

directs, that it is to be proportioned unto the Work and End designed. Where a Church is *numerous*, there is a necessity of increasing their number proportionable unto their Work. In the days of *Cyprian* there was in the Church of *Carthage* Ten or Twelve of them that are mentioned by Name; And at the same time, there were a great many in the Church of *Rome* under *Cornelius*. Where the Churches are small, the number of *Elders* may be so also. For no Office is appointed in the Church for *pomp* or *show*, but for *labour* only. And so many are necessary in each Office as are able to discharge the Work which is allotted unto them. But that Church, be it small or great, is not compleat in its state, is defective, which hath not *more Elders than one*; who have not so many as are sufficient for their Work.

10. THE Government of the Church, in the judgment and practice of some, is absolutely *Democratical* or *Popular*. They judge that all Church-Power or Authority, is seated and settled in the *Community of the Brethren* or Body of the People. And they look on *Elders* or *Ministers*, only as *Servants of the Church*; not only *materially* in the Duties they perform, and *finally* for their Edification, serving for the good of the Church, in the things of the Church; but *formally* also, as acting the Authority of the Church by a meer delegation, and not any of their own received directly from Christ, by virtue of his Law and Institution. Hence, they do occasionally appoint Persons among themselves not called unto, not vested with any Office, to Administer the *Supper of the Lord*, or any other solemn Offices of Worship. On this principle and supposition, I see no necessity of *any Elders at all*, though usually they do conferr this Office on some with solemnity. But as among them, there is no direct necessity of *any Elders for Rule*, so we treat not at present concerning them.

11. SOME place the Government of many particular Churches in a *Diocesan Bishop*, with those that act under him, and by his Authority, according unto the Rule of the *Canon Law*, and the civil constitution of the Land. These are so far from judging it necessary that there should be *many Elders for Rule*

in every particular Church, is that they allow no Rule *in them* at all, but only assert a Rule *over them*. But a Church, where there is no Rule in it self, to be exercised in the Name of Christ by its own Rulers, Officers, Guides, immediatly presiding in it, is unknown to Scripture and Antiquity. Wherefore, with these we deal not in this Discourse; nor have any apprehension, that the power of presenting Men, for any pretended Disorder, unto the *Bishops* or *Chancellors Court*, is any part of Church-Power or Rule.

12. OTHERS place the Rule of particular Churches, especially in cases of greatest moment, in an *Association, Conjunction* or *Combination* of all the Elders of them in one Society, which is commonly called a *Classis*. So in all Acts of Rule, there will be a conjunct acting of many Elders. And, no doubt it is the best provision that can be made on a supposition of the continuance of the present *Parochial Distribution*. But those also of this judgment, who have most weighed and considered the nature of these things, do assert the necessity of *many Elders* in every particular Church, which is the common judgment and practice of the *Reformed Churches* in all places.

13. AND some there are, who begin to maintain, That there is no need of any more but *One Pastor, Bishop, or Elder*, in a particular Church, which hath its Rule in its self; other Elders for Rule being unnecessary. This is a *Novel Opinion*, contradictory to the sense and practice of the Church in all Ages. And I shall prove the contrary.

1. THE pattern of the First Churches constituted by the Apostles, which it is our Duty to imitate and follow as our Rule, constantly expresseth and declares, That *many Elders* were appointed by them in every Church, *Act. 11. 30. Chap. 14. 23. Chap. 15. 2, 4, 6, 22. Chap. 16. 4. Chap. 20. 17, &c. 1 Tim. 5. 17. Phil. 1. 1. Tit. 1. 5. 1 Pet. 5. 1.* There is no mention in the Scripture, no mention in Antiquity, of any Church wherein there was not *more Elders than One*, nor doth that Church answer the *Original Pattern*, where it is otherwise.

2. WHERE there is *but one Elder* in a Church, there cannot be an *Eldership* or *Presbytery*; as there cannot be a *Senate* where

where there is but one *Senator*; which is contrary unto
1 *Tim.* 4. 14.

3. THE *continuation* of every Church in its original State and Constitution, is, since the ceasing of extraordinary Offices and Powers, committed to the Care and Power of the Church it self. Hereunto the Calling and Ordaining of ordinary *Officers*, Pastors, Rulers, Elders, Teachers, do belong. And therein, as we have proved, both the *Election* of the People, submitting themselves unto them in the Lord, and the solemn setting of them apart by *Imposition* of Hands, do concur. But if there be but One Elder only in a Church, upon his Death or Removal, this Imposition of Hands must either be left unto the People, or be supplied by Elders of other Churches; or be wholly omitted, all which are irregular. And that Church-Order is *defective*, which wants the *Symbol* of Authoritative Ordination.

4. IT is difficult, if not impossible, on a supposition of One Elder only in a Church, to preserve the Rule of the Church from being *Prelatical* or *Popular*. There is nothing more frequently objected unto those who dissent from *Diocesan Bishops*, than that they would every one be *Bishops* in their own *Parishes*, and unto their own People. All such pretences are excluded on our principles, of the Liberty of the People, of the necessity of *many Elders* in the same Church in an equality of Power, and the Communion of other Churches in Association: But practically where there is but One Elder, one of the extremes can be hardly avoided. If he *Rule by himself*, without the *previous Advice* in some cases, as well as the *subsequent consent* of the Church, it hath an eye of unwarrantable Prelacy in it: If every thing be to be Originally Transacted, Disposed, Ordered by the *whole Society*, the *Authority of the Elder* will quickly be insignificant, and he will be little more in point of Rule, than any other Brother of the Society. But all these Inconveniencies are prevented by the fixing of *many Elders* in each Church, which may maintain the Authority of the *Presbytery*, and free the Church from the *Despotal* Rule of any *Diotrephes*. But in case there be *but one* in any Church, unless he have

Wisdom to maintain the Authority of the *Eldership* in his own Person and Actings, there is no Rule but Confusion.

5. THE nature of the Work whereunto they are called, requires, that in every Church consisting in any considerable number of Members, there should be *more Elders than One*. When God first appointed *Rule* in the Church under the Old Testament, he assigned unto every *Ten Persons*, or *Families*, a *distinct Ruler*, *Deut. 1. 15*. For the Elders are to take care of the *Walk* or *Conversation* of all the Members of the Church, that it be according unto the Rule of the Gospel. This Rule is eminent as unto the holiness that it requires, above all other Rules of moral Conversation whatever. And there is in all the Members of the Church great Accuracy and Circumspection required in their walking after it and according unto it. The *Order* also and *Decency* which is required in all Church-Assemblies, stands in need of exact care and inspection. That all these things can be attended unto, and discharged in a due manner in any Church by One Elder, is for them only to suppose who know nothing of them. And, although there may be an appearance for a season of all these things in such Churches, yet there being not therein a due compliance with the Wisdom and Institution of Christ, they have no present Beauty, nor will be of any long continuance.

THESE considerations, as also those that follow, may seem *jejune* and contemptible unto such as have another frame of *Church-Rule* and *Order* drawn in their Minds and Interests. A Government vested in some few Persons, with Titles of Pre-eminence and Legal Power, exercised in Courts with Coercive Jurisdiction, by the Methods and Processes of *Canons* of their own framing, is that which they suppose doth better become the *Grandeur* of Church-Rulers, and the State of the Church, than these *Creeping Elders* with their Congregations. But, whereas our present enquiry after these things, is only in and out of the Scripture, wherein there is neither shadow nor appearance of any of these *practices*, I beg their pardon, if at present I consider them not.

10. WE shall now make Application of these things unto our present purpose. I say then, (1.) Whereas there is a *Work of Rule* in the Church, distinct from that of *Pastoral Feeding*. (2.) Whereas this Work is to be attended unto with *diligence*, which includes the whole Duty of him that attends unto it. And, (3.) That the *Ministry of the Word and Prayer*, with all those Duties that accompany it, is a *full Employment* for any Man, and so consequently his principal and proper Work, which it is unlawful for him to be remiss in by attending on another with *Diligence*. And, (4.) Whereas there ought to be *many Elders* in every Church, that both the Works of *Teaching and Ruling* may be constantly attended unto. (5.) That in the Wisdom of the Holy Ghost, *distinct Works* did require *distinct Offices* for their discharge; all which we have proved already; our enquiry hereon is, *Whether the same Holy Spirit, hath not distinguished this Office of Elders into those two sorts, namely, those who are called unto Teaching and Rule also; and those who are called unto Rule only*, which we Affirm.

THE Testimonies whereby the Truth of this Assertion is confirmed, are generally known and pleaded; I shall insist on some of them only, beginning with that which is of *uncontrovertible evidence*, if it had any thing to conflict withal but prejudices and interest; and this is *1 Tim. 5. 17.* οἱ κληρῶς περισώπτις πρεσβύτεροι διπλῆς τιμῆς ἀξιάδωσθ'· μάλιστα οἱ κροπι-
 ὄντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλίᾳ. Πρεσίτημι or πρεσίτημαι, is *Prasum, Præsidio*; to Preside, to Rule. *Præsident probati Seniores*. Tertull. And the *Bishop or Pastor* in *Justin Martyr*, is ὁ πρεσβύτωσ. So is the Word constantly used in the New Testament, *Rom. 12. 8.* ὁ προϊστάμενος, that *Ruleth*; *1 Thess. 5. 12.* προϊσταμένους ὑμῶν, that are over them, that is, *in place of Rule*, *1 Tim. 3. 4, 5, 12.* It is applied unto *Family Rule* and Government, as it is also unto care and diligence about good Works, *Tit. 3. 8. 14.* πρεσβασία is the whole *Presidency* in the Church, with respect unto its Rule. Translators agree in the reading of these Words, so the *Hebrew of Munster*, וקני העדה אשר משיבים לנהג, *The Elders of the Congregation who well discharge their Rule or Conduct*. So the *Syriack*, קעושא אילין, *Those Elders. Qui bene prasunt*

presunt Presbyteri; Vul. Lat. Seniori che Governano bene; Ital. All agree that it is the Governours and the Government of the Church in general that is here intended. *Μάρισα* is the Word most controverted. All Translators esteem it *distinctive*, *Heb.* ועלה, *Eminently*; *Syr.* יתראור, *Chiefly, Principally*; *Maxime.* *וינועים*, *who labour painfully, labour to weariness*; travail in the Word and Doctrine.

