

ruined, for fear of mens unjust pretences of a Necessary: that's but a sad Cure.

§. 29. But on the other side it will be objected, *This is but patching up a peace. If I think that one man hath no more right then another to a Negative voice, why should I seem to grant it him by my practice?* Answ. As when we come to Heaven, and not till then, we shall have perfect Holiness; so when we come to Heaven, and not till then, we shall have perfect Unity and Peace. But till then, I shall take that which you call Patching, as my Duty, and our great Benefit. If you think one man have not a Negative voice, we neither urge you to say that he hath, nor so much as to seem to own his claim. You shall have leave in the publike Register of the Association, to put it under your hand, that [Not as owning the claim of the Presidents Negative voice, but as yielding in a Lawful thing for Peace, you do Consent to forbear Ordaining any without him, except in Cases of Necessity.] This you may do, without any shew of contradicting your Principles, and this is all that is desired.

§. 30. Quest. *And may we not for peace sake, grant them as much in point of Jurisdiction, as of Ordination, and Consent to do nothing without Necessity, but when the President is one, and doth Consent?* Answ. Either by Jurisdiction you mean Law making, or Executive Government. The first belongs to none but Christ, in the substance of his Worship; and the Circumstances no man may Universally and Unchangeably determine of: but pro re nata, according to emergent occasions, the Magistrate may make Laws for them, and the Pastors may make Agreements for Concord about them: but none should determine of them without need: and therefore here is no work for Legislators (the Usurpers that have grievously wronged the Church.) And for Executive Government, either it is over the People, or over the Pastors. To give a Negative voice to the President of an Association of the Pastors of many Churches, in Governing the People of a single Church, is to set up a new Office (a fixed Pastor of many Churches) and to overthrow Government, and introduce the noxious sort of Prelacy, which for my part, I intend not to be guilty of. And for proper Government of the Pastors, I know none but God and Magistrates that have that Power. Every Bishop, saith Cyprian, and the Council of Carthage, hath Power

of his own will, and is responsible for his Actions to God, and none of us are *Episcopi Episcoporum*, Bishops of Bishops. But there is a *Communion* among Pastors and Churches to be exercised, and so an avoiding or rejecting from Communion: and this some call (improperly) a Government. And in this, for my part, I should consent, where peace doth require it, that we will not agree upon the rejecting of any Pastor of our Association (no more then to the Accepting or Ordaining of them) without the President, but in cases of Necessity: and that just on the terms exprest about Ordination.

§. 31. As for instance, in a particular Church, there is a *Communion* to be held among all the members, though none of them but the Officers are *Governors* of the Church. And in many cases where the Peoples Consent is needful, its common to stand to a Major vote: and so great a stress is laid on this, that by many of the Congregational way the Government of the Church is said to be in the Major vote of the people: and yet 1. This is indeed no Government that belongs to them; but Consent to *Communion* or *Exclusion*; and 2. No Scripture doth require a Minor part to stand in all cases to the decision of a Major vote, nor give a Major vote any *Rule* over the Consciences of the Minor part (shew us this voting power in Scripture) And yet 3. All agree, that upon natural Reasons and General Rules of Scripture, the Churches are allowed, yea obliged, in lawful things, for maintaining *Unity and Peace*, to stand to the judgment of a *Major vote*, (in Cases that belong to them to vote in) though there be no particular word for it in the Scripture: Even so *Associate Pastors* have not a proper Government of one another, neither by *Presidents* or *Major votes*, (though over the people they have,) but are all under the Government of God and the *Magistrate* only. And yet they may in acts of *Consent* about *Communion* or *Non-communion* with one another, prudentially agree, to take the *Consent* of the *President*, or of the *Major vote* of *Pastors*, or of both, where *Peace*, or *Order*, or *Edification* requireth it: except in cases of Necessity.

