

not operate to exempt the people from the duty of *legitimate* obedience; of obedience to constituted authority, and established rules, and lawful discipline;—but merely from an absolute and servile obedience.—As long as the Apostles spake the express dictates of the Holy Ghost,—as long as the Church could use such language as—“it seemeth good to the Holy Ghost, and “to us,”—there can be no doubt that *any* resistance to their commands was disobedience not to *man*, but to GOD;—but when this awful power was withdrawn, the Bishops and Pastors of the Church were to govern it by Canons, and Articles, and fixed rules; and the duty of the people became a *canonical* obedience,—an obedience, not to the will or power of man, but to the laws laid down by the whole body of the Church, and administered by its officers. Every act of authority in conformity with those laws is binding upon your consciences; but if any attempt be made to exercise an arbitrary dominion beyond them, you are entitled to refuse submission to it.

But if the cessation of miraculous gifts, and our consequent liability to error, cannot justify disobedience to authority lawfully exercised, still less can it excuse separation from the Church, and a division of the Christian body into sects and parties. Such schisms are condemned in the Word of God as deadly sins,\* and denounced as cutting off the

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\* 1 Cor. iii. 3, xii. 12. &c. Gal. v. 20. 1 Tim. i. 20. Titus iii. 10. &c., &c.