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nion with us, and not till then. And indeed must we lay your Communion so deer? As the Anabaptists do by us in the point of Baptism, so do these Recusants in the point of Ordination. You must be Baptized saith one party, for your Infant Baptism was none. You must be Ordained saith the other sort, for your Ordination by Presbyters was none. The upshot is, We must be all of their Opinions and parties, before we can have their Communion, or to be reputed by them the Ministers and Churches of Christ. And on such kind of terms as these, we may have Unity with any Sect.

If really we be not as hearty friends to Order and Discipline in the Church as they, we shall give them leave to take it for our shame, and glory in it as their honour. But the question is not, whether we must have Church-Order? but whether it must be theirs, and none but theirs? Nor whether we must have Discipline, but whether it must be only theirs? Nay, with me, I must profess, the question is, on the other side whether we must needs have a Name and shew of Discipline thats next to none, or else be no Churches or no Ministers of Christ? The main reason that turneth my heart against the English Prelacy is because it did destroy Church Discipline, and almost destroy the Church for want of it, or by the abuse of it, and because it is (as then exercised) inconsistent with true Discipline. The question is not, whether we must have Bishops and Episcopal Ordination. We all yield to that without contradiction. But the doubt is about their Species of Episcopacy. Whether we must needs have Ordination by a Bishop that is the sole Governour over an hundred, or two hundred, or very many particular Churches: or whether the Bishops of single Churches may not suffice, at least as to the Being of our office? I plead not my own cause, but the Churches, For I was ordained long ago by a Bishop of their own with Presbyters. But I do not therefore take my self to be disengaged from Christianity or Catholicism, and

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and bound to lay by the Love which I owe to all Christs members, or to deny the Communion of the Churches, which is both my Duty, and I am sure an unvaluable Mercy. And I must say, that I have seen more of the Ancient Discipline exercised of late, without a Prelate, in some Parish Church in England, than ever I saw or heard of exercised by the Bishops in a thousand such Churches all my dayes. And it is not Names that are Essential to the Church, nor that will satisfie our expectations.

We are for Bishops in every Church; And for Order sake, we would have one to be the chief. We dislike those that disobey them in lawful things, as well as you. But let them have a flock that is capable of their personal Government, and then we shall be ready to rebuke all those that separate from them, when we can say as Cyprian (Epist. 69. ad Pupian.) [Omnis Ecclesiæ populus collectus est, & adunatus, in individua concordia sibi junctus. Soli illi foris remanserint, qui etsi intus essent, ejiciendi fuerant — Qui cum Episcopo non est, in Ecclesia non est (that is, in that particular Church.) Cyprian had a people that could all meet together to consult or consent at least about the Communion or Excommunication of the members. Epist. 55. Cornel. he tells Cornelius how hard the people were to admit the lapsed or scandalous upon their return if the manifestation of repentance were not full. The Church wish whom the person had Communion, was then it that had a Bishop, and was no greater then to be capable of the Cognizance of his cause, and of receiving satisfaction by his personal penitence.

Brethren ! (for so I will presume to call you, whether you will or not) Some experience hath perswaded me, that if we had honestly and faithfully joyned in the practice of so much of Discipline, as all our principles require, it would have helped us to that experimental knowledge (by the bles-

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sing of God) which would have brought us nearer even in our Principles, than our idle Disputations, separated from practice will ever do. As Augustine saith of the disputes de causa mali (Lib. de utilitat. Credendi, cap. 18.) Dum nimis quarunt unde sit malum, nihil reperiunt nisi malum] so I may say of these disputes, while we thus dispute about the causes of disorder and division, we find nothing but disorder and division.

It is easie to conjecture of the ends and hearts of those that cry down Piety as preciseness, while they cry up their several wares of order : it seems they would have ordered impiety : and their order must be a means to keep down holiness, which all just order should promote. Those men that can fall in with the most notoriously ungodly, and favour and flatter them for the strengthening of their interest, do tell us what Discipline we may expect from them. If they tell us that our Churches also are corrupted, and all are not truly or eminently godly, we can say to them as Augustine (lib. de utilitat. Credend. cap. 17.) [Pauci hoc faciunt, pauciores bene prudenterq; faciunt : sed populi probant, populi audiunt, populi favent] yea we can say much more.

