

THE  
CASE  
OF THE  
**E p i s c o p a l C h u r c h e s**  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES  
CONSIDERED.

*To make new articles of faith and doctrine, no man  
thinketh it lawful; new laws of government, what  
commonwealth or church is there which maketh not at  
one time or another? HOOKER.*

*PHILADELPHIA:*  
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PREFACE.

IT may be presumed, that the members of the episcopal churches, some from conviction, and others from the influence of ancient habits, entertain a preference for their own communion; and that accordingly they are not a little anxious, to see some speedy and decisive measures adopted for its continuance. The author believes, therefore, that his undertaking needs no apology to the public; and that those for whom it is designed will give him credit for his good intentions.

Nothing is farther from his wishes, than the reviving of such controversies as have been found destructive of good neighbourhood and the christian temper; especially as he conceives them to be unconnected with the peculiar situation of the churches in question. He has for this reason, avoided the discussion of subjects, on which episcopalians differ from their fellow christians; and even of those, concerning which a latitude of sentiment has prevailed among themselves.

He thinks his design is subservient to the general cause of religion and virtue; for a numerous society, losing the benefit of the stated ordinances within itself, cannot but severely feel the effect of such a change, on the piety and morals of its members. In this point of view, all good men must lament that cessation of public worship which has happened to many of the episcopal churches, and threatens to become universal.

The present work he also believes to be connected with the civil happiness of the community. A prejudice has prevailed with many, that the episcopal churches cannot otherwise exist than under the dominion of Great-Britain. A church government that would contain the constituent principles of the church of England, and yet be independent of foreign jurisdiction or influence, would remove that anxiety which at present hangs heavy on the minds of many sincere persons.

Such is the natural tendency of this performance. If it should fail of effect on account of the insufficiency of the author, it may nevertheless be of advantage, by drawing to the subject the attention of others, better qualified for the undertaking.

## CHAPTER I.

To form an idea of the situation of the episcopal churches in the present crisis, we must observe the change their religious system has undergone in the late Revolution.

On whatever principles the independence of the United States may be supposed to rest; whether merely on establishments which have very probable appearances of being permanent, or on withdrawing the protection of the former sovereign, or (as the author of these sheets believes) on the inherent right of the community to resist and effectually to exclude unconstitutional and oppressive claims, there result from it the reciprocal duties of protection and allegiance, enforced by the most powerful sanctions of natural and revealed religion.

It may reasonably be presumed, that, in general, the members of the episcopal churches are friendly to the principles, on which the present governments were formed; a fact particularly obvious in the southern states, where the episcopalians, who are a majority of the citizens, have engaged and persevered in the war, with as much ardour and constancy as their neighbours. Many even of those whose sentiments were at first unfavorable to the Revolution, now wish for its final establishment, as a most happy event; some from an earnest desire of peace, and others from the undistinguished oppressions and ravages of the British armies. Such persons accordingly acknowledge allegiance, and pay obedience to the sovereignty of the states.

Inconsistent with the duties resulting from this allegiance, would be their subjection to any spiritual jurisdiction connected with the temporal authority of a foreign state. Such a dependence is contrary to the fundamental principles of civil society, and therefore cannot be required by the scriptures; which, being accommodated to the civil policy of the world at large, neither interfered with the constitution of states as found established at the time of their promulgation, nor handed down to succeeding ages any injunctions of such a tendency.

To apply these observations to the case of the episcopal churches in the united states. They have been heretofore subject to the ecclesiastical authority of the Bishop of London. This authority was derived under a commission from the crown; which, though destitute of legal operation, found a general acquiescence on the part of the churches; being exercised no farther than to the necessary purposes of ordaining and licensing ministers. Hereby a connection was formed, between the

spiritual authority in England and the episcopal churches in America, the latter constituting a part of the Bishop of London's diocese.

But this connection is dissolved by the revolution. Had it been matter of right, it would have ceased with the authority of the crown; being founded on consent, and the crown changed, it cannot be allowed of in future, consistently with the duties resulting from our allegiance. [Were the British colonies independent of their parent kingdom, the episcopalians in this country would be a society independent of the national church.] Even suppose the Bishop of London hereafter exempted, by Act of Parliament, from the necessity of exacting the oaths, a dependence on his lordship and his successors in that See would be liable to the reproach of foreign influence, and render episcopalians less qualified than those of other communions, to be entrusted by their country; neither (as may be presumed) will it be claimed after the acknowledgment of the civil independence, being contrary to a principle clearly implied in many of the institutions of the church of England, particularly in the 34th article of religion; which asserts, that “every particular or national church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies or rites of the church, ordained only by man’s authority, so that all things be done to edifying.” Though the episcopal churches in these states will not be national or legal establishments, the same principle applies, being the danger of foreign jurisdiction.

