

**A DISCOURSE ABOUT
CIVIL GOVERNMENT.**

by

John Cotton

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According to Cotton Mather (John Cotton's grandson) this was not written
by Cotton but by John Davenport. But recent scholarship says that it *was*
written by Cotton (see Everett Emerson, *John Cotton* (revised edition Boston:
Twayne Publishers, 1990); Isabel M. Calder, "The Authorship of *A Discourse*
about Civil Government," *American Historical Review* 37 (1932): 167–169, and
Calder, "John Cotton and the New Haven Colony," *New England Quarterly*
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A
DISCOURSE
ABOUT
CIVIL GOVERNMENT
IN A
NEW PLANTATION

Whose *DESIGN* is

RELIGION.

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A DISCOURSE

ABOUT
CIVIL GOVERNMENT IN A NEW

PLANTATION

Where all, or the most considerable part of free Planters profess their desire and purpose of enjoying, & securing to themselves and their Posterity, the pure and peaceable enjoyment of the Ordinances of Christ in Church-fellowship with his People, and have liberty to cast themselves into that Mould or Form of a Common-wealth, which shall appear to be best for them. Tending to prove the Expediency and Necessary in that case of intruding free Burgesses which are members of Churches gathered amongst them according to Christ, with the power of Choosing from among themselves Magistrates, and men to whom the Managing of all Public Civil Affairs of Importance is to be committed. And to vindicate the same from an Imputation of an Under-Power upon the Churches of Christ, which hath been cast upon it through a Mistake of the true state of the Question.

Reverend Sir,

THe *Sparrow* being now gone, and one days respite from public Labours on the Lord's-day falling to me in course, I have sought out your Writing, and have reviewed it, and find (as I Formerly expressed to your self) that the Question is mis-stated by you; and that the Arguments which you produce to prove that which is not denied, are (in reference to this Question) spent in vain, as arrows are when they fall wide of the Marks they should hit, though they strike in a White which the Archer is not called to shoot at.

The terms wherein you state the Question, are these:

Whether the Right and Power of Choosing Civil Magistrates belongs unto the Church of Christ?

To omit all critical Inquiries, in your thus stating the Question, I utterly dislike two things.

1. That you speak of *Civil Magistrates indefinitely, and without limitation*; under which notion, all Magistrates in the world are included, *Turks, and Indians and Idolaters, as well as Christians*. Now no man, I think, holdeth or imagineth, that a Church of Christ hath power and right to choose all civil Magistrates throughout the World: For,

2. In some Countries there is no Church of Christ, all the inhabitants being Heathen men and Idolaters; and amongst those who are called *Christians*, the number of the Churches of Christ will be found to be so small, and the Members of them so few and mean, that it is impossible that the Right and Power of choosing Civil Magistrates in all places, should belong to the Churches of Christ.

3. Nor have the Churches countenance of State in all Countries, but are under Restraint and Perfection in some; as the *Jews in Egypt under Pharaoh*, and in the Captivity in *Babylon*, and the *Christian Churches* 300 years after Christ persecuted by *Roman Emperors*: and in these days those Reformed Churches *sub cruce* in *Antwerp*, and other Popish Countries.

3. In some Countries the Churches are indeed under the Profession of Magistrates, as Foreigners, permitted quietly to sit down under their Wings: but neither are the Members capable of Magistracy there; nor have they power of Voting in the Choice of Magistrates: Such was that Church of Strangers gathered in *London* by *Johannes Alasco*, with allowance of State under the Broad Seal of *England* in *Edw. 6*. Such are the *Dutch and French Churches* in *England*, and other Churches in the *Netherlands* at this day.

4. In some Countries sundry Nations are so mingled, that they have severally an equal Right unto several parts of the Country, and therefore though they live in the same general Country, yet they are governed by different Laws, and have several Magistrates

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chosen by themselves severally, neither of them being capable of Magistracy in the others parts, nor having Right and Power of choosing Civil Magistrates there. Thus were the *Isrealites* joined with the *Canaanites*, that were left in *Canaan* unsubdued: and thus are the

English planted in these parts of *America*, where sundry Nations of *Indians* dwell near them, and are Proprietaries of the places which they inhabit. Now he that should affirm, that the Church of Christ, as such, have Right and Power of choosing Civil Magistrates in such places, seemeth to me more to need Physic than Arguments, to recover him from his Error.

2. The second thing that I dislike in your stating the Question, is, in that you make the *Churches of Christ to be the subject of it is Right and Power of choosing Civil Magistrates*. For 1. The Church so considered is a Spiritual Political Body, consisting of divers Members Male and Female, Bond and Free; sundry if which are not capable of Magistracy, nor of Voting in the choice of Magistrates, inasmuch as none have that Right and Power but free Burgesses; among whom Women and Servants are not reckoned, though they may be, and are Church-members. 2. The Members of the Churches of Christ are considerable under a twofold respect answerable to the twofold man, which is in all the Members of the Church whilst they are in this world, *the inward & the outward man*.^{*} Whereunto the only wise God hath fitted and appointed two sorts of Administrations, *Ecclesiastical and Civil*. Hence they, are capable of a twofold Relation, and of Action and Power suitable to them both; *viz. Civil and Spiritual*, and accordingly must be exercised about both in their seasons, without confounding those two different states, or destroying either, of them, whilst what they, transact in civil Affairs, is done by virtue of their civil Relation, their Church-state only fitting them to do it according to God.

Now that the state of the Question may appear, I think it seasonable and necessary to premise a few Distinctions, to prevent all mistakes, if it may be.

