

§. 13. If God have left us at Liberty by not commanding or forbidding, then man should not take that Liberty from us without great cause, and without some Accidental good that is like to come by depriving us of that liberty; and the Good must be greater then the Accidental evill. Why should any man on earth deprive the Church of Liberty in that thing where God thought not meet to deprive him of it, unless he can prove that time, or place, or some special accident hath altered the case? In any case which standeth with us just as it did in Scripture times, we must no more be deprived of our freedom by man, then we are by God: Had it been best for us, God would have done it.



CHAP. VII.

Prop. 7. Some things may be lawfully and profitably commanded at one Time and Place, and to one sort of people, that may not at or to another; no nor obeyed, if commanded.

§. 1.



HE case is so plain in point of Commanding, that it is past all doubt. Many Accidents may make that destructive at one Time and place, that would be profitable at another. Pauls precepts and practice in becoming all things to all men, do manifest this.

* The Pope bound *Henry* the fourth King of *France* that no Magistrates tolerate Heresie, except in that which cannot be done without tumult or war.] *Drivila* p. 1362. an. 1595. So that when he feareth losing by it himself, the good man makes conscience of murdering them that he will call hereticks; but at another time 30000. to be murdered in *France* in a few daies (*Drivila* saith 40000.) was a blessed work!

§. 2. * The Papists themselves are convinced of this: and therefore sometime granted the *Bohemians* the use of the cup for the Laity in the Lords Supper: and profess that it is in the Power of the Pope and Council to do the same by other places. Yea when they burn men for the Protestant Religion in one Countrey, they tolerate it in another, for fear of a greater evil. And when they torment men in one age and place for using a Bible in the vulgar tongue, in another place or time, they themselves translate it.

§. 3. It is therefore a very great sin in Governours, unnecessarily to make such things the matter of a common standing Law which is so variable, yea and must be varied according to diversity of times and places: These things should be left to the Prudence of the Governours that are on the place. No wise General will take a Commission for the Command of an Army, if he must be tied up before hand, when to march, and when to stand still, and which way to go, and how to fight in all the variable Circumstances. Shall Governours pretend to be so much wiser then God, as to make a standing Law for that which God thought best to leave at liberty, to be varied as occasions vary?

§. 4. The English Church Laws do tie the Ministers to a particular habit, and to the particular Chapters of Scripture that we must read: and if the Law-givers had pleased, they might as well have tied us to that particular Text which they will have us preach on, and forbid us to choose a Text as a Chapter: And they might have as well tyed us to particular Psalms in singing, as in Reading. But all this is against the nature of our office, and the good of the Church: And therefore it is not fit matter for a Law. If I know my hearers to be most addicted to Drunkenness, must I be tyed up from Reading or Preaching against that sin, and tyed to Read and Preach only against Covetousness or the like, because it seemeth meet to Governours to tie me to a constant course? If I have a tractable people, it may do them no harm to limit them to this or that gesture, vesture, &c. But what if they be prejudiced against a thing that in it self is lawfull, and take it to be a sin, and resolve that they will rather forbear Gods Ordinances then use a thing that their Consciences are against; must I needs exercise or press

press a Gesture, vesture or such Ceremonie, when I see it tendeth to the destruction of my flock? Must I needs deny the Lords Supper to all my flock, if they dare not receive it in this or that gesture (let it be sitting or kneeling,) and all because I am commanded to do so?

§. 5. Suppose it here granted that the thing being lawfull, it is the peoples sinful weakness that causeth them to refuse it; and that the power commanding me no other wise to deliver it, is such as in things lawfull I am bound to obey: yet is it not a thing lawfull to punish the peoples infirmity in a circumstance so severely as with an excommunication, or a denying them the communion of the Church in the Lords supper. In such a case my first duty is, to tell the Magistrate that such a Law is sinfully cruel and destructive to the Churches peace. If that will not prevail with him to repeal or suspend such an unrighteous law, my next duty is, yet to perswade the people to obey him: (for we suppose the gesture or ceremony commanded now to be lawfull :) But if I can neither prevail with the Magistrate to forbear his imposition, nor with the people to obey him; my next duty is to forbear the execution of his unrighteous penalty: I dare not be his executioner, in excluding all Christs servants from his house or holy Communion, that dare not do every circumstantial action that is imposed on them: For the penalty is flat contrary to the Commands of Christ. Yet would I not resist the Magistrate, but lay down my office, if the Churches necessity did not forbid me to lay it down: but if it did, I would do my office, and suffer what the Magistrate should inflict upon me.

