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Thomas Shewen 1710  
The CASE of  
**Indifferent Things**  
Used in the  
**Worship of God**  
Examined, Stated.  
On the behalf of  
**DISSENTERS,**  
And calmly Argued.



Where the Readers may see wherein Dissenters are dissatisfied, in a Reverend Authors late Resolutions in that Case, and themselves by it, judge on whose side the Truth in that matter lieth.

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Rom. 14. 23. *Whatsoever is not of Faith is sin.*

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*J. Pamph. 2017. 7.*  
L O N D O N.

Printed for Joseph Collier, at the Bible, on London Bridge, next the Gate. 1683.

The CASE of

WILLIAM WOODWARD

et al

WILLIAM WOODWARD

Examined, &c.

et al

DISSENTERS

et al

et al

Rom. 14. 23. N. B. 1793

et al

Printed for J. W. ... 1793





The CASE of  
**Indifferent Things**  
Used in the  
**Worship of God**  
EXAMINED.

**I**F indeed those who Dissent from the *Liturgy*, and *Ceremonies* of the *Church of England*, (though in all things agreeing to the *Doctrine* professed in her *Articles*, and desirous to make her *Rule*, the *Rule* also of their *Lives* and *Conversations*) be such *damnable Schismatics*, as they have been represented, and a *Separation* from that *Church*, (though but *partial*) be a *Separation* from *Christ*, as an *Union with her* is the same with *Union with Christ*; they have reason with all thankfulness to *Recognize* the *Charity* of those *Reverend* and *Worthy Persons*, who within these few weeks have contributed their charitable *Assistance* to them (and that at so cheap a rate) to *save their Souls from death*, and to *recover them out of this* (at least by them supposed) *snare*

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of the Devil ; for as to save a Soul is the greatest Charity, so to suffer *sin upon our Brother*, is indeed to hate him in our heart, *Lev. 19. 17.* They are therefore highly concerned, to look narrowly, and see whether indeed they have done according to the Cry against them ; and if they apprehend not, yet at least to let so great friends know the reason why they differ from them in their apprehensions. And at least to be thankful to them for the *Lady's hand* they have used in handling (their supposed) sores, as believing that God is not in the *Whirlwinds* of mens passions, but in the *still voice* ; and that *Solomon* spake like a wise man, when he taught the World, that *a soft answer turneth away wrath*, whereas *grievous words stir up anger.* Bones of Contention (like Flints upon a Cushion) are best broke by a *soft Tongue.*

Amongst the late Writers, there being one *Reverend Person* who hath more struck at (*fugulum causæ*) the very Root of the Controversies in debate, in his Case about *Indifferent things*, (for whether the Use and Imposition of the *Liturgy*, or the *Ceremonies* ( which are the appurtenances to it ) be the cause of mens Dissent, still it seemeth to be bottomed in the diverse *apprehensions* of our *Brethren* and us, about *Things Indifferent* (at least in our *Brethrens* apprehensions) and if we could look upon them under that Notion, possibly our Contest would neither be great nor long.) We have therefore chosen to begin our Debate there, only adding, that if that *Reverend Author* had been pleased to have determined *who is to be Judge of Things Indifferent* as to a mans practice, whether his *own Conscience*, or his *Superiour*, and *what is our duty*, where we upon Arguments to us seeming highly probable, judge a thing unlawful which our Superiour judgeth indifferent, he would (in our Opinion) have made the matter in dispute, much fitter for an Argument, where-

as

... judge, that as he hath stated it, he  
out begg'd the Question; supposing those things  
*Indifferent*, which (such it may be is their weaknels)  
they cannot but judge *unlawful*, as they have often told  
their Brethren.

There is none of them but agreeth with this *Reverend*  
*Author* in his Notion of *Things Indifferent*, explained, p. 3. Page 3.  
*That they are such things, as by the Divine Law are nei-*  
*ther enjoyned, nor forbidden, Things indetermined by the*  
*Law of God in Nature or Scripture; Middle things, be-*  
*twixt lawful and unlawful.* From whence we think it fol-  
lows, that none with reference to our practice can deter-  
mine and judge what is *Indifferent*, but he must also judge  
of *Duty* and *Sin*; for how shall any determine the middle  
before he hath measured the *distance* from the *Extremes*?  
And whoso maketh any power (forreign to his own  
Soul) judge of a thing *Indifferent*, maketh that *power* also  
the Judge of *Good* and *Evil*, *Duty* and *Sin*; for if he can-  
not determine what is my *Duty*, nor what is my *Sin*  
(which surely none but God can) how shall he be able to  
determine what is neither the one nor the other, but  
lieth in the middle betwixt both: So that as to any per-  
sons practice, there can be no *Umpire* betwixt a man and  
his own *Conscience*: For his practical Judgment of *Con-*  
*science* alone must to him interpret the Will of God as to  
*Good* or *Evil*, without which determination, he can never  
judge of what lieth between them both. It is true, that  
as neither *Duty* nor *Sin* derive their nature or denomina-  
tion from the private *Conscience*, but from the *Divine*  
*Revelation*, so neither do *Things Indifferent*. They are  
not things which we fancy, but which *indeed are not*  
*commanded or forbidden*. But as to our practice, what  
Judge have we to determine what things are so? what *In-*  
*terpreter* of this *Divine Will*, but our own practical



Judgment, which must as to our practice determine the Will of God to us as to Duty and Sin, and consequently, as to what lies betwixt both, unless we will outwit even the *Church of Rome*, and constitute an *Infallible Judge* as to matter of Manners, not as to matters of Faith alone. No Superiour that ever we heard of, arrogated to himself a power to determine *Sin* and *Duty*, and how he should determine of what (confessedly) lies betwixt them both, partaking of neither without a Predetermination (as to his Inferiours practice) of both the extremes is (we confess) to us very hard to conceive; so as though there be things that are *Indifferent*, yet what things are so every man must judge for himself, no other can judge for him.

This seemeth most highly reasonable in matters of *Divine Worship*, being *actions*, of which, above all others, good Christians ought to be tender both in regard of the Vengeance of God so revealed against no sins in holy Writ, as against Errours of this nature, and the great difference of *True* and *False Worship*, lying in the *Institution*, or *Non-Institution* of it; and what more reasonable than that God should prescribe his own homage? What earthly Prince, or Master in a Family, doth not challenge this prerogative to himself? or what is there of any value in our Acts of *homage* to the *Supreme Being* more than *Obedience* to his Will. If that be wanting, the *Salt is wanting to the Sacrifices of our God*, which (as we humbly conceive) leaves no more room for *perfective*, than *corruptive* Additions to Divine Worship, supposing the Divine Rule sufficient; for in that case, what we call a *perfective*, is indeed a *corruptive* Addition; what can be an act of Obedience to God, but what he hath commanded, whether he hath forbidden it or no? If we bid our Servant go a mile, and he goeth two (possibly hoping to do us service in it) we hope his going the *second mile* is no act of

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of Obedience to us, though we did not forbid him. In matters of this nature no act of *supererogation* is allowable, because it can be no *Obedience*; and *Obedience* is all that is worth a rush in the action, and much better than Sacrifice.

Nor is the *lawfulness* or *unlawfulness* of an action to be measured, without a due view and consideration of *Circumstances*, which have so great an influence upon Moral actions, as the diversity of them alters the nature of the action. *Bonum ex causis integris*, so as the same thing may with some *Circumstances* be our duty, which with others is our sin, which *Circumstances* varying as to individual persons, the same thing really lawful to one, or to persons in one Age, may be unlawful to another, or in another Age; According to the Opinion of a particular *Conscience*, the Offence or no Offence of Jews, Gentiles, or the Churches of Christ, &c. so as we cannot conceive how it is possible that in things of Divine Worship, things of an indifferent nature should be the just matter of any humane determination, further than the particular practice of the person determining; for the *Circumstances* of another may vastly differ from his, and what is indeed indifferent (to his practice) at least may be utterly unlawful to his Inferiour as to his practice.

From hence followeth, that though what the *Reverend Casuist* saith, p. 4. be true, *That there are Things Indifferent in* (we mean only relating to) *the Worship of God*, yet we cannot agree that *such things may, though not prescribed, be lawfully used in it*, if he means, by those who cannot so apprehend them indifferent, whatever they in themselves be, because, though the Will of God be the *Primary Rule*, yet a mans *Practical Judgment* is, and must be the *Proximate Rule* of his actions; for he that doth what he verily believeth to be unlawful, is equally guilty with  
Page 4.



with him who doth what indeed is so. For though his *Think so* be not the *measure of sin*, yet it is to him the measure of it, because he knoweth no better, nor can better inform himself, and God hath set him no other Judge. And were it not that we thus believe, we should think a Membership in the Church of *Rome*, were much more advisable than in any *Protestant* Church; the *Papists* have Superiours enough, and many of them men of great *Learning* and *Judgment*, in whose determination were it lawful to acquiesce, and to submit the *Practical Judgment* of our Conscience blindfolded to theirs, we might quickly arrive at a *Catholick Unity*, the most desirable thing in the World.

