John Christie
his Book London
May 25, 1769

William Christie purchased
this Book from John Christie
Callon June 30th 1775.

William Christie having died
January 5th 1812 this Book
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608 #1506
CHRIST ON HIS THRONE.

OR,

Christ's Church-government briefly laid downe; and how it ought to bee set up in all Christian Congregations.

Resolved in sundry Cases of Conscience.

I E R. 6.16.

Thus saith the Lord; Stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall finde rest for your soules.

L V K E 19.27.

But those mine Enemies, which would not that I should reignue over them, brung them hire and slay them before me.

Printed in the yeare 1640.
REFORMATION
of Church-Government in
SCOTLAND,
Cleared from some mistakes
and Prejudices,
BY
The COMMISSIONERS
of the Generall Assembly of the Church of
Scotland, now at LONDON.

Printed for Robert Bostock, dwelling in Pauls Church
Yard, at the signe of the Kings Head. 1644.
INTRODUCTION

of Civilized Government in Scotland

Clerical Forms, Laws, &c.

and Practices

by

The Commissioners

for the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

[Title page with a decorative emblem]
Reformation of Church-Government in Scotland, cleared from some mistakes and prejudices.

While we, the meanest of many our Brethren, for a time separated from our particular callings and stations, and sent forth into this Kingdome for a more publike imployment, are in all humility and patience waiting, what the Lord who is about some great worke in his Church, (for which are raised so great Commotions in these and other Kingdomes of the earth) will be pleased to do for Reformation of Religion; the great worke of the honourable houses of Parliament, and the Reverend assembly of Divines, and for Uniformity in Religion, so much desired by all the godly in the three Kingdomes: Unto which an entrance is made by a solene League and Covenant. We find our selves bound against the prejudices and mistakings of some, who in the darke are afraid of that which they know not, and suffer their affections of love and hatred to run before their understanding, and against the mis-representations and indirect advers-
ons of others, who do so commend their owne way, that the reformed Churches thereby suffer disparagement; To give that testimony unto the order and government of the reformed Churches, and particularly of the Church of Scotland, which they doe well deserve, and to honour them whom the Lord hath so highly honoured, in advancing the Kingdom of his Sonne, in the converting and saving of so many soules, and in opposing and suppressing a world of corruptions, heresies and Scissmies, by his wonderful blessing upon their order and Government.

In this our humble testimony and true relation, unto which we are at this time thus necessitiate, we shall endeavour nothing but a simple and innocent manifestation and defence, without desire or intention to give the smallest offence to any who fear God, love the truth, and desire to walke in truth and in love with their Brethren. This our profession, we are confident will find credit with all that know us, and have observed our wayes since our comming into this Kingdome, which have been and, (so farre as the truth will suffer us) ever shall be, to unite and not to divide, to compose rather then to create differences; which we conceive also to be one principall end, of the calling of the Assembly of Divines, and which all the members of the Assembly, against all particular interests, are after a speciall manner ingaged, to aime at and endeavour. The
The order and Government of the reformed Churches in the beauty and strength thereof, as it is not hid in a corner, wrapped up in a Mystery, or covered under a cloud of darkness; but is knowne to the Nations and Kingdomes of the earth, openly professed and practised in the eyes of the world, and clearly seen as a City that is set on a hill, in the light of the Sunne at noon day: So is it commended and already confirmed by a long tract of time, and the experience of many yeares, and hath beene counternanced from Heaven and blessed from above, with the preservation of the truth and unity of Religion against Heresies and errours in Doctrine, Idolatry and corruptions in worship, and all sorts of sects and lchismes, wherewith it hath been continually assaulted: How goodly are thy Tents O Jacob, and thy Tabernacles O Israel, &c. It hath made the Church of Christ terrible as an Army with banners, and like a strong and fenced City, against which the Adversaries have despaied to prevaille, but by making a breach in this wall, and where they have gained ground or gotten any advantage, either the wall hath not beene built, or being built hath been broken downe, or not vigilantly keeped by the Watchmen.

