

the Holy Ghost to the Priest. The doubt is, whether this be not an abuse of the words which Christ himself or his Apostles used, and so not to be assented to, approved and consented to.

3. Yet is it not denied, but that Ministerial *Authority* is given by the ordainers as Ministers, Deliverers or Investors: But *Authority* is not the *Holy Ghost* so called.

4. Nor is it denied but that as Father, Son, and *Holy Ghost* do enter into Covenant with us as *Christians* in our baptism, so do they with Ministers, as such, in their ordination-covenant: But such a Relation to the Holy Ghost as the Ministers future helper in his work, cannot well be supposed to be all that is meant by the words [*Receive the Holy Ghost;*] both Scripture and common use, taking them in another sense.

XXV. This Oath in the Consecration of Bishops is to be taken by every Bishop [*In the name of God Amen. I. N. Chosen Bishop of the Church and See of N. do profess and promise all due reverence and obedience to the Archbishop, and to the Metropolitan Church of N. and to their successors, so help me God through Jesus Christ.*]

2. It is not pretended that any such Oaths of obedience were instituted by Christ or his Apostles; or were used in the Churches for many hundred years, nor till the Papacy was rising, which was furthered by such Oaths.

3. They that suppose Bishops to be successors of the Apostles, cannot make them subjects to any other Ecclesiastical Rulers, without asserting that the Apostles were Governours over one another; which we find not that they do.

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4. It was many hundred years before Arch-Bishops had any Governing power over Bishops, or exacted any obedience from them; being not *Episcopi Episcoporum* (as the Carthage Fathers in *Cyprian* professed.) But were only such as had the first seats and voices in the Synods.

5. The question therefore is, whether such Oaths, as necessary to a Bishops consecration, be to be Approved and consented to?

XXVI. An Oath of Canonical obedience also is put upon all that are made Priests and Deacons: And Priests at their ordination must make this Covenant, that they [*will reverently obey their Ordinary, and other chief Ministers, unto whom is committed the charge and Government over them.*]

2. The ordinary is not only the Bishop, but also the Chancellour, Officials, *Serrogates*, *Commissaries*, *Arch-Deacons*; and all that are Judges in the Ecclesiastical Courts.

3. to obey them that are thus *de facto* set over us, is no less than to obey them in the exercise of that power which is given them as so set over us.

4. The doubt is, whether they that take any of them to be Usurpers of an Ecclesiastical power, which indeed they have not (and can prove it to be so) should swear or Covenant obedience to them as such. *e. g.* It is commonly confessed by the Conformists that the true power of the Keys, of *excommunication* and *Absolution* is appropriated by Christ to the Clergy: And yet our Chancellours being lay men, do decretively exercise that power. The question is, may we swear or Covenant to obey them?

5. And seeing Christ never gave one Presbyter

the Government of others, as Archdeacons, Surrogates, Officials, &c. whether all the rest may swear obedience to them, or Approve of and consent to the use of such Oaths? And divers Councils have condemned it as a dangerous practice for Bishops to tie subject Presbyters to them by Oaths.

XXVII. Ministers that live among the people have greatest advantage to know the penitent from the impenitent.

2. But it is the foresaid lay Chancellours, who usually know nothing of them but by reports, that excommunicate and absolve them. And the Parish-Minister must (as a cryer readeth a proclamation or sentence of a Judge) openly read these excommunications and absolutions.

3. These excommunications must pass according to the Canons, against all that shall affirm that *[there is anything in the book of Common-Prayer repugnant to the Scripture or any of the 39 Articles erroneous, or any of the Rites and Ceremonies such as he may not with a good conscience subscribe to, or that the Government by Arch-Bishops, Bishops, Deans, Arch-Deacons and the rest that bear Office in the Church of England, is repugnant to the word of God, or that anything in the form and manner of making & consecrating Bishops, Priests or Deacons is repugnant to the word of God, &c.]*

4. The present doubt is whether a Minister who knoweth such of his Parish to be godly, peaceable men, whom the Chancellour decretively excommunicateth, may both openly read and declare such excommunications and also swear or Covenant so to do, in obedience to the Ordinary. And whether when he knoweth that a wicked

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impenitent man is absolved, he may pronounce such absolutions.

XXVIII. The Oath of *Canonical obedience* seemeth to mean *obedience* according to the Canons: And he that Covenanteth to obey his ordinary, must be supposed to mean no less than [According to the Canon Laws by which he is known to govern,] and as Government thereby is exercised:

2. And if so, then there are more things in the Canons and present Government, which the Non-conformists dare not swear or Covenant to obey (besides those already named,) than we will now stand to enumerate.

