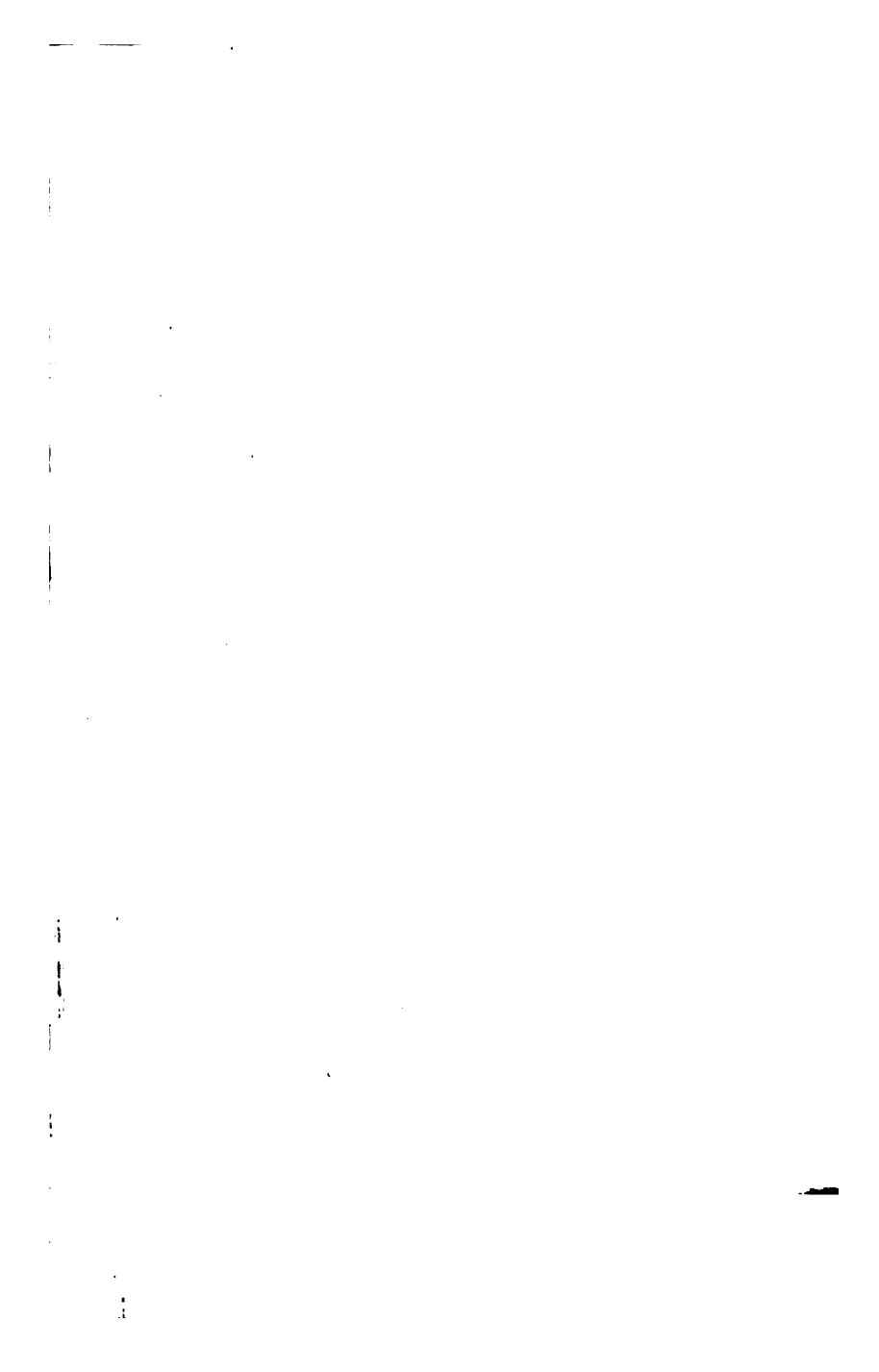
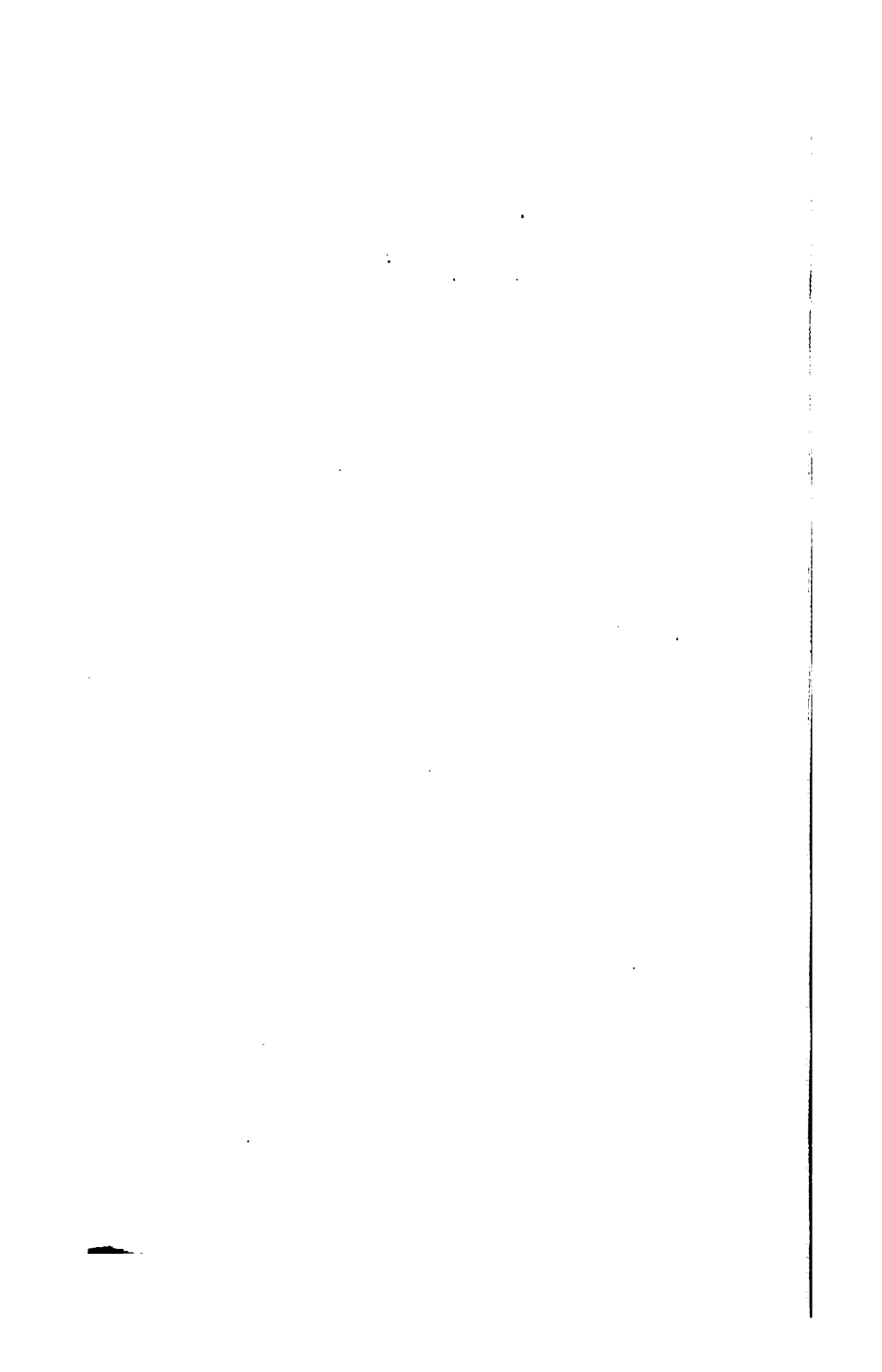
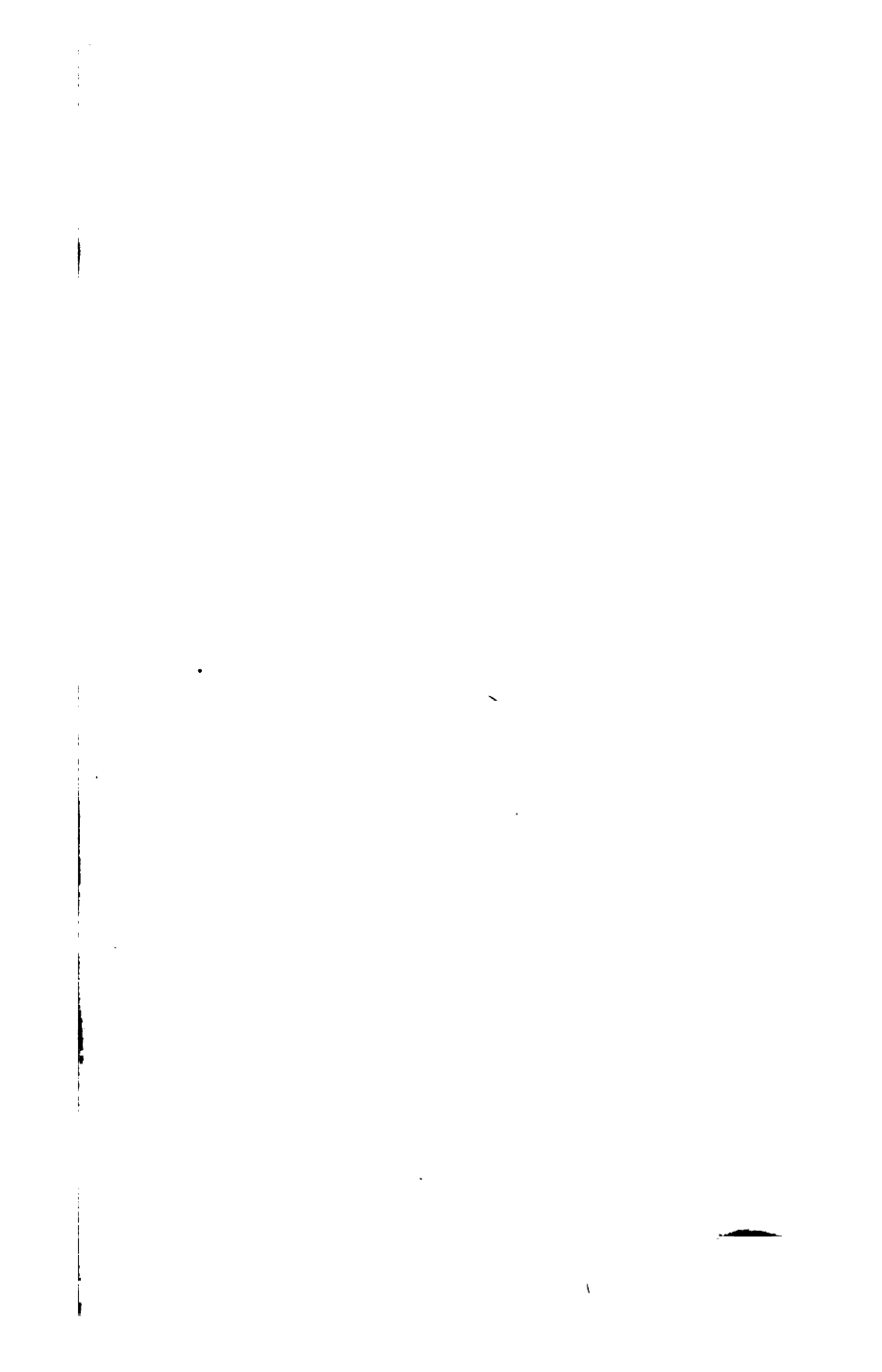


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THE
REASONABLENESS
OF
CONFORMITY
TO THE
CHURCH of ENGLAND,

Represented to the
DISSENTING MINISTERS.

In Answer to the Tenth Chapter of
Mr. Calamy's *Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's History of his Life and Times.*

PART I.

By BENJAMIN HOADLY, M. A.

The Second Edition Corrected.

All this began but in *Unwarrantable Separations*, and too much aggravating the *Faults of the Churches, and Common People, and Common-Prayer Book, and Ministry.* Mr. Baxter in his *Account of the Sectaries*, *Abridg.* p. 96.

LONDON,

Printed for *Tim. Child*, at the *White Hart* at the West-End of *St. Paul's Church-Yard*, 1703.

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THE
PREFACE.

WHEN I first read the Tenth Chapter of Mr. Calamy's Abridgment of the History of Mr. Baxter's Life, and Times, I confess I was not a little concerned to find such accusations brought against Conformity to the Church of England, and especially Ministerial Conformity. This concern led me seriously and impartially to examine whatever I found there alleged; which, I thought was a duty I owed to my self, and my own private peace and satisfaction. And as We are naturall apt to think that
A 2 , what

The Preface.

what appears very satisfactory to our selves, may possibly bring satisfaction to the minds of others ; so I was willing to hope (but not upon my own judgment only) that a fair representation of those arguments, which seemed so convincing to my self in this cause, might prove useful to some others ; and help to remove their prejudices, and recommend Conformity to them. With this view I first drew up these papers in this form ; and now publish part of them to the World for these two ends.

*First, To vindicate the Conforming Clergy, by vindicating the Terms of their Conformity to the Church of England from all false representations, and objections that have no just foundation. We who seriously conform as Ministers to this Church cannot be willing to be accounted what no Christian ought to be ; and cannot
be*

The Preface.

be content to sit down, and suffer our practice to be represented as a complication of the blackest and most unpardonable crimes. We owe something to our own reputation as we are Men; and more as we are Ministers: as the success of that great charge We have undertaken depends very much upon it; and as the blemishes that are cast upon it, reflect a dishonour upon Religion it self. If those accusations which Mr. Calamy hath brought against Ministerial Conformity be received as built upon good reasons, the consequence will be, that We must be accounted guilty of as many and great crimes as it is well possible for any men to be guilty of. I do not say that it was this Author's design in reviving these heads of Non-conformity, to lessen the reputation, or blacken the character of any of his Neighbours: for I have too good an

The Preface.

opinion of him to think him capable of such a design. But I say, that considering the manner in which they are represented to his Readers, and the insinuations often drop'd in their way, it is too probable that multitudes will embrace them as Truth, and be led by them to judge Ministerial Conformity a sin of a very high nature : which indeed it must be, if these representations be reasonable. It cannot therefore be thought an unbecoming attempt, to endeavour to convince the world that they are not reasonable ; that so the reputation of a whole society of Men may not suffer unjustly in the tenderest point : I mean their Honesty and Integrity.

*Secondly, What I farther propose by the publication of these Papers is, To satisfie those who still continue to dissent from us. I mean such of them as Mr. Calamy, and those whose
cause*

The Preface.

cause he pleads in a peculiar manner : wise separation, tho' not accompanied with such violence and heat, yet carries along with it more of mystery, and is more unaccountable than the separation of those who are at a greater distance from us. But how unaccountable soever it appear, it cannot but become us to do all we can for their satisfaction. For if we think they are very much to blame in continuing their separation, We cannot but heartily wish they would unite with us. And if we heartily wish this, We shall not insult or triumph over them, but endeavour to convince them ; to remove what we judge to be prejudices, and to set things in a due light before their eyes. This is what I have attempted : and there is somewhat both in the principles and practice of these persons, which suffers me not to think it altogether an hopeless attempt.

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This Cause indeed hath been sufficiently managed by very able and great hands; and hath, in truth, but little need of any such supports as I can give it. But if the Pleas for Separation be again reviv'd, and represented to the world in a moving manner; and the Charge against Conformity be repeated, as if nothing had ever been urged in its defence, a Reply becomes necessary. Every new book of this nature leaves an impression upon the minds of those who read it: and especially when it is recommended to the People even from the Pulpits, and openly declared by Persons very nearly concerned to be the best and most compleat justification of the Cause it defends. And we know what is commonly given out, and generally believed, if no answer be return'd.

These

The Preface.

These are the Ends I propose, and this is all I have to say for the publication of this Reply.

*In it I have concerned my self only with the present times; judging this to be the properest method towards the healing our Breaches, to speak of things as they are now: and leaving to others the glory of raking into the transactions of former times, and heaping together historical accounts of what signifies nothing to the Cause, but tends only to exasperate men's minds; to open our wounds anew, and make them bleed afresh; to raise the passions, and cast a cloud before the judgment, of the Readers. I confess I could not answer to my own conscience any such attempt, which naturally tends to perpetuate our divisions. Characters are easily given, both bad and good. A history in favour of any one party is easily compiled. It is easy to pick out all the evil that appears in men of different designs from our selves, and to pass by all the good. It is easy to surmise more evil than what appears, and to produce these suspicions where we want better proofs. And it is easy, on all sides, to make harangues to move the pity and compassion of the People. But what wounds can we heal in this way?
what*

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what advances towards peace can we make, while we are producing what must incense us against one another? One would think it were time now to suffer the passions of Men to cool, and to address only to their reason and judgment.

*And it is to the Reason and Judgment of Men I here appeal, regarding nothing in Mr. Calamy's Book but the Tenth Chapter, and nothing in that but what refers to the state of the Case as it is at this time, in which only we are concern'd; nothing but what he himself, at the end of the Ninth Chapter, calls the Stable Principles upon which Nonconformity is still bottomed. I may have occasion in the other part of this Reply, to take a little farther notice of some other parts of Mr. Calamy's Book: but only so far as they are likely to disturb the minds of his Readers, and prejudice them against the Church of England. But I have no design of lessening the satisfaction any persons may have in those good characters so freely bestow'd on one side; or those bad characters, and little insinuations cast upon the other. Let Mr. Baxter be what he pleases, and other Men who opposed him, what he thinks fit to make them. Let the
ejected*

The Preface.

ejected Ministers in 1662 be, in all Ministerial abilities, much above the several hundreds which Mr. Calamy tells us had been ejected before by the Parliament. I see not how this concerns the Question which is only this, Whether separation from the established Church be necessary. And since this is the only point between us of any great concern, it ought to be managed with the most artless simplicity; and not cumber'd with what is apt to hinder a great part of the world from judging aright in it. I believe I could produce a Catalogue of above two thousand, excellent in Learning and Piety, who thought it not unlawful to comply with the Terms of Ministerial Conformity: and none of them either wild Enthusiasts, or Ignorant Mechanics. And I could offer some reasons why this ought to be accounted a better argument for Conformity, than the Catalogue of ejected Ministers is against it. But indeed this would serve for nothing but to amuse the Reader, and divert his mind from the main Question. I am certain I have here endeavoured to avoid whatever may do so; and therefore I can safely say that I write not to perpetuate the dispute; but to bring

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bring it to a good issue, if possible, by offering what may tend to the satisfaction of those, in whose power it is to put a considerable stop to it.

Throughout the whole I have strictly obliged my self to say nothing but what appeared to me truly fitted to the purpose for which I produce it. And in all that I have alleged I have had only a regard to what appeared reasonable, and true, and apt to satisfy any person concerned. If it be so, I am not at all solicitous about any thing farther. I desire it should stand or fall as it agrees or disagrees with Reason, and the Gospel: and accordingly, I shall be very free to defend it, or very ready to retract it. If in some instances I seem to some not rigid enough, and to others too rigid; I desire it may be remembered, that my business was to consider the Terms of Conformity as they are in themselves, not as this or that person desires they should be. I have endeavoured to defend them as they are, but I have not dared to alter them upon my own authority, either in order to make them appear more odious, or more agreeable to the Dissenters. I could never permit my self to have any part in setting them at a great-

The Preface.

er distance from the Church: and, on the other hand, I should judge it but an odd, and very unlikely way to win upon them, to represent the Terms of Conformity more according to their wishes, unless I could persuade them to believe that they were truly what I represent them to be.

What Errours there are in the style (for that there may be some, I am sensible) I hope are small; such as will not disturb the sense, or hide the force of the argument; and therefore pardonable.

The following Postscript is added, in answer to that in Mr. Calamy, and to show the world how easy it is to write such Advertisements. Indeed I have altered the state of the Question at the beginning of it; because it is very evident from every Book published in the Cause, that the Controversy between the Conformists and the Dissenters is not, Whether the established Church be perfect; but, Whether separation from it be necessary or reasonable.

I have nothing more to add, but my request to the Reader, that He would bring an honest heart along with him; and my prayers to God, that he would give a blessing

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ing to what I have here proposed, as far as it is fitted to the promoting his glory, and the increasing peace and unity amongst Christians.

POST.

POSTSCRIPT.

THere being some who may be willing to search into the bottom of that unhappy Controversy that hath been depending almost ever since the Reformation, between the Assertors of the Unreasonableness of Separation from the Establish'd Church, and those who have acted upon the Opposite principle, and pleaded a necessity of Separation from it: I have been desired in order to their satisfaction, to point out those Writings of the Former which may be judg'd to contain the strength of their Cause. In compliance with which desire, I recommend the following writings to the perusal of the Curious.

Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity.

John Ball's Friendly Tryal of the Grounds of Separation.

Bradshaw's Unreasonableness of Separation. 1640.

Rathband's Grave and Modest Confutation of the Brownists. 1644.

A Letter of many Ministers in Old-England to others in New-England. 1637.

Brinsley's Arraignment of Schism. 1646.

Separation Self-condemn'd in answer to Mr. Jenkins. Rob.

Rob. Grovij Responsio ad Celenfma.

Dr. Stillingfleet's Sermon of the Mischief of Separation.

Dr. Stillingfleet's Unreasonableness of Separation.

Dr. Sherlock's Defence of it.

Dr. Claget's Answer to the Mischief of Impositions.

Dr. Falkner's Libertas Ecclesiastica.

A Collection of Cases, and other Discourses, Written to recover Dissenters to the Communion of the Church of England, by some Divines of the City of London. In Folio.

Mr. Bennet's Abridgment of these Cases. ——— Discourse of Schism.

I need not add any more. He that will be at the pains to peruse these, will find that the Assertors of the Unreasonableness of Separation have much to say for their Cause; and little reason to be troublesome to the World, by repeating their arguments as often as such as love Contention think fit to renew the Pleas for Separation, that have been so often urged already, and as often answerd.

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T H E

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Advertisement.

A Serious Admonition to Mr. *Calamy*, occasioned by the First Part of his Defence of Moderate Nonconformity. By *Benj. Hoadly*, M. A. Printed for *Tim. Childe*, at the *White Hart* in *St. Paul's Church-yard*.

THE

THE
REASONABLENESS
OF
CONFORMITY
TO THE
CHURCH of *ENGLAND*,
Represented to the
DISSENTING MINISTERS, &c.

THE Design of the following Papers is so justifiable, how mean soever they be in themselves, that I need not use many Words to engage you to receive them with all *Candour* and *Goodness*. I am one, who sincerely desire a greater Union amongst *English Protestants* than we
B are

The Reasonableness

are yet arrived at : And tho' the method in which I now propose to do somewhat towards this, be perhaps not the most agreeable to your Wishes ; Yet it must be acceptable to you, as You profess your selves willing to attend to any offers that are made this way, and ready to conform, if your *Objections* can be fairly removed.

Now the *Reasons*, on which your whole Cause is built, I find collected by Mr. Calamy in his *tenth Chapter of the Life of Mr. Baxter* : And they are thought to be there represented with the utmost force, and after the most convincing manner possible. The best method therefore I can think of to pursue my Design in, will be this :

I. To answer the *Objections* there advanced against the *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* in our Church.

II. To shew, that the Arguments there proposed, in defence of your Selves, are not sufficient to justify your *Separation*, even supposing these *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* to be *unreasonable*.

III. To

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III. To Consider what is there offer'd for the Vindication of the *Dissenting Laity*.

Only I desire it may be remembered that I confine my self to the present Times ; and speak to those of You who continue to separate from the Church, for the *Reasons* there represented.

I. I shall consider those *Terms of Ministerial Conformity*, which are there represented as *Unreasonable*.

Now, of the *five Terms* there produced, there are but three which are at present the *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* in the *Church of England*: And they are these.

I. They that will minister in our *Church* must be ordain'd by *Bishops*.

II. They must declare their *unfeigned Assent; and Consent*, to all and every thing contain'd, and prescrib'd, in, and by, the *Book of Common-Prayer*, and administration of the *Sacraments* and other *Rites and Ceremonies* of the *Church of England*: together with the *Psalter*; and the *Form and manner* of making, ordaining, and consecrating of

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Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. They must likewise make an equivalent *Subscription.*

III. They must take the Oath of *Canonical Obedience*, and Swear Subjection to their *Ordinary* according to the *Canons* of the Church.

I. They that will *Minister* in this Church must be ordain'd by *Bishops.* The *Church of England* is indeed an *Episcopal Church.* We think we can demonstrate that in the Primitive times the administration of Ecclesiastical Affairs was in the Hands of *Bishops*, who had *Presbyters* subject to them; that as the *Apostles* maintain'd a superiority over the *Presbyters* of the Churches they constituted, so upon occasion of their absence, they settled others in this *Superiority*; that as these thus succeeding the *Apostles* had the power of *Ordination* committed to them, so their *Successours* in the following Ages claim'd this Power as their Right, and look'd upon *Ordination* to be their *Office* in the regular Course of Things. No wonder then that we require all that come into the *Ministry*, to come in at this Door, which we think open'd for that purpose by the *Apostles.* Nor do I find that any of the *Objections* You here
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urge against this do signify, that *Ordination* in the regular course of Things, ought to be administred without *Bishops*. But all that is objected is a difficulty arising from your having been before ordain'd without *Bishops*, which *Ordination* you cannot renounce, as you must do, in effect, if you submit to *Episcopal Ordination*. Taking it, therefore, for granted because I find nothing alleg'd against it, that regularly *Ordination* is not to be administred without the *Bishop*, I shall

1. Give an account why this is insisted on.

2. Answer your scruples against complying with it, as I find them express'd by *Mr. Calamy*. Premising only this, that since most of You came into the Ministry since the restoration of *Episcopacy*, and therefore have brought this difficulty voluntarily upon your selves, refusing wittingly and considerately either to conform as *Lay-men*, or to be ordain'd by *Bishops*, it seems a wonder to us that you should not be more willing to submit in this Point, and to make some recompence for this notorious neglect put upon the *Episcopal Office*, than to search out Objections against it. Much more do we

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find reason to wonder, that instead of recommending *Lay-Conformity* to such whose Consciences could heartily approve of it, and an Education in another way, you still continue to advise, prepare, and ordain others to the Ministry ; by that means laying what you account an insuperable difficulty, which would otherwise be wanting, in the way towards such an Union as you say you desire. Pardon us, if we cannot think, that this practice is agreeable to that desire of Peace and Concord you express, which seems to us as if You rather desir'd to prevent it, unless it could be brought about wholly in your own way. But I return

1. To give some account why this *Re-ordination* is insisted upon, and propose some reasons why it may be submitted to. Now the reasonableness of insisting upon this appears from this one proposition, the truth of which to us is plain, acknowledg'd by Mr. *Baxter*, and not in the least call'd in question in any of your reasonings on this Head, *viz. That Episcopal Ordination is the regular orderly Ordination settled in the Church of Christ.* This being so, as Mr. *Baxter* judges (in his *disputation with Mr. Johnson*) that the end why

See the *Abridgment*
of Mr.
Baxter's
Life, p.
129.

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we are obliged to seek Ordination rather from an Ecclesiastical Officer than from a Magistrate, &c. is, because God hath appointed him for order sake, and to prevent Intrusions and Abuses; so we argue, that the Reason why we are obliged to seek Ordination from a Bishop, rather than from Presbyters without a Bishop, is because God hath appointed Him for order sake, and to prevent Intrusions and Abuses; And because the going out of this settled way, tho' it be into another which possibly might prevent Intrusions and Abuses as well, were it the settled way, gives too much encouragement and too much room for Intrusions and Abuses. As we think with Mr. Baxter that Necessity only can answer for the irregularity of Ordination; so we think that where there is no necessity, or when this necessity ceases, God gives no encouragement to such deviations, and a Regular Ordination is to be sought for. That, therefore, it is not the solemnity of the work, the care taken, the fitness of the Person, the fasting and Prayer, that can excuse the neglect of this, or be accounted sufficient without this: because this is the method deliver'd down to us from the Apostles times, and the departing from this tends

Ibid.

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Ibid.

to the overthrow of all Order : nor can we suppose that Almighty God supplies the want of it, when no necessity can be pleaded, because *He is the God of Order, and not of Confusion.* We judge with Mr. Baxter, that *Persons (let them be never so well qualified) are to seek an orderly admission, and make others the Judges of their qualifications :* And imagining our method to be the orderly and settled method from the Primitive Ages, where we see it neglected, when there is no necessity, we think in Justice, we cannot acknowledge those who depart from it approved of God in setting apart themselves for the Ministry. We dare not think that He allows so great a neglect cast upon the Order settled in his Church ; and we dare not in our Consciences give any encouragement to a method which has disunited a whole Nation from their *Bishops ;* and such an encouragement as would be in effect, an acknowledgment that God approves of *Irregular Ordinations* upon no necessity, and would tend to introduce still more and more *Irregular Ordinations,* when ever any necessity should be pretended. This we dare not do, and taking this to be your Case, that you have neglected

neglected the way settled in the Church; and, when no necessity urged, put your selves into the Ministry in another manner, we cannot think it hard, that you should receive *Orders* in a *regular way*. This will indeed be an acknowledgment that you have been in an error: but surely this consideration will not weigh more with good Men than the Universal good, and the service you may do by giving so publick a testimony to *Order*, and *Institution*, and so great a stop to *irregularity* and *confusion*. Upon the whole, We think that, according to Mr. *Baxter*, We may insist upon this; nay, and ought; as long as we are an *Episcopal Church*. For it was his opinion (as is plain from the occasion of that Paper I have now refer'd to) that nothing but necessity can excuse those who neglect *Episcopal Ordination*; and that their *Irregular Ordination*, when there is no necessity for it, is not approv'd by *God*. I confess this argument supposes You to have no *necessity* laid upon you, which I shall now say somewhat to. You know it is an easy thing to plead *necessity*, and there is no end of *Irregularities*, if any *Necessity* be admitted but what is most apparent: for it is then only

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only that God can be said plainly to require Men to go out of the Common way, or to approve their *Irregular Proceedings*. And if you can prove that any such Necessity was laid upon You to have recourse to irregular ways, I promise, for my part, to believe that God approv'd your ordination, and does approve it as long as that necessity lasts. If You cannot, We cannot believe it, and are in conscience bound not to prevaricate, and cast the greatest reflexion imaginable upon *regular Ordination*.

Let us now, therefore, consider whether *there be such an undeniable necessity for your help; whether the safety of the Church be at Stake, and the Salvation of Men's Souls; or whether there be any other reason sufficient to justify your irregular Proceeding*. And give me leave upon this to ask You these following Questions.

Are the *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* so unreasonable in the Church of *England*, that very many Conscientious, Useful, Judicious, Pious, Excellent, Laborious Men have not conform'd, and do not daily conform as Ministers? Mr. *Baxter* acknowledg'd, and all must acknowledge, there are, and have been many such Men.
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Are there any means necessary to the Peoples Salvation wanting in the *Church of England*? Is there not a pious, and useful *Liturgy* to assist their publick Devotions? Are there not Chapters out of God's Word ev'ry day read to them? Is not the whole Will of God declared to them? Is there any thing in the administration of the Sacraments, contrary to the main design of the Gospel, or destructive of Salvation?

Is there any one thing, plainly declared to be the duty of a Minister in the Gospel, and such a Duty as is necessary either to the preservation of the Church, or the Salvation of Mankind, that a Minister in the *Church of England* cannot legally do? Cannot He exhort, reprove, be instant, instruct, admonish in private and in publick, and refuse the Holy Communion to any scandalous Christians?

If there be any thing else You imagine convenient, which He cannot do, Is it so necessary, that the State of Christianity, and the Salvation of the People depend upon it; so necessary, that you are obliged to be ordain'd after an *irregular* manner to make your selves capable of performing it?

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Or, Is this the reason you put your selves into the Ministry, because there are very few in the Church of *England* that take any care of Souls; and that there is great occasion for your help? If it be, why do ye officiate where there is no such occasion for you; where no want of the means of Salvation can be pretended? Or, if you say there is need ev'ry where of all that will labour in the Ministry, Consider whether this will not be a plea for the most unqualified in the world; and give occasion, whether You will or no, to the greatest *irregularities* imaginable: for where can we stop in *irregularities*, if we justify those for which there is no absolute necessity?

Supposing the Terms of *Episcopal Ordination* unreasonable, Can the good you propose to do in an *irregular* way, countervail the mischief of such *irregularities*; taking into the account, on one side, the good you could do in your private Capacities, if you remain'd *Lay-men*; and, on the other side, the dividing Principles, the Heats, the Uncharitableness, the Indecencies you encourage, and propagate, whether you design it or no?

Or,

Or, Must you be ordain'd to the *Ministry* for the benefit of those amongst the People who cannot submit to the administration of the Sacraments according to the Use of the *Church of England*? And are you forc'd to this irregular way, on this account? If this were truly the reason, you would certainly press *conformity* upon those who can submit to it; You would receive and encourage no such; you would help in the removal of those prejudices and groundless scruples, and teach them how to tolerate what they cannot amend; and, agreeably to this, you would receive none but such as had invincible objections against *Communion* with our *Church*: but not seeing a Practice correspondent to this plea, we cannot think this to be the true Reason. But if it be, we desire you to consider, whether you do not by this give too much countenance to a contempt of all Ecclesiastical Authority; whether do you not give too much encouragement to those who separate from us with the rankest uncharitableness; and receive and cherish those who rail at our whole worship as *Idolatrous, Antichristian, Popish, and intolerable*; or, whether it be fit, that they who
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think such Prejudices groundless, should be so fond of adding life and continuance to them, as, rather than not do it, to transgress the order settled in the Church.

The Question is, what necessity is there for your Ordination in the Ministry? and when you have thought of this necessity, see if the same necessity may not be pleaded for farther irregularities; see if it might not have been pleaded in all ages of the Church; and consider whether such *unwarrantable Ordinations* do not tend to the contempt of all *Institutions* and *Ordinances*, as we judge they do.

These Questions, and such like, considered, and answer'd with all the seriousness the subject requires, if they do not satisfy you, yet they will serve to give you some account why we insist upon *Episcopal Ordination*, and dare not give so open an encouragement to *Irregularity* as you seem to expect.

Episcopal Ordination (says Mr. Baxter) is to be sought for; and where there is not an absolute necessity God does not approve of *irregular Ordinations*:

You have not a necessity (as we judge) so absolute and so apparent, as will justify
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that neglect you have put upon the settled Order of the Church, and the irregular method you have taken;

Therefore, we dare not act as if we thought God had approv'd your *Ordination*, till you shew us this manifest and undeniable necessity; and so dare not acknowledge you Ministers without *Episcopal Ordination*.

And we judge it very hard, that *this* should be number'd amongst the unreasonable *terms* of *Ministerial Conformity*; when we think the whole point is, whether the other *terms* be unreasonable, and sufficient to justify a separation, or no. For, if they be, and it can be prov'd; this will prove such a necessity as will justify *Irregular Ordinations*, and demonstrate that God approv'd your *Ordination*: But if they be not, then no such necessity was laid upon you; and it cannot be prov'd that God approv'd your *Ordination*, or that it is hard for you to submit to a *regular Ordination*.

And we desire you to consider, whether, whilst you argue against this under the general name of *Dissenters*, you do not argue for many Ignorant Mechanicks, who cannot properly be said to have had any
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ordination but a pretended inward Call ; and for a great number of men, of whom Mr. Baxter complain'd long ago *that they made too light of Ordination.*

*Abridg-
ment P.
117.*

One thing more I am led to say upon this Subject, and that is, supposing there was a necessity of seeking *Irregular Ordinations*, such a necessity as arose only from the badness of the times, *when Bishops were put down in England*, which we are allowed by Mr. Calamy to think was the case of the *ejected Ministers* : yet this necessity could justify the *Ordination* no longer than it lasted ; and when they were restor'd, the *Ordination* was null, and another to be sought for in a *regular way*. This I say, supposing this truly the case, and the *irregular* practice grounded only upon this reason : and this Mr. Baxter leads me to, by the parallel instances He produces in his Paper about *regular Ordinations*. They are these, *In an assault of an Enemy, and the absence of a Commander, an experienc'd Soldier who has no commission may supply the place of a Commander.* The necessity answers for the *irregularity*, while the necessity lasts. But would He be acknowledg'd a *Commander*, if, when there is no necessity, He should

P. 131.

should still pretend to that office without another Commission in a regular way? *Necessity gives a man a License to practise Physick, in an extraordinary case,* and when He can have no License in a regular way. Has He therefore a License to practise when this necessity is gone, or does that License which necessity gives last any longer than the necessity it self?

At a time when it is impossible to procure a Commission from the King, suppose any Person, upon the manifest danger of that Kingdom, should take upon Him to be *Lord Deputy of Ireland*; that necessity would make all his acts valid whilst it lasted: but when He could have a *formal Commission* from the King, and would not, is it fit He should be acknowledg'd as *Governour*? or, Is the Power, which necessity convey'd to Him, after that to be obey'd? As, therefore, in these cases, *Necessity gives* a Commission to these Persons, and we allow of this necessity; as they have as much power to act upon this necessity as if they had a Commission in the most regular way; and as they cannot be acknowledg'd to act by Commission when they may, but will not, have it in a regular way, and the necessity

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ceases: so let it be in the case before us. A real necessity gives you a Commission to act, and to go out of the *regular* way. This necessity makes all your acts *valid* whilst it lasts: and they remain valid because they depend entirely upon the Power you had at the time they were done, and not at all upon the Power you have afterwards. But if you refuse to take out commissions in a *regular* way, when that necessity is gone; you have no more pretence to Power and Authority, than the Persons in the Cases before-mention'd.

I see not what can be objected here, unless it be this. Since we allow you no *Authority* in what you do now; and do not think that God approves of your *Ordination*, now you may have *Episcopal Ordination*, and refuse it; why do we not insist upon the *rebaptizing* of those who are *baptiz'd* by you &c.? why do we allow your acts valid now we grant no necessity? to which Mr. Baxter furnishes us with a reply. *If the Lord-Deputy of Ireland were dead, and one should so counterfeit the King's Hand and Seal, as that the Nobles and People could not discern it, and should annex this to a grant for the Place, and shew it to the People, and claim the Power by it; if*

if this man continue the exercise of this Power for a Year before the deceit be discover'd, all his actions must be valid as to the benefit of the Common-wealth, tho' they are treasonable to Himself. From which it is plain, That, as the Honest People ought not to suffer for the *treason* of their pretended Governour; so God will take care that the *truly honest* People shall receive no hurt for the fault of others; that, as the *King* may approve of the actions themselves, as they respect the *People*; and yet not approve of the *person's* pretensions to his authority; so Almighty God may approve of the actions of *Ministers* as they respect the honest and well-meaning *People*; and yet not approve at all of the *Minister*, consider'd as such; that, as the *Governour's* actions were valid; tho' He had really no commission; so the actions of a minister may be *valid*, and yet his *Ordination* no proper *Ordination*; which was the thing I design'd to prove from this instance. Indeed Mr. Baxter seems just before, to lay it down for a truth that *if the actions are not null, neither can the ordinations.* But, if this instance do not plainly prove the contrary; I confess I cannot understand it, *viz.*

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that the ordination may be none at all, and yet the actions not null. For it is the instance of one who has no commission, but is guilty of *Treason* in what he does; and yet the *People* are not to suffer for this, because it was impossible for them to discern it; and so his actions are not null: and yet He must have a real Commission from the *King*, before He can act in that post again. The parallel to this *Governour* and his *People*, is the *Minister* and his *People*. As the *Governour* has no authority, and yet his acts are valid; so the *Minister* may have no authority from God on his part, and yet his actions may be valid as to the *people*; Almighty God not permitting them to suffer for the fault of others.

This too may serve to give some account of the *blessing of Heaven attending your sacred Ministrations*, which you seem to us, to speak of too often; because if this may be allowed as an argument that God approv'd your *ordination*, all parties in the World will claim it; and the most *irregular* will plead it, and patronize under it the greatest *irregularities* imaginable. Pray consider this, Here is a *pretended Governour* with no *Commission*; many of his actions are perhaps for the good
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of the Common-wealth ; and yet this is no argument that he had a *Commission*, or that the *King* approv'd of his acting in his name. So here, The Actions of a *Minister* may be for the good of many honest Persons ; and yet this is no Argument that God approves his *Irregular Ordination*. . The Blessing, whenever it is, is a reward to the Honesty of the well-meaning People ; and ought not to be interpreted as an approbation of the Authority of the *Minister* : as the King's permitting the actions of that pretended Governour to be valid, is due to the Honesty of the People who could not find out the deceit; but cannot be thought an approbation of the pretences of that Person, who was guilty of *Treason*, in counterfeiting his Hand and Seal.

The result of what I have said is this: Those of You who were ordain'd by *Presbyters*, without *Bishops*, because *Episcopal Ordination* could not be had (which Mr. *Calamy* gives us leave to take for the true reason) we acknowledge to have had a *real Ordination*; and your Authority to have lasted as long as that necessity lasted ; and consequently, all your Acts valid, even as to the *authority* of them ; this *necessity* making them so as effectually as if you had had

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regular Ordination. But when that necessity ceas'd, we dar'd no more acknowledge an authority founded only upon a case of necessity, without a *regular Commission*, when it might be had, than we dare acknowledge him to be truly the *King's Vicegerent*, who, because, in case of absolute necessity, he had the command of a country without a *regular Commission*, therefore when he can have this *regular Commission*, refuses to take it. Those of you who have since the re-establishment of *Episcopacy* refus'd either to conform as *Laymen*, or to enter into the Ministry at this Door; after our most serious consideration, we cannot but judge to have put an open, and visible neglect upon *Regular Ordination*, without an apparent necessity; giving occasion by this means to more grievous Irregularities. And, therefore, tho' we think your Actions valid, through the mercy of God, to honest and well-meaning People; yet we dare not say that God approves your Ordination in a way we take to be *irregular*; nor can we consent by our actions to give encouragement to such Doctrins as this, *That Regularity is not to be regarded, whenever any Persons will pretend a necessity*: for thither this tends, how little soever
you

you design it. Consider this, and see if there be no reason why you should comply in this point; at least, if there be no reason for us to request you not to go on to lay this unnecessary bar in the way of others.

2. Having thus given some account of the reasons of what we require in this point, I will now consider those Objections I find offer'd in your Names against it. Amongst which I do not find any taken from the unreasonableness of *Episcopal Ordination*; or any thing said against it; but all that is objected is drawn from that unhappy circumstance of an *Ordination* before. And this being still the case, I shall endeavour, if what I have said before be not satisfactory, to remove these *Scruples*. What I find urg'd is comprehended under these three Heads.

1. The Peace of your own Consciences.
 2. The credit of the reformed Churches abroad.
 3. The *Scruples* of your own People. For, as to *nullifying your past Ordinations*, I hope, I have said what is sufficient.

1. As to the *Peace of your Consciences*, we are not for persuading You to act against your Consciences; to prevaricate or *play with holy Things*. But, if what I have laid down before be true, that an ir-

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regular Ordination is none at all, when there is no absolute necessity; and, supposing there was an absolute necessity, that it lasts no longer than that necessity lasts; here can be no *Playing with Holy Things*, to seek it in a *regular* way; because, according to this reasoning, You are wholly unqualified to act as *Ministers* without it. And we press it upon you seriously to consider, if this be not a fair and reasonable Account of the Matter.

2. As to the *Credit of the reformed Churches abroad*, we think it no Presumption, as we censure not them, who in a Case of necessity went out of the ordinary method, so to expect they will not censure us for not approving *Irregularities*, when there is no such necessity for them. And we judge that you your selves Act as you think just and reasonable, without that regard to them here pretended; and shall judge so, till we see you remove, alter, and reform ev'ry thing amongst you, which the Reformed Churches abroad disprove, either in their Declarations, or their Practice. Nor do we think you would allow it a good Argument for our insisting upon this, if we could produce *Reformed Churches* abroad of the same O-
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pinion with us in this Point, unless you were otherwise convinc'd.

3. As to the *Scruples of your People*, we desire to know, whether you will allow it a good Argument for our insisting upon this, that if we should admit You into the Ministry without it, this will *raise endless Scruples* in the Minds of our best and most understanding *People*; to see Men admitted, and acknowledg'd as Ministers, who have, without an absolute necessity, as they think, departed from the settled method of *Ordination*, and wilfully sought *irregular Ordinations*. Now since *We*, as well as *You*, have this Plea; is it not more fitting that this Plea should be laid aside than urg'd as an Argument against *Us*? is it not more becoming, on each side, to argue from the *reasonableness* or *unreasonableness* of the thing it self, than from the *Scruples* of the *People*? unless perhaps it be worth while to enquire, whether the *Scruples* on the part of *Regular Ordinations* be not to be much more regarded, than the *Scruples* on the part of *Irregular Ordinations*. We desire you to consider, whether, if you your selves were satisfied of the *reasonableness* of this, You have not influence enough upon your *People*

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to persuade them against *unreasonable scruples*. A thing, which if you had seriously undertaken, how much good might you have done! how much Evil might you have prevented! Now, if you cannot agree to this, because the thing is unreasonable; why are the *People's Scruples* pretended? If the thing be reasonable, and yet not to be done because it would raise *Scruples* in the People; then it is a good argument for not doing a *reasonable* thing, that it will raise *scruples* in others. But this we hardly think to be your opinion, because this would be laying a necessity upon your selves very often of acting unreasonably: and also, because we conceive your *practice* to be against this. Nothing can raise more endless scruples in your people, than *Occasional Communion* with a Church, from which you have made a formal *Separation*. They have been fill'd with amazement and uneasiness, and have not known which way to turn themselves; and perhaps have been induc'd by it to stretch their own Consciences a little, and furnish themselves with distinctions, against they should have occasion for them. And the reasons for this conduct, if I remember right, are declared to be such as the *People* are hardly

ly capable judges of: and yet the demonstration of your *Love and Charity to those You have separated from*, is profess'd to be, in your opinion, of more account than the *scruples* of your *People*. Nay, by this conduct you do the very thing, which you are afraid of doing, if you should submit to *Episcopal Ordination*. For by this you lead the poor people to think that this *separation is not necessary*; (as you acknowledge your selves) and, therefore, that there was no necessity for you to seek *Ordination* in an *irregular way*; and, therefore, that your *Ordination* is not approv'd of God, but is null; and, therefore, that your *ministrations are invalid*. When you can reconcile this *Occasional Communion* with the necessity of a *Separation*, in their opinions; and remove their scruples on this account, by plainly convincing them, that *constant Communion may be a sin, where occasional Communion is so far from being a sin, that it is a duty*; then I will undertake to remove their scruples on the other account; and make it as plain as the light to them, *That your ministrations may be valid as to them, and yet your Ordinations null*. In the mean while, we think it a reasonable argument, If the

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Scruples of the People ought not to hinder you from showing your Charity, in a way which raises scruples in them ; The scruples of the People ought not likewise to hinder you from showing your regard to *Regularity and Order* , in a way which raises scruples in them ; and ought not, therefore, to make up one of your Reasons against *Conformity* in this point.

Thus much may suffice for the first Head. And in all that I have said upon it, I only take this for granted, that *Episcopal-Ordination is the regular Ordination* , which your reasonings under this Head give me leave to suppose. From whence it follows, that your *Ordination is irregular*. From hence I argue, that, as long as we are an *Episcopal Church*, and as long as we imagine your *Separation*, and your *irregular Ordination* unnecessary, we cannot (according to Mr. Baxter's reasoning) acknowledge your *Ordination* such as God approves of ; we must not, in conscience, give any encouragement to *Unnecessary irregularities* ; and, therefore, hope we are not to blame in insisting upon *Episcopal Ordination*. To conclude this head, As you, if you were persuaded that your *Ordination* in an *irregular way* was *unnecessary*,
could

could not but own that God did not approve of it; and, therefore, could not but submit to a *regular* one: so We, while we think it so, cannot possibly but think that God disapprov'd it; and, therefore, cannot but insist upon a *regular* one, before we acknowledge You truly Ordain'd.

II. The *Second* of those *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* which you cannot comply with is this, that Ministers must declare their *unfeigned Assent and Consent to all and ev'ry thing contain'd, and prescrib'd, in, and by, the Book, Intituled the Book of Common-Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church; together with the Psalter or Psalms of David; and the form or manner of making, ordaining and consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons.* And they must also (and that *Ex animo*) subscribe these Words, *That the Book of Common-Prayer, and of Ordaining Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, containeth in it nothing contrary to the Word of God; and that it may lawfully be used: and that they themselves will use the Form in the said Books prescrib'd, in publick Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and no other.* That the subscribing this *ex animo*, i. e. sincerely

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sincerely, and heartily, should be esteem'd a Grievance, is, I confess, a strange Thing; But the Church I see, is sure to be found fault with both ways. If this Subscription had been requir'd without this; then the Answer would have been, we dare not subscribe this, because we cannot do it *ex animo*, and are afraid of *Stretching our Consciences, and playing with Subscriptions and Oaths*. And yet now the Subscription is required to be *ex animo*; this very thing is reckon'd amongst the Circumstances that add to the unreasonableness of it.

The first thing I find objected that concerns my present design, is *the Comprehensiveness of this requir'd Declaration*, aggravated with such Hardships, that I will be bold to say, If we use all other *publick Declarations* after the same manner, it is impossible to comply with any one; and yet (in my opinion) aggravated so unhappily, as to expose and betray even your own design in aggravating it.

For your Comment upon the form of this declaration is this, *Words could scarce be devis'd by the wit of man more full; and more significant; whereby the Ministers might testify their highest justification, and commendation; of every point and syllable,*
every

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every Rite and Ceremony, every matter and thing contain'd in the whole Book, and in every page and line of it. In which words I verily think you effectually confute the thing which you would establish: and to these words I appeal, and to every unprejudic'd person who can read them, *if the wit of man could not have devis'd words more full and significant* of this approbation you mean, than the words in which our *Assent* and *Consent* is to be declared. For I think you your selves have. And let any one but compare these two sentences together, one of which contains what the Act requires; and the other what you say it requires; and then let him judge whether they be the same. The words of the Act are these, *You shall declare your unfeigned Assent and Consent to the Use of all things in the said Book contain'd, and prescrib'd in these words,* I do here declare my unfeigned Assent and Consent to all and every thing contain'd and prescrib'd in, and by the Book intituled &c. Your way of expressing it is this, *You shall declare, not only your consent to the use of this Book, but your assent to the truth of every proposition contain'd in the Prefaces, Rules, Rubrics and Prayers in this Book, in these words,*
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I do here testify my highest justification and condemnation of every Point and Syllable, every Rite and Ceremony, every matter and thing, contained in the whole book, and in every page and line of it. I need not ask the Reader whether there be no difference; and whether the latter be not somewhat more than an interpretation of the former. But what follows is much worse than this.

I little thought indeed from some parts of Mr. *Calamy's* Book; from his severe reflexions upon any that have treated the *Nonconformists* after the same manner; from that great regard to *Peace, Truth,* and *Decency,* He every where professeth; I little thought, I say, to meet with such Stuff (quoted out of an Authour selected for that purpose) as He knows in his conscience is nothing to the argument He is upon; and only tends to vilifie and ridicule the *Common-Prayer Book,* and Strengthen the unreasonable prejudices of the multitude against it. But how severely soever He reflect upon others; yet, He himself, in treating of *publick declarations,* cannot forbear (as he expresses it) *transcribing* from one *private* and unregarded Authour, a passage, because it is admirable
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for its peculiarity; and cannot forbear to talk, as if it was requir'd in the Church of England to believe that e'ry tittle of the Common prayer Book was dictated by the Holy Ghost; and as if the Poor Nonconformists had been ejected for not having the Spirit of discerning this.

You cannot take it amiss if I express my self with some Heat upon such an occasion; because these things set us at an irreconcilable distance from one another; and it may justly be demanded of you, either to discountenance such practices amongst your selves, or else to allow and approve them in others as well as your selves. For I leave it to you to consider if this be just. This person (I give it you, as near as I can, in his own words upon a like occasion) *having met with a weak passage of one Conforming Minister, produces it for matter of Reproach: and having found some crude and unmeet expressions drop'd by a private Person, he-brings them forth, esteeming him to speak as foolishly as he could desire, and only such silly things as he knew he could easily shame. And thence he argues against approving, or being fond of, the Common-Prayer Book; as if a man should go to prove the Worship of Christians or Protestants foolish, because there are some weak persons*

*Abridg-
ment p.
589.*

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to be found amongst them. This method of arguing is too much suited to the Humours of these, who not only hate the Conformists, but are despisers, and deriders of all serious Worship and Devotion, who are hereby confirm'd in their contempt and scorn of Worship and Devotion in general. Or, If He rather choose the reproof of Sir Matthew Hale, than his own; He may find it in the same page, and He will easily see how to apply it to himself. And how much more justly it belongs to this Author, than to that person on whom he hath fixed it, will appear, if we consider the difference of the two cases. For it is one thing to expose what is very weak and silly; and thence to argue against that only which is founded upon what is so weak and silly; and another thing to produce what is weak and ridiculous, as an argument against what is not so. It is one thing to gather together the follies of many Persons, and to expose only these follies; and another thing to bring forth ridiculous stuff out of one neglected Author, and from thence to argue against being fond of a Book, out of which no such ridiculous Stuff can be quoted. This indeed is exactly (in Mr. C's own words)

as if one should argue against Christianity from the weakness of some who have defended it; but, how the exposing the weaknesses amongst some of it's professors can be so interpreted, I cannot see. For if there be reasonings, and expressions, that deserve this way of treatment; and this be often the most successful way of handling them; perhaps the good that it may do one way, will countervail the mischief it can do another. And I find very wise and serious persons, your selves, and your own advocates, as well as others, of this opinion; if we may judge by their practice. I have seen the silly reasonings of a *Papist* Advocate expos'd, even when they concern'd the grounds of Christianity: I have seen the follies of some conforming Preachers made ridiculous: and both as I thought, not with any disadvantage to the common Christianity. And if there be some, the grounds of whose *Nonconformity* are so weak, as you seem to grant; why may not these be thus treated, so long as what is not so ridiculous be not exposed for the sake of what is? Expose these Quotations, you have here made, as much as you please, it will neither offend us, nor hurt our cause; but

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rather help to put an end to such ridiculous arguments: but do not produce them as arguments against *Assent*, and *Consent*; or against *approving the Common-Prayer Book*, in which there is not the least shadow of any thing like them. This is what comes under the censure of all good Christians. This is *false Logick*, as well as *unbecoming*; professedly teaching men to think ill of what is good, for the sake of what is bad. Pardon this digression: I could not help taking notice of this ungrateful and unseasonable passage, as it came in my way. What I have said is not to be taken, as if I delighted in such a way of writing: but only as opposed to one, who hath been so severe upon others, and yet hath so sadly offended himself. I now return with much more willingness to endeavour your satisfaction in the point we are now upon. And, in order to this, I must entreat you to consider,

1. That we are commanded to confine this *Assent*, and *Consent*, to the *use* of all things contain'd, and prescrib'd, in this Book, by the express words of the *AET* it self; and forbid plainly by it to refer the *Consent* to the *use* of all things, and the *Assent* to the *truth* of every proposition,

as you do; as plainly forbid as we can be. For the Act it self applies both these words to the *use*, and the *use* only; injoyning the Minister to *declare his Assent and Consent* both, to the *use of all things in this Book*. Whoever, therefore, declares his *Assent* to the truth of every proposition in it, and his *consent* to the *use* of every thing prescrib'd in it; tho' he do not do more than he himself may think lawful; yet He certainly does more than this *Act* requires, and must be at some pains to reconcile it with the intent of the Act plainly declared. You shall declare both your *Assent*, and *Consent*, to the *use* of all things in this Book, says the *Act* expressly. No, say some, Rather than we will do this, we will make a difficulty here, and say that we are required to *Consent* to one thing, and *Assent* to another. By what authority, I pray you, can this be done? You can plead no foundation for this in the intent of the *Act*, as far as it is declared; because *that* determines *one* as well as the *other*, *Assent* as well as *Consent*, only to the *use* of the Book. So that the Act does not leave you at liberty, if you would never so fain, to make this declaration in your hard Sense; for,

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it requires you not to do it, but to give both *Assent* and *Consent* to one thing, even the *use* of this Book. Now We entreat you not to persist in creating more difficulties than there really are. And that what I have said upon this head may have the more effect, I shall propose to you,

Abridgm.
P. 585.

