

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.

Sect. 37. And 2. The people it cannot be : For 1. No man can shew a word of precept or example for it ; nor prove that ever God did give them such a power : Consent or Election is all that can be pretended to by them. 2. It is a work that they are commonly unable for : the Schollars may as well Try and Approve of their Schoolmaster. We confess the People must by a judgement of discretion, endeavour to find out the best they can : but if they had not helps, and if they were also called to a judgement of direction and decision, what work would they make ? Do the Major vote, (or the Minor either) in most or almost any Congregations, understand whether a man know the meaning of the Scripture, or to be able to defend the truth, or whether he be Heretical or sound in the faith, &c. ? God would not set men on a work that is thus beyond the line of their Capacity. It is a thing not to be imagined, that they that call us to be their Teachers, should already be commonly able to Judge whether we are sound or unsound, and able to teach them or not : for this importeth that they know already as much as we (for wherein they are ignorant, they cannot judge of us.) And if they know as much already, what need have they of our Teaching ? 3. And it is contrary to the subjection and inferiority of their Relation : they that are commanded to learn and obey us as their Guides, may yet consent or choose their Teachers, when Approved, or to be Approved by abler men ; but they cannot be imagined to be appointed by God to Ordain their own Overseers : this is a most ungrounded fiction.

Sect. 38. Reaf. 20. On the other side, it is the Pastors of the Church, and only they that are fitted to be the standing Approvers or Ordainers, as will appear in these particulars. 1. It is they that are justly supposed to be of competent abilities to try a Minister. If here and there a Gentleman or other person be able, that is a rarity, and therefore no standing way for the Church in Ordaining Ministers can be gathered thence. 2. Ministers are doubly devoted to God and to his Church : and therefore should have, and ordinarily have, the tenderest care of the Church. 3. It is justly supposed that Ministers are ordinarily the most pious and conscionable men that are to be had (or els they are too blame that choose them to be Ministers) And therefore they may be expected to be most faithful in the work. 4. And they

they are fewer, and have lesser perverting interests, and therefore are like to be less divided in such determinations, then the people that are so many, and of so many interests and minds, that if it were not for the Moderation of Magistrates and Ministers, they would almost everywhere be all to pieces, one being for one man, and another for another; some for one of this mind and way, and some for one of another; some for the Orthodox, and some for the Heretical. 5. Lastly, it is Ministers, whose Office God hath tyed Ordination to, and who have time to wait upon it as their duty: so that lay all this together, and I think the first Proposition is proved, for the Necessity (ordinarily) of the Pastors Approbation, and the sinfulness of neglecting it.

Sect. 39. Prop. 2. It is not only the Pastors of one particular Church, but also the Pastors of Neighbour-churches that hold Communion with that Church, that should regularly Approve or Ordain Ministers: though I deny not but he may be a Minister that hath no Ordination but by the Pastors of a particular Church, yet I conceive that this is not a regular course.

Sect. 40. My reasons are these. 1. Because if it be ordinarily tyed to the Pastors of the same Church only to Ordain, then it will be done ordinarily without any Pastors at all. For most particular Churches in the world have but one Pastor: and when he is dead, there is none left to Ordain; and therefore others or none must do it in such cases.

Sect. 41. And 2. If there be one left, and all the power be left in him, the welfare of the Church would run too great an hazzard: if every man shall be Ordained a Minister that can procure the Approbation of a single Pastor, the Church will be subjected to most of the lamentable miseries before mentioned, supposing that men were judges for themselves.

Sect. 42. And 3. We find in Scripture, that it was not the way appointed by the Holy Ghost, for single Pastors to Ordain. The forecited Texts and examples are a sufficient proof.

Sect. 43. If any say, that the Ruling Elders may concur, I answer. Though I make no great matter of it, nor would not raise a contention about it, yet I must say, that I never yet saw any satisfactory proof, that ever God did institute such Elders.

as this Objection meaneth, in the Church : that is, 1. Such as are not Ordained, but come in by meer Election. 2. And such as have the Power of Discipline and Oversight without Authority to preach or administer the Sacraments. I think these are but humane creatures; though I doubt not but there may be such as *Actually* shall forbear preaching and administration of the Sacraments, when some of their colleagues are fitter for it.