Besides, that it is impossible a man should be guiltless in doing what he verily judgeth unlawful, because he manifestly by it sheweth himself in love with sin; for, though the action be not so which he doth, yet his doing of it is so, because not from a *persuasion of its lawfulness*, but of the contrary: So that considering his action as an humane action, which ought to proceed from Judgment and deliberation; it is inordinate, and therefore sinful, and as much disobedience to God as the act of one of our Children or Servants that should do what we would have done ignorantly, and verily believing he shall anger us by doing of it.

The *Reverend Author* takes it for granted, that we grant the *Circumstances of time and place* are *indifferent*, and left to *humane Prudence* to fix and determine and p. 5. He thinks that if *Natural Circumstances* be such as the action cannot be performed without, it will much serve to justify most of the things in dispute. Our *Reverend Author* cannot but know that Dr. *Ames*, and many more have told him they mean by *Natural Circumstances*, Such as respect not the action as a *Religious act*, but as an *humane act*,

act, and so *time* and *place* must be too, being what is as necessary to a *Lawyers Pleading*, as to a *Churches Praying*. It is very true these must be determined by *humane prudence*, but that they must necessarily be determined by the *Prudence of the Superiour*, and may not be determined by the *Prudence of the agents*, is another Question; not to dispute which, the most sober Dissenters will agree in these things to obey the Command of Superiors provided it be not such as by *Circumstances* it is made sinful. For even in things truly indifferent we know that it is necessary that we should observe the three general rules of the Apostle given us for our Government in those things. 1. To do all for the honour and glory of God. 2. So as least offence be given to any. 3. So as shall be most for edification, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31, 32, 33. So as if our Superiours shall Command us never to Preach nor pray but at eleven of the clock at night or three in the morning, and to meet for it no where but in some sordid place, or where half the people could not hear, or the Minister not speak without danger of his health: Or where meeting we must be exposed to the scorn and reproach of many sober Persons; these *Circumstances* would take away the indifferency of the thing as being contrary to the Apostolical Rule in cases of that nature. He thinks that *Gesture* and *Habit* are as indifferent as *time* and *place*, and so consequently a *Surplice* and *Kneeling*, the first being an habit, the Second a *Gesture*.

We do think that *Habit* and *Gesture* especially the latter ( for habit surely is not naturally necessary ( we read of none before the Fig-leaves were sown together, *Gen.* 3.) are natural *Circumstances*, the one morally necessary, the other naturally so, for though a Person may pray naked, yet he must do it, standing, sitting, lying or kneeling, and by the Custom of civillized Nations some habit is necessary

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ry also ; nor hath God any where in the letter of Scripture determined what clothes we should wear in Worship, nor what posture we should use. For we have better thoughts of our *judicious Author* then to think that he will say, that because God hath not prescribed that we should pray *knœling* or *sitting*, or *prostrate*, or *standing*, therefore our Superiors may Command all their subjects never to pray publickly, but groveling upon their face or sitting on their pesses. Or because God hath no where Comanded this or that habit, nor forbidden any, nor directed whether our clothes should be of *Wool*, or *Silk*, or *Hair*, or *Skins* ; that therefore Superiours may determine that all Ministers, should pray, or Preach covered with an Oxes hide, or Lamb Skins, or in such a dress, as *Aaron* was to go into the holy place in. Nor such a dress as *Popish Priests* ordinarily wear in saying *Mass*, and at no other times. Nor can we think that so *Reverend* a Person would say, that in case of any such Commands, Ministers or people might lawfully obey. If not, we would gladly know why ? If the answer be because of the indecency, or because of the Scandal of them, or because of the apish imitation of Idolaters would be in them ; We ask no more, and will freely grant him, that such *time*, *place*, *Gestures*, *habits* are lawful, as may be made use of without apparent dishonour to God, and exposing Religion to a reproch ; and without, 2. Any reasonable offence to good people, 3. And with a profit to those that use them equal to other times places habits, and Gestures, with any other *time*, *place*, *habit* or *Gesture*. And when all is said that can be, here must be the issue, for no Superiour hath a *power for destruction*, but only for *Edification*.

Nor can we be fully of our *Reverend Brothers* mind, that, *In the Worship of God* ( in political things ( the Superiours proper Province the case is otherwise ) Superiours may



may determine Circumstances which God in his Word hath left at liberty, God left it at liberty to the Jews in the passover, *Exod. 11. 5.* To take the Lamb *from the Sheep, or from the Goats;* their *meat offering, Lev. 2. 5, 7.* might be *baked on a flat plate, or in a frying pan,* they might take the peace offering of the *herd or of the flock, Lev. 3. 1, 6.* The burnt offering might either be of the *herd or of the flock, Lev. 1. 3, 10.* The burnt Sacrifice might be *Turtle Doves, or young Pigeons, v. 14.* We offer it to the Judgment of the whole reasonable world, whether *Moses* after this might have made a law commanding the Jews at the *Passover* to use none but *kids,* for the *burnt offering,* none but *Bullocks* for the *meat offering,* never to offer it but *fried,* and for their burnt Sacrifice to bring no *Pigeons* of any sort but only *Turtle Doves,* and whether had any ruler in *Israel* made any such a law, a Conscientious Jew could have thought it lawful to have obeyed it. If not, let not our Reverend Brother think it strange if we judge the same of *Words in Prayer,* which God hath left at liberty ( observing the general rule of consonancy to his will ) of *Habits and Gestures* supposing them left at liberty, and that none who is to use them verily judgeth them unlawful.

We give a great deference to our civil Superiors commanding in things apparently conducive to the keeping of the Peace, the Government of Nations, we acknowledge we are not in such things to dispute expediency with them. God hath said *they are Gods,* but even in things of that nature, 100 instances may be given of things in their own Nature indifferent, at least not Comanded, where the highest pleaders for absolute Obedience will pull their necks out of this Collar, and not touch those heavy burdens so much as with their little fingers, which they so briskly lay upon others shoulders, Will they allow King

and Parliament, to make a Law, that being sick they shall use no Physitian but such a one as they shall appoint, or that in questions about their estates, they should only go to such Lawyers as they nominate? Will they eat no flesh in Lent, or in Fish days, because by Gods law it is indifferent? Would they obey their Superiors though by a law commanding them to make all their Sons Taylors and Shoemakers, &c. yet where hath God commanded or forbidden any thing in these cases?

Will they reside all upon their livings? Take no pluralities? All know Superiours have Commanded this, and perhaps though the letter of holy Writ doth not, yet the reason of it Commands the same things. Are they the Commands of their *Ecclesiastical Superiours* which they think oblige? And are former *Canons* not contrary to our statute Law (as is pleaded) obliging? Will they then, or do they never drink healths? they know little that know not that the *Canons of the Church* forbid them, if not in two, yet I am sure in one Council, to drink healths?

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Our *Reverend Author* goeth on to prove that *some things in the Worship of God are indifferent*. If by *in the Worship*, he means relating to the *Worship of God* considered meerly as an humane act, no man can deny it; but if he means there are *any acts of Worship* are so, we cannot agree it, but we will not presume any thing so absurd of so worthy a Person. For Circumstances, we before said, we doubted it not.

*Ibid.*

Our Authors first reason is drawn from the *consideration of the Rules* (as he saith) laid down in the Gospel relating to the administration of Divine Worship which (*except what refer to the Elements, &c. in the Sacrament*) are taken from the Nature of the thing, and so alwaies were obliging to all ages, under the several variations and forms of Divine Worship, and will be alwaies.



“ waies so to Christians in the World, viz. Such as re-  
 “ spect Order, Decency and Edification, insisted on, 1 Cor.  
 “ 14. 26, 40. So that we are no otherwise bound, then  
 “ as bound by those measures, and where we are not  
 “ bound by them we are free.