The Instruments which the Lord used in the blessed work of Reformation of the Church of Scotland (we speak not of the reformers of other Churches)
ches) were not onely learned and holy men, but had somewhat in their calling, gifts and zeale to the glory of God, more then ordinary: Their Adversaries were not able to resist the wiudome and Spirit by which they spoke, some of them had a propheticall Spirit manifested in divers particular and wonderfull predictions, and some of them were honoured to be Martyrs, & sealed the truth with their blood. So that in them, in the people of God converted by them, and in the Reformation brought about by the blessing of God upon their labors, against all the Learning, pride, Policy, and abused power of the time, there was to be seen a representation of the Primitive and Apostrolicke times, and a new resurrection from the dead. After them also did the Lord raise up in the Church of Scotland many burning and shining lights, men of the same spirit, mighty in converting of soules, walking in the same way, and who communicated their Counsels & kepted correspondence with Divines of other nations, and with the greatest and purest lights in the Church of England, in the point of Reformation and settling of Church-government, which at that time was the common study and endeavour of both, and wherein they and their Successors continued, till the times of defection, which made an unhappy interruption of the worke. What men are like to doe in after-times we cannot foresee; but we have not seene or heard
heard of any to this day, farther from partiality and prejudice in the matters of God, then their wayes witnesse them to have beene; and were they now living we beleevve there would be none in the reformed Churches, so far swayed with partiality or prejudice, that would deny them this testimony.

They had no other rule and patterne of Reformation, but the word of God, and the practice of the Apostolick Churches in the Word. All the books of God are perfect, the book of life, the book of nature, the book of providence, and especially the booke of Scripture, which was dyted by the Holy Ghost to be a perfect directory to all the Churches, unto the second comming of Jesus Christ; but so that it presupposeth the light and law of nature, or the rules of common prudence, to be our guide in circumstances or things local, temporall and personal, which being Ecclesiastico Politica, are common to the Church with civill societies, and concerning which, the word giveth general rules to be universally and constantly observed by all persons, in all times and places: Of things of this kind a godly and wise Divine giveth two rules: One is, that the Phisitian cannot by sending his letter to the Patient appoint the dyet and bath, the pulse must be toucht, and as it is in the proverbiall speech, gladiatorem, oportet in arena capere consilium. The other is, that in things of this kind, when the change is not to the better
better, it is both without and against reason to make a change; without reason, because when the change is made unto that which is but as good, the one and the other in reason are equal: Against reason, because the change it selfe in such a case, is an hinderance to Edification, favourer of the love of Innovation, and derogateth to the authority which maketh the Constitution.

What they had once received, not upon probable grounds in way of conjecture, but upon the warrant of the word, and by the teaching of the spirit with certainty of faith, that they resolved to hold fast and did hate every false way contray unto it. They did not in the matters of Religion rest upon a Scepticall or Pyrrhonian uncertainty (the charge of the Orthodox Divines against the tenets of Arminians and Socinians) which keepeth the minde uncertaine and unstable, is a fountaine of perpetuall alterations in the Church of God, an open door to all heresies and schisms to enter by, and a ground of despairing to bring questions and controversies to a finall issue and determination. And for us, as upon the one part, wee not only conceive that no man attaineth so full assurance of faith in any matter of religion, but hee may receive encrease of his faith, & therfore should always have his mind open & ready to receive more light from the word and Spirit of God: but also do ingenuously acknowledge
ledge (as wee have formerly professed) that we are most willing to heare and learne from the word of God, what needeth further to bee reformed in the Church of Scotland: Yet God forbid, that we should never come to any certainty of perswasion, or that we should ever be learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth; we ought to be resolute and unmoveable in so far as we have attained; & this we take to be the ground, as of other practices, so also of Covenants and oaths, both assertory and promissory, in matters of Religion.

