

A  
Modest & Brotherly  
ANSWER  
To Mr Charles Herle his Book,  
against the Independency of Churches.



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against the Independency of Churches.

by

Richard Mather  
and  
William Tompson

Quinta Press

Quinta Press, Meadow View, Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, Shropshire, England,  
SY10 7RN

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# Modest & Brotherly ANSWER

To Mr CHARLES HERLE his Book,  
against the Independency of Churches.  
Wherein his four Arguments for the Govern-  
ment of Synods over particular Congregati-  
ons, are friendly Examined, and  
clearly Answered.

Together, with Christian and Loving Ani-  
madversions upon sundry other observable passa-  
ges in the said BOOK.

All tending to declare the true use of Synods, and the  
power or Congregational Churches in the points of  
electing and ordaining their own Officers,  
and centering their Offenders.

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By RICHARD MATHER *Teacher of the  
Church at Dorchester; And WILLIAM  
TOMPSON Pastor of the Church at  
Braintree in NEW-ENGLAND.*

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Sent from thence after the Assembly of Elders were dissolved that  
last met at *Cambridge* to debate matters about *Church-government.*

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*London, Printed for Henry Overton in Popes-head alley, 1644 [1643]*



Reverend and Dear Sir,

**T**He right form of Church Government being more searched into of late time then formerly, and your self amongst others having written for the governing power, or jurisdiction of Synods, over particular Churches: We therefore knowing ourselves bound as well as others, to try all things, and hold fast that which is good, have considered as the Lord hath holpen us; those Arguments of yours which are contained in your Book against the Independency of Churches; and not being satisfied therewith, your Book being published in Print; we have therefore thought meet, in like sort to publish our Answer, and in that way to shew unto your self and others, what yet hinders us, that we do not think your Arguments to be convincing. In which Attempt we have been the more encouraged by your profession (which we dare not but believe) that in what you have written, you have aimed at verity, and not at victory; whereof we are the rather persuaded, because we do perceive your whole discourse to be carried along without passion and bitterness, in a spirit of meekness and love, which also we are willing to acknowledge before all men, to your just commendation, and the glory of that grace of God that gives you such an heart. And it is our hope that since you propose to aim at the truth, and do dispute with such a spirit as if you meant so indeed; that therefore it will not be unacceptable to you, if any weakness be discovered in those grounds whereon you build this persuasion, that in the present Question, the truth doth stand on your side. And as your Book doth breathe forth a spirit

*of meekness ingenuity and love; so we hope you will find, that we have aimed at the like in our Answer; which as we have written and new published it for the truths sake; and for the help of those that cannot attain unto larger, and more learned Treatises about this Subject; so in special manner in love to your self, and our dear Country men & friends, as in other places of Lancashire, so in your Parish of Winwick, wherin one of us was born, and the other was for sundry Tears together an unworthy Minister of the Gospel of Christ. Accept therefore we do beseech you, this brotherly labour of ours, which here we send you divided into these few Chapters. We are also willing upon this occasion, to testify our thankfulness for that loving respect which we found from you, when we lived together in that Country; when you were pleased to own us in our sad times. The Father of mercies be with you, and rHth all those that love the truth in sincerity; and bless that Reverend and Grave Assembly, wherof we hear your self are a Member, that by their wise and holy endeavours, the truth may be cleared, and all corruptions removed in the Doctrine, worship, and Church Government in ENGLAND, to his praise and glory; and the comfort of all those who unfeignedly desire that the Crown of Christ Jesus, and the Scepter of the Son of God, may be gloriously advanced over all; which is the prayer of*

Your Loving Brethren,  
 RICHARD MATHER,  
 and  
 WILLIAM TOMPSON.



A Modest and Brotherly

ANSWER  
TO  
Mr CHARLES HERLE  
His BOOK against the Independency  
of CHURCHES.

CHAPT. I.

*Containing Observations upon sundry passages in  
your stating the Question.*



*THE Independants (say you) deny to a Synod as the name of a Church, so all manner of power of jurisdiction, either to determine,—, or any way oblige such as they shall any way represent. pag. 2.*

Unless it could be proved that in Scripture the name of a Church is given to a Synod, we are not to be blamed, though we give not a Synod that name, since we are commanded to hold fast the pattern of the wholesome words of Scripture, as sufficient, 2 Tim. 1:13. though for this we will not contend. But for power to determine, viz. dogmatically, or by way of doctrine, this we deny not to a Synod: For that Synod, Act. 15. did put forth such power, and we acknowledge other Synods may do the like upon like occasion, and their determinations being according to the Scripture, ought to bind all those whom they represent.

*They acknowledge that neighbour Churches may meet and consult and advise each other,—and withdraw all fellowship from any one that shall grow pertinaciously scandalous. pag. 2.*

And you may add further, that by their messengers being met in a Synod they may determine by the Scriptures any matter of controversy that may arise.

*But for matter of jurisdiction or power of the Keys in excommunication, ordination, or whatever Censure, they held it is entirety and only in every single Congregation, though but of 2 or 3 Believers. p. 2.*

If any hold so small a number as 2 or 3 to be a Church so complete, as to have power of excommunication, ordination and whatever Censure, they may if they see cause declare their grounds for so holding. But for our parts for ought we yet see, a Church that hath such power as is here spoken of, had need to be a greater number then two or three, even so many as shall be necessary and requisite for the carrying on of Church-work, in admonition and reprehension of one another, as there shall be cause, and therefore they had need to be leaven or more. For a Brother that sinneth must so be dealt withal for his recovery, that if he remain impenitent, the proceeding against him is still to go on by degrees, till at last the matter be brought unto the Church, *Mat.* 18:15, 16, 17. But in all the degrees of proceeding against him, the persons before whom he is called, are in every latter step and degree more in number, then they were in the former, and so the Church being the last is the greatest number of all. And yet there are three at the least that must be acquainted with the matter, before it must be brought unto the Church, *viz.* the brother offending, the brother offended, and one witness at the least; so that the Church consisting of those three or four that deal in the matter before it come into the Church, and of another number greater then they, and distinct from them to whom the matter is brought in the last place must needs consist of seven persons, or more. As for that speech of our Saviour, where he speaks of 2 or 3 gathered together in his Name, *Mat.* 18:20. He doth not thereby acknowledge such a small number to be a Church; but fetcheth an argument from thence as from the lesser or less probable, to prove the firm and inviolable authority of the Church, and her Censures, of which he had spoken before *v.* 18. As if he should say, if two agreeing together upon earth shall be heard in whatsoever they shall ask, and if I be present with two or three gathered in my name, then much more shall the whole Church, who is a greater number,

and a more solemn assembly be heard in their prayers, and have Christ's presence in the midst of them, to bind and loose in heaven what they shall bind or loose in earth. But the former is true, vers. 19, 20. Therefore the latter is true also vers. 18.

And for excommunication, ordination and censures, there is nothing in Scripture nor proved in this discourse of yours, that these matters belong only to a Synod, and not to a particular congregation; yea we conceive it will not be easy for any man whatsoever to prove, that Synods, and they only have power to ordain officers, and to excommunicate offenders; and till this be proved, the Independents (as you call them) need not to relinquish their judgement and practice in these particulars. Sure it is, that Synod in *Acts* 15. did neither meddle with ordination nor excommunication, but only determined the controversy about circumcision, and gave rules for practice to be observed of the believing Gentiles, for avoiding of of sense among the Jews.

*We acknowledge that where there is no consociation or neighbourhood of congregations or single Churches whereby they may wish conveniency be aiding to each other—and whereto the particulars may have recourse—there a single congregation must not be denied entireness of jurisdiction.*

If you acknowledge thus much, (which yet is no more then truth requires to be acknowledged, and wherin we for our parts, fully concur with you) then we suppose a man may improve this grant of yours to a confirmation of that, independency of Churches which you plead against and to a disproving of a good part of that authority of Synods which you would establish. For if a Church that hath no neighbourhood of other Churches; have power of jurisdiction entirely within it self (as here you do acknowledge) then first let it be considered whence such a Church hath such power, and see if that ground will not reach to prove the like power in other Churches also. Now we suppose none will deny, but such a Church hath this authority or power by the gift of Christ, and the liberty which he hath granted to every Church as it is a Church, which we had rather express in Doctor *Ames* his words, then in our own. The power

it self (namely, in reproving scandals, and purging out the wicked) of right, or in respect of the first act, cannot be separated from a true Church: Became it flows immediately and necessarily from its very essence; For it is contained in that Covenant, whereby believers are gathered into a Church. *Cas. Cons. lib. 4. cap. 24.* Q. 4. Now if this be so, that power of Jurisdiction doth immediately and necessarily flow from the very essence of a Church, and To belongs to a Church, as it is a Church, then it will follow that this power must not be granted to be in such a Church as hath no neighbour Churches, and be denied unto one that hath: because a Church that hath neighbours is a Church, and hath the essence of a Church, as truly as that which hath none. Power of Jurisdiction flowing immediately from the essence of a Church belongs indifferently to all Churches, to one as much as to another, without respect of what neighbours they have, whether many, or few, whether any or none. Secondly, let it be considered also what is the end and use of the consociation and neighbourhood of Churches, and the same truth will thence appear also; which neighbourhood where it is afforded is from the benefit of Churches, but not for their hindrance and loss; And therefore it may be helpful by calling in more light, but cannot abridge them of any power which they had before. When Doctor *Ames* (*Medul. Theol. l. 1. c. 39. Sect. 27.*) had said that the combination of Churches into Classes and Synods, doth neither constitute a new form of the Church, nor ought by any means to take away or impair that liberty and power, which Christ hath left unto his Churches, since it serveth only for the directing and furthering of the same, what saith Mr *Paget* hereunto? This, saith he, we willingly grant (*Paget, Defence. pa. 107.*) Now if this must be granted, then that dependency of Churches, and that power of Synods which you plead for must not be granted; For let a Church have entireness of Jurisdiction before she have any neighbouring Churches, and be deprived of the power when God sends such neighbours, and by this means she sustains loss by having neighbours, and comes to be in this respect in worse condition, then when she had none; which is against the true intent and use of the consociation of Churches.

Moreover, if this grant of yours stand good, then what shall become of that which is intimated, pag. 6. and pa. 10. as a reason against the Independency of Congregations? where, you say, *that it is against the very light of nature, that the adverse party be the sole Judge, and party too in the cause and that it is against all equity that the offended party (meaning the Congregation) should be the sole and small Judge of the offence?* Sure we cannot think that there can be such a case imagined wherein you would grant it lawful for a single Congregation to do that which is against all equity and the very light of nature. And yet you grant that the case may be such that a single Congregation may have entireness of jurisdiction within it self; which seems to us plainly to prove, that for a Congregation to be so independent, as to be the small Judge of of senses within it self, is not against all equity, nor against the light of nature, as is intimated by you in the pages aforementioned. But since in, one place you grant that in some case a Congregation may have entireness of Jurisdiction within it self, and in another place do seem to imply that it is against all equity, and the light of nature, that they should be granted, we for our parts are not able to discern how these things do stand together.

But that too much may not be made of the grant of yours, you do qualify it in your subsequent words; wherein you say, *that this is a case extraordinary and falls not within the compass of the Question, which is about the ordinary rule of Church-government;* Whereunto we answer two things. 1. That for a Christian Congregation to want neighbour Congregations, to whom they may with convenience have recourse, is not so unusual, as some may imagine: specially if the state of things, in times and places of general perfection, of general prophaneness, and of new plantations in heathen Countries be considered. For at those times, and in those places, it is well, if there be any such Congregations at all to be found (as there was one in London, in the days of Queen *Mary*) but it is not like there should be so many of them, that any one may have many neighbour ones, to have recourse unto. And your self do intimate in page 43 of your book, that in the remoter part of Wales, and of the North, such Congregations even at this day, would be so rare, that in all probability, scarce one could be made up in twenty or thirty miles compass. 2. Suppose the case were extraordinary and rare, would you say that therefore they may

violate the ordinary rules appointed by Christ for Church administrations, and now lawfully exercise Jurisdiction entirely within themselves, which if they had neighbours were unlawful for them to do? We suppose it is good to take heed how far we yield it lawful in such extraordinary cases, to transgress and violate ordinary rules; lest some body do thereupon infer that though according to ordinary rules Baptism and the Lord's Supper must be dispensed only by men, and by Ministers, yet in the want of these, the one may be dispensed by a woman, (suppose the Midwife or some other) and both of them by such as are no Ministers. For as you excuse the lawfulness of entireness of Jurisdiction in a single Congregation, even so may they excuse these dispensations here mentioned, by saying that the case is extraordinary, and falls not within the compass of the Question, which is, what persons by ordinary rule may dispense Sacraments; Wherefore for ought we yet see it is more safe to hold, that since the dispensation of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, by ordinary rules belongs only to Ministers, therefore there can be no such extraordinary case, in these days, wherein the dispensing of them may lawfully be performed by others whether women or men: And since entireness of Jurisdiction must not be denied to a Congregation that wants neighbours, therefore the thing is agreeable unto ordinary rules; and so may be allowed in other cases also. Because the administration of Sacraments, fore-mentioned, is not allowable by ordinary rules, therefore the extraordinariness of the case will not make it lawful; And because the independent Jurisdiction of a Congregation is lawful in the case afore-mentioned, which you call extraordinary; Therefore the same is allowable by ordinary rule.

*There ought to be Synods or Assemblies—with larger power of the keys to make Decrees, ordain Pastors, excommunicate members, or Congregations, pag. 2.*

*Answ.* That there ought to be Synods when occasion requires, we freely grant; but the Question is not about their being, but about their power; Wherein, that they have power to ordain and excommunicate any, we do not yet see it proved. But that they should excommunicate whole Congregations, as here is affirmed, seemeth to us to be altogether impossible; For a Congregation being a Church, it hath communion within it self, out of which it

cannot be cast, no more then cast out it self. *Ames. Cas. Consc. lib. 4. cap. 29. & 11.*

*Yet so as in every single Congregation, there be left a power, of public reprehension, and if need be, of suspension of its own members from the Lord's table; And in case upon such appeal to the Synod, there appear no difficulty in the matter, or partiality in the carriage of it, it is (if between Members of one Congregation) rather to be remitted to the Congregation it self, to be there censured and ended. pa. 2. & 3.*

This is not much less, then a clear granting of the whole Cause, for here is expressly left to the Congregation not only power of public reprehension, but also power of suspension from the Lord's table, yea, and in some case power of censuring and ending matters within themselves, having first consulted and advised with the Synod: which course in matters of difficulty and weight, we for our parts acknowledge very meet to be taken when Synods can be had, and when they cannot, yet in such cases of weight, it is fit to confuse with neighbour Churches.

