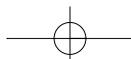


**CHURCH GOVERNMENT  
AND  
CHURCH COVENANT  
DISCUSSED**

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# **Church Government and Church Covenant**

by

**Richard Mather**

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It is planned to reprint this work with John Cotton's Writings on church government, including *The True Constitution of a Particular Visible Church; A Sermon delivered at Salem, 1636; Reply to a Letter by Lord Say and Seal; The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England; The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared; Of the Holiness of Church Members; Certain Queries Tending to Accomodation and Communion of Presbyterian and Congregational Churches;* and *A Defence of Mr John Cotton from the Imputation of Self-Contradiction* (including John Owen's Preface).

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**Church-Government**  
**AND**  
**Church-Covenant**

**Discvssed,**

In an Answer of the Elders of the severall Churches in  
*NEW-ENGLAND*

*To two and thirty Questions, sent over to them by divers Ministers in  
England, to declare their judgments therein.*

Together with an Apologie of the said Elders in *New-England* for  
Church-Covenant, sent over  
in Answer to Master *Bernard* in the  
yeare 1639.

As also in an Answer to nine Positions about Church-Government.  
And now published for the satisfaction of all who desire resolution in  
those points.

*LONDON,*

Printed by R. O. and G. D. for *Benjamin Allen,*  
*Anno Dom. 1643.*

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TO THE

**READER.**

*IT is not hard to believe that such discourses as this wil meet with divers  
censures, the prophane and ignorant loathing Christ, and anything concerning*

him; the Formalist accounting such truths troublesom that may engage him in the change of his opinions and practises, and some of the wisest will be apt to question the tyming such light as this: yea doubtles this pamphlet-gluttred age will so looke upon it, and lay it by.

But because I doe conceive that this sword will not be sheath'd which is now drawn, till Church-work be better known, and mor countenanced, and since safety is laid up in the Temple, Psa. 27. 3,4,5. I could not but help on this, which attended and practised may prove our security next to Christ. These were either sudden answers to our doubting and inquiring Brethren, or some satisfaction rendred about our so much slighted Church-Covenant, which we could not but thinke might come to view, for the present stay to some faithfulle soules, that call for light, and intend to use it well: for others, of what kind soever, we must leave their harder thoughts, among those usuall loads of scandals, that men our our judgement must carry, especially if zeale for the Truth draw them forth to publike observation; nor doe we purpose (God helping us) to succumbe under calumny, being the livery of quarter times then these, let us bee viler still, so God and his Arke may be more glorious. Yet this I doe professe for my selfe and Brethren that as we have not bin dealt with, nor convinc'd of any offence, so we shall ever be ready to give an account of that hope which is in us, being call'd thereunto; in the meane time we over looke these barkings of black mouthes, and wish a good Comment be made upon the text of our plaine meaning.

The onely way I know to reach Gods mind in Worship will be to love the truth for it's owne sake: Who hath not observed that the first step to error is the declining truth in love to it?

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Hence

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Hence Popery begat her first brat, and hath nurst it up with the same milke; we would earnestly desire that none would call that unseasonable or unreasonable, which seems even now to call for at the calling of this Synode, and will carry so much Reason with it, as God and his truth will owne more tendernesse and respect to our Brethren we know not how to shew, who sent us these 32. Questions, no other dealing would we have from our brethren not consenting with us. Some Rivers have him noted to differ in the colours of the water, yet running in the same Channell: let Jesus Christ be lifted up by us all; let us love him whilst wee dispute about him.

Presbytery and Independency (as it is cal'd) are the wayes of Worship and Church fellowship now looked at, since (we hope) Episcopacy is coffind out, and will be buried without expectation of another resurrection.

We are much charged with what we own not, *viz*: Independency, when as we know not any Churches Reformed, or looking at sister Churches for helpe then ours doe, onely we cannot have rule yet discovered from any friend or enemy, that we should be under Canon, or power of any other Church; under their Counsell we are. We need not tell the wise whence Tyranny grew in Churches, and how common wealths got their pressure in the like kind.

These be our sighs and hearty wishes, that selfe may be conquered in this poore Nation, which shuts the doore against these truths. Know (good Reader) we do not hereby go about to whistle thee out of any known good way of God. Commonly Questions and Answers cleare up the way, when other Treatises leave us to darkness. Read them, and what we say for a Church-Covenant, it may save charge and time in reading other Bookes, remember wee strive not here for masteryes, but give an account of our practise, wherein if thou know'st we faile *Candidus imperti*; if we agree let us worke by our plat-forme; and may thy soul flourish as a greene herth or watered garden. So prayeth

*Thine heartily*

H. PETER

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THE XXXII  
**QUESTIONS**  
 STATED.

1. *Whether the greatest part of the English there (by estimation) be not as yet unadmitted to any Congregation among you, and the Reasons thereof?*
2. *What things doe you hold to be Essential and absolutely necessary to the being of a true Visible Church of Christ?*
3. *Whether doe you not hold all Visible Believers to bee within the Visible Church as Members thereof, and not without in the Apostles sense, 1 Cor. 5. and therefore ought so to be acknowledged, and accepted in all Congregations wheresoever they shall come, and are so knowne: and ought if (they desire, and be not otherwise unfit) of right to be permitted to partake in all Gods ordinances and Church priviledges there, so farre as they personally concerne themselves, although they be not Ass yet fixed Members in particular Covenant, either with that Congregation where for the present they reside, nor with any other?*

4. *Whether you doe not hold that Baptisme rightly (for*

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*substance) partaked doth make them that are so Baptized, Members of the Visible Church: and so to have a right (at least quoad nos) to all the priviledges thereof (so farre as they are otherwise fit) untill they be cast out (if they so deserve) by Excommunication.*

5. *Whether doe you admit Children under age as Members of the Church, together with, and in the Admission of their Parent or Parents: So as thenceforth they may partake of all Church priviledges (being otherwise fit) without any other personall profession of Faith, or entring into Church Covenant, when they shall come of yeares? and how long doe you count them under age?*

6. *Whether do not you admit Orphans under age, with and in their Guardians?*

7. *Whether doe you admit or reuse Children under age only according to the present estate of their nearest Parents? Or doe you not admit them if any of their next Ancestors before their parents were believers?*

8. *Whether doe you require of all persons of age, whom you admit Members of any Church?*

1. *A publike vocall declaration of the manner and soundnesse of their conversion?*

2. *A publike profession of their faith concerning the Articles of Religion.*

3. *An expresse verball covenanting to walke with the said Church in particular, in Church fellowship.*

4. *And not to depart from the said Church afterward without the consent thereof: or how doe you hold and practise in these things?*

9. *Whether doe you hold all, or the most of our Parish assemblies in Old-England to be true Visible Churches of Christ; with which you may lawfully joyne in every part of Gods true worship (if occasion served thereto:) or if not all or the most,*

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*then what ones are those of which you so account, and with which you durst so partake or joyne; and in what respects? And why be not the rest such as well as they?*

## FIRST PROOF-READING DRAFT

10. If you hold that any of our parishionall Assembles are true Visible Churches, and that the Members thereof are all, or some of them (at least) members of true visible Churches, then whether will you permit such members (at least) as are either famously knowne to your selves to be godly, and doe bring sufficient Testimoniall thereof from others that are so knowne, or from the Congregation it selfe whereof they were members here, to partake with you in all the same Ordinances, and parts of Gods true worship in any of your Congregations (as by occasion they may be there) in the same manner, and with the like liberty, as you would permit any that might happily come unto you from any of the Churches of *Geneva, France, the Low-Countreyes*, or yet from any one Church to another among yourselves: Suppose from some Church about *Connecticut*, or that of *Plimouth*, &c. Vnto the Church at *Boston, New-Towne, Dorchester*, &c. Or if not, what may be the Reason thereof?

11. *Whether doe you hold our present standing in our Parish Assemblies here in OLD-ENGLAND, to bee lawfull and safe to be continued in, or how farre it may be so?*

12. *Whether doe you hold that every Believer is alwayes bound to joyne himselfe as a fixed Member to some one particular Congregation, so as if he doe not, and so oft and so long as he doth it not, so oft and so long he is without the Church in the Apostles sence, 1 Cor. 5. as an Heathen or Publican, out of the Kingdome of Christ, and possibly of salvation, according to that maxime in divinity, Extra Ecclesiam non est salus.*

13. *Whether doe you thinke it lawfull and convenient that a company of private and illiterate persons (into a Church body combined) should themselves ordinarily examine, elect,*

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*ordaine, and depose their owne Ministers of the word, without the assistance of any other Ministers of other Churches, where the same may be had?*

14. *Whether doe you hold that every small Company of seaven, or nine, or twenty, or fourty persons, combined into a Church body, be such a Church (as by the ordinance of Christ) hath, and ought to have all power, and exercise of Church Government: So as they may transact all Ecclesiasticall businesses independently amongst themselves?*

15. *Whether do you give the exercise of all Church power of Government to the whole Church, or to the Presbiters thereof alone? and if to those, then we desire to know what act of Government, and Superior authority (properly so*

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

*called) may the Presbiters doe, more then any other member may doe, or without the particular consent of the rest, wee crave to have those particular Acts mentioned: and how, and over whom in those Acts the Presbiters doe rule (in propriety of speaking) more then the rest of the Congregation doe?*

16. Whether doe you not permit Women to Vote in Church matters?

17. Whether in Voting doe the Major part alwayes, or at anytime, carry Eccl-siasticall matters with you, or in what things doth it, in what not?

18. what meanes have you to preserve your Churches in Vnity and Verity, or to correct or reduce any Church erring in Doctrine or practice. As,

1. Whether you have any plat-form of Doctrine and Discipline agreed upon: or if you have not, whether meane you to have one, and when; and thinke you it lawfull and expedient so to have?
2. Whether have you combined your selves together into Classes, or purpose so to doe, so as to doe no weighty matter without their counsell and consent?

3. Or

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3. Or give you any power to Synods and Councells to determine and order things that cannot otherwise be ended, so as that their determination shall bind the particular Churches so assembled to due obedience, in case they decree nothing but according to Truth and right, and peaceable suffering, in case they should doe otherwise? Or what other course you have, or intend to have for that end aforesaid?

19. Whether hold you, that each particular Church may lawfully make such Laws or Orders Ecclesiastical for the Government of it selfe, and the Members thereof; for decency, order, and Edification, as shall oblige all her Members, and may not be omitted without sinne?

20. Wherein hold you that the whole essence of a Ministers calling doth consist: As 1. whether is Election by the People it, yea or no? Or 2. is it so Essentiall, as that without it, the Ministers calling is a meere nullity? Or 3. is Ordination as Essentiall a part thereof, as the Peoples Election? Or 4. is it but a meer formality and solemnity of their calling?

21. Whether doe you hold it lawfull for meer lay or private men to ordaine Ministers in any case?

22. What Essentiall difference put you between the Office of Pastor and Teacher, and doe you observe the same difference inviolably; and do not your

## FIRST PROOF-READING DRAFT

*Teachers by vertue of that Office give themselves usually to application of doctrine as, well as your Pastours? and do they not also usually apply the Seales?*

23. *What authority or Eminency have your Preaching Elders, above your sole Ruling Elders, or are they both equalls?*

24. *Whether may a Minister of one congregation (being thereto requested) do as a Minister any act of his Ministry (as Preach, Baptize, Administer the Lords Supper, Ordain, &c. in and unto other Congregations besides his owne?*

25. *Whether hold you that a Minister of a Congregation,*

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*leaving or loosing his place (suppose without his fault, doe withall lose both Nomen and Esse of his ministry, and do become a meere Lay, or private man, untill he be a new elected, and ordained?*

26. *Whether doe you allow, or thinke it lawfull to allow and settle any certain & stinted maintenance upon your Ministers?*

27. *Whether doe you permit and call upon meer Lay and private men (neither being in the ministerie nor intended to it) ordinarily to preach or Prophecie publiquely in, and before the Congregation? and whether thinke you that prophesying mentioned, 1 Cor. 14. be to be understood as such, and be an ordinary and standing order of God in the Church?*

28. *Whether doe you allow and call upon your people publiquely before all the Congregation to propound Questions, move doubts, & argue with their ministers of matters delivered either by them or others, either at the same, or some other time?*

29. *Whether hold you that the conversion of sinners to God is ordinarily the proper fruit and effect of the word Preached, by a Minister alone, and that by vertue of his Office alone, or that it is alike common to ministers, and Lay persons, so they be gifted to preach?*

30. *Whether all and every of your Churches (including Plimouth, &c.) do precisely observe the same course both in Constitution and Government of themselves?*

31. *Whether would you permit any Companie of Ministers and People (being otherwise in some measure approvable) to sit downe by you, and set up and practise another forme of Discipline, enjoying like libertie with your selves in the Commonwealth, and accepted as a sister Church by the rest of your Churches?*

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

32. *Whether hold you it lawfull to use any set forms of Prayer in publique or private, as the Lords prayer and others, either made by himselfe that useth the same, or else by some other man?*

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THE  
**ANSWERS**  
 TO THE  
**AFOREGOING Questions.**  
*The first Question Answered.*

*ALL the English and others also are freely admitted to be present in our Congregations, at the reading of the Scriptures, and exposition thereof (which is wont alwayes to goe along therewith) at the preaching of the word, singing of Psalmes, Prayers, Admitting of Members, and dispensing of Censures; And many also are admitted to Church Communion, and so to partake in Church Ordinances and priviledges, as Sacraments, power of Election, Censures, &c. though many also there are who are not yet admitted to the Church Communion. But whether is the greater number, those that are admitted hereunto, or those that are not we cannot certainly tell? But in the Churches in the Bay. Where most of us are best acquainted, we may truely say, that for the heads of Families, those that are admitted are farre more in number then the other: besides whom there are likewise sundry chil-*

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dren and Servants that are Admitted also. And for the Reasons why many are not yet received to Church Communion, they are sundry. 1. Many are not admitted because they are not yet knowne. Every yeare hitherto God hath replenished the Country with many new commers, and these at the first are not suddainly taken in as Members of Churches, till by time there have been some triall of them, and better occasion to know them what they are. Sometimes once a yeare there are in the Land many hundreds, and some thousands of this sort. 2. When by time they come to be knowne many do appeare to be carnall, and give no Testimony of being Members of Christ, and theretore if they should offer themselves

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to be Members of Churches the Churches would not see warrant to receive them, because the Church is the body of Christ. 3. Soules that are Godly do of their own accord for a time forbear to offer themselves, till they be better acquainted with the Church and Ministry where they intend to joyne, and with the wayes in which the Churches walke in this Country, and till they be better informed what are the duties of Church Members. 4. Those that are knowne to be Godly, are all admitted in some Church or other presently, upon their own desire, when they offer themselves thereto: except any have given offence by walking (in any particular in their Conversation) otherwise then becomes the Gospell; and then such are to give satisfaction to them to whom they have given offence, by acknowledging their offence, and shewing repentance for it, and then they are Admitted.

To. 2. It is one thing what Churches ought to be by the appointment of Jesus Christ, another, what weaknesse and swervings from his appointment, he may beare with all for a time, before he renounce and cast off a People from being his Church. In respect of the former our Answer is, That when a Visible Church is to be erected, planted or constituted by the Appointment of Christ, it is necessary that the matter of it, in regard of quality, should be Saints by

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calling, Visible Christians and Believers, 1 *Cor.* 1. 2. *Eph.* 1. 1. And in respect of Quantity no more in number in the dayes of the New Testament, but so, many as may meet in one Congregation. 1 *Cor.* 11. 20 & 14. 23. *Acts* 14. 27. & 15. 22. 30. And the forme, a gathering together of these visible Christians a combining and uniting of them into one body, by the bond of an holy Covenant, for which we refer you to the Apologie of the Churches In *N.E.* sent the last year in way of Answer to Mr. *Bernard*. For the latter we deny not, our visible Churches rightly constituted at the first, may degenerate, and great corruptions may grow therein, both in respect of matter and forme, and likewise in respect of their walking and Administrations, and yet the Lord in his patience may beare long with them, before he give them a Bill of Divorce, and make them *Lo-ammi*, not a People; as the example of the Church of Israel in the old Testament. Of the Church of *Corinth*, the Churches of *Galatia*, the 7 Churches of *Asia*, and others in the New Testament,

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

doe abundantly manifest. But what degrees of corruption may be, before the soule as it were, and life, and being of a Church be destroyed, is hard for us precisely and punctually to determine; or to say thus farre a Church may erre, and yet remaine a Church; but if it proceed any further, then it ceaseth to be a Church any more; onely in the generall this we observe, the Lord doth not presently cast off a Church or give them a Bill of Divorce, no not for fundamentall errors in Doctrine, or Idolatry in Worship, or Tyranny in Government, till after obstinate and rebellious rejection of Reformation, and the meanes thereof: for all these were found in the Church of *Israel*, when they crucified Christ, yet the Apostles rejected them not, till after the light of *Grace* offered, and blasphemously rejected, *Act.* 13 45. 46. But if your selves have so Studied this point as to have ripened and formed thoughts thereto, we should gladly receive light from you.

To: 3. We do not know any visible Church of the *N. T.* pro-

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perly so called, but onely a particular Congregation; and therefore when this Question in the first and last clause of it speakes of Believers within the visible Church as Members thereof, although they be not Members of that particular Congregation, where for the present they reside, nor of any other: this speech seemes to us according to our apprehension to imply a contradiction. They that are within the visible Church as Members thereof, must needs be Members of some particular Congregation, because all visible Churches are Congregationall, as Mr. *Baine* sheweth at large from the Church of *Antioch*, *Act.* 14. 27. the Church at *Corinth*, *1 Cor.* 11. & 14. and other examples and Reasons with Answers to the objections to the contrary in his *Dioces. Triall Quest.* 1. Where to we referre you in this Point; neither is he alone in this Tenent, for Mr. *Parker*, and many other teach the same. Those silenced and deprived Ministers that wrote the Booke called, *The Christian and modest offer of Disputation*, laying downe 16. Propositions which they offer to maintaine against the Prelats, give this for the fourth of them *viz. There is no true visible Church of Christ, but a particular ordinary Congregation onely.*

Doubtlesse every true visible Church hath power from Christ to exercise Excommunication and other Ordnances of Christ, so that they proceed

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therein according to the Rules of the word, 1 *Cor.* 5. 4. 5. *Mat.* 18. 17. Now Dr. *Whitakers* sheweth against *Bellarmino*, that Excommunication belongs not to the universall Church, but onely to a particular Congregation, *Qui justè excommunicantur*, saith he, *co satanæ ????? esse ?????, non tamen posse propriem, Dicit electos ex Ecclesia Catholica, Quia Excommunicationon Catholica, sed particularis Ecclesiæ censura est.* De *Eccles.* Qu. 1. c. 6. Wherefore if Excommunication which belongs to the visible Church, belongeth to a partlcular Congregation, it followeth, that there is no visible Church, but onely a particular Congregation. Secondly, As all visible Believers are not without Christ but in Christ, according as they are believers, so we easily grant, that those without, of whom the

Apostle

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Apostle speakes, 1 *Cor.* 5. were unbelievers, Pagans, and Heathens, both without Christ, and also without the visible Church. For those that were in Christ, and believers in Him, were not wont to abstaine from joynjng to some particular Congregation or other; and so it came to passe, that as they were in Christ by their Faith, so by such joynjng they became also to be within the visible Church. 3. But this we conceive is cleare also, that unlesse Believers be Members of this or that particular Congregation to whose inspection and Government they have commended themselves in the Lord, they also in some respect may be said to be without, that is without the jurisdiction and power of the visible Church, and without right to the priviledges of it, as long as they continue in that State: for the Church hath nothing to do, either to dispence censures and Church priviledges to Pagans, who are without all Churches, and without *Christ* also; or to such Christians who though they are not without *Christ*, yet are not within any particular Church: for neither the Church, nor the Ministers thereof may be [[GREEK]]*ἀλλοτιοεπίσκοτος*[[GREEK]]. And though those without of whom the Apostle speakes, 1 *Cor.* 5. were Pagans and Heathens, both without *Christ*, and without the visible Church also, yet when hee speaketh of Judgeing, and faith they might judge them that are within, and not Judge them that are without, hee must not be understood as if he meant it simply of being in Christ or without Christ, and no more then so, but also of being in that particular Congregation, and without it: for it is plaine, that those that were in *Christ*, if they were not also within their particular Congregation, they had nothing to do to judge them; and those that

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were within their particular Congregation, them they might judge, though they were not in *Christ*. 4. And that Church priviledges do not belong to Believers, as such, but onely to such as withall are Members of some particular Church: the Grounds and Reasons in the Answer to the third and fourth Proposition sent the last year, do seeme to us to make manifest, whereto we do referre you, for further Answer to this Question.

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*To: 4.* It is an opinion of the Anabaptists, that the Church is made by Baptisme, and therefore when they constitute or erect a Church, they do it by being all of them Baptized, which was the manner of Mr. *Smith*, Mr. *Helxis*, and the rest of that company when they set up their Church: The Papists also do imagine, that men enter into the Church by Baptisme and it is said, that their Founts were set neere the doores of their Temples, to signifie mens entring into the Church by Baptisme, and they thought themselves to be christened, or made christian soules by being Baptized. But we do not believe that Baptisme doth make men Members of the Church, nor that it is to be Administred to them that are without the Church, as the way and meanes to bring them in, but to them that are within the Church, as a seale to continue the Covenant of God unto them. For

1. This is one point of the dignity and priviledge of the Church, that Baptisme and all Church Ordinances are given and committed to it, as Circumcision, and Church Ordinances were given and concredited to the Church of the Jewes, *Joh. 7. 22.* Now if Baptisme in its first being and institution be given as a benefit and priviledge to the Church, then Baptisme is not that which Blakes the Church; but the Church is presupposed and must be before it, for the dones, or persons to whom a thing is given, must needs be before the gift that is given to them.

2. The nature and use of Baptisme is to be a seale to confirme the Covenant of Grace between God and his Church, and the Members thereof, as circumcision also was, *Rom. 4. 11.* Now a seale is not to make a thing that was not but to confirme something that was before; and so Baptisme is not that which gives being to the Church, nor to the Covenant, but is for confirmation thereof. To bring in Baptisme before the Covenant, and before the Church with whom God makes the Covenant and then

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to bring in the Church afterwards, is to make Baptisme a seale unto a Blanke or to a falshood. When the Jesuits of *Rhemes* had said that *Christ* sent

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sent 12 Apostles to the Jewes to move them to penance, and so by Baptisme to make them of his Church. And that *Paul* was sent to the Gentiles to move them also to faith and penance, and by Baptisme to make them of his Church. This saying of making men of the Church by Baptisme, though uttered by them, as it were by the way, and not being the chiefe scope of their discourse, yet seemed to Mr. *Cartwright* so erroneus and unfound, that hee would not let it passe without bearing speciall witnesse against the same. And therefore in opposition thereunto he hath there words, and in another Character for more conspicuuesse, *viz.* That Baptisme makes not men of the Church, but sealeth their incorporation into it, hath been declared afore. *Argument of Acts 6. 1.* And that Catechisme which is commonly said to be penned by our Reverend Brother Mr. *Ball*, or Mr. *Nicholas*, now with God, giving this for the definition of Baptisme, that it is a Sacrament of our ingrafting into Christ, communion with him, and entrance into the Church, doth in the Exposition plainly declare, that when they called Baptisme a Sacrament of our entrance into the Church, they did not meane that Baptisme made men Members of the Church, but signified and sealed that they were Members afore: The seed of Abraham say they, *Pag 144, Gal. 3. 7.* or children of Christian Parents are within the Covenant, are Christians and Members of the Church, *1 Cor. 7. 14. Rom. 11. 16.* Baptisme therefore doth not make them Christian soules, but doth solemnly signifie and Scale their ingrafting into Christ, and that communion which the Members of *Christ* have with him their head, and doth confirme, that they are acknowledged Members of the Church, and entred into it, *1 Pet. 3. 21.*

3. The Lord hath had his Church when there was neither Baptisme nor circumcision, and therefore Baptisme or circumcision cannot be that which constitutes the Church. The Church is one and the same in essence from the begining of the world to the end thereof, *viz.* A company of People combined together by holy Covenant with God,

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## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

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and one with another, and this hath been before Baptisme and likewise before Circumcision in the dayes of the Patriarks afore *Abraham*. Yea it Baptisme now, or Circumcision in former time did make men Members of the Church, then for forty yeares together there was no making Members of the Church, for so long circumcision was discontinued, when Baptisme was not yet instituted, *Joss. 5. 2, 3. &c.* And so by this meanes all that Generation of the Israelites that were not circumcised till their comming over *Jordan* unto *Gilgall* should have bin no Members of the Church afore that time of their circumcision, which is contrary to the Scripture, which as it gives the name and title of a Church to the body of this people, when they were in the Wildernesse, *Act. 7. 38.* (and they were in the Wildernesse 40. yeares, in the latter parts of which time there were few left remaining that had beene circumcised) so it witnesseth that afore this time of their circumcision they were in covenant with God and his Church, *Deut. 29. 10, 11, 12.* For that covenant was not made with their Fathers that came out of Egypt, and were circumcised there, because that generation was consumed in the Wildernesse for their murmuring afore this time: but this covenant was made with the children, that as yet were uncircumcised, and therefore it was not circumcision that made them Members of the Church.

4. Baptisme hath been Administred, and no Church nor Members made thereby and men have been made Members of Churches and not then Baptised, but before. And therfore it is not Baptisme that makes men Members of the Church. Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the Region round about Jordan were Baptised of *Iohn* confessing their sinnes, *Mat. 3. 6.* And Christ made and Baptised more Disciples then *Iohn*, *Ioh. 4. 1.* And yet neither Christ nor John did make new Churches, nor gather men into them themselves, both the one and the other living and dying Members of the Jewish Church, which was not yet dissolved, untill upon their rejecting of Christ (not onely of his person upon

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the croffe, put of his Gospel in blaspheming and persecuting Grace offered them) the two staves of beauty and bands were broken and cut assunder, whereby God did breake the Covenant that he had made with that People, and the Brotherhood between Juda and Israel, that is, he did un church them, *Zech. 11. 10, 11. &c.* to 15. So that here is Baptisme

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Administred by John and Christ, and yet men not received thereby into the Church as Members, for they were Members long afore.

Againe, when any of those of Jerusalem, Judea, and the Region round about Jordan, that were Baptised of John, or any of those, many more that were Baptised of Christ, were afterward joyned as Members to those christian Churches in Judea, Samaria, and Galile, *Act. 9. 31.* (As no doubt many of them were) they were not made Members of those Christian Churches by being Baptised, for they were Baptised long afore by John and Christ, so that those men were Members of the Jewish Church, which was not yet dissolved, and were Baptised afterward. And therefore it was not Baptisme that made them members, either of the one Church or of the other.

5. There are sundry Inconveniencies, which for ought we see will unavoidably follow, if we shall say that Baptisme makes men members of the Church; For first, if Baptisme be that which constituts the Church, then Baptisme may be dispenced by them that are no Ministers, for extraordinary Ministers, as Apostles, and such like are now ceased, and ordinary Ministers have no power to dispence Baptisme to any but onely to them that are already members of the Church, seeing their Commission and power is limited to the Church, and the flock of God over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, *Act. 20. 28.* Besides, the Church is before the Ministers, seeing the power of choosing Ministers is given by Christ unto the Church; and therefore if Baptisme be that which makes the Church, then men must be Baptised afore there be Ministers to Baptise them, and consequently without Ministers.

Secondly,

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Secondly, if Baptisme rightly for substance partaked, doth make men members of the visible Church, then it will follow that Papists are members of the Church: for they have Baptisme so farre right for substance, as that it needs not be repeated. But Mr. *Perkins* teacheth that this Baptisme proves not the Church of *Rome*, of which all Papists are members, to be any true Church of God, and gives sundry Reasons for the same, in Answer to them, that from Baptisme rightly for substance Administred in Popish Assemblies, would prove those Assemblies to be true Churches: *Exposit. of Creede*, In the Article, *I believe the holy Catholique Church.*

And surely for our parts we doe not see how it will be avoided, but if Baptisme made men members of the visible Church, either Papists are

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members of the visible Church, and the Church of *Rome*, of which they are Members, a true visible Church, or else we must renounce their Baptisme as corrupt and false, even for the substance of it; and so all such as shall be converted from amongst them, must be Baptised againe, as not having had the substance of Baptisme before: such dangerous consequences do follow from saying, that Baptisme, rightly for substance partaked, doth make them that are so Baptised Members of the visible Church.

*Object.* If any shall say, *Though Baptisme do not make men Members of the Church, yet it proves them to be Members as a cause, is proved by the effect, or an Antecedent by a consequent: and therefore all Baptised Persons should be admitted to all Church priviledges as Members, wherever they become.*

*Answer.* We Answer, that this will not hold neither, but suppose a man have received Baptisme as a Member of some visible Church, which ought not to have been Administred to him, had he not been a Member, yet this doth not prove him to be a member still and so give him right to all Church Priviledges, though hee do remaine always as a Baptised person; and the Reason is, because his Baptisme may remain, when his Church fellowship may be dissolved, as that he can have no right to Sacraments thereby: the

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Church member-ship of a Baptised Person may be thus dissolved by sundry meanes. 1. By some sentence of Excommunication justly passed against him for his sinne; for that censure puts him away from the Communion of the Church, 1 *Cor.* 5. 2. 13. and makes him as an Heathen or Publican, *Mat.* 18. 17. So that in that case he can have no right to Sacraments by his Member-ship, though he still continue a Baptised Person. 2. By his voluntary departing from the Church and the communion of the same when it is unjustly done, 1 *Ioh.* 2. 19. *Iude* 19. *Heb.* 10. 25. In which case Dr. *Ames* resolves such Schismatics to be no Members of the visible Church. *Cas. Cons. Lib.* 5. c. 12. Q. 4. *Resp.* 3. 3. By the dissolution of the Church of which he was a Member; for Church Member-ship is in relation to a Church, and therefore if the Church cease the Membership must cease also; *Reluntum & correlatum Qua talia sint simul, adeoque se ????? et tollunt.* Now a Church may be dissolved, 1. By Apostacie and Gods giving hem a bill of Divorce thereupon, *ver.* 3. 8. When yet there may be in such a Church some particular person

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or persons deare to God, who in such a case are bid to come out from such an Apostate Church, *Rev.* 18. 4. *Hos.* 2. 1, 2. & 4. 15. 17. 2. By death, as by some grivous Pestilence or Masacre, &c. in which case one particular person surviving, cannot be counted a Member of a Church, when that Church is extinct of which he was, and yet he remains a person Baptised if he were Baptised afore. 3. If that be true which is taught by Dr. *Ames Cas. Cons. Lib.* 5. c. 12. Q. 3. *Resp.* 2. that in some cases it is lawfull and necessary to withdraw from the communion of a true Church which seemes to be agreeable to grounds of Scriprure, *Ephes.* 5. 11. 2. *Chro.* 11. 14. then that will be another case wherein Church Membership is disannulled; for how a man can be counted in that state a Member of a Church, when hee hath lawfully and necessarily withdrawn himselfe from the communion of the Church, we do not understand. And this shall suffice for Answer unto this Point, whether Baptisme make men

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Members of a visible Church, which as we conceive, is the scope and drift of this Question. Yet before we proceed to make Answer to the next, something also may be said concerning some passages in your Amplification of this fourth Question. As first concerning those words wherein you aske, *Whether they that are Baptised have not right*, quoad nos, *to all the priviledges of the visible Church* (so farre as they are otherwise fit:) concerning which words we may say, 1. That those words of your Parenthesis (*so farre as they were otherwise fit:*) doe plainly imply, that in your judgement, though one hath received Baptisme, yet this doth not give him right to the priviledges of the visible Church, unlesse other things do Concurrre to make him fit, wherein we consent with you. Now if this be so, then this seemes to be an Answer to that which (as we conceive) is the maine intent of the Question. For how can it be, that Baptisme alone should give men right to the priviledges of the Church (as Members thereof, as the Question seemes to import) when in the Amplification of it, it is granted, that Persons Baptised have no such right, except other things doe concurrre to make them fit: we doe not see how these things doe stand together.

Secondly, those words *as farre as they were otherwise fit:*) as they seeme to imply that which contradicts the maine scope of the Question; so they are so generall and of such a latitude, as that when the Question is

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Answered the Reader is still left at uncertainty: For if such a Parenthesis may be annexed (*so farre as they were otherwise fit:*) then the like Question may be applied to many other things besides Baptisme, and would receive the very same Answer, as in case of Baptisme it would receive. As for example, if one should aske whether Morall honestie or litterall knowledge in the Scriptures, or Historicall Faith, or the use of Reason, whether any of these doe not give men right to Church priviledges, so farre as they are otherwise fit? You know the Answer would be, Yea. For though none of there be sufficient alone, to give men right to the priviledges of the

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Church, yet they are such as they that have them, have right so farre as they are otherwise fit, and so if it were granted that they that have received Baptisme have right, as you say, to all the priviledges of the Church, to farre as they are otherwise fit: yet as this doth not prove that Baptisme alone doth give men such a right, so still it remains to be considered, and more particularly declared, what those other things are that besides Baptisme must concurre to make one fit; and unlesse those things be expressed in particular, the Question with such a generall Qualification as is here set down, may be Answered affirmatively, and yet the Reader will be still in the darke, and as much to seeke as before.

Lastly, those words in the latter end of this Question had need to be further cleared, wherein you aske, *Whether Baptised persons have not right to all the priviledges of the Church, quoad nos, until they be cast out by Excommunication?* For suppose an open Blasphemer, a Sabath-breaker, an Adulterer, a Drunkard, &c. that deserves to be Excommunicated, be not proceeded against according to rule, but be suffered to continue in the Church through bribery or other corruption of the times, would you say that such a person had right either before God, or *quoad nos* to all the priviledges of the Church, onely because hee is Baptised? Surely your words doe import so much, unlesse that Parenthesis (*so far as they are otherwise fit*) may be any helpe in this case. And yet we hope you doubt not but such Doggs and Swine have no right either *quoad nos*, or otherwise, to the priviledges of the Church as long as they continue in that State, although they have received Baptisme, and although through the sinfull neglect of men they be not cast out by Excommunication, as they doe deserve; For if grosse sinners have such right to Church

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priviledges, onely because they are Baptised then by what right can the Church cast them out by Excommunication, as you seeme to confesse that she may: for can she cast men out from such priviledges whereunto they have right? doubtlesse such proceedings were not

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right, unlesse the Church have such a Transcendent power as the Apostles never had for they could do nothing against the truth but for the truth, nor had they any power for destruction, but for Edification, 2 Cor. 13. 8. 10. Wherefore we dare not say such men have right to Church priviledges (*quoad nos*) untill they be actually cast out, because before they be cast out, it must be cleare to the Church that they have no such right, or else she can have no lawfull Right to cast them out.

To 5. & 6. 1. Infants with us are Admitted Members in and with their Parents, so as to be Admitted to all Church priviledges of which Infants are capable, as namely to Baptisme; and therefore when Parents are once Admitted, their Children are thereupon Baptised, if they were not Baptised afore, as sometimes it falls out. 2. But whether they should thereupon be admitted to all other priviledges when they come to age, without any personall profession of Faith, or entring into Church Covenant, is another Question, of which by Reason of the Infancy of these Churches, we have had no occasion yet to determine what to Judge or practise one way or other. 3. But for the present this we would say; It seemes by those words of your Parenthesis (*being otherwise fit*) you do acknowledge, that Children of Church Members are not to be admitted to Church priviledges, unlesse they be fit, wherein we consent with you as counting it altogether unsafe, that Idiots, Franticks, or persons openly ungracious and prophane, should be admitted to the Lords Table, though they were the Children of Church Members, and thence we may inferre the necessity of their personall profession of their faith, when they come to yeares, and taking hold of Church-Covenant, whereby we meane onely a Renewing of Covenant, or a new professing of their Interest in Gods Covenant, and walking according to it, when they shall be *Adults*: for otherwise we do confesse, Children that are borne when their Parents are Church Members, are in Covenant with God even from their  
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birth) *Gen.* 17. 7. 12. and their Baptisme did seale it to them. But notwithstanding their Birthright, we conceive there is a necessity of their personall profession of Faith and taking hold of Church- Covenant when they come to yeares (though you seeme to thinke it not needfull:) fer without this it cannot to well be discerned; what fitnessse is in them for the Lords Table and other Church priviledges, as by this meanes it might? And inasmuch as entring into Church-Covenant is nothing else but a solemne promise to the Lord, before him and the Church, to walke in all such wayes as the Gospel requireth of Church Members, if they shall refuse to make any such promise, and shall be unable, or unwilling to make any profession of their Faith, when it is required of them, this would be an evidence against them, of their unfitnessse for Church priviledges, inasmuch as they openly breake that Rule, *1 Pet.* 3. 15. Be ready to give a Reason of the hope that is in you with meeknesse and feare. What hope is there that they will examine themselves when they eat of that Bread and drinke of that Cup, *1 Cor.* 11. 28. Who when others do examine them they are unable or unwilling to give Answer? Or how shall we thinke that they will receive the Lords Supper worthily, or walke as becomes the Gospel if they do refuse to professe or promise any such matter? Wherefore in this Point we cannot but fully approve the practise of the Reformed Churches, among whom it is the manner as *Zepporus* writeth, to admit Children that were Baptised in their Infancy unto the Lords Table, by pulblique profession of their Faith, and entring into Covenant, *consuetum est*, saith he *ut qui per ætatem, in que Doctrina Catechetica profectum as sacrum Cœnam primum admittuntur, fidei confessionem corem tota Ecclesiâ publicè edant, &c. Polit. Eccles. l. 1. c. 14. p. 158.* that is, The manner is, that they who by reason of age and porficiency in the Doctrine of Catechisme are furst Admiitted to the Lords Supper, should publicquely before the whole Church, make confession of their Faith, being brought forth into the sight of the Church by their Parents, or them, that are instead of Parents, at the

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appointment of the Minister: and likewise should promise and Covenant by the Grace of God to continue in that faith which they have confessed, and to leade their lives according to it: yea and Moreover, to subject themselves freely and willingly to the Discipline of the Church; these

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words we see are full and plaine, that Children are not in those Churches received to the Lords Table without personall confession of Faith, and entering into Covenant before.

4. But how long Children should be counted under age, and whether Orphans are not to be admitted with their Guardians (which is your Quæry) we should be willing to heare your judgement therein, as having of our selves hitherto had no occasion to search into those Questions; onely this we thinke, that one certaine rule cannot be given for all, whereby to determine how long they are under age, but according as God gives experience and maturity of naturall understanding, and Spirituall; which he gives sooner to some then unto others.