But for those that go further, and clap the prophane railers on the back, and hiss them on to hiss at those that differ from them, and are glad to hear the rabble revile our Ministry and our Churches, in taking part with their Prelacy and Liturgy, they tell us lowder what unity and order they desire, and what a mercy of God it is, that such as they have not their will : and though among themselves the slanders and reproaches of such men may go for credible or be accepted as conducing to their ends ; yet in the conclusion such witnesses will bring no credit to their cause, nor with just men much discredit ours ; at least it will not diminish our reputation with God, nor abate his love,

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love, nor hinder his acceptance, and then we have enough. saith (Cyprian Epist. 69. ad Pupian) Quasi apud lapsos & prophanos, & extra Ecclesiam positos, de quorum pectoribus excesserit Spiritus Sanctus, esse aliquid possit nisi mens prava, & fallax lingua, & odia venenata, & sacrilega mendacia, quibus qui credit, cum illis necesse est inveniatur, cum judicii dies venerit.] That is [As if with the scandalous and prophane, and those that are without the Church, from whose breasts the holy Spirit is departed, there could be any thing but a naughty mind, and a deceitful tongue, and venomous hatred, and sacrilegious lies; and those that believe them must needs be found with them when the day of judgement comes.]

Me thinks rather the hatred, and railing of the ungodly should intimate to you that our Ministry is of God! why else do all the most obstinately wicked maligne us as their enemies, though we never did them wrong? why seek they our destruction, and are glad of any Learned men that will encourage them in their malignity, and to strike in with any party that are against us; when all the harm we wish or do them, is to pray for them, and perswade them, and do our best to save them from damnation! As Cyprian (ubi sup.) said to Pupian [ut etiam qui non credebant Deo Episcopum constituenti, vel Diabolo crederent Episcopum proscribenti] so say I [They that will not believe Gods testimony of our Ministry, let them believe the Devils testimony, as the confession of an enemy, that by the mouths of the wicked revileth us as Ministers, and persecuteth us for doing our Masters work.

Another reproach is commonly laid upon our Ministry by those that vilifie them in order to their ends, viz that they are boyes, and raw and unlearned and manage the work of God so coarsely as tends to bring it into contempt. I would there were no ground for this accusation at all: but

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I must needs say, 1. That no men are more unmeet then you to be the accusers. Have you so corrupted the Ministry with the insufficient and ungodly, that we are necessitated to supply their places with men that are too young; and now do you reproach us, because we imperfectly mend your crimes? yea because we work not impossibilities? It is the desire of our souls, that no able useful man may be laid by, however differing in smaller matters, or controversies of policy? But we cannot create men, nor infuse learning into them; but when God hath qualified them, we gladly use them; the best that can be had are chosen; and what can be done more? And I hope you will acknowledge, that godly and tolerably able young men are fitter then impious, ignorant Readers.