Distinct. 1. First then, let us distinguish between the two Administrations or polities, *Ecclesiastical and Civil*, which men commonly call *the Church*, and *Common-wealth*. I incline rather to them who speaking of a *Christian Communion*, make the Communion to be the

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Genus; and the State Ecclesiastical and Civil to be the *Species* of it. For in a Christian Communion there are these different Administrations or Polities or State, Ecclesiastical & Civil: Ecclesiastical Administrations, are a *Divine Order appointed to Believers for holy com-*

munion of holy things: Civil Administrations, are An Human Order appointed by God to men for Civil Fellowship of human things. Thus Junias defineth them; and maketh 1. *Order the Genus od them both.* 2. *God the Efficient and Author of them both.* 3. *God's Glory the last end of them both.* 4. *Man the common Subject of both: And so they agree very well in the General Nature, Efficient, End and Subject; yet with difference in all. For,*

1. Though both agree in this, that there is Order in their Administrations, yet with this difference, that the Guides in the Church have not a Despotical, but Oeconomical Power only, (*a*) being not *Lord's over Christ's heritage, but stewards and ministers of Christ and of the Church*; the Dominion and Law-giving Power being reserved to *Christ* alone, as *the only Head of the Church*. But in the other State he hath given Lordly Power, Authority and Dominion unto men (*b*).

2. Though both agree in this, that *Man is the common Subject of them both*, yet with this difference, Man by Nature beings Reasonable and Sociable Creature, capable of Civil Order, is or may be the Subject of Civil Power and State: But Man by Grace called out of the world to fellowship with Jesus Christ, and with his People, is the only Subject of Church-power; yet so, as the Outward man of Church-members is subject to the Civil Power in common with other men, whilst their Inward man is the subject of Spiritual Order and Administrations.

3. Though they both agree in this, that *God it the Efficient and Author of them both and that by Christ*, yet not *eadem ratione*. For, God as the Creator and Governor of the World, is the Author of Civil Order and Administrations: But God as in Covenant with his People in Christ, is the Author of Church-Administrations. So likewise Christ, as the Essential Word and Wisdom of God creating and governing the World, is the Efficient and Fountain of Civil Order & Administration (*c*): But as Mediator of the New Covenant, & Head of the Church (*d*), he establisheth Ecclesiastical Order.

(*a*) John 1:23. Matth. 3:11. 2 Cor. 3:5, 21. 2 Cor. 1:1, 24. & 4:5. & 5:20. 1 Pet. 5:1. Matth. 28:18.

(*b*) Luke 22:25. John 19:10. 1 Pet. 2:13.

(*c*) Joh. 1:1, 3, 10. Gal. 1:17. Heb:1:2, 3. Prov. 8:15.

(*d*) Eph. 1:22 & 5:23. & 4:8, 11.

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4. Though they both, agree in this, that they have *the same last End*, viz. *the Glory of God*, yet they differ in their Ends; for the next End of Civil Order and Administrations, is *The Preservation of Human Societies in outward Honour, Justice and Peace*: But the next Ends of Church Order and Administrations, are *The Conversion, Edification, and Salvation of Souls, Pardon of Sin, Power against Sin, Peace with God.* &c.

5. Hence ariseth another Difference about the *Objects* of these different States: for though both agree in this, that they have the *common Welfare* for their aim and scope; yet the things about which the Civil Power is primarily conversant, are *Bodies*, τὰ βιώτικα, 1 Cor. 6:4. or τὰ πρὸς τὸν βίον, *the things of this life*, as *Goods, Lands, Honour, the Liberties and Peace of the outward man*. The things thereabout the Church Power is exercised, are τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν, *The things of God*, as *the Souls and Consciences of men, the Doctrine and Worship of God, the Communion of the Saints*. Hence also 1. They have different Laws: 2. Different Officers: 3. Different Power, whereby to reduce men to Order, according to their different Objects and Ends; Now that a just harmony may be kept between these two different Orders and Administrations, two Extremes must be avoided: 1. That they be not confounded, either by giving the Spiritual Power, which is proper to the Church, into the hand of the Civil Magistrate, as *Erastius* would have done in the matter of Excommunication. If any Magistrate should presume to thrust himself by his Authority or otherwise, into a Work which properly belongs to a Church-Officer, let him remember what befell *Saul* and *Uzziah* for so doing: or 2. By giving Civil Power to Church-Officers, who are called to attend only to Spiritual matters, and *the things of God*, and therefore may not be distracted from them by Secular entanglements. I say, Church-Officers, not Church-members; for they (not being limited as the Officers are by God) are capable of two different employments, suiting with, two different *Men* in them, in different respects, as hath been said: and as they may lawfully be employed about things of this life; so they are of all men fittest, being sanctified and dedicated to God to carry on all worldly and civil business to God's ends, as we shall declare

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in due time. But concerning Church-Officers, I am able with God's help to prove, that the devolving of Civil Power upon Pastors of Churches, (upon how specious pretences soever it began) gave that Rise to the *Man of Sin*, which at last set his feet on the necks of the Princes of the Earth, yea, of the Emperors of the World. It was your mistake, when you too confidently affirmed, That *the limiting of the Right and Power of choosing Civil Officers unto free Burgresses that are Members of Churches, brought that Tyranny into the Romish Church, which all the Churches of Christ complain of.* It would well have become you to have better digested your own thoughts before such words had passed through your lips; for you will never be able to produce any good Author that will confirm what you say. The truth is quite contrary; for that I may instance in *Rome* it self: Had Churches been rightly managed, when the most considerable part in that City embraced the Christian Faith, in the ceasing of the *Ten Persecutions*, that only such as had been fit for the estate, had been admitted into Church-fellowship, and they alone had had power. Out of themselves to have chosen Magistrates, such Magistrates would not have been chosen, as would have given their Power to the Pope; nor would those Churches have suffered their Pastors to become Worldly Princes and Rulers, as the Pope and his Cardinals are; nor would they have given up the Power of the Church from the Church into the Officers hands, but would have called upon them to *fulfil their Ministry which they had received of the Lord*; and if need were, would by the power of Christ have compelled them so to do: And then where had the Pope, Supremacy been which is made up of the Spoils of the Ecclesiastical and Civil State? but had by the course which now we plead for, been prevented.