To 7. Such Children whose Father and Mother were neither of them Believers, and sanctified, are counted by the Apostle (as it seemes to us) not federally holy, but uncleane, what ever their other Ancestors have been, 1 Cor. 7. 14. And therefore we Baptise them not. If you can give us a sufficient Answer, to take us off from that Scripture, 1 Cor. 7. which seemes to limit this fæderall sanctity or holynesse to the Children whose next Parents one or both were Believers, we should gladly hearken to you therein; but for the present, as we believe we speake, and practise according to our light. And if we should goe one degree beyond the next Parents, we see not but we may goe two, and if two, why not 3, 4, 10, 100, or 1000? For where will you stop? And if we shall admit all Children to Baptisme whose Ancestors within a thousand Generations have been Believers, as some would have us, we might by this Reason Baptise the Children of *Turke*, and of all the *Indians*, and *Barbarians* in the Country; for there is none of them but they have

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had some Believing Ancestors within lesse then a 1000. Generations, it being farre from such since *Noah* and his Sonnes came out of the Arke.

To 8. We do believe that all Members of Churches ought to be Saints, and faithfull in Christ Jesus, *Eph.* 1. 1. *1 Cor.* 1. 2. *Col.* 1. 2. *Phil.* 1. 1. and thereupon we count it our duty to use all lawfull and convenient meanes, whereby God may helpe us to discern, whether those that offer themselves for Church Members, be persons so qualified or no: and therefore first we heare them speake concerning the Gift and Grace of

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Justifying faith in their soules, and the manner of Gods dealing with them in working it in their hearts: which seemes to be your first particular in this Quæry. Secondly, we heare them speake, what they do believe concerning the Doctrine of Faith, so taking a tryall what measure they have of the good knowledge of the Lord, as knowing that without knowledge men cannot well Examine themselves and discern the Lords body, as Church Members ought to doe when they come to the Lords Table. And hereby also so we would prevent (as the Lord shall helpe us) the creeping in of any into the Church that may be infected with corrupt opinions of Arminianisme, or Familisme, &c. or any other dangerous error against that faith which was once delivered to the Saints, as knowing how ensily such men if they were admitted, might infect others, and perhaps destroy the Faith of some. And this seemes to be intended in your second particular. For both these we have our warrant as in Generall, from those places which shew how Church Members ought to be qualified, that they ought to be Saints, faithfull in Christ Jesus, &c. So in speciall from that, *Math.* 3. 6. *Acts* 19. 18. & *Acts* 8. 37. 38. Where men before they were admitted, made profession of Repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ; for it is expressly said, that they confessed their sinnes, they confessed and shewed their deeds, they professed their faith in Jesus Christ the Sonne

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of God. Thirdly, when this is done, those that by manifestation of Repentance and Faith are approved; as fit members for a Church do openly professe their subjection to the Gospel of Christ, and to all the Ordinances of God in that Church, where now they joyne as Members, which seemes to be your third particular in this Quærie. The Distinction of particular Churches one from another, as severall and distinct Societies, seemes to us a necessary ground for this practise; for without this kinde of Covenanting, we know not how it would be avoyded, but all Churches would be confounded into one, inasmuch as it is neither Faith, nor inure affection, nor Towne-dwelling, nor frequenting the Assemblies that can make a man a Member or distinguish Church Members from other men: See the Apologie.

4. Your fourth particular in this Quærie is Answered in the Answer to the sixth position sent the last yeare: Besides all these, we heare the testimony of others, if there be any that can speake of the conversion

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and Godly conversation of such persons: which we judge to be a warrantable course from *Acts* 9. 26, 27.

To 9. It is the second of your Quæries) what things we hold necessary to the Being of a true visible Church in Generall: which being Answered; this of the Parish Assemblies in *England* in particular, whether we hold all or the most of them to be Churches, we conceive might well have been spared. They that now the state of those Assemblies may make application of the Generall to the particulars, if they have a calling therunto. Yet because you are pleased to put us to this also, we thus Answer. 1. That we doubt not but of Ancient time there have been many true Churches in *England* consisting of right matter, and compacted and united together by the right forme of an holy Covenant. For Mr. *Fox* sheweth at large that the Gospel was brought into *England* in the Apostles times, or within a little while after, *Acts & Mon. lib. 2. beginning p. 137.* Where hee reporteth out of *Gildas*, that *England* received the Gospel in the time

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of *Tiberius* the Emperour, under whom Christ suffered; and that *Joseph of Arimathea* was sent of *Philip* the Apostle from *France* to *England*, about the yeare of Christ 63. and remained in *England* all his tiine, and so hee with his fellowes laid the first foundation of Christian Faith among the Brittainie people, and other Preachers and Teachers comming afterwards, confirmed the same and increased it. Also the said Mr. *Fox* reporteth out of *Tertullian*, that the Gospel was disperced abroad by the sound of the Apostles into many Nations, and amongst the rest into Brittainie, yea into the wildest places of Brittainie, which the Romans could never attaine unto, and alledgeth also out of *Necephorus*, that *Simon Zelotes* did spread the Gospell to the West Ocean, and brought the same into the Iles of *Brittanie*, and sundry other proofs he there hath for the same Point. Now if the Gospel and Christian Religion were brought into *England* in the Apostles times, and by their meanes, it is like there were Churches planted there of Saints by calling (which is the right matter of Churches) and by way of holy Covenant, as the right form: for that was the manner of Constituting Churches in the Apostles times, as also in the times afore Christ as hath been shewed from the Scripture in the Apologie. And the footsteps hereof (though mixed with manifold corruptions that have growne in aftertimes) are remaining in many places of the land to this

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day, as appeareth by those 3 Questions and Answers at Baptisme. *Abrenuntias? Abrenuncio; Credis? Credo: Spondes? Spondeo Dost thou renounce the Devill and all his works? I renounce them all. dost thou believe in God the Father, &C? I do believe. Dost thou promise to walk according to this Faith &c? I do promise.* For though it may be they conceived, that men entred into the Church by Baptisme, yet hereby it appears that their judgment was that, when men entred into the Church there ought to be a renouncing of sin, and believing on *Christ*, and an open professing of these things, with a promise to walk accordingly.

Secondly, Though Popish Apostacy did afterwards for many ages over spread all the Churches in *England* (as in other Countries) yet we believe God still reserved a remnant according to the Election of Grace amongst them, for

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whose sake he reserved the Holy Scriptures amongst them, and Baptisme in the name of the Trinity onely. And when God of his rich Grace was pleased to stirre up the Spirit of King *Edward* the sixth, and Queene *Elizabeth* to cast off the Pope, and all fundamentall errors in Doctrine and Worship, and a great part of the Tyranny of Popish Church Government, though at first some Shires and sundry Parishes stood out against those Reformation for a time yet afterwards they generally received the Articles of Religi on agreed upon *Anno. 1562.* which are published and consented to by all the Ministers endowed in every Congregation, with the silent consent also of the people, and subscription of the hands of the chiefe of them; wherein they do acknowledge no rule of Faith or manners, but the holy Scriptures; no divine Worship but to God onely; no mediation nor salvation but in *Christ* onely: no conversion by mans free will, but by Gods free Grace: no Justification but by Faith: no perfection nor merit of works, with sundry other necessary and saving truths; all which containing the Marrow and Summe of the Oracles of God (wich are the [[GREEK]]]“gia[[GREEK]], the *eloquia Dei*, concredited onely to the Church. *Rom. 3. 1. 2.* and which are that saving Doctrine of truth, which is fruitfull in all the world where it comes, *Colo. 1. 5, 6.* and upon which the Church is grounded and built, and which also it holdeth forth and maintaineth, *1 Tim. 3. 15.*) we do therefore acknowledge, that where the people do with common and mutuall consent, gather into settled Congregations ordinarily every Lords day, as in *England* they do, to hearc

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and teach this Doctrine, and do professe their subjection therunto, and do binde themselves and their Children (as in Baptismc they do) to continue therein, that such Congregagations are true Churches, notwithstanding sundry defects and dangerous corruptions found in them, wherein we follow the judgement of *Calvin Instit.* 4. 1. 9. 10. *Ec. Whitakers de novis Ecclesiæ cap.* 17. and many other Divines of chiefe note: nor can we judge or speake harshly of the Wombes that bare us, nor of the paps which gave us suck.

Thirdly, But inasmuch as grievous corruptions of latter yeares have greatly increased in some of those Assemblies

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(as we here) both in Doctrine, in Worship, and in the Government thereof besides those that were when some of uwere there, and in former Yeares: Therefore we are not without feare (and with grieve we speake it) what things may come unto at length. If Corruptions should still increase and grow, they might come in time (if the Lord be not more mercifull) unto such an height as unto obstinacy in evill, and to willfull rejection of Reformation, and the meanes thereof; and then you know it might be just with God to cast off such utterly, out of the account and number of his Churches; so as never to walke among them any more: which we heartily pray the Father of mercies to prevent that such a day may never be: But if *Ephesus* repent not of her declinings, the Lord hath threatned that *he will come unto her quickly, and remove her Candlestick;* that is, he will un-Church them, *Rev.* 2. 4, 5. and *Lukewarme Laodicea shall be spewed out of his Mouth,* *Rev.* 3. 16. And therefore it behoves such of them to Repent, and Reform themselves betime, lest the Lord deale with them as he hath done with others.

And it much concernes your selves (in hearty love and faithfullnesse we speake it and so we desire you wou'd accept of it) it very much concernss you (deare Brethren) whilst you live amongst them, to beare faithfull witness against the corruptions that are remaining in any of them, in respect of their Constitution, Worship. Discipline and Ministerie, lest by any sinnfull silence or slacknesse of yours that should blow the Trumpet and stand in the gap, the breach should be made wider, and the iniquity increase; and lest men should flatter themselves in their sinnes, under the Name and Title of the true Church, as the Jewes thought themselves secure because of the Temple of the Lord, *Jer.* 7. 4.

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4. Because you would know not onelie whether we count those Assemblies to be Churches, but what we would doe for joining in Gods Worship in them, if occasion served thereunto: We Answer, that if we were in *England*, we should willingly joine in some parts of Gods true Worship, and namely in hearing the Word, where it is trudy Preached in sundry Assemblies there; Yea though we goe not know them to bee Churches, or knew not what they were, whether true Churches or no? For some Worship, as Praier, and Preaching, and Hea-

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ring the Word, is not peculiar to Church Assemblies, but may be performed in other meetings. *Mars-hill* at *Athens*, was no Church, nor the Prison at *Philippi*, and yet the Word of GOD was Preached and heard hheard lawfully with good successe in those places, *Act. 17.* and *Act. 16.* How much more might it bee lawfull to heare the word in many Parish assemblies in *England*, in which generally there is a professing of Christ; in many of them: Many Soules that are sincere and upright hearted Christians, as any are this day upon the face of the Earth; and many Congregations indeed that are the true Churches of Jesus Christ, See M<sup>r</sup>. *Robinsons* Treatise of the lawfullnesse of hearing the Ministers in the Church of ENGLAND.

5. But why we durst not partake in their prescript Lyturgie, and such Ordinances though true, as are administred therein; We gave you account the last Yeare, in Answer to the first and second Position: As also in an Answer to a Discourse of that Subject, Penned by our Reverend Brother Mr. *Ball*. What we have done in our ignorance whilst we live amongst you, wee have seene cause rather to bewaile it in our selves here, then to it in others there.

To 10. Our Answer to This Question is this, 1. That we never yet knew any to come from *England* in such a manner as you do here describe (if the things you mention may be taken *conjunction*, and not severally) *viz:* to be Men famously known to be godly, and to bring sufficient Testimoniall thereof from others that are so knowne, and from the Congregation it selfe, whereof they were Members: We say we never yet knew any to come to us from thence in such a manner, but one or other of the things here mentioned are wanting: and generally this is wanting in all of them, that they bring no Testimoniall from the

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Congregation it selfe: And therefore no marvell if they have not beene admitted (further then before hath been expressed in Answer to Quest. 1.) to Church Ordinances wi~h us, before they have joyncd to one or other of our Churches; for though some that come over bee famously knowne to our selves to be Godly, or bring sufficient Testimoniall with them from private Christians, yet neither is our knowledge of them, nor Testimonial from private Christians sufficient to give us Church-power over them, which wee

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had need to have, if we must dispence the Ordinances of Church communion to them? though it be sufficient to procure all due Reverent respect, and hearty love to them in the Lord.

2. If the things mentioned were all to be found, yet it would be also requisite (if they would partake of Church Ordinances with us, and yet not join: to any of our Churches) that woe should know the Congregation it selfe, from which they come, not onely to be a true Church, but also want manner of one it is: for such persons cannot communicate with us in Church Ordinances in their owne right; because they joine not as Members in any of our Churches; but it must be in right of the Congregation in *England*, to which they doe belong, and by virtue of the communion of Churches, and so our admitting of them to communion with us in such a manner, and upon such terms, is not only an Act of Communion with the persons themselves, but also with the Congregation of which they are: Now as we cannot of Faith admit men to Church Ordinances, which we believe belong only to Church Members; unles we know the Congregation of which they are Members to be a true Church. So somtimes a Congregation may be so corrupt, that though it doe remain a true Church, yet for the corruption and impurities of it, it may be lawfull and necessary to withdraw communion from the same (for which *Dr. Ames* gives sundry grounds and Reasons, *Cas. Cons. lib. c. 12. Q. 3. Resp. 2.*) or at least to protest against some grosse corruptions therein. In regard whereof we had need to have some knowledge and information what that Congregation is, with whom now we have Church communion; when in their right wee admit men into communion, that wee may know how to admit such Men, and what to require from them more or lesse. And this together with that want of testimoniall from the congregation is one maine Reason, why some few godly men that have come from

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*England* upon occasion, not with purpose of continuance here, but of returning againe; have not beene received to Church Ordinances during their abode in the Countrey (though this we may say also, that we know not of any such that have requested to be received) whereas such as have come in like manner from one Church to another amongst our selves, upon their request have been received: the Reason we say is, because these Churches are better

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knowne then the Parish Assemblies are.

3. But if men come from one Church in this Countrey to another with purpose there to stay, and not to returne to the Church from whence they came, (which is the manner of all, or the most that come from *England*) they are not received into our Churches; but upon the very same termes, and in the same manner, as men are received that come from *England*; viz: upon personall profession of their faith, and entring into Church Covenant, in that Church to which they now come (And the same we say of such as come from any of the Churches in other Countries) and wherefore are they not resolved otherwise, because we renounce the Church of which they were Members as no true Church? Not so, but because wee believe in matter of Faith, (such as is the admitting of Members) any true Church may erre: and there may now bee seene some unworthinesse in the man which did not appeare when hee was admitted in the other Church; and therefore no reason that the Act of one Church in the admitting of Members or the like, should bee a binding Rule unto another; for all Churches are left to their liberty to admit and receive such into their Church; as they shal find to be fit according to the Rule of the word, and to refuse others, without respect of what they have bin before, whether Members of this Church, or that Church, or of any Church, or none: and therefore in this, our walking and practice, is alike towards one another, and towards others as it is towards yours. In which practise we are not alone, for the very same as Mr. *Parker* reporteth, is the manner of the Reformed Churches, amongst whom, no man is admitted for a Member; but upon personall profession of faith, and entring into Church covenant, though it may be he have formally beene admitted in the very same manner in the Church where he lived before, *Polit. Eccles. l. 3. c. 16. 3, 4. p. 171.*

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To II. If the ground of this Qu. were any doubt in your owne consciences concerning your owne way, there were no fault in propounding such a Qu. for further light and satisfaction, if wee were able to give it. Or if it did arise from any unnecessary intermeddling of ours in your matters, so as to take on us to condemne or judge your present standing, when we have no cal-

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ling thereunto, there were then Reason why we should give account of our owne doings or sayings. But if it came from some men we should looke at it as a tempting Question, tending onely to make matter, and pick quarrells; and then we should have it to them that framed it, to consider the ground of it; and to frame their owne Answer to it. As for us, we have alwayes been slow and loth to judge or condemne your present standing; remembring the saying of the Apostle, *Who art thou that judgest another Mans Servant, he standeth or falleth to his own Master, Rom. 14. 4.* But now knowing you well (Reverend and Deare Brethren) and your integrity, we thinke wee may lawfully and safely Answer, and that wee would doe by premising a few distinctions, for explaining the Termes of the Question.

1. Concerning the persons in the Parish Assemblies, which may be meant of such as the providence of *God* hath so disposed that they are free and at liberty: or of such as are bound, and it may be not *sui juris*, as Wives, Children under the government of Parents, Servants, Apprentices, Prisoners, Sickefolkes, &c.

2. Concerning the Parish Assemblies, which may bee meant either of such as wane the Preaching of the Word or Sacraments, or Discipline, or any other holy Ordinance of Christ, or have many Ordinances in them which are not of God, but of Men: or else it may be meant of some others, which in both respects art Reformed and pure, if there be any such.

3. Concerning standing in them, which may be meant onely of habitation, and dwelling upon House or Land within the Precincts of the Parish; or else in conforming in judgement or practise to the corrupt Ecclesiasticall Ordinances used in those Assemblies; and contenting themselves therewith.

4. Concerning lawfull and safe; where safety may be meant either of safety, from sinne, or from danger by persecution, these Distinctions wee judge necessary to bee premised, because your Question is, whether

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wee count your standing in the Parish Assemblies lawfull and safe; or how sure it may be so? And so our Answer is in 3. Propositions.

1. Some Persons, and namely those that are not *sui juris*, may lawfully and without sinne; though it may bee not safely without danger of persecution, continue such standing in the Parish

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Assemblies, as doe dwell within the Precincts of them, so long as they neither conforme themselves to the corruptions of men by such continuing of their standing, nor live in the neglect or want of any Ordinance of CHRIST through their owne default.

2. Such standing in the Parish Assemblies, where a man shall, and must conforme to the corruptions of men, in Doctrine or Worship; or the Government of the Church, is not lawfull for any to be continued in.

3. To continue such standing in the Parish Assemblies, as to live in the want of an Ordinance of Christ is noe lawfull, nor can be done safely without sinne of them, to whom the providence of God doth open a doore of further enlargement.

The first of these Propositions wee suppose you doubt not of.

The second is confirmed by many places of Scripture; and namely by such as these. *Though Israel play the Harlot, yet let not Iudah offend, and come not yee to Gilgall, nor go up to Bethaven, nor sweare the Lord liveth: Ephraim is joynd to Idolls, let him alone*, Hos. 4. 15. 17. *Come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch no uncleane thing, and I will receive you*, 2 Cor. 6. 17. *Be not partaker of other Mens sinnes, keep thy selfe pure*, 1 Tim. 5. 22. *Come out of her my People, that yee bee not partakers of her sinnes, and that yee receive not of her Plagues*, Rev. 18. 4. *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darknesse, but reprove them rather*, Eph. 5. 11. *Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment; because he willingly walked after the Commandment*, Hos. 5. 11. *We ought to obey God rather then Men*, Act. 4. 19. and 5. 29. *Jeroboam* made Priests of the lowest of the People, which were not of the sonnes of *Levi*, and ordained a Feast in the fifteenth day of the Eighth Moneth, in the Month which he had devised of his owne heart, &c. and then the *Levites* left their Suburbs and their possessions, and came to *Iudah* and *Ierusalem*, for *Ieroboam*, and his Sonnes had cast them off from executing the Priests Office unto the Lord; and after them out of all the Tribes of *Israell*, such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of *Israel*, came to *Ierusalem* to Sacrifice to

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the *Lord God* of their Fathers, 1 *King.* 12. 31, 32, 33. with 2 *Chron.* 11. 14. 16. Vpon these and such like grounds of holy Scrip-

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cure we are perswaded that such standing in the Parish Assemblies, as this second Proposition mentions, is not lawfull for any to be continued in. And we hope, you doubt not of the truth of this second Proposition neither, though we are afraid that many Christians, when it comes to practice, doe sinfully pollute themselves by partaking in the Ceremonies, and other corruptions in the prayers, in the Doctrine, and in the Ministry remaining in sundry of those Assemblies, whom it will bee your part whilst you live among them faithfully and by all good meanes to instruct and teach, and exhort, to save themselves from the corruptions and pollutions of the times and places wherein they live; as well in this particular of Church matters, and Gods Worship as in other things: Wherein wee wish with all our hearts that our selves when time was, had been more watchfull and faithfull to God and the soules of his People, then the best of us were: The Lord lay not our Ignorance to our charge.

The third Proposition may bee made good sundry wayes, 1. By precepts wherein we are commanded to observe all things whatsoever Christ hath commanded, *Mat.* 28. 20. to seeke the Kingdom of God and his Righteousnesse, *Mat.* 6. 33. to yield our selves unto the Lord, and to enter into his Sanctuary. 2 *Chr.* 30. 8. And therefore we may not please our selves to live in the neglect of any Ordinance which he hath instituted and appointed. 2. By examples, for the Spouse of Christ will not rest seeking her beloved until shee finde him in the fullest manner, *Cant.* 1. 7. 8. and 3. 1, 2. *Ec.* and the same minde was in *David*; as appears by his heavy Lamentation, when he wanted the full fruition of Gods Ordinances, and his longings, and prayer to be restored thereto, *Psal.* 63. and *Psal.* 42. and 84. although he enjoyed *Abiathar* the High Priest, and the Ephod with him; and likewise *Gad* the Prophet, 1 *Sam.* 23. 6, 9, 10. *Ec.* 1 *Sam.* 22. 5. when good *Ezra* in his journey from *Babylon* to *Ierusalem* viewing the People at the River *Ahava* found none of the Sonnes of Levi there, afore he would goe any further, he sent unto *Iddo* at the place *Casiphia* for Ministers for the House of God, *Ezra* 8. 15. 16. *Ec.* And when being come to *Ierusalem* they found by the law, that it was an Ordinance of God to dwell in Boothes, and keep the Feast of Tabernacles in the se-

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venth Month, they presently set upon the practice thereof, in the appointed season; when the like had not been done in Israell, from the dayes of *Ioshua* the son of *Nun* unto the day, *Neh.* 8. 14. *Ec.* Yea, and our Lord Jesus himselfe; though hee had no need of Sacraments to be to him any seale of Remission or forgiveness of sinnes, yet in conscience to the Ordinance of GOD, (that he might fullfill all righteousnesse, *Mat.* 3. 15.) and for one example, did both observe the Passover, and likewise was Baptized, and did eat with his Disciples at his last Supper. All which examples being written for our learning, doe shew us how farre wee should bee from contenting our selves to live in the Voluntary want of any Ordinance and appointment of GOD.

3. There is none of the Ordinances of Christ, but they are needfull and very profitable in the right use of them to the soules of his Servants: And therefore they should not be neglected. To thinke of any of them, as things that may well bee spared; and therefore to content our selves to be without them, is to call in question the wisdome of him that did appoint them, and to make our selves wiser then God.

4. Our owne infirmities and Spirituall wants are such as that wee have continuall need of all the holy meanes which the Lord hath appointed, for supplying what is wanting in us; for correcting what is amisse; and for our continuance and growth in grace. Hee is a proud man, and knowes not his own heart in any measure, who thinkes he may well be without any spiritull Institution and Ordinance of Jesus Christ. Upon these and such like ground, we hold it not lawfull nor safe, for any Christian that is free, to continue such standing in the Parish Assemblies where he cannot enjoy all the spiritual and holy Ordinances of Christ. And hereupon we do exhort you lovingly in the Lord, to take heed that this be not the sinne of any of you, nor of any other, whom your example may embolden thereunto: For necessity is laid upon you, and upon all Christians, by these and such like grounds of the holy word of the Lord; That neither you, nor others doe live in the voluntary want of any holy Ordinance of Christ Jesus, but either set them up, and observe them in the places where you are; or else (if you bee free) to remove for the enjoyment of them, to some place where they

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may be had; and it may be of the two, rather this latter. For sometimes if Israel Sacrifice to their God in the Land, they shall Sacrifice the abomination of the *Egyptians* to the Lord: And lo say they, *shall wee sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?* It is better therefore in such a case to goe into the Wildernesse, and to do it there, *Exo. 8. 25. 26, 27. Hos. 2. 14. Mat. 10. 23.*

*Obj. As for that opinion that may be in the minds of some, that if any Ordinance of God be wanting, it is the sinne of them that are in Authority, and they must answer for it? But the people of God may without sinne, live in the want of such Ordinances as Superiors provide not for them.*

*Answer. The Answer hereunto is, that indeed the Ordinances of God may more peaceably and quietly bee observed where the Commandement and countenance of Magistrates is afforded; for then is fulfilled the saying that is written, Kings shall bee thy nursing Fathers, and Queens thy nursing Mothers, Esa. 49. 23. and doubtlesse it is a great blessing, when God (that hath the hearts of Kings and Princes in his hands, Prov. 21. 1.) doth incline them to favour, and further the service of the House of GOD, as somtimes he doth, even when themselves are Alients and Strangers. Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, gave great countenance and encouragement to the Jewes to build the House of God, that they might offer sacrifices of sweet savour to the God of Heaven, and pray for the life of the King and of his Sonnes, Ezra 6. 8, 9, 10. In which case good Ezra blesseth the Lord, that had put such a thing into the Kings heart, to beautifie the House of the God of Heaven, Ezra 7. 27. And therefore Kings and all in Authority, should be prayed for, that we may lead a godly and peacable life, in Godlinesse and honesty, 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. Neverthelesse, the things that are ordained and commanded of GOD, the observing of them in a peaceable way (yeilding due reverence to all that are in Authority, and praying for them) this observing of the Ordinances of God cannot be unlawfull, for lack of the Commandement Man, as appears by the doctrine and practise of the Apostles, Act. 4. 19. & 5. 29. and the approved practise of Believers in their times, if they had neglected the Ordinances of God, and namely Church Ordinances, till they had had the commandement of Magistrates therein, such neglect would have*

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beene their grievous sinne, and for ought we know they might have lived and died without them, the Magistrates at that time being all either Heathens or Jewes, yet enemies; and if Church Communion and the

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exercise of such Ordinances, as Christ hath appointed for his Churches, was lawfull, and needfull, and profitable, when Magistrates were enemies to the Gospell; and bee not so when Magistrates doe professe the Gospell, we doe not see but Christians may sometimes be losers by having Christian Magistrates, and in worse condition, then if they had none but professed Enemies. Besides this, if Superiors should neglect to provide bodily sustenance for them that are under their charge; we doe not thinke that any Mans Conscience would be so scrupulous, but hee would thinke it lawfull by all good meanes to provide for himself in such case, rather then to sit still and say, if I perish for hunger, it is the sinne of them that have Authority over mee, and they must answer for it: Neither can we tell how the Conscience of any Christian can excuse himself, if he thinks not the Ordinances of Christ, as necessary for the good of his soule, as food is necessary for his temporall life; or doe not willingly in this spirituall hunger break through stone Walls as the Proverbe is, and runne from Sea to Sea to seeke God in his owne way, rather then to perish without spirituall food, because others provide not for him.

And this is our Answer to this eleventh Quere, concerning your standing in the Parish Assemblies: which Answer or ours, and the exhortation therein, as we pray the Father of mercies to make effectuall by his blessing for those good ends, which wee intend therein, so wee cannot in the same, but reflect upon our selves and our owne ways in times past; as seeing not a little cause to judge our selves before the Lord, as long as wee live, for our sinfull ignorance and negligence, when wee were in *England*, o observe and walke according to those Rules of the Word, which now upon occasion given by this Qu. wee doe commend to your selves and other Christians. The Lord in mercy pardon our offences, and direct your selves and his servants in our dear Native Countrey, both in remaining and removing to doe that which is pleasing in his sight.

To 12. Wheras this Qu. in the first clause and last but one compared together

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together speaks of Believers out of the Kingdome of GOD, and possibility of salvation, we conceive it is a contradiction, for those that are true Believers, cannot be out of possibility of salvation, but possibly may, yea most undoubtedly shall bee saved. *Joh.* 3. 16. and 5. 24. the

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contrary whereof is to overthrow all the premises of the Gospell, and with the Papists and Arminians to establish falling from grace.

2. For that saying, *Extra Ecclesiam est salus*, wee conceive it cannot be universally true, if it be meant of the visible Church, which in the New-Testament is a particular Congregation; but onely being taken for the Church invisible, or the Vniversall Church, which is the whole company of the elect in Heaven, in Earth, and not yet borne, *Ioh.* 10. 16. and 17. 20. out of which elected Company there is not one that shall be saved, nor any of the elect neither, but in the way of Regeneration, *Ioh.* 3. 3. but as for the Visible, we believe the old saying is true, *there are many Wolves within, and many Sheepe without*, *Joh.* 10. 16. and therefore it cannot be universally true, that out of the Visible Church there is no salvation: Inasmuch as all Christs Sheepe shall be saved, *ioh.* 10. 28. of whom yet notwithstanding there are some not joyned to the Visible Church: If the Thiefe that repented on the Crosse was a Gentile, as it was possible he was; then hee was uncircumcised, and then it will trouble a Man to tell of what Visible Church he was: and yet there is no doubt but he was saved. The like may be said of *Iob* and of his friends, of whose salvation we make no question, and yet it is a great question whether they were of any Visible Church or no, inasmuch as the Visible Church in those times seemed to be appropriated to the House and posterity of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, of which line & race it cannot easily be proved that all these men did come, nor that they joined themselves in Visible fellowship with that Church. The Centurion, *Mat.* 8. 10. and the Woman of *Canaan.* *Mat.* 15. were both of them believers and saved, and yet it doth nor appeare that they were members of the Visible Church of the Iews, which was the only visible Church of God in those times.

Men of yeares ought to be believers, and so in the state of Salvation afore they be joyned to the Visible Church, and therefore there may be salvation out of that Church: For it is possible

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that such an one as being a Believer is fit to be joyned to the Church may die and depart this life afore hee can bee joyned, as that good Emperour *Valentinian* 2. died before hee could bee baptized. And for your selves if you should thinke that Baptisme makes men members of the Visible Church; as is intimated in your fourth Question: you may not then deny but there may be salvation out of the visible Church:

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unlesse you will say that there is no salvation without Baptisme, which we believe is farre from you to imagine.

3. We doe hold that so oft and so long as a believer doth not joyne himselfe as a Member to some particular Congregation or other, so oft and so long he is without the Church in the Apostles sence, *1 Cor. 5.* for the Church in the Apostles sence, is a particular Congregation; for he writeth to, and of the Church at *Corinth*, which Church was a particular Congregation, *1 Cor. 5, 4, & 23. & 11. 17. 20.* and having power of judgeing her own Members (as all visible Churches have) yet had no power of Judgeing any, but such as were within that particular Congregation, as all them they had power to judge, whether they were believers in Christ: or no. Mr. *Baine* (as we said before) is very large and cleare in proving this Position, that the Churches instituted by Christ and the Apostles, were only such as might meet in one Congregation ordinarily, and answers many objections to the contrary, *Dioces. tryal. Q. 1.*

4. For the Question it selfe, we hold that every believer (if possibly he can) is always bound to joyne himselfe as a Member to some particular Congregation or other; and yet not because, else he is a Heathen and Publican, or out of possibilitie of salvation, as this Question suggests, but upon other grounds.

1. Because of the Commandment of God, *Cant. 1. 8. Math. 6. 10. 33*

2. Because willingly not to doe this is a secret disparagement to the wisdom of God that hath ordained Churches with giving power and privilegdes therunto, *Mat. 18. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 4.* and promises of his gracious presence to be with them and amongst them, *Mat. 18. 20. Rev. 2. 1. Exod. 20. 24.* Now to what end were all these, if believers should live and not joyne themselves to some Church? These privilegdes and promises would in such case be all in vain, and the mercy of God offered therin, unthankfully neglected.

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Thirdly, voluntarily abstaining from joyning to the Church is noted and condemned as a sinne, *Heb. 10. 25.* and a signe of fearefull unbelievers, *Act. 5. 13.* of the rest durst no man joyne unto them.

Fourthly, good men in Scripture have been forward in practise this way. *Isay. 2. 2, 3. Zach. 8. 33. Act. 2. 41, 42. and 9. 26.* and have mourned with much bitterness when they have been deprived of Liberty so to doe, *Isay. 56. 3. and Ps. 42. and 63. and 84.*

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Fifty, this joyning is a part of that Order, and orderly walking which is required of believers, *Col. 2. 5. 1 Cor. 14. 40.*

Sixtly, If Believers doe neglect this joyning, it is not onely a wrong to themselves, but also a great unkindnesse to God: for if one believer may doe this, why not another, and if two why not three, foure &c. and if all believers should doe thus, God should have no visible Churches upon Earth, unles he will acknowledge the Assemblies to be of *unbelievers* Churches: for as stones in the *Mountains* are not an house untill they be joyned together, though they be digged up out of the Quarry, and squared & hewn, and hereby are made fit to be joyned together, and so to become an house: so believers are not a Church till they be joyned in holy Covenant in some Congregation, though the worke of Grace and Faith in their soules have made them fit, and meete to be a Church of God, which is the House of the living God: or as the humane soule and body are not a man unlesse they be united; so Christian or believers are not a visible Church without visible union into some particular Congregation. Mr. *Perkins* having said that forth of the militant Church: there are no meanes of salvation, no preaching of Gods word, no invocation of Gods Name, no Sacraments, and therefore no Salvation; concludes with these words; For this cause every man must be admonished evermore to joyn himselfe to some particular Church, being a found Member of the Catholick Church, *Expos. of Creed* in the Article of the Church; and Doctor Ames gives 6. Reasons, why every Christian should joyne himselfe to some particular Church or other *Cas. Consc. L. 4. c. 24. Q. 1.* and in another place he hath these words. *Illi igitur qui, occasionem habent*

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*habent adjuxgendi sese Ecclesiae, & cam negligent, gravissimè peccant, non tantum in Deum ratione Institutiones, sed etiam in suas proprias animas ratione benedictionis adjunctæ, etsi obstinatè persistent in ipsa incuria, quicquid alias profitentur, vix, possunt haberi pro sidelibus Regnum Dei verè quarentibus.* Medul. Theol. l. 1. c. 32. Sect. 28.

To 13. First, whereas this 13th. Question speakes of private and illiterate persons into a Church Body combined, wee looke at this as an incongruous expression, if not a contradiction. For a company so combined as to make a Church, are not fitly called private, (though they be illiterate in respect of humane learning) in as much as a Church or a Church-body,

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especially in times and places of peace and liberty, is a publike Congregation and society: and the acts of Communion which they have among themselves (such as is the election and deposing of Ministers, whereof the Question makes mention) are not private acts, but publike or people-like. Neither are literate or learned men therefore publike, because they are indued with humane learning, unlesse withall they be called to publike office or imployment in Church or Common-wealth: and therefore if illiterate be an exegesis of private, we conceive that exegesis is not good.

Secondly, whereas this Question asketh *Whether it be lawfull and convenient that such a company should themselves ordinarily examine elect, ordain and depose their owne Ministers?* if *ordinarily* be as much as *frequently*, we answer three things. First, that if one Church doe frequently come to such actions, that is, to take in and put out the same men, this is not without suspition of much levity and rashnesse in the people, or unfaithfulness or unworthy walking in the Ministers, or both; and therefore *ordinarily*, that is, *frequent* taking in and putting out againe in this manner, is as much as may be to be avoides. Secondly, when such things doe often and frequently fall out, it is doubtlesse a Judgement of God upon such a people to have so many changes in their Ministers; as was that of which it was said, *three shepherds have I cut off in one month. Zach. 11. 8.* that People should be so oft as

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sheep having no Shepheard; *for the transgression of a land many are the Princes thereof, Pro. 28. 2.* So in like sort for the transgressions of a Church many are the Ministers thereof; we meane, when they have many Ministers, by the comming in and going out of the same men, or the removing of some and the taking in of others in their roome: for otherwise, it is a blessing of God, when a Church is furnished with variety of Ministers at the same time, *Acts 13. 1. & 21. 18. Phil. 1. 1.* Thirdly, yet this word (*ordinarily*) doth seeme to imply, that in your judgement sometimes this may be lawfull and convenient to be done; Now upon the same ground on which it may be done sometimes, upon the same it may be done at other times, if there be just occasion.

Thirdly, for the assistance of the Ministers of other Churches, of which this Question maketh mention, if this be onely by way of counsell or advice, we know nothing unlawfull or inconvenient in such assistance,

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because Churches are as Sisters one to another, *Cant.* 8. 8. And therefore it is our practice in ordination of Ministers, as also in removall of them, to have such assistance. But for authority and power, we know none that Ministers have properly so called in any Congregation or Church, save that one, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers: and therefore we thinke it not lawfull nor convenient, when a Church is to ordaine Officers, to call in such assistance (*viz.* by way of authority or power) of the Ministers of other Churches.

Fourthly, we judge it lawfull and convenient that every Church of Christ (what ever then humane learning be, whether much or lesse) should elect and choose their Ministers: God doth not (for ought we know) give this power of calling their owne Ministers unto such Churches as have many learned men in them, and deny it unto others; but give it indifferently to every Church, as they are a Church, and so to one Church as much as to another. If we thought you doubted whether the power of calling Ministers were given by Christ unto the Church, we might here alledge many Reasons for it; but this being the constant judge-

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ment of the eminent Lights of this age, and the former who have been studious of Reformation, wee must hope (till we hear to the contrary) that your selves do not differ from them in this point. As for us, those grounds and reasons from the holy Scripture which are alledged by 1 *Calvin*, 2. *Zanchius*, 3. *M<sup>r</sup>. Cartwright*, 4. *D<sup>r</sup> Ames*, and (5) others doe satisfie us in this particular. (1) *Institut* 4. 3.14. 15. (2) *Deredemp. in* 4. *præcep.* p. 1015. 1016. &c. who alledgeth *Bucer* and *Musculus*. (3) 1. *Reply* p. 44. &c. (4) *Medul. Theol.* 1. 1. c. 21. *Sect.* 30 & *cas. cons. lib.* 4. c. 25. Q. 5. (5) *Demonist. of disc.* c. 4.

