

A
 PREFACE
 TO THEM THAT SEEK (AS THEY TERM IT)
 THE REFORMATION OF LAWS¹,
 AND
 ORDERS ECCLESIASTICAL,
 IN THE
 CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THOUGH for no other cause, yet for this ; that posterity may know we have not loosely through silence permitted things to pass away as in a dream, there shall be for men's information extant thus much concerning the present state of the Church of God established amongst us, and their careful endeavour which would have upheld the same². At your hands, beloved in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, (for in him the love which we bear unto all that would but seem to be born of him, it is not the sea of your gall and bitterness that shall ever drown,) I have no great cause to look for other than the selfsame portion and lot, which your manner hath been hitherto to lay on them that concur not in opinion and sentence with you³.

¹ So early edd. "the laws." K.]
² [The same foreboding tone of thought is apparent in book v. 79, 16.]
³ [Christ. Letter, &c. p. 4. "May wee not trulie say, that under the shewe of inveighing against Puritanes, the chieftest pointes of popish blasphemie are many times and in many places by divers men not obscurelie broached, both in sermons and in writing . . . and verelie such a thing offered itselfe unto our eyes, in reading your bookes, and we had not skill howe to judge otherwise of the handling of your penne and of the scope of your matter. Notwithstanding because rash judgement may prejudice honest travailles, and faithfull labourers may have their unadvised slippes, and we could not tell how

But our hope is, that the God of peace shall (notwithstanding man's nature too impatient of contumelious malediction) enable us quietly and even gladly to suffer all things, for that work sake which we covet to perform.

[2.] The wonderful zeal and fervour wherewith ye have withstood the received orders of this Church, was the first thing which caused me to enter into consideration, whether (as all your published books and writings peremptorily maintain) every Christian man, fearing God, stand bound to join with you for the furtherance of that which ye term the *Lord's Discipline*. Wherein I must plainly confess unto you, that before I examined your sundry declarations in that behalf, it could not settle in my head to think, but that undoubtedly such numbers of otherwise right well affected and most religiously inclined minds had some marvellous reasonable inducements, which led them with so great earnestness that way. But when once, as near as my slender ability would serve, I had with travail and care performed that part of the Apostle's advice and counsel in such cases, whereby he willet to "try all things¹," and was come at the length so far, that there remained only the other clause to be satisfied, wherein he concludeth that "what good is "must be held;" there was in my poor understanding no

"zeale, love, or glorie, might carie
"a man of such towardlie and
"excellent giftes, in the first shew-
"ing of himselfe to the worlde;
"or that an earnest striving and
"bending yourselve in heate of
"disputation against the one side,
"might dazell your eyes, and draw
"your hand at unawares to farre
"and too favourable to the other
"side; or else peradventure we
"might mistake your meaning,
"and so wee should doe you wrong
"against our willes. We thought
"it therefore our parte, in regarde
"of our dutie to the Church, and
"most agreeing to charitie, both
"for your credit and our ease, in
"all Christian love to intreat you,
"that as you tender the good es-
"tate of Christe's Church among
"us, and of thousands converted to
"the gospel, you would in like

"publike manner (but plainly and
"directlie) show unto us and all
"English protestants your owne
"true meaning, and how your
"wordes in divers thinges doe
"agree with the doctrine established
"among us." On which Hooker's
"note is, "That because they are loth
"to prejudice honest travailes by
"rash judgment, and it might be
"they mistooke my meaning, they
"thought it fittest in charity, in
"great care of my credit, and in
"all Christian love, to set abroad
"their suspitions, and to give no-
"tise of alarm throughout hir ma-
"jestie's dominions, till such time
"as my mind were explained unto
"them for satisfaction in their
"doubtes, whereby they might be
"the better furnished to satisfy
"others in my behalf."

¹ [1 Thess. v. 21.]

remedy, but to set down this as my final resolute persuasion: "Surely the present form of church-government "which the laws of this land have established is such, as "no law of God nor reason of man hath hitherto been "alleged of force sufficient to prove they do ill, who to "the uttermost of their power withstand the alteration "thereof." Contrariwise, "The other, which instead of it "we are required to accept, is only by error and misconceit "named the ordinance of Jesus Christ, no one proof as yet "brought forth whereby it may clearly appear to be so in "very deed."

[3.] The explication of which two things I have here thought good to offer into your own hands, heartily beseeching you even by the meekness of Jesus Christ, whom I trust ye love; that, as ye tender the peace and quietness of this church, if there be in you that gracious humility which hath ever been the crown and glory of a Christianly-disposed mind, if your own souls, hearts, and consciences (the sound integrity whereof can but hardly stand with the refusal of truth in personal respects) be, as I doubt not but they are, things most dear and precious unto you: let "not the faith which ye have in our Lord Jesus Christ" be blemished "with partialities¹;" regard not who it is which speaketh, but weigh only what is spoken. Think not that ye read the words of one who bendeth himself as an adversary against the truth which ye have already embraced; but the words of one who desireth even to embrace together with you the self-same truth, if it be the truth; and for that cause (for no other, God he knoweth) hath undertaken the burdensome labour of this painful kind of conference. For the plainer access whereunto, let it be lawful for me to rip up to the very bottom, how and by whom your Discipline was planted, at such time as this age we live in began to make first trial thereof.

