

Presbyters, with his Treatise of the Keys, where he will tell you, that it was the Bishops Office to be the ordinary Preacher, to Pray, to celebrate the Eucharist, to visit the Sick, to keep and distribute the alms and offerings of the Church, as Curators for the Poor, with much more work. And that every single Congregation had such a Bishop, that ever met to celebrate Gods publick Worship; and that there was not a meeting of a Christian Church without such (for the said Worship in Scripture-times) for he saith that there is no proof that there were any other Presbyters in Scripture-times.

And for *Discipline*, it is past doubt: 1. That as to the matter of it, it must consist of a personal watch over each member of the flock; that every one in it that liveth in gross sin, or Infidel, or Heathenish, or Heretical error and ignorance, be orderly admonished, first more privately, afterward more openly, and lastly most publickly; and that he be by convincing reasons and exhortations perswaded to repentance. That the penitent must be comforted and confirmed, the obstinately impenitent rejected, as unmeet for the Communion of the Church. And for the manner, it is agreed that it must be done with condescending tenderness, patience, plain evidence, earnest exhortations, no means left untried to reduce a sinful miserable soul. And all this with the time and patience which so great a work requireth. (And sure if the Congregation must avoid the sinner, they should know why.) One such person will hold the Pastor work from first to last many an hour and day.

Next, let us think how many such as by Christs Law must be thus dealt with, are in a Diocess. I had the most reformed people (as to sins of commission and omission) that ever I knew in *England*. Our custom being to have each family come by turns to us to be personally Catechised and instructed. I had full opportunity to know them all. Many score of them that came daily to Church, knew not the Essentials of Christianity and Baptism. When I came first to them, I suppose some thousands lived in gross ignorance, open impiety and prophaneness. And even at last some scores I fear lived in gross sin. Some were notorious drunkards, raging weekly twice or thrice in the open streets. Some quieter drunkards. Many profane Swearers. Too many railers, fighters, slanderers, &c. Three or four Apostate-Infidels. The Parishes about me were far worse. A great part of
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the people know not who Christ is, nor what he doth, as the Saviour of the world, nor understand one of many Articles of the Creed, or Petitions of the Lords Prayer; much less do any thing like Christians for Children or Servants in their Families.

The Diocess that I now live in, hath above 1000 Parishes, some have half as many; some Parishes have 3000, some 10000 People. in *London* some 20000, 30000, and the Country smaller Parishes usually about 400, 500, or 1000. I do warrantably conjecture that in the Diocess where I now live, there may be about 50000 souls that by Christs Law should be admonished and disciplined for their sin. And about 80000, or 100000 that are grossly ignorant of Christianity. It's ten to one (experience tells it me) that five Conventions will scarce serve with each obstinate sinner, to bring the work to the issue of a due Excommunication or Absolution. Some parts of the Diocess that I am in, are about 120 miles from other parts. The Diocesan then that doth all this himself, (but there is no such) if he sit half the year, must either speak to 10000, or 20000 persons at once, or in a few minutes, or else he must let all the rest lye and rot in their sins, till he hath done with the first. And indeed (I have tried it) a sober Pastoral course of conviction and discipline with each one, will take up so much time, that seven years are not enough for him to go over all this Diocess if he did as much in a month as ever I knew a Bishop do in his life, except against Godly Nonconformists, or Conscientious Dissenters.

But if you consider how far every accusing Minister and Churchwarden, and every accused sinner, have to travel, some 20, some 40 miles, &c.) and that Witnesses also must travel as far; and how long they must attend, and how few can bear the charge of this; and that the old and weak sort of sinners are unable for the journey, and who shall do the Parish Ministers work the while; and how likely it is that of 10000 such sinners, 5000 may be dead, or the Witnesses at least, before the rest are tried and well dispatched; or the case grown old, and the same man drunken twenty times again, before he can be judged for the first. And also how strange a court this is to humble, convince, and save a soul——wonderful!——that it should with any man living be a controversy, Whether one

one Bishop be sufficient for all this? And what need we more than common experience? The work is every where undone. Lay the blame where you will, not one common gross sinner of a thousand is disciplin'd or judged as in question. That which can be done, and should be done, some one good Bishop will do. But none that ever I knew did ever see the face, and speak to one of a thousand gross sinners of his Diocese, (unless perhaps as he preached to one or few Congregations) nor do I know any that take it for their work, (if they could do it), but leave it to the Lay-Chancellor as his part.