Fifthly, as for that objection which seemes to be implied in the word *illiterate*, that it should not be lawfull or convenient for a body to choose their owne Ministers because they are illiterate, or want men of humane learning among them, wee further answer thereto; first, that among us when a company are to be combined into a Church-body, (as you speake) there is usually one or other among them who doe not want all humane learning but have been trained up in Universities, and usually have been Ministers and Preachers of the Word in our native Countrey and approved by the godly there; and are here by the company that doe so combine intended to be chosen afterwards for Pastors or Teachers: and accordingly,

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after the Church is gathered, are in due time elected and ordained into their places. Secondly, but yet if there were none such among them at their first combining and uniting, we doe not see how this could hinder them of liberty to choose Ministers to themselves afterward, when God shall send any to them that may be fit for the worke; because this is a liberty that Christ hath purchased for them by his precious blood and they that are fit matter to bee combined into a Church-body, are not so illiterate but they have learned the Doctrine of the holy Scripture in the fundamentall points thereof; they have learned to know the Lord and their owne hearts, they have learned Christ, the need they have of him, and of all the meanes of enjoying him, the worth that is in him, and the happinesse laid up for them in him: and

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therefore they may not be reproached as illiterate or unworthy to choose their owne Ministers: nay, they have the best learning, without which all other learning is but madnesse and folly, and science falsly so called, 1 *Tim.* 6. 20. and indeed of none account with God, nor available for direction and guidance in the affaires of the house of God, such as is this election of Ministers, nor for the salvation of the soule in another world. 1 *Cor.* 1. 19. 20. & 2. 14. *Job.* 32. 8. 9. though it may be, and is very usefull therewith. Thirdly, you know, and (we doubt not) doe abhorre as much as wee the spirit of those men that are proud of their owne learning, and vilified Believers in Christ for want thereof, saying, *Doe any of the Rulers, or of the Pharisees believe in him? But this people which know not the Law are cursed,*, *John* 7. 47. 48. 49.

First a company of fourty Persons, or twenty, or lesse, is not such a small company, but they may be a Church properly and truly so called, if there be nothing against them but this, *that such a number may seeme not sufficient.* We do not finde that God doth any where say, they must be above fourty, of else they cannot be a Church; and therefore no mortall man can justly say it: Nay, rather that speech of Christ, of *two or three gathered together in his name*, *Matth.* 18. 10. doth plainly imply that if there be a greater number then two or three, whom they being not satisfied in the answere of an offendor may appeale unto, and in so doing tell the Church, such a small number may be a Church, and may have the blessing of his presence to be among them. Besides, the time hath

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been, in the dayes of *Adam* and *Noah*, when there was not forty persons in the world, and yet *Adams* family in his time, and *Noahs* in his, was in those dayes a Church, if there was any Church on earth. And if Christ and his twelve Disciples were the first Christian Church, it is too much for any man to say, that twenty or forty is such a small company that they cannot be a Church.

Secondly, for the matter of Government, there is a difference between ability and right: In respect of the former,

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in as much as some cases are more difficult then others, and some Churches of lesse spirituall abilities then others, and God doth not afford assistance and direction at some times so much as at others; therefore in such cases it is requisite that Churches should seeke for light, and counsell, and advice, from other Churches: as the Church at *Antioch* did send unto the Church at *Ierusalem* in a Question, which could not bee determined among themselves, *Act. 15. 2.* Bue this is not because they have no right, but when they are not able.

Thirdly, as for right, let it be considered how the Church at *Antioch* did long endeavour to have ended that matter amongst themselves, before they determined to send to *Ierusalem*, vers. 2. which shewes that they had power or right to have transacted that businesse among themselves, if ability had served; or otherwise, that endeavour had been sinfull, as being a presuming to doe that, whereunto they had no right. We conceive then that every Church, properly so called, though they be not above forty, or twenty persons, or ten, or the least number that you mention, have right and power from Christ to transact all their owne Ecclesiasticall businesses among themselves, if so be they be able, and carry matters justly, and according to the Rules of the Word. The power of the Keyes, *Matth. 16. 19.* among other things noteth Ministeriall or delegated power of Government; and this power is committed by Christ unto the Church, as may appeare, if wee consider, first, to whom Christ directed his Speech in that place of Scripture; not to *Peter* alone, but to all the Disciples also, for to them all the Question was propounded by Christ, vers. 15. And *Peter* answered in all their names.

Secondly, that he and they were not then looked upon as Apostles, or generall officers of all Churches (for that Commission was not yet given them) but as Disciples and Beleevers, believing with the heart,

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and confessing with the mouth Jesus Christ, the rock upon whom the Church is built; wherein as they did represent all Believers, so in *Peter*, and the rest, the *Keyes* are committed to all Believers that shall joine together in the same confession, according

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to the order and ordinance of Christ. And therefore afterward this power of Government is expressly given to the Church, *Matth.* 18. 17. according hereunto in that description of the visible Church, as it is instituted by Christ in the new Testament, *Rev.* 4. The members of the Church are seene by *John* in a vision sitting on thrones, cloathed with white raiment, having on their heads Crownes of Gold, *vers.* 14 Now Thrones and Crownes are ensignes of authority and power, to note unto us that authority and governing power, which is committed by Christ unto the Church. Doctor *???Puike???* hath this saying; *The Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven (whatsoever they are) be committed to the whole Church, and not to one person onely, as Cyprian, Augustine, Chrysostome, Jerome, and all the ancient Doctors (agreeably to the Scriptures) doe confesse, against the popes pardons chap. 3. P. 381.* And elsewhere he saith; The authority of Excommunication pertaineth to the whole Church, although the judgement and execution, thereof is to be referred to the Governours of the Church; which exercise that authority, as in the name of Christ, so in the name of the whole Church whereof they are appointed Governours, to avoid confusion: against the *Rhemists*, on *1 Cor.* 5. Sect. 3.

And Doctor *Whitaker* hath these words: *Hoc est quod nos dicimus Petrum gessisse personam omnium Apostolorum; quare hanc promissionem non uns Petro, sed toti Ecclesiae factam esse. & totam Ecclesiam in illo claves accepisse. De pontiff. Roman. Q. 2. c. 4. Sect. 17.* And in that Booke hee is pregnant and plaine in this, that by the *Keyes* is meant all Ecclesiasticall power and jurisdiction, and that these *Keyes* are given in *Peter* to the whole Church: The same is also taught by Master *Parker Polit. Eccl. l. 3. c. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.* where he proves by many Arguments, that every visible Church (which hee acknowledgeth to be no other but a particular congregation) hath the power of all Ecclesiasticall Government and Jurisdiction committed to it by Christ Jesus; and answereth many Objections to the contrary: And page 2 of that third book, making mention of foure Opinions concerning those words of the *Keyes*, and power of binding and loosing

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*Matth.* 16. 19. the first of them that understand the Pope onely to be meant thereby, as *Peters* successour: the second of them that understand it of the Diocesan Bishop: The third of them that understand those words as meant of the Ministers, but the Ministers alone: The fourth of them that understand *Peter* to represent the Church in that place, and therefore that that promise is made unto the Church: Of these he refuseth the three first as unsound, and maintaines the fourth as onely agreeing to the truth. And Master *Baine* saith, Every Church by Christs institution hath power of Government, *Dioces. Tryall Quest.* 1. p. 8. And hee tells us page 11. what hee meant by Church: The word Church (saith he) wee understand here not figuratively taken Metonymically for the place. Synecdochically for Ministers administring ordinances; but properly, for a body politick standing of People to be taught and governed, and of Teachers and Governours: So that in his judgement every Church (properly so called) hath power of Government within it selfe: and by these words of his it may also be concluded, that all power of Government is not in the Elders alone, for the power of Government by Church institution is in every Church properly so called; But Ministers are not a Church in propriety of speech, but onely figuratively by a synecdoche; And therefore all power of Government is not in the Ministers alone, but a Church properly so called is the Body politique, consisting of people and Ministers: But of this more may bee said in the next Question.

Fourthly, for the matters of Independency, whereof this *Question* also makes mention: We doe confesse the Church is not so independent but that it ought to depend on Christ both for direction from the rules of his holy Word, *Ioh.* 10. 27. *Act.* 3. 23. and for the assistance of his holy Spirit, to discern those rules, and to walke according to them when they may be discerned, *Ioh.* 15. 5. and 16. 13. but for dependency upon men, or other Churches, or other subordination unto them in regard of Church Government or power, Wee know not of any such appointed by Christ in his Word. Our Saviours words are plaine, *If a man heare not*  
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*the Church, let him be to thee as an Heathen or Publican.* And his promise unto his Church is plaine also, that *whatsoever they shall binde on earth, shall be bounde in Heaven, &c. Mat.* 18. 17. &c. And the Apostle bids the

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Church deliver the impenitent sinner unto *Satan*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 4. 5. 6. Now when the man upon the Churches censure comes to be in case as an *Heathen* or *Publican*, yea becomes bound in Heaven as well as bound in earth, and also delivered unto *Satan*, this seems to us to be such a firme ratification of the Churches censure, as leaves no roome for any other Ecclesiasticall power on earth to reverse or disanull the same, and so takes away that kinde of dependency and subordination of Churches. *Nos plaine dicimus Ecclesias initid regi solit as esse à suis pastoribus, sic quidem ut nullis essent externis, aut Ecclesijs, aut Episcopis subditæ, non Colossensis, Ephæsina, non Philippensis, Thessaloniensi, non hæ Romanæ, non Romana cuiquam, seá paris omnes inter se juris essent, id est, sui omnes juris et mancipy Whitak. de Pontif. Roman. Question 1. Chapter 1. Section 3.* That is in summe. The Churches were not dependent and subordinate to others, but all of them absolutely free, and independent. Wee affirme saith Master *Baine*, that all Churches were singular Congregations equall in dependent each of other in regard of subjection, Diocesse tryall. Q 1 pag 13. The twentieth Chapter of Mr. *Parker* his third Booke of *Eccles. Politie*, hath this Title *De summitate Ecclesia particularis*. And the Title of the 21. is, *De paritate Ecclesiarum* where he openeth and explaineth, and by many Arguments and Testimonies confirmeth what we hold of the Independency and paritie of Churches, to which learned discourse of his, we refre you for further satisfaction in this point.

To 15. Wee doe believe that Christ hath ordained that there should be a Presbytery or Eldership. 1 *Tim.* 4. 14, And that in every Church. *Tit.* 1. 5. *Acts* 14. 23. 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. whose worke is to teach and rule the Church by the Word and lawes of Christ. 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. and unto whom so teaching and ruling all the people ought to be obedient and submit themselves, *Heb.* 13. 17. And therefore a Government meerly Popular or Democraticall (which Divines and Or-

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thodox Writers doe so much condemne in *Morillius*, and such like) is farre from the practice of these Churches, and we believe farre from the minde of Christ.

Secondly, neverthesse a Government meerly Aristocraticall, wherein the Church government is so in the hands of some *Elders*, as that the rest of the body are wholly excluded from entermedling by way of power therein, such a government we conceive also to be without Warrant of

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the Word, and likewise to be injurious to the people, as infringing that liberty which Chriit hath given to them in choosing their owne Officers, in admitting of Members, and censuring of offenders, even Ministers themselves when they be such; as the Church of *Colosse* must admonish *Archippus* of his duety, *Col. 4. 17.* Master *Parker* you know hath 22. Arguments to prove the superiority of the Churches over and above her officers, *Point. Eccles. lib. 3. cap. 12.* And Master *Baine* saith, If the Church have power by election to choose a Minister, and to power of instituting him, then of destituting also: *Instituere & destinuere ejusdem est potestatis,* *Dioces. Triall P. 88.* And againe no reason evinceth the Pope, though a generall Pastors subject to the censure of a Church oecumenicall, but the same proveth a Diocesan Bishop, (and wee may adde, and a Congregationall Minister) subject to the censure of the particular Church, *pag. 89.* And whereas it might be objected, then may Sheep censure the Shepherd, Children their fathers, which were absurd. To this he answereth, that similitudes hold not in all things, naturall Parents are no waies Children, nor in state of subjection to their Children: but spirituall fathers are so fathers, that in some respects they are children to the whole Church. So shepherds are no waies Sheep but Ministers are in regard of the whole Church. 2. Parents and Shepherds are absolutely Parents and Shepherds, bee they good or evill, but spirituall Parents and Pastors are no longer so, then they do accordingly behave themselves *p. 89.* (To the same purpose and more at large is this Objection answered by Master *Parker*, *Polite Eccles. l. 3. c. 12. p. 78, 79.* And againe, if their owne Churches have no power over them, it will be hard to shew wherein others

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have such power of Jurisdiction over persons who belong not to their owne Churches, *p. 89.* So that all power is not in the Officers alone, seeing the Officers themselves, if they offend, are under the power of the Church. Even *Paul* himselfe though an extraordinary Officer, yet would not take upon him to excommunicate the incestuous person, without the Church, but sends to them exhorting them to doe it; and blames them because they had not done it sooner, *1 Cor. 5.* which shewes that the exercise of all Church power of government, is not in the Officers alone: And therefore the *Lord Jesus* reproving *Pergamus* and *Thyatira* for suffering *Balaamites*, *Nicholaitans*, and the woman *Iezebel* among them,

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and calling on them for reformation herein, *Rev.* 2. sends his Epistle, not onely to the Angels of those Churches, but also to the Churches, or whole Congregations, as appeareth *Rev.* 1. 11. And also in the conclusion of those Epistle, where the words are, let him that hath an eare heare what the spirit saith, (not onely to the Angels) but unto the Churches; whereby it appeares, that the suffering of these corrupt persons and practises, was the sinne of the whole Church, and the reforming of them, a duty required of them all. Now the reforming of abuses in the Church, argues some exercise of Church government, as the suffering of them argues some remissenesse therein; and therefore it followes, that some exercise of Church government was required of the whole Church and not all of the Angels alone. Sure it is the whole Congregation of *Israel* thought it their duty to see to the reforming of abuses when they appeared to spring up amongst them, as appeareth by their behaviour & practise when the two Tribes and an halfe had set up the Altar upon the bankes of *Jordan*, *Ios.* 22. for it is said, that the whole Congregation of the Children of *Israel* gathered themselves together at *Shilo*, to go up to warre against them, *v.* 12. And when *Phineas* and ten Princes with him, were sent to expostulate with them about the matter, it was the whole Congregation that sent them, *v.* 13, 14. And when they delivered their Message they spake in the name of the whole Congregation, saying, This saith the whole congregation of the Lord, what trespasse is this? &c. *v.* 16.

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which plainly declares, that the whole congregation (and not the Elders or Rulers alone) thought it their duty to see abuses reformed and redressed) which could not be without some exercise of government. And when *Achan* the Sonne of *Carmi* had committed a trespasse in the accursed thing, *Jos.* 7. it is counted the sinne of the whole congregation and such a sinne as brought a Plague upon them all: for it is said the children of *Israel* committed a trespasse in the accursed thing. *v.* 1. And God saith to *Joshua* (not the *Elders* have sinned, but) *Israel* hath sinned, and they have transgressed my Covenant, and they have stolne of the accursed thing, and put it among their owne stuffe. *v.* 11. And for this, wrath fell on all the congregation of *Israel* and that man perished not alone in his Iniquity, *Iosh.* 22. 20. Now why should not he have perished alone, but wrath must fall upon them all? and why should his sinne, be

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the sinne of all the congregation, if the care of preventing it, and timely suppressing the same, (which could not be without some exercise of Church government) had not bin a duty lying upon all the whole congregation) but upon the Elders and Officers alone? doubtlesse the just Lord, who saith, every man shall beare his owne burden, *Gal. 6. 5.* would not have brought wrath upon all the congregation for *Achans* sinne, if such government as might have prevented, or timely reformed the same, had not belonged to the whole congregation, out to the *Elders* alone. And before this time all the children of *Israel* (and not the *Elders* alone) are commanded to put Lepers and uncleane persons out of the Campe. *Numb. 5. 1, 2.* By all which it appeareth, that all exercise of Church Government is not in the *Elders* alone, but some power is in the people.

And else-where he counts it no Sacriledge for Members of the Church, though not in office, to handle those keyes, *Mat. 16.* but rather a frivolous thing to thinke otherwise; *Quasi absque sacrilegie*, saith he, *tractare claves privati nequeaxt, qhi cas privatim tractare jubeatur. Quoties fraires suos admonere, consolaria, et ædificare. Imò verò est & publica clavium tractatio quam plebs Christiana in unum coacta sine ullo sacralegio ministrat, 1 Cor. 5. Polit. Eccles. l. 3. c. 2. p. 8.* And yet this is not a

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singular conceit of his or ours, but the concurrent judgement of many worthy witnesses of the truth in these latter dayes, who do with great consent hold the Ecclesiasticall government to be of a mixt form compounded of all three Estates, and that the people are not to be wholly excluded from having any thing to do therein. *Si velimus Christum ipsum respicere, fuit semper Ecclesiæ Regimen monarchicum: Si Ecclesiæ presbyteros, qui in Doctrinæ et disciplina suas partes agebant, Aristocraticum: si totum corpus Ecclesie quaternus in Electione Episcoporum et presbyterorum suffragia ferebat, ita tamen ut eutaxia semper à presbyteris seraretur, Democraticum: Sic partim Aristocritum partim Democraticum, partim etiam Monarchicum est, semper que suit Ecclesiæ Regimen*, Whita. *de pontif. Rom. Qu. 1. c. 1. sect. 2.* The Church (saith Mr. *Cartwright*) is governed with that kinde of Government, which the Philosophers that write of the best Common-wealths affirme to be the best. For in respect of Christ the head it is a Monarchy, and in respect of the Ancients and Pastors that Govern in Common, and with like Authority among themselves, it is an Aristocracy, or rule at the

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best men; and in respect that the people are not secluded, but have their interest in Church matters it is a Democracy, or popular State. 1 *Reply* p. 51. And when Dr. *Whitegift*, from the Doctrine of the Authors of the Admonition would infer this consequence, *viz.* that then the more that ruled the better estate it should be, and so the popular state should be the best: In Answer hereunto he saith, I have spoken of this before, where I declared that the mixed estate is best, both by the example of the Kingdome of Christ: and also of this our Realme, pag. 181. 182. And againe, whereas Mr. Dr. saith, that Excommunication, and consequently Absolution or restoring to the Church again pertaineth only to the Minister: it remaineth that I shew that the *Presbytery* or *Eldership* and the whole *Church* also, hath interest in the excommunication and consequently in the absolution or restoring unto the Church againe, p. 183. And, againe, it is certaine Saint *Paul* did both understand and observe the rule of our Saviour Christ (*viz.* that rule,

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“*Mat. 18. Tell the Church*) but he communicateth this power of Excommunication with the Church: and therefore it must needs be the meaning of our Saviour Christ, that the Excommunication should be by many, and not by one, and by the Church, and not by the Minister of the Church alone, for hee biddeth the Church at *Corinth* twice in the first Epistle, once by a Metaphor, another time in plaine words, that they should Excommunicate the Incestuous person. And so the 2<sup>d</sup>. Epistle, understanding of the Repentance of the man, he intreateth them that they would receive him again: And therefore considering that the Absolution of the Excommunication doth pertain unto the *Churches*, it followeth that the excommunication doth in like manner appertain unto it, p. 184. And again that the Ancients had the ordering of these things, and that the peoples consent was required, & that the *Ministers* did not take upon them of their own Authority to Excommunicate, &c. It may appeare almost in every page of *Cyprians Epistles*. In *Augustines* time it appareth also, that that consent of the Church was required, p. 187.

To these may be added, Mr. *Fenner*, who speaking of the Ecclesiasticall Presbtery, and of the businesse which the Presbtery is to deale in, which hee distinguisheth into judiciarie, as deciding of doubts, and dispensing of Censures, and extrajudiciary, as Election, Ordination &c. hath these words, *Atque hac sunt negotia quæ præstari debent: In quibus per omnes Ecclesias*

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*summa Ecclesiastica potestas presbyterio demandata est, ita tamen in his quæ maximi sunt momenti, et ad ecclesiæ totius bonum vel ruinam maxime spectant, post [[GREEK]][[GREEK]] suam de his captum consilia Ecclesiæ denunciantur, ut si quid habeant quod consulant vel objiciant in medium proferant: postea, autem auditis et assentiturbas vitandas sive componendas, quod tum cum Major pars Ecclesiæ dissentit, faciendum est) decervendi et pro decretis Ecclesiis presonenda sunt, and then he declares what hee meanes by those matters maximi momenti, viz. excommunication, absolution, elections, and deposings of Ministers and such like, Sacræ The. lib. 7. c. 7. wherein he plainly sheweth, that though the power*

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of the Presbytery be very great yet in things of greatest moment, as Censures and Elections, the people if they have any thing to counsell or object, have liberty to bring it in; and afterwards matters are to be concluded when they have bin heard speake, and have given their consent, for which liberty and power of the people, he bringeth these Scriptures, 2. Chro. 30. 23. Acts 1. 15. 23. 26. 1 Cor. 5. 4. & 2 Cor. 1. 6. 7. Zanchius speaking of that Question, *per quos exercers dehet excommunication*, answers thus, *nemoe per Ecclesiam, sue per ministros Ecclesiæ nomine, coque et cum consensus totius Ecclesiæ Promissio illa, Quæcung ligaveritis, ad totem Ecclesiam est facta, Ergo &c. Prætere Apostolus hoc expressius declaravit, 1 Cor. 5. congregates vobis, &c. alloquebatur autem totam Ecclesiam. Patres idem docent: Cyprianus ad Cornelium Rom. Episcopum scribit se multum laborasse apud plebum, ut par daretur lapsis punitentibus: Si ergo non erat unias Episcopi cum suo Presbyterio solvere quempiam, sed requirebatur plebes coque totius Ecclesiæ consensus: Ergo neque ligari quispiam poterat, id est Excommunicars, sine totius Ecclesiæ consensus. Augustinus etiam contra Donatistas ait, supersedendum esse excommunicatione Quandotota plebs laborant eodem morbo, Quid ita? cansam adsert, Quia inquit, non assentientur excommunicationi, &c. Satis aperte docet tunc temporis non solitum Suisse excommunicationem serri in Quempiam sine totius Ecclesiæ consensus; et ratio est in promptu, Quæ enim adomnes per tixent cum consensus omnium fieri debent: Ergo sine totius Ecclesiæ consensus excommunicari nemo debet.* And then comparing the Government of the Church, to the Roman Common-wealth which had the Dictators, the Senate and the Quirites, and shewing that the Church government in respect of Christ is a Monarchie in respect of the Presbyters an Aristocratie, and in respect of the people a Democratie, he concludes thus, *In rebus*

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*igitur gravissimis, quæ ad totum corpus pertinent, uti est Excommunicatio, sine consensus et autoritate totius Ecclesiæ nihil fieri debet, de Redempt in præ c. 1. pag. 983. &c. Calvins words are these, Cypriannus cum meminit per quos suo tempore exercereur (viz. potestas jurisdictionis) ad ungeri solet totum Clerum Episcopo, sed alibi quoque demonstrat, sic præfuisse clerum ipsum, ut plebs interim à cognitione non excluderetur, sic enim scribit; Ab initio Episcopatus mei statui sine Cleri consilio & plebes*

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*consensus nihil agree, Instit. 1. 4. c. 11. Sect. 6. And againe, Hoc addo illam esse legitimam in excommunicando homine progressionem quam demonstrat Paulus, si non soli Seniors se orsim id factant, sed conscia & approbante Ecclesia, in eum scilicet modum, ut plebes multitudo non regat actionem, sed observet, ut testis & custos, ue quid per libidinem à paucis geratur, Inst. 1. 4. c. 12. Sect. 7. Those Ministers that penned the Christian and modest offer of disputation, doe say, That the Pastor and Elders that exereise Ecclesiasticall Jurisdiction, ought not to performe any maine and materiall Ecclesiasticall act, without the free consent of the congregation, in Propos. 8.*

The Refuter of Doctor *Downams* Sermon for the superiority of Diocesan Bishops, is plaine and full also in this point, in *Part 2.* of his reply *p.* 104, 105, 106. where answering Doctor *Downam*, that counted it schismaticall novelty, that the forme of the Church Government should be holden in part to be Democraticall, and that his Refuter for so holding was a *Brownist* or *Anabaptist*; he not onely proves the power of the people from the Scripture, and delivers his owne judgement, that the Ecclesiasticall Government is of a mixt forme, compounded of all three Estates; but for the same tenent, and that the Church government is in part Democraticall or popular, he alledgeth the testimonies of the Centuries, of *Illyricus*, of Doctor *Fulke*, Doctor *Willet*, *Cyprian*, *Augustine*, *P. Martyr*, Dr *Whitaker*, and others: Master *Baines* his judgement we heard before in the former Question. *Vrsinus* speaking of that Question *Quibus commissæ est potestas clavium*, hath these words: *Quibus denunciatio verbi divini delegata est itsdem & potestas illa clavium: quæ verò denunciatio sit in Ecclesiastica disciplina est tetius Ecolesi ad totam alio modo fit illa denunciatio in verbi divini ministerio, quam in Ecclesiæ judicia.* And then telling how this denunciation is done in the Ministry, and by the Ministers of the Word, he comes to declare how it is done in Church censures: *In Ecclesiastica judicio* (saith he) *gratiæ & iræ Dei non sit denunciati ab uno aliquoprivatina sed tota Ecclesia cut nomine*

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*toius Ecclesiæ abuis qui ad hoc delecti sunt communicationem consensu*, And a little after answering objections brought against the

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use of Excommunication, he hath these words: *Potest concedi quod Christus non intelligat Presbyterium (viz. in that place Matth. 18. Tell the Church) sed proprie sumat vocabulum Ecclesiæ ante Christ uns Judaicæ, post Christum Christianæ: Sed in Ecclesiæ jurisdictione oportet aliquem esse ordinem, aliquos oportet esse constitutos ab Ecclesia, alioquin esset* [[GREEK]][[GREEK]]. And speaking of that Question, *Quis ordo servari debeat in exercenda clavium potestate (he saith) principalis paus in excommunicatione est denunciatio, qua &c. at que hæc denunciatio qua quis excommunicatur non est penes Ministerium Ecclesiæ, sed penes ipsam Ecclesiam, & ejus nomine dit, quia mandatum hoc à Christo datum est Ecclesiæ; nam ipse ast expressè, Dic Ecclesiæ.* And finally, speaking of abuses to be avoided, and cautions to be observed in Excommunication, he hath such words in the fourth Proposition, or Rule there annex, as doe declare it to be his judgement that if Excommunication should be paired by a few, without the consent of the whole Church; such proceedings would be both Oligarchy and Tyranny: *Attentem expendatum (saith he) à toto Presbyterio, probetur ab Ecclesia, non suscipiatur privaià autoritate, ne ministerium Ecclesiæ convertatur in* [[GREEK]][[GREEK]] *& Tyrannidem*, in his Comment upon the catechisme, in the place *De clavibus regni cælorum.*

*Pareus delivering certaine porismata or: conclusions concerning Excommunication, hath this for the fifth of them, Quòd excommunicandi potestas non fit penes unum Episcopum, vel paucospastores, sed penes Ecclesiam; proinde licet pastores & presbyteri ordiniscausa primas habeant partes circa censu as Ecclsiasticus, & per eos he adminstren ut; quod tamen citra consensum Ecclesiæ pastores ad exclusionem procedere non debeant, alibi demonst, avimus in 1 Cor. 5. And a little after, answering Stapletons objections that would have the power of Excommunication to be in the Bishop alone, he brings the case of Cyprian, who could not absolve Lapsi without the people: Cyprianus (saith he) na Corincium Romanum Episcopum scribit se multum apud plebum laborasse ut pax daretur lapsis, quam siper se dare potuisset, non erat cur adeo in persuadenda plebe se fatigasset. So that in the judgement of Pareus and Cyprian all power of Church government was not in the Presbyters,*  
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but some power was in the people.

*Musculus*, although he thinke there be little use of Excommunication and Church discipline, where there is a Christian Magistrate, yet when it is to be used, he would not have the people excluded from having any hand therein, as may appeare by those words of his, where he speakes *De disciplina Ecclesiastica: Hisce de rebus non constituent Minister suo proprio arvitratu, sed erit ad institutionem carum director, & adhibebit suffragia & consensum sue plebes, ne quicquam invitæ Ecclesiæ imponatur. Denique curabit ut plebs ipsa viros graves, timentes Dei, ac boni testimonii deligat, quorum curâ & vigilantia disciplina Ecclesiastica administratur, & si quid gravioris momenti accidat, ad ipsam Ecclesiam referatur: .oc. com. de Ministris verbi Dei, intit. de potestate Ministrorum p. 377.* And afterward, in the latter end of that place, comming to speake of the deposing of ueworthy Ministers, he hath these words: *Quæritur hic per quos disciplina ista administrari debeat? Respondeo, primim Ecclesiæ populus potestatem habens elegendi dignum Ministrum, habet etiam (teste Cypriano) potestem indignum recusandi: deinde qui Judices sunt Censoresque morum in Ecclesia ex officio tenentur redarguere peccantem Ministrum, si duobus aut tribus testibus fide dignis coram Ecclesia Dei convictus fuerit. Teriò, iidem cum consensus & suffragiis plebes deponent Ministrum, vel adltempus, vel in universum, vel excommunicabunt tandem juxta quaritatem peccati vel defectus illius, p. 429.* Doctor Ames saith, Potestas hujus disciplin... (*viz.* of Ecommunication) *quoad jus ipsum pertinet ad Ecclesiam illam in communi, cujus membrum est peccator: ad illos enim pertinet ejicere, ad quos pertinet prinò admittere, & corporis totius interest ex æquo membrorum conservatio vel amputation, cum Ecclesiæ ideirco consensus (eoque Magistratu non permittente tantum, sed & approbanie & constituente) est executioni mandanda. Medul. Theol. l. 1. c. 37. Sect. 26.*

Lastly Master *Parker* observing a distinctton betweene power, and the dispensing of power; that the one is in the Church and the other in the Presbyters, hath these words: *Neque tamen dispinsatio omnis, omneque exercitur est fenes rectores solos, sed juxta temperamentum formæ partim Aristocratic partim Democraticæ de mandaia Rectoribus suis Ecclesiæ que ipsa per se obire sætis commode requit, retinente vero dispensationem il-*

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*lam illudque exercitium quod & ipsi convenit, & pertinet ad ejus dignitatem, auctoritatem, & libertatem a Christo donatam. Posit. Eccles. l. 3. c. 7.* And

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elsewhere he saith, *Imo vero est & publica clavium trastatio, quam plebes Christiana in noum coacta, sine ulle sacrilegio administrat.* Polit. Eccles. l. 3 c. 2. p. 8.

These testimonies we thought good to produce in this Question, lest any should thinke that to give any Church power of Government to the people, were some singular opinion of ours, swerving from the truth, and disallowed by Orthodox Writers of the Reformed Churches; and no doubt but besides these here cited, the same is taught by others also, whom now we spare to alledge, intending onely these few for a taste instead of many.

2. And therefore when this Question demandeth whether we give the exercise of all Church power of government to the whole Congregation, or to the *Presbyters* thereof alone? Our Answer is, neither thus nor so, neither all to the people excluding the Presbytery, nor all to the Presbytery excluding the People. For this were to make the government of the Church either meerly Democraticall, or meerly Aristocraticall, neither of which we believe it ought to be.

3. Whereas this Question demandeth to know what acts of Government the Presbyters may doe more then any other may doe, and to have those particular acts mentioned: this seemeth to us to be a very large demand, for who is able to mention all the particular acts of government, which anyone Governour may performe in his time, especially if he continue long in his place? But if your meaning in this Point be not of the Individualls, but of the species or kinds, yet even there also it is much to require the particular mentioning of all; yet to give you a taste take these. The calling of Assemblies and dismissing of the same againe; The ordinary preaching of the word, which is done by way of Office; and being the peoples mouth unto God in Prayer; The dispensing of Baptiame, and the Lords Supper: The permitting of any to speak in an orderly way; and againe enjoining silence: The putting of matters to Vote, and pronouncing of sentence in the censure of offenders, or re-

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ceiving in of Penitents after their fall, and blessing of the people in the name of the Lord; These are Acts of Church Government, which the Presbyters may doe according to the Word, and another member may not do without breach of Order and presuming above his place.

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4. It is also here demanded, what the Presbyters may do without the particular consent of the rest? To which wee answer, that when they doe what the Lord Christ (whose Stewards they are) by his word requires of them in their places, this should not be without the consent of the rest, for the rest of the Church ought to consent thereto: Christs Sheep ought to heare his voice *Iohn* 10. 27. and to obey them that speak unto them in his name, *Heb.* 13. 17. And if any man should in such case willfully dissent, the Church ought to deale with such an one, for not consenting to the will and waies of Christ, or else they shall all be guilty of the sinfull dissent of such an one. So that this Passage (if it be meant of Presbyters doing their duty) without the consent of the people, goes upon a supposall (in respect of the people) of that which never ought to be, neither are wee to suppose but that there may be rule when the *Elders* and Brethren doe not dissent nor are divided one from another: The multitude of them that believed in the first Christian Church at *Ierusalem*, were of one heart and of one soule, *Act.* 4. 32. Yet none needs to doubt, but there was rule and Government amongst them, when yet their agreement was such, that the Apostles and Elders did nothing without the full consent of the rest. It is a miserable mistake either to thinke that in the Church of Christ the Elders and Brethren must needs dissent one from another, or it they all consent, that then there can be no ruling but against the peoples minde. They were none of the best Shepherds to their flocks unto whom the Lord saith, with force and rigour have you ruled them, *Ezech.* 34. 4. As for doing any thing in their places which the word of Christ, the Lord and Master of the Church, commandeth not, nor alloweth such things, they neither ought to do nor ought the Church to consent unto them if they should for that were to make themselves partakers of their Rulers sinnes, and so to bring  
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Judgement upon them all, as when the Priests did wickedly beare rule, and the people loved to have it so, *Ieremiah* 5. 31.

5. Lastly, this Question demandeth how, and over whom in those Acts of Government, which are done by the Elders more then by other Members, or without the consent of the rest, the Presbyters doe rule in propriety of speaking more then the rest of the Congregation? wherein are sundry particulars.

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1. How they rule? Whereunto wee answer, that neither the *Elders* nor the people doe rule with Lordly and Princely rule, and Sovereaign authority and power; for that is proper to Christ over his Church: who is the onely Lord, 1 *Cor.* 12. 5. And King and lawgiver that is able to save and to destroy, *Isa.* 33. 23. *Psal.* 2. *Luk.* 19. 27. *Jam.* 4. 12. *The Elders are forbidden to be Lords over Gods heritage.* 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. Or to exercise authority as the Kings and Princes of the earth doe, *Matth.* 20. 25, 26. *Luke* 22. 25, 26. They are not so to rule, as to doe what them selves please, but they must do whatsoever *Christ* hath commanded, *Mat.* 28. 20. Mr. *Baine* sheweth from these words there are diversities of Ministeries, but one Lord, 1 *Cor.* 12. 5. That it is contrary to the Scripture that there should be in the Church more Lords then one: (and saith he) look as great Lords have in their Houses Ministers of more and lesse honour, from the Steward to the Scullery, but no Lord-like or Master-like power in any besides themselves: So is is with Christ and his Church, which is the House of God, wherein hee is the Lord. Apostles and others having more or lesse honourable services, but no Masterlike power over the meanest of their fellow servants: On *Ephes.* 1. 22. p. 395. and elsewhere he saith no Minister of the Word hath any power but Ministeriall in the Church, the power of the Apostles themselves and *Evangelists* is called I,a.x.o i~, *Acts* 20. 2 *Tim.* 4. Yea such a service as doth make the Ministers having it so servants, that they are no way Lords; manny Ministers, one Lord; we preach Christ Jesus the Lord; our selves our servants for Jesus sake, *Dioces.* Tryall. Q. 2. p. 74. The Elders are to rule as Stewards *Mat.* 24. 45. *Luke* 12.

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42. As Shepherds, *Act.* 20. 28. As Captaines, guides, leaders or overseers, by going before the People, and shewing them the word and way of the Lord, 1 *Tim.* 3. 1. 5. & 5. 17. 1 *Thes.* 5. 12. *Heb.* 13. 17.

2. How they rule more then the rest of the Conaregation do? whereto the Answer is, that this is more then the rest of the Congregation doe in these acts, even as acting is more then consenting, and as it is more to be a Steward over of the House then one of the household, or to be a guide or leader, then to be guided or led.

3. Over whom they doe rule? even over the whole Church in generall, and every Member in particular, even all the flocke over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, *Act.* 20. 28. 1 *Pet.* 3. 2.

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

To 16. The rule is expresse and plaine that women ought not to speake in the Church, but to be in silence. *1 Cor.* 14. 34. *1 Tim.* 2. 11, 12. And therefore they ought not to vote in Church matters; besides voting imports some kind of government, and authority and power: now it is not government and authority, but subjection and obedience which belongs unto women, by the rule, and so is the practice of women amongst us.

To 17. Church matters ought not to be determined meerly by multitude or plurality of Votes, but by rules from the word of Christ, whose will, (and not the will either of the Major, or Minor part of men,) is the onely rule and Law for Churches, *Iam.* 4. 12. *Isa.* 33. 22. *Mat.* 23. 8, 9. *Exod.* 23. 2. 21, 22. For our practice among us, the Major part of the Church, yea usually the whole Church doth consent and agree in one minde and one judgement, and so gives a joint unanimes Vote; and the rule requires it should be so *Rom.* 15. 6. and the example of the Primitive Apostolike Churches, where things were earned (nor meerly by the Major or Minor part, the rest dissenting, but) [[GREEK]][[GREEK]], or with one accord, *Act.* 1. 14. & 2. 46. & 4. 24. & 5. 12. & 15. 25. So that in this sence, matters with us are carried according to the Vote of the Major part, that is, with the joint con-

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sent of the whole Church, but yet because it is the minde of Christ. But it may be your meaning is in this *Question* to take it for granted that the Churches will be divided in their Votes, and to know what course we take at such times: But if Churches lay aside their owne affections, and give attendance to the rule, and be (as all Churches ought to be) men of humble spirits, and sincere, and withall depend on Christ their head and King for guidance, in their worke, we know no necessity of such a supposall, that they must needs be divided in their votes, especially considering what promises he hath made unto his Church, of godly concord and agreement among themselves, and of his owne gracious presence in the midst of them, *Ier.* 32. 39. *Zeph.* 3. 9. *Mat.* 18. 20. which promises we believe are not in vaine. Neverthelesse, we deny not but through the corruptions & distempers of men, some dissention may arise for a time in a true Church, as it was in the Church at *Corinth*: and if

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any such thing fall out among us (which we blesse God is not often) then before matters be put to the vote, our course of proceeding is after this manner. If the Elders and Major part of the Church consent in one conclusion, yet if any brother dissent, he is patiently heard, and his allgements of Scripture or good reasons are duly weighed: If it appeare that his judgement is according to the rule, the whole Church will readily yeeld, though before they were otherwise minded. But if it appeare they who dissent from the Major part are factiously or partially carried, the red labour to convince them of their error by the rule, if they yeeld, the consent of all comfortably concurreth in the matter; if they still continue obstinate, they are admonished, and so standing under censure, their vote is nullified. If they without obstinate opposition of the rest, doe dissent still, yet referre the matter to the judgement of the Major part of the body they are not wont to proceed to sentence (if the matter be weighty as in Excommunication) till the reasons on both sides have bin duly pondered, and all brotherly means have been used for mutuall information and conviction. If the difference still continue the sentence (if the matter be weighty) is still demurred, even till other Churches have

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been consulted with, who in such a case will send their Elders to communicate their apprehensions and light, which they do not *pro imperio*, binding the Church to rest in their dictates, but by propounding their grounds from the Scripture. These courses with Gods presence and blessing (which usually accompanieth his Ordinance) faithfully taken and followed, will prevaile either to settle one unanimous consent in the thing, or at least to preserve peace in the Church by the dissentors submission to the judgement of the Major part, though they see not light sufficient to warrant them to act in the businesse: Such subjection is according to the rule, *Ephes. 5. 21. 1 Pet. 5. 5* If the Church or the Elders should refuse the testimony of other Churches according to God, they will (after brotherly admonition and due patient waiting) deny them the nght hand of fellowship, till they shall give better evidence of their subjection to the Gospel of Christ. But thanks be to God we never had occasion of such withdrawing communion of one Church from another, though now and then (as need requireth) Churches send to other Churches for their counsell and advice.