This is then the Opinion of our *Reverend Brother*, that for *Circumstances* attending the acts of Worship, we are obliged to nothing, but only to see that what we do, be *orderly, decent, and for Edification*; for before the Law none were more obliged, &c. To which we crave leave to answer, 1. That we can understand nothing by *orderly* or according to order, but *without Confusion*, whatsoever is not done confusedly is done orderly. 2. By *decency* we can understand nothing, but what is opposed to *sordidly*, ( of which the law of Nature or guise of Countreyes must be the measure ) nor can we think of any action that is not decent, if the Contrary to it be not *indecent*, in the Eye of Nature or Common Judgment. We cannot apprehend it in the power of man to Create a decency. The greatest Emperours wearing an Antick habit, or commanding it to be worn, would not make it decent, till it could prescribe, or had obtained a common consent. *Edification* is a larger word, and signifieth what the same Apostle in the same *Epistle* calleth the *Profit of many that they might be saved*. So then, nothing ought to be done in so grave an action as the Worship of God, but what may be done without *Confusion*, the contrary to which the Apostle plainly reflects on, 1 Cor. 14. 26, 40. 2. So as neither the Light of Nature, nor the common Judgment of Christians shall judge indecent. Nor any thing 3. But *what may be for our own or others profit*, that we or they might *be saved*, of which nature can nothing be that is idle, and superfluous; and certainly in all *Acts of Obedience* (for which there is a sufficient

Rule in the Law prescribing them ) every act expressing no *Obedience*, must be vain, idle and superfluous. We must freely grant we have no other Rules nor Measures. That which is not commanded can bring God no glory ; that which is idle can do our selves no good ; that which reasonably offendeth cannot profit others.

But we shall not need debate this any further, for all that our *Reverend Author* doth conclude from hence is, *That there are some particular Circumstances relating to the Worship of God, which in their own nature are Indifferent, and to be regulated by humane prudence, which yet may be sinful, as offending General Rules given us, by which we are to govern our selves as to such Circumstances.* This (if we understand him) is his sense, p. 7, 8. in which we heartily agree with him. As also with all which he saith, p. 8, and 9. (saying that we think it impossible to be proved, that either the *Love-Fests*, or *Holy Kifs*, were any more than Civil Usages in use yet amongst friends, which the Apostle commanded Christians to use as became Christians, in a *sober, temperate, and chaste*, or holy manner.)

e 9.  
But we cannot so well agree with what he saith in the close of p. 9. about the *Polonian Synods* decree as to *Kneeling at the Sacrament*. We very well know, that since our Church hath declared, that to do it *as to the Bread*, were an *Idolatry to be abhorred*: And that it is not intended as an homage to the *Body of Christ there really present*, which *Body is in Heaven only*; many grave and Learned men do not confidently judge it unlawful, considering that in all probability our Saviour first administred it *Kneeling* and *Sitting* backward upon his Leggs (after the Jewish manner of eating) adding *Leaning* (by them also used at the Paschal Supper;)

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all which were different from the posture instituted at the First Passover. But yet many others do scruple the lawfulness of performing an *Act of Adoration* ( which Kneeling in Worship alwaies was accounted) before a Creature exposed to them as the *Objectum moticum*, or inciting Object of such Adoration, which others would also stumble at, if our *Litargy* had not declared it only a *posture of Reverence*, which phrase it were advisable that all the Sons of that Mother would use instead of the more offensive phrase a *posture of Adoration*. It is not at all to be wondred, that the *Lutherans* in that *Petritonian Synod*, should determine as they did, considering their particular *Tenet* for the *Real Presence of the Body of Christ*, and the ordinary passion and rashness even of *Luther* himself as to that point, and the intemperance of his Tongue in all Debates in that case ; and that his Followers have been much worse than he, and more absurd in their Tenets as to it. Did we believe that the Body of Christ were there really present, we should think it not only a matter of Decency, but highest Duty not to Kneel only, but to fall down and Worship before the Lord our Maker, without any respect to the Bread as exciting us to it ; but our Church hath declared, and we do believe Christ's Body is in Heaven, and not of a Nature that (contrary to the Nature of any Body) it can be in a thousand places at the same time. Those therefore that in that point hesitate, ought to be tenderly dealt with, being ready with all due Reverence, and expressions of it, to receive those holy Mysteries ; but fearing a posture of Adoration in it used by *Idolatrous Papists*, who absurdly think the Bread is on the sudden turned into the imperceptible Body of Christ : And by the *Lutherans*, who believe such a Body of Christ is there really present, as their sense and reason tells



tells them is no Body, being neither exposed to our senses, nor having any Dimensions, nor being limited by any ambient Air, or the boundaries of this or that place.

We having agreed that there are some Circumstances of Humane Actions in God's Worship, not only *Natural*, common to all Actions, but of a Moral Nature too, relating to them as *such Actions*, which God having neither commanded nor forbidden, may be used by those who judge them so, are not much concerned in what our *Reverend Author* saith upon his second Head, where that is all which he undertakes to prove. Only we think they must not be such as have any thing of the *Nature of Worship in them*, but may as well be used in meerly Civil Actions, as in Religious Duties. If there be any thing of homage to God in them, they are *Worship*, (which must have an Institution) but if there be nothing of that, but they be only used as necessary Circumstances of Humane Actions, or such without which the Light of Nature, or common usage shews us the thing cannot be done, or conveniently, or comelily done, we believe they may be used, provided the Persons using have no contrary Opinion of them upon particular grounds not common to all men.

Thus our Saviour Preached in the *Synagogues* as Places of conveniency, and upon the same account we use Pulpits to Preach in, and Pews to sit in, and Bells to call men to the Worship of God. Thus before Christ did eat the *Paschal Supper*, he drank a *Cup of Wine*, and doubtless at it he drank also, though it be not recorded. People need no Institution to drink while they are eating. Thus he used the *Jewish Posture* in eating the Pasover, being a Posture no where (that we know of) used by Idolaters nor being any Posture of *Adoration*, but their ordinary Posture of *eating Meat* (setting Leaning aside,  
and

and whether he leaned or no we know not.) Thus the Apostles used the *hours of Prayer*, which also they might have changed if they had pleased. That the Jews ever sent any to Gaols, or Excommunicated any for not keeping to those hours, we do not find. There is nothing of Religion in the time, more than in any other part of time. Thus St. Paul used *Circumcision* and *Purification*, which yet the *Apostles* would not allow to be Imposed, *Acts* 15. 20, 28. That Christ was in an Act of Worship when *he washed his Disciples feet*, our Reverend Brother hath not proved, p. 12. As to the *Love Feasts*, and *Holy Kiss*, they were no Acts of Worship, nor used in any such Acts (so no proper Instances, as we conceive.)

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There are few Dissenters we conceive but will readily grant,

1. That *before or after any act of Worship on the Lords day* (which is the Solemn time of Worship) they may do many things, which God hath not prescribed but left indifferent, they may eat meat rost, or boiled, put on a garment of Silk, or Wollen, and many such things more, being lawful to be done on the Lords day, and *that before or after an act of Worship any day*, they may put on any habits, use any Gestures, do any acts, not forbidden, though not Comanded, the indifferency of acts to be done by men while they are imployed in an act of Worship is all the point in question. Those who stumble at the *Surplice* (which not many do) or the *Cross*, or *kneeling* at the Eucharist, do not think it unlawful to wear a garment of that form and colour, or to make a cross upon a pack of cloth or stuff, or upon a Sheep for a note of distinction, though they have no institution for such a thing, they only Scruple to do it in an *act of Worship*.

2. That *in an act of Worship*; they may do some things which are either *necessary* to the action, or *convenient* for  
the



*the action*, and are only generally appointed as things without which no *humane action* can be, or such or *such a grave action* ought not to be performed: Or the action cannot be done *conveniently* with reference to its end. All humane actions must have time, and place, the Persons doing them must be in some habit, or Gesture; Dissenters never lookt for an institution to prove that they ought to go to some Church near them, or that they might use a Bell to tell them the time, that the Minister might use a Pulpit, and they might use Pews, or Pesses or Mats with an hundred things of the like nature used by them every day in acts of Worship; we cannot therefore think that our *Reverend Brother* hath either dealt *closely* or *ingenuously* with us; not *ingenuously*, for he ought not to have suggested things no Dissenter ever told him; not *closely*, for he can never make any just proof, that while our Saviour was worshipping his Father, he stept aside to *wash* his *disciples feet*: Or that the Primitive Christians were either *kissing*, or *feasting* one another, in the time or *act of Worship*; we hope the Minister must wear his *Surplice* in his *acts of Worship*, & *sign with the Cross* within the complex act of Worship, for he after it with Prayers concludes the action. The people must kneel *in the act of receiving*. But we do not know how our Brother will ever be able, to prove that the Primitive Christians were ever kissing or feasting while they were in the act of Praying, Preaching or Hearing or Baptizing or breaking Bread at the Lords Table; what Dissenter would Scruple (did his Superiors Command such a thing) to put on a Surplice and wear it an hour in his study before he went to Preach a Lecture (though he would think it like being imployed in watering the dead tree or with his finger to make a Cross on the Church gate as he came home?)