XXIX. The Rubrick saith that [the Minister who repelleth any from the Sacrament, shall be obliged to give an account of the same to the Ordinary within 14 daies after, at the furthest.

2. If all that by gross ignorance, Atheism, Infidelity, Sadducism, Heresie, Schism, Drunkenness, Whoredom, Stealing, Malice, &c. are incapable of the Communion be presented to the Ordinary within 14 daies, no charity that is guided by knowledge of the common state of the people, can think, that in *London* Diocess there would be fewer than many score thousands presented at once. And in other Diocesses many score hundreds at least,

3. Some Ministers dwell a hundred Miles or neer from the Bishops. And the Bishops are divers of them so much at *London* or abroad, as that it cannot be expected that all these must be presented to the Bishop himself, but to the Chancellours court, as is usual.

4. The Chancellours Court is so far from most Ministers

Ministers in the Land, and the prosecuting so many when proof is demanded, will be so chargeable and take up so much time, as that it will undo many poor Ministers, that have scarce enough to maintain their families; and it will take up the time which they should use in the necessary labours for their flocks.

5. The Chancellour is a lay man to whom they must be presented: And the issue will be but a lay mans *excommunicating* them, if obstinate; or absolving them: Which is not justified by the Bishops themselves.

6. At the said Chancellours court things are managed as at a civil judicature: There is not that endeavour to convince sinners by Scripture, and to draw them to true Repentance, by humbling evidence, intreaties and prayers for them, as should be for the saving of a soul from sin: But the charges of the court fees, and the fears of a prison after excommunication, maketh it an unacceptable and as unlikely means to convert men as the flocks.

7. Therefore for a minister to present all his Parishioners to such courts, whom he is bound to deny the Sacrament to, were but to make him seem their greatest and cruellest enemy, and to render him incapable of ever (probably) profiting them by his Ministry any more; and consequently, greatly to promote their damnation and make them almost hopeless as to recovery. And if by this terrour they tell the Chancellour that they *Repent*, how little satisfaction is that to the Minister, that never saw, himself, any signs of their repentance.

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9 Especially considering that all the Parish who receive not thrice a year, (of which *Easter* must be one *for them all*) must be presented to the said ordinary, and also all that come not to Church; By which means divers Parishes about *London* must have some 10000, some 20000, some 30000, some 40000, or 50000, that have no room in the Church, all presented if this Law were executed.

XXX. We have reason to doubt whether the Act of Uniformity it self be not part of the Books which we must subscribe Assent and Consent to; because it is so said in the Book it self: The Contents of the Book are first named in general, and then this Act named among the Contents. Either it is part of the Contents, or it is not; if it be not, we must not assent and consent to that falshood (that it is,) If it be, O far be it from us that believe a God, a Judgment, and a life to come, and the sacred Scriptures, to Assent and Consent to that Act with all its penalties, silencing and ruining such as conform not. One of us that was oft with the great, wise, just Lord Chief Justice *Hales*, hath heard him lamenting the Schisms and discords of the Clergy, seriously say, that [*There was no right way to heal us, but by a New Act of Uniformity.*] (And hath his late Writings against laying Concord or Religion upon mens unnecessary additions.) And the Reporter taketh not himself to be wiser than him, nor meet to Assent and Consent to such a Law, considering the experience of these seventeen years, and the consequents on mens divided and exasperated minds,
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upon the Congregations, upon Ministers and Families, and upon the state and security of the Christian Religion, and the Protestant Cause, &c. As to them that say that the *Act nameth the Book as distinct from it self*; we answer, 1. So do the Titles of Acts of Parliament name the Act it self as distinct from the Title, and yet we suppose that Title part of the Act. 2. The Book nameth the Act as part of its Contents, as is aforesaid.

If we should by mistake think some of these passages to be unlawful that are not, or to have a worse sense than indeed they have, let these things be considered.

1. We judge as well as we are able; and whatever sense another takes them in, we that so understand them cannot take them.

2. We judge of the sense by the plain words; the force and stretch is not by us, but by those that conform and contradict our sense.

3. The Law-givers will not otherwise expound their own words, after 17 years waiting for it under Compulsive Executions: Certainly if they would have us understand their words contrary to common use, they would rather tell us so after seventeen years time, than ruine us, and forbear so easie a means to heal the Churches.

4. Some of us so highly value the excellent Prælections of Bishop *Sanderson de juramento*, and his judgment, against taking and expounding Oaths (and consequently professions and promises) in a stretched or a doubtful sense, and his Counsel to refuse them, when the sense is doubtful, if the Rulers or Imposers will not expound them

(though

(though they should bid us take them in our own sense;) with much more which he hath excellently said to such purposes, that we thankfully acknowledge that he hath much help for to fortifie us against the guilt of perjury, and falshood, and prophaning the holy name of God, and deceiving our Governours by equivocations and false expositions, and scandalously tempting others to perjury, lying, or such other sins.

