

VIII. Your doubt about *mens power to change Christs settled form of Church-government*, is but a consequent of your first, of *mens absolute power*.

But 1. if they change Gods Laws, or instituted Church-forms or Government, may they not change *their own*? And if so, there is some hope of a Reformation. But why then did the Canons of 1640. in the *Et cetera* Oath, swear the Clergy *never to consent to change*? And why are we now to swear in the Oxford Oath, That we will *never endeavour any alteration of Church-Government* (tho' the keys be in the power of Lay-Chancellors, and tho' the King may command us to endeavour it) must the Nation or Clergy swear never (in their own places) to endeavour any alteration of *the Bishops Institutions* (as you take e them), and yet may the Bishops alter the very *Form of Government*, and *Churches* made by our Universal King?

2. What an uncertain mutable thing may Christs Laws or Church-Government prove, while mutable men may change it at their pleasure.

3. To what purpose is *Antiquity and Tradition* so much pleaded by Hierarchical Divines, as if that were the Test to know the right Government and Church, if the Bishops may alter it?

4. If thus much of Christs Laws and Institutions may be altered by Prelates, how shall we be sure that all the rest is not also at their will and mercy? or which is it that they may alter, and which not?

5. Doth not this set man so far above God, or equal with him, as will still tempt men to think that more are Anti-christian than the Pope? If you say that it is by Gods own grant, I wait for your proof, that God granteth power to any man above his Laws: Those that he made but *Local or Temporary* himself, are not abrogated or changed by man where they bind not; for they never bound any but their proper subjects, e. g. The *Jewish* Laws, as such, never bound the Gentile world; and the command of washing feet, bound only those where the use of going bare-leg'd with Sandals in a hot Country,



try, made it an office of kindness ; and so of other Temporary precepts.

6. How contrary is this to the common Christian Doctrine, that we must obey none that command us to sin against God ? For by the first assertion, and this, it seemeth that it cannot be a sin which the Bishops command.

7. I pray you put in an exception for the Power and Lives of Kings, and the Laws of the Land, and the Property and Liberty of the Subjects ; and one word for the Protestant Religion. For we *English*-men think God to be greater than the King, or *St. Patrick* ; and Gods Laws to be firmer than the Statutes of King and Parliament. And yet I doubt that the King and some Parliament will be angry if you do but say that the Bishops by consent may change their *Statutes*, or lawful Officers and Powers ; And Bishops, if you say that Episcopacy may be changed.

IX. Baptism, as such, entereth not the Baptized into any particular Church, but only into the *Universal*, headed by Christ ; yet a man may at the same time be entered into the *Universal*, and into a *particular Church*, but that is by a double consent, and not by Baptism as such. In this I know none that agree with you but some few of the *Independents* in *New-England*, and some of the *Papists*. I confess *Bellarmino* saith, That by Baptism we are virtually obliged to the Pope, being baptized by a Ministry, and into a Church, of which he is the Head. But the contrary is proved,

1. From the express form of the Baptismal Covenant, which only tyeth us to Christ and his Universal Church, and maketh us Christians. But to be a Christian dedicated to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is one thing, and to be a part of the Pastoral Charge of *A. B.* or *N. N.* is another thing.

2. What particular Church was the Eunuch, *Act. 8.* baptized into ? Not that of *Jerusalem*, for he was going from it, never like to see it more. Not that in *Ethiopia*, for there was none till he began it. If you say, of *Philips Church* : 1. I pray you, where was that ? 2. And how prove you it ? 3. Specially if



if it was *Philip* the Deacon that had no Church, being no Bishop.

3. May not men be baptized in *Turkey*, or among other Infidels, or *Indians*, where there is no Church? And is the first baptized man among them, a Church himself? *Paul* thanketh God that he baptized no more of the *Corinthians*, lest they should think that he baptized into his own name. And doth every Baptizer baptize to himself, or to his Bishop? A man may baptize out of all Diocesses, or in another's.