As they held it not sufficient, to receive or retain some such practices, as other reformed Churches judged warrantable; for thus they should have rested upon some few principles & beginnings of reformation, & might have differed as much in other things from the reformed Churches, as they agreed in some things with the, so can it not be satisfactory, that any Church should only practise some things, universally received in the reformed Churches. (1) All Christian Churches although very different in ordinances and practices, yet do agree in some things, (2) If our desire of Uniformity with other reformed Churches, and the reverend esteeme wee have of them, draw us to conforme to them in some things; upon the same reason we ought to joyne in all things wherein they do all agree amongst themselves, (3) Differences about Negatives and the denying of profession and
practise in other matters wherein they are all unanimous and uniforme, may prove no lesse dangerous and destructive, then differences about affirmatives. The Arrians, Socinians, and many others do err dangerously in denying some positive points, and received principles of the doctrine of the reformed Churches concerning the person of Christ and his offices. The Antinomians also (if we should mention them) do also agree with us in the principles of Grace, but in their superstructures and conclusions, runne in a way destructive to the doctrine & deductions of the Apostolick and reformed Churches, and to the principles received by themselves (4). Such Churches, as make profession of differences only in negatives, or in denying some practises received in the reformed Churches, have received and do hold some positive practises of their owne, which the reformed Churches do not allow, and which to them are negative. Of this (would we suffer our selves to descend into particulars) we might give divers known instances; now if they do not allow of the reformed Churches, in so far as they do not admit of these their positive practises, how shall they thinke that the reformed Churches can allow them in the like: for the rule is, wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thy selfe; for thou that judgest dost the same things.

They did honour Luther, Calvin, and many others whether their Predecessors or contemporaries, who

They are not to be called Calvinians.
had heart or hand especially in an eminent degree, in the blessed worke of reformation: for their direction they made use of the light which such notable servants of Jesus Christ, did hold forth, in doctrine & discipline, and in all thankfulnes they did desire and wish, that their names might be had in eternall remembrance: Nor was it possible that so great an alteration as the corrupt state of the Church required could be effected, and not carry some remembrance of the instruments: but for this to call us Calvinians & the reformed Churches, Calvinian reformed Churches, is to disgrace the true Churches of Christ, & to simbolize with the Papists, who call themselves the Catholike Church, & hold the rule delivered by Hierome against the Luciferians: if any where we finde men professing Christi-
anity, called by the particular names of men, know them to bee the Synagogue of Antichrist, and not the Church of Christ. The separation may bee well allowed to bee called Brownists, and others from the matter wherein they erre, and part from all, not onely the reformed, but Christian Churches, as the Monothelites of old, & the Anabaptists now, may bear their own names. They who apprehend any danger in names (as there is a great deale of danger in them) ought not to appropriate unto their own opinion, that which is common to all the reformed Churches, nor to joyne with Papists in giving names of Sects unto the reformed Churches; & they who conceive no evil in so doing, ought not to offend, that names are given unto them, especially
since their differences from the reformed Churches must be designed under some name and notion, and in this case charity commands the mildest names, such as hint most clearly at the difference and are farthest from reproach, to be attributed unto them, as most discriminative and tolerable.