§. 32. Quest. But what will you take for a Case of Necessity? which you will except? Answ. 1. If the President be dead. 2. Or sick, or absent and cannot come. 3. Or if he be malignant, and wilfully refuse to Consent that the Church be well provided for,

or Governed. 4. And withall supposing that without the great hurt or hazzard of the Churches, we cannot delay the business, till he be one, or do Consent. 5. Especially if he be set in enmity against the welfare of the Church: and by pretence of a suspending vote would destroy the Church, and bring in unworthy hurtful persons or things. In all such Cases of Necessity, its time to lay by our humane Rules for peace and Order.

§. 33. Object. *But who shall be judge of this Necessity?* Answ. The Magistrate only shall be the Compelling Judge. The people shall be the Discerning Judges: the Pastors shall at least have as much power as the People: each of them shall Discern, so far as they must obey and execute. And God only shall be the final Judge.

§. 34. Object. *But this will but cause Divisions and Confusions; while the President thinks one thing Necessary, and the Pastors another, and the People another.* Answ. I answered this before. Reason must not be cast by, and the Churches ruined, and poyson and destruction taken in, on pretence of such inconveniences. If such a Case of difference fall out, each man will execute as he discerneth or judgeth, (being to answer for his own actions, and having none that can undertake to answer for him) And when we all come to the Bar of God for final Judgement, he that was in the right shall be justified, and he that falsely pretended Necessity against duty shall bear the blame.

§. 35. Object. *But in the mean time, the Churches will be divided.* Answ. 1. I told you there is no more hope of a perfect Unity on earth, then of perfect Holiness. 2. When two evils are before us, (though neither must be chosen; for Evil is not an Object of choice, unless as seeming good, yet) the Greater Evil must be first and most studiously repelled. And the deformity and destruction of the Churches, and the casting out of the Gospel and Worship of God, is a greater Evil then disorder about good actions, and differences about some Circumstances of Necessary works.

§. 36. All this that I have said about the Negative (*de facto*, though not *de jure*) that I would have Consented to for peace, I intend not to extend to those Cases and Countries where peace requireth it not, but rather the contrary: much less to encourage any to think such a Negative Necessary in it self. Some things

things may be Lawfully granted that are unlawfully and upon mistake desired,

§. 37. Lastly understand also, that when I speak of yielding to this Negative voice in Ordination, to the President of such an Association, I intend not to exclude the Presbyterie of a particular Church (where it is sufficient) from the said Power and exercise of Ordination: of which I am to speak, in the following Chapter, which is of the President of such a Presbyterie.



CHAP. IV.

It is Lawful for the Presbyters of a particular Church, to have a fixed President, during life.

§. 1.



Come now to the most Ancient fixed Bishop that the Church was acquainted with, except the meer *Episcopus Gregis*, the Overseer of the flock, and that is, *A President of many Elders in one particular Church*. The Diocesan Bishop was long after this: The first Bishops (if you will call them so) in the Church were the first mentioned Itinerant Bishops that were sent abroad to convert souls and gather Churches, and afterward took care to water and confirm them. The next sort of Bishops (and the first so called) were the fixed Pastors of particular Churches, that cannot be proved to have any superiority over Presbyters. The third

sort of Bishops (in time, and the first fixed Bishops that were superiours to other Pastors) were these Presidents of the Presbyteries of particular Churches. And these are they that now we have to speak of. And I shall prove that it is not unlawful to have such.

§. 2. But first I must tell you what I mean; and shew you that such may be had among us. I have in one of the former Disputations, defined a *particular Church*. It should ordinarily consist of no more then may hold *personal Communion together in Gods publick Worship*. But yet take notice, 1. That it tendeth to the strength and honour of it, that it be not too small; but consisting of as many as are well capable of the Ends. 2. And it is lawfull for these to have some other meeting places for part of the Church, besides the principal place which is for the whole. Chappels of ease may lawfully be made use of, for the benefit of the weak, and lame, and aged, that cannot always or often come to the common Assembly. And where such Chappels are not, it is lawfull to make use of convenient houses. Yea if there were no Place to be had, sufficiently capacious of a full Assembly, or else if persecution forbid them to meet, it might still be but one Church, though the members met in several houses ordinarily: as five hundred in one, and three hundred in another; or one hundred only in several places, every one going to which house he pleased, and having several Pastors that in Society and by Consent did guide them all. But though somewhat disorderly may be born with in cases of Necessity; yet 1. As it is Necessary to the Ends, and so to the Being of a particular Church that they be a Society capable of personal Communion; and the personal Teaching, Guidance and Oversight of the same Pastors, So 2. It is desirable, as much tending to Order and Edification, that all of them that are able do frequently meet in one Assembly, for the Worshipping of God with one heart and mouth. And this is the Church I speak of.

