

your good will have leave laboriously to serve God in a low estate, as the servants of all, and the Lords of none?

Sect. 16. 10. By this means also you shew your selves impenitent in regard of all the former persecutions that some of you and your predecessors have been guilty of. Abundance of most Learned Godly men have been silenced, suspended, and some of them persecuted to banishment, and some to death. The world hath had too few such men for exemplary abilities, diligence and holiness, as *Hildersham, Bradshaw, Bayn, Nicols, Brightman, Dod, Ball, Paget, Hering, Langley, Parker, Sandford, Cartwright, Bates, Ames, Rogers*, and abundance more, that some suffered unto death, and some were silenced, some imprisoned, &c. for not conforming to the Ceremonies: besides *Eliot, Hooker, Cotton, Norton, Cobbet, Davenant, Parker, Noyes*, and all the rest that were driven to *New England*; and besides *Ward* and all that were driven into *Holland*: and besides the thousands of private Christians that were driven away with them: And besides all the later more extensive persecution of such as were called Conformable Puritans, for not reading the Book for dauncing on the Lords day, and for not ceasing to preach Lectures, or on the Evening of the Lords day, and such like: All this I call to your mind, as the sin that should be lamented, and heavily lamented, and not be owned, and drawn or continued on your own heads by impenitencie; and how do you repent, that would do the like, and take your selves to be persecuted, if your hands are tyed that you may not do it? For my own part, I must profess, I had rather be a Gally-slave, or Chimney-sweeper, yea or the basest vermine, than be a Bishop with all this guilt upon my soul, (to continue,) how light soever many make of it, and how impenitently soever they justifie themselves.

Sect. 17. 11. Yea more, after all the warnings you have had, in the waies and ends of your predecessors, it seems that you would yet incomparably outstrip the most of them in persecution, if you had your way. For few of them did attempt, or make any motion, for degrading or denying most of the Protestant Ministers in *Europe*, or such a number as in *England* and *Scotland* are not Ordained by Prelates, and to unchurch all their Churches. This is far higher then these before you.

Sect. 18. 12. And take heed lest continuing in such a sin, after both prohibitions and judgements, you should be found *fighters against God*. If those that despise the Ministers of Christ, despise Christ himself, what shall we think of them that do it themselves, and *teach men so to do, and have pleasure in them that do it*? Its fearful to draw near that forlorn Condition of the Jews, *1 Thes. 2. 15, 16.* [— and have persecuted us: and they please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.]

Sect. 19. 13. It is apparent that your doctrine and practice tendeth to let in the old ejected rabble of drunken, ignorant, ungodly persons into the Ministerie. (And what can be more odious to the most Holy God!) For if once you cast out all those that have not Prelatical Ordination, or all that are against it, (especially after a former Ordination,) you must take in such as these, and with *Jeroboam*, make Priests of the vilest of the people, or else the places must be vacant: for we know that there are not able godly men to be had of your mind to supply the vacant places.

Sect. 20. 14. Your doctrine doth tend to harden malignant wicked men in their enmitie against a faithful Ministerie: and we see this unhappy success of it by experience. Our doctrine is so much against the inclination and interest of the flesh, and men are by corrupted nature at such an enmity to God, and all that is truly Spiritual and Holy, that we have as many enemies as hearers, till Grace do either restrain or change them. But when they have such an irritation and encouragement as this, and that from men that would be reputed as Godly as the best; then no wonder if they are hardened in their malignity. When we would instruct them and mind them of their everlasting state, and help to prepare them for their latter end; they are told by Learned men, that we are no Ministers but Lay-men and Schismatics, and that it is their sin to own us, or receive the Ordinances of Christ from us as Ministers: and so the poor people turn their backs on us, and on the Assemblies and Ordinances of God; and being taught by wise and learned men to disown us and despise us, they follow their drunkenness, and worldliness, and ungodliness with greater security, and with less remorse: for
now

now they have a defenſative againſt the galling doctrine of thoſe precise Preachers, that would not let them alone in their ſin : they were wont to be diſturbed at leaſt by Sermons, and ſome-time they purpoſed to return, and were in the way of Grace, and in ſome hope : but now they are taught by Learned Godly Divines to keep out of hearing, they can go on and ſin in peace.

Seſt. 21. 15. By this means alſo you rob God of his publick worſhip : People are taught to turn their backs on it : you teach them that it is better that God have no publick Miniſterial worſhip at all, in Prayer, Praises, Sacraments, &c. then that he ſhould have it from any but Prelatical Miniſters ! O ſacred doctrine ! And if you had your wills for the ſilencing or ejecting of all that are not Ordained by Prelates, how many hundred Church-doors muſt be ſhut up in the Chriſtian world, or worſe !