2. The second Extreme to be avoided, is, That these two different Orders and States, *Ecclesiastical* and *Civil*, be not set in opposition as contraries, that one should destroy the other, but as co-ordinate States, in the same place reaching forth help mutually each to other, for the welfare of both, according to God: So that both Officers and Members of Churches be subject, in respect of the outward man, to the Civil Power of those who bear Rule in the Civil State according to God, and teach others so to do: And that

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the Civil Magistrates and Officers, in regard of the inward man, subject themselves Spiritually to the power of Christ in Church-Ordinances, and by their Civil Power preserve the same in outward Peace and Purity; and this will best be attained, when the Pastor may say to the Magistrate, as *Gregory Nazianzin* wrote to the Magistrate of *Nazianzum*, *Scio te ovem neci gregis esse sacri gregis sacram ovuem*: I know thou art a sheep of my Flock, a holy sheep of a holy Flock. Again, *Cum Christo imperas, cum Christo etiam administras, ub eo est tibi gladius, hoad narium à te paiu[?????] qui dedit conservetur*, that is, Thou rulest with Christ, and administrest to Christ; thou hast the Sword from him: let this gift which thou hast received from him, be kept pure for him. And when the Civil Magistrate in his Church-state, answereth *Ambrose* his description of a good Emperor: *Ipse imperator bonus intra Ecclesiam, noie supra Ecclesiam est*: A good Magistrate is within the Church, not above it. Lastly, when according to *Junius* his description of the Power of the Christian Magistrate in Church-matters, he accounts it his duty to embrace in Fellowship with the whole Church, *ut verum Christi & Ecclesiæ membrum* the Laws given by God in the Church, and the means sanctified by him to nourish the inward man, and to protect and defend the same: [*Tanquam Magistratus à Deo Ordinatus*] for, saith he, *As he is a Christian*, he is *sancta ovis de sancto Christi grege*, (*i.e.* A holy sheep of Christ's holy flock. But as a Magistrate he is [*Custos Ordinis vindexq; publici*]; that is, *a preserver of public order*. Such were besides the good Kings of *Judah*) *Constantine*, *Theodosias*, &c. in some measure, though very defective. So much shall serve to have been spoken concerning the first Distinction.

Distinct. 2. The second *Distinction* to be premised for clearing the true state of the Question, is, [*Inter Remp. constitutam & constituendam.*] Between a Common-wealth already settled, and a Common-wealth yet to be settled, and wherein men are free to choose what Form they shall judge best. For I conceive, when *Paul* exhorted the *Romans* to be *subject to the higher Powers*, who at that time were Heathen men, and Persecutors, he considered that Civil State as settled, and suited his Advice accordingly. But if he had been to Direct them about laying the Foundation of a Christian Commonwealth, he

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would not have advised then to choose such Governors as were part of the Church, but would have seriously forewarned them of the danger whereunto the Church would have been exposed thereby, and that unavoidably. And that this may not be thought a slight and uncertain conjecture, let us consider what advice he gave in like cases: Ye know, that writing to persons already Married he exhorteth *the believing wife to live with the unbelieving husband*; yet the same Apostle directeth the same Church, in case they were free to make their own choice, to avoid such matches: *Be not unequally yoked (saith he) with Infidels; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness; and what part hath the believer with the infidel?* In like manner, when *Peter* exhorted *Christian Servants to be subject to their Masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward*, he did accommodate his instruction to their present condition. But had he been to direct them in another state being free, to choose what might be best for themselves, he would have expressed himself otherwise, as may appear by this. The same Spirit that inspired *Peter* thus to advise in this case, guided *Paul* further in a different case: *Art thou called being a servant, (saith he) vare not for it, but if thou mayest be free, use it rather.* And that if he had written to a company of Believers in a New Plantation, where the Foundations of the Church and Civil State, and the communion of both, was to be laid for many Generations to come, he would have advised them to take the same course which we plead for, may appear by his reproving, the Church in *Corinth*, for carrying *their differences before Heathen Magistrates to be judged by them*, though he press them to be *subject to their power*: Had the unbelieving Magistrates cited them to appear before their Judgment-seats, he taught them both by Precept and by his Example, to submit. But when they were at liberty to compose civil Differences among themselves, and yet they would voluntarily, and of their own accord, choose to bring their cases before those that were without the Church, this he blameth in them; and that so far, as he demandeth why *they do not rather suffer wrong* then take such a course? plainly intimating, that men that profess the fear of God if they be free to make choice of their Civil Judges, (as in this New Plantation we are) they should rather choose such as are Members of the Church for that purpose,

* 1 Cor. 7:13.

† 2 Cor. 6:14, 15.

‡ 1 Pet. 2:18.

§ 1 Cor. 7:21.

¶ 1 Cor. 6:1.

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then others that are not in that estate. The same Rule holdeth by proportion in all things of like nature: for *Parism par est ratio*.