If you say that Excommunication must not be on many: I answer,

1. The Bishops trying and conviction of gross sinners is first for their Repentance, and not their Excommunication, except in case of the last obstinacy, which cannot be foreknown till tried.

2. If Christ would not have such Discipline at all, there needs no Bishop to do it. If he would, when twenty drunkards, fornicators, &c. are notoriously guilty, is it his will that one of these only be admonished, convinced, excommunicated, and all the rest let alone that are equally guilty? Sure the Law of God doth not so distinguish, but say of all alike, *If any called a brother be a fornicator, &c.* And will such partiality either reform men, or honour Religion, or rather make it a scorn, and make him that is singled out, hate the partial Prosecutor.

If you say it's long of Churchwardens that accuse not men: I answer,

1. And it will be so, while the thing is unfeasable; who will be hated to do no good?

2. Some Churchwardens of late to some Articles have presented all the Parish without exception. And so no man heard of it any more.

II. And whether the Bishop may delegate his Office, or do his work *per alios*, would be no controversie if Scripture were our Rule, or it were known what a Pastors office is. If he may delegate it, either to a Layman in *sensu composito*, or to a Clergy man: If to a Layman, than a Layman and a Clergy man are all one. For there is nothing but the work to define the authority and obligation by, which constituteth the Office. A Bishop is one authorized and obliged to do the work of a Bishop, and

and so is a Layman too by this supposition. If to a Clergyman, either to one of the same order and office with the Bishop, or of another. If of the same (before or now made so) *datur quassum*, then he is not the sole Bishop. If of another *in sensu composito*, then another Clergy man is not another; For he that is Authorized to the same work, is of the same Office.

If you say that he may not delegate the whole work, *de specie*, but a part; I ask which part? either the Essential part, or but an Integral common part. If the former? 1. Either to such as God in Scripture by office authorizeth to that part, or not. If the former, then the Bishop cometh too late to that which God hath done already. And then that is no proper work of Bishops which God hath made common to another Office. If the later, than a man may make new Priestly Offices and Orders, even to the same work that God hath made Officers to do already. And then we need not say, [that Orders are *Jure Divino*] if the Bishop may make more at his pleasure; but *quo jure*; and what shall set his bounds and end? This seemeth more (in kind) than the *Italians* at *Trent* would have given to the Pope over Bishops. And if they do not themselves also that same Essential part of their Office which they give to others, they degrade themselves. For the ceasing or alienation of an Essential part, changeth the *species*.

But I suppose you will say it is Presbyters to whom they may delegate this work. And if so, either it is a work which God hath made part of the Presbyters Office, or not. If it be, then that Presbyter doth his own work appointed him by God, and not another mans. If not, then he maketh a new Officer, who is neither Bishop nor Presbyter.

But the Nature of the Office sheweth, that it may not be delegated (though a Bishop may Ordain men to an Office of Gods making, and the King or Church may make new Officers *circa sacra*, as Church-Wardens, Clock keepers, Ostiaries, &c.); for it is [an Authority, and obligation to personal duty, to be done by personal ability] as is the Office of a Physician, a Judge, a School-Master, a Pilot, &c. where he that Authorizeth and obligeth another stately to do his work, doth thereby make that other a Physician, Judge, School-Master, Pilot, &c. This is but Ordination.

And if a Bishop be but one that may appoint others to do
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the Episcopal work, then 1. Why is not every King a Bishop, for he may appoint men to do a Bishops work? And why is he not also a Physician, Musician, Pilot, &c. because he may do the like by them? 2. And then the Bishop appointed by the King, is no more a Bishop indeed than one appointed by a Bishop is.

But this delegation that I speak against, is a smaller sin than such men choose. To depute others to exercise Discipline, whom God appointed not *de specie* thereto, is but Sacriledg and Usurpation, (by alienating it from the true office, and setting up a false one): But yet the thing might some how be done, if any were to do it. But the almost total deposition and destruction of the Discipline it self, and letting none do it, by pretending the sole authority of doing it, is another kind of sin.

Now to your answer from the similitude of Civil Monarchs, I reply, It is no wonder if we never agree about Church-offices, if we no better agree of the general nature of them, and their work. Of which if you will please to read a sheet or two which I wrote the last year to *Ludov. Molinaus*, of the difference of Magistracy, and Church-power, and also read the Lord *Bacons* Considerations, you will excuse me for here passing by what is there said.

