

# THE WAY OF THE CHURCHES

OF

# CHRIST IN NEW ENGLAND

BY

JOHN COTTON

**Quinta Press**

**Weston Rhyn**

2008

## Quinta Press

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

Visit our web-site: <http://www.quintapress.com>

ISBN 1 897856 ?? ?

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THE  
Way of the Churches  
OF CHRIST  
in *NEW ENGLAND.*

OR  
THE WAY OF CHURCHES  
WALKING IN BROTHERLY EQUALITY. OR  
CO-ORDINATION, WITHOUT SUBJECTION OF ONE CHURCH TO  
ANOTHER.

MEASURED AND EXAMINED BY THE  
GOLDEN REED OF THE SANCTUARY.

CONTAINING A FULL DECLARATION OF THE CHURCH-  
WAY IN ALL PARTICULARS.

By MR J Cotton, TEACHER OF THE CHURCH AT *BOSTON* IN *NEW-  
ENGLAND.*

I THESSALONIANS 5:22,23.

*'PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD; ABSTAIN FROM  
ALL APPEARANCE OF EVIL.*

*PUBLISHED ACCORDING TO ORDER.*

*LONDON,*

PRINTED BY *MATTHEW SIMMONS* IN *ALDERSGATE STREET.*

1645

## The Epistle to the READER,

satisfying his desire of a fuller De-

### CLARATION OF THE CHURCH-WAY.

ALTHOUGH our Brethren of a different judgement from *that way*, have not all this while, held forth unto us *what discipline* they intend; nor yet have pointed us to any *Platform* settled in adjacent Kingdoms; but rather have lured off our eye, with intimations that they intend some *variation*: yet how many, how long, have even dulled our ears with\* *expostulations* for a *fuller declaration of ourselves*? Whose hands (they know are much bound up, and our *single* selves in an incapacity to be representative of others. The unwillingness of *Licencers* to licence our tracts, and the earnest endeavours of some, to move complaints against two or three of our most moderate books, that with hard travel got a convoy of *Licences*, to cut through the Presses, are not dumb witnesses how much our way is barred, and our hands tied short.\* And for *Plaintiffs* to burn records, or to *lock* up records, and then to importune the *Defendents* to produce those records, are two things that cannot

\* So that School Master *Effiastitasti quotid ano ????? libros emittere, &C. Quintil. lib. 1.*

\* *Whites way* to the Church. *Bernards Look* beyond *Luther*.

**THE**

**Way of the Churches of Christ**

**in *NEW-ENGLAND*,**

**Measured by the Golden Reed**

**of the SANCTUARY.**

**CHAPTER I.**

THE ORDER OF GATHERING DISPERSED CHRISTIAN INTO A CHURCH.

**Proposition I. Section I.**

**T**HAT the Church which Christ in his Gospel hath instituted, and to which he hath committed the keys of his kingdom, the powers of binding and loosing, the tables and seals of the Covenant, the Officers and censures of his Church, the administration of all his public Worship and Ordinances, is, *Cætus fidelium*, a Communion of Saints, a Combination of faithful godly men, meeting for that end, by common and joint consent, into one congregation; which is commonly called *a particular visible church*. For the church to the which Christ committed the power of binding and loosing, was a company of such (as whereof Peter was one). Believers professing that faith on Christ, whereon (as on a rock) the Church is built, *Matthew 16:18–19*, and such as unto whom Peter,

or any brother offended, might (in due order) tell the offence which any brother had given him, & persisted in, Matthew 18:17. And

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17. And the Church of *Corinth* which the Apostle commendeth the calling out of the Incestuous *Corinthian*, (1 Cor. 5.) was such a Church, of which the Apostle saith, *They were Saints by calling, sanctified by Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. 1. 2. and all of them, even the whole Church, did meet together every Lords day, in one place, for the Administration of the holy Ordinances of God, to public Education, 1 Cor. 14. 23. & 16. 1, 2. Which frequent meeting every Lords day in one place, to such ends, cannot possibly be conipatible to any Diocesan, Provinciall, or Nationall Assembly.

### Proposition 2.

It is the part of all Christians, who look for salvation by Christ Jesus, to join themselves (if God give them opportunity) to some one or other such a particular visible Church of Christ; for of such a Church as continued in such Church-fellowship (*Acts 2:42*), it is written, *The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved*, *Acts 2:47*. And seeing there is no holy Ordinance of Christ, but every Christian standeth in need thereof for his spiritual edification in holy fellowship with Christ Jesus (or else Christ ordained them in vain) and seeing withall Christ hath committed all his public holy Ordinances to his Church, it will be needful for every good Christian, to whom God giveth opportunity, to joint himself to some one or other Church of Christ, that so he may not deprive himself of the benefit and comfort of any of God's holy Ordinances.

### Proposition 2.

For the joning of faithful Christians into the fellowship and estate of a Church, we find not in Scripture that God hath done it any other way than by entering all of them together, (as one man) into an holy Covenant with himself, To take the Lord (as the head of his Church) for their God, and to give up themselves to him, to be his church and people; which implieth their submitting of themselves to him, and one to another in his fear; and their walking in professed subjection to all his holy Ordinances their cleaving one to another, as fellow-members of the same body, in brotherly love and holy watchfulness to mutual edification in Christ Jesus: For thus the Lord accepted and entered

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*Abrahams* family into Church estate, by receiving them and their children into such a Covenant with himselfe, though in generall terms, yet such as imply the substance both of Christians and Church duties, *Gen.* 17. 7. And after that when the posteritie of *Abraham* had violated this Covenant in *Ægypt*, the Lord againe made another Covenant with them, whereby he took them to be a peculiar people unto himself in the Wildernesse and Mount of *Sinai*, *Exod.* 19. 1, 5. Whence they were called the *Church in the Wildernesse*, *Act.* 7. 38. And by reason of this Covenant, God calleth the whole body of that people as his owne Spoule; *I entered* (saith he, speaking of that time) *into a Covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine*, *Ezek.* 16. 8. Moreover, the next generation after them, he established them to be his Church and people, by entering them againe into a Covenant, according to the Covenant made with *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, *Deut.* 29. 10. to 13. By vertue of which Covenant, as well as by the former, they were joyned, not onely to the Lord, and to the Officers (the Priests and Levites) which he had given them, *Deut.* 12. 19. but also to mutuall watch fulnesse over one another, *Levit.* 19. 17. *Deut.* 29. 18. In so much that through their neglect thereof, the sinne of one *Achan*, was the sinne of all *Israel*. *Josh.* 7. 11.

Which kinde of Covenanting with God, we finde diversly translated in Scripture, and every way sufficient for the constituting of a godly society or company to become a Church unto God: Sometimes God, or his Messengers in his stead, propoundeth and giveth a Covenant unto a people, and they accept it, though not in express words, yet by fluent consent. *Gen.* 17. 7. *Deut.* 29. 10. to the end of Chapter 30. Sometimes the people declare their content, and restipulation by express words, *Exod.* 19. 8. *Deut.* 5. 27. and *Josh.* 24. 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 25. Sometimes they writing and sealing, *Neh.* 9. 38. In all which Covenants, sometimes they make no express terms of cleaving to their brethren, but onely in generall termes of submitting themselves to every Ordinance and Covenant of God, (as in the places alledged) sometimes they expressly declare their stedfast cleaving to their Brethren also, and to their Officers, *Neh.* 10. 28, 29, & *ver.* 35. to the end the rest of the people every one might have knowledge they cleave to their Brethren, and entred into an Oath, &c. In some we account it all one, and

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of like value, when a Covenant of God is propounded and given on God's part to a people, whether they receive it by silent consent, or by express terms, either by word of mouth, or by writing and seale, and whether their cleaving to their Brethren and Officers, and mutuall watchfulness over one another, be expresly mentioned, or included onely in their general profession of subjection to all Gods holy Ordinances and Covenant; For we see it evident by comparing the former Scriptures, that by any one of these wayes a people is received and established to be a peculiar people and Church unto the Lord, and each of them lay hold of the same spiritual priviledges and hold forth the same holy duties.

Neither is there any colour to conceive this way of entring into Church estate by Covenant, to be peculiar to the Pædagogy of the old Testament; for it is evident by the light of nature, that all civill Relations are founded in Covenant. For, to passe by naturall Relations between Parents and Children, and violent Relations between Conquerours and Captives; there is no other way given whereby a people (*sui Juris*) free from naturall and compolsory engagements can be united or combined together into one visible body, to stand by mutuall Relation, fellow-members of the same body, but onely by mutuall Covenants as appeareth between husband and wife in the family, Magistrates and subjects in the Common-wealth, fellow Citizens in the same Citie: and therefore in the New Testament, when a people whom the Apostles by their ministry had converted, were to be gathered by them into Church estate, what did the Apoliles else but combine them into one body, as one chaste Virgin and Spouse unto Christ 2 *Cor.* 11. 2. And how could that (not universall, but particular) Church of *Corinth* be offered up in one body, not as many Spouses, as all the particular members of that Church were by their conversion but as one Spouse unto Christ, but onely by joyning all together in one Covenant, or Espousage, to worship the Lord Jesus, according to all the Ordinances of his house?

**PROPOS. 4.**

We conceive it cannot seeme unreasonable that in the same way by which particular godly persons do enter into the fellowship of the Liberte of those holy Ordinances which Christ hath appro-

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riated to his Church; in the same way it were meet that an whole company of Christians should enter into Church estate; for in entring of them into Church estate, the Lord calleth as well whole companies, as particular persons, to enjoy the like liberty of all his holy Ordinances; the enjoyment of like libertie requireth preparation thereunto by the like dutie. In the times of *John* the Baptist, such as were received into Baptisme, they did first make confession of their hones, and therewith of their repentance, and of their faith also in him who was to come after him, *Matth.* 3. 6. *Act.* 19. 4, 5. And in the times of the Apostles, *Philip* received the Eunuch unto Baptisme, not untill he had made profession of his Faith in Christ Jesus, *Act.* 8. 37. But now for as much as we all who are borne in Christian Churches, are baptized in our infancy, and such as are baptized infants, are not admitted to the Lords Table in well ordered Churches, till they have approved, and in their own persons publicly confirmed that profession of repentance and faith, which their parents, or others in their stead professed, and promised for them at their Baptisme; it cannot be thought unreasonable, that such a company of godly Christians, having been baptized infants, should now make the like profession of their repentance, before they are admitted into Church estate, which others made in the primitive times before Baptisme, and all growne up to ripe yeares are wont publicly to make, (or at least ought to make) before their admittance to the Lords Supper. Betides when upon *Peters* confession of his faith in Christ Jesus, Christ said that upon that rock, or foundation, he would build his Church, *Mat.* 16. 16, 18. doth he not plainly hold forth, that every Christian Church is founded, as on Christ; so on Christ in this way, to wit, on Christ believed on by faith, and that faith publicly confessed before God and men?

**PROPOS. 5.**

To the erecting of a Church, as the presence of Christ is necessary for the acceptance of it, so the pretence of neighbouring Churches and Brethren, is requisite to cry, Grace, Grace unto it; For if  *Davids* advertisement be (as it is) necessary, and of important weight, *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vaine that build it*, *Psal.* 127. 1. how much more important is it that the Lord

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(who alone buildeth his own *Jerusalem*, Psal. 147. 2.) be sought unto with unfeigned humiliation and fervent prayer, for his presence with his people, and acceptance of them in such a worke; and if the Apostle *Paul* thought it requisite to communicate with the Apostles at *Jerusalem* about his Apostolicall doctrines and proceedings, partly to prevent suspicion of dissent between him and them, left by any meanes he should run in vaine; partly to hold forth mutuall communion with them, in giving and taking the *right hand of fellowship*, Gal. 2. 2, 9. How much more requisite will it be, for such as goe about to gather together scattered Christians into a Church estate, to communicate with the Elders and Brethren of other Churches, craving their presence, and counsell, and communion in so great a work? And seeing Christian Magistrates being also Brethren and members of Churches, are called of God to be Nursing Fathers unto the Church, *Isa.* 49. 23. it can not but encourage them to take the more speciall notice and care of every Church, and to provide and assigne convenient allotments of land for the maintenance of each of them, when in times of peace they are made acquainted with the persons and proceedings of such as gather into Church-fellowship, under the wing of their Government: And yet seeing the kingdome of Christ is not of this world, nor regulated by the wisdome of this world, we do not doubt but that a Church may be clearly gathered, and rightly ordered, though they want opportunitie, or omit to acquaint the Magistrates with their proceedings, csppecially when Magistrates are not acquainted with the Lawes of Christs kingdome.

## SECT. II.

**N**OW then to apply all these Propositions to our present order and practice, in the gathering of a Church; thus it is, when many Christians are come over into these parts, they desire to joyne themselves unto some Church or other, according to the second Proposition, professing that it was the principall end of their comming, to enjoy the presence of the Lord in the libertie and puritie of his Ordinances: And if the company of such as come together, be so well knowne one to another, that they are loathe to part company, and yet so great that they cannot well joyne in any

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one Church already established without too much impeachment of their outward estate and livelihood, the chiefest part of the lands belonging to each Church, being prepossessed by others before them, they then take that course which other companies took before them, they consider of entering into a Church estate and fellowship amongst themselves: And for that end, first commending themselves to the Lord, they enquire out some one or other of Eminent gifts, usually such as have been Preachers of good esteeme in *England*, who may guide and goe along with them in so great an Action, and if God see good, may afterwards be called to place and Office amongst them; And then such whole hearts God toucheth to goe along with them in this worke, they often meet together about the things of God, and performe some duties of Prayer and spiritual conference together, till a sufficient company of them be well satisfied in the spiritual good estate of one another, and so have approved themselves to one anothers consciences in the sight of God, as living stones fit to be laid in the Lords spiritual Temple, which is his Church, according to the first Proposition.

Now because (through the grace of Christ) our Christian Magistrates are nursing Fathers to the Church, and the Churches already established, are carried not onely with a pious desire to enlarge the kingdome of Christ, but also with brotherly love to such as intend so good a worke; those Christians therefore that desire to enter into Church-fellowship together, do acquaint the Governour, and some of the neerest Magistrates, and those Churches which are next adjoyning to them, with their intentions to enter into Church-fellowship, and crave the presence of some from amongst them (at the day appointed, some few weeks after) to helpe them with their prayers, and with their counfell, (if need should be) in so weightie a business, as being themselves for the most part, lesse experienced in the wayes of Christs Kingdome, then those who have gone before them in such a worke; as also desiring to approve themselves and their course, to the consciences of the Brethren of other Churches, that they may more freely give them the right hand of fellowship, and so receive them to all Brotherly communion in the Lord, amongst the rest of the Churches; and this agreeth with the last part of the fift Proposition.

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So when the day appointed for the Church-gathering is come, the persons deputed from the neighbouring Churches are present, (who commonly be the teaching and ruling Elders) and as many also of all sorts as are willing to partake with them at that time, the whole day is kept as a day of humiliation, especially the former part of it, in seekitig the face of God in prayer, and preaching the Word, (according to the former part of the fift Proposition) the Brethren of the Church to be gathered, selecting some chiefe one among themselves to be their mouth for those services: which done, then on the latter part of the day, one of them appointed and chosen by themselves to order the worke of the day, standeth up and addresseth himselfe, with the rest of his Brethren, to make profession of their faith, and repentance, before the Lord, and before the whole Assembly according to the fourth Proposition.

This done with the silent approbation of the whole Assembly, he propoundeth the Covenant of promise, *Eph. 2. 12.* denying also any sufficiency in themselves to keepe Covenant with God, (as having been transressors from their youth up) they professe in the name of Christ their acceptance of the Lord for their God, and the Lord Jesus (the head and Saviour of his Church) to be their King, Priest, and Prophet; and give up themselves in professed subjection unto all his holy Ordinances, according to the Rule of the Gospel; withall they profess their full purpose of heart, to cleave one to another in Brotherly love, and mutuall subjection, according to God; not forsaking their Assembly, (but as the Lord shall call) and ministring one to another (as becometh good Stewards of the manifold graces of God) till they all grow up to a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

Having thus, or to the like purpose propounded the Covenant himselfe, with the rest of the Brethren, who are to joyn in Church-estate, they all declare their joint consent in this Covenant, either by silence, or word of mouth, or writing.

Then the Brethren of other Churches finding the presence of God accepting them, by the heavenly fire of his Spirit come downe amongst them in their performance of their holy duties, they appoint some from amongst them, in the name of all the Churches from whence they come to reach forth unto them the right hand

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of fellowship, testifying their proceedings to have been according to God, and the Churches acceptance of them into brotherly fellowship, and exhorting them to stand stedfast in the Lord, and to grow up in holy fellowship with him, and one with another, and with the rest of the Brethren of all the Churches, according to these beginnings: And to prayers being made unto God for the pardoning and acceptance of this people, and of all the duties of the day; as also for his blessing upon themselves, and all the Churches, both in this Countrey, and throughout the world, especially in *England*; a Psalm of praise is sung.

*Quest.* What could be done more, if a Church were to be gathered out of Infidels?

*Answ.* 1. If a Church were to be gathered out of Infidels, they were first to be converted, that they might become beleevers, and so fit materialls or Church-fellowship, before any of these could be done by them; whereas these here spoken of, are persons converted already.

If it be said againe; But are not all Baptized persons fit for Church-fellowship, as all Circumcised persons were admitted to the Passeover?

*Answ.* There is a difference between the Passeover, whereto all Jewes were admitted, young and old, unless defiled with some pollution, and the Lords Supper, whereto persons of growner yeares, and fit to examine themselves, are invited; and therefore neither children, nor ignorant persons, nor prophane, nor scandalous persons, are admitted to the Lords Table, nor into Church-fellowship.

If it againe be Objected; But are not all Baptized persons church-members already by their Baptisme?

*Answ.* No.

1. Papists and other notorious Hereticks are Baptized.
2. And many in other Churches have cut themselves off from the Covenant by their notorious wickednesse and prophanenesse, *Psal.* 50. 16.
3. A Church Relapsed, with all the members of it, before they can be accepted with God in their Church-fellowship, are bound to renew their Covenant; which is, as it were, a new entring into Covenant the same which in effect is done with us.

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4. Though godly men Baptized members of a pure Church, are to be accounted Church members as long as they continue their habitation and election to that Church; yet several Baptized persons broken off from their several Churches, to which sometimes they did belong, and now meeting accidentally in one place, are not therefore one Church anew amongst themselves, unless they will imagine that *Chimæra* of an universal visible Church.

## CHAP. II.

*Touching Church. Officers, with their election and ordination.*

### *Sect. 1.*

THE Church being thus gathered, as hath been described, our next care is that it may be supplied with all those Officers and members which Christ hath ordained to continue in his Church until his second coming, for they are all given for the edifying and perfecting of his body, untill we all grow unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, *Eph. 4. 11, 12, 13.* The Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, they still continue in their writings, to be Master-builders of the Churches in all ages, and therefore the Church is said to be built upon their foundation, that is, upon the foundation which they by their writings laid, *Eph. 2. 20.* but in their Successors in the same eminent calling they continue not: whence the Apostle speaketh of himselfe and *Barnabas*, as the Last Apostles, *1 Cor. 4. 9.* And when the new *Jerusalem* (the Church of the *Jewes*) commeth to be planted, it is not said to be planted by new Apostles, but by the former twelve Apostles of the Lambe, *Rev. 21. 19.* to wit, by them, in respect of their Doctrine still left behinde them in their writings.

It remaineth therefore, that the ordinary Officers of the church which are to continue to the coming of Christ Jesus, are either Elders, (whom the Apostle calleth also *Bioshops*, *Tit. 1. 5, 7. Act. 20. 27, 28.*) or Deacons; of Elders he maketh two sorts, one sort he

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calleth them that rule, the other them that labour in the Word; whether of Exhortation as the Pastors, or of Doctrine, as the Teachers, *2 Tim. 5.*

17. For the two sorts of ordinary preaching Elders, the Apostle calleth *Pastors and Teachers*, Eph. 4. 11. And such severall kindes of labouring in the Word, by the one in a word of Exhortation, by the other in a word of Doctrine, the Apostle expressly holdeth forth, *Rom. 12. 7, 8. He that teacheth* (saith he) *let him waite on teaching, and he that exhorteth on exhortation*; which argueth a difference of their functions by the distinction of their proper or especiall actions.

If it be said, the difference of those actions do not argue a diversitie of functions, but both teaching and exhorting are co-incident to one and the same Office, as being several actions of severall gifts, not of severall Officers:

*Answ.* The contrary is evident from the Text, as may appeare by three severall reasons from the words of the Text.

*Reas.* 1. From the words which the Apostle useth, [Greek and more Greek], which do not distribute several gifts onely, but several persons, to whom those several gifts are severally committed, according as the same Apostle distributeth the same divers sorts of gifts to the same divers sorts of persons, *1 Cor. 12. 8. To one* (saith he) *is given a word of wisdome*, (to wit, for direction of practice, whereto the Pastor attendeth) *to another the word of knowledge* (to wit, for direction of the judgement) whereto the teacher attendeth, and, both by the same Spirit, who distributeth to every man severally, *ver. 11.*

*Reas.* Though office be one thing, and gift to discharge an office another, and the actions or exercise of every several gift doth not always argue a several office; yet in this place it is the scope of the Apostle to expresse the different offices, or functions of Pastors and Teachers by their different and proper acts; for here he speaketh of the divers members of the Church as of divers members of the naturall body, who having divers offices, or functions in the body, are to performe different proper actions, according to their different functions; *as we having on my members* (saith he) *in one body* (*ver. 4, 5.*) *an all the members have not one office*, (as the translator turneth it when the Originall saith, have not one action, or practise, but both expressing the same meaning;)

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*so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another, having then* (saith he, *ver. 6.*) *different gifts* (gifts comprehending both offices and grace) *whether Prophecy, let us prophecy according to the*

*proportion of faith, or ministry, let us waite on our ministry, whether he that teacheth on teaching, or he that exhorteth on exhortation.* And looke then, as in the naturall body, it being the action of the tongue to speake, it is his function and office to speak, and not to see: and it being the action of the eye to see, it is his function to see, and not to heare; So it is in the members of the body of Christ, it being the action of the teacher to teach, he is to attend unto teaching, not unto exhortation; and it being the action of the Pastor or Exhortor to exhort, he is to attend on exhortation, not on teaching.

*Reas. 3.* If the Apostle speak here onely of several actions or exercises of several gifts, but both co-incident to the same person and officer in the Church; why then doth he command the Teacher to waite on teaching? and the Exhorter to waite on exhortation? for he that performeth an action according to this gift, which is not peculiar to his office, but common to him with men of other offices, is never commanded, nor is it his dutie to attend or waite on such an action. As if a man have a gift of love, or mercy, or liberalitie, and according to that gift be fit to performe an action of giving Almes, yet he is not commanded to attend or waite upon Almsgiving, unless it be his office as well as as gift?

*Object.* Attending, or waiting, is not expressed in the Originall, but in the tranflation onely.

*Answ.* Though it be not expressed in the Originall, it is necessarily intended, for either such a word as expresseth waiting, or at least the verbe substantive must needs be understood, which holdeth forth the same sense; *He that teacheth, let him be teaching; he that exhorteth, let him be in exhortation;* which is all one, as let him attend to it, let him make it his proper and constant worke. So a like example in 1 Tim. 4. 15. [GREEK], which is the same phrase, and which is fitly translated, *Give thy self, wholly to them;* the same with [GREEK], ver. 16. *Continue or dwell in them.*

And indeed experience sheweth, that teaching and exhorting are so far different one from another, and flow from such different gifts, that they are seldome found, at least in any eminency,

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both of them in one and the same person and therefore require severall officers for the dispensing of them: you have many men of eminent dexterity for cleare opening of a Text, for judicious gathering and handling



sound Doctrine from it; and also acute and strong for conviction of a contrary error and heresie, who yet are very cold in exhortation; and on the other side, you have some very fervent in exhortation, who are very confused and generall and common in teaching.

But besides this, the need of the Church, and the weight of both, the works of teaching and exhorting, calleth for several officers to attend to both, the explication of Scripture, and of the Principles and Doctrine of Religion solidly and distinctly, with the discussion of controversies, which are included in (GREEK) Doctrine and Reproof (2 *Tim.* 3. 16.) well attended too, will take up the whole time and talents of a most judicious Divine; and on the other side, the direction and instruction of the people in matters of practice, the reformation of their manners, both in their private carriage, and in their families; as also in the Church and Commonwealth; and the stirring up of men thereto, with the reproof of all disorders and abuses in life and conversation, which are included in [GREEK], instruction and correction, 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. these well attended to, will take up the vigour and strength of the most prudent and vigilant Pastor of any Congregation. All which things considered, we have thought it needfull to make use of the bounty of the Lord Jesus, to finish our Churches, (as we blesse his Name, most of them be) with both these sorts of preaching Elders, Pastors and Teachers; neverthelesse, hee that is gifted for both these in any good measure, let him use both; yet attend principally on that, to which he is most eminently gifted and called.

## Sect. II.

As for ruling Elders, the same Text of Scripture (*Rom.* 12. 8.) speaketh as expresly for their distinct office also; for there speaking of the several members of the body of Christ (which is his Church) he directing them to attend to their proper work: as the Teacher to teaching, the Pastor to exhortation, the Deacon to give

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with simplicity, he directeth also the Ruler to rule with diligence: and who is that Ruler in the Church, but the ruling Elder? of whom the Apostle saith to *Timothy*, *The Elders that rule well are worthy of double honour*, 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. But, as the wisdom of man is ennty to God; so

the wisdome and wit of man hath found out many inventions and exceptions again every Scripture that holdeth forth this Ordinance.

“*Object. 1.* The Elders the Apostle here speaketh of, may be rulers in the family, as Parents are rulers to children, husbands to wives, Masters to servants.

*Answ.* The Church and family are two distinct bodies: the Apostle speaketh here not of the members of the families, (as such) nor of the functions and duties of family-members, but of the family of the Church, and of their functions and duties one towards another: His words are plain, (*vers. 4, 5.*) *As we* (saith he) *have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office; so we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.* One body in Christ is not one family (in Scripture phrase) but one Church; and of this body of the Church, the members they be, whom *Paul* directeth to the due dispensing of their severall functions and gifts; namely the publike officers of the Church, (Teachers, Pastors, Deacons and Elders,) to attend upon their proper work, teaching, exhausting, giving, ruling, *vers. 6, 7, 8.* and all the rest of the members to walk in such duties of love and purenesse, brotherly kindness and modesty, diligence and fervency, &c. as are requisite for every Christian, *vers. 9.* to the end of the *Chapter.*

“*Object. 2.* But *Paul* speaketh not of lay Elders ruling in the Church, but of Rulers.

*Answ.* Neither do we acknowledge ruling Elders in the Church to be lay Elders properly; for to say nothing of the distinction between the Clergie and Laity, which is of a later edition then Apostolique times, the ruling Elders being ordained to the Office by the election of the people, and imposition of hands (as well as the preaching Elders) they are no more lay men, or private Christians, then the Teachers or Pastors are lay Ministers; and though the Pastor & Teacher be either of them Church-rulers, yet the Ruler is here distinguished from them, as a distinct member attending to his action of rule as his proper function. “*Object.*

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“*Object. 3.* *Paul* speaketh of severall gifts, not of publike offices in the Churches, for he speaketh of the severall powers and action of all the members of the body of Christ; now the officers of the Church, they alone are not the body of Christ, but all the multitude of believers; which of all these gifts in those times, was not common, as well to the people as to the Ministers, and to women as well as to men?”

*Answ.* 1. *Paul* speaketh as well of publike officers as of particular gifts, as hath been shewed by three reasons above, out of the words of the Text. It is true indeed, hee speaketh of particular gifts also, not peculiar to any office, but common to all believers, from *verse* 9. to the end; but gifts are not the members of the body of Christ, but the persons indued with those spiritual gifts; neither can it be said, that all the members of the Church have all these gits without manifest contradiction to the words of the Text, for then all the members had the same power to do all of them the same actions, which the Apostle expressly denieth, *vers.* 4. all the members (saith he) have not the same action, which is translated office; whence it is, that when hee speaketh of different offices, he divideth them by particles of partition, [GREEK], *vers.* 7, 8. and he injoyneth each office to attend his own function, but when he cometh to speak of the private members, and of the gifts common to them all, he neither maketh any partition of them into severall sorts, nor bindeth then, to attendance on the imployment or exercise of any speciall gift, as he doth the former.