We excuse no mans weakness: but to speak out the truth, too many of the adversaries of our Ministry accuse our weakness with greater weakness; when they are unable or undisposed themselves to manage the work of God with any of that gravity, and seriousness as the unspeakable weight of the business doth require, they think to get the reputation of learned able men, by an empty childish, trifling kind of preaching; patching together some shreds of sentences, and offering us their Centons with as much ostentation, as if it were an uniform, judicious work. And then they fall a jeering at plain and serious Preachers, as if they were some ignorant bawling fellows, that were nothing but a voice, and had nothing to produce but fervent nonsense. Brethren, will you bear with us a little, while we modestly excuse our simplicity which you condemn. We will not say, that we can speak wisdom to the wise, nor make ostentation of our Oratory: but we must tell you that we Believe what we speak, and somewhat feel it; and therefore we endeavour so to speak what we believe and feel, that others also may believe and feel us. If a man speak smilingly, or not affectionately of very great affecting things, the hearers
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use to say, You are but in jeast; and they believe him not, because he speaks as one that doth not believe himself. It is not wit but Levity and stupidity that we renounce. As Seneca saith, we refuse not an eloquent Physician: but it is not eloquence, but Healing that we need: the easing of our pains, and saving of our lives, and not the clawing of our ears. We dare not speak lightly or triflingly of Heaven or Hell. We more condemn our selves when we find within us but a dull apprehension of these exceeding great eternal things, then we do for want of neat expressions. A vain curiosity in attire, doth shew that substantial worth is wanting. We most abhor the preaching of false doctrine: and next, that manner of preaching Truth that causeth an airy levity in the hearers; and when the manner seemeth to contradict the matter. One taste or sight of Heaven or Hell would put you into another pass your selves. Truly Brethren (though I am one my self, that have the least advantages to vie with you in that wherein you glory yet) there are many among them whom you thus despise, that have wits inclined to as much unruliness and luxuriancy as yours: but being ballanced with the sense of everlasting things, and seasoned with the Light and Life of Christ, they are as careful to keep under and rule their wit, as others are diligent to feed its wantonness, and make ostentation of it to the world. It will shortly appear but ingenious folly which was not animated and regulated by Christ. The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God: and the foolishness of God is wiser then men, 1 Cor. 1. 25. &c. We find the most experienced Learned Divines betake themselves to the plainest stile; and much more addicted to the ancient simplicity, then green, inflated, empty brains. When we displease both our selves, and our queasie, coye and aery auditors by the homeliness of our style, we usually hear more of the success of those sermons, then of those wherein by a
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wordy Curiosity, we procure from the aery mere applause. *Saith Augustine (de Catechiz. rudib. cap. 2.) [Nam & mihi semper prope sermo meus displicet — sic & tu eo ipso quod ad te sæpius adducitur baptizandi — debes intelligere non ita displicere aliis sermonem tuum ut displicet tibi : nec infructuosum te debes putare, quod ea quæ cernis non explicas ita ut cupis ; quando forte ut cupis nec cernere valeas] Our business is to teach the ignorant, to convert the impenitent, and to edifie and confirm the weak ; and therefore if repetitions, and homely expressions, with all the seriousness we can use, be found the fittest means to attain these ends, we shall study them and not decline them, though some dislike them. Augustine de doctrin. Christ. lib. 4. cap. 12. Qui ergo dicit cum docere vult, quamdiu non intelligitur, nondum se existimet dixisse quod vult ei quem vult docere : quia etsi dixit quod ipse intelligit, nondum ille (illi, dixisse putandus est, a quo intellectus non est : si vero intellectus est, quocunque modo dixerit, dixit.]*

I confess when I heard a through pased preacher in the Prelates reign, experience taught me presently to expect three great infirmities in him, viz. stumbling, spotling, and tiring : stumbling either in doctrine, conversation, or both ; especially in a stony way : spotling even the clearest of his Brethren, and that both in the Pulpit, and behind their backs. For most of the wounds we have from such are in our back parts, though we never fled. They can most effectually confute us when we do not hear them. As one of them that I knew, divided his Text into one part, and so do many of them their Disputations : they are best at Disputing alone, when there is none to contradict them. They are better gun-men then sword-men : Eminus fortissimi ; cominus — more valiant a far off than neer at hand :

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band: and making more use of powder then of bullet; the noise exceeding the execution: and being nearest themselves, it is a wonder that their Consciences start not at the report. It is the reward of these pugnacious souls, to be cryed up as victorious, and to have their triumph attended by their like: and it is enough to prove them victors that they can but crow and erect the crist. And if they are soon tired we must not wonder; for they preach at too high rates to hold out long. Funkets are not for full meals; and feasting must not be all the year. When they preach but seldom, they justified it by telling us, that one of their sermons was worth ten of theirs that preach'd so often: and half a crown was as good as six pences.

