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AN
ENGLISH TRANSLATION
OF A
LATIN SERMON
BEFORE THE
CONVOCAATION,

Held by the BISHOPS and CLERGY of the
PROVINCE of CANTERBURY:

Preached in *Westminster-Abbey*, on the 21st of
December, 1689.

By WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, *Archdeacon*
of Colchester, afterwards Lord Bishop of
St. Asaph.

Let the Old Customs prevail. Council of Nice, Can. 6.

By Command of the BISHOPS.

L O N D O N :

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P R E F A C E.

THE Reader will probably want no other recommendation of the following Sermon, than to be assured that it had the Great, the most Learned and Pious, Dr. Beveridge, afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph, for it's author. And as it was only printed soon after it's being preached, but not reprinted among his other Sermons, and as it had never appeared in our own tongue; I thought it would be acceptable to the Readers and Admirers of the justly famous Author, to retrieve this remarkable Sermon from it's state of Oblivion, and in order to render it of universal advantage, to present it to the world in an English Dress.

And that the Reader may the better understand the true Scope and Design of it, it may be necessary to acquaint him with the time and occasion of it's being preached. He is therefore to know, that in 1689, the Year after that most Amazing Revo-

lution in 1688, while the Bill for exempting the Protestant Dissenters from the Penalties of certain laws, which is commonly called the Toleration Act, was depending in Parliament, a motion was made in the house of Lords for a Comprehension, which was received and some progress made in it ; but a Proviso being offered and pressed with great earnestness by some Temporal Lords, that in imitation of the Acts passed in the reigns of King Henry VIII. and Edward VI. a number of persons both of the Clergy and Laity might be empowered to prepare materials for such a reformation of things relating to the Church as might be fit to offer to K. William and his Parliament, it was warmly debated, and at length rejected by a small majority. Bishop Burnet was against the Proviso, for fear of offending the Clergy, who he thought would look upon it as taking the Reformation out of their hands: And Dr. Tillotson being of the same mind with Bishop Burnet, advised K. William to refer the affair to a Synod of Divines, whose determinations
 he

be apprehended would stop the mouths of the Papists, who reproached our Reformation as built chiefly on a Parliamentary authority, and would be better received by the Body of the Clergy.

Accordingly it was agreed in Council, that a select number of learned Divines should be appointed by K. William's Mandate, to meet and consult about the most proper methods of healing the wounds of the Church, that their determinations should be laid before the Convocation, and from thence receive the Sanction of Parliament. Agreeably to this resolution a Commission was issued out to thirty Divines, of which ten were Bishops, whose names were,

*Dr. Lamplugh, Archbishop of York,
Dr. Compton, Bishop of London,
Dr. Mew, Bishop of Winchester,
Dr. Lloyd, Bishop of St. Asaph,
Dr. Sprat, Bishop of Rochester,
Dr. Smith, Bishop of Carlisle,
Sir Jonathan Trelawny, Bishop of Exeter.
Dr. Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury,
Dr. Humphreys, Bishop of Bangor,
Dr. Stratford, Bishop of Chester.*

*To these were added the following
Divines,*

<i>Dr. Stillingfleet,</i>	<i>Dr. Patrick,</i>
<i>Dr. Tillotson,</i>	<i>Dr. Meggot,</i>
<i>Dr. Sharp,</i>	<i>Dr. Kidder,</i>
<i>Dr. Aldrich,</i>	<i>Dr. Jane,</i>
<i>Dr. Hall,</i>	<i>Dr. Beaumont,</i>
<i>Dr. Montague,</i>	<i>Dr. Goodman,</i>
<i>Dr. Beveridge,</i>	<i>Dr. Batteley,</i>
<i>Dr. Alston,</i>	<i>Dr. Tennison,</i>
<i>Dr. Scot,</i>	<i>Dr. Fowler,</i>
<i>Dr. Grove,</i>	<i>Dr. Williams.</i>

Their Commission was as follows :

“ *Whereas the particular forms of Di-*
 “ *vine Worship, and the Rites and Cere-*
 “ *monies appointed to be used therein, be-*
 “ *ing things in their own nature indifferent*
 “ *and alterable, and so acknowledged; it is*
 “ *but reasonable that upon weighty and*
 “ *important considerations, according to*
 “ *the various exigencies of times and oc-*
 “ *casions, such changes and alterations*
 “ *should be made therein, as to those that*
 “ *are in Place and Authority should from*
 “ *time to time seem either necessary or*
 “ *expedient :*

“ *And whereas the Book of Canons is fit*
 “ *to be reviewed and made more suitable*