The ecclesiastical power over the greater number of the churches, formerly subsisting in some legislative bodies on this continent, is also abrogated by the revolution. In the southern states, where the episcopal churches were maintained by law, the assemblies might well have been supposed empowered, in conjunction with the other branches of legislation, to regulate their external government; but now, when the establishments are overturned, it would ill become those bodies, composed of men of various denominations (however respectable collectively and as individuals) to enact laws for the episcopal churches, which will no doubt, in common with others, claim and exercise the privilege of governing themselves.

All former jurisdiction over the churches being thus withdrawn, and the chain which held them together broken, it would seem, that their future continuance can be provided for only by voluntary associations for union and good government. It is therefore of the utmost consequence to discover and ascertain the principles, on which such associations should be framed.

## CHAPTER II.

WHOEVER should consider the subject before us as merely speculative and propose the suggestions of his own judgment or fancy, without attention to the sentiments, habits, and circumstances of the people interested would probably have little weight, and would unquestionably not be useful. In the present investigation, therefore, it will be proper to keep in view the particular situation of the churches in question.

In most cases where spiritual jurisdiction has been established or defined, such has been the connection between church and state, that it was scarcely possible to adopt measures, which did not show some traces of accommodation to political views; but this may be avoided in the present instance, where all denominations of christians are on a level, and no church is farther known to the public, than as a voluntary association of individuals, for a lawful and useful purpose. The effect of this should be the avoiding of whatever may give the churches the appearance of being subservient to party, or tend to unite their members on questions of a civil nature. This is unquestionably agreeable to the simplicity of the gospel; it is conceived to be also, under the present circumstances, agreeable to good policy; for whatever church shall aim at such subjects, unless on account of an

invasion of their religious privileges, will be suspected by all others, as aiming at the exclusive government of the country.

In the parent church, though whatever regards religion may be enacted by the clergy in convocation, it must afterwards have the sanction of all other orders of men, comprehended in the parliament. It will be necessary to deviate from the practice (though not from the principles) of that church, by convening the clergy and laity in one body. The former will no doubt have an influence proportioned to the opinion entertained of their piety and learning; but will never (it is presumed) wish to usurp an exclusive right of regulation. . . .

The power of electing a superior order of ministers ought to be in the clergy and laity together, they being both interested in the choice. In England, the bishops are appointed by the civil authority; which was an usurpation of the crown at the Norman conquest, but since confirmed by acts of parliament. The primitive churches were generally supplied by popular elections; even in the city of Rome, the privilege of electing the bishop continued with the people to the tenth or eleventh century; and near those times there are resolves of councils, that none should be promoted to ecclesiastical dignities, but by election of the clergy and people. It cannot be denied, that this right vested in numerous bodies, occasioned great disorders; which it is expected will be avoided, when the people shall exercise the right by representation.

Deprivation of the superior order of clergy should also be in the church at large. In England, it has been sometimes done by the civil authority; particularly in the instances of Queen Mary's roman-catholic bishops by Queen Elizabeth, and of the non-juring bishops at the revolution; which last occasioned a separation from the national church. . . . It is well known, that the interference of the civil authority in such instances as the preceding has been considered by many as inconsistent with ecclesiastical principles; an objection which will be avoided, when deprivation can only be under regulations enacted by a fair representation of the churches, and by an authority entirely ecclesiastical. It is presumed, that none will so far mistake the principles of the Church of England, as to talk of the impossibility of depriving a bishop.

The last circumstance to be here mentioned, is the impossibility that the churches should provide a support for that superior order of clergy, to which their acknowledged principles point; of consequence, the duty assigned to that order ought not materially to interfere with their employments, in the station of parochial clergy; the superintendence of each will therefore be confined to a small district; a favorite idea with all moderate episcopalians.

It is proposed to offer the outlines of a frame of church government founded on the preceding sentiments.

### CHAPTER III.

THE author offers the following sketch of a frame of government, though he is far from thinking it complete; to make it so even according to his own ideas, would carry him beyond the compass intended in this essay.

As the churches in question extend over an immense space of country, it can never be expected, that representatives from each church should assemble in one place; it will be more convenient for them to associate in small districts, from which representatives may be sent to three different bodies, the continent being supposed divided into that number of larger districts. From these may be elected a body representing the whole.