For my part, I do not undervalue their wit, nor envy them the honour of it: but I would fain have things Divine to be Divinely handled; and the weightiest matters to be spoken off in the most serious weighty manner. And I would not have a school boy when he hath said a Declamation, to think that he is more learned then Scotus or Occam, because he hath a smother style: nor to think that he hath done a gallanter piece of work, then he that hath read a Lecture in Metaphysicks. I am much inclin'd to honour their parts; I value the wit of a Comedian, when I value not the employment of it. I have often heard a Rustical Justice call a staller a Rogue, that call'd himself a Musician; and perhaps he puts him in the stocks, that thinks he deserves a Princes ear: when I have thought of their Art, and forgotten the abuse, I have been apt to pity their case. I could be well content that so great an Artist as Nero perish not: let him live as an Artist, but not as an Emperour. I honour and love the learning and industry of the Jesuits: let them be encouraged as Learned, but not as Jesuits. Let them all be us'd in that which they are good for. But a Comical wit is not enough to make a Minister of
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the Gospel of salvation. Counters can jingle as well as gold. If such must be Bishops, let them be Diocesans, (so they be kept without a sword) for when they have an hundred Churches, they will trouble them but seldom, with their preaching : and that may be endured for a day that cannot for a year.

If you think I have turned my excuse of a plain and serious ministry into a recrimination, or seemed guilty of what I blame, consider of what and to whom I speak.

I am far from a contempt of learning, or encouraging ignorant insufficient men, or justifying any ridiculous unseemly deportment, or any rash, irrational expressions, in the work of God. And I earnestly intreat the servants of the Lord to take heed of such temerity and miscarriages, and remember what a work they have in hand, and how much dependeth on the success, and that the eyes of God and men are on them, and that it is no light matter to an honest heart, that Christ and his cause should be dishonoured by our weaknesses, and our labours should hereby be frustrated, and sinners hardened in their impiety. But yet I must say, that many that are but low in Learning, have greater abilities (by grace and use) to manage the great essentials of Christianity, and set home a necessary truth upon the heart, and deal with ignorant dead-hearted sinners, then many very Learned men did ever attain to. And I confess I could wish for the service of the Church, that some such (now private) less-learned men, in great Congregations were yoked with some Learned men that are less fit for lively rousing application; that they might Lovingly go together, the one confessing his defect in Learning, and the other his defect in application, and the unlearned depending for guidance from the more Learned, in cases of difficulty, where his abilities fall short; that so they might be both as one able Minister, communicating the honour of their several abilities to each other

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other to supply and cover each others defects. But if such a thing should be attempted (though agreeably to the Churches practice for many hundred years after Christ) what an outcry should we have from the men now in hand, against Mechanicks and unlearned men! and how many would reproach their work that cannot mend it! I have been long on this subject: I will end it with this story.

Gregory Nysen tells us in his relation of the Life of Gregory Thaumaturgus, that this holy man then Bishop of Neocæsarea, was so famous by his miracles and successes that the Neighbour Countreys sent to him, to preach and plant Churches among them. Among others Comana a neighbour City sent to him, to come and plant a Church and Bishops among them. When he had stayed a while, and preached and prepared them, and the time was come that he was to design them a chief Pastor (or Bishop) the Magistrates and principal men of the City were very busie in enquiring anxiously and curiously, who was of most eminent rank and splendour, excelling the rest, that he might be chosen to the office and dignity of being their Bishop. For Gregory him, self had all these Ornaments, and therefore they thought their Pastor must have them too. But when it came to choice they were all to pieces, some for one and some for another: so that Gregory looked to heaven for Directions, what to do. When they were thus taken up with proposing men of splendor and eminency, Gregory (remembering Samuels anointing David,) exhorted them to look also among the meanest: for possibly there might be found among them some of better qualifications of mind: Whereupon some of them signified, that they took it as a contumelie and scorn, that all the chief men for eloquence, dignity and splendour, should be refused, and that Mechanicks and tradesmen that labour for their living should be thought fitter for so great an office. And saith one of them to him in derision, If you will pass