§. 6. And indeed, I might else be obliged by a Magistrate to excommunicate or deny Communion to all Christians within my reach: For all Christians are imperfect; and there is not one but is liable to error in a greater matter then a gesture or circumstance, such as we have now before us: no nor one but doth actually err in as great a matter: and therefore one as well as another, on this account may be cast out: But Christ would not have this dealing in his Church.

§. 7. How tender are his own expressions, his practise and his laws towards those that are infirm! He came to preach the Gospel to the poor, and heal the broken-hearted, and lay upon them an easier yoke and lighter burden. He will not break the

And therefore when I said before that in case of Necessity I would rather kneel, then not communicate, yet I now add that I would for all that rather be imprisoned or otherwise persecuted, then cast out of the Churches Communion all that dare not kneel or conform in such a circumstance: And yet this were Ministers then commanded on great penalties to do.



Luke 4. 18. bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking flax: he carryeth the
 Matth. 11. 28. Lambs in his arms, and gently driverth those with young: The
 Matth. 12. 20. little ones that believe in him must not be offended: It were
 Isa. 42. 2, 3. & better for him that offendeth one of them (by injurious
 40. 11. Mat. persecution) that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and
 18. 6. Luke that he were cast into the sea: Him that is weak (even) in
 17. 2. in the Faith, we must receive (and therefore must not cast him
 Rom. 14. 1. & out that doubteth of a ceremony.) And they that are strong
 15. 1, 2. & 14. must bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please
 13, 15, 20, 21, our selves, but every one to please his neighbour for his good to
 23. edification. No man should put a stumbling block, or occasion
 to fall in his brothers way. If we grieve our brother by our
 meats (or other indifferent things) we walk uncharitably:
 we must not for such things destroy them that are the work of
 God, and for whom Christ died. It is good neither to eat flesh,
 nor to drink wine, or any thing whereby he stumbleth or is offend-
 ed, or is made weak. He that doubteth is condemned if he eat,
 because he eateth not of faith. And we must not be too forward in
 damning men for a morsel of bread, or a garment, or a ge-
 sture.

§. 8. Moreover, the Ministry hath a certain end, to which
 all our administrations are Means: even the saving of our flock,
 and the Pleasing of God thereby: And if Magistrates will
 command us to order but a lawful Circumstance so as shall not
 only cross, but destroy these *ends*, we must as soon leave our
 Ministry as obey him: Our Power is *given us to Edification and not
 to Destruction*: Not only those things that of themselves destroy,
 but those that are like to be the occasions of such an event,
 through the infirmity of the people, must be by us avoided. To
 command us a way of Ministration that shall (though but
 accidentally) damn men, and that unnecessarily, is to destroy
 our office, by destroying the end, which is mens salvation. If men
 will destroy themselves by the only means of salvation (Christ and
 the Gospel) this will not excuse us from preaching that Gospel:
 but if men will destroy themselves by a Ceremony, or unne-
 cessary circumstance, I will take it out of their way if I can.
 It is a Lawfull thing for all sick people in *England* to eat of one
 particular dish of meat, as well as on others: But if the Law-
 givers command that all Physicians shall give no man Physick
 that

that will not be tyed only to such or such a dish, I would not be a Physician, if I must obey that command; what if my Patient have a weak stomach and cannot eat of that dish, or be pceevish, and will not? must I therefore be guilty of his death by denying him my necessary help, because the Magistrate forbiddeth me? He may as well forbid us all to visit the sick, or relieve the poor, or cloath the naked, if he can but find the least infirmity that they are guilty of. And I think that Christ will not take it for an excuse in judgement if any man say [Lord, I would have relieved them, cloathed them, healed them, but that the Magistrate forbade me; and I thought it the part of a seditious rebell not to obey my governors.] Yet I should much less desire to be in that Ministers case (whose labours are necessary to the Church) that had no better an excuse for his denying to preach the Gospel, or to admit the servants of Christ to holy Communion, then that the Magistrate forbade him: Our Ministration is a work of Charity, to be exercised upon voluntary receivers: And if a Magistrate have power to forbid us to preach or grant the Sacraments and Communion of the Church to any that wear not black or blew, or white or red, or that kneel not at the Sacrament, or such like, then may he as well or much better forbid us to give alms to any that wear not a horn on their backs, and an iron ring about their arms as Bedlams do: No Magistrate can dispence with Charity, especially in so great a case as mens salvation: no more then the Pope can dispence with Oaths and Covenants.