“ *to*

“ to the state of the Church; and whereas
 “ there are defects and abuses in the Eccle-
 “ siastical Courts and Jurisdictions, and
 “ particularly there is not sufficient pro-
 “ vision made for the removing of scanda-
 “ lous Ministers, and for the reforming of
 “ manners either in Ministers or People :
 “ And whereas it is most fit, that there
 “ should be a strict method prescribed for
 “ the examination of such persons, as de-
 “ sire to be admitted into holy Orders,
 “ both as to their Learning and Manners :
 “ We therefore, out of our pious and
 “ princely care for the good order, edifica-
 “ tion, and unity of the Church of Eng-
 “ land committed to our charge and care,
 “ and for the reconciling as much as possi-
 “ ble of all differences among our good sub-
 “ jects, and to take away all occasion of the
 “ like for the future, have thought fit to
 “ authorize you, &c. or any nine of you,
 “ whereof three to be Bishops, to meet
 “ from time to time as often as shall be
 “ needful, and to prepare such alterations
 “ of the Liturgy and Canons, and such
 “ proposals for the Reformation of the Ec-
 “ clesiastical

“ *clesiastical Courts, and to consider of such
 “ other matters, as in your judgments may
 “ most conduce to the ends abovementioned.*”

The Committee being met in the Jerusalem Chamber, a dispute arose about the Legality of their Commission; upon which Mew Bishop of Winchester, and Sprat Bishop of Rochester, with Dr. Aldrich and Dr. Jane, withdrew dissatisfied. The rest of the Committee proceeded upon their business; and, among many alterations, too tedious to mention here, resolved,

That chanting of Divine Service in Cathedral Churches should be laid aside;

That the Apocryphal Lessons should be changed;

That the Cross in Baptism should be omitted, if any scrupled at it;

That if any refuse to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper kneeling, it may be administred to them in Pews;

That the Intention of Lent-Fast be declared to consist only in extraordinary acts of Devotion, and not in distinction of meats;

That

That the Absolution in Morning and Evening prayer may be read by a Deacon, the word Priest being changed into Minister ;

That these words in the Te Deum, Thine Honourable, true, and only Son, be turned Thine only begotten Son ;

That the Collects for the most part be changed ;

That if any Minister refuse the Surplice, the Bishop, if the People desire it and the Living will bear it, may substitute one in his place that will officiate in it, but that the whole thing must be left to the discretion of the Bishops ;

That the Re-ordination of those, who have had Presbyterian Ordination, be only conditional.

These, with many other alterations in the Litany, Communion Service, and Canons, were designed to be laid before the Convocation for their approbation, which was accordingly called together for this purpose, and before which Dr. Beveridge was appointed to preach. But when it was perceived by the Lower House's choos-
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*ing Dr. Jane Prolocutor before Dr. Tillotson, by their refusing to agree to what the Bishops said concerning the Protestant Religion in the Address sent from the Higher House, and by their Resolving not to enter into any debates with relation to alterations, that there was no prospect of Success; this Comprehending Scheme was dropt, and the Convocation was kept from sitting by continued Prorogations for Ten Years together *.*

Such was the Convocation before which, Such the Time when, and Such the Occasion upon which Dr. Beveridge preached the following Excellent Sermon, from which there is no farther occasion any longer to detain the Reader.

* For the truth of all the foregoing Account, See Bishop Burnet's *History of his own time*, vol. 2. p. 10, 30, &c. Dr. Nicholl's *Apparat. ad Defens. Eccles. Anglican.* p. 95, 96. Calamy's *Abridgment of Baxter's life*, vol. 1. p. 453, &c. Neal's *History of the Puritans*, vol. 4. p. 613—620. Dr. Hicker's *Account of Dr. Grabe*, p. 29, 30, 31. and a *Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, concerning the Validity of Lay-Baptism*, p. 29—34.

A
S E R M O N
B E F O R E T H E
C O N V O C A T I O N .

I COR. XI. 16.

In the eleventh chapter of the first epistle to the *Corinthians*, at the sixteenth verse, it is thus written :

But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

WITH how many and how weighty controversies the church of *England* is exercis'd in these our days, and with how powerful, as well as malicious enemies it is surrounded, we all see and lay to heart, but do not wonder at, as knowing for certain, that this has been almost the constant

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and perpetual fate of the church of Christ, where-ever it has been established : For if we examine the ecclesiastical history of all times from the Apostles days to our own, we shall meet with no age, in which the Catholick Church has not been infested either with Hereticks or Schismaticks, or both. It is certain, that in the Lord's field the tares were sown by the enemy among the wheat, and will grow together until the harvest : But yet, such is our Lord's regard to his field, such is the kindness of the Great and Good God towards his Church, that he has never permitted the Wheat to be quite choak'd by the Tares, the Evangelical doctrine by Heresy, or Discipline by Schism ; and therefore we need not fear, but our Church can sustain the attacks of so many adversaries, since she is supported by the Omnipotent God, as being a pure and sound branch of his universal Church.