Nothing was farther from their thoughts & intentions, then to frame in their own forge a Lesbian rule answerable to any particular form of civil polity or compliable with state ends. That they looked with singleness of mind to the rule of Scripture, we give these three evidences. (1) The great pains they took in searching the will of God, & after they had found it, their grievous sufferings from the civil authority in defence thereof, of both which afterward in the own place. (2) The restles objection & continuall opposition of politic men & Court Sycophants against presbyterial government, as incapable with Monarchy & their manners. (3) And the necessary assertion of the true policy of the Church by Divines in both kingdoms (between whom there was no notable difference) demonstrating that it was in it self unalterable, because divine, and yet compliable with every lawful kind of humane policy and civil government, and able to keep a whole Kingdom or state in a right & sure way of Religion. Our chiefest reformers, had indeed their education in other Churches, which was the goodness of God to them and us: there did they see examples of reformation, & conversed with other
reformers, by whom they were taught from the word in the ways of God, & thence did they bring (as the Romans their laws of old from Greece and other Nations) models of Church-government, that comparing one with another, they might fix upon that which was builded upon the foundation of the Apostles: Like as we accompt it no small happiness that we have been educated in the Church of Scotland, and are acquainted with the practice of Church-government there, which giveth us much light and confidence against such scruples and doubtings as are powerfull enough to suspend the assent of others, who by reason of their education in other Churches, are strangers unto it. Nor do we know a reason why education in sound doctrine & true worship, should be accompted a matter of thanksgiving to God, and yet should glory in this, that we are not by education engaged in any one form of discipline and Church-government, but left to our selves to be moulded by our own private thoughts.

They intended & designed from the beginning, the government of the Church by Assemblies and Presbyteries, although they could not attain that perfection at first in the infancy of reformation, but gave place to necessity, which in such cases is universal, & in this they followed the example and practice of the Churches planted by the Apostles, which if not at first, yet afterward were of greater number in one City, then did or could ordinarily assemble in one place for the worship of God, & thence had a plurality of Pastors.
and Officers, which made up a common Presbytery for governing the whole. They set up such officers in the Church, as were both necessary and sufficient for the Church: Pastors, Teachers, ruling Elders, and Deacons. They did not permit such as are called Lay-men and intended to continue such, to preach or prophesy in the Congregation, nor did they admit of any other ruling Elders, but such as are solemnly elected & ordained, although they do maintain themselves upon their own means, and attend their own particular callings, which is not incompatible with their office, especially they being appointed in a number competent and proportionable to the number of the people and quantity of the Congregation; And their Ecclesiastical charge, not being pastorall, nor requiring any great meditation or study apart, but such as they may easily attend without neglect of their owne particular affaires.

What shall be rendred unto the Magistrate by others whose particular tenets are not yet knowne either to the Church or the Magistrate, unless it be in a hid and secret way, unto which we are not privy, we cannot determine: but the doctrine of the reformed Churches concerning the honour & obedience due to the Magistrate is openly known by their confessions of faith and long continued practices, and this much we know that the principles both of civil & Church-government, are laid out in Scripture, & therfore the one cannot be contrary to the other, or they inconsistent be-
between themselves. Nor do we measure the power of the Magistrate by the principles of Presbyterian government, but both of the by the word, & therefore deny not unto the Magistrate what God giveth them; and more then this, dare we not profess for any respect to our selves, or to the forme of Ecclesiastical government professed by us; how much, and for what ends, the Pagans and Infidels of old, the Papists, Prelats, & Arminians of late, have laboured to make the way of Christ hateful to Princes and Magistrates, is too well known and hath bin bitterly felt, yet God hath cursed this policy in the end. There may be good reason to express our judgement of this or other points of duty from Scripture: but to avouch when we are not challenged, and that only in the generall by way of comparison, that we ascribe more to the Magistrate, then the reformed Churches do, they being faithfull to their own principles of Ecclesiastical government, may suffer a harder construction, then we our selves would willingly undergoe, or put upon the intentions of men who seek not their owne things, but the things of Jesus Christ.