THE Elders or Presbyters in Office, Elders of the Church that Rule well, or discharge their Presidency for Rule in due manner, are worthy, or ought to be reputed worthy of double honour; especially those of them who labour, or are engaged in the great labour and travail of the Word and Doctrine.

AND some things may be observed in general concerning these words.

1. *THIS* Testimony relates directly unto the *Rules and Principles* before laid down, directing unto the practice of them. According to the *Analogy* of these Principles, these Words are to be interpreted. And unless they are overthrown, it is to no purpose to put in exceptions against the sense of this or that Word; the Interpretation of them is to be suited unto the *Analogy* of the things which they relate unto. If we consider not what is spoken here in consent with other Scriptures treating of the same matter, we depart from all sober Rules of Interpretation.

2. *ON* this supposition, the Words of the Text have a *plain and obvious signification*, which at first view presents it self unto the common sense and understanding of all Men. And where there is nothing contrary unto any other Divine Testimony, or Evident Reason, such a sense is constantly to be embraced. There is nothing here of any *Spiritual Mystery*; but only a direction concerning *outward Order* in the Church. In such cases the *literal sense* of the Words rationally apprehended, is all that we are concerned in. But on the first Proposal of this Text, That *the Elders that Rule well, are worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the Word and Doctrine*; a rational

Man who is unprejudiced, who never heard of the Controversy about *Ruling Elders*, can hardly avoid an Apprehension that there are *two sort of Elders*, some that labour in the Word and Doctrine, and some who do not so do. The Truth is, it was Interest and Prejudice that first caused some *learned Men* to strain their wits to find out evasions from the evidence of this Testimony: Being so found out, some others of meaner Abilities have been entangled by them. For there is not one new Argument advanced in this cause, not one exception given in unto the fence of the place which we plead for, but what was long since coined by *Papists* and *Prelatists*, and managed with better Colours than some now are able to lay on them, who pretend unto the same judgment.

3. THIS is the substance of the Truth in the Text. There are *Elders in the Church*; there are or ought to be so in every Church. With these Elders the *whole Rule of the Church* is intrusted; all these, and only they, do Rule in it. Of these Elders there are *two sorts*, for a description is given of one sort *distinctive* from the other, and *comparative* with it. The First sort doth *Rule*, and *also labour in the Word and Doctrine*. That these Works are distinct and different was before declared. Yet, as distinct Works, they are not incompatible, but are committed unto the same Person. They are so unto them, who are not *Elders only*, but moreover Pastors or Teachers. Unto Pastors and Teachers, as such, there belongs no Rule; although, by the institution of Christ, the Right of Rule be inseparable from their Office. For all that are rightfully called thereunto are Elders also, which gives them an Interest in Rule. They are Elders with the Addition of Pastoral or Teaching Authority. But there are Elders which are not Pastors or Teachers. For there are some who *Rule well, but labour not in the Word and Doctrine*; that is, who are not Pastors or Teachers.

ELDERS that *Rule well, but labour not in the Word and Doctrine, are Ruling Elders only*; and such are in the Text.

THE most learned of our *Protestant Adversaries* in this case, are *Erastus, Bilson, Sarravia, Downham, Scultetus, Mead, Grozius,*

Grotius, Hamond; who agree not at all among themselves about the sence of the Words: For,

1. **THEIR** whole design and endeavour is to *put in Exceptions* against the obvious sence and interpretation of the Words, not fixing on any determinate exposition of it themselves, such as they will abide by in opposition unto any other sence of the place. Now this is a most *sophistical* way of arguing upon Testimonies, and suited only to make Controversies endless. Whose Wit is so barren, as not to be able to raise one exception or other against the plainest and most evident Testimony? So the *Socinians* deal with us, in all the Testimonies we produce to prove the *Deity* or *Satisfaction* of Christ. They suppose it enough to evade their force, if they can but pretend that the Words are *capable of another sence*; although they will not abide by it, that this or that is their sence. For if they would do so, when that is overthrown the Truth would be established. But every Testimony of the Scripture hath *one determinate sence*. When this is contended about, it is equal that those at difference do express their Apprehensions of the mind of the Holy Spirit in the Word which they will abide by. When this is done, let it be examined and tried, whether of the *two senses* pretended unto, doth best comply with the *signification* and use of the Words, the context or scope of the place, other *Scripture Testimonies*, and the *Analogy* of Faith. No such *Rule* is attended unto in this case by our Adversaries. They think it enough to oppose our sence of the Words, but will not fix upon any of their own, which if it be disproved, ours ought to take place. And hence,

2. **THEY** do not in the least *agree among themselves*, scarce any *Two of them*, on what is the *most probable sence* of the Words, nor are any of them *singly*, well resolved what Application to make of them, nor unto what persons; but only propose things as their conjecture. But of very many opinions or conjectures that are advanced in this case, all of them but of *one*, are accompanied with the modesty of granting that *divers sorts of Elders are here intended*, which, without more than ordinary confidence, cannot be denied: But,

SOME

SOME by *Elders that Rule well*, do understand *Bishops* that are *Diocesans*; and by those that *labour in the Word and Doctrine*, ordinary *Preaching Presbyters*; which plainly gives them the advantage of Preheminence, Reverence and Maintenance above the other.

SOME by *Elders that Rule well*, understand ordinary *Bishops* and *Presbyters*; and by those that *labour in the Word and Doctrine*, *Evangelists*; so carrying the Text out of the present concernment of the Church, *Deacons* are esteemed by some to have an Interest in the Rule of the Church, and so to be intended in the first place; and *Preaching Ministers* in the latter.

SOME speak of two sorts of *Elders*, both of the same Order, or *Ministers*; some that Preach the Word and Administer the Sacraments; and others that are Employed about *inferior Offices*, as *Reading*, and the like, which is the conceit of *Scultetus*.

Mr. MEDE weighs most of these conjectures, and at length prefers one of his own before them all; namely, that by *Elders that Rule well*, *Civil Magistrates* are intended; and by those that *labour in the Word and Doctrine*, the *Ministers of the Gospel*.

BUT some discerning the weakness and improbability of all these Conjectures; and how easily they may be disproved, betake themselves unto a direct denial of that which seems to be plainly asserted in the Text; namely, that there are two sorts of *Elders* here intended and described, which they countenance themselves in, by exception unto the application of some Terms in the Text, which we shall immediately consider.

GROTTUS, as was before intimated, Disputes against the Divine Institution of such Temporary *Lay-Elders* as are made use of in sundry of the Reformed Churches. But when he hath done, he affirms, That it is highly necessary that such conjunct Associates in Rule from among the people, should be in every Church; which he proves by sundry Arguments. And these he would have either nominated by the Magistrate, or chosen by the People.

WHEREFORE, omitting all contests about the forementioned conceits, or any other of the like nature, I shall propose

One Argument from these Words, and vindicate it from the exceptions of those of the latter sort.

PREACHING Elders, although they Rule well, are not worthy of double Honour, unless they labour in the Word and Doctrine.

BUT there are Elders who Rule well that are worthy of double Honour, though they do not labour in the Word and Doctrine.

THEREFORE, there are Elders that Rule well, who are not Teaching or Preaching Elders, that is who are Ruling Elders only.

THE Proposition is evident in its own light from the very Terms of it. For to Preach, is to labour in the Word and Doctrine: Preaching or Teaching Elders, that do not labour in the Word and Doctrine, are Preaching or Teaching Elders that do not Preach or Teach. And to say that Preachers, whose Office and Duty is to Preach, are worthy of that double honour which is due on the account of Preaching, though they do not Preach, is uncouth and irrational. It is contrary to the Scripture, and the Light of Nature, as implying a contradiction, that a Man whose Office it is to Teach and Preach, should be esteemed worthy of double honour on the account of his Office, who doth not as an Officer Teach or Preach.

THE Assumption consists upon the matter, in the very Words of the Apostle. For he who says, *The Elders who Rule well, are worthy of double Honour, especially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine*, saith there are, or may be Elders who Rule well, who do not labour in the Word and Doctrine, that is, who are not obliged so to do.

THE Argument from these Words may be otherwise framed, but this contains the plain sense of this Testimony.

SUNDRY things are excepted unto this Testimony and our Application of it. Those which are of any weight consist in a contest about Two Words in the Text, *μαρτυροῦντες* and *κατακυριεύουσιν*; some place their confidence of Evasion in one of them, and some in another; the Argument from both being inconsistent. If that sense of one of these Words which is pleaded as a Relief against
this

this Testimony be embraced, that which unto the same purpose is pretended to be the sence of the other, must be rejected. Such shifts doth an opposition unto the Truth, put Men to.

1. SOME say that *μεγιστα*, especially, is not *Distinctive*, but *Descriptive* only; that is, it doth not distinguish one sort of Elders from another; but only *describes* that single sort of them by an adjunct of their Office, whereof the Apostle speaks. The meaning of it, they say, is as much as, *seeing that*. The Elders that Rule well, are worthy of double Honour; *seeing that they also labour*; or especially considering that they Labour, &c.

THAT this is the sence of the word, that it is thus to be interpreted, must be proved from the Authority of *Ancient Translations*, or the *use of it* in other places of the New Testament, or from its *precise Signification* and Application in other Authors learned in this Language; or that it is enforced from the *Context*, or Matter treated of.