Seſt. 22. 16. By this means all Impiety would be cheriſhed and let looſe. When once the mouths of Miniſters were ſtopped, the mouth of the ſwearer, and curſer, and railer, and ſcorner at Godlineſs would be open : and ſo would be the mouth of the drunkard and glutton. If all that can be done, be ſo much too little, as experience tells us, what a caſe would the Nations be in, and how would iniquity abound, if Miniſters were caſt out ?

Seſt. 23. 17. Yea it might endanger the Churches, by the introduction of Infidelity or Heatheniſm it ſelf. For nothing is more natural as it were, to corrupted man : and if once the Miniſtry be taken down, and they have none, or thoſe that are next to none, Infidelity and Atheiſm will ſoon ſpring up : And it will be a more dangerous ſort of Infidelity, then is among many of the open Infidels, becauſe it would be palliated with the name of Chriſtianity, and leave men further from conviction, then ſome that never heard of Chriſt.

Seſt. 24. 18. And it is a temptation to Infidelity and Contempt of the Church and Miniſtrie, when men ſhall ſee that one party of Chriſtians doth thus unchurch another. They will think that they may boldly ſay that of us, which we ſay of one another ; one party unchurcheth all the Papists : theſe that we are now ſpeaking to, do unchurch all the Proteſtant Churches that

that are not Prelatical. The Papists unchurch all but themselves, and so among them, they leave Christ but a very small part of his inheritance.

Sect. 25. 19. Yea I fear that by Consequence (and too near and plain a Consequence) they dissolve the Catholike Church it self. And if it be so, let them judge whether their doctrine subvert not Christianitie? I use no violence for the inference. If want of Prelatical Ordination do Null the Protestant Ministrie and Churches, then it must needs follow that far greater defects (and more against the vitals of the Church) will do as much to unchurch the Romanists, the Greeks, Armenians, Syrians, Ethiopians, Egyptians, &c. But alas, how easie is it to prove that all these have far greater defects then the Presbyterian Protestant Churches! and so the whole must fall together.

Sect. 26. 20. By all these means they joyn with the Quakers, and Seekers, and Drunkards in opposing the same Ministrie that they oppose. *You are no true Ministers of Jesus Christ*, say the Quakers, Seekers, and other Sects; so also say these that now we are speaking of: and if they preach their doctrine, and side with them against the servants of Christ, let them be afraid lest they partake of their Spirit and Reward.

Sect. 27. 21. Their doctrine and practice tendeth to grieve the hearts of the most experienced gracious souls. Should all the Ministers be cast out that are not Prelatical, and the places supplied, as they must be in their stead, with such as can be had, O what a day would it be to honest humble souls, that were wont to delight themselves in the publike worship of God, and to find instruction, and admonition, and consolation suitable to their necessities! If now they should have all turned to what the Doctrine of these men portends, their souls would be as in a Wilderness, and famine would consume them, and they would lament as *David* in his banishment, and the Jews in their captivity, to think of the daies that once they saw.

Sect. 28. 22. And doth it not imply a great deal of *unholiness* and *enmity to Reformation*, when men dare thus boldly unchurch the most of the Reformed Churches, and pass such desperate nullifying censures on the most holy, able, painful Ministers of the Gospel? O how many of them are studying, and watch-

watching and praying for their people day and night, and teaching them publickly and from house to house, and that sometimes with tears, willing to spend and be spent for their Salvation, not seeking theirs but them; and when they have done all, they are reproached as no Ministers of Christ, and the people taught to disown them and forsake them. Is this a sign of a son of God, that is tender of his honour and interest? or of a Holy Gracious soul?

Sect. 29. 23. At least by this means the hands of Ministers are weakned in their work, and their difficulties increased, and their hearts grieved, because of their peoples misery. O if they could have but a free unprejudiced hearing with poor sinners some good might be done! But they will not hear us, nor come neer us, or speak to us: Especially when they are taught to forsake us by such men. I would not be the man that should thus add burden and grief to the faithful Ministers of Christ, upon such an account, for all the Bishopricks on earth.

Sect. 30. 24. They also distract the minds of Christians, when they hear men thus degrading and unchurching one another; so that weak persons are perplexed, and know not what to think nor what Church or Religion to be of: yea it is well if many be not tempted hereby to be of no Religion at all: when they hear them condemning one another.

Sect. 31. 25. These shew too much formality and Ceremoniousness, when they so much prefer their own opinion, about a circumstance, Ceremony or Mode, before the very being of the Churches and Ministry, and the substance of worship it self, and the Salvation of men souls: As if it were better for Churches to be no Churches, then not Prelatical Churches: or for souls to be condemned, then to be saved by men that are not Prelatical. I speak not these things to exasperate them (though I can expect no better:) but in the grief of my soul for the sad condition that they would bring men into.