II. ² A founder it had, whom, for mine own part, I think The first incomparably the wisest man that ever the French Church establish- did enjoy, since the hour it enjoyed him. His bringing ment of new disci-

¹ James ii. 1.

² [Compare the second chapter of Abp. Bancroft's Survey of the pre-

tended Holy Discipline: in which a similar sketch is given of Calvin's proceedings at Geneva.]

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Ch. ii. 1.

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Mr. Cal-
vin's indus-
try in the
Church of
Geneva;
and the
beginning
of strife
about it
amongst
ourselves.

up was in the study of the civil law. Divine knowledge he gathered, not by hearing or reading so much, as by teaching others. For, though thousands were debtors to him, as touching knowledge in that kind; yet he to none but only to God, the author of that most blessed fountain, the Book of Life, and of the admirable dexterity of wit, together with the helps of other learning which were his guides: till being occasioned to leave France, he fell at the length upon Geneva; which city the bishop and clergy thereof had a little before (as some do affirm) forsaken¹, being of likelihood frighted with the people's sudden attempt for abolishment of popish religion: the event of which enterprise they thought it not safe for themselves to wait for in that place. At the coming of Calvin thither², the form of their civil regiment was popular, as it continueth at this day: neither king, nor duke, nor nobleman of any authority or power over them, but officers chosen by the people yearly out of themselves, to order all things with public consent. For spiritual government, they had no laws at all agreed upon, but did what the pastors of their souls by persuasion could win them unto. Calvin, being admitted one of their preachers, and a divinity reader amongst them, considered how dangerous it was that the whole estate of that Church should hang still on so slender a thread as the liking of an ignorant multitude is, if it have power to change whatsoever itself listeth. Wherefore taking unto him two of the other ministers³ for more countenance of the action, (albeit the rest were all against it,) they moved, and in the end persuaded⁴ with much ado, the people to bind themselves by solemn oath, first never to admit the Papacy

¹ [Pierre de la Baume, of a noble family in France, was the last bishop acknowledged in Geneva. "Il partit à la mi-Juillet [1533] pour se ranger au party de Savoye contre la Ville." Besides the agitation occasioned by the new opinions, he was at the time engaged in a dispute with the Syndics regarding the judicial prerogative. Spon, Hist. de Genève, I. 344. Aug. 27, 1535, Protestantism was established by ordinance of the Syndics. *ibid.* p. 366.]

² [Aug. 1536. He was on his way to Basle or Strasburgh, but went round by Geneva on account of the war, and was persuaded by Farel to remain. Spon, II. p. 14.]

³ [Farel and Couraut. Beza, Vit. Calv. [first published 1564] prefixed to his Works. Gen. 1617: from which most of these particulars are taken.]

⁴ [20 July, 1537.]

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amongst them again; and secondly, to live in obedience unto such orders concerning the exercise of their religion, and the form of their ecclesiastical government, as those their true and faithful ministers of God's word had agreeably to scripture set down for that end and purpose.

[2.] When these things began to be put in ure, the people also (what causes moving them thereunto, themselves best know) began to repent them of that they had done, and irefully to champ upon the bit they had taken into their mouths; the rather, for that they grew by means of this innovation into dislike with some Churches near about them, the benefit of whose good friendship their state could not well lack¹.

It was the manner of those times (whether through men's desire to enjoy alone the glory of their own enterprizes, or else because the quickness of their occasions required present despatch; so it was,) that every particular Church did that within itself, which some few of their own thought good, by whom the rest were all directed. Such number of Churches then being, though free within themselves, yet small, common conference beforehand might have eased them of much after trouble². But a greater inconvenience it bred, that every later endeavoured to be certain degrees more removed from conformity with the Church of Rome, than the rest before had been³: whereupon grew marvellous great dissimilitudes, and by reason thereof, jealousies, heart-burnings, jars and

¹ ["Sous pretexte de conserver les libertez de la ville, et de ce qu'ils n'avoient pas voulu se conformer à l'usage de Berne pour la Communion, ils firent prononcer un arrêt au Conseil," &c. Spon. II. 18.]

² [Chr. Letter, p. 39. "You blame them, that in that troublesome time they wanted common conference." Hooker, MS. note. "No man blamed for those defects, which necessity casteth upon him."]

³ [Chr. Letter, p. 43. "The Church of Rome favourable admitted to be of the house of God; Calvin with the reformed churches full of faults, and most of all they which indeavoured to be VOL. I.

"most removed from conformitie with the Church of Rome."

