

multiply : we would exclude those Bishops that would undertake two or three hundred mens work themselves, and will rule a whole Diocess alone (or by a Lay Chancellor) when every conscionable man that hath faithfully tryed it, doth feel the oversight of one Congregation to be so great a burden, that it makes him groan and groan again. We would exclude those Bishops that would exclude all others in a whole Diocess, that they may do the work alone, and so leave it undone, while they plead that it belongs to them to do it. If they will come into the Lords Harveſt, and exclude from the work of Government, the Labourers of a whole County or two, we have reason to contradict them. But this is not to bring in more such Bishops as they that will shut out others, but to keep in the necessary labouring Bishops whom they would shut out. Nor do we shut out them themselves as Labourers or Rulers, but as the excluders of the Labourers or Rulers. If we have a Church to build that requireth necessarily two hundred workmen, and some Pillars in it to Erect, of many hundred tun weight, if one of the workmen would say, that it belongs to him to do it all himself, or at least when the materials are brought to the place prepared, to rear and order and place every stone and pillar in the building, I would no otherwise exclude the vain pretender then by introducing necessary help that the work may be done; and I should think him a silly Caviller that would tell me, that while I exclude him, I do but multiply such as he; when his very fault consisted in an hinderance of that necessary multiplication.

*Object. 2.*

*Answer.*

I know that some will say, that we seign more work then is to be done; and we would have the sentence of Excommunication pass upon every light offence. I answer; that its a thing that we abhor: we would have none Excommunicated but for obstinacy in hainous sin; when they will not hear the Church after more private admonition. But there's much more of the work of Government to be done on men that are not Excommunicable, to bring them to Repentance, and open confession, for manifestation of that Repentance to the satisfaction of the Church: but what need we plead how great the work is which every man may see before his eyes, and experience putteth beyond dispute?

Furthermore that the English Episcopacy is dissonant from all  
Scripture



Scripture Episcopacy, I prove thus. The Scripture knoweth but two sorts of Episcopacy: the one General, unfixed as to any Church or Country or Nation; which was not called Episcopacy in the first times: the other fixed Overseers of determinate Churches appropriated to their special charge: these were called Bishops in those times: whereas the former were, some called Apostles, from their immediate mission and extraordinary Privileges; or Evangelists, or Fellow-labourers and helpers of the Apostles, or by the like titles signifying their unlimited indeterminate charge. But our English Bishops are neither of these: therefore not any of Scripture appointment but different from them. 1. They are not of the Apostolical Order of General Ministers: for 1. Their principal work was Preaching to convert, and congregate, and then order Churches: but our Bishops seldom preached, for the most part. 2. They were not tyed to any particular Church more then other, save only as prudence directed them *pro tempore & renata*, for the success of their work for the Church Universal; nor were they excluded or restrained from any part of the world as being another mans Diocese; save only as prudence might direct them for the common good, to distribute themselves *pro tempore*. This is apparent 1. by Christs Commission, who sendeth them into all the world, only by certain advantages and particular calls, fitting *Peter* more for the Circumcision, and *Paul* for the Uncircumcision, when yet both *Peter* and *Paul* and all the rest, did preach and look to both Circumcision and Uncircumcision. 2. By the History of their peregrinations and labours, which shew that they were not so fixed, whatever some writers may ungroundedly affirm. *Eusebius* (discrediting by fabulous mixtures the lighter sort of his Testimonies, and censured by some rejection by *Gelasius* and others) and some with him, do tell us of some such things, as some Apostles being fixed Bishops, but with no such proofs as should satisfie a man that weighs the contrary intimations of Scripture, and the discord of these reporters among themselves. Only it is certain, that nature it self would so restrain them that as they could be but in one place at once, so they could not be in perpetual motion: and prudence would keep them longest in those places where most work was to be done. And therefore *Paul*s three years abode at *Ephesus* and the neighbouring



bouring parts of *Asia*, did not make him the fixed Diocesan Bishop of *Ephesus*.

And what I say of the Apostles, I say also of many such Itinerant unfixed Ministers which were their helpers, as *Silas*, *Apollo*, *Barnabas*, *Titus*, *Timothy*, &c. For though *Timothy* be called by some Antients the first Bishop of *Ephesus*, and *Titus* of *Crete*; yet it is apparent they were no such fixed Ministers, that undertook a Diocese *durante vita* as their proper charge, which werethen called Bishops; but they were Itinerant helpers of the Apostles in gathering, planting and first ordering of Churches. And therefore *Titus* was left in a whole Nation or large Island, to place Bishops or Elders in each City, and set things in order, and this but till *Paul* come, and not to be himself their fixed Bishop: and *Timothy* is proved by Scripture to have been unsettled and itinerant as a helper of *Paul*, after that he is by some supposed to be fixed at *Ephesus*. I will not needlessly *actum agere*: let any man that is unsatisfied of this, read impartially Mr. *Prins* unbishoping of *Timothy* and *Titus*, and note there the Itinerary of *Timothy* from Scripture Texts. If therefore our Bishops would have been of the Apostles and their General helpers race, they should have gone up and down to gather and plant Churches, and then go up and down to visit those which they have planted; or if they live where all are Enchurched already, they should go up and down to preach to the ruder sort of them, and by the power of the word to subdue men further to Christ, and to see that all Ministers where they come do their duty, reproving and admonishing those that neglect it, but not forbidding them to do it, as a thing belonging only to them. And by Spiritual weapons and authority should they have driven Ministers to this duty, and not by meer secular force (of which more anon.)