But that as every truth, so every ordinance of God may be confirmed, by two or three witnesses; there be other Texts of Scriptures which bear witness to,

For ruling Elders, in *1 Cor.* 12. 28. the Apostle telleth the *Corinthians*, that God hath set in his Church severall members: as first Apostles; secondly Prophets; thirdly Teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Where government is expressly reckoned amongst these offices, which God hath set in his Church for the government thereof, long before it enjoyed civill Magistracy, and therefore he meaneth spirituall government, or Church rulers.

*Object.* 1. But these governments are spirituall gifts, not spirituall offices or admistration.

*Answ.*

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*Answ.* That they were gifts we willingly acknowledge, because all the offices and officers of the Church were given to the Church as well as the spirituall gifts and graces, whereby they do execute those offices; for so saith the Apostle, When Christ ascended up on high, hee gave gifts to men.

What gifts? some to be Apostles, some Prophets, some Euangelists, some Pastors, and Teachers, *Eph.* 4. 8, 11. but yet governments, and all

the rest there mentioned are spirituall offices, as well as spirituall gifts, as will appeare from the context; for the Apostle in this Chapter, putteth a manifest difference between spirituall,

1. Gifts and Graces, [GREEK], making he holy Ghost the giver of them, *vers.* 6.

2. Administrations, or Ministers or Officers, [GREEK] making the Lord Jesus the giver and institutor of them, *vers.* 5. as he doth also, *Ephes.* 4. 8, 11.

3. Operations, efficacies, or successes of their administrations, making the Father (the foundation of all power) the giver of them, *vers.* 6.

Now having spoken of the end for which spirituall gifts a given, *vers.* 7. hee reckoneth up nine of those severall spirituall gifts, *vers.* 8, 9, 10. hee declareth them to be given to severall members of the Church (not all to any one) that so every member might stand in need of the help and gifts one of another, and thus having discoursed of the variety of spirituall gifts and their use, he cometh in *vers.* 28. to 31. to declare the variety of spirituall administrations (that is, Ministeries or offices) which God hath set in his Church, and reckoneth up eight. First Apostles, secondarily Prophets, under whom your Euangelists are comprehended, as being of equall rank with them: thirdly Teachers, under whom he includeth Pastors also, the office of both whom, was to teach or praise in the Church; after that miracles, as the word in the originall is, powers, to wit, to cast out Devils, or to do the like works; then gifts of healing, helps, (opitulations) that is, Deacons, governments (who else can they be but governing Elders for we heare of teaching Elders before;) lastly, the gifts of tongues, true it is indeed, the Apostle reckoned up three of these before for spirituall gifts, [GREEK] *vers.* 9, 10. Miracles, or powers, gifts of healing, kinds of tongues; but here he reckoneth

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them, not as spirituall gifts, and graces, for that were a tautology, and unsuitable to the method of his discourse, but speaketh of them as severall functions or offices, wherein these gifts were exercised.

“*Object.* 2. But if these Governments were Officers or functions, they were extraordinary, and so are now ceased, as gifts of tongues, and healing, and miracles be.

*Answ.* Not so, for no offices are ceased, but such as had their chiefe use, not for beleivers in the Church, but unbeleivers out of the Church;

but governments are of perpetuall necessary use in the Church, even as teachers and helpers, unlesse we shall lay that Anarchy were fitter for a settled Church-government.

*Object.* But why may not these Governours be the Pastors in the Church, who have received an ordinary power of Government in the Church?

*Answ.* The order in which the Apostle reckoneth these governments, will not suffer that; for here the Apostle reckoneth five severall ranks, the former expressly precedent in order before the other; *God* (saith he) *hath set in his Church*; First, *Apostles*; secondly, *Prophets*; thirdly, *Teachers*; after that *Miracles*, which is a fourth ranke; then in the fift place, *gifts of healing, and helps, governments, diversities of tongues*. Now if by *Government*, had been meant *Pastors*, he would not have reckoned them in a lower order; so farre after *Teachers*, seeing they are of the same rank with them.

*Object.* Why, but here helps or Deacons are set before Governments; which argueth the Apostle did not regard to rank them in due order.

*Answ.* It is evident by the words of order, which the Apostle useth, that he intendeth to reckon the foure first sorts in their due order, and the fift sort of them all in a latter order after the former, though in a promiscuous manner, without respect of order amongst themselves; for so he saith; First, *Apostles*; secondarily, *Prophets* thirdly, *Teachers*; after them *Miracles*; then *gifts of healing, helps, Governments, diversitie of tongues*. As *Apostles* are before *Prophets*, so are *Prophets* before *ordinary teachers, the teachers* before *workers of Miracles, the Miracles* before them that have the *gifts of healing*; for the *gifts of healing* follow after *works of miracles*, with a note of order, *Then*. But all those last foure, *gifts of healing, helps, Governments, diversities of tongues*, are reckoned without respect of

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order amongst themselves. What order is due to them, is not expressed in this scripture, though it be in some other, (at least for some of them) but cleare it it, all these last foure sorts, are reckoned in order after the first foure sorts.

*Object.* 4. But it may be the Church, in which the Apostle saith all their members are set, is not meant every particular Church, but the Catholick Church; for every particular Church had not Apostles and Prophets.

*Answ.* It is true, every particular Church had not severall Apostles, apart by themselves, nor was it needfull they should, after that Churches were once planted, but every particular Church had need of his own Governours within it selfe, or else we shall make one Church subordinate to the Government of another, which is incompatible to the Church of the new Testament. The Lord having instituted and ordained, no particular Church, but the Church of a Congregation for the administration of his Odinance, unto which Congregationall Church he hath also appointed the same sort of Officers, without preferment of one before another.

“*Object.* For humane wisdome is pregnant and full of objections and execptions against the ways and Ordinances of God, may be, say some, these Governours are no other but Arbitrators, which the Apostle biddeth the *Corinthians* set up in the Church for the deciding of differences amongst brethren, 1 *Cor.* 6. 4. But now since God hath set up Christian Magiarates, there is no more need of such Arbiters to be chosen by each Church, to compound their difference.

*Answ.* These Arbiters in the Church had not place or office of Government, but of Counsell onely, to direct brethren in the judgment of right and wrong, equitie and inequitie; nor was such a power of such Arbitration any speciall gift for the Apostle thinketh every member of the Church, even the least capable enough of it, and sufficient for it. Nor is it well said, since God hath set up Christian Magistrates, there need no Arbitrator to be set up in the Church, nor Church Goverours; For it is plaine, the Apostle maketh it a fault or defect in the Church of *Corinth*, that any of their members went to law at all for such suites, as the least member of be Church, (if he were called to heart as the the case)

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might arbitrate and determine and he maketh it a further fault, that *they got to law under Infidels. Now therefore, saith he, there is utterly a fault among you, that brother goeth to law with brother, and that under Infidels, ver. 6, 7.* The former is a defect of brotherly love, the latter is a neglect of the honour of Christ, and of his Church: *and before infidels.* If brother goes to law with brother before Christian Magistrates, the latter of these faults is avoyded, but not the former. Neither may it be thought, as some have done, that the benefit of Christian Magistracy taketh off the necessitie of Church Government: For the government of the Church, is as the Kingdome of Christ is, not of this world, but spiritual and heavenly. The

power of the keys is far distant from the power of the sword, and though one of them may need the helpe of the other, when they goe astray, yet when they are rightly ordered, and administred, the one of them doth not intercept, but establish the execution of the other.

A third witness to the office of ruling Elders in the Church, is that well knowne and much agitated Text in *Timothy*, 1 Tim. 5. 17. *The Elders who rule well, are worthy of double honour; especially they who labour in Word and Doctrine.* This text, though it have been much vext and rackt to looke and speake another way; yet when all is done, it still giveth a cleare and stedfast evidence to this office. The most learned Adversaries of this Ordinance would fasten foure other interpretations of the place, and each of them (as they pretend) more pertinent to the scope and sense of the Apostles words, then this of ruling Elders.

“1. Say they, by ruling Elders may be meant Deacons; for the Apostle giving *Timothy* to understand, what manner of persons they be with whose maintenance the Church is to be charged, having before informed him of widowes, now telleth him the Deacons also are to be maintained, yea, and with a double portion above them, and either the Deacons are not to be maintained at all at the Churches charge, or else the Apostle provideth for their maintenance in this place, of no where.

There is no man to be maintained at the Churches charges, but eicher in respect of his present poverty and necessity, or in respect of his office, which calleth him off from attendance to the maintenance of his private family unto the publike service of

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the Church. In the former case, if it fall out that the Deacons be in necessity, they may be supplied with some maintenance from the Church, as well as any other of the poore brethren; and so, though this Text sayeth nothing concerning them, yet other Scriptures take care for them: for the Deacons, by the very institution of their office, were to take up the function which the Apostles laid downe (as over troublesome, and incompatible to their Ministeriall employment,) now that which they laid down, was the serving of tables, and distributing to every, brother according to his need Acts 6. 2. with. 4. 35. if the their own need require, they may with the Churches allowance, take themselves of that supply which they dispose to others. But in respect of their office, there is little cause they should expect maintenance from the Churches charge;

for their office takes them very little off from attendance to the maintenance of their own family. Seeing by the Ordinance of Christ they spend no time to go in and out to collect monies, but only receive what is brought to them, as an oblation to the Lord, laid down before them every Lords day in the face of the Church, or else what is brought home to their own houses, according to the bills they put in on the Lords day; and look what time they may send in keeping a just accompt of what they lay out, or in visiting any sick or poore brethren, their time and labour spent herein is sufficiently recompenced by the use of the Churches flock, or treasury lying in their hands. Secondly, besides, this Text calleth for maintenance to those Elders in respect of their office of ruling well, but neither are Deacons stiled Elders in any place of Scripture, neither is their office a place of rule, but of service to Tables; so that this Text will by no force be racked to bear this interpretation.

2. Another interpretation is fetched from that which is said to be the Proper and usuall force of the word *κοπιᾶν* which is more then simply to labour, even to weary a mans self with labour, so “that this sense they make of the Apostles words, the Pastors or Elders that discharge their places well, are worthy of double honour, chiefly they which weary themselves with labour and care to teach and admonish.

*Answ.* *Κοπιᾶν* in the Apostles language, doth not note out any Intention or labour in some above others; but simply such pains, in a place somewhat parallel to this, *1 Thes. 5. 12.* Where the Apostle  
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exhorteth the *Thessalonians* to acknowledge their Ministers and Rulers with singular love for their works sake, he calleth all their Ministers *τοὺς κοπιῶντας*, and maketh their *κόπος*, the common work and labour of them all, not any intensive or eminent labour of some above others; and in *Rom. 16. 12.* when the Apostle speaketh of some godly women, that either took pains about him, or about other spirituall work, when hee speaketh of intensive or eminent pains and labour, he addeth another word to *κοπιᾶν*, that may expresse so much but if he speake simply and positively of labour, he useth the word *κοπιᾶν* alone, *Salute* (faith he, *v. 12.*) *Tryphena and Tryphosa, τὰς κοπιώσας ἐν κυρίῳ* which is translated simply, *who labour in the Lord*; but when he speaketh of others, that took more painfull labour, *salute Mary*, vers. 6. (saith he) *ἦτις πολλὰ ἐκοπίασεν εἰς ὑμᾶς*, which bestowed much labour upon us, and *vers. 12. salute the*



*beloved ἥτις πολλὰ ἐκοπίασεν ἐν κυρίῳ*, which is translated *who laboured much in the Lord*; and therefore in this Text in *Timothy*, if we strain not *Pauls* words beyond his wonted meaning, he means no more by Elders οἱ κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλίᾳ, then such who labour in word & doctrine, and then he distinguisheth the Elders that nule well, from the Elders that labour in word & doctrine simply, by their different acts, about different objects, some Elders being conversant about the well ruling of the lies & manners of the people, others being conversant in labours about the word and doctrine.

3. A third interpretation is given of these words, That by Elders ruling well should be meant Pastors, and Teachers such as were resident and abiding in the Church, affixed to the place for the rule of it, and by κοπιῶντας, those that travelled from place to place, to visit and to confirm the Churches. To confirm this sense of κοπιᾶν, the place, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. is quoted, where *Paul* saith of himself, περισσότερον αὐτῶν πάντων ἐκοπίασα, which if he had meant of labour in Word and Doctrine, it might have seemed arragancy in him to profess himself before the rest of the Apostles in that work, and would have imputed some aspersion of negligence to them; but if it be meant of his labour and travel through many countreys and nations, for the spreading of the Gospel, so hee might speak truly, and soberly, that hee had laboured more abundantly then them all: to the same purpose, *Maries* κοπιᾶν, and the labour of *Tryphoena*, *Tryphosa* & *Persis* are alledged out of *Rom.* 16. 6. 12

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as if the first had travelled much for *Paul*; and all of them had laboured in the Lord, in wayes of travell, far and neer, by private perswasions to propagate the Gospell.

*Answ.* This interpretation indeed travelled for, and far fetcht, but such is our nature, willing enough to travel, far and wide, to avoid the authority of an unwelcome truth; how much nearer at hand and fitter were it, to fetch the Apostles meaning from himselfe, and to take the sense of his words here, according to the sense and use of the same words in a like place, 1 *Thes.* 5. 12. where the Apostles κοπιῶντας, are not travellers abroad, but κοπιῶντας ἐν ὑμῖν, labourers amongst you. Their own Pastors, and Teachers, resident with them, and *labourers amongst them.* *Pauls* labouring more abundantly then all the rest of the Apostles, if it

were not in word and doctrine, is impertinently alledged to shew the sense of the word in this place, where he speakes expressly of labouring in word and doctrine: Nor had it been arrogancy in *Paul* to have spoken of his own greater labours, then of his fellow-Apostles in the Ministry of the Gospel, without respect to his travels, for his Ministry was accompanied more then all the rest, with greater afflictions and wrastlings, both within and without, whether hee stayed in any place, or travelled abroad; and he might well think it necessary for him (as indeed the law of righteousnesse and gratitude required it of him) to take the more pains for Christ in preaching of the Gospel after his conversion, who had laboured more busily then all the rest against Christ, and against the Gospel before his conversion; nor is κόπιος, or κοπιῶν an usuall word in that language, to expresse travelling to be more then any other labour either of body or mind.

The κόπιος or labour of *Mary* doth not appear to be in travell up and down with *Paul*, but rather in some diligent hospitality and service unto him; but whether in travell, or in her house, is not at all expressed in the Word: Sure it is *Paul* denieth the taking of a sister or wife up and down in travell, though hee lawfull to have taken a wife, 1 *Cor.* 9. 5. but to have taken sister along, to have travelled up and down the countries with him, well be thought to be far from him, who was ever careful to follow things of good report, and to provide for things honest, not only in the sight of God, but of all men labours of *Tryphena*

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and *Tryphosa*, and *Persis*, do not imply travelling up and downe, but rather their own wrastlings with spirituall conflicts, either in their own hearts, or else with other conflicting Christians in the places where they dwell, to settle them in the peace of the Lord Jesus, according to the same sense of the word, *Matthew* 11. 28.

The 4th and last interpretation of these words in *Timothy* (which we see taketh with the most judicious amongst the adversaries of this Ordinance) is, that here not two sorts of Elders, but two parts of the office of preaching Elders are set forth: The one, good life and good government; and the other, good doctrine and painfulnesse therein; and this latter preferred before the other, as more worthy of due honour and recompence.

Now for answer hereunto, it may be considered, that good government, either of a mans life, or of the people, or as the Apostles words be, *their ruling well*, may either be taken properly and strictly, as rule is distinguished from *ministry* of the Word and Sacraments; or more largely for the whole office of a good Elder, *Bené præesse*, to be a good president. If to *rule well*, be taken in the former sense properly, then it acknowledgeth Elders that attend to *rule*, to be worthy of double honour, without respect to their labour, in the *ministry* of the Word, which is the sense of the place that we build upon c for if it should be said, that the Apostle speaketh of Ministers or Preachers, that they *ruling well, are worthy of double honour*, though they do not labour in Word and Doctrine; the wiser sorts of opposites do discern that would not suite with the Apostles minde, who would be so far from thinking, that *well ruling*, but not *painfull preaching Ministers* should be worthy of double honour, that he would account them worthy of little or no honour at all. And they fitly quote for this purpose, the place before alledged, 1 *The*. 5. 12. where when the Apostle calleth for *singular love, and honour to their overseers, for their works sake*, he putteth in there, *Labouring amongst them* (to wit, in the Word) without w<sup>ch</sup> no such respect were due to them. They therefore take the Apostles words in the latter sense; understanding by *well ruling*, the whole office, even all the duties of good presidents: As if the Apostle had said, the *Elders that rode well*, that is, who are *good rulers*, and presidents, *They are worthy of double honour*; chiefly they who labour in preaching the Word. And they

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“give for example this instance: *Logicians*, who *reason well*, that is, all good *Logicians*, are to be honoured, especially those who *judge well*, or are judicious; where, not two sorts of Logicians are held forth, but two duties or faculties of all Logicians, in respect of which they are to be honoured; the one generall to *reason well*, the other speciall to *judge well*; and these disosed, not in a distribution, but in a comparative sentence, preferring the later before the former.

*Answ.* But neither will this settle stand with the Apostles words and meaning: for hereupon this absurdity would follow, that if *well-ruling* in the former part of the sentence, held forth generally all the duties of good Ministers, and *labouring in word and doctrine*, (in the later part) one speciall part of their office, then the other, good Ministers, for doing

all. Neither doth the instance given of *Logicians* help: for it may be truly said of *Logicians*; that *Logicians* who *reason well*, that is, all good *Logicians*, are worthy of honour, especially they who are judicious, because if they only reason well in invention, though they be not judicious, yet such also are commendable. But its not truly said of Ministers, that if they rule well, that is, do their office well in Discipline and *Rule*, though they *labour not in word and Doctrine*, that they are commendable; but otherwise, if *Logicians*, be good as well in *judgement* as in *invention*, and so perform both the parts of their art well; it may be said indeed, that they are commendable and honourable, but it cannot be said without absurdity, that such as are *judicious* are more commendable, or chiefly to be honoured above those that are both *ingenuous* and *judicious*, both parts are doubtlesse better then either alone: neither will the absurdity be helped by saying *Logicians* that *reason well*, both in *invention* and in *judgement*, are worthy of honour, or double honour, especially they that excel in judgment; for though speech be rationally, yet the like cannot be applied in this Text: for it is not said in the Text, *the Elders that rule well are worthy of double honour, especially they that excel in preaching*, which labour doth not hold forth excellency (as hath been shewed before, but only positively and simply *pains taking*, in preaching, the common act and work of all good Ministers, 1 *Thes.* 5. 12. The issue of all is, that when men of learning and judgement have wearied their wits and strength, to shoulder out *ruling Elders*,

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from this Text, yet such is the evidence and wisdom of the holy Ghost, in the word, that it may well appeare, the weakness of God is stronger then men, and the foolishnesse of God wiser then men; the words cannot but approve two sorts of Elders, and both worthy of double honour, both they that *rule well*, though they labour not in preaching, and especially they that do *labour in preaching*; but this interpretation will by no means satisfie some of a contrary judgement, for three reasons, to speak nothing of the fourth, the pretended probability of other interpretations, which have been refuted already.

“First say they, the Text it self clearly renounceth non-preaching Elders; for both sorts of Elders spoken of, are expressly acknowledged in the Text to be worthy of double honour, that is, not reverence only, but maintenance at the charge of the Church; but that non-preaching Elders

should by God's institution have received maintenance at the Churches hand, is a thing so strange, and unheard of, that untill I see it justly proved, (saith *B. Bilson*) I cannot possibly believe it.

*Answ.* It is very true, the Apostle by double honour, doth not mean reference only, but maintenance; But why should it seem so strange a thing, and unheard of, that ruling Elders, though not Preachers, should partake in maintenance from the Churches treasury do you think such men speake in good earnest, when they so speak? Whence have the Chancellors, Commissaries, and Officialls their maintenance, but from the Church? and do they labour in word and doctrine? are not most of them Civilians? and if we may use the word without offence, meer Lay-men? but our ruling Elders, we utterly deny them to be Lay-men as the word is commonly meant in this controversie; but Church-offiers set apart to their office by the election of the people, and by imposition of hands: but if they were Lay-men (which they are not) yet you see it is no strange or unheard of matter, that Churches should be bountifull to the maintenance of sundry sorts of Church Rulers, who are meerly Lay-men, as their adversaries misconceive these to be; yea, what were the many Cloysters of Munks, and Friers and Nuns, in the times of Popery? were they Preachers of the Word? were they not Lay-men& women? and yet did the Churches of those times grudge them their maintenance upon pretence of

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that laity? But the world will love his own; be there never so many idle Droans, or statey Rulers of man's own devising, the Church must supply them not only with maintenance, but with magnificence; butlet the Lord appoint *ruling Elders*, according to the simplicity of the Gospel, to assist his Ministers in the work of government, that they might attend the more to labour in the Word, if they shall expect from the church any maintenance for their works' sake, Oh! that seemeth a strange matter, and unheard of from all antiquity, till this present age..

“The second Reason why lay Elders, (as they miscall them) *ruling Elders* (as we with *Paul* call then) are not meant; in *Paul's* Text, is because *Paul* mentioning the Presbyters but once in all his Epistles, excludeth all lay Elders from that Presbytery, *Neglect not* (saith he) *the grace which is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the Presbytery*, 2 Timothy 4:14. This Christian Presbytery gave imposition

of hands to ordain Ministers; but lay Elder had no right to impose hands to that purpose; therefore Lay-men were none of this Presbytery; for the Presbytery be taken for the company of Elders, none were of that company but such as might give imposition of hands; or, if Presbytery be taken for the office of an *Elder*, then none might take that function on him, but must receive imposition of hands, as *Timothy* did, then Lay-men which neither give nor receive imposition of hands, are wholly debarred both from the degree, and from the society of the Presbytery, that was in *Paul's* time.

Our answer consisteth of three points:

First, *Lay Elders* we disclaim, but *ruling Elders*, though not attending to preaching, as they have their election from the people who are the body of the Church; so are they ordained & set apart from amongst the people by imposition of hands of the officers of the Church, who are the Presbytery, the company of Elders: for by Presbytery, we conceive cannot be there meant the office of an Elder, for he speaketh of such a Presbytery, as laid on hands: now it is not the office of an Elder, but the company of Elders, that lay on hands.

*Answer 2.* When it is said, no man can give what he hath not received; the light of Nature, the law of *Moses*, the Gospel of

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Christ, do all of them make a ready answer for us. The law of Nature tells us, It is not necessary, that they that give should alwayes *formally* have before-hand received that power which they give; it is enough if they have received it *virtually*: For instance, a multitude of free people may elect and ordain a King over them, and yet none of them had before-hand received kingly power; it is enough they have a virtual power, to set up and to submit unto any lawful form of government, which they see good for themselves in the land. The people of *Israel* (to wit, some in the name of the rest, for all could not at once) impose their hands upon the Levites, *Numbers* 8:10. and yet they were not Levites themselves, nor had received imposition of hands themselves, and yet may nevercheless impose hands upon others. In the Gospel of Christ, the power of the Keys is given to the Church, to *Peter*, not as an Apostle, nor as an Elder, but as a professed believer; in the name of believers, and upon occasion of the profession of his faith, *Matthew* 16:16. to 19. whereupon the binding and loosing (which is the power of the Keys) is attributed to the whole

Church, *Matthew* 18:17,18. If then the power of the Keys which is the whole body of Church-power, be given to the body of the Church, though it be not in their power to exercise their pastoral preaching of the Word, and administering of the Sacraments, yet it is in their power to *elect* such whom God hath furnished with gifts among them unto such offices as may dispense all the holy things of God to them; and by *imposition of hands*, to dedicate them to God, and to the publique service of his Church. Now if the whole Church have this power to impose hands upon their officers, in their first ordination, how can it seem a strange and unheard of thing, or an absurd matter, that *ruling Elders* should together with the *Pastor* and *Teachers*, (all of them making up the *Presbytery* of the Church) impose hands in the name of the Lord, and of the Church upon the ordained?

*Answer* 3. Besides there be that conceive, and that not improbably, that in ancient time, the children baptized in the Church were not received to the Lord's Supper, nor into the full fruition of all Church liberties, untill that they being grown up to yeers, did publicly before the Church profess their faith, and ratify the covenant made for them in Baptism, and so were confirmed (as they

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call it) in their Church-estate, which was not done without *imposition of hands*, which some judicious Divines have conceived to be one cause, why imposition of hands is reckoned as one of the six *Principles of the foundation of Christian Religion*, *Hebr.* 6. 2. For it could not be a principle of the foundation of Christian faith; it must therefore be a principle of the foundation of Church estate and order. Now then, if all the *members* of the Church were anciently confirmed in the full *fruition* of their Church estate by *imposition of hands*, then there were none of the *members* of the Church, but had received *imposition of hands*, much more the *ruling Elders*, who were over and above the former, ordained to their publique office by *imposition of hands*; and so having received *imposition of hands* themselves, they might the more freely impose hands upon others.

3. The third Reason, which moveth the adversaries of ruling Elders to conceive that ruling Ethers are not intended in this Text "of *Timothy*, is, because that many, learned and ancient Divines have debated and sifted the force of these words, and not one of them ever so much as surmised any such thing to be contained in this Text: as *Chrysostome*,

*Jerome, Ambrose, Theophylact*, with others; yea, all Lay-eldership is a stranger to all *Antiquity* for 1500. yeers.