*Church government ministerial Independents say is equally and fully in every Congregation, pa. 3.*

*Answ.* That it is equally in one, as much as in another? your self do often grant, though, not equally in one as much as in all: And for fulness, when a Church is furnished with a Presbytery within it self, by whom the Church should be governed, then we know no reason, but yours may be owned also.

*Above and besides which (namely, the single Congregation) there is no ministerially governing Church, by any means they say to be admitted. pag. 3.*

*Answ.* If the Presbytery of a Congregation may be called a Church, then since they do admit the governing power of the Presbytery, they do admit a governing Church, beside the Congregation, if by Congregation you mean the whole multitude of the Members; And if a Synod maybe called a Church, and if power by disputation and disquisition to clear up the rule, and then to command obedience thereto, may be called government, then they also admit a Synod to be a governing Church: For the power here mentioned they do allow unto Synods. But it seems to us that the power is not properly a power and exercise of government and Jurisdiction, but a power of Doctrine, and so a Synod is rather a teaching then a governing Church. But that any other

Church, be it Synod, or any other besides the Congregation and ars Presbytery, should have such a governing power above the Congregation and the Presbytery thereof, as that neither the Congregation nor its Presbytery may ordain their own Officers) nor excommunicate their own offenders, but both must be done by that other governing Church; This we do not admit indeed, because hitherto, we have seen no convincing proofs for the same.

*All and every member both (say they) a governing power, as of ordaining their Pastors and Officers, so of deposing and excommunicating—* pa. 3.

Governing properly so called, we acknowledge not in any, but in the Elders alone. *1 Cor.* 12:28. *Rom.* 12:8. *Hebr.* 13:17. If that word be ascribed to the people, it must be understood in a more improper sense, for that which in propriety of speech were more fitly called Liberty or Privilege. And yet the liberty when it is exercised about Ordination, Deposition, Excommunication, is of the whole body *Communiter*, or in general, but not of all and every member in particular, as you conceive us to hold; for women and children are members, and yet are not to act in such matters, the one being debarred by their sex, and the other for want of undemanding and discretion.

*We acknowledge that Pastors and other Officers were anciently, and it is to be wished, they still were chosen (at least consented to) by the members of each respective Congregation, p. 3.*

By [*anciently*] we suppose you mean, in the Primitive, and Apostolic times; And if in these times they were chosen by the Congregation, what warrant can there be to take another course in these days; since the ancient pattern of Scripture in matters of this nature is a commandment that ought to be kept till the appearing of Jesus Christ. *1 Tim.* 6:13, 14. &c.

*But they are to be ordained in a Synod only—*

That a Synod hath the power, we would gladly see it proved by the Word. But if these things may be done by a Synod only and not elsewhere, then how will that stand which you granted in the page afore, that in some case a single Congregation may have entireness of Jurisdiction within it self? To be done by a Synod only, and to be done by a single Congregation entirely within it self, are not easy for us to reconcile. Further, if Synods consist, as you say, of Presbyteries and other Commissioners, then there must be Presbyters afore there can be Synods; and thence it



must follow that all Presbyters are not ordained by Synods, but some by other men. If it be said though the Presbyters, whereof the particular Synod consisteth, were not ordained by the Synod, but were Presbyters before this Synod had any being, yet they might be ordained by a former Synod; The answer is that this doth not remove the difficulty. For still it would be enquired how the Presbyters of that former Synod, and so of the first Synod that ever was, how they came to be Presbyters: Sure if the first Synod consisted of Presbyters, then there were Presbyters before there was any Synod, and so Presbyters have been lawfully ordained, and not by a Synod.

*In a Synod where all the ultimate power of Decrees and Censures resides—.*

*Ans.* By power of Decrees, we understand Power to clear up the truth dogmatically, for the word translated decrees is *dogmata* in the original, *Act.* 16:4. And this power we confess is in a Synod, though not all in the Synod alone, but also in the Presbytery of a single Congregation. But for power of Censures, this we do not see to be in the Synod at all; much less, that it doth all reside in the Synod, and not elsewhere. But when you say, all the ultimate power of these things doth reside in a Synod (though you do imply by the word ultimate that matters ought not to be perpetually depending, but in some Judicatory or other be brought unto their ultimate or last period, and conclusion, wherein we concur with you, yet nevertheless) your meaning is not sufficiently expressed, what Synod this should be that should have this ultimate power. For you know there are divers sorts of Synods, some particular which are called Classes, some Provincial, some National, and some general, or Oecumenical Synods; And we should be glad to know, which of all these it is in whom the ultimate power of these things doth reside, and why it may not reside in any of the rest; yea and why the ultimate power or censures may not reside in the Congregation, as well as in any of them.

*Whether it be necessary to the well being of a single Church or Congregation, that where it stands in neighbourhood with other Churches, it be equally and mutually coordinated with the rest, in a dependence on the ministerial government of a Synod? This they deny, and we affirm, pa. 4.*

*Ans.* By ministerial government of a Synod; you mean, a Governing power of ordaining Pastors for Congregations, and of excommunicating offenders; for so you describe the power of Sy-

nods, pag. 3. and pag. 2. where you say that Pastors are to be ordained, deposed, excommunicated by a Synod only; And that Synods have a larger power of the keys to make Decrees, ordain Pastors, and excommunicate Members, or Congregations; So that the Question is: Whether it be necessary to the well-being of a single Congregation that hath neighbours, so to depend, on the government of Synods, as that a Synod only and not the Congregation, must ordain their Pastors, and excommunicate offenders: Which being the state of the Question, we are content to join issue with you, upon the same; And to hear your Arguments for the affirmative part.

CHAP. II.

*Containing an Answer to your first Argument taken front the manner of Government, in the Jewish Church, laid down. Deut. 17:8, 9, 10.*

2 Chron. 19:8, 10, 11. Psal. 122:4, 5.

**T**Hat the Government of the Jewish Church was by God's institution national, and dependent, as it clearly appears by the above mentioned Texts, so it is fully confessed by Mr Ainsworth, Mr Davenport, Mr. Ca nne, Mr Robinson, and generally all Judgements, pag. 4.

*Anw.* In some of the places of these Authors which you direct us unto in your Margent, which we have looked upon, we can find no such Confession as here you do report of them. It may be the pages are mis-printed. But what they do confess or not confess, we will not stand long to enquire, such of them as are yet alive, may answer lor themselves, if they see cause: But it shall suffice us, to consider the weight of the Argument it self, which we suppose being put into form must run thus, or to the like purpose.

As the Congregations in Israel were dependent, lb must congregations be in these days.

But Congregations in Israel were dependent on the Ministerial government, of a Synod:

Therefore Congregations in these days must be dependent on the Ministerial government of a Synod.

Indeed in your prosecution of the Argument, you do not expressly mention any Ministerial government of a Synod in Israel, upon

which their congregations did depend: Yet we conceive that must needs be your meaning; because otherwise the Argument which you bring, doth not reach to conclude the thing in question, even as the question is stated by your self. For in the words immediately preceding this first Argument, you thus sum up and conclude your stating the question, viz. *Whether it be necessary—that a single Congregation, where it stands in neighbourhood with other Churches, should be co-ordinated with the rest in a dependency on the Ministerial government of a Synod.* And having answered affirmatively, you then bring in this for your first Argument, taken from the manner of government in the Jewish Church, laid down in the Texts above mentioned. Now if that be the question, as you lay it down, and this the Argument for the affirmative part, then since the question is about dependance on the government of a Synod, the Argument must needs be of the same, or else nothing in question is concluded. And if the Argument must conclude the question, then it must be laid down to the like purpose as we have done; and being so formed, our answer is by denying both parts thereof. For neither is it clear from those texts, that the congregations in Israel did depend on the ministerial government of a Synod; nor will it follow that ours must be dependant as theirs were.

Touching the former of these, (to speak first of the minor proposition) suppose it were true that the Congregations in Israel did depend upon the government of the Judicatories or Assemblies mentioned in those texts, yet that doth not prove they depended upon a Synod: And the reason is, because the Judicatories there mentioned, were not any Synods at all, but Assemblies of another nature. For first, Synods (as your selves describe them pag. 2.) are Assemblies, consisting of the several Pastors, whom together with such other members as should be thought fit, the several congregations are respectively to choose & send therto. But those Judicatories in *Deut. 17.* and the other Scriptures, did not consist of any Pastors or members, whom the several congregations did choose, and send thereto; but of the Priests and Levites, of the Judges and chief of the Fathers of Israel, which were constantly resident at Jerusalem, the place which the Lord had chosen. And the several congregations had nothing to do either to choose them, or send them. Secondly, these Judicatories at Jerusalem were standing Courts, and were constantly to continue, and therefore they were not Sy-

nods; for Synods are not wont to Hand and continue, but only till they have ended the business which was the occasion of calling them, and then to be dissolved and ended. Thirdly, Mr *Paget* (out of whom it seems this argument, and much of the discourse about it, is taken) doth confess, pag. 3. that the authority of Classes and Synods, is not civil, neither have they power to inflict civil punishments, they only judge of Ecclesiastical causes, and that in Ecclesiastical manner, using no other then spiritual censures, in pag. 29. of his *Defence*. But the Judicatories in these texts as Mr *Paget* also confesseth pag. 34, 35.) were for civil causes as well as Ecclesiastical; and so it is said, *Deut.* 21:5. that by the word of the Priests and Levites every controversy and every stroke must be tried even in civil causes, as that of trying out an uncertain murder, which is the cause spoken of in that place. By all which it plainly appears, that those superior Judicatories in Israel were not Synods; and then suppose their congregations did depend upou those Judicatories, and that ours must depend as theirs did, yet it will not follow that ours must depend upon Synods.

And thus your Minor failing, this might be enough to take away the whole strength of your Argument. Nevertheless, for further answer, we may also deny the consequence of your Major proposition: For though it were yielded, that the congregations in Israel did depend upon a superior Judiciary, it will not follow that it mult be so in these days: And our reason is, because the particular congregations in Israel (viz. their Synagogues) were not complete Churches, as the Congregations in the New Testament are. That they were not entire and complete Churches, may appear by this, because the people could not lawfully in them have the use of the most solemn ordinances of God, and parts of his worship, though such as were of ordinary and continual use, but they must go up to Jerusalem for the performing and enjoyment thereof; and therefore they were strightly commanded, as not to keep the Passover, so not to offer any Offerings or Sacrifices (which yet were of very frequent use) in any place within any of their gates, but only in Jerusalem, the place which God did choose to put his name there, as we read at large *Deut.* 12. and 16:5, 6. Neither was it lawful for the chief Ministers of the Church to execute the chief parts of their office in those Synagogues, but only at Jerusalem. But now with congregations in these days it is

far otherwise; there is none of the solemn Ordinances of God, which are of ordinary and continual use, but in these Congregations, they may be enjoyed, nor any ordinary duties of the Ministry, but in them they may be performed, as preaching, prayer, Sacraments, Discipline, &c. which shews they are entire Churches within themselves. Dr. Ames hath the saying. *The Synagogues were not complete Churches, because the whole worship of God, and all the sacred communion prescribed at that time, could not be exercised in them.* Med. Theol. lib. 1. ca. 38. Thes. 37. And again, *There is nothing read in all the New Testament of the institution of any greater Church, on which the lesser should depend: Nor any worship or sacred ordinance prescribed, which is not to be observed in every Congregation: Nor any ordinary Minister appointed who is not given to some one Assembly of this kind.* Lib. 1. cap. 39. Thes. 26. Now if their Congregations could not enjoy all the Ordinances, as not being complete Churches, there might be reason why they should be dependent upon Jerusalem, and the Synedrion and Temple there, where the Ordinances might be enjoyed; and yet ours being complete, and enjoying all the Ordinances within themselves need not to be so dependent.

And another reason why their Congregations might be dependent, and ours not so, may be this. They had a superiour Judicatory to appeal unto which had the *supremum* of Church power within it self, and from whose sentence there was no appeal to any further Judge upon earth; for so it is said of that Synedrion at Jerusalem. *Deut.* 17. And Reason requires that some such supreme judicatory there should be; for controversies & cases of doubt must not be drawn out in *Infinitem*, but of necessity *standum est in aliquo supremo*, we must rest in some supreme, and proceed no further. But now in the New Testament, if we once depart from a particular Congregation or Church, where or when shall we find such a *Supremum*? Surely not before we come to an Oecumenical or General Council: For as for Classical, Provincial, and National Synods there is none of these, but those Cases which you put of deficiency, and possibility of partiality may befall the best of them, and therefore if for these causes the single Congregations, must not be Independent, but there must be appeals from them, the Synods being subject to the like, there must be liberty of appeals from them also. For like as you do allege that Congregations may be partial, and err, so we suppose it will not be denied but the

Classis may err, the Provincial Synod may err, the National may err: And therefore by this Reason entireness of Jurisdiction mull be granted to none of these. And then whither shall we go but to a General Council, which as it hath not been seen for many by pass generations, so God knows whether ever there shall be any so long as this world shall endure. But how if the General Council do err also? Sure learned Doctor *Reynolds* doth abundantly clear it, that such a thing is not impossible. *Theis. 2. Sect. 15.* And so by this reason entireness of Jurisdiction must not be granted to General Councils, but there must be liberty of appeals from them also. Such consequences do inevitably follow upon that which you suggest as a ground of appealing from particular Congregations. And by all this it appeareth, that particular Congregations, have no such superior Judicatory above them, but according to your grounds, there may be liberty of appeals from the same; And thence it followeth that there is not the like Reason, against their Independently, as against the Independency of the Synagogues in Israel: because those Synagogues had a Judicatory above them, from which there was no appeal. Those maybe Dependent which have others above them, which are supreme; Whereas they which have no fitch above them may be supreme themselves, and consequently be independent.

*Obj.* If any shall here ask whether we think it not possible for particular Congregations to err in their Judgement of causes?