X. As to your next Assertion, I grant, that when a Bishop or a beggar speaketh the Commands of God, and a King speaketh against it, we must follow that Bishop or beggar, rather than the King, because this is but obeying God before men. But supposing that it is a thing *indifferent*, and but *circa sacra*, and not a proper part of the *Agent Pastors Office*, I confess to you, I will obey the King before the Bishop.

1. Because it is a thing that is under the Power of the King to command; and if so, the King is the Supreme, and not the Bishop.

2. Bishops themselves are Subjects of the King, and owe him obedience. Therefore rule not over or before him in matters belonging to his Office.

3. Bishops are chosen by the King, (for I suppose no man takes the Dean and Chapters choice for more than a Ceremony, that knoweth it); if the King command me to Preach at one hour, or one place, and the Bishop at another, or to use for Uniformity such a Translation, Metre, Liturgy, Utensils, Garments, &c. and the Bishops others, I will obey the King before the Bishop. But if either or both command me to *sin*, I will obey neither so; and if they would take me off from that which Christ hath made a real part of my own Office (as commanding that I shall preach and pray in *no words* but such as they prescribe, &c.) I think neither hath power to do this.

But Bishop *Bilson* of *Christian Obedience*, and Bishop *Andrews* in his *Tortura Toetis*, and *Buckeridge* of *Rocheſter*, and *Grotius* de *imprprio ſum. Poſteſt. circa Sacra*, have ſaid ſo much of the Power



of Kings about Religion, as that I think I need not add any more.

And by the same Arguments that you will absolve me from obeying if *the King forbid me to Preach*, by the same you absolve, if the Bishop forbid me. If I may disobey *Constantinus* and *Valens*, I may disobey *Eusebius Nicomed.* *Theognis Maris.* If I may disobey *Theodosius junior*, *Anastasius*, *Zeno*, *Iustinian*, I may disobey *Petrus Moggus*, *Dioscorus*, *Severus*, &c. But you will much cross your ends if you tell the *Londoners* that they may preach and worship God though the King forbid them, but not at all if the Bishop forbid them. For he that exalteth himself, or is sinfully exalted by others, shall be brought low. If the reverence of the King were not greater in *England* than of the Bishops, the consciences of many thousands would stick but little at disobedience. There are so many cases first to be resolved. As,

1. Whether such Diocessans deposing all Parochial Churches (and Bishops) and reducing them to Chappels or parts only of a Church, be not against Christs Law?
  2. Whether they destroy not the ancient order of *particular Churches* (Bishops) and Discipline?
  3. Who made their office, and by what power?
  4. Who chose and called them to it?
  5. Whether their Commands be not null, as contrary to Gods?
  6. How far Communion with them that silence hundreds of faithful Ministers, and set up in their stead ———— &c. is lawful?
- Many such questions the people are not so easily satisfied in, as you are.

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XI. And the three last all set together, look with an ill design: The Preface to *Dr. Rich. Cousins Tables*, tells the King, That the Church-Government here is the *Kings*, or *derived from him*, and dependant on him; and *Grotius de Imperio sum. potest.* proveth at large the Power of Kings *circa sacra*, as doth *Spalatensis*, and many more; and that Canons are but good counsel, till the King make them Laws. And we know no Law-makers but the King and Parliament. But if the Church be the Expounders of the Liturgy, Rubrick and Canons, Articles and Acts of Uniformity, and out

of



of Convocation-time, the Bishops be the Church, and the Archbishops be the Rulers of the Bishops, (that swear obedience to them) this hath a dangerous aspect: For then it is in the power of the Bishops (if not of the Archbishops only) to put a sense upon our 39 Articles, Rubricks, &c. consistent with Popery or Heresie, and so to change the Religion of the Kingdom, without King or Parliament, or against them at their pleasure.

And thus Officers of mans making, who become a Church of mans devising, may have advantage by this and the former Articles, to destroy Godliness, Christianity and Humanity.

