

other kindred ones, in your idea of church government, I perfectly agree with you in one part of your assertion, that the bible says little or nothing on such matters; but I do not say that they are all left to human discretion, and therefore I cannot flatter myself into the opinion that the synods and advisory councils, of Presbyterians and Independents are innocent matters of human discretion!

By "church government" I understand the government of the church; which the bible teaches is upon the shoulders of Immanuel. He placed the twelve apostles upon twelve thrones, and commanded the nations to obey them. I find, therefore, that the Lord Jesus is the Governor, and the twelve apostles under him, sitting upon twelve thrones, constitute the government of the church of Jesus Christ. I know that synods and advisory councils have a right to govern voluntary associations, which owe their origin to the will of men; but in the church of Jesus the twelve apostles reign. Jesus, the king, the glorious and mighty Lord gave them their authority. The church is a congregation of disciples meeting in one place, an assembly of regenerated persons who have agreed to walk together under the guidance of Jesus Christ. Hence they are to be governed by his laws. All the exhortations concerning temper, behaviour, and discourse found in the apostolic writings, in all their addresses to the congregations after the day of Pentecost, constitute the government of the church, properly so called. When all the apostolic injunctions, such as those concerning the government of the thoughts, the tongue, and the hands of christians are regarded, then the church is under the government of the Lord. Laws moral and religious, i. e. laws governing men's moral and religious actions are the only laws which Jesus deigns to enact. He legislates not upon matters of mere policy, or upon bricks, stones, and logs of timber. He says nothing about moderators, clerks, and parliamentary decorum: but upon moral and religious behaviour he is incomparably sublime. He enacts nothing upon the confederation of churches, of delegate meetings, or any matter of temporal and worldly policy. Hence they strain out a gnat and swallow an elephant who complain there is no law authorizing the building of meeting houses, and yet find a warrant for a "state convention" or a religious convent, college or seminary of learning. The matter of church government which was discussed at Westminster was never mentioned by the Lord nor his apostles. When I hear Independents, Presbyterians and Episcopalians contending about their different forms of church