Distinct. 3. The third *Distinction* to be premised for clearing the truth in this

Point, is *between free Burgesses and free Inhabitants of a Civil State*. Concerning whom, there must be had a different consideration. This difference of People living under the same Civil Jurisdiction, is held and observed in all Countries, as well Heathen as others, as may at large be proved, if it were needful, out of the Histories of all Nations and Times; and the Experience of our Times, as well in our own Native Country, as in other places, confirmeth it. In all which, many are Inhabitants that are not Citizens, that are never likely to be numbered among ἄρχοντες, or Rulers: Answerably it is in the case now in question. So that when we urge, that Magistrates be chosen out of free Burgesses, and by them, and that those free Burgesses be chosen out of such as are Members of these Churches, we do not thereby go about to exclude those that are not in Church-Order, from any Civil-Right or Liberty that is due unto them as Inhabitants and Planters, as if none should have Lots in due proportion with other men, nor the benefit of Justice under the Government where they live, but only Church-members; (for this were indeed to have the Common-wealth swallowed up of the Church) but seeing there ever will be difference between the World and the Church in the same place, and that both men of the world are allowed of God the use and enjoyment of the help of Civil Government, for their quiet and comfortable subsistence in the world: and Church-members (though called but of the world into fellowship with Christ, yet) living in the world, and having many worldly necessities and businesses in common with men of the World that live among them, stand in need of the civil Power to right them against civil injuries, and to protect them in their right, and outward orderly use of their Spirituals, against those that are apt to be injurious to them in the one, or in the other respect; which being without, are not under the Churches' Power; and yet living within the Verge of the same Civil Jurisdiction, are under the Civil

Power of the Magistrates. Hence it is, that we plead for this Order to be set in Civil Affairs, that such a course may be taken as may best secure to our selves and our posterities the faithful managing of

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Civil Government for the *common welfare* of all, as well in the Church as without; which will then most certainly be effected, when the public Trust and power of these matters is committed to such men as are most approved according to God; and these are Church-members,* as shall afterward, God assisting, be proved.

Distinct. 4. The fourth *Distinction* to be premised for clearing the truth, and to prevent mistakes in this Question, shall be *between the Actions of Church-members*. For some actions are done *by them all jointly as a Spiritual Body*, in reference to Spiritual ends; and some actions are done *only by some of the Body*, in reference to Civil ends. Actions of the first sort, are said to be done *by the Church of Christ, as a Church of Christ*; such are *Admission of members, and Excommunication of them according to Christ's order*, and other actions of that kind; but these fall not under our Question, which is wholly about the *transaction of Civil Affairs*: so that your whole Dispute wanteth a good ground, and your labour about it might well have been spared. Actions of the second sort, are of a larger extent, and reach to businesses of a *Civil Nature such as that Civil Judgement* whereof *Paul* speaketh, *1 Cor. ἐν τοῖς βιωτικαῖς*, in matters that concern this life, as the *Lives, Goods*, (and which is dearer to them then both) the *Reputations of men, and their outward Liberty and Peace*. Concerning which, Members fitly chosen out of the Church, and made free Burgesses, are fitter to judge and determine according to God, then other men, and that for weighty Reasons; some whereof are rendered by *Paul* in that Chapter, whereunto others may be added, when we shall argue that Point, the Lord helping us.

Distinct. 5. The fifth *Distinction* to be premised for the clearing of the truth in this Point, is *between Places, where all, or the most considerable part of first and free Planters, profess their desire and purpose of entering into Church-fellowship according to Christ, and of enjoying in that State all the Ordinances to purity and peace, and of securing the same unto their posterity, so far as men are able; and those Places where all or the most considerable part of the first and free Planters are otherwise minded, and profess the contrary*. Our Question is of the first sort, not of the se-

cond. As for those of the second sort, if the *major*, or more considerable part among them, will be like Heathen men, without such Church-fellowship, as is according to Christ in all things, a Heathen

* By *Church-Members* in all this Discourse, is meant such as are in full Communion.

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man or mere civil worldly Politician, will be good enough to be their Magistrate; or if they desire to set up *idolatry and Superstition*, an Idolatrous and superstitious Governor in the Civil State will best suit their ends; and to they may be said to their just reproof and shame, *Like Priest, like People*; and *Like Prince, like People*. This sometimes the Lord hath spoken against a licentious people concerning their prophets, *He that will prophesy of wine and strong drink, he shall be the prophet to this people.** He that sometimes giveth such *Guides in the Church* to a people in *his indignation*, also sometimes give *Magistrates & Rulers* to a people in *the Civil State* in *his wrath*, when men are forsaken of him, and given up more to affect outward fancy and vanity, then God's Order: as when the people of Israel sought a King, without respect to the *right Tribe*, from whence by God's order they ought to expect one. *He gave them a King in his anger, and took him away in his wrath.*† In such case, what shalt the people of God do that live is such a place? surely if God give them liberty and ability, they should attend to the voice of God, which hath said in a like case to his people, *Arise and depart, this is not your rest;*‡ and follow *the steps of Christ's flock* to any place, *where he causeth his flock to feed, and lie down under a comfortable shadow at noon.*§ As in *Jerusalem's* time, the *Levites left their suburbs, and came to Judah and Jerusalem, and after them of all the Tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel, and strengthened the Kingdom of Judah*, where God's Ordinances both concerning Civil Government and Religious Worship were better observed. But if Divine Providence doth necessitate their stay and abode in such places, they are *to pray for those in Authority,*¶ at they may become such, *as under whom they may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty;* and to be *subject to their Power, even in those things wherein they may not obey their Commands, nor seek their help,* 1 Cor. 6:1, 2 till God shall give there liberty from that Yoke, either by removing them to those places inhere fitter Magistrates bear Rule in Civil matters, or by giving them opportunity of Choosing more suitable ones from among themselves.

So much shall serve to have been spoken to the *Distinctions*, which having thus premised, we now proceed to declare the true state of the Question: which is as followeth.