2. And as for the fixed Bishops of Apostolical Institution, our English Prelacy are not like them. For the fixed Bishops established by the Apostles were only Overseers of one particular Church: But the English Prelates were the Overseers of many particular Churches. Therefore the English Prelates were not the same with the old Bishops of the Apostles institution.

The course that the Prelates take to elude this argument is by giving us a false definition of a particular Church. That we may not therefore have any unprofitable strife about words,



I shall signifie my own meaning. By a Particular Church I mean an Associated or combined company of Christians, for Communion in Publick Worship, and Furtherance of each other in the way to heaven, under the Guidance of Christs Church Officers, (one Elder or more;) such as are undivided, or Churches of the first order commonly called *Ecclesia Prima*, as to existence, and which contain not divers Political Churches in them. A family I mean not: for thats not a Political Church, having no Pastor. An accidental company of Christians I mean not. For those are no Association, and so no Political Church: [Nor do I mean a National, or Diocesane or Classial Church, or any the like; which are composed of many particular Churches of the first order, conjunct. It is not of Necessity that they alway or most usually meet in one Congregation: because its possible they may want a capacious convenient room, and its possible they may be under persecution, so that they may be forced to meet secretly in small companies; or there may be some aged weak people or children that cannot travail to the chief place of Meeting, and so may have some Chappels of ease, or smaller meeting. But still it must be a number neither so big, nor so small as to be incapable of the ends of Association, which enter the definition; how ever weakness, age or other accidents may hinder some members from that full usefulness as to the main end, which other members have. So that they which are so many, or live at such a distance as to be incapable of the ends, are not such a Church, nor are capable of so being: For the number will alter the species. In a word, it cannot, I think, be proved that in the Primitive times, there was any one fixed Bishop that Governed and Overfaw any more then one such particular political Church, as was not composed of divers lesser political Churches: nor that their Churches which any fixed Bishop overfaw were more then could hold Communion in Worship in one publick place, for so many of them as could ordinarily hear at once ( for all the families cannot usually come at once: ) they were not greater then some of our English Parishes are, nor usually the tenth part so great. I have been informed by the judicious inhabitants, that there are fourscore thousand in *Giles Cripple-gate* Parish in *London*: and about fifty thousand in *Stepney*, and fourty thousand in *Sepulchres*. There cannot any Church in Scripture be found



that was greater, nor neer so great as one of these Parishes. No not the Church at *Jerusalem* it self of which so much is said: No not if you admit all the number of moveable Converts and Sojournours to have been of that particular Church, which yet cannot be proved to have been so. I know Bishop *Downam* doth with great indignation Dispute that Diocesses were before Parishes, and that it was more then one Congregation that was contained in those Diocesses; We will not contend about the name Diocess and Parish, which by the Ancients were sometime used promiscuously for the same thing: But as to the thing signified by them, I say that what ever you call it, a Diocess, or a Parish, there were not near so many souls as in some English Parishes; nor take one with another, their Churches commonly were no more Numerous then our Parishes, nor so numerous. A Diocess then and a Parish were the same thing, and both the same as our particular Churches now are; that is, the *Ecclesia prima*, or Societies of Christians combined under Church-Rulers, for holy Communion in Worship and Discipline. And there were no otherwise many Congregations in one Church, then as our Chapples of ease, or a few meeting in a private house because of rainy weather, are many Congregations in one Parish. The foresaid Learned and Godly, (though angry) Bishop *Downam*, saith *Def. li. 2. cap. 1. page 6.* that [*Indeed at the very first Conversion of Cities, the whole Number of the people converted, being some not much greater then the Number of the Presbyters placed among them, were able to make but a small Congregation.*] Call that Church then a Diocess or a Parish, I care not, so we come near an agreement, about the proportion of Members that the definition be not overthrown, and the ends of it made impossible by the distance, number, and unacquaintedness of the members that cannot have any Church communion immediately one with another. If there be no communion, how is it a Church? Nay or if there be no such communion as consists in mutual assistance and conjunction in Worship, and holding familiarity also in our conversation (which the excommunicated are excluded from) And if a communion there be, it is either Immediate by the members themselves Assembled, or else but Mediatly by their Officers or Delegates. If it be only by the latter Mediatly, then it is not the *Ecclesia*



*clesia prima*, but *orta*: It is an association of several Political Churches: For that is the difference between the communion of a single particular Church, and many combined Churches, that as the first is a combination of persons and not of Churches, so the communion is held among the Members in common, whereas the other being a combination of Churches, the communion is maintained orderly by Officers and Delegates; joyning in Synods, and sent from the Congregations. If therefore it be an Immediate ordinary communion of members in Ecclesiastical affairs, viz. Worship and Discipline, that is the Particular Church that I intend, call it what you will else, and whether there may be any private meetings in it besides the main body, or not, as possibly through some accidents there may be; and yet at Sacrament and on the most solemn occasions, the same persons that were at Chappels or less meetings, may be with the chief Assembly.