2. The Example of Dr. Bates, and sundry other Nonconformists, to the number of Twenty; who took an Oath that *they would not at any time endeavour any alteration in the Government either in Church or State, as soon as ever the Lord Keeper had declared openly, that by Endeavour was meant Unlawful Endeavour.* The Lord Keeper then did in effect say thus to them, *You shall Swear that you will not unlawfully endeavour an alteration in Church or State, in these words, I will not at any time endeavour any alteration of the Government either in Church or State.* And the Act of Uniformity says, *You shall declare your Assent and Consent to the use of all things in this Book, in these words, &c.* If, therefore, upon the authority of one single person, they thought it reasonable to confine the word *endeavour* to *Unlawful endeavour*; much more must they think it reasonable, upon the

the authority of that *Act* it self which requires this declaration, to apply both *Assent*, and *Consent*, only to the *use* of this Book. In the one case you have only the opinion of one learned Lawyer that it was meant so ; In the other you are left at no liberty, but are absolutely determined by the very *Parliament* that made the *Act*, that it was meant so. But I argue further, supposing the *Act* it self did not determine both *Assent* and *Consent* to the *use* of the Book, yet

3. The nature, manner, and form of all *Law-deeds*, and *publick declarations*, require this way of Intrepretation, and condemn the other. This is drawn up according to the manner of our Law, in which nothing so common as to gather together words of very little or no difference in their signification, and to apply them all to one thing. Thus, to *give* and to *grant*, tho' there be some small difference in their signification, to *renounce* and *abjure*, and these very words *Assent* and *Consent*, with a hundred other different Terms, are found to be applied to one and the same thing. And, therefore, if the *Act* had only said, you shall declare that you agree to the use of all things in this Book, in

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these words; yet I should have thought it much more reasonable, from the constant form of expressing such declarations, to have applied both words to one thing; than to have argued the contrary way, from the use of two different words. And, therefore, had not the *Act* done it for us, we think it needs no *evasion*, or *distinction*, to determine both *Absent* and *Consent* to the use of the *Common-Prayer Book*; to the use of all things *contain'd* in, and *prescrib'd* by it. But the *Act* has really done it for us. Supposing, therefore, that some of the first promoters of this *Act* had evil and pernicious designs; yet since it is a most usual thing in our *Legal Forms* to apply two or more words to one and the same thing; and since we are all agreed that one of these words ought to be applied to the use of this Book; I think we may, without the least violence to the words, or our own Consciences, apply them *both* to *that* only, there being nothing against it in the *Act* it self.

Having, therefore, shewn that this *declaration* may fairly and honestly be made with respect only to the use of this Book, supposing the *Act* had not so plainly determined it; having prov'd from the practice

Opinion of some eminent men amongst your selves, that if one single person of authority in the *State*, determine any *word* in an *Oath* to one certain signification, which is not so plainly determin'd to it in the *Oath* it self, the *Oath* may be lawfully taken; Having plainly demonstrated, that this *Act* it self (the greatest authority we could have) has determin'd expressly both *Assent* and *Consent* to the *Use* of this *Book*; and is so far from making this *declaration* respect the *truth of every proposition in it*, that it never mentions the thing, but says, in effect, what utterly excludes this sense of the words; we humbly hope, that we shall not any more hear of *stretching our Consciences* in this point; and that *You* will not continue to maintain prejudices against this *Act*, which it gives you not the least occasion to take up.

As for the *Subscription* required, I never heard that it was esteem'd any considerable difficulty; nor do I see how it can be, if it be explain'd according to its original design; which appears plainly to be none but this, that all who *minister* in this Church should be under an obligation to *use* this *Book*. Accordingly three things they are required to subscribe.

1. *That*

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1. *That the Book of Common-Prayer, and of ordering Bishops, Priests, and Deacons containeth in it nothing contrary to the word of God.* 2. *That it may lawfully so be used.* 3. *That they themselves will use the Form in the said Book prescribed, in publick Prayer, and administration of the Sacraments; and none other.* Where it is plain, that this Book is consider'd only as a Book fram'd to direct the Behaviour of those who officiate in publick; what Prayers and what Ceremonies they are to use; without having any regard to every particular sentence inserted in the *Prefaces*, or *Rubrics*, which do not respect, or direct the Behaviour of the *Minister*. I say not this, because I think there are any such sentences in the *Prefaces* or *Rubrics*, which are *contrary to God's word*; for I know of no such: but only because I am perswaded this was the original design of the *Subscription*. Nay, those few sentences, not relating to the use of the *Minister*, which you except against, cannot be thought *contrary to God's word*, even by you who think them *not true*; for granting them *false*, I do not see how they contradict any thing in the whole *Bible*.

I have been the more concern'd upon the matter of this *declaration* and *subscription*, because (though I be convinc'd that it is a great crime for any one to profess his sense of any thing in words not consistent with it; yet, on the other hand) I am so far from thinking it a vertue, that I cannot but account it a thing of very ill consequence, and a piece of publick disservice, to deal very hardly with *declarations* and *subscriptions*; to stretch them beyond what the original design of them, or the words in which they are express'd, will fairly and honestly bear, in order to make them appear as rigid and unreasonable as possible. What I think, and hope, I have prov'd, under this Head, may be reduc'd to this; That the declaration of *Assent and Consent* cannot possibly be extended to any thing but the use of this Book: and that the *subscription* concerns this Book, only as it is a Book directing the *Minister* what *Prayers* and what *Ceremonies* to use; and has no reference to any thing in it that does not concern the *Minister* who is to use it. And from hence it follows, that whoever thinks this Book fit to be used in the service of God, may very fairly make this
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declaration and subscription, without putting a stretch either upon the words, or upon his own conscience. And I think it cannot be thought unreasonable, that all who minister in this Church be obliged to use this Liturgy, and publickly to declare they will use it.

I proceed now to examine the *Reasons*, given in your names, why you think this *Subscription* and *Déclaration* unlawful, and not to be complied with.

1. *This Subscription, and Declaration, would be an approbation of the Doctrine of Real Baptismal Regeneration, and certain Salvation consequent thereupon. For, it would be an approbation of that Rubric, that it is certain by God's word, that Baptiz'd Children dying before actual sin, are sav'd; and it would be an agreement to use constantly after Baptism a Thanksgiving to God, for that it hath pleas'd him to regenerate the Infant with his holy Spirit. This is your first Reason.*

The former part of this relating to the *Rubric*, I deny; having, as I think, shewn before, that both the *Declaration, and Subscription*, concern only your *use* of the *Book*; not your *highest justification, and commendation, of every point and Syllable,*
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every matter and thing, contain'd in the whole Book, and in every page and line of it. But I need not insist upon this. For all the difficulty here is that of a *real Baptismal Regeneration*; and not of *Salvation consequent thereupon*. Supposing this, it is true; and, you say, the Office does suppose it. But, in my opinion, this is undoubtedly true, as it was design'd a part by it self for a general proposition: nor should I ever have call'd it in Question. For is it not true, and what every Body doubts not to say, that *Baptism admits persons into a State of favour with God?* and would any one scruple to subscribe this truth, because there may be a person dipt in Water, whom God does not accept to *Baptism*? I believe not, because the proposition speaks only of persons *duly Baptiz'd*. And, does it not follow from hence, that if they die without having done any thing to put 'em out of this State, they shall be saved? You must be sensible that there is no want of texts to prove the former; and that the latter is as plain a consequence from it as one would wish. Pray consider if it be not very hard to deal as you do with this general Sentence. Consider that
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there is a great deal of difference between these two propositions, *Every individual Child, whom the Minister receives to Baptism, whether he is a qualified subject of Baptism or not, dying after this, without actual Sin is saved, and, Children which are Baptiz'd according to God's word, dying without actual Sin, are saved*: and remember, that you can never prove the words to be incapable of this Sense; or that any other was ever intended, or so much as thought of by those who plac'd them here. And that you your selves sometimes understand it without reference to this Church, or this office, is plain from your supposed instance which follows. And sure you cannot think, if this was said of *Baptiz'd Children* in general, without respect to the *prescriptions* of this, or any other Church, that any children were intended by it, but such as are *duly Baptiz'd*, and admitted into the Church according to God's will. Indeed if you demand such a text of Scripture for the *Salvation* of some whom, you say, our Church admits to *Baptism*, as you produce for their *damnation*; we acknowledge, we shall never be solicitous to produce one. We *freely confess our ignorance*; and own that

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we are so foolish as to think that, in the *Second Commandment*, Almighty God, neither by *Children* understood *Infants dying before actual sin*; nor in the *punishment* He speaks of there, had the least respect to their condition in *another World*; nay, we judge it contrary to his nature, and all his declarations, to determine the future estate of any person by the behaviour of another. If this be all that *might make the matter dubious*, I'm sure it may be as true a proposition as ever was laid down for all this. And when you can shew that this Text ought to be understood either of such *Infants*, or of the *punishments* of *another world*, I will undertake to produce as many as you can demand for the *salvation* of all *Infants*. What is farther *objected* is taken from some *supposed Cases*, design'd to prove that according to this doctrine *it is in the power of Men to give Salvation*. We must confess that we are utterly at a loss what to say to such objections; and utterly surpriz'd, when we meet with such distant and extraordinary suppositions drawn in to prove the falshood of a proposition fram'd for a *Christian Country*, and relating only to *Children* duly baptiz'd. But we reply, that

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that this *Salvation* depends wholly upon *God's* accepting the persons (which this *Rubric* obligeth us not to affirm He does, in such cases as you here put) and that your supposed *Christian King* has no more real power of giving salvation to *Infants* (tho' it should be true that the *Infants* he murders are sav'd) than a *Pagan King* would have, should he conquer a Country of good Christians and kill them all immediately; and yet it may be true that *all good Christians are sav'd*; or no more than every good Christian has the *gift of Salvation* in his power when he brings his Child to Baptism: nay, no more than a *Fever*, or any distemper that kills them has the *gift of Salvation* in its power. Give me leave to tell you, that it is such unaccountable *objections* as this; the stress that seems to be laid upon them; and the study with which they appear to have been sought for; that make some in the world so apt to suspect, and so forward to declare, that No agreement can ever be hop'd for.

But I must not forget to say something to this *Baptismal Regeneration* which you object against. I am so little acquainted with the *Art of Distinguishing*, that I know

no difference between a *regeneration* and a *real regeneration*. If there be a *regeneration*, I think it is *real*: and if there be a *real regeneration*, it is to be ascribed to the *Spirit of God*. And because it always appear'd to me that whoever was received into the *Christian Church* by God's Minister, with Prayers directed by the Congregation to *God*, and with sufficient security for his good education, was duly received and according to God's will; I never doubted but that God received such to his favour, and heard the Prayers of his People, and approved of their Baptism: and because I thought they were duly made *Christians*, I could not but think the *Holy Spirit of God* resided in them; as they were now the *Temples of God*. The Scripture leads us to think thus; and, consequently, to think, that they are *regenerated* (in the Scripture-notion of that word) as they are enter'd into this new estate; and that by the *Holy Ghost*, as they are intitled to all his influences and assistances; purchased by the blood of Christ. We know not of any thing in Scripture to induce us to think otherwise; and, therefore, we do not separate what *St. Paul* hath joyn'd together, the *washing of regeneration*

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tion, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. 3. 5. in speaking of the whole *Christian Church*. But we can hardly persuade our selves that you believe as you speak, when you say, your Reason for not concurring with us in this, is, *for fear of contributing to the hardning of careless men in the opinion that they are regenerate, and need no farther care.* We, on the contrary, think the point now before us a persuasive argument to the greatest care and diligence. For if men were *regenerated by the Holy Ghost, and made the Temples of God by Baptism*, how much does it concern them to live as such; not to defile the *temple of God*, or drive his *Spirit* from them? And in this we flatter our selves that we imitate *St. Paul*, and the other *Apostles*, who in their writings have said this very thing, and all the glorious things imaginable of all professed *Baptiz'd Christians* in general; and yet never thought them an encouragement to security, but always insisted on them as the properest arguments to the greatest care and diligence. And it would be worth while to enquire, whether the same objections do not lye against what *St. Paul* affirms of *Baptiz'd Christians*, as do against what our *Church* says of them. The

The only difficulty here, as I think, is the admitting *all Comers* to Baptism, *without a liberty of refusing the Children of Infidels, or the most scandalous Sinners, provided they have but Sponsors*, as you express it. Now this office of our Church was certainly fram'd for a *Christian Country*; a Country where all were professed Christians, and respects the Children of such. And, as for those *extraordinary Cases* in which our *Church* is supposed to allow *Baptism*, where is the great fault, and where is the ill consequence of thinking, that, if any persons solemnly undertake the good and Christian education of a Child, they have hereby a sufficient right to devote him to God; that the *Church* hath sufficient reason to receive the *Infant*; that God will, of his infinite mercy, in regard to their Prayers and good designs look favourably upon him? I say, where is the crime of thinking this? what great design of Christianity, what precept of the Gospel doth this contradict? But I know not that Baptism may not, according to the *Church of England*, be denied to the Children of *Atheists, Jews, Infidels &c.* For the Office supposes a *Christian Country*, and *Christian Parents*. And, as

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for the Children of *Professed Christians*, I account the *Profession* of Christianity in their Parents sufficient to entitle them to *Baptism*; as I find, in the Apostle's days, the *Profession* only of *Faith in Christ* (whether sincere or not) was sufficient to entitle any to it. To proceed,

2. The *Second Objection* against this *Assent, Consent, and Subscription*, is this, that they extend to the use of *Godfathers and Godmothers in Baptism*, to the *Exclusion of Parents*. But here we must complain that this is not truly and fairly represented; but express'd so as best serves to raise and encrease the aversion of the people to the Church. We desire you to consider, whether the *Parents* be not to provide these *sponsors*; whether the *Parents*, in providing what the Church thinks requisite, and offering their Children to *Baptism*, with this security for their good education, do not truly and properly themselves devote their Children by *Baptism* to God; whether this be not their own act and deed as much as if they had no *sponsors*; whether any *Christian* may not engage himself solemnly for the good education of another; and whether his own willingness, do not
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give him right sufficient to do this; whether the *Parents* own act, where there are *Parents*, in offering the *Child* to Baptism, and providing these *sponsors* in order to it, be not supposed in the Office, and, consequently, whether their Faith (in all ordinary Cases) be not the supposed ground of the *Child's* Baptism (according to our Church) as the Country is *Christian*, and as the *Parents* are required to provide for their *Children* these *sponsors*; and, lastly, whether the grossest abuse of an institution, which, if it were but duly regarded, would be most useful, be a sufficient argument against the institution itself. Now, if *the Parents* be to provide these *Sponsors*, why should it be urg'd, that they are not requir'd to be chosen with due Care; when this certainly will be proportionable to the care and concern the *Parents* themselves have for their *Children*; and if they have none, how will the matter be mended by admitting the *Parents* without the *Sponsors*? And we imagine, that if you had been as diligent in finding out useful *Canons*, as those you account so liable to exception, you would have seen one that shews, that they who require *God-fathers* and *God-mothers*, re-

Can. 29.

quire also, that none should be admitted as such, *before they have received the holy Communion*; and, therefore, ought not to be represented, as if they had taken no manner of care about this, *but opened a wide door to the Profaning this Solemnity*. We confess our selves so short-sighted, that we cannot plainly discern how the method of our *Church* tends to the *Profaning this Ordinance*, more than the administering it without *Sponsors*. In the next place, *If these Parents, in providing what the Church requires; in offering their Children to Baptism, with Sponsors; do sufficiently and effectually testifie their resolution to devote their Children to God; and this devoting them in this way be their own Act*; We desire to know, with what justice the *Church* is taxed with *justling Parents out of their right*; and the People incensed against it by such Phrases as these, as against an unnatural and cruel oppressour? Again, *If the Faith of the Parents (in all ordinary Cases) and their providing these Sponsors themselves, and offering their Children to Baptism with these, be supposed by our Church; and be in truth the ground of the administration of this rite in a Christian Country*; why is the *Contrary* maintain'd

tain'd and fix'd upon the *Church*, as if it were the plain declaration, and professed doctrine of it? Again, *If it be agreeable to the Christian Religion, that a Christian may solemnly take upon him the good education of an Infant*; what need is there of a *natural right, or Positive Law*? and how comes the want of these to be an objection against a lawful, I may say, a commendable action? Last of all, *If the grossest abuse of an institution in it self useful* (as we take this to be) *be not a sufficient argument against the institution*; what do you propose to your selves by arguing from the carelessness of *God-fathers* against the use of them at all? Were all the *Ministers* in the Land forgetful of their *Ministerial Obligations*; would it therefore follow that it was not a useful thing for them publickly to own these obligations when they were made *Ministers*? Did all who own their *Baptismal Covenant* in your way prove the most careless and sinful Men afterwards; would you acknowledge the thing it self useless, or lay it aside? yet in this case it might be said, *they were brought to avouch a great untruth in the face of God and his Church*. For you can no more prove that they are sincere, than we can

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that *God-fathers* are, at the time when they solemnly profess themselves as if they were. But above all, it is very hard, that you should speak here, as if this encourag'd Parents in a carelessness about their Children; or as if the Church took off any part of their duty from them, by providing more effectually for their Children's advantage. *Good Parents* can never take advantage from this institution to be unnatural, and careless of their Children; *Bad Parents* may, but then they would have been as careless without it; and their Children in a much worse condition. And though we bewail the little regard many *God-fathers* have to the serious part of their Office (without thinking this an argument against the Church) yet we hope there are some so sensible of their obligations, that they omit no opportunity of doing their duty.

3. The Third, Fourth, and Fifth Reasons why you cannot conform as *Ministers*, are, because this *Assent, Consent, and Subscription*, would oblige you to deny *Baptism* to such as had not *Sponsors*, tho' they had a real right to that Ordinance; and to the Children of such as would not permit them

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them to be sign'd with the transient sign of the Cross; and to deny the Communion to such as would not receive it Kneeling. I put these three together, because they come under the common Head of *Terms of Communion*, and *Impositions*, against which your zeal seems chiefly to lye; and because the *argument* manag'd under these Heads is not so much design'd against the things themselves, as against the making them *Terms of Communion*; the lawfulness of which I shall now consider; and so remove, if I can, those objections here brought against it. Only, because you have advanc'd something against the *use of the Cross in Baptism*, as well as against the *imposing* it, I must take some notice of that first, and then I shall come to the matter of *Impositions*.

All your Argument against this is at last resolv'd into these three; that this *seemeth* to be a new Sacrament; that it *looks* as if Baptism were not a sufficient Bond without this; nay, at last we find it express'd thus, that though the Church hath declared this sign to be *in token the person shall not be ashamed &c.* yet since the generality are apt to understand it, that *in virtue and power of this sign the person*

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person shall not be ashamed, *You dare not concur in giving occasion knowingly of such a mis-understanding to the vulgar and injudicious.* But give us leave to examine what is here objected more carefully. One reason then against it, is, that *you dare not concur in giving an occasion of such a mis-understanding to the vulgar and injudicious.* You dare not use the words *in token*, because *they* may be apt to think you do not mean *in token* of something signified, but *in virtue and power* of the sign it self. Now, what end of our differences can we ever hope for, if such methods be taken; if, when there is no reason against a thing what is acknowledg'd to be *unreasonable* shall be made an objection against it, by those very persons who, in many other cases, do themselves knowingly give occasion of *mis-understanding* to persons somewhat more *judicious* than those who can understand words in a sense, which it is impossible they should be meant in? I could give many more instances, but I will mention but one. *Dare you not concur in Occasional Communion*, because some of the *Vulgar and injudicious*, You very well know, have had *mis-understandings* about it? If you *dare*, why do you argue
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here, as if *You dar'd not concur* in this for that one Reason? which we cannot believe, till we see you omit all other things which you your selves think fit or proper, for the same reason. But while you use our service thus, we imagine you have done it some credit, by granting as you here do, That they are *injudicious* persons who can understand by the words here us'd, that any *grace* is supposed by the *Church* to be wrought by this sign, or the use of it; that the words must be *mis-understood* before any such thing can be made out of them; and, consequently, that they must be *injudicious* persons that can think this a new *Sacrament*.

Another argument against the *use* of this Sign is, that *it looks as if Baptism, as Christ had appointed it, were not esteem'd a Bond sufficiently firm and strong*. Not by us, who have declared in exprefs and plain words, that *Baptism is compleat without it*, and the Infant a *Christian* as much before as after it. Besides, We imagine that such an objection as this; as strong, and as concluding, may be made against you, or any who use any *Prayers at Baptism*; or administer it with the addition of the least circumstance to the primitive institution

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tution. For all this *looks as if Baptism, as Christ had appointed it, were esteem'd* not sufficient to entitle the Infant to the favour of God, or to the purposes for which it was instituted. You know it is sufficient without one Prayer; and yet this is no objection to you against the use of Prayers at such a Solemnity.

Another objection against it is, that *it seemeth a new Sacrament added to Christ's*. But, if it only *seem* so; and if the words must be mis-understood before it *seem* so (as you here grant) then we account it very unjust for you to assist in perplexing this cause; and to advance arguments to prove what you think, your selves, they do not prove. Now, what is a *Sacrament*? You say, *It is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace &c.* Let it be so, and by this let any one judge between us. The words in the *Common-Prayer Book* I interpret thus, *We receive this Child into the Congregation of Christ's Flock, as one who is now a Baptiz'd Christian; and, as such, do sign him with the sign of the Cross, to signify that, as he is a Christian, and, consequently, a Servant of Him who died upon the Cross, He is obliged never to be ashamed of the Faith*

Faith of Christ crucified; but to glory in it amidst all the scorns the profession of this Religion can expose Him to. I am not apprehensive that here is any constraint put upon the words; nay, they appear to me to be incapable of any other meaning. The things to be considered here are, not so much the *sign of the Cross* it self, as the *signing the Infant with that sign* (for that it is that was design'd to betoken what follows) and the thing signified by that *signing* of the Infant; which is, that, as He is a Baptiz'd Christian, He is obliged to profess manfully the faith of *Christ crucified*. Now, as far as I can see, Here is not the least tittle of grace attributed to the *sign of the Cross*, or to the *signing of the Infant with it*. For the thing signified by this *signing the Child with the cross*, is not, as you say, *Christ crucified, with the Benefits of his cross* (tho' what the Canon says may be true, that under the name of the *Cross* in Holy Scripture they are often signifi'd, which is quite a distinct consideration) but the thing signified by it is, that the Infant is a Christian Baptiz'd, and, as such, the disciple of a Crucified Saviour. Nor is the *Image of the cross appointed to work this grace by way of exciting*

exciting signification. For no grace is attributed to it. Nor is *the signing the Infant with this sign* appointed to work any grace; but only to signify that the Infant, as a Christian, is obliged to confess and worship a Crucifi'd Saviour manfully and constantly. And what is here of a *New Sacrament* in your own sense of the word? Here is indeed an *outward and visible sign*; but not a *sign of an inward and spiritual grace*; not pretended to be *ordained by Christ*; not used, or in the least meant, as a *means whereby we receive any grace, or, a pledge to assure us thereof.* Go from the *Common-Prayer Book* to the *Canon*; explain it as rigidly as possible, so as to make it contradict it self, and the most natural meaning of the words in our service; and, after all, I am sure it is impossible to make out this charge. And after this, I shall only ask one Question. Do you think, in your consciences, that any Reformed Divines, either of this Church, or any other, with whom you agree in your notions about a *Sacrament*, would ever have begun, or maintain'd, a charge against the Church of *Rome* for making *New Sacraments*, upon such a foundation as you still continue to do against the
Church

Church of England? Had they only seem'd new Sacraments; Had the *injudicious* only *mis-understood* their words, and built their reasonings upon such *mis-understandings*; Had the Romanists, by publick Acts, and by all the writers that handled this subject, declared that, tho' they used an *external significant ceremony*, yet, they attributed no *grace* to it; nothing which either they, or their adversaries attributed to a *Sacrament*; which of our *Reformers* would have continued to have tax'd them with this? which of them would have solicitously drawn up some obscure and almost unintelligible arguments against such proof on the contrary side? which of them would not have been glad to have drop't such a charge upon such plain proof? which of them would have argued against the use of one little part of their publick service which only concerns the *Minister*, because the *injudicious* will interpret a word in a sense of which *judicious* men say it is uncapable? Not one, I verily believe.

And as we cannot agree with you in these Reasons against the *use of this sign*, as it is appointed in our Church; so neither do we think it a sufficient one for the total

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tal neglect of it, *that we may witness our dislike and detestation of the vanity of the Papists herein.* We imagine that we witness our dislike and detestation of the Superstition of the Papists by neglecting that use of it they plead for; by reducing it to a sober and single act; by guarding it from all possibility of *Idolatry and Superstition*; by making it wholly different from what it is amongst them. And we are unwilling to give them so great an advantage against us, as we verily think it would be, if we should, in reforming from them, not only reject and condemn the abuse of a thing, but the thing itself merely because they use it after a superstitious manner. We are of opinion that this principle hath been the cause of great deformities, and irregularities in the Church; and when it is observ'd, that we run from a Custom, or a posture, or a ceremony, not because it is likely now to be abused, but because the *Papists* have used it in a superstitious manner; not only the *Papists*, but others are apt to think, That it is *Humour*, and not *Reason* that directs us. Nay, we esteem it more reasonable to insist upon an innocent use of something *they* have abused,

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left we should encourage a principle as *superstitious* as their practice; and a principle that hath led so many already to neglect *useful* things without any reason; than to take away the *use* of it wholly, because they use it after an ill manner. In a word, We think that the reason why it was ever used amongst Christians is not so wholly ceased, but that it may still be used once in this solemn act of Religion. We think that we have always testify'd our dislike of the Papists, in every thing in which they are departed from the Gospel, as effectually as any of our Brethren of whatsoever denomination; and much more reasonably than those who have run from the *extreme* they are in, to another. We cannot answer to our selves the condemning of a thing merely because the *Papists* use it after another manner. We hope we have taken such care, that it is almost impossible that the use of this sign, as we retain it, should minister to *Idolatry* or *Superstition*; and, upon the whole, we see not that any of these arguments shew that it may not *lawfully be used*.

Having thus consider'd what I find offer'd against the *use of God-fathers*; and the *use of the Cross* in *Baptism*; and find-

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ing nothing alledg'd against *kneeling at the Communion*, but rather a great deal for it; I return now to that which makes up the greatest and most terrible part of your charge, and that is the *imposition of these things*; the making them *Terms of Communion*; which you call, a *manifest encroachment upon the Kingly Power of our Saviour*; a *making New Terms of Communion*; a *contradicting Christ's appointed Terms*; a *using that power to destruction, which was given to be used to Edification*. With what justice you have so hard thoughts of the Church of *England* in this particular, I shall now freely examine; wishing you could be as impartial in considering what can be offer'd in defence of this, as you have been solicitous in drawing up this accusation against it. What I have to say on this *Subject* shall be under these following Heads.

1. That the *Bishops*, who are the *Governours of the Church*, have authority to order such things as these which you so grievously complain of.

2. That *St. Paul* says nothing against this in the *fourteenth Chapter to the Romans*.

3. That

3. That Mr. *Baxter's* practice, and the practice of the *Independents* is for *Impositions*. These *Considerations* will, I think, contain a sufficient answer to all that hath been objected on this account.

1. That the *Bishops* have authority to prescribe these things which are so grievously complain'd of. This authority, we say, they have, as they received the care of the *Church* from their Predecessours; as they are obliged to take the most effectual methods for the preservation of *Order*, and *Decency*, in the publick worship of God; and as it results from the nature of all *Societies*, that the *Governours* of them should have a power of ordering what seems to them most for the beauty, and advantage of them; that they should be the judges of what conduces to this end, and should have a title to the obedience of the people under their care, in whatever does not contradict the *Laws* of that Society by which they are all to be governed. Nor do I find but that you would have joyned with them, in the imposing and prescribing some things. Now then, if I can shew that the very same objections

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may be fram'd against *prescribing* those things which you could have complied with, that are brought in your names against those other things which give you so much offence; this I shall account a good argument to you, that the *Bishops* have authority to prescribe in the one case, as well as the other. I instance in their *prescriptions* about *Time, Place, and Liturgy*. For this particular *time, and place*, in exclusion to all others, are not absolutely necessary; and some honest men will pretend they are shut out from *Communion* by *imposing* them. And, as for a *publick Liturgy*, That you your selves think it *unnecessary*, is plain from your not using one in the *Publick Worship* of God; that you think it lawful to joyne with those *Governours* who *impose* one, is plain from your declaring your readiness to comply with our *Common-Prayer*, were it alter'd as you would have it. And now let us consider, if this be not exactly parallel to the case before us. Whoever will not have his Child baptiz'd with *such Prayers* at the time of *Baptism*, is as much *excluded* as he that scruples to have it baptiz'd because the *sign of the Cross* is used after *Baptism*: He that refuses to communicate

communicate with us, because the *Minister* uses this *Form of Prayer* at the *Communion*, is as much *excluded* as He that refuses to communicate with us, because He must *kneel*. As many an honest man may scruple the one; so many an honest man may scruple the other. If an honest man may be excluded for scrupling the one; why not for scrupling the other? If *Regularity* and *Decency* may in this case be prefer'd before the satisfaction of the scruples of ignorant, and injudicious, tho' honest men; then, why is it urged as an infallible truth, that *excluding a man* supposed to be an honest man for his *scruples* is a most unpardonable, and intolerable crime in a *Church*?

But, to be more particular, supposing the *Liturgy* were made according to your minds, and you should comply with this *imposition*, which you were ready to do; We desire you to consider, if they who still thought fit to remain *Nonconformists*, might not read this same *severe Lecture* against you; and give in these same reasons for their *Nonconformity*. We dare not causelessly deprive Souls of visible *Christianity* for want of an humane, unnecessary, if not corrupt invention. We dare not make a *Covenant* to rob *Christ* and the *Church* of

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visible members for nothing; and consign those over to the uncovenanted mercies of God, whom He (we well know) is ready to receive as his: and so concur in setting the will and advice of Man against Christ, who said Forbid them not, and was angry with those who forbad them to come to him. Might not one of them thus express himself, as well as one of you? Shall a Minister dare to withhold so much good from, and endeavour so much evil to, the Souls of poor Infants, in denying them their Christendom merely upon the account of some accessories, and scrupled accidents, invented, and imposed by man, and not at all of the Essence of Baptism it self? &c. p. 510. and might not they argue as you do p. 513. We dare not consent to this, because we dare not consent to the altering the Terms of Christ's Covenant, and Sacrament; and to contradict one of his fundamental laws. Baptize, saith Christ, all that are made disciples, all that repent, and believe. No, saith the Church of England, Baptize none that are propos'd, tho' they have all that is necessary to make them the disciples of Christ, unless they, or their Parents would submit to the use of this particular form of Prayer at the time of Baptism.

Baptism. This is a manifest encroachment upon the Kingly power of our Saviour, in making new Terms of Communion, which we dare not concur in; a turning the Keys upon those whom Christ is ready to receive; and a positive rejecting such as He requires us to Baptize. And this (as light as the Church makes of it, and they who can joyn with the Church in this) is in our esteem a sin of an high nature, and so would our consenting to it too.

The same may be said with respect to a particular *Form of Prayer* at the time of the administration of the *Holy Communion*: for a person who scruples joyning in that, is as much excluded from the *Communion*, as He who scruples *Kneeling*. But I add farther, Supposing the *Governours of the Church* appoint the *Morning*, as the particular time for the receiving the *Holy Sacrament*; and some should scruple this (as it has actually happened) we desire you would consider whether the same arguments may not be used against the *imposing* this (which yet you approve of) as you here produce against complying with the Church that imposes *Kneeling*, p. 514. For may not they who should *minister* to these scrupu-

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lous persons thus apologize for their Non-conformity? We dare not consent to this, because this is a depriving Christ's members of their right; an usurpation upon mens consciences; and a tearing the Church by dividing engines; because this would be obliging our selves to deny the Communion to the people, on the account of their not daring to go against the institution of Christ, the practice of his Apostles and the primitive universal Church; to deny the Communion to such as the Holy Ghost hath required us to receive to it: and because this is an imposing on the Church things antecedently unnecessary upon the highest penalty, viz: Exclusion from Communion; a crossing that great rule of Charity, I will have mercy and not sacrifice; and a using that power to Destruction, which was given to be used to Edification. Even those of us, who cannot charge the celebration of the Sacrament in the morning as sinful, are yet afraid of excluding others on such an account as that, by reason it is far from being so necessary a matter, but that the Church, and the due administration of the Sacrament may be preserv'd without it. And withall, Persons might have a very good reason to be backward to yield to the altering of that Time

at which our Saviour instituted this Rite: and to be sly of seeming to Symbolize with Idolaters, in celebrating it at that time which it is well known some have chose, out of too much veneration to the elements themselves; which tho' disclaim'd by the Church of England, yet is apt to be misinterpreted. Suppose a man should upon Searching Church-History find (or fancy that He finds) that the time of Celebrating the Communion was never determin'd to the Morning till the Doctrine of Transubstantiation was established: this alone (tho' He should have nothing farther to alledge) might be a valid reason for his being sly of that time. But for Ministers to enter into any such Combination as to be oblig'd to tell such men, when desiring the Communion at the Evening, Truly, while you are under this Scruple, tho' I may pity you for your weakness, yet I can't own you for Christians, *this we think hard, and cannot comply with.* All these things may be said against *this*, or any other prescription not absolutely necessary to the being of the Church, or to the due administration of Christ's ordinances; and the same accusation stands against them, and against those who should approve them. What

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What I observe upon this, is, that you your selves grant by this, that the *Governours* of the *Church* have *authority* to *impose some unnecessary things*; that it is not unlawful to prescribe things *antecedently unnecessary under the highest penalty*; that *Men* who may be call'd *Honest* may be dealt with after this manner on the account of their scruples; and that these arguments which hold as well against those *impositions* you say you could comply with, as against *those* you say you cannot, are not so plain, and so demonstrative, that a *wise* man ought to found a matter of such consequence as a *separation* from a *settled Church* upon them. For thus the case seems to me to stand. You grant that the *Governours* of the *Church* may impose a *Liturgy*, and prescribe the *Time* for performing Religious offices: for you would joyn with them in these *prescriptions*, and would not *separate* from the *Church* in order to *witnesse* against these *impositions*. The arguments you urge against complying with the *other* impositions do appear to conclude as strongly against your complying with *these*. Therefore I think it follows unavoidably, that you ought to be as willing

ling to comply with the *other* as with *these*; to acknowledge the *power* of the *Governours* in the *other* as well as *these*; to withstand a Separation founded upon the imposition of the *other*, as you would do one founded upon the imposition of *these*; and not to inveigh so bitterly against what you have allowed and approved of, in cases exactly parallel, as far as your arguments are concerned; for it cannot be more against your consciences to joyn in imposing the *other* upon the *People*, than to joyn in imposing *these*. These *arguments* if they prove any thing, prove too much; and, therefore, they prove nothing. Now since these are the only arguments you produce against the *impositions* in the *Church of England*; we think it ought to be a sufficient satisfaction to your Question, *by what authority are these things prescribed?* to answer, by the same authority by which you acknowledge the *Governours* of the *Church* may prescribe some other things, against which the very same dreadful objections lye: and we argue, that if, in *one* case, the *Governours* ought not to be abused and inveigh'd against, for the groundless scruples of the people; certainly in *others* also,

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ment p.
164.

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Obedience should sometimes be preach'd to the people, rather than a violent lecture constantly read against their *Pastours*; and that you ought sometimes to consider whither these principles tend, on which this terrible *invective* against *impositions* is founded.

Now, whatever is thus order'd, becomes a *Term of Communion*. One particular *Time*, appointed; the *Liturgy* prescribed, become *Terms of Communion*; and *New Terms of Communion*, in as much as Christ made them not so; and *unnecessary Terms of Communion*, in as much as neither a *set form* in exclusion to *free prayer* is so necessary, in your opinion, but that the great ends of Christianity may be serv'd without it; and much less the appointment of one hour of the day in exclusion to another, as agreeable to the nature of the Sacrament. Yet these you are ready to comply with; from whence I collect, that you do not esteem it so great a sin to make *new, unnecessary Terms of Communion* as people may be apt to think from your writings; or to prescribe things *antecedently unnecessary* under the penalty of *no Communion* without them; nay, that it is your opinion, that Obedience to the *Governours*

vernours of the Church is reasonable in such cases; and, consequently, that a *Separation* founded upon an abhorrence of such *prescriptions* (call them *impositions*, or *new Terms of Communion*, or *Terms that contradict the Terms Christ settled*, or *transgressions of the law of Charity*, or what you please) is an ill-grounded and *unreasonable* separation. *Hard names* alter not the nature of *things*; and for all the *hard names* bestow'd upon these *prescriptions* you do not like, I cannot imagine them any more *contrary to the will of Christ*, or the nature of his *Religion*, than *those* which you could have approv'd of, and on which you bestow no *hard words*.

From what hath been said I think it is plain, that those *Governours of the Church* do not sin, or *use the power given them for edification to destruction*, who do not clog the institutions of Christ with troublesome and manifold impositions; who prescribe what they esteem to be in it self reasonable and becoming; what is the greatest security to Religion, and the decencies of publick Worship; who have by publick declarations prevented, and answered all the objections that the scrupulous are apt to entertain against them.

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It is plain that, according to your selves, in the Case of a *Liturgie*, the Scruples of the numbers that think it a sin to joyn with one are not to direct the *Governours* in their *prescriptions*, or to over-balance weightier reasons. Here then you do not seem to think them chargeable with the ill consequences of such a command; or the *command unlawful*, because it will exclude so many from *Church Communion*. And yet I verily think, that all the arguments produc'd against the *other* prescriptions lye as hard against *this*. And I doubt not but many amongst those whose common cause you plead, are of this opinion. But I speak to you who are not averse to such a Command; and cannot but wonder how you could possibly agree with *one unnecessary imposition*; and yet argue from such principles against *others*, as lye directly against *all*, as well as *some*.

Again, those *Governours* who have order'd nothing, but what if all would seriously comply with, is certainly for the good of the Church, have done their duty, and cannot be charged with sin. And, such we esteem the things commanded. I do not think that you can name one
single

single ill consequence, should all the people of the Land seriously endeavour to procure *Sponsors* for their Children; comply reverently with *kneeling* at the Communion; and submit to have their Children signed with the sign of the *Cross* after *Baptism*; and I am sure I could name a great many good ones. Certainly that *command* is not unlawful, which, if it be seriously obeyed by all, procures many advantages, and brings not one disadvantage to the Church.

Neither is that *command unlawful* which enjoyns a thing under a *disproportionable penalty*. For if it be, then the Governours of the Church can enjoyn nothing, neither *this particular Time*, nor *this particular Liturgy*. But they may do this, as you acknowledge; and yet the *penalty* to Him whose fault is only a scruple about joyning with this *Form*, and communicating at this *time*, is *no Communion*. Therefore you cannot think this sufficient to make a *command unlawful*. The plain state of the case, in this point, appears to be this. They, to whom the *Government* of the Church is intrusted, are to *prescribe* what they judge fit in the service of God, according to the

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the best light they have; leaving such persons to *God* and their own consciences, as say they dare not comply with these *prescriptions*. They are obliged to resist *irregularity, disorder*, and an ignorant contempt of all authority. If any truly honest man be excluded *Communion* by this means, the *Penalty* is to be considered, not as the punishment of the scruples of an honest man, (which he may have almost unavoidably) but as a *Fence* against *Disorder*; as a stop to such *Errours* as are against the *Peace and Order* of this society; as a check to the designs of *wicked and unchristian Men*, who, under this pretence, and in such good company, are doing whatever they can to unhinge all, and bring confusion and ruine into the *Church*. You must be sensible from what hath been said before, that there are cases in which it is fit that Men, let them be never so honest, should suffer thus for their errors, granting them to be unavoidable. But this is not to be charged upon the *command*, but upon their weakness, and the ill consequences their *Errours* and mistakes may carry along with them. I might cite *Experience* as well as *Reason* for this, but it is needless.

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This leads us to consider how a good, and understanding Person ought to behave himself, when the Case happens, that some things are *prescribed* in a *Church* which he himself thinks *lawful*, but others pretend they do not; whether he ought himself to comply with these *prescriptions*, and endeavour to convince others that they ought to do so too; or whether it is his Duty to inveigh against the *Governours* of this *Church*, and add life and strength to the unreasonable scruples of others; to patronize those who separate upon groundless prejudices, and with gross uncharitableness, or to plead against their unreasonable and disorderly practices; to maintain an *authority* he himself acknowledges in the *Church* on other occasions, or to countenance the utmost contempt and disgrace put upon it. This we recommend to your sober consideration; and desire you to think how inconsistent it is, to argue against *conformity* from the scruples of others; and yet to pretend that you would have complied if the *Terms of Conformity* had been fram'd to your minds. I suppose you are not so weak as to think that, if all your *Terms* had been accepted, there would not have

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been a number of *Dissenters* in the land, who would have scrupled to comply with them. Now, if the *Scruples* of these persons would not have been a sufficient argument against your *Conformity* upon your *own Terms*; why are they pleaded as a sufficient argument against Conformity upon other *Terms*? If they be a sufficient argument against Conformity *now*; why would they not have been, supposing your *own Terms* had been accepted?

Abridgment
p. 174.

Nor do I see any force in your objection, *that on the same reasons the Bishops impose the Cross and Surplice upon Ministers, they might bring in abundance of ceremonies of the Church of Rome, which we have cast out*; because this will lye against the imposition of every thing not absolutely necessary, as well as those two: and I find you could approve of the imposition of some such things. We think the behaviour, and apparel of the *Minister* who officiates, comes under the care of the *Governours* of the *Church*; and *prescriptions* about *them* are a check to the extremes both of *Indecency*, and *superstitious Pomp*. We think they have authority to fence against these, and to impose rules of behaviour in order to it. But then,

then; we think they go beyond their authority, when they introduce *vain, senseless, indecent* ceremonies, or *abundance* of any sort, to be a trouble and burthen, rather than a grace and beauty to *Publick Worship*. When the *Church of England* doth this, then it is time to complain, and open so vehemently against the *abuse of authority*: And even then, I do not think a *separation* can be justified: Because a *separation* is of a great deal worse consequence to both *State* and *Church*, than a compliance with *authority* in what had better not have been commanded. The *Governour* may transgress his duty in commanding, and yet I may be under an obligation to obey. And the pretence of *witnessing against his impositions* is not of half so much force, as the *witnessing against Publick Disturbance and Disorder*. But since the *Church of England* hath not burthen'd the *Publick worship* with *the abundance of Ceremonies* you speak of; and since these mention'd wholly respect the *Minister*, methinks an objection should not be brought against them, the weakness of which appears at first sight. For how does it follow, *If the Bishops have authority to prescribe two ceremonies, that they*

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have authority to prescribe twenty? or, if they have not authority to burthen God's service with ceremonies, that they have not authority likewise to prescribe one or two? The fault lies in the vanity, indecency, or number of things prescribed; and if there had been nothing to be objected against the Romish Ceremonies from these Topics, our Reformers would hardly have urged an abuse of authority which might be in times to come, as an argument against an authority at the present time.

Having said what appear'd to me reasonable in defence of the *authority* by which these things were first *prescribed*, I shall add a word or two about the *retaining* them. The *impositions* on which your heaviest charge is founded, and which we are now treating of, are, *Sponsors at Baptism*, *The use of the Cross after Baptism*, and *Kneeling at the Communion*. I do not see but that I have shewn that the *Governours* of the *Church* had *authority* to *prescribe* these; as much authority as they had to prescribe other things with which you could comply. So then, these things were once prescribed by a sufficient authority, an authority to which obedience in all lawful things was due.

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The persons who succeeded those who first prescribed these things found them order'd, as they thought upon good grounds; they found the scruples and prejudices in the people against them to have arisen since these things were ordered; and this without reason, and without foundation; they found many men of sober understandings who had the meanest opinion of these *impositions*, allowing them either to be such as were lawful in themselves, or such as would not justify a separation; they found that the same arguments that were urged to prove it to be their duty to lay aside *these*, might be with as much strength urged against *others*; and would as effectually prove it their duty to part with their *Liturgy* and any other prescriptions, upon the scruples of the people: and not being willing to acknowledge they had no authority, or right, to insist upon any scrupled thing that is not essential to the worship, or being of a *Church*, they could not but think it proper to insist upon these, rather than make such an acknowledgment; they found, after all, that the advantage and union proposed by the alteration of these terms was likely to prove in the issue

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none at all, unless other things of greater moment, and what they dared not think of parting with, were removed also. Thus therefore they argued, *We find the removal of three impositions demanded upon these two grounds, That We have no authority to prescribe such things; and, that many scruple to comply with them, and therefore cannot have communion with our Church. We have examined these pretences, and we find, that all the arguments that are used against our authority in these things, lie as strongly against it in other things, which many of the Dissenting Ministers themselves would have complied with. We think that if we have authority to prescribe what is not essential to the Christian Church, We ought not to acknowledge we have not: and we judge that if the scruples of the people, tho' never so unreasonable, be the measures of prescribing, and altering; there is as much reason, from this argument, to give up our Liturgy, and all Liturgies, as there is to give up these other prescriptions. If to retain the one, though it hinder many from Communion with us, be not unlawful; neither is it unlawful or sinful to retain the others. And by retaining them in opposition to those who argue so unreasonably, We shall assert that*

that authority we are intrusted with; We shall testify against unwarrantable separation; We shall give what check we can to those principles which have brought such confusion and disorder into this Church and Nation; and we shall resist the designs of evil men, who, as we judge, make use of the ignorance of some honest Christians to overturn our whole constitution, and, under their shelter, strike at our very root and foundation. Thus, I think, the case might be argued, and I see not what can be replied by You, who argue upon the principles I have been now examining. But you may now ask, *Are you then for no alterations?* Yes, I am fully persuaded there may be *alterations* made for the perfection and advantage of the Church. I profess, I shall always plead for *such* as are so; and that so much the more, if they be *such* also as are likely to reconcile any *Dissenters* to it; nay, upon this account, I shall plead for *such* as are not so, provided the Church receive no damage from them. But I cannot argue for *any* upon such principles as appear to me to tend to *absurd*, and *unreasonable alterations*, as well as those that are *reasonable*.

Having thus shewn that the *Governors* of the Church have authority to pre-

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scribe those things which you so highly dislike, as well as those which you could have complied with; having shewn from your selves that *New Terms of Communion* may lawfully be made; having remov'd your Objections taken from the *penalty* annexed, and from that unbounded number of *Impositions* you fear may be brought into the *Church* upon the same grounds that *these* are; I shall now observe,

2. That *St. Paul* says nothing against this in the *14th* chapter to the *Romans*; in order to remove your objection taken from thence. I find that you urge the *1st* verses of *this Chapter* as an argument to prove that it is unlawful to enjoin *Ministers* to deny the *Communion* to those who will not receive it *Kneeling*; or, which is all one, to prescribe *Kneeling* so, as that there shall be no *Communion* without it. But,

First, It is very unfair to apply what *St. Paul* says in one case, to cases not at all parallel to it. *St. Paul* speaks of such groundless *scruples* as were deeply rooted and fixed in the minds of some Persons by the *Religion* they profess'd before their *conversion* to Christianity; *We* speak of such scruples as have been infused into
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many men's minds by the *common Enemy*; as have been taken up and hotly propagated, *since* the thing it self was commanded, and in opposition to the Authority by which it was commanded. *St. Paul* speaks of such groundless *scruples*, and such differences of Opinion and practice as are perfectly consistent with their joining together in one *uniform* manner of *publick worship*: and it is a little hard to argue from what he says of *scruples* of this nature, to what he would say of *scruples* which are wholly inconsistent with it. He speaks of persons who, for what appears, were perfectly disposed to agree in the same *Customs*, and the same *behaviour*, at the *Communion*; and what he would say of persons who are not, we cannot judge from hence: but we may guess by some other places, that he was not so easie, or indifferent, in the matter of *Decency*, or *Custom*, in the publick worship, as you would represent him; and that it was not his judgment, that *Decency*, and *Custom* should always yield to the weakneses of Men; but that *they* should comply with *Decency* and *Custom*. That *He* was not against *prescriptions* relating to the behaviour of Christians at the *publick worship*, is plain.

plain from those *prescriptions* He himself laid down. Such as these; *That Women should be silent at publick Assemblies*, even in those days when the revelation of the Spirit was common: *That Women should be veiled in the Church*: merely because these things were agreeable to the notions of Decency then in the world. *That the Prophets, who had any thing revealed to them, should wait with patience, and observe a due order in their speaking*, merely to avoid any thing that looked like confusion in religious worship; and the like. These shew that it could not be his design in the chapter now before us, to forbid the making any such *prescriptions*; for being a Governour of the Church, he made some himself: and that it was his opinion that Governours may prescribe for decency and order, is plain from thence. As you therefore argue from the example of St. Paul who, being himself a Church-Governour, commanded not the things he here speaks of, but does in effect forbid the Governours of the Church to command them, to shew the unlawfulness of commanding those things; so give me leave to argue from the example of St. Paul, who being himself a Church-Governour, did command things

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who was appointed

things of the same nature with those we are speaking of; did himself lay down rules for the regulating the behaviour of Christians in Publick Assemblies; and doth, in effect, give leave to Church-Governours to prescribe according to the rules of Decency and Order; give me leave, I say, from hence to argue, that it is lawful (as far as St. Paul's example can make it so) to prescribe about the behaviour of Christians at the solemnities of Religion; that He no more thought, in this Chapter, of scruples relating to men's behaviour at publick Assemblies, than he thought of contradicting himself; and that the things He here speaks of, and those We are speaking of, are so different from one another, that his rules about them may be, and are very different too. If, therefore, the example of St. Paul be a good argument against the lawfulness of prescribing what men shall eat, and that they shall not be received to Communion unless they do eat it: let the example of St. Paul be esteemed a tolerable argument for the lawfulness of laying down rules and prescriptions about the behaviour of Christians at publick Assemblies. That these prescriptions should be laid aside, when they
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to be scurpled as *unlawful*, this chapter is as far from saying as any part of the Bible. It says indeed, *You ought to receive those who are so little instructed in the nature of Christianity, and so prejudiced by their former education and principles, as to scruple things which are lawful; such things as do not concern your customs, or behaviour at the publick Assemblies.* But it says not, *You ought to receive such, tho' they scruple to join with you in your customs and behaviour at religious Worship.* It says not, *You ought to receive such as have taken up their groundless prejudices since such rules were laid down for their behaviour; such as seem to be contentious; such as refuse to comply in mere opposition, as too many do.* It says indeed, *You shall receive Men, tho' they will not conform to your prescriptions and customs in what they eat at their own houses:* but it says not, *You shall receive Men, tho' they will not conform to your prescriptions and customs in their behaviour in God's house.* In fine, We may conclude from this Chapter, that St. Paul, at that time, thought it more prudent to leave men even to their own unreasonable humours in eating and drinking, than to interpose his authority to regulate

late *their own Tables*; but we cannot conclude from it, that he thought it a crime to use his authority to regulate their demeanour at the *Lord's Table*; that he thought it a sin for *Governours* to interpose, or a duty in them when they had interposed, to give up their *prescriptions*, when they come to be scrupled. If you would argue *justly* against *prescriptions* from *this chapter*, you must argue against prescribing something as little relating to any fundamental doctrine of Christianity, or the behaviour of Christians at *publick Assemblies*, as *Meat* and *Drink*: and for any other sort of *prescriptions*, whatever service other arguments may do, I see not how *this chapter* can possibly be to the purpose. And this will appear more plainly to you from what I have to offer farther, and that is,

Secondly, That if *this chapter* prove the unlawfulness of *prescribing Kneeling at the Communion*, or *retaining* it when it comes to be *scrupled*; it proves as effectually the unlawfulness of prescribing what you your selves must acknowledge lawful, and what you could have joined with. From whence we may infer, that if it prove not the unlawfulness of *one*, neither does it prove the unlawfulness

nies of the *other*. Some instances I shall give to make this plain. St. Paul prescribed, that *Women should be silent in publick Assemblies*, merely because it was decent, and becoming that state of subjection they ought to appear in. Our Governours prescribed *Kneeling at the Communion*, merely because it was decent, and becoming the solemnity of that holy rite: arguing, that as we kneel to our *Prince* when we receive a Favour, a pledge of his Love, from him; so it is agreeable to all the notions and customs of *Decency* we have, that we should kneel when we receive the most inestimable pledge of Love from our great *Lord*, by the hands of his *Minister*. Suppose now some *Women* should have been so weak as to have thought it unlawful to have obeyed that injunction of St. Paul's, thinking they were constrain'd by the Spirit to speak, and judging their silence to be a crime; (we have lived to see this and many as ridiculous suppositions verified;) would you produce this *fourteenth chapter* to the *Romans*; to prove that St. Paul was against *prescribing*, or *retaining* any such rule; or that these *Persons* were to be *received*; and not censured?

fared? and yet their crime is *taking a lawful thing to be unlawful*. If you would not produce it against the lawfulness of prescribing *this*, tho' some should be so *weak* as to think it *unlawful*; how can you produce it against prescribing *Kneeling* merely because some think it *unlawful*? Once more, suppose our *Governours* had prescribed a *Liturgy* to your Minds, and amongst others a *Form of Prayer* to be used at the *Communion*. Some, you know, and no inconsiderable number, have scrupled joining with a *Form* as *unlawful*. Now such as these are as effectually excluded from the *Communion* by this *prescription*, as if it were said in express terms, that none shall be admitted, who will not join in this *Form*. Yet in the *imposing* this, you were ready to join. I ask, therefore, if *this chapter* command you to receive all whose crime is only *the scrupling a thing lawful as unlawful*; with what conscience could you have complied with this *prescription*, which, according to you, must be *flatly sinful, and contrary to God's word*, because it doth as effectually exclude those whom you ought to receive, as any other *prescription*? If it do not, why could you not comply with other
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prescriptions as well as *this*? Why is it produced against *others*, and not against *this*? Is a *Form* of Prayer necessary to the due celebration of that religious rite? Your practice shews you think it not so. Is a stated *Form* of Prayer not only *lawful* but *decent*? so is *Kneeling*. But I will urge no more on this Head. I cannot but think I have shewn both from *St. Paul's* example, and your own concessions, that *this chapter* says nothing against those prescriptions which concern the *publick Worship*; and that by the *weak in faith* here is not to be understood every one who is so *weak* as to *take a lawful thing for unlawful*, unless in cases parallel to *Meat and Drink*. I shall now add,

Thirdly, That Mr. *Baxter's* practice, and the practice of the *Independents*, is *for*, and not *against* such impositions as are the foundation of your heaviest charge against the Church. For the *Independents*, take Mr. *Baxter's* word, who represents them as *stricter about the qualifications of Church-members, than Scripture, Reason, or the Practice of the universal Church will allow*. And if this be not to make *new unnecessary Terms of Communion, and to refuse those*

those whom Christ has commanded them to receive, what is? Yet we observe with what brotherly affection you court them; with what caution you open your mouths against *this in them*, and with what heat you can inveigh against any thing like it in the *Church of England*; with what zeal you *join* with them, and with what zeal you *separate* from us. But Mr. *Baxter* hath not only given us this account of the *Independents*, but hath left upon record something of *himself* so like what he censures so severely in the *Church of England*, that, with all the niceness I am Master of, I cannot see any difference between them, unless what serves to make Mr. *Baxter* much more liable to censure than the *Church*. We have it related for his honour, as it seems, in his life. A *Gentle-* Abridgment
man against whom he had no objection P. 36.
 on any other account (as far as it appears) desired to communicate with Him; only He desired to receive *Kneeling*, and at a *distinct time* from those others, whom He thought so guilty on some account or other, that he scrupled to join with them. Supposing this to be a weakness; one would hardly think it consistent with Mr. *Baxter's* way of arguing, that he should be

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denied the *Communion* for it. But let us see how Mr. *Baxter* dealt with him. *First*, He would not give it him at all, unless *he would submit to discipline, and take him for his Pastour*: so that his *Baptism* and profession of Christianity, it seems, were not sufficient to entitle him to the *Privileges* of a *Christian*, unless *he would submit to what Mr. Baxter call'd Discipline, and take him for his Pastour*. Perhaps the *Gentleman* was persuaded in his conscience that the ejected *Bishop* was his *Pastour*; tho' Mr. *Baxter* had authority to administer the *Sacrament* to him. However, what reason was here from his scrupling this, why he should not be acknowledg'd a *Christian*? What was there in this error so contrary to any great design of the *Gospel*, or the nature of the *Sacrament*, that he might not be admitted to it? *Secondly*, As to the *Posture*, He would not give it him *kneeling*, unless *He would first hear his reasons against it, and then profess, after he had heard them, that he thought it a sin against God to receive it in any other posture*: both which an honest man might scruple, and yet be fit to be admitted to the *Communion*. From hence it appears of what moment Mr. *Baxter*

Baxter thought an Uniformity in the *postures* of the *Receivers*; and how willing they ought to be to hear reasons to bring them to it. But, *Thirdly*, As to the *Time*, He absolutely refused to give it him at a *distinct Time* from others, tho' he scrupled to receive it at the same time with them. Now here, if I be not mistaken, are to be found the very crimes which are laid by you at the door of the *Church of England*; and somewhat more. In the *first* place, Here is an honest Christian denied the Communion on the account of some scruples he might have, about submitting to *Mr. Baxter* as his *Pastour*, and to *his discipline*: such scruples as affected not his *Christianity*, or his behaviour at the publick worship; which seems to come very near the case determined by *St. Paul* in the *fourteenth chapter* to the *Romans*. In the *Second* place, He is denied the reception of the *Holy Sacrament* in the manner which seems best to him, unless *He will bear reasons against it*, and *profess he cannot honestly take it otherwise*. That is, he is denied it, if he should be so weak, and prepossess'd, as to scruple what a man might scruple out of a great regard to the prescriptions of his ejected *Bishop*, and

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yet remain a good Christian. In the *third* place, a *prescription* is laid down, *You shall receive it at the same time with those others, tho' you esteem them schismatical, and disorderly*; and the penalty here is *No Communion*. Now, tho' it be necessary to set some time when the people should meet their *Minister*, yet we cannot say it is any more necessary that all should come at *one time*, than that all should receive in *one posture*; nor do I see that this difference of *time* can possibly be the occasion of greater *breaches* and *schisms*, than a difference of behaviour at the *same time*: nay, I believe there may be better reasons found out for admitting companies, on some occasions, at *distinct times*, than for admitting *different gestures* at the same time. And, I pray, what great *breach*, or *schism*, can we suppose would have been made, had he admitted this *Gentleman*, and his *Family*, at *one hour* to the *Communion*, and the *others* at *another*? What great *schism*, I say, more than was amongst them already? Their opinions and hearts were as different already as they could be; and there was no hopes of their communicating together, without greater occasion

occasion given to heat and uncharitable censures. Had Mr. *Baxter* been sure he should have set all his people in flames; I see not how, according to his arguings against the *Church*, he could with a safe conscience, deny the *Communion* to this *Gentleman*, were his *scruples* never so unreasonable, and weak. Now I have this charge against this carriage of Mr. *Baxter's*. Here was a thing as unnecessary as *Kneeling* enjoined; and that under the highest penalty, *viz.* No Communion. From whence I collect that it could not be Mr. *Baxter's* opinion that a *Command*, by having a disproportionable penalty annexed, becomes unlawful. Here were new *Terms of Communion* imposed upon a Christian and as contrary to *Christ's* as the imposition of *Kneeling* can be. *Christ* says, as you think, Receive a Christian, tho' he be so weak as to take things lawful for unlawful; yet Mr. *Baxter* refused a *Christian*, whose only crime it was to be so weak. From whence I conclude that when he was a *Governour* himself, it was not his judgment, that it was unlawful to lay down such *prescriptions*, as do indeed become *New Terms of Communion*; that it was not his judgment that St.