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by all these that are chosen out of the best of the Citizens, and go to the scum and basest of the people for a Pastor for us: its best for you even to make Alexander the Collier a Priest, and lets all agree to choose him. The good man hearing these scornful words, it struck into his mind to know who that Alexander the Collier was? Whereupon they brought him presently with laughter, and set him in the midst of them collowed and half-naked, and ragged and sordid, and thus stood Alexander among them. But Gregory suspected somewhat better by him, then they that laugh at him; and thereupon taking him out of the company, and examining his life, he found that he was a Philosophick man, that being of a very comely person, and loth it should be any occasion of incontinency, and also renouncing the vanities of the world, had addicted himself to the life of a Collier, that his person and worth might be hid from men, and his mind be kept in an humble frame. Whereupon Gregory appointeth some to take away Alexander, and wash him and cloath him with his Pastoral attire, and bring him into the Assembly as soon as they had done. In the mean time Gregory goes to the Assembly, and fals a preaching to them of the nature of the Pastoral office, and the holiness of life required thereto, entertaining them with such speeches, till Alexander was brought, and comely adorned in Gregories garments was set before them. Whereupon they all fell a gazing and wondering at Alexander: and Gregory fals a preaching to them again of the deceitfulness of judging by outward appearances, about the inward worth of the soul, and that Satan had obscured Alexander, lest he should subvert his kingdom. To be short, he ordaineth Alexander their Bishop (a Pastor of a single Church.) And when they desired to hear him preach, he shewed that Gregory was not deceived in him: His sermon was sententious and full of understanding: but because he had no flowers of Oratory, or exactness and curiosity

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rosity of words, one that was a curious hearer derided him, who it is said was by a vision brought to repent of it. And thus despised Alexander the Collier was made Bishop (or Pastor) of Comana, when the great ones were rejected: and afterward proved a Champion for Christ, to whom he passed in Martyrdom through the flames. I have recited this for their sakes that deride the gifts of God in men whom they account unlearned: but not to encourage any to thrust themselves on so great a work without Ordination and due qualifications.

Object. But it is Ordination it self that is wanting to the Pastors of the Reformed Churches, and therefore they are no Pastors, &c. *Answ.* The contrary is manifested in this ensuing Disputation. This separating Principle is it that I here purposely contend against. For it is cast in to divide and to destroy: And to quench such granado's and fire-works of the Devil, is a necessary work for them that will preserve a Churches Peace. I read in Thuanus of a Bishop in France that turning Protestant, took his Popish consecration for insufficient, and was again elect, and ordained by the Protestant Minsters, without a Prelate, to be a Prelate. But that Presbyters Ordained by a Presbytery of Protestants should be reordained by a Prelate, and that as necessary to the being of their office, is strange doctrine to all the Protestant Churches. It was rejected commonly by the English Bishops, even by A. B. Bancroft himself. Saith Firmilian (inter Epist. Cypriani) [Omnis potestas & gratia in Ecclesia constituta est, ubi praesident Majores natu, qui & baptizandi, & Manus imponendi & ordinandi possident potestatem] i. e. All Power and Grace is placed in the Church where Elders do preside, who possess the power of Baptizing, Imposing hands, and Ordaining.]

I know it will be said that Firmilian speak of Bishops only.

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ly. But I believe not that he spoke of such Bishops only as we have in question, or that he did not plainly speak of Presbyters as such. For he speaks of the plenitude of Power and Grace in the Church; and therefore intended more then what was proper to a Prelate. 2. He mentioneth Elders, *Majores natu*, in general without distinction. And 3. His præfident is plainly related to the Church (as the ubi shews;) it being the People and not the Elders over whom these Elders are said to preside. And 4. Baptizing is first instanced; which was known to be commonly the work of Presbyters, and never appropriated to the Prelate. So that the same persons that did Baptize, even the Elders of the Church, according to Firmilian, did then possess the power of laying on hands and of ordaining. But these things are more fully discussed in what followeth. And if any either adversary or friend would see the Reformed Churches Ministry and Ordination more fully vindicated, I refer them to Voetius against Jasenius *Desperata causa Papatus*: which if I had read before I had written this Disputation, I think I should have spared my labour.

Reader, if others are too busie to mislead thee, I may suppose thee unwilling to be misled, especially in a matter of so great concernment: For saith Blessed Augustine, *Multos invenimus qui mentiri velint, qui autem falli neminem de Doctrin. Christ. l. i. cap. 36.*) And therefore as thou lovest Christ, his Church, and Gospel, and the souls of others and thine own, take heed how thou ventur'est in following a sect of angry men, to unchurch so great and excellent a part of the Catholick Church, and to vilifie and depose so great a number of able faithfull Ministers of Christ, as those that had not Prelatical Ordination.