I. The standing of the Magistrates Office is by the Law of Nature, which therefore alloweth variety and mutations of inferior Orders, as there is cause. But the standing of the Clergy is by Supernatural Institution. Our Book of Ordination saith there are three Orders, &c. Therefore man may not alter them, or make more of that same kind.

II. Kingly power requireth not *ad dispositionem materiae*, such Personal ability as the Pastoral-office doth. A child may be a King, and it may serve turn if he be but the head of power, and give others commission to do all the rest of the Governing work. But it is not so with a Judge, a Physician, an Orator, or a Bishop; who is not *subiectum capax* of the essence of the office, without personal aptitude.

III. God hath described the Bishops office in Scripture as consisting of three parts; *viz.* Teaching, Priestly, (or about Worship and Sacraments) and ruling; as under Christs Prophetical, Priestly and Kingly Office. And he hath no where made one

more proper to a Bishop than another; nor said this is Essential, and that is but Integral. Therefore the Bishop may as well allow a Layman to administer the Sacraments, &c. as one not appointed to it by God, to Rule by the Keys.

IV. The Bishops Pastoral Rule is only by Gods word upon the Conscience (as Bishop *Bilson* of *Obed.* sheweth at large, and all Protestants agree), and not by any mulcts or corporal force. If he use the sword, or constraint, it is not as a Bishop, but as a Magistrate. But the Kings is by the sword. And will it follow that because the King may appoint another to apprehend men, and carry them to prison, &c. that therefore a Bishop appointed by God to Preach, Worship and Rule, and therein to draw the Impenitent to Repentance by patient exhortations, and reproofs, &c. may commit this to another, never appointed to it of God?

V. Either it is the Bishops work (as was said) that is delegated by him, or some other. If properly his own, than either he maketh more Bishops, (and that's all we plead for), or else a Presbyter or Layman may do a Bishops proper work. And then what need of a Bishop (to pass by the contradiction.)

VI. But my chief answer to you is, the King as Supreme Magistrate doth appoint and rule by others that are truly Magistrates: They have every one a Judicial power in their several places under him, even every Justice of Peace. But you suppose the Bishop to set up no Bishops, nor no Church-Governours under him at all. A King can rule a Kingdom by Supremo Judgment, when he hath hundreds of Judges under him who do it by his authority. And if this had been all our dispute, whether a Patriarch or Archbishop can rule a thousand Churches by a thousand Inferior Bishops, or Church-rulers, you had said something? But doth it follow that your Church Monarch can over-see them all himself without any sub-overseers, or rule them (by Gods word on the Conscience) without any sub-rulers? You appropriate the Decretory Power to your Monarch; and communicate only the executive. Hold to that. The whole Government is but *Legislatio & Judicium*; Legislation now we meddle not with, (yet our Bishops allow it to the Presbyters in Convocation, for they take Canons to be Church-Laws.) It is a lower power that is denied to them, that they grant the higher

to. Bare execution is no Government. A Hangman is no Governour. A Governour may also be Executioner, but a meer Executioner is no Governour. The People are Executioners of Excommunications, while they withdraw from the Excommunicate; and with such do not eat, &c. as 1 Cor. 5. And the Parish-Priest is an Executioner, while he (as a Cryer) proclaimeth or readeth the Chancellors Excommunication in the Church, and when he denieth the Sacrament to those that he is bid deny it to. I grant you that this is Communicated. But it is the Judicial power it self which I have been proving the Bishop incapable of. Exploration is part of the Judicial work. I know you include not that in execution (which follows it.) If you did, it would be a sad office for a Bishop to sentence all men, upon other mens trial and word. As if the Bishop must Excommunicate all that some body else saith he must Excommunicate. This turneth Decreeing into a Hangman-like Execution.

And the nature of the cause forbiddeth it. No man is to be Excommunicate for any other crime as such, but for Impenitence in some crime; nor to be absolved after, but upon Repentance. Now if it were, but whether a man *de facto* have been drunk, or fornicated, or perjured, &c. it were hard judging sentimentally meerly on trust from others; but yet perhaps that might sometimes be done: But when the case is, Whether the man be penitent, Personal trial is necessary to a Rational and Ecclesiastical administration of the sentence. I conclude therefore, that as a King can judg by many hundred Judges, and a General command an Army by many hundred Commanders, but not without any one by himself alone, having Executioners under him. So is it here.