Indeed by the Preface to the Liturgy, the Bishop is made the Expounder of any thing doubtful in the Book; and by the *Index* the Act of Uniformity is made part of the Book. But this affrighteth me the more from declaring:

1. Because I must consent to all the Penalties and Impositions of the Act it self.

2. And the Bishops Exposition is limited, so that it must be contrary to nothing in the Book.

Thus I have given you the reasons of my *destructive Conference*.

If I had been with you, and we had been to enter upon any dispute that tendeth to satisfaction, I would have endeavoured to avoid the common frustraters of Disputes, 1. By ambiguous words: 2. And subjects that are no subjects: Therefore if you desire any such dispute:

I. I intreat you to write me down your sense of some terms which we shall frequently use, (and I will do the like of any at your desire): As what you mean, 1. By the word *Bishop*. 2. By a *Church*. 3. By a *particular Church*. 4. By a *Diocess and Diocesan Church*. 5. By a *National Church*. 6. By the *Universal Church*. 7. By *Church Government and Jurisdiction*. 8. By *Schism*. I shall dispute no terms unexplained, lest one take them in one sense, and the other in another, and so we dispute but about a sound of words.

II. I desire that the *denied Subject* of the Question may not be taken for granted, instead of being proved.

On these terms (supposing the common Laws of Disputation, especially avoiding words that have no determinate sense) I shall not



not refuse whenever you invite me ; and I am able to debate with you any of these points that I am concerned in ; especially, *whether my Preaching Christs Gospel as I do, be my sin, or my duty ?* And if our great distance in Principles put either of us upon reasons that seem dishonouring to the person opposed, we shall I hope remember that it is the *opinion* only that is directly intended. But that the said opinion is the *persons opinion*, if it be bad, is a dishonour, which the *owner only* is guilty of, and the opponent cannot help ; who must not forbear to open the evil of the cause, for avoiding the dishonour of the owner ; but must the *rather* open it, in hope that the owner will disown it, when he understandeth truly what it is. For I suppose it is evidence of Truth that we desire.

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In Conclusion, remember I pray you, 1. That it is not the ancient Episcopacy (which was in *Cyprians* days ; yea, which agreeth with *Epiphanius's* Intimations, and *Petavius* excellent Notes thereon, in *Haresf. 69.*) which I deny. And I conjecture that at this day in *England* there are more *Episcopal* than *Presbyterian* silenced *Nonconformists*.

2. That what sort of Prelacy or higher Rulers I dare not subscribe to, yet I can live quietly and submissively under, though not obey them by sinning against God, or breaking my Vows of Baptism or Ordination, and perfidiously leaving souls to Satan. Nothing more threateneth the subversion of the Church-Government than swearing men to approve of all that's in it. Many can submit and live in peace, that dare not subscribe or swear Approbation. It was the *& cetera* Oath 1640, that constrained me to those searches which made me a *Nonconformist*. It is an easie matter for Overdoers to add but a clause or two more to their Oaths and Subscriptions, which shall make almost all the conscionable Ministers of the Kingdom *Nonconformists*.

3. Whenever notorious necessity ceaseth by the sufficient number and quality of Conforming Preachers, I will cease Preaching in *England*. (But death is liker first to silence me.)

Though I take my Conforming to be a Complex of heinous sins,  
should



should I be guilty of it; yet till I am called, I perswade none to Nonformity for fear of casting them (occasionally) out of the Ministry, preferring their work before the change of their judgment till such endeavours are clearly made by duty.) But all your endeavour, as far as ever I perceived, is not so much to draw us to Conformity, as to persuade us to give over Preaching Christs Gospel, so contrary are our designs. *1 Thes. 2. 15, 16.* Methinks is a fearful Text. And so are the words of the Liturgy before the Sacrament, *If any of you be a hinderer of Gods Word—repent—or take not this Sacrament, lest Satan enter into you, as he did into Judas, and fill you, &c.*

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F I N I S.



A N  
ACCOUNT  
O F M Y  
DISSENT  
F R O M  
Dr. Sherlocke,

H I S  
Doctrin, Accusations, & Argumentation.  
ESPECIALLY

About the Essence of the Universal, National and single Church, and the nature of Schism, and the terms of Christian Concord. As also of my Dissent from the *French*, from Bishop *Gunning*, and his Chaplain Dr. *Saywell*, Mr. *Thorndike*, Bishop *Bramhall*, Bishop *Sparrow*, Mr. *Dodwell*, &c. on the same Subject.