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

To 18. Meanes to preserve the Churches in unitie and verity, and to reforme any that may erre, thankes bee to God we have sundry. First, the holy Scriptures, which are a perfect rule for Doctrine and practise, *2 Tim.* 3. 15. 16. *2 Pet.* 1. 19. *Psal.* 19. 7, 8. Secondly, the Ministry appointed by Christ, *viz.* of Pastors, Teachers, Elders, and Deacons. *Ephes.* 4. 11, 12. *1 Cor.* 12. 28. *1 Tim.* 5. 17. *1 Tim.* 3. 1, 2. &c. and *vers.* 8. and in both these we have frequently holden forth unto us the Commandment of God, wherein he requires Churches to bee of one mind and one judgement in the truth, *1 Cor.* 1. 10. & 2. 13. 11. *Ephes.* 4. 3. & *Phil.* 1. 27. & 2. 1, 2. and his promise to lead his people into all truth, and holy agreement therein, *Jer.* 32. 29. *Isa.* 11. 6, 7 &c. *Zeph.* 3. 9. *Ioh.* 16. 13. with many motives and Rules from Scripture for continuing in the said truth and love. Now Faith makes use of these promises and submits to these precepts and exhortations, and so both these being mixt with Faith

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are profitable meanes by the blessing of God for that end aforesaid, *Heb.* 4. 2. as these Chueches have found by experience, for these yeares since our comming into this Countrey: And any other meanes sanctified of God for the aforesaid end, we hope we should be glad with thankfull hearts to improve and make use of as the Lord shall help.

As tor a Platforme of Doctrine and Discipline which you mention, as one meanes hereunto; if thereby you meane no more but a confession of Faith of the holy doctrine which is according to godlinesse, we know nothing but it may be lawfull and expedient in some cases for any particular person that hath received the gift to doe it; or any Church, or all the Churches in any Christian Common-wealth, to compile and set forth such a platforme. The practise of those Churches, whose Confessions are contained in that booke called *The harmony of Confessions*, as also of Master *Robinson* at *Leiden*, and others of our Nation in other parts in the *Low-countries*, who have published such platforms, we see no reason to condemne or disallow: neither count we it unlawfull or inexpedient for any Church or Churches, or person or persons in the countrey, upon Just occasion to doe the like.

But if your meaning be of a platforme to be imposed by authority upon others, or our selves, as a binding Rule of Faith and practice, so

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that all men must believe and walke according to that platforme, without adding, altering, or omitting, then we are doubtfull whether such platformes be lawfull or expedient. For it the Doctrine contained therein doe in any particular swerve from the Doctrine contained in Scripture then the imposing of them is so far forth unlawfull; and if they be according to it, then they may seeme needlesse, in as much as the forme of wholesome words contained in Scripture is sufficient. Which reason against such Platformes makes nothing against Sermons or Preaching, though Sermons must be according to the Doctrine contained in Scripture, because Preaching is an ordinance of God and therefore not needlesse; which we cannot say of such Platformes. Besides, as they are not necessary, so they may be a snare unto men, and a dange

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rous temptation of attending more to the forme of Doctrine delivered from the authority of the Church, and the imposers, then to the examining thereof according to the Rule of Scripture; and so their faith may by this meanes stand in the wisdom or will of man, rather then in the power of God as if men had dominion over their faith; which things ought not so to be, *1 Cor. 2. 5. & 2. 1. ver.* Christians have liberty from God to search the Scriptures, and try all things, and hold fast that which is good, *Act. 17. 11. Ioh. 5. 39. 1 Thes. 5. 21.* but the foresaid imposing of platformes and confessions compiled by men, doth seeme to abridge them of that liberty; and if it be any meanes of unity, yet it may be a dangerous hinderance of some verity and degree of truth as binding men to rest in their former apprehensions and knowledge, without liberty to better their judgement in those points, and shutting the doore against any further light which God may give to his best servants, and most discerning, beyond what they saw at first: And therefore we doubt such imposed platformes are not lawfull, or at least wise not expedient.

The consociation of Churches into *Classes* and Synods we hold to be lawfull, and in some cases necessary; as namely in things that are not peculiar to one Church, but common to them all: And likewise when a Church is not able to end any matter that concernes onely themselves, then they are to seeke for counsell and advice from neighbour Churches; as the Church at *Antioch* did send unto the Church at *Ierusalem*, *Acts 15. 2.* the ground and use of *Classes* and Synods, with the limitations therein

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

to be observed, is summarily laid downe by Doctor *Ames*, *Medul. Theol.* l. 1. c. 39. Sect. 27. unto whom we do wholly consent in this matter.

But when you speake of doing no weighty matter without the consent and counsell of a *Classes*, we dare not so far restraints the particular Churches as fearing this would be to give the *Classes* an undue power and more then belongs unto them by the Word; as being also an abridgment of that power which Christ hath given to every particular Church, to transact their owne matters (whether more or

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lesse weighty) among themselves (if so be they be able) without such necessary dependence upon *Classes*, as we have shewed before in answer to Q. 14. Sect. 3. & 4. of that Answer. And Master *Parker* testifieth that in *Genevah*, and in the *Low-countries*, where they have some use of *Classes*, yet it cannot bee said that their particular Congregations are *absque potestate omni in rebus grandioribus, ut in excommunicatione*; the particular Churches are not without power in the more weighty matters, as in Excommunication, *Polit. Eccles. li. 2. c. 36. Sect. II. p. 310*. And Master *Baine* sheweth the same, saying, They have power of governing themselves, but for greater edification voluntarily confederate, not to use or exercise their power but with mutuall communion, one asking the counsell and consent of the other, *Dioces. Triall Q. 1. p. 21*. And a little after *Geneva* made his consociation, not as if the prime Churches were imperfect, and to make one Church by this union; but because though they were intire Churches, and had the power of Churches, yet they needed support in exercising of it, &c. which is the very same that wee said before in Q. 14 *viz.* That all Churches have right of Government within themselves, but some had need of counsell and advice of others, because they are of lesse ability to transact their owne matters of themselves. And Master *Parker*, in the same place afore alledged in the page immediately precedent, dearly sheweth against Doctor *Downham*, Doctor *Sutcliffe*, and others, that those particular Congtegations which have Presbyters of their owne, with power within themselves, are the most perfect, and are precisely formed *juxt a formam illam quæ in verbo patefacta est*, according to that forme which is revealed in the Word; whereas others which haye not the like are more defective and imperfect. And if this be so, then to binde Churches to do no weighty matters without the counsell and consent of *Classes*, were to binde them to bee imperfect. And for Synods,

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if they have such power that their determination shall binde the Churches to obedience (as you speake) it is more then we yet understand. Indeed *Bellamine* makes Bishops in a Counsell or Synod to be Judges; and that *standum sit eo-*

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*rum sententiæ, quia ipsi sic statuerunt, quemodo statur sententiæ Prætoris in causis politicis;* that is, either to obey or suffer: *de Concil. & Eccles. l. 1. c. 18.* But the Orthodoxe Writers do not consent to him therein; for in their Judgement the sentence of a Councell or Synod is onely *inquisitio quædam & dictio sententiæ ministratoria & limitata, ita ut tantum valeat decretum Concilii quantum valeat ejus ratio,* as Doctor *Ames* hath it in his *Bellarminus enervatus*, upon that place of *Bellarmino*: that is, The sentence of a Synod is onely a certaine enquiring and giving of sentence by way of Ministry, and with limitation; so that the decree of the Councell hath so much force as there is force in the reason of it. And *Junius* expresseth it thus; *Sententia Concilii serpsam suasionis non coactionis est judicium ministeriale, non auctoritatem, per se necessitatemque adferens, Animadvers.* upon *Bellarmino* in that place: that is, The sentence of a Councell is of it selfe onely of advice, not of compulsion or constraint, and brings with it a judgement ministeriall, not authority of it selfe nor necessity; whereunto we doe wholly consent. As for that clause in this Question, *That the determination of a Synod should binde if not to obedience, yet to peacable suffering,* we know not what sufferings those should be: for punishments in Purse or Person, in respect of the body or outward man, are not to be inflicted by Synods, but by civill Magistrates; and Church-censures of Excommunication, or the like, belong to the particular Church of which an offender is a member, out of the communion whereof a man cannot be cast, out onely by his owne Church.

To 19. Onely Christ hath Authority to make Lawes for the government of each particular Church, and the Members thereof, and his lawes doe oblige all the Members) and may not be omitted without sinne, *Jam. 4. 12. Isa. 33. 22. Mat 23. 8, 9 10. Act. 3. 23.* But for particular Churches, they have no power to make lawes for themselves or their Members, but to observe and see all their Members observe those Laws which Christ hath given and commanded *Mat. 28. 20. Deut. 33. 3. Iohn 10. 27.*

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

If any Church shall presume further, they goe beyond their Commission,  
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such case their Ecclesiasticall Lawes may be omitted without sinne,  
nay it would be sinne to be subject to them *Col. 2. 20* To walke after  
them, *Hos. 5. 11.* to be such servants of men as not to stand fast in the  
liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, *1 or. 7. 23. Gal. 5. 1.*

To 20. The outward calling of a Minister consisteth properly and  
essentially in election by the people, as Doctor *Ames* sheweth, *Cas. Conf.*  
*l. 4. c. 25. Q. 6.* And this election is so essentiall that without it the  
Ministers calling (if you speak of an ordinary Church officer) is a nullity;  
And therefore *Mornay*, that learned noble man of *France*, approveth that  
saying of *Chrysostome*, election by the people is so necessary, as that  
without it there is neither Altar, nor Church, nor Priest-hood, where  
(omitting other things) it appears to be their judgement, that without  
election by the people, the Ministry is void; And *Mornay* addeth of his  
owne, concerning the Bishops amongst the Papists, that they were *nullá*  
*planè* [[GREEK]][[GREEK]] *nulla proinde*, [[GREEK]][[GREEK]]for  
the one presupposed the other, no Imposition seeing without election,  
in his booke of the Church, *c. 11.p. 375.* Yet sometimes the peoples  
acceptance and approbation afterward may supply the want of election  
at the first, as *Iacobs* after consent and acceptance of *Lea*, made her to be  
his wife, though hee chose her not at the first. And by this we hold the  
calling of many Ministers in *England* may be excused, who at first came  
into their places without the consent of the people.

If ordination by imposition of hands, were of the essence of a Ministers  
calling then in those Churches, where such ordination is not used, their  
Ministers should want a lawfull calling, which were an hard sentence  
against many Ministers in *Scotland*, where (as is reported) this ordination  
is not thought necessary, and therefore used or omitted indifferently.  
Wee looke at Ordination by Imposition of hands, as a solemne investing  
of men in their places, whereto they have right and calling by election,  
like to the inauguration of a Magistrate in the Common-wealth, yet  
necessary by divine Institution. *1 Tim. 4. 14.* But not so necessary as if  
the Ministers calling were a nullity without

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it. *Essentia ipsa vocationis, in electione legitima consistit; Ordinatio pendes ab electione, sicut Coronatio Principis, aut Magistratus inauguratio, ab electione, successione, aut æquivalente aliqua constitutione. Ames Bellarm. enervat. Lib. 3. de clericis, c. 2. Sect. 3.* That is, the essence of a Ministers calling consists in lawfull election, Ordination depends upon Election, as the Coronation of a Prince, or the Inauguration of a Magistrate, depends upon Election, succession, or some other Constitution æquivalent. And againe, *Ritus impositionis manuum non est absolute necessaries ad esse Pastoris, non magis quam Coronatio ad esse Regis, aut celebratio nuptiarum ad earum esse. sect. 10.* That is, the right of Imposition of hands is not absolutely necessary to the essence of a Pastor, no more then the Coronation to the essence of a King, or the Celebration of Marriage to the essence thereof.

To 21. Ordination of Ministers is not a private action but publique, and ought to be done publicly in the Assembly of the Church, and therefore the persons that performe it, (whether they be ordinary Church Officers or no) cannot in any congruity of speech be called meere private persons in that Action.

2. The Church that hath no Officers, may elect Officers or Ministers unto themselves, therefore it may also ordaine them; which Argument Dr. *Whitaker* useth as wee shall see anon. If it have Commission and power from Christ for the one, and that the greater, it hath it also for the other which is the lesser: Now ordination is lesse then election, and depends upon it as a necessary Antecedent by divine Institution, by vertue of which it is justly administred, being indeed nothing else but the admission of a person lawfully elected into his Office, or a putting of him into possession thereof, whereunto he had right before by election, as was said before in answer to the precedent Question.

3. If a Church have Ministers or Elders before, then this ordination is to be performed by the Elders of the Church, and in their Assemblie, 1 *Tim. 4. 14*, as also many other acts are to be performed by them.

4. This

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4. This Ordination thus performed by the Elders for the Church, may fitly be called the Act of the whole Church, as it is the whole man that seeth, that heareth, that speaketh, when these acts are instrumentally performed by the eye, the eare, and the tongue, in which sense Master

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*Parker, saith, Ecclesia per alios docet, baptisatque, Polit. Eccles. l. 3. c. 7. p. 26.*

5. But when a Church hath no Officers, but the first Officers themselves are to be ordained, then this Ordination by the Rite of imposing of hands may be performed for the Church by the most prime grave and able men from among themselves, as the Church shall depute hereunto, as the children of *Israel* did lay their hands upon the *Levites*, *Numb. 8. 10.* Now all the Congregation could not impose all their hands upon them together, all their hands could not possibly reach them together, and therefore it must needs be that some of the Congregation in the name of the whole body performed this Rite: And as this Scripture sheweth, that the people may in some cases lay then hands upon Church Officers, (for the *Levites* were such, upon whom the children of *Israel* did lay their hands) so let it be considered, whether these reasons doe not further make it manifest.

1. Men that are in no Office may elect, therefore they may ordaine, because ordination is nothing else but the execution of Election.

2. If it were not so, then one of these would follow, either that the Officers must minister without any Ordination at all, or else by vertue of some former Ordination received in some other Church or else they must be ordained by some other Minister or Ministers of some other Church, that were ordained afore them, and so the Ministry to be by succession. But the first of these is against the Scripture, *1 Tim. 4. 14. Heb. 6. 2.* And the second were to establish the Popish opinion of the indeleble Character, imprinted as they imagine in their Sacrament of holy Orders. Whereas for ought we can discern, if when they are called to Office in any Church, they have need of a new Election, notwithstanding their former election into another Church

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then they have by the same ground need of a new Ordination, for Ordination depends upon Election: If their former Election be ceased, their former Ordination is sealed also; and they can no more minister by vertue of a former *Ordination* unto another *Church*, then by vertue of a former Election. And for the third, we doe not understand what authority ordinary Officers can have to ordaine Ministers to such a Church of which themselves are not to much as Members. Besides, at some times, namely at the first Reformation after the times of Popery,

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there were no others to be had but from the Pope, and his Bishops and Priests. Now it were a pittifull case, if the Sheep must have no Shepherd but such as are appointed to them by the wolves, That is, if Gods people might not have Ministers, but onely from the Popish Bishops. This were to say, either that the Ministers of Antichrist, must, or may ordaine Ministers to the Church of Christ, or else that the popish Bishops are true Ministers of Christ. And if Protestants thinke it necessary, that their first Ministers should be ordained by the popish Bishops, it is no marvell if the Papists do thereupon believe that their Church is the true Church, and their Bishops true Ministers. Such a scandall is it unto them to maintaine this personall succession of the Ministry. But God doth so much abhorre *Antichrist*, that hee would not have his people to seek to him, nor his Priests to ordaine Christs Ministers, as he would not take of *Babylon* a stone for a Corner, nor a stone for a foundation, *Ier.* 51. 26.

3. It is thus in civill Corporations and Cities, the Major, Bayliffe, or other chiefe Officer elect, is at his entrance and Inauguration to receive at the hands of his Predecessors the Sword or Keyes of the City, or to have some other solemne Ceremonie by him performed unto him yet if either there be no former as at the first or that the former be dead or upon necessity absent, when his Successor entreth, then is this Ceremonie and worke performed by some other, the fittest Instrument; neither need that City borrow any Officer of another City, neither could he entremeddle there without usurpation, though both the Corporations have the same Charter under the same King. And so it is in this

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spirituall Corporation or City, the Church of God.

4. That this point may seeme the lesse strange to you, we pray you consider with us a little further the nature of this Ordination, and then wee will adde the Testimonies of some eminent Protestant Writers in this case, that you may see this is not any singular opinion of ours. For the former, some indeed have so highly advanced this Ordination, that they have preferred it farre above preaching the Word, ministring the Sacraments, and Prayer, making it and the power of Excommunication, the two incommunicable Prerogatives of a Bishop above an ordinary Minister; yet the Scripture teacheth no such thing, but rather the contrary, for when the Apostles were sent out by Christ, there was no mention

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of Ordination in that Commission of theirs, but only of teaching & preaching & baptising *Mat.* 28. 19, 20. *Mark* 16. 15, 16. If Ordination of Ministers had bin such a speciall worke, there would belike have bin some mention of it in their Commission. And certaine it is, the Apostles counted preaching the Word their principall worke, and after it Prayer, and the ministring of the Sacraments, *Act.* 6. 4. *1 Cor.* 1. 17. If ordaining of Ministers had bin in their account so prime a worke, it may seem *Paul* would rather have tarried in *Crete* to have ordained Elders there, then have gone himselfe about preaching, leaving *Titus* for the other, *Tit.* 1. 5. By all which it appears, that ordaining of Ministers is not such an eminent work as that it is to be preferred above preaching the Word, and ministring the Sacraments, and therefore to be performed by them that are superiours unto ordinary Ministers; preaching and ministring the Sacraments, being left as inferiour workes unto Ministers, of an inferiour ranke, as they would have it, that stand for the superiority of Docesan Bishops; neither is it equall unto those other workes afore mentioned, that onely he that doth these, may performe this other also, as some others thinke; but being nothing else in the true nature and use of it but the execution and accomplishment and confirmation of election, it may bee performed by the people of God, that yet have no Officers, even as Election may upon which it doth depend.

5. Lastly,

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5. Lastly, let these sayings of some Protestant Writers of singular note, either for holinesse, or learning, or both, be well considered of. Master *Perkins* saith, Succession of Doctrine alone is sufficient; for this Rule must bee remembered, that the power of the Keyes (that is, of order and jurisdiction) is tyed by God and annexed in the New Testament to Doctrine. If in *Turkey*, or *America*, or elsewhere, the Gospel should be received by the counsell and perswasion of private persons, they need not send into *Europe* for consecrated Ministers, but they have power to choose their owne Ministers from within themselves; because where God gives the Word he gives the power also; upon *Gal.* 1. 11. Doctor *Williet* saith, whereas *Bellarmino* objecteth that as in the old law the Priesthood went by carnall generation and lineall descent from *Aaron*, so in the New it must bee derived by succession from the Apostles; we answer, first, that our Saviour Christ and his Apostles could shew no lineall descent from *Aaron*, neither had their ordination from his Successors,

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and yet were the true Pastors of the Church. And a little after, This we say further that both before Christ there were true Pastors and Prophets, which were not ordained by the Priests of *Aaron*; and since Christ, that received not their ordination successively from the Apostles. First, in the old Law, when the ordinary Priesthood was corrupted, God raised up Prophets from other Tribes that received not from the Priests their ordination and allowance: such an one was *Amos*, who was among Hearsmen, and was made a Prophet as he was gathering wilde black-berries. After the same manner in the corrupt times of the Gospel, the Lord hath raised up faithfull Ministers to his Church, that could shew no succession from the degenerate Clergy. And a little after, If *Paul* were made an Apostle without the ordination of the lawfull Apostles much more may the Lord raise up new Pastors to his Church without ordination from the usurpers of the Apostles: *Synops. Papism. contr. 1. Q. 3. of Succession Error 20. p. 81. Morney* his words are full and plaine to the same purpose, *viz.* Although some of our men in such a corrupt state of the Church, as we have seene in our time; without wait-

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ing for calling or allowance of them who under the title of Pastors oppressed the Lords Flock, did at first preach without this formall calling, and afterward were chosen and called to the holy Ministrey by the Churches which they had taught; yet this ought to seeme no more strange, then if in a free common-wealth the people without waiting either for the consent, or for the voices of those that tyrannize over them, should (according to the Lawes) make choice of good and wise Magistrates, such (happily) as God would serve his turne of for their deliverance, and for the publike restitution. And hereof wee have examples, first, in the *Acts*, where wee read that *Phillp*, who was but a Deacon, preacheth in *Samaria* without the calling of the Apostles, yea without their privity, who for all that gave their allowance to his worke. In *Fruementius*, carried upon another occasion into the *Indies*, a mere Layman, who yet there preacheth the Gospel, and a good while after is there made Bishop. In those of whom *Origen* speaketh, that shall come by chance into a City where never any Christian was borne, shall there begin to teach, and labour to instruct the people in the Faith, whom the People shall afterward make their Pastors and Bishops: and besides, in all the Scriptures there is not one place that bindeth the Ministry of

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the Gospel to a certaine succession; but contrariwise the Scripture sheweth, that God would send two speciall witnesses to prophesie against Antichrist: *Of the Church chap. 11. p. 371.* Doctor *Whitaker* answering *Bellarmino*, that would prove Protestants to have no Church, because their Ministers had no Ordination by Bishops saith, That as sometimes Bishops were chosen by the Clergy and sometimes by the People, so the same may be said of Ordintion, *viz.* that it was sometimes by the Clergy and sometimes by the People; and then addeth, *Quod si vocationem eorum Episceporum legit mam fuisse concedat bellarminus, De ordinatione minus laboramus. Qui enim habent auctoritatem vocandi, iidem etiam auctoritatem ordinandi habent, si legitima ordinatio non possit impetrari: nom ordinatio sequitur vocationem; qui vocatur, is quasi in sui muneris possessionem mittitur:* de *Eccles. Q. 5. cap. 6. p. 510.* Finally, Doctor *Ames* doth also wnesse

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the same in many places of his workes: for a taste take these few sayings of his in this case, *viz.. Ad totam Ecclesiam semper pertinet ordinatio, quoad jus, vim, virtutem illam quam habet in Ministro Ecclesie constituendo; sicut celebratio matrimonii vim aut virtutem omnem acceptam refert legitimo consensui conjugam: Ecclesie statu (ministerio & ordine deficiente) collapsio vel corrupte, à plebe etiam actus iste ordinationis, quatenus necessaries est ad Ministri constitutionem in tali casu, potest legitime exerceri,* Bellarm. *enervat. lib. 3. de clericis, cap. 2 de ordinatione.* And againe, a little after; *Episcopus veros à veris Episcopis ordinarie dicimus ordinandos esse, sed nomine Ecclesie cui ordinantur.* And againe, a little after, *Potestas ordinand est aliquo modo originaliter in tota Ecclesia, sicut potestas videndi originaliter est in toto animali, quamvis formaliter & subjective sit in oculo tantum; tum etiam ordinationis exercitium pendes à tota Ecclesia, sicut actus videndi hoc vel illud dererminatè pendet non ab oculo sed à toto.* And again, *Quam vis in Ecclesia benè constituta non debreas aliis quam presbyteris ordinandi mandari; in defectu tamen idoneorum presbyterorum potest non presbyteris mandari.* These words you see are punctuall and plaine that the power of ordaining Ministers is originally in the Church; and that though when a Church hath Presbyters, the act of ordaining is to be done by those Presbyters; yet in defect of such it may be performed by them that are no Presbyters, lawfully, and without fault; which is the case of our Churches that are in their beginnings, and may be the case of any Church when they come to be without Officers, as by warre, pestilence, &c. it may come to passe.

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To 22. There are some things common to Pastors with Teachers: as, that they ate both Officers of the Church appointed by Christ; both Elders or Bishops to rule and feed the Church, by labouring in the Word and Doctrine, *Act. 2. 28. 1 Tim. 3. 1. Tit. 1. 5, 7.* and therefore the name of Pastour, in a generall sense may be given to them both, *Ier.*

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3. 15. as also the name of Teacher, *Isa. 30. 20.* as those names may also be given to Apostles, in as much as they also are Elders, Pastors, Teachers, to rule, to feed, to teach the Church of God, *1 Pet. 5. 1. Ioh. 21. 15. 16. 1 Tim. 2. 7. & 2. 1. 11.* And if Pastors and Teachers be both of them Church officers, to seed and rule the Church by labouring in the Word and Doctrine, they must not do this without application of it to the consciences and states of the hearers, as God shall helpe them: for this application is one part of his worke, that is by his office to preach the Word, without which the Word is not handled in such a manner as it ought to be, *2 Tim. 2. 15. 1 Cor. 14. 25. Luk. 12. 42.* and many hearers need this, the Word delivered in generall without application of it being to them as bread set before children in the whole loase. And if both of them must labour in the Word and Doctrine, and not onely in a generall way, but with application, we see not but they may both of them administer the Seales or Sacraments, wherein there is a special application of the promises of the Gospel, and the grace of Christ therein, unto the faithfull and believing receivers. 2. And yet for all this community between them, they are not in propriety of speech the same Officers, but distinct, and so the Scripture speaketh of them *Ephes. 4. 11.* For if a man would say their Offices are confounded, because the same generall worke of preaching the Word, and applying the same, belongs unto them both: By the same reason a man might say the offices of Apostles and Evangelists were confounded; for both of them were to preach the Word, with application of the same by doctrine, and Seales; and also that the ordinary Pastors were the same office with them both because hee also is to doe the same worke of preaching and applying: But an Apostle is to feed, and rule, and teach, by way of Doctrine and Application, as an Apostle; an Evangelist as an Evangelist, and an ordinary Pastor as an ordinary Pastor, and therein lyes the difference: and wee may adde, a Teacher as a Teacher; and therein is he distinguished both from the

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Pastor, and from all other Church Officers, even as by the same they all are distinguished one from another, the same generall worke

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of Doctrine and Application being common to them all.

3. And for the Teacher and Pastor, the difference between them lyes in this, that the one is principally to attend upon points of Knowledge and Doctrine, though not ithout Application; and the other to points of Practice, though not without Doctrine: and therefore the one of them is called. *He that teacheth*, and his worke is thus expressed, *let him attend on teaching*; and the other, *He that exhorteth*, and his worke, *to attend on exhortation*, Rom. 12, 7, 8. and the gift of the one is called a *word of knowledge*, and the gift of the other, a *word of wisdom*, 1 Cor. 12. 8. as experience also sheweth, that one mans gift is more doctrinall, and for points of knowledge; and anothers more exhortatory, and for points of practise.

To 23. It is not the manner of Elders among us, whether Ruling onely, or Ruling and Teaching also, to strive for authority or preheminance one above another; as remembering what lesson our Saviour taught his Disciples, when they were at strife among them, which of them should be the greatest, Luke 22. 24, 25. *Ec. If Diotrefes* strive for preheminance 3 Ioh. 9, 10. verily we abhorre such striving, and by the grace of God respect one another as Brethren. As for the peoples duty toward their Elders, it is taught them plainly in that place, 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. as also in that of 1 Tim. 5. 17 *Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, specially they that labour in the Word and Doctrine*; and this Word (*specially*) shewes them, that as they are to account all their Elders *worthy of double honour*; so in speciall manner their Teaching or Preaching Elders.

To 24. & 25. These are answered in that which was sent the last yeare.

To 26. *We doe believe that every Minister of the Gospel ought to be maintained with sufficient and honourable maintenance, according to his need and occasions in regard of his person, calling charge of children and hospitality, so as he that preacheth the Gospel may in all these respects live*

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of the Gospel, 1 *Cor.* 9. 14. *Gal.* 6. 6. 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. And this maintenance is not to be allowed as almes and courtesie, but as debt and duty, to bee paid according to the rule of Justice; the Labourer is worthy of his wages, *Luk.* 10. 17. which the Apostle sheweth to be according to all lawes of nature, nations, *Moses* and Christ, 1 *Cor.* 9. But for setled and stinted maintenance, there is nothing done that way amongst us, except from yeare to yeare, because the conditions of Ministers may vary, and of the Church to which they doe belong: Neither doe we know any such thing to be appointed by Christ our Lord, for the maintenance of the Ministry in there dayes; but this we know that the great mountaine burning with fire, cast into the sea upon the founding of the second Trumpet *Rev.* 8. 8, 9. is applied by some good Writers to those times, when *Costantine* brought setled endowments into the Church, with *ampla prædia* (as they are called) are counted by some to bee no better then poyson to the Church; as the Stories say that upon the fact of the good Emperour a voice was heard, which said, *Hodre seminatum eff virus in Ecclesiam*. And if those writers be not deceived which so expound that Scripture (as for our parts wee know not but they expound it truely) then in as much as upon the casting of that mountaine into the sea, a third part of it became blood and a third part of living creatures dyed, and a third part of ships were destroyed, it may be truely gathered thence that the bringing in of setled endowments and eminent preferments into the Church, hath been the corruption, and to some the destruction of such as lived by them, both Church-officers and Church-members.

To 27. We doe not permit, and call upon (such whom you call) meere Lay men, and privatc persons, neither being in the Ministry nor intended to it, ordinarily to preach or prophecy publiquely, in or before the Congregation, if by ordinarily you meane frequently and usually. For where ordinary Officers are not wanting to a Church, and neither detained from their worke by sicknesse, nor just absence, we thinke it most meet to offer our Sacrifice to God and to the

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Church of our best gifts. But yet if you oppose ordinary to extraordinary, we doe confesse that some private members (to wit such as are eminently fitted with knowledge and utterance, being also men of humble spirits, and holy lives, all which qualifications we finde but in a few) may without

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an extraordinary calling from God be called forth by the Church upon some occasion (and namely in the absence or bodily weaknesse of Ministers, or for tryall of gifts when a man intends the Ministry) to speake to edification, exhortation and comfort. *Jehosaphat* sent Princes (who neither were Ministers nor intended so to be) to teach with the Priests and Levites, to wit, at least to incourage the people, to hearken to the Priests and Levites come amongst them, *2 Chron.* 17. 7. 8. 9. As *Jehosaphat* himselfe also did the like, *2 Chron.* 20. 20. Yea, and was their mouth also to God in prayer, *v.* 2. 5. to 13. As for that prophesying *1 Cor.* 14. We conceive as some things in it be extraordinary, so some things ordinary. Extraordinary, that private men, and new converts should be so soon & so suddainly, & so much enlightened & enlarged, as to be able to prophesy publikely to the edification of a whole Church: But yet this we conceive to be ordinary, that some private men may be found (at least in some Churches) grown Christians, of able gifts, who may have received a gift of Prophecy, and for such we doe not thinke it requireth any more an extraordinary calling for them to prophesy in our Churches, then for *Jehosaphat* and his Princes to prophesy in the Church of *Israel*.

To 28. Our Answer to this Question is that we never knew any Ministers that did call upon the people thus to doe: and as for us, such calling upon them is farre from us. All that we know to be holden in this case is this, that some thinke the people have a liberty to aske a Question publikely for their better satisfaction upon very urgent and weighty cause, though even this is doubted of by others, and all judge the ordinary practise of it, not necessary: but (if it be not meekly and wi??ly carried) to be inconvenient if not utterly unlawfull, and therefore such asking of Questions is seldome used in any Church among us, and in most Churches never. True it is in the times a little afore the Synod divers that were infected with corrupt opinions

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were very bold, & forward in this kind of asking Questions, after *Sermons*, especially when they had heard something delivered publikely that did make against their Tenents; by which kind of asking Questions, they plainly discovered of what spirit they were, but for being called upon by us thus to doe, (as it seems to your Question that you have been informed) the truth is, there was no such matter. But now these

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men are long since (the greatest part of them) to an Island (called *Aquedneck*) departed from amongst us, some of them being excommunicated or banished, or both, & others departing voluntarily, or for feare of the like censure, by meanes of which departure of these troublesome spirits from amongst us, and the blessing of God upon the Synod & Sermons that have laid open & reprov'd this disorderly asking of Questions a man may now live from one end of the year unto another in these Congregations, & not hear any man open his mouth in such kind of asking Questions.

To 29. 1. The conversion of sinners unto God doth not alwaies follow the preaching of everyone, that is in a lawfull office of ministry, as experience and Scripture doe abundantly wnesse, *Isay.* 49. 4, 5. & 53. 1. *Ezech.* 3.7. 2 *King.* 17. 13, 14. *Mat.* 11. 20, 21. &c. *John* 12. 37.

2. And when it doth follow, it is not by venue of him, or of his office, but by vertue of Gods blessing, and the mighty operation of his spirit as he pleaseth, without which the Minister and his office could have had no vertue at all to convert sinners unto God, 1 *Cor.* 3.6. no more then *Peter* and *John* could heale the lame man, by vertue of any power or holinesse that was in them, *Act.* 3. 12. For otherwise faithfull Ministers should not have their labours blessed for conversion some more and some lesse, but all in the same measure inasmuch as one of them is no more a Minister then another, nor no more in Office then another, their office being the same, the effect in conversion would bee the same if conversion were by the vertue of their office. The truth it is the Law of the Lord, (the whole Word of God that converts the soule, *Psal.* 19. 7. And the Gospell that is the power of God unto Salvation. *Rom.* 1. 16. And therefore the conversion of a man to God is to be ascribed to God, and to the Word of his Grace, and not to the Minister, nor any vertue of his office.

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3. But this we doe acknowledge, that the found conversion of sinners, whensoever such a thing comes to passe, doth argue that the Instruments of such conversion are sent of God: God would not so have blessed them, as to convert and by them, if himselfe had not sent them at all, *Rom.* 10. 14, 15 *Ier.* 23. 32.

4. And yet we dare not say, that Gods Word is not made effectuall to conversion, unlesse the man that speaks it be a Minister, that is to say, a Church Officer for the contrary is evident from the Scripture, *John* 4.

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39. *Act.* 8. 4. with 11. 19. 20, 21. 1 *Cor.* 7. 16. They that were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about *Steven*, were not Church Officers, at least all of them (for the Apostles who were their chiefe, if not their only preaching Officers, were not scattered abroad upon that persecution, but remained still at *Jerusalem*, *Acts* 8. 1.) and yet these men did so preach the Word of the Lord Jesus to the *Iewes* and the *Grecians*, that through the good hand of the Lord that was with them, a great number believed and turned to the Lord; And the same we say of the woman of *Samaria*, by whose Testimonie of Christ many of the *Samaritans* believed on him. To refrain the efficacy of Gods Word in such sort as to say that none can be converted by it, unlesse he that speakes it be a Minister, is to limit the spirit of the Lord, where he hath not limited himself, who is free in working by whom he pleaseth, and as he will, 1 *Cor.* 12. 11. Even as the wind bloweth where it listeth, *John* 3. 8. and sometimes doth bring to passe great things by weake meanes, that his owne glory may be the more, 1 *Cor.* 1. 27, 28, 29. If any say, how can there things stand together, that a man that is no Minister may be an Instrument of conversion, and yet conversion of sinners argues that the man is sent of God? Wee answer that we must distinguish of sending according to the divers degrees thereof. For sometimes it imports no more but such an Act of Gods disposing providence, whereby men are gifted and enabled for such or such a worke, and permitted thereunto, though they have no command from him for the doing thereof, nor doe it not with a sincere minde in any obedience to God, but for corrupt and sinister

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ends of their owne. Thus God sent the King of *Assyria* against the *Iewes*, *Isa.* 10. 6. And bands of the *Caldees*, and bands of other Nations against *Jerusalem*; and against *Iudah*, to destroy it, 2 *King.* 24. 2. And yet they had no command from him to doe this, but sinned grievously in so doing. Thus they that preached Christ not sincerely, but of envie and strife, to adde affliction to *Pauls* bands, yet inasmuch as they preached Christ, might be said to be sent of God, and therefore the Apostle joyed at their preaching, *Phil.* 1. 15, 16. Thus *Balam*, in his Prophecies against the enemies of *Israel* and for the happy state of Gods peopl, might be said to be sent of God, though his heart and ends were corrupt and sinfull. But if men be not onely enabled with gifts for such or such a

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worke, but besides this, have a sincere minde and desire in the using thereof, to seeke the glory of God, and the good of soules, such men may much more be said to be sent of God, *Iohn* 7. 18. For these men have not onely abilities and gifts from God, and permission to imploy them as the former had, but also his spirit within them, which doth set their hearts on right and holy ends, which the other wanted. And yet if men doe want a lawfull office of Ministry, wherein to exercise those gifts or a lawfull calling to that office or exercise, they may in that respect be said not to be sent of God, or not to be called of him though sent of him, in the first or second respect. Thus in the Scriptures it is said of some they ran and I sent them not, *Ier.* 23. 21. I perceived that God had not sent him, but he pronounced his Prophecies, because *Sanballat* and *Tobiah* had hired him, *Neh.* 6. 12. And yet doubtlesse in respect of Gods disposing providence, he had sent them, as the Scripture witnesseth, that God sends strong delusions and lying Prophets, and unfaithfull Shepherds, *2 Thes.* 2. 11. *1 King.* 22. 22, 23. *Zech.* 11. 16. to be a plague unto the Sons of men, and for tryall to his servants, *Deut.* 13. 3. *1 Cor.* 11. 19. Now let these distinctions be applied to the case in hand, and we may perceive how, if a man convert sinners, certainly God sends him; and yet some that are not called to any office in the Ministry, may through his blessing convert sinners: A man converts none unlesse God send him in the first or second sence and yet he may convert, and not bee sent, if sending be taken in the third sence, that is for a lawfull calling into some office in the

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Church. And wee may adde, further a man may be sent in this third sence, and yet convert none if he be not also sent in the first and second respect; that is, a man may have a lawfull calling outwardly unto a lawfull office in the Church, and yet not convert sinners, if he want gifts or sincerity at heart, which might be the case of *Iudas*, and of many wicked Priests in the old Testament: Yea, happily convert none though he be truly sent in all three respects, as was said before in the beginning of the Answer to this Quære. But if comparison be made, we doubt not, but whilst the Ministry remains uncorrupt, God is wont to follow with a greater blessing the labours of those who have gifts and an office of Ministry also, then of those who have gifts alone without office. He is

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willing, and wanted to honour himselfe most, where most of his wayes are observed.