We take an understanding, serious (and if it may be *publick*) owning of the Baptismal Covenant in age to be of so great moment to the reviving of true Christianity and the honour of Baptism and cure of Anabaptism, that it greatly grieveth us that we must despair of its effectual practise, when we meet with few that seem not to approve it. The words of a very Learned and Great Conformist Mr *Elderfield* of Baptism pag. 48. *margin*. We think worthy our recital.

“ Upon score of like reason (saith he) whereto,
 “ and for such after tryal, may have been taken
 “ up in the Christian Church, that examination
 “ which did sift the constancy or rather consistency
 “ of those that had been taken in young, to
 “ their presumed grounds, that if they wavered
 “ they might be known and discharged, or if
 “ they remained constant, they might by imposition of hands receive what the Commoner
 “ name of that Ceremony did import, of their
 “ faith (at least a sign of) *Confirmation*.
 “ *Vasquez* hath from *Erasmus* (in the Preface to
 “ his Paraphrase on the Gospels) a word of most
 “ wholsom grave and prudent advise, that those
 “ who were Baptized young, when they begin
 “ to write man, should be examined, *an ratum*
 “ *habeant*

"habeant id quod in Catechismo ipsorum nomine pro-
 "missum: Quod si ratum non habeant, ab Ecclesia
 "jurisdictione liberos manere; in 3. p. Thom. disp. 154.
 "To. 2, c. 1. sect. 2. If they did then stand
 "to what their sureties promised for them. If
 "not they should be discarded. Most necessary!
 "and of unimaginable benefit! Such a scrutiny
 "would shake off thousands of rotten hypocrites,
 "and purge the Church of many such Infidel
 "believers or professors, upon whose dirty
 "faces a little holy water was sprinkled when
 "they knew not what it was; but they no more
 "mind the true sanctification appertaining than
 "the *Turks* or *Saracens* (who shall rise up in
 "judgement against their washed filthiness,) or
 "than those of whom *St. Peter* [It is hapned
 "to them according to the true proverb: The
 "dog to his vomit, and the washed swine to
 "wallow in the mire.] Such discipline of awake-
 "ned Reason is that the world groans for;
 "that men would become Christians. O that
 "the truth of faith, and power of true Christian
 "belief might be seen in those that knowingly
 "put the neck in Christs yolk.] So far he. See
 also *Dr. Patrick* of Baptism. And of our selves
Mr. Hammer and *Baxter* have written Treatises
 only on this subject, to shew that such true
 Confirmation would be the most excellent means
 to heal most of our enormities and divisions.

And shall such Jesuits as *Vasquez*, such mode-
 rators as *Erasmus*, and Protestant Conformists,
 and Nonconformists, all thus speak for it, and yet
 no hope? No wonder if a word or ceremony
 that we disagree in, can make our wound so sad
 as we have felt, when that which we in words

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agree for, and that not as a thing indifferent, but so necessary, cannot yet be obtained though we perish. Dead Images of all good things, is but the last and most effectual means of destroying the life and real good: Dead shews and Images of good, are Hypocrisie; sincerity is reality, seriousness and life. We take our Baptism to be our Christening, or the summe of the Christian Religion: And it is but for men to *do that seriously at Age*, which they did in Infancy by others authorized (or others for them) which is the Conversion which we daily preach: And it grieveth us to see what multitudes, when aged, never seriously think either what they did or received in their Infancy; and how many hate such a life as they have vowed, and yet think that they stand to their Baptismal Covenant. And till the Pastors of the Church make a serious work of it, to bring all their Parishes to a serious understanding and consideration of their Baptism, and a serious owning it, and renewing of that Covenant, we cannot hope that the people will be serious Christians; or that men will not think that serious Anabaptists are better than Hypocrites that contemn their Baptism.

SECT. II.

The Second Part of the Matter of Conformity.

THE First Part *de facto*, being contained in the Canonical Subscription, and the Declaration, hath been opened: The Second Part is the

the case of *Reordination*. Either they that require *Episcopal Ordination* for all that were otherwise ordained when Bishops were put out, do intend it a second Ordination or not. If yea, then it is a thing condemned by the ancient Churches, by the Canons called the Apostles, &c. and by *Gregory M.* and others likened to Anabaptistry. If not, then they take such mens former Ordination to be null, and consequently no Ministers to be true Ministers that are so ordained, and not by Diocesans; and consequently all such Churches to be no true Churches (while they take the *Roman* Ordination to be valid.) To speak of the consequences of this as to the nullity of Baptizings and Consecration of the Lords Supper, &c. and of the taking of God's name in vain in the Office if it prove evil, would be to go further than the Matter of Fact.