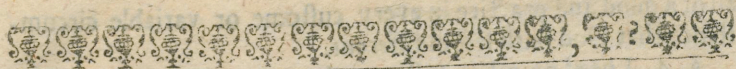
§. 9. We have therefore the use of our Reason left us to weigh the tendency of a Magistrates commands, even where the act commanded is in it self indifferent: For the Magistrates Power, and the Ministers, are from one Fountain, and are but Means to one and the same end: And neither of them hath any power to destroy that end: And therefore if by accident, through the weakness of my flock, the observation of a trivial circumstance would undo them, I would not use it, no nor in obedience to the Magistrate: but would resolve with *Paul* never to eat flesh while I live rather then to offend or destroy my brother. But if I find by the weighing of all accidents, that my obedience will do no such hurt to the Church and Souls of men, but as much good as my not obeying, then (in such indifferent cases) I would

readily obey : But otherwise I would appeal to God, and bear the Magistrates persecution. No means can be justly pleaded against the end (and least of all, a bare ceremony.) For it is no Means when it destroyeth the end.

§. 10. On this account it is that it hath alwaies by wise men been reckoned a tyrannical unreasonable thing, to impose all the same ceremonies and circumstances upon all places as upon some ; and it hath been judged necessary that every Church have their liberty to differ in such indifferent things, and that it hath been taken for a wise mans duty, to conform his practice in such indifferent circumstances, to the severall Churches with which he shall have communion, as *Ambrose* professeth he would do, and would have others do the same.

§. 11. If any think (as too many do) that such a diversity of circumstances is a disorder and confusion, and not to be endured, I shall further tell these men anon, that their opinion for an hypocritical unity and uniformity, is the true bane of Christian unity and uniformity, and that which hath brought the confusion and bloody wars into the Christian world, and that our eyes have seen, and our ears have heard of : And it were as wise an objection for them, if they should charge us in *Britanie* with Confusion, and drive us to a separation or division, because the *Scots* wear blew caps, and the *English* hats : or because some *English* wear white hats and some black ; and so of other circumstances.

§. 12. Did I live in *France* or other Popish Countries, or had lived in *England* at the abolition of Popery, I should have thought it my duty in many indifferent circumstances to accommodate my self to the good of those with whom I did converse ; which yet in another Countrey, or at another time, when those things were as offensive as then they were esteemed, I durst not have so done. And therefore our Common Prayer-Book it self with its Ceremonies might be then commendable, in many particulars, which now are reformatable. And so in *Ethiopia*, *Greece*, or *Spain*, those things would be very laudable, that are now in *England* deservedly vituperable. And severall Ceremonies in the primitive times had such occasions and concomitants, that made them tolerable that now seem less tolerable : The case is not the same, though the Materials be the same.



CHAP. VIII.

Prop. 8. Those orders may be profitable for the Peace of the Churches in one Nation, that are not necessary to the Peace of the Churches in many Nations.

§. 1.



mention this 1. Because the Romanists are so peremptory for the Necessity of their ceremonies through all the world : as if the unity, peace, or well being of the Church, at least, did hang on these. And yet sometimes they could dispence with the different rites of the Greeks, if they could but have got them under their power by it.

§. 2. Also 2. Because the Protestants called Lutherans, stick so rigidly on their ceremonies (as Private Confession, Exorcism, Images, Vestments, &c.) as if these had been necessary to the unity of the Churches. And the Pacifiers find a difficulty in reconciling the Churches of several nations, because these expect an uniformity in ceremonies.