HOWEVER the more pure and sound, and therefore the more acceptable to God, our Church is ; the more numerous and implacable among men are her adversaries, who oppose her on all sides with their whole strength, and if they cannot destroy, at least endeavour to disturb her : For on the one hand the Papists, on the other the Sectaries, assault, teaze, and harrass her both by words and actions ; they use all manner of devices, in order to obtrude their new tenets and rites upon us, and thereby utterly overthrow or corrupt our Church.

BUT

BUT we in the mean while relying upon the assistance of God alone, fly to him in the name of his only-begotten Son, daily beseeching him, that he would vouchsafe to defend and support a Church founded by himself: And he has been pleas'd so far to grant our prayers, that he has in a wonderful manner delivered us at present from one set at least of our adversaries, namely the Papists, and given us hopes that they shall not hereafter occasion any disturbance to our Church.

BUT another set even now remains, namely, of those who seem to agree with us in faith and doctrine, but being misled either by ignorance, or error, or perhaps by a certain superstitious scrupulosity of conscience, do invent I know not what accusations against our Ecclesiastical discipline and rites, and upon that ground refuse to maintain communion with us in sacred offices. And wonderful it is to consider, how many evil effects proceed from this cause, seemingly inconsiderable as it is. For from hence come altars raised every where against altars; from hence party-divisions; from hence mutual hatred among brethren; hence neglect of God's publick worship; hence the Sacraments themselves contemned, the one thrust into corners, and the other very rarely celebrated; hence (I tremble to say it) impious words rashly uttered against God and all religion, as if it promoted discord rather than peace; hence, lastly, flow those popular commotions, which threaten the Church as

well as the State, and for that reason create perpetual uneasiness to both.

BUT that some remedy may at length be applied to these evils also, under which our Church has so long laboured, our most gracious King has thought good, undoubtedly not without divine instinct, to call together the Bishops and Clergy of This kingdom, that they may consider by what methods these pernicious divisions may be so healed, that our Church may lose none of her Purity, Honour, Authority, and Rights, and yet that those who dissent from us, may be brought back to our holy communion, or at least deprived for ever of all reasons, I do not say just ones, for such they never had, but of all specious pretences, under which they have hitherto covered their separation.

THIS I confess as it is a great and very difficult work ; so is it equally pious and necessary, and therefore worthy of the most strenuous application of the whole Clergy of *England*. And how laborious and troublesome soever it be, though it is literally striving against the stream ; yet we must not despair of success, provided that God be with us, and favour our undertaking. And we have so often experienced his singular Providence in defending our Church, that we cannot in the least doubt, but he will be present and propitious to our endeavours after her good, in case that all things be directed according to his divine will revealed to us in holy scripture ; for that
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those sacred books are the chief rule, by which all ecclesiastical controversies are to be decided, is a point agreed between us and our brethren who dissent from us.

Now if we consult those sacred oracles, we shall indeed find in them all things necessary to the attainment of eternal salvation; but we shall not meet with much relating to the external polity of the church, much less to every rite which necessarily belongs to it. For these God left to be ordered by each particular church, according to those general rules, which himself delivered in the holy scriptures for that very purpose: such as, *Let all things be done decently and in order*; *Let all things be done to edification*; and others of the same kind, with which the rites observed by our church exactly agree.

BUT what if a dispute arise concerning any rite between two provincial churches, or different members of the same province? Have we no precept, no example in the holy scriptures, by which it may be decided? Yes, we have an example, and such an one as has likewise the force of a precept; because it is propounded by the Holy Spirit of God, and delivered in the sacred writings for that very purpose, that it might be universally observed. But that I may not seem to take this for granted, it will be proper to give a short exposition of the text, and to shew that my assertion flows from it; this, I say, will be proper on many accounts, but more especially because
nothing

nothing can be of greater use than the rule I mentioned, nothing more necessary to be observed in all such kind of controversies, as those are which are to be discussed by this holy synod.

IN the first place therefore let it be observed, that among those who disturbed the new founded church of *Corinth*, there were some who contended, that in the publick congregations men ought to have their heads veiled or covered, but that women should be unveiled or uncovered. Against this rite, which some people at that time began to introduce, the Apostle argues at large in this chapter, from the first to this sixteenth verse, and demonstrates that the contrary custom ought to be universally observed. First he argues from divine testimony, not directly indeed, but consequentially, upon this topick, that it appears from the holy scriptures, that the man is the image and glory of God, and the head of the woman, but that the woman is the glory of the man, of him, and created for him. This argument he treats at large down to the twelfth verse, and then he urges another taken from the law of nature, and the common consent and custom of mankind. *Judge in yourselves, says he, is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, &c.*

BUT in the last place he produces his clearest and strongest argument, which he expresses in these words: *But if any man seem to be contentious,*

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tentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

WHICH is the same thing as if he had said: But if any one is so contentious, that he will not yield to these reasons, but persist in maintaining, that it is lawful for the man to pray in publick to God with his head covered, and the woman uncovered, there is one argument yet remaining, which both he and all Christians must necessarily allow to be decisive; and that is, that we have no such custom, neither the churches of God: but the contrary custom has prevailed both with us and all the other churches of God, namely, that the men uncover their heads, but the women cover theirs, whenever they are present at God's divine service.