BUT none of these can be pretended.

1. THE rendring of the word in *old Translations* we have before considered. They agree in *maxime illi qui*; which is *distinctive*.

2. THE use of it in other places of the New Testament is constantly *distinctive*, whether applied to *Things* or *Persons*, *Act. 20. 39. οδυνώμενοι, μεγιστα εν τω λογω*, *Sorrowing chiefly at the word*, of seeing his face no more. Their sorrow herein was *distinct* from all their other trouble, *Gal. 6. 10. Let us do good unto all; μεγιστα δε προς τους οικους τ' πιστους*, but chiefly, especially, unto the household of Faith. It puts a *distinction* between the household of Faith and all others, by virtue of their especial privilege; which is the direct use of the word in that place of the same Apostle, *Phil. 4. 22. All the Saints salute you; μεγιστα οι εν τ' Καισαρ' οικιας*, especially they that are of *Caesar's House*. Two sorts of Saints are plainly expressed; first such as were so in general; such as were so also, but under this especial Privilege and Circumstance, that they were of *Caesar's House*, which the others were not; as it is here

with respect unto Elders: All Rule well, but some moreover labour in the Word and Doctrine, 1 Tim. 5. 8. εἰ δὲ τις τῶν ἰδίων, ἢ μάλιστα τῶν οἰκείων ἐπεχοῦν. *If a man provide not for his own, especial those of his own House; especially Children or Servants, which live in his own House, and are thereby distinguished from others of a more remote Relation.* 2 Tim. 4. 13. *Bring the Books; μάλιστα πῶς μεμβράνας, especially the Parchments; not because they are Parchments; but among the Books, the Parchments in particular, and in an especial manner.* 2 Pet. 2. 9, 10. *The Lord knows how to reserve the Wicked to the Day of Judgment to be punished; μάλιστα ὅ τὸς ὁπίσω σαρκῶς, &c. especially those that walk after the Flesh; who shall be singled out to exemplary Punishment.* It is but once more used in the New Testament; namely, Act. 26. 3. where it includes a distinction in the thing under consideration.

WHEREAS this is the *constant use of the word* in the Scripture, (being principally used by this Apostle in his Writings) wherein it is *distinctive* and *comparative* of the things and persons, that respect is had unto; it is to no purpose to pretend that it is *here used* in another sense, or is otherwise applied; unless they can prove from the Context that there is a necessity of their peculiar Interpretation of it.

3. THE use of the word, in other Authors, is concurrent with that of it in the Scripture, *Herodian. Lib. 2. φιλέορτοι δὲ φύσει σύροι, μάλιστα ὅ τὴ Ἀντιοχείαν κατοικῶντες, The Syrians are naturally lovers of Festivals; especially they that dwell at Antioch.* It is the same phrase of Speech with that here used. For all they that dwelt at *Antioch* were *Syrians*; but all the *Syrians* dwelt not at *Antioch*. There is a *distinction* and *distribution* made of the *Syrians* into two sorts: Such as were *Syrians* only, and such as being *Syrians*, dwelt at *Antioch*, the *Metropolis* of the Country. If a Man should say, that all English Men were Stout and Couragious, especially the *Londoners*; he would both affirm the *Londoners* to be *Englishmen*, and distinguish them from the rest of their Countrymen. So, all that labour in the Word, and Doctrine, are Elders; but all Elders do not labour in the Word and Doctrine.

ctrine, nor is it their Duty so to do; these we call *Ruling Elders*; and, as I judge, rightly.

4. THE fence which the words will give being so interpreted, as that a *distinction of Elders* is not made in them, is absurd; the *subject and predicate* of the Proposition being terms convertible; it must be so, if the Proposition be not allowed to have a Distinction in it. One sort of Elders only, it is said are here intended. I ask who they are, and of what sort? it is said, the same with *Pastors and Teachers, or Ministers of the Gospel*. For if the one sort of Elders intended, be of another sort, we obtain what we plead for, as fully as if two sorts were allowed. Who then are these Elders, these Pastors and Teachers, these Ministers of the Church? Are they not those who *labour in the Word and Doctrine*? Yes, it will be said, it is they and no other. Then this is the fence of the words; Those who labour in the Word and Doctrine, that Rule well, are worthy of double honour, especially if they labour in the Word and Doctrine. For if there be but one sort of Elders; then Elders, and those that labour in the Word and Doctrine, are terms convertible. But Elders, and labour in the Word and Doctrine, are *subject and predicate* in this Proposition.

WHEREFORE, there are few of any Learning or Judgment, that make use of this Evasion; but allowing a *Distinction* to be made, they say, That it is as to *Work and Employment*, and not as unto *Office*. Those who in the discharge of their Office as Elders do *so labour* as is intended and included in the word *κοπιῶτες*, which denotes a *peculiar* kind of work in the Ministry: Yea, say some, this word denotes the Work of an *Evangelist*, who was not confined unto any one place; but *travelled* up and down the World to Preach the Gospel. And those of this mind do allow, That *two sorts of Elders* are intended in the Words. Let us see whether they have any better success in this their *Conjecture*, than the others have in the former Answer.

1. I GRANT, That *κοπιῶν*, the word here used, signifies to Labour with Pains and Diligence, *ad ultimum virium, usque ad fatigationem*; unto the utmost of Mens Strength, and unto Weariness. But,

2. SO

2. SO to labour in the Word and Doctrine, is the *Duty* of all Pastors and Teachers; and who-ever doth not so labour, is negligent in his Office, and worthy of severe Blame, instead of double Honour. For,

1. Κόπος, whence is κοπάω, is the *Labour of a Minister*; and so of any Minister in his Work of Teaching and Preaching the Gospel, 1 Cor. 3. 8. εἷς ἑκάστου τὸ ἴδιον μισθὸν λήψεται καὶ ἡ ἰδίον ἔργον, *Every one* (that is every one employed in the Ministry, whether to Plant or to Water; to Convert Men, or to Edifie the Church) shall receive his own Reward, according to his own Labour. He that doth not strive, κοπάειν, in the Ministry, shall never receive a Reward, καὶ τὸ ἴδιον ἔργον, according to his own Labour; and so is not worthy of double Honour.

2. IT is a general word used to express the work of any, in the Service of God; whereon it is applied unto the Prophets and Teachers under the Old Testament, Joh. 4. 38. *I sent you to Reap that whereon you bestowed no Labour; ἄλλοι κοπέτησαν καὶ ὑμεῖς εἰς τὸ ἔργον ἠντήσθητε εἰσελθούσιν, others have laboured, and you have entered into their Labours*: That is of the Prophets and John the Baptist. Yea, it is so unto the Labour that Women may take in the serving of the Church, Rom. 16. 6. *Salute Mary, ἥτις πολλὰ ἐκοπέσασκεν, who laboured much*; which is more than simply κοπάειν, *Verf. 12. Salute Tryphana and Tryphosa, τὰς κοπέσασκεν ἐν κυρίῳ, who laboured in the Lord. Verf. 13. Salute the beloved Persis, ἥτις πολλὰ ἐκοπέσασκεν ἐν κυρίῳ, who laboured much in the Lord.* So wide from Truth is it, that this word should signifie a Labour peculiar to some sorts of Ministers, which all are not in common obliged unto.

3. IF the labour of *Evangelists*, or of them who travelled up and down to Preach the Word be intended, then it is so, either because this is the *proper signification of the word*, or because it is *constantly used* elsewhere to express that kind of Labour. But the contrary unto both of these is evident from all places wherein it is used. So is it expressly applied to *fixed Elders*, 1 Thess. 5. 12. *We exhort you, Brethren, to know, τὰς κοπέσασκεν ἐν ὑμῖν, them that labour among you*; who are the Rulers and Instructors.

IT

IT is therefore evident, that this Word expresseth no more but what is the *ordinary Indispensable Duty* of every Teaching Elder, Pastor or Minister. And if it be so, then those Elders, that is Pastors or Teachers, that do not perform and discharge it, are not worthy of double Honour. Nor would the Apostle give any countenance unto them, who were any way remiss or negligent, in comparison of others, in the discharge of their Duty ; see *1 Theff. 5. 12.*

THERE are therefore *Two sorts of Duties* confessedly here mentioned and commanded ; the First is *Ruling well*, the other *Labouring in the Word and Doctrine*. Suppose that both these, Ruling, and Teaching, are committed to *one sort of Persons only*, having one and the same Office absolutely, then are some commended who do not discharge their whole Duty, at least not comparatively unto others ; which is a vain imagination. That both of them are committed unto one sort of Elders, and one of them only unto another, each discharging its Duty with respect unto its Work, and so both *worthy of Honour*, is the mind of the Apostle.

THAT which is objected from the following verse, namely, that *maintenance* belongs unto this double Honour, and so, consequently, that if there be Elders that are employed in the *Work of Rule only*, that *maintenance* is due unto them from the Church ; I answer, It is so no doubt ; if, (1.) The Church be able to make them an Allowance. (2.) If their Work be such as to *take up the whole or the greatest part of their industry* ; and, (3.) If they *stand in need* of it : Without which Considerations, it may be dispensed withal ; not only in them, but in Teaching Elders also.