§. 3. And so necessary doth it seem in the judgement of some deluded souls, that all Churches be one in a visible Policy, and uniformity of Rites, that upon this very account they forsake the Protestant Churches and turn Papists. As if Christ were not a sufficient Head and Center for Catholick union, and his Laws and waies sufficient for our terms of uniformity, unless we are

all of a mind and practice in every custome or variable circumstance that God hath left indifferent.

* See my writing of *Grotius* Religion. §. 4. I need no other Instance then 1. what *Grotius* hath given of himself * (in his *Discuss. Apologet. Rivet.*) who professeth that he turned off upon that account, because the Protestants had no such unity : And 2. What he said before of others (by whom he took no warning, but did imitate them) in his Epist. to Mr. *Dury* (cited by Mr. *Barksdale* in his Memorials of *Grotius* life) where he saith [*Many do every day forsake the Protestants, and joyn with the Romanists, for no other Reason but because they are not one Body, but distracted parties, separated Congregations, having every one a peculiar Communion and rites —*] And they that will turn Papists on such an inducement, deserve to take what they get by their folly.

§. 5. Did not these men know that the Church hath alwaies allowed diversity of Rites ? Did not the Churches differ till the Nicene Council about Easter day, and one half went one way, and another half the other way ? and yet *Polycarp* and the Bishop of *Rome* held communion for all their differences ? and *Irenaeus* pleads this against *Victors* temerity in excommunicating the *Asian* Churches ? Did they not know that the Greek, and Armenian, and *Roman* Churches differ in many Rites, that yet may be parts of the Catholic Church notwithstanding such differences ? Yea the Romanists themselves would have allowed the Greeks, and *Abassines*, and other Churches a difference of ceremonies and customes, so they could but have subjugated them to the Pope.

§. 6. Yea more, the severall orders of Fryars and other Religious men among the Papists themselves are allowed their differences in Rites and Ceremonies ; and the exercise of this allowed Difference doth make no great breach among them, because they have the liberty for this variety from one Pope in whom they are all united. What abundance of observations do the *Jesuites*, *Franciscans*, *Dominicans*, *Benedictines*, *Carthusians*, and others differ in ? And must men needs turn Papists because of the different Rites of Protestants, when they must find more variety among them that they turn to ? The matter's well amended with them, when among us, one countrey useth three or four Ceremonies which others do disuse : and among the Papists,

Papists, one order of Fryars useth twice as many different from the rest; yea in habit, and diet, and other observances they many waies differ. What hypocrisie is this, to judge this tolerable, yea laudable in them, and much less so intolerable in us, as that it must remove them from our Communion?

§. 7. And how sad a case is it that the Reconciliation between the Lutherans and other Protestants should in any measure stick at such Ceremonies? what if one courtrey will have Images to adorn their Temples, and will have exorcism, and other Ceremonies, which others do disallow and desire to be freed from? may we not yet give each other the right hand of fellowship? and take each other for the Churches of Christ? and maintain brotherly Charity, and such a correspondency, as may conduce to our mutual preservation and edification?

§. 8. Yea in the same Nation, why may not several congregations have the liberty of differing in a few indifferent ceremonies? If one part think them lawfull, and the other think that God forbids them, must we be forced to go against our Consciences, for a thing of no necessity? If we profess our Resolution to live peaceably with them that use them, and only desire a toleration our selves, because we dare not wilfully sin against our light, will charity deny us this? If men forbear a thing (suppose) indifferent for fear of Gods displeasure and damnation, and profess that were it not for this they would conform to the wills of others, are those Christians or men that will come behind them and drive them into hell without compassion, and that for things indifferent?

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Prop. 9. *There is no meer Humane Universal Sovereign, Civil or Ecclesiastical, over the whole Church, and therefore none to make Laws Obligatory to the whole.*

§. 1.



ADD this, because of the specious pretences of some, that say we are bound to an uniformity in Ceremonies by the Church: and call all *Schismatics*, and such as separate from the *Catholick Church*, that disown and disuse such Ceremonies as on these pretences they obtrude. And by the *Church* that thus obligeth us, they mean, either some Universal Sovereign Power: or else an universal Consent of the Church essential (as they call it.) And that Sovereign must be the Pope or a General Council.