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Paul, in the *fourteenth* to the *Romans*, spake of such scruples as respect the *publick worship*; or understood by the *weak in Faith*, every person who was so weak as to judge a *lawful thing to be unlawful*. For we see such a *weakness* may be of that consequence, in *Mr. Baxter's* opinion, as that the person who is so weak ought not to be *received to Communion*. Upon this I cannot help making this reflexion, that the dispute between *Us* and *You* is not, whether there shall be any impositions or no, but whether they shall be such as *Ours* or *Yours*; whether the *Bishops* shall prescribe what *they* think fit, or whether every particular *Minister* shall be left to himself, to make what *Terms of Communion* he thinks fit; to receive, or reject whom he pleases, and on what condition he judges proper. It is too plain this will be the consequence of wresting this power out of the *Bishops* hands; and that this is the practice wherever a *separate Ministry* is erected: and we leave it to all the world to judge, whether the *Bishops* have not as much right to make these *Terms*, as every *Pastour* and *Curate*; and whether the *Christian* world be more likely to suffer by all *Ministers* acting according to *their* prescriptions, than

than by their acting according to their own humours and opinions, passions and prejudices:

Thus have I carefully considered the *Case of Impositions*, which seems to be the great hindrance in your way to *Conformity*; and have chosen to argue with you upon this matter chiefly from your own concessions, and your own practices; which appears to me to be so convincing a method, that I cannot but hope that you will once more review this part of your cause; and that in arguing against the *impositions* of the *Church of England*, you will either shew us, that you allow no such *impositions*, either in your declarations, or practice; or else reason against them from such principles, as conclude not against all as well as some. Till you do this, we must think, either that you are not sincere in drawing up this heavy charge against the Church, while you allow and practice the very thing you condemn; or that you are not sensible whither these arguments tend. But I proceed.

6. A *sixth* Reason why you cannot conform as *Ministers* is, because *this Assent, Consent, and Subscription would be*

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an allowance and approbation of that assertion, that Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are three distinct Orders in the Church by Divine Appointment. By Divine Appointment, you add your selves: For all that the sentence, which you quote, says, is that these Orders have been in the Church from the Apostle's times: and all that you can shew certainly to be implied in any of the Prayers in the Ordination-office is, that God hath appointed divers Orders of Ministers in his Church. And you not only add this, but you wholly alter the form of that sentence in the Preface to the Ordination-office, on which you ground this objection; and seem to me to misrepresent the plain design and intent of it. For there is some difference I think, between these two sentences. Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are three distinct Orders in the Church, by Divine Appointment; and, from the Apostles time, there have been these Orders in Christ's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. The former of these is yours; and leads people to think, that the principal intent of this sentence you scruple, was to lay it down for an undoubted truth, that Bishops, Priests, and Deacons are three distinct Orders (in the most strict

strict sense of that word, and in opposition to those *Episcopal Men*, who did not approve of that word taken in so strict a sense) and that by *Divine Appointment*. The *Latter* is the *sentence*, as it is expressed by the *Church* it self; and the design of it is plainly no more, but to signify, that *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, have been in the *Church*, from the very beginning, distinguished from one another by their peculiar *offices*. But if you take a pleasure in representing, and understanding every thing in the way which to you carries most difficulty along with it, we cannot help it. Thus, another difficulty is made, that these *Orders* are spoken of as *several offices*; tho', how *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, if they be spoken of, either as three *Orders*, or as three *Degrees* in the same *Order*; how, I say, they can possibly be spoken of any otherwise than as *several offices*, I shall never apprehend. But I have two things to answer to this *objection*.

I. Neither *Affent and Consent*, nor *Subscription*, oblige you to agree to every individual sentence in the *Prefaces*, and *Rubrics*, belonging to the *offices* of the *Church*. I have before sufficiently shewn, and I here

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here say it again, that *Affent* and *Consent* refer to nothing but the *use* of these *Forms* in publick ministrations: and that *Subscription* cannot reasonably be extended to this *Book of Common Prayer, &c.* in any other sense, than as it is a Book directing him who officiates, as to his behaviour, and the Prayers he is to use; and doth not appear to have been intended for any thing farther. Besides, if it were design'd to extend to every particular sentence of no relation to *use*, it affects not the matter now before us; for the effect of it is this, that *this Book containeth nothing contrary to the word of God.* Now I hardly think that any thing can be produced out of the *word of God*, to which this sentence is contrary. For there is no Text of Scripture which says *this is not evident, &c.* nor is there any thing in Scripture from whence it may be plainly proved, that this is a false proposition, *Bishops, Priests and Deacons have been in the Church from the Apostles days.* There is no passage in the New Testament that either forbids that there should be such *Orders*, or says that there were not. But,

2. Supposing this *Affent, Consent, and Subscription*, did extend to every such sentence

tence as this; yet I see nothing in your objections against this, but what seems very hard and unreasonable. When it is said, *This is evident to all diligent readers*, can any one imagin that the intent of this is, that it is impossible any such should ever doubt of it? or that any thing more was designed, than to signifie, that it was a plain truth? Should we deal thus with all such expressions, what could we hear that would please us? Suppose it should be said, *It is evident to all Men diligently reading Holy Scripture, that our Saviour existed before he was born of the Virgin Mary*; would you scruple to subscribe to this, because the Socinians, who have diligently read *Holy Scripture*, say they cannot find it there? I believe the objection would never have enter'd into your heads. Nothing is more usual than such forms of speech; and nothing more unreasonable, than to pass by the principal thing intended by them, and to argue against the manner of expressing them taken in a literal Sense, when it is always figurative. We must be sensible, there are many causes why very considerable men sometimes miss of a very plain truth; and if we be afraid of saying, *this is a plain truth*,
because

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because *Calvin, or Beza, or Blondell, or Salmasius, or Cartwright, or Selden, or any others* did not think it plain; and argue from hence against agreeing to it, we shew more regard to *great names* than is allowable. Was this sentence designed to cast a reflexion upon any *learned or judicious* men? You cannot think it was. Do you make any scruple of differing often from them? You know you *do not*; I'm sure you *ought not*. Do not you *run them down as Novices*, and call them *Fools* as much, and as effectually this way, as you can do by *subscribing* this? Yet you do not think that a good argument against judging as you think fit. Is not the principal design of a sentence to be regarded, and the *manner of expression* to be interpreted according to *use*, and not according to the *letter*? yet here you take the *manner of expression*, quite contrary to what you do in common *use*; and draw objections from this *manner of expression* so mistaken.

As to the thing intended in this sentence, it is plainly this, that *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, have been in the Church from the Apostle's days*. Now this Truth hath been very much cleared since

since the reformation; and the unhappy necessity some *Learned Men* imagined themselves under, to contradict and obscure it; and the desire they had that it should not appear of great consequence, hath helped mightily to the clearing it. Arch-bishop *Usher* may very well appear in the head of those who have added great evidence to this proposition. If he differed from other *Episcopal* men, the difference may well be thought *verbal* and not *real*; if we consider the service he hath done to *Episcopacy*, in opposition to the *Presbyterians*. Bishop *Pearson* and others followed. Dr. *Hammond's* Dissertations against *Blondell* (saith Mr. *Chillingworth* who uses not to speak unreasonably) *never were answered, and never will*. Mr. *Chillingworth* himself thinks the proof of this truth amounts to such a *demonstration*, as can never be evaded. He produces several *Presbyterians* allowing, *that from the Apostle's days there was in every City one Person, who had priority of Order, and superiority of Power and Authority over other Presbyters*. Mr. *Baxter* himself thinks it evident that *in the Primitive Church there was a Superiority over Pastours maintain'd not only by the Apostles and Evangelists,*

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lists, but by other general unfixed Church-officers; and, as to fixed Bishops of particular Churches, superiour in degree to Presbyters, that the reception of them in all Churches was early and general. He is pleased to add, there is nothing favouring these in Scripture. Now in the sentence before, he acknowledgeth that it appears from Scripture that there was a superiority of one over many Pastours; not only of the Apostles, but of others commissioned by them. From whence I conclude, that there is in Scripture a great deal to favour this Superiority (even according to Mr. Baxter) and nothing against a fixed Superior. Now the principal part of the Question here is, whether Superior or no, not whether fixed or unfixed; tho' I must observe, upon this part of the Question also, that this very early, and universal reception of fixed Bishops (which Mr. Baxter confesses) is it self a good argument, that there were such constituted by the Apostles themselves; and that the constitution of such was judged most agreeable to their mind. How else can we imagine that the reception of them should be so universal, and so early, that you cannot name the place, or time, from the
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very days of the *Apostles*, in which they are not found? Nor, in the matter before us, doth it signify much, whether the *Scriptures* instituted any particular form of Church-Government, in contradiction to any other or no: tho, if you will follow Mr. *Baxter*, you must think they did. The point is, whether in fact there were in those early days, *Bishops*, *Priests* and *Deacons*. Mr. *Baxter* says there were. And they were sufficiently distinguished from one another. As *Deacons* were not *Priests*, so all *Priests* were not *Bishops*. The *Bishop* was the *superiour*, and had his *Presbyters* under him. So that, as to the peculiar Office of *Bishops*, in the main here is no difference; and an agreement in the whole matter deliver'd in this proposition that *Bishops*, *Priests* and *Deacons*, in the sense that we all understand those words in, were in the Church from the very beginning. And what if they be called *Orders* by others? If you acknowledge the very thing which is meant in this sentence, why should this word trouble you; I think it a very proper word: but if I did not, yet if I acknowledged what Mr. *Baxter* does concerning *Bishops* and *Priests*, I could never answer to my self the

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the scrupling this sentence because they are called *Orders*. If any other word had been here used, let it be *Degrees*, or what you please, the like Cavils exactly might have been made against it, by any who would have been at the pains to do it.

Thus much for your *principal Reasons* against the *Affent* and *Consent*, and *Subscription*, required in the *Church of England*. Let us now proceed to some others you propose of *lesser consideration*; yet such, as seem to you sufficient to keep you from *Conforming* as *Ministers*. As,

1. *You cannot consent to pronounce all saved, that are buried, except the Unbaptiz'd, Excommunicate, and Self-Murtherers*; as, you say, all *Conforming Ministers* are obliged to do. In return to this objection; I shall not trouble you or my self with searching out some possible sound sense, in which some of the *Passages* in the *Burial Office*, against which you except, may be understood. For could I shew you, that God may be said to *take* even a very wicked man away *in mercy*; and that we may *give him thanks* for it, in a just sense; yet I do not love to go against the first design of such *publick forms*; and, after all, though those *expressions* might possibly be

be used of persons of whom we had not the least reason to *hope* well; yet these words, *As our hope is this our Brother doth*, in the last *Collect*, can in no sense be applied to such. It must, therefore, be owned, and it is too plain to be denied, that in such cases as you mention, of *men cut off in the midst of notorious sins, Drunkenness, Adultery, Murther, &c.* this Office is wholly improper: and sure, we need not doubt but that at length some regard will be had to the repeated desires of many of the best Defenders of the Church; and this ground of *objection* against it wholly removed. In the mean while, I have somewhat farther to offer to you.

Only before I do that, I must take some notice of *two things* which I think unreasonable in your management of this Head of accusation. 1. In that sentence, *God hath taken the Soul of our departed Brother to himself*, you will interpret those words, *to himself*, as if they certainly signified, *to happiness*; when they are capable of another sense; and a sense that is justifiable by what *Solomon* saith of *Death* with respect to all men. *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who* Eccl. 12. 7.

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gave it. If the Spirit of all men may, in a sound sense, be said to return to God; then it may also be said, in a sound sense, that God takes to himself the Spirits of all men, when they die. The same interpretation that we fix upon the *one*, we may, with equal justice, fix upon the *other*; and if the *one* be a true proposition, so is the *other*; the same objections lying against the manner of expression in both.

2. You deal very hardly with this sentence, *We commit his body to the ground in sure and certain hope of the resurrection unto eternal life, &c.* These are the words in the *Common-Prayer Book*; and if we Christians may not be allowed, when we commit a body to the ground, even supposing it the body of a wicked man, to say thus, *We commit not this body to the earth as men who believe the bodies thus laid in it shall remain there for ever; but as persons fully persuaded that there will be a resurrection of the bodies of all men at the last day* (which is, I am sure, the true interpretation of those words) it is very hard. But here I find these words, *a happy resurrection*, put instead of *the resurrection*, for what reason I cannot certainly tell: and it is affirmed that this must necessarily refer to the *dead person*, and that

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so as to signify a certainty of a *happy resurrection* to him, because, in one of the following Prayers, we pray, that *we may rest in Christ, as our hope is this our brother doth*. We are told, *this puts it out of doubt*. I can do nothing here but appeal to the words, as I have transcribed them from the *Common-Prayer Book*, and to that interpretation I have given of them; which indeed is so natural, that I never could frame any other to my self; and must leave the *Reader* to judge, whether this be a good way of reasoning; remembering that the word *Hope* may be used, when we are remov'd many degrees from *Confidence*, and are upon the very borders of *Fear*; but that the words, *sure and certain hope*, cannot be used but in the case of a *confident expectation* without the least *doubt* or *fear* in it. This is the case. In a Prayer at some distance from this sentence the Church *hopes* (which, in the lowest sense of the word is far from *certainty*) that this person *rests in Christ*. Now, how doth *this put it out of doubt*, that, in this sentence, *committing his body to the ground, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life? &c.* The Church must necessarily refer to his par-

ticular resurrection only: and signify by these words a *confident assurance* of his *happy* resurrection? The using of this *word* in the *last Prayer* is so far from *putting this out of doubt*; that it does not so much as make it *probable*: nay, there not being other evidence for this, it appears to me rather to prove the contrary. For if the *Church*, where it undoubtedly speaks of the *dead person*, make choice of a word which may be used where-ever we have not certain demonstration that he is incapable of Salvation; this leads us to think that if words be here used importing no less than the *highest assurance and most confident expectation*, they were not intended to refer to the *Salvation* of this particular person; the *one* being applicable to a vast number of persons, of whom the *other* cannot possibly be used. But tho' this be utterly insufficient to *put* your interpretation *beyond doubt*, yet I think verily I can produce something which, if you be truly willing to acknowledge it, will *put it beyond doubt*, that the interpretation I have given is both agreeable to the words, and intended by our *Church*; and that is, the alteration of this sentence as it is to be used
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at the *burial of the dead at Sea*: and I do not see how you can deny the same sense to be intended in both. *We therefore commit his body to the deep, to be turned into corruption, looking for the resurrection of the body, and the life of the world to come, &c.* Compare the *two Forms* together, and see if this do not plainly shew, that the meaning which you have so positively affixed to the *other* was never thought of by those who drew it up.

Having taken notice of these *two* things, what I have farther to offer upon this Head is this, that I do verily think that a *Minister* in the *Church of England* is under no obligation to use these *expressions*, which are the ground of your objection, in such cases as you mention; over notorious, incorrigible, impenitent, *Adulterers, Drunkards, Blasphemers, Murtherers*, or the like: nor ever likely to suffer the least inconvenience for *omitting* them. I design not by this to teach any persons to play with what ought to be sacred amongst Christians; or to make light of *Declarations* and *Subscriptions*. I hope I am far from it: and if what I now say cannot be demonstrated to be perfectly consistent with all the obligations a *Conforming*

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Minister is under, I here renounce it as soon as I have said it. I desire then, it may be considered. 1. That the *omission* of these sentences, in such cases, is not contrary to the original design of the *Church* in prescribing this *form*; but more agreeable to it than the *using* them. I find it almost unanimously affirmed by as great Writers as any that have appeared in this cause, that this *office* supposes such *discipline* in the *Church*, that all notorious and incorrigible finners should be *excommunicated*, and so incapable of this *office*. If this be so, and yet no such *discipline* exercised; to what part of his charge, to what part of his vow is *He* false, who either denies the *office* to those, of whose acceptance with God there cannot be the *least hope*; or omits these *expressions* which render this *office* so improper on such occasions? I desire it may be remembered, that I am not now encouraging any persons to judge hardly of their Neighbours; but speak only of such *cases*, where it is most apparent, and undeniable, that there is no ground for the lowest degree of *Hope*. Supposing therefore a Man cut off in the midst of such sins as *Adultery*, *Blasphemy*, *Swearing*,
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Drunkenness, without the least sign of *Repentance*, or acceptance with God; were these *expressions* design'd for him? Can the *Canon* which respects this, be supposed to command the *use of this form*, any otherwise than as it was designed by the *Church*? Do any of our *Governours*, or did they ever insist upon obedience to the *letter* of this *Canon* in such cases? not as I know of; and if they did, I should venture any penalty rather than obey: because my conscience would not let me say, *I hoped* the dead person *rests in Christ*, when there cannot be the least ground for *hope*; and because I cannot reconcile such an obedience with the obligations I am under to the *Church*. But, as for *omitting* what was never intended by the *Church* for such *occasions*, I could do it with a very easy conscience: having by no *vow*, *declaration*, or *subscription*, as I apprehend, obliged my self to the use of any thing against the plain intent of that *Church* in which I minister. And did it appear, that it was the design of this *Church*, and of the *Governours* of it, to oblige those who *minister* in it to declare in publick, that they *hope* common *Swearers*, *Drunwards*, *Adulterers*, *Murtherers*,

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Blasphemers; that such as these, I say, dying without any sign of acceptance with God, *rest in Christ*; what man, who had the least sense of Religion, could *conform* as a *Minister*? But, 2. You tell us here of some *Conforming Ministers*, who will not allow this *office* to *Dissenters*; under the Notion of *Schismatics*. Upon the authority of these persons then, this *office* may certainly be denied to some who are not actually *excommunicated*. For, as they deny it to some *Dissenters*, who, they think, ought to be *excommunicated*, whether they be or no: so it may reasonably, and upon the same foundation, be denied to notorious and incorrigible *Drunkards*, *Adulterers*, and the like, tho' they be not actually *excommunicated*. Nothing is plainer than that such as *these* shou'd be disowned by all *Churches*, and not esteemed as *Christians*. This is a *Canon* of *St. Paul's*, of as long standing almost as the *Gospel* it self. And certainly, no Church that speaks any thing of *Excommunication*, can be supposed not to design that notorious, incorrigible *Adulterers*, *Murderers*, and the like, should be *excommunicated*; as much as it designs that any others should. If therefore this *office* may be

be denied to any *others*, certainly it may to *these*: and if the *office* may, then also those expressions in it which make it so improper.

In one word, what I esteem truly satisfactory on this Head is this; You may be *Ministers* in the *Church of England* without obliging your selves to *use* this *office* over such impenitent wretches as you mention; for neither *Assent* and *Consent*, nor *Subscription* can refer to it any otherwise than as it was designed by the *Church*. You may *minister* in the *Church of England*, *preach*, *exhort*, *instruct*, do all imaginable good to the Souls of Men for many years together, (for your whole lives, if you please,) without being obliged to use this *office* over any, either good or bad. And I remember the *ejected Ministers* somewhere speak, as if they should have been contented, if they could have been *Preachers* only in this *Church*. But farther, if you should take a *Cure* of a Parish upon you, and perform all the *offices* of a *Minister* in it, perhaps these cases you mention, may not happen; and if they do happen, I am persuaded you may omit these *improper sentences*, without being false to any part of your trust; and without suffering any
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inconvenience for so doing. And after this, I think you cannot say, or think, with any justice, that you cannot conform as *Ministers* without pronouncing all *who are buried, saved*, let them be never so wicked, and never so void of all signs of acceptance with God. And if you can conform without this, then this objection against it is removed.

2. *You cannot consent to a false Rule for finding out Easter-day.* You truly say, that *this is but a Trifle*: yet, I shall neglect nothing which I find seriously proposed as an argument against *Conformity*. And, in answer to this, I should not doubt to shew, that supposing this *Rule false*, a Man may with a very safe conscience both declare his *Assent* and *Consent*, and *Subscribe*; were there any necessity of making this concession. But this I omit for a better reply; which, if you find it to have truth in it, must for ever remove this reason of *Non-conformity*. And that is, that this is wholly founded upon a mistake of your own. The *Rule* neither contradicts the *Table* in the *Common-Prayer Book*, nor the *Common Almanacks*, which agree with the *Table*. Only the thing is this; you judge of the *Moons* by the
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the *Common Almanacks*, which are there set down according to the reformation of the *Kalendar*; and the *Rule* speaks of the *Moons*, as they are to be found in our own *Kalendar*, according to the account in use before that reformation, when this *Rule* was first setled. Now, tho' the *New* and *Full Moons*, in our *Kalendar*, be not so agreeable to the *Moon* in the Heavens, as the *New* and *Full Moons* in the *Almanacks*, yet it is hard to judge of the falsity of a *Rule* which respects the *Moons* in one account, by the *Moons* in another account. The *Rule* is true if we understand it aright. The *Table* agrees with it perfectly; for it only tells what day of the month *Easter-day* always falls, according to that *Rule*; and *Easter-day* in the *Almanacks* is the same that it is in the *Table*. And so both say nothing but what the *Rule* it self directs. I need not tell you how to find the *New* and *Full Moons* by the *Kalendar* in the *Common-Prayer Book*: nor is it worth while to say any thing more upon this Head.

3. You cannot agree to read *Apocryphal Lessons* &c. and therefore cannot conform as *Ministers*. In answer to what you say under this Head, I shall not go against
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my own judgment so much as to plead for the retaining any one thing in the publick service of the *Church*, that is justly suspected to be *fabulous*. Nor shall I now enquire, whether all the stories here mentioned be *fabulous* or no: but shall only at present argue thus. Is it *unlawful* to read any Books in the *Church*, in which there are very many useful and excellent things, as well as some few relations suspected to be *fabulous*? Is it *unlawful* to tell one of these *stories* in the Pulpit, or a *story* the truth of which may be as much suspected as any of these? It is notorious that this hath not been scrupled by many who have scrupled the other: and yet, if *this* be not *unlawful*, neither is the other; and if it be not *unlawful*, it may be complied with.

Art. 6. I desire it may be considered also, that Our *Church* hath sufficiently, and openly, declared what a distinction she puts between these *Apocryphal* Books, and those which are *Canonical*; that no Chapter out of these Books is appointed to be read in the *Service* for *Sundays*; that these Books are full of most excellent lessons and instructions; full of such instructions as it is good for the People to be acquainted with;

with; that they have been always highly esteemed in the *Church*; and that on those days they are read in the *Church*, there are also lessons out of the *New Testament* appointed with them; and all things necessary for the publick Service of God. Nor can I think, that you judge it a *sin* to read these Books in the Publick Service of God, as the *Church of England* hath declared they should be read, *viz.* for example of life, and instruction of man-Art. 6.
ners, but not to establish any doctrine. And if it may be done without *sin*; certainly it were much better to read a great many useful things, and amongst them a *fabulous* story, once or twice in a year, than to divide the *Church* under this pretence.

But you argue not only against reading those parts of the *Apocrypha* which you suppose to be *fabulous*, but against what you acknowledge to be *valuable* in it also, representing these books as read under the title and notion of *Holy Scripture*; nay, in the room of *Holy Scripture*. This we account hard indeed, that our *Church* should be thus represented, when it hath been declared after the most publick manner, that in the name of the *Holy Scri-*

Art. 6.

Scripture we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority there never was any doubt in the Church. And in the same article the Apocryphal Books are number'd up, and call'd the other Books; and it is professed, that the Church doth not apply them to establish any doctrine. Now, can any one suppose after this, that this Church reads these Books under the notion of Holy Scripture? Nay, is it possible the Church should be so inconsistent with it self? You can produce no sentence out of all it's publick offices, or declarations, in which the Apocrypha is called the Holy Scripture. The Order which you cite for this, follows the Order concerning the Psalter, and is intituled, *The Order how the rest of Holy Scripture is appointed to be read.* And in it there is not one word of any thing but the *Old Testament* and the *New*. The *Apocrypha* is not named. I grant indeed that in the Rubric the *First Lesson* is said to be a *Lesson* out of the *Old Testament*, and yet some of the *First Lessons* are out of the *Apocrypha*. But, because this is thus expressed, where exact niceness was not at all necessary; must this be the foundation of an *Objection* which you

you your selves know how sufficiently to answer from that *article* of our *Church* in which these Books are spoken of designedly, and therefore with more exactness? They must be very severe indeed, and strongly inclined to find fault, who can pass by the plain declarations of the *Church*, where it professedly speaks of the *Apocrypha*; and build such a charge as this, upon an *Order* where the *Apocryphal* Books are not so much as named; and upon a *Rubric*, in which the greatest exactness of expression was neither required nor designed.

It sounds very hard too, when you say that these Books are read *in the room of Holy Scripture*, and that *some Canonical Books are omitted, curtailed, mutilated, and the like*. These are *phrases* that leave a strong impression upon the minds of the people; and you need not doubt of prejudicing them against our *Service* with such terms of accusation as these. But you must be sensible this is not fair, and reasonable: For you know, that there is no obligation to read every Chapter, from *Genesis* to the *Revelations*, in the *publick worship of God*; You know, that some Chapters, which are called *Canonical*,
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are such as may be improper, and unintelligible ; such as are of very little concern to the *Christian* People ; wholly out of their reach ; of little advantage, either to the informing their minds in any important matter, or to the raising their devotion ; You know, that many of those *Apocryphal Lessons* are truly of more use, and more to the *edification* of the people, than any of those *chapters* which are omitted. And why then should this always be spoken of, as if the people were rob'd of the *Word of God*, and *fabulous Legends* were imposed upon them instead of it, to be the rule of their lives ?

And, as for your imagination, that the *people* are led by this to think these *Apocryphal* Books of equal authority with the *Canonical Scriptures* ; how poor an insinuation is this ! when the *Church* hath declared, and gives authority to all *Ministers* to declare, that they are not. This is a truth you may as effectually convince the *people* of, in the *Church of England*, as you can do by separating from it. I mean, if they will hear Reason ; and if they will not, it is no matter what they believe, or what they disbelieve. But that any one of them was ever led by
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the Order about reading the *Lessons*, to think that *these* Books were of equal *Authority* with the *Canonical* Books, is what, I dare say, You cannot prove. I am sure, I never knew or heard of an instance. And till I do, I shall hardly think it so likely to come to pass as you represent it. But I proceed.

4. You cannot consent to the *mistranslation* of the *Psalter*: and therefore cannot conform as *Ministers*. The instance you produce is *Psal.* 105. 28. *And they were not obedient unto his word*; where the translation in our Bible reads, *and they rebelled not against his word*. Now, *First*, How can you assent, that they rebelled, and rebelled not? I answer, 1. Supposing these two propositions speak of the *same* persons (which you take for granted) I desire to know where you are required to assent that *they rebelled not*? to assent either to the *truth*, or to the *use* of that sentence? Your *Assent* can extend no farther than to what is appointed by the *Common-Prayer Book* in the publick service: and I know not, that the *translation of the Psalms*, as it is in our *Bibles*, hath any part in it. And, 2. Supposing the *subjects* of these two propositions to be diffe-

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rent (as indeed they are) were your *Assent* to be extended to both, it might be given most readily and safely. For, cannot I *assent* that the *Egyptians* rebelled, and that *Moses*, and *Aaron*, rebelled not? But, *Secondly*, How can you *subscribe* that there is nothing in our service *contrary to the word of God*, when *this* is? I answer,

1. You here take our English *Translation* of the *Bible* to be the *word of God*; which I think it cannot assume to it self any farther than with respect to the main and substantial parts of it. The same may be said of all *Translations*. Nay, it doth not appear that any *Copy*, either of the *Old*, or *New Testament*, preserv'd to us in the *Original languages* in which they were written, hath been so much the care of *Providence* in those parts of it which are of no great or general concern, as that we can certainly say, This is the true reading, and the *Copies* that differ from this in these points, are not to be regarded. The great ends of *Revelation* may all be served without this miraculous *Providence*: and, as they may, so we find they have been.
2. In many such places as this, you cannot say the *Hebrew* must necessarily be interpreted *thus* and no otherwise; when
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you consider how the most Learned *Commentators* and *Interpreters* have differed. And tho' the *translation* of our *Psalter* be granted, in this place, to be more conformed to the *Septuagint*, than to the *Hebrew*, as we now have it; yet, pray, from what did the *Septuagint* translate? and to what did they conform their *translation*? Can you certainly demonstrate that our *Hebrew Copy* is more uncorrupted than theirs in such passages as this? But, 3. Supposing you were fully persuaded that the *Hebrew* ought to be *translated* here, *And they rebelled not against his word*; of whom do you understand this? Of *Moses* and *Aaron*, say the best *Commentatours*, who render it thus. The *Septuagint* translate it, *And they were not obedient unto his word*. Of whom do they understand it? Of *Moses* and *Aaron*? No, but of the *Egyptians*. Now how, I pray, do these two sentences contradict one another, *Moses and Aaron rebelled not*, and, *The Egyptians rebelled*? If you but look into the *Synopses* of *Commentatours*, you will find that all who render it the former way, understand it either of *Moses* and *Aaron*; or of the *signs* and *prodigies*: and that all who render it the latter way, understand it of

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the *Egyptians*. Where then is this contradiction? To conclude this Head. The declaration of *Assent* and *Consent* toucheth this *Translation* no farther than to oblige you to use it in the *publick Worship*. And if a *Translation*, tho' it be faulty, may not be used in our *Churches*; shew us a *Translation* that is perfect; or one that hath not greater failings than this you have produced. *Subscription* obligeth you to say that there is nothing in this *Translation* contrary to the *Word of God*: and there are so many things required to the proving a *Translation* contrary to the *Word of God* in such points as this, that I may say, it is almost impossible to do it.

5. You cannot *Assent* and *Consent* to the *Athanasian Creed*: and, therefore, cannot conform as *Ministers*. The expression you scruple is this, *Which Faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly*. Here you give me leave to say, that You esteem this *Creed* an excellent explication of the *Doctrine of the Trinity*. By which you mean, to be sure, agreeable to the *Word of God*, and to *Truth*. From whence I argue; If this explication be true, and agreeable to the *Word of God*; then it is a good general proposition,

tion, that *whosoever doth not believe it, shall be condemned at the last day*: which is only the same thing in other words. Now, when we express our selves thus, We do not mean to condemn those who have not plain and certain means of coming to the knowledge of this; but only such who have the means of coming to it, and yet, through some fault in themselves, refuse to believe it. And you your selves, I doubt not, understand such general propositions in *Scripture* with this restriction. You would assent to this proposition, *Whosoever believeth not in Christ, shall be condemned*; and yet not look upon your selves as so far call'd to judge other men, as to conclude all certainly damned for ever who did not believe in him; but such as had means and opportunity, and yet did not. Make the same allowance for this proposition which refers to an *excellent explication* of what you acknowledge to be a great and weighty truth, recommended to us in *Scripture*; and be not unwilling to find out as sound a sense for *this*, as you do for others: which if I thought you could not do *without renouncing your candour and charity*, I would never urge you to it. But though I cannot but wonder to find you al-

ways so very ready to pitch upon the worst interpretation of every sentence in our Service; and am fully persuaded there is nothing in *this* but what may be said with a good conscience; yet, I confess, I agree with you thus far, that I cannot apprehend how the *publick Service* would suffer, were there no such *damnatory sentence* ever read in it. Nay, I am of opinion that the *Doctrine of the Trinity* would be better secured, and this very account of it better received, *without* such sentences, than *with* them.

6. *You must Assent and Consent to this Rubric*, that none shall be admitted to the *Holy Communion*, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed; *which you cannot do*; and so cannot *conform as Ministers*. A great grievance indeed! that all who are to be admitted to the *Communion*, should be obliged solemnly, before the *Bishop*, to own their *Baptismal Covenant*; and to have his Prayers, and the Prayers of the *Congregation* for them! Who would have thought this could ever have been scrupled by any serious *Christian*? But what cannot *weakness* and *prejudice* lead men to? If this *confirmation* be not commonly managed

ged with a becoming Gravity and seriousness, as you insinuate, it is the fault of the Bishop who officiates; for I am sure it may be managed most gravely and seriously, because I know it hath often been so managed, and with great and visible advantage to many, And, what is there in it that a Christian ought not to comply with? And why must this be called a *Diocesan ceremony*; when an essential part of it is the most solemn profession of Christianity, to be made by the Persons to be confirmed? Besides, I have shewn before that you could have joined in imposing some things upon the people, which would have excluded many scrupulous persons from Communion; and, therefore, this cannot be an argument to you against conforming as Ministers.

Thus have I gone over all your reasons against the second thing required of Ministers in the Church of England, which you think unreasonable, viz. Assent and Consent, and Subscription: and have remarked, under every Head, whatever appeared convincing to my self, or apt to satisfy You. I must proceed now to the Third.

III. The Third thing required of Ministers in the Church of England, which you think unreasonable, is, To take the Oath

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of Canonical Obedience; and swear *subjection to their Ordinary according to the Canons of the Church*. This you cannot do, and, therefore cannot *conform as Ministers*. Here I must observe to You, that you are guilty of *two mistakes* in the very drawing up of this *Article*. 1. You here insert these words, *according to the Canons of the Church*: for in that *form of words* to which the Persons to be *ordained* are to answer, in order to declare they will *obey their Ordinary* and their *Superiours*, there is no mention of the *Canons of this Church*; but the words are, *following with a glad mind, and will, their godly admonitions, and submitting your selves to their godly judgments*. And it is a little hard indeed that such a *form* of words as this cannot please you. How can you say, that *this* is obliging your selves to an *absolute Obedience* to them; or, that this *declaration* doth not leave you *so much as a judgment of discretion*, when the words do not import any thing like it? when they would have been just the same, had there not been one *Canon* settled in this *Church*; and would certainly have been very different from what they are, if an *unrestrained, and unlimited obedience* had been thought of by those
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who put them into this Form? And, 2. You speak as if no one could be *Ordained* in the *Church of England*, without taking the *Oath* of *Canonical Obedience*: which is not true; for this *Oath* is not to be found in the *Ordination-Office*: and therefore I must observe to you, that though I had invincible scruples against this particular *Oath*, yet, if I thought my self under a necessity of ministring in some Church or other, I would rather *minister* in this *Church* as far as I could without taking it, than divide the *Communion* of *Christians* on this account. I say not this because I think it in the least unreasonable to require all *Ministers* to take this *Oath* (in the true sense of the words) to the *Bishop* of the *Diocese* in which their *charge* lies; or because I think your *arguments* against it unanswerable: for I shall now endeavour to shew that it is not unreasonable, and that your *arguments* against it do not prove it so.

In order to this, let us enquire freely, and without prejudice, into the true meaning, and intent of this *Oath*. A person coming to settle in the *Diocese* of one particular *Bishop*; to exercise his Office under his eye and inspection; is obliged to

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to declare upon *Oath*, that he will pay obedience to him in these words, *I swear, that I will yield True and Canonical Obedience to the Bishop of N — and his Successors, in all lawful and honest things*: which I think cannot be interpreted any otherwise than thus; *I swear that I will yield such an obedience as is due*, according to the Laws of Christ's Church, *from an inferior Presbyter to his Bishop, viz. a sincere, ready, and submissive Obedience, in all lawful and honest things, i. e. provided He enjoin nothing, but what I apprehend in my conscience to be lawful and honest.* Here it is plain from the reason of requiring this *Oath*, that it refers, and can refer to nothing but what this one *Bishop* shall see fit to require. It is plain that the last words, *in all lawful and honest things*, refer to all the *injunctions* of this *Bishop*; and do suppose that every injunction He lays upon you may possibly be *unlawful*, and *dishonest*. If you say they do not, how do you prove it? I am sure it is impossible. If they do, then they refer as well to his *injunctions* in *Cases* which the *Canons* reach to, as to *Cases* which they reach not to: and this being so, this *Oath* hinders not in the least,

least, but that you may demur upon the *one* sort of *injunctions*, as well as upon the *other*. And that you your self are judge of the *lawfulness* and *honesty* of every *command* is so plain, that nothing can be plainer. For what can these last words signify unless you be? and if *you* be not, I pray, *who* is? not the *Bishop*, it is plain; for the *Oath* supposes that every thing He commands may be *unlawful*. So that this appears to be the *Case*. Here is an *Oath* of *Obedience* to one particular *Bishop*, as long as you remain in his *Diocese*: here is no reference to any thing but the *injunctions* of this particular *Bishop*: here is no distinction made between his *injunctions* according to the *Canons*, and others; but all included: and this obedience not left unrestrained and loose, (as it is in other *Oaths* which yet you do not scruple) but determined only to things which you your selves *think lawful and honest*. From whence I think these two things are plain. That this *Oath* can have no reference to the *Canons*, or any of them, but as they are matter of this particular *Bishop's* *injunctions*: and that, when they are the matter of any of his *injunctions*, You have a liberty to demur upon them

as

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as well as any other of his *injunctions*, any thing in this *Oath* notwithstanding. For they are not the *commands* of this *Bishop*, till he hath commanded the observation of them: and when he hath, still the *Oath* it self supposes that it is possible, every one of his *commands* may be *unlawful*. One thing more I add, and that is, that this *Oath* can refer to none but *future commands*; because it is to be taken with relation only to *one* particular person who never had any right to your obedience till this time. You come now under his Jurisdiction and Government: and from this time he is to give you directions in the execution of your *Office*, and lay *injunctions* upon you, as *occasion* requires; and upon this account only is this *Oath* administered to you. And if you would consider things in their due light, you must acknowledge, that it is expressed in words which give as much latitude, and as much liberty to them who take it, as the most conscientious persons upon earth could desire: Nay, I would gladly know in what words you would rather chuse to promise obedience to your *Bishop*; and what *Form* you can devise, that could imply *Absolute Obedience* less than this doth.

doth. But I now come to your *Objections* against it.

And here I do not find, that you attempt to prove that the words of the *Oath* do plainly signifie an *absolute Obedience to every one of the Canons* not abrogated by some *Publick Act*; or that any *Publick Act* of the *Church* declares, that *Ministers* are understood by this *Oath* to swear obedience to all *Canons* not so abrogated: though somewhat like this one might justly expect. Nor do I find that you judge thus of this *Oath* from the word *Canonical* inserted in it: for you say the same of that *promise of Obedience to the Ordinary* required of persons to be *Ordained*, in which no such word is made use of. What then are the *Reasons* why this *Oath* is not to be complied with?

1. The *First* is this; because *as all Obedience hath a relation to the Mandates of those we are to obey: so the Canons of the Church are the stated Laws of the Ecclesiastical Government: and therefore the Oath of Canonical Obedience which hath a reference to these Canons, carries in it a plain Obligation to comply with them, without leaving persons at liberty which to obey,*
and

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and which to refuse, &c. I have shewn before that this *Oath* cannot possibly refer to the *Canons*, but as they become the *injunctions* of one particular *Bishop*: and that it not only permits, but obliges all *Ministers*, in effect, to refuse obedience to any of his *injunctions*, when they appear not to them to be *lawful and honest*. When I swear obedience to one particular Person (as the *Case* is here) this *obedience* hath no relation to the *injunctions* of any Persons in the world except this one: and when I swear *Obedience* to him only in things *lawful and honest*, I oblige my self to obedience in nothing but what is to me *lawful and honest*. Neither the *Canons* of the *Church*, nor any things *antecedently required* have the least relation to this *Oath*. Nor is the question here, whether the *Canons* be without fault; but whether you will obey this particular *Bishop*, in all *lawful and honest things*.

Let me put a *Case* now which appears to me to be exactly parallel; and which may serve to explain yet more fully the point now before us. Supposing you were now coming into this *City*, to act in some *Inferiour Office* under the In-
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spection of the *Lord Mayor*, (who is one of the *Chief-Officers* under his *Prince*, as the *Bishop* is under *Jesus Christ*) in the execution of which *Office* you might often have occasion to consult him, and he often find occasion to send his *Directions* and *Injunctions* to you. Supposing you were obliged upon your coming under his *Jurisdiction*, and within the *Bounds* of his *Government*, to take this Oath, *I swear that I will yield true and legal Obedience to the Lord-Mayor &c. in all lawful and honest things*, I desire to know, 1. Whether this Oath can have a reference to all the *Stated Laws* by which the *Lord-Mayor* is to govern, any farther than as they are the matter of his *Commands* to you? Or, whether it can possibly refer to any thing but *this particular Governour's future Commands*? considering that the only Reason why you are called upon to take it is, because you are now coming to act under his eye, and in an *Inferiour Office*, in which you are often to have *Directions* from him? 2. Whether a *Legal Obedience* to the *Lord-Mayor* can signify any thing in this Oath, but such a sincere, honest, submissive Obedience as the *Laws* require of an *Inferiour Officer*

Officer to his *Superiour*, under whose *Inspection* he is to act? considering that the word *Legal* is join'd with *Obedience*, as the word *True* is, to explain what sort of *Obedience* is expected: and as for the *Extent* of this *Obedience*, there are other words purposely added to restrain it to *lawful, and honest, things* only.

3. Whether you might not, any thing in this *Oath* notwithstanding, refuse *Obedience* to any *Commands* of the *Lord-Mayor* that you apprehend to be *unlawful*, without enquiring whether these *Commands* be according to the *Laws of the Land*, or no? considering that this *Oath* relates to nothing but the *injunctions* of *this Governour*.

4. Whether you might not honestly take this *Oath*, without so much as knowing what *Laws* the *Lord-Mayor* himself is oblig'd to act by; or what *injunctions*, it is probable, he will lay upon you; only resolving to yield *Obedience* to him, *in all lawful and honest things*? considering that the *Occasion* of this *Oath*, and the *Words* of it restrain this *Obedience* to the *Directions* of *this particular Governour*; and that it is time enough for you to judge of the *lawfulness* of them, when they are signified to you.

5. Whe-

5. Whether the last words of the *Oath* do not plainly signifie, that you your self are left sole judge of the *lawfulness* and *honesty* of the *Commands*, and of *all* as well as *some* of them? considering that there is no distinction either made or implied in the *Oath*; that these last words can signifie nothing, and are but a *nonsensical Addition*, if you suppose that you oblige your self by this *Oath* blindly to obey any of the *Commands* of your Superiour without *leaving your self so much as a judgment of Discretion*, whether they be lawful or not.

Now, if you apply what I have said, to the *Case* before us; and be but as willing to put a true interpretation upon the *Oath* of *Canonical Obedience* to the *Bishop*, as I believe you would be to put a true interpretation upon such an *Oath* to the *Lord-Mayor*, I am persuaded not a word more is necessary. But I cannot help declaring, what I constantly find hitherto to be true, that you are more willing to make *Nonsense*, *Absurdity*, and *Contradiction*, of any of those *Declarations*, or *Sentences*, upon which you found your *Objections*, than to allow them such a *Construction* as will make them appear less

rigid than your *Fathers*, or you, have represented them: for fear (one would think) that the World should come at last to esteem *Ministerial Conformity* to the *Church of England* a very pardonable thing. If you blame me for being so free as to declare this, I can do nothing but appeal to this Chapter now before me for the proof of it. And I desire you would consider whether you give us not a just occasion of laying this to your charge in the *Case* now before us. Here is an *Oath* to be taken: and rather than it should not appear *Egregious Dissimulation* (as your words are) to take it, you do indeed put a sense upon it which neither the words, nor design, can admit of. For, to return to your *Objection*, nothing can be plainer, than that an Obedience to a *Governour*, restrain'd in express terms to *things lawful*, can have no relation to any thing but *things* accounted by you to be *lawful*; yet here we have it affirmed, that such an *Obedience* hath a relation to *all the Stated Laws* by which the *Governour* is to act, though you account them *unlawful*. Nothing can be plainer, than that this *Oath* supposes that all his *Commands* may be *unlawful*, and leaves you to judge of *all* as well

as *some*; yet here it is affirmed, that it leaves you not so much as a *judgment of Discretion*, as to *some* of them. Nothing is plainer than that the reason and design of this *Oath* restrains it to the *Future Commands of one particular Bishop*; yet we have it maintain'd, that it supposes an *Obligation to comply with the things antecedently required by others*. Where, I beseech you, is this supposed? What words are here in this *Oath* that *do plainly*, nay, that *can possibly*, refer to any thing *antecedently required*? Or, is this supposed in the *Reason of the Oath*? That, I am sure, is apparently against you. If neither in the *Reason*, nor the *Words* of it, where else can this *Obligation* be supposed? For my part, I am convinc'd that no *Arts*, or *Metaphysics*, in the world can be sufficient to make good this part of your charge. And indeed you seem to me to confute your own Accusation in this place. For after you have acknowledged that there is in the *Oath* a *Limitation of this Obedience to things lawful and honest*, you grant this *Limitation is to be extended only to Future Commands*. From whence I argue (and I recommend the Argument to your Consideration) that the *Oath* it self can

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be extended to nothing but *Future Commands*. For, if these words, *all lawful and honest things*, refer to *Future Commands* only, as you say they do; then an *Obedience* promised in *all lawful and honest things* can refer to nothing but *Future Commands*. If the *Limitation* extend only to *Future Commands*; then the *Obedience* promised with this *Limitation* extends only to *Future Commands*. If there be any other *Obedience* sworn in these words, besides a *limited* one, let it be plainly shewn. If there be not, let it be acknowledged, that a *Limited Obedience*, can refer to nothing, but what the *Limitation* refers to. What might have been expected, if such a *Limitation* had not been added; when, now it is added in plain words, the *Obedience* promised with a *Limitation*, is made to extend to *Injunctions* to which the *Limitation* it self is acknowledged not to extend? Nay, besides all this, supposing this *Oath* to refer to *Obedience to the Canons* already settled; can you possibly invent a better Argument to prove that an *absolute Obedience* to every one of them not abrogated is promised in it, than the last words will afford us that it is not? All you can say is, that *surely whatever*
the

the Church Representative requires cannot be supposed unlawful by those who profess so great a Reverence for all its dictates as some do, which is rather *banter* than *argument*: but we can produce the very words of the *Oath* supposing that every one of them may be scrupled by you unless you your self judge them *lawful and honest*: and we are not now enquiring what I, or any other private person, think; but what this *Oath* supposes, or implies.

Now, if the account of this *Oath* which I have now laid down, be a true one, as I verily believe it is; it is plain that all your objections drawn from the *Canons*, let the obedience to them be never so much *antecedently* required, are no more *objections* against the taking this *Oath* than they are against taking the *Oath of Allegiance*. And, therefore, I need not trouble you, or my self, with any thing particular in defence of every *Canon* you object against; tho', I assure you, I could shew that you put most unreasonable interpretations upon many of them; and represent their sense very unfairly; and argue unjustly against them. If I have proved that this *Oath* cannot refer to any *absolute Obedience* to them, I have done

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what is sufficient to remove this *Reason* against your *conforming* as *Ministers*. From what hath been said it appears also, that the *Case* of a *Minister*, in this matter, is not the same with that of a *Justice of Peace*, as you represent it to be; unless the *Oath* a *Justice* takes, be an *Oath* of *Obedience* to the *Future Commands* of one particular person, under whose inspection He is to execute his *Office*: and unless the *Obedience* be limited to *lawful and honest things*; and a liberty left him of demurring upon the *Commands* of his *Superiours*. But supposing this *Oath* of a *Minister* had been expressed after the same manner with that of a *Justice of Peace*; do you really think that a *Justice* binds himself to execute every particular *Law* of the Land not publickly abrogated when called to it? Do you think that a Gentleman might not honestly take upon him that *Office*, tho' he did not so much as know all the *Laws* He might possibly be called, one time or other, to execute; nay, tho' there were *Laws*, not abrogated, which He was resolved never to execute; provided they were such as His *Prince* neither at present requires Him, nor would, in all probability, require Him to execute during his whole

whole life? such as were grown to be universally disused, and that disuse constantly connived at? This would be no very grateful lesson to many of your own Friends, or indeed to any *Justice* in the whole Land. But I do not believe you think hardly of any such *Gentlemen*; and yet none of their *Superiours* would let them openly explain their meaning, and say, *These Laws I will execute, and these I will not.* They certainly act sincerely and honestly, in taking such an *Oath*, if they satisfy their consciences as to those *Laws* which they themselves may probably, in the present state of things, be called and required to execute. Now, I say, supposing this *Oath* of *Ministers* to be parallel to that of *Justices*, You are obliged either to shew that a *Justice* binds himself to the execution of every particular *Law* not abrogated (which you cannot do) or to make the same allowances for *Ministers* as you can do, upon *occasion*, for *others*; and not to think harder of *them* than you usually do of *others*. But,

2. *Another Capital Reason* (as you term it) why this *Oath* is scrupled is, *because the Episcopal Government is managed by Chancellour's Courts, where Laymen excommunicate,*

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municate, and absolve, &c. I need only mention this. For I have before shewn that there is nothing promised in this *Oath* but an *Obedience* to the *Future Commands* of one particular *Governour*, limited only to such things as you your self judge to be *lawful*: and therefore need not go over all your sad and unjust aggravations of this. Employ all your art and Rhetorick to make this as foul as you would have it appear; Call it by what names you please; I see not how it touches the matter before us; for, Let the Case be never so bad, and your representation of it never so true; (which indeed it is not) this *Oath* obligeth you to no *obedience* but what you your self shall think lawful. It binds you not to *act blindfold*; or to *overtrow the Pastoral office*; or to *approve of sacrilegious propheaness*; or to *trust your consciences with Lay-men*; or to *be the instruments of molesting, worrying, and ruining as Religious Persons as any in your Parishes*; but only to *obey your Bishop in all lawful things*. Look over these passages again; and see with what Conscience you can thus represent either this *Oath*, or the promise of *Obedience* to the *Ordinary*; both of which can relate to nothing but the *Future Commands*

mands of some particular Men, and are drawn up with such a *limitation* plainly *expressed*, as you are forced to *understand* in almost every other *Oath* you take. I do not deny that it is *possible* you may suffer some Inconvenience for *refusing Obedience* in some cases. But it is but *possible*; and I do not think you can produce any Instances of *Ministers* who have suffered any thing considerable for it. But this is not the Point, what *possible Inconveniences* a *Minister* is liable to: but what *Obedience* he obligeth himself to, by the *Oath* we are now considering: and to say that he obligeth himself to any *blindfold acting*, is to say what is directly contrary to the *Words* and *Design* of it. I shall only now set down the *Oath* before the *Reader's* face, and with it the *Two* Interpretations; that which *You* have fixed upon it; and that which I apprehend to be the only one of which it is capable; that so he may the more easily judge between us. The *Oath* is this, *I swear that I will yield true and Canonical obedience to the Bishop of N. in all lawful and honest things.* Your Interpretation of it is this, *I swear that I will obey every one of the Canons, (not publicly abrogated) as being antecedently obliging,*

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obliging; and supposed to contain nothing but what is lawful and honest: and also that I will obey the future Commands of this Bishop in all lawful, and honest things. In which you are forced to make the Oath consist of two Parts, to one of which you apply the last words; and to the other you do not: in *one* of which you promise a *limited Obedience* to the Commands of the *Bishop*; in the other an *absolute Obedience* to something else: whereas the last words do manifestly restrain *all* the *Obedience* promised: and the Oath refers to nothing but the *Commands* of one Person. The Interpretation I apprehend to be the true one, and that of which alone it is capable, is this; *I, now coming to act under the eye and inspection of this particular Bishop, do swear, that I will yield a true Obedience to Him, and such a sincere, ready, and submissive Obedience as, by the Laws of the Church, is required of a Presbyter to his Bishop, in all things that, according to the best light I have, I can apprehend to be lawful and honest.* This is the Oath, and these are the *Two Interpretations*; and let any one in the World judge, which is most agreeable to the Design and Words of it. From
what

what I have said on this Head, give me leave to Conclude, that it is so far from being *Egregious Dissimulation to take this Oath with a Reserve to demur upon the Commands* afterwards given, let them be what they will; that you cannot possibly take this *Oath* in the plain sense of the words in which it is framed, *without this reserve*, unless you make two *Oaths* of it, and make a *distinction* out of your own Heads inconsistent with the words of it. But I have done. Only I desire it may be observed, that for all these long and tragical Exclamations upon this *Oath* to the *Bishop*, and *Promise of Obedience to the Ordinary*, we have only Mr. *Baxter*, and one of his last Books quoted; though for the other Heads of Accusation many others are added. Not that I think that what is here said is ever the more to be rejected on this Account, if it appear reasonable; but yet, this is a prejudice against it, and a presumption that the matter may be mistaken, and his terrible *Invective* misapplied,

But you will say, What then? Is no Obedience due from a *Minister* to the *Canons*? Yes, certainly; but not by this
Oath,

Oath, unless as they become the *Commands* of his *Bishop*; nor then, any *absolute Obedience*. Not by this *Oath*, I say; and that is what we are now considering. But I add, that whoever designs to officiate as a *Minister* in any *Church*, certainly acts not fairly and honestly, if he do not first satisfy his Conscience about the lawfulness of Obedience to such Rules and Prescriptions as have been laid down and agreed upon by the *Governours* of this *Church*, for the regulating the Behaviour of all who minister in it; and resolve to obey them. But then the *Rules* and *Prescriptions* he is to satisfy himself about can be only such as concern his own Behaviour and Conduct in his Office: And of these only such as he supposed by the present *Governours* of the *Church* to be obliged and ready to obey. For it is very plain, that I am concerned only in the *Present Time*; and obliged to *Obedience* to no *Rules* but those to which *Obedience* is *now* required; those which are *now* esteemed to be obligatory. Concerning the *Canons* therefore against which you object (those, I mean, which concern the Conduct of *Ministers*) I ask, Are they not such as are altered and repealed by any subsequent

quent Laws? Or, such as that Obedience to them at this time cannot be performed? Or, such as are generally disused, and that *disuse* not clandestine, but known, and connived at by all in Authority? If they be, they concern not the present *Ministers*; for *they* are obliged to obey no Law, Obedience to which is not at *present* required: and need not trouble themselves about any *Canons*, but what are at present esteemed to be obliging. If they be not, I grant that they are certainly *now* supposed to be in force; and every *Minister* supposed to be ready to comply with them, and obliged to do it. Now if you look into that Catalogue of *Canons* you have produced, and separate those of this latter sort from the others, I hope you will find upon the review, either that you are mistaken in the sense you have put upon them; or that I have in the foregoing Discourse proposed what is sufficient to prove it very lawful both for the *Ministers* to pay Obedience to them, and for their *Governours* to require it. But, however this be, I am sure it is not reasonable, nor justifiable, for Persons to *Conform as Ministers* to a *Church*, in which there are *Laws* laid down

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down for their Behaviour in their *Office*; and these *Laws* neither abrogated, nor disused with connivence: to *Conform*, I say, as *Ministers* to such a Church, without a resolution of obeying these *Laws*. For this is not open and fair; it is putting a Deceit upon the *Governours*, who, to be sure, doubt not but that all who offer themselves to the *Ministry*, are satisfied in their Consciences of the lawfulness of acting according to these *Prescriptions*. And, it looks not sincere for Men first to offer themselves to the *Ministry* in this *Church*, which is in effect, to profess that they are ready to conform to such of the *Canons* as relate to their Behaviour, and are *now* in force; and afterwards to act as they think fit without regard to these *Canons*: *First*, to make a shew of obedience to these *laws*; and after this to act *clandestinely* till they are found out and censured; and then to think it enough to submit to the penalty, which they must do, whether they will or no. The *Law* was certainly made to be obeyed; and the *penalty* was not added to intimate that any might take their choice whether they would conform to the *law*, or submit to *that*; or as if it were an indiffer-

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rent thing to our *Governours*; whether we chose to *obey*, or to *suffer*. It was added for the sake of men who have no consciences, not for the sake of those who have. This is what seemed to me proper and necessary to be said on this Occasion.