VII. And I pray you note one other difference: In the Kingdom it is not one subject of an hundred, or many hundreds, that hath Law suits with others once in a year, or seven years, or his life. Nor one of some hundreds (where I have lived) that findeth the Magistrate work as Criminal. And in this we differ even from the Physician, who in a City hath not one of many that is sick, but we are all of a sinning corrupt disposition, and the Pastor hath few of his flock that need not some personal applications in one degree or other. And even as to gross sins lived in, and ignorance or heresie against the very essence of Christianity, it is a good Parish where a *considerable* part of it are not

guilty; so that it is easier for one Justice of Peace to send two or three thieves in a year to a Gaol, and bind two or three to the good behaviour, than for one Bishop to admonish, exhort, convince and judg 10000 impenitent sinners in a little time, and hear all the Witnesses, &c.

If you should have said, that the Parish Priest is to reprove, exhort, convince them first, till he prove them impenitent, and he is to instruct the ignorant, Infidels and Hereticks: I answer, 1. That is more than an executive power. 2. We desire no more at all from Bishops or any, and know no other Episcopal power over the people, but thus *personally to convince men, and declare to the Congregation upon proof, the fitness or unfitness of men for their Communion, by penitence or impenitence.* But this is it that the Ministers are hindered from, or denied. They have no power to speak with any one ignorant, Heretical, Infidel, or scandalous sinner in the Parish, but such as are willing. And few of the guilty are willing. They will neither come to the Minister, nor suffer him to come to them, but shut their doors on him if they know that he cometh on such a work, or else they will not be within. Or if they be, will tell him, that they will not answer him. When I came first to *Kedderminster*, the rabble multitude curst me in the streets, and rose up against me, but for saying, That Infants Originally have that sin and misery which needs a Saviour; yet such (if they scorn to speak with us) must be our Communicants for want of Pastoral power. There is no Law or penalty that I ever knew of, to constrain any to come to us, receive us, hear us, or answer us, if we had never so much cause to question them of, or fortifie them against infidelity, heresie, ignorance, or wicked lives. And if any other accuse them to us (as few will) we must not judg them without trial.

It may be you will say, Would you have them constrained by force to speak with the Pastor, or give him any account of their faith, life, or knowledg, besides coming with others into the Church? I answer, No, we would have no force, as we have none. But then we would not be forced our selves by the Church-Lords and Monarchs to take our selves for the Pastors of such as refuse our Pastoral office, and to give the Sacrament, and all priviledges of Church-Communion, to every one in the Parish, who upon just suspicion of gross scandal, heresie, infide-

lity or ignorance, obstinately refuseth to speak to us, and give us any account, or to be tried. I that have yearly tried my Parish by Personal Conference, know that thousands and thousands among us know not (and therefore believe not) whether Christ be God or man, or Angel, or what; nor who the Holy Ghost is, or why Christ died, rose; nor scarce any supernaturally revealed article of the Christian faith. And that many that understand them, believe them not. And I desire no Church-power, but not to take those, 1. For Christians; 2. And for my especial Christian flock, 1. Who are no Christians; 2. Who themselves refuse it. Without their consent the Minister is forced on them. They are forced by the sword to say that they are Christians, and to come to Church and Communicate. The old Christian Profession was, *I will be a Christian, and hold Communion with the Church, though I go to prison or death for it.* The Prelatical Christian Profession is, *I will rather be a Christian and Communicate, than I will lye in Gaol, and have all my Estate confiscate.* Seeing then that we have not the due power of a Pastor to deny our Office-administrations in Sacraments to those that refuse us in the other parts aforesaid, we are utterly disabled from so much as preparing men for the Bishops, or Chancellors Examination.

3. But if it were otherwise, that must not satisfie the Church-Monarch, who must judg himself, and therefore must hear by himself.

But you tell me, *It is plainly against experience in Ecclesiasticks.*

Ans. It's hard then to know any thing. For I dispute all this while, as if the question were, Whether men in *England* speak *English*. And if I herein err, I am uncurable, and therefore I allow you to despair of me. You say, *The greatness of no City was thought sufficient to multiply Bishops.*

Ans. 1. Gods Institution was, that every Church have a Bishop, *Act. 14. 23, &c.*

2. A particular Church then was, *A Society of Neighbour-Christians, combined for Personal Communion in Gods Worship, and holy living, consisting of Pastor and flock.*

3. For 250 years I think, you cannot prove that any one Bishop in the world, save at *Alexandria* and *Rome*, had more such Congregations and Altars than one; nor these for a long time after the Apostles; nor in many Churches of one hundred years longer.