OUR next Testimony is from the same Apostle, *Rom. 12. 6, 7.*

8. *HAVING then Gifts differing according unto the Grace given unto us, whether Prophecy, let us Prophecy according to the proportion of Faith ; or Ministry, let us wait on our Ministry ; or he that Teacheth on Teaching ; or he that Exhorts on Exhortation, he that giveth let him do it with simplicity, he that Ruleth with diligence, he that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness.*

OUR

OUR Argument from hence is this; There is in the Church *ὁ προϊστάμενος* one that Ruleth; *προϊσημι* is to Rule with Authority by virtue of Office, whence is *πρόεδρος*, and *προϊστάμενος*, one that Presides over others with Authority. For the discharge of their Office, there is *χάρισμα διάφορον*, a differing peculiar Gift bestowed on some; *ἔχοντες χαρισμάτα διάφορα*, ver. 7. and there is the especial manner prescribed for the discharge of this especial Office, by virtue of that especial Gift; *ἐν ἀσέβη*, it is to be done with peculiar diligence. And this Ruler is distinguished from him that Exhorteth, and him that Teacheth, with whose especial Work, as such, he hath nothing to do; even as they are distinguished from those who give and shew mercy. That is, there is an Elder by Office in the Church, whose Work and Duty it is to Rule, not to Exhort or Teach Ministerially, which is our Ruling Elder.

IT is Answered, that the Apostle doth not treat in this place of Offices, Functions, or distinct Officers; but of differing Gifts, in all the Members of the Church, which they are to exercise according as their different nature doth require.

SUNDRY things I shall return hereunto, which will both explain the Context, and vindicate our Argument.

1. THOSE with whom we have to do principally, allow no exercise of *Spiritual Gifts* in the Church, but by virtue of Office. Wherefore, a distinct exercise of them is here placed in distinct Officers; one, as we shall see, being expressly distinguished from another.

2. GIVE such a probable enumeration of the distinct Offices in the Church, which they assert, namely, of Arch-Bishops, Bishops, Presbyters, and Chancellors, &c. and we shall yield the cause.

3. GIFTS alone do no more, give no other Warranty nor Authority, but only render Men meet for their exercise, as they are called, and as occasion doth require. If a Man hath received a Gift of Teaching, but is not called to Office, he is not obliged nor warranted thereby, to attend on publick Teaching, nor is it required of him in a way of Duty, nor given in charge unto him, as here it is.

4. THERE

4. THERE is *in One*, Rule required with *diligence*. He is $\delta \text{ } \omega \rho \iota \sigma \tau \eta \rho \delta \nu \text{ } \text{C}$, a *Ruler*; and it is required of him that he attend unto his Work with *diligence*. And there are but two things required unto the confirmation of our *Thesis*. (1.) That this Rule is an Act of *Office-Power*. (2.) That he unto whom it is ascribed, is *distinguished from them* unto whom the *Pastoral* and other *Offices* in the Church are committed.

FOR the First, it is evident that *Rule* is an *Act of Office* or of *Office-Power*: For it requires, (1.) An especial *Relation*; there is so between him that Ruleth, and them that are Ruled; and this is the *Relation of Office*, or all confusion will ensue. (2.) Especial *Prelation*. He that Rules, is over, is above them that are Ruled; *Obey them that are over you in the Lord*: This in the Church cannot be in any, but by virtue of *Office*. (3.) *Especial Authority*. All lawful Rule is an Act of *Authority*; and there is no *Authority* in the Church, but by virtue of *Office*. Secondly, That this Officer is distinct from all others in the Church, we shall immediately demonstrate, when we have a little further cleared the Context. Wherefore,

5. IT is confessed that respect is had unto *Gifts*; having *different Gifts*, *ver. 6, 7*. As all *Office-Power* in the Church is founded in them, *Ephes. 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12*. But *Gifts*, absolutely with reference unto common use, are not intended, as in some other places. But they are spoken of with respect unto *Offices* or *Functions*, and the communication of them unto *Officers*, for the discharge of their *Office*. This is evident from the Text and Context, with the whole design of the place: For,

1. THE *Analysis* of the place directs unto this Interpretation. Three sorts of Duties are prescribed unto the Church in this Chapter. (1.) Such as are *Universal*, belonging absolutely unto all, and every one that appertains unto it; which are declared *ver. 1, 2*. (2.) Such as are *peculiar* unto some, by virtue of that especial place which they have in the Church, *ver. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8*. This can be nothing but *Office*. (3.) Such as are *general* or common, with respect unto occasions, from *ver. 8*. to the end of the Chapter. Hence the same Duty is doubly prescribed; to some in way of especial *Office*, to others in the way

way of a Gracious Duty in general. So here, *He that gives, let him do it with simplicity*, Verſ. 8. is the ſame Duty or Work for the ſubſtance of it, with *Distributing unto the neceſſity of the Saints*, Verſ. 13. And the Apoſtle doth not repeat his Charge of the ſame Duty in ſo few words, as required in the ſame manner, and of the ſame perſons. But in the firſt place, he ſpeaks of the manner of its Performance, by virtue of *Office*; and in the latter of its diſcharge as to the Subſtance of it, as a *Grace* in all Believers. The Deſign of the Apoſtle lies plain in the *Analysis* of this Diſcourſe.

2. THE *Context* makes the ſame Truth evident. For,
 1. THE whole ordinary *Publick work of the Church*, is diſtributed into προφητεία, and Ἀγωνία; *Prophecy and Miniſtry*. For the extraordinary *Gift of Prophecy* is not here intended; but only that of the Interpretation of the Scripture, whoſe Rule is the *Analogy of Faith*; ἕτε προφητείαν, καὶ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς γραφῆς. It is ſuch *Prophecy* as is to be regulated by the *Scripture* it ſelf; which gives the Proportion of Faith. And there is not any thing, in any, or both of theſe, *Prophecy and Miniſtry*, but it belongs unto *Office* in the Church. Neither is there any thing *belonging unto Office* in the Church, but may be reduced unto one of theſe, as they are all of them here, by the Apoſtle.

2. THE Gifts ſpoken of, are in general, referred unto all them who are intended. Now theſe are either the *whole Church*, and all the Members of it, or all the *Officers* of the Church only. Hence it is expreſſed in the Plural number, ἔχοντες χάρισμα, *we having*; that is, all we that are concerned herein. This cannot be *all of the Church*; for all the Church *have not received the Gifts of Prophecy and Miniſtry*. Nor can any diſtinction be made of who doth receive them, and who doth not, but with reſpect unto *Office*. And therefore,

3. IN the Diſtribution which enſues of *Prophecy*, into *Exhorting and Teaching*; and of *Miniſtry* into *Shewing, Mercy, Rule, and Giving*; having ſtated theſe Gifts in general, in the *Officers* in general, making diſtinct Application of them unto diſtinct *Officers*, he ſpeaks in the *Singular* number,

ὁ διδάσκων, ὁ ὑπομαρτυρῶν, ὁ προϊστάμενος. *He that Teacheth, he that Exhorteth, he that Ruleth.*

6. IT is then evident that *Offices* are intended; and it is no less evident, that *distinct Offices* are so, which was to be proved in the Second place. For, (1.) The *distributive Particle* εἴτε, and the *indicative Article* ὁ, prefixed unto each Office in particular, do shew them distinct, so far as Words can do it. As by the Particle εἴτε, *whether*, they are distinguished in their nature; whether they be of this or that kind; so by the *Article* prefixed to each of them in exercise, they are distinguished in their *Subjects*. (2.) The *Operations*, Work, and Effects ascribed unto these Gifts, require distinct *Offices* and *Functions* in their exercise. And if the Distribution be made unto all promiscuously without respect unto distinct Offices, it were the only way to bring *confusion* into the Church, whereas, indeed here is an accurate Order in all Church Administrations represented to us. And it is farther evident that distinct Offices are intended. (1.) From the comparison made unto the *Members of the Body*, ver. 4. *All the Members have not the same Office*; the eye hath one, the ear hath another. (2.) Each of the Duties mentioned and given in charge, is sufficient for a distinct Officer, as is declared *Act. 6*.

7. IN particular, *He that Ruleth*, is a distinct Officer. An Officer, because *Rule* is an Act of Office, or Office-Power. And he is expressly distinguished from all others. But, say some, *he that Ruleth*, is he that doth so, be who he will, that is the *Pastor* or *Teacher*, the Teaching Elder. But the contrary is evident. (1.) He that says, *He that Exhorteth*, and then adds, *He that Ruleth*, having distinguished before between *Prophecy*, whereunto *Exhortation* doth belong, and *Ministry* whereof *Rule* is a part; and prefixing the *Prepositive Indicative Article* to each of them, doth as plainly put a difference between them, as can be done by Words. (2.) *Rule* is the principal Work of him that *Ruleth*. For he is to attend unto it, ἐν πάσει, with *Diligence*, that is such as is peculiar unto *Rule*, in contradiction unto what is principally required in other Administrations. But *Rule* is not the principal Work of the *Pastor*, requiring

quiring constant and continual attendance. For his *labour in the Word and Doctrine*, is ordinarily sufficient for the utmost of his *Diligence and Abilities*.

8. WE have therefore in this Context the *beautiful Order* of things in and of the Church. All the Duties of it, with respect unto its Edification, derived from distinct *differing Spiritual Gifts*, exercised in and by *distinct Officers*, unto their peculiar ends. The distinction that is in the nature of those Gifts, their use and end being provided for in distinct Subjects. The mind of no *One Man*, at least ordinarily, is meet to be the seat and subject of all those differing Gifts in any eminent degree ; the *Person of no Man* being sufficient, meet, or able to *exercise* them in a way of Office towards the whole Church ; especially those who *labour in the Word and Doctrine*, being obliged to give themselves wholly thereunto, and those that *Rule to attend thereto with diligence* ; so many distinct Works, Duties and Operations, with the Qualifications required in their discharge, being inconsistent in the same Subject ; all things are here distributed into their proper Order and Tendency, unto the Edification of the Church. Every *distinct Gift* required to be exercised in a peculiar manner, unto the publick Edification of the Church, is distributed unto *peculiar Officers*, unto whom an especial Work is assigned to be discharged by virtue of the Gifts received, unto the Edification of the whole Body. No Man alive is able to fix on any thing which is necessary unto the *Edification of the Church*, that is not contained in these Distributions, under some of the Heads of them. Nor can any Man find out any thing in *these Assignations* of distinct Duties unto distinct Offices, that is *superfluous, redundant*, or not directly necessary unto the Edification of the whole, with all the Parts and Members of it ; nor do I know any wise and sober Man who knows any thing how the Duties enjoined are to be performed, with what Care, Diligence, Circumspection, Prayer and Wisdom, suited unto the nature, ends and objects of them, can ever imagine that they can all of them belong unto *one and the same Office*, or be discharged by one and the same Person.