Thus have I finished one part of what I undertook; and have, with the utmost sincerity, and the greatest regard to truth, considered those *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* which you judge to be *Unreasonable*, and endeavoured to return such answers to the *objections* made in your names against them, as appeared truly convincing and satisfactory: which was the *First* thing I proposed. I promised in the *Second* place to shew that the arguments produced by Mr. *Calamy* in defence of your selves are not sufficient to justify your *separation*, even supposing these *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* to be *Unreasonable*; And, *Thirdly*, To consider what is advanced by *Him* for the vindication of your people. What I shall offer to you under these *two Heads* will be wholly distinct from what is said under the *First*; and the *arguments* to be proposed under *them*, of no relation to the *argument* founded upon *this*. So that, for
this

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this, and some other *reasons*, I shall beg leave to reserve them for *another part*; which I promise shall wait upon you with all convenient haste. In the mean while, permit me to leave this argument with you.

The *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* to the *Church of England* are such as may very lawfully be complied with;

Therefore, supposing it necessary for you to *minister* in some *Church* or other, you ought to *conform* as *Ministers* to the *Church of England*.

This *consequence* you acknowledge, if the *former proposition* be true. And for the truth of *that*, I can only appeal to what I have said in the foregoing discourse: which I, therefore, intreat you to examine, not with the rigour of those, whose only business it is to think the worst of every thing they once disliked; but with such a *temper* of mind as becomes persons whose duty it is most willingly to admit of all reasonable Arguments that can be offered in defence of *Conformity* to the *Established Church*.

FINIS.

THE
REASONABLENESS
OF
CONFORMITY
TO THE
CHURCH of ENGLAND,

Represented to the
DISSENTING MINISTERS.

In Answer to the Tenth Chapter of
Mr. Calamy's *Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's History of his Life and Times.*

PART II.

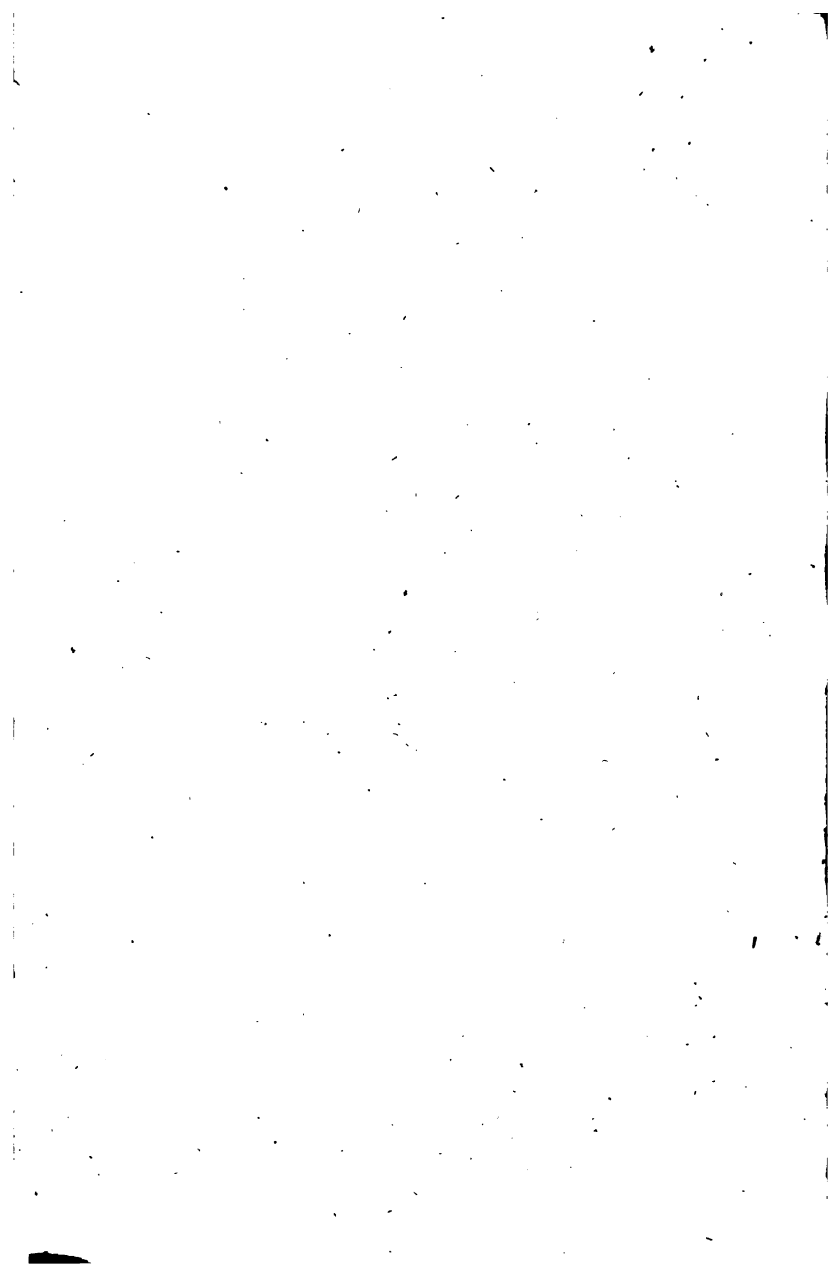
By BENJAMIN HOADLY, M. A.

The Second Edition Corrected.

One would have thought, that if their Opinions had been certainly true; and their Church-Order good; yet the interest of Christ, and of greater Truths should have been regarded; and that they should not tear the Garment of Christ all to pieces, rather than it should want their Lace. Mr. Baxter in his Account of the Sectaries, Abridg. p. 98.

L O N D O N,

Printed for Tim. Child, at the *White Hart* at the
West-End of St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1703.



THE
PREFACE.

To Mr. Calamy.

S I R,

I *Have at length finished my Reply to the Tenth Chapter of your Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's History: And now recommend the whole to your serious Examination. Whatever the success of it prove, it will be always a very great satisfaction to my own Mind, that nothing but a sincere love of Truth hath induced me to appear in this Controversy. And, since I have engaged my self in this Cause, I esteem it no small happiness, that I have to do with a Person, whose Character, and open Professions forbid me to ex-*

The P R E F A C E.

pect any thing from Him, but fair, open, and ingenuous dealing; such as becomes a Man, and a Christian.

You have publickly professed, That you much more desire that Truth should be advanced than any Party. You have declared, That Your being engaged in a Separate way shall not hinder You from attending to any thing that can be fairly proposed against it: But that you will, after fresh Consideration of this whole Reply, either let the World know your Reasons for still continuing in Non-conformity; or else freely yield to the force of our Arguments, as becomes an honest Man. This is indeed what becomes an honest Man; and all that ought to be expected from a Reasonable Creature. And it is this serious and open Promise, that hath raised in me the greatest Hopes, that, tho' we may
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differ after all our Enquiries, yet, nothing shall appear in the Management of this Cause, that may possibly blind Men's Eyes, or hinder them from judging aright in it: Nay, nothing but what shall tend to open their Eyes, and help to lead them still farther into the ways of Truth. It is this Profession, that hath given me all assurance, That You are not one of those who think the pretence of a settled Judgment sufficient to excuse them from giving ear to any thing that can be offered against their Practice; that You are not one of those who think Your Predecessours infallible, or incapable of being mislead into Error by Prejudice, or Passion; that you are entirely for judging by your own Reason, from the merits of the Cause, and not from any other Consideration whatever. And this gives me the
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utmost confidence, that the World will see, by a fresh Instance, that Controversies may be so managed, as to be neither a disadvantage to Truth, nor a dishonour to Christianity. I hope I have not failed myself: I am sure I have taken all possible care to avoid any thing that might but seem likely to obstruct the End all Christians ought to have in their Eye. And I doubt not, but that you will join with me in the same just and reasonable care. I doubt not, but that you will give every thing it's due weight; and not reject any thing, because it hath heretofore been mistaken, or misrepresented. If any part of your Cause have been too violently prosecuted, and loaded with too many, and unjust aggravations; I doubt not, but that you will fairly acknowledge it: Because this will tend mightily to
abate

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abate Men's prejudices, and to discover the right side of the Question. If in any one single Point I have added the least degree of light, or have advanced any thing satisfactory; I doubt not, but that you will expressly confess it: because this is due, in common justice, to the Cause of Truth. Of these things, and the like, I do not, in the least, doubt, because they are perfectly agreeable to your Character; and the contrary perfectly inconsistent with those Professions you have made, and with the least degree of Freedom and Impartiality.

I have endeavoured to speak with all plainness; that nothing relating to the whole Cause, may be misunderstood, or misapplied. And I have all along endeavoured to reduce the Controversy into those Bounds, within which, I judge, it ought always to be confined. Which Two Things

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Things, I am sensible, have often betrayed me into such Repetitions, as may seem tedious to some Persons: But, I hope, that what occasioned them, may also, in some sort, serve to excuse them. And, if You join with me in these Endeavours, the World will better see the Merits of the Cause on both sides; and it will be the more certainly understood, in what Points you still want satisfaction, if you should yet remain unsatisfied.

I have nothing farther to add, but my Prayers to God, that Truth may prevail, on which side soever it be; and that He would direct us in all our searches after it. I am, Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

B. H.

THE
REASONABLENESS
OF
CONFORMITY
TO THE
CHURCH of ENGLAND,
Represented to the
DISSENTING MINISTERS, &c.

PART II.

HAVING, in the former Part of this
Reply, endeavoured to answer the
objections advanced by Mr. Calamy,
in your names, against the Terms of
Ministerial Conformity, in the Church of Eng-
land, and to give You all reasonable
satisfaction that they are not so unjust
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The Reasonableness

and unlawful as You have imagined and represented them to be, (which was the first thing I proposed) I now come to the remaining part of what I undertook, viz.

II. To shew, that the *Arguments* proposed by Mr. *Calamy* in defence of Your selves, are not sufficient to justify your *Separation*, even supposing the *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* to be unreasonable. And,

III. To consider what is offered by *Him* in vindication of your *People*.

Indeed I cannot but hope, upon the most serious consideration, that You Your selves are sensible how sadly the *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* have been mistaken, and misrepresented; and that I have said already what may make it needless to add any thing more upon this subject. But this I must leave to your own Consciences; and am obliged to proceed, in the method I at first proposed, to consider all that I find alleged in defence of *Nonconformity*; that so the merits of this Cause may be fairly and thoroughly tried, and nothing be left untouched in a matter of such consequence. I shall now therefore endeavour,

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II. To shew that the *Arguments* proposed by Mr. Calamy in defence of Your selves, are not sufficient to justify your *behaviour*, even supposing the *Terms* of *Ministerial Conformity* to be *Unreasonable*. By *Unreasonable* here, I mean *unreasonable* in your Opinions; such as You could not with a safe Conscience comply with; such as You could not, after all your consideration, heartily approve of, or submit to, without Sin. If you could have joined with them without sinning, You acknowledge that You ought to have done it, and You profess that You would have done it. But not being able to *Minister publickly* in the Church of *England* without acting against Your Consciences, You *Minister publickly* in a *separate* way. After, therefore, that Mr. Calamy hath produced, in your names, the *Reasons* why You think the *Terms* of *Ministerial Conformity* unreasonable, and a compliance with them sinful; He advances the *Arguments* which induce You to *Minister publickly* in a *separate* way. Accordingly, I now suppose his *Reasons* to be sufficient to prove that a compliance with those *Terms* had been *sinful* in *You*; and come to examine his *Arguments* for

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The Reasonable

your *Publick Ministrations*. And in order to do this distinctly and clearly, I shall,

1. Consider the *Arguments* offered in Vindication of *those* amongst You, who were in the *Ministry* before the *Act of Uniformity*, and have ever since continued the *publick Exercise* of it; And examine whether they be sufficient to defend your practice in so doing. And,

2. I shall consider how far these *Arguments* can vindicate the practice of *those* amongst You, who have Ordained others, and of *those* who have been Ordained to the *Ministry*, since that *Act*.

Under the *former* of these, that I may the more effectually compass the end I propose, I judge it to be the properest method, *first*, to draw up the *Arguments* I meet with fairly and honestly, in such a form that every body may presently see their utmost force; and *then* to return what appears to me to be a *sufficient answer* to them. But I shall pass by whatever is not *Argument*; all such *Aggravations* as these, That *the Church-doors were shut against the Ejected Ministers, with contempt*; and that *they were left to spend their time in Solitude and retirement, preparing themselves*
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of CONFORMITY.

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for another world, as of no farther use in this: (as if a Good Man could be of no use in the World, unless He were a Preacher.) These Observations, and the like, the *Person* who made them, will himself easily excuse me, if I neglect; because He knows, I dare say, that they are nothing to that purpose; that they are rather *Prejudices* to support a *Party*, than *Arguments* to maintain a *Cause*, which ought to be founded on *Reason*, and not on *Passion*. The *Arguments* which I find offered for *those* of You who continued the *Publick* exercise of Your *Ministry*, though You could not comply with the *Terms* of *Ministerial Conformity* in the *Established Church*, are these that follow; which I shall here set down all together, that the whole force of this part of the *Cause*, may be seen at one view.

The *First* is taken from Your *Ordination Vow*, by which You obliged Your selves to the diligent Performance of Your *Ministry*, and may be thus represented in Your names,

We cannot lay aside the *Publick Exercise* of our *Ministry* without *perfidious breaking our Ordination-vow*;

Therefore, We dare not do it.

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The *Second Argument* is built upon the same foundation, *viz.* Your *Ordination-vow*, by which You were *Consecrated to God*; and stands thus,

We cannot lay aside the *Publick Exercise* of our *Ministry* without the *Sin of Sacrilege*, in alienating Persons who have been consecrated to God:

Therefore, we dare not do it.

The *Third* is taken from the desires and entreaties, or rather the *Threatnings* of some of Your People, who *beg'd* You would not desert them; who *profess'd* they could not trust their souls to the care of a great many of those who were placed in the Churches in Your stead; nay, who declared, that if You should forsake them, they would charge You with the neglect of their souls. And the *Argument* drawn from hence stands thus,

We cannot lay aside the *Publick Exercise* of our *Ministry*, without the *Sin of Unfaithfulness, Cruelty, and Unmercifulness*, and without incurring the *Guilt of ruining Souls by stopping our own Mouths*;

Therefore, we dare not do it.

A *Fourth Argument* is taken from the *doom of the Unprofitable Servant* that hid his Talent, *Matth. 25.* and is this,

We

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We cannot lay aside the *Publick Exercise* of our *Ministry* without incurring the Guilt of *hiding our Talent*, and *exposing our selves* to a like treatment with that of the *Unprofitable Servant* in the *Gospel*;

Therefore, We dare not do it.

A *Fifth* is taken from the *necessities* of the *People* in most parts of the *Nation*, notwithstanding the *legal Provision* for them; many *Ministers* in the *Publick Churches* having more *Souls* to look after, than several would be sufficient for, and may be thus expressed,

We judge it to be our duty to continue the *Publick Exercise* of our *Ministry*, because in some *Parishes* there are more *People* than the *Established Minister* can look after.

A *Sixth* is joined to this, taken from the want of good *Qualifications* in many of the *Parish Ministers*, and is this,

We think it our duty to continue the *Publick Exercise* of our *Ministry*, because sundry of the *Parish Ministers* are *insufficient* and *unqualified*.

The *Seventh* Argument is this,

Some *Passages* of *Scripture* intimate the *Duration* of the *Ministerial Office*, where there is once a *Conveyance*;

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Therefore it is our duty to continue the *Publick Exercise* of our *Ministry*.

The *Eighth* is founded upon other *Texts of Scripture*, thus,

Some Passages of Scripture plead for the Necessity of Preaching, even when the Magistrate forbids;

Therefore we cannot lay aside the *Publick Exercise* of our *Ministry*.

The *Ninth* and last, is built upon another passage in the Gospel, in which *You found it was Your duty to pray for sending in of faithful Labourers*, and runs thus,

We cannot lay aside the *Publick Exercise* of our *Ministry*, because if we should, we cannot beg of God to send *faithful Labourers into his harvest* without mocking him: For we cannot *but think the sending up of such a request to God a mocking of him, while such as we are cease to labour, who have been called, and qualified, owned, and succeeded.*

Thus have I faithfully set down the whole of this *Cause*, and produced every *Reason* advanced in Defence of it, in it's full strength; and, as near as I could, in *Your own words*,

Indeed

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Indeed none of these *Arguments*, nor all put together, carried with them such irresistible conviction, or undeniable demonstration, but that *several* who were in the *Ministry* before, and these none of the most inconsiderable, or injudicious, were not determined by them. Nay, They were so far from thinking it their indispensable duty to continue the *Publick Exercise* of their *Ministry*, when they were unhappily shut out of the *Establishment*; that they found very *weighty Reasons* against it, and were induced by them to seek out some other ways of being *usefull* to mankind: though, if these *Arguments* prove good, I would not be in their case for a thousand Worlds. For, I doubt, *Ignorance* and *Mistake* will go but a little way in the excusing Men from the guilt of such crimes, as *Perfidiousness*, *Sacrilege*, *Unfaithfulness*, *Cruelty*, *Unmercifulness*, *Ruining of Souls*, *hiding their Talent*, *mocking of God*, *neglecting an indispensable duty lying upon them as Men, and Ministers, by the obligation of God's Law of Charity, and by the binding force of their own Vows, and forsaking that work which God and the necessities of Souls called them to.* This will be a terrible charge against them indeed,

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indeed, if it be found at last to be built upon good Reason. But *I hope better things*: and in order to make appear what I design under *this head*, I shall now examine the strength of every one of these *Arguments*, in the order in which I have now proposed them.

The *First* and *Second* are built upon the same principle, and may be united together. The import of them is this,

We dare not lay aside the *Publick Exercise* of our *Ministry*, because we cannot do it without being guilty of *Perfidious breaking our Ordination-Vow*, by which we obliged our selves to the diligent performance of our *Ministry*; and of *Sacrilege*, in alienating *Persons who have been consecrated to God*.

This reasoning, we see, is founded upon that *Vow* You had before made, and that *dedication* by which *Tou* had solemnly given Your selves up to the service of God in the *Ministry*. Now, I confess I know not what it was that You *explicitely* promised, when You devoted Your selves to the service of God in the *Ministry*; but I am sure nothing ought to be *implied* in such a *Vow*, and such a *dedication*,

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dedication, that is contrary to the service of that God to whom You dedicated your selves, or inconsistent with the good of the *Christian Church*, in which You obliged your selves by *Vow* to *Minister*. This, I believe, You will easily grant me, if I make You judges in the Case, that no *Vow* to serve God in any particular way (let it be never so solemn) can be supposed to oblige, when the performante of it will tend to the *disservice* and *dishonour* of God; and that no *dedication* of your selves to the service of the *Church of Christ* in one certain way, can bind You, when that particular way proves (in its consequences) a *prejudice* and *disservice* to the *Church of Christ*. For this *Vow* and *Dedication* were founded upon the supposal of *doing good*; and were determined to one particular way, considered as the way in which You could do service to the *Church*. But when the time comes that You cannot keep in this way without *doing hurt*, and being the occasion of *mischief* to the *Church* of God; this *Vow* and *Dedication* are so far from obliging You to continue in this particular way, that they do really oblige You to forsake it, as they are
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founded upon the general *obligation* You, and all Men are under, of doing what is most for the *honour* of God and *service* of the *Church*. The *Vow* was, to promote the *Glory* of God, and *good* of that society to which You belong: and you had not determined your selves to one certain way, unless in order to these ends. Now, if these Ends may be better promoted by you in forsaking this way, than in continuing in it, You are neither *perfidious*, nor *Sacrilegious*, if You *desert* it: but rather, if You *continue* in it. For by *continuing* in it, if the Case be so, You act against the main and manifest design of it. Remember therefore, that You may be *perfidious breakers* of it, whilst You look to the *letter*, and neglect the *intent*; and *Sacrilegious Deserters*, whilst You continue the *Publick Exercise* of Your *Ministry*, and refuse to promote the honour and service of that God to whom You *dedicated* your selves, by laying it aside, and studying to do good by *other methods*. He is not *perfidious* who acts against the *literal* sense of his *Vow*, because it is agreeable to the first and original design of it, that he should do so: nor is he *sacrilegious*, who with-
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draws from the *Sacred Office* to which he had *dedicated* himself, because he can now no longer do that Service to the *Church* he once proposed to himself, in this *station*; but can do much more by betaking himself to *another*. On the contrary, This very *imputation* will be found to lie heaviest upon those, who are resolved to come up to the *Letter* of their *Vow*, and to keep to the *Office* to which they have *dedicated* themselves, though they do *mischief* by so doing.

As for the *Sacrilege* They are guilty of, who would *alienate* You from the *Service of God* in a *Ministerial* way, which You speak of in this Place; *Every Man shall bear his own burthen*. That any person knowingly, and willingly designed to rob the *Church* of the Labours of any *truly good* and *useful* Men, it shocks me to think. But if they did; The Faults of others are neither our faults, nor excuses for our faults. And this is of no relation to the *point* now before us.

What I have said is sufficient to shew, how little this *Vow* and *Dedication*, when You were *ordained*, have to do with this
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this *Question, Whether you ought to continue the Publick Exercise of your Ministry or no?* For this *Vow* can oblige You to it no farther, than as it is for the greater good and service of the *Christian Church*; and whether it be so, or no, depends wholly upon *other Considerations*. If upon Examination, it be found to be so, I grant indeed this *Solemn Vow* will aggravate the guilt of those who *desert* it, because then they desert it against the *Intent* as well as the *Letter* of this *Vow*. But if it be not found so, this *Vow* is no *Argument*, as it stands by it self, for the continuance of your *Publick Ministry*, but indeed *against* it. The right way therefore must be, first to shew from other *Arguments*, that it is for the honour and service of *God* and his *Church*, that you should *publickly* execute the office of *Ministers*; and then to argue from your *Vow*, to the continuance of your *Publick Ministrations*. But your *Vow* alone can never prove it to be your duty to continue them, because it was not, in the design of it, absolute, that you would *publickly Minister* in the *Church*, whether it should be for the good and service of the *Church*, or no; but wholly *conditional*,
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and respecting the good and service of the Church. We must therefore consider what *other Reasons* there are for your *behaviour*, and what other *Arguments* sufficient to vindicate your practice; that is, sufficient to prove it your duty to continue the *Publick Exercise* of your *Ministry*. I proceed therefore to

The *Third Argument*, which is this,

We cannot lay aside the *Publick Exercise* of our *Ministry* without the *Sin* of *Unfaithfulness, Cruelty, and Unmercifulness*, and without *incurring the guilt* of *ruining Souls by stopping our Mouths*.

There is *another Argument* to this purpose, taken from the *necessities of the People*, which I shall have occasion to consider presently. But *This* now before us is founded, not upon the *real necessities of the People*, and the *real danger* they were in without your assistance, but upon the *entreaties*, and importunate requests of *some of the people*, the *Care of whose souls You had undertaken*, and upon their *declaring that they would charge You with the neglect of their souls, if you forsook them*. And your *being sought to for help*, is made the *Argument* for your affording your *help* in this *publick*

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publick Manner. I do not doubt indeed, but that many of your people might be induced by their own affections to you, and many by Your discourse with them, to request You still to *Minister* to them. But how doth it follow from thence, that therefore you ought? Are the *People* fit judges of your duty, and directours of your practice? Nay, Have you acted, or do you act, as if You were guided by this consideration; as if it were your judgment, that you contracted such a relation to the *Flock* in which You once Minister, that a *removal* becomes unlawful, if any of them request your stay? Did you never remove from these People, who thus entreated You? Do you never remove from one Congregation to another? Or, Are the *People* always content to part with You, when You would have them so? and, Is this Argument only good when You are succeeded by a *Minister* of the *Established Church*, and not when You are succeeded by one from amongst your selves? Are the *People* such Excellent *Discerners*, that their judgment is brought into the Account; and have not You had reason Your selves to complain sometimes of
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their want of Judgment? Did they make this *Request* only where Your *Successors* were really insufficient? and, was it regarded by You only in such Cases? I cannot but wonder to see such insignificant Arguments advanced for so very material a point of Practice.

It would be Presumption indeed for me to pretend to advise You; but had I been in your Circumstances, and had any of my People been so importunate with Me to continue my *Publick Ministry* amongst them; tho' I know not what Answer I should have given them, yet I know what I verily think, I ought to have given them. And that is something like this. *I have indeed contracted a Relation to You; and am obliged to Minister to you in Holy things as long as it is best, upon all Accounts, that I should do so: but now, since it is more for the peace and universal good of the Church, that I should not execute my Office publickly amongst You, I think my self obliged not to do it. Indeed if there were any necessity for it; if there were any danger of your losing your Souls for want of my publick Assistance; if your own care, together with the Legal Provision for them, and the Grace of God, were not suffi-*

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cient to secure your salvation; I would run all hazards rather than forsake You. But I cannot think the Case is so bad. You who make this Request to me, are Persons who are concerned for the salvation of your Souls, and talk much of the Care of them; and therefore I cannot but think that you are sensible what You owe to your selves; and resolved to do your own duties. And if you be, I must tell You that the Church of England is a Church in which there is excellent Provision for your Edification, and increase in all truly Christian Graces. You have a good, or, at least, a tolerable Liturgy, to assist your united devotions, and that more fit for the solemnities of Publick Worship than many of the sudden effusions You have heretofore joined with. In this Church no part of God's Will is hid or obscured, or enervated and render'd useles; and You may be sure of hearing several portions of his Word whenever you attend upon the Services appointed in it. And you need not doubt, whatever my Successour be, but that you may make considerable proficiency in the Paths of the Gospel, under such a dispensation, if You be not wanting to Your selves; as I believe you will not, if I may judge by this concern You now express for your eternal Interest. You can hardly

hardly live under so bad a Minister, but that He will be able to teach You many a useful Lesson. But however that be; there is excellent food provided for You by the very constitution of this Church, which he cannot keep from You; what will nourish You unto Eternal Life, if You hinder not the Effect of it your selves. Your salvation depends not upon his Abilities; nor are you to entrust your selves to the guidance of him or any man upon Earth: but your Belief and Practice is to be built on another Foundation. The Care of your Souls lies chiefly upon your selves; and if You do your part, and attend seriously upon the Publick Service, and do not place Edification in any thing but an Improvement in true Goodness and Piety, the means of this are not wanting in the Church of England; nor will your Salvation be much endangered in such a constitution. If I still live amongst You in another capacity, I may be useful to your Souls without the Publick Exercise of my Ministry. And if I do not, it is a false Notion, that your Case is desperate; and it is what I think my self obliged to declare to you, that the Provision made for you in the Church of England is what you ought to be very thankful to Almighty God for. Remember that you are

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to regard the Peace of the Church, as well as your own humours and fancies; and to consult it, whenever your own Salvation is not in danger: which I know none will affirm it to be, in the Established Church, but the most violent and most uncharitable Separatists; of whom ye ought to beware.

This, I think, is what might most justly be returned in answer to these unreasonable demands, and threatnings of some of your People. This is what some of You, nay, all of You with whom I am now chiefly concerned, could with a safe conscience have said: and what, I dare say, You have not scrupled to say on other occasions. And, if this may justly be said; then the *Argument* taken from the *Requests* of some of your People can signifie nothing to your Justification. For it appears from hence, that their *Requests* might have been answered another way, and that they did not necessarily oblige You to the continuance of your *Publick Ministry*.

But here you speak as if the *Authority of the Magistrate*, were the only *Argument* to engage you to *Silence*; and talk of a *Solemn Obligation* you were under to a higher *Authority*, to fulfil your *Ministry*, as you were able,

able, when sought to for help. For my part, I urge not the bare *Authority* of an *Earthly Power*: for indeed I have but a mean *Opinion* of the *Argument* drawn from thence, in the *Question* now before us. But I urge this, which is included in what I have already advanced, *That you are under no Obligation to God to continue the Publick Exercise of your Ministry, be you never so much sought to for help, when it is more for the honour of God, and the good of the Christian World, that you should not; when the necessities of these People, who have such a Concern for their Souls, as to demand your help, may be served without your Publick Ministrations; when you may promote the peace of the world, and salvation of your Neighbours in other ways; and therefore, that this Reasoning signifies very little.* So that your aggravating this part of your Cause with comparing the neglect of these *Demands* of your People, with the neglecting to feed your *Children*, or to relieve the *Poor and distressed*, upon the *Command* of the *Magistrate*, shews only how willing you are to say what may move the *Affections* of the World about you, not what may convince the *Judgments* of Men of **Thought and Consideration.** If these

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Cases be parallel, it is plain from your practice, either that you judge it not to be *inhumane* and *barbarous* to neglect to feed your *Children*, when they are otherwise provided for, and it is expedient for you to remove from them; and to relieve the poor in one particular way, when there is no danger of their starving for want of your relief, and some considerations make it better that you should not your selves relieve them in this particular way: I say, It is plain from your Practice, either that you judge not such neglects, in such circumstances, to be *Inhumane* and *Barbarous*; or that you have been, and are, sometimes guilty of *Barbarity*, and *Inhumanity*. For you do not scruple to remove from one *Congregation* to another (tho' it be a venture who shall succeed you) upon Considerations of much lesser moment than what might have induced you to lay aside the *Publick Exercise* of your *Ministry* some Years ago. Nay, I doubt not, but that you may have removed (at least, that you esteemed it not unlawful so to do) from these very *People*, who so importunately demanded your stay amongst them, to exercise your *Publick Ministry* in some other *Congregation*,

tion; and contract a new relation to another People: And yet by this Removal you are ejected, and silenced as far as they are concerned. And if so, where is the force of this Argument, on which so great weight seems to be laid,

Some of the People, the care of whose Souls we had undertaken, declared, that they would charge us with the neglect of them, unless we continued publickly to Minister amongst them,

Therefore, it is our duty to Minister publickly, not only in this place, and among these persons, but in whatever other places, and amongst whatever other Persons, we think fit, throughout the whole Nation?

You may see from hence, how few, how very few of you who continued to Minister publickly, this Argument will excuse; and that it was hardly worth your while to mention it, supposing it to have that weight in it you imagine it to have: Much less, considering the weakness of it in it's utmost force. I shall add but one thing more upon this Head, which you need not me to put you in mind of, That supposing any had perished, and been lost, whom you were able to have assisted and instructed, you are not chargeable with this sad conse-

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quence of your silence; since this must have come to pass through their neglect of their own Souls; thro' their not regarding the Legal Provision made for them; their not attending upon the Publick Service of the Church; their not receiving the Portions of God's Word read to them, and the Instructions given, with a serious and Religious frame of mind, and a desire of profiting by them; in one word, thro' their own fault, not thro' yours. And therefore, Their Souls would God have required at their own hands, and not at yours.

The *Fourth* Argument in defence of your *Continuance* in the *Ministry* after a *Publick* manner, is this,

We cannot lay aside the Publick Exercise of our Ministry, without incurring the guilt of hiding our Talent, and exposing our selves to a like Treatment with that of the Unprofitable Servant in the Gospel, Matth. 25. 30. Therefore we dare not do it,

In answer to this, I deny not, but that many of *You* might have been very useful and *profitable Servants* (in the Office of the *Ministry*) had you thought fit to continue in the *Established Church*: But I deny that you would have been judged and condemned as *Unprofitable Servants*, had you

you laid down the *Publick Exercise* of that *Office*, when you could not join with the *Established Church*. And my Reason is this, Because by doing so you would have consulted the *peace* of the *Church*, and the honour of God, without putting your selves out of all capacity of doing service to the Souls of Men. Your *Examples* might still have continued to *shine before Men* as much as ever; Your *Conversation* might have been *Instructive*, and of great *Influence* upon your *Neighbours*; Your *Writings* might have pleaded the Cause of true and serious *Religion* in the *World*; Your *Conformity* as *Laymen* to the *Church of England*, would have given a check to the *spirit of violent separation* then reigning; would have done much to the producing *Peace* and *Harmony* in the *Tempers* of Men; would have reflected no dishonour upon the *Gospel* of *Jesus Christ*, nor, consequently, upon your own *Characters*, as you are *Christians*. And, under such *Considerations*, what danger there could be of your *incurring the guilt and doom of the unprofitable servant* in the *Gospel*, I cannot see. That *wicked and slothful servant*, acted his part upon a quite different principle. He consulted

sulted not the honour of God; regarded not the improvement of those Abilities and Opportunities He had of doing good; but determined to live idle and useless in the World. Whereas your Case, as I suppose, would have been quite otherwise. Had you laid down the *Publick Exercise* of your *Ministry*, it would have been out of regard to the *Honour of God*, and *good* of his *Church*; out of respect to your great *Lord* and *Master*; with a resolution of doing all the good possible to the World about you in *other Stations*, and carrying forward the Salvation of your Neighbours in the ways of *Peace, Unity, and Concord*: and how different is this from the Case of Him who had Opportunities and Abilities of promoting the Service of God, and absolutely refused to make use of them? Nay, God knows, whether, in the rigour of Justice, your *Practice* be not more parallel to that of this *Unprofitable Servant*, than your *Silence* would have been. It will all turn upon this one point, whether of the Two, considering all Circumstances, had been more for the *Honour of God* your *Master*, and your *Judge*. If it be found at last, that the advantages

vantages of your *silence*, and your hearty endeavours to do good in a more private way, would have been greater, than the advantages of your *Publick Ministrations*; and that the Consequences of the *latter* have been more pernicious to the *Christian World*, than the Consequences of the *former* would have been; then it will be found that you have been *unprofitable Servants*, and incurr'd the same guilt by your *Practice*, which you were so afraid of incurring by your *Silence*; that you have refused to promote the *Honour of God*, and *Good* of his *Church*, when it was in your power to do it. And it is a very weighty matter, and worthy of a most serious consideration, whether the *Arguments* on the side of your *Practice* be plainly and evidently *Superiour* to those on the *other* side. That they are so, I hardly believe I shall ever see clearly demonstrated. And till I do, I cannot possibly think the *Argument* now before us sufficient to vindicate the *Continuance* of your *Publick Ministrations*.

The *Fifth* Argument is this,

We judge it to be our Duty to continue the *Publick Exercise* of our *Ministry*, because of the *Necessities of the People*;
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many Ministers in the publick Churches having more to look after than several would be sufficient for.

If I understand this *Argument* aright, You do not mean by it, that the *Private* care of these *Ministers* cannot be sufficient for their *People*: for though this might be an *Argument* for your *Private Assistance*, yet you could not produce it as an *Argument* for your *Publick Ministrations*. But what you mean by it must be this, that there are more *People* in some *Parishes* that can possibly enjoy the *Publick Care* of their *Established Minister*; that can have the opportunity of *Communion* in the *Publick Assemblies*, and the *Offices of Religion*: and that it is for the sake of *these* that you continue your *Publick Ministrations*.

This, I say, is what must be meant by it, as it is urged in defence of your *Publick* not *Private Ministry*; and in answer to it, You must pardon me, if I tell You, that it is not sincere in You to allege, in vindication of your *Publick Ministrations*, what, you know your selves, is not the *true Reason* of your continuing them. And tho' what you here urge may, in your opinions, reflect

reflect upon the *Established Church*; yet, supposing the matter to be true, it must a little reflect upon your selves, when it appears, that such a *Practice* as yours cannot possibly be founded upon such a *Reason* as this.

Not that I grant the *necessities of the People* to be so great, and pressing, as you would have the world believe them to be; for the *Churches* and other places for *Religious Assemblies* annexed to them, in which they may meet, and pray, and hear God's word, are not so little in many of those *Parishes*, which have given occasion to this *plea*, but that they will hold many more people than ordinarily frequent them, and with no great inconvenience. And, supposing they will not, the *People* of these *Parishes* may as easily frequent the *Churches* of their *Neighbouring Parishes*, which are not so large, as many from these *Neighbouring Parishes* frequent your *Separate Assemblies*. And if so, where is this undeniable necessity for your *Publick Ministrations*? But what I now insist upon is this, that this cannot be the *true Reason* of your *Practice*, and therefore ought not to be alleged in justification of it.

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You know very well, that as considerable persons as any amongst You make no scruple of settling in *Parishes* of as little extent as any in *London*: That those of You, who settle in the largest *Parishes*, receive, without distinction, *People* from all quarters; as well those whose *Parish Churches* are able to contain them as those which, You pretend, are not: That your *Congregations* are made up, not of those persons whom their *Established Minister* is not able to take care of, but of those who will not let him take care of them; who would not come to the worship and service of the *Church of England*, were the *Places of Assembly* ten times more capacious than they are, and the *settled Minister* never so able and ready to instruct them. And if I should say that there is not a single person in all your *Congregations* who applies himself to You purely because He hath no opportunity of *Publick Worship*, and *Attendance upon God's Ordinances*, in the *Established Church*, and because it is not possible for the *Minister* of the *Parish* to take care of Him; I hardly think I should go beyond truth. And if this be true (as I have reason to think it is)

how

how can You allege it as an *Argument* for your *Publick Practice*, that the *People* of your *Congregations* have no opportunity; in the *Established Church*, of attending upon God's worship; when none of your *People* will give this as the *Reason* of their Attendance upon You? We have not the least reason to think, that You would lay aside the *Publick Exercise* of your *Ministry*, had all your *People* these opportunities you speak of. We find you all generally as little scrupulous of *Ministring Publickly* where the *Established Ministers* are able to take care of the Souls in their *Parishes*; where the *Churches* stand very thick, and are capacious enough to hold many more than those that belong to them; as of *Ministring* in the most *Populous* Parishes. We see you but little concerned that the *People* should make use of the opportunities they have in the way *Established*: and not at all backward to receive and encourage any, though under no such *Necessities* as You here represent them. And while we see and observe these *Practices*, we cannot but wonder at the mention of this *Principle*; and therefore appeal to all the
World,

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World, if this be not very odd Reasoning.

The *People* in many *Parishes* have not the possibility of reaping any benefit from the publick Labours of their *Settled Minister*; that is, of attending upon God's *Publick Worship*, and of hearing his Word;

Therefore, We think it our duty to settle our selves in these *Parishes*, to *Minister* in *Publick*, not to those persons who come to us because they have no opportunity of attendance upon God's Ordinances in the *Established Church*, but to those, who would never attend upon the worship of God in their *Parish-Church*, though they could do it with the greatest Ease; to those who come from other *Parishes* where they lie under no such difficulties; in a word, to *all*, who will attend upon us, let the motive be what it will. And, what is more,

Therefore, we think it our duty not only to settle our selves in these *Parishes*; but in any others, where we think fit, as opportunity offers it self.

I hope I have not misrepresented your *Practice*; the *Reasons* for which we are now enquiring into. And to advance in defence

defence of it, the *necessities of a few Parishes* is to advance a *Plea*, which, when we compare it with your *Practice*, we find utterly insufficient to defend those of You who have settled in these very *Parishes*; much more, those of You who have not scrupled to *Minister publickly*, where ever an opportunity hath offered it self: A *Plea* utterly inconsistent with the *Practice* of any amongst You, that have either encouraged *others* who *Minister* where no such *necessities* can be pretended, or, have *Ministred* there *Our selves*; and therefore, utterly insufficient to defend the *Practice* of any one of You all, that I ever heard of. This You must be sensible of your selves, unless you may be supposed ignorant of your own constant and professed *Practice*. And therefore, I say again that, how plausible soever this *Argument* seem, and how full of concern for the *People*; yet, it is not fair for you to urge it in defence of your *Practice*, whilst it is so manifest that your *Practice* cannot be defended by it.

The *Sixth* Argument in defence of Your *Publick Ministrations* is this,

We think it our duty to continue the *Publick Exercise* of our *Ministry*, because *Sundry* of the *Established Ministers* are *insufficient* and *unqualified*.

I confess I know not well what You mean in this Place by *insufficient*, and *unqualified*. But I think You cannot mean that they are *Evil*, or *Wicked*; because it is your opinion that the *Ministry* of *such* may be used *both in hearing the Word of God, and in receiving of the Sacraments*; and that with *Profit*, if the People be not wanting to themselves. And if their *Ministry* may be used with *Profit*; then the *Case* of the *People* under such *Ministers* is not, in your account, so *desperate*, as to make your *publick Assistance* a necessary remedy. And if it be not necessary; it ought not to be *continued*. That this is your opinion, I conclude from your *subscribing*, amongst others, the *Twenty sixth Article* of our *Church*, Entituled, *Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the Effect of the Sacraments*; and from your so frequent inveighing against any, whom You imagine to have *made light of*, and to have *played with subscriptions*.

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By *insufficient* and *unqualified*, I think therefore, that You must mean *Ignorant*, and unable to teach and instruct the People. And I suppose, that You do not here speak of the *Insufficiency* of *Ministers*, with respect to those *Private Labours* which are necessary in a Parish; (because this can be no Argument for any but *Private Labours* in your selves) but with respect to their *Publick Labours* and Instructions: and that what You would have us understand here, comes to this, That the *insufficiency* of some *Parish-Ministers* is so great, that the Souls of the *People* are endangered by their attendance upon their *Publick Ministrations*, and that it is necessary, on this account, to *Minister Publickly* in a *separate* way. And if this be what You mean, I have *three things* to offer in answer to this Argument; not denying but that there may be *Ministers* in the *Established Church*, in this sense, *insufficient*. In the *first Place*, This is not a sufficient reason for the *People* to join with *Ministers* of Churches separated from the *Church of England*; and consequently, it is not a sufficient reason for You to continue your separate *Publick Ministrations* for their advan-

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tage, *Secondly*, In the Places where this *Plea* can be urged with the best grace, it is very great odds whether the People get any thing by going over to those *Ministers* who separate from the *Established Church*. *Thirdly*, As I told You under the last Head, so I tell You *freely* under this, That, how good a reason soever this may be, You know that it is not the *true Reason* of your *Publick Ministrations*.

First, supposing it true, That there are *sundry Ministers* in the *Established Church*, *insufficient*; that is, *ignorant*, and not able to teach and instruct their People; I say, this is not a sufficient reason for the People to forsake the *Church of England*, and betake themselves to the helps of a *Separate Ministry*, and form themselves into *Churches* distinct from it. And if it be not a sufficient reason for the *People* to do this, You ought not, in conscience, to encourage them in doing it; and therefore, this cannot be a sufficient justification of your *Publick Ministrations*. No *Church* upon Earth, in which there are some *thousands* of *Ministers*, can possibly escape this *Unhappiness*: And it is a little hard indeed, if, upon an
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unhappinefs wholly unavoidable, new and distinct *Churches*, with differing modes of Worship, must be erected, for the Improvement of the *Knowledge*, and the Destruction of the *Love* and *Charity* of the *Christian* People. But if ever any Church upon Earth may be said to have taken care that the *People* shall not suffer considerably, or their Salvation be endanger'd, through this Inconvenience, certainly it must be granted that the *Church* of *England* hath effectually done it. Were the *Publick Assemblies* indeed left to the sole Management, and Guidance of the *Minister* of the *Parish*; were the *People* to be served with nothing but what he could, and would, afford them; were they to be entertained with *Prayers* wholly according to the Abilities, or the present Phancy, Invention, and Disposition of their *Minister*; were He left to his Liberty, whether he would read to them any part of God's Word, or not; whether He would use the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Creed*, the *Ten Commandments*, or not; Were the *Poor People* in such a Case, under the Provision of the *Church* of *England*? then, indeed, the *Ignorance* of their

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Minister might be a deplorable misfortune to them. But God be thanked, The *Case* is not so, in the *Church of England*; though it be, in the *Churches* set up in opposition to it, and under pretence of greater Purity of Worship, and Edification of the People. But in our *Church*, the *People* have no necessity of departing from the most *insufficient* *Minister* You can easily find. For the decencies, and essentials of *Publick Worship* are secured to them. They have *Prayers* prepared for them, serious and pious; *Prayers*, which, if a Man bring a good heart along with Him, will be neither useless, nor insipid; such as are fit for the publick Addresses of the *Church* to God, and such of You your selves will allow to be *tolerable*. They are sure of hearing the pure *Word* as *God*, in the reading of which they may join, and from which, by a serious Attention, they may reap (I hope) as much Advantage as from any Humane Composure whatever. The *Lord's Prayer*, The *Creed*, The *Ten Commandments*, are constantly part of their Entertainment on the *Lord's Day*; which are Instructions to them, what it is proper for them to *ask*
of

of God; what it is necessary for them to *believe*; what it is their duty to *practise* in order to Salvation. These are no small, nor contemptible Advantages. And, I believe, You could not but bestow a very good character on that *Minister*, who should provide such wholsom Food for his *People*, as a *Minister* in the *Established Church* is under an obligation to bring forth to his *Congregation* every *Lord's Day*; nor could You think that a *Pastour*, who should do what was Equivalent to this, in Your way, was lightly to be forsaken, or the Case of his *People* to be represented as desperate. Besides, The *People* we are now speaking of, must be supposed to be Persons concerned for their Souls, and able to judge of the *sufficiency* of their *Minister*. If they be, they must be sensible that these Advantages are, to a serious Person, infinitely beyond the best Sermon in the World; and their Salvation not endangered under such provision. But if they be resolved not to hear any thing from one whom they imagine to be *insufficient*, where yet is the necessity of *Your Publick Ministrations*? Are none of their neighbouring, *Established Mi-*

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nisters sufficient *Preachers* enough for them? Can they find none that teach sound doctrine? And, Is *Preaching* in such a desperate Condition in the *Church of England*, that a *separate Ministry* must be set up, and continued, for fear the *Truth of God*, and the *Essentials of Salvation* should perish from the Earth? If it be not, and if those who complain of their *Ministers Insufficiency*, can be supplied at a neighbouring *Church*, with as little pains as many are at to go to *separate Congregations*, and as much to their Advantage as at any of these *separate Congregations*; then there is no necessity for the continuance of your *Publick Ministrations* on this Account. And that they may be as well supplied, is what, I believe, You *will not*, and, I am sure, You *cannot* reasonably, deny. Nay, I offer it to your Consideration, whether it be not credible, what I have ventured to say,

Secondly, That in the *places* where this *Plea* can be urged with the best Grace, it is very great odds whether the People get any thing by forsaking their *Parish-Minister*, and attending upon those *Ministers* who separate from the
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of CONFORMITY.

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Established Church. You must be very ignorant of the State of the Nation, or very much mistaken in your Notions of true *Christian* knowledge, if You think that this *separate Ministry* which You have encouraged throughout the Nation, and now are pleading for, hath this advantage over the *Established Ministry* You would here give it. If I judge aright, the *Country* and the *Parishes* at the greatest distance from *London*, and other considerable Towns, are (generally speaking) the places in which the *People* are most likely to suffer under *insufficient Ministers*, and in which they can with the best face cry out upon the *Ignorance* of their Teachers. What excellent judges the *People* in these places are, of the knowledge and abilities of their *Ministers*, I need not say. But however, if they be resolved to forsake their own *Minister* and not to be contented with Him, nor any other of the *Established Ministers* about them, I may appeal to your selves, whether it be probable, that they will meet with more Knowledge, and greater Abilities, in the *separate Ministry* commonly found in such places. You must be very partial to your own cause,
if

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p. 96.

if You think so. Were You to hear but some part of what might truly and justly be affirmed of the gross and intolerable *Ignorance* of many who are set up for *Preachers* in a *separate way*, in the *Places* I am speaking of; such an *Ignorance* as fills their *Prayers* (as Mr. Baxter describes the performances of some in his time) with *Carnal Passion, Selfishness, Faction, Disorder, Vain repetitions, unsound and loathsomely Expressions*; and their *Doctrine* with *Errors and Confusion*; You would be sensible, that such a general encouragement ought not to be given to the *People* to forsake their *Ministers*, whenever they please to think them *insufficient*. And did You but call to mind (what You know to be true) how much the most *insufficient* are followed; and before what sort of Men they are often preferr'd, You would be more sensible of this. And did You but consider (what is matter of fact) that the most *sufficient* of the *separate Ministry* are generally found where the most *sufficient* of the *Established Ministry* are settled; and as it were oppos'd and confronted to them; and that the most *insufficient* and most *ignorant* of the *separate Ministry* are found where

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where the most *insufficient* and most *ignorant* of the *Established Ministry* are pretended to be, where there is most occasion for the able and knowing; You would blush to put us in mind of this, by urging such a *Plea* in defence of that *separate Ministry* You have set up, and continue to plant, and encourage, throughout the Land. But I must not be so unjust to the *Established Church*, as not to observe the little likelihood of any advantage to the *People*. in forsaking their *Parish-Churches*, and frequenting *separate Congregations*; even supposing their *Established Minister* truly *insufficient*. For, As they leave an *insufficient Minister*, so it must be remembered, that they leave a *Publick Service* excellently fitted for the *Worship* of God (the chief end of *Publick Assemblies*) and their own improvement in Knowledge and Piety. They leave a *Publick Service* made up of serious and devout Prayers and Praises; Sentences and Hymns in the very words of *Scripture*; Lessons out of the *Old and New Testament*; the *Lord's Prayer*, *Creed*, and *Ten Commandments*. But it seems, the *People* must be encouraged to think this but a heavy, insipid service; of
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little profit and little edification ; easily to be disregarded, and to be left upon any prejudice, and upon the least ground, thò never so foolish, and unworthy of a Christian. Whether they be sensible what it is they leave, I know not ; and I doubt, you do not care much they should be : But this I know, that they are not very likely to meet with a *Publick Service*, in any *Separate Congregation*, more fitted either for the *worship of God* ; or their own *edification* ; especially, in those parts of the Land, where the *insufficiency* of their *Ministers* may with most reason be urged. But

Thirdly, This Plea, how good soever it be in it self, yet, is not the *true Reason* for your continuing your *Publick Ministrations*. The World can easily see what your *Practice* hath been, and is ; and, say what you please, will judge of your *Principles* from it. The very mention of this must reflect upon your selves, when it is so plain (as I observed before) that the most *sufficient* of *You* plant your selves where the most *sufficient* of the *Established Clergy* are to be found, and that the *Places* which first gave occasion to this pretence, are left to the most *insufficient*, and most unworthy of you ;
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which looks as if more regard were had to the maintaining the Credit, and supporting the Interest of a *Party* than to the supplying the Necessities of the *People*, or making up the Deficiencies of the *Established Ministry*. Could we but see you heartily concerned (as Mr. *Baxter* was once, if not always) that the *People* should attend upon their *Minister*, when he is a *sufficient* Man; as much concerned for this, as you are to gain Profelytes, and increase the number of your own Followers; Were you as ready to encourage the *People* to keep to their *Established Minister* whom you know to be sufficient, as you are to receive any that leave the most *sufficient* of them all; Did you act as if you were willing that the *People* should separate only upon good grounds, and not upon phancy; that they should know what a *Publick Service* there is settled in the *Church of England*; and how sufficient for the purposes of *Publick Worship*, before they forsake it; Could we see the most *able* and useful amongst you settled where you imagine there are not *able Ministers* already; and could we see that in all other places, you exhort and advise the *People*,
and

and press it upon their Consciences as their Duty, to attend upon the *Ministrations* of those who are settled amongst them by Law; Were there any thing like this apparent in your Practice, we might then begin to think that the *insufficiency of sundry Parish Ministers* was the true Reason for your *Publick Ministrations*. But, as things appear to us, we are sure, that were all the *Established Clergy* through the whole Land *sufficient* beyond exception, you would, notwithstanding this, keep on foot your Separation, and continue your *publick* Practice.

What I have said to this *Argument*, may be reduced to this. You say, you minister in publick because of the *insufficiency of sundry of the Established Clergy*. I answer, Supposing it true, that there are some *insufficient*. We cannot think this *Plea* of force enough to excuse the *People* who separate upon it, or *Them* who *Minister* to them, for these Reasons: because the *Publick Service* of the Church is not *insufficient*; because the *People*, if they will not attend upon their own *Minister*, may find those that are *sufficient* amongst the *Established Clergy* about them; because in those Places where the most *insufficient* are

are to be found, the most *insufficient* also of the *Separate Ministers* are to be found; and it is a great chance if they do not go from an *insufficient* Preacher to one *more* *Insufficient*; because, taking into the account the whole *Publick Service* of the *Established Church*, they cannot mend the matter by frequenting any *separate Congregation*; and lastly, Because your *Practice* assures us, that this is not the true Reason for the *continuance* of your *Ministry*.

The *Seventh Argument* for the continuance of your *Publick Ministrations* is this,

Some passages of Scripture intimate the duration of the Ministerial Office, where there is once a conveyance. The Passages you cite are as follow; *Mat. 5. 13, 14, &c. Mat. 28. 19, 20. Eph. 4. 10, &c. 1 Tim. 4. 15, 16. Mat. 24. 45, 46, 48.*

Therefore, it is our duty to continue the *Publick Exercise* of our *Ministry*.

What my thoughts are about your *Ordinations*, I have freely let you know, in the *former* part of this *Reply*, as the *Argument* obliged me to do. What I have there said, is founded upon Mr. *Baxters* Principles, and must be thought most true, and reasonable by me, as long as I think *Episcopal Ordination* the settled method

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method in the *Christian Church*, and your *Separation* unnecessary. I shall not now repeat any thing of it, but, under 'the present *Argument*, shall take it for granted, that *there was once a Conveyance*, as I know there certainly was to *several of You*; and shall endeavour to shew, That there is nothing in any of these *passages*, which doth *intimate this duration of the Ministerial Office* which you are contending for: That is, in other words, that none of these *Passages* do *express, or imply*, that a person who hath *Authority* once given him to *Minister publickly* in a *Christian Congregation*, may not, upon some Considerations, lay aside the *Publick Exercise* of his *Ministry*. This is what these *Texts* must prove, if they prove any thing to our present purpose. If they do not prove such an *absolute Duration*, and an *absolute Obligation* to *Minister publickly*, the *Argument* taken from them will signify nothing, but will wholly turn upon a very different point, *viz.* whether your *Ministrations* be *necessary*. And, I suppose that if these *Texts* had not been thought to imply such an *absolute Obligation*, they would not have been produced by you as containing in them
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an Argument sufficient, of it self, to defend your Practice; and distinct from those others drawn from the *necessities* of the *People*.

Now, before I examine them, I might venture to affirm, that it is impossible, or, at least, highly improbable, that there should be any thing of this *absolute* Obligation in any passage of the *New Testament*. For it is certain, That the Case may so happen, that the *Silence* of a Person, who had once a *Commission* given him to Officiate in publick, may be of much more advantage to the *Christian Church*, than his *Publick Ministrations*; and that when the Case doth so happen, this *Silence* becomes his Duty, and is to be preferr'd before the *publick Execution* of his *Office*; as he is under a general and indissoluble Obligation to behave himself always, as the *Good* of the *Christian Church*, and the Honour of God require. This I have observed under the *First Argument*, which was taken from your *Ordination-Vow*. That this *Case* hath actually happened amongst us, I cannot expect you should grant, till you are convinced that it hath. But that it *may* possibly happen.

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many Ministers in the publick Churches having more to look after than several would be sufficient for.

If I understand this *Argument* aright, You do not mean by it, that the *Private* care of these *Ministers* cannot be sufficient for their *People*: for though this might be an *Argument* for your *Private Assistance*, yet you could not produce it as an *Argument* for your *Publick Ministrations*. But what you mean by it must be this, that there are more *People* in some *Parishes* that can possibly enjoy the *Publick Care* of their *Established Minister*; that can have the opportunity of *Communion* in the *Publick Assemblies*, and the *Offices of Religion*: and that it is for the sake of *these* that you continue your *Publick Ministrations*.

This, I say, is what must be meant by it, as it is urged in defence of your *Publick* not *Private Ministry*; and in answer to it, You must pardon me, if I tell You, that it is not sincere in You to allege, in vindication of your *Publick Ministrations*, what, you know your selves, is not the *true Reason* of your continuing them. And tho' what you here urge may, in your opinions, reflect

fect upon the *Established Church*; yet, supposing the matter to be true, it must a little reflect upon your selves, when it appears, that such a *Practice* as yours cannot possibly be founded upon such a *Reason* as this.

Not that I grant the *necessities* of the *People* to be so great, and pressing, as you would have the world believe them to be; for the *Churches* and other places for *Religious Assemblies* annexed to them, in which they may meet, and pray, and hear God's word, are not so little in many of those *Parishes*, which have given occasion to this *plea*, but that they will hold many more people than ordinarily frequent them, and with no great inconvenience. And, supposing they will not, the *People* of these *Parishes* may as easily frequent the *Churches* of their *Neighbouring Parishes*, which are not so large, as many from these *Neighbouring Parishes* frequent your *Separate Assemblies*. And if so, where is this undeniable necessity for your *Publick Ministrations*? But what I now insist upon is this, that this cannot be the *true Reason* of your *Practice*, and therefore ought not to be alleged in justification of it.