To 30. Master *Parker Polit. l. 2. c. 39. & c. 41.* observes a difference between the Substantialls in Church Politie, and the accessaries or accidentalls, and circumstantialls: And againe, that of circumstances some are generall, and some particular and individuall; and so sheweth that the Church Politie in regard of the substantialls thereof is prescribed In the Word, and therefore immuitable. According to which distinction wee Answer, that if those words (precisely the same course) mentioned in this Question, be not meant of particular and individuall circumstances, but only of the substantialls or generall circumstances, then for ought we know there is no materiall point, either in constitution, or government, wherein the Churches in *N. E.* (*viz.* In the bay, in the jurisdiction of *Plymouth*, at *Connectacute*, and *Quilipiak*) do not observe the same course. (And sure it is, if they doe not they ought, because Christ hath left but one way for all Churches, and the same to be observed to the Worlds end, *1 Tim. 6. 13, 14.*) Onely, that conformity to the Lyturgie and Ceremonies in some places, to the Northward, that Anabaptisme at *Providence*, and Familisme at *Aquidneck* hinders that we cannot say the same of them, nor of any other in *N. E.* that concurre with them in their unwarrantable wayes, if there be any such, though thanks be to God there is none within this Jurisdiction.

To 31. who must have liberty to sit downe in this Common-wealth and enjoy the liberties thereof is not our place to determine, but the

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the Magistrates who are the rulers and governours of the Common-wealth, and of all persons within the same. And as for acknowledging a company to be a sister Church, that shall set up, and practise another forme of Church Discipline, being otherwise in some measure, as you say, approveable, we conceive the companie that shall so doe, shall not be approveable therein. For the Discipline appointed by Jesus Christ for his Churches is not arbitrary, that one Church may set up and practice one forme, and another another forme as each one shall please, but is one and the same for all Churches, and in all the Essentialls and Substantialls of it unchangable, and to be kept, till the appearing of Jesus Christ, *1 Tim. 6. 13, 14*, from which place Master *Cartwright* observes the perpetuity of Church Government taught by the Apostles, unto the end of the World, and is plain and large in this point, *1 rep. p. 177.* as is

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likewise Mr. *Parker Polit. Eccles. l. 2. c. 42.* and so forward to the end of that Book, unto whom we refer you herein. And if that Discipline which we here practise, be (as we are perswaded of it) the same which Christ hath appointed and therefore unalterable, we see not how another can be lawfull; and therefore if a company of people shall come hither and here set up and practise another, we pray you thinke not much if we cannot promise to approve of them in so doing, especially untill wee see how approvable the men may be, and what Discipline it is that they would set up. For should wee in such generall words as is there expressed, promise to accept of a companie as a Sister Church, that shall set up and practise another Discipline, and then should be taken at the utmost extent of our words, we might by this meanes be bound to accept of a company of Papists, or Arminians, or Familists, or Anabaptists, as a sister Church, for there is none of these but something may be found in them, and in their Discipline, that is in some measure approveable. And yet we pray you heartily in the Lord, so conceive of us in this passage, that we are farre from making any such comparison, as if yourselves were not approved in our consciences far above the best of such men, yea and above our selves in many respects.

We have said before in that which we sent you the last yeare, and upon this occasion we say it now againe, that you are in our hearts (if the Lord would suffer) to live and dye together: and

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therefore if this Question were meant of your selves, or any of you, and a company of godly people joyning with you (as it may be it is, though we cannot certainly lay it, because you doe not expresse so much) we thinke if you were here, wee should gladly accept of you and your people as a sister-Church, and that you would doe the like to ours; and yet not when you should set up and practise one forme of Church-discipline, and we another; but because we are perswaded if you were here, you would let up and practise the very same that wee doe, and not any other: or else if we be swerving from the rule in any particular (as God knowes we are but weake men, and far from dreaming of perfection in this life) God would by you send in more light unto us then yet we see, and make you instruments in his hand for perfecting what is here begun according to his will, for strengthening what is weake, and reforming what may be found to be amisse: For we trust in the Lord,

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that as wee are desirous that you might joyne with us in the wayes wherein we now walke, (which we doe not see but they are according to the Rule) so we should be as willing to receive light from you, and to redresse (as God shall helpe us) whatsoever by you or any other he may discover to us to stand in need of Reformation. For which cause among others we doe the more earnestly desire, if it were the Lords will that he might send you hither, nothing doubting but if you were here, there would be such agreement between you an us, that either you would approve of the things which we beleeve and practise, or that we should approve of what you may shevv us to be more agreeable to the minde of Christ: and then there would be no occasion of such a Question, *Whether we may set up and practise another discipline, and yet be accepted as a sister-Church:* but rather of blessing the Lord, when that shall be accomplished in you and us which is written in the Prophets. *I will give them one heart and one way: I will turne unto the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the Name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent,* Jer. 32. 39. Zeph. 3. 9. *Wee have confidence in you through the Lord, that you will be none otherwise minded;* but if in any thing ye be otherwise minded God shall reveale even this unto you, Gal. 5. 10. Phil. 3. 15.

To 32. This was answered in the answer to Posit. 1. & 2. sent unto you the last yeare.

**FINIS.**

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AN  
**APOLOGIE**  
OF THE CHURCHES  
IN *NEW-ENGLAND*  
FOR *CHURCH-COVENANT*.

OR,

*A DISCOURSE TOUCHING THE COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND MEN,  
AND ESPECIALLY CONCERNING CHURCH-COVENANT, THAT IS TO SAY,  
THE COVENANT WHICH A COMPANY DOE ENTER INTO WHEN THEY  
BECOME A CHURCH; AND WHICH A PARTI-  
CULAR PERSON ENTERS INTO WHEN HE BECOMES A MEMBER OF A  
CHURCH.*

SENT OVER IN ANSWER TO MASTER **Bernard**, IN THE YEARE **1639**.

AND NOW PUBLISHED FOR THE SATISFACTION  
OF ALL WHO DESIRE RESOLUTION IN THIS POINT.

LONDON,  
PRINTED BY *T.P.* AND *M.S.* FOR *BENJAMIN ALLEN*,  
**1643**.

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## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

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DISCOVRSE  
TOVCHING THE

COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND MEN,

AND ESPECIALLY CONCERNING CHURCH-COVENANT, THAT IS TO SAY,  
THE COVENANT WHICH A COMPANY DO ENTER INTO WHEN THEY  
BECOME A CHURCH, AND WHICH A PARTICULAR PERSON ENTERS INTO  
WHEN HE BECOMES A MEMBER OF A CHURCH. 1639.

Jer. 50. 5.

*Come let us joyne our selves to the Lord, in a perpetuall Covenant that  
shall not he forgotten.*

*Although that which is foretold in there two Chapters, and namely in the  
fourth and fifth verses of this Chapter, was in part fulfilled when the people  
of God returned from Captivitie in Babylon at the end of seventie yeares: yet  
we must not limit the place to that time onely, but may extend it further to the  
dayes of the Gospel, and the spirituall return, not of the Jews onely, but of the  
Gentiles also, when men shall be converted from Pagan, Antichristian, Babylonish,  
or Jewish bondage and captivitie, or from slavery to sinne, and self-righteousnesse,  
and shall be joyned to God in the fellowship of his Church, in the dayes of the  
New Testament. For as some passages in this Scripture were never fully accomplished  
at the returne from the captivitie of the seventie years, and namely this, that the  
children of Israel and Judah should returne both together: (for the ten tribes  
returned not*

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at all:) so many things that literally concerned the Jewes were types  
and figures, signifying the like things concerning the people of God in  
these latter dayes: In which respect sincere converts are called Jewes,  
*Rom. 2. 29.* and Israelites, *Gal. 6. 16. Joh. 1. 47.* and our Sacraments are  
made Antitypes of theirs, *1 Cor. 10. 1, 2, 3.* and Rome is called Babylon,  
*Rev. 17. 5.* and Papists are called Gentiles, *Rev. 11. 2.* and therefore the  
captivitie of Babylon might well be a Type of the spirituall captivitie of

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Gods people to Antichristian bondage, and their returne from Babylon to Sion, a type of the returne of Christians from Romish slavery to the true Sion, the Christian Church. And this may be added further, that this place seemes not onely to be meant of the private or personall conversion of this or that particular Christian, but also further, of the open and joynt calling of a company, because it is said, they shall come, the children of *Israel* and the children of *Judah* together, and that their saying shall not be, *Let me joyne*, &c. but in the Plurall number, *Let us joyne our selves unto the Lord*, so noting the joyning of a company together in holy Covenant with God.

Concerning which Covenant with God, it will not be amisse for the better understanding of that which followes; first, briefly to shew how diversly Covenant is taken in the Scripture, which sometimes imports generally any firme appointment or promise of God, when man doth not promise unto God any thing backe againe: Thus the preserving of *Noah* in the Arke, and of the world from being drowned any more by a floud; the interchangeable succession of day and night; the giving of the Priesthood unto *Phineas*; the setting forth of the Shew-bread every Sabbath before the Lord, and the giving of the heave-offering unto the Priests, are said to be done by a Covenant, or an everlasting Covenant of God, *Gen. 6. 18. & 9. 9, 10, 11. Jer. 33. 20. Num. 25. 12, 13, Levit. 24. 8. Num. 18. 19.* But sometimes Covenant is taken more strictly and properly, for an agreement which God doth make with men, when he promiseth some blessing unto men, and bindes them to performe some dutie backe againe to him. Taken thus it hath two parts: first, a promise or stipulation of some blessing on Gods part: secondly, Restipulation or promise, or binding of man unto dutie back againe on his part: both these are in those words of the Covenant, *I will be to thee a God, thou shalt be to je a people*: and so *Gen. 17. 1. & v. 7, 8, 9, 10.* The Co  
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venant taken thus is either the Covenant of workes, or the Covenant of grace: And againe the Covenant may be considered, first as it is personall, private and particular, between God and one particular soule, making Covenant with God, and God with him, either at his first conversion, or at other times; of which we reade *2 Sam. 23. 5. & Psal. 119. 106. & 66. 13, 14. & 27. 8. & Psal. 119. 7, 8* Secondly, it is generall and publick of a company joyntly together, of which this Text *Jer. 50. 5* seemes most

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properly to speake: and also that *Deut.* 29. 9, 10, &c. and that *Exod.* 19. 5, 6, and many others: A Covenant taken thus generally when it respects spirituall blessings, and spirituall duties, in the Communion of Saints, is that which is called Church-covenant, which Church-Covenant differs not in substance of the things promised from that which is between the Lord, and every particular soule, but onely in some other respects; as first, the one is of one Christian in particular, the other of a company joyntly together. Secondly, if right Order be observed, a man ought not to enter into Church-Covenant, till he be in Covenant with God before, in respect of his personall estate. Thirdly, The one is usually done in private, as in a mans Closet between the Lord and his soule, and the other in some publick assembly. Fourthly, The one in these dayes is of such duties as the Gospel requires of every Christian as a Christian, the other of such duties as the Gospel requires of every Church and the members thereof.

Now concerning Church-Covenant, two things are to be noted for the better understanding thereof: first, the description of it: secondly, the use of it, and the benefit and fruit thereof. For “the former it may be thus described, *viz. A solemn and publick promise before the Lord, whereby a company of Christians, called by the power and mercy of God to fellowship with Christ, and by his providence to live together, and by his grace to cleave together in the unitie of faith, and brotherly love, and desirous to partake together in all the holy Ordinances of God, doe in confidence of his gracious acceptance in Christ, binde themselves to the Lord and to one another, to walke together by the assistance of the Spirit, in all such wayes of holy worship in him, and of edification one towards another, as the Gospel of Christ requireth of every Christian Church, and the members thereof.*

*In this description, there are comprised six things: First the generall name of the thing: [a solemn and publick promise] a pro-*

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mise it is, and therefore it is called, a joyning in Covenant here: an entering into Covenant, *Deut.* 29. 10. Solemn and publick, and therefore it is by the children of *Israel* and the children of *Judah* together: and they say, *let us joyne*. Secondly, The object [*the Lord, and one another*] *joyne our selves to the Lord*, it is not a promise onely to man, but to the Lord himselfe, and likewise to one another; for, *come let us joyne*, implies mutuall consent together. Thirdly, The Agents or the qualification of

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the persons: [*Christians*] not Turkes, Indians, &c. Saints, *Psal.* 50. 5. 16, 17. [*called to fellowship with Christ*] so *1 Cor.* 1. 9 else if they be not united to Christ by faith, they are not fit materialls for such a building as a Church of God, which is the house of the living God, *Ephes.* 1. 1. *1 Cor.* 1. 2. *Phil.* 1. 1. *Rev.* 21. 27. [*By his providence to live together*] else they cannot partake in the Lords Ordinances together as Churches ought to doe, *1 Cor.* 14. 23 *Act.* 14. 27. the whole Church comes together in one place [*cleaving together in faith and love*] so *Act.* 4. 32. If they differ, namely, in opinion, or in their affection, and should joyne in this Covenant, breaches, factions, rents, and schismes, would be like to be the issue of such joyning: things so unlike would not close nor long hold together, *Dan.* 2. 43. [*Desirous to partake in all Ordinances*] this should be the ground of their joyning in Covenant together, *Psal.* 110. 3. willing: and not pride, not gaine, nor the like: Fourthly, The Act [*binde themselves*] that now they are bound by their owne word and promise, that they may say now, as *Psal.* 56. 12. *Thy vows are upon me*, or as *Num.* 30. 2. if he binde his soule with a vow. Firstly, The matter promised; [*To walke together in all such wayes of worship and mutuall edification, as the Gospel requireth of Churches and Church members*] they binde not themselves to observe any devices of their owne, nor inventions of men, but such things as the word of God requireth; neither is it perfect obedience to the Law, for that were impossible to performe, and presumption to promise; nor is it onely in generall the duties of the Gospel, but specially such duties of worship to God, & edification of one another as concerne Church-State, which now they enter into. Sixthly, The manner of performing [*Confidence of Gods gracious acceptance and assistance through Christ*] for in all our wayes God must be aknowkdged, *Pro.* 3. 6. and much more in such speciall matters of weight: If men in entring into this Covenant looke for acceptance, through any worth

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of their owne, or promise dutie in their own strength, they shew themselves like to the Pharisees, *Luk.* 18. 10, 11. and turne the Church-Covenant into a Covenant of workes: and as many as are of the workes of the Law, are under the curse, *Gal.* 3.10.

The use and benefit of this Church-Covenant, and the fruit thereof, may be seene in two particulars; first, That this is that whereby a company of Christians doe become a Church: It is the Constituting forme of a

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Church. Secondly, This is that by taking hold whereof a Particular person becomes a member of a Church, which was constituted afore. For the former of these; every Christian Church must have in it both matter and forme, and as the matter by Gods appointment are visible Saints, or visible beleevvers, *Ephes. 1. 1. 1 Cor. 1. 2.* and in the New Testament, onely so many as may meete together in one Congregation: So the forme is a uniting, or combining, or knitting of those Saints together into one visible body, by the band of this holy Covenant. Some union or band there must be amongst them, whereby they come to stand in a new relation to God, and one towards another, other then they were in before: or els they are not yet a Church, though they be fit materials for a Church; even as soule and body are not a man, unlesse they be united; nor stones and timber an house, till they be compacted and conjoynd.

Now that a company becomes a Church, by joyning in Covenant, may be made good sundry wayes; first, By plaine Texts of Scripture; as from *Deut. 29. 1, 10, 11, 12, 13. Yee stand this day all you before the Lord your God, your Captaines of your Tribes, your Elders, your Officers, with all the men of Israel, ver. 12. That thou shouldest enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God, ver. 12. and he may establish thee for a people unto himselfe, ver. 13.* So that here is plainly shewed, that here was a company, *ver. 10.* and this company were to be established to be a people unto the Lord, that is to say, a Church, *ver. 13.* And this is done by the peoples entring into solemne Covenant with God, *ver. 12.* And therefore a company of people doe become a Church by entring into Covenant with God.

*“This Covenant was not like our Church-Covenants, for it was of all the Nation together; whereas the Church-Covenant with us, is of some select persons, leaving out others.*

*Answer. 1.* This Objection concerns the matter of a Church, but the Covenant is not the materiall cause of a Church, but the formall

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cause thereat: and for this the Text is plaine and expresse, that by entring into Covenant with God, a people come to be the Lords people, that is to say, his Church.

2. If it was of all the people together, the reason was because that Church was a nationall Church: now if a nationall Church becomes a

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Church by entering into solemne Covenant with God, then a Congregationall Church becomes a Church by the same means; for there is no difference between them in this point.

3. Though it was of all the people, we may not say it proves that when we looke at the materiall cause of a Church, there may be a promiscuous taking in of all Commers without distinction or separation of the precious from the vile; for, first, when God took in this Nation to be his people, he separated them from all the Nations of the earth besides: so that there was a distinction and separation of some from others. Secondly, this generation was generally a gencration of beleevers; for it was they that were to enter into the land within a while after; for they were fortie-yeares in the Wildernesse & this Covenant was made in the last moneth save one of the last of those fortie yeares, *Deut.* 1. 3. And their carkasses fell not in the Wildernesse through unbeliefe, as their Fathers did, *Num.* 14. *Heb.* 3. but entred by faith, and when they were entred, subdued Kingdomes by their faith, *Heb.* 11. 33. and served the Lord all the dayes of *Joshua*, and of the Elders that outlived *Joshua*, *Josh.* 24. 31. As for that which is said of them, *ver.* 4, 5. of this Chap. that the Lord had not given them eyes to see, &c. that proves not that they were wholly hardned in a carnall estate, but onely that they were dull and slow of heart to consider of sundry dispensations of God towards them; for as much is said of the disciples of Christ, *Mar.* 8. 17, 18. when doubtlesse they were not meere carnall or naturall persons.

*Object.* 2. “*This people Deut. 29. could not become the Lords people by entering into solemne Covenant with God, for they were the Lords Church and people already before this.*”

*Answer.* 1. If they were, yet that was by entering into solemne Covenant with God on Mount *Sinai*, when the Lord had brought them up out of the Land of *Ægypt*; for then they entred into solemne Covenant with God, and God with them, and so they became the Lords peculiar people, *Exod.* 19. 4, 5, 6, 8. &c. If they were his people before that, yet that also was by Covenant made with them in

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the loynes of *Abraham* when God tooke him and his seede: to be his Church and people, yet separating *Ishmael* from *Isaac* and *Esau* from *Jacob*, that the inheritance of the Covenant of God, and of being the Church of God, might rest in the house of *Jacob*.

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2. Yet it was not without great reason that the Lord should now establish them by solemn Covenant to be a people to himselfe, because the Nation had been much degenerated from the spirit and wayes of *Abraham* in *Ægypt*, and had broken that Covenant by their Idolatries there, *Ezek.* 20. 7, 8. And the Covenant made in *Sinai* or *Horeb* when they were come out of *Ægypt*, they had also broken by their Idoiatries in the Wildernesse, *Ezek.* 20. 13, 16. for which causes, and the like, the Lord consumed that generation, that they never entred into the Land, *Josh.* 5. 4, 6. And therefore now when their posteritie and children were ready to enter in, the Lord entred into Covenant with them, and thereby established them to be his people, their Fathers being cut off for breaking the Covenant. But still it was by Covenant that both Fathers first, and children afterward became a Church and people unto God; and when this generation were entred into the Land, their Covenant made before between God and them, was confirmed by Circumcision, *Josh.* 5. 3. 7. they being not Circumcised before.

*Object.* 3. “*But this Covenant was of the whole Church with God, and therefore not like our Church-Covenant, which are between the Church and the members, concerning watchfulnesse over one another, and the like.*”

*Answer.* Our Church-Covenants are with the Lord himselfe, as was shewed before in the description thereof. For watchfulnesse and duties of edification one towards another, are but branches of the Lords Covenant, being duties commanded by the Law: and so it was with that people of *Israel*, who when they promised and Covenanted to walke in all the wayes of God; in all his statutes and commandements and judgements, they promised these duties of love and watchfulnesse and edification one towards another, because these were duties commanded and required of God, *Lev.* 19. 17. *Deut.* 29. 18. the neglect whereof in the matter of *Achan* was the sinne of all the Congregation, and brought judgement upon them all, *Josh.* 7. 11, 12. Yea by this Covenant they were bound to duties towards them that were not then present, but children afterward to be borne, and proselytes, that afterward should be ad-

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ded to them, *ver.* 14, 15. Like as our Church-Covenants are with them that now are, and that hereafter shall become members of the same Church. When *Jehoiada* made a Covenant between the King and the people. 2. *King.* 11. 17. that Covenant was but a branch of the Lords

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Covenant with them all, both King and people: for the King promised but to Rule the people righteously, according to the will of God: and the people to be subject to the King so Ruling. Now there duties of the King to them, and of them to the King, were such as God required in his Covenant, both of him and them: and so it is in Church-Covenant, the duties of the Church to the members, and the members to the Church, and one another, are no other but such as the Gospel and the Covenant of grace requireth both of the Church and the members of it in their severall places.

*Object. 4* “But this place of Deut. 29. is not sufficient to prove a Church-Covenant in these dayes: because it is in the Scriptures of the old Testament, for whatsoever must be used in the dayes of the New Testament, must be proved from the Scriptures of the New Testament, or else it is to be layd aside.

*Answer. 1.* The Church Covenant may be proved from the New Testament also as will afterwards appeare.

2. But suppose there were not pregnant places for it in the New Testament, yet it is not enough to prove the same unlawfull: for whatsoever Ordinancce of the old Testament is not repealed in the New Testament, as peculiar to the Jewish Pædagogic, but was of morall and perpetuall equitie, the same bindes us in these dayes, and is to be accounted the revealed will of God in all ages, though it be not particularly and expressly mentioned in the writings of the New Testament, else how shall we prove it unlawfull for a man to marry his Sister, or his Aunt? How shall we prove it warrantable and necessary tor Magistrates to punish Sabbath breaking, blasphemy, and Idolatry? How shall we prove it lawfull to apply the seale of Gods Covenant unto Infants? or to admit women to eate of the holy things; for the Scriptures of the New Testament doe speake little in these cases; onely the Scriptures of the Old Testament doe give direction, and light about them, *Lev. 18. & 19. Neh. 13. 15. & 2. Chron. 15. 16. & 2 King. 23. Gen. 17. 2. & Exod. 12. 4. 6.* And the New Testament hath nothing to the contrary, and they are all according to morall equitie and reason,

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and therefore they are to be observed from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as the revealed will of God, though there were, nothing expressly for them in the New. And the same we say of the particular in hand. For, that a company should be combined together into one

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body, in way of Government and subjection, by way of mutuall free Covenant; as men doe when they enter into Church Estate, nothing is more naturall or agreeable to morall equitie; nay, it implyeth a contradiction in the very name of libertie or freedome, that free-men should take upon them authoritie or power over free men without their free consent, and voluntary and mutuall Covenant or Engagement. And therefore seeing this Covenant is not repealed in the Scriptures of the New Testament, the Scriptures of the Old are sufficient warrant for it.

Another Scripture to prove the same, is *Deut.* 26. 16, 17, 18. with *Deut.* 27. 9. *This day the Lord hath commanded thee to doe these Statutes and Judgements, thou shalt therefore keepe and doe them, &c. Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walke in his wayes, and to keepe his Statutes, &c. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people; Take heed and hearken, O Israel, this day thou art become the people of the Lord thy God.* This Scripture plainly shewes these things: 1 That here was the making of a Covenant between God and man; for that avouching of God to them, and them to God, was the making of Covenant *ver.* 17, 18. 2. This wss not of one person, but of a company together, the whole people of *Israel*, 26. 18. & 27. 9. 3. Here is the effect of this Covenant, that thereby they become the Lords people, *ver.* 9. So that when a company doe enter into holy Covenant with God, they become thereby the Lords people, that is to say, his Church. So *Ezech.* 16. 8. proves the same likewise: *I entred into Covenant with thee, saith the Lord, and thou becamest mine.* Here also is the making of Covenant between the Lord and men; and this Covenant was not personall, but of a company; for it was with Hierusalem, *ver.* 2. which was a whole Citie; it was with them that were multiplied as the bud of the feild, *ver.* 7 and it was with them that did prosper into a kingdome, *ver.* 13. and therefore not meant onely of anyone particular person: And by this Covenant they became the Lords; that is, the Lords Church and people; for it is expresly said, *I entred into Covenant with thee, And thou becamest mine.* So that when a company enter into Covenant with God, and God with

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them, they become thereby the Lords Church and people. Likewise *Ezek.* 20. 37. *I will cause you to passe under the rod; and I will bring you into the bond of the Covenant.* In which place, there is first mention of an holy Covenant. Secondly, This was not of one person, out of a company, the

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whole house of Israel, *ver.* 30. 39. Thirdly, And this Covenant is called a *Bond*, because it is by Covenant that a people are bound, and tyed, and knit together, as one Church, all of them unto the Lord, and one unto another, So that the Covenant is the bond of union, by which a company are so combined and united, as that they become a Church. It is also observable, how the Lord before he would bring them into this bond of the Covenant, he would *cause them to passe under the rod*; by which phrase, a *Junius* upon the place well observes, is meant tryall and probation; drawne from the manner of Shepherds or owners of Cattell, who went among their sheepe, or other cattell with a rod, and therewith pointed out such as were for the Lords holy use, as *Lev.* 27. 32. And so hereby is noted that God would not in the dayes of the Gospel have men to be brought into his Church hand over head, out he would first cause them to passe under the rod of due tryall and probation; and then such as upon tryall were found to be holy for God, or meere matter for his Church, should solemnly enter into Covenant with God, and that Covenant should be the bond that should combine them, and knit them together into one, that so they that were many particular persons, should all become one body, that is to say, a Church.

And so much of the first Argument drawne from plaine Texts of Scripture.

*Argu. 2.* A second Argument may be taken from the Titles that are given to the Church; as first, that the Church is said to be married or espoused unto Christ, *Jer.* 2. 2 & 3. 14. 2. *Cor.* 11. 2. From whence the Argument may be formed thus: If every Church becomes a Church by being married or espould unto Christ, then a company becomes a Church by way of Covenant: But the former is true, therefore the latter is true also.

*The Assumption*, that a Church becomes a Church by being married unto Christ, is plaine from the former Scriptures, where the Church of *Israel*, and the Church of *Corinth*, in regard of their entring into Church Estate, are said to be espoused and married unto Christ, as a loving and chast Virgine to one husband. Which

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spirituall marriage between Christ: and his Church, is also taught in the type of the marriage between King *Solomon* and *Pharoahs* daughter, *Psal.* 45.

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

The Consequence of the Proposition is plaine in reason; for there is no marriage but by way of Covenant; no woman becomes a mans wife, but by way of bestowing her selfe in Covenant upon such a man: neither doth a man become an husband, but by the same means; and therefore the Scripture speaking of the violation of marriage, calls it a violation of Covenant, *Prov. 2. 17.*

*Objct. 1. "Christ hath but one wife or Spouse, Cant. 6. 9.*

*Answer.* The Catholique Church indeed is but one; *viz.* the whole company of Gods Elect in heaven, in earth, dead, now living, and not yet borne: But as there is the Church Catholique, which is but one; so there are particular and visible Churches, which are in number many; and therefore the Scripture speakes of Churches, *2 Cor. 8. 1. 19. Gal. 1. 2. Of the Churches of the Gentiles, Rom. 16. 4. Of seven Churches, Rev. 1. 4. Of all Churches, 1 Cor. 14. 33. & 7. 17. Rev. 2. 23.*

*Obj. 2. "But if every particular Church be the wife of Christ, how many hundred wives should he have?*

*1. If the Church of Israel, Jer. 2. 2. the Church of Corinth, 2 Cor. 11. 2. The Jewish Church, Rev. 19. 7. be the Spouse and wife of Christ, there is no reason but others should be the same also, especially seeing there is no particular Church, but in respect of their Church estate, they may decline and goe a whoring from Christ, and that shews that they were first espoused to him; for no woman can be said to goe a whoring from a man, if shee were never married, nor espoused to him at all.*

*2. This that seemes an absurditie, and were a sinfull practise among men, in respect of Christ, is a certaine truth, and no dishonour unto him at all, to have more Spouses then one upon earth, many spirituall Spouses. Men cannot give themselves wholly and intirely to many as Christ can. Every faithfull soule is espoused and married unto Christ; and in that respect he hath not onely many hundred but many thousand, yea many millions of spirituall Spouses.*

*Obj. "But this spirituall marriage is between Christ and the Church. But the Church-Covenant is between the Church and the members, and therefore this marriage doth not prove the Church-Covenant.*

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*Answer. 1. In some sort there may be said to be a marriage between the Church and the members, viz. in respect of that deare love and affection, that ought to be between them; and therefore it is said, As*

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*young man marieth a Virgine, so shall the children of the Church be married to the Church, Isa. 62. 5.*

2. But properly the marriage is between Christ & the Church, and so is the Covenant also, so farre as therein they give up themselves to Christ as unto an head and Lord; as a woman in the Covenant of marriage doth give up her selfe unto her husband; And the performance of such duties as the Church and the member owe one unto another, is a branch of that marriage-Covenant, wherein they are tyed to Christ; for Christ himselfe in his Covenant requires, not onely that they should give up themselves to him, but also that they should performe these duties one unto another. And accordingly it is said of the Churches in *Macedonia*, that *they gave up themselves first to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God, 2 Cor. 8. 5.* True it is, they doe also binde themselves by Covenant one unto another, but in that respect the Covenant is properly a brotherly Covenant; like that *1 Sam. 20. 8. Amos 1. 9.* because there the engagement is to one another as brethren, fellow-members, and fellow-helpers, and not as to one head or Lord, as it is in respect of Christ, and therefore in that respect it is not so properly a marriage-Covenant as it is in respect of Christ: though duties to one another are promised in their Covenant with one another, and also in their Covenant with Christ. In bride thus: They promise unto Christ duties to him, and duties to one another according to him: and so their Covenant is a marriage-Covenant with Christ: They promise also to one another, duties to one another, and so it is a brotherly Covenant.

Another Title given to the Church (which also proves that a Church is made by Covenant) is the Title of a Citie, or Citie of God, *Psal. 87. 3. & 48. 1. 8. & 122. 3. Ephes. 2. 19.* The Argument lyeth thus. If a true Church be a Citie of God, then a Church becomes a Church by Covenant: But every true Church is a Citie of God. *Ergo.*

*The Assumption is proved by the Scriptures forealleged. The Consequence of the Proposition is plaine in reason, for every Citic is united by some Covenant among themselves, the Citizens are received inno jus Civitatis, or right of Citie priviledges, by some*

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Covenant or Oath; And therefore it is so likewise in this Citie of God the Church; and men become Citizens of the Church by solemne Covenant.

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

The third Argument may be drawne from the meanes of reforming and restoring a Church when it is corrupted, which is by entering into Covenant a new with God, 2 *Chron.* 15. 10. & 29. 10. & *Neh.* 9. 38. & 10. 28, 29. *Jer.* 50. 4, 5. The reason may be taken thus: If a Church decayed is to be restored and reformed by renewing Covenant with God, then it was instituted and erected at the first by way of Covenant: The reason of which Consequence is, because abuses and corruptions are to be reformed by bringing things back to the first Institution: Thus Christ reformes the abuses of marriage, by bringing them to the first Institution of that Ordinance; *From the beginning it was not so*, *Mat.* 19. 8. And thus *Paul* reformeth the Abuses of the Lords Supper, by telling them what was the first Institution thereof, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23. &c. And thus the Lord *Jesus* calling on the declining Church of *Ephesus* for reformation, *bids her remember from whence shee is fallen, and repent and doe her first workes*, *Rev.* 2. 5.

Now the Assumption is plaine from the Texts above alledged, that at the reforming of a Church, there is to be a renewing of Covenant; and thence it follows, that at the first erecting of a Church, there was the making of a Covenant with God, for els this renewing of Covenant would not have been the way to reforme it.

*Argu.* 4. The fourth Argument is taken from that which doth dissolve a Church, which is the dissolving or breaking of the Covenant, *Zach.* 11. 9, 10, 14. If dissolving the Covenant be that which doth dissolve the Church, then the making of Covenant is that which constitutes a Church. The reason of the Consequence is plaine, because otherwise the Covenant might be dissolved & the Church stand still, if it were no: the making of the Covenant that did constitute the Church: But if dissipating stones in a building doe dissolveth house, then the compacting and conjoyning of them is that which makes the house; If separation of soule and body be that which destroys the man, that then we say he is not: it must needs be the uniting of them, that did constitute & make the man: and so it is in this case. And that dissolving the Covenant is that which dissolves a Church, is plaine from the Text alledged, *Zach.* 11, where the breaking of the two staves, of beautie and

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bands, that is, the unchurching of the Jewes, is interpreted to be the breaking of the Covenant that God had made with that people, and the brotherhood that was between *Judah* and *Israel*.

*Argu.* 5. The fifth Argument is taken from the distinction which God hath appointed amongst Churches, and the confounding of all Churches into one, if there be not this Covenant to distinguish them. If Churches be distinct Societies, and may not be confounded, then Churches are compacted and combined by Covenant: But the former is true. *Ergo*,

That Churches are distinct Societies, is plaine in the Scriprure, where we have mention of many Churches in one Countrey or Province, *Gal.* 1. 1. 1 *The.* 2. 14. Of seven Churches in Asia, *Rev.* 1. 4. and of all the Churches, 1 *Cor.* 14. 33. *Rev.* 2. 23. *Ephesus* is not *Smyrna*, nor *Smyrna* is not *Thyatira*, nor either of them *Pergamus*, but each one distinct of themselves, having Officers of their owne, which did not belong to others: vertues of their owne for which others are not praised, corruptions of their owne, for which others are not blamed; If it were not thus, then when *Laodicea* is condemned for lukewarmnesse, or *Ephesus* for declining, all the rest should be reprov'd also: And when *Philadelphia* is praised, all the rest should be praised also, which we see is otherwise. Now from hence the Consequence is certaine, that therefore they are combed by some Covenant each one amongst themselves; for there is nothing els without this that wil sufficiently distinguish them. The Spirit of God and Faith in their hearts, is common to all Christians under heaven, and in heaven also, and therefore this is not the thing that makes distinction. Nor is it habitation in the same Towne together, for that may be common to such Christians as are not of this Church, and usually is to many that are no Christians. As it is with Companies in *London*; as the Company of Goldsmiths, &c. that many others dwell in the same Towne with them, yea it may be in the same streete that are not of their Company: and therefore it is not merely habitation that doth distinguish them from others, but some combination and agreement amongst themselves; So it is not habitation in the same Towne that distinguisheth Churches, and Church members from other men, but their mutuall agreement and combination and joyning themselves together in an holy Covenant with God.

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## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

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*Object.* “If the Spirit of God and Faith in their hearts cannot distinguish one Church from another, because these are common to them all, then how can Covenant distinguish them, sith all Churches are joyned by Covenant one as well as another!

It is not a Covenant simply or a Covenant in generall that doth confitute a Church, or distinguish one Church from another, but a Covenant with application and apprepiation to these persons. Even as it is in marriage, though all married couples be united by Covenant, and a Covenant wherein one couple promiseth the same duties that another couple doth yet a Covenant with application and appropriation of the duties covenanted to this man and this woman in particular, such a Covenant is the very thing that make a couple, man and wife together, and gives them mutuall power over each other, as husband and wife, and puts a distinction between them and all other men and women in the world. And so it is in this case; a Covenant to performe Church-duties with appbcaton and application to such persons, is the very thing that constitutes a Church, and distinguisheth one Church from another.

And thus much concerning the former of the two particulars, to shew the use of Church Covenant, *viz.* that it is that whereby a company doe become a Church.

The second particular is this, the taking hold of the Covenant, or joyning in it, is that which makes a particular person a member of a Church. And this followes upon the former, and that may be the first Argument to prove it.

*Argu.* 3. If joyning in Covenant be that which makes a company to become a Church, then taking hold of that Covenant is requisite to make a particular person become a member of the Church: But the first is true, as hath been shewed before; Therefore the second is true also: If compacting and conjoyning of stones and pieces of Timber, be that that makes an house, then a particular stone cannot become a part of that house, till it be compacted and conjoynd to the rest: But the former is true, even in the Church of God, which is the spirituall Spouse and Citie of God, living stones, Christians, beleevvers must be compacted together, and builded up together, *Ephes. 2. 21. 22. Psal. 122. 3.* and therefore the latter is true also, that a particular Christian becomes a member of the Church, a part of that building by being combined with the rest.

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*Argu.* 2. A second Argument may be drawne from the Scripture, *Isa.* 56. 3, 6, 7. *Let not the sonne of the stranger, that hath joyned himselfe to the Lord, speake, saying, the Lord hath utterly separated me from his people, &c. The sonnes of the strangers that joyne themselves to the Lord, to serve him, &c. and take hold of my covenant, even them will I bring to my holy mountaine, and make them joyfull in my house of Prayer, &c.* Concerning which Scripture, note three things to the present purpose. First, That there strangers were members of Christ, true beleevers, joyned to God by Faith; for it is said, *they have joyned themselves to the Lord, v. 3 & v. 6,* that they loved the name of the Lord, served him, and kept his Sabbaths, *v. 6.* and yet for all this they were not as yet joyned as members of the visible Church, for if they held been joyned, there: would have been no cause for such a complaint, *the Lord hath separated me from his people, v. 3.* Besides, bringing them into the Church as members, and granting them the priviledge of members, is promised as a reward and blessing upon this their joyning to the Lord by faith and obedience, *v. 7.* And therefore it is not the same, but a distinct thing from it; the one being promised as a reward and blessing upon the other. Secondly, The Lord promiseth that he will make them members of his Church: *Them will I bring to my holy mountaine, and make them joyfull in my house of Prayer.* Thirdly, That among other things requisite to make them members, this was one, *viz.* the taking hold of that Covenant which was between the Church of *Israel* and God, *v. 6.* So that hence we may gather, that men may be members of Christ, joyned to the Lord by faith and love, and yet for the present not be members of the visible Church: And that when God is so gracious to true beleevers, as to make them members of his visible Church, it is requiute that they joyne in Covenant before.