Sect. 44. But 2. If such an Office *can* be proved, I despair of seeing it proved from Scripture, that they have authority to *Ordain*. 3. And how can they have *Authority*, when most of them have not *Ability*? And I think it is supposed that they have not *Ability* to *Preach*, in them that deny them *Authority*: and if they want *Ability* to *Preach*, its two to one but they want *Ability* to *Try and Approve of Preachers*. 4. And how come they to have Power to Ordain others, that are not Ordained themselves, but are admitted upon bare Election? 5. And this course would prostitute the Churches to unworthy men, as aforesaid.

Sect. 45. And 4. It is not a contemptible Consideration, that the chief Pastor of every particular Church, hath ever since the second Century at least, been Ordained by the Pastors of other Churches. And how it was before, we have but very defective Evidence, except so much as is left us in the Holy Scriptures, of which we have spoke before.

Sect. 46. And 5. The Church of Christ is a Chain of many links: a Society united in Christ the Head, consisting as a Republic-like of many Corporations, or as an Acedemy of many Colleges: and a greater Union and Communion is requisite among them, then among the parts of any other Society in the world. And therefore seeing it is the duty of Neighbour Pastors and Churches, according to their Capacity to hold Communion with that particular Church and its Pastors, it seems reasonable, that they have some antecedent Cognisance and Approbation of the persons that they are to hold Communion with.

Sect. 47. And 6. It is considerable also, that whoever is according to Christs institution Ordained a Minister of a particular Church, is withall (if not before) Ordained a *Minister simply*; that is, one that may as a separated Messenger of Christ, both preach for the Conversion of those without, and gather Churches where there are none, and *pro tempore* do the Office

of a Minister, to any part of the Catholike Church, where he cometh and hath a Call. And therefore as he is simply a Minister, and the Unconverted world, or the Universal Church are the Objects of his Ministry, the Pastors or Members of that particular Church where he is settled, have no more to do in Ordaining him then any other. As a Corporation may choose their own Physician, Schoolmaster, &c. but cannot do any more then other men, in Licensing a man to be in general a Physician, Schoolmaster, &c. So may a Church choose who shall be *their Teacher*, but not who shall be simply a *Teacher* or Minister of Christ, any more then an other Church may do, that's further from him.

Sect. 48. And 7. It is also considerable, that it is the safest and most satisfactory way to the Church and to the Minister himself, to have the *Approbation of many*. And it may leave more scruple concerning our Call, when one or two or a particular Church only do Approve us.

Sect. 49. And 8. It is granted in their writings by those that are for Ordination by a particular Church only, that the Concurrence of more is *Lawful*: and if Lawful, I leave it to Consideration, whether all the forementioned accidents make it not so far convenient, as to be ordinarily a plain duty, and to be preferred where it may be had.

Sect. 50. Yet do I not plead for Ordination by Neighbour Pastors, as from a Governing Authority over that particular Church: but as from an interest in the Church Universal, and all its Officers within their reach, and from an interest of Communion with Neighbour Churches.

Sect. 51. And it is observable in Scripture, that the Itinerant Ministers, that were fixed and appropriated to no particular Church, for continuance, (such as the Apostles and Evangelists were, and *Titus*, *Timothy*, and such others) had a Principal hand in the work of Ordination wherever they came. It was they that Ordained Elders in every City, in every Church.

Sect. 52. *Prop. 3.* If any shall cull out two or three or more of the weakest, injudicious, facile Ministers, and procure them to Ordain him, his course is irregular, and his call unsatisfactory, though the formal part be obtained to the full. For it is not for meer formality, but to satisfy the person called, and the Church,

Church, and to secure the Ministry and sacred works and souls of men, from injury by Usurpers, that God hath appointed the way of Ordination: And therefore it is fraud, and not obedience, for any man so to use it, as to cheat himself and the Church with a formality, and frustrate the Ordinance, and miss its ends.

Sect. 53. *Prop. 4.* If any man, avoiding the Orthodox and Unanimous Ministry, shall apply himself for Ordination to some divided schismatical or heretical persons, that will Approve him, and Ordain him, when the others would reject him, this also, as the former, is fraud and self-deceit, and not obedience; upon the last mentioned grounds. It is the basest treacherous kind of sinning, to turn Gods Ordinances against himself, and to sin under the shelter and pretence of an institution. By using the means in opposition to its end, they make it no means, and use it not as a means at all. Though Pastors must Ordain, yet is it not all kind of Pastors Ordination that should satisfie an honest meaning man; but that which hath the qualifications suited to the Rule and end.