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By RICH. BAXTER, not as their Accuser, but a Defender of himself and the Protestants against other mens Accusations, who call for the Execution of the Laws against Us.

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L O N D O N,

Printed for *Tho. Parkhurst*, at the Bible and Three Crowns in *Cheapside*, near *Mercers-Chappel*. 1681.



An Account of my Dissent from Dr.  
 Sherlocke, his *Doctrine, Accusations* and  
*Argumentation, &c.*

C H A P. I.

*The Historical Proem.*

S E C T. I.

WHEN Mr. Dodwell had published his old Letters to me, with his Reply to my Confutation of his Schismatical Book (which nullifieth not only the Churches Ministry, Sacraments, and Covenant-right to Salvation, of the Reformed Transmarine Christians, but, as I think I have proved, of all, or almost all the Christian World), I thought it needful, as an Antidote to prevent the death of Christian charity, to publish also the Letters which I had sent to him, (the last of which came not to his hands, because he was gone into the Country), and with them my Consideration of his Reply: But weariness of dealing with this sort of men, made me cast it by about a quarter of a year, and then Dr. Stillingfleet's Defender, by insulting and joining in the deceit, persuaded me to let it go forth. His words are *Pag. 437.* *All these pretences have been so shamefully baffled by Mr. Dodwell in his Letters to Mr. B. that no man need concern himself further in that cause.* The shame of the baffle I shall bear with thankfulness, if it be truth that shames and baffles me. My soul would rejoice by such a discovery to make a publick recantation. But if that which must shame me, be their dangerous deceit, notoriously tending to the extirpation of Church-



Discipline, and to the destruction of Christian Love and Concord, and to engage their Church in the Prescuting and destroying of the faithful Servants of Christ, I must expect to bear more from such men than baffling and shame.

§. 2. The first Question which we are concerned in with this sort of men, is, *Whether Nonconformists deserve to be forbidden to Preach the Gospel, and to be Excommunicated ipso facto, and to be fined 20 l. and 40 l. a Sermon, and laid in the Common Gaol with Rogues, from six months to six months, till they die?*

The second Question is, *Whether their not Conforming to all the Covenants Oaths, Declarations, Subscription and Practices imposed on them, be a crime deserving this, (with their not ceasing to Preach the Gospel)?*

The third Question is, *Whether it would not be sin (yea hainous sin) in them so to Conform and cease Preaching?*

§. 3. These be the cases that we have to dispute. We still disclaim accusing others. We only think we are bound (not resisting any of their force) to deny false Accusations, and give a reason of what we do, and why we suffer, rather than against our Consciences obey them. And this we forbore more than seven and seven years, lest we should exasperate them, while they continued to persuade the world (yea our Superiors) that we took not the matters of Conformity for any sin, but for inconveniences. They spoke this, they preacht it, they wrote it. We wondered, thinking formerly that there were no men called Protestant Divines that would do this in the open light of the Sun, against the visible evidence of our Writings, and against our open Disputations with them, Petitions to them, our Protestations, our practices and our sufferings; but we could not deny their *fact*, though they denied ours. We now saw there were such men, and with whom we had to do; we gave over wondering at such as *Tympius, Bolesek, &c.* They continued to make our Rulers believe that we kept up a dangerous Schism in the Church, against that which we took to be no sin, meerly to make good what we had said and done, and to avoid repenting They called out in Press and Pulpit for the Execution of the Laws against us, as if our suffering were yet too light. Our Rulers askt us, *What we stuck at, and what we would have?* And when yet we durst not tell them, they published us *obstinate* in adhering to a *baffled cause*, when



we had nothing to say for it. And at last told us how ill our Superiors thought of us for it, and threatened to petition them to compel us to give in our Reasons of Nonconformity. Would not an indifferent person think all this was a sufficient call and warrant for us to speak? But we knew they that called for it could not bear it.