But I shall proceed in the proof of this by the next Argument, which will serve for this and the main together.

Argum. II. **T**hat sort of Church Government may most safely be now practised which was used in the Scripture times, and that's less safe which was not then used. But the Government of many Elders and particular Churches by one Bishop (fixed, and taking that as his proper Diocese, such as the English Bishops were) was not used in Scripture times. Therefore it is not so safe to use it or restore it now.

The Major is proved hence: 1. In that the Primitive Church which was in Scripture times, was of unquestionable Divine Institution, and so most pure. And it is certainly lawful to practice that Church-Government which alone was practised by all the Church in the Scripture times of the New Testament. 2. Because we have no certain Law or Direction but Scripture for the frame of Government as *jure Divino*. Scripture is Gods sufficient and perfect Law. If therefore there be no mention of the Practice of any such Episcopacy in Scripture, no nor any precept for the practice of it afterwards, then cannot we receive it as of Divine Institution. The Objections shall be answered when we have proved the Minor.

And for the Minor I shall at this time argue from the Concessions



sions of the most Learned and Reverend man that at this time hath deeply engaged himself in defence of Episcopacy, who doth grant us all these things following. 1. That in Scripture times they were the same persons, and of the same office that were called Bishops and Presbyters. 2. That all the Presbyters mentioned in Scripture times, or then instituted (as far as we can know) had a Power of Ordination. 3. And also a Power of Ruling the Church, Excommunicating and Absolving. 4. That there was not then in being any Presbyter (such as the Bishops would have in these times) who was under the Bishop of a particular Church or Diocess. His words are these [And although this title of *Presbyter*, *Elders*, have been also extended to a second Order in the Church, and is now only in use for them, under the Name of Presbyters, yet in the Scripture times it belonged principally, if not alone to Bishops; there being no Evidence, that any of that second order were then instituted, though soon after, before the writing of Ignatius Epistles there were such instituted in all Churches.] 5. It is yielded also by him that it is the office of these Presbyters or Bishops to Teach frequently and diligently, to reduce Hereticks, to reprove, rebuke, Censure and absolve, to visit all the sick and pray with them, &c. And therefore it must needs follow that their Diocess must be no larger then that they may faithfully perform all this to the Members of it: And if there be but one Bishop to do it, I am most certain then by experience that his Diocess must be no bigger then this Parish, nor perhaps half so big. 6. And it must needs follow, that in Scripture times a Particular Church consisted not of severall Churches associated, nor of severall Congregations ordinarily meeting in several places for Christian com-

Dr. H. Dissert.

4. p. 208.

[S. 9. Prius

non usquequaq;  
verum esse

quod pro concessio sumitur (in una civitate non fuisse plures Episcopos). Quamvis enim in una Ecclesia aut eam plures simul Episcopi nunquam fuerint, nihil tamen obstat quin in eadem civitate duo aliquando distincti autem fuerint, duobus Apostolis ad fidem adductis, diversis forsitan dialectis & aliquando ritibus distinctis, quibus duo iidem Episcopi scilicet, & diversis aliis praesiderent.

Et p. 211. S. 21. [Ex his ratio constat, quare sine Presbyterorum mentione interveniente, Episcopis Diaconis immediate adscribantur, quia scilicet in singulis Macedonae civitatibus, quamvis Episcopus esset, nondum Presbyteri constituti sunt, Diaconis tantum *epos* & *diakon* ubique Episcopis adjunctis.

Mark well the stating of the question by Dr. H. Dissert. Epist. S. 30, 31. The controversy is not Quibus demum nominibus cogniti fuerint Ecclesiarum Rectores, sed an ad unum in



*singulari Ecclesia, an ad plures, potestas ista devenerit. Nos ad unum singularem Praefectum, quem ex famosiore Ecclesiae usu Episcopum vulgo dicimus, potestatem istam in singulari Cœtu ex Christi & Apostolorum institutione nunquam non pertinuisse affirmamus.* ] You see here that it is but [ *in singulari Ecclesia* ] & [ *in singulari Cœtu* ] that he affirmeth an Episcopacy of Christs and the Apostles institution. And such Bishops most Churches in England have already.

munion in the solema Worship of God, but only of the Christians of one such Congregation with a single Pastor ( though in that we dissent, and suppose there were more Pastors then one usually, or often. ) That this must be granted with the rest is apparent.