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LET Men advance any other *Church Order* in the room of that here declared; so suited unto the principles of Natural Light, Operations and Duties of *diverse natures*, being distributed and assigned to such *distinct Gifts*; acted in distinct *Offices*, as renders those unto whom they are prescribed meet and able for them; so correspondent to all *Institutions*, Rules and Examples of Church-Order in other places of Scripture; so suited unto the Edification of the Church, wherein nothing which is necessary thereunto is omitted, nor any thing added above what is necessary; and it shall be cheerfully embraced.

THE Truth is, the ground of the different Interpretations and Applications of this Context of the Apostle, ariseth meerly from the prejudicate Apprehensions, that Men have concerning the *State of the Church and its Rule*. For if the State of it be *National* or *Diocesan*, if the Rule of it be by *Arbitrary Rules and Canons*, from an Authority exerting it self in *Courts Ecclesiastical*, Legal or Illegal, the Order of things here described by the Apostle, doth no way belong, nor can be accommodated thereunto. To suppose that we have a full Description and Account in these Words of all the *Offices and Officers* of the Church, of their Duty and Authority, of all they have to do, and the manner how they are to do it, is altogether unreasonable and senseless unto them, who have *another Idea* of Church-Affairs and Rule, conceived in their Minds, or received by Tradition, and riveted by Interest. And on the other hand; those who know *little or nothing* of what belongs unto the *due Edification of the Church*, beyond Preaching the Word and reaping the Advantage that is obtained thereby, cannot see any necessity of the distribution of these several *Works and Duties* unto *several Officers*; but suppose all may be done well enough by One or Two in the same Office. Wherefore, it will be necessary, that we treat briefly of *the Nature of the Rule of the Church* in particular, and what is required thereunto, which shall be done in the close of this Discourse.

9. THE *Exceptions* which are usually put in unto this Testimony, have not the least countenance from the Text or Context, nor the matter treated of, nor Confirmation from any

any other Divine Testimony. It is therefore in vain to contend about them, being such as any Man may multiply at his pleasure on the like occasion; and used by those who on other considerations, are not willing that things should be as they are here declared to be by the Apostle. Yet we may take a brief *Specimen* of them. Some say it is *Gifts absolutely* without respect unto *distinct Offices*, that the Apostle Treats of; which hath been disproved from the *Text* and *Context* before. Some say that *Rule* is included in the *Pastoral Office*, so as that the Pastor only is here intended. But, (1.) *Rule* is not his principal Work, which he is to attend unto in a peculiar manner with *diligence* above other parts of his Duty. (2.) *The care of the Poor of the Flock* belongs also to the *Pastoral Office*, yet is there *another Office* appointed to attend unto it in a peculiar manner, *Act. 6.* (3.) *He that Ruleth*, is in this place expressly distinguished from *him that Exhorteth*, and *him that Teacheth*. Some say, that *he that Ruleth*, is he that *Ruleth his Family*. But this is disproved by the *Analysis* of the Chapter before declared. And this Duty, which is common unto all that have Families, and confined unto their Families, is ill placed among those *publick Duties*, which are designed unto the Edification of the whole Church. It is objected, that *he that Ruleth*, is here placed after him that *giveth*, that is the *Deacon*; I say then it cannot be the *Pastor* that is intended; if we may prescribe Methods of expressing himself unto the Apostle. But he useth his Liberty, and doth not oblige himself unto any *Order* in the annumeration of the *Offices* of the Church; see *1 Cor. 12. 8, 9, 10, 28.* And some other Exceptions are insisted on of the same nature and importance, which indeed deserve not our consideration.

10. THERE is the same Evidence given unto the Truth argued for, in another Testimony of the same Apostle, *1 Cor. 12. 28.* *God hath set some in the Church, First Apostles, Secondly Prophets, Thirdly Teachers, after that Miracles, then Gifts of Healings, Helps, Governments, Diversities of Tongues.* I shall not insist on this *Testimony* and its Vindication in particular, seeing many things would be required thereunto, which

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have been Treated of already. Some things may be briefly observed concerning it. That there is here an Annumeration of *Officers and Offices* in the Church, both *extraordinary* for that season, and *ordinary* for continuance, is beyond exception. Unto them is added, the present exercise of some *extraordinary Gifts*, as *Miracles, Healing, Tongues*. That by *Helps*, the *Deacons* of the Church are intended, most do agree, because their Original Institution was as *helpers* in the Affairs of the Church. *Governments*, are Governours or *Rulers*, the *Abstract* for the *Concrete*; that is, such as are distinct from Teachers; such hath God placed in the Church, and such there ought to be. But it is said that *Gifts*, not *Offices* are intended; the *Gift of Government*, or Gift for Government. If so, then these Gifts are either *ordinary* or *extraordinary*; if *ordinary*, how come they to be reckoned among *Miracles, Healing, and Tongues*? if *extraordinary*, what extraordinary *Gifts for Government* were then given distinct from those of the Apostles; and what instance is any where given of them in the Scripture? Again, If God hath given *Gifts for Government* to abide in the Church, distinct from those given unto *Teachers*, and unto other Persons than the Teachers, then is there a distinct *Office of Rule or Government* in the Church, which is all we plead for.

II. THE Original Order in these things is plain in the Scripture. The Apostles had all *Church-Power* and *Church-Office* in themselves, with Authority to exercise all Acts of them everywhere on all occasions. But considering the nature of the Church, with that of the Rule appointed by the Lord Christ in it or over it; they did not, they would not ordinarily exercise their power by themselves or in their own persons alone. And therefore, when the First Church consisted of a small number, the Apostles acted all things in it, by the *consent of the whole Multitude* or the *Fraternity*, as we have proved from *Acts* the First. And when the number of Believers encreased, so as that the Apostles themselves could not in their own Persons attend unto all the Duties that were to be performed towards the Church by virtue of Office, they added by the direction of the Holy Ghost, the Office of the *Deacons*, for the especial discharge

discharge of the Duty which the Church oweth unto its poor Members. Whereas therefore it is evident, that the Apostles could no more *personally* attend unto the *Rule of the Church*, with all that belongs thereunto, without an entrenchment on that *labour in the Word and Prayer*, which was incumbent on them, than they could attend unto the *Relief of the Poor*, they appointed *Elders*, to help and assist in that part of Office-Work, as the *Deacons* did in the other.

THESE Elders are first mentioned, *Act. 11. 30.* where they are spoken of as those which were well known, and had now been of some time in the Church. Afterwards they are still mentioned in conjunction with the Apostles, and *distinction* from the Church it self, *Acts 15. 2, 4, 6, 22. Chap. 16. 4. Chap. 21. 18.* Now the *Apostles* themselves were *Teaching Elders*, that is such as had the *Work of Teaching and Rule* committed to them, *1 Pet. 5. 1. 2 Joh. 1.* And *these Elders* are constantly distinguished from them; which makes it evident, that they were not *Teaching Elders*. And therefore in all the mention that is made of them, the *Work of Teaching* or *Preaching* is nowhere ascribed unto them; which at *Jerusalem* the Apostles reserved to themselves, *Act. 6. 2, 3.* but they are every where introduced as joining with the Apostles in the *Rule of the Church*, and that in *distinction* from the Church it self or the Brethren of it. Yea, it is altogether improbable, that whilst the Apostles were at *Jerusalem*, giving themselves wholly unto the *Word and Prayer*, that they should appoint in the same Church many more *Teaching Elders*; though it is plain that the *Elders* intended were *many*.

I SHALL add for a close of all, that there is no sort of Churches in being but are of *this persuasion*, that there ought to be *Rulers* in the Church, that are not in *Sacred Orders*, as some call them; or have no interest in the *Pastoral* or *Ministerial Office*, as unto the dispensation of the Word, and Administration of the Sacraments. For as the Government of the *Roman Church* is in the hands of such Persons in a great measure, so in the *Church of England*, much of the Rule of it is managed by *Chancellors, Officials, Commissaries*, and the like Officers,

Officers, who are absolutely *Lay-Men*, and not at all in their *holy Orders*. Some would place the *Rule* of the Church in the *Civil Magistrate*, who is the only *Ruling Elder*, as they suppose. But the generality of all *Protestant Churches* throughout the World, both *Lutherans* and *Reformed*, do both in their judgment and practice assert the necessity of the *Ruling Elders* which we plead for; and their Office lies at the foundation of all their Order and Discipline, which they cannot forgo without extream confusion, yea, without the ruine of their Churches. And although some among us, considering particular Churches only as *small Societies*, may think there is no need of any such Office or Officers for Rule in them; yet when such Churches consist of *some Thousands*, without any opportunity of distributing themselves into several Congregations, as at *Charenton in France*, it is a weak imagination, that the Rule of Christ can be observed in them by *Two or Three Ministers* alone. Hence, in the *Primitive Times* we have instances of *Ten, Twenty*, yea, *Forty Elders* in a particular Church, wherein they had respect unto the Institution under the Old Testament, whereby *each Ten Families* were to have a peculiar Ruler. However, it is certain that there is such a Reformation in all sorts of Churches, that there ought to be some *attending unto Rule*, that are not called to labour in the Word and Doctrine.