We answer. That we confess they may; But in our Judgement that needs not to hinder, but they may have entireness of Jurisdiction within themselves, and not be under the power of any other. For that supreme Synedrion at Jerusalem did many times erre, and gave corrupt Judgement in causes, and yet was not under the power of any other Judicatory. When we are enquiring in what Judicatory, *supremum* of Church-power doth lie, it is not our best course to look for such an one as cannot err: for such in one we shall never find, but to look out where God hath appointed it to lie, and therewith to rest contented: Now in the old Testament this *supremum* by God's appointment, was in that Synedrion at Jerusalem. But in the new Testament we know of no appointment of God, that the like *supremum* must be in a Synod; but for ought we know a particular Congregation may be answerable to that Synedrion, as well as any Classis or Synod; and

so much the rather, because the power in a particular congregation, is constant, and always ready to be had, as it was in that Synedrion; whereas Classes and Synods are more seldom and rare, and cannot be gathered so often as there may be need of the use of Church power, in regard of ordaining of Officers, or censuring of offenders, and the like.

Therefore briefly to wind up all, since Congregations in the New Testament, are complete Churches, which the Jewish Synagogues were not; and since the Synagogues had a supreme judicatory above them, from which there was no appeal, which our congregations have not: Therefore we conclude, That the dependency of the Synagogues upon that superior Judicatory, doth not prove that our congregations must depend upon the government of a Synod, especially this being considered withal, that the Judicatory upon which the Synagogues did depend, was not any Synod, but an Assembly of another nature: And though the Supremacy must be some where, even where God hath appointed it to be, yet the particular congregations may shew as much for that appointment, as the Synod.

And this shall suffice for answer to this first Argument: Only we will add some observations upon some few passages in that which you write for removal of three exceptions which you say are given by some against this argument of yours.

1. *That that government was ceremonial and typical.* 2. *That Papists allege it against us for their Hierarchy and appeals to—the Pope.* 3. *That the Priests and Levites were then Judges in civil causes, wherein it was that the government was then appealative and dependent,* pag. 5.

If any do make such exceptions, we leave it to them that make them, to undertake the defense of them, or to clear them as they shall see cause. But for us, the answer we have given to the Argument, is that wherein we do rest.

*That there ought to be one High-Priest, in whom all appeals and judgements were to determine.* pag. 6.

Though there was to be one High-Priest among the Jews, yet that all appeals and judgements were to determine in him, we suppose is more then can be proved. Sure Mr *Paget* pag. 35, 36. (whom you seem in your discourse much to follow) doth say, that the judgement spoken of, *Deut.* 17. was not given by the High-Priest alone, but by a College or Senate of Priests, noted in the text, and

approveth the judgement of Doctor *Reynolds* and Doctor *Whitaker*, giving this answer as a just refutation of the Papists, arguing from this Text to prove there should be one supreme Judge of Ecclesiastic all causes.

*That there ought to be gradual Judicatories wherein the aggrieved party may appeal from the lesser to the higher—There can be no ceremony or type in this—This was taught by the light of nature to Jethro—Appeals (saith Doctor Whitaker) are of divine and natural right, pag. 6.*

If this be meant in civil causes, where more is left to the light of nature and civil prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, the Word not determining all particulars so fully, as it doth in Ecclesiastical matters; then we for our parts do fully consent thereto. And though it were extended to Ecclesiastical causes also, yet this we suppose is clear likewise by the same light of nature, that both for civil causes and Ecclesiastical, there must be some small and supreme judgement, that controversies may not by appeals after appeals be spun out in *infinitum*. Now unless it be determined where that supremacy doth lie (which is the very thing in question) the usefulness and necessity of appeals may be granted, and yet we shall be still at uncertainty about the thing In question, and as much to seek as before. That there ought to be appeals till you come to the highest, is one thing, and that a Synod (and not a particular congregation) is the highest, is another; and they are so far different, that though the first were granted, yet the latter is not thereby proved.

*That renowned Martyr Cranmer, the form of his appeal to a Council, three times by him urged—we have recorded by Mr Fox at large pag. 6.*

But how this example doth suit the present question, we do not understand: for his appeal was not from a particular congregation, but from the Pope; nor was it to a Synod, but to the next general Council, which from that day to this, hath not yet assembled, nor been called. If we must hold a necessity of appeals to such a Judicatory as *Cranmer* appeal'd unto, then the supremacy of Synods, Provincial or National, is utterly taken away.

*Generally all that write against appeals to the Pope, acknowledge yet their necessary usefulness to a Synod; So did that reverend Martyr Cranmer,—So (besides the whole stream of Antiquity) Ursin, Zepperus, and to come nearer, Cartwright, Fenner, nay Barrow, Ainsworth, Johnson, pag. 6.*



We doubt it is a speech a good deal too large, to say, That all these do acknowledge the necessary usefulness of appeals to a Synod, especially if you mean of such appeals as you must needs mean, or else you speak not to the question in hand; viz. of appeals from a particular congregation. We have looked upon some of the places, and do persuade ourselves that if you do look upon them also, you will find this speech of yours to be too excessive. As for Mr *Paget*, who (pag. 39, 40.) allegeth all these very places that you do allege, he doth not say that those Authors do all acknowledge such necessary usefulness of appeals to a Synod, as you do report them to acknowledge; nor doth allege them for that end, but for another purpose, viz. to shew, that in these days we may allege and argue from texts out of the Law of *Moses*, and other places of the old Testament, which if it be rightly done, we for our parts see no reason to disallow. But that all these Authors, even *Barrow* and *Ainsworth* do acknowledge the necessary usefulness of appeals from particular congregations to the government of Synods, is so large an expression, as we know not upon what grounds to think it credible; since it is well known to them that have read their writings, that they acknowledge no Ecclesiastical Judicatory superior to that of a particular congregation.

*If the benefit of appeals and consociation of Churches, to their mutual help in government, should not be as free to us as to the Jews, how much more, defective and improvident were the Gospel, then the Law? pag. 7.*

Consociation of Churches for mutual help, we willingly acknowledge, so that this consociation may neither constitute a new form of a Church, nor take away or impair the liberty and power which Christ hath given to Churches; but serve only according to the true use thereof, for the directing and guiding of the same: which proviso (as we said before) Mr *Paget* doth willingly grant.

And for appeals, we do willingly acknowledge any benefit that may come thereby: But for making the Gospel more defective than the Law, we conceive if things be well considered, it is not our way, but yours, that will be found justly culpable, in this respect. For first, as the Jews had a supreme Judicatory for the final ending of Games, so we hold the same in a particular Congregation. Whereas according to your opinion and grounds, we

know not where or when to find such a Judicatory, but there must be appeals upon appeals, from the Congregation to the Classis, from a Classis to a Provincial Synod, and from them to a National, and from that to an Oecumenical; and by this means causes may be so protracted, as not to receive any determination forminy generations, yea it may be never while this world doth endure. Secondly, as with them there was a standing Judicatory always in readiness for the hearing of causes, so we hold the like in the particular Congregation: Whereas Synods are not always in readiness, but so seldom, that if they had supreme power to determine, yet causes may be long depending, before a Synod can be called for the determining of them. Thirdly, whereas the supreme judicatory at Jerusalem, being but one in all the world, was very far remote from all proselytes, that lived in other countrys was the Eunuch of Ethiopia, *Act. 8.*) yea far remote from those Jews, that dwelt in the furthest parts of the Holy Land; God hath provided better for us in regard that Congregations wherein we place the supreme Church power being many in number, a Christian may have the use of that power with much more conveniency, then was afforded to most Jews and Proselytes in those days; But as for Synods, as they are for time more seldom, then that Synedrion, so they are to many persons no lesser remote in place. By all which it doth appear, that the doctrine of the Independents (as you call them) doth in some things make us equal to the Jews, and in other things, doth make our condition more excellent then theirs; Whereas according to your way, that are against Independency, in many things our condition is made more defective then theirs.

*How were our Saviour King of peace and righteousness, should he have ordained now under the Gospel, such a government as — were neither righteous nor peaceable? pa. 7.*

That our blessed Saviour is King of righteousness and peace, and the Church government which he hath ordained both righteous and peaceable, is such a certain and divine truth, that it were blasphemous wickedness to doubt of it; But when the Question is, what government Christ hath ordained, it is better arguing to say, This government the Scripture doth witness to be ordained of Christ, and therefore it is righteous and peaceable, then to say, his government is not righteous nor peaceable, and there-

fore not ordained of Christ. We mean plainly thus, that it is more agreeable to religious sobriety and humility, to search out by Scripture-grounds, what government Christ hath ordained, and when that is once found, then to conclude from thence, the righteousness and peaceableness of the same; rather than on the either side, to think with our selves what government to natural reason seems righteous and peaceable, and thence to gather what is ordained or not ordained of Christ, your self have a saying p. 9. that laws merely positive are therefore Laws because commanded. And why may not we say in like sort, this or that form of Church government, is therefore peaceable and righteous, because ordained, since this or that form is by the positive law of Christ.

*But (say you) how can that government be peaceable and righteous, where parties are made sole Judges? Suppose the greater number of members in a Congregation be against the Pastor and Elders. pag. 7.*

*Answ.* It is not unrighteous nor unpeaceable in it self that they should be Judges, whom the God of all righteousness and peace hath appointed so to be. Nor is it reasonable, that they should be thrust out of the office, whereto God hath appointed them, under this pretence, that they are parties; For if good care be not taken how far we give way to such allegements, we may lay a foundation for weakening, if not utterly evacuating, the authority of all supreme Judicatories whatsoever. For as you allege against the Congregation, that they may be divided amongst themselves, and then if matters be ended there, parties are made Judges, (*viz.* the major part against the minor) so the very same may be said of a Synod, where controversies may arise, as well as in a Congregation: And if Congregations must not determine matters arising within themselves, because parties must not be Judges; then by the same reason matters arising in a Synod, must not be determined by a Synod; and so the Synod unto whom, you would have matters carried from the Congregation, must be no more Independent, then the Congregation it self, from whom they are carried. Yea, by this Reason, that supreme Synedrion among the Jews, must have been dependent also. For it is plain, that sometimes that Synedrion was divided into parts among themselves, as in that famous instance, *Act. 23.* where the division of the Council was the means of *Paul's* escape.

Finally, there is not any supreme Judicatory upon earth, nei-

ther Civil nor Ecclesiastical, but if they consist of many persons, and be not absolute and meere Monarchies confining of one alone, the members thereof may be divided among themselves, and yet they must be the final Judges to determine matters within themselves, if the matters must be determined at all: so that this which you seeme to reject as an absurdity, that parties should be Judges, is in some cases (and namely when the supreme Judicatory is divided into parts about matters arising among themselves) a matter of unavoidable necessity, and cannot be otherwise.

*This communion and mutual assistance in government,—God as by his Word, so by the very light of Nature, teacheth all societys whatever, whether Common-wealths or Armies, Universities or Navies, pag. 7.*

*Ans.* Either this passage means that all Common-wealths, &c. are taught such communion and assistance in government with other Common-wealths, &c. as that none of them have entireness and supremacy of jurisdiction within themselves, but are dependant on other the like societys for the same; or else that the members and parts of a Common-wealth, &c. are taught such communion and assistance in governments not to be entire of themselves, but to depend upon the whole society of which they are members and parts. If it betaken in the latter sense, then the thing is most true, but no prejudice to our cause at all, for we grant the same of the parts and members of a Congregational Church, &c. But it must be taken in the former sense, if it make any thing against us; and in this sense it will not hold true: for it is well known, that Common-wealths and Universities, as the Common-wealth of England for example, and the University of Oxford, have no such communion and assistance in government, with other Common-wealths and other Universities, but that they have entireness of jurisdiction within themselves; and the same may be said of Armies and Navies. The members of all these societys do depend on the society of which they are members: But that is nothing against us. If the Societys did depend upon other the like Societys, this indeed were against us. But this cannot be proved so to be.

*Not that therefore this government of Churches should at those end in a Monarchy on earth.*

*Ans.* We suppose it is a clear mistake, to say that the government in all those societys, doth end in a Monarchy: For whatever may be said of the rest, Common-wealths you know there are

sundry, whose government is either Democratical or Aristocratical, and doth not end in any Monarchy at all; witness for example the Low Countries.

But if Churches must be dependent upon the government of Synods, because the very light of Nature teacheth a communion and assistance in government to all Societies whatever; then we see not how it will be avoided, but by the same reason Churches must end in a Monarchy upon earth, if it were once proved, that the light of Nature doth teach all societies whatever so to end: For there is as good reason for this as for the other. And the old plea for Bishops and Popes, *ut capite constituto schismatis occasio tolleretur*, will not be easily avoided. If we yield thus much that what the light of nature teacheth other Societies, the same must be observed in the government of Churches.

You say indeed that this will not follow, *Because the Churches Monarch or Head is in Heaven, and such an one, as though in Heaven, yet still present by his Word and Spirit hereon earth too, to all the offices of a Monarch.* pag. 7.

But this we conceive doth not remove the difficulty, partly, because the objection is for a visible Head, and not an invisible; and partly because the time hath been when there was one High-Priest upon earth, in whom you say (pag. 6.) that all appeals and judgements were to determine: And yet at that time the Monarch or Head of the Church was in Heaven, and present on earth too by his Word and Spirit, to all the offices of a Monarch, as truly then as now.

Whereby we may see, that if you will go by the light of Nature, it is not the presense of Christ in Heaven, and his spiritual and invisible presence with his Church on earth, that will take away the necessity of a visible Head upon earth. A surer answer to this plea, is to fly to the institution and appointment of God, whose wisdom and will it was to appoint one High Priest upon earth in former times, but hath not done the like in these days.

## CHAP. III.

*Containing an anseer to the second Argument taken from  
Matth 18. Tell the Church.*

**T**hat this is spoken by our Saviour in reference to the Jewish Church-government,—is the joint judgement of Ambrose, Theodoret,—among the ancient: Melancton, Strigetius, Peretius, Aretius,—and even Mr Johnson himself.—And if so then our Saviour here sufficiently confirms to it as lawfull, and conveys to us as useful so much of the Jewish Church-government as includes an Independency and liberty of Appeals therein, pag. 9, 10.

*Answ.* By dependency here spoken of, must be meant dependency upon the government of a Synod; and by Appeal must be meant Appeal from a particular Congregation unto that Synod, or otherwise the Argument concludes besides the Question: And the words being thus understood, the form of the Argument must be to this purpose, viz.