And if you are Gentlemen, or unlearned men, that for want of long and diligent studying of these matters, are incapable of judging of them, and therefore take all on the Authority of those whose Learning and parts you most esteem, I beseech

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beseech you before you venture your souls on it any further, procure a satisfactory answer to these Questions.

1. Whether the Reformed Churches that have no Prelates, have not abounded with as learned men as any one of those that you admire of a contrary judgement?

2. If you are tempted to suspect men of partiality, whether they that plead for L^rship, honour and preferment, or they that plead against it, and put it from them, are more to be suspected, cæteris paribus?

3. If you will needs suspect the Protestant Ministers of partiality: what ground of suspicion have you of them that were no Ministers? Such as the two Scaligers, whose learning made them the admiration of the Christian world, even to Papists as well as Protestants: and yet were cordial friends to those Reformed Churches which these men deny and draw men to disown. Such also as Salmasius, that hath purposely wrote about the subject: with abundance more.

4. If these are not to be trusted, why should not Bishops themselves be trusted? were not Bishop Usher, Andrews, Davenant, Hall, and others of their mind, as learned pious men as any whose Authority you can urge against them?

5. If all this be nothing, I beseech you get a modest resolution of this doubt at least: whether the concurrent judgement of all the Protestant Churches in Christendom, even of the English Bishops with the rest, should not be of more authority with any sober Protestant, then the Contrary judgement of those few that are of late risen up for the cause that you are by them solicited to own. It is a known Truth that the generality of the Bishops themselves and all the Protestant Churches in the world, have owned them as true Ministers that were ordained by Presbyteries, without Prelates: and have owned them as true Churches that were guided by these Ministers, and have taken them for valid administrations that were performed by them. And are your few Recusants that would draw you

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to separation of greater Learning, authority and regard, than all the Protestants in the world besides? I beseech you, if you will needs take things upon trust, consider this, and trust accordingly. Though I must say it is pitty that any truly Catholick Christian should not have better grounds than these, and be able himself in so palpable a case to perceive his duty.

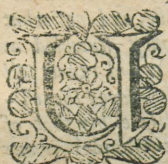
For my own part, my conscience witnesseth that I have not written the following Disputation out of a desire to quarrel with any man, but am drawn to it, to my great displeasure, by the present danger and necessity of the Churches, and by compassion to the souls that are turned from the publick Ordinances, and engaged in the separation, and also of the Churches that are divided and troubled by these means. The sad complaints of many of my Brethren from several parts have moved my heart to this undertaking. Through Gods Mercy, I have peace at home; but I may not therefore be insensible of the divisions and calamities abroad. I shall adjoine here one of the Letters that invited me, and no more; because in that one you may see the scope and tenour of the rest, and that I rush not on this displeasing work, without a Call, nor before there is a cause. The passages that intimate an over-valuing of my self, you may charitably impute to the Authors juniority and humility, with some mistake through distance and disacquaintance.

One of the Letters that invited me to this task.

Reverend



Reverend Sir,



Understanding by the Preface to the Reader before your Gildas Salvianus, that you intend a second part, wherein you promise to speak of the way how to discern the true Church and Ministry, I make bold to present you with the desire of some Godly Ministers: viz. that if you see it convenient, you would do some thing towards the vindication of the present Churches and Ministers from the aspersions of the new Prelatical party in England. It is a principle much made of by many of the Gentry and others, that we are but Schismatical branches broken off from the true body; and this by faithfull tradition is spread amongst them: the learning of some rigid Prelatical Scholars is very prevalent with them to make them thus account of us. With these men we must be all unchurched for casting off Diocesan Episcopacy: though we be sound in the faith, and would spend our selves to save souls, and the main substance of our Ordination (at least) cannot be found fault with; yet because we had not a Bishop to lay his hands on us, we are not sent from God. Of what consequence this opinion may prove, if it spread without being checked, an ordinary apprehension may perceive. I can guess something from what I observe from many of this heaven already, that our most serious pains will be little regarded, if our people take this infection; when we would awaken them, we cannot, because they take it that we have no power to teach them. It must not be men of means parts that must undertake more fully to wipe off this reproach: for the learned adversaries are tall Cedars in knowledge in comparison of many of us: and if men of parts do not grapple with them herein, they will easily carry the vote in many mens judgements; for they judge that the greater Schollars by far certainly have the better in the contest. Sir, we beseech you that you would improve your acquaintance in Antiquity for our help in this case. Not that we would engage you in wrangling with particular men by name, who will not want words: but how ever you would evidence it that our Ordination by Presbyters is not void, and of no effect. I have this reason ready to give for this request: for (besides what I had formerly heard) I was lately with some of those not of the meanest influence, who urged Episcopacy as of absolute necessity, affirming that this order the Church of God ever observed: and that it was doubtless of Apostolical institution, being a thing of Catholick tradition; and that's the best standard to interpret Scripture by. What then are we arrived at, that have forsaken the whole Church herein? Though I am little versed in the Ancients, yet I tell them we acknowledge that soon after the Apostles times the name Bishop came up as distinct from the Presbyters; but then I call for their proof that the Primitive Bishops had the power of jurisdiction over Presbyters, or that to him only ordination was appropriated. I tell them also that we have certain evidence that in some Churches these Bishops were made by Presbyters

