

pect; for if it was like other charters it ought to have left every thing, but the definition of the powers and privileges granted, to the management of the individuals incorporated. Now all the apostolic writings are filled with matter and laws entirely subversive of such a representation of the matter. The apostles taught christians a thousand times more than any charter teaches; and while the constitution of the christian church is laid down most fully in these writings, every important item of christian duty requiring the attention of christians, either in public or private capacity, is also laid down. In representing the bible, then, only as the charter of the church, injustice is done to it as great as I can conceive of. And the book is divested of all its utility as regulating the conduct of individuals. For you know that charters regulate public bodies, and not individual persons; whereas almost the whole New Testament is engrossed with the regulations, and rules, and precepts which are to govern individuals. I am therefore constrained to differ essentially from you in this part of your plan of church government. But I hope, when you more maturely reflect upon this matter, you will differ from yourself as far as I differ from you; and indeed I must say, that I think you will agree with this view of the matter, and that your public lectures to congregations are at variance with your theory.

A second capital objection to your scheme of church government is, that it terminates in the same systems with those fashionable in Rome, Constantinople, and Edinburgh. In giving to the church the incorporated powers of legislation, even upon the subject of by-laws, the question is, Do the whole church, male and female, old and young—or do the rulers in the church make these laws? Or do you use the word church in the classic sense of the presbyterians, or the New Testament sense of a single congregation? As a Baptist, I suppose you use it in the latter sense. Well, then, the congregation in Washington city, for example, is chartered by the bible, and authorized to make its own by-laws or particular laws for the government of its members. The whole congregation must, then, make these laws, or their rulers. Now, to say nothing of the principles involved on either hypothesis, where do the sacred writings authorize or give directions for either? What command, law, or precedent, says, You may make your own by-laws or regulations? I must candidly say, I know of not one. If you know of any such, do, for the sake of the churches, declare it. The presby-