Sect. 54. In such cases of unjust entrance, if the People sinfully comply, and the man have possession, it may be the duty of some particular persons, that cannot help it, (having done their own parts in disowning it) to submit, and not therefore to separate from the Church, except in desperate extraordinary cases (not now to be enumerated :) And all the administrations of such a man shall be not only Valid to the innocent, but without any scruple of conscience may be used and received, with expectation of a promised blessing.

Sect. 55. But yet *quoad debitum* it is the Churches duty (except in Cases of Necessity) to disown such intruders, and to suspect and suspend obedience, to those that indirectly enter, (by a few ignorant, or schismatical Ordainers, refusing the tryal of the unanimous abler Orthodox Ministry) till they have either perswaded the man to procure their Approbation, or have themselves sought the Judgement of the said United Ministers concerning him. And seeing all the Churches of Christ should be linke and jointed together, and hold communion and correspondency, according to their capacities, the Members of a particular Church are bound in reason, and to those

those ends, to advise in such suspicious cases with neighbour Churches, and not to receive a Pastor that comes in by way of Discord, or that neglecteth or refuseth the concordant way. For he that entreth in a divisive way, is like to govern them accordingly, and still to shun the Communion of the Brethren.

Sect. 56. This Cyprian fully shews in the fore-mentioned Ep. 68.p.201. perswading the people to shun the unworthy though they were Ordained by Bishops, adding [*Ordinari nonnunquam indignos, non secundum Dei voluntatem, sed secundum humanam presumptionem; & hac Deo displicere, quæ non veniant ex legitima & iusta Ordinatione, Deus ipse manifestat, &c.* —] Necessity may justifie some things that otherwise would be irregularities: but when [*Per urbes singulas* (that is, in every Church) *Ordinati sunt Episcopi, in atate antiqui, in fide integri, in pressura probati, in persecutione proscripti, ille super eos creare alios pseudo-Episcopos audeat*] this is a fact that the people should disown. And [*Qui neq. unitatem spiritus nec conjunctionem pacis observat, & se ab Ecclesie vinculo, atq; à Sacerdotum collegio separat, Episcopi nec potestatem potest habere, nec honorem, qui Episcopatus nec unitatem voluit tenere, nec pacem.* Cyprian Epist. 52. ad Antonian.

Sect. 57. Prop. 5. Solemn Investiture is the last part of Ordination, by which the man that by consent of the people and himself, and by the Pastors Approbation, had received from Christ a Right to the Power and Honour, and Priviledges, and an Obligation to the Duties of the Office, is solemnly introduced and put in Possession of the place.

Sect. 58. Though in some cases a man may exercise the Ministry upon the foresaid Approbation and Election (which are most necessary) without this solemn investiture, yet is it ordinarily a duty, and not to be neglected: And the people should require the performance of it: I need not stand upon the Proof: for it is proved before by what was said for Approbation, seeing they have ever gone together. Though fundamentally he be a Christian that hath entered Covenant with Christ: yet before the Church he is Visibly no Christian that hath not been Baptized, or at least made open Profession of that Covenant. Though fundamentally they are Husband and Wife that are contracted, or knit together by private Consent; yet *in foro Civili*, in Law sense,

fence, and before men, they must be solemnly married, or else they are judged fornicators. And should any fantastical persons seek to cast by this publick investiture or solemn Marriage, as unnecessary, he would but let in common Whoredoms: The solemnity or publication in such Cases is of great Necessity. And its much conducible to the greater obligation of Pastor and people to be solemnly engaged together: and to have solemn Prayer for Gods blessing, tendeth to their prosperity.

Sect. 59. When men are Ordained only to the Ministry in General, it may be done in one place as well as another, (that is otherwise convenient.) But if they are also Ordained to be Pastors of a Particular Church, it is the fittest way by far, that they be Ordained in the face of the Church, that the people and they may be mutually engaged, &c. Though yet this be not absolutely necessary.