In each smaller district, there should be elected a general vestry or convention, consisting of a convenient number (the minister to be one) from the vestry or congregation of each church, or of every two or more churches, according to their respective ability of supporting a minister. They should elect a clergyman their permanent president; who, in conjunction with other clergymen to be also appointed by the body, may exercise such powers as are purely spiritual, particularly that of admitting to the ministry; the presiding clergyman, and others to be liable to be deprived for just causes, by a fair process, and under reasonable laws; meetings to be held as often as occasion may require.

The assemblies in the three larger districts may consist of a convenient number of members, sent from each of the smaller districts severally within their bounds, equally composed of clergy and laity, and voted for by those orders promiscuously; the presiding clergyman to be always one, and these bodies to meet once in every year.

The continental representative body may consist of a convenient number from each of the larger districts, formed equally of clergy and laity, and among the clergy, formed equally of presiding ministers and others; to meet statedly once in three years. The use of this and the preceding representative bodies is to make such regulations, and receive appeals in such matters only, as shall be judged necessary for their continuing one religious communion.

These are (what was promised) no more than outlines; which it will not be proper to dismiss, without a few observations on the degree of power to be exercised, in matters of faith, worship, and government.

For the doctrinal part, it would perhaps be sufficient to demand of all admitted to the ministry, or engaged in ecclesiastical legislation, the questions contained in the book of ordination; which extend no farther than an acknowledgment of the scriptures, as a rule of faith and life; yet some general sanction may be given to the thirty-nine articles of religion, so as to adopt their leading sense; which is here proposed rather as a chain of union, than for exacting entire uniformity of sentiment. . .

As to divine worship, there must no doubt be somewhere the power of making necessary and convenient alterations in the service of the church. But it ought to be used with great moderation; otherwise the communion will become divided into an infinite number of smaller ones, all differing from one another and from that in England; from whence we may expect considerable numbers to migrate hereafter to this country; who if they find too wide a deviation from the ancient practice, will probably form an independent communion of their own. Whatever may in other respects be determined on this head, it is presumed the episcopalians are generally attached to that characteristic of their communion, which prescribes a settled form of prayer.

In the preceding pages, the idea of superintending ministers has been introduced; but not a word has been said of the succession supposed necessary to constitute the episcopal character; and this has been on purpose postponed, as demanding a more minute discussion.

#### CHAPTER IV.

ON the subject of episcopacy, the general opinion of the churches in question is of peculiar consequence; yet it can be collected only from circumstances; to assist in ascertaining it, the two following facts are stated.

Wherever these churches have been erected, the ecclesiastical government of the church of England has been adhered to; they have depended on the English bishops for ordination of their clergy, and on no occasion expressed a dissatisfaction with episcopacy. This, considering the liberty they enjoyed in common with others, of forming their churches on whatever plan they liked best, is a presumptive proof of their preferring the episcopal government; especially as it subjected them under the former connection to many inconveniences, such as sending to the distance of three thousand miles for ordination, the scandal sometimes brought on the church by the ordination of low and vicious persons, the difficulty of getting rid of immoral ministers, and that several of the clergy formed attachments of which this country has been always jealous, and which have at last proved extremely prejudicial to her interests. . .

On the other hand, there cannot be produced an instance of laymen in America, unless in the very infancy of the settlements, soliciting the introduction of a bishop; it was probably by a great majority of them thought an hazardous experiment. . . That they (bishops) were generally feared by the episcopalian laity, he thinks the only way of accounting for the cold reception they gave (a fact universally known) to every proposal for the introduction of a bishop. Those who pleaded for the measure on a plan purely spiritual, thought he would not be invested, by the laws of England, with such powers; but in case it had proved otherwise, they proposed the limiting him by act of parliament.

From these two facts it may fairly be inferred, that the episcopalians on this continent will wish to institute among themselves an episcopal government, as soon as it shall appear practicable, and that this government will not be attended with the danger of tyranny, either temporal or spiritual.

But it is generally understood, that the succession cannot at present be obtained. From the parent church most unquestionably it cannot; whether from any is presumed to be more than we can at present be informed. . . Now, on the other hand, to depart from episcopacy, would be giving up a leading characteristic of the communion; which, however indifferently considered as to divine appointment, might be productive of all the evils generally attending changes of this sort. On the other hand, by delaying to adopt measures for the continuance of the ministry, the very existence of the churches is hazarded, and duties of positive and indispensable obligation are neglected.