1. The Reverend Author saith as Bishop Downam before cited [ *That when the Gospel was first preached by the Apostles and but few converted, they ordained in every City and region, no more but a Bishop and one or more Deacons to attend him, there being at the present so small store out of which to take more, and so small need of ordaining more, that this Bishop is constituted more for the sake of those which should after believe, then of those which did already.* ]

2. And its proved thus : If there were in Scripture times any more ordinary Worshipping Assemblies on the Lords dayes then one under one Bishop, then either they did Preach, Pray, Praise God, and administer the Lords Supper in those Assemblies, or they did not : If not, then 1. They were no such Worshipping Assemblies as we speak of. 2. And they should sin against Christ who required it. 3. And differ from his Churches which ordinarily used it. But if they did thus, then either they had some Pastor ( Presbyter or Bishop ) to perform these holy actions between God and the people, or not : If not, then they suppose that Lay-men might do all this Ministerial work, in Word, Sacraments, Prayer, and Praise in the name of the Assembly, &c. And if so, what then is proper to the Ministry? then farewell Bishops and Presbyters too. If not, then either the Bishop must be in two Assemblies at once performing the Holy Worship of God in their communion ( but thats impossible : ) or else he must have some assisting Presbyters to do it ; But thats denied : Therefore it must needs follow that the Church order, constitution and practised Government which was in Scripture times, was this ; that a single Worshipping Congregation was that particular Church which had a Presbyter or Bishop ( one or more ) which watched over and ruled that only Congregation as his Diocess or proper



proper charge, having no Government of any other Church ( Congregation ) or Elders. *De facto* this is plainly yielded.

Well: this much being yielded, and we having come so far to an agreement, about the actual Church Constitution and Government of the Scripture times, we desire to know some sufficient reason, why we in these times may not take up with the Government and Church order which was practised in the Scripture times? And the Reason that is brought against it is this; Because it was the Apostles intention that this single Bishop who in Scripture times had but one Congregation, and Governed no Presbyters, should after Scripture times, have many settled Congregations, and their Presbyters under them, and should have the power of ordaining them, &c. To this I answer, 1. The Intentions of mens hearts are secret till they are some way revealed. No man of this age doth know the Apostles hearts but by some sign: what then is the revelation that Prooveth this Intention? Either it must be some Word or Deed. For the first I cannot yet find any colour of proof which they bring from any word of the Apostles, where either they give power to this Presbyter or Bishop to Rule over many Presbyters and Congregations for the future: Nor yet where they do so much as foretell that so it shall be. As for those of *Paul to Timothy and Titus*, that they rebuke not an Elder, and receive not accusation against them but under two or three Witnesses, the Reverend Author affirmeth that those Elders were not Presbyters under such Bishops as we now speak of, but those Bishops themselves, whom *Timothy and Titus* might rebuke. And for meer facts without Scripture words, there is none that can prove this pretended Intention of the Apostles. First, there is no fact of the Apostles themselves or the Churches or Pastors in Scripture time to prove it. For *Subordinate Presbyters* are confessed not to be then instituted, and so not existent: and other fact of theirs there can be none. And no fact after them can prove it. Yet this is the great Argument that most insist on, that the practice of the Church after Scripture times, doth prove that Intention of the Apostles which Scripture doth not ( for ought is yet proved by them that I can find ) at all express. But we deny that, and require proof of it. It is not bare saying so that will serve. Is it not possible for the succeeding Bishops to err and mistake the Apostles



Apostles Intentions? If not, then are they Infallible as well as the Apostles, which is not true. They might sin in going from the Institution: And their sin will not prove that the Apostles intended it should be so *de jure*, because their followers did so *de facto*.

If they say that it is not likely that all the Churches should so suddenly be ignorant of the Apostles Intention, I answer, 1. We must not build our faith and practice on Conjectures. Such a saying as this is no proof of Apostolical intentions, to warrant us to swerve from the sole practised Government in Scripture times. 2. There is no great likelihood that I can discern that this first practised Government was altered by those that knew the Apostles, and upon supposition that these which are pretended were their intents. 3. If it were so, yet is it not impossible, nor very improbable, that through humane frailty they might be drawn to conjecture that that was the Apostles intents which seemed right in thier eyes, and suited their present judgements and interests. 4. Sure we are that the Scripture is the perfect Law and Rule to the Church for the Establishing of all necessary Offices and Ordinances: and therefore if there be no such intentions or Institutions of the Apostles mentioned in the Scripture, we may not set up universally such Offices and Ordinances, on any such supposed intents.

*De facto* we seem agreed, that the Apostles settled *One Pastor over one Congregation* having no Presbyters under his Rule: and that there were no other in Scripture time: but shortly after when Christians were multiplied, and the most of the Cities where the Churches were planted, were converted to the faith, together with the Country round about, then there were many Congregations, and many Pastors, and the Pastor of the first Church in the City did take all the other Churches and Pastors to be under his Government, calling them Presbyters only, and himself eminently or only the Bishop. Now the Question between us is, *Whether this was well done or not? & Whether these Pastors should not rather have gathered Churches as free as their own? & Whether the Christians that were afterward converted should not have combined for holy Communion themselves in particular distinct Churches, and have had their own Pastors set over them, as the first Churches by the Apostles had?* They that deny it, and Justifie their