§. 3. It is not of Necessity to the Being of such a particular Church that it have more Pastors then one. And when one only is the Pastor or Governour, that one alone may do all the works of a Pastor or Governour (For what else is his Office, but the state or Relation of a man obliged and authorized to do such works?)

The

The Learned Dr. H. H. thinketh that the Apostles planted none in Scripture times but single Pastors or Bishops (called also Presbyters) in every Church, with Deacons under them, without any other Presbyters (subject or assistant) over that Church. This I conceive cannot be proved, nor so much as the probability of it; nay I think, at least a probability, if not a certainty of the contrary may be proved, of some Churches. But yet it is most likely that it was so with *many* Churches. And reason tells us, that the thing being in it self indifferent, was suted by the Apostles to the state of the particular Churches that they planted. A *small* Church might well have a *single* Pastor, when a *large* Church, especially in times of persecution, when they must assemble in several houses at once, required more. Some places might have many persons fit for the Office, and some but one: Which cases must needs have some Variety.

§. 4. Where there are *more* Pastors in such a Church, then one, I know of *no* Necessity that one should have any superiority over another: nor can I prove that it was so from the beginning. Some Divines of the Prelatical Judgement think that this was an Ordinance of the Apostles, at the first planting of such Churches; Others of them think that it was of their *appointment*, but not actually *existent* till after Scripture times. Others of them think, that as *Hierom* saith, it began when factions rose in the Church, not by Divine Otdination, but Ecclesiastical agreement, for the preventing or cure of schism.

§. 5. The first Church that we find it in, in History, is that of *Alexandria*. And *Alexandria* was a place exceedingly given to sedition, tumults, and divisions: the contentions between *Cy-ril* and *Orestes*, the murder of *Hypatia* by *Peter* and his company, the assault made upon *Orestes* by *Ammonius* & the other *Ni-trian* Monks, and many such feats in the dayes of *Theophilus*, *Dionysius*, and up to the beginning, do shew what they were. And *Socrates* saith of them expressly, *li. 7. cap. 13.* that [*The people of Alexandria above all other men, are given to Schism and contention; for if any quarrel arise at any time among them, presently hainous and horrible offences use to follow, and the tumult is never appeased without great blood-shed.*] such were the *Alex-andrians*.

§. 6. But yet it is certain that the Original of this custom, of setting up one as President or chief Presbyter in a particular Church, cannot be found out, so as to say, by whom and when it was first brought in. But if it began upon the death of *Mark* at *Alexandria*, it must needs be long before the death of *John* the Apostle, (in that Church, what ever other Churches did.) But it seems that there was then a difference and indifferency in this point, and that other Churches did not presently imitate the Churches of *Alexandria* and *Rome* herein. He that reads *Clemens* Epistle to the *Corinthians* without partiality, I think will be of *Grotius* mind (before cited, *Epist. ad Gal. ad Bignon.*) that *Clemens* knew not any such Prelacy among the *Corinthians*, when he wrote that Epistle. And so we may say of some other Witnesses and Churches in those times, and afterwards in many places.

§. 7. It is not another Order of Ministers, or Office, that was in such Churches distinct from the Presbyters that assisted them. Their Presidents or Eminent Bishops were not made then *Episcopum*, vel *Pastores Pastorum*, as having an Office of Teaching and Governing the other Pastors, as Pastors have of teaching and Governing the flock. But they were only the chief Presbyters, or chief Bishops or Pastors of that Church, as an Arch-deacon is to the Deacons when he is made such by their choice, as *Hieroms* comparison is (*ad Evagr.*)

§. 8. Nor is it lawfull now, even in the smallest Parish, for any One to assume such a superiority over any Presbyters (though such as have their maintenance from him, and are chosen by him, and are called, his *Curates*) as if he were of a Superior Order or Office, and so the Governour of the other as his inferiours.