I AM not ignorant, that some have interpreted the Apostle's words a little differently from what I have done, and have put such a sense upon them, as if he affirmed that neither he nor the churches of God had any such custom as to contend about matters of this nature: But besides that according to this explication the Apostle would contradict himself, since he in this very place does contend sharply with the *Corinthians* about this matter; if we grant that the words are capable of that sense, it makes equally for our point. For from hence it appears, that when the Apostle disputed with the church of *Corinth* concerning an ecclesiastical rite, he appealed to the custom of the other churches of God; this, I say, appears

appears from the latter sense of the words, no less than from the former, which is the true and genuine sense, and that so plain and certain, as to require no farther explanation. However it may be proper to take notice of one particular ; and that is, that those words *neither the churches of God* are in some *Greek Manuscripts* read in the singular number *neither the church of God*. So likewise the *Syriac* interpreter turns it *neither the church of God* ; which are also the words of the *Vulgar Latin* Version, and the same are to be found in *St. Cyprian* and other *Latin* Fathers. But the sense comes to the same. For *the church*, in the singular number, denotes the Universal, consisting of all churches : and *the churches* in the plural, being put indefinitely, signifies all churches, of which the Universal consists. Either way therefore the appeal is here made to the Universal Church, and the argument drawn from the custom of the same. Of which therefore *S. Theodorit* says, *this argument is sufficient to silence even the most contentious*. For the Apostle shews, that these things appeared to be so not only to him, but to all the churches of God ; so that he who acted contrary thereto, opposed *the universal church*, as *Theophylact*, and before him *S. Chrysostom*, observed upon the place.

THESE words of the Apostle thus briefly explained, set before us a sure and safe method of proceeding in our examination of all questions of this kind ; namely, that if any rite used

used by any provincial church be controverted, we are diligently to enquire what all the other churches think of it, and whether it be used by them also. And that this may the more clearly appear, it is to be observed, that through all ages from Christ's death, many provincial churches have been constituted over almost the whole earth, all which collected together make up that one church, which for that reason we commonly call the Catholick or Universal church; which comprehends in its notion, not only the churches which exist at one and the same time, but likewise all the churches that ever existed from the beginning.

Now all these churches of all ages have always agreed in the necessary articles of faith. But as to rites, they partly belonged and were peculiar to particular churches, and partly common to all. The rites which belonged to this or that particular church, might by the same church at its pleasure be abolished or retained, and might also be admitted or refused by others. For they are of an indifferent nature, and therefore have no force but what they receive from that church, by whose authority they are established. But as to the rites which were always common to the Universal church, that is to all churches through all ages, or which is the same thing, to the greatest part of them; the same ought to be observed even now by every particular church. For indeed it is not in the power of any particular church to reject the rites observed by the

Universal Church, or to observe those which she has rejected. If any church does either of these things, it is Schismatical, dividing itself in that particular at least from the body of Christ. For that any church be rightly constituted, and so as to become a sound branch of the Catholick church, it is necessary that it conform itself to her, as far as may be, and exactly observe her discipline and rites, as well as embrace her doctrine. Now that I may not seem rash in what I have said, I will confirm it with the following arguments.

THE first of which we are supplied with from the words of the text. For the church of *Corinth* was a provincial church, into which some persons had endeavoured to introduce a new rite. Of which the apostle being informed, he argues in this place against that rite, and proves that it ought by no means to be admitted by that church. And his last and principal argument he takes from the custom of the Universal church, as was before observed, and founds his conclusion upon this assertion, that all other churches had no such custom, but practised the contrary. *But if any man, says he, seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.* In which words he argues in this manner.

THAT which is contrary to the custom received by all other churches, ought not to be admitted by the church of *Corinth*.

BUT

BUT this is contrary to the custom received by all other churches :

THEREFORE.

NOW if the church of *Corinth* had not been obliged to conform itself to all other churches, and observe their rites, this argument of the apostle had been of no weight and force. For upon this hypothesis, that rite might have been admitted by that church, though it was contrary to the custom received by all others. And then the major proposition had been false. But that the apostle argued justly and consequentially, is out of all manner of question. For in writing these words he was assisted by the Spirit of God himself, which is the highest Reason: So that he could neither deceive nor be deceived, either in the argument itself or in the manner of arguing. And therefore even the highest Reason requires, that every such church as that of *Corinth* was, that is every provincial church, should exactly observe the rites of all other churches or of the Universal church. For if any church does not observe them, she is by this same infallible argument proved guilty of the greatest error and of schism. Nor is it possible for her to defend herself upon any pretence. For since God himself dictated this argument to the apostle, it necessarily follows from hence, that it is the will of God himself, that every provincial church should conform to the Universal, and also that we should always make use of this method of arguing, which we are

taught by him himself, to determine controversies of this nature.