Sect. 60. And thus I have dispatcht, with the brevity intended, this weighty point, concluding with these two requests to my Brethren that shall peruse it: 1. That before they let out their displeasure against me for contradicting any of their conceits, they would humbly, impartially, and with modest self-suspicion, both study and pray over what they read, and not temerariouly rush into the battell as pre-engaged men. 2. That they will alway keep the faith and charity, and self-denyal and tenderness of Christians upon their hearts, and the great Ends and Interest of Christ and Christianity before their eyes; and take heed how they venture upon any controverted points or practice, as a Means that certainly contradiceth the Spirit of Christianity, and the great Ends (the Churches Unity, Peace and Holiness, &c.) which all true means are appointed, and must be used to attain. And wherunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same Rule, and mind the same things, Phil. 3. 16. Remembring that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be on them and Mercy, and on the Israel of God, Gal. 6. 15, 16.

Finisur, May 19. 1658.

The Third
DISPUTATION:
FOR

Such sorts of Episcopacy, or
Disparity in Exercise of the Mi-
nistry, as is Desirable or Con-
ducible to the Peace and Refor-
mation of the Churches.

By Richard Baxter.



LONDON,
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AN
Episcopacy Desirable for the
Reformation, Preservation, and
Peace of the Churches.

CHAP. I.

Of General unfixed Bishops or Ministers.

§. 1.



It is but delusory dealing of them that make the world believe that the question between the Prelatical Divines and the rest of the Reformed Churches, is, *Whether the Church should be Governed by Bishops?* This is a thing that is commonly granted: But the controversy is about the *Species of Episcopacy*: Not whether *Bishops*,
but

but *what sort of Bishops* should be the ordinary Governours of the Church of Christ?

§. 2. And therefore it is also very immethodical and unsatisfactory of most that ever I read for Episcopacy, that plead only for *Episcopacy in General*, but never once define that sort of Episcopacy which they plead for, but go away with it as smoothly when the question is unstated, as if they understood themselves, and others were capable of understanding them; and so they lose their Learned labours.

§. 3. I have already in the first Disputation told you among ten several sorts of Episcopacy, which they be that I think desirable, and which I judge tolerable, and which intolerable. And I have there already given you the Reasons why I judge such a general unfixed Bishop to be of standing use to the Church and world, as here we are speaking of: and therefore I shall forbear here the repeating of what is said already.

§. 4. That the world and Church should still have such a *General Itinerant unfixed Ministry*, as that was of the *Apostles*, *Evangelists* and others, having there already proved, I have nothing to do more but to shew the use of it, and to answer the objections that some very learned Reverend Divines have used against it.

§. 5. The principal use of a general Ministry, is for the converting of the unconverted world, and Baptizing them when converted, and Congregating their Converts into Church order, and settling them under a fixed Government. And the next use of them is, to have a Care, according to the extent of their capacity and opportunities, of the Churches which they have thus Congregated and settled, and which are settled by other Ministers.

§. 6. Let it be remembered that we are not now disputing of the *Name*, but of the *Thing*: It is not whether such an Officer of Christ be to be called an *Apostle* or an *Evangelist*, or a *Prophet*, or a *Bishop*, or a *Presbyter*: But whether unfixed general Ministers, to gather Churches and settle them, and take the care of many, without a special Pastoral charge of any one above the rest, were appointed by Christ for continuance in his Church: This is it that I affirm, and have already proved.

§. 7. Nor yet is it any of our Question, *Whether the difference between these general unfixed Ministers and ordinary fixed Presbyters,*

byters, be in point of Authority or of exercise only. Whether they are two distinct Species of the Ministry, or but one of the same Office in Specie, variously exercised: I have given in my thoughts of this before, so far as I can yet reach: But if it be granted that some should *ordinarily exercise* their office generally and ambulatorily over many Churches, as others ordinarily must exercise it fixedly in one particular Church, I shall not contend whether they are to be called *One Office* or *two*: nor yet whether the fixed Minister may not extraordinarily upon a special reason, do the same work as the itinerant Minister in the same way. But Ministers there must be for both these work.