3. Some posture in an humane action, being necessary, and

and none by God determined, in every Act of Worship; where there is no determination, they believe themselves at liberty, and think they ought not to be determined by any thing but their own practical Judgment according to present Circumstances, it is a *liberty with which God hath made them free*, and such a liberty as *Circumstances not to be foreseen, may necessarily incline them to determine themselves in one way or other*. They do not believe that the Children of *Israel* could by *Moses* and *Aaron* be determined to bring only *Bullocks*, or *Sheep*, or *Lambs*, or *Goats*, or *Turtle-Doves*, or young *Pigeons*, when God had left them a liberty (as their Circumstances ruled) to bring either a *Bullock*, or a *Sheep*, or a *Goat*, or *Turtle-Doves*, or young *Pigeons*. They think that where in matters of *Worship* God hath wrote *Or's*, whether by his *Pen* in sacred Writing; or by his *not prescribing* the particular Circumstances, no man can blot them out, though themselves may as to their own practice, for this or that particular time, or Act, where they cannot use more than one of those Postures or Circumstances.

Our *Reverend Author*, p. 13. thinks that *Dr. Ames* hath said nothing in this case, in saying that some things brought as Instances of the lawfulness of things in acts of *Worship*, which yet are not prescribed, are not to the purpose, because they are but *Civil Usages*, and used as well out, as in the *Worship of God*.

1. "Because this will justifie the use of a *Surplice*, white *Garments* being used in *Civil Cases*."

2. *Because Civil Usages used in Religious Acts, become Religious.*

3. *Because it is evident, that Christ's washing the Disciples feet, the holy Kifs, and Love-Feasts, were not meerly Civil Usages.*

D

4. *Because*

4. *Because then every thing lawful in Civil Usage would be lawful in a Religious Act.*

5. *Because then the Position is destroyed, That nothing is to be used in the Worship of God, without Prescription, except the Natural Circumstances of Action.*  
See p. 13, 14.

If we do not mistake, the Reason why Dr. Ames and others do think that *Civil Usages* may be used in *Acts of Worship*, is, because they are either *necessary* to the *Action*, as it is an *Humane Act*, or *convenient*, or *comely* for the *Acts* with reference to their ends, and they do think that such *Usages* which may ordinarily be used in other *Humane Actions* of a grave nature, may be used in *Acts of Worship*; and being so used, are no more than appendants to the *Action*, either as a merely *Humane Act*, or as a grave *Humane Act*. Hence they never looked for an Institution for a Minister's Preaching, more than for an Orator's making an Oration *in a Pulpit*, nor for *Seats* for them to sit in while they hear a Sermon, more than for the like conveniency while they are hearing an *Orator* for an hour together. Nor for a *Bell* to call them to *Worship*, more than for a *Bell* to call a Family to Dinner or Supper. Nor for a *Gown* or a *Cloak* to Preach in, more than for the same ordinarily to walk in up and down the Town. But yet some of them cannot but look for an Institution for a *Garment*, which they must be *tyed to use in the Worship of God*, and *restrained from the wearing of at other times*, not only because here what God hath left at liberty to them is restrained, but because the appropriation of it to the *Religious Act*, speaks something of *Religion and Homage to God* intended in it.

Nor can we think that civil usages become *Religious* when used in *Religious acts*, what Religion can any possibly imagine in the use of a *Pulpit*, or a *Pew*, or a *Bell*? For  
they



they only relate to the *action* as an *humane action*, or a *grave humane action*, to be performed by one, to many, not as it is an act by which an *homage* is paid unto God. Nor is there any evidence, that Christ *washed his disciples feet* as, or in an *act of Worship*. Much less that the *holy kiss*, or *Love feasts* were so used, only indeed Christians in the use of them were obliged to behave themselves *religiously*, that is, as Persons who feared God, and in all their actions, were obliged to behave themselves temperately and chastely. Nor can we conceive by what consequence it follows. That because some *Circumstances* necessary for all actions whether *civil* or *sacred*, or *convenient* for some actions both *Civil* and *Sacred*, or *decent* for any *grave actions*, whether *Civil* or *Sacred*, may without any particular prescription be used in *Sacred Actions* as well as in *civil*, especially *grave Actions*, therefore *all civil usages* whether so *necessary*, or so *convenient*, or so *decent*, yea or no, may be brought into a *sacred use*. By all this it will easily appear, that the *Position* of Dissenters is not destroyed, but only a *Position* which their adversaries have imposed upon them without any ground from what they ever asserted, or we have read at least.

But our *Reverend Author*, p. 15. thinks to corroborate his *Proposition*, That *things Indifferent, though not prescribed may be lawfully used in Divine Worship*. Indeed as stated by him it needed no corroboration. For none in his wits did ever deny it, had our *Reverend Author* been pleased to have stated the question ( as indeed it is ) thus:

*Whether things, the doing, or not doing of which God hath not prescribed, being neither necessary to the action as an humane action, nor convenient for it ( with reference to those that perform it ) for the ends of it, nor naturally nor in common judgment such, without which it cannot be done decently, may be lawfully used in the Worship of God by all Persons, or by any Persons, who judge that God hath forbid-*

den the part to which, they are by men determined, either in the letter, or by the just reason, and consequence of holy Writ, as forbidding all useless, and Superfluous things, in so sacred actions, or things not necessary and used ordinarily in Idolatrous and Superstitious Services, or judging that in Worship every man is sui juris, and ought not to be deprived of the liberty God hath left him, may be universally and lawfully used.

He might have met with very many that had differed from him, but that things indifferent though not prescribed, may be lawfully used in divine Worship, none (that we know of) ever doubted.

Our Reverend Author will yet prove this *ex abundantia*, p. 15, 16, 17. Because those that judge so (which indeed are none at a l) must else,

1. Have had no Communion with the Primitive Churches, who all used some such things.

2. Nor must they have Communion with any Churches now in being, which all have some such things in use amongst them.

3. Nor must any have Communion with them, for they themselves determine themselves in such things. This is the sum of what he saith, p. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19.

For the Primitive Churches we shall not much concern our selves more then in inquiring what we should have been, and done, if Adam had abode in his state of Innocency. Actual Communion with them is to us impossible. what usages they had, or with what liberty and indulgence, some things amongst them were used we cannot tell, but when we read Tertullians book *de Idololatriâ*, We are apt to think we must have had no Communion with them if we would keep to any Usages (how indifferent soever in themselves) that had been unnecessary, and used once in idolatrous Services. Nor can our Reverend Author  
make

make it appear to us, that none could have any Communion with those Churches, unless he did *Eat the Lords Supper fasting, or Prayed toward the East*. But leaving their practices as great incertainties, and to be known only upon the credit of their writings published by the known Depravers of all writings that have come to their hands, and have had in them any thing not for their interest, let us consider the present *Churches of Christ* with whom indeed we are concern'd to hold Communion.

2. That every particular Christian, must practise every thing which the Churches practise which he hath Communion with, or be concluded to have no Communion with it, is to us a *New assertion*; we do most firmly believe that Christ had Communion with the Jewish Church, and as firmly believe he had nothing to do with them in the *Traditional part of their Worship* (which he so often and steadily condemned) only in the part owned by his Father. Besides, we ever took the Church of God in *Scotland*, and those in *New Engl.* to say nothing of the *Reformed Churches in Holland, France, and Suitzerland* to be true Churches of Christ. Yet we have not heard of any thing they have in them, used in Acts of Worship (and not coming within the latitude of the Circumstances before mentioned) but what is prescribed (excepting only some *Forms of Prayer* relating to the Sacrament;) none of all these receive the Sacrament *kneeling*, nor compel any to receive it *standing* or *sitting*, but leave at liberty what God hath left so. For the *Forms of Prayer*, we have not heard of any compelled to use them, if they do use them, we know no reason but people may hear them, if any Scruples the use of them, he may yet have Communion with the Church, we hope, though he doth not act in it as a Minister.