AGAIN, the same thing appears from the very nature and notion of the church. For the church, in general so called, *is one large society or congregation of men professing the faith of Christ, wheresoever dispersed over the whole earth; of which church all and singular the provincial churches are so many parts.* Now in all such sort of societies, every part ought to agree with its whole, and the lesser part conform to the greater. This the voice of reason, this the law of nature teaches, this the common consent of mankind declares to be necessary. Therefore if any thing be constituted by the greater, much more by the greatest, part of any society; the remaining part is obliged to the same, and must necessarily observe that thing, if it would continue a member, and enjoy the privileges of that society. For as this rule takes place in all societies of whatever kind they be, much more ought it do so in the church, which should be the most regular and best governed society of all.

To apply this: Christ himself is the head of this great body, which is called the Universal church, and he diffuses his Spirit equally through all the branches thereof. This idea or notion of the church the apostle explains in his epistle to the *Ephesians*, and many other places. Since therefore the Spirit of Christ himself is diffused through all his members,
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and leads and governs them ; whatever is done by all these members, is rightly ascribed to the Holy Ghost himself. For though every particular member may perhaps have something human in them, yet what all have always jointly done, can hardly proceed from any other author, than the common (if I may so speak) principle of them all, namely from the Divine Spirit, by whom they are all actuated in common ; and therefore it cannot but be necessary to be observed, as far as may be, by every one even of the present members.

THE next argument upon this question we shall take from the Apostolical institution of all such rites, as were observed by the Universal church. For that whatever the apostles at the first settlement of churches delivered to them to be observed, is necessary to the right constitution of them, is beyond all manner of doubt. For otherwise something superfluous might have been instituted by them : which cannot be charged upon the apostles, because they instituted nothing in the Church, but what was committed to them by divine authority. Now as all christians are persuaded of the truth of this, they have in nothing agreed more than in the consequence of it, that the Apostolical institution of churches is the rule and pattern, by which all particular churches even in these days should be constituted : So that no constitution of any church can be called right, unless it exactly agrees with it. But from this concession it follows, that no par-

particular church is rightly constituted, unless it observe all the rites of the Universal church. For whatever rites have been observed by her through all ages, could not be instituted but by the apostles. For by what means can it seem possible to any one, that all the churches, dispersed far and wide, should every where agree in the same rites, unless they had received them from the apostles together with the faith?

IT is certain, that the apostles travelled through almost all regions, and planted churches in each of them: It is certain, that they were all led by the same Spirit; It is certain lastly, that their desire was that uniformity should be preserved in all churches. And therefore it cannot seem strange to any one, that they should institute the same rites every where: It would rather have been a wonder, if they had done otherwise. Now if these general rites were not instituted by the apostles themselves, from whence could they be derived to all churches every where disjoined from each other by so large a distance of place? from General councils? for that is the only thing which remains to be said. For that they were instituted either by the Apostles or by General councils, is unavoidable; as S. *Augustin* observes in his epistle to *Januarius*, saying, *Those things which we practise, though not written, but delivered by tradition, which are indeed observed over all the earth, are to be retained, as being appointed and constituted either by the apostles themselves, or*
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by great councils, whose authority in the church is of the greatest advantage. But now in this place we are arguing only for such sort of rites as were observed by the Universal church, even before General councils began to be held, and which therefore could not be instituted by them. It remains therefore, that they can be referred to nothing but apostolical institution, according to that noted rule of the most learned Father, *Whatever is held by the Universal church, and was not instituted by councils, but has been always retained, is most rightly believed to have been delivered by no other than Apostolical authority.* Since therefore to the right constitution of any particular church, it is necessary that the rites instituted by the apostles should be retained by it; and since all the rites of the Universal church were instituted by the apostles themselves; no one can doubt, that the observation of them is necessarily required to the right constitution of every particular church.

AND this is the sentiment not of me alone, but it is and always was the common opinion of all, especially the antient christians; as appears from this, that if formerly any controversy arose concerning any ecclesiastical rite received by any particular church, it was always the method to enquire into the practice and constant custom of the Universal church, and thereupon to form a judgment. Examples of this occur frequently, of which we shall give but one at present. The Primitive church,

church, you know, was a long while disturbed with that hot dispute about the time when *Easter* should be observed. For the *Asiatick* church contended, that it should be celebrated with the *Jews* upon the fourteenth Day of the moon, on whatever day of the week That happened. But all other churches were not wont to break their fast, and celebrate that festival, on any other day but *Sunday*, the day of our Lord's resurrection. This controversy subsisted a great many years, till at last it was brought before the Universal Synod held at *Nice*. Where it was proved that all other churches besides the *Asiatick*, had been used to observe that festival on the Lord's day; and for this cause all the Fathers assembled in the Synod, thought it just and right, that the *Asiatick* church likewise should celebrate it on the same day; as his most sacred majesty the Emperor *Constantine* expressly affirmed in his epistle to the churches. From whence it appears, that the *Nicene* Fathers opposed the *Asiatick* church with the same argument, as *S. Paul* made use of against the church of *Corinth*, taken from the custom of all other churches. The same argument was likewise used by *S. Cyprian* against *Novatian*, and by *S. Augustin* against the *Donatists*, as also by *S. Epiphanius* against all sorts of Hereticks as well as Schismatics, condemning all those as guilty of heresy, who departed either from the doctrine or discipline of the Universal church.