§. 9. But yet that a Primacy of degree, or Presidency, or stated Moderatorship of one in such a Church and Presbyterie, is lawfull, I think with small labour may be evinced. And 1. All the Arguments before used, for the Presidency of one in an Association, will prove this Parochial Presidency with advantage.

§. 10. 2. It is a thing that is constantly or very ordinarily practised among us already, with common approbation, or without contradiction, as far as I have heard. Many places have one Minister only that is presented by the Patron; and this one Pastor hath divers with him (or as the common saying is, *Under him:*)

him :) If it be a great Congregation, many have a Curate or assistant in the Town with them, and other Curates at Chappels that depend on that Town. Though there be but one Chapel in this Parish where I live, yet this Church hath three or four Presbyters, and three or four Deacons. And the Law of the Land doth give one Minister only the *Maintenance* (called the *Benefice*) and the Power of the Temple, and the calling of Assemblies, and the choice of Curates, whom he is to maintain. And they that are chosen and maintained by him, must and will be ruled by him; at least in all *circumstantial* things. It belongs not to them to Rule even the *People contrary* to Gods word; nor in *substantials* to institute new Ordinances of Worship: But in *circumstantials* which are left to humane determination (as time, place, particulars of order, decency, &c.) no doubt but the chief Pastors in each Parish, do exercise actually a Negative Vote, and the Curates do nothing without their consent. So that this sort of *Presidency* being common among us, without contradiction I may take it for granted that it hath the common consent. And if any allow not of so much as is commonly used, yet a *Presidency* is a far lower thing.

§. 11. 3. This sort of *Presidency*, (yea with such a Negative voice as in the foregoing Chapter is granted) is usually grounded on *Nature* and the *General Rules* of Scripture, and warranted by them. *Nature* teacheth us, that the younger and more ignorant and unlearned, should (proportionably) submit to the Elder and Wiser, and in a sort be Ruled by them. And *Scripture* saith the same, 1 Pet. 5. 5. [Ye younger submit yourselves unto the Elder.] Even the aged Women (that were no Officers) must teach the younger, Tit. 2. 4. Now it commonly falls out that in every Parish that hath many Ministers, there is but one that is aged, or grave, and that one commonly is more Learned and judicious then the rest, who are usually some young unexercised men. Now in such cases. (which is common) no man can deny that authority to age or Wisdom that is naturally due to it, nor exempt the younger ignorant men from that submission which naturally they are bound to: Equality of Office may stand with inequality of gifts and age, and consequently of duty.

§. 12. 4. The good of the Church requireth it that this discipline

proportion of Ministers gifts in one and the same Congregation should be the ordinary case (And rules must be fitted to ordinary cases, rather then to extraordinary.) For God doth not (as we see by long and sad experience) bestow his excellent gifts so commonly, as that one Church (ordinarily) should have many Learned able men: There are but few that are of eminency for judgement and other Ministerial abilities: Not one for many Parishes: If therefore many of these should be placed together in one Church, it would be against the common good, and an unjust ingrossment, and injurious unto others. Providence therefore by the rarity of eminent parts, doth teach us to make it the ordinary course, that in every Congregation where there are many Pastors, some one of chiefest parts be chosen to be standing Moderator of the rest.

§. 13. 5. That which is lawfull for *Private men* to do towards one another, is lawfull Prudentially for *Pastors* that are conscious of their own imperfection, to do towards one that they think more able then themselves. But it is lawfull for *Private men* to be *subject one to another in humility*: therefore it is lawfull for such Pastors, 1 Pet. 5. 5. [*Ye all of you be subject one to another, and be cloathed with humility*] A voluntary subjection to another, in lawfull actions, is nowhere forbidden, but here commanded; and is a great part of Christian self-denial: and therefore lawfull.