*Answ.* Though with thankfulness and reverence we readily acknowledge and accept the Labours of these ancient Divines, yet we cannot but conceive it to be much partiality, to say they sifted, or which is all one, diligently searched, the force of these words in *Timothy*, and that they never so much as surmised any such thing contained in this Text, as *ruling Elders* for; *Chrysostome* on “this *place*, putting the question, what it is to *rule well*? Answereth him self, in two things: first, in laying down (as a good Shepheard) his life for his sheep: secondly, in sparing none in his government. *Tleophylact* resteth in the former of these; *Jerom* interpreteth *Elders that rule well*, to be Elders who *fulfill their office*; *Ambrose* interpreteth them to be good *Dispensers, and faithfull*. Here is nothing in all these expressions that argueth any diligent sifting of the force of the words, or excludeth such *ruling Elders*, as do attend chiefly to *rule*, not to teaching we look upon it as *deceitfull* and *vain-glorious* flourish, to beare the world in hand, that *Lay Eldership* is a stranger to all *Antiquity* for 1500. yeers;

*deceitful,*

*deceitful*, for they know we disclaim *Lay Eldership*, (properly so called) as themselves do; yea more then themselves, who do prefer *Lay Elders* to the highest places of Judicature its the Church, next to the Bishops: For though some of the Brethren plead for *Lay Elders*, and bring proofs for them, both from Scripture, and out of Aniquity, yet herein they rather speak after the language of their opposites, then according to their own choice; for they mean no more then *non-peaching Elders*: And in the places which they quote for them out of Antiquity, wherein *Seniors* are sometimes distinguished from *Presbyters*, sometimes from *Clerus*, the words *Presbyters* and *Clerus*, are there taken more strictly then their proper and usual meaning will bear, to wit, for *Preaching Presbyters* otherwise *Seniors* cannot be distinguished from *Presbyters*, in propriety of speech the one signifying the same in Latine, which the other cloth in Greeke: nor can they be distinguished from *Clerus*, but by a *καταχρησις*. It is also a *vain-glorious* flourish to avouch *Ruling Elders* strangers to all Antiquity, for 1500 yeeres for, 1. If that were true, yet it will not evince *Ruling Elders* to be no ordinance of God, though so long ditontinued: The keeping the feast of Tabernacles in booths, was neglected of the



Church of *Israel* many hundred years; to wit, during the greatest part of the *Assyrian Monarchy*, and also the whole time of the *Babylonian Monarchy*, yea toward the end of the *Persian Monarchy*, Nehemiah 8:17. The long disuse of an ordinance of God, doth not make it of none effect; though a contrary custom may be of force to abrogate an human Law. 2. It was revealed to the Apostle *John*, that for the space of 1260 years, (which whensoever they began, took up the greatest part of these 1500.) *Antichrist* bore such sway in the Church, that *he trod under foot the Court and the holy City* all that while, *Revelation* 11:2,3. And then when *Antichrist* had all the power in his owns hands, no marvel if he took away all power from the *Rulers*, which Christ did ordain in his Church, especially such *Rulers*, who whilst they stood, neither his *Rule*, nor the Image of it, could enter or stand. For set up *Ruling Elders* in every Congregation to transact (together with the preaching Elders ) all Church government within the *Congregation*, and what use will there be of *preferments*, of Officers of *Cathedral* and *Diocesan* Churches abroad? And for the former part of this 1500 years

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(which is but a small remnant in comparison) 300 years were spent in the Primitive persecutions, whereof we have few monuments of Antiquity extant, written in that time; those we have “speak so of *Elders*, as do indifferently comprise as well *Ruling Elders*, as *Teaching Elders*; *Ignatius* his *Presbyters*, whom he styleth the *Court of God*, the *Combination of the Apostles of Christ*, the *holy Assembly*, and *Counsellors* and *Assessors* of the *Bishops*; with all these Epithets may as well agree to *Ruling Elders*, as to *Preachers*: The *Scripture* doth not disdain to admit Civil Magistrates into the fellowship of God’s Tabernacle, *Psalms* 82:1. And why not then the *Rulers* of his Church? For *Tertullian* his *Elders*, who were *Presidents over the Censures of the Church*, and attained that *honour*, not by Bribes, but by *approved Testimony*, *Apologetic. Chap. 29*. what is there in his whole description of them, but is compatible to *Ruling Elders*, as well as to *Preaching*? Yea *Cyprian* (who lived in those ancient bloody, but zealous times) doth expressly acknowledge *Elders* that were not *Preachers*: For it evidently appeareth in the fift Epistle of his fourth Book, that he ordained *Calinus* and *Ancellus* to be *Presbyters* of his Church, who were no *Preachers* but *readers* only; and yet were to be maintained *Sportulis communibus*, (that is, at the common charge of the Church) with the

*Presbyters*, and to sit with himself in their grown years. It appeareth also in the tenth Epistle of his fourth Book, That he ordained *Numiditus* a Confessor, to be a *Presbyter* of his Church, who was not at first called to be a Preacher. *Ambrose*, though he out-lived those times of purer government, yet beareth full witness to the honorable use of *Ruling Elders* in the Church before his time; for in his Comment on 1 Timothy 15:1. giving a reason why the Apostle would have *Elders* in years honoured, even in the healing of their faults, he urgeth the honour of old age in all Nations. Whence saith he, it was that the Synagogue, and afterwards the Church had *Elders*, without whose Counsel nothing was done in the Church: which by what negligence is grown out of use in the Church, I know not, unless by the sloth of Teachers, or rather pride, whilst they only would seem to be somewhat. Against this testimony, because it is pregnant, sundry exceptions (or rather evasions) are taken. As 1. That the Author of this Testimony was not that *ancient Ambrose*, the famous Bishop of Milan, but some other later of that name

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*Answer.* And what though? yet all men acknowledge this other *Ambrose*, whose Testimony this is, to be an ancient learned Writer, and therefore his Testimony of the Antiquity of *Ruling Elders*, is sufficient to silence that charge and brave flourish, that *Ruling Elders are utterly unknown, and unheard of from all Antiquity for 1500. years.* A second Exception they give, is that *Ambrose* speaketh not of *Elders* in Office, but in years, without whose Counsel, not without whose authority nothing was done in the Church.

*Answer* 1. It is evident he speaketh of the *Elders* in the Church, as in the *Synagogue*; now the *Elders* were *Rulers* in the *Synagogues*, as appeareth by sundry places in the Gospel. 2. That *nothing was done without their counsel*, implyeth, that *nothing was done without their authority*, as the same phrase of other Ancients imply, when they speak of the concurrence of the Counsel of *Presbyters* in Church-government; for in that sense speaketh *Cyprian* to his *Presbyters*, (*Epistolarum lib. 3. Epist. 10.*) *A primordio Episcopitus mei, I determined with myself, nihil sine consilio vestro & sine consensu plebes meâ privatim sententiâ gerere*, that not out of courtesy, but as the words in the next sentence implies, *Sicuti honor mutuus poseit.* And in the same sense *Jerome's* words to the like purpose implies *Authority* in such Counsels, whereby the *Presbyters* of each

Church governed their own Church; though otherwise in governing other Churches, they imply rather *advice* than *authority*: his words are *before factions and schisms grew in the Church Communi Presbyterorum consilio Ecclesia gubernabantur Hierome* in the 2. Tome of his works, and upon *Titus*. A third exception they give is, that by *Elders* are meant *preaching Elders*, whom the Bishop were wont to consult withall, in government, but now had left it off, either by the idleness of the learned Teachers, who for their own ease gave over meddling with matters pertaining to government, or by the pride of the learned Bishops, who took all upon themselves, that they alone might seem to be somewhat; For if you expound *Pastorum* for the *Teachers* or *Pastors* of Parishes only, as the Presbyterians do; or for *Bishops* alone, as others do; I cannot see (saith Dr *Downham*) how the excluding of *Seniors* and taking the whole burthen and employment upon themselves, could by *Ambrose* be imputed as a matter of sloth and idleness, either in the *Pastor* to exclude *lay Elders*, or in *Bishops* to exclude

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“learned Presbyters. *Ans.* 1. The words of *Ambrose* do plainly imply, not only that *consulting with Elders* was grown out of use, but that the *Elders* themselves, who were wont to be consulted with, were grown out of use also: for his words be, *the Synagogue, and afterwards the Church had Elders, without whose counsel nothing was done in the Church, &c.* which plainly intimateth, the Church formerly had such, but then hath them not, they are obsolete, and accordingly consulting with them is obsolete also. 2. It is plain these *Elders* are, opposite to *Doctors* or *Teachers*, or (if you will so construe them) learned men, and therefore these *Elders* were neither *Doctors* nor *Teachers*, nor Learned men. But to appropriate the name of *Doctors* or *Teachers*, or *Learned men* to *Bishops* only, were too great an arrogancy in *Bishops*, and too great an injury to the *learned Pastors and Teachers* in every age, till *Antichrist* his darkness overwhelmed all in ignorance, as well *Bishops* as *Pastors*. 3. It may be marvelled, why those learned opposites, that make this exception should understand *Ambrose* to attribute it to the idleness of the Teachers, that for their own case they gave over meddling in matters appertaining to government, when as rather it was the *Bishops* and their parties idleness, that they gave over labouring

in Word and Doctrine, and their pride, that they ingrossed all rule and government into their own hands; and therefore, when they say, they cannot see how the excluding of *Seniors*, and the taking of the whole burthen of government upon themselves, could by *Ambrose* be imputed as a matter of sloth and idleness, either in the *Pastors* or *Bishops*; surely, if men do not willingly shut their eyes, they may see and, daily experience maketh it palpably evident, that they who are most idle in teaching, are most busy and proud in government; so that the *Doctorum desidia, aut magi superbia*, which *Ambrose* maketh to be the two causes why *Seniors* in the Church, and consulting with them, were then both of them grown out of use, need no Comment to expound the same, but the perpetual practice of those persons, who have from the former ages, to this very day, usurped all Church-government into their own hands.

If any man say (as some have done) that whatsoever this *Ambrose* saith, yet that famous Bishop *Ambrose* doth utterly disclaim it, in his Epistle to *Valentinian*, that any *lay Ruler should be Judge of*  
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*Church-offices and causes*; let him take for an answer that which hath been often given; that we utterly deny those *ruling Elders* to be *Lay-men*, or *lay Judges*, but part of that Church body which those ancient times called *Clerus*.

If it be said again (as also it is) that *Ambrose* calleth his *Presbyters*, *Antistites*, and Vicars of God, and such like full of high honour, let them understand, that the least office of rule in the Church of God, (to a spiritual eye) will easily and safely admit as great acknowledgements as these be; onely to flesh and blood nothing seemeth divine and high but secular pomp and worldly glory.

Having thus rescued the Testimony of *Ambrose* unto *Ruling Elders* from all Exceptions (of any colourable weight) made against it; Let us add only one observation out of Antiquity, which may give some further light to the cause in hand. It is well known to all such as are studious of Antiquity, that it was counted a rare and insolent matter for an Elder to preach in the presence of a Bishop, which was the cause why the good old Bishop *Valerius* was

hardly spoken of, for suffering *Augustine*, a Presbyter (though a learned *Presbyter*) to preach before him; which is said never any *African* Bishop had allowed before him. Now whence should such an offence as was taken against *Valerius* arise, but from translating the silence of *Ruling Elders* from Preaching in the presence of *Pastors* and *Teachers*, unto those *Presbyters* also, who were called oft to preach the Word freely and diligently as well as the Bishop themselves? But when through corruption of times, Bishops claimed to themselves the principal *pastoral* cure of Souls, then it was taken for an offensive matter, that *Teaching Elders* should preach before them; as before it was unwonted for *Ruling Elders* to preach before the *Teaching* ordinarily.

*Object.* But there remains one objection or two; which some learned and prudent men have made against the office of *Ruling Elders*,

*Object.* 1. It is not credible that the office of *Ruling Elders* should be of Divine or Apostolical Institution, and no footsteps left of it in any Church of Christ, for these many hundred years. Popery it self, though it corrupted all Ordinances, yet retaineth some footsteps of every Ordinance of Christ, though much perverted

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from the first Institution: But there are no footsteps at all of those *Ruling Elders* extant, in any Church, but those of *Genevah*, and such as have followed their pattern. For though some tell us of *Church-Wardens* and *Vestry men* in the *Parish Churches of England*, who assist the Preachers in the governing of the Church, yet there is a great difference between *them* and *Ruling Elders*; For these *Church-wardens* and *Vestry men*, are appointed not for assistance to the Ministers in governing the Church, but for other purposes: As *Church-Wardens* for keeping the Churches stock, and laying it out upon necessary repairs of the place of God's Worship, (called the Church) and the *Vestry* being a company of the wisest and richest Parishioners, that have been, or are to be *Church-Wardens*, are exercised in auditing the accompts of the *Church-Wardens* and *Collectors for the poor*. And though now and then they are taken not by *Authority*, as *Rulers*, but by *Christian discretion and charity*.

Answ. *We do not say, that Church-Wardens and Vestry men, are the same with Ruling Elders; for though they are both chose by the body of the Church, yet in the choice, the qualifications of Ruling Elders are not attuded to; nor are they so ordained, either with the like holy Solemnity, or invested with the same measure of spiritual power, nor allowed to continue for life, as Ruling Elders are, and ought to be; But yet such as they be, we may see in them some footsteps and remnants, (and as it were Rudera) of that holy and ancient Ordinance, so much as is escaped out of the ruins of Antichristian Apostacy: For to say nothing of Chancellors, Commissaries, and Officials, (who are mere Lay Elders, and yet administer Church-Government, not in one Church only, but in many scores of Churches,) what other thing soundeth the very name of Church-Wardens, Guardiani Ecclesiæ, but Church-Guardians, or Church-Rulers? And what is the company of Vestry men, but a kind of Consistory?*

Secondly, Though by the Sophistry of Satan and of his Vicar (the man of sin) a great part of this care is transformed from ordering the *spiritual body of the Church*, to take care of the body of the *material Church* or *Temple*, yet what power of Government is left in any Congregation (besides Preaching the Word) the

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*Church-Wardens and Vestry men* do assist the *Ministers* in managing the same: they observe all scandalous disorders, that are found in any of the Church-Ministers or people, they admonish the offenders: And though they be over-rulers to present all disorders to the *Cathedral Church* (and the Officers thereof) which of right they should complain of (when the offenders are incorrigible) only to their own Congregation, yet it is an usual thing for the *Bishop*, and his Officers, to return such offenders (having first paid them their fees) to the *Minister*, and *Church-Wardens*, to make acknowledgement of their offences before them, and to profess their amendment, of which also they must bring a *Certificate* under the *Minister* and *Church-Wardens* hands. Yea, (of our knowledge) there be some peculiar priviledged Churches in *England*, exempted from the jurisdiction of the *Bishop*, and his Officers, where the *Church-Wardens*, and *Ministers*, either by them-

selves, or with the consent of the Congregation, do transact all that Government, which in other Churches the *Bishop* and his *Officers* do invade and usurp as to admonish offenders, to enjoin acknowledgement of scandalous offences, and to debar from the Sacraments, &c. And by this means they repress idleness, drunkenness, swearing, Sabbath-breaking, and the like disorders, with better success then other Towns can do; who have the help of Major and Justices, but not so much spiritual power in the Church: but by that power which is still left in some Churches unto their *Ministers* and *Guardians*, (or *Rulers*) it may not obscurely appear, that anciently they did enjoy it amongst themselves, before one Church began to Lord it over another.

*Object.* The other Objection which is made against *Ruling Elders* is, That it is a matter of perilous consequence to let up *Rulers* in the Church, and that by Authority from the Word of God, when yet the Word hath no where set forth the limits and bounds of their Authority.

*Answ.* The word of God hath clearly enough limited the bounds of a *Ruling Elders* Calling, and the work of his Rule: For since all *Ecclesiastical power*, is the power of the *keys*; (not of the Sword, *Matth.* 16. 19.) And, the *Kingdom of Christ is not of this world*, *Joh.* 18. 36. It is plain, no Church-Governor may take up the *power of the sword*, to wit, *Civil Jurisdiction*, without

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usurpation; The power of the sword is *Princely, Lordly*; But the power of the *Keys* is only *Stewardly* and *Ministerial*; For so it is said, the *keys of the House of David to Eliakim*, *Isa.* 22. 22. And, *he was over the House*, *Ver.* 15. Which phrase of *being over the House*, is translated properly, *Gen.* 43. 19. *Steward of the House*, Seeing then the Kingdom of Christ is *spiritual*, and not *worldly*, the *Government* of his Kingdom is not *Lordly*, but *Stewardly* and *Ministerial*, evident it is that these *Ruling Elders* in the Church, may only attend to works of spiritual and *ministerial Rule*: And further, because such acts of *spiritual Rule*, as are dispensed in the *preaching of the Word*, the *Ruling Elders* are not called to attend unto, but that work is left unto *Pastors* and *Teachers*; Therefore plain it is, that what acts soever of *spiritual Rule*

and *Government*, Christ hath committed to his Church over and above the *Ministry of the Word and Sacrament*: All such acts of *Rule* are committed to the *Ruling Elders*, and none but such.

To Instance then in the particular duties of the *Ruling Elders* Office: The *Ruling Elders* having received the keys of Christs House, as his *Stewards*; it doth belong to their Power.

1. To *open and shut the doors of Christs House or Church*; that is, to admit and receive all members and Officers into place in the Church, (with the consent of the Church) and to keep out the unworthy: Hence Ministers are said to be ordained and admitted into office by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. And if Ministers be admitted through their hands into office in the Church, how much more private members after due trial.

2. If they have power to open the doors of the Church, by admitting officers and other members into the Church, and keeping out the unworthy, (shutting the doors against them) Then they have also power (with the consent of the Church, and their fellow-*Elders*, as in the former) to cast out of the Church by Excommunication such as fall into scandalous offences within the Church, and do persist therein; For *Ejusdem potestatis est destituere cujus est instituere*, The same keys that have power to open the doors, have power to shut it.

3. As it is the office of a *Steward* in a family, so it is of the *Elders* in the Church, To see that none live Inordinately, without a calling,

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ling, or idly in a calling, but every one employed and set a work to his Lords advantage, 2 *The.* 3. 10, 11, 12.

4. As a *Steward* in the family is not to suffer any members in the family to hinder his fellows in his Lords work, so neither ought the *Ruling Eider* to suffer any to walk scandalously in the Congregation; for that hindereth edification, which is the work that each one in his place is to set forward in the house of God: And the Church-Rulers are to attend to see it done accordingly.

5. It is the *Ruling Elders* office to prepare matters for the Congregation, as much as may be, to prevent their trouble, by keeping



out such complaints, and other matters, as are not yet ripe for the Churches cognizance; And by ordering such things as are to be presented to them; *Paul* consulteth with the *Elders* as well as with the *Apostles* at *Jerusalem*, before he presented himself to the agitation of the Church, *Act. 21. 18. to 24.*

6. It belongeth to the *Ruling Elders* (as well as to the *Teachers*) to moderate the carriage of all matters in the Congregation Assembled, as to call on Strangers of other Churches or members to speak upon occasion, *Act. 13. 15.* And such as may call men forth to speak, may call for silence when speech is unseasonable.

7. Those *Elders* of *Ephesus*, whom *Paul* sent for, to wit, both the *Teaching* and *Ruling Elders*, (*Acts 20. 17.*) those he commands to feed the flock of God, *ver. 28.* which implieth they should be able, not only to rule, but to instruct the people, though not by attending to a word of *Exhortation*, (which is the *Pastors* office) nor by attending to a word of *doctrine*, (which is the *Teachers* office) yet by attending to a word of *Admonition*; For the *Apostle* maketh *Admonition* the work of them that are *over the Church in the Lord*, *1 Thes. 5. 12.* that is, that Rule over them. The same word which is ascribed to *Ruling Elders*, (*1 Tim. 5. 17.*) whom he joineth with those that labour in word and doctrine in both places. And indeed Rule without counsel and instruction is dumb. Thus all *Elders* are apt to teach, according to a *1 Tim. 3. 5.*

8. It is a part of their office (though it be not theirs alone) to visit the sick, (especially when they are sent for) and together with some counsel and admonition to pray for them, and to help forward their spiritual estate as *John 5. 14, 15, 16.*

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We have been the more large, in clearing the several sorts of these *Elders*, which *Christ* hath ordained in his Church, because we find *Satan* hath been very busy to let the wits of men awork, both to confound the several Functions of the *Pastor* and *Teacher*, and utterly to abandon the office of a *Ruling Elder*.

Now for *Deacons*, which are the other ordinary Officers, ordained by *Christ* for the perpetual service of the Church: All men do acknowledge them both to be Instituted expressly in the Scriptures, (*Acts 6. 2. to 6. 1 Tim. 3.8. to 13.*) and continued in the

Church throughout all ages, though not without sundry mixtures of corruptions in the practise of the Church, which is impertinent to our purpose to prosecute, who only intend to declare and clear our own practise and proceedings.

*Deacons* therefore we reserve in our Churches, but without distinction of pre-eminence of some of them above others: much less over the Ministers and *Elders*: Neither do we employ them about the Ministry of the Word, nor about the Government of the Church; For the Apostles thought themselves unmeet, both to attend to the Ministry of the Word, and to prayer, and to serve Tables also; And therefore the work which the Apostles laid down, and which the *Deacons* were elected and ordained to take up, was the serving of Tables, *Act. 6. 2.* to wit, the serving of all those Tables which pertained to the Church to provide for, which are, the Lords Table, the Tables of the Ministers (or *Elders*) of the Church, and the Tables of the poor Brethren whether of their own body, or strangers; for the maintaining whereof, we do not appoint them to go up and down to collect the Benevolences of abler Brethren, but as the Apostles received the oblations of the Brethren, brought and laid down at their feet, (*Acts 4. 35.*) and thereby made distribution as the  $\chi\pi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$  use of the Church required; so the *Deacons* being ordained to take up and execute that part of the office which the Apostles laid down; they receive the Oblations of the Brethren every Lords day, brought unto them and laid down before them, or else brought unto them on the week day, and distribute the same, as the use and need of the Church doth require.

SECT. III

SECT. III.

AS for *Widows*, whom *Paul* speaketh of, as *Servants to the Church*, (*2 Tim. 5. 9, 10.*) we look at them as fit Assistants to the *Deacons*, in ministering to the sick poor Brethren in sundry needful seivices, which are not so fit for men to put their hands unto: only we find it somewhat rare to find a woman of so great an age (as the Apostle describeth, to wit, of threescore years)

and withal, to be so hearty, and healthy, and strong, as to be fit to undertake such a service.

#### SECT. IV.

HAVING thus declared what are the Officers we desire to supply each of our Churches withal, we come now to declare in what manner they are Chosen and Ordained into their Offices.

When therefore any of the Churches are destitute of any of these Officers, the Brethren of the Church (according to the Apostles advice, in defect of *Deacons*, and so in defect of all other Officers) *they look out from amongst themselves*, such persons as are in some measure qualified according to the direction of the Word; *Elders* according to 1 *Tim.* 3. 2. to 7. *Tit.* 1. 6. to 9. *Deacons* according to *Acts* 6. 3. 1 *Tim.* 3. 8. to 12. For the Church hath not *absolute* power to choose whom they list, but *ministerial* power only, to choose whom Christ hath chosen, hath gifted and fitted for them. If the Church can find out none such in there own body, they send to any other Church for fit supply, and each Church lookth at it as their duty to be mutually helpful one to another, in yielding what supply they may, without too much prejudice to themselves, according to *Cant.* 8. 8, 9. Such being recommended to them for such a work they take some time of trial of them, partly by their own observation and communion with them, partly by consultation with the *Elders* of other Churches (continuing there) in so great a work; to fulfil the command of the Apostle *Lay hands suddenly on no man*, 1 *Tim.* 3.22. For every man of good gifts is not always endowed with an honest and good

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heart; every good heart is not fitted to close (so fully as were meet) with every good people: Every key is not fit to open every Lock; nor every good mans gift fit to edify every people: But when upon trial, the Church doth find every mans spirit among them desirous of the fellowship of the man, and his gifts; then they agree amongst themselves upon a certain day, wherein in a solemn manner they intend to Elect him to office amongst themselves.

Of this they give notice to all the near adjoining Churches, whom, and when, and to what office they intend to choose such a man, whom they nominate to them, intreating their presence, and brotherly counsel, and assistance at the day appointed: They give notice also thereof unto the Governor, and such other of the Magistrates, as are near to them, that the person to be chosen meeting with no just exception from any, may find the greater encouragement and acceptance from all.

When the day is come, it is kept as a day of humiliation, with fasting, praying, and preaching the Word, according to the pattern, *Act. 4. 23. & 13. 1, 2, 3.*

Towards the end of the day, one of the *Elders* of the Church (if they have any) if not, one of the graver Brethren of the Church, (appointed by themselves to order the work of the "day) standeth up and inquireth of the Church, If now after this "solemn seeking of God for his counsel and direction in this "weighty work, they still continue in their purpose, to elect "a one for their own *Pastor*, or *Teacher*, or *Ruling Elder*, whom before they agreed upon; Then having taken their silence for a consent to their purpose, He proceedeth to inquire into the approbation of the rest of the Assembly, not only the Messengers, and Brethren of other Churches present, but of all that stand by; because *an Elder is to be a man of good report of them that are without* (1 *Tim. 3. 7.*) how much more well approved of the Churches "Of Christ? He demandeth therefore of the Churches first, and "then of the rest, whether any of them have known of any evil, "in the man presented before them, either in judgement, or "practice, which might give them just cause to forbear his election? If all keep silence (as usually they do, for if any have any just exception against the man, he is wont to acquaint some or other of the Church with it before the day) he turneth himself to

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the Church again. Now seeing all is clear for their free election of him to such an office, he desireth all the Brethren of that Church, to declare their Election of him with one accord, by lifting up their hands; which being done, he desireth to know of the party chosen, whether he doth accept of that calling, which the Church

hath given him in the name of Christ unto that office? He having expressed his acceptance (upon such grounds, as wherein he hath chiefly seen the hand of God leading him thereunto,) the *Elder*, doth then admonish the Church what duties the Lord requireth of them all in his Word towards him, whom they have thus chosen; And afterwards adviseth him what duties the Lord requireth of him in that place towards the Church; And having taken the acknowledgments of them both, of their mutual duty towards one another; He then with the *Presbytry* of that Church (if they have any, if not two or three others of the gravest Christians amongst the Brethren of that Church, being deputed by the "body) do in the name of the Lord Jesus ordain him unto "that Office, with imposition of hands, calling upon the Lord, "(who hath furnished him with spiritual gifts, and bowed the "hearts of the Church to call him to that office) to accept and "own him therein, to enlarge his heart and spirit, according to all the duties thereof, to breath in all his administrations, and to guide and bless all his going out and coming in before them: And so turning his speech upon the person on whom their hands are imposed, He as the mouth of the *Presbytry*, expresseth their "ordination of him to that office in the name of the Lord Jesus, "and puts a solemn charge upon him to look well to himself, "and to the whole flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made "him an overseer, as one that must give account of all their souls "unto the great Shepherd of the sheep, at the day of his appearing. After this the *Elders* of their Churches present, observing the presence of God, both in the duties of that day performed by the Officer then chosen, and ordained, and in the orderly proceeding of, the Church to his *Election* and *Ordination*, one of them in the name of all the rest, doth give unto him the *right hand of fellowship* in the light of all the Assembly, testifying their Brotherly acceptance of him, and their thankfulness to God for his gracious gift bestowed on him, and doth

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to him in the Lord to fulfil the ministry which he hath received of the Lord.

And, so after public praise given to God by him in the name of the Church, he dissolveth the Assembly with a Blessing.

#### SECT. V.

FOR our calling of *Deacons*, we hold it not necessary to ordain them with like solemnity, of fasting and prayers, as is used in the Ordination of *Elders*; because we do not read the Apostles gave any president thereof in the Ordination of the first *Deacons* at *Jerusalem*, Act. 6. But the Brethren of the Church having looked out among themselves men fitly qualified for that calling, according to the Scriptures formerly mentioned, and having made some proofs of them according to the Rule (1 *Tim.* 3. 10.) the *Elders* with the content of the Church upon some Lords day, or other public holy meeting, do ordain them to the Office, and appoint them over that business, with prayer and imposition of hands.

#### SECT. VI.

**O**bject. Two things are here demanded; First, by what warrant the People choose their Officers?

*Answ.* From the President of the Apostolical Churches. In the choosing of an Apostle, the voices of people went as far as any human Suffrages could go; of an hundred and twenty, they chose two, and presented them before the Lord, and his Apostles. And because an Apostle was immediately to be called of God, out of those two God chose one, *Act.* 1. 15. 23. 26. *Act.* 14. 23. The Apostles are said to have *ordained Elders by lifting up of hands*, (to wit, of the people) as the original word implieth: And the multitude of the Disciples are directed by the Apostles to look out and choose seven *Deacons*, Act. 6. 3. 15.

The practice of succeeding Churches for many years after, is plain from *Cyprians* words, *Lib.* 1. *Epist.* 4. *Plebs maxime potestatem habet vel dignos Sacerdotes eligendi, vel indignos recusandi.*

*Object.* 2. It is also demanded, by what warrant doth a particular Church depute such who are not *Presbyters*, to *lay their hands*

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*upon Presbyters?* Were it not more regular and orderly to repair to some Bishop, to receive *imposition of hands* from him? or as the *Presbyters* in every Church in *Crete*, received *imposition of hands* from *Titus*, who was left in *Crete* with Episcopal Authority for that very end, *Tit. 1. 5?* or rather then take *imposition of hands* from *lay-men* (as they are called) why do not the Churches rather intreat the *Elders* of other Churches to supply the defect of their own *Presbytery*, by the *Presbyters* of other Churches?

*Ans.* The warrant by which each particular Church doth depute some of their own body (though not *Presbyters*) to lay their hands upon those whom they have chosen to be their *Presbyters*, is grounded upon the Power of the keys, which the Lord Jesus Christ (who received all fullness of Power from the Father) hath given to the Church: For the power of the keys, is the power of opening and shutting, binding and loosing, *Matth. 16. 19.* And this is given to the whole Church met together in his name, *Mat. 18. 18. Whatsoever* (saith Christ, speaking of the Church) *ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven:* which is the whole ministerial power of the Keys.

#### SECT. VII.

**O***bject.* 1. THE Church is not the first subject and receptacle of all Ecclesiastical power; For though the Church elect a *Pastor* or other *Elder*, yet the office of a *Pastor* is from Christ, *Eph. 4. 8.* And so is his Authority from Christ also; And if he have neither his Office, nor his Authority from the Church, how can he be ordained by the imposition of the hands of the Church?