If that which is here spoken by our Saviour's be spoken in reference to the Jewish Church-government, then particular congregations must depend upon the government of Synods.

But the first is true: Therefore the second is true also.

But for confirmation of this Minor Proposition, you bring no other proof but only the testimonies of a number of Authors, all cited before by Mr. *Paget* in his *Defence*, pag. 46, 47, &c. And for the consequence of your Major you bring no proof at all. Nevertheless we are willing to consider what strength there may be in the Argument, and to that purpose we must enquire into your meaning in this phrase of *Reference to the Jewish Church-government*, whereby we conceive you intend one of these two, either that the word *Church* in our Saviour's rule. *Tell the Church*, doth signify the Elders and Governors alone, as somtimes the like word is used in the old Testament; or else that no new rule is prescribed here by our Saviour, but the very same that was formerly given to the Jews. Mr *Paget*, who also takes his second argument from this place of *Mat.* 18. doth understand our Saviour's words in this later sense. But whether way soever you intend, our answer is briefly thus: First, that though we will not now deny the minor Proposition, yet this we may say, That it is not so evident of it self, but that it needs

some better proof than by you is given for the confirmation of it; for of it self it is not clear, that by *Church* is meant only the Elders of the Church, nor that all the steps of such gradual proceeding as our Saviour doth prescribe, were formerly commanded to the Jews. And yourself professing in your Epistle to the Gentlemen, prefixed before your book, that you like D. *Moulin's* resolution, rather to bring one Argument than ten Authors, if accordingly you had confirmed this minor proposition with some further proof than only the names of Authors, it could have given better satisfaction.

But what ever become of the minor, the consequence of the major may justly be denied. For though it were granted that our Saviours words, *Tell the Church*, were spoken with reference to the Jewish Church-government in this sense, that this gradual proceeding *in all* the steps of it was formerly commanded to the Jews, yet this is nothing to prove the necessity of the dependance of Congregations upon the government of Synods, (which is our question) because there may be such gradual proceedings to the fulfilling of our Saviour's rule, without any use of a Synod at all. If it were not so, Synods had need to be more frequent than they are, or ever were, or are ever like to be, for this rule of our Saviour is of very frequent use.

And though it were granted also, that by *Church*, our Saviour meant the Elders (which is the other sense of your words of reference to the Jewish Church-government) yet neither would this prove the dependence of Congregations upon the Government of Synods, because there may be and ought to be Elders, and an Eldership or Presbytry in every particular Congregation, and by telling those Elders that rule may be observed, if our Saviour's words were taken in that sense. And indeed it seems your self do so understand them, as appears in pag. 17. of your book, and likewise in this place now in hand, because one of those Authors whom you allege for the meaning of our Saviour's words, is Mr *Johnson*, who in his latter times, did so understand them, of whom you say, "*Even Mr Johnson himself though a Pastor of Separatists in a peculiar Treatise reduceth himself from his former error in the contrary opinion, to this judgement too.*" Whereby it seems, that for the meaning of this text, you concur in opinion or Judgement with Mr *Johnson*. And if so, then though you may by *Church* understand the Elders as he

did, yet then you must also acknowledge the Independency of particular Congregations and the Pastors thereof; for it is certain and plain that Mr *Johnson* was of that opinion and judgement too, notwithstanding that his Exposition of *Matth. 18.* and did never reduce himself to this opinion, that Congregations must be dependent upon the Government of Synods, which is your plea, for which purpose you may consider what is to be seen in his *Christian Plea*, which was one of the last books that ever he wrote. Now in pag. 250, 251. of that book are these words, *viz. Seeing now every particular constituted Church hath right and power eithin itself to celebrate the Lord's Supper, which is answerable to the Passover that was kept at Jerusalem, this sheweth that now every particular Church is to be esteemed as Jerusalem, and so to stand immediately under Jesus Christ, the Arch-Pastor of his sheep, and high Priest of our profession. And again, All particular Churches with their Pastors do stand immediately under Jesus Christ the Arch-Pastor without any strange Ecclesiastical power and authority interposed between whether it be of the Prelates, or of their unlawful usurping Synods, or any such like—*. And in the words following, speaking how all Churches, and the Ministers of them, should be ready and willing to help and advise one another, he addeth thus: *viz. And so to this end? and in this manner, may he had a lawful and profitable use of Synods, Classes, &c. for mutual help and advise, so as always it he provided that they do not challenge or usurp any unlawful Jurisdiction or power over the particular Churches, or their Pastors and Governors,* By which words it plainly appeareth, that though Mr *Johnson* by *Church* in *Matth. 18.* did understand the Elders, yet he never held that particular Churches, and the Elders thereof, should depend upon the government of Synods, but be immediately under the government and authority of Jesus Christ, and depend no other way upon Synods but only for their advise and counsel: and therefore his Exposition of *Matth. 18.* will stand you in no stead to prove the dependance of particular Churches upon Synods.

Wherefore to wind up our Answer to this Argument. Though it were granted that when our Saviour saith, *Tell the Church*, he means *tell the Elders*, and though it were granted also that enjoying such a gradual proceeding, he prescribeth no new rule, but the same that had been given before unto the Jews, yet neither of these do prove that Congregations must depend upon the Authority of Synods; and the reason is, because both these may be per-



formed in a particular Congregation; for therein a man may proceed by such steps and degrees as our Saviour enjoineth, and may also tell his matter to the Elders of that particular Church. And so the consequence of your major proportion failing, the whole Argument must fail also, though the minor were never so strongly proved: and how much more when the minor is left so weak, neither of these particulars being sufficiently cleared and made good, by you, that by *Church* is meant the Elders, nor that all that our Saviour in that place prescribeth, was before commanded to the Jews.

But inasmuch as your words are, that this of *Matth.* 18. is spoken by our Saviour Christ in reference to the Jewish Church-government before urged, therefore we may give a further Answer to this Argument, out of that which before hath been answered when the Argument from the Jewish Church-government was urged. For though it were granted that Christ speaks in reference to that government, yea though it were granted (which we suppose none will affirm) that all that was used among the Jews is here prescribed by Christ, yet all this were too short to prove that our Congregations must depend upon the government of Synods, unless it could be proved that the Jewish Congregations did so depend, which we have formerly shewed to be otherwise, the great Synedrion at Jerusalem upon which their lesser Congregations did depend, if they were dependent at all, being not any Synod, but an Assembly of another nature.

But you will improve this Text further; and therefore after some speech of an Indefinite proposition in Logic, and an Indefinite command in Divinity, and of five gradual *Iffs* in our Saviours words, *If he shall offend, &c.* you come thus to argue, *viz.* *The remedy of complaint or Appeal must be as large as the malady offence, otherwise Christ's salve were not equal to the sore: but offenses may arise as well between divers Congregations in the same Church, as between divers members in the same Congregation, and therefore particular Congregations as well as members have hereby liberty to complain and appeal to a more general Judgment for redress.* And a little after: *That such offenses may arise between Churches as well as members, appears by that between the Grecians and Hebrews about the neglect of their widows, Act. 6:1. and that in such cases they may complain and implead each other, appears by that of the Prophet Hosea 2:2. even the daughter Church with the mother. pag. 10.* To all which we thus answer.

First, though we deny not but offences may arise between Churches as well as members, yet we do not see that those instances alleged by you from *Act. 6.* and *Hos. 2.* do sufficiently prove the same; because those Græcians and Hebrews, *Act. 6.* might be all of one and the same Church and Congregation which was at Jerusalem, and not two Congregations or Churches, the Græcians one and the Hebrews another, as it seems you do conceive of them. For when the Apostles upon occasion of this murmuring of the Græcians for the neglect of their widows, did take course for the appointing of Deacons for the remedying thereof, the whole managing of the business was transacted and done in one Congregation alone; for so it is said, *they called the multitude of Disciples together,* vers. 2. they appointed them to look out seven men duly qualified whom they might appoint over that business, *v. 3.* and the saying pleased the whole multitude, who thereupon did choose seven whom they presented unto the Apostles, *ver. 5, 6.* and the Apostles imposed hands on them, *ver. 6.* In all this there is no hint of two congregations, one of Græcians and another of Hebrews, but the Text seemeth plain enough, that the whole multitude of Disciples whether Græcians or Hebrews were all gathered together into one Congregation about the choice and ordaining of these Deacons.

And as for *Hos. 2:2. Plead with your mother, plead,* since there is no mention in that Scripture of any daughter Church, nor of any two Churches at all; and since at that time there was only one Church upon the face of the earth, even the National Church of the Jews, therefore we cannot see how this Text can be any proof of Churches complaining and impleading one another. If any man think otherwise, and that the daughter-Churches did plead against the mother-Church of Israel that is here spoken of, then we would demand what or where was that superior Judicatory, be it Synod or any other, before which they did plead, and before whom the mother-Church of Israel must answer for herself, when the daughter-Churches did complain against her. We suppose none will affirm there was any such: and therefore this text can be no ground for Churches impleading one another. But the true meaning of the place is thus much, not that one Church must plead against another, but that the godly members of the Church of Israel must plead against the corruptions of that very Church,

though in respect of them she were as a mother, and they as children. And before whom must they plead? Not before any other Judge upon earth, but before the Lord of heaven, and unto her own face, laying open her abominations, and shewing unto her, her sins: And we acknowledge the members of any other Church may do the like, if there be the like occasion, so that they keep themselves within the bounds of sobriety, and their own calling.

But if it were granted (though these allegations do not prove it) that offences may arise between Congregations, how doth this prove the thing in question, viz. That Congregations must depend upon the government of Synods? Yes, say you; "Because the remedy must be as large as the malady; and otherwise Christ's salve were not equal to the fore. But if this reason be sufficient against the Independency of Churches; then by the like reason a man may prove, that the Church of a Nation must not be Independent neither: For as you allege, that offences may arise as well between divers congregations, as between diverse members in the same congregation; so a man may allege, that offences may arise between divers National Churches. And as you demand, *What if a brother offend not a particular brother, but the whole Congregation? What if ten brethren offend the whole, or part; shall we think the offence falls not within our Saviour's remedy?* So in like sort a man may demand, What if the Congregation offend not a particular Congregation, but the whole Church of a Nation? What if ten, twenty, forty congregations, offend the whole Nation, or part? Yea, we may add, What if the National Church offend the Church of another Nation? Would you now say, that all these offences must fall within our *Saviour's* rule of *telling the Church*; and that this were a sufficient reason against the independency of National Churches and National Synods? We suppose you would not say so: And yet we do not see how it can be avoided by your reason and ground, since that ground is applicable to the one case as well as to the other. If the reason do overthrow the Independency of particular Congregations, then of a National Church also. If not of a National Church, then how doth it make any more against the other? Of necessity for ought we can discern, you must own the reason as strong in both cases, or else refuse it as weak in both. Yea, and further, by the like reason a man might

prove that Indians and Turks must be complained of unto the Church, and that the offences of them, or of other Heathen, must fall within the compass of our Saviours remedy. For as offences may arise between members and members, between Churches and Churches: so it is apparent that offences may arise between Christians and Pagans; and if this ground that you say be found, that the *remedy complaint, or appeal must be as large as the malady offence*: and consequently there must be a Church above Congregations; then if an Indian or other Pagan shall commit an offence's the remedy must be to complain of the Indian to the Church. And since (as you say, pag. 11.) *There must be power of judgement to redress there where the complaint is to be made*; would it not thence follow, that there must be power of judgement in the Church to redress the offences of Indians? Which were directly contrary to the plain words of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 5:12. *What have I to do to judge them that are without?* But this inconvenience of the Churches judging them that are without a doth unavoidably follow upon this which you say as a ground against the independence of Congregations, viz. that where an offence may be committed, there Christ's rule, *Tell the Church*, may be applied for redress thereof.

But what shall we say then? If Indians and other Heathens, if Congregational and National Churches of Christians; be not under the power of that rule of Christ, shall we say then there is no salve for all their sores, but so many sinners must be left lawless, and their offences remediless? God forbid! The Lord hath provided good store of help for all these: but every salve is not for every sore. Such persons as are in the Church, all they are subject to the discipline of the Church, and to the power of Christ administered therein, so that if need so require, they may be excommunicated and cast out. Whole Churches are subject to the wholesome advice and counsel of other Churches; and so far as the same shall be according to God, they ought to hearken thereunto: And if they do not, they may lawfully be renounced by other Churches, from all Church-communion with them. And as for Indians, or others, that are no Churches, nor members of Churches, though our Saviours Rule of Telling the Church, was not intended for them, yet both they and Christian Churches likewise, and the members of them, are all of them to be subject to the Magistrates, and the authority of the higher Powers, whose duty

it is to be keepers of both Tables of the Law of God, and to do their endeavour that all the Subjects may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. *Rom.* 13:1. *1 Tim.* 2:2.

*But, say you, an offence may be so general as to defile and make guilty a whole Land, and why not then the remedy at large at it, Tell the Church?* pag. 11.

*Ans.* In such case of general and national defilements, the remedy is general and National repentance, whereto all the people must be provoked, and exhorted by the Ministers of the Word in their several Congregations. And when the higher powers do give example thereof in their own persons, and by some act of their Authority do call upon all the people for the same, this is a notable remedy, through the mercy of God, against the defilement of National sins, and the danger that may come thereby. Which as it was the practice of *Asa*, *Hezekiah*, *Josiah*, and the States of *Judah* in their times, so we have cause with all humble thankfulness to bless the Lord that put the like care into the hearts of the *Lords* and *Commons* assembled in Parliament in our dear native Country, who by an Ordinance of both Houses thought it meet to exhort all the Subjects of England and Wales to the duty of Repentance, both for personal and National sins.

*But suppose the Magistrate be an Enemy to Religion, and the Land or whole Church therein have occasion to make a solemn renewal of their Covenant with God, shall not this whole Church or number in their collective body have power to enjoin it?*

*Ans.* If the supreme Magistrate be an enemy to Religion, it is not like but most or many of the people will be of the same minds *Regis ad exemplum totus*—as it is at this day in France and Spain, and was in England in the days of Queen *Mary*, and other Popish Princes; and then the believers in the Land will not be so many as to bear the name of the Land or Nation, but of a small part thereof, and so at that time it will not be required of them to make any National Covenant, or to enjoin the same. Nor can it well be conceived how they should assemble in a National Synod for that or any other purpose, when the Magistrate is a professed enemy to their Religion. At such times it is more like their meetings in small congregations will be full of danger, rather than that they should have liberty safely and freely to meet in such great Assemblies as National Synods. And though for lack of

such a National Covenant, the remedy be note equal to the offense or need, yet at such time that remedy being not in the power of such believers as are in the Land, it is not required at their hands.