3. But if we contradict our selves we are indeed highly  
to



to be blamed, we would gladly know wherein. Our Reverend Author tells us, *We have no Command nor example for Sprinkling the Child in Baptism.* With due Submission to our Reverend Author, we hope that, *Matth. 28.* we have a Command for a sacred *washing with water* in the *name of the Father Son and Holy Ghost.* Every one knows, that a Person or thing, may be washed either by *dipping him or it in water,* or by *Sprinkling or pouring water upon him or it.* God hath left us to our liberty which way to do it; we are only to determine our selves by *Circumstances.* We cannot think *dipping a Child* in our Country lawful, because it may probably be the Childs death, we use *Sprinkling or pouring* indifferently. Have we not a prescript for this? One way or other we must *wash it.* By dipping we must not do it, only the other two ways remain, we sometimes use one, sometimes the other. 2 Obj. *We have no Command for sitting at the Lords Supper.* Nor do we make it necessary, it is indifferent to us to sit, or to stand, if any scruple *kneeling,* it is for the reason before given, because it is a *posture of adoration,* and there is before their Eyes brought an *objectum motivum,* the lawfulness of an *adoration* of God under that Circumstance is the only thing they question. For *conceived Prayer* which is the next not prescribed thing our Reverend Author mentions, we know no body saith, no other must be used in Gods Worship; that which hath been said is, *That those to whom God hath given the gift of Prayer ought to use their own gifts in that act, not other mens;* and our Reverend Brother knows that he and others have been told where, and how this is prescribed, both in the letter, and reason of holy writ. For his third instance about *laying hands on a book* when we swear, It is no further allowed by us then as a convenient Circumstance to shew that we are the Persons that invoke God at that time; a civil, no sacred usage. Our compliance  
with

with it, is but an evidence to our Superiours of our readiness to obey them as to such Comanded Circumstances as come within the latitude before expressed, which are no Ceremonies properly so called, but meer necessary, or Convenient Circumstances either of Actions, or such or such Actions considered abstractly from any Religion.

For the other self condemning instances produced by our *Reverend Author* we do not think them worth the while to reply any thing, not only because we design not the defence of the particular Sentiments of any party, but because we apprehend them only brought *Ad Populum*, not one of them relating to *Divine Worship*; to Acts in which our *Author* had restrained his question; and this, p. 19. he himself is sensible of, but tells us, *the case is the same*. We hope not, till we agree so, who assure him we think ten times is more allowed to *humane Prudence in matters of Government* than in matters of *Worship* where we pay an *immediate homage to God*, and have reason to expect, that himself should tell us how it should be paid. Our *Reverend Brother* ought not in this case so much as to have named any such things, lest any should imagine his hope was more to out-number us in words; then outweigh us by Scripture and reason.

Pag. 18, 19

But he is now come to that which he tells us *must put an issue to the dispute for if there be no such position in Scripture, either expressed in it, or to be gathered from good consequence from it, they have gained the point, but if there be; then they must give it up*. We join with them in that issue, alwaies provided that he alloweth us to form our own position, which we form as before, in this manner :

Page 19.

*There are no things in or within Acts of Worship to which God hath not determined us by his revealed will, and which are*

are

are not necessary either to the Action, as an humane Action, or Convenient for it (as to those that perform it) with reference to the end of such Actions, nor naturally, nor in Common Judgment such, without the use of which the Action must be sordidly performed, which may lawfully be used in such Acts by all Persons, or by any Persons, who judge that God hath forbidden them the use of such things, either in the letter, or in the just reason, and consequence of holy Writ. As forbidding all useles, or Superfluous things in Acts of Worship, or things which not being in themselves necessary, have been used Ordinarily in Idolatrous, and Superstitious Services, or who judge, that as to things in Gods Worship, not determined by God, every man is sui juris and ought to be determined by God alone to this or that part.

This is the Dissenters Position explained. If our Reverend Author will encounter this, we are ready to defend it. If not, it lyes upon him to prove, that those things to which he would have all Dissenters conform to are,

1. Things Naturally necessary to all humane Acts. Or,
2. Things convenient for them as humane acts, with reference to the true ends of such acts. Or,
3. Such as Nature shews to be comely for all humane Acts, or such grave Acts at least, or which Common judgment so judgeth. Or,
4. That men may do what they reasonably judge sinfull. Or,
5. That there is no reason to judge useles, and Superfluous Actions in the Worship of God sinful. Or, No reason,
6. So to judge of the things not necessary to be used in Gods Worship, and which have been, and are ordinarily used in Idolatrous Worship. Or,

7. That



7. That there is no reason to judge, that Christians in matters of Worship ought to be left at liberty in things where God hath so left them.

If our *Reverend Author* hath taken the Position as here stated, and argued it, we shall consider what he hath said, if not we shall very lightly pass over what he hath said, to what scarce any body denies, and expect till he hath justified all or any of the seven last mentioned particulars.

Our *Rev. Author* attempts the answer of all Ordinary exceptions against the *Lawfulness of doing some things in Divine Worship which God hath not Commanded.*

The first is, From the charge upon the Israelites for *doing things which God Commanded them not*, which is not only, *Lev* 10. 1. but, *Deut.* 17. 3. *Jer.* 7. 31. *Ch.* 32. 35. *Jer.* 19. 5. *Jer.* 29. 23. Obj. 1.

That which our *Reverend Author* saith in answer is no more then what hath been many times said, *that by things not Commanded are meant things forbidden*, and hath nothing to prove it, but only,

1. *That the things mentioned in Scripture to which that phrase was applied, were things forbidden, as Idolatry, offering strange fire, &c.* Which is true, but why are such things expressed to us in this phrase as *not Commanded only*, but only to let us know the doing of a thing in Gods Worship *not Commanded* is guilt enough.

2. *That the guilt of the sin of Idolatry and Superstition lay in this, that it was a thing not Commanded*, had God Commanded those things, they had been a true worship, and acceptable.

2. He saith, *the Jews did do what God Commanded them not*, David designed a Temple, the Jews instituted Purim, and Worship in Synagogues. These are all the instances given by our *Reverend Author*, answered long since by Dr. Ames, in his *Fresh suit.* David indeed designed a

Temple for God without a Command, but God Checked him for it for this very reason, 2 Sam. 7. 7. and though he approved his generally good intention, yet he restrained him as to his *Act*, as may be seen in *that Chap.* It lyeth upon our Author to prove the *feast of Purim* was kept as a *Religious feast*: there is no order for any *Religious Acts* to be performed in it. If it were, it was generally Commanded under the Precepts of *giving thanks* for publick mercies. The Worshipping of God in *Synagogues* wanted no special Command, being but a Circumstance Convenient, if not necessary to publick Worship considered as an humane Act: A multitude of people could not meet to Worship God together without a fit place.

Obj. 2.  
P. 24, 25.

The 2d Objection which our *Reverend Author* pretends to answer is from, *Deut.* 4. 2. where God forbids to *add to his rule* or to *diminish from it*. To this he answereth,

1. That he agreeth, *that we must not add to the Word, what God forbiddeth, nor diminish from it what it requireth.*

2. *That we must not add to it by appointing any thing in stead of what God appointeth, nor diminish, by taking away what God hath Commanded.*

3. *That we must not so expound Gods Command, as to make it frustrate.*

4. *That we must not add, by making that which is not the Word of God of equal Authority with the Word.*

5. *That we must not ascribe the same efficacy to humane Institutions as to those which are Divine.* In these things we are all agreed.

Page 25. What pity it is that we cannot agree with our *Reverend Author* in what followeth, viz *That the doing any thing* (though not falling within our former exceptions of things we judge lawful) *in Divine Worship not Commanded by God, is no sin.* But we have reason to agree with him if indeed wherein we differ, *we do not only differ from him,*  
but

but from *Christ and his Apostles and all Churches*. But is it indeed so? He hath here only dictated, not bringing so much as one instance to make it good. So that it is enough for us to deny the charge.

He comes to a third objection, *That the doing of such things in Acts of external Worship as are not Commanded is contrary to the second Commandment, Thou shalt not make unto thee any Graven Image*. This Objection might have been spared by whosoever have used it, we do indeed think it a violation of the second Commandment. The reason why we so judge is, Because as in the 6th Commandment it is agreed that all injuries to our neighbours Person is forbidden under the highest species of such Acts and in the 7th Commandment all species of uncleanness or Acts of it are forbidden under the prohibition of *Adultery*, and so in all the rest: So in the second Commandment all errors in the matter of external Worship are forbidden under the species of *Idolatry*. 2. Without this interpretation (not of this Precept alone but all the other 9.) The *ten words* will not be found the tenth part of what is commanded, and forbidden us in holy Writ. Errors in Worship are not reducible to any Precept but the second. We do not equallize *Idolatry* and *Superstition*, but say they are both sins against the second Commandment, because in other Scriptures plainly declared sins, and we conceive them hardly reducible to any other of the Ten Commandments; so that indeed this is no new Argument, but must be proved by the Scriptures brought to justify the two former. For our *Reverend Author's Answer to Dr. Ames*, we are not concerned in it. Nor doth our *Author* say any thing besides in answer to this Objection: We intend no such prolixity as to defend what all others have said before us; nor do we see any thing in this Objection, but what was in the

Obj. 3.  
Pag. 2

Answ.