§. 8. And that some should make the general work before mentioned their ordinary business, and not take the pastoral Charge of any particular Church, I conceive (besides the former proofs) is further manifest, 1. In that the work of Converting Unbelievers, and bringing them into a fitness for Church Communion, is the work that is to go first, and is the greatest work: Its the greatest in weight (precisively considered, and as to the *terminus à quo* of the change that it effects:) and it is the greatest in regard of opposing difficulties: the winning of a soul, which rejoyceth Angels, and rejoyceth Jesus Christ himself, will have so much of Satans malice to oppose it, and hath so much resistance in the heart of the sinner, that it requireth the whole work (in ordinary) of those Ministers that are specially called hereunto.

§. 9. And 2. Withall it commonly falls out, that there are far greater numbers to be converted, then to be Governed after Conversion: If it be not so in some Countries (where the face of God hath shined most effectually) yet in others, and in most it is: even in the far greatest part of the world. O how many millions of souls are there that perish for lack of knowledge, and know not for want of teaching; and never heard of Jesus Christ in any likely manner to prevail, in all their lives? Surely such multitudes of Miserable souls, yea Nations, require Ministers wholly set upon this work.

§. 10. And 3. It ordinarily falls out too, that the unconverted unbelieving part of the world do live at a great distance from the Churches of Christ: and therefore the same man that is

Pastor of a Church hath not opportunity to speak to them. Or if they live in the same Country, they seldom meet in greatest numbers in the same Assemblies: And therefore when the Pastor is upon his own work, it is requisite that there be some to speak to the rest.

§. 11. And yet I doubt not but as there are hypocrites in most Churches, and among us many that by their ignorance, or impiety we have cause to judge to be yet no Christians, are our Ordinary hearers, so the Pastors of the Churches may and must endeavour their conversion, and much suit their preaching to the condition of such souls. But yet those millions that in other parts of the world (and perhaps in *Ireland, Wales* and the Highlands of *Scotland*, too many such may be found) that neither know what Christianity is, nor are the Ordinary hearers of a fixed Ministry, and live not within the reach of such, should have a Converting Itinerant Ministry for themselves.

§. 12. Moreover, 4. The Pastoral work is it self so great, and the charge that we take of particular Churches, and our obligation to them so strict, that it will usually it self take up the whole man, and will not allow a Pastor time for the other work on those at a distance yet uncalled, without neglecting the souls that he hath undertaken to oversee.

§. 13. And 5. For want of such general Ministers, the state of persons is in some places confounded, and the world and the Church are thrust together, as if there were no difference to be made. Because there are no Ministers known but Pastors, therefore there are no People known but as Christians, where yet the very knowledge of Christianity is too rare. Whereas if (where numbers and distance make it necessary) the preparing Ministry had first done their part, it would have prevented much dangerous confusion, and self-deceit that followeth hereupon in many places.

§. 14. And 6. By the mistaken supposition, that such general or unfixed Ministers are ceased, men have been drawn to set Lay-men upon the greatest and noblest work of the Ministry: and a conceit is hence risen among some, that because this is not proper to the Pastors of a Church, therefore it is not a Ministerial work, but the work of gifted Brethren: And hereupon uncalled men are tempted to exercise it: and by laying
aside

aside the officers appointed hereunto by Christ, the burden is cast on the weakest men.

§. 15. Yea 7. By this means many Ministers themselves understanding not the Nature and extent of their own Office, when they do but preach to any that are not of the Church that they have charge of, imagine that they preach but as meer Laymen; and if they preach for the Conversion of unbelievers, they profess it to be no act of their office: which is an act that hath more inconveniences then I shall now express.

§. 16. And 8. Which is worst of all, by supposing that no Ministers are now to be appointed for the Conversion of Infidels, and gathering and planting Churches, it is come to pass that the most necessary work in all the world is neglected, cast off, and almost quite unknown in the world: except Mr. Eliots and a few with him in *New England*, and some of the Jesuites and Fryars in the *East-Indies* and *America*, who have been sent, or have adventured themselves for the Converting of the Nations. Were it but known and considered, how much of the Will of Jesus Christ is to be fulfilled by this most blessed work, Princes would have studied it, and contributed their assistance; and many would have been ready to have offered themselves to God for the work, when now it is looked on as no part of our duty, not only because that sluggishness and cowardize calleth it impossible, and the adventure unreasonable; but also because we think it was a work that was proper to Apostles and Evangelists; and Ministers are now tyed to their proper flock. And thus the poor unbelieving world is left in their sin.