Sect. 32. 26. They lay a very dangerous snare, to draw Ministers to be guilty of casting off the work of God. Flesh and blood would be glad of a fair pretence for so much liberty and ease. O how fain would it be unyoakt, and leave this labourious, displeasing kind of life! And when such as these shall perswade them that they are no Ministers, they may do much to gratifie

gratifie the flesh. For some will say, *I am at a loss, between both wayes; I cannot see the lawfulness of Prelacy: and yet they speak so confidently of the nullity of all other callings, that I will forbear till I am better resolved.* Another will say, *I find my self to be no Minister, and therefore free from the Obligation to Ministerial Offices; and I will take heed how I come under that yoke again, till I have fuller resolution.* Another will scruple being twice Ordained, and so will think it safer to surcease. At least they tempt men to such resolutions, that would discharge them from so hard a work.

Sect. 33. 27. By this means also they make the breaches that are among us to be incurable, and proclaim themselves utterly unreconcilable to the most of the Protestant Churches. For if they will have no reconciliation or communion with them, till they shall confess themselves no Churches, and cast off all their Ministers, they may as well say flatly, they will have none at all. For no reasonable man can imagine or expect that ever the Churches should yield to these terms. When they are declared no Ministers or Churches, you cannot then have Communion with them as Ministers or Churches.

Sect. 34. 28. And it is easie to see how much they befriend and encourage the Papists in all this. Is it not enough that you have vindicated the Pope from being the Antichrist, but you must also openly proclaim that *Rome* is a true Church, their Priests true Priests, their Ordinances and Administrations Valid, but all the Protestant Churches that are not Prelatical are indeed no Churches, their Ministers no Ministers, &c. Who would not then be a Papist rather than a member of such a Protestant Church? How can you more plainly invite men to turn Papists, unless you would do it expressly and with open face? Or how could you gratifie Papists more?

Sect. 35. 29. And truly if all these evils were accomplished, the Ministers forsaken, iniquity let loose, the Ordinances prophaned by unworthy men, &c. we could expect nothing but that the judgements of God should be poured out upon us for our Apostacy: and that temporal plagues involuntary should accompany the spiritual plagues that we have chosen! and that God should even forsake our land, and make us a by word and an hissing

hissing to the Nations : and that his judgements should write as upon our doors, *This is the people that wilfully cast out the Ministers and mercies of the Lord.*

Sect. 36. 30. And if all this were but accomplished, in the Conclusion I may be bold to ask, *what would the Devil himself have more, except our damnation it self?* If he were to plead his own cause, and to speak for himself, would he not say the very same as these Learned, Reverend Disputers do? would he not say to all our graceless people, *Hear not these Ministers: they are no true Ministers: Joyn not in Communion with their Churches, they are no true Churches?* I doubt not but he would say many of the same words, if he had leave to speak. And should not a man of any fear be afraid, and a man of any piety be unwilling to plead the very cause of Satan, and say as he would have them say, by accusing so many famous Churches and Ministers, as being none indeed, and drawing the people so to censure them and forsake them; This is no work for a Minister of Christ.

Sect. 37. Besides what is here said, I desire those whom it doth concern, that are afraid of plunging themselves into the depth of guilt and horror, that they will impartially read over my first sheet for the Ministry, which further shews the aggravations of their sin that are now the opposers and reproachers of them. Consider them, and take heed.

Sect. 38. But again I desire these Brethren to believe, that as it is none of the Prelatical Divines that I here speak of, but those that thus nullifie our Church & Ministry, while they own the Ministry and Church of *Rome*; so it is none of my desire to provoke even these, or injure them in the least degree: But I could not in this sad condition of the Church, but propound these hainous evils to their consideration, to provoke them to try, and to take heed lest they should incur so great a load of guilt, while they think they are pleading for Order in the Church. How can there be any charity to the Church, or to our brethren in us, if we can see them in such a gulf of sin as this, and yet say nothing to them, for fear of provoking them to displeasure?

Sect. 39. And I think it necessary that all young men that are cast by their arguings into temptations of falling with them into the same transgressions, should have the case laid open to them, that they may see their danger; and not by the accusations of

Schism be led into far greater real Schism, with so many other sins as these.

SECT. 40. Yet is it not my intent to justify any disorders or miscarriages that any have been guilty of in opposition to the Prelacie. And if they can prove that I have been guilty of any such thing my self, I shall accept of their reproof, and condemn my sin as soon as I can discern it. Only I must crave that the usual way of presumption, affirmation, or bare names of crimes be not supposed sufficient for Conviction, without proof, and before the cause is heard. And also I do profess that for all that I have here said against the English Prelacy, and though I earnestly desire it may never be restored, yet were I to live under it again, I would live peaceably and submissively, being obedient, and perswading others to obedience, in all things lawful.



CHAP. IX.