*Answ.* 1. Though the *office* of a *Pastor* in general be immediately from Christ, and the authority from him also, yet the *application* of this office, and of this authority to this elect person, is by the Church; and therefore the Church hath sufficient and just warrant, as to elect and call a *Presbyter* unto office, so to ordain him to it, by imposition of hands: They that have Power to elect a

King, have power also to depute some in their name to set the Crown upon his head.

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Answ. 2. As the authority of the *Pastor*, and other *Elders*, is not from the Church, but from Christ; so neither is their Office and Authority from the Bishop, nor from the *Presbytry*, nor from the *Classis of Presbyteries*; If therefore that were a just impediment, why the Church should not lay hands upon their elect *Pastors* or *Elders*, because neither their office, nor their Authority, is from the Church, then neither may the *Bishop*, nor the *Presbytery*, nor the *Classis* lay their hands upon them; because their office and Authority is no more (nor so much) from them, as from the Church; nor by this Argument might the *Apostles* themselves (if they were present) ordain Officers, because neither the *office* nor the *Authority* is from the Apostles, but from *Christ* only. Neither will it follow from hence (as some object) that if the *Elders* received their *ordination from the Church*, then they should execute their office in the *Churches name*, or that then they may be more or less diligent in their office at the *Churches appointment*, or that then the *Church* hath a *Lord-like power over them*, or that then the *Elders* must receive their *errand from the Church*, as an Ambassador doth from him from whom he receiveth his Commission; or that then the *Church*, in defect of all Officers, may perform *all duties of the Officers*, (as to administer Sacraments, and the like.)

None of all these things will follow; For 1. Most of these Objections do strike as much against *impusition of hands* by *Bishops* or *Presbyters*. 2. Though the *Elders* do receive the *application of their office* and of their power by the Church, yet not *from the Church*; or if *from the Church*, *ministerially* only, as instruments unto Christ. So that they cannot choose or ordain *whom* they please, to *what office* they please, but whom they see the *Lord Jesus* hath prepared and fitted for them, and as it were, chosen and ordained to their hands: nor may they *enlarge* or *straighten* the limits of his office whom they do elect or ordain, but as the Lord hath prescribed: nor can they *give him any errand*, but only a *Charge to look to the ministry which he hath received from the Lord*: nor have they any more *Lordly power over him*, then he *over them*,



but both ministerial, as they have received from the Lord: neither may *they administer Sacraments*, in defect of all Officers, because that by appointment from Christ pertaineth only to such as are called by office to preach the Gospel, *Mat. 28. 19, 20.* As for

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*mutual instruction and admission, election and ordination of Officers, opening of the doors of the Church by admission of members, and shutting the same by Church-Censures; these things they may do (if need be) without Officers; yea, and if all their Officers were found culpable, either in heretical Doctrine, or scandalous crime, yet the Church hath lawful Authority to proceed to the censure of them all: For they that as a Church might admonish Archippus, (Col. 4. 7.) might (in case he had not hearkened to their admonition) have proceed against him to Excommunication; And they that might so proceed against one of their Officers, might in like sort (upon like ground) proceed against them all, which they could not do if the Church did receive the power of the keys not immediately from Christ, but from the Presbyters: And yet in such cases our Churches are never wont to proceed, but in the presence, and with the consent and approbation of other Churches; as knowing that in such weighty cases, in the multitude of Counsellors there is safety: And as the Church doth not choose any Elders, but in the presence, and with the approbation of other Churches; so neither doth it proceed to the censure of them, but with the like grave and solemn hindrance.*

*Object. 2.* The Apostles receive the power of the keys *immediately* from Christ, *Joh. 20. 23.* And therefore the Church received it from the Apostles, and the Officers of the Churches from them also, and not from the Church.

*Answ.* It is true, the Apostles being extraordinary Officers, as they were *immediately* called and chosen of Christ, not by the Church; so they were most of them ordained by Christ, and not by the Church; And yet not all of them neither: For *Paul* and *Barnabas*, though *chosen* to the Apostolical office *immedistely from God*, yet they were *ordained* to that office by the *imposition of hands*, of some officers, or members of the Church, *Act. 13. 2, 3.* But that hindereth not, but as the *Apostles* received their power immediately

from Christ, so did the *Church* receive their power immediately from Christ also; For he that said to the Apostles, *Whose sins ye retain, thy are retained; whose sins ye remit, they are remitted,* (Joh. 20. 23.) He also said to the Church, *Whatsoever ye bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven,* Mat. 18. 18. which is a Commission of the same power, and to the same effect.

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If then the *Church* have received, as well as the *Apostles*, the same Commission of *Church-Power*, (so far as it is of perpetual use) that though the Church then presented their Officers chosen by them, to receive *Ordination* from the *Apostles*, yet when the *Apostles* are ceased, and no other successors left in their room, from whom their Officers might receive ordination, but from the *Presbytry* of their own Church, then where such a *Presbytry* is yet wanting, and their power is now to be executed, the Church hath full power to give ordination to them themselves, by the imposition of their hands.

#### SECT. VIII.

**O**bject. When the *Apostles* ceased, *Bishops* were left as successors in their room; As *Timothy* in *Ephesus*, and *Titus* in *Crete*, to ordain *Elders* in every Church, Tit. 1. 5.

Ans. *Timothy* and *Titus* were not left to ordain *Elders* as *Bishops*, but as *Evangelists*, whose office was alike extraordinary in the Church, as that of *Apostles* and *Prophets*, (Eph. 4. 11.) Theirs work being to follow the *Apostles*, and so set forward the work which the *Apostles* had begun, whereto the *Apostles* called them forth, and directed them; And not to keep settled residence in any one Church, as *Elders* do, or in any one Nation of Churches, as *Bishops* do: *Timothy* is expressly commanded to do the work of an *Evangelist*, 2 Tim. 4. 5. And *Titus* was not ordained a *Bishop* at *Crete*, but left in *Crete*, as having travelled up and down with *Paul*, Gal. 2. 3. and coming to *Crete* was left to direct the *Cretian* believers in their Church-affairs, after *Pauls* departure: afterwards he departed to *Dalmatia*, 2 Tim 4. 10. Sometimes *Paul* appointed

him to meet him at *Nicopolis*, Tit. 3. 12. Sometimes he sent him to *Corinth*, 2 Cor. 12. 18. And commends him (as his partner and fellow-helper) to the Church of *Corinth*: And at *Troas*, Paul found no rest in his spirit, because he found not *Titus* his Brother, 2 Cor. 2. 13. And in *Macedonia* he found much comfort, because he found *Titus* there, 2 Cor. 7. 5, 6. Which argueth his calling was not Episcopal to rest in a certain charge, but to travel up and down with the Apostles, or after them, or whither the the Holy Ghost should lead them forth to help forward the work of Christ, and the Apostles.

*Object.*

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*Object.* But in the Subscriptions of the Epistles of Paul to them, *Titus* is called the first ordained Bishop of all the *Cretans*: And *Timothy* the first ordained Bishop of the Church of *Ephesus*.

Ans. The Subscriptions of Pauls Epistles, both those and the rest, are no part of Canonical Scripture, but Apocrypha, nor written by the Apostles themselves, but by some Scribes that copied them out in after ages, as is observed by many learned both Protestants and Papists: In particular this Subscription in the Epistle to *Titus* containeth an apparent mistake; for the Subscription saith, the Epistle was written from *Nicopolis* to *Macedonia*; as if Paul had been at *Nicopolis* when he wrote this Epistle: which conceit in the Scribe sprang from a mistake of Pauls words, Tit. 3. 12. where Paul bids *Titus* be diligent to come to me to *Nicopolis*, for I have determined there to winter; but Paul doth not say, I have determined here to winter, (as if he were there already in *Nicopolis*) but! have determined there to winter, to wit, as intending to go thither for to winter. The Subscription of the Epistle to *Timothy*, styling him the first ordained Bishop of the *Ephesians*, will not stand with the Apostles charge to him in the same Epistle, (2 Tim. 4. 5.) do the work of an Evangelist. For a Bishop was to attend with personal residence upon his charge, Act. 20. 28. But an Evangelist was to travel up and down with the Apostles, or after them; to come and go at their appointment: As Paul there doth command *Timothy* to be diligent to come to him, 2 Tim. 4. 9. 21. Again when Paul addresseth himself to go to *Rome* (from whence this Subscription telleth us this Epistle was written) he intending to pass by *Macedonia*

to Rome, (Act. 19. 21.) besought Timothy to abide still at Ephesus, 1 Tim. 1. 3. *But if Timothy had been the Bishop, ordained of the Ephesians, his duty would have bound him to abide there, and should not have needed Pauls entreaty so to do.*

Besides when *Paul* in that journey came to *Miletus*, he called for the *Elders* of *Ephesus*, Act. 20. 17. whom also he named, *Bishops*; for so the Greek word is, which is translated *overseers*, v. 28. and then *Paul* acknowledged no such singular ordination of any to a *transcendent Episcopacy*, but what was *common* to all the *Elders* of *Ephesus*: But that it may further appear, that it was not the intent of *Paul*, or of the other *Apostles*, to direct the Churches to send the *Elders* whom they have chosen, unto any *Transcendent*

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(or *Diocesan*) *Bishop* for *ordination*, nor left any to like eminent place after *Timothy* and *Titus* to perform that work; Let it be considered, that there is no direction at all in the *Epistles* of *Paul* to *Timothy* and *Titus*, for the Churches election of any *Evangelist*, or of any *Bishop* over many Churches.

For 1. The *Bishops* *Paul* speaketh of in *Timothy*, of whose qualification he giveth direction 1 Tim. 3. 2. to 7. he calleth them all (when he cometh to give order for their maintenance) by the name of *Elders*; some *Ruling Elders*; some *Labouring in the Word and Doctrine*: And in his *Epistle* to *Titus*, the *Elders* which *Paul* left *Titus* to ordain in every *City*, he calleth them *Bishops*, Titus 1. 5. 7. Now of these he appointeth *many Elders*, and *many Bishops* in one *City*, or *Church*; not *many Cities* or *Churches* under, *one Bishop*, Act. 14. 23. *Elders in every City*, Act. 20. 17, 18. *Many Elders* and *Bishops* in the *Church* of *Ephesus*, Phil. 1. 11. *Many Bishops* as well as *many Deacons*, in *one Church* of *Philippi*, and that a poor one too; for *Philippi* was a *Church* in *Macedonia*, Act. 16. 12. And all the *Churches* of *Macedonia* had trial of deep poverty, 2 Cor. 8. 1, 2.

2. In the *Epistles* to *Timothy* and *Titus*, there is no difference at all put, of any one *Bishop* above his fellows, except only the difference of *Ruling* and *Teaching Elders*, 1 Tim. 5. 17. And those as they, are not set over many Churches, so neither are any of them set above his fellows; only the *Preachers* are allowed more reverence

and maintenance then the *Rulers*. If the Holy Ghost had appointed some *singular Bishops* above the rest, of any *transcendent and eminent office*, he would have appointed him also some *eminent and transcendent proper work* of his office: But what shall that be? shall it be *Ordination*, as *Hierome* saith, (speaking of the *Bishops* in his time; *Quid facit Episcopus excepta ordinatione quod Presbyter non facit?*) Why, that is a work of *Rule*; or shall it be *hearing accusations against Elders*, and censuring them accordingly; as *1 Tim.* 5. 19, 20? Why, that is a work of *Rule* also. Now the Apostle acknowledgeth no *Acts of Rule*, nor any *Elders* (or *Bishops*) that do *Rule*, as worthy of *greater honour* then such *Elders* as *labour in Word and Doctrine*, *1 Tim.* 5. 17. It is therefore apparently contradictory to the institutions given by *Paul* in the Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, to set up any eminent or transcendent Bishop in the Church, in

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respect of *Rule*, or exercise of office of more *honour and power*, then pertaineth to *all* the Minsters of the Word. So that evident it is, that neither *Ordination*, nor *Jurisdiction*, (which are both of them Acts of *Rule*) are to be fetched from transcendent Bishops, but pertain indifferently to *all the Presbyters*.

#### SECT. IX.

**O**bject. BUt if no *transcendent* acts of *Jurisdiction* and rule be reserved unto *one Bishop alone* above other Ministers, how cometh it then to pass, that in *Rev.* 2. 3. each *singular Angel* in the Churches of *Asia*, is admonished, and reprov'd alone for all the faults that are found in his Church, whereof he is the Angel? Why should one Angel alone be charged with the guilt of all those faults in the Church, if it were not in his hand alone to redress and punish them?

*Ans.* It is an usual thing with *John* (and found also in other Scriptures) to use the name of Angel not *singularly* for one person, but collectively for a *company*, administering the same work: As the *seven Angels* that sounded the *seven Trumpets*, and the *seven Angels* that poured out the *seven Vials*, were not *seven singular persons*, but *seven companies*, or sorts of persons, performing that service.

And when *David* saith, *the Angel of the Lord pitcheth his Tent about them which fear him*, Psal. 34. 7. He speaketh not of *one Angel alone*, but of many of them; For one alone cannot *pitch* his Tents about all them that fear God. And that *John* in the second and third Chapters of the *Revelation*, did not mean by the Angel of the Church *one singular person*, but the *whole company* of the *Ministers* of the Church (the whole *Presbytry* of persons, more then one) it is evident by his speech unto them, as unto many; The Devil (saith he) shall cast *some of you* into Prison, *Rev. 2. 10. Some of you*,\* which implies *more then one*. And again in *Rev. 2. 24.* speaking unto the Angel of the Church of *Thyatira*, But unto you,\* I say, and unto the rest of *Thyatira*; which argueth that *the Angel* distinguished from the *rest of the Church*, was more then one person; For he saith *unto you* in the plural number.

*Object.* But now, say some; Let it be so then, if such eminent and *transcendent Bishops* (that is, *Diocesan Bishops*) who claim a

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\* Gr. ὑμῖν in the plural.

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*peerless power* in *Ordination* and *Jurisdiction* to themselves alone, have no foot-hold in the Scripture, then let them neither have name, nor place, portion, right, nor memorial in the Christian Churches of the new Testament. But yet nevertheless, the Apostle is clear for a *Presbytery*, and acknowledgeth *imposition of hands* (even upon *Timothy*, how much more upon other *Elders*) by the *Presbytery*, 1 Tim. 4. 14.

*Answ.* We willingly also acknowledge the same, where God hath furnished any Church *with a Presbytery*. To them it pertaineth to *ordain* by *imposition of hands*, any *Elders* or *Deacons* that shall be chosen by office, by the Church comitted to them; But if the Church *want a Presbytery*; for want of *Elders*, they *want a warrant* to repair to the *Presbytry of another Church*, to impose hands upon their elect *Elders*.

Our reasons be;

1. *Reason.* First, *Ordination* by *imposition of hands*, is a work of Church Power, as all men acknowledge: Now as *no Church* hath Power

over another, but all of them stand in Brotherly equality one towards another; so the *Presbytry of one Church*, hath no Power over the *elders* of another. As the *Apostles* having all of them received the same Commission (*Job* 20. 23.) had none of them *power over another*; so the *Churches* having received all of them the same *power of the keys*, (as hath been shewn above) they none of them *have power over another*, and therefore no power of *ordination* of one anothers Officers.

2. *Reason*. As every Church hath *equally received the same power of the keys*,

so they ought they to maintain and stand fast in the same; The *power of the keys* as it is a privilege and liberty purchased to the Church by *the blood of the Lord Jesus*; so at a *less rate it may not be alienated* from the Church. Christ by his death and resurrection hath obtained all power, both in heaven and in earth, *mat.* 28. 18. *Phil.* 2. 8, 9, 10. And look where he hath communicated the same by his Testament, ratified in his blood, there it ought to remain and not to be removed out of their hands, by the hand of man or Angel. Whence it appeared unlawful for any Church of Christ to put over that power which they have received of Christ, out of their own hands, into the hands of the *Presbyters* of other Churches. The *Apostles* having received all of them equal power from Christ,

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Christ, it was not lawful for them by common consent, to have conferred upon *Peter* and *Paul*, *James* and *John*, a transcendent government over them all. If some of the *Apostles* seem to be *pillars*, as is said of *Peter*, *James* and *John*, *Gal.* 2. 9. and so more eminent in gifts then all their brethren, it may put upon their brethren *an expediency*, and sometimes a *necessity* to call upon them for *more counsel*, but not to call them to *more Authority*. In like sort, if a Church in a *City*, and the Officers thereof, be of more eminent *gifts* and *graces*, then a Church in a *village*, it is a just occasion for the Church in the *village*, to listen the more after the *counsel* of the Church in the *City*, but not to submit the more unto their *Authority* in the way of *subjection*. And so it is true, a *Classis* of the *Presbyters* of *many Churches* may excel (in more variety of all abilities) then the *Presbytry* of any *one* Church, yet that only rea-

cheth to make their *counsel* the more weighty and acceptable, but not to invest them with more *rule or more authority*. Thirdly, If a Church shall send to the *Presbyters of another Church for ordination of their Elders*, they may as well repair and *submit to them for censuring of their offenders*; And would not that be a manifest transgression of the royal law of Church-Government, *Matth.* 18. 15, 16, 17, 18. If a Brother see his brother fallen into a scandal, and after dealing with him first himself alone, and then with the conviction of two or three witnesses, find him to give no satisfaction at all, whither shall the offended brother repair? If to the Church whereof the brother offending is a member, that is indeed according to the rule, but what need is there then, or what ground of repairing to the *Presbyters* of other Churches? by what Authority shall they proceed to censure the offender that is a member of another Church?

Indeed if a Brother offended shall complain to the Church whereof the offending brother is a member, and the Church neglect to do their duty, through prejudice, or partiality, or other remissness, it may then be lawful to make use of the brotherly love and brotherly communion, which one Church oweth and beareth to another. The brother offended, and not satisfied with the proceedings of his own Church against the offence, may then repair to the Elders of other Churches, and crave their judgement and counsel in the case in hand; and if they do not approve upon

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good inquiry the proceedings of their sister-Church, they may admonish the *Elders* of that Church touching what they judge amiss. But if the *Elders* hearken not unto them, the *Elders* who admonish them, being unsatisfied, may acquaint their own Church with the offence of their neighbour Church, and then in the name of the Lord, and of their own Church, they may admonish them thereof, by Letters. and Messengers sent to them to that purpose. If yet the Church admonished, hearken not unto them, the Church offended may and ought to acquaint their neighbour Churches therewithall, who may join with them, either in *convincing* the offending Church of their sin, and so prevail with them unto reformation or else (if they persist in obstinacy) they may from



thenceforth *withdraw all continuance of brotherly communion with them*, till they acknowledge their transgression; which is as far as Churches may go in a Church-way, in case of obstinacy of a neighbour-Church in any offence, and so far they may go according to the proportion of the rule, *Mat. 18. 15, 16, 17.* Look what rule a *brother* is to attend unto in seeking to heal the *offence of a brother*, the same rule may and ought a *sister-Church* to attend unto in seeking to heal an *offending sister-Church*. And look as *Paul* who had received the same equal power of the keys, with *Peter*, *reproved Peter openly when he was to be blamed*, *Gal. 2. 11.* some *Church*, who hath received the same equal power of the keys with another, may *reprove another Church* openly when they are to be blamed. And look by what power they may *reprove* them, by the same they may proceed to *withdraw from them*, if they hearken not to their reproof according to God. But all this notwithstanding they will not allow a *brother* offended to complain to the *Presbyters of another Church*, till he see no hope of removal of the offence by his *own Church* at home.

### CHAP. III.

## Of the Addition of Members to the Church

#### SECT. I.

THE Church being thus gathered and furnished with such Officers, in such manner as the Lord hath appointed; look as in the first Primitive Church *the Lord added to* them

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*them daily such as should be saved*, *Acts 2. 47.* so do we admit and receive from the Lord such as he sendeth and addeth to us. The first and lowest number of a Church, to which the other members

are added, is not expressly limited in the Word, only it is not so low as some have conceived, to consist only of *two or three*, it is a mistake of that place, *Mat. 18. 20.* where a promise of Christs presence *is made to two or three*, to conceive it made to the lowest number of a Church-body; for those *two or three*, are not considered there as a *Church-body*, but as a *sufficient number of witnesses*, to join with a brother offended, in convincing and admonishing the brother that gave the offence; against whom, if he do not hearken to them, they are then further to proceed, and *to tell the Church*. Which argueth that they themselves are not a Church, but a smaller company agreeing in a duty of brotherly love, either to heal an offending brother by their own admonition, or to witness against him before the Church; and yet they have a special promise of Christs presence with them in the duty, lest they might think such a labour of love undertaken in value.

But the Church must needs be a *greater number then two or three*, seeing these two or three are to refer the person and the cause to a *greater body* then themselves; for though there might be a *domestical Church* in *Adam and Eve* at the beginning, yet such a Church which Christ hath *instituted in the new Testament*, consisteth of a greater number. The very *Officers* of a Church, completely furnished, are no less *then four* (a Pastor, a Teacher, an Elder, a Deacon,) and therefore the *body* of the Church had need to be of a greater number then so. And though the *essence* of a Church may consist without the integrity of all his members (as a lame man that wanteth some of his members may have the essence of a man,) yet under seven, a Church can hardly consist of so many members as do perform any part of a Church-body.

To such a body, how many members may be added, is not limited expressly in the Word, only it is provided in the Word, that they be no more then that all may meet *in one Congregation*, that all may *hear, and all may be edified*. For (as hath been noted above) the Apostle so describeth the whole *Church as meeting in one place*, *1 Cor. 14. 23.* But if *all* cannot *hear, all* cannot be edified. Besides the Apostle requireth, that when the Church meeteth together, for  
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the celebrating the Lords Supper, *they shall tarry one for another*, 1 Cor. 11. 33. Which argueth the Church indued with only ordinary Officers, should consist of no greater number then that all might *partake together of the Lords Supper in one Congregation*, and therefore such Parishes as consist of 15000. though they were all fit materials for Church-fellowship, yet ought to be divided into many Churches, as too large for one. When the hive is too full, Bees swarm into a new hive; so should such excessive numbers of Christians issue forth into more Churches. Whence it appeareth to be an error, to say there is no limitation or distinction of Parishes, meaning of Churches, (*jure divino*) for though a precise quotient, a number of hundreds and thousands be not limited to every Church, yet such a number is limited as falleth not *below seven*, nor riseth *above the bulk of one Congregation*, and *such a Congregation* wherein *all may meet, and all may hear, and all may partake, and all may be edified together*.

## SECT. II.

They that desire to be added & joined to such a body, they first make known their desires to the *Elders* of the Church, who take trial of their *knowledge* in the principles of religion, & of their *experience in the ways of grace*, and of their *godly conversation* amongst men; that if any of them be found *ignorant*, and *graceless*, or *scandalous*, he may not be presently *presented to the Church*, till these evils were removed. The stones that were to be laid in *Solomons Temple*, were squared and made ready before they were laid in the building; neither iron, nor ax, nor any iron tool was heard in the house while it was abuilding, 1 *King*. 6. 7. And wherefore so, if not to hold forth that no members were to be received into the Church of Christ, but such as were rough-hewn, and squared, and fitted to lie close and level to Christ and to his members?

But when such as offer themselves are *approved of the Elders*, they are *propounded* by one of the *Ruling Elders* to the Church, with a motion to the *brethren* to make inquiry after them, and if they shall hear of any just *exceptions* against them, to give *notice of it to one of the Elders*.

*But if no exception be heard of, they are called forth before the*

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Church, after other holy duties are performed, and each one maketh confession of his sins and profession of his faith. In confession of his sins (that it may appear to be a penitent confession) he declareth also the grace of God to his soul, drawing him out of his small estate into fellowship with Christ. In the profession of his faith, he declareth not only his good knowledge of the principles of Religion, but also his professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ, with his desire of walking therein, with the fellowship of that Church. Now before or after such his profession or confession, those of the brethren of the Church who are of his acquaintance do give some good testimony (if need be) of his life and conversation; either according to their own knowledge of him, or according to the credible reports or letters which they have received concerning him: which done, the *Ruling Elder*, or one of the *Preaching Elders* propoundeth it to the Church, whether from all that they have heard and seen, they find any just exception against him? if so, it is cleared and removed before any further proceedings; if no just exception appear, the *Ruling Elder* then moveth the Church to express their acceptance of him into fellowship with them, by lifting up their hands. Which done (and the like course taken with two or three more, is the time will permit) the *Elder* propoundeth to them *the heads of the Covenant which the Lord hath made with his Church, what promises of grace he hath made to them; as also what duties of faith and obedience he doth require of them; As to take the Lord Jesus for their only Priest and Atonement, their only Prophet and guide, their only King and Law-giver, and to walk in professed subjection unto all his holy Ordinances; as also to walk in brotherly love with the brethren of the Church, unto mutual edification and succour, according to the rule of the Gospel.* And the new received members acknowledging this to be their duty, and professing their consent unto it in the name of Christ; the *Elder* doth further acquaint them with *what duties of holy watchfulness over them they may expect from the Church;* and so shutteth up his work with some short prayer unto the Lord, who keepeth covenant and mercy with thousands of his people, to make us all faithful to him,

and one to another, according to the rules of his holy Gospel in Christ Jesus, the Mediator, and surety of his Covenant, between the Lord and his people.

SECT.

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### SECT. III.

**N**OW what offence is there in all this? or what scruple may arise in a godly mind against these things? Two or three things seem herein offensive, but are not.

First, That we require gracious qualifications in such as we receive to Church-fellowship: whereas the visible Church is said to consist of all sorts, good and bad, and to be a garner containing chaff and wheat, as a field wherein wheat and tares grow up together.

Secondly, That we receive such into the Church by a covenant.

Thirdly, That we communicate too much power unto the people, and do not rather refer all power (in this case) into the hands of the *Elders*. To give therefore some account of these, as the Lord shall assist.

For the first, though we willingly admit all comers to the *hearing* of the Word with us (as the *Corinthian* admitted Infidels, 1 *Cor.* 14. 24, 25.) yet we *receive none as members into the Church*, but such as (according to the judgement of charitable Christians) may be conceived to be received of God into fellowship with Christ, the head of the Church.

Our Reasons be;

First, *From the near relation between Christ Jesus, and the Church*, as also between the Church and the other persons in the Trinity: the Lord Jesus is the head of the Church, even of the *visible Church*, and the visible Church is the body of Christ Jesus, 1 *Cor.* 12. 27. The *visible Church* is said to be the *habitation of God by the Spirit*, *Eph.* 2. 22. to be the *Temple of the holy Ghost*, and the Spirit of God to *dwell in them*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 16, 17. to be Espoused to Christ as a chaste Virgin, 2 *Cor.* 11. 2. The members of the visible Church are said to be the *sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 18. and are exhorted to be *followers of him as dear children*, *Eph.* 4. 1.

Now how can the visible Church be the members of the body, or the Spouse of Christ, or the Temple of the Holy Ghost, or the sons and daughters of the heavenly Father, except the members in charitable discretion be (as indeed the holy Ghost describeth them to be) *Saints by calling*, (1 Cor. 1. 2.) and *faithful brethren*,

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Gal. 3. 2. and that not only by external profession, for these are too high styles for hypocrites, but in some measure of sincerity and truth.

Secondly, We read *Act. 2. 47.* that the Lord *added to the Church daily such as should be saved*; and how then shall we add to the Church such as God addeth not? such as have no shew of any saving work upon them to any spiritual discerning? ought not the Lords Stewards to be faithful in God's house, and to do nothing therein, but as they see the Lord got before them? receiving whom he receiveth, and refusing whom he refuseth, casting out whom he casteth out. Doth not the Apostle *Paul* upon this ground direct the *Romans* to receive *a weak believer, because the Lord hath received him?* Rom. 14. 1, 2, 3.

Thirdly, The Lord Jesus maketh the profession of the faith of his name, and such a profession as *flesh and blood hath not revealed* to a man, but his heavenly Father; to be the rock on which his visible Church is built; for he speaketh of such a Church whereunto he committeth the keys of his kingdom, and that is the visible Church, *Mat. 16. 16. to 19.* Now if such a profession be the rock and foundation of a visible Church, then we shall build a Church without a foundation, if we receive such members into the Church as do not hold forth such a profession, but either through ignorance make no profession at all, or such a verbal profession as favoureth not of any blessed work of the Father by his Spirit upon their hearts. And doth not the Lord expostulate with *such a guest* as comes into the fellowship of his Church, even unto his Table, *not having a wedding garment*, Mat. 22. 12? And doth not espostulation intimate a *Taxation also of them, by whose connivence he came in*, where he saith, *how comest thou in hither?* And doth not Christ in the parable impute it to the *sleepiness* (that is,

to he remissness and negligence) *of his servants*, that tares were sown in his field amongst the wheat, *Mat. 13. 25. 38. 39.*

Fourthly, Such as have only a *form of godliness, and deny the power of it, we are forbidden to join with, and commanded to turn from them,* 2 Tim. 3. 5.