The conduct meant to be recommended, as founded on the preceding sentiments, is to include in the proposed frame of government a general approbation of Episcopacy, and a declaration of an intention to procure the succession, as soon as conveniently may be; but in the mean time to carry the plan into effect without waiting for the succession.

The first part of this proposal is conceived to be founded on the plain dictates of propriety, prudence, and moderation; for if the undertaking proceed on acknowledged principles, there will be far less shock to ancient habits, and less cause of intestine divisions, than if new principles are to be sought for and established. To illustrate this by an allusion; had our old governments been so adjusted to the genius of the people and their present circumstances, as at the Revolution to have required no farther change than what necessarily arose from the extinction of royal authority, it is obvious, that many pernicious controversies would have been prevented. Such, however, except in a few instances, was not the happiness of the Colonies. But it is precisely the situation of the episcopal churches in their religious concerns; none of their constituent principles being thereby changed, but what were founded on the authority of the king.

In the minds of some, the idea of the episcopacy will be connected with that of immoderate power; to which it may be answered, that power becomes dangerous, not from the precedency of one man,

but from his being independent. Had Rome been governed by a presbytery instead of a bishop; and had that presbytery been invested with the independent riches and dominion of the Papal See; it is easy to conceive, of their acquiring as much power over the christian world, as was ever known in a Gregory or a Paul.

It may be further objected, that episcopacy is anti-republican; and therefore opposed to those ideas which all good citizens ought to promote, for securing the peace and happiness of the community. But this supposed relation between episcopacy and monarchy arises from confounding English episcopacy with the subject at large. In the early ages of the church, it was customary to debate and determine in a general concourse of all christians in the same city; among whom the bishop was no more than president. Matters were indeed too often conducted tumultuously, and after a manner which no prudent and peaceable man would wish to see imitated; but the churches were not the less episcopal on that account. Very few systems of religious discipline on this continent are equally republican with that proposed in the preceding pages. . .

But it will be also said, that the very name of “Bishop” is offensive; if so, change it for another; let the superior clergyman be a president, a superintendent, or in plain English, and, according to the literal translation of the original, an overseer. However, if names are to be reprobated, because the powers annexed to them have been abused, there are few appropriated to either civil or ecclesiastical distinctions, which would retain their places in our catalogue.

The other part of the proposal was an immediate execution of the plan, without waiting for the episcopal succession. This is founded on the presumption, that the worship of God and the instruction and reformation of the people are the principal objects of ecclesiastical discipline: if so, to relinquish them from a scrupulous adherence to episcopacy, is sacrificing the substance to the ceremony.

It will be said, we ought to continue as we are, with the hope of obtaining it hereafter. But are the acknowledged ordinances of Christ's holy religion to be suspended for years, perhaps as long as the present generation shall continue, out of delicacy to a disputed point, and that relating only to externals? All the obligations of conformity to the divine ordinances, all the arguments which prove the connexion between public worship and the morals of a people, combine to urge the adopting some speedy measures, to provide for the public ministry in these churches; if such as have been above recommended should be adopted, and the episcopal succession afterwards obtained, any supposed imperfections of the intermediate ordinations might, if it were judged proper, be supplied without acknowledging their nullity, by a *conditional* ordination resembling that of *conditional baptism* in the liturgy. . .

But it will be said, the dropping the succession even for a time would be a departure from the principles of the Church of England. This prejudice is too common not to deserve particular attention.

## CHAPTER V.

IT would be to the greatest degree surprising, if the church of England, acknowledged by all protestant churches to lay a sufficient stress on the essential doctrines and duties of the gospel, should be found so immoderately attached to a matter of external order, as must in some cases be ruinous to her communion. But, far from this, it will not be difficult to prove, that a temporary departure from episcopacy in the present instance would be warranted by her doctrines, by her practice, and by the principles on which episcopal government is asserted.

Whatever that church holds must be included in the “thirty-nine articles of religion;” which were evidently intended for a comprehensive system of necessary doctrine. But what say these articles on the present subject? Simply, that “the book of consecration of arch-bishops and bishops and the ordering of priests and deacons, doth contain all things necessary thereunto; neither hath it any thing that of itself is superstitious and ungodly. . .”

How can such moderation of sentiment and expression be justified, if the episcopal succession be so binding, as to allow no deviation in a case of extreme necessity? Had the church of England decreed concerning baptism and the Lord's supper, only that they were “not repugnant to the word of God,” and that her offices for those sacraments were “not superstitious and ungodly,” would she not be censured by almost all christendom, as renouncing the obligation of those sacraments? Equally improper would be the application of such moderate expressions to episcopacy if (as some imagine) she considers it to be as much binding as baptism and the Lord's supper.