§. 2. If it be Universal Consent of all Believers, that they suppose to be the obliging power, I shall answer them, 1. That Believers are not Governours and Law-givers to the Universal Church, no nor to a particular Church. If that point of the Separatists be so odious that asserteth the multitude of Believers to be the Governours of a particular Church, and to have the power of the Keyes: what then shall we think of them that give them, (even to such as they call the Laity themselves) the

the Government, yea in the highest point even Legislation, over the Universal Church it self.

§. 3. And 2. I add, that the Dissent of those Churches that refuse your Ceremonies, doth prove that there is no Universal consent: If all must consent, we must consent our selves before we be obliged. We are as free as others, we gave none power to oblige us by their consent. If we had, it had been Null: because we had no authority so to do, and could not have obliged our selves, by a universal Law, or perpetual contract. Or if we had, we had also power, on just occasion to reverse a self-obligation. But no such thing *de facto* can be pretended against us.

§. 4. And if such an obligation by consent should be pretended, 3. I would know whether it was by *this* or by some *former* generation? Not by *this* as is certain. Nor by any *former*: For former ages had no power to bind all their successors in Ceremonies about the worship of God. Shew whence they had such a power, and prove it, if you can: we are born as free men, as our ancestors were in this.

§. 5. And 4. I would be satisfied, whether every mans consent in the world be necessary to the *Universality*, or not? If *it be*; then there are no Dissenters: or no obligation because no Universal consent. If *not*; then how many must consent before we are obliged? you have nothing to say, but [*a Major part*] where you can, with any shew of reason, rest: And 1. How shall we know in every Parish in *England*, what mind the Major part of the Christians through the world are of, in point of such or such a Ceremony? 2. Yea by this rule, we have reason to think that both Papists and Protestants must change their Ceremonies, because the greater part of Christians (in East and South, and some in the West) are against very many of them.

§. 6. But if it be the Authority of a Sovereign Head that is pleaded as obliging the universal Church to an uniformity in Rites and Ceremonies, we must know who that Sovereign is. None that we know, pretend to it but the Pope and a General Council. And for the Pope we have by many volumes proved him an Usurper, and no authorized Head of the Church Universal:

sal: The pretended Vice-Christ, is a false Christ. The first usurpers pretended but to a Sovereignty in the Roman world, but had never any shew of Government over the Churches in *Ethiopia*, *India*, and the many Churches that were without the verge of the Roman Empire.

§. 7. And as for General Councils, 1. They are no more the Visible Head and Sovereign of the Church then the Pope is. This I have proved in another Disputation by it self. 2. There neither is nor can be any Council truly universal, as I have there also shewed. Its but a delusory name. 3. There never was any such in the world, since the Church (which before was confined to a narrow room) was spread over the world. Even at *Nice*, there was no proper representative of almost any but the Churches under the Roman Emperours power: Few out of the West, even in the Empire: and none out of almost any of the Churches without the Empire: (For whats one Bishop of *Persia*, or such another of another Countrey, and perhaps those prove the Roman subjects too, that are so called?) If there was but one from *Spain*, and only two Presbyters of *Rome* from *Italy*, and one from *France* (if any) and none from many another Countrey in the Empire, no wonder if there was none from *England*, *Scotland*, or *Ireland*, &c. And therefore there can be no universal obligation on this account.

§. 8. Councils are for Concord by Consultation and consent, and not a Sovereign or superiour sort of Governing power. And therefore we that consented not are not obliged: and if we had consented, we might on weighty reasons have withdrawn our consent.

§. 9. The Orders established by General Councils have been laid aside by almost all, and that without the repeal of a Council: Yea such Orders are seemed to presuppose the custom of the Universal Church, if not Apostolical Tradition, to have been their ground.

§. 10. Among many others, let us instance only in the last Canon of the Nicene Council, that forbidding Kneeling, commandeth all to pray only standing on the Lords Dayes, &c. And this was the common use of the Church before, as *Tertulian* and others shew, and was afterwards confirmed again in a General Council: And yet even the Church of *Rome* hath cast it

it off; much more the Protestant Churches. No General Council hath been of more authority then this of *Nice* : No Ceremony of more common use then this standing in prayer on the Lords dayes : So that it might as much as any, be called the constitution and custom of the Catholick Church. And yet we suppose not these now to bind us to it : but have cast it off without the repeal of any other General Council. And why are we more bound then by the same authority to other Ceremonies then to this? And if to any, then to *which*, and to *how many*, and where shall our consciences find rest?