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You know very well, that as considerable persons as any amongst You make no scruple of settling in *Parishes* of as little extent as any in *London*: That those of You, who settle in the largest *Parishes*, receive, without distinction, *People* from all quarters; as well *those* whose *Parish Churches* are able to contain them as those which, You pretend, are not: That your *Congregations* are made up, not of those persons whom their *Established Minister* is not able to take care of, but of those who will not let him take care of them; who would not come to the worship and service of the *Church of England*, were the *Places* of *Assembly* ten times more capacious than they are, and the *settled Minister* never so able and ready to instruct them. And if I should say that there is not a single person in all your *Congregations* who applies himself to You purely because He hath no opportunity of *Publick Worship*, and *Attendance upon God's Ordinances*, in the *Established Church*, and because it is not possible for the *Minister* of the *Parish* to take care of Him; I hardly think I should go beyond truth. And if this be true (as I have reason to think it is)

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how can You allege it as an *Argument* for your *Publick Practice*, that the *People* of your *Congregations* have no opportunity; in the *Established Church*, of attending upon God's worship; when none of your *People* will give this as the *Reason* of their Attendance upon You? We have not the least reason to think, that You would lay aside the *Publick Exercise* of your *Ministry*, had all your *People* these opportunities you speak of. We find you all generally as little scrupulous of *Ministring Publickly* where the *Established Ministers* are able to take care of the Souls in their *Parishes*; where the *Churches* stand very thick, and are capacious enough to hold many more than those that belong to them; as of *Ministring* in the most *Populous* Parishes. We see you but little concerned that the *People* should make use of the opportunities they have in the way *Established*: and not at all backward to receive and encourage any, though under no such *Necessities* as You here represent them. And while we see and observe these *Practices*, we cannot but wonder at the mention of this *Principle*; and therefore appeal to all the
World,

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You think this *Commission* obliged them to officiate in *publick*, in such places, and in such circumstances? Do you think they would not have thought themselves obliged to *silence*; and have rejoiced at all opportunities of doing good in a more private way? If You do, how can You think that this *Commission* to You is absolute, and conveys an obligation to You to exercise your *Ministry* in a *publick* manner, let what will be the consequence? This is what I understand to be your Meaning, when You speak here of the *duration of the Ministerial Office*. If it be not your Meaning, then I confess I do not understand it. The *Latter* part of this passage viz. *Lo I am with you to the end of the World*, is nothing but the promise of *Christ*, to assist his *Apostles* and their *Successours*, in the work of converting unbelievers, and instructing his *Church*; and no Argument can be drawn from hence to prove, that no consideration ought to prevail with any one to lay aside the *publick Exercise* of his *Ministry*. For the *Case* may so happen, that to continue it may be against the Interest of the *Christian Church*, and consequently
 against

against the Will of *Christ*. And, therefore, He cannot mean this, as an encouragement to all, in all cases, to *Minister publicly*, whether the Church receive advantage, or disadvantage from it.

The *Third passage* You cite is, *Eph. 4. 10*, &c. in which there is nothing declared, but that *Christ gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastours and Teachers, &c.* i. e. that, for the Instruction and Edification of the *Christian People*, and for the good of the *Christian Church*, he hath appointed divers orders of Men, to Minister to this *Church* according to their several *Offices*. But how doth it follow from hence, that these *Teachers* may not, in some *Cases*, contribute more to the Edification, and building up, of his *Church*, in Love and peace, by their *silence*, and private endeavours, than by their *publick Labours*? And if they may, it is their duty; And if it be their duty, there is nothing in this *Text* that forbids it: but the whole proposition, and all that *St. Paul* intended in it stands as firm, if some lay aside the *Publick Exercise* of their *Office*, as if every individual person for ever continued it.

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The *Fourth* passage is 1 *Tim.* 4. 15, 16. where St. Paul charges *Timothy* thus, *Meditate upon these things, give thy self wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thy self, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thy self, and them that hear thee.* Which words, it is plain, are only a direction to a *Minister of Christ*, whose Labours were necessary to the very being of the *Christian Church*, in the place where He was, and highly useful to all the *Christians* there: but contain not in them the least *Insinuation*, that whoever hath once an *Authority* given him to *Minister publickly* in the *Christian Church*, is under an obligation never to cease doing so, whether his Labours be necessary, or for the advantage of the *Christian Church*, or no. When You will show me, that there is any thing of such an *absolute* obligation implied in these *Injunctions* of St. Paul to *Timothy*, I promise, not only to review, but, wholly to give up, this part of the Cause.

The *last* place of Scripture You mention, for *the duration of the Ministerial Office, where there is once a Conveyance*, that
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is, for the *Publick Exercise of the Ministerial Office* (which is the only point we are now upon) is *Mat. 24. 45, 46, &c.* The Words are these, *Who then is a faithful, and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing, &c.* Mr. Baxter's paraphrase upon them is this, *Those that are faithful and wise Teachers, and Rulers of his Church, to give them meet, and seasonable instruction, as food for their Souls, shall be found at their Lord's coming, Blessed Persons, and shall be abundantly gainers by their labours and sufferings.* They plainly signify, that *Faithful* and good *Pastours* shall be rewarded at the day of judgment. And the following words declare the intolerable punishment of those who make it their business to molest and ruine their *Fellow-servants*; and who give themselves up to *Luxury, and Debauchery*. But neither these, nor the following words, do give the least *intimation*, that there may not be, at any time, considerations sufficient to determine a very *faithful and wise Teacher*, to lay aside the *Publick Exercise of his Function*;

Function; or that there is an indispensable Obligation, in all circumstances, upon all, who ever devoted themselves to the *Ministry*, to continue the *open* performance of their Office. They do not say, or intimate, that he is no *faithful, and wise Teacher*, who for the sake of the Peace of the Church, and the edification of Christians in Love, leaves them to that provision which is certainly sufficient for them; and rather submits to be *silent* in publick, upon such considerations, than to give the least encouragement, by his Practice, to a *separation* which must necessarily divide the hearts of Christians from one another, and unavoidably contribute to the decrease of Charity, and the abounding of Strife, and Variance, and Emulation, and all the instances of Uncharitableness in the world: resolving to do all in his power, for the promoting Godliness, and true Religion, in his more private Capacity. And since these *Texts* say nothing against the Principles, or Practice of such an one, I see not how they come near the matter we are now considering: which I must again tell You, is nothing but this, whether there

there may not be Times, and Circumstances, in which the *publick Labours* of very good Men may not prove a greater disadvantage to the *Christian Church*, than their *silence in publick*, joined with their hearty endeavours to serve the interest of Religion in *private*; and, if there may be such times, and such Circumstances, whether it be not, then, the Duty of every good Man to lay aside the *publick Exercise* of his *Ministry*.

If the whole matter turn upon this (as it most apparently doth) then, what signifies it to produce such *passages* of *Scripture* as these; which import nothing but that *Christ* hath appointed *Pastours* in his Church; That there is a Duty incumbent upon them, *viz.* the feeding of his Flock; that the Reward of such as are Good and Faithful, shall be great, and the punishment of the slothful and Faithless intolerable; or the like? Who denies all this? or, who ever denied it? But doth it follow from hence, that a *Pastour*, for the advantage of the *Christian Church*, and when there is no *necessity* for his *Publick Performances*, may not turn all his thoughts upon more private ways of doing good, without incurring the guilt
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of *Perfidiousness*, and *Slothfulness*? Not in the least, as I see. And indeed, the very mention of this Consideration had been a sufficient return to your *Argument* taken from these *Passages* of Scripture. But I was willing to examine particularly into them, That the Reader might see what was in them, and be the more capable of judging whether they intimate such a *Duration of the Ministerial Office* as you contend for, *viz.* an absolute Obligation upon *Ministers* to exercise their Office *publickly*. I have placed the words before his Eyes, lest He should think either that there was more, or less, in them, than there is; And so leave him to determine, whether I have dealt fairly with them, or no.

The *Eighth Argument* in defence of your Practice, is this,

Some Passages of Scripture plead for the necessity of Preaching, even when the Magistrate forbids; as *Act. 4. 19. 5. 28. 1 Cor. 9. 14, 16. Act. 4 29. 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. 1 Tim. 6. 13, 14.*

Therefore, it is our Duty to continue the *Publick Exercise* of our *Ministry*.

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I shall not be so particular under this Argument, as I have been under the last, because there is no need of it. I know none who maintain, that the meer Command of the *Magistrate* is sufficient to oblige a *Minister* to lay aside the *publick Exercise* of his *Office*. But then, I know none that think, there may not be Considerations, sufficient enough to induce a *Minister* of *Jesus Christ* to comply with such a Command of the *Magistrate*. And therefore, I see not to what purpose it is to produce such *Texts* as have nothing in them against this. For still we are where we were before, and the Question remains the same. Is your practice for the advantage of the Christian Church, all things considered? And, Is there a necessity for it? If there be, In God's Name let it be continued. But, as long as there appears to me no necessity for it, and no advantage to the Church of God, comparable to the disadvantages of it, I cannot think it reasonable, or agreeable to the Precepts of the Gospel. Whether it be so, or not, nothing can be gathered from these Passages. Your Obligations would not have been less, had there not been one of these in the whole New Testa-

Testament; nor would they be; in the least degree, greater, could you produce a thousand more to the same effect. You will hardly say, that in a *Christian Country*, where there is a *Church*, in which are all things sufficient for the People's Edification, and Salvation, and nothing destructive of them; (such, if I be not mistaken, you have allowed the *Church of England* to be) you will hardly say, that there is the same necessity for your *Publick Preaching* in such a Country, as there was for *St. Peter*, and *St. John*, *St. Paul*, and *Timothy*; their propagating the Gospel; as there was for their preaching *Jesus Christ* to those who could never have heard of him without them, and looking after those *Churches* of Converted Persons, which must have perished, and vanished without their Care. You will hardly say, that because there was a necessity upon *St. Paul*, and *St. Peter*, to plant the Christian Religion, where it would not have been without their preaching; Therefore, there is a necessity upon you to preach, where it is as well, and as effectually taught as you can teach it. You will hardly say, that God commands

mands you to continue your *publick Labours*, as much as He commanded those, who had immediate Revelations from him, and were assisted with a Supernatural power, from above, of working Miracles, to demonstrate to all the World the *necessity* they lay under. And if you will not equal *your necessity* To that *they* lay under, you cannot think that the same *Texts* which shew the *necessity* of their Publick Ministrations, will convince us of any such *necessity* incumbent upon You: because what proves a *necessity* in some certain Circumstances; cannot prove a *necessity* in Circumstances wholly different, St. Peter, St. John, St. Paul, and Timothy, lay under a *necessity* of Preaching, because there could have been no such thing as *Christianity*, or a *Christian Church* in the world without it: but the *Texts* in which *their* necessity is declared, can never prove a necessity of *your* preaching, without whose *publick Labours*, *Christianity* can very well subsist, and the *Christian Church* be edified in truth; nay, without whose *Publick Labours*, *Christians* can be more effectually edified in Love, and Peace
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and Concord, than *with* them. I am sure, therefore I do this Argument no wrong, by neglecting any farther examination of the *Texts* on which it is built.

The *Ninth*, and Last Argument, in defence of the continuance of your *Publick Ministrations*, is taken from *Mat. 9. 38. Luke, 10. 2.* and runs thus,

We find it to be our duty to pray for the sending in of faithful Labourers into God's vineyard; and, We judge the sending up such a request to God a mocking of Him, while such as We are cease to labour, who have been called, and qualified, owned, and succeeded,

Therefore, We dare not lay aside the *Publick Exercise* of our *Ministry*.

I have often wondred, to find that Wise and considering Men, when they are aggravating their adversary's cause, of defending their own, can often so far forget themselves, as to prefer the *number* before the *weight* of Arguments; and, instead of insisting upon what must at last support their cause (if it be to be supported) to chuse to add to the heap, though they do their cause an injury by it. I do not deny but that
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many of You were *Faithful Labourers*, and sincerely endeavoured to promote the Salvation of Souls in the execution of your Office. But supposing that, upon serious consideration; being sensible that there was good and sufficient Provision for the Souls of the People in the *Established Church*; being persuaded that the good You could do in your private Capacities, and the peaceful consequences of laying aside the *Publick Exercise* of your *Ministry*, would more than counter-balance the advantage of your *Publick Ministrations*: I say, supposing You had, upon such considerations, ceased from your *Labours* in *Publick*, What is there in this petition, which You could not say without *mocking God*? Could not You beg of God, to send Useful and Laborious *Pastours* into his Church, to *Minister publickly* in it; thō You thought it more for his glory, and the advantage of his Church, that You your selves should leave off to *Minister publickly*? Or, If You say, that You could never be of this opinion, I answer, Then this is the reason of the continuance of your *Publick Ministrations*, because You imagine it more for the

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advantage of *Christ's Church*, than the laying them aside; not because You cannot put up this petition *without mocking God*, if You should lay them them aside. *This* indeed is the consequence of the *other*. But why is not *that*, which is the only material point, insisted upon, and clearly demonstrated? Why are We amused with so many aggravations of the guilt of ceasing Your *publick Labours*; all which aggravations import nothing, without supposing this, that Your *Publick Labours* are necessary, and more advantageous to the Church than your *Silence* would be; and *this* not clearly proved, but very little done towards it? Besides, You are as sensible as any Persons whatever, that these *Publick Labours* are but part of the *Office* of a *Minister*; and not the only beneficial part. Now you know that it is about these *Publick Labours* we are speaking, and Your cessation from them. You may still be very beneficial in your *private Labours*; and methinks, You might be *Private Labourers*, and do what good You can, in the way most conducing to the increase of Peace and Love, and not be said to have ceased even your *Ministerial Labours*

hours for the Salvation of Mankind; or, consequently, to *mock God*, when You pray to Him to *send Faithful Labourers* into his Vineyard. But I have said enough of this. If your Cause were to be supported by such *Arguments* as this, You might add a vast number more to those You have already offer'd.

To conclude this point, Having *matu- rately weigh'd the whole matter*, and considered every *Argument* alleged, I cannot apprehend it to be an *indispensable duty* lying upon You as Men and Ministers, either by the *Obligation of God's Law of Charity*, or by the *binding force of your own vows at your self-dedication to the service of God in his house* to continue the *Publick Exercise* of Your *Ministry*. I grant indeed, that it is *your duty to do your best in the exercise of all your Talents, to seek to save people's souls*: and it is a good general rule, that every person, as well as You, ought to do so. But for all this, it is as certainly true (and I believe You will acknowledge it to be so) that many a Man, who may have a good Talent at *Publick preaching*, and may do some good by it, may yet be under

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an obligation not to do it. It may be, that the good He can do this way, will be very little more than what He can do in a more private way; It may be, that his *silence* will be more for the increase of Universal Love, and Peace amongst Christians; It may be, that the necessities of the People may be provided for in other, and more regular ways; and the thoughts of a *greater good* in *another* way will certainly lay an obligation upon him, to omit this one particular way. I have done what I can to shew, that the *necessities of souls* calls *You* not to it; which is the only thing that can defend your Practice. But if *You* still think fit to persist in this, I shall only ask, Do the *necessities of Souls* call *you* to it, in every place where you have settled your selves, or in *some* only? If in *some* only, then what pretence have *You* for your *publick Administrations* where the *peoples necessities* do not require them? and why are the Chief of your Labourers employed where there is least need of them? If in *every* place, then you must maintain, I think, that the *necessities* of the People cannot be supplied in any *Established* way; and that there

there cannot be so much done towards this, but that there will be always room for more. And then the consequence is, *Division*, and *Subdivision* without end, and no hope of Unity and Concord. There was a time when such Arguments for a *separate Ministry* were rejected, and exploded by your selves. And, indeed, if *this* be retained, and insisted on, as reasonable; I see not, but that it must follow, that there is a good, and reasonable ground for *eternal Division* in the *Church of Christ*; which I hardly think there is,

Having thus considered the *Arguments* offered in vindication of *those* amongst You, who were in the *Ministry* before the *Act of Uniformity*, and have ever since continued the *publick Exercise* of it; and examined, whether they be sufficient to defend your Practice in so doing: I come now to the other point I propos'd, of very great concern to the Cause, as it stands at present. And that is,

2. To consider, how far these *Arguments* can vindicate the Practice of *those* amongst you, who have ordained others, and of *those* who have been ordained, to the *Ministry*, since that *Act*.

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The Consideration of this will take up very little time: And a very few words will serve to determine this point. No *Ordination Vow*, and *solemn dedication* to God, can here be pretended; and so, the great crimes of *Sacrilege*, and *Perjury*, might have been avoided without this, The *People* had never experienced the Labours of those of You, who have since taken the *Ministry* upon you; They had never contracted any relation to You; and therefore, it cannot be said, that they *requested Your Publick Labours*, or *declared that they would charge You with the ruine of their souls*, if You did not take it upon You; and so, You could not do it for fear of the guilt of *Unfaithfulness*, *Cruelty*, and *Unmercifulness to the souls whose care you had undertaken*. Nor do I see, that the *Curse and Doom of the Unprofitable Servant* could have moved You, either to ordain others, or to be ordained to the *Ministry*. The *Passages of Scripture which (You say) intimate the duration of the Ministerial Office where there is once a Conveyance*, have nothing to do, where *no Conveyance* is. And those which *plead for the necessity of preaching, even when the Magistrate forbids*, can be of little moment

moment to this part of the Cause. The Petition for *Faithful Labourers* might have been put up, with as good a grace, and as great sincerity, without Your *New Ordination*, as with them: And you seem your selves to apply that Argument only to such as *had been* before called, and qualified, owned, and succeeded. Granting all these Arguments their full force, and as much strength as You your selves imagine to be in them. They will not, in the least, vindicate the behaviour of those amongst You we are now speaking of. And thus We see, The greatest aggravations of the guilt of your silence, and those which you lay most *weight* upon, are of no consideration in this point of your Practice. There remain *two* of the Arguments here alleged, and these only can have any relation to it: The *one*, taken from the *insufficiency of sundry of the Parish-Ministers*; and the *other*, from the *necessities of the people in most parts of the nation, notwithstanding the Legal provision for them*. The *latter* of these I cannot but acknowledge a sufficient ground for your Practice, if it can be fairly and clearly made out; and, I'm sure, it is the only Argument

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that You ought to lay any weight upon. But then it is my opinion, that it can never be made out; so made out, I mean, as to be a good reason for Your *separate Ministry*. Why I think that neither this *Argument*, nor the other, can do You any service, I have given a full account before, in the consideration of them, as they presented themselves under the *former head*. And the same reasons which I produced, to prove that they were not sufficient to justify the *Continuance* of your *Publick Ministry*, will at least, equally prove that they are not sufficient to justify, the other part of your *Conduct*, your *New-Ordinations*, for the perpetuating a *separate Ministry* in the Land. And to these I must refer You.

Thus have I endeavoured to satisfy You, *First*, That the *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* are not so unreasonable, and unjust, as You have imagined, and represented them to be. *Secondly*, That the *Arguments* You have alleged, upon supposition that they are so *unreasonable*, are not sufficient to vindicate your Practice, in the continuance of your *Publick Ministrations*. There remains yet the *Third*
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thing I proposed at first, which I now come to, *viz.*

III. To consider what is offered by Mr. *Calamy*, in vindication of your *People*. And what I have to say under this *Head* I shall address to *Tou* (though it do not so immediately respect *Tou*, as the former two) because *Tou*, indeed, are the chief Maintainers of the separation ; because *Tou* have pleaded the cause of the *People*, and put these Arguments into their Mouths ; because *Tou* have furnished them with their objections against *Conformity*, and kept up their prejudices against the *Church of England* ; because *Tou* have very great interest with them, and a very great authority, and influence over them ; and consequently, as *You* have been their Guides, and supports, in their departure from *Us*, so *You* may, upon maturer consideration, prove successful, and happy instruments in the Uniting them to *Us* again, to the Glory of God, and the increase of Peace and Love amongst *Us* ; and, lastly, because many of the *Arguments* offered for *them*, belong in common to *You* both, and under some of them, I shall have occasion to speak to *You*, and *Your* own *Practice*.

I shall

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I shall take the same method under this head, which I did under the last; and, first, draw, up all the Arguments I meet with, in defence of your People, in their full strength; and then, consider them separately, and examine into the strength of every one of them.

The *First* is taken from the benefit the People had found by your Labours, and is thus Express'd.

Many of the People had found benefit by the Labours of the Ejected Ministers.

Therefore, *they were obliged to stick to them, and to prefer their labours before others, &c.*

The *Second* is this,

These Ministers were cast off, without having any suitable crime alleged against them,

Therefore it had been *inhumane, and barbarous* in the People, to desert them,

The *Third* is taken from the Cause You are engaged in, viz. *The pressing a farther reformation in Ecclesiastical matters;* and stands thus,

This Cause is a good and just Cause,

Therefore, it is the duty of the People, *in their place, to espouse it, and adhere to the same principle, &c.*

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The *Fourth* is this,

It is the Duty of the *Dissenting Ministers to continue in the Exercise of their Ministry, though silenced by the Magistrate,*

Therefore the *People are therein obliged to support, and encourage them.*

The *Fifth* is taken from their right to *choose their own Pastour.*

The *People* must often *part with this right, if they submit to the Legal Provision for them,*

Therefore they cannot live in conformity to the *Church of England.* This I find a little afterwards thus expressed, in a manner somewhat differing from this.

Without submitting in many Parishes to Unqualified guides, there is no room left by the Law, for Ministerial instruction, and pastoral help,

Therefore, it is the duty of the *People* to provide for themselves in a *separate way.*

The *Sixth* is taken from the want of *Discipline* in the *Church.*

The *Discipline* of the *Church* is still bad, and insufficient, notwithstanding all the *Calls for greater strictness*
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and care, ever since the Reformation from Popery.

Therefore, it is the duty of the *People*, to seek for *better Churches* in a *separate way*.

A *Seventh Argument* is this,

Many of the Laity are afraid of sinning, in baptizing their Children with Godfathers and Godmothers, and the sign of the Cross; and many of them question the lawfulness of kneeling at the Communion,

Therefore it is their duty to *separate* from the *Church of England*.

The *last Argument* I find proposed (if *that* may be called an *Argument*, which is nothing but *Invective*) is this,

Some of the *Church-party* (You say) were observed to lay a greater stress upon their *Ceremonies*, than upon *Knowledge*, or *Faith*, or *real Holiness*; and to make light of *Oaths*. The *ruling Clergy*, and their *Patrons*, framed several very troublesome *Acts*. The *People* found themselves wretchedly hamper'd, and ensnared by *Fetters* of the *Clergies* making. And they who were so fond of their own constitution, had so little charity left for those whose sentiments differ'd from theirs, as to question the validity
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of their Ministry and Ordinances, nay, and even the possibility of their salvation, &c. Such Observations as these, made many of the Laity think, that there was no small danger of encouraging them in their rigours, and assuming pretensions, by an adherence and submission to them,

Therefore, it was their Duty to separate from them into distinct Churches.

I shall not think this last *Plea* worthy of a repetition, or a second thought; and, therefore, shall here (before I resume the Consideration of the *other Arguments*) only ask the Person who hath thought fit to load the Cause with this *Irrelative*, Is this an *Argument* fit to be urged in defence of a *Separation*, or not? If it be not (as, I verily believe, He thinks it is not) Why is it produced by one that pretends to study peace, and reconciliation? why is it proposed as a strong and sufficient reason? why is it urged without any consideration, or any reflexion upon the weakness of it, and without any *antidote* against the poison of it? Is it no matter upon what Grounds the *People* divide into distinct Churches? Are they to be supported and carressed in all their most unreasonable and foolish prejudices?

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ces? And, Is it laudable to multiply *objections* against the Church, tho' at the expense of Charity and Judgment? If this be thought a good reason for *Non-conformity*, then I see no hopes of ever putting an end to it, even upon the grounds you your selves desire. For no Abatements, or Amendments in the Church, it's Discipline, Government, or Liturgy, can possibly prevent, or remove such objections as this. Nor can there ever be revived a spirit of Love, and a desire of Union amongst us, whilst little conscience is made of putting the worst construction upon the actions of others, and then bringing their persons into the quarrel; of prejudicing men against a Cause, by what hath no more relation to it (in truth) than the most distant thing in nature. Supposing these Accusations of the *Clergy* true, and supposing the crime as great as you please; Doth it follow, Because some of the *Ruling-Clergy* have been *Rigid Task-Masters*, have been men of ill tempers, or severe in their attempts to bring men to *Conformity*, therefore the *People* ought not to conform? Or, was it ever thought, that *Conformity* obliged men to approve of the

the tempers and actions of every man that conformed? And, would not the *Conformity* of the *People* have been so far from *encouraging them in their rigours, and assuming pretensions* (as you say) that it would wholly have put an end to them? And were not these persons, who were thus *hamper'd* and *fetter'd*, Dissenters (and resolved so to be) before these *observations* made upon the Clergy? How then were they *Nonconformists* in consideration of these *Rigours, and assuming pretensions*, when, rather, it is plain, these *Rigours* were used, because they were *Nonconformists*? But I have said too much upon this *Argument*.

Would Men that write in such Causes but consider, that they write in the presence of God, and that they are to answer for every insinuation, and every unreasonable aggravation; for every thing they say that may blind the eyes, and prejudice the understanding of their Readers; for every hindrance that they lay in the way to Peace and Union; for every word and sentence that may incense the divided Parties of Christians against one another; we should not see so frequently in Books of Controversie the marks of *Passion* and *stubborn Preju-*

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Prejudice, where nothing ought to be seen but *Reason* and *Good-nature*, and a disposition inclined to put the most favourable constructions upon the designs of *others*; where nothing ought to be seen, but what tends to the composing the unhappy differences between men of the same nation, and the same profession. We all pretend to lament our Divisions, and to wish for a perfect Union; but, when it will be seen, that we shall study not to offend, or incense those we differ from? When shall we learn to argue without reflexions, or railing? When shall the contest between us be, not, who shall say the bitterest things; who shall use the most severe and cutting language; who shall vex and irritate his Adversary most; or, who shall keep up his Party most effectually: but, who shall represent things with most Truth and Candour; who shall contribute most to the setting things in a due light; who shall most effectually pave the way to Peace, and Concord, remove men's prejudices, sweeten their tempers, and draw their affections nearer to one another? But what end is there of Division and Hatred, when Men cannot be contented with

with the best reasoning their Cause will bear, but are ever burthening it with *Aggravations*, which always work more than *Arguments*, and never fail to destroy Christian Charity in the World? This thought hath carried me a little beyond due bounds: but it hath it's use in all Controversies,, and especially in this. I heartily wish it may have the same effect upon all others, as, I hope, it will ever have upon me; and so return to these Arguments in Vindication of your People, as they lie in their Order.

The *First* is this,

Many of the People had found benefit by the labours of the ejected Ministers.

Therefore, they were *obliged to stick to them*; and, as it is expressed presently after, *They could not forbear preferring the Labours of those Ministers, the suitability of whose Gifts, and whose readiness to watch for their Souls, They had experienc'd, before others that came in their places, to whom they were strangers, and as to whom they were, at the best, in great uncertainty.*

Of how very little Account in the Cause before us, this Consideration is, and to how little purpose this *Argument* is produced (unless to make up the

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number) is plain. For how few of the *Ejected Ministers* confined themselves to the very Places whence they were *ejected*? How few of the *Dissenting Laity* make any scruple of forsaking a *Pastour* on the account of any little difference, or groundless dissatisfaction, how *suitable* soever they have found his *Gifts*, and how much soever they have *experient'd* his *readiness* to watch for *their Souls*? How few do we find, that express the least readiness to conform to the *Church of England*, any more after the departure, or death of their *Ejected Ministers*, than before? And when do we find any of them that are not more ready, at such a time, to trust the care of their *Souls* with *Dissenting Pastors*, to whom they are *strangers*, and as to whom they are, at best, in great uncertainty, than to return to the Communion of the *Established Church*? This *Argument* then can be of little use to the present state of the Cause. For it is plain, the People think not themselves obliged in Conscience constantly to attend upon the Ministry of that Person, from whom they have once received benefit. It is plain, that many Considerations of lesser moment than the *Peace and Unity* of the *Church*, do

do induce them to leave a *Pastour* who hath been useful to them, and attend upon one to whom they are *strangers*. It is plain, if this *Argument* were wholly wanting, there would not be a *Dissenter* the less in *England*. It is plain therefore, that the *Argument* is weak, and of no great account in the judgment of your People themselves. If then they do not judge themselves obliged in Conscience never to forsake that *Teacher*, the *benefit* of whose *labours*, and suitableness of whose *Gifts* they have experienced, They could not be obliged in Conscience to stick to their own *Ejected Ministers*. Much less are they obliged in Conscience to joyn themselves to others, whose Abilities are unknown to them, in opposition to the *Church of England*. Yet this is their constant Practice upon the departure, or death of their old Pastor, or upon any dislike of their own. Whom then of your *Laity* will this *Argument* vindicate? And, if their Practice be such, why is an *Argument* brought to defend it, which must suppose it quite otherwise, or else be acknowledged to have no strength in it? Their *Practice* therefore is different from what you think it, and represented by

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you as what it should be, rather than what it really is; and your *Argument* consequently wants the force you suppose to be in it, when you apply it to a *Practice* which is not agreeable to your representation. And then, If any Considerations can be of force enough to induce a Man to leave one *Pastour*, and go over to another (tho' He have profited by the *One* heretofore, and knows little of the *other*) certainly the Consideration of Peace, and Love, are of all the most forcible; and may be supposed, more than any others, to discharge him from his great Obligation to attend for ever upon the *Ministry* of one Person who hath been useful to him. Especially considering, on the one Hand, that this Person may be very useful to him still, in a more private way: and, on the other hand, that tho' He be perhaps a *Stranger* to the *Established Minister*; and in great uncertainty as to him; yet he may be secure, in his constant attendance upon the *Publick Worship* in the *Established Church*, (which is all we are concerned about) that He shall meet with a *Service* fitted for the Worship of God, and his own Edification, if He bring a good Heart along

along with him. And there is this advantage in the *Established way*, that He need not be a *Stranger* to the main part of the *Publick Worship*; nor in the least *uncertainty as to that*. Is it not therefore, a little unaccountable, that the great satisfaction some People take, in their attendance upon *Publick Worship*, should lie in their being *Strangers* to what they are to join with, and in *great uncertainty* what it will be; and yet, that these persons should make it an *Argument* against their attending the *Publick Worship* in the *Established Church* (where the main parts of it are settled with Piety and Judgment, and constantly the same) that they are *Strangers* to the *Minister*, and *as to him, at best, in great uncertainty?*

The *Second Argument* in defence of your People, is this,

The *Ejected Ministers* were cast off, without having any *suitable Crime* alleged against them.

Therefore, it had been *inhumane* and *barbarous* in the People to desert them.

It is no pleasure to me to speak on this subject; or to think that any good, and useful Persons were so unhappy, as not to be satisfied in their Minds about

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the *Terms* of *Ministerial Conformity* imposed. But let us argue the Case a little, as far as the Cause of *Separation* is concerned. You your selves, with whom I am chiefly concerned, would have some *Establishment*, nay, and such an *Establishment* as would inevitably exclude some Persons, and such as you may think useful and laborious. You would then have some *Terms*, and some *Conditions* imposed, by which all who come in to the *Establishment*, should be obliged. Who shall be Judges what *Terms* are proper? Shall not the *Governours* in *Church* and *State*? Is it not their Province, and must not they give an Account to God for it? if there be some Persons, who cannot come in to the *Ministry*, or remain in the Publick Exercise of it, upon these *Terms*, Can this be remedied? Or, Must these Persons presently begin, and encourage the division of the Nation, and set up *Churches* against the *Established Church*? Methinks this should not easily be affirmed. Thus in the Case before us, You would at that very time if I mistake you not, have had some *Terms* imposed upon such as should continue in their *Parish-Ministry*. Supposing therefore these *Terms* had
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been exactly what would have contented you, you cannot imagine but that for all this many a Man would have been *Ejected*, and, for ought I can judge, the number of *such* might have come but little short of what it is represented now to be. Now I would ask, whether would have been better, and more reasonable, all things considered, that the *People* should have united with their *Parish-Ministers*, or with these *Ejected Persons*; whether they should have been esteem'd *barbarous and inhumane*, if they had deserted *these*, and seriously attended upon the *publick Worship* in their *Parish-Churches*; whether it might not have been the Duty of the *People* to leave them, tho' they were *ejected without having any suitable Crime alleg'd against them*. For observe, If you grant that at that time some *Terms* might be imposed very lawfully, nay, and such *Terms* as would infallibly exclude some, You must grant, that there was no necessity then of *alleging any suitable Crime against them*, and that they might be lawfully turn'd out, because they did not think it lawful, or proper, to come up to those *Terms*. Why then are the *People* taught to follow them,

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because they were cast off *without the allegation of any Crime*, by You who can teach them, that such *Terms* might lawfully have been imposed, as would unavoidably have caused many to have been cast off, without such a Ceremony? Why is an *Argument* built upon this, by You who know it will not bear one? Who know this, I say, for I suppose you will give me leave to say, That had these *Terms* been to your content, you would not have censured the *People* who Conformed to the *Church of England* as *Barbarous*, and *Inhumane*, in deserting their former *Minister*; but rather, have rejoyc'd at it, as what would have tended mightily to an entire and universal Concord. And now, methinks, Though the *Terms* were not exactly what you wished them, yet since they were such as your *Lawful Governours* then thought fit to impose, and such as many Excellent, Pious, and Useful Men thought fit to comply with; You should not make so vast a difference in your ways of arguing; and now, move the compassion of the *People* with the Thoughts of the *Inhumanity* and *Barbarity* of *Deserting* You: When, if you had not been of
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the number of the *Ejected*, but had thought the *Terms* large enough, You would, I doubt not, have pleaded another Cause; and have argued, That such a *Desertion*, for the sake of the peace and quiet of the *Church*, is neither *Inhumane* nor *Barbarous*; and perhaps farther, that to *stick to the Ejected Ministers*, and carry on, with them, a *Formal Separation* from a good and sound Church, is, in it's consequences, and ill effects upon the World, a much greater instance of *Barbarity*, and *Inhumanity*. This is really as if you should say, If the *Terms* had been such as to take in *Us*, then the *People* might have *Conformed* without *Inhumanity*, or *Barbarity*, notwithstanding the *Ejection* of many others would have been unavoidable: But since they were framed so, that *We* could not come up to them, the *People* justly feared the guilt of *Inhumanity* in *deserting* us. And, whether it be reasonable to argue at this rate, I leave you to judge.

Besides, I must observe that this *Argument* signifies very little to our present Times, unless you will say, That, whenever any Persons have prepared themselves for the *Ministry*, and cannot come
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up to the *Terms* of the *Established Church*, it is *Inhumane* and *Barbarous* in the People not to *stick to them*, and encourage them. And perhaps you will say this. For, if this be so mighty an *Argument* in the behalf of the *Ejected Ministers*, it should be of some force in the Case of these others. *They* were actually indeed in the *Ministry*; and *these* have thought fit to prepare themselves for it. *They* would have come up to the *Terms* of the Establishment, if they could have done it without sin; and *These* profess themselves most ready to do it, but that it is against their Consciences. *They* were *ejected* because they could not submit to these *Terms*; and *these* are kept out on the same account: and both *without having any suitable Crime alleged against them*. I see not, but that you may as truly tax the *People* with *Inhumanity* and *Barbarity* in not attending upon *these*, as in deserting *those*. And then, what a Foundation is here laid for constant Divisions from an *Established Church*, tho' never so perfect? It is but for any Persons to pretend, that they have prepared themselves for the *Ministry*, and that they are ready to *Minister* in this Church, but that they
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cannot with a safe Conscience submit to the *Terms* required of *Ministers* in it; and presently it shall be *Inhumane* and *Barbarous* in the *People* not to give encouragement to them: and so it shall be made their *Duty*, to divide from the *Established Church*, and to promote all the sad consequences of such a *Division*. In the mean while, these Consequences are not considered, and it is not remembered, what deplorable effects have been caus'd by setting up *Church* against *Church*, and *Worship* against *Worship*; it is not remembered, what *Inhumanity* and *Barbarity* this hath already occasioned, and may again occasion in this Nation; what prejudices, and passion, what emulations, and opposition, what hatred and malice, what jealousies and evil surmises, what disturbances, and unhappineses, this naturally tends to produce in the *World*. And now, As to this *Inhumanity* and *Barbarity*, upon the consideration of which only this *Argument* is founded, let any one of common sense judge, on which side the greater *Barbarity* lies; whether on the part of those who would not desert the *Separate Ministry*, tho' the Consequences of it must be
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acknowledg'd very prejudicial; or on the part of those, who in consideration of these evil consequences, and of the Advantages and Blessed Effects of a *Universal Conformity*, rather chose to *desert the Separate Ministry*, than the *Established Church*.

The *Third Argument* in vindication of your *People*, is taken from the *Cause* you are engaged in. thus,

The *Cause* in which the *Dissenting Ministers* are engaged, is a good and just *Cause*;

Therefore, it is the Duty of the People *in their place to espouse it, and adhere to the same Principle, &c.*

The *Cause* you are engaged in, you say, is, *The pressing a farther Reformation in Ecclesiastical Matters, as necessary in order to the more general reaching of the great ends of Religion.* This is the *Principle* the People are to adhere to, *in opposition to those who reckon the Church so perfect as to need no amendments.*

This I find frequently mentioned by you, and therefore I shall endeavour, under this *Argument*, clearly and distinctly to set down my thoughts upon this part of the *Cause*. And it will be, I conceive

ceive, a sufficient *answer* to what is advanced upon this pretence, if I can make out the following particulars,

1. That *You*, and your *People*, may continue in *Communion* with the *Church* of *England*, without thinking it *so perfect as to need no amendments*, and without forsaking the *Cause*, you say, you are engaged in.

2. That you have not attained to *perfection*, or a greater degree of it, in the separate Churches which you have erected.

3. That to *separate* from a Church, in order to obtain a *farther Reformation*, is not reasonable; or defensible.

4. That the method you have taken, is not a likely way to make the *Church* of *England* one degree more *perfect* than it is already.

5. That if this be a good *Argument* for a *Separation*, there will always be a necessity for one, and that your own *Amendments* would not make the *Church* *so perfect*, but that this same pretence for *Separation* would remain.

1. That *You*, and your *People*, may continue in the *Communion* of the *Church* of *England*, without thinking it *so perfect as*

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to need no Amendments, and without forsaking this Cause in which you say, you are engaged. It is none of the *Terms of Communion* in our Church, as I know of, that we shall think it in ev'ry respect perfect; that nothing is wanting, to make it compleat, either in it's *Government, Discipline, or Worship*: Nor is it contrary to the Principles of *Honesty and Sincerity*, for any one to *Minister; or Communicate* in a Church, tho' He think something or other in it may be made better, and more adapted to the ends of *Religion, and the interest of Christianity*. Almighty God, tho' without doubt He would have his Church as *perfect* in all respects as possible; yet, without doubt also, He would not have us upon every defect we imagine to be in it, withdraw our selves from the *Communion* of it: because at this rate we must not Communicate at all, but live *Separatists* from all the Churches in the World. Peace, and Unity, are the concern of all *Christians*; and the breaches of *them*, all are answerable for: but the *Constitution* of a *National Church* is not the Concern of every Christian, so as that He becomes answerable for the defects of it. If He can himself,

self, with that care which every Christian ought to exercise, live in the Communion of it, *righteously, soberly, and godly*; enjoy God's Ordinances without any sinful mixtures, and be in a safe and secure way to Heaven; whence, I beseech you, can arise any Obligation upon Him to break the Publick Peace and Quiet of this Church? Can you imagine it sufficient for him to urge, *This Church is not perfect enough: it wants something in the administration of it's Government: The Discipline of it is loose and defective: This expression, or this word, in it's Liturgy, is improper?* What if it be? and what if these things be not amended, just when He calls for *Reformation*? must He therefore disturb, and ruine the Quiet and Charity of the Nation? And will these Pretences answer for such evil Consequences, which are what He knows to be unavoidable? I think it is plain they will not. Supposing therefore the *Church of England* to want some *Amendments*, and a *farther Reformation*; yet since it wants nothing necessary to the edification of any serious Christian, and requires nothing in order to *Communion*, but what you acknowledge in it self lawful, what should

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should hinder a *serious Christian* from holding Communion with it? Not his Conscience, or the danger his Soul is in, or the impossibility of his encrease in all goodnes, or the least improbability of his obtaining Salvation in it; for these are not here pleaded, nor will you allege them; But only, He does not think every thing in the Constitution so exactly well as it might be. Nor is it necessary He should do so: He may live in the Communion of it without this; He may do all possible good in the World, and dye a happy death, without it. This you know, that many as great and excellent Persons as ever belonged to this Church, have not thought it *so perfect as to need no amendments*; have spoken and written, and very warmly argued for *Amendments*; and yet have lived constantly in the *Communion* of it, and been most useful and honourable Members of it. And tho' there be an unhappy and fatal distinction between *Church-men*, and different *Names* framed according to this distinction; yet I never yet heard of a Man of tolerable sense of either sort, that would seriously say, that there is nothing in the *Church of England* belong-

belonging either to it's *Government, Discipline, or Liturgy*, capable of *Amendment*, or which wants *farther Reformation*. Nay, Each sort have publicly spoken, and written for a *farther Reformation* in some one, or more of these. What hath hindered the accomplishment of it, God knows. But *they* only are to answer for this, who have resisted this design; hinder'd the Reformation of any thing that is really amis, and the Amendment of what it is reasonable to amend; of whatever might be more adapted to the design of Christianity, or more fitted to promote the Honour of God. If there be any, I say, who have hinder'd this, *They* are accountable to God for it, not *Tou*: And you may hold constant Communion with the *Church of England*, without thinking it absolutely perfect, or without ever ceasing, by all proper methods, to endeavour the *amendment* of any thing in it that can be made better, or the *supply* of any thing that is wanting. But

2. I desire it may be considered, that you have not attained to *perfection*, or to a greater degree of it than what our Church may pretend to, by separating

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from it, and erecting Churches in opposition to it: And how incongruous is it, that you should separate from the *Church of England* because it is not *perfect*, and be your selves, in the mean while, as *imperfect* and defective Churches, as that you have separated from? I speak the least, and therefore I hope you will give me leave to say it, That *Your Churches* are not more *perfect* than the *Established Church*. What advances then have you made towards the *attaining this perfection*? And what have you gained by leaving an *imperfect* Church? It sounds but indifferently to say, We leave the *Church of England* because it is imperfect; and we communicate with Churches as imperfect: we leave the *Church of England* because we are engaged in a design of pressing a *farther Reformation*, and for fear we should contribute to the strengthening the opinion of some that is *perfect*; and yet we constantly Communicate with Churches which we know to be imperfect: We forsake the *Established Church* in opposition to those who think it *perfect*; and we join with Churches of whose *perfection* there is as little hope. But I pray, until this *Reformation and Perfection* be accomplished,

ed. Is not Communion with this *imperfect* Church as laudable as Communion with one which is no better? And supposing two Churches equally imperfect, doth not the Obligation to Communion, on many accounts, lie manifestly on the side of the *Established Church*? Nay, doth it not manifestly lie on that side, even supposing the *separate Church* somewhat the perfecter of the two? Permit me to ask you one Question more, and that is this, If the Cause you are engaged in, the pressing *Reformation* and *Amendments*, be a good Reason for Separation, or lay an Obligation upon you to *separate*, why do you not *separate* from your own Churches, in order to bring them to perfection? Either your Churches are *perfect*; or you make a strange difference in your behaviour towards the *Established Church*, and towards *them*. If you say not that they are *perfect*, it must remain still unaccountable, that you should make *that* a reason for joining together in *separate Churches*, which is as much a reason for separating from these *separate Churches*, as it is for your separating from the *Church of England*.

If you will say, that the *Churches* you join with are *perfect*, or any thing more

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perfect than the *Church of England*, this I grant to be consistent with this Argument, but not with truth: And I desire you to shew us plainly, in what it is that this *greater perfection* is manifest. Is it in the *Government* of your *Churches*? What is that? *Presbyterian*, or *Independent*? And in what doth it exceed the *Episcopal* form? Is it more antient, or more beneficial to the Flock of Christ? You cannot shew a *Church*, before these late times, in which *Bishops*, as Superiour to *Presbyters*, did not preside; nor can you shew any advantage to the *Church* in any other Government, which that of *Bishops* is without. Is this preeminence in the *Discipline* of your *Churches*? Where is it to be seen, and how is it exercised? I cannot say that you are without it, because I am not well enough acquainted with the present state of your *Churches* to be able to say it; but I cannot hear that you can boast of any *regular*, beneficial, and truly Christian *Discipline*? Or, Is this *greater perfection* chiefly visible in your *publick worship*, and your Administration of the publick Offices of Religion? Is a *stated Liturgy*, composed of *Sentences*, *Lessons*, *Psalms*, and *Hymns* taken out of the
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Scripture, and of Pious and profitable Prayers, an *imperfect* and low Dispensation, when compared with the performances amongst *You*, which must wholly depend upon the preparation, abilities, temper, and present disposition of the Persons who are to Officiate? And, Is it more for the honour of God, for the decency of *Publick Worship*, for the edification of the *Christian Church*, that a general encouragement should be given to this, than such a *Liturgy* be joined with? The best and most complete way of determining this, would be, to procure a true Copy of all the *Publick Prayers* used in all the *Congregations* throughout the whole Land, on any one *Lord's Day*, by those who have thrown off the *Use* of the *Liturgy*; and to compare *these*, with the *Service* in the *Common-Prayer-Book* established. This would clearly demonstrate, which is most for the honour of God, and the decency of his Worship; which gives most occasion to improprieties, and irregularities in his Service; which is, universally speaking, most for the true and Christian Edification of the *People*; the *method* you have chosen and encouraged, or the *imperfect* discarded

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Liturgy of the Church of England. But alas! this is impracticable. However, Enough is known of the *Worship* in the *Dissenting Congregations* to make me think, that your selves will not affirm the *whole* of it (as made up of all the *Separate Performances* throughout the Land, on any one *Lord's Day*) to be more free from imperfections, and indecencies, more suitable to the Nature of God, or more fit for the Instruction of his *Church*, than the *Established Liturgy*. Nay, I hardly think, that you can prefer any one single Performance, in all respects, before it. But if you could, and if we should suppose (for Arguments sake) that Mr. *Baxter*, and a few more, could in their way, express themselves very happily, and entertain the People with a *Publick Service* much better than the *Liturgy*: yet this would not prove that your *Churches* are more *perfect* than ours in this respect. For it is not from what this, or that particular Man can do, by the help of *Nature* and *Art*, that we must draw our Judgment in this point. But if you would prove your *Churches* more *perfect* in their *worship*, than the *Church of England*, you must prove that, generally
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speaking, they are so; and that your method tends to make them so; or rather, that, upon comparison of the whole service of every one of them in the Nation, with that of the *Church Establisbed*, it appears, that they are fewer, and more inconsiderable *Imperfections* in it, than in *that* settled by the Law. How securely might we put the whole matter upon this issue, without so much as desiring that you should be as severe, and hard, in the *Constructions* you put upon your own *Performances*, as you have been in those you have put upon our *Liturgy*? But I will forbear saying any more upon this *Head*, because I think it needless: there being nothing plainer, than that it is unaccountable, and inconsistent, to *separate* from an *imperfect* Church, in order to *press a farther Reformation*; and constantly to *join* with another Church as *imperfect*, and which wants *Reformation* as much.

3. I shall endeavour to shew, That to separate from a *Church*, in order to obtain a *farther Reformation*, is not in it self a reasonable or defensible thing. This Argument, as it seems to me, supposes that the *Church* is *tolerable*, only that it

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hath some defects, and stands in need of some amendments. If it were *intolerable*, than *that* would be the Reason of your *Separation*, and not the prospect of *Amendment*, and *Reformation*. This is the same Church with which the *Old Puritans* thought *constant Communion* to be *lawful*, and *necessary*. What therefore this Argument, as distinct from all others, intends, is; not that you cannot Communicate with this Church, as the *Old Puritans* did, but, that finding no likelyhood of compassing a *farther Reformation* in it by *Communicating* with it, you *separate* from it as the most likely way to obtain this *Reformation*. Now supposing this to be the likeliest method of bringing this to effect, yet it seems to me to be a method not allowed by Reason, or Christianity. I will not be positive in the matter, but, according to the best of my understanding, and the present view I have of it, this is *doing evil, that good may come*, Supposing a *Government* to be *tolerable*, and to require nothing but what may lawfully be complied with; tho' it have something in it which you could wish amended, yet, would it not be *Rebellion*, and a sinful *Disobedience*, to rise up against it,

it, and fill the World with Confusion? Or, would it Sanctify such a Practice, to say, That this is done in order to make it more complete and perfect? So likewise, supposing a *Church* to be *tolerable* (as this Argument gives us leave) and nothing to be required in order to *Communion* with it, but what may lawfully be complied with: tho' it be not so perfect as it might be, and as you wish it, yet, will it not be sinful to *separate* from it, and disunite *Christians* from one another? Will the *End* proposed sanctify an evil which hath so very pernicious, and sad consequences? and will it be sufficient to say, We *separate* in order to bring this *Church* to *greater perfection*? When the Question is put, *Why do you divide from a Church of Christians already settled? and why are you the occasion of so much Variance and Strife in the Land?* Will it be a proper Answer, Not because we cannot join in *Communion* with it (for this we can do as well as our *Pious Progenitors*) but because we hope by this means to bring this *Church* to a better estate, and a greater degree of perfection? Is *Separation* then so innocent, and harmless a thing, that any
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good, proposed at a distance, shall justify it, and make it eligible? No Men have inveigh'd more against it than you, and your Predecessours: No Man hath load-ed it with more Aggravations than Mr. *Baxter*: And yet indeed it must be a most trifling and insignificant matter, if such Reasons as this can change it's Nature, and dissolve the Obligations Men are under to avoid it. We are obliged not to seek the Glory of God in all ways: And it is unlawful to endeavour or design the Amendment, or Advantage of a Church by all Methods: And therefore to separate from a Church with which You can hold Communion in all Christian Offices without sinning, under pretence of bringing it to more perfection, is unlawful. If you could not join with the *Church of England* in the *Offices of Religion* without sinning against your Consciences, this turns *Separation* from a Sin into a Virtue, by making it a necessary Duty: But since you can Communicate without sinning, and yet *Separate*, I see not what can make it necessary, or excusable.

But I find that you are often endeavouring to avoid this difficulty, by
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saying thus, *If we should Communicate constantly with the Church Established, we should not indeed sin in the action it self, but in the Circumstances or Consequences of it we should.* For this *Constant Communion* would be a *Practical Concession* that the Church is perfect, and would tend to confirm many Church Men, in their opinion that it was so. This I find you frequently mentioning, and therefore give me leave to examine it thoroughly before I proceed. I have just now shewn that your *Communion* with the *Church of England* would imply in it nothing like this, and have alleg'd the example of great numbers who constantly Communicate with it, and are far from thinking it perfect, and these not only of one, but of all sorts. Communicating with a Church cannot be a *practical declaration* that it is so complete *as to need no Amendments*, but can only signify that we judge it to be so perfect, that we can very well communicate with it. When you constantly keep Company with any Persons, would you have this signify that you imagine them to be absolutely without fault? And can it signify any more, but that you judge them fit for your constant Conversation? So likewise
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let it be in the Case before us, because it can be no otherwise; and because, if it were otherwise, there would hardly be a *Constant Communicant* left in this Church; nor could there be one in any Church in the World. Is your *Constant Communion* with your own Churches a *Practical Declaration* that they are perfect? If not, why should it be more so, when it is exercised with the *Church of England*, than when with your own? But *it will confirm some Church-men in an opinion, that the Church is perfect.* None, but such as will think so, whether you Communicate with it or not, and very few there are who do think so, at least, who will say so. But supposing it would settle them in the belief that *there is no need of Amendments*, there would be this advantage in it, that as they would resist alterations which you think for the better, so they would likewise any for the worse; and you might be secure the *Church* would not prove worse upon your hands thro' their means: which, considering all things, is a very happy security. But farther, Would this Consequence of your *Constant Communion* (supposing it certain, whereas it is nothing but imaginary) be a Reasonable

sonable and Natural interpretation of your Practice, or not? It is plain from what I have said, that your Practice cannot reasonably be so interpreted? nor is the practice of many *constant Communicants* so interpreted. If then these *Churchmen* will so interpret it, whose fault is it? and who is to answer for it? Are you accountable for all the ill consequences of your actions? I hope not. Are you to answer for all the unreasonable interpretations other Men shall put upon them? You tells us, *No certainly*, when your *Occasional Communion* is concerned. Then, you say, *The unreasonable interpretations ignorant or violent Men will put upon your Practice, ought not to move you in the least*. Why then will you not be as favourable to *Constant Communion*, and own, that the Unreasonable Opinions, or Judgments of others ought to be of no account in this Cause also? Or, is *Occasional Communion* a much greater duty, a greater honour to the *Christian Cause*, and the *Protestant Religion*, more beneficial to the Nation, or more edifying to your selves, than *Constant Communion* would be? And I can assure you, that your *Occasional Communion* hath contributed as much

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much to Men's thinking that you have a very good opinion of the *Church of England*, as your *Constant Communion* would do, and is to some as much a *Practical Declaration* that it is *perfect*. These then are the ill Consequences of your *Conformity*, and these are, in truth, only imaginary, and fantastick, light and inconsiderable, such as arise from the Unreasonableness of others, which you argue, ought not to influence you in another Case very like this. But the ill Consequences of a *Separation* are not imaginary, but visible. They have been seen, and felt, and are daily seen and felt. They are not light and inconsiderable, but of the highest importance; as being utterly inconsistent with the Unity and Peace of Christians, and the happiness of humane society. Division and Subdivision without end; Confusion and Disorder; Indecency in the Worship of God; Irregularity; Strife, and Emulation; Heat, and Passion; Ill-will, and Malice; are the unavoidable Consequences of such a *Separation* as you have given a general encouragement to. And that they are unavoidable, you must know, if you understand either Humane Nature, or Constant Experience.

ence. Who would not do any thing, but commit sin, to avoid any thing like these? I take it to be a certain Rule, That of two evils, it is the Duty of every Man, to chuse the least. Thus in the Case before us, Supposing Conformity to have these ill Consequences you have mention'd, and Separation to have those I have produced? the Duty of a Christian is certainly to chuse the way of action which hath the fewest, and most inconsiderable inconveniences, and the lightest ill Consequences to the Christian Church. Since therefore, He must either Communicate with this Church, or Separate from it, let any persons judge whether it be worse, to give occasion to some Persons to think an imperfect Church perfect, or to give occasion to Diffension and Uncharitableness amongst Christians; to do what may possibly (but not certainly) induce some to think no Amendments in this Church to be reasonable, or to do what will certainly, and unavoidably, lead to the producing all the Hatred, Strife and Violence imaginable; to do what injudicious Men only can so misinterpret, and make such an use of, or to do what will infallibly help to destroy Christian Charity in the World. What greater Obligation

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ligation can a Christian lie under, than that by which he is bound to avoid every thing that tends to ruine the *Peace*, and *Quiet* of Society? Is his Obligation to look after the Constitution of a Church, and to see that every thing in it be as exactly and nicely order'd, as He in his private judgment wishes it to be; I say, Is this Obligation ever to take place of the other? And would He that reads the *Gospel* seriously, imagine it to be the Duty of a Christian, or worth his while to quit his regards to *Unity* and *Love*, in order to rectify somewhat that He thinks amiss in a Church, in which he meets with all things necessary to his Salvation, and nothing destructive of it; and in the *Communion* of which, He knows, he can live and die a good Christian. Can any *Christian* that is sensible what a stress is laid upon *Charity*, and *Peace*, in that Law by which he is to be judged, induce himself to neglect the promotion of these, even for one day; and think it recompence enough to his Lord, that He hath some hopes this way of adding to the perfection of one particular Church? What is more *edifying* to his Church than *Charity*? And what more conduceth to the Beauty and Splendour of it than the

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Loving and Peaceable Dispositions of his Disciples? Without Peace and Love, all the *Perfection* in the World is not lovely in his Eyes: and with *them*, imperfection is by him accounted perfection. They are the chief and principal things that compose the Beauty and exact Symmetry of a Church, and in vain do we talk of making a Church *perfect* whilst we are doing what must inevitably ruine that in which it's greatest Glory must consist. I say not that all who *Separate* are *Uncharitable*: but I say, that they give occasion (and such an occasion as never fails) to all the instances of *Uncharitableness* and *Passion* amongst Persons of the differing Parties: And this, I say, all Christians are bound indispensably to avoid, and more strongly obliged to avoid it, than they are to study the Perfection of the outward Forms of *Church-Government*, and *Worship*, supposing them but tolerable. And this the *Old Puritans* seem highly sensible of; and have left behind them nothing that gives us any reason to think, that it was their opinion, that either length of Time, and waiting for Amendments, or any faint hopes of bringing them to pass by Separation, could dissolve the

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Obligation Christians are under *to preserve the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace.*

Pardon me, if I seem a little troublesome, or tedious on this head. I confess, my concern here transports me a little; and it grieves me to see a Church torn to pieces, it's members divided from one another, Discord triumphing upon the ruines of Unity, and Uncharitableness reigning without controul; and all this brought about by men of seriousness and consideration, men that profess they desire nothing more than the edification, and perfection of this very Church. Had You asked the Enemies of this Church and Nation; (those whom it hath so gloriously and successfully opposed;) which way You should take to ruine both Church and Nation; they would have thought of no other, but the encouraging such a *separation*: and they may well be pleased that You think *separation* your duty in order to a *farther reformation*, because this thought will help more effectually to bring about their wishes. You are as far from desiring that their wishes may be accomplished as any Persons living: but You know sometimes *Good men* have given an unhap-

py occasion to what hath produced effects quite contrary to their designs; such effects as they would afterwards have given all the world to hinder, but could not. This hath been experienc'd in this nation, and Experience should teach us all wisdom.