Fifthly, Can any man judge such Persons fit materials for the constituting and edifying of a Church, who are more fit for the ruin and destruction of the Church; such as leave their first love

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(as all hypocrites will at length?) They procure the removal of the candlestick, *Rev. 2. 4.* We pass by the types of the old Testament, which yet are not without their due weight; it was touched above, that *rough stones were not laid in the building of Solomons Temple, till they were hewn and prepared before,* 1 Kings 6. 7. *and behold a greater than Solomon is here, and a greater Temple* then that of *Solomons*; the attendance and watchfulness of the porters suffering none to enter into the Temple that were unclean in any thing, 2 Chro. 23. 19. doth it not evidently type forth the watchfulness of the Officers of the Church of Christ, to suffer none unclean (unclean in estate or course of life) to enter into the fellowship of the Church, which ought to be a Communion of Saints?

Well then, if all the members of the Church ought to be *Saints by calling, and faithful brethren*, it cannot be thought an unseasonable curiosity, but rather held a due and faithful watchfulness in the Officers and body of every Church of Christ, to take a due trial of men by a *confession of sins*, as *John Baptist* did, *Mat. 3. 6.* and by a *profession of their faith*, as *Philip* did, *Act. 8. 37.* before they receive them into the Church as members of the body of the Lord Jesus; neither was it an excessive austerity in *John*, but an holy faithfulness and godly zeal, not only to repulse the *Scribes and Pharisees*, *Mat. 3. 7.* but the *profane people also* from his Baptism, *Luk. 3. 7.* as those who were a *generation of vipers, and had not yet brought forth fruit meet for repentance*, ver. 7, 8. and therefore themselves were not meet for his Baptism, which was a baptism of repentance, *Luk. 3. 3.* Nevertheless, in this trial, we do not exact eminent measure, either of knowledge, or holiness, but do willingly stretch out our hands to receive *the weak in faith*, such

in whole, spirits we can discern *the least measure of breathing and panting after Christ, in their sensible feeling of a lost estate*; for we had rather 99. hypocrites should perish through presumption, then one humble soul belonging to Christ, should sink under discouragement or despair; and by reason of these hypocrites received into the Church, it is that the Church is said to have in it good and bad, wheat and tares; for tares, (as *Hierome* saith) are like to wheat.

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## SECT. IV.

Come we now to give account of the second point, why we receive such into the Church by way of *Covenant*.

1. Meet it is that as the whole Church was received as one body unto Christ by professing their entrance into covenant with God, as hath been shewed above in the third Proposition of the fifth part, so every member of the Church should be received into the same fellowship, by profession of their taking hold of the same Covenant; Eadem est ratio partium & totius, there is the same reason of the whole and of the parts, in such things as concern the common nature of both; And as all relatives do, they mutually argue one another. Hence it is that when godly strangers (who had joined themselves to the Lord, to wit, by faith, to serve him, to love his name, and keep his Sabbath) were to be brought into the fellowship of the Lords house, they added this duty over and above the former, they took hold of the Covenant of the Lord, *Isa. 56. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.* Surely not by faith only, for their personal salvation, (for so they took hold of the covenant before when they joined themselves to the Lord, *ver. 3.*) but by their profession of their acceptance of the Covenant, and subjection to it, which the Lord maketh with his Church and people, whom he causeth to pass into the hand of the Covenant, *Ezek. 20. 37.*

*Object.* It is objected first, that the place in *Isaiah* speaketh of such strangers at were *proselytes*, who in joining themselves to the Lord, were therein also joined unto the Church, for so joining to the Lord, implieth joining to the Church, *Jer. 50. 5. Ezek. 2. 11.*



*Ans.* 1. They that joined to the Lord in those Texts of *Jeremy* and *Zachary*, did indeed in so doing join in a Church-body also; for they who are there spoken of were a multitude, concurring and consenting in the same Covenant, to join to the Lord, and to become his people; but herein, I say, the Eunuch and strangers are said to be joined to the Lord, who yet were not joined to the Church, but ready to complain *that the Lord had utterly deprived them of that liberty of joining to the Church, and had utterly separated them from his people*, ver. 3. As indeed he had by express Law *separated them*, that is, *prohibited them from entering into the Congregation of*

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*the Lord for ever*, Deut. 23. 1, 2, 3. Against which Law the Lord comforteth them with this promise of the Gospel, that in the new Testament, neither their *Eunuchical* estate, nor the *alienation* or *strangeness* of any Nation, shall be an impediement unto their entrance into the Lords house, which is the Church.

The joining (there spoken of) is not their joining to the Lord and his people as *Proselytes* of the Church; for though they were joined to the Lord, yet they complained of their disjoining and separating from the Lords people, but the Lord comforteth them with this promise, that *such as are joined to the Lord*, he will hereafter bring them to *his house*; no bodily infirmity, (as that of the *Eunuch*) nor national *pollution* (as that of some *strangers*) should hinder their admittance into his Church, only this the Lord *requi- reth both of the Eunuchs*, ver. 4. and of the *strangers*, ver. 6. who had joined themselves to *the Lord before*, that they do *also take hold of his Covenant* (as antecedent to their entrance into Church- lowship,) to wit, take hold of it by *solemn profession* of their accep- tance of it, and of their subjection to it.

*Object.* 2. It is not credible that the Lord would ever separate or debar such from Church-fellowship as were joined to him- self by faith, who can think it? what reason can you give for it?

*Ans.* The text is plain, that *Eunuchs*, *Moabites*, and *Ammo- nites*, were separated from the Church or Congregation of *Israel* for ever, without exception of *godliness* or *ungodliness*. Some in deed make a doubt whether the Law again *Moabites* and *Ammo-*

*nites* reached to the *women* of those Nations; but against *men* the Law is clear. But if the Law had excluded them only upon point of their own *ungodliness*, that was no *singular* curse to them. No Nation under heaven could expect admission into the Church of *Israel*, unless they *believed* in the God of *Israel*. What reason God might have for excluding the *Eunuchs*, we leave to his sovereign wisdom. But yet himself giveth a plain reason for it against the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, taken from their *malignant enmity* against God's people, *Deut.* 23. 4, 5 6. Against the *Eunuchs* he giveth no express reason; the *authority of the Law-giver* is reason sufficient; who can tell whether God would not thereby type out the debarring of *barren Christians* from Church-fellowship?

Object. 3.

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Object. 3. The word *separation*, implieth they had been some-time of the Church; or it cannot cannot be said in common sense, that any can be *separated* from that society of which they never were.

Answ. Why not? What is *separated* but *severed*? May *England* be *severed* from *Scotland* by the river of *Tweed*? and from *France* and *Germany* and *Holland*, by the Sea? though they were never joined to any of those Nations? Did not God make the *Star* to *separate between the day and the night*? (for it is the same word in the Original, *Gen.* 1. 14.) and yet day and night were never joined in one society.

So that from the place in *Isaiah*, we have two passages of our practises in admitting *Church-members*, witnessed unto and confirmed by the Lord.

1. That those whom the Lord *joineth to the Church* in the new Testament, are such as have been joined to *himself*, to love him, and to serve him, and keep his Sabbaths.

2. That they do all *take hold of his Covenant with his Church*, before he bring them into his holy *Mountain* which is his *Church*.

Both which are the more to be observed in this place, because the place is a *prophesy* of what the Lord *will do* in the days of the *new Testament*, to wit, when his house shall be called *an house of prayer unto all Nations*, ver. 9. which is proper to the *times of the Gospel*.

Object. 4. But the *Covenant* here spoken of, hath nothing to do with the *Church Covenant*, for the *Covenant* is the *Lord's between*

him and his people, but the Church Covenant is between the members of the Church one towards another.

*Answ.* This objection was prevented before in the first point; for when the Lord entereth into covenant with his people, that is with his Church, his Church either expressly, or by silent consent covenanteth with him, and also one with another, to yield professed subjection to him, as hath been shewed above.

But though this place *prophecying of the days of the new Testament*, speak expressly of *taking hold of the Covenant* before entering into the Church, yet let no man wonder why there is so little express mention of the peoples taking hold of the Covenant in the new Testament, when this promise cometh to be accomplished. In the *old Testament*, where the *Church and Common-wealth* grew up together in divine institution and administration, there is express mention

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of this Covenant, and the Church being national, and all the *Magistrates* being members of the Church from the first plantation of it, the Covenant of the Lord with his Church was not at all *suspicious* to them, (who were parties to it themselves) but very acceptable; but in the days of the *new Testament*, the *Magistrates* and Princes of the earth being *Aliens* and *enemies* to the Church, the Apostles thought it meet to speak of this Covenant not plainly, but as it were in *Parables and similitudes*, as knowing the name of *Covenants* and *Covenanters* might breed no small *jealousies in Civil States*, as seeming most dangerous to civil peace, but yet in apt similitudes they so describe the estate of Churches as doth necessarily imply a joint Covenant, both *between the Lord, and them one with another*: which may serve for a second argument to prove the point in hand, the receiving of Members by way of Covenant; for, 1. they so describe every Church of God, as a *City of God*, as the *new Hierusalem*, as the *Church of the Jews* at their first conversion is styled, *Rev.* 21. 4. and the *Church of the Jews*, though it may be a more *glorious Church* then any of the *Churches of the Gentiles*, yet it partaketh in the *common nature* of them all, *every true Church* is as well a *City of God*, as the *Church of the Jews*; and hence the Members of the Church of *Ephesus* are called *fellow-Citizens* with the Saints, as being of the household, or Church of God, *Eph.* 2.19.

Now every *City* is founded in some *confederacy* by oath, or such like bond, and every *Citizen* is received into the same *City*, by taking the *same* oath, or entering into the same bond, wherein the whole *City* standeth engaged; which holdeth forth to an intelligent heart, that if every Church of the new Testament be a *City*, and and the Members thereof fellow-Citizens, then as the whole Church is planted and founded *in some Covenant* or *Confederacy*; so every Member of the Church is implanted and received into the same body, by *taking hold of the same Covenant*, and professing subjection thereunto.

Again, when the Apostle speaketh of the planting of the Church of *Corinth*, calleth *espousing* of it as a chaste Virgin unto Christ, *2 Cor. 11. 2*. It implieth plainly, that he drew them all as one body to profess their acceptance of Christ as an *husband* to them all, and of one another, *as members of the same body*: if he had spoken of his *conversion* of their *particular souls* unto Christ, he would not

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have spoken of them as *one virgin*, but so *many souls*; so *many virgins*; but now speaking of them all as *one virgin*, it plainly argueth he joined them all as one virgin into one body, and that one body into a *Covenant of Espousals* with Christ Jesus; for there are no Espousals without a covenant; and therefore they that will take hold of their Espousage, must take hold of their covenant.

3. The mutual relation wherein all the members in the Church stand one to another, members to members, and all of them to their Officers, and their Officers to them, together with their mutual interest one in another, and mutual power one over another, do all of them necessarily imply a mutual confederacy one with another and that whosoever will partake herein, must partake in their confederacy. Suppose a godly Christian come over into these parts, (as every year some or other do) there is not any Minister of any of our Churches can *usurp Pastoral authority over him*, unless that Christian *call him thereunto*, or profess his subjection to his Ministration, according to God. Nor can such a man expect any *Ministers watchfulness over him as his Minister*, unless the Minister see just cause to *accept such a charge, and profess so much*. No *Church* in the Country, nor all the members of any Church, can

take upon them to *Censure any stranger*, though an inhabitant amongst them, unless *he give top himself to them*, and profess his subjection to the Gospel of Christ amongst them. Nor can *he challenge such watchfulness from them*, unless he have given them a *just call* to take upon them that care over him. That *Christian liberty* which the Lord Jesus by his blood hath purchased for his Church, and for all his children, giveth them all *liberty to choose their own Officers*, and their *own fellow-Members*, unto whom to commit the care of their souls according to the rules of the Gospel. We speak not of *Infants*, who *make choice in their parents*, but of such who know their liberty, and are called to stand fast in it: till then that a man tender and offer himself to the Church, (to the Officers and Members of it) they have no power to *receive* him; For the Churches receiving a believer (which is the Apostles word, Rom. 14. 1.) implieth and presupposeth his *offering* and *giving up* of himself unto them, in a *professed subjection* to the Lord, and unto them, according to the will of God; and their *receiving* of him, implieth and holdeth forth no less then their *professed acceptance* of him un-

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to all those holy liberties with them, and performance of all such spiritual duties to him, which belong to all the fellow-members of the same body; and let men call this expression of mutual agreement by what name they please, this is no other then what we call *Church-Covenant*.

#### SECT. V.

**L**Et us proceed then to give account of the third point, why we communicate so much power to the *people*, as to propound *receiving of Members*, unto their approbation and consent: our reasons are these:

1. From the like power given onto them by Christ, for the casting out of scandalous and corrupt members, *Matth. 18. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 5.* if the Church must be *told of every member* that is to be *cast out*, and when he is to be *cast out*, they are to *deliver him to Satan*: then the Church must be told of every member that is *received*, and when he is to be received, they are to *receive him* into the

fellowship of the Lord, and of his Church; but the former is clear from those Scriptures, and consequently the latter. It is a received Maxim, *Ejusdem est potestatis aperire & claudere, instituere & destituere* (as they call it,) they that have power to *shut* the doors of the Church by Excommunication, they have power to *open* the doors of the Church by admitting to Communion.

2. From the Example of the *Church at Hierusalem*, Act. 9. 26. who when *Paul* assayeth to join himself unto them, did not at first *receive* him, because the Disciples were not satisfied in his spiritual good estate, until *Barnabas* by his testimony of him had removed their scruple: which argueth the *private brethren* in a Church as well as *public Officers*, must be satisfied in him who is to be received into Communion with them.

3. From the Churches power in Electing and calling Ministers to office. It hath been shewed above, that it belongeth to the people, the body of the Church, to *choose and call their Officers*, according to the speech of *Cyprian*, *Lib. 1. Epist. 41. Plebs maxime potestatem habet, vel sacerdotes dignos eligendi, vel indignos recusandi* And if they have such power of choosing worthy *Ministers*, and refusing the unworthy, how much more of receiving worthy *Chri-*

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*stians*, and refusing of unworthy. Yea, in the Epistle going before, he speaketh expressly, *he had much ado to persuade the people to receive some, whose repentance was not so clear to them; which argueth evidently their power in receiving Members.*

## CHAP. IV.

## Concerning our order and form in administration of Gods public worship.

## SECT. I.

HE Church being gathered and furnished with able helps, *Officers* and *Brethren*, they proceed to the *administration* of all the public Ordinances in public Assemblies, especially on every Lords day; wherein our principal care and desire is to administer and partake *in all, and no more then all*, the ordinances of Christ himself, and in all those (so far as the Lord hath sent its light) in their *native purity and simplicity*, without any dressing or painting of human inventions. For as the first Commandment requireth us to worship him with his own only true worship, as he hath appointed in his Word, without adding ought thereto, or taking ought therefrom, *Isa. 29. 13. Deut. 12. 32.* So we believe it to be unlawful for any Church to take upon them to observe, much less for the Officers of their own or other Churches to *impose* upon them *any institutions of their own* (whether in *doctrine, or worship, or government*, but what the Lord hath appointed in his word.

Our reason hereof (one in stead of many) is taken from the extent of the Commission of the Lord Jesus given to his Apostles, which is as large as ever was given to any Church-governors, and yet reacheth no further then to teach the people to observe *all things whatsoever I have commanded you*, *Mat. 28. 20.* If the Apostles themselves teach the Churches to observe more then he hath commanded them, they got beyond the bounds of their Commission. The Apostles in the *Synod in Hierusalem*, laid upon the Churches no other burden then necessary things, *Acts 15. 29.* Necessary

they were, some of them in their *own nature*, others for the *present estate* of things to avoid offence, and when they ceased to be offensive, the prohibition of them ceased to bind.

*Object.* If any shall say, the Apostles Commission reacheth on-ly to *matters of substance*, not *circumstances*, of worship and forms of *necessity*, not *indifferency*.

We answer, let them shew us another Commission to authorize them to put laws upon the Churches for matters of circumstance (of forms and of *indifferency*) and we shall submit, but the Scrip-ture holds forth no such Commission given to any of the sons of men since the world began.

That much urged place, 1 Cor. 14. 40. doth not authorize the Church, nor any Church-governors, to make laws for the ob-servation of such things as they shall account *decent* and *orderly*; but only provideth that all the *ordinances of God*, whether prayer, or prophesy, or singing of Psalms, or tongues, or interpretations, be *all of them done decently, without uncomeliness, and orderly, without confusion*; and that this place reacheth no further, appeareth evi-dently from hence, that if this place should give unto the Church, or unto Church-governors, authority to prescribe and command *decent* and *orderly* things at their own discretion, a man could not transgress the *Commandment* of the Church, but he should also transgress the *Commandment* of the Apostle; but the contrary is evident. For suppose the Church or Church-governors should make an order, that Ministers should always preach in a *gown*, the thing is decent enough, but nevertheless if a man shall preach in a cloak, he shall transgress the order of the Church, but not of the Apostle; for he that preacheth in a cloak, preacheth de-cently also; which plainly argueth, that such a commandment of the Church, is not grounded upon the commandment of the Apostle.

## SECT. II.

First then when we come together in the Church, according to the Apostle direction, 1 *Tim.* 2. 1. we make prayers and in-



tercessions and thanksgivings for our selves and for all men, not in any prescribed form of prayer, or *studied Liturgy*, but in such a manner

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manner, as the Spirit of grace and of prayer (who teacheth all the people of God, what and how to pray, *Rom. 8. 26, 27.*) helpeth our infirmities, we having respect therein to the necessities of the people, the estate of the times, and the work of Christ in our hands.

After prayer, either the *Pastor* or *Teacher*, readeth a Chapter in the Bible, and expoundeth it, giving the sense, *to cause the people to understand the reading*, according to *Neh. 8. 8.* And in sundry Churches the other (whether *Pastor* or *Teacher*) who *expoundeth* not, he preacheth the Word, and in the afternoon the other who *preached* in the morning doth usually (if there be time) *read* and *preach*, and he that *expounded* in the morning *preacheth* after him.

Before Sermon, and many times after, we sing a Psalm, and because the former translation of the Psalms, doth in many things vary from the original, and many times paraphraseth rather than translath; besides divers other defects (which we cover in silence) we have endeavoured a new translation of the Psalmes into *English metre*, as near the original as we could express it in our *English* tongue, so far as for the present the Lord hath been pleased to help us, and those Psalms we sing, both in our public Churches, and in private.

The seals of the Covenant (to wit, the Sacrament of Baptism and the Lords Supper) are administered, either by the *Pastor* or by the *Teacher*; and though with some godly learned Divines, it be a question whether the Teacher may dispense the seals, yet the question doth rather concern School-Doctors, then the *Teachers* of a Particular Church, but we who have only the *Teachers* of particular Churches, do believe that they to whom the *preaching or dispensing of the Gospel* (or *Covenant of grace*) unto the Church is committed, to them is committed also the dispensing of the *seals of the Covenant*; but to the *Teacher* as well as to the *Pastor*, is committed the dispensing of the Gospel (the *Covenant of grace*) unto the Church, and therefore to him (as well as to the other) is committed the dispensing of the seals of the Covenant.

Both the Sacraments we dispense, according to the first institution, Baptism to *Disciples*, and (who are included in them) *their seed*. The Lords Supper to such as neither want *knowledge* nor *grace* to *examine and judge themselves* before the Lord. Such as lie under

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any offence publicly known, do first remove the offence, before they present themselves to the Lords Table; according to *Mat. 5. 23, 24*. The members of any Church, if any be present, who bring Letters testimonial with them to our Churches, we admit them to the *Lords Table* with us, and their *children* also (if occasionally in their travel they be borne with us) upon like recommendation we admit to *Baptism*. The prayers we use at the administration of the seals, are not any *set forms* prescribed to us, but conceived by the Minister, according to the present occasion, and the nature of the duty in hand. Ceremonies we use none, but are careful to administer all things according to the primitive in institutions. The *Father* presenteth his own child to *baptism*, as being baptized by the right of *his Covenant*, and not of the Covenant unto God-fathers & god-mothers, (for there is no such covenant of God unto them and their god-sons) and therefore we have no use of them, but omit them in Baptism; as the Apostle cast out *love-feasts* from the Lords Supper, being both of them alike *super additions to the Lords institutions*, 1 Cor. 11. 23, 24. The Lords Supper we administer for the *time, once a month at least*, and for the *gestute*, to the people *sitting*; according as Christ administered it to his Disciples sitting, (*Mat. 26. 20. 26.*) who also made a Symbolical use of it, to teach the Church their majority over their Ministers in some cases, and their judicial authority, as co-fessors with him at the last Judgement, (*Luk. 22. 27. to 30.*) which maketh us look at kneeling at the Lords Supper, not only as an adoration devised by man, but also as a violation by man of the institution of Christ, diminishing part of the Counsel of God, and of the honour and comfort of the Church held forth in it.

In time of *solemnization* of the Supper, the Minister having taken, blessed, and broken the bread, and commanded all the people to take and eat it, as the body of Christ broken for them, he taketh it himself, and giveth it to all that sit at Table with him,

and from the Table it is reached by the *Deacons* to the people sitting in the next seats about them, the Minister sitting in his place at the Table.

After they have all partaked in the bread, he taketh the cup in like manner, and *giveth thanks a new*, (blesseth it) according to the example of Christ in the Evangelist, who describes the institution

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*Mat. 26. 27. Mark. 14. 23. Luk. 22. 17.* All of them on such a way as setteth faith the Elements, not blessed *together*, but either of them *apart*; the bread first by it self, and afterwards the wine by it self; for what reason the Lord himself best knoweth, and we cannot be ignorant, that a received solemn blessing, expressly performed by himself, doth apparently call upon the whole assembly to look again for a supernatural and special blessing in the same Element also as well as in the former; for which the Lord will be again sought to do it for us.

After the celebration of the Supper, a Psalm of thanksgiving is sung, (according to *Mat. 26. 30.*) and the Church dismissed with a blessing.

### SECT. III.

**I**N the afternoon after public prayer offered up to God, either by the *Pastor* or *Teacher*, and the Word read and expounded by them who preached in the morning (if there be time) and preached by the other, and the Sacrament of Baptism administered, (if any of the Church do offer their children thereunto) the *Deacons* (who sit in a seat under the *Elders*, yet in sundry Churches lifted up higher then the other pews) do call upon the people, that as God hath prospered them, and hath made their hearts willing, there is now time left for contribution: presently the people from the highest to the lowest in sundry Churches do arise, the first pew first, the next next, and so the rest in order, and present before the Lord their holy offerings. For in the old Testament at their solemn feasts none was to *appear before the Lord empty*, Deut. 16. 16. And the Lords day is only unto Christians the ordinary *solemn feast of the Lord*: in the new Testament the Christians laid down

their oblations at the *Apostles* feet, (*Acts* 4. 35.) into whose place, for that service, *Deacons* were substituted, *Acts* 6. 3.

And to that purpose the Apostle gave order unto the Churches, that upon the first day of the week every one should lay by him, into the treasury (as the word signifieth) for the supply of the Saints, as God had prospered them, *1 Cor.* 1. 2. Which ordinance *Justin Martyr* speaketh of in his time, that the abler sort on the Lords day did contribute to the necessities of the brethren, in the end of the second Apolo-

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gy. And *Cyprian* rebuketh a wealthy rich widow for believing she could celebrate the Lords day (as holy) and yet neglect to contribute to the Lords treasury, in his first Sermon *de Eleemosynâ. Locuples & dives Domini cum celebrare te credis, quæ Corbonam omnino non respicis?*

After the contribution ended, the time left is taken up in sundry Churches in the public trial and admission of such as are to be received Members into the Church, in such manner as hath been before declared; and so after a Psalm of praise to God, with thanksgiving, and prayer to God for a blessing upon all the ordinances administered that day, and a blessing pronounced upon the people, the Assembly is dismissed.

Besides the celebration of the Lords day, every week we sometimes upon extraordinary occasions, either of notable *judgements*, do set a part a day of *humiliation*, or upon special *mercies* we set apart a day of *thanksgiving*. The grounds whereof we conceive are generally known and approved amongst Christians. Moreover, every week in most of our Churches, Lectures are kept on some or other of the week days; so that such whose hearts God maketh willing, and his hand doth not detain by bodily infirmity, or other necessary employments, (if they dwell in the heart of the Bay) may have opportunity to hear the Word almost every day of the week in one Church or other, not far distant from them.

## SECT. IV.

**I**N all these admjniftratioiis, oncly two or three things may seem to require clearing from the Word of God; as

1. Why in our public prayers, we forbear to use *set forms* of prescript Liturgies

2. Why in our Sacraments we do not admit the members of the Church of England to the fellowship of the *Lords Table*, and their children to Baptism, as was said before, we did receive the Members of other Churches in this Country.

For the former, the reasons usually given may suffice

1. From the pattern of all the Churches, both in the old and new Testament, God never gave leave to any ordinary Officers

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of his Church, neither did any of them take leave to impose any forms of Liturgy upon any Church. And yet it ever there had been place for prescribing set forms to any, it had been most seasonable in the *Jewish Synagogues*, whose members being as children under age, (*Gal.* 4. 2, 3.) might stand in most need of such a help. It is easily acknowledged, *Moses* prescribed a form of blessing, *Numb.* 6. 23. to 26. and *David* sundry Psalms of praise and prayers; and the Lord Jesus taught his Disciples not only to pray *after this manner*, but thus, or these words, *Luk.* 11. 2. But neither were these *ordinary Officers* of the Churches, neither did they prescribe any use but *arbitrary* and occasional of these forms; as they might suit our occasions. God by immediate revelation, and by the hand of his *extraordinary Messengers*, may prescribe this or that form to his Church, but will not warrant ordinary Officers (who have only received a common measure of the Spirit) to do the like. God who forbad his people to make to themselves Images or imaginations, inventions, and forms of worship, hath not restrained himself to set up what images or forms himself seeth good.

*Object.* These forms of prayer or praise, though as they be *parts of hoy Scripture* they are of God, yet as they are *applied* without special commandment to be the matter or form of a prayer or thanksgiving at this time, so they are the *device* of man, &c.

*Answ.* They are not applied to be matter and form of prayer or thanksgiving without commandment, or at least without such directions as amount to a lawful warrant from God for *Moses* expressly saith, *On this wise shall ye bless the Children of Israel, and say unto them,* (Numb. 6. 23.) The 102. Psalm is expressed in the title, not only to be a prayer of *one that was afflicted, but of any in like estate.* And the Apostles exhortation is general concerning all the Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs of *David,* (as well as of others) that we should sing them with holy melody unto the Lord, *Eph. 5. 19.* and Christs words, *Luk. 11. 2. When ye pray say our Father, &c.*

A second reason why we forbear a set form of prescript Liturgies, is taken from the meaning of the second Commandment, which we conceive prohibiteth such prescript Liturgies.