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4. At *Antioch* (the third Patriarchate) *Ignatius* professeth that every Church had one Altar, and one Bishop with his Presbyters and Deacons, fellow-servants. And that in this one Church the Bishop must enquire of all by name, even Servant-men and Maids, and see that they absented not themselves from the Church. Why is not *Ignatius* confuted if he erred? Vid. *Mede* on the Point.

5. *Alexandria* and *Rome* by not multiplying Bishops as Churches or Converts needed it, began the grand sin and calamity which hath undone us, and therefore are not to be our Pattern. *Orbis major est urbe.*

6. Were Bishops necessarily to be distributed by Cities, the Empires that have few, or no Cities, must have few, or no Bishops; and an Emperor might, *aliud agendo*, depose all the Bishops by disfranchizing the Cities.

7. But every Corporation, *oppidum*, like our Market-Towns, was then truly *polis*: And if you will but procure every such City with us, to have a Bishop, and the Office of such Bishops to be to drive men from sin, and not to it, and to silence Blasphemers, and not faithful Preachers of the Gospel, all our controversies of Prelacy are then at an end.

8. And you must remember, that great Cities had long but few Christians, in comparison of the Heathens (till *Constantine's* time, and mostly long after). And when *Patrick* with his own hand Ordained Three Hundred and Fifty Bishops in your *Ireland*, they were but *Ecclesiarum fundatores*, and with them he founded but *septingentas Ecclesias*, and Ordained *Five Thousand Clerks*, if *Joceline* be true, *Vit. Patric. cap. 185.* and not rather the far more credible report of *Antonin. in Chron. tit. 11. cap. 18. §. 2.* and *Vincent. specul. histor. lib. 20. cap. 23.* who say, that *Ecclesias fundavit 365. ordinavit Episcopos eodem numero 365. et eo amplius in quibus Spiritus Dei erat. Presbyteros autem usq; ad 3000. ordinavit.* As *Usher* citeth them, *de primord. Eccl. Br. p. 957.* which is *Ninius* number there. So that here is no more Churches than Bishops, and about Nine Presbyters to a Bishop.

You tell me of above One thousand Clergy-men at *Rome*, in *Cornelius's* time.

Ans. 1. This was above Two hundred and Fifty years after Christ's Birth. *2.* I never took all the impotent persons, poor,

poor, and Widows in the Church, to be Clergy-men, and Clergy-women. *Cornelius* his account is, that there are Six and Forty Presbyters, Seven Deacons, Seven Sub-Deacons, Two and Forty Acolytes, Two and Fifty Exorcists, and Readers, with Porters, Widows, and impotent persons, above One thousand and Fifty souls, considering, 1. How their Meetings were then obscure, and small, in Houses (as the tolerated Churches in London). And in so vast a City, in how many distant places. Besides the sub-urbicarian Assemblies. 4. And how many Presbyters used still to be with the Bishop in the same Assembly? 5. And that here are in all but Seven Deacons. 6. And that many then were Presbyters that used not to Preach, but for privater oversight, and as the Bishops Assessors. 7. And that the poorer sort most commonly received the Gospel. 8. And that none of these, but the Six and Forty Presbyters, had any power in the Discipline. 9. And that by all this reckoning, the whole Church maintained not, besides the Officers, near a thousand poor; we may probably conjecture, that the whole Church of that Bishop was not bigger than some one London-Parish (*Stepney, Giles, Cripplegate, Martins, &c.*) where are about Fifty thousand souls. 10. And when none were Christians but persecuted Volunteers, they were the holiest, and best of men; and I have tryed, that Six hundred such make less work for Discipline, than Ten of the Rabble that are driven into our Churches, and choose them rather than the Goal.

But when all's done, Two Cities under the power of great temptation, are not to be our Rule against Gods Word, and the state of all other Churches in the world, and undeniable experience.

It's true that you say, that to erect another Altar was counted Schism; that is, *Altare contra altare*; because when the Phrase came up, no Church had more than one Altar:

Your Instances intimated of *Antioch* and *Carthage*, I believe not; and can give you (had I liberty) a Volume of proof from Antiquity, that for Two hundred and Fifty years, if not much longer, *Ignatius's* Rule was true, that every Church had one Altar, and one Bishop, at least, except the two aforesaid.