*Object.* “*But might not faith in Christ, believing in heart on the God of Israel, be all the taking hold of the Covenant that is here meant.*”

*Answer.* *Not so, but over and above that, here is also meant their open profession of their Faith in the God of Israel, and open binding of themselves by Covenant to all such duties of faith and obedience, as God required of the Church of Israel, and the members thereof. Now distinctly take the Answer to this Objection in three or foure particular Propositions. First, There was a Covenant between the Church at Israel and God, Exod. 19. 5, 6, 7, 8. Ezek. 16. 8. Deut. 29. 10. &c. Secondly, This covenant was mutuall; not*

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onely a promise on Gods part to be their God, and to take them for his people, but also reciprocally on their part to give up themselves unto God to be his people, and to doe the dutie of people to their God; The Covenant is not meerely to receive from God, and promise nothing back againe to him; nor doth God binde himselfe therein, and leave men at libertie, but it is mutuall on both parts, as these Scriptures declare; *Gen. 17. 1. Exod. 19. 7. 8. Deut. 5. 27. & 26. 16, 17. Hos. 2. 23. & Zach. 13. 9.* Thirdly, Hereupon it followes, that if men had not promised, and also performed, in some measure of truth, the duties of Faith and obedience unto God, they had not taken hold of the Covenant, out had discovenanted themselves, notwithstanding all the promises of God unto their Fathers or others. Thus though God promised *Abraham* to be a God to him, and to his seede in their generations, *Gen. 17. 7.* yet the *Ishmaelites* and *Edomites* descending from *Abraham*, were discovenanted by not promising nor performing those duties of Faith and obedience, which God required on the peoples part: when a Covenant containes promises on Gods part, and duties also on mans, he doth not take hold of the Covenant that takes one part, and leaves another. Fourthly, To beleeeve what God promised in the Covenant for his part, and to promise in a private way the duties of obedience on mans part, was not sufficient to make these strangers members of the Church, but they must doe it openly and in the view of the Church, else the Church could have had no warrant to have admitted such into their Fellowship, if their faith and obedience had not been visibly professed, *Exod. 12. 43. 48. 2 Chron. 23. 19.*

And in as much as the Covenant was mutuall, when these strangers did manifest their taking hold of the Covenant, they manifested and professed both Faith and obedience, both that they beleeeved what God promised, and that they would be obedient to what he required; If any should have claimed Church fellowship, saying, I beleeeve the promises, but would not binde himselfe to any duties of Evangelicall obedience, this had been a taking hold of the Covenant by the halves, a taking of one part of it in seeming and pretence, and a leaving of another; but it would not have been sufficient to have brought a man into the fellowship of the church: Such of the Congregation of *Israel* as would not come to *Hierusalem* to enter into Covenant, were to be separated from the Church

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in the dayes of *Ezra*, *Ezra* 10. 8. And therefore such as being strangers should refuse to enter into it, could not be admitted into the Church; So that the taking hold of Gods Covenant, which is there required to make these strangers members of the Church, is a beleeving in heart on the God of *Israel*, and all open profession that they did believe, and likewise a promise of obedience or subjection unto the God of *Israel*, and an open professing of such obedience and subjection; and that is the joyning in Covenant which we stand for, before a man can be a member of a Church, even an open profession of Faith and of Obedience.

*Argu.* 3. A third Argument is taken from those Scriptures which shew that men become members by being added to the Church, or being joyned to them, *Act.* 2. 47. & 5. 13. & 9. 26. If men become members of the Church by being added or joyned, then joining in Covenant (or professing of subjection to the Gospel or Covenant of God) is that whereby a man becomes a member of a Church: But the former is true, as appears by the Scriptures forementioned, and therefore the latter is true also.

But all the doubt in this Argument will be concerning the consequence of the *Major* Proposition; but that may be made good by this reason, and the confirmation of it, *viz.* that a man cannot be added or joyned to the Church by any other meanes without this joyning in Covenant. The truth of which Assertion will appear by shewing the insufficiency of all other means, without this joyning in Covenant, and that may be done in Answer to the Objections ensuing.

*Object.* 1. “*When men were added to the Church, it may be, no more is meant but that God did convert them and worke Faith in their hearts, and that converting of them was the adding of them to the Church.*”

*Answer.* This cannot be all; for, first, *Saul* was converted and had faith wrought in his heart, and yet he was not at the first received for a member of the Church at *Hierusalem* (though he assayed to be joyned unto them,) till they were better satisfied in his spirituall estate by the testimony of *Barnabas*, *Act.* 9. 26, 27, 28. And those strangers, *Isa.* 56. (as was said before) were joyned to the Lord by being converted, and having Faith wrought in their hearts, and yet they doe lament it with grieffe, that they were not joyned as member to the visible Church: *The Lord hath separated me from his people*, say they, *ver.* 3. The old saying is true concerning the  
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visible Church, *There are many wolves within, and many sheepe without.* Secondly, Those that were joyned were beleevvers before they joyned; for it is said, *divers were added*, ver. 14. Thirdly, Those that were added to the Church, were added and joyned to them by such an act as others durst not put forth, *Act. 5. 13. Of the rest durst no man joyne unto them*, and therefore it was not by the irresistble act of God in converting of them, but by some voluntary act of their owne choice and consent; for Gods convening grace depends not upon mans daring, or not daring to receive it. It to be joyned be no more but to be converted, then when it is said, *Some durst not be joyned*, the meaning should be, they durst not be converted, nor suffer Faith to be wrought in them; which is grosse Arminianisme, suspending the convening grace of God upon the free will of the creature. Fourthly, And as this joyning which others durst not doe, cannot be meant of bring convened; So if it be well considered, what the thing was wherein they durst not joyne, it may appeare that it was nothing els but this, that they durst not agree, and engage themselves to be of their body and societie; that is, they durst not joyne in Covenant with them. For it cannot be meant of dwelling in the Towne with them, for this they both durst doe and did: nor is it onely of joyning to heare the Word in their assembly, for this also they durst doe, and many did it in great multitudes, so that many by hearing the Word became beleevvers, and were added to the Lord both of men and women, ver. 14. at this very time when it is said of some they durst not joyne unto them: Nor is it of joyning to them in affection, or approbation of their way, for this they also durst doe and did expresse so much in magnifying and commending them, when yet they durst not joyne unto them, ver. 13. Which magnifying of them doth imply that they heard their doctrine, and saw their practise, and approved it, and highly commended them for the same: Wherefore seeing this joyning, which some durst not doe, cannot be meant of being convened, nor of joyning in habitation, nor of Joyning in affection, nor in hearing the Word in their Assembly, nor of approbation, and expressions that way, it remaineth that it must be meant of joyning in that neere relation of Church-fellowship amongst them, so as to be engaged by voluntary consent and agreement to be members of their Church. Fifthly, If joyning to the Church, were no more but to be con-

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verted, then he that were converted were joyned as a member of every visible Church throughout the world, which were a great confusion of that Order, and distinction of Churches, which the Lord hath appointed.

*Obj. 2.* “Men may be joyned to the Church, in heartie affection and love, And yet without any Covenant.

*Answ.* True, but this will not make them members of that Church, for then *Saul* was a member of the Church at *Hierusalem*, afore he was joyned a member, for he was joyned to them in heartie affection afore, and therefore arrayed to joyne as a member; and so were they that durst not joyne, *Act. 5. 13.* yea then a man should be a member of many Churches, yea of all Christian Churches in the world; for he is to love them, and beare heartie affection to them all; The true members of the Churches in *England* are united in heartie affection, to the Churches in *Scotland*, in *Holland*, in *Fraunce*, in *New-England*, &c. And yet they are not members of all these Churches, nor subject to their censures as members are.

*Obj. 3.* “But the reason of that is because they doe not dwell among them in the same Towne.

*Answer.* Neither would habitation with them in the same Towne, make a man a member of the Church there, if there be no more then so. Suppose *Saul* to have dwelt in the same house afore his conversion in which he dwelt after, which is not unpossible nor unlikely; yet we see he was no member of the Church at *Hierusalem*, afore his conversion, no nor of some time after, though he might have dwelt in an house in the midst of the Christians, and Church-members there. The members of the *Dutch* and *French* Churches in *London*, or other Townes in *England*, are not members of the *English*-Congregations or Churches, no more then the *English* are of theirs, and yet they dwell promiscuously together in the same Streete of the same Towne. Towne-dwelling would not make a man a free-man of a Company in *London*, or some other Corporation; for many others dwell in the Towne with them; yea it may be in the same streete, that are not free of their Company, and so it is in this case.

*Object. 4.* “But the reason why such as dwell in Towne with the Church, are not members thereof, may be, because they frequent not their Assemblies.

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*Answ.* Idiots and Infidells might come into the publick meetings among the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 23, 24, 25. yet Idiots and Infidells were not therefore members of the Church. And *Saul* after his conversion might have come in among the Church in time of publick duties, and have seene and heard all that they had done: yet this would not have made him of one body with them. Some *Indians*, *Moores*, and other naturall persons come into our meetings in *New-England*, some of their owne accord, and others by the Command or Counsell of their Masters and Governours, yet no man can say, that all there are hereby made Church-members. Wherefore seeing neither conversion, nor loving affection, nor cohabitation, nor coming into their meetings, doth joyne a man as a member of the visible Church (for some men have all these, and yet are not members, and others are sometimes members of the visible Churches, and yet want some of these, are hypocrites and want sound conversion) it remaineth therefore that as sound conversion makes a man fit matter for a Church; So profession of his Faith, and of his subjection to the Gospel, and the Churches approbation, and acceptance of him (which is the summe of Church-Covenant) is the formall cause that gives him the being of a member.

*Object.* 5. “*But joyning doth nat always signifie joyning in Covenant; Philip joyned to the Eunnuchs chariote, and dust to mens feete, Act. 8. 29. & Luke 10, 11. and yet there was no Covenant, and therefore men may joyne to the Church without any Covenant.*”

*Answ.* The word indeed may expresse any close joyning, whether naturall, (as the branch is joyned to the Vine, or an arme or other member to the body) or artificiall, as when two stickes were joyned to become one in *Ezekiels* hand, *Ezek.* 37. Or when Carpenters or Masons doe joyne pieces of stone or Timber together, to make one house, *Neh.* 4. 6. *Ezr.* 4. 12. but is not onely the force of the word that is stood upon. But when joyning is used to expresse such joyning, wherein a man voluntarily takes on him a new relation, there it alwayes implyes a Covenant, whether the relation be morall and civill, or religious and Ecclesiasticall: We speake of voluntary relation, for there are naturall relations, as betweene parents and children: and there need no Covenant, there is no Covenant to make a man a Parent, or a childe; There are also violent relations, as between Conquerour and Captives, and

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in these there is no Covenant neither; but others are voluntary, and there alwayes imply a Covenant, and are founded therein, whether they be morall and civill (as between husband and wife, *Pro.* 2. 17. between Master and servents, *Luk.* 15. 15. between Prince and subject, between Partners in Trade, 2 *Chro.* 20. 35, 36, 37. where the Covenant or agreement is, that men shall bare such a share of charges, and receive such a share of profits:) or religious, as between Minister and people, between the Church and the members: all there are done by way of Covenant. A man cannot joyne himselfe to a woman as her husband, but by way of Covenant: A man cannot joyne himselfe to another as a servant, or apprentice, but by way of Covenant; And so may we say of all the rest; nor into any body corporate, but by the same way and means. If men be united into a body politick or incorporate, a man cannot be said to be joynd to them by meere heartie affection, unlesse withall he joynes humselfe unto them by some Contract or Covenant. Now of this nature is every particular Church, a body incorporate, 1 *Cor.* 12. 27. *Ye are the body of Christ, &c.* and hath power to cast out, 1 *Cor.* 5. 13. and to forgive and receive in Penitents, 2 *Cor.* 2. 7, 8 as a body incorporate; and therefore he that will joyne unto them, must doe it by way of Covenant or Agreement; and so this Answer to this Objection, may be a fourth Argument to prove the point in hand, that joyning in Covenant is that which makes a man, a member of a Church.

*Argu.* 4. All voluntary relations, all relations which are neither naturall nor violent, are entred into by way of Covenant.

But he that joynes into a Church as a member, or enters into a Church, doth take upon him such a relation; Therefore joyning to a Church as a member, is by way of Covenant.

*Argu.* 5. A fifth Argument may be drawne from the power which all Churches, Officers and members, have over all their members in the Lord. If all Churches, Officers, and members, have power in the Lord over all their members, then joyning in Covenant is necessary to make a man a member of a Church, but the former is true, therefore the latter is true also.

The Assumprion in this Argument, that all Churches have power over their members, is proved from 1 *Cor.* 5. 4, 5. 13. where the Apostle reproveth the *Corinthians* for suffering the In

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cectuous man amongst them, and commands them to deliver him to Satan, and cast him out from amongst them. Now this he would not have done, if they had had no power over him, or if there had been any roome for them to say, wee have nothing to doe with him, wee have no power over him. And the same is proved in other Scriptures also; as, *Matt.* 18. 17. *Psal.* 149. 6, 7, 8, 9.

And the Consequence of the *Major* Proposition, *viz.* that then members doe engage themselves by Covenant, is proved by this reason; That Churches have no power over such as have not engaged themselves by Covenant, and committed power unto them, by professing to be subject to all the Ordinances of Christ amongst them.

The truth whereof may appeare by two Reasons:

First, Because all Christians have power and right, *pure divino*, to choose their owne Officers to whom they commit their soules, *Act.* 6. & 1. & 14. 23. where the word [[GREEK]]*ξερο ονησαντες*[[GREEK]]. imports choosing by Election: and so the word is used and translated, 2 *Cor.* 8. 19. *he was chosen by the Churches, &c.* It is not ministeriall gifts that makes a man a Minister to every Church, nor investeth him with spirituall power over them, nor though he dwell amongst them, unlesse they call him, and he accept of that call: And as they have power to choose their Officers, so likewise to choose their brethren according to God, *Rom.* 14. 1. Now if they have power to choose their Officers and brethren, then none can have power over them as Officers and brethren, without their owne consent, and whom they never chose, nor promised by any Covenant at Engagement to be subject to the Lord.

Secondly, If the Church thould exercise any Act of Church-power over such a man as never entred into Covenant with them (suppose to Excommunicate him for whoredome or drunkennesse, or the like) the man might protest against their Act, and their Sentence, as *Coram non judice*, and they could not justifie their proceedings, if indeed there have passed no Covenant or Engagement between him and them. If he shall say, you have nothing to doe to passe Sentence or Censure upon me, I am none of your Church, but of another Church; suppose in *Holland*, in *France, &c.* and I am onely here now for Merchandise sake, or upon some other occasion: what shall they say to stop his month, if there ne  
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ver passed any Covenant between him and them.

*Object.* “*But Ministers have power over the people by the word of God, Heb. 13. 17. 1 Thes. 5. 12. 1 Tim. 5. 17. and not by mens engaging themselves by Covenant.*”

*Answer.* But what is it that makes men Ministers to such a people, Officers to such a Church, or maketh them sheepe of my flocke? Is it not those Scriptures that makes every man a Pastour, or Teacher, or Ruler to a people, unlesse they call him to that Office; and then in so doing they Covenant and Engage themselves to be subject to him in the Lord, and then those Scriptures take hold on them. One might as well say, it is not the Covenanting of a wife to her husband that gives him power over her, but the Word of God; For as the Word of God commands people to obey their Ministers, so it commands *wives to be subject to their husbands*, Ephes. 5. 22. And yet all men know, a man cannot take this woman for his wife but by Covenant. So that if shee once makes her selfe a wife by her owne voluntary Covenant, then the word of God takes hold on her, and bindes her to doe the duties of a wife: but if shee, hath made no Covenant, the man hath no power over her as her husband, neither is shee his wife; So if men once make themselves members of such a Church, sheepe of such a mans flocke, by their own voluntary Covenant, then the word of God takes hold of them, and bindes them to doe the duties of members to their fellow-brethren, and of people to their Pastours or Ministers. But if they never chose such a man to be their Minister, nor Covenanted to be subject to him in the Lord, he then can have no power over them as a Minister unto them, because they have right to chose their owne Ministers.

*Argu. 6.* A sixth Argument may be taken from the distinction that is between members, and not members. If there be by the word of God a distinction, between members of the Church and such as are no members, then joyning in Covenant is necessary to the being of a member; but the former is true, as appears 1 Cor. 5. 12. Some are within, and may be judged by the Church, and others are without, and may not: and therefore the latter is true also. And the reason at the Consequence is because there is nothing else without this joyning in Covenant, that can sufficiently distinguish them; It is not Faith and Grace in their hearts, for some men are members of the visible Church, and yet have no

Grace,

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Grace, and others may have Grace, and yet be no members, and therefore this is not the thing that doth distinguish them, nor is it affection, nor cohabitation, nor every approbation of the Word of God, and the wayes of his Church, nor comming into their Assemblies to heare the Word; But these things were touched before, and therefore may be here the more briefly passed over.

And so much shall suffice to have spoken of the second particular, concerning the use of Church Covenant, that it is by joyning therein that a particular person becomes a member of a Church.

But here it will be needfull to remove sundry Objections, which may seeme to some to be of great wright against Church-Covenant, that so by the removing of them, the truth may be the more cleared, to fuller satisfaction, if it be the will of God.

*Object. 1. "Church-Covenant is a Terme that is not found in Scripture.*

*First, So is Sacrament, Trinitie, &c. and yet those termes may be lawfully used, because the thing meant thereby is found.*

Secondly, But seeing the Covenant is between the Lord and his Church, as the two parties that are confederate, it is all one whether it be called the Lords Covenant, or the Church Covenant: As when *Mamre Aver, & Eschol* were confederate with *Abraham*, Gen. 14. 13. might not one truly say, *Abraham* was confederate with them? Relatives doe mutuallly put and establish one another.

Thirdly, The Scripture allowes both the Lords Covenant with the Church, *Eze. 16. 8.* & the peoples covenant or Saints covenant, or Churches Covenant with him, *Deut. 29. 12. Psal. 50. 5. Jer. 50. 5.*

Fourthly, There is good reason for both the words; both the Lords Covenant, and the Church-Covenant, because both are confederate; And for that of Church-Covenant, there is this reason also, *viz.* to distinguish it from other Covenants, as a marriage-Covenant, *Pro. 2. 17.* and a brotherly Covenant, *1 Sam. 20. 8.* The Church-Covenant being thus called not onely because they are a Church, or members thereof that make it, but also because they enter into it in reference to Church-Estate and Church-duties: The duties which they bind themselves unto in this Covenant being such especially as concern a Church and the members thereof.

*Object. 2. "But this Church-Covenant puts some disparagement upon the Covenant of Grace, which every beleever is already entred into with God, and*

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*seeme to charge the same with insufficiency; for every second Covenant doth argue that the first was not faultlesse, Heb. 8. 7.*

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*Answ.* 1. A second Covenant doth argue that the first was not faultlesse, where the Covenants are contrary one to another, as the covenant of grace, and the covenant of works are, and so it is most true, that the bringing in of the free Covenant of Grace did argue that righteousness and life could not be attained by the Law, or Covenant of works; for if there had been a Law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law. *Gal. 3. 21. Rom. 8. 3.*

2. But if it be the same Covenant that is renewed or made againe, though upon a new occasion, no man can say that entring into the same the second time, or a third, or a fourth, doth disanull the first, or cast disparagement upon the same. The covenant of works given to *Adam* was not blamed or faulted, because it was renewed in *Sinai*. The Covenant of Grace was first given to *Adam* in Paradise after his fall, afterward to *Abraham*, then to the people of Israel under types and shadows; And againe after the coming of Christ in the flesh; yet none of there doth disanull the former, or argue the same to be faulty; and the reason is, because it is still the same Covenant though renewed upon new occasions; and in some particulars in some other manner. And the like we say concerning Church-Covenant, or the Covenant which a man makes when he enters into the Church, *viz.* that it is not another Covenant contrary to the Covenant of Grace, which every beleever is brought into at his first conversion, but an open profession of a mans subjection to that very Covenant, specially in the things which concerne Church estate, into which estate the man is now entring.

*Obj.* 3. “*It is not lawfull to make such a Covenant as the Church-Covenant, beause it is not in our power to keep it, and we do not know whether God will give us power.*”

*Answ.* This ground is very true, that no man hath power of himselfe to any thing that good is, but all a mans power and abilitie must come of God through Christ, *2. Cor. 3. 5. Phil. 2. 13. Joh. 15. 5.* But the inference is not good, that therefore it should be unlawfull to ento into Church-Covenant: for 1. By the same reason, all promises are unlawfull, and all covenants whatsoever; as the covenant of marriage, the covenant of service, yea and the personal covenant of Grace, when a particular

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soule promiseth faith and new obedience; for there is none of these, no not the covenant of

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Marriage, which a man is able of himself to keep, as the adultery of *David* and *Bathsheba*, among others, doth plainly prove.

2. God hath promised to give power to them that in self-deniall seek it of him, and trust to his promise for it. *Ezek.* 36. 27. *Jer.* 31. 33. *Rom.* 6. 14. *Jer.* 32. 40. The true inference therefore from this ground, from mans disabilitie to performe were this, that therefore a man should not enter into Church Covenant in his owne strength, for that was *Peters* fault in promising not to deny Christ, but to die with him rather: but Church-Covenant, as also all other promises, should be entred into, in an humble looking up to Christ Jesus for help and assistance to performe. *Thou therefore my sonne, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,* 2. *Tim.* 2. 1.

*Obj.* 4. “*God disalloweth covenants of mans making (and so our Church-Covenant) in those words, But not by thy Covenant.* *Ezek.* 16. 61.

*Ans.* God doth not reprove them there for making Covenant, for then he were contrary to himselfe, who elsewhere called them to do it, *Exod.* 29. *Deut.* 29, and commended them for it, *Psal.* 50. 5. Yea and in that very place of *Ezek.* 16. acknowledgeth a Covenant betweene him and them, *ver.* 60. 62. But the meaning is, he would do them good, but not for their good keeping the Covenant of works, for they had very sinfully broken it, *ver.* 59 but even as he saith elsewhere, not for their sakes, or for their righteousnesse, *Ezek.* 36. 32. *Deut.* 9. 4, 5, 6. But what force is there in this arguing, *viz.* If God will do us good, but not for our good keeping the covenant of works, then it is not lawfull to promise obedience to the covenant of Grace, in such things as concerne Church estate; All men may easily see due here is a plaine *non sequitur.*

*Obj.* 5. “*This entring into Covenant may keep out many good men from joining to the Churches, because they are not satisfied about it: and therefore it is better laide aside.*

It is not impossible, but good men may for a time be unsatisfied about it, till they understand the nature and use of it, and yet the thing be warrantable enogh for all that in the sight of God; the Tribes were troubled at the Altar set up upon the banks of Jordan by the two Tribes and an halfe, till they understood the intent and use of it, and for what

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purpose it was erected: and then they were satisfied. *Josh. 22.* And the same may be said of *Peters* eating with the Gentiles, which at the first was very offensive to them of the

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circumcision, till they understood what *Peter* had to say for his defence therein, and then they rested well satisfied, *Act. 11.*

But if men understand what the Church-Covenant is, there is no reason that good men should be troubled at it; it being nothing else but a promise of obedience unto the Gospel of Christ, or of such duties as the Gospel requireth of all Christians in Church-estate: For, will good men refuse to obey the Gospel, or submit to the ordinances of Christ? or will they refuse to professe and promise so much? If a man understand what it is, and what we meane by it, and yet refuse to enter into it when he hath opponunine thereto, such refusing is no part of his goodnesse, but is to be reckoned amongst his corruptions; It is ignorance at the best, and if not so, then it may be perversenesse of will, or some want of will to performe obedience to the Gospel. And surely there is smal hope that such would yeeld subjection and obedience to the Gospel, who do refuse to professe or promise it.

*Obj. 6.* “*But the Scripture, Act. 2. 41. tells of joining to the Church without any Covenant. For it was not possible that 3000. should enter into covenant in one day.*”

*Answ.* *Two things may be said in Answer to this Objection.*

First, that 3000. were not so many, but that joyning in Covenant might easily be done by them all, in one day. For, 1. it was at Penticost, at which time of the yeer the dayes were at the longest: And, 2. the Scripture tels us, that *David* made a Covenant with all the Tribes of Israel in one day, 2. *Sam. 5. 1, 2, 3.* The Articles of the covenant betweene *David* and the Tribes, and so betweene this 3000. and the Lord might be openly declared, and they both the one and the other might by some signe or other, expresse their consent thereunto in one day.

Secondly, as joyning in Covenant is a thing that might be done, so it is more then probable that indeed it was done, by those 3000. soules. For it is said, *ver. 41. that they gladly received the word,* that is, they openly professed that they did with all their hearts receive it, for this receiving of the Word is noted as a condition, upon which they were admitted to baptisme, and therefore it was nor onely an inward receiving of it in

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their hearts, but also an open professing that they did receive it; for an inward receiving of it in their hearts, without an open professing thereof outwardly, would not have been sufficient for the admitting of them unto Baptisme.

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Now this Word which they received was an exhortation to Repentance for sinne, and to Faith in the promise, *ver.* 38. 39. and to obedience in severing themselves from others, and saving themselves from that untoward generation, *ver.* 40. And therefore when they openly professed, that they gladly received this word, there was an open professing of their Repentance for sinne, *ver.* 40. of their Faith in the promise and of obedience to the Commandement, which is nothing else, but the very summe of Church-Covenant: yea, and further, their very preparation to this repentance, faith and obedience, in that true compunction and sorrow of soul, was also openly made manifest. *ver.* 37.

*Reply.* “But yet there would not be such long narrations, of every one severally, as now are used, when men do enter into Church-Covenant, when each one makes a good long speech, in the profession of his Faith and repentance.

*Answ.* When the thing is certaine, as was shewed before, that they did openly professe repentance, faith and obedience, it is not difference in the length or largeness of their speeches in expressing of themselves, that can make any difference in the thing: *Majus & minus non diversificant speciem.* And we denie not but they might be briefer, because there was not such need they should be long in regard of some difference betweene them and us, their time and ours: First there were the Apostles present to heare their confessions, and to judge thereof, who were men of very good discerning, and therefore briefer expressing of mens selves might suffice; whereas the best Christians, yea the best Ministers amongst us are not to be compared to the Apostles; and therefore as we need more time for study, and for preparation for our Sermons then they did: so likewise we need more time to heare, and try the soundnesse of mens repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet this we may adde withall, that if the Apostles and those primitive Christians, men of such excellent discerning were sometimes deceived, and could not alwayes so discern, but that some Hypocrires would creep

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into the Church: as the example of *Ananius* and *Saphira* doth witness; how much more need is there, that the Churches of God in these dayes (being far inferiour to them) should be very watchfull and circumspect in

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trying the spirituall estates of them that offer to come into the Church?

Secondly, their times also differed from ours: for their Christianitie was a matter of reproach and danger of excommunication, *Joh. 9. 22.* of imprisonment, *Act. 4. 3* and *5. 18.* and the like. And therefore to see men now to make open profession of their faith in Christ Jesus, whose servants and disciples were so hated, and who himselfe but a while before was crucified, this was not an ordinarie matter: and therefore in words, men might be the briefer when they came to be received into the Church: But our times in *New England* do not persecute Christ, and Christians, and Christian Churches, but countenance them, and protect them; and therefore there is more need now to be more studious in examination of mens estates when they offer themselves for Church members: when the Jews were in favour, many of the people of the Land became Jews, *Esth. 8. 17.*

*Obj. 7. "But why is there so little proofe of this Church-Covenant in the New Testament?"*

1. Suppose the New Testament said nothing of it, yet it might have ground sufficient from the Scriptures of the old Testament; for if it was Gods revealed will in those dayes, that a companie should become a Church, and particular persons become members of that Church by way of Covenant, we may be sure it is so now likewise, unlesse covenanting were peculiar to the Jewish Pædigogie; indeed if it had never been used in those times, but were some new ordinance, peculiar to the dayes of the New Testament, in such cases also a ground from the Scriptures of the New Testament were necessarie, as there is in all such things wherein there is any change or variation, from what was used in those times afore Christ, as that there should not be Nationall Churches, but congregationall, and not one visible Church, but many, that there should be baptisme, and the Lords Supper: these are matters that are not found in the old Testament, nor were appointed to be used in those dayes, and therefore we must have warrant for them in the New, and so we have. But for the Covenant it is otherwise, it is no new ordinance peculiar to the dayes

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of the Gospel, nor any Leviticall ordinance peculiar to the Jewish Pedigogie; and therefore the Scriptures of the Old Testament that give warrant for it, may be sufficient as hath been shewed afore.

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2. And yet there is not wanting good warrant for it, that it ought to be used, in the dayes of the New Testament. For, 1. the Prophets do foretell it, *Isa.* 56. 6, 7. and 44. 5. and *Jer.* 50. 5. *Ezek.* 20. 37. and in sundrie other places, to omit the rest at this time, because some of them have been spoken of before; Onely let those words of *Isa.* 44. 5. be well considered, and see if they do not plainly hold forth that in the dayes of the New Testament, men should openly professe their faith, and solemnly bind themselves by Covenant to be the Lords people, one shall say, I am the Lords, and another shall call himself by the name of *Jacob*, and another shall subscribe with his hand, and surname himself by the name of *Israel*. These words are so plaine for open professing of faith in the Lord, and open binding of mens selves by Covenant unto him, as we conceive nothing need be more.

2. The Apostles do sufficiently testifie, that such a thing was practised in their dayes, else how should we understand that fellowship in the Gospel in its full latitude and breadth, *Phil.* 1. 5. if this combining into Church fellowship be no part thereof; yea when it is said, *they continued stedfastly*, or as the word [[GREEK]] ??? ???[[GREEK]], may well be translated, *they strongly did cleave together*, or hold together in such a Fellowship, which was not preaching and hearing the doctrine of the Apostles, nor Sacraments, nor Prayer, but a thing distinct from all these. If this combining themselves into a spirituall fellowship and societie of Church-state be no part thereof, we know not how to understand it, nor what that fellowship should meane; If Doctrine, and Sacraments, and Prayer had not been particularly mentioned, in the same place, it might have been thought that the Fellowship in which they so steadfastly cleave together had been no more, but their coming together to observe these said ordinances, and their communion therein. But when all these are particularly mentioned, and Fellowship mentioned among them, as a thing distinct from the rest, we may not confound it with the rest. We might as well say, that by doctrine is meant Sacraments, and by Sacraments is meant Prayer; as to say that by Fellowship is meant nothing else but the exercise of doctrine and Sacraments, and Prayer. And if these are

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they are distinctly named, be distinct ordinances, and may not be confounded, then Fellowship being named in the same manner imports something distinct from them all, and may not be confounded

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with them, nor with any of them, no more then the other may be confounded one with another. And if so, then as this Fellowship may import, the communion of their gift and goods one for the helpe of another, so it must first of all imply a combining of themselves into Church-state by mutuall agreement, consent, or covenant.

Furthermore, when the Apostle writeth, that by experience of the *Corinthians* liberall contribution to the poore Saints, men glorified God for their professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ, 2. *Cor.* 9. 13. he plainly employes thereby, that the *Corinthians* had made a profession or promise of such subjection to the Gospel as did comprehend this particular of distributing to the necessitie of the Saints, among other things. And their liberall distribution which he there speaks of, was looked at as one point of their reall performance of that subjection to the Gospell which they had before professed, and promised. Now the Church Covenant is nothing else, but the professing or promising of such subjection, and therefore this place is another prooffe of Church-Covenant. Besides, it hath been shewed afore in *Argument* 3. that those places which speake of being added to the Church, of joyning, or assaying to joyne unto the Church, *Act.* 2. 47. and 5. 13, and 9. 26. are not expounded according to the full meaning of them, when they are understood of any other joyning, if joyning in Covenant be left out. And therefore the Scriptures of the New Testament do beare good witnessse unto Church-Covenant, though, as we said before, the Scriptures of the Old Testament might have been sufficient if the New Testament had spoken nothing of it.

*Obj.* 8. “*But Baptisme makes men members of the visible Church, and therefore the Covenant is needlesse.*”

*Ans.* This is answered in the Answer to the fourth of the 32. Questions, where it is shewed at large that Baptisme is a seale of the Covenant betweene God and the Church, but neither makes the Church, nor members of the Church, nor alwayes so much as proves men to be members.

*Obj.* 9. “*This Church-Covenant is a late devise, and was not known in ancient time, and therefore is to be rejected.*”

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*Answ. First, True Antiquitie is that of the Scriptures. Now sith Church Covenant is warranted by the Scripture, as hath been shewed*

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shewed before in this discourse, it cannot be charged to want true Antiquitie. When the Papists are wont to charge the doctrine of Protestants with Novelty, and such as was never heard of before *Luther*, the Orthodoxe are wont to answer, that if the doctrine do not agree with the Scripture, then let it be condemned for Novelty; and if it do, it is warranted by the best Antiquitie, even the testimonie of God himself who is the Ancient of dayes: Out Faith, faith Doctor *White*, is in all points the same that is contained in the Scripture, and so consequently of the same Antiquitie: and therefore all they that say it came up but of late, must first prove it contrary to the Word of God, or else hold their peace. *White, Way, 44. 1.* And the same we say in this particular of the Church-Covenant.

Secondly, And yet they that search the Stories and Writers of the times and ages next after the Apostles, may find some testimonie of Church-Covenant in those dayes: For instance, *Justine Martyr* in his Apol. 2. makes mention of three things which were required of all that were admitted into the Church as members, [[GREEK]]????? ?????[[GREEK]], that is regeneration, and soundnesse in the Faith, and a promise to walke in obedience to the Gospel. And generally this was the practise of all those times, that never any man was admitted to Baptisme, nor his children neither, but they put him to answer three questions, *Abrenuntios?* whereto he answered, *Abrenuntio. Credis?* whereto his answer was, *Credo:* and *Spondes?* to which he answered, *Spondeo.* So that here was an open declaration of his Repentance from dead works, and of the soundnesse of his Faith, in the two first particulars, and an open binding himself by covenant or promise to walke according to the Gospel, in the third. But much needs not to be said in this point, unto them that do acknowledge Scripture Antiquitie to be sufficient, though after times should be found to swerve from the Rules and Patterns that are therein contained.

*Obj. 10. "If Church-Covenant be so necessarie, then all the Reformed Churches are to be condemned as no Churches; for they have no such Covenant.*

*Answ.* They that have knowne those Churches, not onely by their writings, and confessions of their faith, in Synods and otherwise; but; also by living amongst them, and being eye-witnesses of their Order, do report otherwise of them, *viz.* that they are combined

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together by solemne Covenant with God and one another. *Zepperus*, speaking of the manner, used in the reformed Churches, in admitting the children of Church-members to the Lords Table, when they came to age, and have been sufficiently catechised, and instructed in the doctrine of Religion, tells us, that such children are admitted to the Lords table, by Publick profession of Faith, and cntring into Covenant. “*Consuetum est*, saith he, *ut qui per ætatem inque Doctrinâ Cateheticâ profectum ad sacram Cœnam primum admittuntur, fidei confessionem coram totâ Ecclesiâ publicè edent per parentes aut qui parentum loco sunt, jussû ministry, in Ecclesiæ conspectum producti: quòdque in illa confessione, per Dei gratiam perstare, ac, juxta illam, vitam instituere, insuper etiam disciplinæ Ecclesiasticæ ultrò ac sponte suâ subjicere sese velint, spondeant atque stipulentur, Polit. Eccles. lib. I. cap. 14. p. 158.* that is, The manner is, that they who by reason of age and proficiencie in the doctrine of Catechisme are first admitted to the Lords Supper, should, publicly before the whole Church make confession of their faith, being brought forth into the sight of the Church by their parents, or them that are instead of parents, at the appointment of the Minister; and likewise should promise and covenant by the grace of God to continue in that Faith which they have confessed, and to lead their lives according to it; yea, and moreover to subject themselves freely and willingly to the discipline of the Church. These words we see are full and plaine, that children are not in those Churches received to the Lords Supper, without personall confession of Faith, and entring into Covenant before; And if they tooke this course with children come to age, there is as much reason, or more, that the same course should be holden with men of years, when they are admitted members. And so the same *Zepperus*, speaking of the consociation of Churches amongst themselves by mutuall confederation, hath these words, which as they may be applyed to the combining of many Churches, so may they be combining of many members of the same Church, “[GREEK][GREEK], *quam in Symbolo profite nunc Apostolico, nihil aliud hic requirit, & vult, quam obligationem omnium Ecclesiæ membrorum & confæderationem, &c.* that is, that communion of Saints which we professe in the Creed, doth require and meane nothing else but an obligation of all the members or the Church, and a binding of them to-

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“gether by Covenant. *Polit. Eccles. li. 3 c. 8. p. 721.*

To these testimonies of *Zipporus*, those words may be added of Mr. *Parker* our own countryman, a man of singular note for learning and holinesse, who also himselfe lived sometimes beyond Sea in the reformed Clunches, and there ended his dayes, so that we may safely give the more credit to his testimonie, he having so good meanes fully to know the state and order of those Churches. Now he speaketh of a “*Solemne forma absque quâ in Ecclesia alicujus communionem nullus rite recipitur*: of a solemne forme, without which no man is rightly received into the communion of the Church, hath these words. *Hic mos ille est reformatarum Ecclesiarum non solum in lapsis restituendis, sed in extraneis, imò quibuscumque recipiendis qui ad habitandum alicubi consistunt, etsi forte in Ecclesiâ illius loci quo ante commorabantur, juxta hanc formam admissi prius fuerant. Examinat Presbyterium plebs consentit, quisque testes vitæ suæ secum adfert, vel testimonia saltem: publicatur nomen cujusque competentis pro concione, admoniuntur quisque siquid habeat quod exipiat, ut denunciât presbyteris. Si nihil contra adferatur, admittitur quidem, sed non nisi solerni pactione cum Deo & cum Ecclesiâ. Spondet verò Ecclesiâ, se ambulaturum prout sanctum illem communionem decet; Disciplinâ illius Ecclesiæ subiacere velle, se fratribus illites communionis invigilaturam juxta Christi præceptum, Matth. 18. 17. ut præveniantur sanenturque scandala, & illi ad studium bonorum operum provchantur.* That is, This is the manner of the reformed Churches, not onely in restoring such as have fallen, but in admitting of strangers, yea of all whoeverer they be, who do sit down in any place for habitation, though perhaps they have been formerly admitted after the same manner in the Church where they have formerly dwelt; The Presbytery doth examine, the people do consent, every man brings with him witnesses of his life, or at least wise testimonies: The name of each one that desires to be a member, is published in the Assembly, every one is admonished if he have any exception against the party, to bring it to the Presbytery. If nothing be brought against him, then indeed he is admitted; but yet no otherwise then by a solemne covenant with God and the Church; And to the Church he promiseth that he will walk as becometh that holy Fellowship, that he will be subject to the discipline of that Church, that he will watch over the brethren

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“of that Communion, according to the Command of Christ, *Matt.* 18. 17. that offences may be prevented and healed, &c. *Polit. Eccles. lib.* 3. *cap.* 16. § 4. *Pag.* 171. 172. Much more he hath to the same purpose in that place, alledging sundry Canons and Decrees of Synods of reformed Churches, wherein they have determined that none should be received into their Churches, but by this way of solempne Covenant. And others that have lived amongst them may have been eye-witnesses that this is their usuall practise.