§. 17. And 9. I doubt by this mistake and neglect we forfeit the benefit of that special promise, in too great a measure. *Mat. 28. 20.* and miss of that eminent assistance and presence of Christ with our Ministry, that otherwise we might expect. If we did go into the world, and preach the Gospel to the Nations (having used our industry first to learn their languages,) we might expect that Christ would alwayes be with us to the end of the world, in a way of assistance and owning of our Labours, answerable to our engagements for him, and service to him. Were we deeper engaged for Christ, and did with *Peter* cast our selves into the Sea, or walk on the Waters at his Call,

Call, we should find Christ acting as if he were answerably engaged for our indemnity, or at least for our eminent encouragement and reward. If ever we might expect Miracles again, it would be upon our engagement in the ancient work; though I know that even for this they are now no more necessary, nor I think, promised.

§. 18. And 10. We do hereby seem to accuse Christ unjustly of Mutability, supposing that he had settled one sort of Ministry and Government in his Church for one Age only, and then changed it for another, that is ever after to continue alone. I know the extraordinary work of that age (to plant Churches by new doctrine and Miracles, and reveal the new Articles of Faith and Practice in Scripture to the world) did require such enablements thereto, which ordinary works do not require: and therefore the Apostles, as immediately sent, and as inditing Scriptures, and working Miracles, and Prophetically bringing new Revelations have no Successors. But the Apostles as preaching to the Nations, and as planting Churches, and as settling them, and taking care of their prosperity after they had planted them, and as exercising their Ministry itinerantly, as not fixed to a special charge, thus they have Successors, the work being ordinary, and such as should be done now as well as then; and must continue while the necessity of it doth continue.

§. 19. There needeth no other proof of this, then by observing that it was not Apostles only, but *all* the Ministry at first, that was thus unfixed and itinerant; and that the Apostles assumed such to their assistance, and employed them all their dayes in this work.

§. 20. The seventy Disciples as well as the Apostles were at first by Christ sent forth in this Itinerant way, for the Conversion of the inhabitants of *Judæa*. And thus *John* the Baptist had preached before them. And after Christs Resurrection and Ascension, it was not only the Apostles, but it was they that were scattered abroad, that went everywhere preaching the Word, *Act. 8. 4.* And who were these? [*Act. 8. 1. They were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the Apostles.*] And the Evangelists of those times are confessed to have exercised this Itinerant Ministry: so did *Barnabas, Silas, Mark, Epaphroditus, Tychicus, Trophimus, Timothy,*

Timothy, Titus, Luke, and others ordinarily. It was the first and most ordinary way then of exercising the Ministry.

§. 21. And if we lived our selves in Heathen or Infidel Countreys, we should be soon taught by experience, that this must be still an ordinary work. For what else is to be done till persons be converted and brought into the Church? They must be made Disciples before they can be used as Disciples, and taught to observe all things that Christ hath commanded.

§. 22. But against this it is objected, 1. That *the Apostles were extraordinary Officers, and therefore have no Successors*. To which I answer, 1. That I have before shewed in what they were extraordinary, and in what not: in what they have no Successors, and in what they have. As Apostles sent immediately by Christ to Reveal a new doctrine, and confirm it by Miracles, they have no Successors: but as general Ministers of Christ to convert souls, plant Churches, and take a care of many, they have Successors; call them by what name you please. 2. And what if the Apostles have no Successors? Had the seventy Disciples none? Had *Apollo, Titus, Timothy, Silas, Barnabas*, &c. none? Had all the Itinerant converting Ministers of those times none, that were not affixed as Pastors to a particular Church?

§. 23. Obj. 2. *But at least in the extent of their charge the Apostles were extraordinary, in that they were to preach the Gospel to all Nations*. I answer; in point of exercise, being furnished with tongues and Miracles for the work, they were obliged to go further, or to more Nations than most particular Ministers are now obliged to go: but that is not because we want Authority, if we had ability and opportunity, but because we want ability and opportunity to exercise our Office. The Apostles were not bound to go into every Nation of the world, inclusively; but to avoid none, but go to all, that is, to as many as they could. Otherwise they had sinned in not going to *Mexico, Peru, Brazil*, the *Philippine* or *Molucco Islands*, to *Japon, China*, &c. And it is our duty to extend our Ministry for the Conversion of as many as we have Ability and opportunity to do. That which was common to the *planting and watering Ministry* in the Apostles days, was not proper to the Apostles: but to go up and down the world to Convert, and Baptize, and plant, and water Churches.