It is a rule generally known in the exposition of the Commandments

dments, that all sins forbidden in the Word of God, are reduced to the ten Commandments, and fall under the prohibition of one of them or other, for there is no sin but is a transgression of some or other commandment of the law, 1 Joh. 3. 4. and upon the two Tables of the *Law hang all the Law, and the Prophets,* Mat 22. 40. Now it is plain, that all sins are not contained in the letter of the ten Commandments, and therefore there is no judicious Expositor of then, but openeth the letter of the Commandments by *Synecdoches* and *Metonymies*; *Synecdoches* to comprehend all sins of the *like kind,* and all he *degrees* thereof, and *Metonymies* to comprehend all *couses* and *means,* and occasions thereof so that for opening the second Commandment, which forbids both making and the worshipping of any image or similitude, it is requisite to consider in what sense or respects *Images* or *similitudes* are forbidden: *Images* or *similitudes* are forbidden in the second commandment, not as *objects* of worship, for all *false objects* of worship are the *false gods* forbidden in the first Commandment; *Images* then and *similiutdes* are forbidden in the second Commandment, not as false objects of worship, wherein the worship is terminated and fastened, but as *false means of worshipping* the true God. For so are the *Images* considered that are forbidden in the Word. The

*golden calf* was not considered as the *God of Israel*, that brought them up out of the Land of *Ægypt*, but as an *Image* of that *Jehovah* which did bring them up out of the Land of *Ægypt*. Whence it is said, that *Aaron* proclaimed a feast, not to the *calf*, but to *Jehovah*, whereof the *calf* was but an *Image*. *To-morrow*, saith he, *is a solemnity* (or feast) *to Jehovah*, Exod. 32. 5. The *Calf* therefore was not the god, but the *Image* of the god which they worshipped, as that which resembled him, and put them in mind of him, helped their hearts nearer to him, or his presence nearer to them: As it is written in the Psalm, that *they turned their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass*. Psal. 106. 20. And in this ox or calf they looked at *Jehovah as near unto them, and as going with them, and before them*, Exod. 32. 1. Furthermore, the *Image* forbidden in the second Commandment, is not only a false means of worship, devised by man, but a *false manner* of worship also; and therefore when the *Samaritan-strangers* knew not the *manner* of worshipping God in the *Calves of Jeroboam*, it is said they knew not the

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*manner of the god of the Country* (2 Kings 17. 26.) and one of the *Priests* of the high places was sent to teach them the *manner of the fear* (or worship) of *Jehovah*, ver. 28. and so *they feared Jehovah after the former manner*, ver. 34. and that was *in serving him in the graven Images of their own devising*, ver. 41.

So that under this one kind of false worship of God its graven Images, is forbidden by a *Synecdoche*, not only all worship of God in *carved or molten or painted Images*, (all bodily representations of God) but all *spiritual Images also, which are the imaginations and inventions of men*, whether they be ordained for worship, as the *high places* erected to the true God, 2 Chron. 33. 17. and the *devised feast of the eighth month*, 2 Kings 12. 33. or whether they be brought in and used for *helps and means* of worship, as the *strange fire of Nadab*, Levit. 10. 1, 2. and  *Davids new Cart* to carry the Ark, 2 Sam. 6. 3. with 1 Sam. 15. 13. or whether they be used for *manner and form* of worship, as *preaching in the wisdom of mans words*, (or in carnal Eloquence) which is but a painted Image of preaching (1 Cor. 2. 4.) and so forbidden in this second Commandment. In like sort, *Women praying in public bare-headed, and men covered*, 1 Cor. 11.

4, 5. Mens praying or prophecying in *strange tongues*, and many of them at once, 1 *Cor.* 14. 22. 26. the celebrating of *love-feasts* in holy *Assemblies, together with the Lords Supper*, (1 *Cor.* 11. 21. 23. 34.) are all of them Images or imaginations of men, forms or manner, of worship devised and used by man, but not ordained by God, and so forbidden in this second Commandment.

The reason whereof is taken from the perfection of the wisdom of God revealed in Scripture, to *make the man of God perfect to every good work*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 17. No wisdom of mans device, as any other worship, or any other *helps* or *means* of worship, or any *forms* or *manners* of worship acceptable to God, but what the wisdom of God hath directed us in his Word. Besides, the Church is complete in Christ, (*Colos.* 2. 10.) so as we need no other *Priest* to make atonement, him, nor other spiritual *King* but him to rule our consciences, no other *Prophet* to teach us but himself, and such as he hath appointed to that end; thus the sum and substance both of *Law* and *Gospel*, lead us to rest in the ordinances of God, and not to help our selves by the inventions of men, for the administration of the worship of God. To apply this then to set-

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forms of prayer, devised by and prescribed to be read out of a book, and so taken up by one Church from another, as the forms of their worship, and as the meanes and help of their devotion, we find no command or pattern for them in the Word, nor any promise of their acceptance. They are enoined for means and helps of Gods worship which he hath not sanctified, and for forms of worship which God hath not acknowledged. What difference is there between the carrying of the *Ark* upon a *Cart*, and our prayers upon a *Book*? whereas both should be *carried*, the one upon the shoulders of the Levites, the other upon the *gifts* of the Ministers.

*Object.* 1. God hath in general commanded us to worship him in public with all manner of prayers and supplication, (1 *Tim.* 2. 1.) but prayers upon a book, stinted Liturgies, are some manner of prayers.

*Answ.* God that in general commandeth all manner of prayers, commandeth also in special the several kinds of prayers, whe-



ther supplications, intercessions, thanksgivings, or the like. He that commandeth the *Genus*, commandeth the distribution of it into all its *species*, but he that commandeth the *subject*, doth not always command the distribution of it into all its *adjuncts*; he that commandeth prayer in general, alloweth every *kind of prayer*, but not every *form of prayer* for then God should allow prayer in a *starnage tongue*, prayer *before Images*, prayer in the *corners of the streets*, and the like.

*Object.* 2. If set forms of prescript prayers be unlawful, then set-forms of *confession of faith*, set-forms of *Catechism* were unlawful also.

*Answ.* 1. It followeth not; for the Apostle commandeth *us* to keep a form of *sound words in faith and love*, that is, in the principles of Religion, (2 *Tim.* 1. 13.) but he no where commandeth us to keep a form of *sound prayer*, unless it be a form of *directions* and instructions, how to pray, and that is included in the former, and we dislike it not.

*Answ.* 2. The Apostle did not command *Timothy* to devise himself a form of sound words, & to prescribe the same to the Churches, without suffering ought to be added to it, or taken from it, but what he must commend to others, were the things that he *heard*

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of *Paul among many witnesses, which he was to commit to faithful men who might be able to teach others also*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 2.

Thirdly, For a third reason why we do not take up set-forms of prescript Liturgies, is taken from the like proportion of set-forms, both of *prescript Liturgies*, and of *prescript Sermons* and *Homilies*. Prayer and preaching are both of them public duties of the ministerial office. The Apostles tell the Church they will lay down the *Deacons employment*, that they may give themselves to the *ministry of the word and prayer*, Act. 6. In the one they are the *mouth of God to the people*; in the other, they are the *mouth of the people unto God*. If we prescribe to one another set-forms of prayer, why not *set-forms of Homilies*? and then neither the *Apostle*, nor their *successors* needed to have left off their employment in ministering to Tables, to attend the ministry of the Word and prayer, (*Acts* 6. 4.) for both are prepared to their hands, by the prescrip-

tions of others. Whence also it will follow, that Ministers shall little need to edify the Church by their own gifts received of *Christ* to that end, but may edify them by the gifts of others. Yea, Ministers, though destitute of *ministerial gifts*, may be fit for the *public discharge of their duties* by the help of *other mens gifts*, both in prayer and preaching and so indeed a prescript Liturgy is properly a maintenance to all *Idol dumb Ministers*. And in this forbearance of prescript prayers, as we follow the example of the Church of *Israel*, and of the *Apostolical Churches*, so we are not destitute of patterns in this case of those that succeeded them. Justin Martyr “In his second Apology for Christians, a hundred and fifty years “after Christ, speaketh of the *ruler* of the Church, sending up “prayers add praises to God, without mentioning any *prescript* “*form*, according to his power (or faculty) of prayer, or thanksgiving left him by the Apostles or others. And *Tertullian* about “203. years after Christ, in his Apology for Christians, saith, “they prayed *fine monitore, quia de pectore*, without a prompter, because they prayed from their heart, *Tertull. Apolog. 30.* that is, “(as *Zeph.* on the place expoundeth it) they prayed not according to the dictate of the Saints, to wit, in any form of words “prescribed by them. And indeed if in those bloody times of persecution, the Church had any set-form of Liturgy, wherein they had been enjoined a form of solemn prayers for their Emperor,

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it has been an unskillful and sinful neglect, both in *Justin* and *Tertullian*, to omit such public evidences of their professed loyalty and devotion to the State.

#### SECT. V.

**O**bject. THE second thing in our administration of public ordinances, whereof many require account of us is, why in the administration of the Sacraments, we do not admit the Members of the Churches of *England*, either themselves to the Lords Supper, or their children to Baptism, as we receive the Members of other Churches in this Country.

*Ans.* Let it first be known what we do, and then consider upon what ground we do it.

1. We do not admit the members of other Churches in this Country, unless they bring with them Letters of recommendation from the Churches whence they came; or at least unless those Churches have made known to us their desire, that their Members coming occasionally amongst us, may be received to the Lords Table, with our own, by virtue of communion of Churches.

2. We do not admit the Members of other Churches to fellowship of the Lords Table, if either the persons themselves, or the Churches from whence they came, lie under any offence before the Church.

Now the grounds upon which we thus walk, are these.

1. From the power requisite to the administration of the Sacraments, *viz.* to administer a Sacrament, is not an act of *Christian liberty*, that every Christian may dispense to whom he please, but an *act of power*, which Christ hath given to them who are called to be Ministers of the Word, and by them to be dispensed unto the Church, whereof the Holy Ghost hath made them over-seers. They then over whom we have no *ministerial power*, unto them we may not dispense an *act of power*; but they who are Members of no Church, we have no ministerial power over them; and they who are Members of other Churches (not of our own) we have no power over them, further then they are recommended to us from their own Churches, either by Letters, or by word of mouth, and such are all the members of the Churches in this Country

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whom we do admit to communion with us at the Lords Table.

But now for our Brethren, who come out of *England*, many of them are altogether unknown to us; and those who are well known, (and it may be also well approved) yet they bring no Letters of recommendations to us from those Churches who had interest in them, and power over them. And besides, we know that those who have been members of any parish Church in *England*, when once they remove their dwelling out of that Parish, they are accounted as no longer members of that Church; so that they come over to us as members of no particular Church at all, either in old

*England* or in new; and so they are under the power of no Church, either there or here; how then can we dispense an act of power to them, over whom we have no power at all, either commended to us by themselves, or by the Churches from whence they came? Would it be thought reasonable, in case that any of our Country-men coming over to us, should fall into drunkenness, or whoredom, or other scandalous crimes, if the Church where he sojourneth amongst, should proceed to excommunicate him for the same? were it not an act, *Coram non judice*? might he not demand justly, by what authority we cast him *out of our Communion*, who was never yet *entered into our Communion*? This may therefore yield us a just defence.

They over whom we have no power to censure, (in any case by Excommunication) to them we have no power to dispense the Communion; but so it is, we have no power to censure any of our Congregation (though never so scandalous) by excommunicating unless they first commend themselves to our fellowship.

Therefore neither have we power till then to receive them into our communion.

2. A second ground of their practise we take from the nature of the Sacraments, which though they be seals of the righteousness of faith, (*Rom. 4. 11.*) yet not to all the *faithful, or such*, but as they are *confederate and joined together in some particular visible Church*. None may ordinarily dispense a Sacrament of the new Testament. but a *Minister of a visible Church*, nor may he dispense it to any, but to the members of a visible Church. In the old Testament, none were partakers, either of the *Passover*, or of *Circumcision*, unless they were either *Israelites* born, or *Proselytes* to the

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*Church of Israel*. *Job* and his three friends, and *Elihu* with them, though all of them righteous by *faith*, and all of the *stock and kindred of Abraham*, yet we read of none of them to be circumcised; nor is it credible they were; for had they been *Circumcised*, they would not have kept so deep silence of it throughout all their conference with *Job*, as they do; especially having so often occasion to urge the *pollution of nature* from the birth; whereof *Circumcision* had been a most pertinent and pregnant evidence to convince the

same. And wherefore were they not all *circumcised*, being all of them righteous by faith, but only because they had not *opportunity to join themselves to the house of Israel*, to whom only the *Church*, and the *Covenant of grace*, unto *them* and their *seed*, and the *seals* of the *Covenant* were granted.

*Object.* If it be objected, that all that were *circumcised* amongst the people of *Israel*, might come and keep the *Passover* amongst them: but we here withhold the *Lords Supper* from them that are baptized.

*Answ.* Our answer is, they that were *circumcised* amongst the *Israelites*, might rightly keep the *Passover* amongst them, because the whole Nation of *Israel* made but one Church, and the *Officers* or *Ministers* of any one *Synagogue* (the *Priests* and *Levites*) were *Ministers* in common to the *whole house of Israel*. In proportion whereunto they that are baptized in any particular Church, may in like sort require the *Lords Supper* in the same particular church where they are baptized, if there be no other impediment in regard of their unfitness to *examine themselves*, which is a thing requisite to the *receiving of the Lords Supper*, more then was required to the *receiving of the Passover*. But now because the Churches of the new Testament are of *another constitution*, none of them *national*, as the Church of *Israel* was, but all of them *congregational*; *Baptism* in one Church doth not give a man right to the *Lords Supper* in another, unless the *Officers of one Church* were the *Officers of all*, (as in *Israel* they were) or unless that one Church and the *Officers* thereof did *recommend their right and power* to another.

3. A third ground of our practise in this point is taken from the case of *public offence*, which we conceive ought to be removed from all such as are to partake together at the *Lords Table*; so we deal with the members of our own Church, and so we deal with the

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members of neighbour Churches in this Country: None of them are received unto the *Lords Table* with us, whilst they lie under the guilt of any public scandal before the face of the Church: For it is our Saviours direction, that if *a man bring his gift to Altar, and there remembers that his brother hath ought against him, he should there leave his gift, and go first to be reconciled to his brother,*

and then come and offer his gift, Mat. 5. 23, 24. If this be a rule for a mans own private direction, in case of private offences, it will be a rule also for a whole Church to direct an offending brother to do the like in case of a public offence: We do therefore direct both the brethren of our own Church, and of any other Church in this Country, that if they present themselves to communion with us at the Lords Table, they should first remove such public offence, as either themselves or the Church from whence they come, do lie under, before the Lord, and us; that according to the figure in the law of the *Passover*, no leaven must be found amongst us when we come to sit down at the Lords Table together.

Now though we rather choose to *cover in silence*, and to *mourn in secret*, for any corruptions found in other Churches, especially in these so dear and near unto us, as the Churches of *England* be; yet in this case, faithfulness to God and them, and the necessary defence of our own due proceedings here, constraineth us to confess sundry public offences, under which our *English parish Churches* lie, and wherein our selves also were defiled, whilst we lived in them, and our Country-men are defiled that come over to us from them.

1. It is a public offence, that they come over not as members of any particular visible Church, (for they leave that relation where they left their habitation) but of a *National Church*, whereof Christ hath given us no pattern in the new Testament; and in which he hath appointed no *national Churches*, nor any *national worship* to be performed by them.

2. It is a public offence, that though they were *baptized* in some parish Church in *England*, upon some Covenant, or stipulation of their parents, or of some in their stead, whom they call *god-fathers*, which also was without warrant, yet generally they have come to the Lords Table without any public profession of their own faith, or repentance, or promise of performance of those Christian duties, which their  
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parents, or others in their stead, made for them; which is an offence, not only contrary to the order of their own Church, expressed in the *Rubric* before the *Common Catechism*, but also contrary to the word of God, which receiveth none to the fellowship of the

seals of the Covenant but such as *profess* their *taking hold of the Covenant*, as hath been shewed before.

3. It is a public offence, that in their parish Communion, (which not *communion of spirit*, but *co-habitation* begetteth) they partake with all *ignorant* and *scandalous* persons, not exduding drunkards, whoremongers, prophane swearers, covetous worldlings, Atheists, Papists, and the like; whereby it cometh to pass, that not a *little leaven*, but a *great mass of leaven* hath deeply leavened the whole lump.

4. It is a public offence, that they have worshipped God according to the precepts and inventions of men, both in prescript forms of Liturgy, and Letanies, and in such ceremonies, as which though they be not *ordained* of God, yet are publicly *enjoined*, as neither dark, nor dull, but apt to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of duty to God by some notable and special signification, by which he may be edified.

5. It is a public offence, that they have yielded voluntary subjection and obedience to *such a form of government* in the Church, as the Lord Jesus hath not appointed in his Word, and have *approved* the same, whether by *subscription*, or by *oath of Canonical obedience*, or by *conformity* to their usurpations and *injunctions*.

These, or such like public offences, as we have bewailed in our selves, (so far as we had any fellowship with them) so we have thought it needful, that our brethren also who came over to us, should profess their repentance of the same, at least in a positive acknowledgement, of the contrary sincere ways of the Gospel, before they be received to Communion with us.

#### SECT. VI.

IF these grounds may suffice to justify our *non-admittance* of all the Country-men promiscuously, that come over to us *to the fellowship of the Lords Table*, without further satisfaction, the same also (or some of them at least) may suffice to justify our *non-ad-*  
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*mittance of their infants unto Baptism*. Infants cannot claim right unto Baptism, but in the right of one of their parents, or both:

where *neither* of the *Parents* can claim right to the Lords Supper, there their *infants* into cannot claim right to *Baptism*. And they cannot claim right to the Lords Supper, if it be so that we have not lawfull liberty to administer the Lords Supper to the *Parents*, or to one of them, at least, either for *our want of due power* over them, or through *their want of Communion* with the Church, (whereof the Sacrament is a seal) or by reason of some *public offence* which they lie under; (as hath been already opened). Surely though this third reason reach not *Infants*, yet the two former do, and prevent as their *Parents* of just *claim* of the *Lords Supper*, so *them* of *due right* of *Baptism* with us. For neither have we power over them, neither have they communion with any particular Church, being dismissed from the Church where they were baptized, and recommended to none.

Against this sundry things are objected, and such (as seem) of much weight; as

1. That the Sacrament of *Baptism* hath been administered to some who were *no members of any visible Church*, and therefore why not to the *Children of non-members?* as *Philip* baptized the *Eunuch*, Acts 8. 37, 38. and *Peter* baptized *Cornelius* and his household, Acts 10. 47, 48. *Paul* baptized *Lydia* and her household, the *Gaoler* and his household, Acts 16. 15. 33. To which we answer three things.

First, The Apostles had an unlimited power, and might baptize believers professing the faith, and their seed, wheresoever they came, but the power of *Pastors* and *Teachers* is limited to their own particular visible Church, which hath called them to minister unto them.

Secondly, It cannot be proved, that the Apostles or Evangelists baptized any but such as either were members of some visible Church before they preached to them, or else they gathered them into a visible Church estate, before they baptized them. The *Eunuch* in Acts 8. was a Proselyte to the Church of *Jerusalem*, for the Text saith, *he came up to Hierusalem for to worship*, Acts 8. 27. Neither let any man object, that his membership at *Hierusalem* would not intitle him to *Baptism*, seeing *Baptism* is a Sacrament of the *Chri-*

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*stian* Church, not of the *Jewish*; for whatsoever member of the *Jewish* Church, as believed in Christ as the Messiah, and professed that faith, he was capable of Baptism; for such they were whom *John* baptized, *Mat.* 3. 6 and Christs Disciples, *Joh.* 4. 2. yea all the *Israelites* were baptized in the cloud and in the Sea, in the days of *Moses* 1 *Cor.* 10. 2. As for *Lydia*, and the *Gaoler*, and both their families, they lived together in the same City of *Philippi*, *Act.* 16. 12. where was a company also of other brethren, *ver.* 4. and from the beginning of the Gospel (which doubeless was when he preached to them, *Acts* 16.) he speaketh of them as a Church; *Know ye Philippians* (saith he) *that in the beginning of the Gospel, no Church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only,* *Phil.* 4. 15. Which evidently holdeth them forth as a Church at that time, and that *Paul* did first gather the brethren there into a Church, when he baptized *Lydia*, and the *Gaoler*, and others there. And indeed the Commission which Christ gave his Apostles, holdeth it forth, that they were by preaching to make Disciples, before they baptized them and their children, *Mat.* 28. 19. Now a Disciple (as the meaning of the word implyeth) is a Scholar in Christs school, and therefore when the Apostles were directed to make Disciples before they did baptize them, they were not only to convert them to the faith, but also to gather them as Disciples or Scholars into a School of Christ; and the School of Christ is every particular visible Christian Church, wherein some are teachers, some are Disciples or Scholars, and his Discipline is exercised amongst them. Neither is it credible, that the Apostles would baptize any, that is, apply to them the seal of the Covenant given unto the Church, before they had taught them the Covenant it self, and entered them into it, in which regard we cannot easily think, that when *Peter* baptized *Cornelius* and his family he did only perceive they had received the holy Ghost, and evidently professed the same in new tongues, (*Acts* 10. 45, 46, 47.) but that he did also gather them into one *body*, directing them to the spiritual use of the newly received gifts in the Communion of Saints, and baptized then, into the fellowship of the Lord Jesus, and of one another in his Name.

Thirdly, We answer, as the Apostles were transcendent Officers of the Church, so they received transcendent power to ad-

minister their work. As the Father sent Christ, so Christ sent them, Joh. 20. 21. to wit, *Cum amplitudine & plenitudine potestatis*, with all fulness of power, so that any *one Apostle* received both the *gifts and power of all the Officers of the Church*. Any *Apostle* might do the work, not only of an *Apostle*, but of a *Prophet*, of an *Evangelist*, of a *Pastor*, of a *Teacher*, of a *Deacon*. They do foretell (as *Prophets*) things to come, *Acts* 27. 22. They travelled up and down not only to *plant Churches*, but to *water Churches*, as *Evangelists*, *Acts* 15. 41. They as *Pastors feed the flock of Christ* with wholesome words of exhortation, *Joh.* 21. 25. They as *Teachers* of the Gentiles, as *Paul* speaketh of himself, taught them in the mysteries of the kingdom of God. They (as *Elders*) *ruled the Church*, not as *Lords*, but as *examples* to the flock, and as *Deacons* they received the *oblations of the Church*, and distributed the same according to the necessity of the Saints. Yea, though when the Apostles came where Churches were planted, they did put forth no act of transcendent authority, but did all with the consent of the Church; yet in the absence of the Churches, they might do *any act* which *any Church*, and *all the Officers thereof* might do together. As for ought we know they might in such a case *impose hands alone*; so *Paul* might set apart *Timothy* to some special office, *2 Tim.* 1. 6. they might alone *deliver unto Satan*, *1 Tim.* 1. 20. they alone might *baptize*, in as much as the presence, and the power, and fellowship of any one of them, did comprehend as much as the presence and power and fellowship of the whole Church together their acts therefore in such transcendent cases, are not patterns, nor presidents for us; but according to the *measure* of the gift of Christ, we are to move in our own line, and to act only as the Ministers of Christ and his Church, in the *presence and fellowship* of the Church.

2. It is objected again, that children of excommunicated persons, such as being cast out, are not holden as members of the Church, has yet right unto Baptism, and therefore it is not well done of us to deny the Baptism of the children of such as are not Members.

That children of Excommunicated persons have right to Baptism, they prove by sundry Arguments.

1. From the consideration of the divers sorts of Members;

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Rev. 1. 1.  
1 Tim. 2. 7.  
Acts 4. 35.

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some are members not *actually*, but in the eternal Counsell of God, as *Paul* before his conversion.

2. Some are members only in *shew and apopearance*, as hypocrites, which are as wooden legs fastened to the body.

3. Some are *lively members*, knit to Christ by faith, to the brethren by the spirit of love.

4. Some are *decayed members*, which though they belong to Gods Election, and are truly ingrafted into Christ Jesus, yet for the present have no lively sense of the power and virtue of Christ: these are like a leg or arm to a man that hath a dead palsey, which though it remain for a time without feeling and nourishment, yet being joined to the body, it may be recovered by the virtue of some strong medicince, and made whole as the other.

Of this sort are Excommunicated persons, for in regard of their ingrafting, they are true members, and cannot be quite cut off from the body of Christ, *Joh. 10. 18*. And though they be holden as cut off from the holy Communion of the faithful by the Churches censure; as also became Christ ratifieth in heaven, what the Church hath done on earth; and likewise because in themselves they want the free passage of the life and virtue of the spirit of grace, till they be touched with repentance; yet they are not wholly cut off from the society of the faithful, because the seed of faith remaineth in them, and that knitteth the bond of conjunction with Christ.

*Answ.* Those godly learned Divines, who do thus argue, we do so highly esteem, and so deeply reverence in the Lord, that were the cause our own, and not the Lords, we should rather let it fall, then defend it, by opposition to the grave judgements of such holy Saints. But because we may not accept persons in the things of Christ, we are forced to excuse our selves from submit-

ting to their judgements in this cause, which yet generally is others we yield unto them; Our answer therefore is, that howsoever such excommunicate persons as are truly *faithful* (notwithstanding the censuere of excommunication) because the seed of faith remaineth in them; yet to the *society* of the *faithful*, joined in a *particular visible Church*, they are not knit, but wholly cut from their Communion: for it is not the *seed* of faith, nor *faith* it self, that knitteth a man to *this* or *that particular visible Church*

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but an holy *profession of the faith*, and professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ in their Communion. Which profession, when a faithful man hath violated by some notorious scandalous crime, or by wilful obstinacy, in standing out in any offence against the rule of the Gospel, he is now delivered unto Satan, and therefore wholly cut off from the *Communion of the Church*, and consequently from the *seals* thereof: himself from the *Lords table*, his seed (which are his members) from *Baptism*: he is not now as a dead palsey member, cut off from the body; *Ne pars sincere trahatur*; the Lord Jesus may fill lay hold upon him by his Spirit, when yet he cannot in any lively manner for the time lay hold upon Christ; and so he may still remain a member of the invisible Church of the first-born, when yet he hath neither part, nor portion, nor fellowship in the particular flock and visible Church of Christ Jesus, *but is as an Heathen, or a Publican*.

Now because the Sacraments are not given to the invisible Church, nor to the members thereof, *as such*, but to the visible particular Churches of Christ Jesus, and to the members thereof; such therefore as are cut off from their memberlike Communion with the visible Church, are cut off all from the seals of that Communion, Baptism, and the Lords Supper. As therefore we do not receive an *Heathen* to the fellowship of the Supper, nor their seed to Baptism, so neither dare we receive an *Excommunicate person* (who is to us as an Heathen) unto the Lords Supper, nor his children to Baptism.

*Object.* it is objected again in the behalf of the children of Excommunicate persons, that it is not in the power of man to cut them off from Christ, though they be excommunicate: the perso-

nal sin of the Parent, may not keep the blessing from the child, and therefore not deprive it of the liberty of the ordinance of God.

*Answ.* The same power of Christ that ratifieth the Censure of the Church against the Excommunicate parent, though it do not cut off the child *from Christ*, (no more then the Father) yet it cuts him off *from the outward fruition of the Covenant* of Christ with his Church, and from the *seals* thereof: For as Christ gave the ehilde no right unto Bapdctne, but by the Fathers right unto the Covenant, and Communion of the Church; so if he taketh a-

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way the *Fathers right* from the Covenant and Communion of the Church, he taketh away the *Childtens right* also. The personal sin of the parent is not in this case a mere private or personal sin, but the sin of a public person of his family. For as the profession of his faith at his receiving into the Church was as the profession of a public person, for *receiving him* and his *children* (who could make no profession, but by his mouth) into the *Church*: So his violation of his profession by a scandalous crime, was as a *public violation* thereof, for himself and his seed, who *stand and fall* before the Church in his name and person.

*Object.* It is yet further objected, We must always put a difference between persons Excommunicate, which do not make separation from the Church, (though they be grievous offenders) and open *Apostates* (which join themselves with the enemies of the Church, to the ruin and overthrow of the Gospel,) and between *Turks* and *Infidels*, that are forth of the Covenant, and never belonged to Christ.

*Answ.* We willingly put a difference between the Excommunicate persons and Apostates, and Turks; to wit, in such things wherein they differ. Excommunicate persons are nearer to help and means of conversion then Turks; For Excommunication it self is a means of salvation, 1 *Cor.* 5. 5. and Turks are nearer then Apostates; *For better it were never to have known the way of righteousness, then after they have known it, to turn away from the holy Commandment given unto them*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 21. But yet in this they all agree, they are all of them as Heathens, *Mat.* 18. 17. And therefore

neither the Parents to be admitted to the Lords Table, nor their children to Baptism.

2. *Command. Object.* Moreover, it is still further objected in behalf of Infants, If the *mercy of God enlarge itself to thousands*, why should men question whether such Infants belong to the Covenant, and so keep them from the Sacrament of Baptism, which is due to them by the right of their Ancestors?