*Obj.* 11. “*But what shall be said of the Congregations in England, if Churches must be combined by Covenant? Doth not this doctrine blot out all those Congregations out of the Catalogue of Churches? For what ever Covenant may be found in the reformed Churches in other parts, yet it is plaine that the English have none.*

*Answ.* Though we deny not but the Covenant in many of those Congregations is more implicate and not so plaine as were to be desired; (and what is amisse in them, in their materialls, or in want of explicate combining of pure matter, or in any of their wayes, wee will not take upon us to defend) yet we hope we may say of them “with Master *Parker, Polit. Eccles. lib.* 3. *cap.* 16 § 1. *pag.* 167. *Non abest ea realis & substantialis (quanquam magis quàm par erat implicita) coitio in fœdius, casque voluntaria professio fidei substantialis: quâ (Deo gratia) essentiam Ecclesiæ idque visibilis hacusque sartam tectam in Angliâ conservavit;* That is, there wants not that reall and substantiall comming together, (or agreeing in Covenant, though more implicate then were meete) and that substantiall profession of Faith, which (thanks be to God) hath preserved the essence of visible Churches in *England* unto this day.

The reasons why wee are loath to say, that the Congregations in *England* are utterly without a Covenant, are these:

First, Because there were many Christian Churches in *England* in the Apostles time, or within a while after, as Master *Fox* sheweth at large, *Act. & Mon. lib.* 2. beginning *pag.* 137. where he reporteth out of *Gildas*, that *England* received the Gospel in the time of *Tiberius* the Emperour, under whom Christ suffered, and that *Joseph of Arimathea* was sent of *Philip* the Apostle from *France* to *England* about the yeare of Christ 63. and remained in *England* all his time and so he with his fellowes layd the first foundation

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of Christian Faith among the Britaine people, and other Preachers and Teachers coming afterward, confirmed the same and increased it. Also the said Master *Fox* reporteth out of *Tertullian*, that the Gospel was dispersed abroad by the sound of the Apostles into many Nations, and amongst the rest into *Britaine*, yea into the wildest places of *Britaine*, which the *Romans* could never attaine unto: and alledgeth also out of *Nicephorus*, that *Simon Zelotes* did spread the Gospel to the West Ocean, and brought the same into the Isles of *Britaine*: and sundry other proofes he there hath for the same point. Now if the Gospel and Christian Religion were brought into *England* in the Apostles times, and by their means, it is like that the *English* Churches were then constituted by way of Covenant, because that was the manner of constituting Churches in the Apostles time, as also in the times afore Christ, as hath been shewed from the Scripture before in this discourse. And if Christian Congregations in *England* were in those times combined by Covenant, then eternitie of Gods Covenant is such, that it is not the interposition of many corruptions that may arise in after times that can disanull the same, except when men wilfully breake Covenant and reject the offers of the Gospel through obstinacy, which we perswade our selves they are not come unto: and consequently the Covenant remains which hath preserved the essence of Churches to this day; though the mixture of manifold corruptions, have made the Covenant more implicate then were meete.

Secondly, Because there want no good Records (as may be seene in *Seldens History of Tithes*) to prove that in former times in *England* it was free for men to pay their Tithes and Oblations where themselves pleased: Now this paying of Tithes was accounted as a dutie of people to their Minister, or sheepe to their Pastour: and therefore seeing this was by their owne voluntary agreement and consent, their joyning to the Church as members thereof, & to the Ministry thereof, as sheepe of such a mans flock, was also by their owne voluntary agreement and consent: and this doth imply a Covenant. It was not the precincts of Parishes that did limit men in those dayes, but their owne choice.

Thirdly, Those Questions and Answers ministred at Baptisme, spoken of before, (viz. *Doest thou renounce? I doe renounce: doest thou beleeve? I doe beleeve: doest thou promise? I doe promise*) as they

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were used in other places, so were they also in *England*, and are unto this day, though not without the mixture of sundry corruptions. Now this doth imply a Covenant. And when the children came to age, they were not to be admitted to the Lords Supper, before they had made personall Confession of their owne faith, and ratified the Covenant which was made at their Baptisme by their Parents, which course indeed afterward did grow into a Sacrament of Confirmation, but that was an abuse of a good Order.

If here it be said, that the Members of the Parishionall Assemblies are not brought in by their owne voluntary profession, but by the Authority and Proclamation of the Prince, and therefore they have no such Covenant.

The Answer is, that the Christian Prince doth but his dutie when he doth not tolerate within his Domimons any open Idolatry, or the open worship of false gods by baptized persons, but suppresseth the same: and likewise when he gives free libertie to the exercise of all the Ordinances of true Religion, according to the minde of Christ. With countenance also and encouragement unto all those whose hearts are willingly bent thereunto, *Ezra*. 1. 1. 3. & 7. 13. And therefore this practise of his cannot overthrow the freeness of mens joyning In Church-Communion, because one dutie cannot oppose nor contradict another. And suppose that this course of the Magistrate should seeme to be a forcing of some to come in for Members who were unfit, (in which case it were not justifiable) yet this doth not hinder the voluntary subjection of others, who with all their hearts desired it. When the *Israelites* departed out of *Ægypt*, there went a mixed multtude with them, many going with them that were not *Israelites* indeed, *Exod.* 12. And in the dayes of *Mordecay* and *Hesther*, many of the people of the *lands* became *Jewes*, when the *Jewes* were in favour and respect, *Est.* 8. 17. and so joyned to them not of their owne voluntary minde, nor of any sincer: heart towards God, but meerely for the favour or feare of men; yet this forced or feined joyning of some could not hinder those that were *Israelites*, indeed from being *Israelites*, nor make the *Jewes* to be no *Jewes*, no Church-members.

And the same may be said in this case, Suppose the Magistrates Proclamation should be a cause, or an occasion rather, of bringing  
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some into the Church, who came not of their owne voluntary minde, but for feare, or for obtainmg favour, yet this cannot hinder, but others might voluntarily and freely Covenant to be subject to the Gospel of Christ: Such subjection and the promise of it being the thing which themselves did heartily desire, though the Magistrate should have said nothing in it.

If any shall hereupon inferred, that if the Parishionall Assemblies be Churches, then the members of them may be admitted to Church priviledges in *New England*, before they joyne to our Churches: Such one may finde his Answer in the Answer to the tenth of the thirty-two Questions; whereunto we doe referre the Reader for this point. Onely adding this, that this were contrary to the judgement and practise of the Reformed Churches, who doe not admit a man for member without personall profession of his Faith, and joyning in Covenant, though he had formerly been a member of a Church in another place, as was shewed before out of Master *Parker*.

Lastly, If any say, that if these reasons prove the *English* Congregations to have such a Covenant as proves them to be Churches, then why may not *Rome*, and the Assemblies of Papists goe for true Churches also? For some man may thinke that the same things may be said for them that here in Answer to this eleventh Objection are said for the Parishes in *England*: Such one must remember two things: first, that we doe not say simply, a Covenant makes a company a true Church, but (as was said before) a Covenant to walke in such wayes of worship to God and edification of one another, as the Gospel of Christ requireth. For who doubts, but there may be an agreement among theeves, *Pro. 1. A* confederation among Gods enemies, *Psal. 83* A conspiracy among the *Arabians*, the *Ammonites* and *Ashdodites*, to hinder the building of *Hierusalem*, *Neh. 4. 7, 8*. And yet none of these are made true Churches by such kind of confederacies or agreements. And so wee may say of the Assemblies of Papists, especially since the Counsell at *Trent*. If there be any agreement or confederacy among them, it is not to walke in the wayes of the Gospell, but in wayes contrary to the fundamentall truths of the Gospel, as Idolatry in worship, Heresie in doctrine, and other Antichristian pollutions and corruptions: and therefore if they combined in these things, such combinations will never prove them true Churches.

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The Church is the Pillar and ground of truth, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. But the Religion of Papists is so farre from truth, that whosoever lieth and beleeveth according to it, without repentance, cannot be saved. Witnesse their doctrine in the point of vilifying the Scriptures, and in point of free-will, and of Justification by works, of the Popes Supremacy, of the Sacrifice of the Masse, of worshipping of Images, &c. In regard at which, and such like, the Holy Ghost saith, that their Religion is a Sea, *become as the bloud of a dead man, and every soul in that Sea dyeth*, *Rev.* 16. 3. And therefore agreement in such a Religion will never prove them to be true Churches; nor any Assemblies of Arrians, Antitrinitaries, Anabaptists, or Famelists, supposing them also to be combined by Covenant among themselves.

But now for the Assemblies in *England*, the case is farre otherwise; for the Doctrine of the Articles of Religion which they professe, and which they promise to hold and observe (though some things are amisse in some of those Articles, and though many persons live contrary in their lives) yet the doctrine is such that whosoever beleeveth, and liveth according to it, shall undoubtedly be saved, and many thousands have been saved therein; and therefore Assemblies united by Covenant to observe this doctrine may be true Churches, when the Assemblies of Papists and others may be false, although they also were combined by Covenant: the reason of the difference rising from the difference that is in the doctrine and Religion which they severally professe and by Covenant binde themselves to observe, the one being fundamentally corrupt, and consequently pernicious: The other in the fundmemall points Orthodoxall and sound.

Secondly, It must be remembred also (which was intimated before) that if fundamentall corruptions be professed in with impenitency and obstinacy, then God may disanull the Covenant on his part and give a Bill of divorce to such a people, *Jere.* 3. 8. Now experience and the Scripture also doth witnesse of the Jesuited and *Trent*-Papists, that they repented not of the workes of their bands, of worshipping Devills, and Idolls of Gold, &c. neither repented they of their munhers, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts, *Rev.* 9. 20, 21.

But now for the Parish Assemblies in *England*, we hope that we may safely say, they doe not sinne of obstinacy, but of ignorance, having

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having not been convinced ( and many of them never having had means to be convinced) of the corruptions that are amongst them, In respect of their constitution, and worship, and Ministrey, and so the Covenant remaining among them, may prove them to be Churches, when it cannot stand the Papists in like stead, they being impenitent and obstinate: Which we doe not speake to justifie the Parishes altogether, as if there were not dangerous corruptions found in them, nay rather (the Lord be mercifull to the sinnes of his people) wee may lament it with teares, that in respect of their members and Minidtery, in respect of their worship and walkings, in many of those Assemblies there are found such apparant corruptions, as are justly grievous to a godly soule, that is enlightened to discern them, and greatly displeasing to the Lord, and indeed had need to be repented of betime, least otherwise the Lord remove the Candelsticke and unchurch them, *Rev.* 2. 5. In a word, the corruptions remaining are just causes of repentance and humiliation: but yet in as much as the Articles at Religion, which they professe, combine such wholesome doctrine, that whosoever beleeveth and walketh according thereunto, in sinceritie, shall undoubtedly be saved, and in as much as the corruptions are not persisted in with obstinacy, therefore wee deny not but they have the truth of Churches remaining.

*Obj.* 12. “*But this opinion of Church-Covenant, is holden by none but the Brownists, or those of the Separation, and therefore it is not to be received.*”

*Ans.* This ground cannot be made good, that none but they of the Separation are for Church Covenant, for all the Reformed Churches generally, as was shewed before in Answer to Objection the tenth, are for it in their judgement & practise; and shall all they be condemned for \*Brownists, or maintaining unlawfull Separation from the Church? Also Master *Parker* and Doctor *Ames*, men of our owne Nation, famous for holinesse and learning, and moderation, both of them plead for Church-Covenant, and yet neither of them were Brownists, but bare witness against that rigid Separation. For Doctor *Ames*, his judgement of Church-Covenant may “be seene in his *Medulla. Theol. lib. 1. cap. 32. § 14, 15, 17. Fideles non constituent Ecclesiam particularem, quamvis simul forsan plures in eodem loco convenient ant vivant, nisi speciali vinculo interese conjunguntur, &c.* That is, believers doe not make a particular

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\* By Brownists and Separatists you are to understand those of the rigid Separation.

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“Church, though perhaps there be many of them that meete together, and live in the same place, unlesse they be joyned together by some speciall bond amongst themselves: for so one Church would many times be dissolved into many, and many Churches confounded into one. Now this bond is a Covenant, either expressed or implicite; whereby beleevvers do binde themselves particularly to performe all such duties, both towards God and mutually to one another, as pertaine to the nature of a Church, and their edification. And thereupon no man is rightly admitted into the Church, but by confession of his Faith, and stipulation, of promise of obedience.

These words doe plainely and fully shew his judgement of Church-Covenant, to be the very same that is held and practised in *New-England* at this day. And that he was not, for that severitie and regiditie of separation, may be cleared from sundry of his workes, wherein he plainly and fully beares witnesse against the same, and namely, in his *Fresh suite against Ceremonies*, pag. 207. and in his second *Manuduction*, wherein he purposely and at large deales in this Argument of Separation. Sure it is Master *Canne* in his Booke, wherein he goes about to prove the necessitie of separation from the Non-Conformists principles, doth professedly and expressly oppose himselfe against Doctor *Ames* in the point of Separation, which shewes how farre the good Doctor was from favouring that way, when they most zealously therein doe count him to be a speciall opposite of theirs, as indeed he was. And for Master *Parker*, his judgement of Church Covenant was heard before in part; where he so much approveth the practise of the Reformed Churches in this point. And much more may be seene of his judgement herein, in the sixteenth Chap. of the third booke of his *Polit. Ecclesiastica*. And yet in the same place, and likewise *lib 1. cap. 13. 14.* of the same Treatise he plentifully and plainly shewes his dislike of the wayes of Separation, as is also acknowledged in an Admonition to the Reader, prefixed before that Booke, by *I. R. suo, suorumque nomine*. So that this Assertion appears to be untrue, wherein it is said, that *none but Brownists and Separatists doe approve of Church-Covenant*.

As for the Inference from this ground, that therefore Church-Covenant should not be received, because it is pleaded for and practised by the Separatists. We Answer, that this will not follow,

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unlesse it could be proved, that the Separatists hold no truth; or if they hold a truth wee must not hold it, that so it may appeare wee differ from them; Either of which, it were unreasonable to affirme. If the Papists hold sundry Articles of Faith, as that there is a unitie of the Divine Essence, and Trinitie of Persons, that Jesus Christ is God and man, and that true Messiah that was promised, and the onely Saviour of the world, and many such like, must wee deny these things because they are holden by the Papists? This were as unreasonable as to condemne the doctrine of the Resurrection, because it was maintained by the Pharisees, *Act.* 23. 8. And so we say of Church-Covenant, holden and practised by them of the Separation; as also many other truths are maintained by them: No reason that truth should be refused, because the Separatists maintaine it. When Doctor *Bancroft* in a Sermon at *Pauls-Crosse*, had avouched that the Superioritie of Bishops above other Ministers, is by Gods owne Ordinance, and to make the contrary opinion odious, affirmed that *Aerius* persisting in it, was condemned for an Heretique by the generall consent of the whole Church, and that *Martin* and his Companions, doe maintaine the same opinion of *Aerius*; What faith learned Doctor *Reinolds* hereunto, in a Letter to Sir *Francis Knolls*, who required him “to show his judgement herein: Touching *Martin*, saith he, if any man behave himselfe otherwise then in discretion and charitie he ought, let the blame be laid where the fault is, and defend him not; but if by the way he utter a truth, mingled with whatsoever else, it is not reason that that which is of GOD should be condemned for that which is of man: no more then the doctrine of the Resurrection should be reprovved, because it was maintained and held by the Pharisees: Wherefore removing the odious name of *Martin* from that which is sinceritie and love, is to be dealt with, &c.

And the very same doe wee say to them that would make Church-Covenant to be odious, because it is held by those of the Separation who are commonly called Brownists: If men behave themselves otherwise then they ought, we defend them not therein, but if they hold any truth mingled with whatsoever else, wee would not have that which is of God to be condemned, for that which is of man: truth should not be refused, because of other corruptions that may be found in them that hold it.

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*Reply.* “If you with them hold Church-Covenant, you iustifie them in all their wayes of separation and erroneous opinions.

*Answ.* Not so, for many of them hold that there are no visible Christians that stand members of the Parishes in England, and that it is not lawfull to hold any Private Religious communion with such persons; and that the parishionall Assemblies are none of them true Churchcs, and that it is not lawfull to hear any of those Ministers to preach the Word, none of which are justified at all by holding Church-Covenant, though they do hold the same; There is no such necessarie and inseparable connexion betweene these opinions, and that of Church-Covenant, that he that holds this must needs hold the other also.

*Obje.* 13. “But the time hath been, when your selves did not hold Church-Covenant, as now you do; when you were in England you were not of this mind, and therefore no marvell if you change since your coming to New England be suspected, and offensive. If you change your judgement and practise in this manner, God knows whether you may come at last, and therefore men may well be afraid of holding with you in this point, which your selves did not hold when you lived in your native Countrey.

*Answ.* Some of us when we were in England, through the mercie of God, did see the necessitie of Church-Covenant; and did also preach it to the people amongst whom we ministred, though neither so soone nor so fully as were meete, for which we have cause to be humbled, and to judge our selves before the Lord.

But suppose we had never knowne nor practised the same before our coming into this countrey, yet if it be a truth of God, there is no reason why we should shut our eyes against the light, when God holds it forth unto us, not that others should be offended at us for receiving the same. For by the same reason men might still continue in their sinnes, and not make any progresse in knowledge and holinesse, that so they may not seeme unconstant, which were contrary to the Scripture, wherein we are commanded not to fashion our selves according to the former lusts of our ignorance. 1. *Pet.* 1. 14. But to be changed, *Rom.* 12. 2. and renewed, *Ephes.* 4. 23. and put off the old man, and put on the new, *Ephes.* 4. yea to grow in grace and holinesse, 2. *Pet.* 3. 18. and be stronger and stronger, *Job* 17. 9. that our good workes may be more at the last, then at the first, *Revel.* 2. 19. Sure it is, the Apostle tells the *Corinthians* and *Ephesians* that the time had been

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when they were not the same men that now they are when he wrote unto them; and yet he doth not blame them for leaving their former opinions or practise, but commends them for it, 1. *Cor.* 6. 11. *Ephes.* 2. 3. &c. And it is said of *Apollos* an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scripture, that when he came to *Ephesus* the way of God was expounded unto him more perfectly by *Aquila* and *Priscilla*, whereas before he was instructed in the way of the Lord, knowing onely the Baptisme of *John*: yet this was no dispraise at all to him, that now upon better information he would change his judgement to the better, nor unto them that were the means thereof: *Act.* 18. 25, 26. *Nullus pudor est ad maliura transpire.*

The time hath been, (and we may be humbled for it) when we lived without God in the world, and some of us in many sinfull courses: and shall any be offended, because we are not still the same? and when God called us from the wayes of sin and death, to the Fellowship of his grace in Christ; yet some of us lived a long time in conformity to the ceremonies imposed in our native Countrey, and saw not the evill of them. But when God did open our eyes, and let us see the unlawfulness thereof, we cannot see but it would have been a withholding the truth in unrighteousnesse, and a great unthankfulness to God for light revealed to us, if we should still have continued in that course through an inordinate desire of seeming constant: and therefore it is not any just cause of offence that we have changed our judgement and practise in those things, when we once perceived the Word of God to disallow them.

Indeed it hath been sometime objected against Mr. *Cartwright*, and others, that desired the reformation of the Churches in *England*, in regard of Discipline and Church-Order, that they which stood so much for Reformation in Discipline, did in after times adde and alter some things, beyond what they saw at first, and what themselves had formerly desired; and that therefore being so mutable, and inconstant in their apprehensions, they were not to be regarded, nor hearkened unto: to which Objection Mr. *Parker* makes full Answer in *Eccles. lib. 2. ca. 36. p. 307.* where he sheweth from the Scripture, and the testimonie of Bishop *Jewel*, Doctor *Reinolds*, and others, that in the Reformation of Religion God brings not his servants into perfection in knowledge and zeale at the first, but by degrees, so as they grow and make

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## FIRST PROOF-READING DRAFT

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“progresse in there things in such wise, that their good works are more at the last then at the first, as was said of the Church of *Thyatira*, even as the man that had been blind, when Christ restored him to his sight, could at the first but see men like trees walking, and afterward saw every man cleerly; and therefore it is no good arguing to say there men have altered and corrected such things from what their apprehensions were at first, and therefore they are not to be regarded.

Now if this be no good arguing against Mr. *Cartwright*, and those that in *England* have been studious of Reformation (as indeed it is not) then it is no good Argument againa us if this matter of Church Covenant, to say we now hold and practise otherwise then we have done in former time.

*Reply.* “*If any shall here reply, that change from conformity to the ceremonies to worship God more purely is warranted by the Word, and therefore not blame-worthy, and that the same may be said of the case of Apollos, of the Corinthians, and Ephesians forementioned, and of Cartwright, and the rest in his times.*

*Answ.* We answer, that this is true, and thereby it appears, that it is not simply the changing a mans opinion or practise that can be counted blame-worthy, or offensive, but changing without warrant of the Word; and therefore in point of Church-Covenant, the issue must not be whether we or others have formerly known and practised it, but whether it have ground from Gods Word; For if it have (as we hope have been proved before in this discourse) then the observing of it, can be no cause of just offence unto others, nor imputation of inconstancy to our selves, though in time past we had not had so much light as to discern the necessitie and use thereof.

The good Lord pardon everyone that prepareth his heart to seek God, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary: and grant unto all his Churches and servants, that their love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgement, that they may discern the things that differ; and approve the things that are excellent, and by his Spirit of truth be led forward into all truth, till Antichrist be utterly consumed with the breath of his mouth, and the brightnesse of his coming, and the holy City new Jerusalem came down from God out of heaven, as a Bride adorned for her husband the Lambe, the Lord Jesus, to whom be all glory of affiance and service for ever. *Amen.*

CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

*FINIS.*

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AN

**ANSWER**

**OF THE ELDERS  
OF THE SEVERALL**

**CHVRCHES IN  
NEW-ENGLAND**

*UNTO NINE Positions,*  
**SENT OVER TO THEM**

**(BY DIVERS REVEREND AND GODLY MINISTERS IN England) TO  
DECLARE THEIR JUDGEMENTS THEREIN.**

**WRITTEN IN THE YEAR, 1639.**

**AND NOW PUBLISHED FOR THE SATISFACTION  
OF ALL WHO DESIRE RESOLUTION IN THOSE POINTS.**

**LONDON,**

**PRINTED BY T. P. AND M. S. FOR BENJAMIN ALLEN.**

**1643.**

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**The severall *Positions* handled in this Treatise.**

1. *THat a stinted Forme of prayer, or set Liturgie, is unlawfull.*
2. *That it is not lawfull to joyne in Prayers, or receive the Sacrament where a stinted Liturgie is used, or as we conceive your meaning to be in this as in the former Question, viz. where that stinted liturgie is used.*
3. *That the children of godly and approved Christians, are not to be baptised until their parents be set members of a Congregation.*
4. *That the parents of themselves though of approved piety, are not to be received to the Lords Supper, untill they be admitted as set Members.*

## FIRST PROOF-READING DRAFT

5. *That the power of Excommunication, &c. is so in the Bodie of the church, that what the major part shall allow, that must be done, though the Pastors and Governors, and part of their Assembly be of another mind, and peradventure upon more substantiall Reasons.*
6. *That none are to be admitted as set Members, but they must promise not to depart or remove, unless the Congregation will give leave.*
7. *That a Minister is so a Minister to a particular Congregation, that if they dislike him unjustly, or leave him, he ceaseth to be a Minister.*
8. *That a Minister cannot perform any ministeriall Act in another Congregation.*
9. *That Members in one Congregation may not communicate in another.*

AN

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**AN EPISTLE WRITTEN  
by the Elders of the Churches in**

**New-England, TO THOSE GODLY MINISTERS FOREMENTIONED THAT  
SENT OVER THE Positions.**

*Reverend and beloved Brethren:*

**I**N these remote Coasts of the earth, whereunto the good hand of God hath brought us, as we do with much comfort of heart call to mind the many gracious blessings, which both, with you, and from you we enjoyed in our Christian and holy communion, (the memory and fruit whereof we hope shall never be blotted out) so we have also seene cause to look back to our former administrations there, and to search and trie our wayes; that wherein soever we have formerly gone astray, we might judge our selves for it before the Lord: And that seeing now God hath set before us an open doore of libertie, we might neither abuse our libertie in the Gospel, to runne out into any groundlesse unwarrantable courses, nor neglect the present opportunitie to administer (by the help of Christ) all the holy ordinances of God, according to the patterne set before us in the Scripture; in our native Countrey, when we were first called to the Ministry, many of us took some things to be indifferent and lawfull, which in after times we saw to be sinfull, and durst not to continue in the practise of them there; Afterwards some things that we bare as burthens, that is, as things inexpedient, though not utterly unlawfull; we had no cause to retain and practise the same things here,

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

which would not have been not onely inexpedient, but unlawfull, such things as a man may tollerate when he cannot tolerate without sinne when he may remove them; Besides some things we practised there (which we speake it to our shame and grieffe)

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we never took it into serious consideration whether they were, lawfull, and expedient or no, but took them for granted, and generally received; not onely by the most Reformed Churches, but by the most godly and judicious servants of God amongst them; which nevertheless when we came to weigh them in the ballance of the Sanctuarie, we could not find sufficient warrant in the Word to receive them, and establish them here: of one of these three kinds will these our present practises appeare to be, which you call our new opinions, or, Innovations here; except it be some few of them, which though they have been reported to you to be our Judgements and practices, yet are indeed farre from us: The particulars are too many, and too weightie to give you account of them, and the ground of our proceedings about them in a Letter. But to give you (if it be the will of God) the better satisfaction, we have sent you a short Treatise touching each particular, that according to your desire you might understand from us how farre we do acknowledge any of these tenents, and upon what ground hoping that according to your promise, if upon due examination you shall find any weight in them, you will give us the right hand of fellowship. But if otherwise, you will send us your just and faithfull animadversions, and we do not suspect your loves to the truth, or your sinccre speaking according, to your conscience in the sight of God, neither taxe you as a side from the truth with by respects, whereof you complaine, verily we abhorre such rash, harsh, and presumptuous notoriousnesse; we see as much cause to suspect the integritie of our own hearts, as yours; and so much the more, as being more privie to the deceitfullnesse of our own hearts then to yours. And we cannot but with much thankfulnesse of heart acknowkdge the many rich precious treasures of his grace, wherewith the Lord hath furnished sundrie of you above your Brethren, which causeth us with great reverence to accept, and receive what further light God may be pleased to impart unto us by you; But as we have beleaved, so have we hitherto practised, and so have most of us spoken: this our Answer to your particulars, most

## FIRST PROOF-READING DRAFT

of us we may say, because there wants not some Brethren amongst us who proceed further, even to look at all set formes of Prayer invented by men of another age or congregation, and prescribed to their Brethren to be read out of a book for the prayers of the Church, as Images, or Imaginations

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of men, forbidden In the second Comrnandement. But as we leave them to their libertie of their own judgements without prejudice, so do we also concurre with the rest of them, so farre as we all go in bearing witness against any set formes, or the corruptions in them; In dispatching whereof we have been the more slow because it behoved us first to inquire into, and to settle some controversies amongst our selves, before we could well attend to entertaine discourse about forraigne questions which do not so neerly concerne our present estate and practise. Besides your Letters being sent to the Ministers of the Churches, and some of us dwelling farre asunder, it was not an easie thing for all of us often to meet together to consider of these Questions, much lesse to resolve upon one just answer. But having at length (by the assistance of God) brought our Answers to this issue, we commend it to the blessing of the Lord, and in him to your Christian, and judicious consideration; where if all things be found safe, and duley warranted from Scripture grounds; do you also as seemeth vigilant Watchmen of the Lords flock, and faithfull witnesses to God; If any thing seeme doubtfull to you, consider and weigh it very well before you reject it: If my thing appeare to be unfound, and dissonant from the Word (which we for our parts cannot discern) we shall willingly attend to what further light God may send unto us by you: In the meane while we intreat you in the Lord, not to suffer such apprehensions to lodge in your minds, which you intimate in your Letters; As if we here justified the wayes of riged separation, which sometimes amongst you we have formerly born witness against: and so build againe the things we have destroyed; you know they separate from your Congregations, as no Churches; from the Ordinances dispensed by you as meere Antichristian) and from your selves as no visible Christians. But we professe unfainedly, we separate from the corruptions which we conceive to be left in your Churches, and from such Ordinances administred therein as we feare are not of God, but of men; And for your selves, we are so farre from separating as from no visible Christians, as that you are

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

under God in our hearts (if the Lord would suffer it) to live and die together; and we looke at sundrie of you as men of that eminent growth in Christianitie, that if there be any visible Christians under heaven amongst you, are the men which for these many yeers have been written in your fore-

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heads (*Holiness to the Lord*) which we speak not to prejudice any truth which our selves are here taught and called to professe, but we still beleeve though personall Christians may be eminent in their growth of Christianitie: yet Churches had still need to grow from apparent defects to puritie; and from Reformation to Reformation, age after age, till the Lord have utterly abolished Antichrist with the breath of his mouth, and the brightnesse of his coming, to the full and cleare revelation of all his holy Truth; especially touching the ordering of his house and publick worship; as a pledge of this our estimation of you, and sincere affection to you, we have sent you these Answers to your demand, and shall be readie, by the help of Christ, to receive back againe from you, wise, and just, and holy Advertisements in the Lord.

Now the Lord God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, your Lord, and ours; lead us all unto all Truths, purge out all Leaven out of his Churches, and keep us blamelesse and harmlesse in his holy Faith and feare, to his heavenly kingdome, through him that hath loved us; In whom we rest,

*Your very loving Brethren,  
the Elders of the Churches  
in New-England.*

AN

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## AN ANSVVER OF THE

*ELDERS OF THE SEVERALL CHURCHES IN NEW-*

*ENGLAND, UNTO NINE POSITIONS SENT OVER TO THEM (BY DIVERS REVEREND AND GODLY MINISTERS IN England) TO DECLARE THEIR JUDGEMENTS THEREIN.*

**PROPOSITION the I.**

That a stinted Form of Prayer, or set Liturgie, is unlawfull.

## FIRST PROOF-READING DRAFT

**B**Efore we proceed to declare our selves concerning this Position, it will be needful that some things be premised for the explication of the terms thereof; we suppose that first (by a Liturgie and forme of Prayer) you meane not a forme of private prayer, composed for the helpe of the weaker; but that Sistome, or body of Publick Prayer, generally used in the English Parishes, comprised for the Churches use by other men, not infallibly guided of God to be said or read out of a book by their Ministers, as the Churches prayers: And that this is your meaning, may appear from your Letter it self, wherein you complain, that divers in many parts of that Kingdome have sett your Assemblies, because of a stinted Liturgie; now we know not of any other stinted Liturgie from which the people do absent themselves, but onely that which is in use in the English Churches; for as for a Form of Prayer in generall, we conceive your meaning cannot be of that for it is evident that many Preachers constantly use a set form of prayer of their own making before their Sermons, with whom the people refuse not to joyne.

Secondly, by stinted prayers, and set formes, you meane such prayers as are so imposed upon the Churches and Ministers, as that they are limited to the use of that very forme of words exprest in the Book, with no addition, diminution, or alteration: For that Liturgie amd Form amongst you is in this set & stinted.

Thirdly, by unlawfull, you meane that we looking at that form as swerving from the rule, neither do first practise it our selves, or

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secondly, approve the use of it by others.

This he:mg the true state of the Question, so far as it appears to us from your Letters, We answer:

1. For our own practise the Churches here do not use any stinted form of Prayers, and set Liturgies: for these and such other like Reasons.

First, because we find no necessitie of a stinted Liturgie to be used amongst us, by vertue of any Divine precept; And seeing the commission of the Apostle limited them to teach men to observe and do onely what Christ had commanded them in matters of this nature, *Matth.* 28. 20. who are we, and what are our Churches, that we should presume above this Commission? And we hope it will not be offensively taken by any godly Brethren, that we stand fast in that Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, in this as well as in any other thing.

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

Secondly, because the unlawfulness of set Formes, and stinted Liturgies, is questioned, and doubted of by many faithfull servants of Christ; whereas for Church Officers to edifie the Church by their own gifts, as well in praying as in preaching, all sorts without controversie grant it to be lawfull: Now spirituall prudence guideth Beleevers when two wayes are set before them, one doubtfull though ventured on by some; the other certainly safe and good, though neglected by many, to chuse that which is safe, declining from the other.

Thirdly, because the primitive patternes of all the Churches of God in their best times, when as touching this point they keep the rule in their eyes; whether Jewish before Christ or Christian above an hundred years after Christ, yeeld not the least foot steps to show us another safe way to walke in, then this which we have chosen. As for after times towards the end of the second and beginning of the third Century, we know how farre the Churches were then degenerated, and declined from their first puritie; nor do we marvell at it, seeing in the Apostles time the mystery of iniquitie began to work, and it was then foretold, that the power of godlinesse would in after times be exchanged tor empty forms; in which respect we look not at them as our guides, neither in this or other particulars; nor warranted by the Rule: herein following the advise at *Cyprian*, who himselfe saw the corruptions of those times, *Non est attendum quid aliquis ante nos sciendum pu-*

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*taverit, sed quid qui ante omnes est Christi facerit & faciendum præseperit.* To conclude, seeing our Christian liberty frees us from binding our selves to any religious observances, whereunto the written Word doth not bind us; And seeing spirituall prudence directs us to chuse those wayes which on all hands are confessed to be safe, avoiding those that are doubtfull and hazardous, and seeing it will not be safe for us needlessly to swerve from the constant practise of all Churches that are recorded in the Scriptures, that held forth as a cloud of witnesses for us to follow in matters of this nature; we therefore, may not, do not, dare not, use that forme of prayer, and stinted Liturgie in those Churches; more particularly in that we do not use that Forme of Prayer and stinted Liturgie which is in use among your selves: this and such other Reasons have induced us thereunto.

## FIRST PROOF-READING DRAFT

First, the many and just exceptions whereunto that Liturgie is liable for matter and manner: for the prooffe whereof, we referre you to those servants of God who have gone before us in witnessing against the same; amongst others, to Dr. *Cartwright*, and the Abridgement.

Secondly, In as much as that Liturgie was never commanded of God, and hath been greatly abused to idolatry and superstition, and is not of any necessarie use, therefore we are afraid to bring it into the worship of God, as knowing (*Exod.* 20.) the jealousie of the Lord in matters of this nature, and how strictly he commanded his people, that all monuments of Idolatrie and superstition should be abolished from among them: *Deut.* 5. 25,26. *Exod.* 13. *Isa.* 30. 32. 2. *Cor.* 6. 17. in which respect the holy Ghost hath greatly commended *Jacob*, *David*, *Jehu*, *Hezekia*, and *Josia*, for taking away the remembrance of such things, (*Gen.* 33. 24. *Psal.* 6. 4. 2. *King.* 20. 26,27. 18. 4. 2. *King.* 23. all the Chap.) and when other Kings of *Judah*, came short of the same zeal, the Scripture notes it as a blemish in them, that the high places were not taken away, albeit the people did not sacrifice in them to false gods, but onely to the Lord, 2. *Chron.* 15. 17. and 20. 32. and 32. 17. yea moreover it appeareth by the Scripture that some things that had a good originall and use, if they still did not necessarie and commanded of God, are unlawfull, when once they are known to be defiled by Idolatrie, and abused to it, 1. *King.* 18. 14. *Hos.* 2. 16. 17. As the brazen Serpent was at the first Gods institution,

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though but temporarie, but when the children of Israel burnt incense to it, *Hezekiah* is commended for breaking it in peeces: and the Lord witnessed of him, that herein *he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord*, And according to his Commandments which he commanded, *Moses.* 2. *King.* 18. 3. 46. How much more in the like case ought other things to be removed which never were commanded of God, but onely were devised by men; And that that Liturgie hath been superstitiously abused, may be cleare to any that shall consider. It is the same for substance that was used in the dayes of Poperie; and therefore when the Papists in *Devonshire*, and *Cornwall* had made a commotion and Rebellion upon the change of Religion in the dayes of King *Edward* the sixth, it was told then by the King, for the pacifying of them, that it was the self-same service in English which had been before in Latine, (it remaineth good in English, for nothing is altered) And Pope *Pius* the fifth did see so little

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

variation in it from the Latine Service, that had been formerly used in that Kingdome, that he would have ratified it by his Authoritie, if Quene *Elizabeth* would have so retained it: And many of the people put such holinesse in it; that they thinke God is not rightly worshipped, nor the Sabbath observed, nor the Sacraments sufficiently administred, if there be no reading of the Service. And others put such holinesse and necessarie in it, that they preferre it before Gods holy ordinances of preaching the Word, in so much as the Ministers are in danger of being called into question, and of being censurcd, if they do not read the Liturgie every Lords day, without omitting any part thereof, either in respect of preaching, or other wayes: This Argument is used in the abridgement, against Conformitie to the Ceremonies, and we do not see but it is as strong against the Liturgie.