*If a whole Congregation, great or small, play the Foxes, and spoil the vineyard, why may it not be takgn and restrained? pa. 11.*

*Ans.* No doubt but it may, but ever in the way, and by the means which Christ hath appointed. If those Foxes be particular members of the Church, they may be restrained by doctrine, by discipline, and by the Magistrates Authority. If they be whole Churches, they may be restrained by Doctrine, and by the advise and counsel of other Churches, and also by the Magistrates. But if they be not members of the Church, they can not be restrained by Church discipline, but only by the Authority of the Magistrate, and by the preaching of the Word.

*To this Argument the Independent party reply or rather labour to obtain out of the Text three things.*

*First, that our Saviour speaks here of a single Church or Congregation—Secondly, to this single Church, and to all this Church entirely, not distinguishing between Elders and Members, he gives the keys of Excommunication and Absolution—Thirdly, over this Church to assume a Church power of Judicature is a Lording it over Christ's heritage—*

*To the first of these exceptions we answer, that it no way appears that our Saviour in this place or that, the Scripture elsewhere, usually means a single congregation by the word Church, but that the contrary rather is easily evincible.*

*First, that he here spake in reference to the Jewish Church, which way no single congregation hath above sufficiently appeared, pag. 11.*

*Ans.* But how in reference? If you mean in this sense, that what ever was used in that Church mutt be used in the Christian, or that as that Church was National, so Christian Churches must be the like, then we may say, no such things hath appeared, at all, nor hath been so much as undertaken to be proved. If you mean only thus, that there were such gradual proceedings in that Church as Christ in this place requireth, or that the word *Church* may signify the Elders or Rulers, then we may say neither of these have sufficiently appeared by any proof that you have brought, and if they were both granted, they are nothing to the matter now in question *viz.* that the word *Church* doth not signify one single Congre-

gation; for both these particulars may be found and made use of in such a Church as is of no larger extent.

*Next, that he hath reference herein to that of Deut. 19:15. appears by his citation of the very words of that text, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established: Now there the witnesses and offenders were by way of further Appeal to stand before the Lord, before the Priests for judgements vers. 17. pag. 12.*

*Answ.* The words are not as you cite them, *before the Priests for judgement*; but before the Priests and Judges which shall be in those days. And it appeareth by the punishment which these Judges must inflict upon the guilty person there spoken of, life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, &c. *v. 21.* that if our Saviour refer his Church to do like unto that Judicatory which you say he hath reference unto, then the Church must have power to inflict corporal punishment, even to the taking away of life it self, because that Judicatory had such power.

*Lastly, no other place can be shewed, where our Saviour used the word Church for a single congregation.*

*Ans.* Nor can any other place be shewed where he used the word *Church* for a Synod, nor that he ever used the word at all, but only here, and in *Matth. 16. Upon this rock will I build my Church:* in which place he means a Synod no more then a single congregation.

*But for the Scripture language, nothing is more manifest, then as it never any where useth the word Church for a single congregation, unless happily in 1 Cor. 14.—so nothing is more frequent therein then to call many congregations in a Province or City, by the name of a Church. pag. 12.*

*Ans.* We are willing to consider of both these particulars; and first of the former, wherein you do acknowledge (though a perhaps, or happily) that in *1 Cor. 14.* the word *Church* is taken for a single congregation: but you may acknowledge it undoubtedly, and without any perhaps at all, because it is said, *ver. 25.* of that Chapter, that the whole Church cometh together in one place. And in other verses of the same Chapter he speaks, how he that prophecietieth edifieth the Church, how interpreting is that the Church may receive edifying, how it is a shame for women to speak in the Church, *ver. 4, 5, 35.* Yea in *ver. 26, 27, 28.* he gives them this direction, that when they come together, and every one hath a Psalm, a Doctrine, &c. that he that speaks in a strange tongue, if there be no Interpreter, must keep silence in the Church.

By all which he plainly sheweth, that the name *Church* is given to the company that did assemble and come together, for performance of spiritual duties, and for the exercise of spiritual gifts. Now a company coming together is a congregation, and therefore the name of Church is here given to a congregation. But besides this Chapter, there are many other places where the word *Church* is also used in the same sense: for instance, take these amongst many: *Act.* 14:27. and 11:26. and 15:4, 22, 30. *1 Cor.* 11:18, 20, 22, 33. *3 Joh.* 6. in which places there is mention of assembling with the Church, of gathering the Church together, of being received by the Church, of bearing witness before the Church, of coming together in the Church, of coming together into one place of gathering the multitude together, and the like. Which places do abundantly shew, that a company that are gathered together into one place (which is nothing else but a congregation) are called by the name of a Church. And the Christians of Cenchrea which was but a little village, and therefore not like to be many congregations, yet they are styled by the name of a Church. *Rom.* 16:1. And though Cenchrea were but the port of Corinth, and not far from it, like Radcliff or Limehouse to London, as some have observed, yet being a congregation of it self, it is a distinct Church of it self, as well as Corinth was.

Much more might be said to make it manifest, that a single congregation is called by the name of a Church in many places of Scripture; and how then can that stand which is here affirmed by you, that the word is never so used, unless happily in *1 Cor.* 14. and that nothing is more manifest.

But whereas you say. *That nothing is more frequent then to call many congregations in a Province or City, by the name of a Church;* we may rather say, that this is so far from being so frequent, as nothing more, that on the contrary it is very questionable, whether it be ever so used at all in all the New Testament: Sure it is more frequent to call many Congregations in a Province or Nation, by the name of Churches in the plural number, and not by the name of Church in the singular; which doth strongly imply, that if they be many congregations, then they are not one Church, but many. For this purpose it is to be considered, how the Scripture mentions not the Church, but the Churches of Galatia, *Gal.* 1:1. *1 Cor.* 16:1. of Macedonia, *2 Cor.* 8:1, of Judea, *1 Thess.* 2:14. *Gal.* 1:21. of Galilee



and of Samaria, Acts 9:31. of Syria and Cilicia, Acts 15:41. and of Asia, 1 Cor. 16:19. In which one Province there were seven famous Churches at once, mentioned. Revel. 1:4. besides others that are mentioned else-where. Now as all these instances do sufficiently shew, that something is more frequent in Scripture, then to call many Congregations by the name of a Church, so it is worth our consideration, what should be the reason of this different speech in Scripture, that when it speaks of the Christians of one Congregation, it should frequently give them the name of a Church, as we heard before; and when it speaks of the Christians in a Province or Country, where were many congregations, it should call them so usually by the name of Churches in the plural number. Sure it seems to us to be strongly implied thereby, that one Congregation of Christians may be a Church; but if they be many Congregations, then they are many Churches, and not one only.

*But you will give four instances, where the name of a Church is given to many congregations, Jerusalem, Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus. And concerning Jerusalem, the number of Disciples that were there, being 8120, Acts 1:15. with 2:41. and 4:4. and afterward abundantly larger, it was impossible all the members should meet but by way of distribution into several congregations, pag. 12.*

*Answ.* How large soever that Church was in those places you allege, yet if the Scripture say they did meet together in one place, then we must believe it was possible for them so to do; and that as they were but one Church, so they were but one Congregation. Now the text is plain, first of all, that when they were but 120. they all met together in one place; for otherwise how could *Peter* stand up in the midst of them, and make a speech to them all, about the election of another Apostle in the room of *Judas*, as he is recorded to have done, Acts 115. Next of all, when 3,000 were added to them, Acts 2. yet all that multitude before they were converted, did all come together in one place, vers. 6. and *Peter standing up, lift up his voice and spake unto them all*, vers. 14. And when they were converted, both they and the rest of the believers were not yet so many, but the multitude of them were all together, vers. 44. and continued daily with one accord in the Temple, vers. 46. And when after this, (the Lord adding daily to the Church such as should be saved) the number of the men was about 5,000. Acts 4:4. yet all

this company did still meet together in one place: for it is said, that when the Apostles were dismissed from the Council with threatenings, they went unto their own company and reported what the chief Priests and Elders had said unto them, vers. 23. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice in prayer to God with one accord, vers. 24. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, vers. 31. By which it is plain, that all this company, whether they were in all 5,000. or (if you will have it so) 5,000. besides the former number, and so in all 8,120. yet still they were all assembled in one place.

And when after this, believers were more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, Acts 5:14. yet all that time they were all with one accord in *Solomon's Porch*, vers. 12. which shews they were not yet so many, but all did meet together in one Congregation.

Furthermore, when after this, the number of Disciples in Jerusalem was more multiplied, Acts 6:1. yet the Apostle called the multitude of them together, to propose unto them the choice of Deacons, vers. 2. and the matter being commended to them by the Apostles, it is said, the saying pleaded the whole multitude, and they chose seven who are there named, vers. 5. which shews that the whole multitude was not so many, but they might assemble and come together in one place, to hear matters proposed, and to make election of Officers.

After this indeed, this Church at Jerusalem were all scattered by persecution, except the Apostles, Acts 8:1. But when a Church was gathered again by the Apostles Ministry, that Church, even all the multitude of them, as well as the Apostles and Elders, did all assemble and meet together with one accord in one congregation, about the business of the controversy that arose at Antioch; so it is plainly said, Acts 15. That *Paul* and *Barnabas* coming from Antioch, were received of the Church at Jerusalem, and of the Apostles and Elders, vers. 4. And it pleased the Apostles and Elders, with the whole Church, to send messengers to Antioch, vers. 22. and to that Church letters are written from the Apostles and Elders, and Brethren, vers. 23. being all assembled with one accord, verse 25. which plainly shews that the Church at Jerusalem at this time, did not consist of Apostles and Elders alone, as a representative Church, but of others also, who are expressly di-

stinguished from those officers: and yet all this Church did assemble with one accord in one place. Lastly, for that place, 21. where you say;

*It is plain, that when the Church met collectively, it was in the Presbyters and Elders. And that in this Church at Jerusalem the collective meetings were representative in their Elders.*

The answer is, That we deny not but Elders may meet apart from the multitude if there be occasion, and so much may be proved from verse 18. where it is said, *Paul* went in unto *James*, and all the Elders were present; but this is nothing to the point in hand, That the Church at Jerusalem was so numerous, that all the members could not meet in one, but in several congregations: Nay, that very place (though it speak of many thousand Jews that did believe, verse 20.) yet as it doth not say, that all these were of that one Church at Jerusalem; so there are good Divines that do think they were not: but if they were, it nothing prejudiceth our cause in this matter; for when *James* and the Elders speaking to *Paul* of the Jews, do tell him, the multitude must needs come together, for they will hear that thou art come, verse 22. It appears thereby, that their multitude was not such, but they might all assemble and come together.

If any say, How can these things be, that so many thousands as were members of the Church at Jerusalem, should all yet be but one Congregation, besides what hath been said to shew that thus it was; such an one may consider further, that many thousands, yea Miriads, were gathered together, *Luke* 12:12. and Christ spake unto them all, though unto his Disciples first, verse 1, 14, 15, 54. and that Parishes in England in or about London, and else-where, as *Stepney*, *Giles*, *Sepulchres*, and others, have many thousand inhabitants in them, all members of one Parishional Church, and yet all but one Congregation. And that of *Chrysostom* on *Matth.* 24. who as Mr *Bayne* reports, *Dioe. Trial*, pag. 16. did esteem the company that heard his voice in one congregation, to be about 5,000. persons, and that by means of Scaffolds and Galleries, a man lifting up his voice, may so speak, as to be heard of thousands at a time.

All which being considered, do make it less incredible, that the Church at Jerusalem, consisting of such a great multitude, yet for all that might be no more but one ordinary Congregation.

*Next, for the Church at Rome in the Apostles time, filled every where in that Epistle, by the name of Church, not Churches. pag. 13.*

*Ans.* We suppose it is a plain mistake, that the Church at Rome is every where in that Epistle styled by the name of a *Church*. For ought we remember in that Epistle, it is never so styled at all; and yet we deny not but it was a Church, and one Church.

*But (say you) can it be thought that the faith and obedience of a Church in such a city, could be famous throughout all the world, as the Apostle speaks, Rom. 1:8. & 16:19. and yet but one single independent congregation?*

*Ans.* We know nothing to the contrary but it might be so: For the Church at Thessalonica was but one congregation, and yet from them sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place, their faith to Godward was spread abroad, 1 Thess. 1:8. And there might be other means to make their faith famous, as well as plurality of congregations; as the resort and confluence of people of all sorts and nations to the place where this Church dwelt, Rome being the Seat of the Empire, and the Lady of Kingdoms at that time: Also the good will of the godly, the malice of the wicked, the new fangledness of most, would open the mouths of many to talk of the faith and profession of the Christian Romans, though they were no more but one congregation.

*Those very persons and families named in the Apostles salutations of that Church, even those choicer families were able to fill several congregations.*

*Ans.* We dare not say so: for there is not named above 30. in all. Sure if 30. families fill several congregations, then those congregations must be very small ones.

*Tertullian tells us, that in his time the city was at least half Christian: And Cornelius tells us, that besides himself, there were in that Church 45. Presbyters.*

*Ans.* But the question being, whether many Congregations be frequently called in Scripture by the name of a Church, these testimonies being not from Scripture do not suit the question, therefore we will not insist upon them, but only say this much; that as they are both alleged by Doctor *Downam*, and them of the Hierarchy that plead for Diocesan Churches against Congregational, so they are both sufficiently answered by Mr. *Bain*, in his *Diocesan triall*, p. 19, 20. and by the refuter of D. *Downam's* Sermon at Lambeth, p. 65.