Presbyters, so was the custom in Alexandria: and when did ever the Church judge them to be no Bishops or Ministers? And also of Tertullians President probati quique Seniores, and of Cyprians Salvo inter Collegas pacis & concordiae vinculo: and that doubtless if Cyprian be to be believed, the Church was then ruled by the joint consent of its Pastors, of whom one was indeed the President or Moderator, who yet called himself compresbyter, and the Presbyters fratres (not filios as it was of late.) This answer I have had from some of them, that the Church in those times was much under the cloud, being persecuted, and had not that liberty to settle Diocesan Episcopacy in that Glory, which the Apostolical institution aimed at, and that the Church was then what it could be, and not what it would be. Do you judge of its weight. For my part, I am most stumbled at the reading of Ignatius (whom Dr. H. so strenuously defends) and cannot tell how to evade that Testimony in the behalf of Episcopacy, if it be indeed the testimony of the true Ignatius. But methinks his phrase is much unlike either that of Clemens, or of Cyprian in this case. Its great pity that Dr. Blouel wants his eyes, and so we are hindered of enjoying of more of his labours in this point. His Notion of the Apostolical Presbyters is a very pretty one, and it were well if we had fuller evidence added to that which he hath endeavoured after in his Preface, to his Apology for Hieron.

Or if your judgement about the power of every single Pastor were fully improved, it would conduce much to the clearing of these controversies. I could methinks be glad of the practice of those proposals which Bishop Usher hath made in a late printed sheet: But these angry Brethren who now oppose us are of a higher strain.

But I run out too far and forget whom I am writing to. Truly I am deeply sensible, what mischief those seeds which are as yet but thin-sown (as I may say) may grow up to in time: I know not how it is with you, but with us, I fear ten for one at least would be easily drawn to such an opinion of us, if the temptation were but somewhat stronger; multitudes observing how civil transactions have again: now if these Episcopal mens judgement should but be dispersed more abroad, how easily would it make these people think that we have deluded them all this while? and so will not regard us! Alas! what a sad thought is it if I should study and preach and pray for mens souls, and yet be rejected as one that had no charge of them as a Minister laid on me for God! We thank you for what you said in your Christian Concord: and I treat you would enlarge further on this Subject, as you see convenient: That the striplings in the Ministry may be furnished with arguments against our adversaries from such able hands as yours are.

I have done, only I shall desire your pardon for my interrupting you in your other business; and if I shall hereafter crave your assistance and direction in some cases, I pray you excuse me if uncivil, and vouchsafe to let me hear from you: for I am about to settle where the charge is great. The Lord continue you amongst us, that you may be further an instrument of good. I rest, dear Sir, as usual,

Jan. 8.
1657.

Your Affectionate friend and weak
Brother M. E.

Affert.



Affert. Those who nullifie our present Ministry and Churches, which have not the Prelatical Ordination, and teach the people to do the like, do incur the guilt of grievous sin.

CHAP. I.

Sect. 1.



OR the making good this Assertion,
1. I shall prove that they groundlessly deny our Ministry and Churches;
and 2. I shall shew the greatness of their sin.

