

ministers in the Church, but did not appoint a particular mode of conducting public worship; the Christian Church is bound to retain those orders of ministers, but may exercise its discretion with respect to the mode of worship, provided the general rules given for the guidance of that discretion are observed. Or, if the apostles have marked out with precision the duties of an officer of great consequence in the Christian Church, whose continuance in the Church was necessary for the execution of that plan of Church government which they, by Divine inspiration, had appointed, and yet have left no directions how this officer should be elected in future ages; we are bound to consider the office as perpetual, but the mode of election to that office as discretionary.

3. Some persons have imagined, that if matters relative to Church government had been of importance, they would have been more clearly revealed. Such imaginations are highly improper, if Divine revelation has given any directions relative to this subject. We must not pretend to dictate to the all-wise God, how he shall reveal his will to us. If he has revealed it in *any* way, this ought to be considered as sufficient to command our obedience.

That excellent writer, Bishop Butler, has observed, that a preponderance of argument in favour of any duty requires our obedience, as well as a more clear and explicit revelation. Let it be granted, for sake of argument, that no particular form of Church government is *commanded* in Scripture; yet, we cannot thence conclude, that all Christian Churches have equally the support of Divine authority. For the inspired apostles formed the first Christian Church after a particular model; and if any modern Church has the example of the apostles on its side, all other things, being by the supposition equal, this Church has a preponderance of argument in its favour.

4. But the example of persons acting by Divine