As the blessed instruments of reformation proceeded by no other rule but the word of God: so did they with great judgment, and learning, which they had in a measure above others, examine and frame all things diligently and exactly according to the rule; & although the reformers in England were either altogether, or for the greater part taken up with the Do
Church of Scotland: it was otherwise: after the doctrine was established, which was speedily done, they were exercised in conferences & assemblies, with debating the matters of discipline and government above the space of 20. years, which endured much opposition from authority, from worldly men, and from the adversaries of the truth, both Prelatical on the one hand, and upon the other hand Separatists, of which sort some came into Scotland from England, which was unto them a whetstone to quicken them, and to make them the more circumspect and exact in their way, which lay in the middle between Episcopacy upon the one hand, & popular confusion on the other. It pleased the Lord whose presence and blessing they sought after in these days with frequent prayer and humiliation both in private and in the publick nationall Assemblies, so to assist and lead them in all truth; that the Church of Scotland was honoured from abroad, both from England & other Nations, with the testimony of such a Reformation, as other Churches accounted to be the greatest happiness upon earth, & when they were wishing after a Reformation, they made it the measure of their wishes. We would willingly shun comparisons, were we not brought upon this strain: We do upon very good reason judge the Church of England in the midst of her Ceremonies, to have been a true Church, & the ministry therof, notwithstanding the many blemishes & corruptions cleaving unto it, to have bin a true ministry, and shall ne-
ver deny unto them that praise, whether in debating
controversies with Papists, or in practical Divinity
for private Christians, which they do most justly de-
serve. Upon the other part, we are neither so ignorant
nor so arrogant, as to ascribe to the Church of Scot-
land such absolute purity and perfection, as hath not
need or cannot admit of further Reformation. Yet that
there is a wide difference betwixt the one & the other
acknowledged also in the common Covenant; We bring
two famous witnesses from the Church of England to
prove: The one is Brightman; Loath would I be (saith
he, speaking of the Church of Scotland) to provoke any
man to envy, or to grieve him with my words: Yet this I
must say, there is no place where the Doctrine soundeth
more purely, the worship of God is exercised more uncor-
ruptly; where more faithful diligence of the Pastor doth
flourish; or more free or willing obedience is given by the
people, nor yet where there is greater reverencing of the
whole Religion amongst all orders. And afterwards, Nei-
ther doth it onely keep the Doctrine of salvation free from
corruption, but it doth also both deliver in writing & ex-
cercise in practice that sincere manner of government wher-
by men are made partakers of salvation, Revel. of the A-
pocal. cap. 37. The other is Cartwright, yea, the Scottish
Nation, which were some yeers behind us in the profession
of the Gospell, the first day almost that they received the
truth, did by many degrees in the way of purity outstrip
us. These 2 witnesses, unto which we might add many
other from the reformed Churches in other Nations.
beare testimony that there is no such thing in the
Church of Scotland, as might prove her to be no Church
or bar Communion in worship with her as the Liturgy,
Ceremonies and Prelacy in the Church of England, or
that the corruptions of the one & the other are of the
same kind, equally destructive of the essence of a Church
and equally impeditive of Communion and worship.
All visible Churches, which have bin, or shall be at any
time on earth, consist of persons, good and bad, sheep
& Goats, wheat and tares, such as walk Christianly &
such as walk inordinately: Which therefore must also be
the condition of the Church of Scotland; yet the order
of the Church, admitteth not either ignorant or open-
ly prophane & scandalous persons, to the participati-
on of the Lords Supper: If any Pastor & particular El-
dership be negligent in their duty, it is their fault, who
are to beare their own guiltiness, & ought not to be
imputed to the order of the Church, which standeth in
force against it. We maybe very confident, that the godly
people, who did transplant themselves out of this Island,
(the same of whose piety & zeal shall never suffer de-
truction or the smallest diminution from our thoughts or
words) might have lived in the Church of Scotland in-
joying the pure Ordinances of God, with peace in their
consciences and comfort to their souls, & would have
willingly come into Scotland, when they went into
New-England, could they have bin free of the usurpation & ty-
ranny of Prelates & the Prelaticall Party, which at that time did
reigne and rage in that Kingdom vexing the godly ministry and
people there, with many and bitter sufferings.
The two extremes of the true forme of Church-Government which standeth in the middle way betwixt Popish and prelaticall tyrannie, and Brownisticall and popular Anarchie, were contrary one to another, and have their own degrees of tyrannie or Anarchie in themselves, which is the cause of their subdivisions, factions, and differences amongst themselves: but both sides agree, and strongly joyne in opposing the true Government, which standing constantly, and without variation betweene the one, and the other is contrary to both. This is the true cause (nor could it bee otherwise) that on what hand the invasion was hottest, there the defence was strongest. Against Prelacie which had many friends, and therefore made many enemies to Presbyteries, the Presbyteriall power and pens were long pleading: No sooner is the Prelaticall party by the power and blessing of God begun to be subdued in this Island: but ariseth unexpectedly, the opposition on the other hand, waiting the opportunitie, stronger then it was before, which moved some of our Divines of late, to write on this hand in defence of the government of the reformed Churches, as others had done before them in other Churches: In France Beza, and against Morellius Sadeel. Two Nationall Synods also of the reformed Churches in France, the one at Orleans in the yeare 1561. Another at Rothel 1571. And in all the reformed Churches, governed by Presbyteries, and
Assemblies, the positive grounds of the Government, are laid open, which worke equally against Adversaries on both sides, and have beene applied against them pro re nata as they did arise or shew themselves. If so much have not beene written upon one hand, as the other in a polemicall and Analytick way, let it be attributed unto the adversary, which was but obscure and weake, and from whom small danger was apprehended: it being laid for a common ground by them all, that where a whole Nation is converted to the Christian faith, every particular Church is not to be left to itselfe, as if it were alone in a Nation, but that Christ had provided a way, and there is a necessitie of a common Nationall Government, to preserve all the Churches, in Unitie and Peace.