§. 4. I drew up first a Catalogue of the matters, and summary reasons of our Nonconformity; but on perusal I saw they would take it for an accusation of them, and could not bear it. I then drew up all our case by way of Query, to engage their own consideration. But when it was done, I saw it made their cause so naked, that they could not bear it. I wrote a full Treatise of *Episcopacy* as the reason of our not swearing or subscribing to them, and our not becoming the Purgators of all the thousands that had sworn it, for not endeavouring (by lawful means in their places and callings) any alteration of the Government of the Church. I thought this alone was reason enough why we should rather die than conform. But I cast all these by, as perceiving that mens impatience would turn it by exasperation, to the increase of their wrath, and of our reproach and suffering; where Satan hath once got *strong worldly interest* on his side, he hath with multitudes (even of men called Reverend and Learned) done half his work, and virtually armed them against the clearest evidence of truth, and erected a Fort which neither plain Scripture or reason, or the common experience of the world, can batter, till God will do it. But this last Treatise (of *Episcopacy*) Mr. *Dodwell* hath since drawn out.

§. 5. When my Conscience would endure my silence no longer, against the will of my advisers, I confess, I ventured nakedly to tell those that so earnestly called for it, what it is that we durst not do? Intending if they bore with that, to give them our Reasons or Arguments after. But the thing that I feared was the consequent; they thought while we named so many hainous crimes which we feared and avoided, that it intimated that they were guilty of them, and so we made them *Perjured, Perfidious, Persecuting Villains*; and the tempest of their wrath did presently assault us with multiplied accusations. And when in any writing we tell them of their Errors, in false Accusations, or false Doctrine, or false History; they tell us that we *rail and revile them*; and to manifest any of their untruths, or abuses, or fallacies in arguing, is an intollerable crime; nothing but passion,



passion, rage, fury, if not rebellion or sedition, (by such an inference as [*No Bishop, no King*]) or a much worse. Thus we are fallen into mens hands that will neither endure us to be silent, nor after 16 or 17 years silence and provocation to speak, and profess as Dr. *Stillington*, that *they gave us not the least provocation*. I have said all this before; but there is no understanding any Controversie without remembering the matter of fact, and the state of the question.

§. 6. I doubted whether I should name this accusing-defender, because he doth not name himself. But uncontroled fame saying it is Dr. *Sherlock*, and it being useful to know with whom we have to do, I name him only as famed to be the Author, which if he deny, I will not affirm.

§. 7. As to his Book, it loudly tells the world, That such Conformists, and the Nonconformists, are agreed, that the Devils great design against Christianity and mens Salvation, is to turn Christs own Offices and Ordinances, Ministry and Preaching, against himself, and to do his destructive work in the name of Christ, and as by his authority. And that it is the Clergy that are become the great dividers and danger of the Church, and the grand hinderers of Christian love, peace and concord, and consequently the danger of Kings and Kingdoms. If one side think so of them, this Book of his, and many such another, tell us, that they think so of others. That the Clergy are the great danger of the Land and Church, we are agreed. All the question is, Who of them it is, whether this party, or that, or both?

§. 8. One side saith it is the Puritans, the other that it is the *Parliamentarians*; now they go by the reproaches of *Whiggs* and *Tories*. What *Whiggs* are, I know not, nor whence so called; but I am sure it is the *PR-IG'S Pride* the father, and *Ignorance* the mother by the seed of *worldly carnal interest*, that beget the *malignant contention, division and cruelty that threatens Church and State*. I never yet to my remembrance met with a malignant fierce dividing contender, but he was a man very *IGNORANT* of the matters about which he raised strife; and for an *IGNORANT* man to rage and be confident in error, and think that all deserve to be excommunicate, silenced, laid in Prisons, or ruined, that are not of his mind, or do oppose him, must needs be a hainous overvaluing  
of



of himself, which is *PRIDE*. And yet if you do but discover their *IGNORANCE*, be it never so gross, or tell them of any of their error or sin, the discovery must prove that it's you that are *Proud*, and they are half justified by the very naming their sin. And the Devil hath got a crafty trick to draw them into sin of so odious a nature, that he shall seem to rail that doth but name it to the guilty. Let a man silence never so many faithful Ministers, or write the most palpable untruths against them, he raileth that would have him repent, or tells him of lying or persecution.