Ulphilas was but an *Arrian* Bishop; of a few *Goths* newly turned *Arrians*, and the first that translated the Scriptures into the

the *Gothick* Tongue; so that no Churches among them had the Scripture, till after his translating; and these few were presently persecuted to the death by *Athanasius* (*ut Socrat. lib. 4. cap. 32.*) You may call these few, a Kingdom, if you please.

How few of the *Indians* were converted when *Frumentius* (not *Adesius*, as you say) was made their Bishop, it's easie to gather by the History.

Scythia and *Persia* used to have each a Bishop, and he lived in the *Roman* Empire, as near them as he durst, as not being tolerated usually in their Land. And as few, it's like, *Moses* had among the *Arabians*; there being no mention in the History of any thing to perswade us, that he had many Churches under him, that I remember. And the work of these Bishops was to ordain Presbyters, who had the power of the Keys, & *excepta Ordinatione*, did all that Bishops did, as *Hierome* saith. So that then a Diocess had not one sole Church-Governour; and therefore where you gather that yet Discipline was not dissolved: I answer:

1. In all this you leave out a matter of chief consideration: viz. That all the Presbyters then were assistants in Discipline, and had a true Church-Government over the people, which now they have not.

2. It's strange that we that have eyes and ears must be sent to the *Indians* and ancient History, to know whether one Bishop can hear, and try, and admonish so many thousands at once, as we see by experience are those Objects of Discipline which the Scripture describeth, and when we see that it is not done.

And after all this, we have talk't but of a Phantasm; for it is not one Bishop, but one Lay man, a Chancellor, that useth this Decretory power of the Keys, over all these souls, so far as they are used, as to the ordinary Court-tryals and exercise; and the Bishop rarely medleth with it.

Again, Nonconformists doubt not to prove, that the Diocessan frame, which they dare not swear to, 1. Doth depose the *species* of Churches of Gods Institution. 2. And the Discipline itself almost totally. 3. And the *species* of Presbyters. 4. And the old *species* of Bishops. And instead of each of these, setteth up a new *species* of man's invention, wholly different, and inconsistent.

And

And that they are not willing to Swear, Subscribe, or deliberately and solemnly enter into a Church Covenant, That in their Places and Callings they will never endeavour any alteration of this, no not by a request or word, you may less wonder than if some were then loath to Swear or Covenant never to endeavour to take down the Priests of *Dan* and *Bethel*, or reform the high places. It's dangerous making a solemn Ministerial Covenant, *Never to obey God in any one great matter, and never to repent of so doing.*

Again, our Reasons at the *Savoy* were, 1. About another matter: 2. Few of them received, or ever published to the world. And all that I have said to you is very little of our Cause; which I will not touch, unless I might prosecute it.

Your information about Bishop *Sanderson*, and the word, *Use of all things, &c.* is as the rest, to conquer our sense and experience. 1. The words in the *Act* are most plain, and Bishop *Sanderson de Jure*, concludeth, That Oaths (and Covenants) must be taken in the plain and proper sense. 2. It is notorious, that after the Lords in a *Proviso* of another *Act*, would have so expounded the *Act* of Uniformity, (that it is meant but of *consent to use, &c.*) and the Commons rejected it as intolerable, and upon a meeting of both Houses satisfied the Lords by their Reasons, who acquiesced in the rejection of that Exposition. And shall we still stretch our sense against the plain words, when the Parliament long after hath rejected such an Exposition?

Sir, it is much more (especially about Separation) which your lines invite me to say, and the cause requireth; but I fear I have wronged you by prolixity already; and much more by my freedom of speech, which is from my inclination to speak of things as they are, and is truly joined with a very great respect and honour of your self, commanded by your excellent Book, and judicious peaceable stile and temper. I rest,

Your unworthy Fellow-servant,

Jan. 5. 1672.

(worthy to be Silenced),

RI. BAXTER.

The short Answer to Mr. Dodwell's long Letter, fully answered in my Treatise of *Episcopacy*.

For the Worthy and much Honoured Mr. Henry Dodwell,
at Trinity Colledg near Dublin in Ireland.