It is the Will of God, and hath beene alwayes the constant course of Divine providence, that when his servants have beene diligent in searching the truth, and zealous by professing, and preaching to hold it forth unto others, that they confirme and seale the truth, which they have beleevd and professed with their confession, and suffering. The Church of Scotland, had many Confessors: diverse Pastors brought before the Lords of Councell, the High Commission, Diocesan Synods, were removed from their places, deprived of all the means of their livelihood; some confined, others imprisoned, a third sort
brought into England, whence some of them never suffered to returne, all of them for the Government of the Church. Others for the same cause were proceeded against by the criminal Judge, condemned of Treason, sentenced to death, and after long imprisonment, before and after the sentence, could find no other mercy, but perpetuall banishment, wherein the greater part of them ended their dayes, without any Congregation, or company of their owne Nation, rich or poore to comfort them. So many of these witnesses, as were suffered to live in their owne Land, did not undergo any voluntary exile: but in much poverty and affliction, went up and downe, teaching and confirming the good people, and waiting for a spring-time, wherein the face of God might againe shine upon His Church and (to use their owne expression) some buds might arise out of the slump of Church government left in the earth. Had they at that time abandoned the poore oppressed Church, when they were put from their places, and deprived of their liberty, and had carried away with them, such of the people, as were of their minde, they had (if we would judge according to ordinary providence, and the course of second causes) opposed the poore desolated Church for a prey to Episcopall oppression, and made the case of Religion in that Kingdome desperate: Or if they should have returned upon a revolution of extraordinary
After, they would have preferred the sufferings of their Brethren left behind them in the midst of the fierce trial, unto their own exile, and would have been loath to have impeded, or retarded the late Reformation, with anything they had brought with them from abroad: so many as returned from constrained banishment, having in all unities of mind, and heart joined in the works of Reformation.