their fact, have nothing that we can see for it, but an ungrounded surmise, that it was the Apostles meaning that the first Bishops should so do: But we have the Apostles express Institution, and the Churches practise during Scripture times, for the other way. We doubt not but Christians in the beginning were thin, and that the Apostles therefore preached most, and planted Churches in Cities because they were the most populous places, where was most matter to work upon, and most disciples were there; and that the Country round about did afford them here and there a family which joyned to the City Church: Much like as it is now among us with the Anabaptists and Separatists, who are famed to be so Numerous and potent through the Land, and yet I do not think that in all this County, there is so many in Number of either of these sects as the tenth part of the people of this one Parish; nor perhaps as the twentieth part. Now if all the Anabaptists in *Worcestershire*, or at least that lived so neer as to be capable of Church communion, should be of Mr. T's. Congregation at *Bewdley*, or of a Church that met in the chief City *Worcester*, yet doth not this intimate that all the space of ground in this County is appointed or intended for the future as Mr. T's. Diocess; but if the successive Pastor should claim the whole County as his charge, if the whole were turned to that opinion, no doubt but they would much cross their founders mind. And (if the comparison may be tolerated) we see great reason to conceive that the Ancient Bishops did thus cross the Apostles minds. When there were no more Christians in a City and the adjoining parts, then half some of our Parishes, the Apostles planted fixed Governours called Bishops or Elders over these particular Churches, which had constant communion in the worship of God: And when the Cities and Countreyes were converted to the faith, the frailty of ambition co-working thereto, these Bishops did claim all that space of ground for their Diocess where the members of their Church had lived before; as if Churches were to be measured by the acres of Land, and not by the number of souls; whereas they should have done as the Bee-hives do, when they are ready to swarm, so that the old hive cannot contain them all, the swarm removes and seeks them another habitation, and makes them a New hive of their own. So when a Church grows big enough for two Churches, one part should remove



remove to another meeting place, and they should become two Churches, and the later be of the same sort as the former, and as free, and not become subject to the former, as if men had right to be Rulers of others, because they were Converted before them, or because they dwell in a walled City, and others in the Villages. This Error therefore was no contrived or sordain thing, but crept on by degrees, as Countries were Converted and Churches enlarged; we are agreed therefore *de facto*, that it was otherwise in the Apostles daies, and that soon after, in some places, it came to that pass as the Prelates would have it (in some degree.) But whether the Apostles were willing of the change, is the Question between us; we deny it, and expect their better proof. And till they prove it, we must needs take it for our duty to imitate that Government which themselves confels was *only practised* in Scripture times; supposing this the safest way.

**B**ut yer, though the proof lye on their part, who affirm the Apostles to have had such Intentions, that Pastors of single Congregations should afterward become the Pastors of many, I shall *ex superabundanti* give them some Reasons for the Negative.

1. And first we are most certain that the holiest Pastors of the Church, had so much Pride and Ambition, that might possibly make them guilty of such a mistake as tended to the increase of their own power and rule. We find even the twelve Apostles contending in Christs own presence for the Primacy, till he is put sharply to rebuke them, and tell them the Necessity of humility, and teach them better the state of his Kingdom. Paul met with many that contended against him for a preheminance, and put him upon all those defences of the dignity of his Apostleship which we find him using. Peter found it necessary to warn the Pastors

*Conqueritur enim olim Socrates Episcopatus quosdam suis temporibus extra sacerdotii fines egressos et empuase esse delapsos: Conqueritur apud Pelusios tam Hierax lenitatis & insuetudinis dignitatem in Tyrannidem transisse: conqueritur de Episcoporum ambitione Nazianzenus, & propterea si non Episcopatum, certe civitatum jus perpetuum in retinenda Episcopali dignitate mutatum veller.* He addeth yet more such, and concludeth, that Ecclesiastical Ambition never made such progress from the Apostles daies to those, as it hath done since to ours, almost incurably. *Grotius de imperio pag. 360. 361.*

that



that they should not Lord it over Gods Heritage. And *John* did meet with a Lording *Diotrephes*, that loved to have the pre-eminence. While they lay under the Cross, the Bishops were aspiring, and usurping authority over one another; or else *Victor* of *Rome* had not presumed to Excommunicate the *Asian* Bishops for not conforming to his opinion: What abundance of unworthy contentions did the Bishops of the first ages fill the Churches with? and much about superiority, who should be greatest; what should be the privileges of their several Seas; &c. Their pride no doubt was a great cause of their contention; and those contentions necessitated the interposition of Emperors to reconcile them that could not agree of themselves. If the Emperors called a Council to that end, even the Council it self would fall to pieces, and make all worse, if the Magistrate did not moderate them. Had not *Constantine* burnt the *Nicene* Schedules, and done much to maintain an Union among them, the success of that Council might have been such as would have been no great encouragement to succeeding ages to seek for more. What bitter quarrels are there between the most eminent of all the Fathers and Bishops of the Church? between *Chrysostom* and *Epiphanius*; *Chrysostom* and *Theophilus Alexandrinus*; *Hierom* and *John of Jerusalem*; *Jerome* and *Ruffinus*; besides his quarrels with *Chrysostom* and *Augustine*. I open not the concealed nakedness of the Saints; but mention those publike doleful tragedies which made the Church an amazement to it self, and a scorn to the Heathens that lived about them; witness the well known censure of *Ammianus Marcellinus*: when so many people shall be murdered at once in contention for a Bishoprick as were at the choice of *Damasus*; ambition was too predominant. The mentioning of the contentions of those most excellent Bishops, and the first four general Councils, makes *Luther* break out into so many admiring exclamations, in his Treatise *de Conciliis*; that ever such men should so ambitiously quarrel about toys and trifles, and childish things, and that even to the disturbing of all the Churches, and setting the Christian world on a flame. Of the two Churches of *Rome* and *Constantinople* he saith, *Ita haec duo Ecclesiae ambitiose rixate sunt, de re nihili, vanissimis & nugacissimis nanis, donec tandem utraque horribiliter vastata & deleta est.* pag. 175. This caused