SECT. III.

The Third Part of Conformity.

THE Third Part of Conformity is the Subscribing against the obligation from the Vow [*To endeavour any change or alteration of Government in the Church,*] with the Oxford Oath [*That we will never endeavour any alteration;*] and the Articles for our Prelacy; and the Ordination-promise, and Oath of Canonical Obedience before-mentioned, as to this point together.

2. Even those Nonconformists that are for the lawfulness, yea the need and desirableness of Bishops,

Thops, and Archbishops, have so much against this Subscription, as that to avoid prolixity, we will forbear reciting the particulars, any further than to tell you, that while a thousand or many hundred Parish Churches are all without any particular appropriate Bishops (great Towns and Villages) when in *Ignatius's* daies the Unity of each Church was known by having *One Altar*, and *One Bishop, with the Presbyters and Deacons*. And *Jerom* defineth a Church to be *Plebs unita Episcopo*; and consequently they are without the Discipline and Pastoral oversight of such Bishops; and while all these Parishes are in the old sense become *No Churches* (for *ubi Episcopus, ibi Ecclesia*) but only *Parts* of a Diocesan Church: And while the old *form* of Churches, Presbyters and Bishops is thus changed: And while one Bishop hath now more work of Discipline (besides Confirming and all his other work) than an hundred of the ablest and best men can do; and so such Discipline is necessarily undone: And while the Case is as if the Bishop of *Carthage* had put down six hundred neighbour-Bishops, and become the sole Bishop of all their Churches; or as if all the Schools in a Diocess have but one Governing School-master, who had power to judge what Scholar to receive or to refuse: And while the Keys are to be exercised by Lay-men, these will be unsatisfying things.

3. The Conformists are not agreed of the meaning of these Subscriptions and Oaths; some think that they covenant only to *submit* to them (though they dislike them :) But others think that it is also to *approve* the Government. Some think that it is only *Bishops* that they are bound

to: But others say, that the word *Ordinary* certainly signifieth more than Bishops, even Lay-Chancellours. And that the *forecited* Canon expressly nameth many others, even with an *& cetera*, [*the rest that bear Office*] And [*any alteration*] must needs mean more: as [*any alteration in State*] sure extendeth to more than not endeavouring to [*change Monarchy or the King himself*]. Some say that by [*not endeavouring*] is meant only [*not unlawfully endeavouring*] but not that all *endeavour*s are forbidden, viz. not petitioning, speaking when called, &c. Others say that if exceptions had been allowed, the Law makers would have made us know it, and not have spoken universally: And that if you expound it of [*unlawful endeavours*] you leave all men at liberty to judge what is unlawful, and all Schismatics will take the Oath or Subscription, because they hold their endeavours to extirpate Prelacy to be *lawful*. Some say that one may endeavour in his place and calling, to take the Church-Keys out of the hands of Lay Chancellours notwithstanding this Subscription and Oath. But others more ingenuously say, that the very *actual Government* or Keys being in the hands of Lay-Chancellours, if it bind us not against endeavouring to change these, it binds us to *nothing* that can be understood: And that if Subjects thus take liberty after *Universal Oaths and Promises* to make such exceptions, they reproach the Law-makers, as if in such tremendous things as these they knew not how to put their Laws in words intelligible, and of common sense: And they relax all such sacred bonds. Some say that in [*not endeavoring*] is excepted [*unless the King com-*
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mission or command us:] But others say, that if the Law givers would have had such exceptions, they had wit enough to have put them in: And that if you leave it to men to except from universals, you cannot tell them where to stop: And that the use of the Oath and Subscription is, that the Church-Government be taken for unalterable.

SECT. XII.

The Fourth Part of Conformity.

IV. **T**HE Fourth Part of Conformity is the Subscription against the obligation of the Oath called the Solemn Vow and Covenant. Corporations are constituted by Declaring, that *there is no obligation from it to any one without exception: But Ministers must only subscribe that there is no obligation on me, or on any other person, from the Oath, -- to endeavour any change or alteration of Government in the Church.*

2. It is none of the Controversie here, 1. Whether that vow was lawfully imposed or contrived, 2. Nor whether it were lawfully taken.

3. Nor whether part of the matter was unlawful. But supposing all these unlawful, 1. Whether all alteration of Church Government be unlawful? whether it be not in the power of the King and Parliament, to set a Bishop in every Market Town: or to take the use of the Keys from Laymen: or to take down Archdeacons, Officials, Commissaries. Surrogates, &c? Whether all Reformation be out of the power of the King, or not to be desired by the people?