Pag. 27  
28, 29.



two former, and defended in our defence of them.

Pag. 29. Our Reverend Author comes to a very great Argument from the sufficiency of the Scriptures. He proposeth it thus; *If there be not a Rule for all things belonging to the Worship of God, the Gospel would be less perfect than the Law, and Christ would not be so faithful as Moses in the care of his Church.* We had rather lay it thus:

If there be not a Rule for all things belonging to the Worship of God (except such things as we have before excepted, for which it is impossible there should be a Rule) then *the Scriptures are not able to make us wise to Salvation perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

But the Scripture is able to make us *wise to Salvation, perfect, and thoroughly furnished to all good works,* 2 Tim. 3. 15, 17.

The Argument is the same, only I would spare the many words necessary to make out Christ's compare faithfulness with *Moses.*

In answer to this, our Author saith,

Pag. 30. *That the sufficiency of Scripture, and faithfulness of Christ is not to be judged by what we fancy they should have determined, but by what they have.* Very true, and they have determined whatsoever may make us *wise to Salvation, perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works.* Now if the *Worshipping of God* be a good work, and the right doing of it, hath any tendency to make us *perfect, or wise to Salvation,* they must have a sufficiency in them to direct us in that, and certainly none will say, but a true and perfect *Worshipping God,* is of the highest sort of good works.

Our Author tells us, *The Scripture is perfect for all the Ends it was wrote for:* We ask no more; then *it is sufficient to furnish us to all good works,* for that is one great End, and we are sure *Acts of Worship* are works eminently good. If our Reverend Author can shew us any *Act of Worship* for  
the

the performance of which in such a manner as God will accept, we cannot shew him direction of Scripture (with the addition only of such Circumstances as are naturally necessary to all *Humane Actions*, or evidently *convenient for an Action* of a grave and weighty Nature for the obtaining the Ends of it; or, appearing to any *common Judgment* to be so *decent*, that without them the performance would be *sordid*, and *indecent*;) either in the Precept of Scripture, or in the practice of the first Guides of the Church, he saith something; but if he can shew us no such thing, we must maintain the sufficiency of the Scripture, (because the Apostle hath told us so) as to furnish us as to every good work, so to these in a special manner. Now if the Scripture, with the Light of Nature shining out in every reasonable Soul, be *sufficient*, whatsoever in *Worship* is added must be *deficient* and *faulty*, because useless and superfluous. If indeed it be not *sufficient*, then *Reason* or *Authority* may supply; but then the Apostle was mistaken, who saith it is. If any one shall say, we have no written word for *Time*, or *Place*, or *Habit*, or *Gesture*, or *Bells*, or *Pews*, or *Pulpits*, &c. with an hundred things of that nature, which we use in the Worship of God. We have no direction to *kneel*, or *stand*, or *sit* when we pray, nor what words to use, &c. We answer, the most of these things fall under the three sorts of things excepted out of our Position, and that reasonably; for we need no Scriptures for what the *Light of Nature* teacheth; the *Light of Nature* teacheth men to Worship God in the most decent manner they can, so as none shall reasonably judge our Action sordidly performed. The *Light of Nature* (we having the prospect of an End) directeth us to use the most convenient Circumstances for it; and the *Law of Nature* will enforce men in doing Actions to use time and place. For other things, such as the postures, or Words used in  
Prayer;

Prayer ; the holy Scripture is every where as sufficient to us as the Law of *Moses* was to the Jews, which commanded as to the Pasover the offering a *Lamb* or *Kid*, and left it to the discretion and conveniency of the *Offerer* to determine which. In other Offerings to offer *Bullocks*, *Goats*, or *Sheep*, *Turtle-doves*, or *young Pigeons*, but did not determine which : leaving it to the Offerers conveniency or choice. For *standing*, *sitting*, or *kneeling* at Prayer, God indeed hath left the one or the other of them to us not determined, leaving it to our choice or conveniency which to use, who sometimes cannot use standing, another time cannot use kneeling. He hath commanded us to *Pray*, and that with our *Voice*, as well as with our *Hearts*. But he hath not told us *what words* we should alwaies use, nor was it possible the Scripture should direct all Christians words; but he hath given us all his Word, commanded us to ask any thing *according to his will*; we want something this day, something to morrow we wanted not to day. God hath therefore left us at liberty what words to use, as he left the Jews at liberty whether to offer a *Lamb* or a *Kid*. Let them use words (not contrary to his will) whether they be *French*, or *Dutch*, or *Italian*, or *English*, or *Latine*, whether they be these, or these, or of another form, or in another method or order, they are equally acceptable to God. And *Moses* might by the same Authority have tied up all the Jews to offer none but Kids, or none but Lambs; as Superiours can tie up Inferiours to use none but such or such words in Prayer : And the Jews might every whit as lawfully have obeyed *Moses* in such a command, as we can obey any Superiours in such a case. Nay, the lawfulness of their Act had been a hundred times more clear, *Moses* being the Person God used to reveal his Will by speaking with him face to face, so as had he done it, they might  
have



have presumed God had secretly delivered something to him which was not published to them.

But we hope, as notwithstanding the O R's or *Alias's* in the Levitical Law, yet it was a sufficient Rule of Worship, and it had been great wickedness for any to have added to it: So it is also under the Gospel, and being so, it must follow that all *Supplements* and *Additions to it*, must be needless, and of no good use; though they be but circumstantial, if there be any thing in such Addition, of Worship, it must be denominated from the Will of him that appointed it.

For the *faithfulness of Christ*, our Reverend Author, p. 30. makes it to lye in matters belonging to him as a Mediator (in which respect Moses was a type of him,) and discovering to mankind the method, and means by which he may be saved. Is not a right Worshipping of God one of those means? Was not Christ then faithful as a Prophet? And in that was not *Moses*, a type of Christ? Deut. 18. 15. did not *Moses* reveal the will of God to the *Israelites*, for the Rule of Worship? Who else did it? hath not Christ revealed his Fathers will as to a new Form of Worship? Why should not Christ here be as faithful as *Moses*? Our Reverend Author saith, we find no such thing done, no such care taken, no such particular directions as they had under the law. We cannot possibly agree with our Reverend Brother in this thing. For what particular direction (as to *Circumcision*) had the Jews, (as to the *Circumciser* or the *Instrument* he or she should use,) their Rule extended no further then to the Act and the time. *Zipporah* took a sharp stone and circumcised her Child; probably *Abraham* used a knife Gen. 17. 23. both equally acceptable to God, they had indeed a Rule for the Passover: But what Rule had they to determine them to a kid, or a Lamb? Or what words they should use in Prayer before they ate it, or in what

what posture, or at their Paschal Supper to use one, two or three Cups. God left these things at liberty not for the *Superiours* to determine but the *inferiours* to agree in among themselves, every one might drink as his appetite required, and use the posture which was most Convenient for the nature of the Action, and bring either a *kid* or a *Lamb*, nor do we find, any good Princes ever determining by their laws to People what the wisdom of God thought fit so to leave. If they did use one uniform posture in any paschal society it was because they agreed it among themselves; nor do we see any reason to conclude, they would have shut out any from their paschal societies, that because of the institution desired to Eat it with his *loins girt* and *his staff in his hand*, and *his shoes on his feet*, according to the first institution, *Exod. 12.11.* yet their *Rule* was perfect and *sufficient*, because by it it was lawful for them to do one, or the other, and they were no more acceptable to God that ate a Lamb in that service, then they who offered a kid, that ate it standing, then those that ate it in a posture of discubiture.

For their *Sacrifices*, the Rule was sufficient and perfect as we hope, though one Jew brought a *Bullock*, another a *Goat*, a third a *Sheep* for a *burnt offering*, and though for a *meat offering* one brought what was *baked* another what was *fried in a pan*. Nor did any Superiors amongst them keeping to their duty, ever offer to limit them wherein God did not limit them. If the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* in later, and corrupter times did any such things, it is no Rule for others to do the like, nor will be so judged by any, who reads the Gospel and observeth our Saviours sense of their Traditions, and Supererogate Impositions. People in an Act of Worship though they Act diversely are uniform enough, if they all do what God hath Comanded, and do only use the liberty which God hath left them.