caused *Nazianzen* ( who complaineth so much himself of the odium or displeasure of his fellow Bishops ) to profess himself to be so affected, that he would avoid all Assemblies of Bishops, because he had never seen a good end of any Synod, and which did not rather increase the evils than remove them; and his reason is not as *Bellarmin* feigneth, only because they were all *Arrians*; but because, The desire of contending, and of pre-eminency or principality, and their emulation, did overcome reason, ( which *Luther* mentioning *ib. pag. 225.* wondereth that for these words he was not excommunicated as an arrant heretick ) Who knoweth not, that knoweth any thing of Church history, how the Church hath been torn in pieces in all ages except the first, by the dissention of the Bishops, till the Pope drew part of them to unite in him? And who knoweth not, that knoweth any thing of the present state of the Christian world, into how many fractions it is broken at this day, and almost all through the Division of these Guides? If therefore we shall imagine that the Pastors of the Church could not be tainted with so much ambition as to enlarge their own Diocesses, and gather the new Churches under themselves, when they should have formed them into the same order and freedom as were the first, we shall shut our eyes against the most full experience of the Christian world: especially when the change was made by degrees.

2. The second Reason that perswadeth me to stick to the sole practised Government in Scripture times, and not to alter it upon pretended Intentions of the Apostles, is this: *Nothing that intimateth temerity or mutability, is to be charged upon the Holy Ghost: but to institute one frame or species of Church government for Scripture times, and to change it presently into another species to all succeeding ages, doth intimate temerity or mutability; or at least, is so like it, that therefore without good proof it is not to be charged on the Holy Ghost.* That they are two distinct species of Government is plain: one is the Government of a Particular Congregation, without any other Congregations or Elders under that Government: the other is the Governing of many Elders and Churches by one supereminent Prelate: and if these be not two differing sorts of Government, then let the Prelates confess that the Government which we would continue

Reason 2.



is of the same sort with theirs: for ours is of the first sort; and if theirs be of the same, we are both agreed.

And that the Lord Jesus Christ should settle one kind of Government *de facto* during Scripture time, and change it for ever after, is most improbable: 1. Because it intimateth levity, or mutability in a Law-giver, so suddenly to change his Laws and form of Government; either something that he is supposed not to have foreseen, or some imperfection is intimated as the cause. Or if they say, that it was the change of the state of the body Governed, *viz.* the Church: I answer, 2. There was no change of the state of the Church to necessitate a change of the kind of Officers and Government: for (as I shall shew anon) there was need of more Elders then one in Scripture times; and the increase of the Church might require an increase of Officers for Number, but not for Kind. There was as much need of assisting Presbyters, as of Deacons. I may well conclude therefore, that he that will affirm a Change of the Government so suddenly, must be sure to prove it; and the rather, because this is the Bishops own great and most considerable Argument on the other side, when they plead that the Apostles themselves were Rulers of Presbyters, therefore Rulers over Presbyters (and many Churches) should continue as Gods Ordinance: many on the other side answer them, (though so do not I) that this Ordinance was temporary, during the Apostles times, who had no Successors in Government: to which the Prelates reply, that its not imaginable that Christ should settle one sort of Church-Government for the first age, and another ever after, abolishing that first so soon: and that they who affirm this, must prove it. For my part, I am overcome by this Argument, to allow all that the Apostolical pattern can prove, laying aside that which depended on their extraordinary gifts and privileges; but then I see no reason but they should acknowledge the force of their own *Medium*; and conclude its not imaginable that, if God settled fixed Bishops only over particular Congregations, without any such order as subject Presbyters, in the first age, he should change this, and set up subject Presbyters and many Churches under one man for ever after.

If they say, that this is not a change of the *species*, but a growing up of the Church from Infancy to Maturity: I answer, It



It is a plain change of the *Species* of Government, when one Congregation is turned into Many, and when a new order of Officers, viz. subject Presbyters without power of Ordination or Jurisdiction, is introduced, and the Bishops made Governours of Pastors, that before were but Governours of the People, this is plainly a new *Species*. Else I say again, let them not blame us for being against the right *Species*.

3. The third Reason is this: *They that affirm a change* (not Reason 3. of the Governours, but also) *of the very nature or kind of a particular Governed or Political Church, from what it was in Scripture times, do affirm a thing so improbable, as is not without very clear proof to be credited. But such are they that affirm that Congregational Bishops were turned to Diocesan: therefore, &c.*