Churches was then common to such (as *Apollo, Silas, &c.*) therefore, &c.

§. 24. Obj. 3. *But (say others) the Apostles were not at last such unfixed Ministers as you imagine, but fixed Diocesan Bishops. Peter was Bishop of Antioch first, and of Rome after: Paul was Bishop of Rome: James of Jerusalem, &c.* — Ans. That any Apostle was a fixed Bishop, taking on him *durante vita* the special Pastoral charge of one particular Church or Diocese, as his peculiar, is 1. Barely affirmed, and therefore not to be believed. 2. And is contrary both to the tenor of their Commission, and the History of their Ministrations. And 3. Is also contrary to Charity it self, and therefore is not worthy of any credit. The Apostles were not so lazy or uncharitable, as to affix themselves to Parishes or Dioceses, and leave the Nations of the world in their unbelief; and to cease the work that they were first sent out upon, before the necessity of it ceased. *Peter* and *Paul* were Bishops of *Rome*, as they were of other Churches which they planted and watered, and no more: even as *Paul* was Bishop of *Ephesus, Philippi, Corinth, &c.* And *James* was either no Bishop of *Jerusalem*, or no Apostle (but as many think, another *James*.) Indeed *pro tempore* not only an Apostle, but other Itinerant Ministers were Bishops of the places where they came; that is, were Officers of Christ, that might exercise any act of their Office (Teaching, Governing, administering Sacraments, &c.) to any people that gave them a Call, or so far as opportunity and need required. And so I doubt not but every Minister now may do in any Church on earth. If he be invited to stay a day, or week, or month among them, and do the work of a Minister, yea or if he be invited but to preach a Sermon to them, he may do it, not as a private man, but as a Minister in general, and as their Teacher or Pastor *pro tempore, & ad hoc*, that give him the invitation. For though the first Call to the Ministry, separating us to the Gospel of God, do give us our Authority in general to perform any Ministerial act; yet I have before shewed that a further Call is needfull for the particular exercise of this power: and this is usually by the people: who may sometime call a man to be their stated Pastor, and sometime but to exercise some one Pastoral act, or else to exercise all but *pro tempore*, as there is need.

§. 25. And by this means it came to pass that the line of Succession in many Churches is drawn down from the Apostles, by *Eusebius, Hierom,* and other antient writers. Not because the Apostles were the stated fixed Bishops of those Churches, as the Successors were; but because they first planted and Governed them, and were their Bishops *pro tempore* till they had settled Bishops over them; and then went and did the like by other places: so that one Apostle, or Evangelist, or unfixed Minister, might be the root of Succession to many Churches, even as many as they first planted: but their Successors had but one Church.

§. 26. Object. 4. *But what use is there among us for such Ministers as these, when all the Nations are Converted from Infidelity already?* *Ans.* 1. If there were no use of such with us, we must not forget the lamentable necessity of them abroad in the world. 2. As I before said, experience of the ignorance and unbelief of many about us in the best Parishes, doth cause me easily to believe that in *Ireland,* and part of *Scotland,* and *Wales,* and other places where settled Ministers are few, such an Itinerant Ministry is of necessary use among us. 3. But yet where there are settled Teachers enough, they may be spared: for if we had Parishes that had not the knowledge of Christ, it is a greater work of mercy to such a Parish, to settle a converting Teacher among them to fit them for a Church-state, that so they may have frequent Teaching, then to send them but now and then a Sermon. But where Ministers are not so plentiful, it were a great sin for an able man to confine himself to one Town or Parish, and neglect the Countrey round about. 4. And also there is use for Itinerants to water and take care of the Churches which are planted, as the Apostles and others formerly did.

§. 27. Concerning these unfixed Ministers, I add these following Propositions. 1. That such Ministers may not deprive the fixed Pastors of any of their Power: they may not disabie them from Governing their own Churches as fully as if there were no Itinerant Ministers. If they are admitted *pro tempore* to assist the Churches where they come, that will not enable them to hinder them, or assume a Lordship or a Rule over the Pastors of the Churches.