§. 14. 6. And it is a thing that dependeth so much on the Wisdom and will of Presbyters, that no man can hinder it. I can make another Minister a Bishop to me, whether other men will or not. *Honor est in honorante*. I can 1. In judgement esteem him more able, yea or more authorized, then other men. 2. And I can have recourse to him for advice. 3. And I can give him a Negative vote in all my Ministerial Actions, so far as they are left to humane determination: I can resolve to do nothing in such matters, but by his consent. And if I find reason for this in his abilities, and my disabilities, it is Lawful. The thing therefore being Lawfull, and such as none can hinder me from, I see not why it may not be made the matter of Consent, when the Churches Peace requireth it.

§. 15. 7. Moreover, as Divisions justly provoked the Churches at first to think of such lawfull means, for the cure; so our Divisions

Divisions, or danger of them, do make it as Necessary, or convenient, now as then. We see to our shame, that in most or many Congregations, Ministers that are *equal* or neer to an equality in parts and place, can hardly agree and live in Peace: but they are jealous of one another, and envying each others esteem and interest (Though I confess this is so odious a vice, that its an abominable shamefull thing, that any Minister of Christ should be tainted with it: but so it is, we cannot hide it.) And therefore it is our ordinary course to have such a disparity of age, and parts, and interests, that one may have the preheminance, and some rule, and the rest be ruled by him.

§. 16. 8. Lastly, the Antiquity and speedy Universality of this course, is a strong argument to make men moderate in the point. For 1. It seemeth a most improbable thing that *all* the Churches, or *so many*, should so suddenly take up this *Presidency*, *Prelacy*, or *Disparity* without scruple or resistance, if it had been against the Apostles minds. For it cannot be imagined that all these Churches that were planted by the Apostles, or Apostolical men, and had seen them and conversed with them, should be either utterly ignorant of their minds, in such a matter of public practice, or else should be all so careless of obeying their new received doctrine, as presently and unanimously to *consent* to a change, or *endure* it without resistance. Would *no Church* or *no persons* in the world, contend for the retention of the Apostolical institutions? Would *no Church* hold their own, and bear witness against the corruption and innovations of the rest? would *no persons* say, [*you go about to alter the frame of Government newly planted among us by the Holy Ghost; It was not thus in the dayes of Peter, or Paul, or John; and therefore we will have no change.*] This seems to me a thing incredible, that the whole Church should all at once almost so suddenly and silently yield to such a change of Government. And I do not think that any man can bring one testimony from all the volumes of Antiquity to prove that ever Church or person resisted or disclaimed such a change, in the times when it must be made, if ever it was made, that is, in the first or second ages.

§. 17. Yea 2. It is plain by the testimony of *Hierom* before mentioned and other testimonies of antiquity, that in *Alexandria*, at least, this practice was used in the dayes of the *Apostles* themselves.

selves. For they testifieth that from the dayes of *Mark the Evangelist* till the days of *Heroclas* and *Dionysius*, the Presbyters chose one from among them, and called him their Bishop. Now it is supposed by the best Chronologers that *Mark* was slain about the sixty third year of our Lord, and the tenth of *Nero*; and that *Peter* and *Paul* were put to death about the sixty sixth of our Lord, and thirteenth of *Nero*, and that *John* the Apostle died about the ninety eighth year of our Lord, and the first of *Trajan*, which was about thirty five years after the death of *Mark*. Now I would leave it to any mans impartial consideration, whether it be credible that the holy Apostles, and all the Evangelists or Assistants of them, then alive, would have suffered this innovation and corruption in the Church without a plain disowning it and reproving it: Would they silently see their newly established Order violated in their own dayes, and not so much as tell the Churches of the sin and danger? Or if they had indeed done this, would none regard it, nor remember it, so much as to resist the sin? These things are incredible.

§. 18. And I am confident if the judicious godly people had their choice, from the experience of what is for their good, they would commonly choose a fixed President or chief Pastor in every Church. Yea I see, that they will not ordinarily endure that it should be otherwise. For when they find that God doth usually qualifie one above the rest of their Teachers, they will hardly consent that the rest have an equal power over them. I have seen even a sober unanimous Godly people, refuse so much as to give their hands to an assistant Presbyter whom yet they loved, honoured and obeyed, though they were urged hard by him that they preferred, and all from a loathness that there should be a parity. I know not one Congregation to my remembrance, that hath many Ministers, but would have one be chief.