Thirdly, In regard of the many wofull scandalls and dangerous consequences of using that Liturgie, of which, wee suppose, you are not ignorant: to mention out two; first, the hardening of Papists, who are imboldened to thinke better of their owne Breviaries, and Masse-Bookes, seeing most of that Liturgie hath been extracted out of these Bookes, and rather fetched from them, then from the formes used in any parts of the reformed Churches; Secondly, The countenancing and establishing of an unlearned Idoll-Ministry, of not-Preaching-Curates, Non-residents, Plu-

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ralists, &c. In whose skirts is to be found the bloud of so many thousand soules, living and dying in their sinnes, whilst they ignorantly content themselves with, and harden themselves In some emptie formes of Relieion, and blinde devotion, which are begot and cherished chiefly by such Prayers and Ministry: Neither is there lesse scandall thereby (we meane) not onely taken but given them, by the eating of an Idolethite in the Idolls Temple, condemned by the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 8. 7. 10. For it the eating of an Idolethite by him that had knowledge, and knew that an Idoll was nothing, and that all meats were lawfull, did imbolden others to honour the Idoll, and therefore was a scandall given, so also is it in this case.

Fourthly, Seeing that Booke is so imposed, as that the Minister in reading of it, is limited to the very words set downe, without any addicion, diminution, or alteration, therefore wee dare not use it.

## FIRST PROOF-READING DRAFT

For first the Lord himselfe: bath not limited his people to his owne forme, therefore wee see; not how it can be lawfull for to be limited to other mens formes; for in thus doing, we should subject our selves to the exercise of such an authoritie and power of the Prelates, as in this case puts forth a stronger Act of limiting power then Christ himselfe, who doth not limit us to those formes which himselfe hath set downe in Scripture; for though wee acknowledge the Lords Prayer, and other formes set downe in Scripture, may be lawfully used as prayers (due cautions being observed) yet there is not a limitation lying upon the Churches, in the use of these prayers; And therefore we doe not finde that the Apostles ever used that forme taught by Christ in those very words, much lesse limited themselves to it when they prayed; nor did they teach the Churches so to doe.

Secondly, If the Lord would not have us limit our selves to our owne formes, whilst we are exercising our owne gifts, which he hath specially sanctified to edifie his Churches, *Act. 6. 4. Eph. 4. 8. 1 Cor. 12. 17.* Least wee should quench, or at least straighten his Spirit in prayer, *1 Thes. 5. 19.* Would he not have us then limited to other mens formes, which have not been in like sort sanctified of God, but will rather quench or straighten the Spirit of God, whilst we are so limited to them.

Thirdly, The entertainment of this forme hath been a manifest

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snare unto other Churches, who upon the same ground on which they have received this forme into the desire, have been limited to others in the Pulpit, by the means whereof the poore Church of Christ hath been wholly deprived of the publique use of the Ministers gifts in prayer, and the Spirit of prayer in the Ministers in publique hath been greatly restrained.

Secondly, As for our judgements concerning the practise of others, who use this Liturgie in our native Counrrey, we have been alwayes unwilling to expresse our minds there against, unlesse wee had been necessarily called thereunto: And at this time we thinke it not expedient to expresse our selves any further concerning this matter, as loath to entermede in the affaires of other Churches; but contenting our selves with, and blessing the Lord for these Liberties, which wee by the mercy of God doe here enjoy, reserving also due reverence to the judgements

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

of our beloved Countrey men, who concerning this matter may be otherwise minded.

**POSITION the II.**

*That it is not lawfull to joyne in prayers, or receive the Sacrament, where a stinted Liturgie is ued, or as wee conceive your meaning to be in this as in the former question, viz. where that stinted Liturgie is used.*

**A***nsw.* IT seemes by your Letters, the ground of this your Position hath been the seperation of divers from your Assemblies, because of a stinted Liturgie; And we are not ignorant of that ridged Separation of divers people, who withdraw themselves from an able faithfull Ministry, as no Ministry of Christ, and from their Congregations, as no Churches of Christ, because of some corruptions, from which through want of light (not love of the truth,) they are not throughly censed; against which practice we have ever witnessed: As for our judgements concerning the Position it selfe, wee would premise two things:

First, Concerning the persons reading this Liturgie, which may be either an ungodly, or unable Ministry, or an able and godly.

Secondly, Concerning the Liturgie it selfe, which may be understood,

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derstood, either of the whole, or some selected prayers, which may be conceived to be the least offensive.

Now if the Question be of joyning in prayer, where and when that whole Liturgie is used, or when that which is used, is read by an unable and ungodly Minister, we then see not how it can be lawfull to joyne in prayer in such cases; For the preyers of the Minister are not his private prayers, but the publique prayers of the whole Assembly, whose mouth he is unto God; And when the prayers offered by the Minister, as a living holy acceptable service to God, are not through humane frailtie, but otherwise for matter and manner corrupt, we see not what warrant any man hath to joyne in such prayers, *Act. 13. 13. 14.* When they are joyned therein with an insufficient Ministry, they doe not onely countenance them in their place and office, whom the Lord hath reject'd from being his Priests, *Hos. 14. 6.* but also set up those Idolls and \*means of worship to edifie themselves by, which God never appointed in his holy Word, *Ezek. 11. 17.*

## FIRST PROOF-READING DRAFT

But if the Question be of joyning in some few selected prayers, read by an able and faithfull Minister out of the Booke; as of the one side wee are tender of imputing sinne to those that so joyne, so on the other side, ee are not without feare least such joyning may be found unlawfull; unlesse it may appeare that the Ministers with whom wee have communion in reading those prayers, doe neither give any scandall, by reading at them, nor give unlawfull honour to a thing abused to Idolatry and superstition, nor doe suffer themselves to be sinfully limited in the reading of them.

**POSITION the III.**

*That the children of godly and approved Christians are not to be Baptized untill their Parents be set members of a Congregation.*

**POSITION the IV.**

*That the Parents of themselves though of approved pietie, are not to be received to the Lords Supper, until they be admitted as set members.*

THESE two Positions may be maintained with one and the same defence, being somewhat coincident, and therefore wee thus joyne them, as it they were but one.

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\* By this argument all as well as a part of the Common-prayer-booke, must of necessitie be rejected.

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First, therefore to prevent all mistakes, it may please you to take notice, that we are not of their judgement, who refuse all religious communion with such as are not Church-members, nor doe wee appropriate in this priviledge of the Seales, onely to the members of our owne Church, excluding all other Churches of Christ from the same, though they may be through error or humane frailtie defective in some matters of order; provided that the libertie of our Churches be preserved, of receiving such satisfaction as is meete, as well by Letters of Recommendation from such Churches, as otherwise; if it be requifite concerning those whom wee admit into fellowship in the Seales, for as wee account it our dutie to keepe the unitie of the Spirit inviolate, with any in whom we descerne any fruits of the Spirit; so we hold our selves bound to discharge this dutie according to our spirituall communion, in prayer, holy conference,

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED

and other religious actions of like nature, wee maintaine with all godly persons, though they be not in Church-order: But Church Communion we hold (with Church-admitting to fellowship of the Seales) the knowne, approved, and orderly recommended member of any true Church; But to fellowship in the Censures admittance of members, and choice of officers, onely the members of that particular Church, whereof they and wee, or any of us stand members.

These things being premised to consideration, whereupon our judgements and practise is swaid; for administration of the Seales onely to such as are members, a priviledge peculiar thereunto in ordinary dispensation, *Rom. 9. 4, Act. 2. 41, 42, 47.* Indeede the Preaching of the Word is not so, being an Ordinance given not onely for the edifying of the Churches already gathered, but also for the gathering of men to the Church that are yet without, whereas the dispencing of the Seales, are an Ordinance given onely for the edifying of the Church; being ordained, not for the gathering of it; And because there is now no Nationall Church on earth wherein the Seales are dispenced, there being neither place nor time, nor Officers, nor Ordinances appointed in the New Testament by Christ the Lord, for any such Assembly as the *Jewes* had under *Moses*. It remains that the Christian Churches whereunto these priviledges are given, are Congregationall, consisting onely of so many as may and doe meet together ordinarily in one place, for the publike worship of God, and their edifying. Hence

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it is that we reade so much in the New Testament of Churches, in the Plurall number; The Churches of Christ, *Rom. 16. 6.* The Churches of God, *2 Cor. 11. 16.* The Churches of the Saints, *1 Cor. 14. 33.* And not onely when they were of divers Nations, the Churches of the Gentiles, *Rom. 16. 12.* but also of the same Nation, the Churches of Judea, *Gal. 1. 20. 1 Thes. 2. 14.* Not onely when the Countrey was of a large circuite and extent, the Churches of Asia, *1 Cor. 16. 19.* but also of a small part of the Countrey, the Churches of Gallatia, *Gal. 1. 2.* Yea, when two Congregations in severall Cities are spoken of, they are called Churches, as the Church of Jerusalem, *Act. 15. 22.* and the Church of Antioch, *Act. 14. 27. & 15. 25. 30.* To winde up all, seeing the Churches under the Gospel, are Congregationall, and that Baptisme and the Lords Supper, belongs onely to the Churches, it will follow that as a Citie priviledge

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belongeth onely to Citizens and their children; so Baptisme and the Lords Supper, being Church-priviledges, belongs onely to the particular Churches, and their seede, and that seeing *Sigillum sequitur donum*, to apply them to others, what is it but to abuse them? As a Seale of a Corporation is abused, when added to confirme the Grant of a priviledge which is peculiar to any Towne Corporation, to one that being no freeman of that Corporation is uncapable thereof.

*Object.* We are not ignorant of what is wont to be objected against what hath been said, from Instance of the Centurion, the Eunuch, *Lydia*, the Jaylor, &c. How of the Eunuch no more was required to Baptime, then beleiving with his whole heart; In the Centurion, the Apostle *Peter* upon his being Baptized with the Spirit, inferred his right to Baptisme with water; So in *Lydia*, the Jaylor, and many others; It being the constant expression of the holy Ghost, *They beleived, and were Baptized*, without any regard to their Church-Estate.

*Answ.* Whereunto wee Answer; Where the holy Ghost is given and received (which was the case of the Centurion) and where faith is professed according to Gods Ordinance (which was the case of the rest) there none may hinder them from being Baptized, *viz.* by such as have power to Baptize them: In the Instances given, Baptisme was administred, either by Apostles, or Evangelists, or by ordinary Pastours: The persons Baptized, if they were members of Churches, they had a right to Baptisme in their estate;

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And the Apostles being Officers of all Churches, might dispenze the Seales to them where ever they came, which yet will not warrant ordinary Church-Officers to doe the same; nor is it improbable, but that all these were in Church-order. *Aretus* is of opinion in *Act. 9. 18. Act 8. 37.* that the Centurion had a constituted Church in his house; The Eunuch coming to *Jerusalem* to worship, argueth him to be a Proselyte, and member of the Jewish Church, yet dissolved, and therefore upon profession of the Christian faith, capable of Church-priviledges at that time: As for *Lydia* and the Jaylor, it appeareth that on the beginning of the Gospel, there was a Church at *Philippi*, which communicated with *Paul* concerning giving and receiving, and he expressly sayth before his departure from Macedonia, *Phil. 4. 18.* which departure was immediately upon the Jaylors conversion; In which respect what should hinder that *Lydia* and

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the Jaylor should first be joynd to the Church, & then to be Baptized, though it be not mentioned in that story, as neither is here mention of a Christian Church, which yet *Paul* mentioneth in his Epistle to the *Philippians*, at least it is probable, that *Lydia* was a member of the Jewish Church, because shee is said to be one that worshipped God; But if any man thinke that they were not members of any Church yet Baptized, though we see not how it will be proved, yet if it were so, the objection doth no whit weaken the Argument, which speaketh of the ordinary dispensation of the Seales, and not what was done in an extraordinary way; So that suppose that in the case alledged, Baptisme was dispenced to some that were not in Church-fellowship, yet the example of the Apostles and Evangelists in so doing, will not warrant ordinary Pastours to doe the like.

The Reason of the difference, why Apostles and Evangelists might administer Baptisme out of Church Orders, whereof Pastors and Teachers may not is double.

1. *Reas.* First, Because their calling gave them illimited power over all men, especially Christians whereunto they came; But we do not find that ordinarie Pastors and Teachers can do an act of power, but onely over their own Church, which hath called them to watch over them in the Lord.

2. *Reas.* Secondly, Because they were assisted with an immediate direction and guidance of the holy Ghost, in the particulars of their administrations, in the case alledged; But ordinarie Church Offi-

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cers are to walke according to the ordinarie Rules of the Scriptures in their dispensation of the seals, and not to expect immediate inspiration, and extraordinarie Revelations for their help in such cases: This difference betweene Apostles and ordinarie Church Officers must needs be acknowledged, or otherwise a man might from their examples justifie Baptisme in private places.

*Object.* If it be objected, that Baptisme (as Circumcision also formerly) is a seale of the righteousnesse of faith, and therefore where faith is, and the righteousnesse of it, the seal may be added also, even to those that are not in Church Covenant by vertue of their relations to the Covenant of grace to all Beleever. *Rom.* 4. 11. *Gen.* 17. 1. to 11.

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*Answ.* We answer: The scope of the Apostle in that place of the *Rom.* 4. is not to define a Sacrament, nor to shew what is the proper adæquate subject of the Sacrament: But to prove by the example of *Abraham* that a sinner is justified before God, not by works, but by faith, (thus) as *Abraham* the Father of the faithfull was justitied before God, so must his seed be, that is, all beleevers whether Jews or Gentiles, circumcised or uncircumcised, for therefore *Abraham* received Circumcision which belonged to the Jews to confirme that righteousnesse which he had before, even whilest he was uncircumcised, that he might be the Father of both. But lest any man should thinke his Circumcision needlesse, if he was justified by faith before circumcised, he addeth that his Circumcision was of use, as a seale to confirme to him his faith, and the righteousnesse which is by faith; yet as justification is not the onely thing that Circumcision sealed, but the whole Covenant also made with *Abraham* and his seed was sealed thereby: so *Abraham* is to be considered in using Circumcision, not simply, or onely as a Beleever without Church relation, but as confederate, a beleever, and so in the state and order of a visible Church, though the Apostle maketh mention onely of the righteousnesse of faith as sealed thereby, which was as served for his purpose. Now that circumcison sealed the Church Covenant, may appear from *Gen.* 17. 9. 10, 11. where you may find that *Abraham* & his seed, though beleevers, were not circumcised till God called them into Church-Covenant. There is the same reason and use of Baptisme to us, which serveth to seale to our justification as Circumcision did:

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yet not that alone, but also the whole Covenant with all the priviledges, as Adoption, *Act.* 2. 38. and Sanctification, *Gal.* 3. 26. 27. *Tit.* 3. 5. fellowship with Christ in his affliction, *Tit.* 3. 5. and the salvation of our soules; *Matth.* 20. 23. And the resurrection of our bodies, 1. *Pet.* 3. 21. And not onely the Covenant of grace which is common to all beleevers, 1. *Corinth.* 15. 29. But Church-Covenant also which is peculiar to confederates, according to that of the Apostle, *By one Spirit we are all baptised into one body* 1 *Cor.* 2. 13. And by one Body, he meaneth that particular Church of *Corinth*; whereunto he writeth, and saith, *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.* ver. 17. And therefore Church membership is required as well to the orderly partaking of Baptisme,;ls it was of Circumcision; nor do we find that Circumcision

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was administred to all that were in the Covenant of grace (as all beleevers were) but onely to such, of them as were joyned to the people of the God of *Abraham*. *Melchisedech* was under the covenant of grace, so was *Lot*, and *Job*, and his foure friends, yet we no where read that they were circumcised, nor do beleeve they were: so that if Circumcision were administred to none but those that were joyned to *Abrahams* familie, and the Church of God in his seed, then may not Baptisme in ordinarie course be administred to any beleevers now, unlesse they be joyned to the Church of Christ: For, *Parism par est ratio*; But the first is true, therefore the second also.

*Object.* If any shall say, that a man may be a member of a visible Catholic Church, that stands in no relation to any particular Congregation.

*Answ.* We answer, as we have already said, we know no such Church in the New Testament, as a visible Catholick Church, wherein the seales are to be dispenced: If any man think otherwise, and will undertake to prove it from Scripture.grounds, we shall gladly weigh his Argument, and returne such answer as the case will beare.

Secondly, the Ministers of *Scotland* in their examination, and re-examination of the Articles of *Perth*, in the last Article touching the administration of the Sacraments in private places, do expresse their judgements in such termes, as may serve for a full answer to this Objection.

Visible communion (say they) in the holy things of God is the

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end of our union, and consolation of a particular Church: because we cannot attaine to visible communion in the holy things of God immediately, but by our Communion with a particular Congregation, the communion must not be violated.

The second consideration, the ordinarie administration of the seales is limited to the Ministry, and the Ministry to a particular Church; therefore the seales also must necessarily be proper to the Church, and to the members thereof.

Thirdly, that the administration of the seales is limited to the Minister, is evident from the first Institution, where God hath joyned to preach, *viz.* by office, and to baptise together; therefore we may not separate them: for howsoever any one man may by the appointment of the Lord, and master of the family, signifie his mind, and deliver a message from him to the familie, yet the dispensing of a fit portion of food to every

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one of the household, is a branch of the Stewards office. Indeed the keys are given to the whole Church, yet the exercise and dispensation of them in this as well as in other particulars is committed to the Ministers, who are called to be stewards of the mysteries of God. *1. Cor. 4. 1.* And no Church office can be orderly performed by any but such as are called thereunto; nor will God vouchsafe his presence and blessing whereupon all spirituall efficacie depends, in an ordinance, but when it is dispensed by such whom he hath ordained and appointed thereunto.

Secondly, that the Minister is limited to the Church, appeareth from evident Texts of Scripture, *Act. 14, 23.* so also upon this ground, *1. Cor. 4. 17. 1. Pet. 5. 2. Act. 20. 28.* The office is founded in the relation betweene the Church and the officer: wherefore take away the relation, and the office (and so the work) ceaseth; for where he hath no power, there he may not do any act of power, and he hath no power where he hath no relation by office: herein the proportion holds betweene an Officer of a Towne Corporate, and of a Church, that as the power of the former is onely within his owne corporation; so the power of the latter is confined to his own congregation.

The third Consideration: Circumcision and the Passeover onely are to be administred to the members of the Church, therefore Baptisme, and the Lords Supper is to be administred also, &c. The consequence is made good by the puritie of these ordinances: for

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if the Argument hold strong for the prooffe of *Pædobaptisme*, which is taken from the circumcision of infants, why may we not as well infer a necessitie of Church membership to baptisme from the necessitie of it to circumcision? And that Circumcision was peculiar to the members of the Church, may appeare in that persons circumcised, and they onely mighe eat the Passeover, and they might enter into the Temple, which was the priviledge of Church members.

In our answer to the second Objection against the first Consideration, we have shewed you that Circumcision was not administred to all that were under the Covenant of grace, (which all beleevvers were) but onely to such of them as joynd themselves to the Church: As first in *Abrahams* family, whereunto Baptisme doth so farre answer, that the Apostle accounteth these expressions equivalent: *Col. 2. 12.* to be circumcised in Christ with circumcision made with hands, and to be buried with

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Christ in Baptisme, indeed in some things they differ: as onely the males were circumcised, whereas also with us females are baptised; the reason is, because God hath limited circumcision to the males, but under the Gospel that difference is taken away.

Againe, Circumcision was administred in the privatr familie, but Baptisme onely in the publick Assemblies of the Church. The Reason of this difference is, because they were bound to circumcise the males on the eighth day, but that would not stand with going to the Temple, which was too farre off for the people to bring their children from all the parts of *Judea* to be circumcised on the eighth day: not had they always opportunitie of a solemne Convention in their Synagogues on every eighth day when some child or other might be brought to be circumcised. But there is no precise day set down for Baptisme; nor are opportunities of publique Assemblies so remote when Churches are gathered in a congregational frame; but that every first day of the week Baptisme may be administred if it be required. Againe for the aforesaid Reason circumcision required not a particular Minister, for ought we find in the Scriptures, but it is not so in Baptisme, as hath been shewed in the second Consideration: But no good reason may be given why in this they should not both agree, (*viz.*) that they are both to be dispensed onely to members of the visible Church, it hath been proved in the first Consideration.

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4 *Consid.* They that are not capable of Church censures, are not capable of Church-priviledges; But they that are not within Church Covenant, are not capable of Church-censures; *Ergo.*

The Proposition is evident; the Assumption may be proved, 1 *Cor.* 5. 12. *What have I to doe to judge them that are without:* Now to be without is not onely the case of Heathens, and Excommunicants, but of some beleivers also: who though by internall union with Christ, they are within the Covenant of grace, yet being not externally joyned to the visible body of Christ, (a particular Church) are in regard of a visible Church-communication said to be without: to this purpose is that Text alledged by other Divines also, as Doctor *Ames.*

5. *Consid.* Wee may adde hereunto for a fift Consideration, the evill and pernicious consequences of extending Communion in Church-priviledges beyond the bond of Church-fellowship: for thus;

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First, the extraordinary office of Apostles, and the ordinary office of Pastours and Teachers, will be much confounded, if the latter be as illimited as the former in the execution of their office, beyond the bounds of their owne particular Churches.

Secondly, The second distinction of Church-Assemblies from the confused multitudes is abrogated; if without membership in a particular Church, the Parents may Communicate with the Church in the Lords Supper, and their seede in Baptisme.

Thirdly, The Church shall indanger the prophaning of the Seales, and want one speciall means whereby the grace and pietie of men may be discerned and made knowne, for if without respect to their Church-estate, men of approved pietie, as you say, are to be admitted to fellowship in the Seales; how shall their pietie be approved to the Church, not by their owne report of themselves alone, without the attestation of such as are approved by the Church? And how can such beare witnes to their approved pietie, who against light refuse to professe subjection to the Gospel of Christ, by orderly joyning themselves with fellowship to some approved Church of Christ, as members thereof, when they have opportunitie thereunto? Seeing such Church fellowship is an action of true pietie required of all beleivers in the second Commandement; and true pietie frameth mens spirits to have respect to all Gods Commandements; and we have had much experience of it; that men of approved pietie in the judgements of some, have

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been found too light, not onely in the judgement of others, but also in their owne consciences, when they have come to the tryall in offering themselves to be members of Churches: with such a blessing hath God followed this Ordinance of taking hold of Church-Covenant, by publique profession of faith and repentance, before men be admitted to the Seales: But this means of discovery of mens pietie and sinceritie, would be wholly left, if men should be admitted to the Lords Table, without entering into Church-fellowship.

6 *Consid.* None have power to dispence the Seales but those that are called to the office of the Ministry, and no man can be so called till first there be a Church to call him: Seeing the power or calling Ministers is given by Christ to the Church; and then it followes, that all those who desired to partake in the Seales, are bound to joyne themselves

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together in the Church state, that so they may call a Minister to dispence the Seales unto them. And seeing this dutie by the appointment of Gods Law, is not onely upon some Christians, but equally upon all, therefore no Christian can expect by the appointment of God, to partake in the Seales till he hath joyned himselfe in Church-fellowship, and in the call of the Ministry. And indeed seeing in a Church, a Minister called by the Church, is of such necessitie for dispensing of the Seales, it mat seeme unreasonable that Christians should be bound to become a Church, and to call a Minister, that so the Seales may be dispenced, and other men (when this is done) may not have equall libertie to the Seals, which refuse to joyne unto the Church. In consideration that our practise may not be censured, as novell and singular, give us leave to produce a president of the like case observed and approved by publique Countenance in the dayes of *Edward the Sixt* (of blessed and famous memory) who in the yeare 1550 granted *Johannes a Lasco*, a learned Nobleman of *Poland*, and under the Broad Scale of *England*, got libertie to gather a Church of strangers in *London*, and to order themselves according as they should finde to be accordmg to the Scriptures. Amongst other godly orders established in the Church that w<sup>th</sup> concerned the Admistration of Baptisme, to prevent the prophaning of it, (wee will report in *Alasco* his owne words) *Baptisme in Churches*, saith he, *is administred in the publique Assembly of the Church, after the publique Sermon; For seeing Baptisme doth so belong to the whole Church, that*

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*none ought to be driven backe which is a member of the Church, nor to be admitted to it which is not a member of it: truly it is equall that they should be performed publicquely in the Assembly of the whole Church, which belongeth to the whole Church in common. Again he addeth; Many seeing our Churches are (by Gods blessing) so established by the Kings Majestie, that they may be, as it were, a Parish of strangers, dispersed throughout the Citie, or a body Corporate (as it is called in the Kings Graunt) and yet all strangers doe not joyne themselves to our Churches; yea, there are those whilst they avoyd all Churches, will pretend to the English Church, that they are joyned with us and to us; Least the English Churches and the Ministers thereof should be deceived by the impostures of such men, and that under colour of our Churches, wee doe Baptize their Infants alone, who have joined themselves to our Churches by publique confession of their Faith, and observation of the Ecclesiasticall discipline.*

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*And that our Church may be certaine that the Infants that are to be Baptized, are their seede who have joined themselves in manner aforesaid, the Father of the Infant to be Baptized (if possible he can) or other men or women of notable credit in the Church, doe offer them to Baptisme, and doe publique professe, that it is the seede of the Church, and that wee suffer no strangers to offer Infants to Baptisme in our Churches, who hath not made publique profession of his Faith, and willingly submitted himselfe to the discipline of our Churches; least otherwise they who present the children to Baptisme, might in time plead that they belong to other Churches, and so should deceive the English Churches and their Ministers.*

To those that presented Infants to Baptisme, they propounded three questions; The first was, *Are these Infants which you offer the seed of our Church, that they may lawfully here be baptized by our Ministry.*

Answer, *Yea*; This instance is the more to be regarded, *because Alasco* affirmeth in the Preface to that booke, that this libertie was by the King graunted to them, out of his desire to settle a like reformation in the *English Churches*, which is in effect you see the same with our practise in this particular.

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**POSITION the V.**

*That the power of Excommunication, &c. is so in the Bodie of the Church, that what the major part shall allow, that must be done, though the Pastours and Governours, and part of their Assembly be of another minde, And peradventure upon more substantiall Reasons.*

**A***nsw.* IF the Question had been, whether the power of Excommunication lyes in the body of the Congregation, consisting of Officcrs and members? Our Answer should be Affirmative, and according hereunto also is our practise, and wee hope your judgements and ours are not different herein; But seeing the Question is, whether it is so in the Body of the Congregation, that what the *Major* part shall allow that must be done, though the Pastours and Governours, and part of the Assembly, doe dissent upon more substantiall Reasons.

Our Answer is Negative, *viz.* that the power of Excommunication is not sealed in the Congregation, neither ought it to be in any of the Churches of the Lord Jesus, who ought not to carry matters by number

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of votes against God, as this position implyeth, but by strength of rule and reason according to God. The power of the Apostles themselves was not to doe things against truth, but for the truth, *2 Cor.* 13. 8. and not for destruction, but for edification, *2 Cor.* 10. 8. And the same may be said concerning the power which God hath given to you, and if any Church amongst us have swarved from this Rule, which is more then we know, we doe not allow them in such a practice, but should be ready as the Lord should help to convince them of their sinne therein.

**POSITION the VI.**

*That none are to be admitted as set Members, but they must promise not to depart or remove, unlesse the Congregation will give leave.*

**O**Ur Answer hereunto is briefly this, Wee judge it were expedient, and most according to Rule, that such Brethren as are in Covenant with the Church, and ourselves as fellow-members,

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and have committed their soules to us as Ministers, should not forsake our fellowship, nor abruptly breake away from us, when, and whether they please: But first approve themselves therein to their brethrens consciences, and their counsell in so weightie a matter: For which wee propound to your consideration there two Reasons following.

1. *Reas.* The former is drawne from the nature of the Church-Covenant, and confession in these foure particulars.

First, Every member at his admission doth openly promise, and solemnly promise, that by Christs helpe assisting, he will not onely in generall give up himselfe as to the Lord, to be guided by him, so to the Church according to God, to be directed by them (which is no more then the members of the Church of *Macedonia* did, *2 Cor.* 8. 5. in a parallell case) but also in particulars, that he will performe all duties of Brotherly love and faithfulnessse to all the members of the Body, as of diligent watchfulnessse over all his bre thren, throughly to prevent sinne; so of faithfull admonition afrer their falls, to regaine them to the Lord from their sinne: therefore men are enjoyned hereunto, & that deeply condemned in *Cain* that he would not doe that dutie of being his Brothers keeper. *Levit.* 19. 17. and by Christ himselfe, *Mat.* 18. 15. and by *Paul* also, *Gal.* 6. 1.

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Secondly, Those ingagemems named, are not made onely by the members admitted to the Church, but by the Church backe againe to the members; So that thereby the whole Church in generall, and every Member in particular, stands as well in conscience bound to performe all duties at love and watchfulnesse to him, as he doth to them. And this wee doe according to the golden Rule of love and equitie enjoyed by our Saviour, *Mat. 7. 12.* fearing the contrary practise of Scribes and Pharisees, so much condemned by Christ, of laying greater burdens on others then we our selves are willing to undergoe, *Mat. 23. 4.*

Thirdly, These promises they are lawfully and mutually made, that members (as also the whole Church) are bound not onely every one for himselfe actually to performe them, but passively also to suffer his Brethren to doe these offices upon and towards himselfe; if he neglect his former, he shall satisfie his Covenant, before God, Angells, and men made, and so not onely breake promise to his Brethren, contrary to *Psal. 15. 4.* but also also some sort commit

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the sinne of *Ananias* and *Saphira*, in lying to the holy Ghost condemned and punished secretly by Gods own hand, *Act. 5. 3. 10.* If he failes in the latter, he shall not onely be guiltie of the same sinne of the breach of Covenant with God and man, as in the former, but shall adde unto it this folly of despising counsell so much commended, *Prov. 12. 15. 1. 7.* And shall also proclaime this his folly and pride, by shewing to all the Church that he is wise in his own eyes, and leane unto his own wisdom, both reprov'd, *Prov. 3. 7. 13. 4.* Seeing need of no further light to be held forth by his brethren, then what he apprehends himself, which is one of the greatest properties of folly itself.

From all these things premised, it appeares we can do no lesse (and yet we do no more) then require a Member before he depart according to our Covenant, thus lawfully, deliberately, and mutually made, to expresse to his Brethren his desire of departing; and the place and societie to which he tends, whether to a godly Church where he may be further edified, or to some corrupt Assembly where he may be destroyed. And secondly, his groundsand Reasons which move him to to do, which if they hold good, being scanned by the Word, he may not onely be confirmed in his way by the consent and advice of many, out counselled also how to manage his departure for his best comfort: and so after all

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solemnitie with the whole Churches prayers, and blessing, in the name of Christ dismissed. But if his grounds be either none at all, or weake, or sinfull, and that his desire of departing savours of self-will, inordinate love of gaine, rash precipitancie, or a spirit of Schisme, more strongly then of sound Reason: Then what can we, what dare we, do lesse without breach of Covenant, then in love and tendernesse, shew him his weaknesse, dissuade him from his purpose, and refuse to consent? Yet if after all this, we see his spirit stedfastly and stiffely bent for a departure, then, though we dare not act against our light by consenting or counselling, yet if his sinne be apparent, and danger eminent, we use rather through Indulgence (in cases or like nature) to suspend our Vote against him, as not willing against his wish to detain him, abhorring to make our Churches places of Restraint and Imprisonment.

*Object.* But if any man should object, that this Argument holds firme, where this our Church-Covenant is allowed to be lawfull, but with some it is questioned.

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*Answer.* Some indeed have questioned the necessitie of the Church Covenant, but we hope our Reverend Brethren that we write unto do not question the lawfulness of such a Covenant, being nothing else for the matter of it, but a promise of doing such Christian duties, as the Gospel of Christ requires of all Saints in Church state: For as we do not hereby promise to performe any new duty to our Brethren which was not before commanded us of the Lord, but onely review and renew our purpose afresh, performing such duties to that particular Body into which we are there to be incorporated, as were before injoyed in the Word; as to love each other, and to watch over each other (out of love) for their good, to be readie to give counsell to, and take counsell from each other, to prevent sinne in them, or gaine them from sin, all which are plentifully and frequently held forth in the Scriptures: for the defect of which care and watchfulness, all the Body shall be wrapped in the same guilt and punishment with the members that commie the sinne, as the whole Church of Israel was in *Achans* sin and punishment.

Secondly, Its a thing very seasonable, and a knowne fundamentall rule in all Societies, that he that is incorporate thereunto, and so participates of the priviledges thereof, should ingage himselfe to conforme to all such lawfull lights and orders as are expedient for the well being of the

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Society, the contrary whereunto will be a thing injurious to him to offer, and confusion to themselves to accept.

2. *Ground.* A second Ground, is drawne from the necessarie Ruine that may fall upon the Body, if every particular member should depart at his own pleasure; for as every Societie, so much more a Church of Saints, both from principles of Nature, and Christianity also, not onely lawfully may, but in duty are bound, to indeavour the preservation of it self: And therefore timely to foresee, and wisely to prevent all such things, as would bring destruction to it self. Now if any member might when and wherefore he please, without consent of the Church depart away from it, this may by unavoidable consequence destroy the whole: For if one man may so depart, why may not another also, though never so usefull in that Body, whose absence might much change the well being of it and if one, why nor 2. 6. 10. 12. As well as one? for where will you stop, seeing all may plead the same libertie? and if members

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may so do, why may not the Pastor and Teacher also, seeing they are tyed to him by the same relation that he is to them? And so the principal falling, the whole building must fall down. And if that may be so in one Church, why not in all? and so Christ should have no certain settled Church on earth.

**POSITION the VII.**

*That a Minister is so a Minister to a particular Congregation, that if they dislike him unjustly or leave him, he ceaseth to be a Minister.*

**O**Vr Answer to this consists in two branches.

First, in case a Minister be set aside by the Church, meerly through his own default. Secondly, by the Churches fault, with out any defect of his. In the former cafe, it is evident he ceaseth to be a Minister to them any longer, as appears in foure conclusions.

First, It is cleare from the Word, that a Pastor, or a Teacher in these dayes hath no Apostolicall power over all Churches, but onely limited to that one Church where God hath set him. *Paul* gives the Elders at *Ephesus* not a generall commission to go to teach all Churches, but to feed one flock, in which the holy Ghost hath made them Over-seers. *Act.* 20. 28. So *Peter* gives direction to Elders, to feed that flock of God

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onely which was amongst them, and to take the over-sight thereof.

1. *Pet.* 5. 2.

Secondly, It is as cleare, that all this power of feeding which the Minister hath in that church, is nextly derived to him from Christ, by the Church who hath solemnly called him to the worke, and promised to obey him therein; for if he hath it elsewhere, it must be either from Christ himself immediatly, or from some others deputed by Christ to conferre it on him; or he must take it up himselfe. Not the first, for that was proper to the Apostles, or Apostolicall men: therefore *Paul* proving his Apostleship, saith, he *was called not of men, nor by men, but by Jesus Christ himselfe*, Gal. 1. 1. Not the second, for we never read in Gods Word of any ordinarie Officers, or others besides the Church, that had any Commission given them from Christ to call Ministers unto Churches;

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Not the third, for no man taketh this honour, (*viz.*) of a Priest, but he that is called of God, *Heb.* 5. 4. Therefore it must needs be from Christ by the Church.

Thirdly, as that Church in the name of Christ gave this power to a Minister, to be what he is, and to do what he doth amongst them; when such a Minister shall make and manifest himselfe apparently unworthy and unfit to discharge the place which they thus called him unto; so that they may discern that Christ the head of the Church hath refused him, from being a Minister unto him; they may then upon as good grounds depose him from it, as they called him to it.

Fourthly, when a Church hath thus in Christs name put forth this power, of shutting, as before they did of opening to a Minister, then he must cease to be a Minister to them any more: For we have no such indeliable character imprinted upon a Minister, that he must needs be so for ever, because he once was so: his ministry ceasing, the Minister ceaseth also.

But secondly, In case the Church shall without cause, or a sufficient weightie cause, rashly or wilfully see him aside, whom Christ hath set over them; and whom they so solemnly called, and promised before the Lord to submit unto; and so abuse their power given them by Christ: It is doubtlesse a very great wrong unto the Minister, and sinne against Christ himself before whom it was done; and not onely Christ himselfe will take it ill at their hands, for such contempt done to him in his

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Ministers (according to Christs speech, *Luk. 10. 16. He that rejecteth you, rejecteth me:* and Gods speech, *1. Sam. 8. 7. They have not cast off thee, but cast off me.*) But even other Churches also may admonish them for it; and if they prove obstinate therein, withdraw the right hand of fellowship from them. And concerning the Minister himself thus deposed, seeing it is done not by Christ, but by the Church without Christ, yea against the mind of Christ, we conceive though he be by them deprived of the execution of his Ministry amongst them, yet untill he accepts of a call to another people, he still remains a Minister of Christ, in whose account (notwithstanding such a deposition) he hath true right of Administration amongst the people.

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**POSITION the VIII.**

*That a Minister cannot perform any ministeriall Act in another Congregation.*

**A***nsw.* IF you take (ministeriall act) improperly, as sometimes it is taken by some, onely when the Minister of one Church doth exercise his gifts of praying, and preaching in another Church, being by themselves so desired: Then we answer in this sence, a Minister of one Church may do a ministeriall act in another, which he doth not perform by vertue of any office, but onely by his gift. And thus upon any occasion we mutually performe these act's, one in anothers Churches. But if you meane (by ministeriall act) such an act of authoritie, and power in dispensing of Gods ordinance, as a Minister doth perform it to the Church, whereunto he is called to be a Minister; then we deny that he can so perform any ministeriall act, to any other Church but his own; because his office extends no further then his call. For that solemn charge in Act. 20. 28. is not to feed all flocks, but that flock onely over which the holy Ghost hath made them over-seers: If that Question were propounded to any Minister, so exercising in another Church, which was once to our Saviour by the chief Priests and Elders [*By what power doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authoritie?*] let that Minister, whosoever he be, study how to make an answer.

**POSITION the IX.**

*That Members in one Congregation may not communicate in another.*

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*A*<sup>nsw.</sup> This Question (as the other) needs no long Answer, being altogether through misreport mistaken; for members of other Churches well known and approved, by vertue of communion of Churches, do mutually, and without exceptions communicate each of them at others Churches: even so often as Gods providence leads them thereunto, and themselves desire it.

**FINIS.**