*Next, the Church at Corinth every where filled a Church, not Churches.*

*Answ.* This we grant: But why might it not be one Congregation, as well as one Church; The only reason you bring to the contrary is, because *They had so many Instructors*, 1 Cor. 4:15. *and Builders*, 1 Cor. 3:12. *So many Prophets (say you) and Teachers, speakers with Tongues,—could not questionless have their ordinary local meetings, but by way of distribution into several congregations.*

*Answ.* This arguing about the Church of Corinth, doth not very well agree with that which went before, p. 12. where you seemed to grant, that though no other place in Scripture, yet that place, 1 Corinth. 14. doth give the name of Church to one single Congregations whereas now you give Corinth also as one instance where many congregations are called a Church. It is strange to us, how Corinth should be an example of both these, viz. of the name of Church given to one single congregation, as you do acknowledge, pag. 12. and of many congregations called by the name of one Church, as now you would have it. But the place, 1 Cor. 14:23. that speaks of the whole Church coming together into one place, doth unavoidably prove (for ought we can discern) that Corinth had their meetings, and not by way of distribution into several Congregations, but altogether in one congregation: and doth also answer your reason drawn from the variety of Teachers and Prophets in that Church: For it is plain from that very Chapter, that the Church of Corinth had many Prophets; *Let the Prophets speak two or three, and let the rest judge*, vers. 39. and many that spake with Tongues, who must speak by course two or three, and one interpret, verse 27. yea every one generally had a Psalm, or a Doctrine, or a Revelation, or an Interpretation, verse 26. as indeed they came behind in no gift, 1 Cor. 1. & yet for all their variety of gifts, and gifted men, Prophets, Interpreters, speakers with Tongues, and the like, both they and the whole Church also, even women and all, used to come together into one place.

*But it is with much instance urged generally by all the Separatists, that those among whom the Corinthian fornicator was—they were all to be gathered together, and all to deliver him to Satan; therefore the power of the keys is alike in all the members?—and not in the Elders alone*, pag. 14.

*Answ.* This and all that follows for two whole pages maybe something pertaining to the second of your three exceptions fore-

mentioned; but nothing concerns the Question now in hand. For whether the Church of Corinth, that must excommunicate the incestuous man, were the Elders alone, as you hold; or all the people also, as others: This is nothing to the present point of the sense of the word *Church*, which is, whether it be taken in Scripture, for many Congregations or one only: and therefore we marvel why you would here bring it in. Neither indeed is it any thing to the maine Question, of the Dependency of Congregations upon the government of Synods; For if all were granted, that here is argued for, *viz.* that the Church that must excommunicate the delinquent Corinthian was not the common people, but the Elders alone, yet the authority of Synods is not a whit holpen thereby; unless it could be proved that the Church of Corinth had no Elders of their own; which we are persuaded you will not affirm, because you grant pag. 13. that they had many Instructors, many builders, many leaders, many Prophets and Teachers. Wherefore this Dispute being besides the Question, we will not spend time in answering of it, because we would hasten to go forward with the rest, that pertains to the Question, as you have stated it.

Your last instance of many Congregations, called by the name of *Church*, is Ephesus, where you argue, *There must needs be many congregations, because there was a great door, and effectual opened unto Paul, so mightily there grew the Word of God and prevailed, the greatness of the price of the conjuring books burnt publicly and God himself testifies, he had many people in that City.*

*Answ.* When the Lord saith to *Paul*, *I have much people in the City*, it is a plain mistake to understand this of Ephesus, for it was spoken of Corinth, and not of Ephesus. *Act.* 18:10. But if it had been spoken of Ephesus, as we deny not, but that there were many Christians there, how doth this prove the point, that they were not one Congregation, but many? We do not think they were more in number, then in Corinth and Jerusalem, where the Christians, as we have shewed, did usually meet in one places and therefore at Ephesus, they might do the like, though there were a great number of Christians there.

*As for that which you say, that as this Church could not possibly ordinarily in all its members meet but distributively; so that it did meet collectively in its Presbytery and Eldership; that which ordained Timothy (there by the Apostles own testimony) appears in the 17:28. and 26. verses of the 20. Chapter, beyond all exception.*

We answer thereto, it is not beyond all exception, that at Ephesus was one Church consisting of many Congregations, which is our Question. It may be granted that the Elders of that Church upon *Paul's* sending for them did meet at Miletum apart from the people, as was noted before out of *Act. 21*. Of the Elders of Jerusalem; but this is nothing to our Question, whether a Church be many Congregations, or one only.

*As much might he said of the other of the seven Churches of Asia, with that at Antioch, Philippi and Thessalonica.*

*Ans.* And if as much were said of these as of the other, as much might also be answered. And though Philippi and Thessalonica had many Bishops, Deacons, Overseers, yet all this is too short to prove they were many Congregations; for what should hinder but one Congregation may have many Officers?

That which followeth in this sixteenth page, and so forward to the middle of pag. 19. is spent in answering the other two exceptions which you formerly proposed pag. 11. Concerning which we need not to spend much time; the one of them, as we said before, is altogether besides the purpose, and on which side soever the truth doth lie in that matter, the present Question is nothing at all cleared thereby; and for the other, we leave it to them that make it to undertake the desense of it. For us it is sufficient to have shewed that all that you have said from *Matth. 18. Tell the Church*, doth not prove that Congregations must depend upon the government of Synods, nor that many Congregations are in Scripture usually called by the name of a Church; and this being already performed in that which we have answered, we therefore now proceed to consider of your third Argument.

### CHAP. IIII.

*Containing an Answer to your third Argument from Acts 15.*

**I***F that all ancient and modern Writers, of all sorts, (excepting only some few of these last fifty years, engaged by their own tenet of independency) have with one voice concluded this chapter, a formal president for Synods, would weigh any thing herein, the matter would soon be at an end; but however the text it self is so pregnant of this truth, that it hath of it self strength enough to deliver it self of it.*

*Here's all that goes to the making up of a compleat Synod, First, here's the occasion—Secondly, here's a designation both of the Commissioners and place,—Thirdly, here's the matter of a Synod,—Fourthly, here's the form of a Synod,—Fifthly, here's the end of a Synod,—Lastly, here's the proper effect of a Synod,—pag. 19.*

If all this were granted, yet the thing in difference, as your self have stated the Question, in pa. 2, 3, 4. of your book, is not concluded thereby. For all this that is here said, goeth no further, but only to shew that there ought to be Synods; whereas the question is about the power of Synods, and how far the same doth reach, whether so far as that a Synod only (and not a particular congregation) ought to ordain officers, and. excommunicate offenders: and between these two is a wide difference; so that many a man may acknowledge the former, which is all that is here concluded, and yet not acknowledge the latter, which, is the main point, which should have been cleared. For our parts we deny not but there ought to be Synods, and your Argument concludes no more: yea your self do testify, pag. 2. that those whom you deal against, do acknowledge as much in effect as here by you is concluded; for there you say that they acknowledge, that neighbour Churches may meet, conmlt and advise, &c. and if they acknowledge all this, then they acknowledge a use of Synods, because these things we suppose, cannot be done by many Churches at once, unless it be by their messengers, and Deputies assembled together, which Assembly is no other then a Synod. Wherefore since no more is here concluded, then is by the Independents parties (as you call them) acknowledged, we need not insist long, in giving answer to this Argument. We will therefore only briefly mention some grounds, that incline us to think that this Assembly in *Act. 15.* was a Synod, and then give some annotations upon some few passages in your Discourse about this place, and so proceed to the next Argument. Touching the former, when we say this meeting in *Act. 15.* was a Synod, we mean at least such an one as Mr *Parker Pol. Eccl. lib. 2. c. 23. Sect. 1.* understands it to be, *viz.* a consociation or combination of more Churches then one, even of two at least. Or as Doctor *Whitaker*, who counts it neither a general Council, nor yet a National, or Provincial, but a particular Council, as he calls it, less then either of the other. *de Concil. Q. 1. c. 2.* And that matters were carried in it, in way of an ordinary Synod, may appear by two



things. 1. The persons employed in it, which were not only the Apostles, those extraordinary Officers, but also the ordinary Elders and brethren of Jerusalem. *Ver.* 6, 22, 23. And besides *Paul* and *Barnabas*, certain others that were sent with them from Antioch, *v.* 2. Secondly, the means used for clearing the controversy, then in hand, was not the Apostolical Authorities nor any extraordinary revelation, vouchsafed to the Apostles and such extraordinary persons: there is not a word mentioned of any such thing; but the means they used, was the same, that is common to ordinary Synods, *viz.* much disputation, *v.* 7. *Peter's* experience of Gods blessing upon his Ministry, to *Cornelius*, and his company, *v.* 7. And the like is done by *Paul* and *Barnabas*, for their part, *ver.* 12. And as for *James*, he allegeth ths testimony of the Prophet *Amos*, *v.* 15, 16. and the *Law of Moses*, read and preached in the Synagogues, every Sabbath day, *v.* 21. Now all these means being no other, but such as may be used, in ordinary Synods, therefore we see no other, but this meeting might be such an one.

*Here if a designation (say you) of the Commissioners and place, p. 19.*

*Answ.* But these Commissioners, and this place, were designed only by them of Antioch, *v.* 2. which shews that this meeting, was not of any more, but two Churches, Antioch and Jerusalem.- For if there had been more, how came it to pass, that only they of Antioch determine the place? Reason would have required, that if there had been others, they also should have had a voice in determining the place of meeting.

*Here is the matter of a Synod, not only Apostles but Elders, and of several Churches, pag. 20.*

*Answ.* True: but these Churches are not mentioned, to be any other, but only Antioch and Jerusalem.

*Both thus meeting, to determine so great a matter consequently all matter of jurisdiction, is not confined to one single Congregation. pag. 20.*

*Answ.* The matter determined, was a matter of doctrine, *viz.* whether Circumcision was necessary to salvation: *v.* 1. and therefore no matter of jurisdiction, unless jurisdiction, and Doctrine be the same. And though they that taught this Doctrine, (if they persisted pertinaciously therein,) deserved to be censured, as you do truly allege, from *Tit.* 3:10. Reject an heretic, the dispensing of which censure, is a matter of jurisdiction. Yet (for ought that doth appear to the contrary) both these Churches might concur,

to clear up the doctrine, and yet one only, even that congregation whereof the offenders were properly members) might dispense the censure, that was due for their pertinacious defence of such Doctrine. The concurrence of both, to clear up the Doctrine, doth argue want of light in the one; but nevertheless there might be entireness, of jurisdiction in each.

*But if Churches had then been independent, Antioch had undertaken and been able her self sufficiently and finally to have judged the cause, and prevented the danger.*

*Answ.* Antioch did undertake to have ended the matter among themselves, and spent much time about it, before there was any speech of seeking out for help elsewhere, as appears, vers. 2. and this doth sufficiently declare it, that they were not necessarily dependant upon any other Church, or Churches, but had right to have ended the matter within themselves, if ability had served thereto, or else this undertaking of theirs had been sinful, as being an attempting to do that whereto they had no right. And though by reason of much dissention among themselves, they were forced to seek for help for ending the cause, this may argue want of ability and light, but argues not any want at all of authority or right: In which respect they might be independent, notwithstanding their imperfection in the other regard. Suppose a father of children, or matter of a family, through want of wisdom, or courage, be not able to rule his own children, and houshold, as *Eli*, or suppose a King that is a child, as *Solomon* speaks, (*Eccles.* 10.) or Princes that are babes, (as the Prophet termeth them, *Isai.* 3.) be not able to govern their own subjects, as *Rehoboam*, 2 King. 12. would you think this want of sufficient ability, a sufficient argument to prove, that such a Father or Master, had no authority or right to rule his own children, or houshold; nor such a Prince any right to rule his subjects; but that the families of the one must depend upon other families; and the common-wealth of the other upon other common-wealths? We suppose you would not say so? And yet you may as well say it, as say as here you do, that if Churches had been independent, Antioch had been able her self sufficiently to have ended the cause. Antioch finding her self not able, may send to Jerusalem for help, and yet this sending neither proves right of jurisdiction in them of Jerusalem, who are sent unto, nor want of jurisdiction in them of Antioch, who so do send. Yes, say you.

*An obliging the Churches by decrees, laid on them, as a burden, is a use of the keys, in which use of them, Ephesus is commended, Pergamus and Thyatira reprov'd, pag. 25.*

*Ans.* But if this be a use of the Keys, may it not be of the Key of Doctrine, as well as the Key of Discipline, since the burdens laid on them, were not burdens of penalty, but burdens of duty; not punishments to be differed for offence given, but rules of practice to be observed, lest offence should be taken; as is plain, if the particulars be considered, pag. 29. And therefore it seems the imposing these burdens, was not so properly an act of jurisdiction, and discipline, as an act of Doctrine. As for Ephesus, the use of the Keys (for which they are commended) is not (as you affirm) for imposing decrees as burdens upon one another; nor is Pergamus or Thyatira reprov'd, for neglect of so doings but trying and detecting counterfeit Apostles, which was a matter of doctrine, and not bearing with them that were evil, which was matter of discipline, are the things for which Ephesus is commended; and suffering them which were evil (which was a neglect of Discipline) is that for which the other are reprov'd, Rev. 2:2. 14:20. But neither is the one commended for imposing decrees, nor the other reprov'd for neglecting so to do. But you will prove that the Synod had jurisdiction and power of the Keys of discipline; because, say you,

*This Decree is it self a Rule given, wherein and whereby to use the keys, upon such as shall prove stubborn, in defending the contrary of what is here decreed—, and that authority which can give the rule, can (a fortiori) back and punish its breach. p. 25.*

*Ans.* But is this certain and clear, that whoever hath authority by way of doctrine, to impose a rule, hath also authority, by way of discipline, to punish its breach? we propose to consideration, these instances for the contrary. First of all the Prophets in Israel, *Isaiah, Joel, Amos*, and the rest, had authority by way of doctrine, (as being sent of God for that purpose) to deliver the will of God, as a rule to be observed, not only by all the Princes, and people, but even by the Priests and Levites also; for so we read they many times did, and yet not being Priests themselves, nor Levites, they had not authority to punish, by way of Discipline, such as disobeyed their doctrine, and those holy rules which they delivered from the Lord.

Nextly, any one Minister, who is truly sent of God, may in his

doctrine, deliver the rules of God's word, to the people he is sent unto, and impose those rules as burdens, and necessary things to be observed; and yet one Minister alone cannot punish the breach of those rules, in a way of discipline, because Church-discipline is to be dispensed by a Church, Matth. 18:17. and one man alone (we are persuaded) you will not say, can be a Church.