The Church that was the object of the Government of a fixed Bishop in Scripture times, was, [A competent Number of persons in Covenant with Christ (or of Christians) co-habiting, by the appointment of Christ and their mutual expressed consent, united (or associated) under Christs Ministerial Teachers and Guides for the right worshipping of God in publick and the Edification of the Body in Knowledge and Holiness, and the maintaining of obedience to Christ among them, for the strength, beauty and safety of the whole and each part, and thereby the Pleasing and Glorifying God the Redeemer, and Creator,] It would be too long, rather then difficult to stand to prove all the parts of this Definition, of the first particular Political Church. That part which most concerneth our present purpose, is the *Ends*, which in Relations must enter the Definition: which in one word is, *The Communion of Saints personally*, as Associated Churches consisting of many particular Churches, are for the Communion of Saints by officers and Delegates. And therefore this communion of Saints is put in our Creed, next to the Catholick Church, as the end of the combination. I shall have occasion to prove this by particular Texts of Scripture anon. A Diocesan Church is not capable of these Ends. What personal communion can they have that know not nor see not one another? that live not together, nor worship God together? There is no more personal communion of Saints among most of the people of this Diocess, then is between us and the inhabitants of *France* or *Germany*: For we know not so much as the names or faces of each other, nor ever come together to

A particular Church, what.



any holy uses. So that to turn a Congregation into a Diocesan Church, is to change the very subject of Government.

Obj. *This is meer independency, to make a single Congregation, the subject of the Government.* Answ. 1. I am not deterred from any truth by Names. I have formerly said, that its my opinion that the truth about Church-Government, is parcelled out into the hands of each party, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Independents, and Erastian: And in this point in Question the Independents are most right. Yet I do not affirm (nor I think they) that this one Congregation may not accidentally be necessitated to meet in several places at once, either in case of persecution, or the age and weakness of some members, or the smallness of the room: But I say only that the Church should contain no more then can hold communion when they have opportunity of place and liberty; and should not have either several settled Societies or Congregations, nor more in one such Society then may consist with the Ends. And that these Assemblies are bound to Associate with other Assemblies, and hold communion with them by the mediation of their Officers; this, as I make no doubt of, so I think the Congregational will confess. And whereas the common evasion is by distinguishing between a Worshipping Church and a Governed Church, I desire them to give us any Scripture proof that a Worshipping Church and a Governed Church were not all one, supposing that we speak of a settled society or combination. I find no such distinction of Churches in Scripture. A family I know may perform some worship, and accordingly have some Government: And an occasional meeting of Christians without any Minister, may perform some Worship without Government among them. But where was there ever a Society that ordinarily assembled for publick worship, such as was performed by the Churches on the Lords dayes, and held communion ordinarily in worship, and yet had not a Governing Pastor of their own? Without a Presbyter they could have no Sacraments and other publick Worship? And where was there ever a Presbyter that was not a Church-Governour? Certainly if subject Presbyters were not till after Scripture times, nor any settled Worshipping Church without a Presbyter (unless the people preached and administered the Sacraments,) then there could be no Worshipping Church that had not their own



proper Governour, nor any such Governour (fixed) that had more Churches then one.

Reason 4. *The contrary opinion feigneth the Apostles to have allotted to each Bishop a space of ground for his Diocess; and to have measured Churches by such spaces, and not by the number of souls:* But this is unproved, & absurd. 1. Unproved, For there is no place in Scripture that giveth the Bishop charge of all that space of ground, or of all the Christians that shall be in that space during his time: Indeed they placed a Bishop in each City, when there was but a Church in each City: But they never said, there shall be but one Church in a City, or but one Bishop in a City; much less in all the Country region. 2. And its absurd: For its the number of souls that a Church must be measured by, and not a space of ground, (so they do but co-habite:) For if in the same space of Ground, there should be twenty or an hundred times as many Christians, it would make the number so great as would be incapable of personal communion, and of obtaining Church Ends. If a Schoolmaster have a School in the chief City or Town of this County, and there come as many from many miles compass as one School can hold, and there be no more there: so long all that space may belong to his School, not for the space sake, but the number of Schollars: For if there be afterward an hundred times as many in that space to be taught, they must set up more Schools, and it were no wise part in the old Schoolmaster to maintain that all that Country pertaineth to his School, because that it was so when there were fewer. So that to measure our the matter of Churches by space of ground, and not by number of souls, is plainly against the Reason of the Relation.

Reason 5. *The opposed opinion doth imply that God more regardeth Cities then Country Villages, or that Churches are to be measured according to the number and greatness of Cities rather then according to the number of souls.* For they suppose that every City should have a Bishop if there be but twenty, or forty, or an hundred Christians in it: but if there be five hundred Country Parishes, that have some of them many thousand souls in them, these shall have no Bishops of their own, but be all ruled by the Bishop of the City. Now how unreasonable this is, methinks should not be hard to discern. For, 1. What is a City



City to God any more then a Village, that for it he should make so partial an institution? Doth he regard *Rome* any more then *Eugubium*, or *Alexandria* more then *Tanis*, for their worldly splendor or priviledges? No doubtless it is for the multitude of inhabitants. And if so, its manifest that an equal number of inhabitants elsewhere, should have the same kind of Government.