*Answ. 1.* If the *extension of Gods mercy to thousands*, be a sufficient ground to *extend Baptism* to the children of Excommunicate persons, in the right of their Ancestors; it may suffice as well to extend it to the children of *Turks* and *Infidels*, and *Apostates*, and so the difference of the one from the other (urged in the last Argument)

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ment) will be taken away. For it is not above 66. Generations from *Noah* to *Christ*, as is plain in the Genealogy, *Luk. 3. 23. to 38.* and there have not passed as many more generations from *Christs* time to the *Turks* and *Infidels* of this present age. And then if Gods *mercy to a thousand Generations* may fetch in the *Children of Excommunicate persons*, the same promise may fetch in all *Turks* and *Infidels* at this day; we dare not therefore improve the large extension of God's mercy so far as to give a thousand Generations right and title to the Covenant of God with his Church, and to encourage the Ministers of the Gospel to let the seals of the *covenant thereunto*.

The true meaning of the promise we take to be, That God out of his abundant grace and rich mercy, may and doth extend thoughts of redeeming and converting grace and mercy unto thousand Generations; But he never allowed his Church any warrant to receive into their *Covenant, and Communion, the Children of godly parents, who lived a thousand years ago, much less a thousand Generations*. Nay rather the Text is plain, that the holiness of the children, dependeth upon the faith of the next immediate parents, (or of one of them at least) *1 Cor. 7. 14.* to wit, such faith as denominated them *Christian-believers*, in opposition to *Pagan Infidels*: and that holiness of the children to such parents, is called

*Federal*, which receiveth them into the Covenant, and to the seals of it.

*Object.* Lastly, it is objected, that children born in *fornication*, have right to Baptism, and why not then the children of Excommunicate parents? The wickedness of parents ought not to prejudice the children in things that pertain to their salvation.

*Answ.* The wickedness of the Parent doth not prejudice the *Election*, or *Redemption*, or the *faith of the child*: *Jephtha*, a bastard, is yet reckoned up in the *Catalogue of Believers*, Heb. 11. 32. But yet in the old Testament a *Bastard was not admitted to come into the Congregation of the Lord, to his tenth Generation*, Deut. 23. 2. and that could not but prejudice all the base-born children of *Israel*, and that in the things which pertain to their salvation. And though God sheweth greater grace to them in the days of the Gospel, yet greater grace cannot (by proportion of any rules of the Gospel) be expected for them from the Church, then this, that notwith-

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standing the sin of their parents, they may be received into the Congregation of the Lord, and so unto Baptism, either when their *parents repent* and acknowledge their sin before the Lord and his Church, or when *themselves are able to make a better profession of better things in their own persons*.

It is generally known, that our best Divines do not allow the Baptism of *Bastards, sine sponsoribus*; But whether they consider *Sponsors*, as witnesses, as some do who fetch allowance of witnesses from *Isa.* 8. 2, 3, 4. or whether they consider them as *Sureties*, the holy Scripture gives no warrant for either in such a case. The place in *Isaiah* giveth no foothold for Witnesses in Baptism. The Prophet called not *Uriah* for a *witness of the Circumcision* of his child; but of the conception of a man-child yet unbegotten, and of the *Prophecy* of such events as were to fall out during the infancy of the child; nor was it meet the Prophet should honour so wicked a *time-server* ever as *Uriah* was, to be a witness of the Circumcision of his child; though the more prophane and idolatrous he was, the more fit and faithful a witness of a miraculous prediction, to the *conviction* of an incredulous King, and people: And as for *Sureties*, the Covenant is not intayled to *Sureties*, to

such as for whom they undertake, but to *faithful parents*, pertaining to the family of the Church, and to *their seed*. It is true indeed, there is a large promise to *Abraham*, stretching the Covenant to his seed, not only to the *children of his own body*, and to his *proselyte servants*, but also to all that were *born in his house, or bought with money*, Gen. 17. 12, 13. which happily may grant so much liberty to a Christian *Sponsor*, that if a stranger or wicked man should give him a child from his infancy to be brought up as his own, it may be *baptized as his own*; But that is the utmost bounds of liberty in this case. And very doubtful it is, whether the promise pertain only to the children of *Proselytes*, either strangers or born in the house. But we know not any ground at all to allow a faithful man liberty to entitle another mans child to

CHAP.

## CHAP. V.

# Touching the Dispensation of the Censures of the Church.

### SECT. I.

WE proceed not to Censure, but in case of *known offence*, and such offence as *cannot be healed without Censure*. Two sorts of offences there be, some *private* between Brother and Brother; Come *public* and *notorious*, being known to the *whole Church*; or at least to *many*. And of them, some are *more gross* and heinous, some *less*.

If the offence be private between Brother and Brother, the Brother offended is to follow the Rule of Christ, *Mat. 18. 15, 16, 17. That is, first to go and tell him of his fault*, or (as the word signifieth) *Convince him of his fault, and to admonish him of it privately*; So that



the plaister may be no broader then the fore; private admonition is most suitable to a private fault, and expresseth both the wisdom and love of the Brother, who in so doing, both healeth and covereth the offence at once: If the offender take the admonition in good part, (as taking part with the admonition against his own sin) the Brother hath *won and gained him both to God and himself: to God by repentance; to himself by this experiment of his brotherly love:* But if the offender hear not his Brother, but takes part with his sin against the admonition, he then taketh one or two more with him, (such as in wisdom he thinketh to be most fit to prevail with him) that so by the *mouth of two or three, his word of admonition may be established;* or if the offender hear them not, his *word of accusation to the Church may be established:* And they coming to the offender and acquaint him with the cause of their coming to bring him to the sight of his sin, which they understand is committed by him; they first call upon the name of Christ to be present with them in this duty according to his promise, *Mat. 18. 19, 20.* where he hath said he will be present with *any two or three that are met together in his name,* to ask of him, (for it is upon this occasion, and this chiefly upon which the promise is

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made.) And the brother offended layeth open the offence before them, and declareth how ill the labour of his love was accepted before, and desireth their help, to assist him in the conviction of the offender. If they can prevail with him to acknowledge his offence, and to be humbled for it, the soul of the offender is healed, thanks are given to God, and mutual love renewed and increased among themselves. But if the offender deny the fact, and there is none to prove it but the Brother that brought them, they can proceed no farther, because the testimony of *one against one, will not stand in Judgement,* Deut. 19.15. If he acknowledge the fact, but do not acknowledge the sinfulness of it, but stand stiffly to justify it, the the Brother first offended telleth the Church of it, to wit, in God's way. He telleth the *Elders,* who are the mouth of the Church, that by them it may be presented before the Church, and the cause heard and examined, and judged by them. Then one of the *Elders,* either by himself, or calling forth the Brother

offended, declareth the offence given to him by such a Brother, and what course he took with him (according to the rule of Christ) to heal his Brother. First by private admonition, but so he prevailed not to bring him to a sight and sense of his sin; then how neither so could he or they revail with him; which they being present, do openly testify before the Lord and his Church: And so by the mouth of two or three, the word of his accusation is established before the Church.

The Church being thus informed of the estate and carriage of the offence, the *Elders* do labour in public with the offender to convince him, both of his sin and impenitency under it, notwithstanding all the faithfulness, and love of his Brethren, in seeking to heal his spirit in private. It is free also for any of the Brethren (leave and liberty being first desired and obtained of the *elders* to help forward the conviction by any *words of wisdom* and zeal which God shall put into their mouths; wherein if the convictions and persuasions of the Church do prevail to any kindly humiliation of the offender in the acknowledgement of his sin before the Lord and his Church; the *offender is gained*, the *sin is subdued*, others *discouraged from the like offence*, and the *Church is satisfied*.

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But if on the contrary the offender stand out in defence of his sin, as well *against the whole Church*, as he did before *against the Brethren*, who dealt with him in private, the Church then entrench into consideration of the Nature and Quality of the offence, whether it be gross and heinous, such as is condemned by the *light of nature*, (like those cast out by the Apostle 1 *Cor.* 5. 11.) or whether it be such as (through some *mist of ignorance*, or *strength of present passion*) he doth not clearly discern the sinfulness of it: if it be of the former sort, they proceed then to excommunication, both in respect of the *nature of the crime* (whereof more hereafter) as also in respect of his *contumacy* to the Church. If it be of the latter sort, the Church proceedeth not forthwith to excommunication of the offender, but after once or twice admonition; For in this case it is with the *offender* as with an *Heretic*, who may err at first, and stand in his error, for want of clear light, and is therefore *once and again*

(according to the rule of the Apostle, *Tit. 3. 10*) *to be admonished before he be rejected*: when therefore an admonition is judged seasonable, one of the *Elders*, with the consent of the whole church, doth *recollect the offence*, and all *the arguments of weight, which have been publicly or privately used to convince the offender of his sin*, and discovereth to him also, that *invalidity and shallowness of all his answers and evasions*; and thereupon doth *solemnly, in the name of the Lord, admonish and charge him to see the danger of such a sin, and distemper of his soul, it maintaining of it*; that so (if it be the will of God) he may be recovered out of the snare of the Tempter. Whilst the Brother is thus *cast, and lyeth under the censure of admonition*, he standeth in the judgement of the whole Church, as a *convinced public offender*; and therefore, till he be *reconciled to the Church* by the penitent and public acknowledgement of his sin before them, *he doth abstain from the Lords Table*; according the direction of our Saviour, who would not have on offender present himself *nor his gift before the altar, whilst the guilt of the offence of his brother lay upon him*, *Mat. 5. 23, 24.* or, as the *Priests in the Law did forbear to eat of the holy bread, whilst they lay in uncleanness*, *Lev. 22. 3, 4.* or, as one who *lying in his uncleanness, did rather pollute the holy Ordinance of God by partaking of it, then receive any holiness from it*, *Hag. 2. 12, 13.*

The offender then by this public admonition being debarred

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of his wonted fellowship in the Lords Table, and with all being solicited, and urged by his brethren and friends, to consider his great distemper of spirit, in standing out so long in that which is evil; If hereupon (by the grace of Christ) he come to himself, and see his sin, and desire to reconcile himself to the Lord, and his brethren, he then acquainting one of the Elders with his desire, is called forth in the face of the Church, to make public confession of his sin, and to judge himself for it; wherein, if the Lord help him to hold forth an ingenuous and humble loathing of his sin and of himself for it; they bless God for his blessing upon his ordinance, and readily receive him into wonted favour, and brotherly fellowship with them, in all the liberties of God's house; but if on the contrary the spirit of the brother grow more & more hardened in his

sin, and stand out against all means (public and private) of his reformation, the Church having waited a convenient time, and yet finding their brother wax worse and worse, (as is commonly seen in such cases, wherein men are not humbled under such means) then, according to the rule of Christ, *Matth. 18. 17.* one of the Elders propounding the case, first to the whole Church, and they giving their consents (as before for his admission, so now for his expulsion) he setteth his sin in order again before him, with all the circumstances and aggravations of it, especially how he hath taken in vain, and made unprofitable all other means for his recovery; and therefore now, in the name, and with the power of the Lord Jesus, and with the consent of the whole Church, he pronouneth him cut off from the communion of the Church and delivereeth him unto Satan, as an Heathen or a Publican, for the destruction of the flesh, that his soul may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus; and all this according to the direction of the Holy Ghost, *Matth. 18. 17. 2 Cor. 5. 4, 5.*

## SECT. II.

And thus the Church proceedeth, in case the offence be private at first, and and less scandalous; but if the offence be public, and hainous and grossly scandalous, such as is condemned even amongst the Heathens, by the light of nature; as those mentioned by the Apostle *1 Cor. 5. 11. Fornication, Adultery, Incest, Murther,*

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*Murther, Rayling, Extortion,* and the like; or such as an generally accounted damnable and detestable amongst Christians, as *Idolatry, Blasphemy, Prophaneness, &c.* We take our selves bound to proceed more roundly against such; for in such cases the Apostle doth not direct us to such *gradual proceedings by private admonitions,* but if any Brother (saith he) be a *fornicator, or covetous, or an Idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one no not to eat:* For it doth not stand with the glory of God, or honour of his Church to accept an acknowledgement of such gross and scandalous crimes without further censure; but it becometh the Church, (being a communion of Saints) rather to free them-

selves from the guilt and fellowship of such notorious wickedness, by expression of their zeal and just indignation against such sins by calling out the committers thereof from fellowship amongst them; for though the blood of Christ, and the repentance of an offender do remove any offence, though never so heinous in the sight of God and man, yet God being jealous of his own glory, and of the honour of his Church, is not wont ordinarily to grant repentance unto such notorious sinners, until the censure of the Church have passed upon them.

Whilst the offender lyeth under the censure of excommunication, though he be excluded from the communion of the Church, and so from the Lords Table, and from all other liberties of Church-fellowship (as voting in elections, admission of members, censures, &c.) yet we do not debar him from *entrance into the assembly* of the Church in *time of preaching the Word*, or Prayer, or such other worship of God, as is not *peculiar to the Church*; for this liberty we do not forbid to Heathens and Indians; and persons excommunicate are but as *Heathens*, in respect of worship, although *worse then Heathens* (even as *Publicans*) in respect of familiar private communion; for though we might eat with an *Heathen*, (1 *Cor.* 10. 27.) yet with a *Publican* the *Jews* would not eat, *Mat.* 9. 11. no more may we with *excommunicate persons*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 11. But we do not read that an *Heathen* was forbidden to hear the Word in the *Synagogues*, though they were not permitted to enter into the *Temple* (which was to them of a *Sacramental* nature) *Act.* 21. 28. 29. nor might they enter as members into the *Congregation*, *Deu.* 13. 3. to 8. But suppose *Heathens* were forbidden to hear the

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Word, even in the *Synagogues*, yet seeing that wall of partition between *Jews* and *Heathens* is now broken down, as in other respects, so in this, that it is not now unlawful for an *Infidel* or *Heathen* to come into the assembly of the Church (1 *Cor.* 14. 23, 24, 25.) As therefore we do not deny the like liberty, either to *Indians* or *Negars*; so excommunicate persons: Moreover, this further compassion and succour we afford to an excommunicate person, that though we have call him out of our liberties and priviledges peculiar to Church-fellowship, yet we have not cast him out also

of our hearts, nor out of our prayers, nor out of our care to recover such a lost sheep into Christs fold again; and therefore still, though we forbear all familiar fellowship with him, and countenance towards him, that he may be ashamed; yet we account him not as an *enemy*, but still take opportunity to admonish him as a *Brother*, *2 Thess. 3. 14, 15*. And if we find by the blessing of God and Christ upon the censure, or by the rebukes of many ministred unto him, that the foul of the excommunicate person be humbled (as it was the case of the *incestuous Corinthian*, *2 Cor. 2. 6.*) the Elders discovering the same, do call him forth before the Church, where he giving glory to God, and confessing his sin, and the justice of God against him, and holding forth a repenting frame of spirit, to the satisfaction of the Church, they do with common consent forgive him and comfort him, and confirm their love to him, by receiving him again into communion with the Church, and into all the liberties of God's House, as before.

### SECT. III.

**I**N all these transactions of Church proceedings, when we say we do this or that with *common consent*, our meaning is, we do not carry on matters, either by the *over-ruling power of the Presbytery*, or by the consent of the *major part* of the Church, but by the general and joint content of all the members of the Church; for we read in the *Acts* of the Apostles, the Primitive Church (which is a pattern for succeeding ages) carried all their administrations, *ὁμοθυμαδὸν* that is, with one accord, *Acts 2. 46.* as becometh the Church of God; which ought to be of *one heart*, and *one soul*, of *one mind*, and *one judgement*, and all to speak the *same thing*, *Act. 4. 32.*

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1 Cor. 1. 10. *Phil. 2. 2, 3.* But if is to fall our, that any difference do arise, (as sometime there doth, through the remaining darkness of our minds, seeing we all know but in part) then such as do dissent from their Brethren, are required to propound the grounds of their dissent; which if they be weighty, and held forth from the light of the Word, all the rest do submit, and yield thereunto, not as to the voice of their Brethren only, but as to the

voice of Christ; whose voice alone must rule in the Church and all the sheep of Christ will hear it; and all the upright in heart will follow it; thus *Paphnutius* is said to turn about the whole general Council of *Nice*, in the point of *Ministers marriage*. But if the grounds of such as do dissent, do upon due consideration appear to have little or no weight in them, the officers of the Church, or some other of the Brethren, do declare unto them the invalidity thereof: If they be satisfied, the matter in hand doth then proceed with the common consent of all; if they be not satisfied yet, it is either through *want of light*, (and so through weakness of judgement) or through *strength of pride*, and so through *stiffness* of will. If the *former* be the let, they take further pains, lovingly to inform them, and patiently bear with them, till matters be further, cleared; so that at length, they come either to consent, to go along with their Brethren, or at least to be content to refer the matter to the judgements of their Brethren; and for their part to sit still, and to make no farther dealings with the Churches proceedings; but if through partiality or prejudice, their dissent do appear to spring from *stiffnes of will*, or from a spirit of contradiction, (which yet falleth out very rarely) in so much, that they will not be brought (by loving and brotherly information) to give way to the better judgements of their Brethren, the Church doth proceed with common consent to admonish them of their pride, and self-willedness, and so leave them *under the censure of admonition*; whereby the liberty of their voice is taken from them, till they have removed this offence from the spirits of their Brethren; but if it do appear that the dissent, whether of one or more Brethren, do arise from such darkness and intricacy of the matter in hand, as that the officers and members of the Church do find themselves either unable to clear the matter fully, or at least unfit, in regard of some prejudice which may be conceived against them, (which sometimes doth

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fall out, though very seldom) in such a case, when the matter is weighty, and the doubt great on both sides, then (with common consent) we call in for light from other *Churches*; and entreat them to send over to us such of their Elders, or Brethren, as may be fit to judge in such a cause; upon their coming, the Church

meeting together in the Name of Christ, the whole cause, and all the proceedings in it, are laid open to them; who by the help of Christ, pondering and studying all things according to the rule of the Word, the truth is cleared, a right way of peace and concord discovered and advised, and the spirits of the Brethren on all Parts comfortably satisfied.

#### SECT. IV.

IN these transactions we know not what might be subject to exception, or controversy; but only that we allow, to the people so much power in the censures of the Church, both in binding an offender to admonition and excommunication, and in loosing of penitents from the same. But the Reasons that prevail with us to take this course, seems to us to have evident ground from Scripture-light; and therefore may excuse us from following the pattern of such Churches as rather consult with human wisdom than divine institution in this case.

Our first Reason is taken from the royal rule of Love and Wisdom, in healing offences, given by our Saviour, *Matth.* 18. 17. where he directeth a Brother offended, for the healing of the spirit of an offender, finally to refer the matter to the Church. *Tell* (saith he) *the Church*. Now we cannot find throughout the new Testament, that ever the word *Church* is taken any otherwise then for the *Society and Congregation* of the faithful; unless it be once, where it is taken for a *town Assembly*, *Act.* 19. 41. But never for one *Bishop*, or *Counsellor*; or *Archdeacon*; for neither doth the Scripture acknowledge any of these offices in the Church at all, (as hath been shewed above) taking a *Bishop*, as now they stand; nor can the *Church*, which is a word of *multitude*, hold forth a *Bishop* or his *Commissary*, who is but one Person: For, though one person may represent a whole Church when he is sent forth in the Churches name, with instructions from the Church; yet such is not the case  
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here: The *Bishop* cometh in his own name, and the *Commissary* in the *Bishops* name, but neither of them in the *Churches'* name, nor with instructions from the *Church*; but rather with destructions, or at least,



with disturbance to the *Church*. Neither is the word *Church* taken throughout the new Testament for an *Assembly of Presbyters*: the *Consistory* is a word unheard of there. Nor are any complaints directed thither, unless it be to prepare them for the hearing & judgement of the Church; As all the *Elders are said to be assembed in the house of James, to prepare and indruct Paul for the carriage of his matter before the Church*. Nor are any Censures of the Church committed to the *Presbyters alone*, to be administered by them; though they be to be *administered by them in the presence, and with the consent of the Church*. And therefore when the *Angels of the Churches in Asia* are blamed for neglect of proceeding against offenders, (whether *Balaam*, or *Jezabel*, or the *Nicholaitons*) the charge is given not to the *Angels of the Churches only*, but to the *Churches also* themselves; *Let him that hath an ear hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches, Revelation 2:17,29*. And though the word *Congregation*, which is all one with *Church*, be sometimes put in the old Testament for *Elders or Judges of the Congregation*; yet

1. It is far more frequently put for the *Elders and body of the people* met together, as he that observeth the several places shall find it.

2. When it is put for the *Elders and Judges of the Congregation*, as *Numbers 35:12,24,25*. it is never understood of them sitting in a *Consistory by themselves* apart from the people, but in the *presence of the public Assembly of the people*, who also had liberty in such cases to rescue an innocent from unjust punishment. 1 *Samuel 14:45*.

*Objection*. In *Matthew 18.17*. when Christ directeth the Brother offended to tell the Church, he speaketh of such a Church to whom we may *orderly*, and *ordinarily* complain; now this we cannot do to the whole multitude.

*Answer*. We willingly grant, it will be *orderly* to tell any offence to the *Elders of the Church*, before it be presented to the multitude of the Church, both because they are the mouths and guides of the Church: and also meet it is all things be *prepared by them* for the Churches cognizance, that so the Church be not cumbered, (as sometimes it might) with unnecessary and frivolous agitations.

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But though the *Elders* in such a case have *power to direct and persuade what were best to be done*, yet not *power to judge and determine public Cases*, without the consent of the Church; unless the Brother offended be satisfied in their advise.

*Answer 2.* When a whole multitude is assembled in a body, any offence may be orderly and ordinarily told unto them, by a complainant; especially in case any Officer amongst them shall call him forth to tell his complaint: As the *Levite* orderly told his complaint to the *whole multitude* of the Congregation of *Israel* assembled at *Mispah*, Judges 20:3,4, &c.

*Objection 2.* The Church Christ directeth unto, he presupposeth to be the ordinary Executioners of all Discipline and Censures, which the multitude is not: And the reason ratifying the Censure of the Church, doth show the number of them to be small, Matthew 18:20, where two or three, &c.

*Answer.* The multitude of the Church doth ordinarily execute all Discipline and Censures *by the Presbyters*, and the *Presbyters* by *their Consent*. The promise made to two or three (*ver. 20.*) respecteth not the *Judges* of the cause when it is brought to the Church; but the *two or three Brethren who dealt in the Cause before it came to the Church*: As in like sort, the promise of *binding in heaven, what the Church bindeth in earth*, (*ver. 19.*) pertaineth to the ratifying of the Censure of the *whole Church*, mentioned in the verse before, to wit, in *vers. 17.*

A second Reason why we allow such power to the people in Church-censures; is taken from the practice of the Church of *Corinth*, in the case of the *incestuous person*, and that according to the Apostles direction; For in the *1 Corinthians 5:4,5* he directeth the *whole Church of Corinth*, (to whom he writeth) *That they in the name of the Lord Jesus, when (saith he) ye are gathered together, and my Spirit, with the Power of the Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan.* Where *Paul* laying in the verse foregoing, that *he had judged already* that so it should be done, doth not argue that now the Church was at hand, he took the *power of judging* the Cause *wholly unto himself*, and the publication and declaration of it only in the Church, but that *he had seen already evident cause, to judge the party worthy to be cast out*: but directed them to do it with all the power that is requisite to that action:

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As 1. In the *name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, in whom the principal power of all Church-censures resteth.

2. When *they* (that is, the whole Church) are gathered together: not the *Bishops*, nor the *Presbyters* alone.

3. And *Paul's spirit* with them, to wit, much of Apostolical Authority being committed to the Church, and present with it in such cases.

4. He speaketh of the *power of the Lord Jesus* with them in this action, which holdeth forth their Authority.

5. When the Excommunicate person was humbled under this Censure, *Paul* beseecheth *them* to forgive him, to comfort him, to confirm their love unto him, *2 Corinthians* 2:7,8. Now they who have power of *forgiving* an offender, have power also of *binding him under wrath: Ejusdem potestatis, &c. ligare, &c. & solvere.*

*Objection* 1. All this argueth no more, but that some in the Church had this power, to wit, the *Presbytery* of the Church, but not the *whole body of the people.*

*Answer* 1. There is no word in the Text that attributeth any *power* to the *Presbytery* apart, or singularly above the rest: But as the reproof is directed to *them all*, for not mourning and taking the offence to heart, that the offender might be taken away from amongst them, (*ver. 1,2.*) so is *Commandment* directed to *them all*, when they are gathered together, to proceed unto the *casting of him out*: in like sort, in the end of the Chapter, he *exhorteth them all* again, *Put away therefore* (saith he) *from amongst you that wicked person*, *ver. 13.* and that by a *judicial power*, (to wit, as under Christ,) *do not ye judge them that are within*, *ver. 12.* And lest this Judgement should be restrained to the *Presbyters* onely, he magnifieth the judgements of the *Saints*, taking occasion from hence to stretch their Judicature, in some cases, even to *Civil matters* also; *Know ye not* (saith he) *that the Saints shall judge the world?* yea the Angels, *1 Corinthians* 6:2,3. And thereupon he encourageth them to *betrust the deciding of my Civil Cause* depending between *Brethren*, to the Judicature of the *meanest Brother* in the Church, (*ver. 4.*) rather than to fly suddenly unto Civil Magistrates, especially amongst the Heathen.

*Objection* 2. But if the power of Judicature be committed to the *whole Church*, together with the *Presbytery*, then all he multitude

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shall be made Governors, and who then shall be governed?

*Answer.* The multitude of Brethren are governed by the Elders, so long as they rule aright, to wit, whilst they hold forth the Word and voice of Christ, which the sheep of Christ are wont to hear, *John* 10:4. But in case the officers do err, and commit offence, they shall be governed by

the whole body of the Brethren; though otherwise the Brethren are bound to obey and submit to them in the Lord, *Hebrews 13:17*.

*Objection 3.* A democratical government might do well in *Athens*, a city fruitful of pregnant wits, but will soon degenerate to an Anarchy (a popular tumult) amongst rude common people.

*Answer 1.* It is unworthy the spirit of so godly learned a man as maketh this objection, to preferre *Athens* before *Jerusalem*, *pregnant wits* before *sanctified hearts*.

*Answer 2.* *Though the government were democratical (as it is not) yet there is no tumultuous disorder, where not the will of each man beareth the sway, but the voice of Christ alone is heard, who is the Head and wise Monarch of the Church.*

*Objection.* If it be said, tumult, and disturbance, and confusion cannot be avoided where the multitude have all of them, no only leave, but power to speak, and one will be ready to take the word out of the others mouth, and one of them to thwart and contradict one another; and will not this make the Church of Christ a confluence of Cyclops?

*Answer.* All such disorder is easily and timely prevented by the Elders, who have power from Christ to restrain any man's speech, whilst another is speaking; and to cut off any man's speech that groweth either impertinent or intemperate: the Elders having received in special manner the power of the keys, they have power to open and shut the doors of speech and silence, in which respect the government of the Church is not merely democratical, but as the best governments be) of a *mixed temper*; in respect of *Christ* (whose voice only must be heard, and his rule kept) it is a *Monarchy*; in respect of the *peoples power* in choosing officers, and joint power with the officers in admitting members, in censuring offenders, it is a *Democracy*; in respect of the *officers* instruction and reproof of the people in the public ministry, and in ordering of all things in the Assembly, it is an *Aristocracy*; what is so

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good in any civil government, is in Church-government; and what is found evil is by the wisdom of Christ safely avoided and prevented.

But that we may more distinctly declare wherein lyeth the difference of their mutual authority, both of the Church over the Elders, and the *Elders* over the Church, we conceive the Church exerciseth several acts of authority over their Elders, to wit, in three cases

1. In *calling and electing* them to office, and in ordaining them also thereunto in defect of their Presbytery.

2. In *sending them forth* upon the public service of Christ, as the whole Church at *Jerusalem* sent forth chosen Ministers with letters of instruction to *Antioch*, and other Churches, *Acts* 15:22. Now the Ambassador is not greater then he that sent him, but usually inferiour, *John* 13:16.