Further, any Minister or Ministers of one Church (be it Congregational or National, may upon occasion being desired thereto, preach the word of God in another the like Church, and so impose burdens of Christian duties to be observed by them, that they thus occasionally preach unto; yet it would not follow they might by discipline punish such as should walk contrary to those rules, because the power of jurisdiction which they have when they are at home in their own Church, doth not reach so far as unto that other Church where now they are called to preach the doctrine of the word. Lastly, there is no doubt but any Minister, or Ministers of the Gospel (if occasion served thereunto) might by way of Doctrine deliver rules of faith and obedience, unto Pagans, and such as are no members of any Christian Church at all, and might command them in the name of the Lord, to observe those rules; and yet it would not therefore follow, that they might punish those Pagans in a way of discipline, for the breach of those rules; because the Apostle saith plainly, *What have I to do to judge them that are without?* 1 Cor. 5:12. Yea, there are sundry good Writers in reformed Churches, who do hold, that Doctors in the Church have authority by their office, to deliver sound wholesome doctrine, from the Scriptures, and yet may not meddle, with dispensation of Sacraments, nor Discipline; See among others for this, *Calvin's Instit. lib. 4. Ch. 3. Sect. 4.* And if this be so, this may be another instance For the same purpose as the rest, and by all this, we suppose it is clear, that some men may have authority, by way of doctrine, to impose rules, that must be observed, as necessary things, and yet not have authority, by way of discipline, to punish those that shall disobey those rules. And therefore though the first of these were granted, to be within the power of a Synod, yet that they have power to do the other also, is not proved thereby.

## CHAP. V.

*Containing an Answer to your fourth Argument, taken from 1 Tim. 4:14.  
laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.*

**H**ence I argue thus. Such as are for independency, admit of no other rule in Church-government, but the Scripture practice or institution, but where in all the Scripture, read we of any ordination, of Pastors, but by Presbyters?—Timothy was ordained by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery: Titus was for this very cause, left at Crete that he should ordain Elders in every City. pag. 26, 27.

*Answ.* All that is here said is only about ordination of Officers, which (at the most) is but one part of the Ecclesiastical government, or jurisdiction. And therefore if it were granted, that this ordination belongeth only to a Synod, yet the Question (being not of one part, but of the whole jurisdiction) is not concluded thereby. Nevertheless we are willing to consider what is said about this particular and therefore our Answer is distinctly thus. 1. That if a Congregation have Elders of it own, then when other Officers are to be ordained, in that Church, such ordination is to be performed, by the imposition of the hands of those Elders. This we never denied, and a good deal of your proofs, do conclude no more. For what if the Presbytery at Ephesus, did lay hands upon Timothy, 1 Tim. 4:14. and the Presbytery, at Antioch upon Paul, and Barnabas, Act. 13:1, 2. which are two of your proofs? this may evince, that in Churches furnished with a Presbytery, (as Ephesus and Antioch were) that that Presbytery is to perform imposition of hands, which is nothing against us, neither do willingly acknowledge the same.

But it may be in this Argument you intend a further matter, *viz.* that ordination cannot be performed lawfully, by any, but only by Elders.

*For where (say you) in all the Scripture do we read of any ordination of Pastors but by Presbyters?*

Whereto we answer three things. 1. That we do read of such a matter in the Scripture. 2. That if we did not, yet we read so much as by good consequence doth infer the lawfulness of the practice. 3. That which we do read, that may seem, to make against this practice, is not because the thing, is in every case, unlawfully but

for other reasons. 1. For the first of these, we allege *Numb.* 8:10. which place sheweth, that though the Levites were Church Officers, and the Children of Israel were none, yet the Children of Israel did lay their hands upon the Levites; by which Scripture, thus much is manifest, that when a Church hath no Elders, but the first Elders themselves are to be ordained, and this at such times, and in such places, where Elders can not conveniently be borrowed from any other Church, in such case imposition of hands may lawfully be performed, by some principal men of the Congregation, although they be not Elders by office; for since it was so in the Church of Israel as this text doth witness, what should hinder but in the like case, the like may be lawfully done in these days? If any shall ask how was it possible, that the Children of Israel, being 600,000 should all lay hands upon the Levites at once? *Answer.* It is not like that all did it, but some instead of the rest: and so when some do impose hands, instead of all the Congregation, that may be sufficient.

If it shall be said, these Children of Israel, might be Elders, and so their example will be no warrant for imposition of hands by non-elders: The answer is, it is like they were Elders, as being the chief and principal members, of the Congregation; but yet their example proveth the point if two things be considered. First, that they did not this as a work peculiar to them as Elders. Secondly, that they did it not for themselves only, but for all the Congregation; the former of which may be thus manifested; If they did it as Elders, then either as Elders and Governors Ecclesiastical, or as Civil governors but not the first, for that charge was only belonging to *Aaron* and his sons, *Levit.* 8. and these Levites now ordained, If the second be said, then it will follow, that Civil Magistrates though no Church officers, may impose hands in ordination of Church officers, and so the point is gained. For if Magistrates may do it, then it will follow that a Church wanting Magistrates may perform this action by other the fittest Instruments she hath. For this is not a work properly tied to the Magistrates office; because then the Church in the Apostles time, wanting Magistrates, could not have had Officers; the contrary whereof is manifest in the Scripture, *Act.* 14:23. *Tit.* 1:5. Secondly, as these Children of Israel (suppose they were the chief Fathers of families) imposed hands on the Levites, not as Elders and governors Eccle-

siastical, or Civil but as principal members of the Church, so what was herein performed by them, was not done by themselves only, but for all the Congregation. And this appears, first because these Levites now to be ordained by imposition of hands, were taken in stead of all the first-born of Israel, and not in Head of the first born of Elders only: *Numb.* 3:40, 41. Secondly, they were presented to the Lord, as an offering of the Children of Israel, *Numb.* 8:11. and not of the Elders only; and inasmuch as all offerings were to be presented at the door of the Tabernacle, with the imposition of his hands whose the offering was, *Levit.* 1:3, 4. it is therefore evident, that they that imposed hands on the Levites did it in the name of all the people, whose offering these Levites were. Thirdly, it was usual, that when all the multitude brought an oblation, the Elders put their hands on the head of the sacrifice. *Levit.* 4:14, 15. *viz.* in stead of all the multitude, whose the Sacrifice was. And thus you see, we read in Scriptures of the imposition of hands, performed by them that were no Elders, by office, and so this demand of yours, where in Scripture do we read of such a practice, is answered. But if we did not read of any such thing, yet it may suffice (which was our second particular to be proved) that we do read so much as by good consequence, inferreth the lawfulness of the practise. And for this purpose, first, we propound *Act.* 1. *Act.* 6. and *Act.* 14. where we read of the peoples electing, and choosing officers, of which places, more may be spoken afterward; Now it the people may elect Officers, then in some cases, they may ordain them also, because ordination is less then election, and depends upon it as a necessary antecedent; by virtue whereof it is justly administred. Yea it is not only less then election, but less in the same kind, being nothing else, but the accomplishment of election, or the admission of a person into the possession of that office, whereto he had right before by election. And hence it follows by good consequence, that if a single congregation, may elect officers, which is the greater, they may also in some case ordain them, which is the lesser. For your self do grant that to argue affirmatively, from the greater, to the lesser in the same kind is good consequence, and such is this; Which kind of arguing is also used by Doctor *Whitaker* concerning this very particular.

Besides, we read, *Heb.* 6:2. that imposition of hands is amongst the principles of religion, and joined by the Apostle with baptism,

resurrection, and the eternal judgement; and therefore an institution of ordinary and perpetual use, as all principles are, and so not to be omitted in the ordination of Officers. And if so, it will therefore follow, that in some case it may be performed by such as are not in office; because the case may so be, that otherwise it cannot be performed at all, so that either no Officers must be ordained, nor any imposition of hands used at all; or else imposition of hands in some case may be performed by them that are not in office. Now that it cannot always be performed by Officers, three instances make it manifest: First, when there are no Officers of any other Church to be had, as at the first rise of the first Christian Church in a Pagan Country, far remote from all Churches, as here in America by the English; & in the case which you put of a company of Christians by shipwrack cast upon an Island where no Pastors were. Secondly, when those that may be had, are so exceedingly corrupt, and the Churches to whom they do belong, that it could not be convenient to make use of them, but very dangerous to fetch ordination only from them, as at the first reformation after the times of Popery, when there were none to be had, but from the Popish Bishops and Priests; from whom to receive ordination, were as much as to say, either that the Ministers of Antichrist may ordain Ministers to the Church of Christ, or else that Popish Bishops are true Ministers of Christ: And sure if Christians might not have any Ministers, unless ordained by the Popish Bishops, the case were as pitiful as if sheep might have no Shepherds, but such are appointed to them by the Wolves. Thirdly, when those that are more desireable, have no sufficient calling to dispencc ordination in another Church which is the case when they are not requested thereto; For since ordinary Elders are not like Apostles, to feed all flocks, but that flock of God, which dependeth upon them, 1 Pet. 5:2. that flock over which the holy Ghost hath made them over-seers, Acts 20:28. Therefore we do not understand, how they can assume authority and power unto themselves, to ordain Elders to other Churches, whereof themselves are neither Elders nor members, unless they had a calling thereto, by the request of that Church where the Elders are to be ordained. So that by these instances, it appeareth, that sometimes officers of other Churches are not to be had, sometimes those that may be had, are as ill as none, and not to be depended on, or desired; and some-



times those that are more desireable, have no sufficient calling to ordain Ministers in any other Church; and therefore in such cases as these, since Officers must not be admitted without imposition of hands, imposition of hands must be performed by non-Officers.

But you will say, we read in sundry places, where imposition of hands, was performed by Elders, and not one place in all the new Testament, where it was performed by others. Whereto we answer, That all this is true, but nothing against what we have said; because (which was our third particular to be cleared) the true reason of this, that is here alleged, was not, as if ordination by non-Elders were in every case unlawful: But because in those times Elders were not wanting; for there were the Apostles and Apostolic men, who were Elders in all Churches. And we do willingly grant, that where a Church is furnished with Elders, imposition of hands is to be performed by the Elders, and so much the examples in the New Testament do evince. But we have also shewed from *Numb.* 8. that if there be no Elders, as at the first, nor any that can conveniently be gotten from other Churches, then imposition of hands may lawfully be performed by others.

*But you will prove, that it doth not belong to the congregation with or without a Pastor, to ordain Elders; because the rules of direction, how to proceed in ordination, and the Epistles wherein those rules are, are not written or directed to the whole Churches of Ephesus or Crete, but to Timothy and Titus only, as their inscriptions speaks.*

*Answ.* If this be a sufficient reason, to prove that the people may notin any case, meddle with ordination, then by as good a reason, a man may prove that ordination belongs not to the Presbytery, nor to the Synods, but only to one man, as the Prelates would have it: for a man may turn the reason against your self, and say, The rules of direction how to proceed in ordination, and the Epistles wherein those rules are, are not directed to any Presbytery or Synod at Ephesus or Crete, or any where else, but only to *Timothy* and *Titus*, who were each of them but only one man. But look how you would answer this plea for Episcopal ordination, the same answer may be given to yours. And for us, we cannot but approve the answer given to this kind of reasoning, by the refuter of Doctor *Downham's* Sermon at Lambeth, who in his *Reply, part. 2. pag. 107.* doth shew that the laws of Church-government prescribed in the

Epistles of *Timothy* and *Titus*, were not provided for Bishops alone, nor Elders alone, but for a mixed state, wherein many Presbyters under the guidance of one Pastor or President, do administer and execute all matters with the peoples content and approbation. In which affirmation he allegeth the consent of most & best Divines of later times, instancing in *Calvin & Beza*, & especially the Apostles own warrant in the close of thoses Epistles, with these words, *Grace be with you, or with you all*, 2 *Tim.* 4:22. *Tit.* 3:15. And by this, saith he, it appeareth, that what was written specially by name to *Timothy & Titus*, was intended to be of common use, not only for other ministers, but also in some sort to all the Saints that then converted in those places. Now if wh at was written by name to *Timothy* and *Titus*, was intended to be of common use to all the Saints, then there is no reason that you mould appropriate those rules only to the use of Presbyteries and Synods, no more then others only to the use of Prelates; especially this being considered withal, that if once the Saints be excluded from being at all concerned in those rules, they that would appropriate them to one man, have a fairer colour for their plea, then they that would appropriate them to a Presbytry, or Synod, consisting of many; because *Timothy* or *Titus* to whom those Epistles are by name directed, are not many persons, but either of them one only.

*But it appears, say you, that we read in Scripture, that this part of Jurisdiction was dispensed by the Eldership only, and that a consociated Eldership.* pag. 27.

*Answ.* That it was dispensed by the Eldership, we willingly grant; but that it was dispensed by the Eldership only, and that the Eldership by which it was dispensed, was a consociated Eldership (that is to say, a Synod) neither of these do appear at all: Nay, we suppose the contrary to both these may appear. For as for the former, we have shewed the contrary already; and for the latter, we will only instance in that Eldership at Antioch, Acts 13. that laid hands on *Paul* and *Barnabas*, which Eldership was not any Synod, but an Eldership of one Congregation: for it is plain out of Acts 14:27. that the Church of Antioch was no more then might be gathered together in one place; yea, the whole multitude of them were gathered together at the return of *Paul* and *Barnabas* from the Synod at Jerusalem, to hear the Epistle read which was sent from that Synod, Acts 15:30, 31. And therefore this Church

being but one Congregation, that Eldership therein by whom *Paul* and *Barnabas* were ordained, could not be any Synod.

*But, say you, there must be trial of parties to be ordained, and hands must not be laid on suddenly on any, and 'tis laid down what kind of men they ought to be, before they be ordained. And that this trial and approbation of the parties to be ordained, it in the hands of the Presbytery and consociated Eldership, not the whole.* pa. 27.

*Answ.* That they ought to be tried, before they be ordained, yea and afore they be chosen, we freely grant; but that this trial is in the Synod alone, hath not appeared, by the former texts, nor by any of them. We cannot perceive how any of them, do in any sort, look towards such a thing. And as for this which is here alleged of the impossibility of discharging it by a single congregation, with or without a Pastor; We answer thereto; First, that if a Congregation that is without a Pastor could not discharge it, yet if they be furnished with an able and faithful Pastor, we know not what should hinder but they might be able thereto. An able and faithful Pastor, one would think should be able to try others, that are to be ordained Pastors; And therefore we marvel that you should deny this ability to this Congregations as well as to the other. Secondly, suppose they be without a Pastor, yet if they be believers, they are not altogether without ability of spiritual discerning, to discern whether that which is taught be wholesome doctrine, or otherwise. Witness the words of our Saviour, who saith, that his sheep know his voice, but a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers: and though there had been many thieves and robbers, yet the sheep did not hear them. *Joh.* 10. Which plainly shews, that the sheep of Christ, have some ability, to try and discern, whether the doctrine that men teach, be the wholesome Doctrine of truth, or otherwise. Which may be the more confirmed, by the promise, they shall be all taught of God, *Isa.* 54:13. and by that of *Joh.* 7. that if any man will do God's will, he shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God, or men speak it of themselves. There must be some ability to discern, whether men be qualified according to the rule, afore they ought to be elected, and chosen into office; and the people of God have so much ability, to discern this fitness, as that they may lawfully, make this election; and what then should hinder, but they may have so much ability, as is of necessity required,

afore there be proceedings unto Ordination.