The Church of Scotland, as all other reformed Churches hath used the power of the Keyes, and Church-censures of all sorts, especially the gravest of excommunication, with such sharpness and severity, and yet with such caution, and moderation, as it hath beene very powerfull and effectuall to preserve the Name of God, from being blasphemed, the Church and people of God from contagion, and the Delinquents brought under censure, from destruction, which are the ends proposed by them in executing the censures of the Church, and where such scandalis arise, whether in matter of opinion or practice, as are apt to make the Name of God to be blasphemed, are dangerous for the Church, and wait the Consciencs of the sinners themselves, being accompanied with obstinacie, and contempt of Ecclesiastical Authority, they doe apply this last remedy, according to the order prescribed by Christ, against scandalous transgressors. To limit the censure of excommunication, in matter of opinion to the com-
Two main objections are made against the principles and practice of the order & government of the reformed Churches, for which the Church and Kingdom of Scotland, have done and suffered so much of old and of late. One is, that there is no need of the Authoritative power of Presbyteries and Synods, and that the exhortation of particular Churches one to another, the Protestation of one against another, and the withdrawing of communion, one from another, may be a sufficient remedy, and no less effectual against all offences, then excommunication itself: especially if the Magistrate shall vouchsafe his assistance and interpose his authority, for strengthening the sentence of Non-communion?

To this we answer.

1. That this Objection supposes the case, which

mon and uncontroverted principles, and in the manner to the common, and universal principles of Christianitie, and in both to the parties known light, is the dangerous doctrine of the Arminians, and Socinians, openeth a wide door, and proclaimeth liberty to all other practices and errors, which are not fundamentally, and universally abhorred by all Christians, and tendeth to the overthrow of the Reformed Religion: which we wish all sound and sober spirits to abstaine from, lest it render them and their profession, suspected of some such opinions, and practices, as in charitie we judge to be farre from their minds and wayes.
After it not been found in the Church of Scotland, for
the space of above four score years, and which we
beleeve was never heard of in any of the reformed
Churches, except those of the separation: the pro-
nouncing of non-communion or Excommunication against a whole Church. Our excommunica-
tion hath been executed, and but seldome against par-
ticular members, never against a whole Church, and
we thinke never shall be, and therefore this imagi-
narie feare of that which never falleth forth, is not
considerable: Rules are made for ordinary and usu-
all cases.

2. What shall be the remedy, where the censure
is mutuall, and two or more Churches mutually pro-
test, and pronounce the sentence of non-Communi-
on one against other: Unlesse there bee a common
Presbyterie, or Synod made up of the whole, which
may decide the controversy, and give order unto the
severall Churches. This non-communion may
prove a meane of division, rather than union.

3. In this Exhortation, Proteftation, and non-
Communion, there is no more to be found, then one
particular member may doe against another, which
yet is acknowledged to be unsufficient for removing
of offences, Unlesse the Authoritie of the Church, of
which both of them be members, shall interveine: Were it in the power of particular members to sub-
mit, or not submit, as they please, there would be as
great difference and division amongst members, now there is amongst Churches.

4. What shall be done if the Magistrate be negligent or care for none of those things? or if his authority cannot be obtained? or if he be of another Religion, and foment the difference for his own politicke ends? hath not the wisedome of the Sonne of God provided remedies in the Church for all the internall necessities of the Church, and constitute it a perfect body within it selfe.

5. By what probabilitie can it be made to appeare to any Rationall man and indifferent minde, that no authority shall be as valide as authority against the obstinate, that via admonitionis, & requisitionis, is equall with via citationis, & publica authoritatis: There cannot be so much as triall and examination of the offence without authoritie, vnlesse the partie be willing to appeare: that perswasion, and Jurisdiction, that the delivering over to Satan, and thereby striking the conscience with the terour of God, by the authoritie of Jesus Christ which hath the promise of a speciall and strong ratification in heaven, and any other Ecclesiasticall way whatsoever, which must be inferiour to this, and depend only upon perswasion on the one part, and free will on the other, can be supposed to be a like efficacious. No man will say, but in civill matters, it is one thing to have adoe with our neighbour, who hath no more autho-
Affery over us, then we have over him; and another
ning to have to doe with civill power which hath
authority over both.

The other Objection is: That by this authoritie
and order of Government, one Church hath power
over another, which is contrarie to that libertie and
equalitie Christ, hath endewed his Churches with,
and is no other but a new Prelaticall dominion set
over the Churches of Christ? To this we answer.