Worthy Sir,

I Thankfully received yours of 28 Pages, from the hand of Mr. Teate. That I may not be again guilty of such hastiness in writing as you take notice of, I premise this to acquaint you, That your warning, with my backwardness to such work, and the multitude of Employments in which I am pre-engaged, shall keep me a while from that error, and you from the trouble. And if I take not your concluding counsel to avoid both timidity and partiality in this Cause, I shall notoriously contradict mine own interest. I have studied the point as diligently as I could, almost thirty years longer than you have lived in the world, (if the bearer of yours give me a true account of your age.) And yet I truly think it very possible that one of such admirable parts and diligence as your self, (evident in your great reading and accurate stile) may know much more in half that time. But if I can know my own thoughts, I have studied with a desire whatever it cost me, to know the truth. I dare not say, (*Impartially*) altogether. For I have flesh and blood, and who can choose but have a *little partiality* for that way which all his worldly interest pleadeth for? Could I have proved Conformity lawful (not to have contained a Covenant against the Church-form, Church-offices, and Church-discipline of Christs Institutions, and for upholding that Church Usurpation and Tyranny which began and still continueth the Divisions of the Christian World; nor the deliberate *Ministerial* owning of the Perjury of many thousands, &c.) I need not have undergone the common scorn and hatred that I have born, nor to have been deprived of all *Ministerial* maintenance, and silenced for eleven years of that part of my life, which should have been most serviceable (to add no more); my Reputation with those on the other extreme, I did

did voluntarily cast away, by opposing them (when I could as easily have kept it as most I know) lest it should be any snare or tempting interest to me. I assure you, That I have not wanted bread, is a thing that I owe no thanks to any party for, either Prelatists, Presbyterians or Independents, &c. I confess I have read what the Antiprelatists say, such as Beza, Gerson, Bucer, Didoclay, Parker, Bains, Jacob, Blondel, Salmasius, &c. But I have more diligently studied, since I was twenty years of age, the chiefest on the other side, Saravia, Bilson, Downham, Hooker, Burges, Covell, Bridg, Bancroft, Whitgift, Spalatensis, and since Petavius, Hammond, and multitudes more. And I have now, as you desired, read over all yours, that I might see the end, before I past my judgment on the beginning. But our apprehensions are various, as our preconceptions are; I find that we are all forestalled, and readiest to learn of our selves, who are not always the happiest Teachers of our selves. What we have first laid in, is usually made the standard of all that followeth; and all must be reduced into a due Conformity and subserviency to our former sentiments. You have shewed great learning, ingenuity and piety, and in a very fluent stile expressed what was in your mind; and made me remember what one answereth him that said, Hooker was yet unanswered, viz. Reduce what you would have answered, to Argument, and it will soon be done. I find, that it had been much better to have said nothing, than to have begun in such a manner of dispute, in which the further we go, the less we understand one another, and make each other molestation, instead of edification: For plainly I find, that (though much may be learned out of so rare a discourse as you have vouchsafed me, yet) it doth very little at all to any dispatch of our present controversie, but might easily deceive me by avocation, if I would forget what it is that I dispute about: For I perceive, 1. That we agree not in our sense of the terms which we make use of: And from thence you infer some great and dangerous errors in my judgment. 2. We agree least of all in common and obvious matters of fact, which are before our eyes, and the things of which I have had almost an Ages experience. 3. I find, that a very great part, if not the far greatest of all your discourse, is written upon a mis-understanding of my Words and judgment. And if one were to publish such kind of Writings, how tiresome would it be to the Reader, should I set down

This was
written
long ago.

a particular account of all your passages that are besides the question, and all that proceed from such misunderstanding ? I speak not by way of blaming you ; for we are not competent Judges of other mens actions, till we know the Reasons of them : that may be laudable, which crosseth our desires. Perhaps you had Reasons to pass by the chief part of my explications of my sense, and of the matter of fact, and say nothing to them : And perhaps you had Reasons when I had told you our Country-distribution of Acts of Government, into Legislative, and Judicial, and Executive, to make use still of the Equivocal word *Decretory*, and to understand by it (as you saw cause) only the Legislative power, and to leave out the *Judicial*, which was all that I controverted : It may be you had Reason, when I talk of a single, or Parochial Church, to say, I supposed in it but a single Pastor : You are not accountable to me for such errors, be they never so causeless in my opinion. It may be you had Reason to write against the old Nonconformists that are in another world ; and to think, that for the Names sake it concerned us : and to plead, that Conformity to all the present Covenants, and Oaths, and Subscriptions, is necessary, because you could wish the Discipline more Regular, as if we were to Subscribe to what is in your wishes. It may be you had Reason to suppose the Parish-Priests to have the *Government of the People*, even the power of the *Church-Keys* (and yet sometimes to unsay it again), without answering my Proof to the contrary, when I take it for the chief supposition that causeth my Nonconformity : And to prove copiously, that a Bishop may govern a Diocese when he hath a Governor under him in every Parish, without answering my Proofs, that he hath no such under him, but hath, *quantum in se*, half degraded the Presbyters. And when I said, that Discipline is not possible under such Diocesans as are with us, you might have Reason that I know not of, to leave out, *as are with us*, and to prove it possible with other Diocesans that have governing Presbyters under them. Perhaps you had Reason to confound the *Convincing, Perswasive, Declarative Power of a Judge*, with that of a private man, and thence to raise the supposition which you raise. Perhaps you know some *Medium* between corporal force, and Mulcts, proper to the Magistrate, and Authoritative perswasion, and prevailing on the Conscience by the Reverence of Gods Laws, though I know none : And you were not bound