3. In case of *offence given by any Elder, or by the whole Eldership together*, the Church hath authority to require satisfaction of them, and if they do not give due satisfaction, to proceed to censure according to the quality of the offence. For we see when some of the Church of *Jerusalem* took offence against Peter, for communicating with the *Gentiles*, and contended with him about it; *Peter* condescended to give ample and due account of his actions to the satisfaction of them all, *Acts* 11:2. to 8.

If admonition, and (in some cases) excommunication be ordinances of God sanctified for the healing of the souls of God's people gone astray; it were a sacrilegious injury to the Elders, to deprive them of the benefit of such wholesome medicines, when the estate of their souls should come to stand in need thereof: and it being a ruled case, *Cujus est instituere ejus est destituere*; If *Plebs obsequens præceptis Dominicis & ipsa* (as *Cyprian* saith, *lib. 1. Ep. 4.*) *maximè potestatem habet dignos Sacerdotes eligendi*, then, as he saith there also, *potestatem etiam habet Sacerdotes indignos recusandi, & abdicandi*.

On the other side, the Elders have rule over the Church, and do express it in sundry acts of authority: as,

1. In *calling the Church together* upon any weighty occasion, *Acts* 6:2.
2. In *opening the doors of speech and silence* to any of the Assembly,

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*Acts* 13:15 unless it be where the Elders themselves lie under offence or suspicion of offence; and the offended parties may begin with them, *Acts* 11:2. yet with due reverence observed, as to their years, so to their place, 1 *Timothy* 5:1.

3. In *preaching the Word*, the Elders have power to *teach* and *exhort*, to *charge, command*, to *reprove*, and *rebuke*, with all authority, 1 *Timothy* 5:7 & 6:17. 2 *Thessalonians* 3:6. *Titus* 2:15.

4. In *dispensing all the censures of the Church* (unless it be in their own cause:) for though they take the *consent of the Church*, in dispensing a censure, yet they set it on with great authority, in the *Name of the Lord*;

yea, it is no small power they put forth in *directing the Church what censure is due*, according to the Word; as in our native country, though the *Judge* dispense no sentence but according to the *verdict of the Jury*, yet his authority is great, both in directing the Jury to give in their verdict, according to the law, and in pronouncing sentence with power and terror according to the law, and their verdict. The like do the Elders, in dispensing Church-censures.

5. The Elders have power to *dismiss the Church*, and that with a blessing, *Numbers 6:23 to 26* which is an act of superiority, *Hebrews 7:7*.

6. In case of the Apostasy of the Church, or of other notorious scandal committed by them, and their obstinacy therein, the Elders have power to *denounce the Judgement of God against the Church*, and to withdraw themselves from it. As upon the Idolatry of the *Israelites*, *Moses took the Tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp*, Exodus 33:7. and *Paul with Barnabas, rejected the Jews for their blasphemy, and turned to the Gentiles*, Acts 13:45,46.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SECT. I.

WE come now to that last part of our order, which standeth in our *communion with other Churches amongst our selves*; though one Church claim no power, either of *Ordination* or *Jurisdiction*, over another, (for we know of none such given us by Christ) yet we maintain *Brotherly communion* one with another, so far at we may

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also help forward our mutuall communion with the Lord Jesus. The communion of Saints is accounted an Article of the Creed; and communion of Churches is but a branch thereof. Seven *ways* there be, wherein we exercise holy communion one with another; which for distinction and memories sake, we may summe up in so many short names: First, by way of *Participation*: secondly, of *Recommendation*: thirdly, of *Consultation*: fourthly, of *Congregation*: fifthly of *Contribution*: sixthly, of *Admonition*: seventhly, of *Propagation*, or *multiplication* of Churches.

1. For Participation, we have occasionally spoken of it before; it is allowed by the consent of our Churches; that when the members of any other Church are occasioned to rest with us on the Lords day, when the Supper cometh to be administred, (and neither the persons themselves, nor the Churches they come from, lie under any publike offence) we do admit them to the *participation* of the Lords Table with us: For we look at the Lords Supper, not only as a seal of our communion with the *Lord Jesus*, but also of our communion with his *members*; and that not only with the members of our *own Church*, but of *all the Churches* of the Saints.

## Sect. II.

**B**Y way, of *Recommendation*, we communicate one with another in this wise; When any of our members by occasion of business is called to reside and continue for any time in another "Towne, we give him *Letters of recommendation* unto the Church in that place, giving testimony of him as of a Brother approved, and intreating them so receive him in the Lord, (as becometh Saints) unto holy Communion with them, and *to watch over him in Brotherly love, to his building up in fellowship with the Lord Jesus*: The patterne wherof we take from *Pauls recommendation of Phebe* (a Deaconesse of the Church of *Cenchrea*) unto the Church of *Rome, Rom. 16. 1, 2*. Of which Letters he maketh mention also to the Church of *Corinth*, though not as needfull for himselfe, but for others, *2 Cor. 3. 1*. But if a Brother have necessary *occasion to remove himselfe and his family for all together unto another Church*, and there to take up his settled habitation, for the necessary impoyment of

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his calling, or for other just ends, he acquainteth the *Elders* of the Church, and some of his intimate friends and brethren, and it may be (if conveniency permit) the whole Church with the grounds of his removall; which if they do appeare to them to be just and weightie, they then write more *ample Letters of recommendation unto "that Church* in his behalfe; wherein they do recommend him *wholly to their charge*; now not as *one of themselves*, but as one of *theirs*, to whom they do resigne him, and intreat them to receive him as a Brother, beloved in the Lord, unto all those Christian liberties, and holy duties, wherein they are wont to

Communicate with their own members, unto all spiritual growth in Christ Jesus.”[“?”quote ends here?”] Which Letters, because they do so fully recommend a Brother unto another Church, are to dismiss him from his owne; we therefore for distinction sake, call them *Letters of dismission*; which indeed do not differ from the other, but that the former recommendeth him to another Church *for a time*, these *for ever*.

The Brother thus dismissed to another Church, bringeth his letters to the *Elder* of that Church, who reading them before the Church, *demandeth* the Churches content for his acceptance. If he be well knowne and approved of them, they expresse their consent, either by lifting up of hands, or by silence: but if the man be wholly unknowne, and doubted of by them, though they reserve due honour to the testimony of the Church which sent them, yet for as much as Churches may erre sometimes, as well in judgement of *persons*, as of *doctrines*; (*Hanc veniam petimusq; damusq; vicissim*) we take libertie to take some tryall of his spirit and gifts, and then either upon his just approbation of him, we receive him, or if we see just occasion of offence in him, we returne him with the cause back againe to his owne Church, who receiveth him againe into her own fellowship, and takes care for his healing; for we look at our Church-Covenant, as an everlasting Covenant, *Jer. 50. 51*. And therefore though it may be *translated* or *resigned* from one Church to another, as God’s hand shall direct, yet it is not to be *rejected* or *violated by us*, but onely by the members *cutting off himself* from the fellowship of the Church by such demerit, as exposeth him to the just censure of Excommunication. But if a member be importunately desirous to remove wholly from  
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the Church where he is unto another, and yet the grounds of his removall favour of nothing, but levitie, or covetousness, or schisme, or the like, according to their Covenant of brotherly love, and faithfulness; the brethren of his own Church labour to convince him of his sinfull weaknesse, herein to dissuade him from his purpose, to which counsell, God usually toweth his heart to stoop and submit: But if after all their dissuasions, they shall see the bent of his spirit unremovably set upon removall; in such a case, if his sinne be not apparent, and his danger imminent, they use indulgence towards him, as not willing to make the Church of God a prison to any man. But when men thus depart, God usually followeth them with a bitter curse: either taking away their lives



from them, or blasting them with povertie, or exposing them to scandall where they come, or in entertaining them with such restlesse agitations, that they are driven to repent of their former rashnesse, and many times to desire to returne to the Church, from which they had broken away.

## SECT. III.

Our third way of communion with other Churches, is by way of *Consolation*, whereof we have given some touch before; as

1. In time of the *gathering of a Church*, the Brethren who desire to enter into Church-estate, do give notice to all the Churches about them, and desire the presence of their *Elders*, and of such other Brethren as they shall see meete to send to helpe them with their counsell, in discovering the spirits and competent gifts of such members, as should joyne with them in that worke; And further, to give counsell, and direction, in the ordering of that day; as hath been shewed above.

2. In the *choice and ordination of Officers*, one Church is wont to send all the rest about them, for such *Elders*, and Brethren, as may give counsell and direction to their proceedings, and approbation of the same, as the matter shall require; as hath been formerly delivered.

3. In case of *difference of judgement amongst the Brethren of a Church, in the administration of Church-Censure*, and the like, to prevent all suspicion of partiality or preudice, the Church is same

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time soccasioned to send to the neighbour-Churches (one or more) for the assistance of some of their *Elders*, and Brethren, to helpe them with their counsell, in discovering and judging of the causes depending amongst them, who giving advice according to the Word, do by the blessings of Christ heale jealousies, and compose differences, and settle peace and love amongst them; and this also hath been mentioned before.

4. In *doubtfull cases arising in the Church*, whether of *judgement or practice*; where yet no difference hath risen, but all or most are *uncertaine, what were fit to be done*; as whether a child may be baptized by right of his *Grand-fathers Covenant*, or the like; the Church doth sometimes send Letters or Messengers, to crave the counsel of other Churches; who deliberate by considering and arguing the matter, and agree upon what they conceive most agreeable to the Word; each Church sendeth their

judgements, and their reasons, either by *Elders*, or by Messengers, to the Church that sent to them.

## SECT. IV.

A Fourth way of our communion with other Churches, is by way of *Congregation*, or gathering together many Churches, or the messengers of many Churches to examine and discuss, either some corrupt opinions, or suspicious practices, which being scattered, and found in many Churches at once, cannot well be healed in any one alone. In which case the Elders of the Churches; do both acquaint our *Magistrates*, being nursing fathers to the Church, with the necessary occasions and ends of a generall and a solemn assembly, and do also solicit the *Churches* to send some fit persons, at such a time, to such a Church (where assembly be most seasonably held) to consider and discern of the matter in question and agitation.

The assembly being met in the name of Christ, and his presence called for by humble and earnest prayer, the matters to be discussed and cleared, are propounded by some or other of the Elders of that Church, where we meet, or by some other appointed by them, and consented to by the assembly.

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When the matters are propounded, the Elders do declare their judgements of the points in order, one after another, together with their reasons from the Word, at which time it is free for any man present (and all may be present, if they will) as well the Messengers of the Churches as others, (after leave orderly craved or obtained) to propound their doubts, without offence) whence disputation doth arise (as in *Act. 15. 7.*) till all parties be either, satisfied or convinced, and so the matters in controversie are cleared and this course is taken for the clearing of all the points remaining, which may seem to some not so fully cleared, and agreed upon, and the nature of them such as may admit further discussion; yea, and difference of apprehension, whout disunion of affection, or disturbaunce of the Churches peace; yet for satisfaction of God's people the mean while, in such things each man is left to his Christian liberty: So farre *as thy are all come*, they judge and mind *one thing*; *If any be otherwise minded who in simplicity of heart seeketh the touch, and in meekness of wisdom and love*

*holdeth forth the same, we hope God will in time reveale the same unto him: in the mean time all agreeing in this one, not to condemn, nor to despise one another in differences of weaknesse, according to the Apostles rule, Rom. 14. 2, 3, 4.*

## SECT. V.

**A** Fifth way of communion with other Churches, is by *contribution*, or communication in yeelding supply to one anothers wants: for (according to the ancient president, in the Primitive Churches) if any of our Brethren should fall into such decay as not to be able to supply, their own necessties, in outward things amongst themselves, we should take it our bounden duty, to minister to their wants, according to our abilities, *Act. 11. 29, 30. Rom. 15. 25, 26.* Hitherto, the Lord hath been pleased, out of his all-sufficient goodness, so to supply us all, (each Church within it self) as that we have had scarce (any occasion never but once) to exercise our mutuall love and liberality to one another in this kind; but if need should require, we consider aforehand what mutuall help God requireth of us from one towards another in such a case.

Also, if any of our Churches do want some fit members to im-

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ploy in some publike office amongst them and shall make known their want of some other Church, who may abound in such blessings, (sometimes the Church at Antioch had four or five Propphets among them, *Act. 13. 1.* when others wanted) the Church that aboundeth in such helps, is ready to send and commend such of their members as their selves may spare, and are fit for office, (but not called to office amongst themselves) to supply the necessities of their Brethren.

## SECT. VI.

**A** Sixth way of communion amongst our Churches, is by way of *Admonition*: as if one Church should be credibly given to understand, of some scandall arising in another Church whether by *corruption of doctrine*, or *in manners*, and upon diligent search and inquiry, the report is found true; the Church hearing thereof, sendeth Letters, or Messengers, or both, unto the Elders of that Church, where such offence is found,

and exhorteth them to take a speedy and diligent court for the redress thereof; but if the Elders of that Church should be remiss therein (or be faulty themselves) they then certifie the whole Church thereof, to call upon their officers, as *Paul* sent to the Church of *Coloss*, to call upon *Archippus*, to take diligent heed to the fullfilling of that work of the Ministry, which hee had received of the Lord (*Col. 4. 17.*) If the Church heare them, the scandall is removed; if it heare them not, the Church offended herewith, taketh in the help of two or three Churches more to joyne with them in their exhortation, or admonition.

If still the Church where the offence lieth persisteth in the neglect of their duty, and of the counsell of their Brethren; either the matter would be referred to a *Congregation of many, or all the Churches together*; (if need should require) or else, if the offence be evident and weighty, and of ill, though not generall consequence, the Churches offended with them would (as justly they might) withdraw themselves from the right hand of fellowihip, and so forbear all such exercises of mutuall brotherly communion with them, which all the Churches of Christ are wont to walk in one towards another. We have never yet been put to the utmost extent of this duty to-

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wards; of our Churches: The Lord hitherto so farre preventing with his grace, that no Church hath stood out so long in maintaining any offence found amongst them: But if it should so fall out, (which God forbid) we look it as our dutie to be faithfull, one Church to another in like sort as the Brethren of the same Church are called to faithfull one towards another; Doe not Churches injoy brotherly Communion one with another, as well as brethren of the same Church? The Church in the *Canticles* tooke care, not onely for her own members, but for her little sister, which had no breasts, *Cant. 8. 8.* And would shee have taken no care of having her breasts healed, if her breasts had been distempered, and given corrupt milke? The Apostles had a public care (by vertue of their office) of all the Churches, *2 Cor. 11. 28.* And is the public spirit of grace and love dead with them? ought not all the Churches of Christ, to have a care and watchfull eye over the publick good of one another? Though not *virtute officii*, yet *intuitu charitatis*.

## SECT. VII.

**T**He seventh and last way of the Communion of our Churches, is by way of *propagation*, or multiplication of Churches, Though this was a peculiar eminency of the Apostolike calling for them in their life-times to travel into all Nations, to preach the Gospel, to beget Disciples, to gather them into Church-estate, and so to plant Churches wheresoever they came: yet that which they did by vertue of their office, is reserved unto the Churches of Christ, to prosecute and carry along (according to their measure) throughout all generations, and in all Nations, for the inlargemnt of the kingdome of Christ, unto the end of the world.

The power of the keys, which was immediately given by Christ unto his Apostles, is also given by Christ unto all the Churches, in that fulnesse of measure, which the establishment and enlargement of Christs kingdom, doth require.

If then any particular Church of Christ shall come in processe of time to be so farre multiplyed, as that like Bees when the hive is too full they are necessarily occasioned to swarme forth (as it is Indeede the case when the voice of their Ministers cannot reach to

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all) in such, or in the like case, the Church surcharged with multitude, may send forth sundry of their members, fit for the purpose, to enter into Church-estate amongst themselves; or if a number of godly Christians shall come over into a Countrey, where they finde the Church so full that they cannot with conveniency joyne with them, the Church may comfortably encourage them, to enter into holy Covenant amongst themselves. They may also commend both unto the one Company, and unto the other, such able gifted men, whom they may fitly choose, to be Minister and Officers to them, and both then when they enter into Covenant and gather into Church-estate, (as hath been shewed in he beginning) as also when they goe about to choose and ordaine Church-Officers amongst themselves, the Churches already established ought to be ready to helpe them, with their presence, counsell and assistance, so farre as shall be found requisite for the propagation and enlargement of the kingdome of Christ, in the multiplication of Churches according to the order of the Gospel.

Thus have we given unto all our holy Brethren, throughout the Churches of our Lord Jesus, a just and true account of all our proceedings in Church-affaires; so farre as concerneth our way and order amongst our selves. If we fall short of the Rule in some thing or other goe astray, it is our humble and earnest request unto all our godly learned Brethren, that they will be pleased, *Erranti comiter monstrare viam*; but if the way we walke in be upon serious and mature consideration, to be agreeable the roles of the Gospel (as we verily beleeve it is) let all the upright in heart be entreated, in the name of the Lord Jesus, not to judge or speake evil of the wayes of Christ before his people; But rather seeke how to addresse themselves, and to call on others to walke in the straight steps of the Lord Jesus, in the kingdome of his grace, till we shall all come to meete him in the kingdome of his glory.

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## CHAP. VII.

# Of the way of reformation in the Congregations in England.

### SECT. I.

**W**e take not upon us as *ἄλλοτριεπίσκοποι*, to prescribe unto our Brethren in *England*, (men of their Churches, and eminent lights in the world) what course to take in pursuing and perfecting the great worke of Reformation in *England*, Nay, we know our own *Tenuity*, and the store of business enough which we have to attend unto neere home: Nevertheless, as we cannot cease to pray for, and seek their good as our own; so we cannot but rejoyce with them to behold that open doore which God hath set before them, and with that all their hearts were so far enlarged towards the Lord, and to his wayes, as we hear his hand is enlarged towards them. Onely being absent in body, but present in spirit, we crave leave to beare witness to them, and with them; That if the

Lord be pleased to prosper his worke amongst them, it is possible to reduce the estate of the Congregations in *England*, to such reformation, as is suitable to the patterne revealed in the Gospel, according to the way of Primitive simplicitie, described above.

Four things we observe in the estate of the Churches in *England*, which make way for Reformations amongst them.

First, The *efficient* instruments of their first plantation, which were either *Apostles*, or *Apostolical men*, whether *Philip*, or *Joseph of Arimathea*, or *Simon Zelotes*, as any of our Countrymen may reade in M<sup>r</sup>. *Foxes booke of Acts and Monuments*, in the beginning of it, next after the story of the ten Primitive Persecutions, our of *Gildas*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Beda*, *Nicephorus*. Which being so, we cannot but conceive the Churches in *England* were *rightly gathered*, and planted according to the Rule of the Gospel; and all, the corruptions found in them since, have sprung from Popish Apostasie in succeeding ages, and from want of through and perfect Purging out of that leaven in the late times of Reformation in the dayes of our Fathers. So that all the worke now is, not to *make*  
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*them Churches*, which were none before, but to reduce and restore them to their *Primitive Institution*.

Secondly, The *publick Service-booke* acknowledgeth, That in the Primitive Church, there was a godly Discipline; That notorious sinners were put to open penance, and punished in this world; that both their soules might be saved in the day of the Lord and others admonished by their example, might be the more afraid to offend. Which godly Discipline, is a thing (saith the Booke) much to be desired, that it might be restored again. See the beginning of the *Comminations against sinners*. It is therefore acknowledged by the very state of the Churches of *England*, that the present estate of Church discipline, is not perfect, but defective, and swerving from the Primitive godly discipline.

Thirdly, In the *publick Rubrick* before the *Catechism*, it is ordered, That when children come to yeares of discretion, and have learned what others promised for them in *Bapsisme*, they should then themselves with their own mouth, and with their own consent, openly before the Church ratifie and confirme the same: And also promise, that by the grace of God, they will evermore endeavour themselves, faithfully to observe and keep such things as by their own mouth and confession they have

assented to. Which course the Booke in a few words after acknowledgeth to be agreeable with the usage of the Church of times past, That children coming to perfect age, having been instructed in Christian Religion, should openly profess their own faith, and promise to be obedient to the will of God. Which direction (if it were as duly observed, as it is expresly ordered) doth plainly hold forth, that the Church of *England* (as they call it) doth not acknowledge any to be confirmed members of the Church, and unfit to partake of the Lords Supper, till they have expresly confessed their faith openly before the Church, and promised obedience to the will of God. Which if it be seriously done, and not perfunctorily, is somewhat of like nature with our receiving of members into the Church, and joyning them by Covenant.

Fourthly, In the *Exhortation before the Communion*, the Minister is directed to denounce unto the people, That if any of them be a blasphemer of God, an hinderer or slanderer of his Word, an adulterer, or be in malice, or envie, or in any other grievous

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“crime, they should bewaile their sinnes, and not come to that holy Table, lest after the taking of that Sacrament, the Devill enter into them, as he entered into *Judas*, &c.” Which plainly argueth, they would allow no scandalous person to partake in the Communion of the Lords Table: All these things presupposed, really performed, and seriouly attended to, might open a doore to sundry passages of a more full and perfect Reformation.

## SECT. II.

### *TENDERING CERTAIN PROPOSITIONS TENDING TO THE REFORMATION OF THE CHURCHES IN ENGLAND.*

*Propos.* WHere godly Miniurers be already planted in any Congregations, let them (with due encouragement from the State) call the people to solemne humiliation before the Lord for their own sins, & those of their fathers they have imitated. So did *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*, with the Levites and Priests, and upon the like ocasions, *Nehem.* 9. 2. 2, 3, 4. *Ezra* 10. 1, 2. 9, 10. For though the Parliament, & the whole Kingdome have *protested*, and *Covenanted* Reformation for the time to come, yet they have cause also to be humbled, and that throughly for the time past.



2. Let such of the people, is are of good knowledge in the wayes of God, and of approved conversation, take up that course which the Service-book (as hath been said) giveth an hint of; *Renue their Covenant formerly made in Baptisme, professing their faith and repentance, and promising Reformation of life, not onely in their private conversation, but also in their publick Communion in the Church of God, yeelding professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ in the fellowship of all his holy Ordinances.*

3. Let no Minister, that loves the Lord Jesus better then his own belly, stand upon his *advocation* from his *Patron*, but rather expect his *vocation* from his *people*.

4. For this end let every patron restore his *jus patronatus* to the Church. Or if it seeme too hard a thing for them to part so freely with their freehold, (though they ought freely to give unto Christ, who have received freely from him) the Parliament may be pleased to give them a competent part of the revenues of the Benefice,

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(as they call it) and annex it to their own private inheritance, reserving so much to the use of the Church, as may strengthen their hands in a sufficient maintenance of their Ministry; for though *things dedicated to sacred use, cannot be alienated, or diverted to private use without sacrilege*, yet that holdeth in such things as are so dedicated to sacred use, *as that the Lord accepted, as sacred to himselfe*: But God nowhere in the new Testament, hath expressed his acceptance, or allowance of lands, dedicated to the ministry, but onely to the service of the whole Church, and then for the Churches service they may be disposed of by their consent; as sometimes the Kings and Princes of Israel gave away the treasures of the Temple, to save themselves from captivitie, *2 King. 18. 15, 16.*

5. The people having called or chosen their Minister (one or more unto office in a day of humiliation, let them in the presence of the Ministers of other Churches depute some of the gravest and godly members of the Church, to lay their hands upon him, with prayer over him in the name of the Lord, letting him apart to that office. The whole Congregation are said to *anoint Zadok* to the office of an *high Priest*, as well as *Solomon to be King, 2 Chron. 29. 22.* Which is a sacred right, as Imposition of hands and this the whole body, of them could not do, but by deputing some eminent persons among them to the performance thereof: But after they be furnished with Elders, (a *Presbytery* of their

owne) let Imposition of hands be given by them (according to 1 *Tim.* 4. 14.) to such as for the future shall be ordained.

6. For the making up of a Presbytery, in stead of *Parson* and *Vicar* (wherewith some Congregations are endowed) let them choose *Pastors* and *Teachers*; and *Ruling Elders*, in stead of those who crept into their roome, *viz.* the *Church-wardens*, and *Sidesmen*. But let them choose and ordaine them in a day of humiliation (according to *Acts* 14. 23.) and not for a yeare onely, but during life; and let the *Presbyteries* of all neighbour Churches, take all opportunities to make use one of another, for brotherly consultation, but not for Jurisdiction, and Authoritie one over another. And in stead *Collectors* or *Overseers* for the poore (who crept into the roome *Deacons*) let *Deacons* be chosen as hath been shewed above; but not as members of the *Presbytery*.

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7. For set forms of prayer, or prescript Liturgies, let them not be enjoyed unto the Ministers of the Churches; but let the Ministers as well give up themselves wholly unto prayer, as to the Ministry of the Word, *Act.* 6. 4.

8. Baptisme may orderly be administred to the children of such parents, as have professed their faith and repentance before the Church, as above. Or where either of the parents have made such profession; or it may be considered also whether the children may not be baptized, where either the grand-father or grand-mother have made such profession, and are still living to undertake for the Christian education of the childe; for it may be conceived where there is a stipulation of the Covenant on God's part, and a restipulation on mans part, there may be an obligation of the Covenant on both parts, *Gen.* 17. 7. O if these faile, what hindereth, but that if the parents will resigne their infant to be educated in the house of any godly member of the Church, the childe may be lawfully baptized in the right of its household Governour, according to the proportion of the law, *Gen.* 17. 12, 13.

9. Let the Lords Supper be administred onely to such, as have so professed their faith and repentance publickly, and are received & approved members of the Church, endued with sufficient knowledge, to examine themselves, and to discern the Lords body: free from scandall, and of good conversation.

10. Let Officers in the Church, be redressed, and removed, not by presentments to Officers of other Churches, but according to the order of the Gospel, described above, *Chap. 5. sect. 1, 2, 3.*

11. Where the Ministers of the Congregation are ignorant or scandalous, meet it is that they were removed, and better chosen in their roome by the people; according to the counsell & direction of the godly Ministers and brethren of neighbour Churches, *Hos. 4. 6.*

12. Where the people in a Congregation are generally ignorant and profane, it were necessary godly Preachers were sent forth with countenance from the King and State, to preach unto them, till they were brought onto knowledge, and to some measure of gracious reformation. Thus *Jehosaphat* sent forth Priest and Levites, to teach in the Cities of *Judah*, and certaine Princes and Nobles with them, to countenance the good worke in their hands, 2 *Chron. 17.7, 8, 9.*

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13. Till the people be in some sort duly prepared, and growne up to some measure of knowledge, and grace, it were neither meet to receive them to a renewing of their Covenant formerly made at their Baptisme, or to the seales of it. But after they have been wrought upon by the Ministry of the Word, *to lament after the Lord; as the Israelites* did when the Arke had been long absent from them, 1 *Sam. 7. 29.* then let them proceed as other godly Christians were directed to do, *Propos. 2, 3, &c.* for *renewing* of their Covenant, for *choice of their Ministers, and Officers,* and for *Communication* in all the liberties of the Church of God.

14. For the helpe of the Universities (of the whole Kingdom, and of all the Churches in it) it were necessary, that some experienced godly learned Nobles and Ministers were deputed, to visite and reforme the Universities; That subscriptions to Ceremonies and prescript Liturgies were removed; That degrees in Divinitie were not abused unto qualifications for pluralities, and non-residency, nor allowed in the Ministers of Churches, to put a difference between brethren of the same calling, whence Christ hath removed it, *Matt. 23. 8, 9, 10.* The *Καθηγητής* there mentioned) is not to be translated *Master;* for it is a Title common to all Ministers, but Doctors; and the Academicall title of Doctors fitter for Master of Colledges, & Readers in the Schooles, then for Church-officers. Here also speciall care would be taken for setting up of such Preachers in both the

Universities, as whose spirit, and gift, and Ministry, might be exemplary patterns to young Students.

15. For the effectuall and orderly expedition and transaction of all these things, it were requisite, that as King *Jehosaphat* did, so the King and State should depute some choice persons to do the same, to wit, to goe throughout all the Kingdome, to see the people returned, and all the Churches reprov'd to a true state and course of Reformation, 2 *Chron.* 19. 4.

*All which things are humbly presented by us, not as if we would undertake to give Counsell them that are wiser then our selves, much lesse, Injunctions; But as Subjects who desire to approve our faithfull service to the Lord, and our King, and Countrey, hold them forth as true Consectaries from the Rules of the Gospel, which should rule us all.*

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