And what but a *worldly carnal interest* could be fruitful seed for such an off-spring? whatever sheeps-clothing they wear, the grievous wolves mentioned, *Act. 20.* are they that make *merchandize of souls*. And whatever plausible confident Volumes they may write, and Pulpit-exclamations they may use, or what paint soever they may put on the worst cause, it is they that *serve not Christ, but their own bellies*, who by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple, *Rom. 16. 16, 17.* Methinks I see the Picture of *St. Paul*, and of *Diotrephes*, or a Pope before me; the latter gnashing his teeth at all that obey him not, and oppose his worldly grandure and dominion, and crying, *Away with him, crucifie him.* Away with such a fellow; it is not fit that he should live; away with these precise Schismatics, Hereticks, Phanatics, to the Gaol, to the Stake, or Gallows? The other saying as *Phil. 3. 18, 19.* I tell you weeping, they are enemies to the Cross of Christ, whose God is their belly, who glory in their shame, who mind earthly things: But our conversation is in Heaven.

Yea, methinks I see the different case of the Twelve, before the Spirit came down on them and after, before (*Luk. 22.*) they are striving which should be greatest; and even *Peter*, *Mat. 16.* dissuadeth Christ from suffering, and persuadeth him to favour himself and escape, till Christ say, *Get thee behind me Satan, thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.* But after they became the servants of all, and seek their honour and reward in humility, and doing good to all, glorying with *Paul* in his infirmities, and becoming all things to all men, and not accounting their lives dear, that they may finish their course with joy.

§. 9. I intreat all Gods Servants that love his Churches peace and safety, to pray earnestly to God to discover to us, who they are that are these *Proud, ignorant, worldly, fleshy men* that are the Churches



ches plague or danger; and that if it be I, and such as I, it may not be unknown to us, and we may not live or die impenitent. For though the *Vindicator* in excuse of the *Peccavimus* of the mutable Bishops, by reflection suppose me an enemy to repentance, either he (whom I never saw) knows me much better than I know my self, or else I study, pray and long for a true information and conviction, which may bring me to the most open *peccavi* or confession. I am certain that I am *ignorant*, yea so *ignorant*, that I am tempted to doubt of my own apprehensions when from the matter I see no cause of doubting; but I can truly say, That though in haste I be too neglective of words and circumstantial, I have determined of few substantial causes of any great concern without many years trial, as diligent and impartial as I can use; forty-three years have I now studied the old Conformity, and nineteen the new; and I can truly say that I take *Pride* especially of our *Knowledg* or *Goodness*, to be so mad or Diabolical a sin in one that hath so vile and painful a body as I, so dark an understanding, and so bad a heart, that so far as I am proud, I am most unexcusable; and I am sure it is conjunct with constant *self-vilifying*, and mens contempt doth seem no very unjust or offensive thing to me, when it reflects not on the truth and cause of God.

§. 10. The Author that I am now to answer, is pleased oft to reflect on the *Doctrine* of the *Nonconformists*, as if they Preached against Truth and Peace; and yet I find not that he proveth that; nor that they have been these nineteen years accused upon proof before any Judicature of any more ill *Doctrine* than the chief of their accusers. For my own part, I should think that the publishing of my *Doctrine* in near Eighty Books (of which three in Folio) might allow me to say, that in secret have I said nothing: Ask my writings what I hold. If they say, *It is Heresie*, let them prove it. If they say, *Disloyalty*, let them read my *second Plea for Peace*; and I will take it thankfully to see my error. But if in malice they will rake into that which is twenty years revoked, and yet call for *Retractions*, or talk falsely of matters of *fact*, and *times*, and *things*, and *persons* which they knew not, let them take their course.