Whether that which is *Lawful* may not be done by the Law-makers, and be endeavoured by speech in Parliament, or by petition by the people; Especially if the King Command it? 3. Whether men be not bound by a *Vow* to that which is *Lawful*: much more to that Which is antecedently a duty?

3. The Conformists are here disagreed among themselves; some say that the *Vow* bindeth not because it was *unlawfully imposed*: But others better say, that this proveth no more, but that the *Imposers* could not bind *me to take it by any authority of theirs*; And that if I had taken it *in secret without imposition* I had been bound by it: Els no private *Vow* should bind. Some say that it binds not because it was *sinfully taken*: But others truly say that if Oaths bind not wherever men *take them sinfully*, no wicked man should ever be bound by Oaths or Vows, because they usually make them *sinfully* by an ill end and intention, wrong motives, or ill principles or manner: Or at least a bad man might choose whether ever he will be obliged: But all good casuists agree, that if the *matter* be lawful the *unlawful taking* hinders not the obligation. A man that is Baptized with ill motives or intentions, is yet obliged by his Baptismal Vow. Some say that it binds not because the *matter it self* is unlawful. But its granted that it bindeth to no unlawful matter: Others therefore truly say that he that Voweth six things whereof three are sinful, is not disoblged by the conjunction of these from the other three that are *Lawful*: Els a Knave may keep himself disoblged as to all Vows, by putting in some unlawful thing. Some say that
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it binds not because we were antecedently bound to all that is good by other bonds, and therefore not by this. But others truly say, that this is a most intollerable reason and would nullifie our Baptismal Vow, and all our sacramental Vows renewed; and all Covenants that ever man can make to God of any duty. For *Gods own Laws first bind us to every duty*: But for all that our own *Vows, Covenants and promises secondarily bind us also*: And a man may have *many obligations to one duty*; Yea indeed the Covenanters ordinarily profess that they think not that a man should Vow any thing to God but what God first hath made his duty. And they are against the Papists for making Religions and duties to themselves which God never made: And therefore they profess that if some things in the Covenant were not their duty before, they would not think that they are bound to it now: And they profess that if they had never taken that Vow they had been bound to all that by it they are bound to: And therefore condemning that Vow doth no whit secure the Government of the Church (*e. g. Lay Chancellours use of the Keys, or the d. frunction of discipline*) from their Lawful endeavours to alter it. And they profess that seeing the King hath power to command them Lawful things, if they had Vowed any thing meerly Indifferent it would not have bound them against the Kings Commands; Because it is not in subjects power, by Vows to withdraw themselves from their obedience to authority. Some say that the Proclamation of King *Charles* the first against the Covenant null'd the obligation. But others truly say, 1. That it could null no

more than the *Imposition* to take it, and not the obligation when it's taken, in *necessary* things: 2. That this is nothing to all them that took it *afterward*, and that when *Charles II.* had (though injuriously) been drawn to declare for it. Some say that it binds not because men took it *unwillingly*. But others truly say, 1. that this would leave it in the power of a bad man to nullifie all Vows and contracts, by saying that he *did them* unwillingly: 2. That man hath *free will* and cannot be compelled: And a Vow of a thing Lawful to save ones life bindeth: Men must rather die than lie. 3. This would teach Subjects to say that they take all Oaths of Allegiance to the King unwillingly, and therefore are not bound. 4. Its true that no man that forceth another injuriously to a promise can *claim to himself any right* from that which was not free but procured by his own injurious violence or fraud; But *God* wrongeth none, and a *Vow to God* bindeth though procured by sinful force by men. Some say that, It was only a League and Covenant with men, and not a Vow, and therefore ceaseth *cessante occasione*, and by the consent of Parliaments, &c. *Ans.* There is no place for the belief of this objection to any that knoweth a Vow otherwise than by the name: Indeed an Oath that is but an appeal to God, that I will faithfully perform my Covenant with a man, obligeth me not when that man hath discharged me from any obligation to him. But this in question was primarily a promise or *Covenant made to God* (which is a Vow,) and a League and Covenant of men with one another that they will perform it; as is notorious to any man that

readeth

readeth it with common understanding.

II. The second thing questioned about that Vow (and the main) is, whether every Minister must or may become the judge of *all other mens Consciences and obligations in three Kingdoms*, even of many thousands whom they never saw nor heard of, and that so far as to absolve or justify them from all obligations by that Vow to endeavour any Church reformation.