§. 11. Even the Jesuites themselves say that the General disuse of a practice established by Pope and Council, is equall to an abrogation, without any other repeal, so it be not by the said powers contradicted. And certainly all such disuse began with a few, and proceeded further : we are allowed then to disuse such things.

§. 12. It would grieve a man that loves the Church to hear the name of the Church abused by many dark, though confident disputers, when they are pleading for their Ceremonies, and Holy dayes, and laying about them with the names of Schismaricks against all that will not do as they do [O (say they,) *These men will separate from the Catholick Church, and how then can they be the Children of the Church?*] And 1. Which is it that is called by them the Catholick Church? Little do I know, nor am able to conjecture. Did the Catholick Church make the English Common-Prayer Book? what were the then Bishops in *England* that consented in that work, the whole Church of Christ on earth? God forbid. Or did ever any General Council authorize it? I think not. And if they would tell us what General Council commanded *Christmas Day*, or *Kneeling at the Sacrament*, &c. they would do us a pleasure : but I think they will not.

§. 13. And 2. What if these things had all been commanded by a General Council? May not a man disuse them without separating from the Church? I think, as good as you are, you do some things your selves that God himself hath forbidden you to do; and yet will be loth to be therefore taken for men that separate either from the Church or God. And when you read the Books of Heathen Philosophers; when you adore

not toward the East, or when you pray & receive the Sacrament, Kneeling on the Lords Dayes, would you be taken to separate from the Catholick Church, for crossing its ancient customs, or Canons? But these perverse and factious reasonings we must hear to the dishonour of Christianity and Reason it self, and that from men that scorn the supposed meannesse of others; yea and see poor souls seduced into separation by such empty words! And this is one of the present judgements on this land.



CHAP. X.

Prop. 10. *If it be not our Lawfull Governours that command us, but usurpers, we are not formally bound to obey them, though the things be lawfull which they command.*

§. 1.



VE may be bound by some other Obligation perhaps, to do the thing which they command us, but we are not formally (though sometime Materially) bound to obey them: For it is not *formally* obedience unless it be done *eo nomine* because commanded, or for the Authority of the Commander. If the Pope or any usurper should command me to pray or to give alms, I will do it, but not because he commandeth me, but because God commandeth me: and therefore I will not obey him but God: But if a Parent or Magistrate or Pastor command it me, I will do it both because it is commanded me, by God and them, and

and so I will obey both God and them. If an usurper command me to do a thing in it self indifferent, I will not do it because he commandeth it : but yet if accidentally it become my duty, by conducing to anothers good, or avoiding their offence or hurt, or any other accident, I will use it for these ends, though not for his command.

§. 2. The Pope 1. As the Vice-christ or universall Head, is an usurper; and therefore hath no authority to command me or any man (in that relation) the smallest Ceremony. 2. The Pope as Patriarch of the West, is an humane creature, and not of Divine institution, and was indeed a sinfull institution from the first of his creation; but if it had been otherwise, yet since is that Patriarchship become unwarrantable, since he hath forfeited it, and the world hath found the mischiefs of it. So that no man is therefore bound to use one lawfull Ceremony because the Pope as Patriarch of the West commandeth it. 3. If this were not so, yet *Brittain* and *Ireland* were from the beginning none of his Patriarchate, nor did at *Nice* consent to it: and therefore have the less appearance of any obligation.

§. 3. The Authority of General Councils cannot be pretended as obliging men in Conscience to the English Ceremonies. 1. Because indeed General Councils are not a superiour Power for proper Government of the Church having authority to command particular Bishops, or Synods, as their subjects; but they are only necessary for Union and Communion of Churches and mutual assistance thereby: and so their Canons bind but by virtue of the General commands that require us to maintain the Unity and Communion of the Churches.