bound to teach me what you know. Perhaps you had Reason to think that I may Subscribe, That no man in Three Kingdoms that hath Vowed it, is bound to endeavour to alter our Church-Government by Lay-Chancellors, because you defend it not, but wish it altered: And it may be you have Reasons unknown to me, that none but Irregular endeavours are there disclaimed, and that our Lawgivers spake universally, and would be interpreted particularly, with many such like. But *abscondita & quæ supra nos, nihil ad nos* ——— What I may not pretend to understand, I will not presume to censure, but only say, That I am, incapable of being informed by them. This I am satisfied of, that my Schismatical Principles take into Church-Communion such as you, and those that are in knowledg below, not only you, but me, even the weakest true Christians. But upon your Catholick terms, no man of my *measure* of knowledg must be tolerated to be a Preacher, or a Christian in Church-Communion, nor live at least out of Goal, or some such penalty. And if one at *Muscovy* can get a Courtier to make him a Bishop, he and such other are the Church (which why you still put it in the feminine Gender when it consisteth of Masculine Court-Bishops, I know not.) And if he command us to do that which we account the most inhumane perjury, if he think it to be but the renunciation of an unlawful Oath, as I understand you, we are Schismaticks if we obey him not. Whether in cases of commanded blasphemy, and all other crimes, we must accordingly renounce our understandings, I know not. Though there be somewhat of Irony in all this, there is nothing but what is consistent with the high estimation of your extraordinary worth. And I must say, that our different Educations, I doubt not, is a great cause of our different sentiments. Had I never been a Pastor, nor lived out of a Colledg, (and had met with such a taking Orator) I might have thought as you do. And had you conversed with as many Country-people as I have done, and such, I think you would have thought as I do. My great deceiver is Sense and Experience. I am inclined to look near me, in judging of present matters of fact: As if our Controversie were, Whether one Schoolmaster can govern a thousand Schools without any but Monitors under him, and Teachers that have no Government. And your way is from old Histories, to prove that some body did so 1400 years ago, or a thousand, in some places of the world, if stories deceive us not;

not; and therefore it may be so now. Though none of those excellent men do it, who are put into the places of the silenced Schismatical Ministers, nor none of the excellent Bishops that are over us, who are so good that one of them no doubt would do it, were it possible. But seriously I take it for a great mercy of God, that honest Christians of little learning have that *experience* in the *Practicals* of Religion, which the *studied* accurate plausible Oration of contradictors cannot overcome, though they are not so well skill'd at the same weapons as to answer them. Sir, pardon and accept this short and thankful acknowledgment, that I have received your Learned Treatise, till I take the leisure (if I so long live) to return you an answer suitable to your discourse and expectations. I rest,

Aug. 5. 1673.

Your Servant,

RICH. BAXTER.

Mr. *Dodwell* desiring me not to make haste in answering him, I sent him only this, intending more; but want of time, and the quality of the task, (being put but to answer a multitude of words) delayed it till he came to *London*, and then I thought we might talk it out, which we oft tried to little purpose. His great proof of large Churches, of many Altars, from the only two that swelled first, *Rome* and *Alexandria*, are so fully answered in this annexed Letter which worthy Mr. *Clerkson* wrote to me, that I think he needs no other answer; since published by me: As is a full discourse on the Subject, by Mr. *Clerkson* himself, against Dr. *Stillingfleet*.

A Copy of the Letter to Mr. *Dodwell*, March 12. 1681.

S I R,

Since your Speech with me, I have thought again of what you insisted on, and find it consist of these four Points: 1. Whether I charge you with Popery, or at least, do not vindicate you when so accused. 2. Your reasons against answering *Voetius* and me. 3. Your desire to know my terms of concord. 4. Your perswading me to give over Preaching. Left words
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