- * Micah 2:11.
 - † Hosea 13:12.
 - ‡ Micah 2:10.
 - § Cantic. 1:6, 7.
 - ¶ 1 Tim. 2:11.
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The true state of the Question.

Q. *Whether a new Plantation, where all of the most considerable part of free Planters profess their purpose and desire of securing to themselves and to their posterity, the pure and peaceable enjoyment of Christ's Ordinances; Whether, I say, such Planters are bound in laying the Foundations of Church and State, to take order, that all the free Burgesses be such as are in fellowship of the Church or Churches which are, or may be gathered according to Christ; and that those free Burgesses have the only power of choosing from among themselves Civil Magistrates, and men to be intrusted with transacting all public Affairs of Importance, according to the rules and directions of Scripture?*

I hold the Affirmative part of this Question upon this ground, that this course will most conduce to the good of both States; and by consequence to the *common welfare of all*, whereunto all men are bound principally to attend in laying the *Foundation of a Commonwealth*, lest Posterity rue the first Miscarriages, when it will be too late to redress them. They that are skilful in Architecture observe, *that the breaking or yielding of a stone in the groundwork of a Building but the breadth of the back, of a knife, will make a cleft of more than half a foot in the Fabric aloft: So important* (saith mine Author) *are fundamental Errors*. The Lord awaken us to look to it in time, and send us his Light and Truth to lead us into the safest ways in these beginnings,

The Question being thus stated, I now proceed with God's help to prove the Affirmative part: and thus I argue, to prove that *the Form of Government which is described in the true stating of the Question is the best, and by consequence, that men that are free to choose (as in the new Plantations they are) ought to establish it in a Christian Common-wealth*.

Argum. 1. Theocracy, or to make the Lord God our Governor (a), is the Form of Government in a Christian Common-wealth, and which men that are free to choose (as in new Plantations they are) ought to be established. The Form of Government described in the true stating of the Question is

Theocracy, of that wherein we make the Lord God our Governors. Therefore that Form of Government which is described in the true stating of the Question, is the best Form of Government in a Christian Commonwealth, and which men that are free to choose (as in new Plantations they are) ought to establish. The Proposition is clear of it self, The Assumption I prove thus:

That Form of Government where 1. The people that have the power of

(a) Deut. 33:29. Isai. 33:22. Judg. 8:23.

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choosing their Governors are in Covenant with God (b) 2. Wherein the men chosen by them are godly men, and fitted with a spirit of Government (c): 3. In which the Laws they rule by are the Laws of God (d): 4. Wherein Laws are executed, Inheritances allotted, and civil differences are composed, according to God's appointment (e): 5. In which men of God are consulted with in all hard cases, and in matters of Religion (f), is the Form which was received and established among, the people of Israel whilst the Lord God was their Governor, as the places of Scripture alledged shew; and is the very same with that which we plead for, as will appear to him that shall examine the tree stating of the Question. The Conclusion follows necessary.

Argum. 2. That form of Government which giveth unto Christ his due preeminence, is the best Form of Government in a Christian Commonwealth, and which men that are free to choose (as in new Plantations they are) ought to establish. The Form of government described in the true stating of the Question, it that which giveth unto Christ his due preeminence. Therefore the Form of Government which is described in the true stating of the Question, is the best Form of Government in a Christian Commonwealth, and which men that are free to choose (as in new Plantations they are) ought to establish.

The Proposition is proved out of two places of Scripture, *Col. 1. 15. to 19.* with *Eph. 1:21, 22.* From which Texts it doth appear, that it is a preeminence due to Christ, that all things, and all Governments in the world, should serve to Christ's ends, for the welfare of the Church whereof he is the Head. For 1. In relation to God, he hath this by Right of Primogeniture, as he is *the first-born, and so Heir of all things, higher then the Kings of the earth.* 2. In relation to the World it is said, *All things were made by him, and for him, and da consist in him,* and therefore it is a preeminence due to him, that they all serve him. 3. In relation to the Church, it is said, *He hath made all*

things subject under his feet, and hath given him over all things to be Head of the Church, that in all things he might have the preeminence. And indeed that he upholdeth the Creatures, and the Order that is in them, it is for his Churches sake; when that is once complete, the world shall soon be at an end. And if you read the stories of the great Monarchies that have been, and judge of them by Scripture-light, you will find they, stood or fell, according as God purposed

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to make use of them about some service to be done about his Church. So that the only considerable part fro which the world standeth at this day, is the Church: and therefore it is a Preeminence due to Christ, that his Headship over the Church should be exalted and acknowledged and served by all. In which respect also the Title of *The first-born* is given to the members of the Church, and they are called *The first-fruits of his Creatures*, to shoew both their preeminence above others, and that they are fittest to serve God's ends.

The Assumption (*That the Form of Government described in the [?????] stating of the Question, doth give unto Christ his due preeminence*) will easily be granted by those that shall consider what Civil Magistrates and Rulers in the Common-wealth those are, who are fittest to serve Christ's ends for the good and welfare of his Church; which will be evident from two places of Scripture: First in *Psal. 2: 10, 11, 12.* you have description of those that are fitted to order Civil Affairs in their Magistrty to Christ's ends; they are such as are not only wise and learned in matters of Religion but also do reduce their knowledge into practise: they *Worship the Lord in fear*; and not only so, but *kiss the Son*, which was a solemn & outward *Profession of love* (a) and of *Subjection* (b), and of *Religious Worship* (c), and so fitly serveth to express their joining themselves to the Church of Christ. Secondly, in *Isa. 49:23.* it is promised to the Church, that *Kings & Queens shall be their nursing-fathers and nursing-mothers*, and therefore it is added, *They shall worship with their faces to the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet*; which is a proverbial expression of their voluntary humbling of themselves to Christ in his Ordinances, (taken from the manner of the *Persians*, in declaring their Subjection to their Emperor (d), which the Apostle calls a *voluntary submission to the Gospel* (e), which is the spirit of the Members of the Churches of Christ. And for this Reason it is, that the Lord, when he moulded a Communion among his own People, wherein all Civil Administrations

should serve to holy ends, he described the men to whom that Trust should be committed, by certain Properties, which also qualified them for fellowship in Church-Ordinances, as *Men of ability and power over their own affections* (f); secondly, *fearing God, Truly Religious, Men of Courage, hating Covetousness, men of Wisdom, men of understanding, and men known or approved of among the people*

(a) 1 Pet. 5:14.