§. 4. And 2. If it were otherwise, there is few, if any of these Ceremonies that are commanded by any true General Council. They that can prove any such thing, let them do it: but till we see it, we will not be forward to believe it. Yea 3. Some of them, General Councils have made Canons against; as I before shewed in the Case of Kneeling at the Sacrament on the Lords dayes. And therefore the neglecters of our Ceremonies sin not against a General Council.

§. 5. The Common plea is, that we are bound to use these Ceremonies in obedience to the Church of *England*; and that we are not true sons of his Church if we refuse it. But what is

it that is called by them [*The Church of England*] In a Political sense, I know no such thing as a Church of *England*, or of any Nation on earth; that is, There is no one Society united in any one Ecclesiastical Sovereign, that can truly be called [*the Church of England*] or of any other Nation. The whole Catholick Church is One, as united in Christ the Head: And every particular Church, associated for personal Communion in Gods Worship, is one; being a part of the Catholick Church, and united in, and individuated by their relation to their several Pastors. But a National Church under one chief Ecclesiastick Government, I find no mention of in Scripture; but contrarily, [*the Churches of Judæa, Galatia, &c.*] or any other Countrey where there were many, are alway mentioned in the Plural number; and never called *one Church*.

§. 6. Yet will we quarrel with no men about meer names or words. If by [*a National Church*] be meant any of these following, we acknowledge that there is such a thing. 1. If all the particular Churches in a Nation do Associate, for Communion and mutuall assistance, and so use to meet by their officers in one National Assembly; I confesse the Association usefull, if not necessary, and the Assemblies to be maintained, and for unity sake obeyed in things lawfull: And though *Scripture* call not such National Associations by the name of [*a Church*] in the singular number, yet we shall leave men to their Liberty in such names. If all the Schoolmasters in *England* should hold General Assemblies, to agree what Books to read in their Schools, &c. if any man would therefore call all the Schools in *England* in the singular number, by the name of [*the School of England*,] I would not differ with him for a word. 2. Or if the Churches are all called *One* that are under one Christian Magistrate, I will confesse the thing to be true that is pretended to be the reason of the name: All the Churches do owe obedience to the Magistrate. But he is no Essentiall part or Ecclesiastical Head of the Church: and therefore it is very improperly denominated from him; or called [*One*] on that account: No more then all the Schools are *one* because he is their Sovereign. It is the Common-wealth that is specified and individuated by the Magistrate as the Sovereign Power; and not the Churches.

ches. But yet it is but an *improper word*, to call all the Churches one Church on that account, which we contend not about.

§. 7. But it is the *Thing* that we stick more at then the name. *A General Head* doth properly specify and individuate the *Body*. Prove either, 1. That the Archbishop of *Canterbury*, or any other. 2. Or an Assembly of Bishops or Presbyters, is properly an Ecclesiastical Head, having Authority from Jesus Christ to be the chief Ruler of all the Churches in the Land and then I will confess that we have properly and strictly a *National Church*. But no such thing can be proved.

§. 8. As for an *Assembly*, I have already shewed (which Bishop *Vher* asserted to me) that they are not superior Governors, nor instituted *gratia Regiminis*, but *gratia unitatis*; having no more Rule over particular Bishops, then a Convention of Schoolmasters over a particular Schoolmaster. If they say that Kings and Parliaments give Power to Convocations, I answer, that can be but such as they have themselves: which we shall speak of anon, and is nothing to this place.

§. 9. And as for a *Primate* or Archbishop (of *Canterbury*, e. g.) 1. It will be a hard task to prove Archbishops, as such, to be of Divine Institution. 2. And it will be harder, even Impossible, to prove Archbishops of the English species, as such, to be of Divine institution. 3. And certainly Christ hath nowhere told us, that every Nation shall have such a Head, nor every Province, nor every County: nor told us whether there shall be one over ten Nations, or ten over one: Their limits are not to be found in Scripture (supposing there were such an office there known.) 4. Nor is it anywhere determined, that such a City shall have the preheminance, and *Canterbury*, v. g. be Ruler of all the rest. All these are of meer humane institution: And therefore that which the imposers of Ceremonies call [*the Church of England*] is a meer humane thing, which therefore can bind us no further then the Magistrate can authorize them to do.