The sinfulness of despising or neglecting Ordination.

SECT. 1.



It is a thing so common and hardly avoided, for men in opposing one extreame, to seem to countenance the other, and for men that are convinced of the evil of one, to run into the other as the only truth, that I think it necessary here to endeavour the prevention of this miscarriage: and having said so much against the Necessity of Prelatical Ordination, and in some cases of any, I shall next shew the greatness of

of their sin that despise or neglect Ordination when it may be had.

SECT. 2. For the right understanding of what is to be said, I must again remember you, that though it be not at the Ordainers will to deprive the Church of Ministers, and it is none of the Question which they have to resolve, *Whether the Church shall have Ministers or none* (and therefore there may be Ministers without them, if they would hinder or refuse;) And though it be not the Question which is put to their decision, *What kind of Ministers the Church shall have* (for that Christ hath determined of;) nor yet *what Qualifications are necessary to them*, (for that also Christ hath already set down;) yet is it a great and weighty case that is put to the decision of Ordainers, that is, *whether this man be thus qualified as Christ hath described and required in Ministers?* and *whether he be the fittest person* (or fit at least) *for the particular charge to which he is called?* And the right determining of this question is a thing that the Churches welfare doth very much do depend upon.

SECT. 3. And therefore it is the decision of this one Question, that Ministers, People and Magistrates themselves, must all contribute their powers and endeavours too in their several places. All that they have to do is but to see that the Churches have fit men, even such as are qualified as God requireth. The People must choose fit men: or consent to them when chosen for them: The Pastors must try them, and Approve them, and only them that are fit: The Magistrate must encourage, assist and defend fit men, and forbid such as are intolerably unfit, and not permit them to abuse the name and Ordinances of Christ, and wrong his Church.

SECT. 4. This treble guard at the door of the Church doth much tend to its security, and preservation from the great evils that intruders may introduce. And each party of the three hath a special interest which should make them carefull of the business. 1. The people have great reason to have a hand in it, and to be carefull: For it is *their Souls* for which their Overseers watch, and *their Salvation* that is concerned in it. And he that will not trust his Son with any Tutor without due choice, nor his state with every Lawyer, nor his body with every Physician, nor his land, or cattle with every servant, but will choose the

best, hath reason to know upon whose care he trusteth his soul. For though it may be some excuse, it will be no justification of them that lie in sin and misery, to say, *Our Teachers did mislead us.* For if the blind lead the blind, it is both that fall into the ditch: And as *Cyprian* saith (with the rest of his Colleagues,) *Epist. 68. (alias Li. 1. Ep. 4.) [Propter quod plena diligentia, exploratione sincerâ oportet eos ad Sacerdotium delegi, quos à Deo constet audiri. Nec sibi plebs blandiatur, quasi immunis esse a contagio delicti possit cum Sacerdote peccatore communicans, & ad injustum atq; illicitum prapositioni sui Episcopatum consensum suum commodans, &c.]* Besides the work of the Ministry is Teaching and Perswasive, and the success is only on the *Willing*: and seeing we can do nothing on them for their good against their wills, or without their *own Consent*, it is needfull therefore that some way or other their *Consent* should be procured, unless we would frustrate all our labour, and mis our end. And also, a Church is a *Society Voluntarily conjoined for holy worship and Living*: and therefore it is contrary to the nature of it, that they should have Pastors, or be members and not *Consent*.

Sect. 5. And 2. For the *Magistrate*, there is great reason that he have his part also in the work: For the honour of God must be his End; the Law of God his chiefest Rule; the Church of Christ his chiefest subjects; and the work of Christ, his chiefest care and business. And seeing he Ruleth from Christ, and by Christ, and for Christ, it is necessary that he take care of the quality, and enterance, and carriage of Ministers, on whom Christs work and honour doth so much depend.

Sect. 6. Yet is there here a special difference between the works of these several parties in admitting men into the Ministry. The proper or necessary work of the people, is but to discern and consent: Whether they be the first Electors, is a matter of indifference in it self, & is sometime fit, and sometime unfit. The Magistrates work is not to Ordain Ministers; but carefully to Oversee the Ordainers and the People, that they put in none but worthy men: And if he find that they miscarry, he is not (ordinarily at least) to take the work upon him, and Ordain fitter men himself: but to correct them to whom the work belongs, for their male-administration, and restrain them from misdoing, and urge them by due means to do it better, or cause them to be displaced that
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are unreformable, that better may be chosen in their stead, that will be faithfull.

SECT. 7. And 3. The reason of the Ministers interest in the work, I shall more at large lay down anon. And though there be a possibility of frequent differences arising, through disagreement of these three several parties, yet Christ would rather use this treble guard for caution, then for the preventing of division, lay open his Church to the injury of intruders.