C H A P. VIII.

The Nature of Church-Polity or Rule; with the Duty of Elders.

HAVING declared *who are the Rulers of the Church*, something must be added concerning the *Rule* it self, which is to be exercised therein. Hereof I have Treated before in general: That which I now design, is, what in particular respects them who are *called unto Rule* only;

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only; whereunto some Considerations must be premised.

1. THERE is *Power, Authority, and Rule* granted unto and residing in some Persons of the Church, and not in the Body of the Fraternity or Community of the People. How far the Government of the Church may be denominated *Democratical* from the necessary *consent of the people* unto the principal Acts of it in its exercise, I shall not determine. But whereas this consent, and the liberty of it is absolutely necessary according to the Law of Obedience unto Christ, which is prescribed unto the Church, requiring that all they do in compliance therewith be *voluntary*; as unto the manner of its exercise, being in *dutiful compliance* with the guidance of the Rule, it changeth not the State of the Government. And therefore, where any thing is Acted and Disposed in the Church, by *Suffrage*, or the plurality of Voices, the *Vote of the Fraternity* is not Determining and *Authoritative*, but only *declarative of consent and obedience*. It is so, in all Acts of Rule where the Church is *Organical*, or in compleat Order.

2. THAT there is such an *Authority and Rule* instituted by Christ in his Church, is not liable unto dispute. Where there are *Bishops, Pastors, Elders, Guides, Rulers, Stewards, instituted, given, granted, called, ordained*; and some to be Ruled, *Sheep, Lambs, Brethren*, obliged by command to *obey them, follow them, submit unto them in the Lord, regard them as over them*: There is *Rule and Authority* in some persons, and that committed unto them by Jesus Christ. But all these things are frequently repeated in the Scripture. And when in the practical Part or Exercise of Rule, due respect is not had unto their *Authority*, there is nothing but Confusion and Disorder. When the People judge that the *Power of the Keys* is committed unto them as such only, and in them doth the *Right* of their Use and Exercise reside; that their *Elders* have no interest in the disposing of Church Affairs, or in Acts of Church Power, but only their own suffrages, or what they can obtain by reasoning, and think there is no Duty incumbent on them to acquiesce in *their Authority* in any thing (an Evil apt to grow in Churches) it overthrowes all that *beautiful Order*, which Jesus Christ

Christ hath ordained. And if any shall make Advantage of this Complaint, That where the *People* have their due Liberty granted unto them, they are apt to *assume that Power* unto themselves which belongs not unto them; an evil attended with troublesome Impertinencies and Disorder, tending unto *Anarchy*; let them remember, on the other hand, how upon the confinement of Power and Authority unto the *Guides, Bishops* or *Rulers* of the Church, they have changed the nature of Church-Power, and enlarged their Usurpation, until the whole Rule of the Church issued in absolute *Tyranny*. Wherefore, no fear of consequents that may ensue and arise from the darkness, ignorance, weakness, lusts, corruptions or secular interests of Men ought to entice us unto the least Alteration of the Rule by any *prudential Provisions* of our own.

3. THIS *Authority* in the Rulers of the Church, is neither *Autocratical* or *Sovereign*, nor *Nomothetical* or *Legislative*, nor *Despotical* or *Absolute*; but *Organical* and *Ministerial* only. The endless Controversies which have sprung out of the mystery of iniquity, about an *Autocratical and Monarchical* Government in the Church, about *power to make Laws* to bind the Consciences of Men, yea, to kill and destroy them, with the whole manner of the execution of this Power, we are not concerned in. A pretence of any such Power in the Church, is destructive of the *Kingly Office of Christ*, contrary to express Commands of Scripture, and condemned by the Apostles, *Isa. 33. 22. Jam. 4. 12. Mat. 17. 5. Chap. 23. 8, 9, 10, 11. Luke 22. 25, 26. 2 Cor. 1. 24. 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22, 23. 2 Cor. 4. 5. 1 Pet. 5. 1, 25.*

4. AS the Rule of the Church, in those by whom it is exercised, is meerly *Ministerial*, with respect unto the Authority of Christ, his Law, and the Liberty of the Church, where-with he hath made it free; so in its nature it is *spiritual*, purely and only. So the Apostle Affirms expressly, *2 Cor. 10. 4, 5, 6.* For its *object* is spiritual; namely, the Souls and Consciences of Men whereunto it extends, which no other Humane Power doth; nor doth it reach those other concerns of Men that are subject unto any political Power: Its *end* is *Spiritual*, namely,

the Glory of God, in the guidance and direction of the Minds and Souls of Men, to live unto him, and come to the enjoyment of him; the *Law* of it is spiritual, even the Word, Command and Direction of Christ himself alone; the *Acts* and *Exercise* of it in binding and loosing, in remitting and retaining Sin, in opening and shutting the Kingdom of Heaven, are all *Spiritual* meerly and only. Neither can there be an Instance given of any thing belonging unto the Rule of the Church, that is of another nature. Yea, it is sufficient eternally to exclude any Power or Exercise of it, any Act of Rule or Government from any Interest in Church-Affairs, that it can be proved to be *Carnal*, *Political*, *Despotal*, of external Operation, or not entirely *Spiritual*.

5. *THE Change of this Government* of the Church, fell out and was introduced *gradually*, upon an advantage taken from the *unmeetness* of the People to be lead under this *Spiritual* Rule. For the greatest part of them that made up Christian Churches, being become ignorant and carnal, that Rule which consists in a spiritual influence on the Consciences of Men, was no way able to retain them within the bounds of outward obedience, which was at last only aimed at. There was therefore *another kind of Rule* and Government judged necessary to retain them in any Order or *Decorum*. And it must be acknowledged, that where the Members of the Church are not in some degree *Spiritual*, a Rule that is meerly *Spiritual* will be of no great use unto them. But principally, this change was introduced by those that were in possession of the Rule it self; and that on two grounds. (1.) Their *unskilfulness* in the management of this *Spiritual* Rule, or weariness of the Duties which are required thereunto: This made them willing to desert it; with that perpetual labour and exercise of all sorts of Graces which are required in it, and to embrace another more easie, and more suited unto their Inclinations. (2.) A desire of the Secular advantages of Profit, Honour and Veneration, which tendered themselves unto them in another kind of Rule: By these means was the *Original Government* of the Church, which was of Divine Institution, utterly lost; and a *Worldly Domination* introduced

introduced in the room thereof. But the brief delineation given of it before, with what shall now be added, will demonstrate sufficiently, that all these Disputes and Conteſts which are in the World, between the *Church of Rome* and others about *Church-Power and Rule*, are utterly foreign unto Chriſtian Religion.

6. I SHALL therefore briefly enquire into theſe three things, (1.) What is the *Skill and Polity* that is required unto the Exercise, or Administration of the Government of the Church? (2.) What is the ſole *Law and Rule* of it? (3.) What are the *Acts and Duties* of it? What it is converſant about; eſpecially thoſe wherein the Office of *Ruling Elders* doth take place.

1. THE *Polity* of Church-Government *ſubjectively* conſidered, is generally ſuppoſed to conſiſt, (1.) In a *ſkill*, learning or underſtanding in the *Civil*, and eſpecially the *Canon Law*, with the additional *Canons*, accomodating that Law unto the preſent ſtate of things of the Nation, to be interpreted according unto the general Rules of it. (2.) *Knowledge* of and Acquaintance with the Conſtitution, Power, Jurisdiction and Practice of ſome *Law Courts*; which being in their original, grant of Power, manner of Proceeding, Pleas and Cenfures meerly Secular, are yet called *Eccleſiaſtical* or *Spiritual*. (3.) A good *Diſcretion* to underſtand a-right the extent of their Power, with the bounds and limits of it; that on the *one hand* they let none eſcape whom they can reach by the diſcipline of their Courts, and on the *other* not entrench ſo far on the *Civil-Power* and the *Jurisdiction* of other Courts according to the Law of the Land, as to bring themſelves into charge or trouble. (4.) An acquaintance with the *Table of Fees*, that they may neither loſe their own profit, nor give advantage unto others to queſtion them for taking more than their due. But in theſe things we are not at preſent concerned.

8. THE ſkill then of the Officers of the Church for the Government of it, is a *ſpiritual Wiſdom and Underſtanding* in the *Law of Chriſt*, for that end, with an *Ability* to make application of it in all requiſite Inſtances, unto the Edification of the whole Church, and all its Members, through a *miniſterial Exercise*

ercise of the Authority of Christ himself, and a due Representation of his Holiness, Love, Care, Compassion and Tenderness toward his Church.

1. THE sole Rule and Measure of the Government of the Church being the Law of Christ; that is, the Intimation and Declaration of his Mind and Will, in his Institutions, Commands, Prohibitions and Promises; an Understanding herein, with Wisdom, from that Understanding, is and must be the whole of the Skill enquired after. How this Wisdom is bestowed as a spiritual Gift, how it is to be acquired in a way of Duty, by Prayer, Meditation and study of the Word, hath been intimated before, and shall fully be declared, in our Discourse of spiritual Gifts. All Decrees and Decretals, Canons and Glosses come properly in this matter under one Title of them, namely Extravagant. The utmost Knowledge of them, and Skill in them will contribute nothing unto this Wisdom. Neither are any sort of Men more strangers unto it, or unacquainted with it, than they are, for the most part, who are eminently cunning in such Laws, and the Jurisdiction of Ecclesiastical Courts. But Wisdom in the knowledge of the Will of Christ as revealed in the Scripture, is that alone which is of use in the Government of the Church.