§. 11. But supposing that same is true which makes this Accuser of our *Doctrine* to be Dr. *Sherlocke*, I will first tell the world what transactions about such matters I have had with him, and desire to  
be



be reprov'd if I have dealt uncharitably or uncivilly, or erroneously with him.

It is not long ago since he came to me at *Acton* (where I lived when silenced and ejected), as seem'd to me in the garb of a young man not fix'd in his resolutions to conform, (and therefore I thought not yet Ordained), and he told me, *That he came to hear what I had to say against Conformity?* I asked him, *Why he askt me the question? and whether he were in any doubt? and if so, of what?* He would give me no answer to any of this. *But he would know what I had to say against Conformity?* I told him I did not use to tell men what I had to say, I knew not why, nor without cogent reason to seek to make others of my mind. I thought him a resolv'd designing aggressor, and imagin'd that his honest father had made him consent to come first to hear what I could say, and that he us'd this way of his own to secure his ends. But foreseeing that he was like to go home and say *Mr. Baxter had nothing to say against Conformity*; I told him why I could not own the *English State or Prelacy*, as unavoidably casting out the Discipline of Christ. He told me, *That he was of Dr. Stillingfleet's judgment in his Irenicon, that faith, No form of Church-Government is of Divine Institution.* I thought it strange that he that thought so, could yet subscribe to what is said of the three Orders from the *Apostles time in the Book of Ordination*. But now how far is this man chang'd? I allow him to be wiser since he writes himself *D. D.* and wish I could have learnt in 43 years as much as he thinks he hath done since then.

§. 12. After this he published a famous Book against the supposed dangerous Doctrines of some about *Imputation of Christs Righteousness*, and against mens pretending to acquaintance and marriage with Christ, and many such things. A friend of his desired me to write my judgment of it. I told him, I had rather tell it the Author secretly alone. He vouchsafed to come to me. I presumed to tell him how he had made odious some unapt words of a few others, with words so much worse of his own, as seem'd to import no less than a denial of our belief in God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; but hoping he meant better than he spake, advis'd him by explication or retraction to prevent the consequents; and the next day wrote to him this Letter following.



## CHAP. II.

To the Reverend Mr. Sherlock.

S I R,

THE freedom which you offered me, encourageth me thus to tell you more distinctly than I could then do in haste, what objections against your Book I think you will be concerned to give the world satisfaction in.

1. It will be thought in these distracted times of division, to be notoriously factious to widen the breach, and to hinder the reconciliation of minds. And upon my knowledg some on one side are tempted by it to think the hardlier of the Conformists; and persons of honour on the other side that have read it, and understand not the Controversie, think odiously of the *Nonconformists* as fools or Hereticks. Either you would have our divisions healed or not: If not—If yea, then either by reconciliation, or by the extirpation of the *Nonconformists*. If the first, you would quench the fire with oil. If the latter, you are worse than an unskilful Chyrurgeon.

2. You seem to lay a snare, to insinuate that against the *Nonconformists* which you durst not expressly charge them with; and secretly to perswade the Reader, that it is them that you mean throughout. For you plainly oft intimate that it is some party, and more than those you name, and you make them to be those who have spoken against me (which few of those whom you name have done.) And at the same time cometh out the *Sober Inquiry* into the reasons of the *Nonconformists* esteem, &c. a Book of the same spirit and strain, charging the *Nonconformists* with the same things, as the *Friendly Debate* also hath done. Whereas, for ought I know, ten to one of the *Nonconformists* (if not forty) are of my mind in the point in Controversie; and only a few of the *Independents*, and a very few others, not well studied in the matter, are of their mind whom you oppose. And it's common with the *Presbyterian* and *Episcopal* *Nonconformists* to say, that a few of the old *Independents* by their overmuch heat against *Arminianism* under pretence of exalting free grace, and by their unhappy wording of their *Savoy-Article*:



title of Justification, have injured the truth and common cause.

3. You seem exceeding partial in your charge, in naming four or five *Nonconformists* as the proper defenders of that Doctrine which the far greatest part of all the Protestant Churches have long held.