The *Church of England* is a *Church*, with which You acknowledge *Constant Communion* to be necessary in places where You have no opportunities of *separate Congregations*. By this You acknowledge *Constant Communion* with it to be lawful. If it be your duty therefore to communicate with the *Church of England* where no other Church can be communicated with, certainly it must be your duty to communicate with the *Church of England*, where no other Church can be set up, or communicated with, without giving occasion to Division, and Animosities, and Malice, and Hatred amongst Christians. And as, on the one side, You say, We cannot *communicate* with this *Church* without confirming some men in the opinion that it is perfect; so, on the other side, let me argue, You cannot *separate* from this Church without Encouraging *Discord*, and *Passion* amongst Christians, and sowing the seeds of *Hatred* in the land: and let this have it's

due weight with You, because I have shewn, that Communion with the Church is not a declaration that it is perfect, and that there are very few or none who have such an opinion, or, if they have, who will be confirmed in it by any thing You can do or say; and because I have proved that, supposing this would be the consequence of your *Constant Communion*, yet the Consequences of your Separation are far worse, and much more pernicious to the honour, and life of Christianity. And consequently, it is not a reasonable, or defensible thing, to *separate* from a Church in order to a *farther reformation*. And as I am deeply touched with these thoughts my self, so I cannot help beseeching God, that, if they have any weight in them, they may likewise affect You, and forcibly move You to do somewhat towards the reviving Christian *Love* and *Unity* in the Land. What you have alleg'd, besides what I have here mention'd, concerning the sinfulness, and ill consequences of *Constant Communion*, notwithstanding the lawfulness and necessity of *Occasional Communion*, I shall very distinctly consider in it's proper place.

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I proceed now in the *Argument* before us, and desire You to consider.

4. Whether the method You have taken be a *likely way* to make the *Church of England* one degree more perfect than it is. Under the last head I argued upon the supposition that it was a *likely way*. But I only *supposed* this, that you might be the more sensible of the *Unreasonableness* of *separation* upon the *principle* I am now examining. I cannot think that You your selves can judge the methods You have taken, at all *likely* to induce, or force, the *Church of England* to a *farther reformation*, and a greater degree of *perfection*. And if they be not, it must be very unreasonable to make use of them as *means* to bring about this *end*. By *Perfection*, I know, You understand such *Amendments* as You have thought reasonable: and not thinking Your selves likely to obtain them by *Conformity* to the *Church*, You *separate*, in order to obtain them. Let me now ask You, Is it a *likely way* to obtain any *amendments*, or any such *alterations* as You desire, in the *Established Form of Church-Government*, wholly to lay aside *Bishops*, and to discard the

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inequallity You know there ever was in the *Christian Church* between *them* and *Presbyters*? Is it a *likely way* to obtain those *alterations* You have thought reasonable in the *Established Liturgy*, to lay aside *Liturgies* wholly, and encourage such a liberty in *publick worship*, as must very often be the occasion of much disorder, and imprudence in it? Is it a *likely way* to *Union*, to run into the farthest *extreme* possible from those with whom You desire to unite? Is it a *likely way* to compose the heats You complain of, and influence the judgments and affections of men to the prosecution of Love and Peace, and a mutual agreement, to put your selves at such a distance from them, to instruct and educate the People in differing modes of worship, to keep up their prejudices against the *Church*, and to load the *Cause of Conformity* with all the aggravations, and imagined ill consequences possible to be thought of? Do You so little understand Humane nature, and the strength of Passion, and prejudice, as to think that men love to be forced and hector'd into compliance and Condescension? Did You find your selves so
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willing to yield upon bad usage, and violent Contradiction? Doth not *opposition* always beget *opposition*, and *violence* produce *violence*? And are two *Extremes* often known to meet? To anger and incense Men, to move their resentment, and stir up their passions, is really, in other words, to raise a Mist before their Eyes, and cast a Cloud before their Understanding; to hinder all the Efforts of their Good Nature, and utterly to set them against all Terms of Reconciliation, and all Overtures of Peace. And in Truth, You seem to me to have taken the course effectually to indispose Men from hearing of any proposals for Accommodation, or from thinking of an Agreement to any *alterations* you shall think fit, by the encouragement you have given to Churches so wholly opposite to the *Established Church* in every respect, and to the passions, and most unreasonable prejudices of the People against it. You have separated from it, as from a Church with which *Constant Communion* is not tolerable; You have drawn many People from it, as you have had opportunity; You have chosen to joyn and unite with, the most irregular, and imperfect *Churches*, rather than with *this*, and

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to make your interest one with theirs, rather than to be thought to prefer *this* before them; You have written for many years with such a concern and heat against it, that you could hardly write with more against the *Church of Rome* itself; You have blacken'd *Ministerial Conformity* to it with such a number of aggravations, as must make it a Complication of sins of the most horrid, and unpardonable nature; You have done what tends to alienate the Minds and Hearts of the Nation from the *Established Church*, and those that *Minister* in it. And you cannot think this the likeliest way to bring those from whom you differ to such a *Temper of Accommodation*, and such a *yielding Disposition*, as you wish, and as there must be before this *farther Reformation* can be accomplished. Granting therefore that some *Amendments* are highly reasonable in themselves, and that some *Alterations* which you (amongst others) have contended for, would make the *Church* more *perfect* than it is; yet, before this be done, Men's minds must be disposed to it, and made easy and yielding. They must be void of *Passion* and *Prejudice*, for fear they should make such

Alterations

Alterations as are not reasonable, or resist and prevent such as are. Nothing of Hatred, or the least degrees of private Resentment and anger, must have place, where such a Design is on foot. And yet your *Method* tends to Passion, and Prejudice, and Resentment; but can never have the least part in making Men pliable and easy, in disposing them to recede from any thing, to make the smallest Concessions, or give up a Point of the least importance. It is true, that, upon the *Supposition* that the Church may be made more perfect, nothing will hinder considering Men from promoting such *Alterations* as will do it. No unreasonableness, or unaccountable behaviour, no aggravations, or invectives, no violence or heat, in any who differ from them, ought to have such an Effect upon their Minds, as to render them unwilling, or indisposed to encourage such a *farther Reformation*; because their failings belong to themselves, and not to the Cause in hand, and can make that neither better, nor worse. If it be reasonable in it self, it will be so, whoever espouse it, or by what Methods soever they attempt it: And the *perfection* of a Church

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is a thing of that moment, that nothing ought to divert us from pressing towards it. But then, on the other side, would any who seriously desire this *Accommodation*, and wish for such Concessions, take such Methods to procure them, as, in the ordinary and constant course of things, must resist and hinder them? Would you anger and incense those whom you would have yield and comply? Would you provoke and irritate Men whom you would dispose to agree with you? Would you, in any affair in the World, be ever inveighing against the Cause, or Behaviour of Persons, with whom you desire to settle a lasting Concord, and from whom you hope for some favourable Concessions? I believe not; yet here you act after that manner. For there is hardly any thing that hath the least tendency to obtain this desired Union, and in order to it, to soften the hardnesses, to cool the heats, to engage the affections of any on whom this Concord must depend; there is hardly any thing of this Nature that you have thought fit to do. But there is hardly any thing that tends to keep us at a distance from one another, and hinder this Agreement,
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that tends to inflame the Passions of those you differ from, to make them jealous and fearful of a closer union with you, to render them suspicious of your tempers and designs, and disengage their Affections from you, but that you have thought it worth your while to practise it, in the way of your *Separation*, and in the Methods you have taken to begin, and confirm it. As if it had been your business to do what you knew would be most grievous in their Eyes, and your resolution, to *vex* them as much as possible, since they would not agree with you; and as if the interchanging of such good Offices were likely to prove the readiest way to settle a good Correspondence between you, or to bring you one step nearer to one another. In one word, Let who will believe, that can, that your *Separation*, and the Methods which have been taken to uphold it, can have any tendency towards the procuring these *Alterations* which would make the Church perfect enough for you. Common Sense contradicts this; and the more I consider it, the more I am confirmed, that tho' it were never so lawful to use such *Means* for the Accomplishment

ment of such an *End*, yet this *End* cannot be accomplished by such *Means*. If either Reason or Experience be to be regarded, it is certain, that from hence have proceeded the greatest Unwillingnesses, and strongest Aversions to such an *Agreement*. And if so, The Consideration of obtaining these *Alterations* ought not, in the nature of it, to have induced You to *begin* Your *Practice*; and cannot in Reason induce You to *continue* it.

Besides, were you certain that the Method you have taken is both a *lawful* and *likely* way to the procuring those *Abatements*, and *Amendments* which would content you, and supposing that the effecting them should bring in many of You, who are *Ministers*; yet God only knows, as the *Cause* hath been unhappily managed, whether this would so mightily contribute to the *Universal Union* of this *Church* and *People*, as one would wish, or as some expect. For it is notorious, that these *Abatements* and *Alterations* are not the matters which the generality of your *People* concern themselves about; or which, in their opinion, make up any considerable part of the *Cause*. No, I doubt, these would move
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them but little, and bring them but a very little way towards the *Church*. For the most unfortunate thing of all is, That you have settled them in a way of Worship wholly different from what ours *is*, and *must be*. You have disused them to *Liturgies*, and effectually taught them to esteem a *stated Form of Prayer*, as a dry, insipid, heavy Dispensation, unable to raise their Affections to a due pitch, unqualified to raise any transports of Devotion, or to kindle any sort of Religious passion in their Breasts; nor to be compared with the meanest *Extemporary Effusion*, so it be but utter'd with Vehemence and Zeal; and therefore not fit for their entertainment in the Worship of God. You have laid aside *Episcopacy*, as an inconvenient, or useless, or, at least, as a very indifferent Form of *Church-Government*, and Your People can hardly, by this means, bear the thoughts of a *Church* in which so much as the name of *Bishops* is found. These, and the like unhappineffes have necessarily followed from your manner of behaviour, and therefore, if You should come in *your selves* to a *Church* in which *Episcopacy* and a *stated Liturgy* are retained, (as
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you will do, I hope, if ever you come into *this*) Let them be never so well regulated, and never so excellently framed, your *People* perhaps will rather chuse the way you have already engaged them in, and sooner forsake *you*, than those fancies in which you have established them. And if this should prove so, what great progress shall you have made towards the *perfection* of a Church by this Method, when tho' it should gain your Point, and help to effect these desired *Alterations*; yet it hath, before this be accomplished, laid the foundation of perpetual division in the Land; hath prejudiced the *People* against the *Established way*, tho' you joyn with it; hath taught them to relish, and to value beyond measure a way distinct from it, and opposite to it; and to be proof against all Arguments taken from the universal Good, and Peace of the *Church*, and the common Interest of *Protestants*. Indeed I would gladly hope (as I have before said) that you have that Interest and Authority with your *People*, and that your Example and Persuasion will have that influence over them, that, if ever that happy time should come when you should think fit

to submit to the *Established Terms*, and Conform to the *Church of England*, Your People will be induced to follow you, and Conform also. *Some*, I doubt not, *will*: But this *Separation* and your *behaviour* in it, will have no part in persuading them to it. And for the generality of the *People*, my fears are, that it hath established, and harden'd them in another course, and so inur'd them to it, that nothing at last may be able to remove their prejudices; to convince their judgments, or draw their affections to *Conformity*. We know not the *utmost* force of prejudices once entertained, encouraged, and strengthen'd by many Year's *practice*: But we know the force of them to be great, and almost unconquerable; and this ought to make us always afraid, lest for the sake of avoiding a little present inconvenience, or the obtaining a little present good, we should prevent a much greater good in times to come, and run into a much greater inconvenience. It should make us afraid of doing any thing towards the cherishing, and strengthening such unreasonable Errours, and wrong Notions in a multitude of People, as may, one time or other, stand
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in the way to Union, and be the greatest Bar to that happiness which we ourselves desire, and the very thing that hinders it, when we most wish, and most hope to effect it. This then is one great inconvenience in your way of proceeding, that it obstructs and frustrates your own professed design, by engaging a multitude of People in such a Method, as they will with great difficulty, if at all, be removed from; and so, preventing *Union* and *Conformity*, by the way in which you propose to obtain such *Alterations* and *Amendments*, as you desire, towards your own *Union* and *Conformity*. Be it therefore so, that the Method you have taken will carry forward this *farther Reformation*, yet it will not carry forward, or very much promote, one main thing proposed by this *farther Reformation*, a more universal *Concord* and *Unity*. And therefore, it is a mysterious and unaccountable thing, that you should not rather have chosen some *other Method* of prosecuting your design: and whatever other you had chosen, I dare affirm, it could not have produced worse Effects, or have had more ill Consequences, than *that you have pitch'd upon; or have been*
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more disagreeable to the main *End* proposed. And this last I prove thus. Mutual Concessions and a yielding Spirit are necessary to these proposed *Alterations*; and the Conformity and Unity of the People are the greatest perfection of a *Church*; and a main *End* intended in these *Alterations*. Now the Method you have taken is not at all *likely* to produce such *Concessions*, or to incline Men to yield the most indifferent Points, but rather to make them jealous and suspicious of you, and incense them against you; and is so far from being ever likely to unite the *People* to the *Church*, that it is rather to be feared, it hath laid the Scheme of perpetual Division, and a continued *Separation*, even supposing such *Alterations* in the *Church* as would content you. Therefore your *Separation*, and the method you have taken to maintain it on foot, is as *unlikely* as possible, to effect this *farther Reformation*, or ever to bring about the Union and Agreement of the Christian People in this Land. This *Syllogism* is the sum of what I have proposed to you under this *Head*, and I entreat you to consider, if it have not some force in it,

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and do not deserve a few of your serious thoughts.

And now, to conclude this *Head*, give me leave to invert your *Argument*, and to argue thus with you upon your own Principle. If the Consideration of obtaining these *Amendments* have been of that mighty force with you, as to move you to venture upon a thing of such Consequence, as a *Formal Separation*, and a distinct way of *Publick Worship* from that *Established*; of how much greater force ought this Consideration to have been, in the moving you to a quiet and peaceable *Conformity*, as far as your Consciences could give leave? My Reason is, Because this would have been much the more *likely* way of accomplishing the *End* You had in view. If the prospect of *this*, therefore, moved you to *Separation*, which will never effect it; let the prospect of this carry you to *Confermity*, which (as it hath not so many ill Consequences, so it) hath a greater likelihood of effecting it. As far, therefore, as this *Argument* can prevail, I think verily it must prevail on the side of *Confermity*: For, I may appeal to the *Reason* and *Experience* of Mankind, and to the known *Movements* of *Human*

made Nature ; if it be not more likely, by Patience, and Tenderneſs, by Conformity to Men in all lawful things, by Courteſy and Amity, by keeping up a Friendſhip and good Correſpondence, by Calmneſs and Temper, by Moderation and Candour, to bring them to a yielding Diſpoſition and a compliant Humour, to incline their Affections and their Good-will towards us, and ſo to diſpoſe them to be ready to make *Abatements*, and *Alterations* ; than by *Separating* from them as Perſons unworthy of our *conſtant Communion*, by aggravating and loading their Cauſe with all the evil we can invent, by putting the worſt conſtruction upon all their Actions, by drawing the *People* from them, and encouraging their prejudices againſt them, by ſetting up other *Forms of Church Government* and *Worſhip*, at the wiſeſt diſtance from them. Let me ask any Perſon, whether of theſe Two is the moſt probable Method of attaining this *End* ? It ſeems to be a plain Caſe, that the *former* is the moſt *probable* Method, and therefore, that the Conſideration of the gaining theſe very *Alterations* you ſo much deſire, ſhould rather have engaged you

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to *Conformity* and *Union*, than to *Separation*, and your behaviour in it. But it is time to leave this, and proceed. I desire you therefore to consider,

5. That if the *Argument* which I am now examining, be a good Argument for a *Separation*, then there will always be a necessity for one, and always a reason sufficient to uphold, and excuse it; which, I think, is by no means to be allowed. You, and your *people*, separate in order to *press*, and obtain, a *farther reformation in Ecclesiastical Matters*, as necessary in order to the more general reaching of the great ends of Religion; and in opposition to those who reckon the Church so perfect as to need no amendments. Now I may safely affirm, that neither You, nor any Men else in the World, can contrive such a Church, or lay the scheme of such a constitution, that a *farther reformation* shall not be necessary in order to the more general reaching of the great ends of Religion. Had such amendments and alterations as, we are often told, would have contented You, and brought You in, been accepted of, in the *Established Church*, You cannot say that it would have wanted nothing in order to the more general

general reaching the great ends of Religion.
 And yet You would have conformed, and have pleaded the Cause of Conformity. If then, You should, upon such *amendments*, have thought it your duty to have conformed to the *Establishment*, notwithstanding the want of a *farther reformation in order*, &c. it cannot certainly be judged by You a good Argument for a *separation*, that a *farther reformation is necessary in order*, &c. If You could, upon some *alterations*, have complied, though other *alterations* in the constitution would have been *necessary* for the *end* mentioned; then it is certainly *lawful* for You to comply, though the *alterations* which You most wish, be not made; and therefore, it cannot be your duty to separate because these *alterations* are not yet obtained. For this Argument goes no farther, than the want of such *alterations* as are *necessary to the more general reaching the great ends of Religion*; and supposing the *alterations* You have desired, to be such, it cannot be accounted by You necessary to separate because these are not made, since You would have conformed, if these had been accepted, and yet others of
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the same sort would certainly have been then wanting. Whatever depends so much upon the prudence, and contrivance, of imperfect, fallible, short-sighted Creatures, as the constitution of a *National Church* doth, must, without doubt, have some marks of their imperfection upon it, and cannot be devised so *perfect*, and complete, that nothing can be added to it, which may be truly said to be *necessary to the more general reaching the great ends of Religion*. It can hardly be supposed, that such a *perfection* can be attained in any Church on Earth, that it may be with truth affirmed, that nothing *necessary to that end* is wanting. Much less can it be supposed, that such a *perfection* can be attained in any *Establishment*, that many persons shall not imagine many necessary things to be wanting in it, and many things in it very much out of order, and very much amiss. If this *plea*, therefore, be admitted as sufficient to justify a *separation*, a wide door is opened to numberless, and endless *separations*; for as long as *imperfection* belongs to the nature of Man, so long will it belong to any *Constitutions* that depend upon the prudence, and wisdom of Man.

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This should indeed be no objection against the making nearer and nearer approaches to *perfection*, against making any such *alterations*, at any time, as are apparently for the encreasing the beauty of a *Church*, and tend to *the more general reaching the great ends of Religion*; because it is certainly the duty of every Christian, who hath it in his power, to press towards those ends, and to do all lawful things towards the compassing of them, and to consult the honour of God, and the *Christian Church*. But then, supposing these *alterations* not made, but resisted, and rejected, this will not justify a *separation*, unless you will lay it down as a good Principle, That *separation* is necessary, whenever a *Church* is imperfect, and will not admit of such *amendments* as we think necessary. This I cannot think you will say, though this *Argument* in defence of your behaviour towards the *Church of England*, say it for you; because according to this, I see not how you can possibly communicate with any *Church* in the world, or what reason you can give, why You do not *separate* from your own *Churches*. They are imperfect, They stand in need of a-

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amendments, and alterations; There is a farther reformation of them necessary, in order to the more general reaching the great ends of Religion; and this, I doubt not, is the opinion of many of your selves. What reason then is there to be given, why you should separate from the Established Church because of the want of this farther Reformation, and join with these Churches which want it as much? But this I had occasion to urge under my second Answer to this Argument. And then, To separate in opposition to such as think the Church so perfect as to stand in need of no amendments, is yet more unreasonable; and I should think, somewhat too wild to be mentioned by persons of thought and seriousness, without a mark of their dislike upon it. It is as if we should separate, and think our selves under an obligation so to do, because there are men of little judgment, and strong passions, in the Church of England; because there are weak Men, and Men guilty of errors, that hold communion with it. Such You think these Persons to be, and in opposition to their Error, run from their Church, as if You were accountable for the Errors

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of other Men, and to answer to God for their weaknesses: Yet at the same time you do the very thing you avoid, and communicate with *Churches* in which there are many who think them *so perfect as to need no Amendments*; and, by this means, confirm *them* in this opinion, as much as you could these *Church-men* by your *Conformity*; and hinder the *farther Reformation*, and *Perfection* of those *Churches*, as much as you could that of the *Church of England*, by your constant *Communion* with it.

For my part, It is my opinion, that there never was, is, or will be, a *National Constitution* so perfect, but that something may be added to it, and something *necessary to a more general reaching the great ends of Religion*. But yet, on the one hand, I shall never think any *Objection* strong enough against such *Additions*, or *Alterations*, as may contribute to the *farther perfection* of it; and, on the other hand, I shall never think *Separation* so trifling, and inconsiderable a thing, as that the want of such *Alterations*, as, in my private judgment, I think *Amendments*, can make it necessary, or justify it. I have seen, and heard too much of the nature
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and evil Consequences of it, to give such an encouragement to it as is included in this *Argument*. And tho' I differ, as well as you, from those who think the *National Establishment* so perfect as to need no *Amendments* (if there be any such) yet I should think it but an odd way of shewing my judgment to be contrary to theirs, to depart from their Church; and very unreasonable to oppose them, by doing mischief to the *Church* and Nation; and hardly worth my while to contradict and resist them, at the expence of *Peace* and *Unity*: and should judge it a great deal more defensible, to confirm *them* in an *Error* by *Communicating* with them, than to confirm the world of Christians in mutual jealousies, and animosities, by *Separating* from them; tho' the *former* I have shewn to be only an *imaginary*, and *supposed evil Consequence*, and the *latter*, I doubt, is too *certain*, and *unavoidable* an evil.

With what Churches, therefore, will you *Communicate*, whilst you are engaged in this *Design* of pressing a farther *Reformation*? With *imperfect* Churches, or *perfect*? If with *imperfect*, why not with the *Church of England*, which, on many weighty accounts, deserves to be considered

sidered by you in the first place? If only with *perfect* ones, or those in which there is not an aversion to a *farther Reformation*, where will you find them? In what happy place, in what climate, free from prejudice and passion, are they seen? I only wish you would consider your own practice, and see whether you can well reconcile it to this *Principle* we are now upon; and look into the Nature and Tendency of this *Principle*, and see if you can easily reconcile it to *Reason*, and *Christianity*. This is all I have to say to it at present; and permit me to shut it up with a Recapitulation of what I think I have proved.

Since, therefore, I have shewn, that *You*, and *Your People*, may continue in the *Communion* of the *Church of England* without thinking it *so perfect as to need no Amendments*, and without forsaking the *Cause*, in which, you say, you are engaged; it appears, that there is no *necessity* from hence, that you should *separate* from it. Since, as I have observed, you have not attained to *perfection*, or a greater degree of it, in the *Separate Churches* you have erected, but communicate with *imperfect Churches* that stand in need of a *farther Reformation*.

Reformation, as well as the *Church of England*, and with *Churches* in which there are many who think them *so perfect as to need no Amendments*; it appears from hence, that you think your selves under no necessity of *Separating* from a *Church*, either in order to *press a farther Reformation*, or *in opposition to such as think it perfect*; and therefore, that you are under no necessity on these accounts, of separating from the *Church of England*, but may *Communicate* with it as safely as with your own *Churches*. Since I have shewn, that to *Separate* from this *Church* in order to obtain a *farther Reformation*, or *in opposition to such as think it perfect*, is not reasonable, or defensible; that it is *to do evil that good may come*, and of *two evils to chuse the greatest*; and to leave a *Church* because there are some in it of weak understandings, as you think; hence it is plain, that you ought not to *separate* on these accounts. Since I have proved, that the *Method* you have taken is not a *likely way* to make the *Church of England* one degree more *perfect* than it is already, but a very *likely way* to prevent, and hinder those very *Alterations* you so much desire; it is manifest, that you ought not in

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prudence to have begun it, or to continue to pursue it; and that the *End* proposed can lay no obligation upon you, to use such *means* as are so far from leading to it, that they contradict, and oppose it. Lastly, Since I have shewn, that if this *Argument* in defence of your *Separation* from the *Church of England*, be a good one, the Consequence will be, That there will be always a necessity for *Separation*, because we can have no hopes of a *Church* so completely *perfect*, that a *farther Reformation* shall not be *necessary* to the more general reaching the great ends of *Religion*; and since I have observed, That your own *Amendments* would not make the *Church* so *perfect*; that if some few *Alterations* had been made, you would have *Conformed*, and have thought yourselves obliged so to do, and yet, that still a *farther Reformation* would have been wanting; it appears from hence, that the want of this *farther Reformation* is not a sufficient ground for a *separation*; and that, in your own accounts, you may be obliged to *Communicate* with a *Church* which is not so *perfect* as to need no *Amendments*. If I have advanced, under these *Heads*, any thing of *Reason*, and
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to *Conformity* and *Union*, than to *Separation*, and your behaviour in it. But it is time to leave this, and proceed. I desire you therefore to consider,

5. That if the *Argument* which I am now examining, be a good Argument for a *Separation*, then there will always be a necessity for one, and always a reason sufficient to uphold, and excuse it; which, I think, is by no means to be allowed. You, and your *people*, separate in order to *press*, and obtain, a *farther reformation in Ecclesiastical Matters*, as necessary in order to the more general reaching of the great ends of Religion; and in opposition to those who reckon the Church so perfect as to need no amendments. Now I may safely affirm, that neither You, nor any Men else in the World, can contrive such a Church, or lay the scheme of such a constitution, that a *farther reformation* shall not be necessary in order to the more general reaching of the great ends of Religion. Had such amendments and alterations as, we are often told, would have contented You, and brought You in, been accepted of, in the *Established Church*, You cannot say that it would have wanted nothing in order to the more general

general reaching the great ends of Religion. And yet You would have conformed, and have pleaded the Cause of Conformity. If then, You should, upon such *amendments*, have thought it your duty to have conformed to the *Establishment*, notwithstanding the want of a *farther reformation in order*, &c. it cannot certainly be judged by You a good Argument for a *separation*, that a *farther reformation is necessary in order*, &c. If You could, upon some *alterations*, have complied, though other *alterations* in the constitution would have been *necessary* for the *end* mentioned; then it is certainly *lawful* for You to comply, though the *alterations* which You most wish, be not made; and therefore, it cannot be your duty to separate because these *alterations* are not yet obtained. For this Argument goes no farther, than the want of such *alterations* as are *necessary to the more general reaching the great ends of Religion*; and supposing the *alterations* You have desired, to be such, it cannot be accounted by You necessary to separate because these are not made, since You would have conformed, if these had been accepted, and yet others of
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the same sort would certainly have been then wanting. Whatever depends so much upon the prudence, and contrivance, of imperfect, fallible, short-sighted Creatures, as the constitution of a *National Church* doth, must, without doubt, have some marks of their imperfection upon it, and cannot be devised so *perfect*, and complete, that nothing can be added to it, which may be truly said to be *necessary to the more general reaching the great ends of Religion*. It can hardly be supposed, that such a *perfection* can be attained in any Church on Earth, that it may be with truth affirmed, that nothing *necessary to that end* is wanting. Much less can it be supposed, that such a *perfection* can be attained in any *Establishment*, that many persons shall not imagine many necessary things to be wanting in it, and many things in it very much out of order, and very much amiss. If this *plea*, therefore, be admitted as sufficient to justify a *separation*, a wide door is opened to numberless, and endless *separations*; for as long as *imperfection* belongs to the nature of Man, so long will it belong to any *Constitutions* that depend upon the prudence, and wisdom of Man.

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This should indeed be no objection against the making nearer and nearer approaches to *perfection*, against making any such *alterations*, at any time, as are apparently for the encreasing the beauty of a *Church*, and tend to the *more general reaching the great ends of Religion*; because it is certainly the duty of every Christian, who hath it in his power, to press towards those ends, and to do all lawful things towards the compassing of them, and to consult the honour of God, and the *Christian Church*. But then, supposing these *alterations* not made, but resisted, and rejected, this will not justify a *separation*, unless you will lay it down as a good Principle, That *separation* is necessary, whenever a *Church* is imperfect, and will not admit of such *amendments* as we think necessary. This I cannot think you will say, though this *Argument* in defence of your behaviour towards the *Church of England*, say it for you; because according to this, I see not how you can possibly communicate with any *Church* in the world, or what reason you can give, why You do not *separate* from your own *Churches*. They are *imperfect*, They stand in need of a-

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mendments, and alterations; There is a farther reformation of them necessary, in order to the more general reaching the great ends of Religion; and this, I doubt not, is the opinion of many of your selves. What reason then is there to be given, why you should separate from the Established Church because of the want of this farther Reformation, and join with these Churches which want it as much? But this I had occasion to urge under my second Answer to this Argument. And then, To separate in opposition to such as think the Church so perfect as to stand in need of no amendments, is yet more unreasonable; and I should think, somewhat too wild to be mentioned by persons of thought and seriousness, without a mark of their dislike upon it. It is as if we should separate, and think our selves under an obligation so to do, because there are men of little judgment, and strong passions, in the Church of England; because there are weak Men, and Men guilty of errors, that hold communion with it. Such You think these Persons to be, and in opposition to their Error, run from their Church, as if You were accountable for the Errors
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and do not deserve a few of your serious thoughts.

And now, to conclude this *Head*, give me leave to invert your *Argument*, and to argue thus with you upon your own Principle. If the Consideration of obtaining these *Amendments* have been of that mighty force with you, as to move you to venture upon a thing of such Consequence, as a *Formal Separation*, and a distinct way of *Publick Worship* from that *Established*; of how much greater force ought this Consideration to have been, in the moving you to a quiet and peaceable *Conformity*, as far as your Consciences could give leave? My Reason is, Because this would have been much the more *likely* way of accomplishing the *End* You had in view. If the prospect of *this*, therefore, moved you to *Separation*, which will never effect it; let the prospect of this carry you to *Conformity*, which (as it hath not so many ill Consequences, so it) hath a greater likelihood of effecting it. As far, therefore, as this *Argument* can prevail, I think verily it must prevail on the side of *Conformity*: For I may appeal to the *Reason* and *Experience* of Mankind, and to the known Movements of Hu-
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made Nature ; if it be not more likely, by Patience, and Tenderneſs, by Conformity to Men in all lawful things, by Courteſy and Amity, by keeping up a Friendſhip and good Correſpondence, by Calmneſs and Temper, by Moderation and Candour, to bring them to a yielding Diſpoſition and a compliant Humour, to incline their Affections and their Good-will towards us, and ſo to diſpoſe them to be ready to make *Abatements*, and *Alterations* ; than by *Separating* from them as Perſons unworthy of our *conſtant Communion*, by aggravating and loading their Cauſe with all the evil we can invent, by putting the worſt conſtruction upon all their Actions, by drawing the *People* from them, and encouraging their prejudices againſt them, by ſetting up other *Forms of Church Government* and *Worſhip*, at the wideſt diſtance from them. Let me ask any Perſon, whether of theſe Two is the moſt probable Method of attaining this *End* ? It ſeems to be a plain Caſe, that the *former* is the moſt *probable* Method, and therefore, that the Conſideration of the gaining theſe very *Alterations* you ſo much deſire, ſhould rather have engaged you

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to *Conformity* and *Union*, than to *Separation*, and your behaviour in it. But it is time to leave this, and proceed. I desire you therefore to consider,

5. That if the *Argument* which I am now examining, be a good Argument for a *Separation*, then there will always be a necessity for one, and always a reason sufficient to uphold, and excuse it; which, I think, is by no means to be allowed. You, and your *people*, separate in order to *press*, and obtain, a *farther reformation in Ecclesiastical Matters*, as necessary in order to the more general reaching of the great ends of Religion; and in opposition to those who reckon the Church so perfect as to need no amendments. Now I may safely affirm, that neither You, nor any Men else in the World, can contrive such a Church, or lay the scheme of such a constitution, that a *farther reformation* shall not be necessary in order to the more general reaching of the great ends of Religion. Had such amendments and alterations as, we are often told, would have contented You, and brought You in, been accepted of, in the *Established Church*, You cannot say that it would have wanted nothing in order to the more general

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Truth, let it have it's due weight with you: and, if you be convinced *your selves*, suffer not *your People* to think that the *Cause* you are engaged in, will justify *Separation* either in *you*, or *them*. I mean, if there be any of your *People* who *separate* from the *Church*, and follow you, upon this Principle. It is time now to proceed to the *Fourth Argument*, in vindication of your *People*, which is this,

It is the Duty of the *Dissenting Ministers* to continue in the Exercise of their *Ministry*, tho' silenced by the *Magistrates*.

Therefore, The *People* are therein obliged to support and encourage them.

But, If I have before shewn, that it is not the Duty of the *Dissenting Ministers* to continue in the Exercise of their *Ministry*; then it will follow, That the *People* are not therein obliged to support and encourage them. Whether I have or no, I must leave to others: But the *Duty* of the *People* seeming to depend upon the *Duty* of the *Ministers*, in this Argument, what I have advanced against the necessity of their *Publick Ministrations*, will equally destroy the Obligation of the *People* to support and encourage them therein: Supposing therefore that this *Conclusion* is justly drawn, yet if the

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Proposition, on which it depends, be not true, it must certainly fall with it. And so I might fairly leave this *Argument*, with an appeal to what hath been already discoursed.

But I cannot dismiss it without observing to you, that it appears to me to be full of *fallacy*. For, if the *People* be not, on *other* accounts, obliged to attend upon your *Ministrations*, you cannot say, that they are obliged to it merely to *support and encourage you*; nor would they ever do it for that reason only. And if they be not obliged to it merely to *support and encourage you*, then this *Argument* signifies nothing to their justification. Nay, you know that they do, and always did, attend upon you on *other Accounts*, and you know that they are worthy of blame, if it were otherwise. Again, your *Publick Ministrations* are not absolute, but bear a relation to the *People*; and therefore, your obligation to them cannot be absolute. And so, you cannot prove any necessity upon your selves to *Minister*, but upon supposition of the necessities of the *People*, and their readiness to wait upon you: Consequently, if it had so hapned, that the *People* had thought their necessities fully supplied in other ways, and had not been ready to attend upon you on *other* accounts, it could

could not have been their duty to have attended upon you merely on this account, *to support you in your Duty*; because, upon this supposition, it could not have been your duty *to minister publickly*, even tho' we should grant it to be your duty to be *ready to minister* if the People would attend upon you. And you might have been *ready to minister publickly* upon this supposition, without actually doing it; and that is all your *Ordination-Vow* could oblige you to, no Man being obliged to impossibilities, or absurdities. Supposing therefore, that it is your duty to be ready to *minister publickly*, if the People will attend upon you (which is the utmost that can be said) yet, if they attend not upon you, they hinder not you from doing what you are obliged to do; your *readiness* to Minister, in this Case, being your whole Duty.

Besides, you your selves will grant (at least, you often argue so in your own Cause) that if they think their necessities can be better supplied by others than by you, they ought to follow those others. This your People are taught to think. From hence, therefore, it follows, that they are not obliged to attend upon
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you, in order to *support and encourage you in your duty*. I entreat you to think of this, and, if you will deal fairly in this Cause, you are obliged plainly to deny the one, or the other. For, if it be the *People's* duty to *support*, and *encourage* you, then it is not their duty, nay it is not allowable for them, to go where their necessities can best be supplied. But, if it be their Duty, or allowable for them, to leave you, in order to have their necessities better supplied, then it is not their duty to *support and encourage* you by their attendance upon you; because these are inconsistent one with another. Either therefore relinquish *this* Argument, or give up that *popular plea* of Edification; and the natural, and unalienable right of every Man to chuse his own *Pastour*; or shew us how to reconcile them.

Farther, You cannot be so little concerned for the Nation you belong to, as not to think it would be a very considerable happiness to it, did all the *People* seriously attend upon the *Publick Worship* in the *Established Church*; were they all persuaded that the necessities of their Souls could very well be supplied in it, and all resolved to unite, and

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perſue their Duty in one way. You cannot ſay, that this would endanger their Salvation, or hinder their own private *Edification*, if they be not wanting to themſelves; You cannot ſay, that this would be a mighty advantage to the *Chriſtian Religion*, and the *Proteſtant Cauſe* in particular; or, that it would not very much conduce to the univerſal *Edification* of the *Church of God in Love and Unity*. Nor will you, I preſume, put your own *Support* and *Encouragement* into the Ballance againſt ſo great and publick a good. Far be it from me to think, that you would not be willing to purchaſe ſuch an advantage to the *Chriſtian Church*, ſuch an honour to your Lord and Saviour, ſuch a foundation of happineſs to your native Country, at the deareſt price; that you would not be ready to Sacrifice all your own private Fortunes to it, and to buy it at the expenſe of your own Reputation, and all the *ſupport* and *encouragement* you could hope for in the World. This I cannot but think you would be willing to do, (even tho' it were to be done by the *People's Conformity* to the *Church of England*) becauſe it is certainly the duty of every

every *Christian*; what every good Man ought to do, and what is but agreeable to that sense You have frequently express'd, of the miserable consequences of *Religious divisions*, and the unspeakable advantages of *Concord and Unity*. And if this be so, it appears, that your private *support and encouragement*, ought not to hinder the *People* from pursuing a greater good, the universal Advantage of the *Protestant Church, and English Nation*, by *Conformity to the Church of England*; and therefore, that this Argument cannot prove it to be their duty, to adhere to You in the *separate Exercise of Your Ministry*. I leave this to your consideration, and proceed to

The *Fifth* Argument, in defence of Your *People*, which is taken from their *Right to chuse their own Pastour*, as follows,

The *People* must often *part with this Right*, if they submit to the *Legal Provision* for them;

Therefore, They cannot live in *Conformity to the Church of England*. This I find, a little afterwards, *thus* expressed; in a manner somewhat differing from this;

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Without submitting, in many Parishes, to unqualified Guides, there is no room left by the Law for Ministerial Instruction, and Pastoral Help.

Therefore, it is the Duty of the People, to provide for themselves in a separate way.

Upon this *Head* I find You copious, and pathetic: and I do not wonder at it, considering how popular a *Plea* it is; and how much it must ingratiate You with the *People*, to plead their Cause, and defend their *rights* or *privileges* against Invaders, and Oppressours. I shall, in answer to what you have advanced upon this Subject, endeavour to shew, that there is nothing included in this *Right*, or in all You have said concerning it, sufficient to justify a *separation*: which, I think, is the point now before us. And this I hope to do, with so much plainness, that the *People* themselves, who are most concerned, may be able to judge in this *Question*. I desire You, therefore, to consider,

1. That this *Right* to chuse their own *Pastour* doth not, according to your selves, so belong to the *People*, that they may not very lawfully recede from it,

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upon some considerations; nay, that they ought not in duty to do it. *Pa-*^{Abridg.}
rish-Order, we are told in the name of ^{p. 546.} your People, *bath it's advantages, and is to be prefer'd, when more weighty reasons do not offer.* Give me leave, then, from this to infer, that there may be reasons sufficient to move the People to recede from this *Right*, so vehemently contend for, and to acquiesce in the *way Established.* And, as this is granted to be their duty, on some occasions, so we find it practis'd by many of those who make up your own *Congregations*, who often, for the sake of *Peace*, and *Love*, and *Order*, think it their duty to acquiesce in the Person chosen by the *major part* of the *Congregation*; and yet this *majority* hath no more right to impose a *Pastour* upon the other part of the *Congregation*, or upon any one single Person in it, than the *Magistrate*, or the *Bishop*, or any *Patron* hath. This then we see accounted by them a sufficient inducement to relinquish this *Right*, that by so doing, they shall contribute to the increase of *Love*, and *Quiet*; and consult the *Peace*, and *Order* of that *Congregation* they belong to, tho' they be not

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so happy as to enjoy the publick Labours of the Person by whom they could edify most, and whom they would chuse before all others. From hence I think it will follow, that if they would act with respect to the *Church of England*, agreeably to their own *maxim*, and their own *Practice* in their *separate Congregations*, they ought, in conscience, readily to recede from this *Right* (though it be never so truly their *Right*) and *Conform*. For if any *Reasons* in the world be *weighty* enough to engage them to do this, certainly those taken from *Peace*, and *Order* are so: and this their behaviour shews us to be their own opinion. And certainly, if the *Peace*, and *Order* of one particular *Congregation* be of force enough to move them to this; much more ought they to be moved to it by the *Peace* and *Order* of a whole *National Church*, and by the consideration of *Universal Concord*, and *Unity*. Were their *Salvation* likely to be endangered by their *Conformity*; or, could they not *conform* without giving themselves up entirely to the guidance of one who would mislead them, and hazard their eternal happiness, I would not argue thus; but

but own, that they had a *Right* to consult their own eternal interest in a *separate way*. But I have before observed, that the salvation of any serious Person is not endanger'd by *Conformity*, and you your selves will not say that it is: and that they may *conform* without submitting themselves to their *Parish-Minister*, after the manner You speak of, I shall shew by and by. What I now say is this, That they ought to recede from this *Right*, upon weighty considerations; that Publick *Peace* and *Order* are considerations weighty enough to induce them to do it; that it is plain from their *Practice*, that they often think so themselves; that, therefore, since they may do it without endangering their Salvation, they ought to *conform*, tho', by this means, they recede often from this *Right*.

2. I must observe to You, that in *Parishes*, and places where the *People* chuse their own *Ministers*, there are the greatest divisions, and quarrels, the greatest feuds, and passions remarkable; as *Unqualified Ministers*, as in other places; and, perhaps it may be said also, the greatest number of *Dissenters* from the *Established Church*. Nothing hath been

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the *Cause* of greater variance and strife, and illwill amongst neighbours, than this *Choice*, and the time of *Election* is commonly the time of heat, and anger; and it ends often in a *bad Choice*, and in the alienation of the minds of many Men from their *Brethren*, and from their *Minister*, worthy, or not worthy. I would not have you think, that I argue barely from such ill consequences as these, to shew that any *Right* is to be given up; for I am sensible, at this rate, We might argue our selves out of all *Rights*, and this would be of the worst consequence imaginable. But I argue thus; These consequences of a general enjoyment, and exercise of this *Right*, are worse than any, which will follow upon a general acquiescing in the *way now* settled: taking this into the account, that there is such a provision for the souls of Men in the *Church of England*, that they are not in the least danger, or, under the least necessity of seeking any farther assistances in a *separate way*; which, I hope, I have already proved, and shall say somewhat more to, presently. And from hence it appears, that this *Right* is not of such mighty advantage

to the *Christian Church*, or to the *People's* souls, or, of such necessity, considering the *Legal Provision* for them, that You should be so concerned to maintain the *People* in the actual exercise of it, and they be so often, and vehemently alarmed with the fear of losing it. And then, if in these *Parishes*, where the *Minister* is chosen by the *Votes* of the *People*, there be no smaller a number of *Dissenters* than in others (if so small) this doth not look as if the *People* dissented because they cannot, in the *Established way*, *Vote* for their *Minister*, but upon some other account; and that if they were universally restored to this privilege, this would put no stop to their *separation*. And, if *Parish-Order* be at all to be regarded, as You say it is, this *Right of Voting* for their *Minister* is all that your *People* can possibly claim. For I observe,

3. That the *Constitution* can never be so ordered, or so happily contrived, that every particular Christian shall be under the *Ministry* of the *Person* whom He would chuse before all others. Your own *People* can acquiesce when they see fit (tho' every one cannot be pleased in the

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the choice of a *Pastour*) upon the motive of *Peace*, and *Unity*. If this, therefore, cannot be, and yet the People are presently to assert their Title to this *Right*, and not to suffer a *Pastour* to be imposed upon them by any Persons in the world but themselves, in what must this end? There must be *Divisions*, and *Schisms* numberless, and the blessed consequences of them; and the Church and Nation must be torn in pieces. If the *People* be not obliged to assert this *Right* when the *Peace* and *Unity* of your own *Congregations* are concerned, but only in opposition to the *Church of England*, why do not You speak out, and say so? If there may be considerations sufficient to induce them to relinquish it, why is not this inculcated upon the *People*? If there be not considerations, on the side of the *Legal Establishment*, sufficient to do this, why is not this proved? If there be, why is it not fairly, and honestly granted? If it be only in the Case *Unqualified Ministers*, that this *Right* is to be asserted, why is it not said in the plainest words? Why is not a full account given? who are truly *unqualified*? And why is not one very material point proved,
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That a *separate way* must necessarily be set up on this account, that is, that there are not in the *Established Church*, within the reach of the *People*, any *Ministers qualified* to guide and instruct their consciencies? Have You never observed how ready the generality of the *People* are to prefer the worst *Preachers* before the best, and how universally they leave the most *qualified* guides, as well as the most *Unqualified*? And did it not pity You to observe it, and move You to think that such a general, and loose encouragement as this, ought not to be given to that spreading humour? No stop can ever be put to *separation*, if it may be lawfully built upon such foundations as this; and therefore, this *Principle* is not what Good Christians should use in defence of their Practice. But that your *People* may not be wholly at a loss to know how the exercise of this *Right* hath been restrained upon some occasions, and that they may be sensible how very few of themselves this *Argument* will defend, I observe,

4. That

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p. 573.

4. That Mr. Baxter had such a sense of the advantages of *Parochial Communion*, that He advised his People of *Kedminster* to attend upon their *Parish-Minister*, and not to absent themselves from his *Ministrations*, unless in three Cases. When the *Minister* was one that was utterly insufficient; which He is careful to explain in the following words, as not being able to teach them the *Articles of the Faith*, and *Essentials of True Religion*: Or, when the *Minister* preached any *Herese*, or *Doctrine* which was contrary to any *Article of the Faith*, or necessary part of *Godliness*: Or, when in the *Application* He set himself against the *Ends of his Office*, to make a *Holy Life* seem odious, and to keep Men from it, and to promote the *Interest of Satan*. Nay, so solicitous is He in this matter, that He adds farther, *Let not to take every bitter reflexion upon themselves or others, occasioned by difference of Opinion or Interest, to be a sufficient Cause to say, That the Minister preached against Godliness, or to withdraw themselves.* So then, when the *Parish-Minister* is not utterly insufficient; or doth not preach any thing contrary to the *Faith*, and *Practice of Christianity*; or doth not set himself to oppose serious *Godliness*; the *People*, if they

they will follow Mr. *Baxter's* judgment, ought to attend upon Him, and ought not to assert their *Right* to chuse their own *Pastour*. Now which of your *People* will be judged by this Rule? And where is that single Person amongst them all, that hath acted upon these Principles, and left his *Parish-Minister*, and chosen another for his *Pastour*, only on these accounts? Hardly to be found, I dare say, throughout the Land: For it is too manifest, that they run, without distinction, from *all* as well as *some*; nay, that multitudes of them have never so much as endeavour'd to hear their *Established Minister*, or to satisfy themselves whether He be *qualified*, or not. And so it appears, that the *Practice* of your *People* is such as cannot be defended by this *Argument*; and therefore, that this *Argument* signifies nothing to their *Vindication*, Especially, considering that it is their *Separation*, their providing for themselves in a way distinct from the *Established way*, you are now defending. For I ask, Supposing that they may upon these accounts, or any other, leave their *Parish-Minister*, yet where is the necessity of leaving the *Church of England*? How doth

could not have been their duty to have attended upon you merely on this account, *to support you in your Duty*; because, upon this supposition, it could not have been your duty *to minister publickly*, even tho' we should grant it to be your duty to be *ready to minister* if the People would attend upon you. And you might have been *ready to minister publickly* upon this supposition, without actually doing it; and that is all your *Ordination-Vow* could oblige you to, no Man being obliged to impossibilities, or absurdities. Supposing therefore, that it is your duty to be ready to *minister publickly*, if the People will attend upon you (which is the utmost that can be said) yet, if they attend not upon you, they hinder not you from doing what you are obliged to do; your *readiness* to Minister, in this Case, being your whole Duty.

Besides, you your selves will grant (at least, you often argue so in your own Cause) that if they think their necessities can be better supplied by others than by you, they ought to follow those others. This your People are taught to think. From hence, therefore, it follows, that they are not obliged to attend upon
you

5. That, supposing an *unqualified Minister* settled in a *Parish*, His *Parishioners* are not presently in so desperate a condition as you represent them to be in. They are not obliged to give up themselves blindly to his direction, and to receive whatever He preaches, or teaches, with an implicit faith. This is a *Popish*, and not a *Protestant* Doctrine, nor ever yet taught, or admitted in the *Church of England*. His *People* (as I have had often an occasion to observe) are secure of a *Liturgy* adapted to all the purposes of *Publick Worship*, and of many Portions of God's Word delivered to them in it, by means of which, they may attend upon God to his Glory, and their own Edification. So that, in this Church, The great business of *Religious Assemblies* is render'd much more useful to the *People*, and much more agreeable to the Nature, and Design of them, than it can possibly be in that *Form of Publick Worship* which you have encouraged in the Land. And you your selves cannot pretend a defect, in this constant appointed Service, of any thing necessary to Salvation; or any thing in it destructive of it. And this is their certain entertainment, however
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insufficient their *Minister* be; which is a great, and unspeakable happiness to a Land, how lightly soever you teach your *People* to think of it. The main point between us relates to their constant attendance upon the *Publick Worship* in the *Established way*: And we see, They may constantly attend upon it without endangering their Salvation, if they be truly serious themselves: And if they may, why should they not? For private helps and assistances, none are forbidden to them, as I know of. They are not confined to the Writings, or Advice, or Directions, of any particular Man, but are at liberty to apply themselves to whom they see fit. But, if they will not be content with this, but will leave the *Publick Ministrations* of their own *Parish-Minister* because they think Him *unqualified*, still here is no necessity for a *Separation*. It is one thing to leave the teaching of one particular Man, and another thing to leave the *Church* in which He Ministers, and to set up other *Churches* in opposition to it. It is to be hoped, that there may be *Ministers* of the *Established Church*, within some convenient distance from them, *qualified* to preach to them.

And

And Mr. Calamy tells us, That if they go ^{Abridg-} to another Parish, the inconvenience is not ^{p. 547.} great; not so great, I am sure, by many degrees, as what must follow upon their setting up *Separate Churches*. Whence then arises any necessity of a *Separate Ministry*, and *Separate Churches*, and distinct Modes of *Publick Worship*, if it be so, that the *People* may attend constantly upon the *Service* in the *Established Church*, and yet neither hazard their Salvation, nor submit to *Unqualified Guides*? And consequently how little doth this contribute to their justification? I have already spoken something on this *Argument*, taken from *Unqualified Ministers*, when I considered it with relation to your own *Practice*: And so, shall add no more here, but argue a little with you upon what I have now laid down.

If, then, this *Right*, we are speaking of, be a *Right* with which your *People* not only may, but ought in duty to part, upon weighty Considerations, (as I have shewn from their own practice, and your own Concessions) why ought they not to part with it, as well in the *Established way*, as in a *Separate way*? Or, what Motives are there to induce them

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Truth, let it have it's due weight with you: and, if you be convinced *your selves*, suffer not *your People* to think that the *Cause* you are engaged in, will justify *Separation* either in *you*, or *them*. I mean, if there be any of your *People* who *separate* from the *Church*, and follow you, upon this Principle. It is time now to proceed to the *Fourth* Argument, in vindication of your *People*, which is this,

It is the Duty of the *Dissenting Ministers* to continue in the Exercise of their Ministry, tho' silenced by the *Magistrates*.

Therefore, The *People* are therein obliged to support and encourage them.

But, If I have before shewn, that it is not the Duty of the *Dissenting Ministers* to continue in the Exercise of their Ministry; then it will follow, That the *People* are not therein obliged to support and encourage them. Whether I have or no, I must leave to others: But the Duty of the *People* seeming to depend upon the Duty of the *Ministers*, in this Argument, what I have advanced against the necessity of their *Publick Ministrations*, will equally destroy the Obligation of the *People* to support and encourage them therein: Supposing therefore that this *Conclusion* is justly drawn, yet if the

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Proposition, on which it depends, be not true, it must certainly fall with it. And so I might fairly leave this *Argument*, with an appeal to what hath been already discoursed.

But I cannot dismiss it without observing to you, that it appears to me to be full of *fallacy*. For, if the *People* be not, on *other* accounts, obliged to attend upon your *Ministrations*, you cannot say, that they are obliged to it merely to *support and encourage you*; nor would they ever do it for that reason only. And if they be not obliged to it merely to *support and encourage you*, then this *Argument* signifies nothing to their justification. Nay, you know that they do, and always did, attend upon you on *other Accounts*, and you know that they are worthy of blame, if it were otherwise. Again, your *Publick Ministrations* are not absolute, but bear a relation to the *People*; and therefore, your obligation to them cannot be absolute. And so, you cannot prove any necessity upon your selves to *Minister*, but upon supposition of the necessities of the *People*, and their readiness to wait upon you: Consequently, if it had so hapned, that the *People* had thought their necessities fully supplied in other ways, and had not been ready to attend upon you on *other* accounts, it could

could not have been their duty to have attended upon you merely on this account, *to support you in your Duty*; because, upon this supposition, it could not have been your duty *to minister publickly*, even tho' we should grant it to be your duty to be *ready to minister* if the People would attend upon you. And you might have been *ready to minister publickly* upon this supposition, without actually doing it; and that is all your *Ordination-Vow* could oblige you to, no Man being obliged to impossibilities, or absurdities. Supposing therefore, that it is your duty to be ready to *minister publickly*, if the People will attend upon you (which is the utmost that can be said) yet, if they attend not upon you, they hinder not you from doing what you are obliged to do; your *readiness* to Minister, in this Case, being your whole Duty.

Besides, you your selves will grant (at least, you often argue so in your own Cause) that if they think their necessities can be better supplied by others than by you, they ought to follow those others. This your People are taught to think. From hence, therefore, it follows, that they are not obliged to attend upon
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you, in order to *support and encourage you in your duty*. I entreat you to think of this; and, if you will deal fairly in this Cause, you are obliged plainly to deny the one, or the other. For, if it be the *People's* duty to *support*, and *encourage* you, then it is not their duty, nay it is not allowable for them, to go where their necessities can best be supplied. But, if it be their Duty, or allowable for them, to leave you, in order to have their necessities better supplied, then it is not their duty to *support* and *encourage* you by their attendance upon you; because these are inconsistent one with another. Either therefore relinquish *this* Argument, or give up that *popular plea* of Edification; and the natural, and unalienable right of every Man to chuse his own *Pastour*; or shew us how to reconcile them.

Farther, You cannot be so little concerned for the Nation you belong to, as not to think it would be a very considerable happiness to it, did all the *People* seriously attend upon the *Publick Worship* in the *Established Church*; were they all persuaded that the necessities of their Souls could very well be supplied in it, and all resolved to unite, and

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perſue their Duty in one way. You cannot ſay, that this would endanger their Salvation, or hinder their own private *Edification*, if they be not wanting to themſelves; You cannot ſay, that this would be a mighty advantage to the *Chriſtian Religion*, and the *Proteſtant Cauſe* in particular; or, that it would not very much conduce to the univerſal *Edification* of the *Church* of God in Love and Unity. Nor will you, I preſume, put your own *Support* and *Encouragement* into the Ballance againſt ſo great and publick a good. Far be it from me to think, that you would not be willing to purchaſe ſuch an advantage to the *Chriſtian Church*, ſuch an honour to your Lord and Saviour, ſuch a foundation of happineſs to your native Country, at the deareſt price; that you would not be ready to Sacrifice all your own private Fortunes to it, and to buy it at the expenſe of your own Reputation, and all the *ſupport* and *encouragement* you could hope for in the World. This I cannot but think you would be willing to do, (even tho' it were to be done by the *People's Conformity* to the *Church* of *England*) becauſe it is certainly the duty of every
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every *Christian*; what every good Man ought to do, and what is but agreeable to that sense You have frequently express'd, of the miserable consequences of *Religious divisions*, and the unspeakable advantages of *Concord and Unity*. And if this be so, it appears, that your private *support and encouragement*, ought not to hinder the *People* from pursuing a greater good, the universal Advantage of the *Protestant Church, and English Nation*, by *Conformity to the Church of England*; and therefore, that this Argument cannot prove it to be their duty, to adhere to You in the *separate Exercise of Your Ministry*. I leave this to your consideration, and proceed to

The *Fifth* Argument, in defence of Your *People*, which is taken from their *Right to chuse their own Pastour*, as follows,

The *People* must often *part with this Right*, if they submit to the *Legal Provision* for them;

Therefore, They cannot live in *Conformity to the Church of England*. This I find, a little afterwards, *thus* expressed; in a manner somewhat differing from this;

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Truth, let it have it's due weight with you: and, if you be convinced *your selves*, suffer not *your People* to think that the *Cause* you are engaged in, will justify *Separation* either in *you*, or *them*. I mean, if there be any of your *People* who *separate* from the *Church*, and follow you, upon this Principle. It is time now to proceed to the *Fourth Argument*, in vindication of your *People*, which is this,

It is the Duty of the *Dissenting Ministers* to continue in the Exercise of their *Ministry*, tho' silenced by the *Magistrates*.

Therefore, The *People* are therein obliged to support and encourage them.