2. Is it probable that God would have twenty thousand or an hundred thousand people in a Diocess ( and in some a Million ) to have but one Church-Ruler, and yet would have every small congregation in a City to have one, though there be none else under him? What proportion is there in this way of Government, that an hundred or fifty men shall have as many Governours as a Million? as if ten thousand or an hundred thousand Schollars out of a City shall have no more Rulers, then an hundred in a City; and all because one part are in a City, and the other not? Or a Physitian shall have but an hundred Patients to look to in a City, and if there be a Million in that City and Country, he shall also upon pain of Gods everlasting wrath undertake the care of them all? Let them that strive for such a charge look to it; I profess I admire at them, what they think 1. Of the needs of men souls: 2. Of the terrours of Gods wrath. 3. And of their own sufficiency for such a work? Were it my case, if I know my own heart at all, I should fear that this were but to strive to damn thousands, and to be damned with them, by undertaking on that penalty to be their Physitian ( under Christ ) when I am sure I cannot look to the hundreth man of them, and I had rather strive to be a gally-slave to the Turks, or to be preferred to rid Channels, or the basest office all my dayes.

Reason 6.

Reason 6. According to the opposed opinion, it is in the power of a King to make Bishops to be either Congregational or Diocesan, to make a Bishop to have a Million of souls or a whole Nation in charge, or to have but a few. For if a King will but dissolve the Priviledge and title, and make that no City which was a City, though he diminish not the number of souls; and if he will do thus by all the Cities, save one in his dominion, then must there be but one Bishop in his dominion. And if he will but make every countrey Town, that hath four or five hundred or a thousand inhabitants to be incorporate, and honour it with the title and priviledges of a City, then shall they have a Bishop. Moreover, thus every Prince may *de jure* banish Episcopacy out of his



his Dominions, without diminishing the number of Christians, if he do but defranchise the Cities, and be of the mind as I have heard some men have been, that Cities are against the Princes interest, by strengthening the people, and advantaging them to rebellions. Also if there be any Indian Nations so barbarous as to have no Cities, though they were converted, yet must they have no Bishops: Also it would be in the Princes power *de jure* to depose any of those Bishops that the Apostles or their Successors are supposed to set up: For the Roman Emperour might have proclaimed *Antioch, Alexandria*, or any of the rest to be no Cities, and then they must have no longer have had any Bishops. And what Bishops shall *Antioch* have at this day?

Now how absurd all this is, I need not manifest: that whole Contreves shall have no Government for want of Cities, that Kings shall so alter Church Officers at their pleasure when they intend it not, meerly by altering the Civil Priviledges of their people; that a King may make one Diocess to become an hundred, and an hundred become one, by such means. And yet all this doth undenyably follow, if the Law be that every City, and only every City shall be a Bishops Sea where there are Christians to be governed.

Reason 7. *There is no sufficient Reason given, why subject Presbyters should not have been set up in the Scripture times, as well as after, if it had been the Apostles intent that such should be instituted.* Reason 7. The Necessity pretended, was no necessity, and the Non-necessity is but pretended. First it is pretended that there were so few fit men that there was a Necessity of forbearance. But this is not so: For, 1. The Church had larger gifts of the Spirit then, then now, and therefore proportionable to the flocks they might have had competent men, then as well as now. 2. They had men enough to make Deacons of, even seven in a Church: And who will believe then that they could find none to make such Elders of? Was not *Stephen* or *Philip* sufficiently qualified to have been a subject Elder? 3. They had many that prophesied, and interpreted, and spake with tongues in one Assembly, as appears, 1 Cor. 14. And therefore its manifest that there were enough to have made Ruled Elders: At least that the Church at *Jerusalem*, where there were so many thousands



sands, would have afforded them one such, if it had been requisite.

But secondly, its pretended not to have been Necessary, because of the fewness of the people. But I answer, 1. The same persons say that in *Ignatius* his time all Churches had such Presbyters: And its manifest that many Churches in the Scripture times, were more populous or large, then many or most beside them were in *Ignatius* time. 2. Did the numerous Church at *Jerusalem* ordinarily meet on the Lords dayes for holy communion, or not? If they did, then it was but a Church of one Congregation ( which is by most denied ) If not, then the several Assemblies must have several Presbyters ( for several Bishops they will not hear of, ) Doubtless they did not celebrate the holy communion of the Church and Ordinances of God, by meer Laymen alone. 3. What man that knows the burden of Pastoral Oversight, can say that such Churches of thousands, as *Jerusalem*, *Rome*, *Alexandria*, &c. had need of no more than one man, to Teach them, and do all the Pastoral work? and so that assisting Ruled Presbyters were then needless? If they were needless to such numerous Churches then; let us even take them for needless still, and set up no new orders which were not seen in Scripture times.

Reason. 8. *The Apostles left it not to the Bishops whom they established to make new Church-offices and orders quoad speciem, but only to ordain mento succeed others in the offices and orders that themselves had (by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost) appointed, or else Christ before them.* A Bishop might make a Bishop or a Deacon perhaps, because these were *quoad speciem* made before, and they were but to put others into the places before appointed. But if there were no such creature in Scripture times as a *subject Presbyter*, that had no power of Ordination and Jurisdiction, then if the Bishops afterward should make such, they must make a new office, as well as a new officer. So that either this new Presbyter is of the institution of Christ by his Apostles, or of Episcopal humane institution. If the former, and yet not instituted in Scripture times, then Scripture is not the sufficient rule and discoverer of Divine Institutions and Church Ordinances: and if we once forsake that Rule, we know not where to fix, but must wander in that Romane uncertainty. If the latter, then we must