SECT. 8. And remember again, that it is not in the Power of Magistrates, Ordainers, People and all to make a Minister of Christ, of a man that wanteth the Essential Qualifications: *Ex quo vis ligno non fit Mercurius*. He that is not qualified for the works Essertial to a Minister, cannot by Ordination be made a Minister: No more then the bare stamp can make currant money of a piece of lead, when the Law makes the Mettal Essential to currant Coin: And no more then a license will make him a School-master that cannot read: or him a Pilot, that knows not how to Rule the ship: saith *Cyprian ubi sup.* [*Sed enim desiderio tuic vestro, non tam nostra concilia, quam Divina precepta respondent; quibus jampridem mandatur voce celesti, & Dei lege prescribitur, quos & quales oporteat deservire altari, & Sacrificia Divina celebrare.* (Here he citeth Scripture) *Qua cum predicta & manifesta sint nobis, preceptis Divinis necesse est obsequia nostra deserviant: Nec personam in ejusmodi rebus accipere, aut aliquid cuiquam largiri potest humana indulgentia ubi intercedit, & legem tribuit Divina prescriptio.*] God gives not men authority to contradict his Law, or to Ordain a man incapable of Ordination; nor introduce the form, where the matter is undisposed for it.

SECT. 9. Perhaps some will ask, *What should be done, in case that these three parties disagree: If the Magistrate would have one man, and the Ordainers another, and the people a third, or if two of them go one way, and the third another?* To which I answer, There are many things that must be taken into consideration for the right resolving of the case. Either the persons nominated are equal or unequal: Either they are all capable, or some of them incapable: Either the welfare of that Church dependeth on the choice: or else it may be somewhat an indifferent case.

1. If there be but one Minister to be had, and the Dissenters would

would have none, then it is past controversie, that the Dissenters are to be disobeyed. 2. If one party would have a Godly, Able Minister, and the other would have an incapable, intolerable person, then it is past doubt, that the party that is for the worthy person ought to prevail, and it is his duty to insist upon it, and the duty of the rest to yield to him. 3. If any will make a controversie in this case where there is none, and say, [*You say this man is fittest, and I say the other man (that is incapable) is fittest, and who shall be judge?*] The party that is in the right must hold to their duty, till they are persecuted from it, and appeal to God, who will judge in equity. If a blind man say to a man that hath his eye-sight [*You say that you see; and I say that I see; you say that it is day, and I say it is night; who shall be believed?*] It is not such words that will warrant a wise man to renounce his eye-sight. God will judge him to be in the right that is so indeed. 4. But if really the several parties are for several Ministers that are all tolerable, yet if there be any notable difference in their fitness, the parties that are for the less fit, should yield to the party that is for the more fit. If you say, *They discern it not*, I answer, that is their sin, which will not justify them in a further sin, or excuse them from a duty. They might discern, if they were not culpable, in so great a difference, at least whom they are bound to take for the most fit. 5. But if there be no great inequality, then these Rules should be observed. 1. The Magistrate should not deny the people their Liberty of choice, nor the Ministers their Liberty in Approbation or disallowance: but only Oversee them all, that they faithfully do their several duties. 2. The Ministers should not hinder the people from their Choice, where both parties nominated are fit, but content themselves with their proper work. 3. The People should not insist upon their choice, if the Ministers to whom it belongeth, do disallow the person, and take him to be unmeet, and refuse to ordain him: because obedience in such cases is their duty, and a duty that cannot tend to their loss: at least not to so much hurt to them as the contrary irregular course may prove to the Church. 4. If Magistrates or Ministers would make the first choice, and urge the people to consent if the person be fit, it is the safest way for the people to obey and consent, though it were better for the

the Rulers to give them more freedom in the choice. 5. If a people be generally ignorant (in too great a measure,) and addicted to unworthy men, or apt to divisions, &c. it is their safest way to desire the *Ministers* to choose for them. Or if they will not do so, it is the safest way for the *Ministers* to offer them a man: Yet so that Magistrates and Ministers should expect their *Consent*, and not set any man over them as their Pastor without consent some way procured. 6. But if they are *no Church*, but uncalled persons, and it be not a *Pastor of a Church*, but a *Preacher to Convert men*, and fit them for a Church-state, that is to be settled, then may the *Magistrate* settle such a man, and force the people to hear him preach. 7. If *Necessity* require not the contrary, the matter should be delayed, till Magistrate, Ministers and people do agree. 8. The chosen Pastors should decide the case themselves: They should *not accept* the place, and *Consent*, till all be agreed, unless there be a *Necessity*. And if there be, then the greatest necessity should most sway. If the Magistrate resist, he will forcibly prohibit and hinder you from preaching. If the Ministers resist, they will deny you the right hand of fellowship. If the people resist, they will not hear nor join in worship nor obey. All these if possible should be avoided. The Peoples consent (to a Pastor of a Church) is of *Necessity*. We cannot do the work of Pastors without it. And therefore neither Magistrates or Ministers can drive us on where this is wanting (unless it be only to seek it, or only to do the work of Preachers to men without.) Unity and Communion with Neighbour-Churches is so much to be desired, that nothing but *Necessity* can warrant us to go on without it. And the Magistrates restraint is so great a hindrance, that nothing but *Necessity* can warrant us to cast our selves upon it. And therefore out of cases of *Necessity*, the Ministers nominated should not consent till all agree: But in cases of *Necessity*, the souls of men and the worship of God, must not be disregarded or neglected, though neighbour-Churches or Ministers disown us, or Magistrates persecute us.