(b) Gen. 41:40. 2 Sa. 10:1.

(c) Hos. 13:2.

(d) *Val. Max.* lib./ chap. 3.

(e) 2 Cor. 9:13.

(f) Exod. 18:21. Deut. 1:13.

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of God, be chosen by the Lord from among their Brethren, & not a stranger, which is no brother: the most of which concur to describe Church-members in a Church rightly gathered and ordered, who are also in respect of their union with Christ, and fellowship together, valled Brethren frequently in the New Testament, wherein the equity of that Rule is established to us. Object. Christ will have his due Preeminence, though the Civil Rulers oppose him, and persecute the Churches, as in Rome: Therefore it is not necessary that this course be taken in Civil Affairs to establish Christ's Preeminence.

Answ. The Question is of a Christian Commonwealth that should willingly subject themselves to Christ, not of a Heathen State that shall perforce be subdued unto Christ. It is concerning what God's people being free should choose, not what his enemies are compelled unto.

Argum. 3. That Form of Government wherein the best provision is made for the good both of the Church and of the Civil State, is the best Form of Government in a Christian Communion, and which men that are free to choose (as in new Plantations they are) ought to establish. The Form of Government described in the true stating of the Question, is that wherein the best provision is made for the good both of the Church and Civil State. Therefore the Form of Government described in the true stating of the Question, is the best Form of Government in a Christian Communion, and which men that are free to choose (as in new Plantations they are) ought to establish. The Proposition (if need be) may be confirmed from the end of all Civil Government & Administrations which is *the public and common Good*, whether Natural, as in *the preservation of Life and Safety*; or Moral, as *Justice, and Honesty in Human Societies*; or Civil, as *Peace, Liberty of Commerce*; or Spiritual, as to *pro-*

tect the Church in Spiritual, though outward, Order and Administrations in peace & purity. And this last is principally to be attended unto, and therefore such as are instructed with this care, are called *The Ministers of God*, to note the principal end whereunto they serve, *viz.* The things wherein God is most directly and immediately honoured, which is in promoting man's Spiritual good, so far as they are enabled by the Civil Power.

The Assumption (*That the Form of Government in the Commonwealth which we plead for, it that wherein the best provision is made for the good both of the Church and of the Civil State*) may appear by the

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blessing of God which usually is upon the Commission, where the securing of the Spiritual good of men, in the peace and purity of God's Ordinances, is principally attended unto by all sorts as may be proved by the state of things in the Communion of *Israel*, whilst the service of the Lord was with due care attended to *all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the Elders that over-lived Joshua, which had known all the work of the Lord which he had done for Israel* (Joshua 24:31). Many more places of Scripture might be alledged; but I will only note *Psal. 72.* wherein all sorts of good are assured to the Commonwealth, wherein *the fear of God*, that is Matters of Religion are so regarded, as the preservation thereof to after-ages is duly provided for; which how can it be done, if the course described in the true stating of the Question be neglected by those that are free to cast the Commonwealth into what Mould they please?

This *Junias*, a Learned and Godly man, and much exercised in State Affairs, as appears by the Story of his Life, saw clearly; and therefore speaking of the Consent and Harmony of the Church and Civil State, in the concurrence of their several Administrations to the welfare of a Christian Commonwealth, he expresseth it by the *conjunction of the Soul and Body in a Man*; and concludeth, that *Nothing will be of so much avail to the welfare of civil Administrations, as will the best Administrations of the Church giving attendance to the holy and just Communion of Saints*, (ut ad parentem officiorum omnium) *as to the Parent of all Duties*: and, that *Nothing will so secure and strengthen Church-Administrations, as that security* (quam præbitura est justa pii Magistratus atque fidelis Πολιτεία) *which the just Administratiom of a godly and faithful Magistrate will afford.* Now *Pii & Fideles, Men that are godly and faithful*, are such as are

described in our stating of the Question. And having, thus said, he breaks out into an affectionate Admiration of the Happiness of a Communion so ordered: *Ecquid obsecro futurum est, si optima Ecclesia, cum Republicâ optima coal scat? O beatum populum, in quo una ore, & uno animo, utraq; administratio, ad sanctam communionem cum civili Societate continendam, & auferendam conspiraverit! Non minuit illam hæc administratio, sed altera alteram stantem, confirmat, labantem, staiumina, collapsam erigit.* Which I thus English: *What I pray may be expected in future times, of the best Church, and the best Common-wealth,*

Junias Edes. lib. 3. chap. 5.