2. A PART of this Wisdom consisteth in an Ability of Mind to make Application of the Law of Christ in all requisite Instances, unto the Edification of the Church in general, and all the Members of it respectively. This Wisdom is not notional only, but practical. It consists not in a speculative comprehension of the sense of the Rule, or of the Mind of Christ therein only, though that be required in the first place; but in an Ability of Mind to make Application of it, whereunto Diligence, Care, Watchfulness and spiritual Courage are required. Some are to be Admonished; some to be Rebuked sharply; some to be cut off; in which and the like cases, a spirit of Government acting it self in Diligence, Boldness and Courage is necessary. And this is one reason why the Lord Christ hath appointed many Elders in each Church, and those of several sorts. For it is seldom that any one Man is qualified for the whole
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work of Rule. Some may have a good understanding in the *Law* of the Churches Government; yet through a natural *Tenderness*, and an insuperable kind of *Modesty*, not be so ready and prompt for that part of this *Discipline* which consists in *Reproofs* and *Severity* of *Censures*. Some may not have so great an *Ability* for the *Indagation* of the sense of the *Law* as others have; who yet upon the *knowledge* of it being discovered unto them, have *readiness* and *boldness* in *Christ* to apply it as occasion doth require. All *Elders* therefore in their variety of *Gifts* are to be helpful to each other in the common *Work*, which they are called unto. But such as are utterly destitute of these *Gifts*, are not called unto this *Work*; nor any part of it.

3. THE *Power* that is exercised herein, is the *Power and Authority* of *Christ* committed unto the *Elders*. *Our Authority*, which the *Lord Christ* hath given us for *Edification*, and not for *Destruction*, 2 Cor. 10. 8. It is granted unto the *Rulers* of the *Church*, not *formally* to reside in them, as the *Power* of a *King* is in his own person; but *ministerially* and *instrumentally* only. For it must be the *Authority* of *Christ* himself, whereby the *Consciences* of *Men* are *spiritually* affected, with reference unto *spiritual* *Ends*; whereby they are bound or loosed in *Heaven* and *Earth*, have their *Sins* *remitted* or *retained*. And the consideration hereof is that alone which gives a due regard unto the *Ministry* of the *Church*, in the discharge of their *Office* among them that desire to commend their *Consciences* unto the *Lord Christ* in what they do.

4. THE especial *Design* of the *Rule* of the *Church* in its *Government* is to represent the *Holiness*, *Love*, *Compassion*, *Care* and *Authority* of *Christ* towards his *Church*. This is the great end of *Rule* in the *Church*, and of all the *Discipline* which is to be exercised by virtue thereof. Whilst this is not attended unto, when the *Officers* and *Rulers* of the *Church* do not endeavour in all the actings of their *Power* and *Office*, to set forth these *Vertues* of *Christ*; to exemplifie that impression of them which he hath left in his *Laws* and *Rule*, with the *Divine* *Testimonies* which he gives of them in his own person, they

they utterly deviate from the principal end of all Rule in the Church. For Men to act herein in a way of *Domination*, with a visible *Elation* of Mind and Spirit above their Brethren, with *Anger, Wrath* and *Passion*, by *Rules, Order* and *Laws* of their own devising ; without the least consideration of what the Lord Christ requires, and what is the frame of his Heart towards all his Disciples, is to reflect the highest Dishonour imaginable upon Christ himself. He who comes into the *Courts of the King in Westminster-Hall*, when filled with Judges, Grave, Learned and Righteous, must ordinarily be allowed to judge of the *King himself*, his Wisdom, Justice, Moderation and Clemency, by the *Law* which they proceed upon, and their manner of the Administration of it. But God forbid that Christians should make a Judgment concerning the *Holiness, Wisdom, Love* and *Compassion* of Christ, by the Representation which (as is pretended) is made of him and them in some Courts, wherein Church-Rule and Discipline is Administred. When any had offended of old, their Censure by the Church was called the *Bewailing of them*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 24. and that because of the *Sorrow, Pity* and *Compassion* whereby in that Censure they evidenced the compassion of the Lord Christ towards the Souls of Sinners. This is scarce answered by those *pecuniary mulcts* and other *penalties*, which, with indignation and contempt, are inflicted on such as are made Offenders, *whether they will or no*. Certainly, those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and have a due honour for the Gospel, will at one time or another begin to think meet, that this stain of our Religion should be washed away.

2dly. THE Rule and Law of the exercise of Power in the Elders of the Church, is the *Holy Scripture only*. The Lord Christ is the only Law-giver of the Church ; all his Laws unto this end are recorded in the Scripture ; no *other Law* is effectual, can oblige or operate upon the *object* or unto the *ends* of Church-Rule. If the Church make a Thousand Rules or *Canons*, or Laws for Government, neither any of them, nor all of them in general, have any the least power to oblige Men

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unto *obedience* or compliance with them, but only so far, as *virtually* and *materially* they contain what is of the Law of Christ, and derives force from thence. As the *Judges* in our Courts of Justice, are bound to judge and determine in all cases, out of and according to the *Law of the Land*; and when they do not, their Sentence is of no validity, but may and ought to be reversed. But if wilfully or of choice, they should introduce Laws or Rules not *legally established* in this Nation, judging according unto them, it would render them highly criminal and punishable. It is no otherwise in the *Kingdom of Christ*, and the *Rule* thereof. It is by *his Law* alone that Rule is to be exercised in it. There is nothing left unto the *Elders of the Church*, but the *Application* of his Laws, and the General Rules of them unto particular cases and occasions. To make, to bring, to execute any other Rules, Laws or *Canons* in the Government of his Church, is to usurp on his Kingly Dominion, whereunto all Legislative Power in the Church is appropriate. Nor is it possible that any thing can fall out in the Church, that any thing can be required in the Rule of it, nor can *any instance be given* of any such thing, wherein, for the ends of Church-Rule, there is or can be any more left unto the Rulers of it, but only the *Application* and *Execution* of the Laws of Christ. Unto this *Application* to be made in a due manner, the *Wisdom and Skill* before described is requisite, and that alone. Where there are other *Laws, Rules* or *Canons* of the Government of the Church; and where the Administration of them is directed by *Laws Civil* or *Political*, there is a *skill in them* required unto that Administration, as all will confess. So is the *Wisdom* we before described, and that alone, necessary unto that *Rule* of the Church which the Lord Christ hath ordained; the Instrument and means whereof, is his Word and Law alone.

3dly. THE *matter of this Rule* about which it is conversant, and so the *Acts and Duties* of it may be reduced unto Three Heads.

1. THE *Admission and Exclusion of Members*. Both these are Acts of Church-Power and Authority, which are to be exercised by the Elders only in a Church that is *Organical* and

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compleat in its Officers. There is that in them both, which is founded in and warranted from the Light and Law of Nature and Rules of Equity. Every Righteous *voluntary Society* coalescing therein rightfully, upon known Laws, and Rules for the Regulation of it unto certain ends, hath naturally a *power inherent in it* and inseparable from it, to *receive* into its *incorporation*, such as being meet for it, do voluntarily offer themselves thereunto ; as also to *reject*, or withhold the Privileges of the Society, from such as refuse to be Regulated by the Laws of the Society. This power is inherent in the Church *essentially* considered *antecedently* unto the enstating of Officers in it : By virtue of their *mutual confederation* they may receive into the privileges of the Society those that are meet, and withdraw the same privileges from those that are unworthy. But in these actings of the Church, essentially considered, there is no exercise of the *Power of the Keys*, as unto Authoritative Rule, but what is meerly Doctrinal. There is in what it doth a declaration of the Mind of Christ, as unto the State of the Persons whom they do receive or reject. But unto the Church as *Organical*, as there are *Elders* or *Rulers* instated in it according unto the Mind of Christ, there is a *peculiar Authority* committed for those Acts of the Admission and Exclusion of Members. Unto this end is the *Key of Rule* committed unto the Elders of the Church, to be applied with the consent of the whole Society, as we shall see afterwards.

2dly. THE *Direction* of the Church in all the Members of it, unto the observance of the Rule and Law of Christ in all things, unto his Glory and their own Edification. And all these things may be reduced unto these Four Heads. (1.) *Mutual*, Intense, peculiar *Love* among themselves, to be exercised continually in all the Duties of it. (2.) *Personal Holiness* in Gracious Moral Obedience. (3.) *Usefulness* towards the Members of the same Church, towards other Churches, and all Men absolutely, as occasion and opportunity do require. (4.) The *due performance* of all those Duties, which all the Members of the Church owe mutually unto each other, by virtue of that Place and Order which they hold and possess in the Body. About these

these things is Church-Rule to be exercised ; for they all belong unto the preservation of its *Being*, and the attainment of its *Ends*.

3^{dly}. HEREUNTO also belongs the *disposal of the outward concerns of the Church in its Assemblies*, and in the management of all that is performed in them, *that all things may be done Decently and in Order*. The disposal of Times, Seasons, Places, the way and manner of managing all things in Church-Assemblies, the Regulation of Speeches and Actions, the appointment of Seasons for extraordinary Duties, according unto the *General Rules of the Word*, and the Reason of things from present Circumstances, are Acts of *Rule*, whose Right resides in the *Elders of the Church*.

THESE things being premised, we may consider what is the Work and Duty of *that sort of Elders*, which we have proved to be *placed by Christ for Rule in the Church*. For, considering that which hath been spoken before concerning the *Pastoral Office*, or the Duty of *Teaching-Elders of the Church*, and what hath now been added concerning its *Rule in general* ; I cannot but admire that any one Man should have such a confidence in his own Abilities, as to suppose himself *meet and able* for the Discharge of the Duties of both sorts in the least Church of Christ that can well be supposed. Yea, supposing more *Teaching-Elders* in every Church than one, yet if they are all and every one of them equally bound to *give themselves unto the Word and Prayer*, so as not to be diverted from that Work by any inferior Duties, if they are obliged to *labour in the Word and Doctrine* to the utmost of their strength continually, it will appear at length to be necessary, that there should be some whose peculiar Office and Duty is to attend unto *Rule with Diligence*. And the Work of these Elders consists in the things ensuing.