*As for that instance which you give about the union of the two natures in the person of Christ, whether the nature assumed the nature, or the person the person; or the nature the person, or the person the nature. And again, whether this assumption was by way of composition, or conjunction, or conversion, or vision (we suppose it should be union) wherein you think it would be hard for these examiners in a congregation, to hit upon the right judgement, and of four Preachers to ordain him that were orthodox in this matter.*

We lay no more to this instance, but only thus much, That as he is the best Preacher who most teacheth the people knowledge, *Eccles.* 12. and who had rather speak five words to the understanding, so as he may teach others, and the hearers be edified, rather than ten thousand words in a strange tongue, and uncoth terms, that himself might be admired, *1 Cor.* 14:19. So we know nothing but the people of God in a Congregation: these terms being explained unto them, might be able to discern which were the orthodox tenent of the four particulars, and accordingly pitch upon him that holds it.

Lastly, you speak, pag. 29. *of four things that are opposed about this matter of Ordination.*

Where, though we will not take upon us to justify all those reasons, but leave them to the authors of them, to undertake the defence of them, if so be there be any that do so argue; yet we may speak a word or two to some passages in your answer to these four particulars.

First of all, to the case of a *Company of Believers cast by ship-wrack upon an Inland, where are no Pastors, your answer is, that the question is about the ordinary way of Scripture-institution in this matter of ordination, not what may be done in extraordinary cases.*

Whereby it seems that in the case proposed, you grant ordination may be performed by non-Elders. And if so, what then becomes of all you have said before of *Timothy* and *Titus*, and of the rules about Ordination in the Epistles to these two Evangelists, of the Presbytery at Antioch, that laid hands upon *Paul* and *Barnabas*, of the inability of people to examine and try who were fit for office, and the rest? For granting what here you do, you plainly declare, that all your former reasoning amounts but to this much, That when Pastors can be had, then imposition of hands is best performed by those Pastors, otherwise it may be done without

them; wherein we for our parts consent with you. But by this means the necessary dependance upon Synods for ordination of officers, is utterly overthrowen.

*But, say you, Independency of every single congregations to be the ordinary way, herein is the claim of the independent party.*

*Answ.* What others claim, they may declare their grounds for the same as they see cause; for our selves, that which we hold, with the grounds thereof, is briefly this, in four Propositions; two of them concerning what is to be done in case a Church. have Elders of its own: and two concerning what is to be done in case it have not. In respect of the former.

*Proposition 1.* If a Church have Elders of its own, imposition of hands in ordination is to be performed by those Elders, and not by the people.

*Proportion 2.* A Church that hath Elders of its own, needs not to depend upon a Synod, or the Presbyteries of other Churches, consociat or single, for the the ordaining of its Officers; but the same may be performed lawfully and sufficiently by its own Elders.

In respect of the latter: 1. In a Church that hath no Elders, imposition of hands in ordaining of officers, may lawfully be performed by some principal members in the congregation.

2. If the Church have Elders of its own, it may do well to crave the approbation of the Ministers of neighbouring congregations if there be any such.

The grounds of the first and third of these Propositions hath been declared already; and for the second we thus argue:

*Arg. 1.* If such a Church may elect and choose Officers to it self, without any necessary dependance upon Synods; then they may ordain them also, having so fit instruments as Elders of their own to do it by. But the first is true, as we have elsewhere shewed in this Answer of ours: Therefore the second is true also. The consequence of the Major is clear by this reason, That they which can do the greater a can do the lesser also, if it be of the same kind.

*Arg. 2.* If such a Church as we here speak of, may not ordain their Officers without dependance on a Synod, or a Classis; then neither may they administer Seals without such dependance: For

the word makes such dependance, no more requisite in the one case, then in the other.

*Arg.* 3. If it were not thus, it were not possible, there should be any Synod or Classis upon the face of the earth; for what is a Classis or a Synod? but a company of Ministers or Elders, of several Congregations, assembled together to consider of things concerning themselves, and the Churches of Christ, specially such Churches, whereto they do peculiarly belong; Now this assembling of Elders into a Classis or Synod, doth imply that there were Elders before there was any Classis, or Synod; and if so, then certainly there was no concurrence, of the Classis or Synod in the ordination of those Elders; since they were Elders before that Synod had any being; Which doth sufficiently shew, that the concurrence of a Synod, is not always required in the ordaining of Elders.

*Obj.* If it be said the Synod did ordain *Timothy*, an Evangelist, an Officer of many Churches, 1 *Tim.* 4:14. and therefore much more must ordain Officers of one particular Church.

The Answer is, first, that the consequence is not strong, because a particular Church might have authority sufficient, to ordain by their Eldership the Officers of their particular Church only; and not sufficient to ordain such as must be Officers in all Churches, whatsoever. The help of a Classis or Synod, where is a combination or consociation of Elders, of many Churches, might be requisite for ordaining an Officer of many Churches, and yet the eldership of our particular Church, might be sufficient for ordaining such a one, as is to be officer, to no more but only to that particular Church.

Secondly, the ground hence is not certain. For though *Timothy* was an Evangelist, and so to travel from one Church to another, yet the Presbytery 1 *Tim.* 4:14. that laid hands on him, might be the Presbytery of one particular Church, and not any Synod or Classis. For *Paul* and *Barnabas* were Apostles, *Act.* 14:4. and 14. *Gal.* 2:9. and yet they were ordained, not by any Classis or Presbytery of many Churches, but by the Presbytery of one Church, the Church at Antioch. *Act.* 13:1, 2, 3.

*Those (say they) that can do the greater (that it to say) make a Church, can do the less, make Pastors of that Church.*

*Ans.* We would rather argue thus; those that have power of electing Officers, they have power of ordaining Officers; But the

people that have no Officers, have the former. Therefore they have power to do the latter. The consequence is proved, because electing is greater then ordaining, and greater not in another kind, but in the same; *viz.* about the placing of a Minister, or the designing of a person to the office, of Ministry. Now an Argument from the greater to the less, in the same kind, you confess will hold.

*Which visible Ministry where it is, this property or proper power of ordaining Officers, is a necessary and immediate ordinary concomitant thereof.* pag. 31.

*Ans.* If this be so, then there may be Officers ordained, and not by a Synod, even in a particular congregation; because in such a one there may be a visible Ministry.

Although that which you have said in this Argument, be not expressly against the Congregations, electing their Officers; but only against their ordaining of them, by imposition of hands; yet in as much as sundry passages in your book, and in this Argument especially, do seem to make as much against the one, as the other. Therefore as we have already spoken, to the point of ordination, so we will also, for the Readers further direction, give some grounds for confirmation of tins position, about election, *viz.* Election of ordinary officers belongeth to the Church, whereof the party is to be an officer, so that they proceed in this election, according to the rules of the Word; both choosing a man fitted by God for the office, unto which they choose him, and carrying their choice, in an orderly manner. *Reason 1.* It was thus in the Apostles times, and therefore it ought to be so now. The antecedent is clear from *Act.* 1. where in the very choice of an Apostle, the Church are not wholly excluded; for though the office of an Apostle being extraordinary, the express designing of the particular person, is determined by God by lot, yet the Church appoints two that one of them may be singled out, *v.* 23. and when the lot had fallen upon *Matthias*, it is said he was numbered with the eleven Apostles, *v.* 26. that is, he was by common suffrage of the Church chosen to be of that number; for so doth the word signify, that is used, *συγκατεψηφίσθη* and therefore it is translated by *Scapula*, *Omnium calculis allectus*. And it is observable, that though the office was extraordinary, and though the Apostles (who were extraordinary officers, and had received their calling and extraordinary authority from Christ himself, immediately) were now present, yet for

all this, the Church hath a stroke in this matter, both first appointing two, and then approving by their common suffrage or consent him of the two, on whom the lot had fallen; to be for instruction unto us in after times, that in the choice of ordinary officers, it should be far from any of the sons of men, to exclude the people of God, from their right and interest therein; For if they had a stroke in the choice of an Apostle; how much more should they have the like, in the choice of ordinary officers? And if the Apostles themselves being present, would not abridge the people of this liberty, much less may others do it; doubtless they that engross the authority of choosing Ministers into their own hands, excluding the people, they arrogate more unto themselves than the Apostles ever did. So likewise in *Act. 6.* when Deacons were to be appointed, the Apostles do not take all the business into their own hands, as if election of such officers appertained only to themselves, and not at all unto the people: but they call the whole multitude unto them, *ver. 2.* and bid them choose out *seven* men, fitly qualified for the office, *ver. 3.* and accordingly the saying pleased the whole multitudes and they chose seven that are there named, *ver. 5.* and having so done, they set them before the Apostles that they might ordain them by laying their hands on them, *ver. 6.* And in *Act. 14: 23.* it is said that the Apostles ordained Elders, by election, or lifting up of hands, (for so doth *χειροτονήσαντες* signify) in every Church.

*Obj.* The word signifieth nothing else, but laying on of hands, which was the act of the Apostles alone, and not of the people.

*Ans.* The word is never used for laying on of hands in all the Scripture, but the word used for that is *χειροθεσία*, betwixt which and this word *χειροτορία*, there is as much difference as between holding up and laying down. If *Luke* the writer of the Acts had intended the laying on of hands, it had been easy for him to have used the other word, which is proper to express such an action, and frequently used by himself in that sense in this book. *Act. 6:6.* and *8:17.* and *9:17.*

*Object.* But be it laying on, or lifting up, that was not the act of the people, but of the Apostle alone.

*Ans.* Of the Apostles it is confessed: For who doubts, but as they moderated the whole action, and laid on their hands in ordination; so they might also concur in the election, by lifting



up their hands? But it will not follow that therefore that lifting up of hands was performed by the Apostles only; for elsewhere the word is used to express the act of the whole Church, and is translated (*was chosen*, 2 Cor. 8:19. χειροσάτηθειώς ὑπὸ των ἐκκλησιῶν; *was chosen of the Churches*: Even as one place mentioneth a gift that was in *Timothy*, by the laying on of *Paul's hands*, 2 Tim. 1:6. which must not be understood of *Paul's hands* alone, because another Scripture mentioneth the hands of the Presbytery, 1 Tim. 4:14. By all which it appeareth, that in the Apostles times, the people had one hand in the election of their Officers. And if so, then it ought to be so also in these days: for the practice of the Apostles recorded in the Acts is presidential for all Churches in all ages, in those things that were not of particular reason and respect; which for the peoples choosing their Ministers, cannot be said. Besides, when the Apostles were alive, the Churches were in the greatest purity, and therefore we may more safely tread in their steps. And further, if this practice had not been according to the mind of Christ, we may be sure the Apostles would not have countenanced it, nor have directed the Churches to have used it, but would have left: and prescribed some other course to be observed in the choice of Ministers, which we see they have not done.

Secondly, if Ministers must not be chosen by the Church, then either they must be called of God immediately, or Ministers without any calling at all, or be chosen and appointed by some other men: But not the first, because such immediate calling is now ceased (as being peculiar to the extraordinary function of Apostles, Prophets, &c.) which in these times are not to be expected; Nor the second, because that is expressly against the Scripture, which saith, *No man must take this honour to himself, but he that it called of God, as was Aaron*, Heb. 5:4. And therefore they that ran when God sent them not, are many times, and very sharply reprov'd in the Prophets. Jer. 23:21. Nor the third: For 1. God hath not given any such authority to either men that are not of the Church, to appoint Officers to the Church: Nor 2. may some of the Church arrogate this power only to themselves, excluding the rest; because that which concerneth all (as this matter doth) ought to have approbation of all, unless it might appear, that God had committed the thing only to some, which for the choosing of Officers cannot be said. 3. It is suitable to right reason, that it should be thus: For 1. by this means

the liberty of the Church is not infringed by thrusting officers upon them without their consent, and whom they never chose. Also 2. this is a strong engagement to the people, to yield due reverence, subjection and obedience to their Ministers, because they are the men whom themselves have chosen; whereas one thrust upon them against their wills, is not like to be much beloved, but rather condemned and hated; and how then shall they profit by his doctrine? Finally, the people have a right originally to choose their civil officers, as is also practised at this day in many places: And when the Lord brings a sword upon a land, the Scripture faith expressly, *that the people of the land may take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman, Ezek. 33:2.* And if so, then they may well have liberty to choose such as must be watchmen for their souls: for it is much more unreasonable, that there should be thrust upon them such watchmen and officers, upon whom the salvation or damnation of their souls doth depend, then such as upon whom dependeth no more but their wealth, or commodity of this life. And this shall suffice for answer to your fourth and last Argument.

There are in your book two other general heads which are something insisted on, the one about clearing such objections as are not reducible to your former arguments; the other of appealing to the judgement of the adverse party: In both which, though we might observe sundry things which were worth your second review, yet inasmuch as our *intentions* were chiefly to consider the weight of your arguments, but not to undertake the desense of every objection which you propose; and considering withal, that those considerations from the order, unity, peace, and strength of government with the rest, are not intended by you (as we suppose) as convincing, but only as probable grounds against that way which you deal against therefore for these and some other reasons, having spoken to that which we conceive to be the main substance of your book, we will here for this time surcease, *praying the Father of mercies for Christ Jesus his sake, to pour out his rich blessings of truth & peace upon our dear native country, and to guide all his servants there & here by a Spirit of truth, into all truth. And to give us such hearts and grace, that we may follow the truth in love, till Antichristianism be utterly rooted out, and Sion be restored, (especially in England) to her former beauty, and new Jerusalem come down from heaven, as a bride adorned for her Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ. To whom be all glory and praise for ever and ever. Amen.*

FINIS.