In preparation to the first I must
1. Take some notice of the true Nature of the Ministerial function: and 2. Of the Nature and Reasons of Ordination.

Sect. 2. We are agreed (*ore tenus* at least) that the Power and Honour of the Ministry is for the *work*, and the *work* for the

the *Ends*, which are the revelation of the Gospel, the application or conveyance of the benefits to men, the right worshipping of God, and right Governing of his Church, to the saving of our selves and our people, and the Glorifying and Pleasing God.

Sect. 3. So that [*A Minister of the Gospel is an Officer of Jesus Christ, set apart (or separated) to preach the Gospel and thereby to convert men to Christianity, and by Baptism to receive Disciples into his Church, to congregate Disciples, and to be the Teachers, Overseers, and Governours of the particular Churches, and to go before them in publick worship and administer to them the special Ordinances of Christ, according to the word of God; that in the Communion of Saints, the members may be edified, preserved, and be fruitful and obedient to Christ; and the Societies well ordered, beautified and strengthened; and both Ministers and People saved; and the Sanctifier, Redeemer and the Father Glorified and Pleased in his People now and for ever*]

Sect. 4. In this Definition of a Minister, 1. It is supposed that he be competently qualified for these works: For if the Matter be not so far Disposed as to be capable of the Form, it will not be informed thereby. There are some Qualifications necessary to the being of the Ministry, some but to the well being. Its the first that I now speak of.

Sect. 5. Before I name them, lest you misapply what is said, I shall first desire you to observe this very necessary distinction: Its one thing to ask, *who is to take himself for a called and true Minister; and to do the work, as expecting Acceptance and Reward from God:* and its another thing to ask, *Whom are the people (or Churches) to take for a true Minister, and to submit to as expecting the Acceptance and blessing of God in that submission from his administrations.* Or its one thing to have a Call which will before God justify his Ministration and another thing to have a Call which will before God justify the Peoples submission, and will justify in foro Ecclesie, both him and them. And so its one thing to be a Minister whom God and Conscience will justify and own, as to Himself: and another thing to be a Minister to the Church, whom they must own, and God will own and bless only as to their good.

In the first sence, none but truely sanctified men can be Ministers.

nisters; but in the latter an un sanctified man may be a Minister. As there is a difference among Members between the *Visible* and *Mystical*, (of which I have spoken elsewhere. *) So is there between *Pastors*. Some have a Title that *in foro Ecclesie* or *Ecclesia judice* will hold good, that have none that is good *in foro Dei*: In one word. the Church is bound to take many a man as a *true Minister to them*, and receive the Ordinances from him in faith, and expectation of a Blessing upon promise; who yet before God is a sinful invader, an usurper of the Ministry, and shall be condemned for it.

* Dispute of
Right to
Sacraments.

As in worldly Possessions, many a man hath a good Title before men, and at the bar of man, so that no man may disturb his Possession, nor take it from him, without the guilt of theft, when yet he may have no good Right at the bar of God to justify him in his retention. So it is here.

Sect. 6. It is too common a case in Civil Governments (the ignorance of which occasioneth many to be disobedient.) A man that invadeth the Sovereignty without a Title, may be no King as to himself, before God, and yet may be truly a King as to the People. That is, He stands guilty before God of Usurpation, and (till he Repent, and get a better Title) shall be answerable for all his administrations as unwarrantable: And yet, when he hath settled himself in Possession of the Place, and exercise of the Sovereignty, he may be under an obligation to do justice to the people, and defend them, and the people may be under an obligation to obey him and honour him and to receive the fruits of his Government as a blessing. Mens Title in Conscience and before God (for Magistracy and Ministry) themselves are most to look after, and to justify; and its often crakt and naught, when their Title *in foro humano* may be good; or when the people are bound to obey them. And those miscarriages or usurpations of Magistrates or Ministers which forfeit Gods Acceptance and Blessing to themselves, do not forfeit the blessing of Christs Ordinances and their administrations to the Church: For it is the guilty and not the Innocent that must bear the loss. A Sacrament may be as effectual, and owned by God, for my benefit, when it is from the hand of a man that shall be condemned for administring it, as when it is from the hand of a Saint that hath a better call; supposing still that I be innocent of his usurpation or error.

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