2. It is here supposed 1. That though men ought to take an Oath in the sense of a *Lawful Governour* so far as they know it, yet that they are not bound beyond the plain meaning of the words to the sense of Usurpers: Therefore they know not but the King and Lords, &c. might take the same words in another meaning than the obtruders did intend; *e. g.* to reform according to Gods Word and the example of the best reformed Churches might signifie to them an opposition to Presbytery.

2 That if men mistake the sense of the Imposers, they are bound to keep an Oath in the Lawful sense in which they took it. And then how knoweth every Minister in what sense every man in the three Kingdoms took it? And how is he able to say that no one man of them all is obliged by it to endeavour a lawful and necessary reformation?

3. And as to the former Argument that men were forced to it, many of the Old Parliament are yet living, and many others, that then forced others to it, and were not forced to it themselves.

4 And if the present Parliament-men could (upon what compulsion soever) Vow to reform, *e. g.* scandalous Ministers, Swearing, Drunkenness,

Popery, &c. and then would command all Ministers on pain of silencing to subscribe that no man is bound to perform that Vow, this would not do them any service, but involve each Subscriber in the guilt of a multitudes perfidiousness.

SECT. XIII.

V. *The Fifth Part of Conformity.*

1. **T**HE The Fifth Part of Conformity is the Subscribing of the said Declaration, and taking the Oxford Oath, as it concerneth Civil Government, viz. [*It is not lawful on any pretence whatsoever to take Arms against the King; and that I do abhor that traiterous position of taking Arms by his authority against his person, or against those that are commissioned by him.*] in pursuance of that Commission.

2. Here the Question is not of the first Clause, of *taking Arms against the King*; but only of the last [*against those that are commissioned by him*] the Ministers being mostly ignorant of Law, and not knowing what is called a *Commission*, and what seal maketh it such: For as they are satisfied that no true Legal Commission of the King may be resisted, so while the unpounded words have no limitation or exception, they dare not think that a Lord Chancellour or Keeper hath power at his pleasure to depose the King, by sealing Commissions to any to seize on his Forts, Garrisons, Magazines, Treasure, Navies or Guards; nor yet to destroy the Kingdoms,

doms, Cities, Laws and Judgments, and seize at pleasure on all mens estates or lives. And they dare not swear or subscribe that which the generality of Learned men, Heathens, Papists and Protestants, Politicians, Lawyers, and Divines are commonly against, it being too great presuming on their own wits to say or swear, that almost all the world are in the wrong (even men in their own profession) and that yet they are wiser than all these. An Oath therefore being to be taken *understandingly*, their not *understanding* this, causeth their refusal; and it pleaseth not the Law givers to explain it to them.

3. But though this be a very important business, we are so unwilling to meddle with matters of our Rulers Power, as being less pertinent to our function, and the late debates in the House of Lords (as some body hath published them) have said so much in this case, that we think it best to say no more of it.

SECT. XIV.

VI. *The Sixth Part of Conformity or Obedience consequently required of Ministers.*

1. **T**HE Sixth part of Obedience required of us consequently is, that till we can do all *aforesaid*, We must desert our former flocks, though they desire us to continue our care of them, and that we give over our preaching the Gospel of salvation to any but our families, or four more; and that no man not ordained by Diocesans administer the Lords Supper, &c.]

2. The

2. The question is not whether we should give up the Temples and Tythes, and all publick Maintenance when ever it is required of us: Though St. *Ambrose* would not obey the Emperour *Valentinian*, in giving up one Temple which he could spare, to the *Arrians*; yet the Nonconformists are of another judgment, and think them all in the Magistrates power: But it is the *Office, Relation and Work*, that they dare not renounce or cease from, without a better discharge.

3. Yet they judge, that where truly there is no necessity of their labours, or they should do more hurt than good by Preaching, it is their duty, when forbidden, to forbear: But not because any will say, we are Judges, and it is so, when notoriously it is not so.

4. But this requireth a larger disquisition than we may here stay to make.

SECT. XV.

VII. *The Seventh Part of required Obedience.*

1. **T**HE Seventh Part of the Obedience required of us, is that we come not within five miles of any City or Corporation which sendeth Burgeses to Parliament, or to any other place whatever, where we have ever preached since the Act of Oblivion; except on the Rode or summoned.

2. Many Ministers have their friends, houses, and all that they have, in those forbidden places.

3. The greatest places being most populous have

have most need of Preachers, many souls being more precious than few, and the publick Teachers that have many thousands, needing more help than they that have but little charges.

4. Few Ministers are rich enough to be able to sell their houses and goods at loss (when perhaps none will take them,) and to take houses in other Countries.