But, If I have before shewn, that it is not the Duty of the *Dissenting Ministers* to continue in the Exercise of their *Ministry*; then it will follow, That the *People* are not therein obliged to support and encourage them. Whether I have or no, I must leave to others: But the *Duty* of the *People* seeming to depend upon the *Duty* of the *Ministers*, in this Argument, what I have advanced against the necessity of their *Publick Ministrations*, will equally destroy the Obligation of the *People* to support and encourage them therein. Supposing therefore that this *Conclusion* is justly drawn, yet if the

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upon some considerations; nay, that they ought not in duty to do it. *Pa-*^{Abridg.}
rish-Order, we are told in the name of ^{P. 546.}
 your People, *hath it's advantages, and is to be prefer'd, when more weighty reasons do not offer.* Give me leave, then, from this to infer, that there may be reasons sufficient to move the People to recede from this *Right*, so vehemently contend- ed for, and to acquiesce in the way *Established.* And, as this is granted to be their duty, on some occasions, so we find it practis'd by many of those who make up your own *Congregations*, who often, for the sake of *Peace*, and *Love*, and *Order*, think it their duty to acquiesce in the Person chosen by the *major part* of the *Congregation*; and yet this *majority* hath no more right to impose a *Pastour* upon the other part of the *Congregation*, or upon any one single Person in it, than the *Magistrate*, or the *Bishop*, or any *Patron* hath. This then we see accounted by them a sufficient inducement to relinquish this *Right*, that by so doing, they shall contribute to the increase of *Love*, and *Quiet*; and consult the *Peace*, and *Order* of that *Congregation* they belong to, tho' they be not

so happy as to enjoy the publick Labours of the Person by whom they could edify most, and whom they would chuse before all others. From hence I think it will follow, that if they would act with respect to the *Church of England*, agreeably to their own *maxim*, and their own *Practice* in their *separate Congregations*, they ought, in conscience, readily to recede from this *Right* (though it be never so truly their *Right*) and *Conform*. For if any *Reasons* in the world be *weighty* enough to engage them to do this, certainly those taken from *Peace*, and *Order* are so; and this their behaviour shews us to be their own opinion. And certainly, if the *Peace*, and *Order* of one particular *Congregation* be of force enough to move them to this; much more ought they to be moved to it by the *Peace* and *Order* of a whole *National Church*, and by the consideration of *Universal Concord*, and *Unity*. Were their *Salvation* likely to be endangered by their *Conformity*; or, could they not *conform* without giving themselves up entirely to the guidance of one who would mislead them, and hazard their eternal happiness, I would not argue thus; but

but own, that they had a *Right* to consult their own eternal interest in a *separate way*. But I have before observed, that the salvation of any serious Person is not endanger'd by *Conformity*, and you your selves will not say that it is: and that they may *conform* without submitting themselves to their *Parish-Minister*, after the manner You speak of, I shall shew by and by. What I now say is this, That they ought to recede from this *Right*, upon weighty considerations; that Publick *Peace* and *Order* are considerations weighty enough to induce them to do it; that it is plain from their *Practice*, that they often think so themselves; that, therefore, since they may do it without endangering their Salvation, they ought to *conform*, tho', by this means, they recede often from this *Right*.

2. I must observe to You, that in *Parishes*, and places where the People chuse their own *Ministers*, there are the greatest divisions, and quarrels, the greatest feuds, and passions remarkable; as *Unqualified Ministers*, as in other places; and, perhaps it may be said also, the greatest number of *Dissenters* from the *Established Church*. Nothing hath been

pursue their Duty in one way. You cannot say, that this would endanger their Salvation, or hinder their own private *Edification*, if they be not wanting to themselves; You cannot say, that this would be a mighty advantage to the *Christian Religion*, and the *Protestant Cause* in particular; or, that it would not very much conduce to the universal *Edification* of the *Church of God* in Love and Unity. Nor will you, I presume, put your own *Support* and *Encouragement* into the Ballance against so great and publick a good. Far be it from me to think, that you would not be willing to purchase such an advantage to the *Christian Church*, such an honour to your Lord and Saviour, such a foundation of happiness to your native Country, at the dearest price; that you would not be ready to Sacrifice all your own private Fortunes to it, and to buy it at the expense of your own Reputation, and all the *support* and *encouragement* you could hope for in the World. This I cannot but think you would be willing to do, (even tho' it were to be done by the *People's Conformity* to the *Church of England*) because it is certainly the duty of every

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to the *Christian Church*, or to the *People's* souls, or, of such necessity, considering the *Legal Provision* for them, that You should be so concerned to maintain the *People* in the actual exercise of it, and they be so often, and vehemently alarmed with the fear of losing it. And then, if in these *Parishes*, where the *Minister* is chosen by the *Votes* of the *People*, there be no smaller a number of *Dissenters* than in others (if so small) this doth not look as if the *People* dissented because they cannot, in the *Established way*, *Vote* for their *Minister*, but upon some other account; and that if they were universally restored to this privilege, this would put no stop to their *separation*. And, if *Parish-Order* be at all to be regarded, as You say it is, this *Right of Voting* for their *Minister* is all that your *People* can possibly claim. For I observe,

3. That the *Constitution* can never be so ordered, or so happily contrived, that every particular Christian shall be under the *Ministry* of the *Person* whom He would chuse before all others. Your own *People* can acquiesce when they see fit (tho' every one cannot be pleased in the

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Without submitting, in many Parishes, to unqualified Guides, there is no room left by the Law for Ministerial Instruction, and Pastoral Help.

Therefore, it is the Duty of the *People*, to provide for themselves in a *separate way*.

Upon this *Head* I find You copious, and pathetic: and I do not wonder at it, considering how popular a *Plea* it is; and how much it must ingratiate You with the *People*, to plead their Cause, and defend their *rights* or *privileges* against Invaders, and Oppressours. I shall, in answer to what you have advanced upon this Subject, endeavour to shew, that there is nothing included in this *Right*, or in all You have said concerning it, sufficient to justify a *separation*: which, I think, is the point now before us. And this I hope to do, with so much plainness, that the *People* themselves, who are most concerned, may be able to judge in this *Question*. I desire You, therefore, to consider,

1. That this *Right* to chuse their own *Pastour* doth not, according to your selves, *so* belong to the *People*, that they may not very lawfully recede from it,
upon

upon some considerations; nay, that they ought not in duty to do it. *Pa-*^{Abridg.}
rish-Order, we are told in the name of ^{P. 546.}
 your *People*, *both it's advantages, and is to be prefer'd, when more weighty reasons do not offer.* Give me leave, then, from this to infer, that there may be reasons sufficient to move the *People* to recede from this *Right*, so vehemently contend-
 ed for, and to acquiesce in the *way Established.* And, as this is granted to be their duty, on some occasions, so we find it practis'd by many of those who make up your own *Congregations*, who often, for the sake of *Peace*, and *Love*, and *Order*, think it their duty to acquiesce in the Person chosen by the *major part* of the *Congregation*; and yet this *majority* hath no more right to impose a *Pastour* upon the other part of the *Congregation*, or upon any one single Person in it, than the *Magistrate*, or the *Bishop*, or any *Patron* hath. This then we see accounted by them a sufficient inducement to relinquish this *Right*, that by so doing, they shall contribute to the increase of *Love*, and *Quiet*; and consult the *Peace*, and *Order* of that *Congregation* they belong to, tho' they be not

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so happy as to enjoy the publick Labours of the Person by whom they could edify most, and whom they would chuse before all others. From hence I think it will follow, that if they would act with respect to the *Church of England*, agreeably to their own *maxim*, and their own *Practice* in their *separate Congregations*, they ought, in conscience, readily to recede from this *Right* (though it be never so truly their *Right*) and *Conform*. For if any *Reasons* in the world be *weighty* enough to engage them to do this, certainly those taken from *Peace*, and *Order* are so: and this their behaviour shews us to be their own opinion. And certainly, if the *Peace*, and *Order* of one particular *Congregation* be of force enough to move them to this; much more ought they to be moved to it by the *Peace* and *Order* of a whole *National Church*, and by the consideration of *Universal Concord*, and *Unity*. Were their *Salvation* likely to be endangered by their *Conformity*; or, could they not *conform* without giving themselves up entirely to the guidance of one who would mislead them, and hazard their eternal happiness, I would not argue thus; but

but own, that they had a *Right* to consult their own eternal interest in a *separate way*. But I have before observed, that the salvation of any serious Person is not endanger'd by *Conformity*, and you your selves will not say that it is: and that they may *conform* without submitting themselves to their *Parish-Minister*, after the manner You speak of, I shall shew by and by. What I now say is this, That they ought to recede from this *Right*, upon weighty considerations; that Publick *Peace* and *Order* are considerations weighty enough to induce them to do it; that it is plain from their *Practice*, that they often think so themselves; that, therefore, since they may do it without endangering their Salvation, they ought to *conform*, tho', by this means, they recede often from this *Right*.

2. I must observe to You, that in *Parishes*, and places where the *People* chuse their own *Ministers*, there are the greatest divisions, and quarrels, the greatest feuds, and passions remarkable; as *Unqualified Ministers*, as in other places; and, perhaps it may be said also, the greatest number of *Dissenters* from the *Established Church*. Nothing hath been

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Reformation, as well as the *Church of England*, and with *Churches* in which there are many who think them *so perfect as to need no Amendments*; it appears from hence, that you think your selves under no necessity of *Separating* from a *Church*, either in order to *press a farther Reformation*, or *in opposition to such as think it perfect*; and therefore, that you are under no necessity on these accounts, of separating from the *Church of England*, but may *Communicate* with it as safely as with your own *Churches*. Since I have shewn, that to *Separate* from this *Church* in order to obtain a *farther Reformation*, or *in opposition to such as think it perfect*, is not reasonable, or defensible; that it is *to do evil that good may come*, and *of two evils to chuse the greatest*; and to leave a *Church* because there are some in it of weak understandings, as you think; hence it is plain, that you ought not to *separate* on these accounts. Since I have proved, that the Method you have taken is not a *likely way* to make the *Church of England* one degree more *perfect* than it is already, but a very *likely way* to prevent, and hinder those very *Alterations* you so much desire; it is manifest, that you ought not in
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prudence to have begun it, or to continue to pursue it; and that the *End* proposed can lay no obligation upon you, to use such *means* as are so far from leading to it, that they contradict, and oppose it. Lastly, Since I have shewn, that if this *Argument* in defence of your *Separation* from the *Church of England*, be a good one, the Consequence will be, That there will be always a necessity for *Separation*, because we can have no hopes of a *Church* so completely *perfect*, that a *farther Reformation* shall not be *necessary* to the *more general reaching the great ends of Religion*; and since I have observed, That your own *Amendments* would not make the *Church* so *perfect*; that if some few *Alterations* had been made, you would have *Conformed*, and have thought your selves obliged so to do, and yet, that still a *farther Reformation* would have been wanting; it appears from hence, that the want of this *farther Reformation* is not a sufficient ground for a *separation*; and that, in your own accounts, you may be obliged to *Communicate* with a *Church* which is not so *perfect* as to need no *Amendments*. If I have advanced, under these *Heads*, any thing of *Reason*, and *Truth*,

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Truth, let it have it's due weight with you: and, if you be convinced *your selves*, suffer not *your People* to think that the *Cause* you are engaged in, will justify *Separation* either in *you*, or *them*. I mean, if there be any of your *People* who *separate* from the *Church*, and follow you, upon this Principle. It is time now to proceed to the *Fourth Argument*, in vindication of your *People*, which is this,

It is the Duty of the *Dissenting Ministers* to continue in the Exercise of their Ministry, tho' silenced by the *Magistrates*.

Therefore, The *People* are therein obliged to support and encourage them.

But, If I have before shewn, that it is not the Duty of the *Dissenting Ministers* to continue in the Exercise of their Ministry; then it will follow, That the *People* are not therein obliged to support and encourage them. Whether I have or no, I must leave to others: But the Duty of the *People* seeming to depend upon the Duty of the *Ministers*, in this Argument, what I have advanced against the necessity of their *Publick Ministrations*, will equally destroy the Obligation of the *People* to support and encourage them therein. Supposing therefore that this *Conclusion* is justly drawn, yet if the

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Proposition, on which it depends, be not true, it must certainly fall with it. And so I might fairly leave this *Argument*, with an appeal to what hath been already discourf- ed.

But I cannot difmifs it without obferv- ing to you, that it appears to me to be full of *fallacy*. For, if the *People* be not, on *other* accounts, obliged to attend upon your *Miniftrations*, you cannot fay, that they are obliged to it merely to *support and encourage you*; nor would they ever do it for that rea- fon only. And if they be not obliged to it merely to *support and encourage you*, then this *Argument* fignifies nothing to their juftifi- cation. Nay, you know that they do, and al- ways did, attend upon you on *other Accounts*, and you know that they are worthy of blame, if it were otherwife. Again, your *Publick Miniftrations* are not abfolute, but bear a relation to the *People*; and therefore, your obligation to them cannot be abfo- lute. And fo, you cannot prove any neceffity upon your felves to *Minifter*, but upon fup- pofition of the neceffities of the *People*, and their readinefs to wait upon you: Confe- quently, if it had fo hapned, that the *People* had thought their neceffities fully fuppli- ed in other ways, and had not been ready to attend upon you on *other* accounts, it could

could not have been their duty to have attended upon you merely on this account, *to support you in your Duty*; because, upon this supposition, it could not have been your duty *to minister publickly*, even tho' we should grant it to be your duty to be *ready to minister* if the People would attend upon you. And you might have been *ready to minister publickly* upon this supposition, without actually doing it; and that is all your *Ordination-Vow* could oblige you to, no Man being obliged to impossibilities, or absurdities. Supposing therefore, that it is your duty to be ready to *minister publickly*, if the People will attend upon you (which is the utmost that can be said) yet, if they attend not upon you, they hinder not you from doing what you are obliged to do; your *readiness* to Minister, in this Case, being your whole Duty.

Besides, you your selves will grant (at least, you often argue so in your own Cause) that if they think their necessities can be better supplied by others than by you, they ought to follow those others. This your People are taught to think. From hence, therefore, it follows, that they are not obliged to attend upon
you

you, in order to *support and encourage you in your duty*. I entreat you to think of this, and, if you will deal fairly in this Cause, you are obliged plainly to deny the one, or the other. For, if it be the *People's* duty to *support*, and *encourage* you, then it is not their duty, nay it is not allowable for them, to go where their necessities can best be supplied. But, if it be their Duty, or allowable for them, to leave you, in order to have their necessities better supplied, then it is not their duty to *support and encourage* you by their attendance upon you; because these are inconsistent one with another. Either therefore relinquish *this* Argument, or give up that *popular plea* of Edification; and the natural, and unalienable right of every Man to chuse his own *Pastour*; or shew us how to reconcile them.

Farther, You cannot be so little concerned for the Nation you belong to, as not to think it would be a very considerable happiness to it, did all the *People* seriously attend upon the *Publick Worship* in the *Established Church*; were they all persuaded that the necessities of their Souls could very well be supplied in it, and all resolved to unite, and

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perſue their Duty in one way. You cannot ſay, that this would endanger their Salvation, or hinder their own private *Edification*, if they be not wanting to themſelves; You cannot ſay, that this would be a mighty advantage to the *Chriſtian Religion*, and the *Proteſtant Cauſe* in particular; or, that it would not very much conduce to the univerſal *Edification* of the *Church* of God in Love and Unity. Nor will you, I preſume, put your own *Support* and *Encouragement* into the Ballance againſt ſo great and publick a good. Far be it from me to think, that you would not be willing to purchaſe ſuch an advantage to the *Chriſtian Church*, ſuch an honour to your Lord and Saviour, ſuch a foundation of happineſs to your native Country, at the deareſt price; that you would not be ready to Sacrifice all your own private Fortunes to it, and to buy it at the expenſe of your own Reputation, and all the *ſupport* and *encouragement* you could hope for in the World. This I cannot but think you would be willing to do, (even tho' it were to be done by the *People's Conformity* to the *Church* of *England*) becauſe it is certainly the duty of every
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every *Christian*; what every good Man ought to do, and what is but agreeable to that sense You have frequently express'd, of the miserable consequences of *Religious divisions*, and the unspeakable advantages of *Concord and Unity*. And if this be so, it appears, that your private *support and encouragement*, ought not to hinder the *People* from pursuing a greater good, the universal Advantage of the *Protestant Church, and English Nation*, by *Conformity to the Church of England*; and therefore, that this Argument cannot prove it to be their duty, to adhere to You in the *separate Exercise of Your Ministry*. I leave this to your consideration, and proceed to

The *Fifth* Argument, in defence of Your *People*, which is taken from their *Right to chuse their own Pastour*, as follows,

The *People* must often *part with this Right*, if they submit to the *Legal Provision* for them;

Therefore, They cannot live in *Conformity to the Church of England*. This I find, a little afterwards, *thus* expressed, in a manner somewhat differing from this;

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Without submitting, in many Parishes, to unqualified Guides, there is no room left by the Law for Ministerial Instruction, and Pastoral Help.

Therefore, it is the Duty of the People, to provide for themselves in a *separate way*.

Upon this *Head* I find You copious, and pathetic: and I do not wonder at it, considering how popular a *Plea* it is; and how much it must ingratiate You with the *People*, to plead their Cause, and defend their *rights* or *privileges* against Invaders, and Oppressours. I shall, in answer to what you have advanced upon this Subject, endeavour to shew, that there is nothing included in this *Right*, or in all You have said concerning it, sufficient to justify a *separation*: which, I think, is the point now before us. And this I hope to do, with so much plainness, that the *People* themselves, who are most concerned, may be able to judge in this *Question*. I desire You, therefore, to consider,

1. That this *Right* to chuse their own *Pastour* doth not, according to your selves, *so* belong to the *People*, that they may not very lawfully recede from it,
upon

upon some considerations; nay, that they ought not in duty to do it. *P^a-Abridg.*
rish-Order, we are told in the name of *P. 546.*
 your People, *hath it's advantages, and is to be prefer'd, when more weighty reasons do not offer.* Give me leave, then, from this to infer, that there may be reasons sufficient to move the People to recede from this *Right*, so vehemently contend for, and to acquiesce in the way *Established.* And, as this is granted to be their duty, on some occasions, so we find it practis'd by many of those who make up your own *Congregations*, who often, for the sake of *Peace*, and *Love*, and *Order*, think it their duty to acquiesce in the Person chosen by the *major part* of the *Congregation*; and yet this *majority* hath no more right to impose a *Pastour* upon the other part of the *Congregation*, or upon any one single Person in it, than the *Magistrate*, or the *Bishop*, or any *Patron* hath. This then we see accounted by them a sufficient inducement to relinquish this *Right*, that by so doing, they shall contribute to the increase of *Love*, and *Quiet*; and consult the *Peace*, and *Order* of that *Congregation* they belong to, tho' they be not

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so happy as to enjoy the publick Labours of the Person by whom they could edify most, and whom they would chuse before all others. From hence I think it will follow, that if they would act with respect to the *Church of England*, agreeably to their own *maxim*, and their own *Practice* in their *separate Congregations*, they ought, in conscience, readily to recede from this *Right* (though it be never so truly their *Right*) and *Conform*. For if any *Reasons* in the world be *weighty* enough to engage them to do this, certainly those taken from *Peace*, and *Order* are so: and this their behaviour shews us to be their own opinion. And certainly, if the *Peace*, and *Order* of one particular *Congregation* be of force enough to move them to this; much more ought they to be moved to it by the *Peace* and *Order* of a whole *National Church*, and by the consideration of *Universal Concord*, and *Unity*. Were their *Salvation* likely to be endangered by their *Conformity*; or, could they not *conform* without giving themselves up entirely to the guidance of one who would mislead them, and hazard their eternal happiness, I would not argue thus; but

but own, that they had a *Right* to consult their own eternal interest in a *separate way*. But I have before observed, that the salvation of any serious Person is not endanger'd by *Conformity*, and you your selves will not say that it is: and that they may *conform* without submitting themselves to their *Parish-Minister*, after the manner You speak of, I shall shew by and by. What I now say is this, That they ought to recede from this *Right*, upon weighty considerations; that Publick *Peace* and *Order* are considerations weighty enough to induce them to do it; that it is plain from their *Practice*, that they often think so themselves; that, therefore, since they may do it without endangering their Salvation, they ought to *conform*, tho', by this means, they recede often from this *Right*.

2. I must observe to You, that in *Parishes*, and places where the *People* chuse their own *Ministers*, there are the greatest divisions, and quarrels, the greatest feuds, and passions remarkable; as *Unqualified Ministers*, as in other places; and, perhaps it may be said also, the greatest number of *Dissenters* from the *Established Church*. Nothing hath been

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the *Cause* of greater variance and strife, and illwill amongst neighbours, than this Choice, and the time of *Election* is commonly the time of heat, and anger; and it ends often in a *bad Choice*, and in the alienation of the minds of many Men from their *Brethren*, and from their *Minister*, worthy, or not worthy. I would not have you think, that I argue barely from such ill consequences as these, to shew that any *Right* is to be given up; for I am sensible, at this rate, We might argue our selves out of all *Rights*, and this would be of the worst consequence imaginable. But I argue thus; These consequences of a general enjoyment, and exercise of this *Right*, are worse than any, which will follow upon a general acquiescing in the *way* now settled: taking this into the account, that there is such a provision for the souls of Men in the *Church of England*, that they are not in the least danger, or, under the least necessity of seeking any farther assistances in a *separate way*; which, I hope, I have already proved, and shall say somewhat more to, presently. And from hence it appears, that this *Right* is not of such mighty advantage

to the *Christian Church*, or to the *People's* souls, or, of such necessity, considering the *Legal Provision* for them, that You should be so concerned to maintain the *People* in the actual exercise of it, and they be so often, and vehemently alarmed with the fear of losing it. And then, if in these *Parishes*, where the *Minister* is chosen by the *Votes* of the *People*, there be no smaller a number of *Dissenters* than in others (if so small) this doth not look as if the *People* dissented because they cannot, in the *Established way*, *Vote* for their *Minister*, but upon some other account; and that if they were universally restored to this privilege, this would put no stop to their *separation*. And, if *Parish-Order* be at all to be regarded, as You say it is, this *Right of Voting* for their *Minister* is all that your *People* can possibly claim. For I observe,

3. That the *Constitution* can never be so ordered, or so happily contrived, that every particular Christian shall be under the *Ministry* of the *Person* whom He would chuse before all others. Your own *People* can acquiesce when they see fit (tho' every one cannot be pleased in the

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Repentments against *Communion* in what you allow to be *tolerable*; how can they be too *rigid*, or too *zealous*, against what they think to be *intolerable*? If then, it be *unlawful* to *appear to acquit the one*; why should it not be *unlawful* to *appear to acquit*, and encourage the *other*? Again, Supposing your *Liberty* to be invaded by these *Impositions*: yet since the things required are not *unlawful* (as you acknowledge) it is certainly *lawful*, if not very commendable, for you to yield up your *liberty*, in a small and lawful instance, to the Considerations of *Peace* and *Unity*. And if it be but lawful for you to do this, then this Argument cannot prove your *Constant Communion* to be *unlawful*. Much less, if it appear, upon consideration, to be your *Duty* so to do. You may then, I think, be *Constant Communicants*, notwithstanding any thing in this *Argument*: Especially considering, that as there are *Rigorous Imposers* in the *Church of England*; so, there are, and have been many, most ready and willing, to yield up some inconsiderable Points, to gain your *Conformity*. And why should you not thing

your selves as much obliged to *commu-
nicate* with this Church, for the sake of
these, as to *separate* from it, for the sake
of those *others*? But

3. *Constant Communion*, you say, *seems*
to intimate, as if *Divine Worship* were not
acceptable without such *superadded Formalities*
as are used in the *Church of England*. And,
therefore, it is *unlawful*. You do well to
say no more than that it *seems* so to do:
For, you cannot produce one single Per-
son of tolerable sense in the whole Land,
who constantly *Communicates* with the
Church of England with this Opinion;
nor one, who ever concluded this to be
the Opinion of any Person, from his *con-
stant Communion*. But you do ill, to load
the *Cause* with all the aggravating *Cir-
cumstances* you can think of, when you
cannot but know them to be wholly ima-
ginary, and without foundation; and
cannot but be sensible, that you are in
this, *unjust* to a *Church*, which hath de-
clared, in the most publick manner, that
these *superadded Formalities* are of such a
nature, that they may be altered, and
abolished upon occasion; and which can-
not consequently, be supposed to give
the least *Encouragement* to any Persons

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to think, that *Divine Worship* would not be acceptable without them. Hence I argue, That *Constant Communion* with a Church which hath declared that *Divine Worship* may be acceptable without these super-added Formalities, cannot be thought to intimate, as if *Divine Worship* were not acceptable without them: But, if it intimate any thing about them, it intimates quite the contrary. And farther, I desire to know, Where is that *Religious Assembly*, amongst all your own, in which *Divine Worship* is offered, without some super-added formalities constantly used? And again, Doth your *Constant Communion* with them, intimate, or seem to intimate, as if *Divine Worship* were not acceptable without them? For, if it do not, then, no more doth *Constant Communion* with the Church of England; and, If it do, then *Constant Communion* is not, in your opinion, unlawful on this account. And still, your *Constant Communion* with the Church of England, is as lawful, as your *Constant Communion* with your own Churches; as far as this Argument is concerned. For this Argument concerns only your constant Use of some super-added Formalities in Religious Worship; not the imposition of them.

I say,

I say, therefore; that if it be *lawful* for you; to use any such in *your own Churches*, it is *lawful* in the *Church Established*. And, I add farther, That your *Constant Use* of any particular *superadded Formality* in your own Churches, *seems much more strongly, to intimate, as if Divine Worship were not acceptable without it,* than such a *Constant Use* of any in the *Church Established* can do. For, what you use in your Churches, you pretend; you use upon choice; which implies, that you imagine it to add something to the *acceptableness* of the *Worship*: whereas no such thing can be fairly gathered from your *Constant use* of a *superadded Formality* in the *Church of England*; because no one can possibly tell, whether you constantly use it, because you think it most conducing to the *decency* and *acceptableness* of *publick Worship*; or, because it is enjoyned by *Authority*, and you think it more for the universal good to submit to the enjoyned use of it; than to break the *Peace* and *Unity* of the *Church* for the sake of it. Or, If you say; that the *Constant use* of some *Formality* in your own Churches, may also be so interpreted; I answer, Then *Constant Communion* with a Church, doth not intimate

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as if *Divine Worship* were not acceptable without the *superadded Formalities* used in it. I shall add only this, That your *Separation*, as it is accompanied with *Occasional Communion*, seems to intimate, as if *Divine Worship* were not acceptable with the constant use of such *superadded Formalities*, as are enjoined in the *Church of England*; which is contrary to the inward sense of the *Moderate Dissenters*. And if this *Circumstance* do not make your *Separation* unlawful; why should the *Circumstances* which here you fix upon *Constant Communion*, render that unlawful? Or, why should you prefer *Separation* before it? From hence, therefore, I infer, that this *Argument* cannot prove *Constant Communion* with the *Church of England*, unlawful. Let us proceed.

4. *Constant Communion*, you argue, represents *Christ's own Institution* as defective, and not orderly or decent, without the additions to *Divine Worship*, brought into the *Church of England*. And, therefore, it is unlawful. I need not tell you, that *Christ's own Institution*, whether you mean, of *Baptism*, or of the *Lord's Supper*, or of *Publick and United Prayer*, is as perfect, as He designed it to be, and no perfecter: And that you do not think, your selves,
that

that He designed it to exclude *Additions*, and the *constant use* of *Additions* in any of the *Acts* of *Religious Worship*, your own Practice is a clear Demonstration. For, you never Baptize without the use of somewhat which is an *addition to Christ's Institution*; you never celebrate the *Communion*, you never meet for *Publick Prayer*, without the use of somewhat which is an *Addition to Christ's Institution*. The *Communion* is a main part of *Publick Worship*, and therefore, I shall instance in that. And I argue, as I did under the last *Head*, that *Constant Communion* with your own *Churches*, or with any others in the World, doth as much represent *Christ's Institution* to be defective, &c. As *Constant Communion* with the *Church of England* can do. *Christ's institution* of the *Eucharist*, was only, *Eat this Bread, and drink this Wine, in remembrance of me*: Not in this particular *posture*, any more than at this particular *time*; the *gesture* being no more a part of the *Institution*, than the *time*. Your *constant use* of any *Posture*, (whether it be *standing*, or *sitting*) is as much a reflection upon the *defectiveness* of *Christ's Institution*, as your *Constant Use* of *Kneeling* could be; it being

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the Use of what is as much an addition to *Christ's Institution*, as *Kneeling* is. And, therefore, if it be not *unlawful* to use any other *Posture* constantly, it is not *unlawful* to use *Kneeling* constantly. I might instance also in all the *Prayers* you make use of, at the Celebration of the *Lord's Supper*, since our Lord appointed none in his *Institution* of it; which was only, That we should eat and drink *in remembrance* of Him? and this we may do without one single *Prayer*. Every *Prayer*, therefore, that you use at this Solemnity, is a reflexion upon *our Lord's Institution*, and represents it as defective, and not orderly, or decent without such additions; as doth every *Prayer* that you use at the *Baptism* of a *Child*, without which it is as complete as with it, and without one word of which *Christ* instituted it. Now, you can no more constantly *Communicate* in the *Sacrament* with your own Churches, without the constant use of such additional *Prayers*, than you can *Communicate* with the *Church of England* without *Kneeling*; and so, your *Constant Communion* with your own Churches as effectually represents *Christ's Institution* as defective; as your *Constant Communion* with the *Church of England*,

England could do. You must, therefore, acknowledge that *Constant Communion*, on neither side, doth thus represent *Christ's Institution defective*; or, that this is not sufficient to render it *unlawful*; or, that you are guilty of this in your *Constant Practice*. But the truth of the matter is this: Neither *your Practice*, nor the *Practice* of the *Church of England*, doth represent the *Institution* of our Lord any more *defective*, than He designed it: For He only designed to ordain, that there should be *Publick Assemblies of Christians*; and that the *Holy Communion* should be celebrated in those *Assemblies*. All the *Circumstances* of these *Assemblies*, it is plain, He left to be determined by the *Governours* of his *Church* and *People*, according to the *Notions* of *Decency*, and the various *Customs*, of different *Nations*. And, in the enumeration of these *Circumstances*, I think, I have often, in my reading, found your own Mr. *Baxter* mentioning *Gesture*, as well as *Time* and *Place*, and the like; and affirming, that it comes within the bounds of the *Authority* of our *Governours*. To this Argument, therefore, I answer plainly thus, *Constant Communion with the Church of England, represents*

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the institution of Christ as defective, only in such Circumstances as He purposely neglected to determine, and left to be determined by Future Governours. This Representation of Christ's Institution is not only not unlawful, but necessary, and unavoidable in all Religious Assemblies. And, Therefore, Constant Communion with the Church of England is not unlawful on this account. Besides, It is worth while to consider, whether your Occasional Communion with the Church Established, do not as truly represent Christ's Institution as defective, as your Constant Communion can do; only with this difference, that the one represents it so, less frequently than the other. But still, If it be unlawful to do this (suppose in the Celebration of the Communion; which must here be meant by you) twelve times in a Year, it is unlawful to do it once. And if the Communicating with our Church once in a Year, do not represent Christ's Institution as defective, I cannot see how the Communicating with it twelve times in a Year can do it. But, what I have already said, together with what I have observed under the preceding Head, which is of the same Nature with this, I judge to be a more than

than sufficient Answer to this Reason against *Constant Communion*.

5. And lastly, *Constant Communion*, according to You, is a *Confining your Charity to a Party*; and a *practical disowning and condemning all other worshipping Assemblies*, And therefore, is *unlawful*. To this I answer,

1. *Constant Communion* is not a *Confining our Charity to a Party*. For, I dare say, You cannot name any one single instance of *Christian Charity*, due, by the Laws of the Gospel, to any Person, of what denomination soever, which a man that lives in *Constant Communion* with the *Church of England* cannot perform as well as any of You, who *Occasionally* communicate with it. And if you cannot name any one such instance, then this part of your *Charge* cannot be true.

Constant Communion breaks not in upon any one single part of *Christian Charity*; but it is the *Neglect of Constant Communion*, that hath been the destruction of *Christian Charity* in the Land, and the encouragement to all *Uncharitableness*. This is a terrible *circumstance* of the *Neglect of Constant Communion*: but this weighs nothing with You, on one side; whilst

whilst the lightest feathers weigh down the scale, on the *other*.

Did ever any Persons say, till now, that the joining in the *External Acts* of *Communion*, is a necessary part of *Christian Charity*, due to all *Parties* of *Christians*? and therefore, not to be *confined*, without *sin*, to any one Church? You may as well say, that the *Constant* joining in the outward *Acts* of *Communion* with one *Parish-Church*, is the *confining our Charity* to this particular *Parish* in exclusion to all others; for it is only of *External Communion* we are now speaking. And, if the confining of *that* to a *Party*, be *confining our Charity to a Party*; then, the confining of *that* to one *Parish*, is a *confining our Charity* to this particular *Parish*: *Constant External Communion* with any one *Party* of *Christians* being as much *Communion* with all *Christians*, as *Constant External Communion* with one *Parish-Church*, is *Communion* with the whole *Church* of *England*; nay, as much, as *Occasional External Communion* with more than one *Parish-Church*, or *Congregation*, can be. And farther, If it be *unlawful to confine our External Communion* to one *Party*; then,

then, it is not our duty; nor lawful to give all the encouragement We can, to Peace, and Order, and Unity; and all the credit We can to a good Establishment: but, on the contrary, a *duty* incumbent upon us to give encouragement, and credit, to *all separations*, tho' never so unreasonable; and to all the consequences of them.

2. *Constant Communion is*, I confess, a *practical disowning*, and *condemning all other worshipping Assemblies*; I mean, such as have *separated* from the Church of England. I say, it is a *practical disowning them*, thus far, that it is a *practical declaration*, that we judge *Constant Communion* with the Church of England to be *lawful*; and *preferable* to a *separation*. But then, this is consistent, to a tittle, with the law of God, and the *Charity* of a *Christian*. It is as *lawful*, and as *charitable*, to make such a *declaration* in our *actions*, as it is to make it in our *words*: and I never heard yet, that it was either *unlawful*, or *uncharitable*, for any person, persuaded of the Universal Advantages of *Constant Communion*, and the evil consequences, and unreasonableness of *separation*, to declare himself so to be. Nor can I be per-

persuaded, that it is not his duty, his indispensable duty, to do it. I grant, therefore, that this, as I have explained it, is a *Circumstance of Constant Communion* with the *Established Church*; but then, I maintain, that is very *lawful*, and perfectly consistent with *Christian Charity*; and so no objection against *Constant Communion*.

3. I must put You in mind again, as I have often had occasion to do, that You would have *constantly* communicated with the *Church of England*. your selves, and would do still, upon some *alterations*. Now *Constant Communion* would be *then*, as much a *confining your Charity to a Party*, and a *condemning all other separate worshipping Assemblies*, as it is now. Yet, if it be unlawful *now*, so it would be *then*. If lawful *then*, so is it *now*. As, therefore, You have declared, that You should think it not only lawful, but your duty, *then*; so, acknowledge it, at least, lawful *now*, notwithstanding this *Circumstance*; lest You should accuse your selves of having resolved to do what is *unlawful*, if *this* can make *Constant Communion* unlawful. Once more,

4. By

4. By saying this, and declaring this to be one of the *Circumstances* which make *Constant Communion* with the Church of *England* unlawful, You condemn the greatest part of your *Brethren*, and your *People*; all those who never communicate *occasionally*; and all those who communicate never, but when an *Office* is concerned. Either, therefore, speak out, and let your *People* know, that they live in a continued *sin*, whilst they keep *constantly* to You, and never *occasionally* communicate with the Church of *England*; or else, acknowledge that to *Communicate constantly* with a Church, is not to *confine our Charity to a Party*, &c. or that it is not *unlawful* so to do; and consequently, that *Constant Communion* with the Church of *England* is not, on this account, *unlawful*.

But, now we are upon this subject, I must not forget one very remarkable *Circumstance* of your *Occasional Communion*; and that such an one, as is not imaginary, but certain, and acknowledged on all hands; and which must, I think, according to your way of arguing against *Constant Communion*, render it *unlawful*. And that is this. *Occasional*
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Communion intimates, as if Constant Communion were lawful, and therefore; necessary; which is contrary to your inward sense. This it intimates more strongly than *Constant Communion* intimates any of those things You have fixed upon it: and multitudes on all sides, You know, are actually persuaded that it doth so. From hence, therefore; I should think, when I read Your reasonings against *Constant Communion*, that, according to You, *Occasional Communion* must be unlawful. But when I read your defences of your *Occasional communion*, I find; that this is so necessary to the demonstration of your charity to the *Established Church*, that it is your indispensable Duty, notwithstanding this *Circumstance*. Now, How much better; and greater a demonstration of your regards to *Peace and Charity*, would your *Constant Communion* be? And, therefore, If this *Circumstance* ought not to hinder You from so poor a demonstration of your charity as *Occasional Communion*; how can You think, that such like *Circumstances* ought to hinder You from so much greater a demonstration of your Love to Unity and Concord; as Your
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Constant Communion would be? Alas! Your *Occasional Communion* is no better a demonstration of Your charity to the *Church of England*, than a declaration, spoken, or written upon paper, that You hold the worship of it to be *materially lawful*, and *tolerable*: nor hath it any better influence upon the publick face of Affairs, than such a *verbal declaration* would have. Your *separation*, accompanied with it, hath as evil consequences, and as direful effects, and as bad an influence upon Men's minds, and dispositions, as it would have, were it without it. It shews it self as pernicious, and is much more unaccountable. But Your *Constant Communion* would be an undeniable demonstration, that You love *Peace* and *Concord*; and hate the consequences, and effects of a *separation*. It would tend to the producing an *Universal Agreement*; and give a check to the *Violence* on all sides; and probably, would have a most happy influence upon the tempers of Men, and the face of this divided *Church* and *Nation*. With these considerations, tell me, I beseech You, how *Occasional Communion* can be a *duty*,

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notwithstanding this *Circumstance* of it; and yet *Constant Communion* be rendered *unlawful* by *Circumstances*, much more inconsiderable; and hardly founded upon any thing but *Imagination*.

I have one *Argument* more to offer to your Consideration, to prove, that these *Circumstances*, supposing them to attend upon *Constant Communion*, do not make it *unlawful*; and this taken from your own concession, that *Constant Communion* was *lawful*, before You came to imagine that there were no hopes of amendments; and that the waiting time was over. p. 563. Now, there is not one of these *Circumstances*, but what always belonged to it, as much as now. *Constant Communion* always betrayed your liberty; always intimated, as if *Divine worship* were not acceptable without such superadded formalities; always represented *Christ's own institution* as defective; always appeared to acquit *Ecclesiastical Assumers*; always was a confining your *Charity* to a *Party*, and a disowning other worshipping *Assemblies*, as much as it is now. How, therefore, can you say, that these *Circumstances* are what make it *unlawful*? For, If they did not make it *unlawful* here-

heretofore, how can they *now*? If they do *now*, how could it be lawful *heretofore*? If it were lawful *heretofore*, notwithstanding these *Circumstances*, for the sake of *expected Amendments* (which is nothing but a *Colour* put upon the Cause) why is it not lawful *now*, notwithstanding these *Circumstances*, for the sake of *Peace*, and *Concord*? which are, in my opinion, no less weighty considerations; than the *Amendment* and *Reformation* of a tolerable *National Constitution*. Supposing, therefore, that you have here represented things aright (which, in truth, You have not done) yet, if these be the *Circumstances* which render *Constant Communion* unlawful, the Conclusion must be, either, that it was not lawful *heretofore*; or, that it is lawful *now*.

Thus have I considered every one of those *Circumstances* which, you say, render *Constant Communion* unlawful to You, who hold *Occasional Communion* to be lawful, and necessary; and have endeavoured to shew, as I proposed, That these *Circumstances* either do not attend upon *Constant Communion*; or, if they do attend upon it, that they do not make it unlawful. And what I have

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said, in order to this, appears to me so extraordinary evident, and so very demonstrative, that I have a more than usual confidence in this point; and cannot help taking it for granted, that You your selves are by this time convinced, that this part of your cause hath been very much mistaken; and that these *Circumstances* either do not belong to *Constant Communion*; or, do not make it *unlawful*. And, therefore, If these be truly the Reasons for your refusing to join constantly with the *Church of England*; and if these be all the Arguments You have to prove *Constant Communion* any more unlawful than *Occasional Communion*; I press it upon You, as your indispensable duty, to review, with all the calmness possible, this part of your Cause; and to consider once more, whether You be not obliged, in conscience, to *communicate constantly* with the *Church of England*. Which You must also be the more willing, and determined to do, if You will but consider, what I shall observe in the next place, *viz.*

Secondly,

Secondly, Supposing, some inconvenient *Circumstances* do attend upon *Constant Communion*; that, besides such like *Circumstances*, much worse do unavoidably attend upon *separation*, and make it much more *unlawful*, and much less eligible. I shall not here repeat any thing of what I have before said to this purpose, nor suppose You ignorant of the wretched, and miserable consequences of all *Separations*; the most just, as well as the most unjust; and these so certain, and so constant attendants upon them, that they never yet were seen in the world without them, nor ever will be, as long as *Humane Nature* is what it is, and as long as *Ignorance* and *Passion* govern the greatest part of Mankind. You know, that all our own intestine dissensions, and quarrels, our hatreds, and animosities, owe their violence, and their edge, to their Religious differences; and have their foundation in our *opposite Churches*, and *distinct Communion*s. You have professed your selves, in the highest degree, sensible of these *Circumstances* of *Separation*; and no one hath more grievously aggravated the Cause of those who, without the utmost necessity,

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have given occasion to these instances of Unchristian behaviour, than Mr. *Baxter* hath done. This makes it unnecessary for me to be more particular on this subject: And the thought of it makes me the more earnestly entreat You to consider, whether any *Separation* can be more *unnecessary* than the *Separation* of those, who acknowledge all things required of them to be *materially* lawful: and a *Separation* founded upon a few *Circumstances*, which, if they belong to *Constant Communion* with this Church, belong to *Constant Communion* with all other Churches; and, if they prove a *Separation* from this Church *necessary*, prove a *Separation* for ever, from all other Churches, to be *necessary*. Reflect, therefore, on the worst *Circumstances* that can possibly attend upon *Constant Communion*, and the worst of those *Circumstances* which will certainly attend upon *Separation*; reflect upon the best consequences of your *Constant Communion*, and the best consequences of your *Separation*; and, if the *Circumstances* of both be to determine your Choice, I shall not doubt of your *Constant Communion* with this Church *Established*.

To

To conclude this head, If the *Circumstances* You have mentioned, do not make *Constant Communion* sinful, as I verily think, I have shewn; then You profess, that You think, You ought *constantly* to communicate, as You now do *occasionally*. And therefore, I hope, You will act agreeably to that profession. And again, The *certain* and unavoidable consequences of your separation, are worse than the *possible* consequences of your *Constant Communion*; and, therefore, I hope, you will prefer *Constant Communion*, supposing there be some *possible* inconveniences in it, before *separation*; the inconveniences of which we all agree to be most *certain*, and most pernicious to the *Christian Cause* in general, and to the *Reformed Religion* in particular. I have heartily endeavoured to set this matter in a due light, and so leave it to your own Consciences, whether your *Practice* be to be defended, or reformed.

But, if all that I have said will not move You; at least, consider, whether You do well, to proclaim to the world, so often, your readiness to *Conform*; and to appeal to all mankind, to judge how

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zealous You have been for *Peace* and *Unity*; when, here it stands upon record against You, that You will not so much as do what You *lawfully*, and with a safe conscience, may, towards the glorious end, which, You say, is always in your eye: And, that You have been so far from being inclined to *Conformity*, that (not being able to deny it to be *materially* lawful) You have clothed it with such *Circumstances* (in order to make it appear unlawful another way) as are a contradiction to the *Principles*, and *Practice* of your *Predecessors*; a *Condemnation* of the Present behaviour of *your selves*, who *separate*, and yet *occasionally* communicate; a terrible charge against those numbers of your *Brethren*, and *Peoples*, who never do; a prejudice to *all the Churches* in the world; an eternal Bar to our own *Unity* and *Concord*; and a loose encouragement to all *Discord*, and the most groundless *Separations*. But I hope that neither your being already engaged in this *Cause*, nor any other motive in the world, can prevail with You to neglect such considerations as these.

You are very free in declaring, that the whole guilt of our *Divisions* must lie

lie upon *those* who have imposed *Terms* of *Communion*, and still adhere to the *Imposition* of them. But, supposing the *Imposition* of these *Terms* to be blameable, let all the world judge, whether as great a part of the guilt of our *Divisions* be not justly to be laid upon *those*, who acknowledge the things *imposed* to be, in themselves, *lawful*; and yet love not *Peace* and *Unity* so well, as to submit to them. For, As, on the one side, *they* prefer the *Injunction* of some things of less moment, before *Concord*; so, on the other side, *You* prefer *opposition* to the *injunction* of what is not sinful, before *Concord*. As *They* refuse to lay aside what they acknowledge to be, in it self, *unnecessary*, for the sake of a closer *Union* amongst *Protestants*; so, *You* refuse to comply with what *You* acknowledge to be, in it self, *lawful*, for the sake of that so much desired *Union*. As *they* bear their testimony against all *Disorder*, and *unnecessary Separation*, by adhering to their *Impositions*, at the expense of *Love*, and *Peace*; so *You* bear your testimony against all *unnecessary Impositions*, by forming a *Separation*, at the expense of the same precious, and invaluable goods.

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And, where is the mighty difference between your *Principles* and theirs; or, between the *Consequences*, in which *both* end; or the *Reasons* on which *both* are founded?

They will not unite with *you*, unless *you* will come up to *them*; and *you* will not unite with *them*, unless *they* will come down to *you*: whilst, in the mean time, *They* acknowledge it *materially* lawful to yield to *you*; and *you* acknowledge it *materially* lawful to comply with *Them*. This, then, is the professed *Principle* both of *Them*, and *You*, That it is not *reasonable* to do a thing *materially* lawful, for the sake of *Publick Concord* and *Unity*. And, if there be any *guilt* in this *Principle*, you must both equally share in it.

As for the *Consequences*, in which both your *Principle* and theirs naturally ends, they must be the same, because the *Principle* is the same. There can be no *Union*; There must be *Division*; unless this *Principle* be *given up*, either by *Them* or *You*; and the only way left by which the World can be determined, whether of you have the greater regard to *Peace* and *Union*, is by observing, which of you will first recede from this *Principle*. If
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They should recede from this *Principle* to meet *You*; you have no way left, in which it is possible for *You* to convince the World, that *You* desired an Agreement, as much as they did. And if *You* recede from it to joyn with *Them*; all the World must own, that *Your* Love and Desire of *Concord* is greater than *Theirs*. And you cannot prove this by any other Argument imaginable. And so the Contest now between you seems to be this, which of you shall most stiffly adhere to the *same Principle*; and which of *You* shall most obstinately resist all hopes of *Peace*, and *Unity*. Proceed in this glorious strife; and guide your *Practice* by the *Principle* you so much hate, and condemn in *others*; and see, what will be the blessed Fruits of it, and who will most rejoyce at it: But remember, that you can no more defend it in *your selves*, than you can bear with it in *others*. And consider, what a wretched estate a *Church* and *Nation* are come to, when they that *hate* the *Peace* and *Prosperity* of them will *compass* *Sea* and *Land*, and do all *unlawful* things to disturb and ruin them; and they that pretend most to *Love*, and desire their *Peace*, and *Prosperity*, will not do all *lawful*

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lawful things to purchase them, or sacrifice the least part of their own *Scheme* to them. What is Christian *Moderation*, unless it be a temper of Mind, disposing us to yield up Matters of lesser Consideration, to the great Concerns of *Love* and *Unity*? Or, Is it only a *word*, to be used, by *some*, when it will serve a purpose; and, after *that*, to be ridiculed, and exposed: And by *others* to amuse the World in a Disputation, and make People think them the only *Moderate* Persons: whilst neither the *one* sort, nor the *other* will yield an Inch of their ground? What a Melancholy Prospect must it afford us, to see the faint Dispositions there are, on all sides, to this *Christian Grace*; when we consider, that nothing but *this* can restore *Unity* and *Happiness* to a divided *Church*, and *Nation*.

And, that *you* may be the more ready to incline to thoughts of *Union*, and to reap the glory of such a *Compliance*, as I am now pressing upon you: I shall put you in mind, that, as the *Principle*, on which your *Separation* is founded, is the same with *that*, on which *others* found their Resolution of not yielding, in any thing, to your demands; and as the *Con-*
sequences

Sequences of it are the same; so the *Reasons* for their not yielding to *You*, are much the same with your *Reasons* for not constantly *Communicating* with them; and are taken, not from any thing *unlawful* in it self, but from some *Circumstances* attending upon it, exactly answering to those *Circumstances* which you have fixed upon *Constant Communion*. And this may help to make you sensible, that *They* have, at least, as much Reason to expect your *Compliance*, and *Constant Communion*, as *You* have to expect their *Compliance* and *Acceptance* of your *Propositions*. For instance, As, *Constant Communion* represents the *Worship* of the *Church of England* as eligible, and preferable, which is contrary to your inward sense; and therefore, is *unlawful*: so, their *Compliance* with you, would represent the *Church of England* as wanting *Reformation* in all those particulars which you insist upon, which is contrary to their inward sense; and, therefore, is *unlawful*. As, *Constant Communion* practically betrays your *Liberty*, in compliance with *Rigorous Imposers*, and, appears to acquit *Ecclesiastical Assumers*; and therefore, is *unlawful*: So, their *Compliance* with you would practically betray the *Authority of Governours*, in compliance with

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Unreasonable Separatists, and, would appear to acquit those that had before separated from the Church; and therefore, is unlawful. As, Constant Communion intimates, as if Divine Worship were not acceptable without the Formalities enjoyned in the Church of England, and represents Christ's own Institution as defective, and not orderly, or decent, without these Additions; and, therefore, is unlawful: So, their Compliance with you, in the Alteration of these Formalities, and Additions, would intimate, as if Divine Worship were not as acceptable with them, as without them; and, as if Christ's own Institution had received some injury from them, and been depraved by them; which is not true; And, therefore their Compliance is as unlawful, as your Constant Communion. As Constant Communion is a practical disowning and condemning other worshipping Assemblies; and, therefore, is unlawful: so their Compliance with you, in your demanded Alterations, would be a disowning and condemning the Church of England, as it was before, and, an acquitting other Worshipping Assemblies that had separated from it, as if they had had Reason on their side; and therefore, is unlawful. And if these Circumstances, as you say, make Constant Commu-

Communion unlawul, tho' it be *materially* lawful, and conduce highly to our *Publick Peace and Concord*; then, you must grant, that the *Circumstances* which I have here reckoned up, do make such a *Compliance* as you require, *unlawful*; tho' it be *materially* lawful, and very much conduce to our *Peace and Concord*. And so, your *Constant Communion with Them*, is as *lawful*, as their *Compliance with You* can be; because their *Compliance with You*, you see, is as *unlawful*, as your *Constant Communion with Them*. That is, in *truth*, Neither the *one*, nor the *other*, is any more *unlawful*, than the greatest Duties in the *Christian Religion* are. But, indeed this *Doctrin* of *Circumstances*, when applied to a *Practice* of such moment as *Constant Communion with an Established Church*, serves only to perplex, and obscure a very weighty and plain Duty; as, you see, on the other side, that this same *Doctrin*, when applied to a thing of such moment as a *Compliance with You*, only tends to confound, and render intricate, what is, in your *Opinions*, not only *lawful*, but a most useful and necessary Duty.

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And now, what is there, that can hinder you from a *Practice* which you acknowledge to be *materially lawful*; when by it you may contribute so very much to some of the noblest, and greatest ends of *Christianity*? And, if you will not yet condescend to *Constant Communion*, for the compassing these Ends, tell us, what it is that you are willing to do towards it. If you say, That the way you are now engaged in, tends towards it; I have shewn, that this is not true; that it is *doing evil, that good may come*; and that your present *Practice* is attended with as bad *Circumstances* as any, that can possibly be fixed upon *Constant Communion*; and with much worse *Consequences*, and therefore is much more *unlawful*. If you still insist, and resolve so to do, upon your own *Scheme* of *Amendment* and *Reformation*; and will not *constantly Communicate*; till that be entirely accepted; I need not observe, that this is declaring, that you will do nothing towards it: And I have before shewn, that your *Constant Communion*, even *then*, would be capable of as heinous *Aggravations*, as you have loaded it with *now*; and, therefore, is as *lawful now*; as it would be *then*: and much more
glorious;

glorious, because it could not *then* be the least demonstration, that you had any regard to *Peace*, whereas it would be *now* the greatest. There remain therefore only two ways, by which you can fairly make good, what you so frequently profess, That you truly desire *Concord* and *Unity*. Either you must be willing to comply; and *constantly Communicate*, upon the granting some part of your *Scheme*; or you must comply, as affairs stand at present. Now, supposing some part of your demands granted, it is easie to shew you, that the same *Circumstances* would accompany *Constant Communion then*, which, you say, make it unlawful *now*; and any one may see it at first view. And yet, taking it for granted, that you would be *Constant Communicants*, tho' your *Scheme* were not entirely accepted; I argue, that, if your *Constant Communion* would be lawful *then*, it is so *now*. And from all this, I may, I think, safely conclude, Either, that your *Constant Communion* would not be at any time, and upon any suppositions, *lawful*; or, that it is *now lawful*. The former of these You will not allow; therefore, You ought to allow the latter: And if You allow the latter, You must *Constantly Communicate* with the
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Established Church; if it be true, that nothing, but the *Unlawfulness* of the *Practice*, hath hitherto kept you from it. At least, it is but a *Reasonable Request* to you, Either leave off to lament our *Breaches*, and to exclaim against *Those*, who will not heal them, by a *Compliance* with *You*, which is *materially lawful*: or, do you *Your selves* heal them, by a *Compliance* with *Them*, which you acknowledge to be *materially lawful*.

But you often tell us, as a *Reason* for your *Separation*, that the *waiting Time* was over, and all hopes of *Amendments* at an end. And, accordingly, you have now tried *Forty Years* Separation, to see, if this would procure any *Alterations*. And what hath your *Experience* taught you? Do not you complain to this Day, that there is not the least inclination in the *Church Men*, to admit a *farther Reformation*? Why then will not you try the ways of *Peace* and *Unity* once more? which are at least as likely to end in a *greater Perfection*, as the ways of *Separation*: And, I believe, much more so. And, if there be not yet, after all your *Trials*, any hopes appearing of what, you say, you are labouring after; I am of opinion,

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on, that there cannot be a greater inducement to you, now to comply, than *this* is. For, if there be no hopes of other Men's *Compliance* with you, then, there are no hopes left of *Peace*, and *Unity*, without your *Compliance* with Them. And, therefore, if *Peace* and *Unity* be any thing more than *Words*; the Consideration, that they are now to be purchased *only* by your *Constant Communion*, ought not to set you against it, but to engage you to it; unless it be too great an instance of *Condescension*, to sacrifice the least matters to such Considerations. But, I pray God to forgive those, who think *that* a *hardship* and grievance, which they ought to esteem one of the greatest *honours* they are capable of, on this side Heaven. For, when can it be more truly *honourable* for you to *Conform*, than when it is visible, that you comply with others, because *They* will not comply with *You*; and, when you demonstrate, by this means, that *you* have a greater regard to *Peace*, and *Unity*, than *They* have?

And, now, after *You* have said all that is possible in the *Vindication* of your *Separation*, and after I have said all this to prove it to be *unnecessary*; it imports nothing, ei-

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ther for you to argue for your selves, from the *Scripture-notion* of *Schism*, and from the *Writings* of the *Fathers*; or for Me to turn such Arguments against You. For, we are both agreed, that all causeless Divisions amongst Christians are to be avoided: And the Point in Question is not, How the word *Schism* is used in *Scripture*; or, what the *Fathers* have said of the *Occasions*, and *Nature* of *Schism*; but only this, *Whether your Separation from the Church of England be necessary, or not?* If it be not, you acknowledge it to be *Shismatical*; and, therefore, you endeavour to shew, that it is. If it be, We acknowledge it not to be *Scismatical*; and only endeavour to shew, that it is not. But whether it be so, or not, cannot be shewn, either from the *Scripture Notion* of *Schism*, or from any Sayings of the *Fathers*.