SECT. 10. Remember these Distinctions for the understanding of what follows. 1. Its one thing to be Approved, and another thing to be solemnly Invested. Ordination consisteth of these two parts. 2. We must difference between Ordination, by one

Pastor, and by many. 3. Between Ordination by Pastors of the same Church, or of many Churches. 4. Between Ordination by sufficient or insufficient Ministers. 5. And between Ordination by Neighbour Ministers or Strangers. 6. And between Ordination by Divided Ministers, and Concordant. On these premised I propose as followeth.

Sect. 11. Prop. 1. Approbation by Ministers is ordinarily to be sought and received by all that will enter into the Ministry. I gave some Reasons before, Chap. 2. Which here I shall enlarge, by which the sinfulness of Neglecting this Approbation may appear.

Sect. 12. Reas. 1. It is the way that God hath appointed us in Holy Scripture, and therefore to be followed. They that Ordained Elders or Bishops in the Churches, did more then Approve them, but could do no less, 1 Tim. 4. 14. Timothy was ordained by the Imposition of the hands of the Presbyterie, 1 Tim. 3. 15. Paul giveth Timothy the description of Bishops and Deacons, that he may know how he ought to behave himself in the house of God, which is the Church, &c. That is, that he may know whom to Approve of or Ordain, Tit. 1. 5. Titus was to Ordain Elders in every City, Acts 13. 1, 2, 3. The Prophets and Teachers in the Church at Antioch did separate Barnabas and Paul to the work, with Fasting and Prayer, and imposition of hands. It was the Apostles that Ordained them Elders in every Church, Acts 14. 23. Suppose it must be read [by Suffrages] as many would have it, that proveth no more but that the People did consent: But still it is Paul and Barnabas that Ordained them Elders, though with the peoples suffrages, and it is they that are said to fast and pray in the next words. Act. 6. 3. Expressly shews that the People chose the Deacons, and the Apostles ordained them [Look ye out among your selves seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.] But I shall cut short this part of my task, because so much is said of it already by many that have written for Ordination, to whom I shall refer you.

Sect. 13. Reas. 2. If there be not a standing regular way for Trying and Approving such as enter into the Ministry, then men will be left to be their own judges, and if they can but get the consent

consent of any Congregation, will presently be Pastors. But this course would tend to the ruine or confusion of the Church, as I shall manifest by evidence.

Sect. 14. 1. If all men may enter into the Ministry that will, upon their own perswasion that they are fit, the most proud, self-conceited, worthless men will be the readiest to go, and if they can get hearers, will most abound in the Church; and the people will quickly have heaps of Teachers. For we all know that many of the Ignorant are least acquainted with their ignorance: and commonly the Proud have the highest thoughts of themselves, and think none so fit to Teach and Rule as they. And what could be more to the shame and hazzard of the Church, then to have it taught and guided by such ignorant unworthy men?

Sect. 15. 2. Moreover, Humble men are so conscious of their weakness, and sensible of the burden and greatness of the work, that they think themselves unworthy, and therefore would draw back; and so by their forbearance would give way to the foresaid proud intruders. And thus the Church would soon be darkened, defiled, and brought low, if all men were their own judges.

Sect. 16. 3. Moreover, it is the common disposition of Erroneous and Heretical persons to be exceeding zealous for the propagating of their errors, and bringing as many as is possible to their mind. So that if all be left to themselves, the most Heretical will run first, and carry their filth into the house of God, and seduce and undo men instead of saving them.

Sect. 17. 4. By this means also the Covetous and sordid worldlings will crowd in: and men will do by Preaching, as they do by Ale-selling, even make it their last Trade when others fail: and he that breaks in any other Trade, if he have but any volubility of speech, will presently turn Priest; till the Office and Ordinances of God seem vile, and be abhorred by the people. This must be the Consequent if all be left to their own judgement.