5. A great part of the Land is seated so neer Corporations, that it is hard to find a place that is above five miles off them; And some Ministers have Preached about in so many places, that it is hard to find a place within their reach, above five miles from the places which they have preached in: And in such places, it is rare to find empty houses, and Landlords that will let them on terms which they are capable of: so hard to them is this confinement.

6. They think that men can no more disoblige them from preaching to many in Cities and Corporations, than to four or five in Villages; seeing the Churches of old were planted most in Cities, and Christ saith not, [forsake all the souls in Cities if they bid you,] but [*When you are persecuted in one City fly to another.*]

7. Though we live not to eat, we must eat to live; and when Ministers that have nothing, are like to beg or famish among strangers in poor Villages, and bigger places do more call for help, and will allow them bread, they think it no sin to eat bread any more than to give bread to others that are in want.

8. The former Laws send them when they are in beggery, to be kept by the Parishes where they last lived; and this Law forbids them to come within five miles of them.

SECT.

SECT. XVI.

*The Adjuncts and other Matters agreed on,
which affright the Nonconformists.*

I. **A**S there are some sins far greater, and more terrible to conscience than others, so aggravating Adjuncts oft make them such: And these here seem very frightful. We are not now charging any others with sin, nor proving the unlawfulness of what we fear, but expressing the Matter of Fact agreed on, which doth affright us.

I. Both sides agree, that it is a great aggravation of sin to be done by a *Minister of Christ*, a person consecrated to holy work, to preach truth and holiness, and serve at the Altar: For our Doctrine will be the less regarded, and men will be tempted to follow our bad example, who are bound to be to them patterns of purity and obedience to God: And Christian and Protestant Religion is most injured by *Ministers* sins.

II. It is agreed that our *Ministerial* sins, which we do as if they were part of our Office in the publick Assemblies, have a special aggravation differing from mens *secret personal* crimes.

III. It is agreed that Lying and Perjury are sins of so heinous a nature, as that they tend to overthrow humane trust and converse, and all Societies, and deprive Princes of part of the security due to them for their lives and Crowns: And that in a Preacher of the Gospel they are intollerable, tending to tempt the hearers to believe nothing that we say.

IV. It

IV. It is agreed that by assertion to absolve thousands of persons known or unknown, and justify them, if they should prove guilty of such a crime, and so to draw on our selves the guilt of many thousand perjuries, would be a sin of as heinous a nature as most we can imagine.

V. It is agreed by Protestants, that all Oaths, Covenants and Laws, must be understood according to the plain and usual sense of the words, unless our Rulers otherwise expound them, and tell us that they mean somewhat else.

VI. It is agreed that though Judges must determine of the sense of Laws, so far as to decide the cases that are brought to them; yet none can make an universal obligatory exposition of a Law, to bind the subjects conscience in understanding it but the Sovereign and Lawgivers themselves: Else a Judge might become a Legislator and frustrate the Kings Laws by his expositions. If Judgements be the expositors and preservers of *Common unwritten Laws* which are *Customs*, it is because it is the *Law-makers* or *Sovereigns* will that it shall be so.

VII. It is agreed by all Protestants that stretching the words of Laws, Oaths and Promises to meanings quite differing from the Common use of the words, without the direction of the Law-makers to to do, and taking such Oaths or Covenants with *equivocations* and *mental reservations* on pretence of *Charitable interpretation*, for our own ends and interests, is more suitable to Atheists than sincere Christians, and would overthrow humane trust, and the end of Laws and Princes safety, as well as other sorts of perjury. For instance, if one take the subscribed

Decla-

Declarations that [*Its unlawful on any pretence whatsoever to take Arms against the King and so on*] and will thus equivocate; as they say some do; viz. [*It is unlawful*] that is, against the Law of the Land but not against Gods Law; [*To take Arms against the King*] that is, as King; but saith Suarez, and such others, when he is excommunicate by the Pope he is no King; [*On any pretence*] that is, say they, [*unjust pretence*] [*by his authority against his person, and Souldiers*] that is, say the equivocaters, [*Its well said that we may not do it by his Authority, but we may do it by the Law of nature and so by Gods Authority whose Law that is; [against any Commissioned by him]*] that is, say they, lawfully commissioned, and we are judges when his Commissions are unlawful: So [*We will not endeavour any alteration of Government in Church or State*] that is, say they, 1. Not of Monarchy, or the King, but we may yet disturb any of his Officers: 2. Not of the Essentials of Episcopacy; but we may seek to take down their wealth and Lordships, and reduce them from Diocesans to Parochial or Corporation Bishops: 3. Not by unlawful means; but we take not that to be unlawful which they do. What good will Oaths or Covenants taken with such Latitude or Equivocation do? Do they secure any of the ends of Governments? Rulers should abhor such Equivocations and stretching Latitudes as these.