§. 10. But the stronger pretence will be, that the particular Bishops of *England* were severally officers of Christ, authorized to Govern their several flocks, and therefore a Convocation of these Bishops binds us in conscience *gratia unitatis*. The People they oblige as their Rulers: and the several Presbyters
also

also as their Rulers, and the several Bishops, *gratia unitatis*, for avoiding of schism.

§. 11. *Ans.* This also is an insufficient evidence to prove our Consciences obliged to their Ceremonies, *eo nomine*, because of their Canons or commands. For though we acknowledge a sort of Episcopacy to be warrantable, yet that *this* sort that made the Canons in question, is not warrantable, I have proved at large in the former Disputation on that question. Such Pastors of a Diocels as our Bishops were, have no word of God to shew for their office (further then as they are Presbyters,) but we have shewed already, that their office is unlawfull. And therefore though their actions as Presbyters may be valid, yet their actions are Null which were done by pretence of this unlawfull sort of office, (they being no other way enabled thereto.) On this ground therefore we are not bound.

§. 12. If it could be pretended that at least as Presbyters the Convocation represented the Presbyters of *England*, and therefore thus their Canons binds us to the use of ceremonies, Common prayer, &c. I should answer, that 1. Even Synods of Presbyters or the Lawfullest sort of Bishops, oblige but *gratia unitatis*. 2. That the late Synod at *Westminster* was as truly a Representative of the Presbyters of *England*, as the Convocation; where such consent, if any were given, was retracted. 3. By actuall dislike signified by disuse, the Presbyters of *England*, for the most part, have retracted their Consent. 4. Yea molt that are now Ministers never gave such Consent. 5. Even all particular Pastors and Churches are free, and may on just reason deny consent to such impositions.

§. 13. There remains nothing then, that with any shew of strength can be pretended, as continuing our obligation to Ceremonies, from Authority, but that of the Civil Power that commanded them. But to that I say, 1. So much as was lawfull, we confess that we were bound to use, while we had the command of the Civil power: But nothing unlawfull could be made our duty by them. 2. the Civil Power hath repealed those laws that bound us to these ceremonies. The Parliament repealed them: the late King consented, at least, for the ease of tender Consciences (as he spoke) that men should have liberty to forbear them. And the present Rulers are against them, whom we see even the ceremonious obey in other matters.

§. 14. Let

§. 14. Let those then that would subjugate our Consciences to their ceremonies, make good their foundation, even the Authority by which they suppose us to be obliged, or they do nothing: If all their impositions were proved things indifferent and lawfull, thats nothing to prove that we must use them, till they prove that lawfull authority commandeth them. The Civil Powers do not command them: And the Ecclesiasticks that command them, prove not their authority over us. In the matters of God, we will yield to any man that bids us do that which God hath bidden us do already: But if they will exercise their power by commanding us more then God commands us, and that unnecessarily, we must crave a sight of their commission.

§. 15. And if men that have no Authority over us, shall pretend Authority from God, and go about to exercise it by Ceremonious impositions, we have the more reason to scruple obeying them, even in things indifferent, lest we be guilty of establishing their usurpation, and pretended office in the Church, and so draw on more evils then we foresee, or can remove.



CHAP. XI.

Prop. 11. *The Commands of Lawfull Governors about Lawfull Ceremonies, must be understood and obeyed with such exceptions as do secure the End; and not to the subverting of it.*

§. 1.



HE proof of this is obvious. These humane Ceremonies are appointed but as means to a further end. But that which would cross and overthrow the end, doth cease to be a Means; and cannot be used *sub ratione medii.*

§. 2. Order, and Decency are the pretended ends of the Imposed Ceremonies; and the right worshipping of God, and the good of mens souls are said to be the greater and remoter ends, and the glory of God the ultimate end. If then I have good assurance that I cannot use such or such a ceremony but it will prove the subversion of Order, or Edification, (though it should be by accident, through the infirmity of men,) I know no reason I have to use them, when such a mischief would follow, unless they can shew me some greater good that also will follow, which may recompence it.

§. 3. Therefore the commanding of unnecessary ceremonies, on such Penalty, as was done in England, and Scotland, to the