Hooker, MS. note. "True. For are not your Anabaptists, Familists, Libertines, Arrians, and other like extreme reformers of popery grown by that very means hateful to the whole world? Are not their heresies a thousand times more execrable and hateful than popery?"

"Is it then a matter heinous to looke awry upon any man which hath been earnest against the Pope? As earnest men that way as M. Calvin are nothing spared by you and yours in any such conflict. You honour Calvin as the father of discipline; this is the boil that will not be touched."]

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discords amongst them. Which, notwithstanding, might have easily been prevented, if the orders, which each Church did think fit and convenient for itself, had not so peremptorily been established under that high commanding form, which tendered them unto the people, as things everlastingly required by the law of that Lord of lords, against whose statutes there is no exception to be taken. For by this mean it came to pass, that one Church could not but accuse and condemn another of disobedience to the will of Christ, in those things where manifest difference was between them: whereas the selfsame orders allowed, but yet established in more wary and suspense manner, as being to stand in force till God should give the opportunity of some general conference what might be best for every of them afterwards to do; this I say had both prevented all occasion of just dislike which others might take, and reserved a greater liberty unto the authors themselves of entering into farther consultation afterwards. Which though never so necessary they could not easily now admit, without some fear of derogation from their credit: and therefore that which once they had done, they became for ever after resolute to maintain.

[A.D. 1538.] Calvin therefore and the other two his associates, stiffly refusing to administer the holy Communion to such as would not quietly, without contradiction and murmur, submit themselves unto the orders which their solemn oath had bound them to obey, were in that quarrel banished the town¹.

[3.] A few years after² (such was the levity of that people) the places of one or two of their ministers being fallen void, they were not before so willing to be rid of their learned pastor, as now importunate to obtain him again from them who had given him entertainment, and which were loath to part with him, had not unresistable earnestness been used. One of the town ministers, that saw in what manner the people were bent for the revocation of Calvin, gave him notice of their affection in this sort³.

¹ [MS. note on Chr. Letter, p. 39. "De Calvino vere quod Tullius de Q. Metel. 'De civitate de-cedere maluit quam de sententia.'"]
"Orat. vol. III. p. 151. Oratione pro Balbo." c. 5.]
² [1541, 1 May. Spon. II. 25.]
³ Epist. Cal. 24, [p. 27, ed. Gen.

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"The senate of two hundred being assembled, they all 'crave Calvin. The next day a general convocation. They 'cry in like sort again all, We will have Calvin, that 'good and learned man, Christ's minister. This," saith he, "when I understood, I could not choose but praise 'God, nor was I able to judge otherwise than that 'this 'was the Lord's doing, and that it was marvellous in our 'eyes,' and that 'the stone which the builders refused 'was now made the head of the corner¹.'" The other two² whom they had thrown out, (together with Calvin,) they were content should enjoy their exile. Many causes might lead them to be more desirous of him. First, his yielding unto them in one thing might happily put them in hope, that time would breed the like easiness of condescending further unto them. For in his absence he had persuaded them, with whom he was able to prevail, that albeit himself did better like of common bread to be used in the Eucharist, yet the other they rather should accept, than cause any trouble in the church about it³. Again, they saw that the name of Calvin waxed every day greater abroad⁴, and that together with his fame, their infamy was spread, which had so rashly and childishly ejected him. Besides, it was not unlikely but that his credit in the world might many ways stand the poor town in great stead: as the truth is, their minister's foreign estimation

1617. "In crastinum Ducentorum congregatur concilium, et omnes petunt Calvinum: congregatur et generale sequenti die, itidem clamant omnes, Calvinum probum et doctum virum Christi ministrum volumus. Quod cum intellexissem, non potui non laudare Deum, aliterque [neque aliter?] judicare, quam quod a Domino esset factum istud, et esset mirabile in oculis nostris: quodque lapidem quem reprobarant edificantes in caput fieret anguli." Bernardi de Calvin. 6 Feb. 1541.]

¹ Luke xx. 17. [Ps. cxviii. 22, 23.]

² [There seems to be a slight oversight here. Farel and Couraut (not Viret) were the two ejected with Calvin in 1538. Couraut died

the same year. (Calv. Ep. p. 10.) Viret was before that time settled at Lausanne, but returned to Geneva for a time to assist Calvin in the new settlement, 1541; as did Farel from Neufchatel, where he had obtained an appointment. Bayle, art. Viret. Spon. II. 19, 25.]

³ ["Calvinus bonos nonnullos ista mutatione usque adeo offensos, ut etiam a cena sibi abstinendum putarent, serio monuit, ne ob istud ἀδιόφορον litem moverent." Beza. Vit. Calv.]

⁴ [By his theological lectures at Strasburgh; his settlement of the church there; his defence of the church itself of Geneva against Cardinal Sadolet; his Institutes, Commentary on the Romans, and Book on the Lord's Supper.]