BUT

BUT there would be no end, if I should only name all the Councils and Fathers, who have made use of this argument, and from whom for that reason our proposition may fairly be inferred. For this argument, which was always used by the Catholick Church, supposes it to be an acknowledged truth, that it is right and proper at least, that all her rites should be every where observed.

WE have been the more large in prosecuting this argument, because it shews us the best and readiest way of silencing, when occasion requires, all the adversaries of our church; even the Papists themselves, who are wont to behave with insolence on account of the name of *Catholicks*, which they usurp to themselves. For the *Roman* church, to whose faith and customs all the Papists are sworn, has invented so many new tenets, has in late days instituted, and at this time imposes, so many new rites, either unknown to or rejected by the Universal church; that instead of the title of *Catholick* church, she can be called no other than a most corrupt branch of it. For she has nothing common with the Catholick, nothing with all other churches, but every thing rather differing from and contrary thereto, except those things in which she agrees with the church of *England*.

BUT leaving these things, as not belonging to our present design, let us rather consider how far what we have hitherto said, may con-

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duce to the right ordering of the business now under our hands.

Now from the premises it appears, how expedient and proper it is, that the customs and rites hitherto observed by the Universal church, should be even now observed by every particular church. In the same manner as is usual even among political bodies. For example, in this kingdom there are many corporations and other inferior societies, which have each of them the power of making laws for themselves and their members, but always with this condition annexed, that nothing be constituted or done by them, *that is contrary to the statutes of the kingdom, or the common law, as they call it, or any old custom which was introduced and has been received by the whole kingdom before the memory of man, and has thus obtained the force of a law.* In the same manner almost, the Universal church, which is the kingdom of Christ, has her statutes, written in the holy Scriptures; and she has likewise as it were her common law, consisting of some certain rites: Which though they are not expressly and in so many words commanded, yet they are so agreeable to the general, if I may so speak, reason and design of them, and of so much use in propagating and establishing what is instituted in them, that they have been always and every where observed by the universal christian world, and therefore should be observed now by all churches, that would retain a true and solid communion with the Universal church.

For

For if any church destroys any of these, or constitutes any thing contrary thereto, from that time it will not have such a custom, as all the other churches of God have. Which the apostle objects to the *Corinthians* as a crime: And that deservedly; since it cannot be a less crime to be sure to abolish the common rites of the Universal church, than to break the common law of a kingdom. Which how great an offence it is, all men confess, and some to their own loss have experienced.

BUT perhaps it will be imputed to me as a fault, that I have hitherto been pleading in favour of these rites, and yet have not shewn what they are, and how they may be known. But in truth this is not my business: my design was only to prove, how just and right it is that our Provincial Church, for example, or any other should religiously observe all such rites, as appear to have been observed by all the other churches of God: But what particular rites ought to be ranged in this class, and how that appears, I leave to your publick determination. Some of them perhaps will come to be debated before you; and therefore I dare not make the least mention of them in this place, lest I should seem to anticipate your better and more solemn judgment concerning them. But there are some general customs of the Universal Church, which, if I mistake not, will not be brought into dispute, and yet seem to be of great moment in settling those points which will come before this Holy Sy

nod : and therefore I cannot entirely pass them by, lest I should seem deficient in discharging the office which is laid upon me.

FIRST then all the churches of God have, and always had, this custom ; that in whatever Province they are situated, the Bishops and Pastors of that Province, as often as occasion requires, and they can have opportunity, should hold Synods or sacred Assemblies, in which to consider of and consult about the affairs belonging to the Church established in that province. Which Meetings for that reason are called Synods, Convocations, or Provincial Councils. This plainly appears from those great and numerous volumes of the Councils, in which it may be seen, that many of these Councils have been held through all the provinces of the whole Christian world. And many more no doubt have been celebrated, which at present are not extant either there or any where else. This I thought proper to take notice of here, that it may appear to every one, that our being thus Synodically called together is no new thing ; since nothing was more commonly practised by all the churches of God, than to hold such sort of Provincial Councils.