1. THEY are joined unto the *Teaching Elders* in all Acts and Duties of Church-Power, for the Rule and Government of the Church. Such are those before declared. This is plain in the Text, *1 Tim. 5. 17*. Both sorts of Elders are *joined* and do concur in the *same Rule* and all the Acts of it ; one sort of

them labouring also in the Word and Doctrine. Of both sorts is the *Presbytery* or *Eldership* composed, wherein resides all Church-Authority. And in this conjunction, those of both sorts are every way *equal*, determining all Acts of Rule by their common suffrage. This gives Order, with a necessary representation of Authority, unto the Church in its Government.

2. *THEY* are in particular to attend unto all things wherein the *Rule* or *Discipline* of the Church is concerned, with a due care that the Commands of Christ be duly observed by and among all the Members of the Church. This is the substance of the *Rule* which Christ hath appointed, whatever be pretended unto the contrary. Whatever is set up in the World, in opposition unto it or inconsistent with it, under the Name of the *Government of the Church*, is foreign unto the Gospel. *Church-Rule* is a due care and provision, that the Institutions, Laws, Commands and Appointments of Jesus Christ be duly observed, and nothing else. And hereof, as unto the Duty of the Elders, we may give some instances: As,

1. *TO watch diligently* over the ways, walking and conversation of all the Members of the Church, to see that it be *blameless*, without offence, useful, exemplary and in all things answering the holiness of the Commands of Christ, the honour of the Gospel, and profession which in the World they make thereof. And upon the observation which they so make, in the *watch* wherein they are placed, to instruct, admonish, charge, exhort, encourage, comfort, as they see cause. And this are they to attend unto, with *Courage* and *Diligence*.

2. *TO watch* against all risings or appearances of such *differences* and divisions on the account of things Ecclesiastical or Civil, as unto their Names, Rights and Proprieties in the World, that are contrary unto that *Love* which the Lord Christ requireth in a peculiar and eminent manner to be found amongst his Disciples. This he calls *his own new Command*, with respect unto his *Authority* requiring it, his *Example* first illustrating it in the World, and the peculiar *fruits* and effects of it which he revealed and taught. Wherefore, the due observance of this *Law of Love* in it self and all its fruits, with the Prevention, Removal,

Removal or Condemnation of all that is contrary unto it, is that in which the *Rule of the Church* doth principally consist. And considering the Weakness, the Passions, the Temptations of Men, the mutual Provocations and Exasperations that are apt to fall out even among the best, the influence that Earthly occasions are apt to have upon their Minds, the *forwardness* sometimes of Mens natural Tempers; the attendance unto this one Duty or part of Rule, requires the utmost diligence of them that are called unto it. And it is meerly either the want of Acquaintance with the nature of that Law and its Fruits, which the Lord Christ requires among his Disciples, or an undervaluation of the Worth and Glory of it in the Church, or inadvertency unto the causes of its decays, and of breeches made in it; or ignorance of the Care and Duties that are necessary unto its preservation, that induce Men to judge that the Work of an especial Office is not required hereunto.

3. THEIR Duty is to *warn all the Members of the Church* of their especial Church-Duties, that they be not found negligent or wanting in them. There are *especial Duties* required respectively of all Church-Members, according unto the distinct *Talents*, whether in things Spiritual or Temporal, which they have received. Some are *Rich*, and some are *Poor*; some are *Old*, and some are *Young*; some in *Peace*, some in *Trouble*; some have received more *spiritual Gifts* than others, and have more *opportunities* for their Exercise. It belongs unto the *Rule of the Church*, that all be Admonished, Instructed, and Exhorted to attend unto their respective Duties; not only publicly in the *preaching of the Word*, but *personally* as occasion doth require, according to the observation which those in Rule do make of their Forwardness or Remissness in them. In particular, and in the way of instance, Men are to be warned that they contribute unto the Necessities of the Poor, and other occasions of the Church according unto the *Ability* that God in his Providence hath intrusted them withal; and to admonish them that are *defective* herein, in order to their Recovery unto the discharge of this Duty, in such a measure as there may be an *Equality* in the Church, 2 Cor. 8. 14. And all
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other Duties of an a-like nature are they to attend unto.

4. THEY are to watch against the beginnings of any *Church-Disorders*, such as those that infested the Church of *Corinth*, or any of the like sort; with remissness as unto the Assemblies of the Church and the Duties of them, which some are subject unto, as the Apostle intimates, *Heb. 10. 25.* On the Constancy and Diligence of the Elders in this part of their Work and Duty, the very Being and Order of the Church do greatly depend. The want hereof hath opened a door unto all the Troubles, Divisions and Schisms, that in all Ages have invaded and perplexed the Churches of Christ from within themselves. And from thence also have *Decays* in Faith, Love and Order insensibly prevailed in many, to the dishonour of Christ, and the danger of their own Souls. First one grows remiss in attending unto the Assemblies of the Church, and then another; first to one degree, then to another, until the whole *Lump* be infected. A diligent watch over these things as to the *beginnings* of them in all the members of the Church will either heal and recover them that offend, or it will *warn others*, and keep the Church from being either corrupted or defiled, *Heb. 3. Chap. 12.*

5. IT belongs unto them also to *visit the Sick*, especially such as whose inward or outward conditions do expose them unto more than ordinary *trials* in their Sickness; that is the *Poor*, the *Afflicted*, the *Tempted* in any kind. This in general is a *moral Duty*, a Work of Mercy; but it is moreover a peculiar *Church-Duty* by virtue of *Institution*. And one end of the *Institution* of Churches, is, that the Disciples of Christ may have all that Spiritual and Temporal Relief which is needful for them, and useful to them in their Troubles and Distresses. And if this Duty were diligently attended unto by the Officers of the Church, it would add much unto the Glory and Beauty of our Order, and be an abiding reserve with Relief in the Minds of them whose outward condition exposeth them to straits and sorrows in such a season.

I ADD hereunto as a Duty of the same nature, the *visitation of those who suffer unto Restraint and Imprisonment* upon the

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the account of their Profession, adherence unto Church-Assemblies, or the Discharge of any Pastoral or Office-Duties in them. This is a case wherewith we are not unacquainted, nor are like so to be. Some look on this as the Duty of all the Members of the Church, who yet enjoy their Liberty; and so it is, as their Opportunities and Abilities will allow them, provided their discharge of it be useful unto those whom they visit, and inoffensive unto others. But this Duty diligently attended unto by the *Elders*, representing therein the care and love of the whole Church, yea, of Christ himself unto his *Prisoners*, is a great Spring of Relief and Comfort unto them. And by the *Elders* may the Church be acquainted what yet is required of them in a way of Duty on their account. The care of the *Primitive Churches* herein was most eminent.

6. IT belongs unto them and their Office, to *advise* with and give *direction* unto the *Deacons* of the Church, as unto the making Provision and Distribution of the Charity of the Church for the Relief of the Poor. The Office of the *Deacons* is principally *Executive*, as we shall see afterwards. Inquisition into the state of the Poor, with all their circumstances, with the warning of all the Members of the Church unto Liberality for their Supply, belongs unto the *Elders*.

7. WHEN the State of the Church is such, through Suffering, Persecution and Affliction, that the *Poor be multiplied among them*, so as that the Church it self is not able to provide for their Relief in a due manner, if any *Supply* be sent unto them from the love and bounty of other Churches, it is to be deposited with *these Elders*, and disposed according to their advice, with that of the Teachers of the Church, *Act. 11. 30.*

8. IT is also their Duty, according to the advantage which they have by their peculiar inspection of all the Members of the Church, their ways and their walking, to acquaint the *Pastors* or *Teaching-Elders* of the Church, with the *State of the Flock*, which may be of singular use unto them for their Direction in the present Work of the Ministry. He who makes it not his business to *know the State of the Church* which he ministers unto in the *Word and Doctrines*, as to their Knowledge, their Judgment

ment and Understanding, their Temptations and Occasions, and applies not himself in his Ministry to search out what is necessary and useful unto their *Edification* ; he fights *uncertainly* in his whole Work, as a Man *beating the Air*. But, whereas their obligation to attend unto the *Word and Prayer*, confines them much unto a retirement for the greatest part of their time, they cannot by themselves obtain that Acquaintance with the whole Flock, but that others may greatly assist therein from their daily Inspection, Converse and Observation.

9. AND it is their Duty to *meet and consult with the Teaching-Elders*, about such things of importance, as are to be proposed in and unto the Church, for its consent and compliance. Hence, nothing crude or indigested, nothing unsuited to the sense and Duty of the Church, will at any time be proposed therein, so to give occasion unto contests or janglings, disputes contrary unto Order or Decency ; but all things may be preserved in a due regard unto the *Gravity and Authority* of the Rulers.

10. TO take care of the due *Liberties* of the Church, that they be not imposed on by any *Diotrephes* in Office, or without it.

11. IT is incumbent on them in times of Difficulties and Persecution, to *consult together with the other Elders* concerning all those things which concern the present Duty of the Church, from time to time, and their preservation from violence, according unto the will of Christ.

12. WHEREAS, there may be, and oft-times is but One *Teaching-Elder, Pastor or Teacher* in a Church, upon his Death or Removal, it is the Work and Duty of *these Elders*, to preserve the Church in Peace and Unity ; to take care of the continuation of its Assemblies ; to prevent Irregularities in any Persons or Parties among them ; to go before, to direct and guide the Church in the *Call and Choice* of some other meet Person or Persons in the room of the deceased or removed.

THESE *few instances* have I given of the Work and Duty of Ruling Elders. They are all of them such as deserve a greater enlargement in their Declaration and Confirmation, than