

**AN INQUIRY INTO THE
SCRIPTURAL FORM OF
CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649534098

An Inquiry into the Scriptural Form of Church Government by Thomas Witherow

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

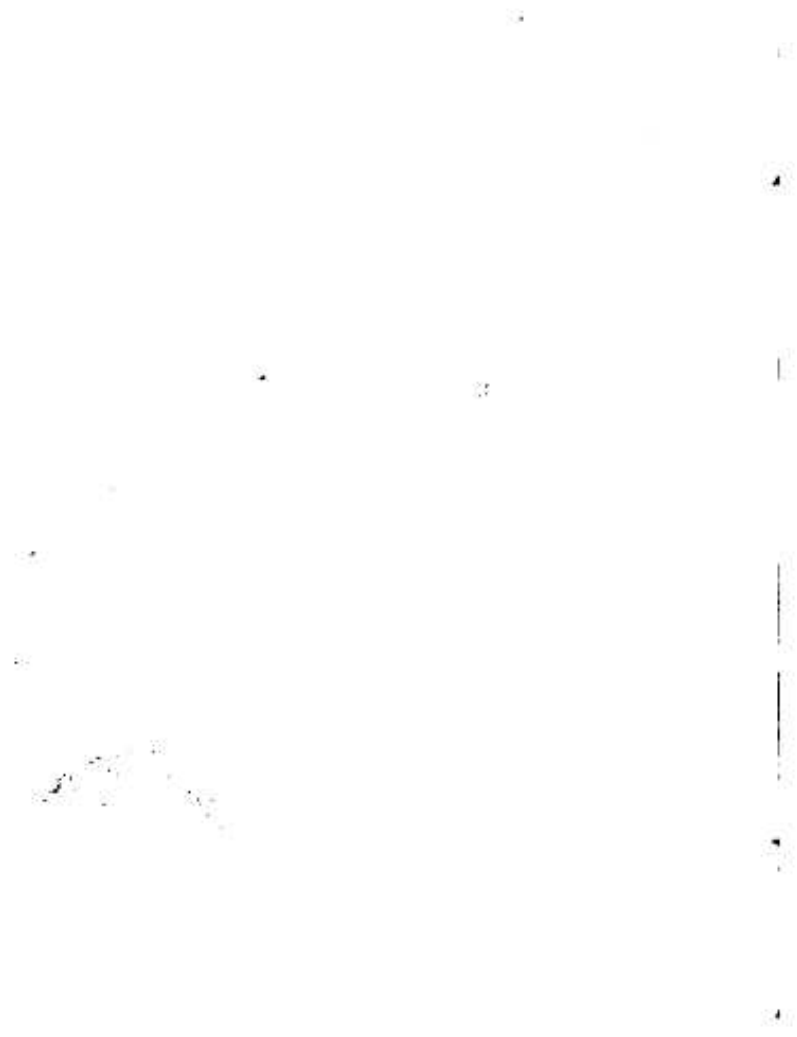
This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

THOMAS WITHEROW

**AN INQUIRY INTO THE
SCRIPTURAL FORM OF
CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

AN INQUIRY
INTO
THE SCRIPTURAL FORM
OF
CHURCH GOVERNMENT.



AN INQUIRY
INTO
THE SCRIPTURAL FORM
OF
CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

(Extracted and Abridged from "The Apostolic Church.")

BY THE
REV. THOMAS WITHEROW,
PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY IN THE
MAGHER COLLEGE, LONDONDERRY, IRELAND.



LONDON:
JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

MDCCLXVII.

110. k. 184.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

A FEW preliminary remarks seem called for in publishing this little book on Church government. In endeavouring to show that the Presbyterian form is most in accordance with Scripture, and should therefore be adopted in preference to other systems, we desire to keep in remembrance that Church government is quite subordinate to the vital doctrines of the Bible. There is a bond of union infinitely higher. The unction from the Holy One unites all believers, of whatever denomination; and the exercise of charity towards those who differ from us on minor matters, is absolutely required of all true Christians. We therefore desire to hold out the right hand of fellowship to all who love

the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. All that is asserted here is, as has been stated by the late Principal Cunningham, "that the Presbyterian system is believed to be indicated and sketched out in its leading features in the New Testament, and that others have mistaken the mind and will of Christ in this matter." While we freely admit that no form of Church government can of itself be a safeguard against the decline of spiritual life, yet if it be the means of excluding error and maintaining purity of worship, it must be so far conducive to vital godliness.

The great aim of all true Protestant Churches should ever be not to aggrandise their own body, but to leaven society with the Truth, and to save souls. It is, therefore, the duty of all sister Churches to unite against the common enemy of souls, and to seek the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom. This duty becomes self-evident, when men of different denominations are fighting shoulder to shoulder with heathenism in foreign countries,

but it is equally incumbent on us in the face of the rampant heathenism and nominal Christianity in our own beloved land.

It is, therefore, only in reference to those who take no part in the great conflict with sin and deadly error that we can use the Saviour's words: "He that is not for us, is against us;" while in reference to sister Churches,—to the different bands in the Lord's army, to the different tribes of the one Israel, let us use that other text, (and it is the sense in which it is used in Scripture,) "He that is not against us, is on our part."

But it is none the less necessary that the Scriptural grounds of our Presbyterian system should be rightly understood, and the weak points in other systems indicated—that our doing so may help forward the needful reform.

Looking, for instance, at the National Church of England—while we maintain that under certain conditions alliance with the State is good and right, no intelligent Chris-