Sect. 18. 5. And it is too known a case, that the people will bid such persons welcome, and so they will make a match. The erroneous and giddy party will have such as are sutable to them. And the Covetous party will have him that will do their work best cheap: if they will preach for nothing or for little, he shall

shall be a man for them, though he would lead them to perdition. If it be poyson, they'll take it, if it cost them nothing. And many there be that will have their own kindred or friends to make Priests of; and all that they have interest in must joyn with them on the account of friendship. And the childish injudicious sort of Christians will follow them that have the smoothest tongues, or best opportunities and advantages to prevail with them. And so they will be tossed up and down, and carryed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, according to the cunning sleight and subtilty of men, by which they lie in wait to deceive.] Eph. 4. 14. *And they will be carried about with divers and strange doctrines,* Heb. 13. 9.

Sect. 19. Reas. 3. And when the *Ministrie* is thus corrupted (by making every man judge of his own fitness) the Church will be corrupted, and degenerate into a common state, and cease to be a Church (if Reformation do not stop the gangrene.) For it commonly goeth with the Church according to the quality of the *Ministrie*. An ignorant *Ministrie*, and an ignorant people; an erroneous *Ministrie*, and an erring people; a scandalous *Ministrie*, and a scandalous people commonly go together. Like Priest, like people is the common case.

Sect. 20. Reas. 4. And by this means Christianity it self will be dishonoured, and seem to be but a common religion, and so but a deceit, to the great dishonour of Jesus Christ; for the world will judge of him and his cause, by the lives of them that teach it and profess it.

Sect. 21. Reas. 5. And by this means God will be provoked to depart from us, and be avenged on us for our dishonouring him. If he would spew out of his mouth lukewarm *Laodicea*, what would he do to such degenerate societies? If most of the seven Churches, *Rev.* 2. & 3. had their warnings or threatenings for smaller faults, what would such corruptions bring us to, but even to be plagued or forsaken by the Lord?

Sect. 22. Reas. 6. If you should be men of ability and fitness for the work your selves, that enter without Approbation and Ordination, yet others might be encouraged by your example that are unfit: and if you once thus set open the door, you know not how to keep out woolves and swine: all the persons before described will take the opportunity, and say, *Why may*

not we enter unordained, as well as such and such?

Sect. 23. Reas. 7. By this means also you will leave many sober godly persons unsatisfied in your Ministry, as not knowing whether they may own you as Ministers or not: & how much you should do to avoid such offence, me thinks you might perceive.

Sect. 24. Reas. 8. By this course also you will walk contrary to the Catholike Church of Christ, and that in a cause where you cannot reasonably pretend any necessity of so doing. Ever since Christ had a Ministry on earth, the constant (ordinary) way of their admittance hath been by Ministerial Ordination. If any man despise this, and be contentious, we have no such Custome, nor the Churches of God. Is it a design be- seeming an humble man, a Christian, a sober man, to find out a new way of making Ministers now in the end of the world? as if all the Ministers from the Apostles dayes till now, had come in at a wrong door, and wanted a true Calling? This is too near the making a New Ministry: and that's too near the Making of a new Church: and that's too near the feigning of a new Christ. The Church hath many promises, that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it; that Christ will be with her Ministers to the end of the world, they being given by him for the perfecting of the Saints, and edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, &c. Eph. 4. 12, 13. And therefore we must not easily believe, that the Ministry of the universal Church have been falsly called or admitted untill now, and you have found out a better way at last.

Sect. 25. Reas. 9. You would bring that irrational confusion into the Church of the living God, which is not to be introduced into the basest Commonwealth or society in the world. You have more wit then to let all men play the Physitians: but will first have them tryed by men of their own Profession: or else the lives of many may pay for your Licentiousness. You will have Schoolmasters approved by them that have Learning, before you will commit your children to their trust. And shall every man be a Teacher and Ruler that will in the Church of Christ, as if it were the only confused contemptible Society in the world? God is not the God of Confusion, but of Peace, as in all the Churches, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 14. 33.

Sect. 26. Reaf. 10. Do but confider how high, and holy, and honourable a Calling it is to be a Minister of the Gospel: and then it will appear, that it is horrible Profanation of Holy things, to suffer all that will, to invade it. They are to be the Embassadors of Christ, and speak as in his Name, and to be Stewards of his Mysteries and Household, and to stand near him, as at his altar, and to dispense his treasure, to magnifie and praise his Name, and to administer his holy Sacraments, &c. And should all that will, be taught to usurp or invade such an holy Calling ?

Sect. 27. Reaf. 11. Consider also, how great a *Trust* it is that is committed to all that are Ministers of the Gospel. The souls of men are committed to them: the Mysteries of God, the precious promises and glad tidings of Salvation are committed to them: the order and affairs of the house of God are committed to them: those that are Christs Sheep, his Jewels, his Friends, his Brethren, his Spouse, his Members, and as the apple of his eye, are committed to them. And is it futable to so great a Trust, that men untryed, unapproved, that do but think well of themselves, and their own doings, shall at their pleasure take so great a charge ? What man of honour and wit among you, will give every man leave to be your Steward, that hath but folly and pride enough to think himself fit for it ? and will not rather choose your Stewards your selves ?