§. 19. Object. But, (the Prelatical men will say) our Parishes are not capable of this, because they have commonly but one Pastor, nor have maintainance for more. Answ. 1. Though the greater number have but one yet it is an ordinary case to have two, or three, or more, where there are Chappels in the Parish, and the Congregations great, as in Market Towns. And if ever we have Peace and a settled faithfull Magistrate that will do his part for

for the house of God, we shall certainly have many Ministers in great Congregations: Or else they are like to be left desolate; For Ministers will over-run them, for fear of undertaking far more work then with their utmost pains they are able to perform.

§. 20. And 2. There are few Congregations, I hope, of Godly people, but have some private men in them that are fit to be Ordained Assistant Presbyters, though not to govern a Church alone (without necessity) yet to assist a Learned, judicious man, such as understand the body of Divinity, (as to the great and necessary points) and are able to pray and discourse as well as many or most Ministers, and to exhort publicly in a case of need. He that would imitate the example of the Primitive Church (at least in the second Century) should Ordain such as these to be some of them *Assistant Elders*, and some of them *Deacons* in every Church (that hath such ;) and let them not teach publicly, when a more learned, able Pastor is at hand to do it ; but let them assist him in what they are fittest to perform ; Yet let them not be *Lay Elders* : but authorized to all Pastoral administrations, and of one and the same office with the Pastor, though dividing the exercise and execution according to their abilities and opportunities ; and not coming in without Ordination, nor yet taking up the Office only *pro tempore*. And thus every Parish, where are able Godly men, may have a Presbyterie and President.

§. 21. Till then 3. It is granted by the Learned Dr. H. H. that it is not necessary to the being of a Bishop that he have fellow Presbyters with him in that Church : If he have but *Deacons* it may suffice. And this is easie to be had.

§. 22. And indeed 1. The parts of many very able Christians, are too much buried and lost as to the Church, for want of being drawn into more publick use. 2. And it is it that tempteth them to run of themselves into the Ministry, or to preach without Ordination. 3. And yet few of these are fit to be trusted with the Preaching of the word, or guiding of a Church alone, no nor in equality with others : for they would either corrupt the doctrine, or divide the Church. But under the inspection and direction of a more Learned judicious man, as his assistants, doing nothing against his mind, they might be very serviceable

to some Churches. And such a Bishop with such a Presbyterie and Deacons (neither Lay, nor usually very Learned) were the ancient fixed Governours of the Churches, if I can understand antiquity.



CHAP. V.

Objections against the Presidency fore-mentioned, answered.

§. 1.



UT it is not likely but all these motions will have Dissenters on both sides; It were strange if in a divided age and place, and among a people engaged in so many several parties, and that so deeply as now men are, there should any healing remedy be propounded, that should not have abundance of opposers: Most men are prejudiced and affected at their Education; or opportunities, or parties, or several interest sway them. And therefore I expect that most should reject all that I say, and some of them with much reproach and scorn. Our disease were not so great and dangerous, if it could but endure the remedy. But let us consider some of their Objections.

§. 2. *Object. 1.* The unpeaceable men of the Prelatical way will say [*This is but to turn a Bishop into a Parish-Priest; and to make him the Ruler of a Parish and a Curate or two, and in many places, of no Ministers at all: A fair Promotion. It seems you would leave them but a name and shadow, and make them to be contemptible.*]