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grow up together? *Oh blessed people, among whom each Administration shall conspire with one mouth, and one mind, to conjoin and advance the Communion of Saints with the Civil Society! One of these Administrations will not detract from the other, but each will confirm the other, if it stand, and stay it if it be falling, and raise it up if it be fallen down.* And a little after he thus concludeth, *Magistratum cui credita est civilis administratio non in Ecclesia solum, sed etiam ex Ecclesia esse affirmamus; We affirm, that the Magistrate to whom the Civil Administration is committed, is or ought to be not only in the Church, but also taken out of the Church.* Thus Junius thought, and taught, and published to the world. And indeed what is more equal, then that he who by Office is to be a *Minister of God*, should be chosen by and out of those who are by open Profession in the Church-estate, the Servants of the Lord and have more helps to know his Mind, and deep engagements to seek his Ends, and observe his Will, then other men? But if any be otherwise minded, let them shew some other course, wherein the public good may be promoted according to God, with assurance of a blessing by virtue of the Promises.

Argum. 4. The fourth Argument shall be taken out of *1 Cor. 6. ver. 1, to 8.*

Whence I thus argue: *That Form of Government wherein the power of Civil Administrations is denied unto unbelievers, and committed to the Saints, is the best Form of Government in a Christian Common-wealth, and which men that are free to choose (as in new Plantations they are) ought to establish. The Form of Government described in the true stating of the Question, is that wherein the power of Civil Administrations is denied to unbelievers, and committed to the Saints. Therefore the Form of Government described in the true stating of the Question, is the best Form*

of *Government in a Christian Communion, and which men that are free to choose (as in new plantations they are) ought to establish.* The Proposition is evident from the Scripture alleged. For, the thing which *Paul* blameth in them, is not, that living under unbelieving Magistrates, they submitted to their Civil Judicature when they were sited to appear before their Judgment-seats; but this he reproveth, that when they were free to choose other Judges, (as in voluntary references they were) they would out of choice be judged under the unjust, and not under Saints. His Arguments against this are many and weighty, 1. From the danger of thus exalting unbelievers,

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and abasing the Saints, in these words, *Dare any of you having a matter against another, be judged under the unjust, and not under the Saints?* 2. From the quality of unbelieving judges, whom he calleth *unjust*, because they are destitute of the righteousness that is by Faith, and which is the fountain of all true Moral Justice; and because they were ill-affected to Christians, and to the Church of Christ, and apt to vex them injuriously, if they had any business before them; and because though some men out of Christ may be found civilly honest, and morally just, as were also some Heathen men, yet you can have no assurance of their justice, seeing this is the genius and nature of all men out of Christ to be unrighteous. 3. From the property of Church-members, whom he calls *Saints*, that is, men consecrated to God and to his ends in all things; for so they are in their Church-estate, and by virtue of their Covenant are bound so to be: when as others are (or at least are not manifested to be otherwise, according to God's order) worldly-minded, or self-seekers, *minding their own things, and not the things of Jesus Christ.* The 4th Argument is *à majori*, for he saith, *The Saints shall judge the world*, and blames their ignorance that question it: *Know ye not that the Saints shall judge the world?* and thence inferreth, that they should much more have judgement ἐν τοῖς βιωτικοῖς *in matters that concern this life*, such are Human Contracts, men's Goods, and Lives, and outward Liberties. The 5th Argument is from the Wisdom wherewith the Church of God is furnished; for all Civil businesses: *Is there not a wise man among you?* as if he should say, It cannot be that more wisdom should be for transacting of business according to God; in men that are out of the Church, then in those that are in the Church? howsoever much worldly wisdom is sometimes given to men of the world, yet

not sufficient to reach God's ends, that is the Priviledge of Saints, they only are wise *as Serpents*, the other men may be as *subtle as Foxes*. And seeing it is by Christ that *Kings reign, and Princes decree justice*, how can it be supposed that Christ, who is the Head of the Church, will furnish others with a Spirit of Wisdom and Government in Civil Matters, and deny it to the Church, Members of his own Body, whom he alone sanctifieth to his ends?

The Assumption (*That the Form of Government in the Commonwealth which we plead for, is that wherein the power of civil Admini-*

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strations is denied to unbelievers, and committed to the Saints) is evident of it self. For whom doth the Apostle call *Saints* there, but Members of the Church? when he had said before, they *were sanctified in Christ Jesus, Saints by calling*. Hence it is that he speaks of men esteemed in the Church). *v. 4.* and of men that can judge between *Brethren, v. 5.* which is a Title given Church-members ordinarily in the New Testament.

Object. If it be objected; *He speaketh thereof Church-members, in opposition to Infidels which persecuted the truth, not in oppositon to men that may fear God, and be accounted Believers, though they be not in Church-fellowship.*

Answ. I Answer, The fear of God, and Faith of those men, may be justly doubted, whose settled abode is in a place where Churches are gathered and ordered according to Christ, and yet are not after a convenient time joined to them: For if in those times and places where the Name of Christ was a Reproach, men were no sooner converted, then they were *added to the Church*, and their being added to the Church, was made an evidence of their conversion; what may we think of those men, who living in times and places where the Ordinances of the Gospel may be enjoyed in purity, with peace in Church fellowship, do yet live without the Church? 2. Though there be sundry degrees, of distance from the Church, to be found among men that are out of Church fellowship, as the Heathen are further off then moral Christians, yet the same Spirit of unrighteousness and enmity against Christ, worketh and bears rule in an unconverted Christian, as doth in an unbaptized Heathens; He is unsanctified as the other is, and so unsuitable to God's ends in civil Administrations; and therefore it will, not be safe, nor according to the Rule, that where a Church is gathered according to Christ, the

Members should be neglected, and such men entrusted with managing the Public Affairs, as are not in fellowship with them.