1. That wee are very farre from imposing or ac-
knowledging any such collateral power of one par-
ticular Church over another; Nay not of the greatest
in all respects whatsoever over the smalllest: for God
hath made them equall one to another. The power
which we maintaine, is aggregative of the Officers
of many congregations over the particular members
of their Corporation: even as a member of the Na-
turall body, is not subject to another; but each one of
them to the whole Man consisting of them all: And
as one Member of Parliament, one Counsellor, or to
goe lower, one member of a Company, is not subject
to another; but every one to the whole Colledge: The
same may be said of townes and cities; so is it with
particular congregations combined in one Presbyte-
rie. All the Reformed Churches acknowledge the
Independencie of one particular Church upon an-
other.

2. It is as miserable a mistake to compare Pres-
byteries
byteries and Prelates together: for the courts of Prelates are altogether forraigne and extrinsecall to the congregations over which they rule, and then indeed the Metropolitan Church usurpeth and tyrannizeth over other Churches: but the power of Presbyteries is intrinsecall and natural, they being constitute of the Pastors and Elders of the particular congregations over which they are set: So that another without themselves doth not bear rule over them, but all of them together by common consent doerule over every one, which is a most milde and free form of Church-government: it being no more contrary to the liberty of a particular Church, to be ruled by a common Collegiat, Presbytery, or Ecclesiastick Senate, then it is for a Member of a particular congregation, to be ruled by his own particular Eldership. 3. Were this way of government as well known by experience unto others, as it is unto us, it would be accounted rather Subsidium, then Dominium, & would be looked at, rather as auxiliary to particular Ministers & Elderships, then authoritatative over the, especially since they neither ordaine nor depose Ministers, they discern no censure, nor sentence of Excommunication of any Member without the knowledge and consent of the congregation which is particularly concerned therein: whatsoever their authority be, the Minister and particular Eldership are advised, assisted, and strengthened rather then commanded, enioyed, or forced: which the particular Churches should much rather chuse, then through want of counsell and assistance, suffer them-
felves to run rashly upon Deposition or Excommunication, and afterward either be brought by the neighbouring Churches to the publike Confession of their error, which leftheneth their authority afterward, or to have the sentence of non-Communion pronounced against them, which must be the cause of Schisme or scandall.

So much for the present have we said, not for consolation, but meerely for justifying our owne, and other Reformed Churches against such misrepresentings & mistakes, as in matters of Religion are too frequent in this place at this time, to the perverting and abusing of simple and unstable mindes which will never be brought to a consistence and unity, without this true order and government of the Church, and the blessing of God from heaven upon his own ordinance. Were Magistrates and civill powers acquainted with the power thereof, they would finde their authoritie increased, their work more easie, and their places more comfortable thereby. Such as are most adverse to this order and government (if they allow no material difference in doctrine, worship, or practice) might enjoy their peace, and all the comforts of their Miniftry, and profession under it, without controlment, from that authoritative power which they so much apprehend. The Church of England which God hath blessed with so much learning and piety, by this Reformation and Uniformitie with other Reformed Churches, which all of us have solemnly sworn and subscribed, sincerely, really, and constantly through the grace of God, to endeavour in our severall places and callings, should bee a praise in the
we will hear thee again of this matter. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed, &c. We doubt not but there are many within the Province; whose hearts the Lord will open, to attend to what is here said. Our desire is to do good unto all, even unto those that are our greatest adversaries; and not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good. If they mock at us (as they did at Paul) yet surely, Our Judgment is with the Lord, and our work with our God; He that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is unjust, let him be unjust still: But we hope better things of you, that have submitted to the Presbyterian-Government. For whom we pray; That the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of his Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, would make you perfect in every good work, to do his Will; working in you, that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

Subscribed in the Name, and by the Appointment of the Assembly,

George Walker, Moderator.       Roger Drake, Scribe.
Edmund Calamy, ?

FINIS.