BESIDES, all churches of all places thus assembled in Provincial Synods, have been always wont to enact whatever canons or ecclesiastical laws themselves judged expedient and conducing to the better administration of publick worship, the word, the sacraments, and all ecclesiastical discipline, in their own province.

vince. This abundantly appears from the fore-mentioned acts of the councils ; in which we have a great many canons, made by particular provincial churches as proper and peculiar to themselves. For though all the churches of God did religiously retain the common rites of the Universal church, yet they always thought it necessary to add others to them in a canonical way, agreeable to the forms and customs of that kingdom or province in which each church was situated. Otherwise it could hardly be, that any provincial or national church could long enjoy peace, or indeed subsist.

HENCE also a common custom has obtained among all the churches of God, namely, in making all canons and laws of this kind, to have respect not only to the salvation of every particular member, but likewise to the peace and good order of the whole church ; to which many things are necessary, which are not so to the obtaining the eternal felicity of each Individual. For which reason almost all the Canons, which have been hitherto enacted by Provincial, or even General, Councils, relate to such things only as concern the external discipline and peace of the Church. And from hence likewise it proceeds, that there never was any Church, which did not insert many things in her laws, not indeed contrary to, but besides those which are contained in the holy Scriptures. Which is so clear and evident, that I cannot sufficiently admire how it ever came into any one's head to doubt of it.

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MOREOVER it has been the practice of all the churches of God to enforce the Canons of this kind made by themselves with Ecclesiastical censures, that they might not be broken with impunity. This appears from the Canons of all the Councils, on which no one can cast his eyes, but he will immediately see Suspension or Deposition denounced against the Clergy, and Anathema or Excommunication against the Laity, if they act contrary to them. For the Church never thought the former worthy of the sacred ministry, nor the latter of her communion, if they would not obey the laws which were ordained for their as well as her own good and advantage.

FARTHER, it is evident from the fore-mentioned collection of the Councils, that all the churches of God were wont so to compose and contrive the laws which they esteemed necessary for themselves, that they should be for the advantage and edification of the whole Community, and *as far as might be* give offence to no one. I say, *as far as might be*; because some persons are so ignorant that they hardly understand any thing, and others so perverse that they put a bad sense upon every thing. And it is scarce possible, or rather absolutely impossible, that any Civil, much less any Ecclesiastical law should be so framed, as to be entirely approved of by them: For whom therefore the Church is not at all solicitous, unless it be perhaps, that by the force of laws they may be brought to better discipline

pline and manners. But there are some, who endeavour to worship God with piety and holiness, and to live according to his precepts, and yet have such weak and scrupulous minds, that nothing hardly can be done but it is a scandal to them and gives them offence; and this proceeds, as is reasonable to believe, not from obstinate wilfulness or pertinacious party-zeal, but from a certain pious, though ill-grounded fear lest God should be displeas'd. And in the making of all but especially Ecclesiastical laws, great regard ought to be had to such persons as these, that their minds be not loaded with new scruples, but rather deliver'd from their old ones. And this, whether those who labour under this conscientious infirmity, worship God in conjunction with the Church or separately from it. Of both whom care should be taken; of those, that they continue in the communion of the Church; of these, that they be brought back into it. And here indeed, here is an arduous task, deserving the greatest care and utmost endeavours of all. Which notwithstanding ought to be undertaken in such a manner, that for their sakes nothing may be omitted which will be beneficial to the Church, nor any thing admitted which may be detrimental to it. For certainly neither reason nor the constant practice of the Church do allow, that a part should be preferred to the whole.

To this may be added, that nothing was more usual with all the Churches of God, than,

than, when times and necessity required it, to alter the laws made by themselves, to abrogate old ones, and substitute others and perhaps different ones in their stead. This cannot be unknown to any one, who is versed in Ecclesiastical history. For no Church can be found through the whole world, which has the same laws at present that it formerly had. Doubtless all such kind of laws of Provincial Churches as we are speaking of, are constituted upon present occasions according to the circumstances of time and place. And if they change, the Laws must necessarily be altered too, that they may be accommodated to the particular customs of every age and country.

But even this is not wont to be ever done by any Church either hastily, or without great necessity; as indeed it ought not. For every unnecessary alteration of Ecclesiastical laws fixes a mark of levity upon the Church, as not being steady and constant to herself; it derogates too much from the authority, which Christ has committed to her; makes the Profane question, whether Religion does not depend upon the will of men; sets many together by the ears, keeps More in suspense with the expectation of other alterations, and renders Most people doubtful and uncertain what they shall follow or avoid; it raises great commotions, and very often disturbs the publick peace. Nor is there any one, who has such an insight into the present and future state of things, as to be able to foresee with
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his utmost skill, how many and how great disadvantages may accrue from the alteration of even inconvenient laws. And therefore to change old ones for new, is always dangerous, unless the necessity which requires it, is so great that it cannot otherwise be conquered; and so plain and open to the eyes of all, that no one can see the alteration, but may at the same time discern the highest reason and necessity for it.