§. 3. *Ans. 1.* Remember that I grant you also the Presiden-

cy of Associations, &c. which you may call an *Archbishoprick* if you please. 2. Is it *honour* that you contend for, or *labour* and *service* to the Church? If honour, you must get it by being the *servants* of others, and not by being Lords of the Clergy or heritage of God. If you are seeking honour of men, and founding offices in the Church, by such directors as ambition, you are not the men that we can hope for Peace or Holiness from, and therefore can have little treaty with you, but to lay by your wickedness. But if it be *service* that you contend for, in order to the Churches good, try first whether a *Parish* will not find you work enough. I have tried it, and find that if I were ten men, I could find as much as I am able to do, in this one Parish. Though I do as much as I am well able night and day, and have so many helpers, yet it is so great a trouble to me, that my work and charge is quite too great for me, that I have been often tempted to desert it, and go to a smaller place: And nothing stayes me but this consideration, that God requireth no more then I can do, and that its better do what I can then nothing: and that if I leave them, the next is like to do no more. Could I but speak with each man in my Parish by personal Instruction, once a moneth, or once a quarter, or half year, it would put me into high expectations of making a very great change among them, by this means: But when I am not able to speak to them past once a year, or two years, I must needs fear lest the force of former words will be lost before I come again. And yet must you needs have *more work and service*, and *more souls* to answer for? To deal plainly and faithfully with you, Brethren, impartial standers by conceive that its time for you rather to be more diligent in a smaller charge, and to lament your negligence in your Parishes, and publickly to bewail that you have by your idleness betrayed so many souls: letting them alone in their ignorance and ungodliness, and commonly doing little in your charges, but what you do at Church in publick. Overseers think that most of you are fitter for smaller charges rather then for greater. I doubt this will offend many. But you were better use it to your Repentance and Reformation, then your offence.

§.4. And 3. I pray you consider how your Passion and partiality maketh you contradict yourselves. Do you not use to reproach the *Presbyters*, that they would all be Bishops, and they

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Primitive Bi-
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or more Dea-
cons.

would have a Bishop in every Parish, and so are against Bishops, that they may be Bishops themselves? And what! is a Parish Bishoprick so great a prize for *our* Ambition, and yet is it so contemptible to *yours*? Are *we* proud for seeking to be *Parish Bishops*, and do *you* take it as an empty name or shadow? At least then confess hereafter, that *your Pride* is so much greater then ours, that the Mark of our Ambition is taken by you to be a low dishonourable state.

§. 5. And 4. I would intreat you impartially to try, whether the Primitive Apostolick Episcopacy fixed in particular Churches were not a *Parochial Episcopacy*? Try whether I have not proved it before? And if it were, will you pretend to antiquity, and Apostolick institution, and yet despise the primitive simplicity, and that which you confess was settled by the Apostles? Let the Eldest carry it without any more ado.

§. 6. And 5. At least say no more that you are for *Episcopacy*, and we against it: when we are for *Episcopacy* as well as you. It is only your *transcendent*, or *exorbitant* sort of Episcopacy that we are against. Say not still that we have no Power of Ordination, because we are not Bishops; but because we are only *Bishops of one Church*. Put the controverſie truly as it is, Whether it be lawful for the Bishop of one Church with his Presbytery to Ordain? Yea or whether many such Associated may Ordain? Or rather, whether it be tyed to the Bishop of many Churches (as you would have it:) that is, Whether Ordination belong to Archbishops only? Is not this the controverſie?

§. 7. And then 6. Why do you in your *Definitions* of Episcopacy (which you very seldom and sparingly give us) require no more then a *Parochial Episcopacy*, and yet now despise it as if it were no Episcopacy at all? Tell us plainly what you mean by a Bishop? I thought you meant a *Primus Presbyterorum*, or at least, a Ruler of People and Presbyters? And is not this to be found in a Parish Bishop, as well as in a Bishop of many Parishes, or Churches? Change your *Definition* from this day forward, if you must have a change of the thing defined, as it seems you must.

§. 8. And I wou'd know whether you can prove that it is *Essential* to a Bishop to have more Churches or Parishes then one? Prove it if you are able. Was not great Gregory of Naocesarea a Bishop

Bishop with his *seventeen souls*? And was not *Alexander* (the Colliar) whom he Ordained at *Comana*, a Bishop, though but of a small Assembly? Do not some of you confels, that Bishops in Scripture-times had no subject Presbyters, and consequently had but a single Congregation? If then a Parish or Congregational Bishop were a true Bishop, why may he not be so still?