4. You seem too bold and harsh an accuser of all these Protestants under the names of four or five men. The world knoweth that the *Lutheran* Churches, even those that in other things say as the *Arminians* do, almost unanimously hold that Doctrine of Imputed Righteousness which you oppose. And that almost all the *Calvinists* went the same way till the Controversie about the active and passive righteousness managed by *Olevian*, *Ursin*, *Piscator*, *Pareus*, and the rest, put a stop to it. And that the most learned Prelates and Conformists of *England* (and most that write against the *Papists*) seem to go the same way. And that almost all our Voluminous Controversies against them, written by the foreign Divines, till lately, run in the same channel. And that when Mr. *Wotton* set the matter straiter in *London*, most were against him; and when Mr. *Bradshaw* wrote his Tractate for Reconciliation, and Mr. *Gataker* in many writings defended the sounder way, even among the Conformists, the most dissented. And when *John Goodwin* rose up for the same cause, the greater part seemed to be against him. And when about twenty-five years ago I declared my self for that middle way in the point, which *Bradshaw* and *Grotius de Satisfaction*. had opened, many Conformists as well as others were against me; why did you not then plainly tell your Reader, that it is of old and of late almost all the Protestants that you accuse with so much severity?

5. You seem to injure the present Protestants by rendring them to the *Papists* (who join with you in this charge) more erroneous and more divided than they are. For we all offer to subscribe the same Articles of Religion; and therefore his Majesty in his Declaration about Ecclesiastical affairs, proclaimeth his displeasure against Doctor *Burgess* his Book (for that was it meant) for pretending that we differ in Doctrine. And now you would make the world believe that we are so different therein, as to be in a manner of two Religions.

6. You manage not the real Controversie in any such method, as Controversies are managed by all learned men, or as may profit and satisfy the Reader that would know the truth. You should



have stated the Questions accurately, which you would dispute, and have well opened the terms, and have given us your Arguments clearly, and answered theirs; whereas he that readeth your Book from end to end, will not easily find what is the true Controversie, much less orderly and accurately stated. And the Arguments of the Dissenters are mostly passed by, and Arguments of your own are hardly to be perceived. But instead of all this, mens words which sound not well, are recited, and they will say that a supercilious continued stile of scorn, doth pass for argument or confutation. Indeed all that you had to do was to have opened in what sense Christs Righteousness is or is not imputed to us. And the sum of all the Controversie is but this, Whether Christ fulfilled the Law and suffered, (not only thereby to merit all that Pardon, Justification, Adoption, Spirit and Glory, which is given by the new Covenant as you and I hold; but also) in the *person* of each elected sinner, *in sensu legali*, (though not in *his natural person*) so that we are justified by the *Law of innocency, and its works*, which saith, *obey perfectly and live*, as having fulfilled it all in and by Christ? This you and I deny. And how much otherwise doth *Watson de reconcil. Bradshaw, Gataker, John Goodwin*, dispute this, than you do as to the mode? To come out after such Learned Disputations, and think that the contemptuous reciting of four mens words should do the business, will not convince Dissenters.

7. They will call it livor or malignity, that you fall upon that which is blameless with the rest; what error or harm is in Mr. *Vincent's* words, when St. Paul hath much the like, *I have espoused you to one husband*; and the Prophet, *Thy maker is thy husband*? How did Mr. *Watson* offend by allegorizing? Do you not know that (besides the *Canticles*, and many other Scriptures) abundance of the ancient fathers do the like, and who reproacheth them for it? Almost all of them, I think, fall under this censure. And there are many of Dr. *Owens* words blameless which you blame, to say nothing of the rest.

18. They will say it is profane to make the very words of Scripture used by them, part of your reproachful recitation? and many of them not by them interpreted in any ill sense. But if they were, the sense only should have been blamed. And your talk of *marrying Christ by the Liturgy and the Ring*, will seem no better; and against the Apostle as well as them. And you distinguish not between the Allegorizers Explication and Applications. Do you think they use  
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