The book of consecration and ordination carries the idea no farther, except that the preface as altered at the Restoration (for it was not so in the old preface) affirms that “from the Apostles' times there have been these orders in Christ's Church, bishops, priests, and deacons.” But there is an evident difference between this and the asserting the unlawfulness of deviating from that practice in an instance, extraordinary and unprovided for.

Next to the doctrine of the church, let us enquire, whether her practice will furnish us with a precedent to justify the liberty we plead.

Many of the English protestants, during the persecution by Queen Mary, took refuge in foreign countries, particularly in Germany and Geneva. When protestantism revived at the auspicious accession of Queen Elizabeth, and at the same time a cloud was gathering on the continent in consequence of the emperor's victories over the princes of the Smalcaldic league, many of the exiles returned to their native land; some of whom, during their absence, had been ordained according to the customs of the countries where they had resided; these were admitted without re-ordination to preach and hold benefices; one of them was promoted to a deanery; but at the same time, as several of them were endeavouring to make innovations in the established Church, it was provided in a law that “whoever shall pretend to be a priest or minister of God's holy word, by reason of any other form of institution, consecration or ordering, than the form set forth by act of parliament, before the feast of the nativity of Christ next ensuing, shall in the presence of the bishop “declare his assent and subscribe to all the articles of religion agreed on, &c. . .” Here existed an extraordinary occasion, not provided for in the institutions for common use; the exigency of the case seems to have been considered; and there followed a toleration, if not implied approbation, of a departure in that instance from Episcopal ordination. . .

Let us next take a view of the grounds on which the authority of episcopacy is asserted.

The advocates for this form maintain, that there having been an episcopal power originally lodged by Jesus Christ with his apostles, and by them exercised generally in person, but sometimes by delegation (as in the instances of Timothy and Titus) the same was conveyed by them before their decease to one pastor in each church, which generally comprehended all the christians in a city and a convenient surrounding district. Thus were created the apostolic successors, who, on account of their settled residence are called bishops by restraint; whereas the apostles themselves were bishops at large, exercising episcopal power over all the churches, except in the case of St. James, who from the beginning was bishop of Jerusalem. From this time the word “episcopos,” used in the New Testament indiscriminately with the word “presbuteros,” (particularly in the 20th chapter of the

Acts where the same persons are called “episcopoi” and “presbuteroi,”) became appropriated to the superior order of ministers. That the apostles were thus succeeded by an order of ministers superior to pastors in general, episcopalians think they prove by the testimonies of the ancient fathers. . .

Can any reasonable rule of construction make this amount to more than ancient and apostolic practice? That the apostles adopted any particular form, affords a presumption of its being the best, all circumstances at that time considered; but to make it unalterably binding, it must be shown enjoined in positive precept. . .

Now, if the form of Church government rests on no other foundation, than ancient and apostolic *practice*; it is humbly submitted to consideration, whether episcopalians will not be thought scarcely deserving the name of Christians, should they, rather than consent to a temporary deviation, abandon every ordinance of positive and Divine appointment.

Now if even those who hold episcopacy to be of divine right, conceive the obligation to it to be not binding when that idea would be destructive of public worship, much more must *they* think so, who indeed venerate and prefer that form as the most ancient and eligible, but without any idea of divine right in the case. This the author believes to be the sentiment of the great body of episcopalians in America; in which respect they have in their favour *unquestionably* the sense of the church of England, and, *as he believes*, the opinions of her most distinguished prelates for piety, virtue and abilities.

## CHAPTER VI.

It is to be expected, that the far greater number of writers in defence of episcopal government, confine their observations to the ordinary state of the church, without giving their opinions on supposed cases of necessity. Yet, if it were required to multiply authorities, and writers were consulted with that view, it is probable that many more than the following might be produced. But, as the lawfulness of deviation, in cases of necessity, is a fair inference from the sentiments of expressly to the purpose (perhaps) all, it will be sufficient if those quoted rank among the most respectable for their authority.

The first mentioned shall be the venerable Hooker. . .(who), after asserting with great zeal the authority of episcopal government, makes the following exception; “when the *exigence of necessity* doth constrain to leave the usual ways of the church, which otherwise we would willingly keep; when the church must needs have some ordained and neither hath nor can have possibly a bishop to ordain; in case of *such necessity* the law of God hath oftentimes and may give place: and therefore we are not, simply and without exception, to urge a lineal descent of power from the Apostles, by continued succession in every effectual ordination.”