Our *Reverend Author*, p. 32. comes to direct us, how we may know what things are *Indifferent*, and truly determineth, p. 33. that things in an abstract consideration or in their *Nature lawful may in their use and application become unlawful*. We fully agree with what our *Reverend Author* saith, p. 33, 34, 35. and see nothing wherein we differ from him till we come to, p. 36, 37. where he tells us,

1. *That we are not so much to judge of Decency, order, and Edification asunder as together, and would not have us Judge of Edification from what most improveth Christians in knowledge or grace, but from what most tendeth to publick order and agreeth with publick practice, here, we that have friendly walked together with our Reverend Brother for three or four pages must crave leave to leave him, which yet we would not do if we did not apprehend that we saw a nearer and directer way to please God: we will calmly tell him our reasons ( for we think it unreasonable to send a rational Soul as a Prisoner, to any bar, without also certifying the cause of its bonds and Imprisonment, and desire no more our selves to dictate, then to hear others dictating to us which we judge the only proper canting. )*

1. In the first place we judge the *edifying of the Churches* mentioned in, 1 Cor. 14. 5. 12. Eph. 4. 12. 1 Cor. 14. 4. Acts 9. 31. to be the *edifying of the several Persons who Collectively make up that body which is called the Church*. The *Church* exists not, but in the several individual Christians that ( united in some Common things ) make it up. So that the primary Edification to be attended is that of particular Souls, mentioned, Rom. 15. 2. 1 Cor. 14. 3. 2 Cor. 10. 8. Rom. 14. 19. 1 Thes. 5. 11. who so talketh of building up the Church, in a distinct Notion, from the building up of those particular Souls that make up



that Church doth but discourse of building Castles in the Air.

2. In the next place, we conceive *there is no imaginable building up of Souls in Spiritual things, but an improvement of them in faith or Love, in knowledge, Obedience to the will of God, the fear and dread of God, &c.* we are Comanded to grow, 2 Pet. 3. 18. but in what? It follows, *in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* We cannot therefore agree with our Brother in reflecting on such, *who, when they would judge of Edification, consider presently what they conceive doth most improve them in knowledge or any particular grace, and having no further consideration throw down the bounds of publick order.* For though we do freely agree that no private Person ought to throw down the bounds of publick order: Yet we know and are assured, that no man to keep up any such humane bounds ought to omit means by which he may improve his own Soul in the *knowledge of Christ, or the exercise of his habits of grace.*

3. We conceive it is impossible that any order (truly so called) should hinder the improvement of any one Soul in *knowledge or any habit of grace.* Christ did not trust his Apostles with *any power* but for *Edification, not for destruction,* 2 Cor. 10. 8. from whence it appears impossible, that any thing truly called *order,* (and not much better deserving the name of *disorder*) should hinder *Edification,* if any think that the very *ordering* of a thing by *Superiours,* makes it *edifying,* as experience proves the contrary, so he sets up one *higher* than *the Highest,* and turns *Regulam Regulatam* into *Regulam Regulantem.* A Rule under the Authority of an higher Rule into a first Rule under no Authority at all, and either Nullifies God, or deifies a Creature. God hath given us Rules, declared the end of them to be *Edification,* and that he gave no other

other power to his Apostles : Shall now man come and tell us, we are not to consider *Edification*, but as in conjunction with, and truckling to humane Rules of order. This is what we cannot reconcile, the Reverence we have for the great and living God to. God ordered nothing but for *Edification*, shall man be thought to have any power to do it ? Especially considering that Edification or an improvement in knowledge, and the habits of all grace, hath the nearest tendency to the Glory of God, and the saving of our own Souls, the two highest ends of man, for none will say that he who increaseth in the knowledge Love, Fear of God and obedience to his will doth not more Honour God, and work out his own Salvation, then he who meerly keeps to *humane order* without regard to those improvements. But we proceed further with our *Reverend Author*.

2. He gives us p. 37. a second Rule by which we may judge of things that in the Worship of God are indifferent which he layeth down thus:

2. *When the case is not apparent, we should rather judge by what is contrary, then by what is agreeable to those Rules he instanceth as to the Posture to be used in Receiving the Lords Supper: Where he acknowledgeth, That the ancient Church received it standing, some forreign reformed Churches, and most of the Dissenters chuse sitting. Others use kneeling, as in ours and many more (we desire to know what more, except the Lutherane Churches, because of their particular opinion, of the Real Presence of Christs Body with the Bread, for we presume our Reverend Brother did not mean the Popish Churches (if they deserve that name.) Now he saith very truly, Every private Person cannot determine which is most Decent. The safest way is by the contrary: If it be not indecent, it is Decent. We cannot agree that nothing can be Decent but what either the*

light of Nature, or the Common custom of a place makes so, but not to argue that point till better Leisure, we believe there is no Dissenter refuseth to receive the Sacrament *kneeling* because it is not *Decent*, but because he strongly suspects, or verily believeth it *unlawful* upon one account or other which we have before mentioned, and need not here repeat, and it is most certain that nothing that is *unlawful* can be *Decent*. Nor any thing which any Person judgeth *sinful*, can be *Decent* to him while he so judgeth.

3. Our Reverend Authors last Rule is this :

P. 38, 39.

If the case be not apparent, and we cannot easily find out how the things used, and enjoined in a Church are *Decent*, &c. We are to consider that we are in, or obliged to be of a Church, and that these things do respect such a society, and therefore are to be cautious how we condemn this or that for indecent, confused and inexpedient, when we see Christians agreeing in the Practice of them, and such whom for other things we cannot condemn, when we find, if we argue for it, they argue against it, and produce experience against experience, and Reason against Reason, and that we have a whole Church against our particular conception of things of this Nature, we should be apt to think the fault may be in our selves, and that it is for want of understanding, or insight, and by reason of some Prejudices, or Prepossessions, that we thus differ, &c.

For those who cannot comply with some things required in the *English Liturgy* and can say no more, then that they think them, not *Decent* not *expedient*, not *orderly*, this is very well said, for no private Person is a Judge of these things, but if it be because they believe the things *sinful* and *unlawful* ( which nine parts of ten of all Dissenters say ) it affects them very little.

2. Yet



2. Yet something it doth, for if Persons as to the lawfulness or unlawfulness of a thing, Dissent from any orderly Church made up only of such members as are men of knowledge and blameless lives, they ought to do it very peaceably having their *faith to themselves before God*. But these Persons cannot make a trial how they can like the things ( like those that talk of Marrying first and loving afterward ) yet are they obliged to hear all reasons, &c.

3. The Churches Judgment to be valued is the *Sensus piorum* in it and if none but Persons of knowledge and blameless lives might judge in Dissenters cases, there would as they believe be no further hazard to them from their Judgments, then what they run, who live by others faith, and can satisfy themselves to believe *as the Church believes*, and because it doth so, whether they see any other ground or reason for it or no.

4. We should ever suspect faults in our selves, and be jealous of our own Judgments but we cannot act against them, nor mend the supposed faults in our selves till we see them our selves without the charitable assistance of others Spectacles which possibly will not fit our sight.

Hitherto our *Rev. Author* hath lent us his Charitable hand to help us out of the *Mine* wherein he conceived we stuck ; if any of us still remain in our places we have told him our Reasons ) he will now lend us his hand to guide us in our way, teaching us *how to determine our selves in the use of things Indifferent in the Worship of God*. Let us not refuse so kind and good an hand, but so far as we can go along with him.

1. In the first place we observe he speaketh to none but those that judge the things to be such, as God hath neither Commanded nor forbidden the use of, either in the letter or just reason of his holy Writ. This mightily thin-

P. 40, 41  
&c.

neth

neth our *Reverend Brothers* auditory, for he speaketh hardly to two Dissenters of an hundred. But as to those few in whose Eyes the things pressed, and pleaded for are of that Nature, they are I dare say all agreed with him in what he saith, p. 40.

1. *That Christians considered as Soli ta ry may in such things determine themselves to either part as they please.*

2. *That considered in conversation with others, they must be careful not to use their liberty to the just prejudice of others. Nature so plainly teacheth the first of these, and Revelation the second, that he deserveth not the name of a Christian that Dissents as to them.*

P. 41.

3. But he further considereth Christians, as *Members of a Church* (as all Christians are or ought to be) there he thinks the *Practice of the Church or Commands of Authority ought to be regarded*, in which Notion also they must be considered. Here our *Reverend Brother* thinks, That if the things be indifferent, and the Church determineth one part the private Person ought to yield to the Churches determination, and restrain himself in his liberty this is the Sum of what he saith, and proveth, answering objections to the contrary from, p. 41. to the end of his discourse, we shall not need here meddle with the debates about the Nature of a Church and what may be called the Church because there is the same reason for the Commands of the Civil Magistrate as for the Commands of the Church in this case, and who the Civil Magistrate is in England, none disputeth. As to the matter it self,

1. Very many of the *Dissenters* agree the whole of what our *Reverend Author* saith, dissenting in practice, only because they verily believe the things required are unlawfull, and protesting against any pretence of setting up their Judgments in competition with the *Magistrates* in the Judgment of things expedient, &c.