On the other hand, if there be such necessity in the case, then all those dangers and disturbances will be avoided, which we have declared to be the consequences of an unnecessary alteration of the Laws. The Church will lose no part of the reputation and honour that is due to her; for she and her authority will be self-consistent; and all things belonging to her will be more quiet, settled, firm, and undisturbed, than if they had remained in their former condition. This all the Churches of God have been taught, every one by it's own experience; and therefore have never scrupled to abrogate the Laws enacted by themselves, and constitute new ones, whenever there was occasion.

But whether our Church now lies under the necessity of altering any thing which is enforced by her laws, belongs not to me but to the wise and prudent to determine. This however I dare be bold to say: If it be necessary to bring back the wandring sheep into the fold of Christ; if to remove scruples from the

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minds of weak brethren ; if to mitigate hatred, appease wrath, and compose as far as may be all diffensions about religion ; if to restore ecclesiastical discipline to it's pristine vigour ; if to defend and establish the best Church upon earth against the attacks of men and devils : If these things, I say, seem necessary to any one, to the same person it will appear equally necessary to admit of such alterations, as he is persuaded will conduce to those ends : provided always that those alterations be made only in such things, as our church has constituted by her authority alone, and not in those which the Universal church has established by her common law. For to lay the least finger upon these on any pretence whatever, was always matter of conscience to all the churches of God, and among them to our own. For to abrogate or reject what was always and every where observed, is not only altering an ecclesiastical rite, but is changing the church itself, and making it different from all the other churches of God. Which thing never yet could, and I hope never can, be said of ours,

FOR such was the care and diligence of our Reformers, (whose blessed memory we can never celebrate with due praise and thankfulness) such their piety and religion, such their prudence with which they were divinely inspired ; that holding it equally necessary to preserve communion with the Catholick Church, and to depart from the *Roman*, though
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they abrogated those superstitious ceremonies which the latter had invented in the lower ages, yet they religiously retained whatever had been observed by all the Churches of God: and thus in ours they have exhibited a most illustrious copy and pattern of the Catholick Church. And hence it is, that the *English* Church has been always hated indeed by the *Roman*, but held in so great honour by all the Reformed Churches, that I do not at all doubt but they would imitate her pious example, if it were in their power: So that their not being like us in all respects ought to be imputed, not to them, but to the necessities of times and places.

SINCE therefore God has committed such a Church to our care, and since his Vicegerent in this kingdom has at this time afforded us an opportunity of accomplishing every thing that may contribute to the benefit and peace of the same; upon this let our eyes and thoughts be fixed, to this let our diligence and all our endeavours be applied. Let nothing be left undone that may make the *English* Church the Church of all the *English*; nothing that may spread far and wide and increase, if possible, the admiration of her faith, worship, and discipline; nothing that may contribute to the continuance of the Church herself, under whose guidance the people of this realm may obtain eternal salvation through Christ, even to his second advent: that all posterity may render thanks to God, for that

our most pious King has called together this holy Synod, and has committed to her many particulars to be so adjusted, that the Church may thence receive the greater advantage; if it so seem good to the Convocation, to whose judgment all things must be submitted.

BUT while we are engaged in these considerations, let us remember the custom observed by all the churches of God, which was to hold their synods with quiet calmness and patient sedateness; and let us practise the same in this. Let no prejudiced opinion, no preconceived suspicion, no disputatious inclination approach this holy assembly; nothing that may disorder or confound such sacred deliberations. But let all things be transacted with that concord and unanimity, which becomes Christians, Clergymen, and the *English* Clergy in particular; I say, which becomes the whole body of the *English* Clergy, taking proper measures for establishing the peace of their own Church, the Church of *England*. Whatever is done, let it be done unanimously without contradiction. That in this likewise we may truly say after the Apostle, *If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.*

BUT all our endeavours, how great soever, towards the good of our Church will be of no signification, unless they are attended with good works. Wherefore permit me, Right Reverend Fathers in God, and most beloved brethren, to conjure you all in the name of Christ

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to proceed in such a course of godly living, as becomes the Fathers and Sons of so holy a Church: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. May all the world see and admire the illustrious sanctity of the Church of *England* in producing the most holy of Christians. By this means we shall gain the favour, not of men only, but also of God himself; who alone is able to defend a church, at first founded and afterwards restored by himself, from the crafty devices of all its adversaries, and preserve it to the end of ages.

LET God therefore arise, and let his enemies be scattered. May he grant, that our, or rather his, Church militant in this kingdom may daily more and more increase and flourish: May he grant, that the gates of hell itself may never prevail against it: May he grant lastly, that his most Holy Spirit may direct and govern this Synod called together in his name, and lead it into all truth, that whatever is transacted therein may tend to the glory of God, and the advantage and establishment of the Church Universal, and of the Church of *England* in particular, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord:

*To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost
be Honour and Glory now and for evermore.
Amen.*

F I N I S.

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