Argum. 5 The fifth Argument may be taken from the Nature and Power of Church-Order, which when it is managed according to Christ's appointment; affordeth best security to a Christian State, for the faithful discharge of any Trust that shall be committed to those that are under it. Whence I thus argue: *That Form of Government when in the power of choosing from among themselves, men to be entrusted with*

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managing all public Affairs of Importance, is committed to them who are furnished with the best helps for securing to a Christian State the faithful discharge of such a Trust, is the best-Form of Government in a Christian Common-wealth, and which men that are free to choose (as in new Plantations they are) ought to establish. The Form of Government, described in the true stating of the Question is such. Therefore the Form of Government described in the true stating of the Question, is the best Form of Government in a Christian Common-wealth, and which men that are free to choose (as in new Plantations they are) ought to establish, The Proposition is undeniable.

The Assumption (*That the Form of government which we plead for, is that wherein the power of choosing men to be entrusted with managing of all public Affairs of Importance, is committed to them who are furnished with the best helps for securing to a Christian State the faithful discharge of such a Truth*) maybe confirmed, by shewing what these Helps are; *viz.* 1. That the Members of the Church are *Saints by calling*, i.e. men *Separated from the world, and the pollutions thereof, out of which they are called, and dedicated to God, as the first-born, and the first-fruits were; and they are qualified, by the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, in some measure through fellowship with Christ, to serve God and men in holiness and righteousness all the days of their lives.* 2. That these *Saints by calling* being in Church-Order according to Christ's appointment, are in Covenant with God, and one with another, whereby they are most strictly bound to do faithfully, whatsoever they do to God or men. 3. That by virtue of this Order, they are bound to mutual helpfulness, in Watching over one another, Instructing, Admonishing, and Exhorting one another, to prevent sin, or to recover such as are fallen, or to encourage one another, and strengthen them in well-doing.

Thus are they bound in a threefold Cable unto all Faithfulness *in all things to God and Man*. The like assurance cannot be had in any other way, if this course be neglected.

Argum. 6. The sixth Argument, with which I will conclude, (that I may not

wear you with Reading, as I have wearied my self with Writing) shall be taken from *The Danger of devolving this Power upon those that are not in Church-Order*. From whence the Apostle would

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have men to be affrighted *Dare any of you having business, against another, be judged under the unjust, and not under the Saints?* The Dinger therefore that is to be feared in reference to the *Church*, is, The disturbance of the Churches' Peace, when Power shall be put into their hands, who being of worldly spirits, hate the Saints and their Communion; and being of the *seed of the Serpent, are at enmity against the seed of the Woman*; and being Satan's instruments, who is the *God of this World*, are resisting and fighting against Christ his Kingdom and Government in the Church. 2. Add hereunto, The Danger of corrupting Church-Order, either by compelling them to receive into fellowship unsuitable ones, or by imposing upon them Ordinances of men, and worldly Rudiments; or by establishing Idolatrous Worship; or by strengthening Heretics in subverting the common Faith, as those *Arian Emperors*, and Idolatrous Kings and States have done, of which we read so many instances.

Secondly, the Danger to be feared in reference to the Civil State, is, 1. The raising of Factions to the disturbance of Public Peace, whilst some Magistrates out of the Church, watch the seasons to strengthen themselves against those that are in the Church, till they have wrought them out of Office and Power in the Civil State: and in the mean time, what other can be expected from such unequal mixture in State, but that they should be as *the toes of the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image, which were part of iron, and part of clay*, they should be partly, broken, and partly strong, and not comfortably join one with another, as iron cannot be mixed with clay. The second Danger to the Civil State, will be, A perverting of *Justice* by; Magistrates of worldly spirits, through Bribery, respect of persons, unacquaintance with the Law of God, and injuriousness to the servants of God. But I must break off, lest I grow too tedious. How easily might I add the Consent of all Nations to this Truth in

some proportion, who generally practise accordingly? In our Native Country, none are instructed with managing of Public Affairs, but *Members of the Church of England*, (as they call them.) In *Holland*, when the *Arminian* Party had many Burgomasters on their side, *Grave Maurice* came into divers of their Cities with Troops of Soldiers, by Order from the *States General*, and put those *Arminian* Magistrates, out of Office, and caused them to choose only

1 1 Cor. 6:1.

2 John 15:18. Gen. 3:15. Zech. 3:1. Revel. 12:7.

3 Col. 2:22, 23.

4 Dan. 2:42, 43.

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such as were of the *Dutch Churches*. And in *Rotterdam* (and I think it is so in other Towns) the *Vrentscap* (who are all of them of the *Dutch Church*, and free Burgers) do out of their own company choose the Burgomaster, and other Magistrates and Officers. In all Popish Countries and Plantations, they observe it strictly, to entrust none with the managing of Public Civil Affairs but such as are *Catholics*, (as they speak) and of the *Roman Church*. Yea, in *Turkey* itself, they are careful that none but a man devoted to *Mahomet* bear public office. Yea, these very *Indians* that Worship the Devil will not be under the Government of any *Sagamores*, but such as join with them in Observance of their *Pawawes* and *Idolatries*: That it seems to be a Principle imprinted in the minds and hearts of all men in the equity of it: *That such a Form of Government as best serveth to Establish their Religion, should by the consent of all be Established in the Civil State.*

Other things I might add, but I hope enough hath been said for Defence and Confirmation of what I have affirmed touching this matter. If you remain unsatisfied, I shall desire that you will placidly, and lovingly, and impartially weigh the Grounds of my judgment, and communicate yours, if any remain against it, in writing. For though much writing be wearisome unto me, yet I lead us into the safer way for me. Now the God of Peace and Truth lead us into all ways of Peace and Truth, to the Praise of his Grace through *the Lord Jesus Christ*, who is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life. To whom be in all things the preeminence, and Glory, and Praise. Amen.*

FINIS.

ERRATA. Page 8. line 17. *for* the State *read* that estate. *Ibid.* *for* that *read* and.
p. 11. l. 27. and having.