2. All

2. All indeed are not of their mind, but though they also agree with the former in judging things unlawful, yet they *ex abundanti*, say if they did judge them indifferent, yet being in matters of Worship they could not obey them if Comanded by men, though they might determine themselves in the case; some of us are not of that mind, yet know not well how to resolve these two *Questions*.

1. *Whether either Moses or Aaron had authority under the Levitical Law to determine the things which God had left indifferent to his people?* Commanding all the Jews to keep the passover with a Kid, not with a Lamb, or with a Lamb, not with a Kid, and to offer *Bullocks* in burnt offerings, not Goats, nor Sheep, or *Sheep*, not Bullocks or Goats. And whether in such Commands *Moses and Aaron* ( though in other cases unquestionably so ) were the Peoples Superiors.

It seemeth very hard to us to say *Moses* or *Aaron* had any such authority, for it had been a controukment of the Divine Wisdom, or to say that in any such case they were the Jews Superiours; for who made them so?

2. *Whether in case they or their Successors had made any such law the People might without sin have obeyed them?*

The reason is because Nature it self teacheth us not to part with all our natural liberty. So as though every good Christian taketh himself obliged in civil things to part with his moneys upon the Command of the Magistrate ( in a Propoition with others equally concerned ) when the Legislative power judgeth it for a Common good, for the ends of Government, and to do many other like things in a restraint of our liberty, yet if the same power, should Command all in such a precinct to make no use of any other Physician then *L. M.* or of no other Lawyer then *R. L.* nor to buy any commodities but of such particular



lar Traders. We believe most of men would judge they were not in conscience obliged to obey, yet they might as to these things determine themselves. And this holdeth much stronger in *matters of Worship* considering the Command we have *not to be servants of men, and to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, Gal. 5. 1.* we are most of us confident, that in *matters of Worship* no *Superiours* may restrain what *God hath left at liberty*. And are only divided as to the latter question which we judge also *Problematical*.

P. 47.

We cannot possibly be of our *Reverend Authors* mind, that *Christian liberty is no other then man had naturally before it was restrained by a particular institution*. For in that we must *not stand fast* because *Divine Institution* hath restrained us in it ( unless men will say that in *Divine Worship*, there is now nothing of any *Divine institution* ) neither hath *Christ* restored any to such a liberty, we alwaies took *Christian liberty* to lye as in other great things so in a *Freedom in matters of Worship*, from any thing but what is of *Divine institution* ( not founded in the law, or discovered by the light of *Nature* ) and in a *Freedom of practice* not of *Judgment only* ( as others contend, ) for it were a strange liberty for *Christ* to have purchased for any which he could not use, without the continual reverberations of his own *Conscience*.

To conclude this matter. Is this the *Sum Total* of *Dissenters crimes*, that they judge some things *forbidden them by God* and other things *Commanded* ( which they take themselves therefore bound to *avoid* or *do* ) which others look upon as *indifferent*, as neither by *God forbidden* nor *Commanded*, and therefore would have them required, or compelled to do them, or that judge it not lawful for them in the tender matters of *divine Worship*, to give away that *liberty* which *God* hath left them.

then

then it had been for a *Jew* being left at liberty to bring a *Lamb*, or a *Kid*, to have obeyed an *Asa*, or an *Hezekiah* Commanding him and all his Brethren to bring *Kids only*? Are these the highest crimes for which thousands of Consciencious Christians ( some of which possibly may labour under an over fearful Conscience ) must be denied the *holy Supper of the Lord*? And yet for not Receiving be cast into *Gaols*, ruined in their *Estates*, *Trades*, *Health*, and as to what ever in this World is dear unto them? For which they must be hunted from *Sessions* to *Affizes*, and from one *Ecclesiastical Judicature* to another, and never suffered to be at rest, or to Eat their bread in peace, serving God with gladness of heart? For which they must be reviled, as *Rebellious*, *perverse*, *Contumacious Persons*, and what the foulest mouths will call them. Judge ( *O thou Righteous Judge!* ) between these *People*, and those who thus pursue them!

But certainly *Divines* who ought to be no *Smiters* of their fellow *Servants* ( though their *Lord* for a while delayeth his coming ) who well enough know that no Consciencious Person, can do what he verily believeth is unlawful ( whether it be so yea or no ) nor ought to do any thing with a *doubting mind* ( whether it be lawfull yea or no, ) will think it their duty, not to encourage their *Superiours*, by *Penalties* of so high a nature as may issue in the *cryes*, and *blood of innocent Persons*, to inforce their *Brethren* ( for their *Satisfactions* ) to part with the *Right* which God hath in their Souls, when they may avoid it at so easy a rate as departing a little from their own ( disputable ) *Right* in Commanding in *Gods Worship*, what themselves will own to be *indifferent* and they may or may not Command as they please; certainly if indeed they have any value for the *Glory of God*, for the *good*, and *peace of others Souls*, for the *preserving the Protestant Religion*,

*ligion, (which dyes that day that Private Christians Judgment of discretion is destroyed) for the union of Protestants against Popish adversaries, for any thing indeed that is good and lovely; they will beseech their Superiors to break this long saw of contention, which hath now been drawing much above an hundred years and cut asunder many of the Lords Prophets, they will surely be the Authors of an Address to his most Excellent Majesty who hath long since in two Declarations ( the one published as we remember twenty years since, the other more then 12. ) taken notice of the difficulty of reconciling these things between Persons of differing judgments as to them, as also how inadequate a medium force hath proved alwaies to effect such a thing, that he would please to Command the People to return from following their Brethren; shall this Sword devour for ever? Know they not it will be bitterness in the latter end? Is it not yet time, that in stead of contending who hath a better Judgment, about things indifferent then his Brother, vve should be contending only, which of us should most love his neighbour, and please him in all things, not seeking our own profit, but the profit of many that they might be saved? Why should we thus fall out by the way? As we are all in pretence Travelling towards the new Hierusalem, where ( when we once arrive, ) we shall be better able to judge of the Nature of things then it is possible we should do, while the mists of Ignorance ( in part ) passion, prejudice or interest disorder the Organ or Medium which we here have, by, with or through which we must discern the things that differ? Have we not all one Father? And are vve not all Brethren, both by Nation, and Profession of Religion? We have indeed sometimes seen two Children not to be reconciled one to another, while there hath been a contest betwixt them who should to it self enjoy the dish of Milk which the Mother hath prepared*



prepared for them both, but we have rarely seen the quarrel hold, when one of them hath shewed so good nature, as freely to yield up all to its *Brother* or *Sister*, and be content to beg a little to satisfy its hunger where, though vwith more difficulty, it could get it. In such a case -- *Sævis inter se convenit ur sis.*

But what shall we say? The hand of the mighty God is in this thing. It is not the *Sword of Gideon* only, but of *the Lord* also, that yet imbroils us and wounds the Common interest of *Religion* in this *Nation*, it were else impossible, but that all should see ten thousand times more in the *Love of God*, the *Redemption of our Common Saviour*, the *Precepts of holy Writ*, the *interest of Souls*, the *upholding the Religion which we all own*, &c, to unite us, then there is in a particular Judgment concerning *things indifferent* ( in the opinion of one party ) to divide us, things which we confess *indifferent*, are not half so much worth as the *Romans Cupboard of Glasses*, which yet his Lord, thought not of so much value as the blood of one Slave. What is now objected hath been said twenty times, and what is here answered hath been as oft replied; to what purpose do we say over the same things again, and multiply *Bills* and *answers* without the least new matter? And not make an end of *Controversy*? How often have our *Brethren* said these things are things *indifferent*? How often have they been told whether they indeed be so or no must be determined when *Elias* comes, or rather ( as *the Woman of Samaria* said, *John 4. 25.* with a little difference of sense ) *we know that Messias comes*, which is called *Christ*, in great power and Glory with his *holy Angels*, when he is come, he will tell us all things. But we verily believe them to be *unlawful*, this will not serve our turns, but if we will not believe them lawful ( whereas it is not possible we should believe what we would )

would) or do them, believing them unlawful, we must lose our *Estate*, be laid up in *Gaoles*, &c. To what purpose do we waste any more Paper, and not *Possess* our Souls with *Patience*, in a sure confidence that the God whom we serve, will not *despise* nor *abhor the affliction of the afflicted* as he hath not in any former times *hid his face from them*, but when they have *cried he hath heard*.

Ναὶ ἔρχεται Ἰαχὺ. Ἀμήν. Ναὶ ἔρχε Κύριε Ἰησοῦ. Rev. 22. 20.

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FINIS.

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