Sect. 28. Reaf. 12. And is it not evidently notorious Cruelty to the souls of men, to cast them upon every unworthy fellow that will but be impudent enough to undertake the charge ? Do you set so light by mens everlasting Joy or Torment ? You would not so contemptuously cast away mens lives: and will you so contemptuously cast away their souls ? And what a contempt is it of the blood of Christ, that the purchase made by it should be thus neglected ? You will lock up your money, and look to your goods, and take care of every groat of your estates: and shall the souls of men, and the blood and the inheritance of Christ be no more regarded ? This is unjust.

Sect. 29. Reaf. 13. Yea and it is a way of Cruelty to the men themselves, if every man that is sick of self-conceit, or Pride, shall have leave to exercise it, and run themselves into unspeakable guilt, by undertaking such works as they are no way able for: Alas, have not these poor sinners transgressions enough

enough of their own already, but you must encourage them to draw the blood of souls, and the sins of so many others upon their heads? O what a burden do they take upon them! and what a dreadful danger do they run into? Had you faith and any pity of souls, you would rather study to do your best, to prevent mens destroying of themselves and others, and falling altogether into the ditch. I know you'l say, that you are guilty of no such thing: it is the saving, and not the destroying of souls that you intend by being Ministers unordained: but your intentions will not justifie your cruel and destructive practices. Its plain that you teach men by your doctrine and example to be their own judges of their fitness for the Ministry, or to neglect the judgement of the Pastors of the Church: and what better can this course produce?

Sect. 30. Reas. 14. Either you are fit for the Ministry, or unfit: if fit; why should you be afraid of tryal? He that doth evil comes not to the light: it is a sign of an ill cause that cannot endure a just tryal. But if you are unfit, is it not better to forbear?

Sect. 31. Reas. 15. Your very refusing of a tryal doth give the people sufficient reason to question your call and fitness for the work, or your humility at least: for humble men think meanly of themselves, then to judge themselves meet for such great employments, when they have not the encouragement of men that are more fit to judge: the good men of old were wont to run away from a Bishoprick, or Pastoral dignity in the sense of their unfitness: so that the Bishops were fain to seek and send after them: and *Gregory of Neocesarea* was Ordained by *Phedimus* when he was three daies journey from him, even against his will; and then charged by him in the name of Christ to yield unto the Call. And what then shall we think of that sort of men, that think themselves so good and worthy, as to run on their own heads, without due approbation?

Sect. 32. Reas. 16. It is natural for man to be *Partial* in his own Cause: insomuch as no law or equity will allow men to be witnesses or judges for themselves in the smallest civil controversy: and shall they be judges of themselves in so great a cause? Are not others more impartial?

Sect. 33. Reas. 17. You cast away your own encouragement

ment and support, and create vexation to your own Consciences. There are so many difficulties to be conquered in this work, and so many sufferings to be endured, that if a man be not clear that his Call was good, he is like to be left to great discomforts. We have exceeding great labours to undergo: we have abundance of enemies and impediments to strive with: we have many a scorn and unthankful return, and perhaps imprisonment or death to undergo: we are our selves, alas, too weak and insufficient, and must depend on God for daily helps. And with what confidence can you expect his help, if you Call your selves, and enter not by his Approbation? And how will you ever go through all this, and suffer so much with Christian comfort, when you cannot say that you are sent of God, and have nothing but your own overweening conceits of it? Could you but say, [I entered by the way that God appointed, and was not my own Judge] you might have some more boldness and confidence of Gods assistance.

Sect. 34. Reas. 18. The most that plead against Ordination, that are worthy the name of sober Christians, do plead but against the *Necessity* of it, and cannot deny it to be *lawful*: and should not all the reasons before mentioned prevail with you to submit to a *lawful* thing?

Sect. 35. Reas. 19. And if it be thus undenyable, that men must not be their *own* Judges, it will soon appear that *Ministers* are the standing Judges of mens fitness for this work, because no other Judges are appointed to it, or capable of it. It must be an ordinary stated way of Approbation, that can give us satisfaction: for if God had left the case at large, for men to go to whom they will, it would be all one as to go to none at all, but to be Judges themselves. And if a standing way of Approbation must be acknowledged, let us enquire where it is to be found: and look which way you will, and you shall find no other, but this which is by men of the same Calling with them that are to be Ordained.

Sect. 36. For 1. Magistrates it cannot be: none that I know pretend to that. Magistrates in most of the world are *Infidels*: and therefore cannot there be Ordainers: and none of them hath the work committed to them by Christ, nor do any that I know, assume it to themselves.

Sect.