The same great man, speaking in another place of some churches not episcopal, says, “this their defect and imperfection, I had rather lament in such a case than exaggerate; considering that men oftentimes, without any fault of their own, may be driven to want that kind of polity or regiment, which is best; and to content themselves with that which either the irremediable error of former times, or the *necessity of the present* hath cast upon them.”

Had Mr. Hooker been asked to define “*the exigence of necessity*,” could he have imagined any more urgent than the case in question? Or had he been enquired of concerning the “*necessities of present times*,” could he have mentioned any in the cases to which he alludes (those of Scotland and Geneva,) so strongly pleading for the liberty he allows, as those now existing in America?

The character of Arch-bishop Usher for extensive learning and fervent piety is generally known; and is distinguished both by his great moderation on the subject of Episcopacy, and by the service it has received from his indefatigable researches. In a letter (to a colleague) . . . he writes thus, “in places where bishops *cannot be had*, the ordination of presbyters stands valid.” What part of the christian world could the learned primate have named, of which it could have been so properly said as it may be of ours, that “ordination by bishops *cannot be had*?”

*[White then digresses to a discussion of what situations might permit a secular ruler to “make bishops and priests” in the absence of an ecclesiastical hierarchy, citing Thomas Cranmer.]*

Now every circumstance in the cases supposed makes the principle apply, with the greater force, to that now under consideration. If a Christian king may on an emergency constitute a bishop, much more may the whole body of the churches interested; especially when they interfere not thereby with the civil magistrate. If a prince would be justifiable in taking such a step, rather than have recourse to the spiritual authority of some neighbouring and allied kingdom, much more would we, who labour under peculiar political difficulties. If it were commendable on the mere hope of converting infidels to the christian faith, it would be more so, for the purpose of maintaining the principles of christian knowledge and practice, among those who are already of the number of its professors. If a prince ought to do this from concern for the spiritual welfare of his subjects, much rather ought we, for that of ourselves and our children.

On the credit of the preceding names, the author rests this the last part of his subject; and if his sentiments should meet with an unfavorable reception, he will find no small consolation from being in a company so respectable.

Perhaps, however, there would be little room for difference of sentiment among the well informed, if the matter were generally taken up with seriousness and moderation, and were to rest on religious principles alone. But unhappily there are some, in whose ideas the existence of their church is so connected with that of the civil government of Britain, as to preclude their concurrence in any system, formed on a presumed final separation of the two countries. Prejudices of this sort will admit of no conviction but such as may arise from future events; and are therefore no farther considered in this performance, than with a sincere sorrow, that any persons, professing to be of the communion of the church of England, should so far mistake the principles of that church, as to imagine them widely different from what form the religion of the scriptures. . . .

As for those who are convinced that the “United States,” have risen to an independent rank among the nations, or who even think that such may probably be the event of the war, they are loudly called on to adopt measures for the continuance of their churches, as they regard the public worship of God, the foundation of which is immutable; as they esteem the benefit of the sacraments, which were instituted by the supreme bishop of the church; and as they are bound to obey the scriptures, which enjoin us “not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.”

More especially is this their duty, if they entertain a peculiar preference for the principles and worship of their own communion, from a persuasion of their superior excellence. That the church of England is a creature of the state, an engine of civil policy, and no otherwise to be maintained than by human laws, has been said by some, as a reason for their dissenting from her. If the same prejudice has been with others a reason for conformity, it is to be hoped they are comparatively few, and that the great majority of episcopalians, believing that their faith and worship are rational and scriptural, have no doubt of their being supported, independent of state establishments; nay, it is presumed there are many, who, while they sincerely love their fellow christians of every

denomination, knowing (as one of their prayers expresses) that the "body of Christ" comprehends "the blessed company of all faithful people," are more especially attached to their own mode of worship, *perhaps* from education, but *as they conceive*, from its being most agreeable to reason and scripture, and its most nearly resembling the pattern of the purest ages of the church. On the consciences of such, above all others, may be pressed the obligation of adopting speedy and decisive measures, to prevent their being scattered "like sheep without a shepherd," and to continue the use of that form of divine service, which they believe to be "worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

THE END.

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Project Canterbury <http://anglicanhistory.org/usa/wwhite/case1782.html>, referenced January 8, 2013 edited and condensed, January 20, 2013.