§. 28. 2. These Itinerant unfixed Ministers, are not so obliged to perpetual motion, but that they may reside for a considerable

derable time in a place, either for the following on the work of Conversion, where they find a plenteous harvest, or for settling Churches, or surpressing heresies or disorders, or because of their own disability to travail. And thus *Paul* staid at and about *Ephesus* in *Asia* three years, *Act.* 20. 31. Their stay must be prudentially apportioned to their work and opportunities.

§. 29. 3. No Itinerant Minister can (of himself) exclude another from his Province, and appropriate it to himself, and say, *Here I will work alone, or here I have greater Authority than you :* nay it was usual for these Ministers to go by companies, or more than one (as *Paul* and *Barnabas*, *Paul* and *Silas*, *Paul* and *Timothy*, *Titus*, &c.) so that it was no mans Province or Diocess where they came. For they that Convert Souls to Christ and not to themselves, and Baptize into his name and not in their own, do know the greatness of the work and burden, and therefore are glad of all the assistance they can get : when those that do nothing, are the men that thrust others out of the Vineyard, and say, *This is my Diocess or Province ; you have nothing to do to labour here.]*

§. 30. 4. Yet may there lawfully and fitly be a Prudential distribution or division of their Provinces among such unfixed Converting Ministers : for to be all together and go one way, must needs be a neglecting of most of the world, and so not a wise or faithful performance of the work of Christ. And therefore some should go one way, and some another, as may most promote the work.

§. 31. And ordinarily it is most convenient, that there go more than one to the same people, (and therefore they will not be like a fixed Diocesan Bishop) for they have many wayes need of mutual assistance : one would be oppressed with so great a work, and have many disadvantages in the performances. *Paul* used not to go alone.

§. 32. The persons to be exercised in this ambulatory Ministration, may be determined of, and their Provinces distributed any of these three wayes, or all together. 1. By the Judgement and Consent of Pastors. If many shall choose out one, or two, or more, as fit for such a work, the persons chosen have reason to obey, unless they can prove, or know the Pastors to be mistaken, and to have been misguided in their choice. The Prophets and Teachers,

Teachers of the Church at *Antioch* must send or separate *Saul* and *Barnabas*, for the special work in which the Holy Ghost would imploy them, *Act.* 13, 1, 2. which seems to me, to be but a secondary Call to some special exercise of their former Office, one way rather than another. Thus also by mutual agreement their Provinces may be allotted and divided.

§. 33. 2. By the Magistrates appointment and command also, may this be done. Though he make not Ministers, yet may he do much in assigning them their Provinces, Seats, and Stations: and it is our duty to obey his Commands in such cases if they be not plainly destructive to the Church: much more if they are beneficial to it.

§. 34. 3. Also by a Ministers own discerning of a fit opportunity to do good, either by the Magistrates bare permission, the peoples invitation, or their willingness, or not opposing; or though they do oppose, yet some other advantages for the work may be discerned, or Hopes at least. Now though the *Call of Ordination* must be from the Pastors of the Church, and neither Magistrates nor people can make us Ministers, yet the *Call of Opportunity* may be from the people and Magistrate, more commonly then any. And he that is already a Minister, needs not alwayes another Call for the exercising of his Ministry, save only this *Call by Opportunity*. He had his *Authority* by that Call that placed him in the Office; which was done at first, and must be done but once. But he hath his *Opportunity and Station* for the exercise of that Authority by the people and Magistrates, and perhaps may receive it over and over many times.

§. 35. 5. This way of exercising the Ministry is not alike necessary in all times and places; but with great variety; it is exceeding necessary in some Countreys, and not in others, but useful in some degree in most as I conceive.

§. 36. If the Question be, whether such a Ministry be useful in these Dominions, or not? I have answered before, that in some darker and necessitous parts, where ignorance doth reign, and Ministers (or able ones at least) are scarce, there such an exercise of the Ministry is necessary: but in other parts it is not of such necessity: yet much work there may be for such, or for those in the next Chapter mentioned, in most Countreys: of them therefore I shall next speak.