VIII. It is agreed on both sides, that if we might go on this supposition, that our Rulers can require nothing that is *unjust or impious, or against the Law or Common good, or their own interest*, and therefore that no *exposition is to be put on their*

Laws

Laws or Impositions which is of any such importance, by this rule any oath or Covenant or promise in the world, which Governours shall impose upon us, may be taken : For we must put a good sense upon them all : And the sense is the Oath or Covenant.

IX It is commonly agreed that a man may not deliberately tell one lie to save his life, or his Ministerial liberty : And that if any one only of all the things imposed on us be a sin, it is the duty of all the Ministers of England rather to suffer any thing, or to dye than to Commit it. And that if it be one mans duty to be silent in such a case, it would be the duty of all the Ministers in the Land, if the things be sin.

X: And all are agreed, that to silence all the Ministers of the Nation, is a thing that God hath not given any man authority to do, because of the necessity of their Ministry ; and consequently not to silence any necessary Ministry at all.

XI. It is agreed that Satan would fain corrupt States and Churches with the most heinous sins, to expose them to Gods judgements and the enemies scorn : And that common Perjury or Perfidiousness is one of those greatest sins : And that as the Belief of the Truth is the beginning of Christianity, so Satan is a Lye and the father of Lies : And he that thinketh that Satan is endeavouring to stigmatize Persons, Churches or Kingdomes with his brand of PER should the more carefully avoid the receiving of that mark.

XII. It is agreed that God hath within these fourteen years excercised very grievous Chastisements on Cities and Corporations, by such a Plague (on London and many Corporations) and such fires on London, Southwark and many Corpora-

porations) and such increase of Poverty, (though we have more liberty at Sea and Land for trade, than almost any Nation neer us) as that the like hath not been known in our forefathers daies: And that if this should be the Voice of Christ, as a reproof of our perfidiousness, and perjuries, saying (*except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish,*) it would leave the impenitent without all just excuse.

XIII. It is agreed by us all, that God will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain; especially by perjury or false Vows or Covenants; And that for *Oaths* (broken) the Land may mourn: And that he is the grand enemy of Church or Kingdomes, who would by such sin bring them under the judgments of God: And, as *Achan*, bring in an accursed thing.

XIV. None can deny that it is better to cherish *honesty and conscience*, especially about *Oaths and Covenants* which secure Converse and the lives of Princes, than to teach men to *stretch Conscience* in such matters; and to make every *seared Conscience* capable of the *holy Ministry*, *preferment and honour*; and a *fear of such sin*, to be the way to silence and ruine.

XV. we agree that when Jesuites and other Papists have contracted the shame of equivocation and perfidiousness, Protestants should not partake with them, and take the shame on their religion,

XVI. It is agreed that when the *Scots Covenant* is so greatly decryed, and the *violation* of the *Oaths of Allegiance* and other *Oaths and Covenants* was found necessary to the killing of the King, and other late confusions and iniquities, we should not after such warning either

either inſnare men in unneceſſary Oaths & Covenants, nor harden ſuch men againſt Repentance, by doing any ſuch thing our ſelves, much leſs by commanding it.

XVII. We are agreed that to commit a ſin by paſſion or ſudden ſurprize, is not ſo wicked as to do it on deliberation: Nor is the doing it only ſo bad, as undertaking to juſtify it, and encourage others to do the like.

XVIII. We are agreed that God is jealous about holy things, and that wilful corrupting his Church, worſhip or diſcipline, to the diſgrace of religion and encouragement of wickedneſs is a heinous ſin: Eſpecially to Approve ſuch things.

XIX. We are agreed that to make a deliberate Covenant that I will ſin againſt God, and to ſubſcribe and declare this, is a heinous aggravation of the ſin: *e. g.* When the high places were kept up in *Judea* if any had Covenanted to keep them up, and *purpoſed* to tranſgreſs, the wilfulneſs had been the greatneſs and dangerous ſignification of ſuch ſinning.

XX. We are agreed that *Repentance* is Gods condition of forgivenesſ; and that for a man to *reſolve and Covenant to ſin* and to *profesſ it openly* to all the Church, and that *oft times*, and ſo to *renounce Repentance*, is---alas---

XXI. Moſt ſober Chriſtians are agreed that Chriſtians ſhould be united upon the terms which Chriſt himſelf hath made in the baptiſmal Covenant, and in their obedience to his Laws; and that Papall Uſurpations and impoſing of things unneceſſary as neceſſary to Union, Communion or Miniſtration, hath been the great cauſe of Schiſms through the Chriſtian world;