You allege also in your own Vindication the Judgment of Mr. *Hales*: And therefore, here I must take notice, that the *Reader* is very much mistaken, if He imagine, that there is any thing in his *Writings* to your purpose; or, that you can defend your selves by any thing you have transcribed from Him: tho', if you could

could, I must put you in mind, that His Authority would signifie no more when alleged for You, than You would allow it to signifie, were it alleged against You. That *Great Man* says, indeed, that the word *Schism* is often so used, That it is only a *Theological Scare-crow* : but He says also, That it is a *deadly Crime, where it is not by imputation but in deed*. He says, indeed, that *where cause of Schism is necessary, there not He that Separates, but he that occasions the Separation, is the Schismatick* ; But He says also, in so many words, That *in Schisms, which concern Fact, nothing can be a just cause of refusal of Communion, but only to require the execution of some unlawful, or suspected Act* ; that is, nothing but what renders *Occasional Communion* unlawful, as well as *Constant Communion*. And from hence it is plain, that He never so much as dream't of a *Separation* joyned with *Occasional Communion* ; and little thought, that *Constant Communion* with a Church, which doth not require the execution of any Act, which you think, or suspect to be *unlawful*, could be rendered *sinful*, by such *Circumstances* as you have fixed upon it. If there were any thing necessary to your *Communion* with

the Church of England, which you did but suspect to be unlawful, this would hinder your *Occasional Communion*, as effectually, as your *Constant Communion*. But you are thoroughly satisfied, That *Communion* with this Church, is *materially lawful*; and, therefore, you are as much condemned by Mr. Hales, as by any one; who, tho' He excuse those who judge, or suspect it to be *materially unlawful*, yet He absolutely condemns both your Principles, and Practice. He says indeed, That *when either false, or uncertain Conclusions are obtruded for Truth; and Acts either unlawful, or ministring just scruple, are required of us to be performed: In these Cases, Consent were Conspiracy, and open contestation is not Faction or Schism, but due Christian Animosity: And that it is alike unlawful to make profession of known, or suspected falsehoods, as to put in practice unlawful, or suspected Actions.* But what is this to you, who allow *Communion* with our Church to be *materially lawful*; and consequently, who acknowledge, that, in order to it, you are neither required to *make profession of known, or suspected falsehoods; or to put in practice unlawful or suspected Actions?* Another Principle I find attributed

tributed to Him, *Abridg. p. 647.* That *if things be imposed, under the notion of indifferent, which many think sinful, and a Schism follow thereupon, the Imposers are the Schismatics*: which I do not find so expressed by Himself; and, if too strictly understood, I am certain, is contrary both to *his Principles, and yours.* But, granting this to be His *Principle, what if things be imposed, which are not thought sinful, and a Schism follow?* Will this *Principle* excuse the Separation of those who think that the things *imposed are not sinful, as you do?* But I wish that, instead of picking a Sentence, or Two, out of his Writings, you would seriously consider what there is to be found in them irreconcilable to your Practice. For then, you might perhaps be sensible, That, as it is a fault in *Superiours, not to yield, in a matter of small Concern, to the imbecilities of Inferiours*; so it is, much more, in *Inferiours, not to yield, in Points materially lawful, to the Authority of Superiours.* And, sure, you could not be so fond of charging the guilt of your *Schism, on the side of the Imposers, upon his Authority, when you find it to be his Opinion, that there are Schisms, in which both Parts are the Schismatics,*

maticks; and remember, that as *They* will not yield up, what they grant not to be necessary; so *You* will not practice what you grant not to be sinful; and that *You*, as well as *They*, will not do what *You* acknowledge to be *materially lawful*, in order to put an end to this *Schism*.

You often insinuate, that your *Separation* from the *Church of England* is founded upon the same Arguments, on which the *Separation* of the *Church of England* from the *Church of Rome* is founded. But I wonder with what justice this can be said by *You*, who think that nothing is required in the *Church of England*, but what is *materially lawful*. For, Did any of our *Reformers* think it *materially lawful* to joyn in *Publick worship* with that *Church*? Did ever any of them *occasionally communicate* with it, and argue against *Constant Communion*, not from any thing *unlawful* in the thing it self, but, from some imagined *Circumstances*, equally applicable to other parts of their *Practice*? If they did not, then Your *Separation* is not founded upon the principles, on which *They* separated. And You ought, in justice, either to give up such *Reasonings* as these, or,
fairly

fairly to acknowledge, that the *Protestant Separation* from the *Church of Rome*, was built upon foundations wholly different from those, on which Your *Separation* from the *Church of England* is built.

But it is time for me to conclude. I had a design of adding some few Considerations more relating to some other Parts of Mr *Calamy's* Book, and the Methods there taken for the supporting, and establishing your *Cause*. But I have already run out into a greater length, than I thought of, in speaking to what is more material to the great point between Us: and, I am sure, You will agree with me, either, that I have already said what is sufficient to recommend *Conformity* to You; or, that nothing, that I could farther allege, would signify any thing towards it. However, If there be any thing in any part of that Book, which I have not regarded; or any thing, which You can add to what hath been already alleged; on which You will say that your *Cause* doth in the least depend: I promise, that I will give it all due consideration. In the mean while, give me leave to think, that I have advanced something,

in

in all that I have said, which may make You a little *doubtful* of the *Excellence* of your *Cause*; and incline You to think somewhat more favourably of *Conformity*, than You have hitherto appeared to do. You must, of necessity, either *Conform*, or *Separate*. And, therefore, if I have said but barely enough to make it a *doubtful* point, Whether of the two You ought to chuse; consider, last of all, that there are many, and weighty Arguments to determine You to *Conformity*; and remember, that it is your own Concession, That you ought to be much more willing to attend to any Reasons that can engage You to *that*, than to find out *Evasions*, and *Art*, for the keeping on foot our unhappy Divisions. It is in your *Power* to put a mighty stop to them; and, I pray God, it may, at length, be in your *Will*.

F I N I S.

A
Serious Admonition
TO
Mr. CALAMY,
Occasion'd by
The First Part
OF HIS
DEFENCE
OF
Moderate Non-Conformity.

By BENJAMIN HOADLY, M. A.

L O N D O N :

Printed for *Tim. Childe*, at the *White-Hart*
in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*, 1705.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS 309

LECTURE 10

THE HADRONIC COLLIDER

PROFESSOR J. J. HARRIS

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR J. J. HARRIS

LECTURE 10

THE HADRONIC COLLIDER

A

Serious Admonition

T O

Mr. CALAMY, &c.

S I R,

I Have already given sufficient Assurances to *You*, and the World, that my whole Design, in endeavouring to reply to the *Tenth Chapter of your Abridgment of the Life of Mr. Baxter*, was founded upon nothing, but a sincere desire that *Truth* might prevail; and that all Persons concerned might the more easily judge on which side it lies. This I have frequently, and seriously professed: And, therefore, need not now repeat any thing of this nature; but only take care to let the World see, by my Behaviour in this *Controversie*, that I am as much concerned for *Truth*, in reality, is in Pro-

A 2

— fession.

fession. And as this was truly the *End* I
 proposed to my self in Writing; so, in
 order to the more easie Accomplishment
 of it, I thought nothing could be more
 proper, than to consider all the *Arguments*
 for *Non-Conformity*, as they are represent-
 ed in that *Chapter*; to State them as fair-
 ly, and impartially, as possible; to pro-
 pose such *Reasons* against them as appear-
 ed to me convincing, with all the plain-
 ness and calmness I could; to avoid ev'ry
 thing that might raise a cloud of *Passion*
 before the Eyes of the *Reader*, and hin-
 der Him from judging with freedom;
 and, throughout the whole, to endea-
 vour to reduce the *Controversie* within its
 due Bounds, that so nothing might be
 mixed with it, either to amuse, or mis-
 lead any Person concerned. And be-
 cause I am still resolv'd to search for
Truth in the same Methods in which I
 have begun; with the same regard to the
 main *Controversie* between us; with the
 same Resolution of not turning aside from
 it, on any Account; with the same De-
 sign of not mixing any Thing with it
 which either doth not belong to it, or
 may, in the least, contribute to the mak-
 ing it Obscure, and Intricate; therefore,
 it

it is, that I make bold to apply my self now to *You*, in this Publick manner; to Expostulate with you a little about the *Way* you seem to have chosen to manage your Part in this *Cause*; to complain to *You* of the *unkind Returns* I have met with from *You*; to free the *Controversie* once more from all those *Circumstances*, Foreign; and Personal, with which you have cloathed it; and to engage *You*, if possible, to persue the *Cause* between us with that Steadiness, and in those *Methods*, which appear to me absolutely necessary for the finding out of *Truth*, and the recommending it to the *World*. It is my Design, when I see the *Whole* of what *You* shall offer, in Answer to my *Defence* of the *Terms* of *Conformity*, to consider seriously ev'ry *Particular* alleged against any thing I have advanced; and to give it its due *Weight*. And it is my *Resolution* to permit nothing which is either *Personal*, or *Foreign* to the *Cause*, to enter into the *Body* of the *Controversie*. In the mean while, I think fit to lay your *Book*, already *Published*, before me; to separate what belongs to the *Cause* from what doth not belong to it; and to give *You* my free *Thoughts* upon such

A 3 Things

Things as seem to me to have no relation to our Purpose: That so the World may judge, whether I have not some Reason to Complain of You, both on the Account of my self, and of the Cause I defend; and that I may be more at Leisure to attend wholly upon the Point in Hand, when You shall have Published all that You think fit; and that You your self may have an Opportunity of considering, whether it be not better for You to alter the way in which You have begun to Treat me, and the Controversie in which I am engaged. What I design in this Paper shall be compris'd under these two Heads.

I. I shall observe that great part of your Defence is taken up in what is of no relation to the Cause between Us. And that many Things are brought into it, which may help to obscure the Controversie, and prejudice Men against the Established Church.

II. I shall take Notice of the Personal Reflexions scattered thro' your Book; your unhandsome Treatment of my self; your unkind Censures; and your Misrepresentations of my manner of Writing, and my Design.

Before I enter upon these, I cannot help saying a Word or two to that great Wonder You express, why You, who had *but the Drudgery of bringing the Reasons of the Ejected Ministers within a narrow Compass,* should fall under the Indignation of those who have replied to your *Tenth Chapter, Defence,* p. 6. You tell us in your *Preface,* p. 6. *That you acted but as an Historian; and that if you have given a just view of their Sentiments, you have performed what you undertook:* For my part, I know of no Indignation that you have experienced, but a great deal of Civility. I am sure I had so much Charity as to acquit you of any designed Injury to the *Established Ministers* in these plain Words. I do not say Prof. to Reason. of Conform. P. 1. that it was this Author's Design, in reviving these Heads of Nonconformity, to lessen the Reputation, or blacken the Character of any of his Neighbours: For I have too good an Opinion of him to think him capable of such a Design. In the Sentence before I had indeed said, that if the Accusations there brought against Ministerial Conformity be received as built upon good Reasons, the Consequence will be, that we must be accounted guilty of as many, and great Crimes, as it is well possible for any Men to be guilty of: which is a

very different Thing. And this I thought one good Reason for making a *Reply*, let who will be the first *Author* of them. But if you think much to be named as the *Author*, or the approver, of these *Reprofections*; (which is the utmost Injury I have done to you) You would do well to consider, whether You have behaved your self in this Cause, merely as an *Historian*. You know, that You profess your self a Follower of these Men; You have in your *History*, in express Words, applauded their *Cause*, and the *Reasons* they acted upon, without setting the least Mark of Dislike upon any of them; You call them, in general, the *stable Principles*, upon which *Nonconformity* is still *bottomed*, as I have observed before now, tho' you have taken no Notice of it; and, what is yet more, You have added several Things in that *Chapter* your self. All the *Arguments* in the latter part of it, urg'd in defence of your *Separation*, notwithstanding your *Occasional Communion*, appear there as your own, without any *Quotations* in the *Margin*; and, about the beginning, the very worst, and most groundless *Aggravation* of all, is entirely your own. And whether You can
 still

still be considered merely as an *Histori-
 an*, let any one judge. But, besides this,
 You cannot but be sensible that a *Book*
 drawn up in the form of a *History*, may
 possibly, by some helps of *Art*, be so
 contrived, as to serve the Purposes of a-
 ny one particular sort of Men, and to ex-
 pose their *Adversaries* better than in any
 other form whatever. All my design was
 to answer the *Arguments* there urged for
Nonconformity, without reviling, or abu-
 sing any Person. And this, I hope, can
 be no Offence to You; considering what
 you profess, your self, at the beginning
 of that *Chapter*, in these Words, *For the*
help and assistance of Posterity, I have here
drawn up the Pleas of those who were the
Sufferers, which, compared with the Argu-
ments and Replies of the Aggressors, may
help in passing an impartial Judgment. And
 this my *Design* I prosecuted by represent-
 ing my Thoughts upon this Subject, not
 to any one Person only, but to all the
Dissenting Ministers, in whose name that
Chapter was drawn up. What little Rea-
 son therefore, is there for your complain-
 ing of me, on this Account? But I come
 now to my present Design. And

I. I shall observe, That great part of your *Defence* is taken up in what is of no relation to the *Cause* between Us: I shall that many Things are brought into it; which may help to obscure the *Contra-verse*, and prejudice Men against the *Established Church*. And this I take notice of, for the sake of *Truth*, that Men may not be set against *Conformity* without *Reasons*; for my own sake, that the *World* may not expect that I should trouble myself to Reply to what is of no Relation to my Purpose; and for your sake, that you may reflect seriously upon your own *Conduct* in this *Cause*. The *Particulars* I have observed, of this Nature, are as follow.

1. I begin with the *two Sentences* which you have thought fit to prefix to your Book: The one of which is taken out of my Lord of *Sarum*, viz. *It is not our Boasting that the Church of England is the best reformed, and the best constituted Church in the World, that will signify much to convince others, &c.* and the other is taken out of *Pufendorf*, viz. *Ubi Controversie Dogmatibus annexa sunt Emolumenta; seu, ubi ad conservandam potentiam, ac acquirendas Dogmata inventa, aut attemptata*

ratio sunt, non est quod credamus, Disputando ac Ratiocinando illa posse Evetti, &c.
 The Design of the former of these was, to make all Church-men sensible, that a good and holy Conversation was necessary; on their part, to recommend the Church of England to the Esteem of Men, &c. And I heartily applaud his Lordship's Design in it. But I wonder what relation it hath to our *Controversie*; or what Service it can possibly do You; or what could induce You to place it in the front of a Book, which You call an *Answer* to Mr. *Olyffe*, and Mr. *Hoadly*; unless You would have Your Reader imagine, that both Mr. *Olyffe*, and my self, spend our whole Time, and fill all our Pages with the highest and most extravagant Applauses of the *Established Church*; that *We* are sensible of no necessity of any Thing to recommend it to the World, besides loud Cries of its *Perfection* and *Excellence*; and that *We* have advanced nothing against your *Tenth Chapter*, but Exclamations, and Harangues upon the *Constitution*. I say, it can have no relation to your *Book*, or the *Title* of it, but thus considered. And yet You know, that neither Mr. *Olyffe*, nor I, have spent our
 Time

Time after this manner ; or given you this Advantage over Us. But, if you say, that there are some in the *Church* who do so ; and you designed it against them : I answer, What is that to our *Cause* ? Or, Why must the *Reader* be prejudiced against *Us*, with whom your chief Business lies, for the sake of *Others* ? Is the *Church* to answer for the Behaviour of all the *Members* of it ? Or must every Thing that can be thought of, be brought in, to set Men against our *Cause*, for fear they should not find enough in our own Writings to do it ? But the *Other* Sentence is yet more unaccountable ; the plain meaning of which I take to be this. *When Temporal Profits are annexed to Conquered Doctrines ; or, when Doctrines are invented, or framed, for the preserving of Power, and the obtaining of Riches ; We must not hope by Argument to work any Conviction in the Minds of Men ; especially of those, whose Interest is peculiarly concerned.* This I take to be the intent of the *Sentence*. And if this do not insinuate, and very plainly intimate to your *Readers*, that, if We be not convinced, by your *Arguments*, of the goodness of your *Cause*, it is to be attributed to the *Worldly Advantages* that

that

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that attend *Conformity*; and, consequently, that *Temporal Interest* guides our Thoughts, and frames our Notions for Us: If this, I say, do not plainly, and without any force, intimate thus much, I confess, I understand not the *English* of it. And if it do, I hope, you will not any longer be so angry with Mr. Ollyffe, for *Insinuating*, as you express it (p. 9.) that *You Charge the Conformists, as Men of no Conscience*. Nay, We, of all others, have most Reason to complain of this; because it is prefixed to a *Book* written in *Answer to Us*. We are the Persons, with whom your *Argument* is managed, and whose *Conviction* is chiefly attempted: And how unfortunate are We, if this severe *Censure* must be our Lot, should we want *Light to discern the Strength of those Arguments, in which You sometimes so much Triumph*? I might as justly retort this upon *You*; many of whom need not envy the *Worldly Profits* of the greatest number amongst Us; much less the *Expectations* of those who have none in Possession: But had I insinuated to the *World*, that any Thing of a *Temporal Consideration* was the *Reason* of your want of *Conviction*, I would have publickly asked
 Pardon

Pardon of the God of *Truth and Love* against both which such *Insinuations* greatly offend; whilst they *Injure the Reputation of Men*, who may be *Honest* for ought we know, and recommend themselves, and their *Cause*, to the *Hatred and Aversion* of others. You had more *Scope and Excuse* for this way of *Writing* in your *Abridgment*: Out of which I could produce many unkind *Insinuations* of this *Nature*. There, indeed, You acted as an *Historian*; and *Freedom* becomes that *Character*. But why in this *Book* also this *Method* should be continued; why the *Conforming Clergy* should be here also represented as *determining to take all Things in their own Sense* (as distinct from that *Sense* in which it was most reasonable to understand the *Terms of Conformity*), and others as *Urged to Conformity by the Necessities of their Families, and the Times*: And why in the very front of an *Answer* to Persons, who had not been over free in their *Censures upon You*, such a *Sentence* should be placed; will always remain a *Wonder* to all who know the value of *Truth and Love*. *Thogh*, your boasted *Impartiality*, and your great *Care* to appear of a *Catholick Spirit*, will induce

p. 29.

p. 30.

induce you to remove such *Stumbling Blocks* as these out of the way of your *Readers*.

2. I cannot but observe how solicitous *You* still are to draw in all the *unnecessary Aggravations*. You can think of such, I mean, as may either raise a respect in the *Reader* for *your Cause*; or prejudice Him against the *Cause We* maintain. Your *Preface* begins with the *Acceptance*. Your *Abridgment* hath met with, among Men of *Temper of all Ranks, and Denominations*. I must profess that my *Acquaintance, and Conversation* lies among Men of as much *Temper, and as good a Spirit*, as any can possibly be found: And I think my self obliged to declare, that I never yet knew any one single Person, who did not esteem it an unseasonable *Performance, naturally tending to revive our Differences; full of Insinuations, and Reflexions, upon the Cause of Conformity, and such Representations of it to the World, as must be of very ill Consequence, if some Person did not endeavour to clear and vindicate it.* I must likewise profess, that if I had met with any one sensible Person of another Mind, I had not easily been determined to concern

cere may self in the Cause. And I be-
 lieve, I may say the same for Mr. Olyffe
 who hath expressed as great *Resentment*
 of Your *Performance* as I have; and
 whose Acquaintance want not *Temper*
 and *Moderation*. But neither He, nor I
 have called it by such Names, as an *In-
 famous Abridgment*; or a *Continued Libel*
against the Church, and Crown; And there-
 fore, methinks, You should either have
 wholly neglected to draw in such *Aggra-
 vations* as these; or else have plainly sig-
 nified to the *Reader*, that they belonged
 not to Us, or our *Cause*. Thus You like-
 wise Acquaint your *Reader*, that You are
 not insensible that you engage in a *Cause* that
 hath oft been trampled upon; But generally
 by those who have least understood it; a
 Cause that hath often been doomed to *Death*,
 and yet still survives; a Cause that hath
 met with as many *Reproaches*, as *Primitive*
Christianity. What must the *Reader*
 think from hence, but that We have in-
 sulted, and trampled upon it, and load-
 ed it with *Reproaches*? Otherwise, why
 should He be prepared by such an *Allegation*
 as this, for a *Defence* of your *Cause*, in
Answer to Mr. Olyffe, and my self? This is
 as much to the purpose, and tends as much
 to

to the enlightening the Reader, as your repeated mention of *Dr. Hickman's* Distinction of Spirits; and your Reflexion upon the *Church* for the *Ill-manners* and *Ingratitude* of some of her *Profelytes*; your frequent and severe *Censures* past upon many of the *Conforming Clergy*; and several the like matters, interspers'd with your Argument, throughout your whole *Book*: As if the *Church* ought to rise, and fall, in the *Esteem* of Men, according to the *Spirit* and *Behaviour* of any particular member of it; and as if there were not sometimes a visible want of a good Spirit, and good Manners, out of the *Church*, as well as in it. Such methods of *Controversy*, I think, I can safely say, You could not learn either from *Mr. Olyffe* or my self: and, I hope *We* shall not learn them from *You*.

3. You amuse the World throughout your *Preface*; and your *Book* both, with a talk of *Catholick Christianity*; a *Catholick Temper*; a *Catholick Spirit*; *Union upon Scripture Terms*; and a zeal against making more necessary to the making a *Man* a Member of the *Church*, than what is necessary to the making him a *Christian*: whereas I have shewn that, were the *Scheme* of

those *Ministers* whom You profess to follow, accepted, the same *Objections* would still ly against the *Constitution*; that Mr. *Baxter*, and the *Independents* are guilty of the same thing; and, consequently, that You do not expect, or desire, a *National Establishment*, wholly without such *Additions*, as will inevitably exclude many, who have a Title to the name of *Christians*. If You, for your part, be one of the same Principles with the more *Moderate*, of the *Ejected Ministers*, as You profess your self to be, You must be ready to *Conform*, tho' there be such *Terms* in the *Establishment* as will exclude some *Christians*. If you have forsaken them in these Principles, then declare it; speak for your self only; *Prophesie* not against *Union*, in their Name, but in your own; and distinguish plainly between your own Principles, and theirs; that so I may know what I have to argue against. *Union upon Scripture Terms* is a very desirable thing: And, as far as I am able to judge, were all of Us but willing to comply in what we acknowledge to be *materially lawful*, This would be an *Union upon Scripture Terms*. But, so proceed,

4. Your

4. Your Book consisting of 230 Pages, besides the *Postscript* (in which nothing of Mr. *Hoadly* is mentioned, but his *Charity*) I shall now observe to You, and the World, how many of these Pages are of no concern to me; that so I may the more easily hereafter Answer the *Expectations* of all who shall Impartially look into this *Controversie*. For Instance, therefore, your *Defence* from Page 1. to Page 16. is all *Preliminary*: And of more concern to Mr. *Ollyffe*, and his Friends, and to my self, than to any part of our *Cause*.

Your *Historical Account* from Page 16. to Page 32. seems to me to be of no consequence to the *Question* between Us, *Whether Conformity to the Terms now imposed in the Church of England, be lawful*. But if You take a pleasure in still acting as an *Historian*, in this *Cause*, I cannot help it: But I will not imitate You; unless you can shew me, that this is the readiest way to compose our differences; which is the *end* I propose. This I apprehend to be one of the most effectual methods, to revive our mutual Jealousies, and incense Us against one another: and therefore, I shall make a Conscience of avoiding it; lest I should have a hand

in renewing and opening those Wounds, which I will ever study to heal. But You seem very much concerned, that the World should believe, that the Controversie between Us depends very much upon History. I have read over all the Historical Passages, by which You have, as they occur'd to your Memory, elucidated Mr. Ollyff's general Remark: and I cannot, I profess, apprehend how they will help Us in our present Debate. However, when you prove that this Controversie depends so much upon History as you pretend, I promise that I also, will not take History and Argument apart, but consider them together, as having mutual Dependence, and Reflecting a mutual light. This is what I have endeavour'd hitherto to avoid: And I will see more Reason for it, before I alter my Resolution of freeing the Controversie from every thing that will not help to determine it. But, perhaps, I need not be so concerned about this, since your Contents tell the World, that this was design'd particularly for the use of Mr. Ollyffe.

Again, your Defence from Page 35. to Page 52. concerns Mr. Ollyffe and not my self, who Argues with You upon supposition, thaty our Ordinations are Valid.

From

From Page 68, to 70. Your *Defence* concerns the most Learned Mr. *Dodwell's* Notion.

From Page 125, to Page 183. We have an *Elaborate Dissertation* against the *Fathers*, and their *Authority* in the *Question* between Us, *Not but that there are a great many Passages in their Writings, which may abate the Triumph of your Brethren, if they'll weigh them impartially:* But yet there is some reason or other for your great *zeal* against them; especially when not one of them hath been urged against You, either by Mr. *Ollyffe* or by *Me*. At present, I am not much concerned to examine all that you have amass'd together against them. But I promise You, that when I begin to argue with You upon their *Authority*, I will either Build no more upon it than your own concessions will give me leave; or I will vindicate their *Authority* as far as I make use of it. I am sorry, in the mean time, that You should think it worth your while to fill so many Pages, with what hath been already so fully treated of, amongst *Learned Men*: Especially when those, whose names you have put in the *Title* of your *Defence*, seemed so solicitous to keep the *Cause* clear from

p. 179.

from all such *Embarrassments*; and not to urge You with *Authority*, but *Reason*. You tell Us indeed, that *You have taken a wider Compass than a bare Reply to your Animadvertisers made necessary*. For what Reasons You were induced to this, You best know: But I hope, You will pardon your *Animadvertisers*, if they still endeavour to keep the *Controversie* within it's due Bounds; and think it not *necessary* to follow you in this *wide Compass*, which, You acknowledge, they made it not *necessary* for You to take. Methinks, when it was nothing but our *Animadversions* which gave occasion to this *Defence*, You should rather have endeavoured to keep the *Cause* as clear, and open, as We had left it; and to avoid the *taking a wider compass than a Reply to Us made necessary*.

These parts of your *Defence* I am not under the least Obligation to consider any farther. Every *Title*, besides these, shall (I promise You) be in due time seriously and deliberately wigh'd. Every thing, I mean, in which you can think You oppose me: And it shall be either shown, that it doth not concern my Argument; or that it hath not that weight which you
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suppose: or it shall be acknowledged to carry *Truth* and *Reason* along with it.

In the mean while, lest those *Reflections* which You have so freely cast upon my self, should prejudice any Persons against the *Cause* I defend; and hinder them from judging impartially between Us, You must permit me, as I designed.

II. To take notice of the *Personal Reflections* scattered thro' your *Book*; your unhandsome treatment of my self; your unkind Censures; and your Mis-representations of my design, and my manner of Writing: An *Usage* which, in the judgment of all who are not so nearly concerned as your self, I have little deserved at your Hands.

And this I think very necessary, not only as a just Vindication of my self in those Points, in which no good Man is willing that his *Reputation* should suffer; but principally, for the sake of *Truth*, and that *Cause* in which I am, upon true Christian Principles, engaged. For when the *Person* who defends a *Cause* is represented after such a manner, as must necessarily render him *Odious* to those whom He is Labouring to convince; the *Cause* it self is sure to suffer for it; and all

his hopes of having the least influence upon their minds are utterly defeated: They will not so much as be persuaded to read what *such an one*, hath advanced: And that He is *such an one*, they are sure, because they have it upon the Word of *One*, on whom they can safely depend. This prejudice is propagated from one to another: And so most of those, who are chiefly concerned, are perfectly out of the reach of whatever He can propose, and entirely Indisposed to receive any thing He can advance.

What I have to complain of, under this Head, is, that I find you very free in your Reflexions upon my *Temper*, and *Charity*, and *Manner of Writing*; and giving a strange account of my little *Regard to Peace and Union*: And these *Reflexions* are intermixed with your Reasoning, and scattered throughout your whole Book. As for your dignifying me with the Contemptuous name of your *Catechist*, only because I ask some very material *Questions* in the Course of my *Argument*; and your ridiculing my *Agreement* with *Mr. Baxter* (which, I here give you notice, shall be evidently shewn to be exactly as great as I have expressed, notwithstanding

p. 211.

p. 196.

withstanding your Triumphs over me) and other *pleasantnesses*; by which you have endeavoured to give Life to your Cause; I can easily pass them over; and ascribe them to a sort of Genius unable to bear up under the dryness of a serious Controversie, without such diversions. But I will see it more for the advantage of *Truth*, before I imitate You in these Beauties: And, in the mean time, can very easily yeild the Prize. But upon the other things, which I have just now mentioned, You must give me leave to dwell a little longer. And

1. As to my *Temper*, and *Charity*. You observe p. 183. that *many think the Church can never be preserved but in that Vessel, they are embarked in.* And you add, that *You are sorry to find Mr. Hoadly discovering so much of such a Temper: And that a more Catholick Spirit must certainly must prevail, before ever our Breaches come to be healed.* And again, p. 200. after You have, in your way, exposed my obliging Condescension, in promising to believe that God approves your irregular Ordinations, if you can shew any necessity for them. You add, that *when I become more acquainted with a Catholick Spirit, You doubt not but my Brotherly*
Kind.

Kindness will be more extensive P. 17, You
 tell the World, that in the *consequence* of
 this Argument, my *Frankness* seems more
 commendable than my *Charity*, P. 62, You
 are more inclin'd to wish your *Confidant's*
Charity, than to question the grounds it is to
 rest upon. P. 191, A little more *Charity* might
 do him no *Disadvantage*. P. 220, You
 say, You are confirm'd, by any *Reasons*
 for *Re-Ordination*, in this, that your *Dis-*
senters are not the only Persons in the World,
 among whom the *Want or Decay of Charity,*
 and *Humility*, is to be lamented. Nor
 are you content with this frequent
 Repetition of your *Censures* through-
 out your *Book*, in which only I am con-
 cern'd: But Your very *Postscript* must
 not be free from Your *severity*, and Mr
Dorrington must be told, that He *comes*
short even of Mr. Hoadly's Charity, P. 244:
 which looks as if my *Charity* were going
 into a *Proverb* amongst You. But before
 You proceed any farther in this *Course*,
 let me beg of You to consider, whether
 You be not very much mistaken, either
 in me, or in your notions of *Temper* and
Charity. As for my self, I thank God,
 I have as *diffusive and extensive a Charity*
 as can be. I am as ready and inclin'd
 to

to think well of those who differ from me, as I am to think well of my self. I am as willing to believe that they act upon *Principles*, and are perfectly honest Men, as I am to believe so of my self. I can make all the allowances in the World for them: And I am heartily disposed to do them all the good Offices that the *Christian Religion* requires from one Man, and one Christian to another. And I think, this is a *Catholick Temper*, and a *Catholick Spirit*. But then you must pardon me, if I cannot esteem it a part of *Christian Charity*, to frame my *Principles* so, as to approve of all the Actions of Honest and Understanding Men. Certainly, no Consideration in the World, but the apparent Reason of things, ought to have any hand in the forming our Notions, and settling our Judgments: And certainly *Charity* hath nothing to do in my impartial Searches after *Truth*, and in my Enquiry after *Regular Ordinations*. If I think that I find the greatest Reason to judge that *Episcopal Ordination is the Regular Ordination settled in the Church of Christ*; this may be an Error possibly, but can never deserve the hard name of *Uncharitableness*, or be called *Want of a*

Catholick Temper. These are *Vices* severely censured, and condemned by the *Christian Law*: And it is very hard indeed to tax a Man with these, because He is honest, and judges as He himself sees Reason; and endeavours to convince others of the Truth of the same things. Nay, I do not see that You your self exceed me very much in this *Catholick Spirit*, unless it be that I mention it not so often as You do. For, as I say that *Regular Ordination is to be sought for*, so say You. As I say, that God doth not approved *Irregular Ordinations*, so say You. As I say, that *Episcopal Ordination is the Regular Ordination*, so You say, that both *Episcopal and Presbyterian Ordination are Regular*. So that, as I come behind You in this *Catholick Temper*; so You, as certainly, come behind other Persons, who maintain, that God approves the *Ministrations* not only of those who have *Episcopal Ordination*, or *Presbyterian Ordination*; but of those also who have *Popular Ordination* without any *Ecclesiastical Officer*; and of those who have only an *Inward Call*; and of all who will set themselves up for *Publick Teachers*. And indeed, according to this notion of *Charity*, I do not see but that

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He that is largest in his thoughts about *God's Approbation*, hath the only true Title to a *Catholick Spirit*, and an extensive *Brotherly-kindness*. But I confess, I have other notions of *Charity*: And never shall understand that *that* hath any thing to do with the *Judgment* in the search after *Truth*, and the *Will of God*; and never, I hope, shall tax any Man with the *Want of Charity*, for the sake of the *Doctrines* He Preaches, or the *Principles* He Argues upon. And pray consider, that to make out this *Charge* of yours against me, you must either suppose, that I was led to my *Principles* at first by an *uncharitable* and *narrow* frame of *Spirit*; which I am sure You will not say, because you have not the least ground for it: or else, you must charge me with this *defect*, merely on the account of the *Consequences* of my *Principles*; which I could hardly think you capable of doing. For when I think I have full *antecedent* proof for the *Truth* of them, I am no more blameable for the *Consequences* of them, be they never so harsh, than if they were such as the best natur'd Man in the World could wish them to be. And
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I'm sure you your self would think it hard to be represented to the World as a Person of little Charity, and so Catholic Temper, on account of any unpleasant consequences, which might be fix'd upon a Doctrine which you judge to be founded on Scripture. But if you still persist in charging me with the want of an Extensive Brotherly-kindness for the sake of the Consequences of my Principles; I desire to know, what these Consequences are. The utmost you can make of them is this, that Honest Men may be mistaken in their Ordaining others, and in their being Ordained themselves, to the Ministry: And that God doth not approve of them in this their Behaviour. These are the only consequences which you can justly fix upon Me: For, as for the invalidity and unprofitableness of all their Ministrations to the People, I have disclaimed it, and sufficiently shewn the Unreasonableness of it, and will go on to defend what I have said upon it: And that (with your good leave) still upon Mr. Baxter's Principles. Now what is there so mighty terrible in these that should affright any Man from embracing the Principles I have oppos'd? Nay, what is there in the Consequences

quences of my Principles, comparable to the Consequences of that Principle, that the Benefit of Spiritual Administrations depends upon the Authority of Him that Administers? In the espousing of which Principle you agree with Mr. Dodwell. Were it a true way of judging, I should desire that the Truth of our Principles might be determined by the Consequences of them. But I know it is a very fallible and unjust method: And, as the Consequences of my Principles had nothing to do in the recommending them to my Understanding; so I will be careful not to charge any one with Want of Charity for the sake of those things in which Charity can have no part. And I cannot but hope, that though I be not the first whom you have charged after this manner; and on this very account; yet I shall be the last, whose Temper and Brotherly-kindness you will call in question, for the sake of his Principles. It is one part of Charity not to charge all the hard Consequences of a Doctrine upon the Person who teaches it; because He may disown them, tho' they appear to Us to follow from it. And, certainly, it is a part of Charity not to charge Him with Uncharitableness, for the sake

sake of these *Consequences*: And such a part of *Charity* as You will not, I hope any longer deny to One who hath not so much as provoked You to this sort of Behaviour. When a *Doctrine* is void of all *antecedent proof*, or can pretend to but very little; then let it be embraced, or rejected, according to its *Consequences*. When two *Doctrines* seem to have equal *antecedent proof*; then let the *Consequences* of each be weigh'd, and they may reasonably help to determine the Contest between them. These *Uses* we may justly make of the *Consequences* of any *Doctrines*. But as for judging of the *Temper*, or *Humility*, or *Charity* of any *Person*, from them; had I been guilty of it, I would acknowledge, that I had been sadly defective in a *Catholick Spirit*, and an *Extensive Brotherly-kindness*.

In one of the *Passages* before-cited you do, indeed, tax me with the *Want* of *Charity* upon another account, the ground of which I must now set before the *Readers Eyes*, that He may judge himself of it. You say, *Re-ordination* is such a difficulty in the way to *Union*, as can never be got over. You still go on to *Ordain* others, *i. e.* You go on to lay

(as

(as my Words are) *what you account an insuperable Difficulty, which would otherwise be wanting, in the way towards such an Union as You say you desire.* Then I add; Pardon us, if we cannot think that this Practice is agreeable to that desire of Peace and Concord you express, which seems to Us as if you rather desired to prevent it; unless it could be brought about wholly in your own way. These are my Words, and upon these You tell me, that a little more Charity might do me no Diskindness. I return not your Complement; but appeal to all who can read the Sentence, whether it be not a very natural Thought, that the laying an *insuperable Difficulty in the way to Union* seems rather agreeable to a desire of preventing it (unless it can be had upon your own Terms) than of obtaining it; and also whether this Thought could be expressed more inoffensively, than I have expressed it. And were it not so *Natural* in it self, and so *Inoffensively* expressed; yet I would Appeal to your self, and ask You, whether You will be content with the Name of *Uncharitable*, because you think you have Reason to Charge the *Church-men* (as You often do) with the want of any desire after Union, unless

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p. 6.

all will come up exactly to their Measures? I suppose you will not. I will not Examine whether you always do this in as *inoffensive* a Manner as that in which I expressed myself; but only desire you, if you would not take it well to have this Name fixed upon You, on this Account, not to fix it upon One, who hath as little deserved it as your self. I come now

2. To take notice of those *Reflections* scatter'd thro' your Book concerning my *Manner of Writing*. I am represented by you as *arraigning You all as Intruders*, p. 53. and, in another Place, as *sauing You*, p. 113. as *taking Pleasure in nullifying your Ministry*, p. 59. as *sighting You, and pouring Contempt upon your Ministry*, p. 238. And you cannot set about the defending of your *Ordinations*, without adding, of which Mr. Hoadly takes a Liberty of Speaking so *Contemptibly*, p. 70. These Phrases carry along with them the Ideas of *Violence*, and *Contempt*: And yet, these, and the like, are the Phrases you chuse to make use of: And who would not imagine from these, that I had very violently, and rudely attacked you; and that

that I had made it my Business to ridicule, and expose your *Ministry*. When, in Truth; you cannot produce one *vicious*, or *contemptuous* Word, that I know of; Nor can you lay to my Charge any thing, but that my Thoughts differ from yours; and that I have seriously and calmly represented them to you. And whether I deserve such Language; and ought to be thus represented, let any Persons judge.

But this is not all. For you have represented me as a Person running in with the Common Cry against *Occasional Communion*; only for mentioning the *Scruples* of your People about that; as an Argument why you should not insist upon the *Scruples* of your People, in the Affair of *Reordination*. These are your Words, p. 224. *This Occasional Communion is most certainly a strange sort of all things; that High Church, Low Church, every one that writes, must have to sing at it. 'Tis Modish to give it hard Words; and our Author was not willing, it seems, to be out of the Fashion. He makes most tragick Exclamations about it.* As for the Argument drawn from these *Scruples*, it shall be defended in its proper Place. But what you lay to my Charge here, the giving

hard Words because it is manifestly unjust, that I cannot find that you could say it. For I appeal to all your Brethren, who have done me the Honour to look into what I have written, whether I have ever mentioned *Occasional Communion* but when it naturally offer'd it self; and whether I have ever brought it in, but to make use of it as an *Argument* to convince you of what appeared to me to be *Truth*. Had I inveighed against it as a *dishonest Practice*, or a *piece of Hypocrisie*; or had I gone one Step out of my Way to Expose it, You might have had some Ground for this Charge. But I have never done so, either in *Conversation*, or in *Print*: And since I have said nothing of it but what you know to be true; and what I can justify by what You your self say, at the end of the *Tenth Chapter* of your *Abridgment*, where you answer the *Objection* drawn from the *Scandal* of the *Practice*; methinks, You might have spared me; and not have made me *Odious* to your Reader, by representing me as *One* who give it *hard Words*, because it is *Fashionable*.

This is the right way, I confess, to prejudice Him against the Cause I maintain

tain : But *that* doth not become an impartial Lover of *Truth*. I have, indeed, considered, as carefully as I could, whatever you have said in vindication of the necessity of a *Separation* from a *Church* with which you can *occasionally Communicate*. But I have given your *Occasional Communion* no *hard Words* ; nor have I spoken of it, but in order to shew, that your *Separation* is not necessary. And I dare assure you, that there is not one of those *Bishops* whom you have thought fit to bring in, and Applaud, upon this Occasion, but will say the same of *Occasional Communion* that I have said. For, I am sure, no Persons have at all times declared themselves more sensible of the *Unreasonableness* of your *Separation* ; and of *that* Principle in particular, that a *Separation* is necessary, tho' *constant Communion* be materially *Lawful*, than their *Lordships* have done. But, after you have triumphed as much as you thought fit upon this Head, you tell us, p. 226. *You forbear enlarging now, in hope it will shortly be performed by a better Hand*. I do, therefore, here call upon you, in the Face of the World, to use your Interest ; and I do make it my Request to that *better Hand*

that I may not be drawn in as a Person giving *hard Words* for *Fashion's* sake; but that the *Uses* I have made of it in my *Arguments* may be as fairly, and seriously considered, as they have been proposed. If this *Favour* may be granted, without any such groundless *Excursions* as these, it concerns me little by what *Hand* it be performed; for I regard not the *Person*, but the *Cause*. But if I must still have no other Satisfaction, but that of seeing my self abused, and objected (as it were) to the hatred, and ill-will of the Multitude; I shall take no farther notice of it; but only be content to learn some *Experience* in Mankind from it.

To conclude this Head, I think I can safely say, that I have avoided whatsoever might Offend, as far as it was possible; that I have exposed and ridiculed, neither any Person, nor any Arguments; that I have never step'd aside to Censure, or inveigh against any one; that when I have been forced, in the *Course* of this *Chapter* to which I replied, to take notice of some *ungrateful Passages*, I have done it seriously; and shewn the Occasion; and only endeavoured to put a stop to such *unnecessary Aggravations* as must alienate

alienate our Minds from one another, and prevent our *Union*. And if this have offended any, it was what was absolutely necessary; and I cannot help it. But, for fear I may be too partial in my own Case, I will add this, that if *You* will shew me, in all that I have written, any hard and bitter Language; any thing that tends to Incense and Inflame; any thing brought in for *Fashion's* sake, or for *Wit's* sake, or for *Railery*; any thing but what I had a just and fair Occasion for saying; I promise, that I will repent of it, and revoke it, and alter it. For I would willingly have the *Book* as perfect as possible: And, I assure you, I look upon such *Embellishments* to be the worst sort of *Imperfections*, that can be found in the Writings of *Christians*. And thus having, as I hope, sufficiently vindicated my *Temper*, and *Charity*, and *Manner of Writing*, from such *Representations* as are scatter'd thro' your *Book*, and may prejudice many Persons against the *Case* I maintain; and finding abundant Reason, upon the Review, to rejoyce that I have given you no more occasion for *Censure*; I come now to what, indeed, is something worse. I mean

3. The *Account* you give of my *Views* *Regard* to *Peace* and *Union*. And this not spoken by the by, or drop'd in the heat of *Disputation*; but given at some length, at the very beginning of your *Defence*, before you let the *Reader* into any part of the *Cause*. Perhaps you will wish me a little more *Charity*, if I should tell you, that this looks as if you would not admit your *Dissenting Readers* into the merits of the *Cause*, before you had given them such an account of my *Regards* to *Union*, as must of necessity prejudice them against *Me*, and against my *Argument*: And, therefore, I shall only set the *Matter* before the *Reader's* own *Eyes*; that He may himself judge upon what *Grounds*, and for what *Reasons* you have thus thought fit to *Characterize* me, before you come to the *Cause*, which doth not in the least depend upon my *Personal Qualities*. This *Account* is given, p. 14, 15. of your *Defence*; from which I shall make bold to *Transcribe* the *Passages* following. There are two ways to *Union*. One is by retaining all the *Ecclesiastical Impositions*, and obliging those who have hitherto stood back to crouch under the *Burdens*: The other by leaving the

Things

Things imposed in their natural Indifference;
 Sec. He is for the former way of Union.
 — Again, If you keep the Cause of Division, and have an incurable Fondness for that, You may take what Pains You please in fairly removing, &c. — Again, You may attempt to persuade those that complain, that Things are as they should be; and that the removal of the dividing Engines is needless; that they are better as they are, &c.
 — Again, As to Mr. Hoadly, he gives us fair Words 'tis true: He is not for Hang, Draw and Quarter, as some of his Brethren have been, that have gone before Him, (which way of talking you had better have left, at this time, to the Author of the Shortest Way with the Dissenters) But he seems as fond of all the Impositions that have occasioned the Division, as those that fix'd them. He's for Union indeed, by our Compliance with the Church in all Things; but, by his good Will, he'd hardly part with a Pin out of the Tabernacle, tho' Union might be the Consequence. And for this Reason, all his fair Words wont make his Performance acceptable. You are pleas'd to add, I am not indeed insensible, how little it is in the Power of Men of his Rank, or even of those in Higher Stations

*Stations in the Church; to which way for
 needful Abatements. But owning the want
 of Amendments, and justifying the Denial
 of them, are with me very different
 Indications. In plain Truth, he'd have
 been as likely to win upon Us, by repre-
 senting the Terms of Conformity ac-
 cording to our Wishes, as by pretending
 the said Terms are as good as we could
 wish them to be; which they must be, if A-
 mendments are needless. This is the Al-
 lergy by which You prepare your Rea-
 ders Minds for an Answer to my Ar-
 guments; and in this Accusation, You have
 laid to my Charge, that I am for retain-
 ing all the Ecclesiastical Impositions; that
 I have an incurable Fervour for them;
 that my Business hath been to persuade
 you that Things are as they should be;
 that I seem as fond of the Impositions; as
 those that fixed them; that, by my good
 Will, I'd hardly part with a Pin out of
 the Tabernacle, tho' Union might be the
 Consequence; that I have justified the De-
 nial of Amendments; and that I have
 pretended that the Terms of Conformity are
 as good as you could wish them to be; and
 that Amendments are needless. Which
 Accusation will for ever remain a Won-
 der*

der to any who will but look into my Books. And that you your self may be sensible of the Injury you have done me in this Charge; and that you may see I am not ashamed of the *Temper* contrary to this which you have here ascribed to me; and that the World may judge of the *Treatment* I have met with from you; I will here transcribe some plain and express Sentences, out of my *Book* in which you may find as evident Declarations and Professions, to the contrary of what you have here charged me with, as can be expressed in Words.

Part 2. p. 87. After having endeavoured to show, upon your own Principles, that you may lawfully comply with the *Impositions*; and that the *Bishops* had as much Authority to prescribe those which are *scripted*, as those which are not *scripted* by you; and after having argued, in the same *only* of those who resorted to them, and in relation to those Arguments *only* which I had been before examining; I add these Words. *But you may now ask, Are you then for no Alterations? Yes, I am fully persuaded, there may be Alterations made for the Perfection,*
and

and Advantage of the Church. I profess, I shall always plead for such as are so; and that so much the more, if they be such, also as are likely to reconcile any Dissenter to it. Nay, upon this Account, I shall plead for such as are not so, provided the Church receive no Damage from them. And surely you will not say, that I am absolutely set against all Alterations, merely because I do not think every Argument, you have urged to be sufficient to prove them absolutely necessary. Again, Page 113. I plead in express Words for the Alteration of the Burial Office, which hath given you so much Disgust. Page 124. Speaking of some of the Apocryphal Lessons, I use such Expressions as do not certainly imply, that every Thing is just as it should be. Again, Page 134. Speaking of the Damatory Sentences in the Athanasian Creed, I am so open as to give it as my Opinion, that such Sentences had better been omitted. Further, Part 2d. p. 137. I have these Words, For my part; It is my Opinion, that there never was, nor will be, a National Constitution so perfect, but that something may be added to it, &c. and, immediately after; I shall never think any Objection strong enough

enough against such Additions or Alterations as may contribute to the farther Perfection of it. And again, p. 138. I tell you that I differ, as much as You, from those who think the National Establishment so perfect as to need no Amendments. And let any one but consider, what I have said, from p. 214, to p. 221, where I have compared Your Refusal of Communion, with the Refusal of Alterations for the sake of Peace; the Reasons why You cannot constantly Communicate, with the Reasons why some think themselves obliged to deny all Abatements; and read that Sentence, p. 221, Neither the one, nor the other, is any more unlawful, than the greatest Duties in the Christian Religion are: And then let him judge, whether I have not Reason to suspect, that I have been too bold, rather than too backward, in declaring my poor Opinion in this Cause; and whether I have given You the least foundation for taxing me, as You have done. These are all express Declarations, diametrically opposite to your Charge, besides many Intimations to the same effect. Had I been wholly silent upon this Head; or, had I only given some obscure Hints,

by

by the by, of my Judgment upon it. You could not have thought it justifiable, to have drawn up this *Accusation* against me: And you ought to have attributed my *Caution* to the *little Power*, which, You are sensible, Men of my Rank have, to make way for needful *Abatements*. But if You can, after such direct and positive Declarations to the contrary, and those repeated over and over again, and freely expressed upon all occasions, represent me as one who hath pretended that all *Amendments* are needless; as one who would hardly part with a Pin out of the *Tabernacle*, the *Union* might be the *Consequence*; as one that hath an insatiable Fondness for the *Impositions* You set up, and the like: I say, If, after all this, you can represent me as such an one, I confess, I know not what You will lay to my Charge next. I will not retaliate upon You, who have to absolutely and positively declared against *Union* upon the present *Terms*; and have *prophesied* that no *Period* will ever be put to our *Divisions* by your *Compliance*. In what You acknowledge to be *materially* lawful. But I would trust any one to determine, whether of Us is the more

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concerned for *Peace* and *Union*: You, who disdain *Concord*, unless others will come down to You; or I, who have endeavoured to shew, that a *Compliance*, on all sides, in what is *materially lawful*, for the sake of *Concord*, is a most reasonable and glorious *Virtue*.

I have, I acknowledge, endeavoured to represent to you the *Reasonableness* of *Conformity*, notwithstanding these *Impositions*; I have, indeed, shewn you what might be reply'd to you by the *Retainers* of the *Impositions*, in answer to those Arguments you have laid stress upon; I have, I confess, declar'd that *Episcopacy*, and a *Liturgy*, ought not to be given up to the unreasonable *Scruples* of Men; neither of which are scrupl'd by you: But *Peace* and *Union* are such valuable *Considerations* in my Account, that I would part with many a *Pin* out of the *Tabernacle*, to purchase them. All my Reasonings with You, who acknowledge *Conformity* to be *materially lawful*, are taken from these *Considerations*. And, indeed, the only *Scheme* You can justly fix upon me, is this, That a *Compliance* is, on each side, lawful, and commendable, for the sake
of

of *Peace and Union*. And surely, You cannot but see a difference between arguing with You about the *Lawfulness* of *Compliance* with these *Impositions*, on your own *Principles*, and having an *incurable Fondness* for them; but from the pleading in the Name of others, for the bare lawfulness of retaining them, in opposition to some particular *Books* only; and being averse to part with one of them, to purchase *Peace and Union*: Especially when I have in the same Breath openly declared my own Mind.

You tell the World in your *Præface* that You have carefully perused my *Books*. Now you cannot give a greater Demonstration that you have done so, than such *Representations*, and *Accusations* as these, are to the contrary. If we join to them what you say also, *viz.* that I have said nothing to that great *Difficulty* You there propose, (which yet I have expressly considered in my *last Book*, p. 82, 83, 84.) I am sure, I may say, that lesser Arguments than these have passed, amongst good *Criticks*, for a sufficient Proof, that such a particular *Book* had never been perused by such a par-

particular man; for how can a man well be supposed to have *carefully perused* a Book, when He is found to affirm, that *there is nothing* in it of what is professedly and plainly-spoken of; and to draw up an *Accusation* against the *Author*, directly contrary to several express Passages, and plain-declarations in it? I confess I am utterly at a loss, into what I should resolve this part of your *Behaviour* to me: Nor will I give my self leave to guess, whence it could proceed. I leave it to your self to consider of the nature of it. For my own part, I heartily forgive you; and assure you that I put as candid an interpretation upon it, as it can possibly bear.

This is some Account of the *Treatment* I have met with, at Your hands. And if I have given You sufficient reason to think that I have little deserved it, I hope, You will not be backward in making a *publick reparation*; that so those many, who will never perhaps look in to my Writings, may be undeceived by your self; who have deceived them into an ill opinion of me; and may, upon your authority, alter those notions of my *Temper*, and *Charity*, and *Averseness*

to *Union*, which they may, upon your authority, have taken up. All that read what I have written, I doubt not, will justify me in these particulars; and *these* will be prejudic'd against You, when they see you giving me such a *Sage*: And many that have not read my Books, will, I doubt not, take your word; and *these* will be prejudic'd against whatever I can advance hereafter, or you produce as my *Arguments*. And so the *Cause of Truth* must necessarily suffer, for the sake of what relates not to it. And this it is, that chiefly induc'd me to represent *those* things to You; to engage You, if possible, to do me *justice* as publickly as you have injur'd me; and to entreat you to alter this way of Writing: Which, I am very certain, cannot be for the *Interest of Truth*, or serve to commend it to the World. You will not own, that your *Cause* stands in need of such supports as these: And why then do you incline the World to believe so doth, by using them? You would pity, and desert it, if you thought it did: And why then, do you act as if you thought so? Could it serve the purposes

ses, of *Truth*, and *Goodness*, I would willingly submit to a thousand times more severe *Censures*, than what you have passed upon me. Nay, had I a desire to triumph over you; and were *that* the End of my appearing in this *Controversie*, I would even wish that you should go on to treat me after this manner, and give me this advantage over you. But as this is not my *Aim*; and as the *End* of my Writing was *Truth*, and not *Victory*; I neither desire that you should go on in a method which leads not to it; nor do I wish, that any one of those others whom you have needlessly provoked, may return this sort of *Usage* upon your self; because this also can serve no good purpose.

My *Expectations*, which seem a little to have disgusted you, were only, *fair, and ingenuous dealing, such as becomes a Man, and a Christian*. Forgive me this *Wrong*. I could not help hoping for this from you; nor can I think it would have been to your dishonour, if you had *this way answered my Expectations*. And tho' I have been once disappointed; yet I have fresh hopes that

you will, upon the review be perswad-
ed to alter the methods in which you
have begun to manage your part in this
Controversy; and that your *Judgment* will
not only *leave* you, but *incline* you, to write
after another manner.

It would be some satisfaction, amidst
all our variety in *Opinions* and *Practices*,
if we could but persuade our *scholars* in this
Controversy, to deal with one another as
Men sincerely engaged in the same search
after *Truth*; and to assist in the freeing
the *Cause* from all unnecessary *Embarras-
sments*, and the setting it in a due light.
But it is a deplorable Consideration, if all
the *Aggravations* you please, shall be
heaped upon the *Cause* of *Conformity*;
and, as soon as any Person endeavours
to Represent the *Unreasonableness* of them,
He shall meet with such *Treatment*, as
I have already given an account of;
and an *Answer* to his Arguments cannot
be drawn up, without an *Historical Ac-
count* of *High-Church* and *Low-Church*;
the third bare Repetition of *Dr. Hick-
man's Distinction of Spirits*; *Dr. Gou-
ding's Desire of more Ceremonies*; *the Arts
and Fetches to bribe Gentlemen's Stewards*;
the Church-men's gaping for Preferments;

neglecting their Cares; conversing most with the dissolute part of their Parishes; and dissembling such as are most Conscientious; and many other things, of no manner of Relation to the Controversy; and not so much as occasion'd by the least provocation. This, I say, is a deplorable Consideration: And these are not the means of coming to the merits of the Cause; but of preventing all good Correspondence, and every the least tendency to Union.

I have read your Book: And tho' I will not pay you so ill a Complement, as to tell you, that it hath rather confirmed than removed my Scruples about the Lawfulness of your Practice; yet I must own to you, that, as yet, I find nothing in it sufficient to make me alter my Mind; no, not so much as in my Agreement with Mr. Baxter. But I promise you to peruse it more carefully; and to give you my thoughts upon ev'ry part of it that concerns what I have written: And this I will do seriously and calmly. For methinks (as you well observe in your Preface) It becomes Divines to weigh maturely the Subjects they handle, and to write with Temper.

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If you think fit to alter the *Method* in which you have begun, I shall have more satisfaction in the prosecution of my design. But if you shall still persist in the same manner of handling *Me*, and the *Cause* we are engaged in ; I must say, that you are a very *Formidable Adversary* : and that the utmost care will be requisite on my side, lest such a *Treatment* should, at length, break in upon my *Temper* ; and I should be provoked to return you a like Usage ; and so, the Controversy between Us should be carried on by mutual Affronts and Unkindnesses ; and end at last in *Heat* without *Light*, to the dishonour of *God*, and the shame of our common *Christianity*. Pardon this necessary freedom I have taken with you, and believe me

Your Heartly

Well-wisher and Friend,

B. H.

P O S T.

POSTSCRIPT.

SIR,

YOU tell me, that You your self would not have neglected Episcopal Ordination, had not You apprehended your self under a necessity so to do. You must acknowledge, that there can be no necessity for any other Ordination, unless there be a necessity for a Separation. You must be sensible, that there can be no necessity for a Separation, unless Constant Lay-communion be either materially, or circumstantially unlawful. That it is not materially unlawful, You have often acknowledged. I only, therefore, beg leave to ask, whether the whole of the Cause do not visibly depend upon this one Point, whether Constant Communion be circumstantially unlawful: And, whether any thing can demonstrate your Ordinations to be approved of God, but the affirmative side of this Question clearly made out. Why then should you chuse to confound your Readers in a maze of Quotations, and Digressions; and to set them against Me for saying no more than
what

what may be resolved into this; rather than once to let them into the true state of the Question between Us? And till that be clearly demonstrated; or, till you can shew, that I make use of any Methods in this Controverfy, condemned by the Laws of God; I shall think it contrary to my duty to take Gamaliel's Counsel; and unworthy of Mr. Calamy to apply it, in this Cause.

Def. P.
238.

F I N I S.

ADVERTISEMENT.

A Preservative against Separation from the Church of *England*. Wherein the Unlawfulness of it is proved. And the chief Objections of the Dissenters Answered. By *Solomon Pagis*, Rector of *Enruberen* in *Somersetshire*.

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