§. 9. Object. 2. *But the Church under Christian Princes should not be conformed to the model of the Church under persecution: Shall Bishops have no more power and honour now then they had then? We see in Constantines dayes a change was made. Must they be tyed to a Parish now, because they were Bishops only of a Parish in Scripture-times?*

§. 10. Answ. 1. We would not have them persecuted now, as they were then, nor yet to want any due encouragement or assistance that a Christian Magistrate can afford them. But yet we would have Gods Word to be our Rule, and Bishops to be the same things now as then, and we would not have men make the prosperity of the Church a pretence for altering the Ordinances or Institutions of Christ, and making such changes as their conceits or ambitious minds incline them to. We shall never have a Rule nor fixed certainty, if we may change things our selves on such pretences. Pretend not then to Antiquity, as you do.

§. 11. And 2. I have in the former Disputation proved by many Reasons, that it was not the mind of the Apostles themselves, that the Parochial or Congregational Churches which they planted, should be changed into another sort of Churches. Nor is there any reason for it, but against it, in the prosperity of the Church, and piety of Magistrates. For 1. Pious Magistrates should help to keep, and not to break Apostolical institutions. 2. And pious Magistrates should further the good of the Church, and not hurt it to advance ambitious men.

§. 12. For 3. Ministers are for the Churches, and therefore no change must be made on such pretences that is against the good of the Churches. If every Parish or Congregation then, were meet to have a Bishop and Presbyterie of their own, why shall the Church be now so abused, as that a whole County shall have but one Bishop and his Presbyterie? If every Hospital or Town had a Physician with his Apothecaries and Mates, in your Fathers dayes, would you be their benefactors, by procuring that
all

all the County shall have but one Physitian with his Apothecaries? Or if every School had a Schoolmaster in your Forefathers dayes, will you say, there shall be but one in your dayes, in a whole County? Do you thus think to honour Physitians and Schoolmasters, to the ruine of the people and the Schools? So do you in your advancement of Bishops. Upon my certain experience I dare affirm it, that every Parish of four or five thousand souls, yea of a thousand souls, hath need of such a Presbyterie for their Oversight. And is not he that hath a County on his hands, like to do leiss for this Town or Parish, then if he had no more then this? If your Bees swarm, you will not keep them all still in an hive, nor think of enlarging the hive to that end: but you will help the swarm to an hive of their own. If your Children marry, you will rather settle them in Families of their own, then retain all them and all their Children in the Family with your selves. So if a Bishop of one Church should Convert all the Countrey, he should rather settle them in several Churches, proportionable to their numbers and distances, then to call them all *his own Church*.

§. 13. Object. 3. *But by this means the Church would be pestered with Bishops. What a number of Bishops would you have, if every Parish Priest were a Bishop? We read not of such numbers as this would procure, in the antient times.*

§. 14. Answ. 1. I find where Christ commandeth us to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth Labourers (that is, more Labourers) into the harvest, because of the greatness of the harvest. But I find not where he once requireth us to pray or wish that there may not be too many, for fear of pestering the Church, or diminishing the honour of the Clergy. Mens purses, I warrant you, will hinder the over-abounding of them; and Gods providence doth not enrich too many with abilities and willingness for the work. Do you undertake that they shall not be too bad; and I dare undertake they will not be too many.

§. 15. And 2. Is it not the felicity and glory of the Church which you object as an inconvenience or reproach? O blessed time and place that hath but *enow* that are able and faithfull! But I never knew, nor heard, nor read of the age that had too many that were good and faithfull in the work. Would you not have a chief Schoolmaster in every School, or Town, for fear

fear the Land should be pestered or overwhelmed with Schoolmasters? Why how can there be too many, when people will imploy no more then they need? O miserable Church that hath such Bishops, that are afraid Gods vineyard should be furnished with labourers, lest their greatness and honour should be diminished! Do you not see how many thousand souls lie still in ignorance, presumption and security for all the number of labourers that we have? And see you not that six parts of the world are Infidels, and much for want of Teachers to instruct them? And yet are you afraid that there will be too many? What could the enemy of the Church say worse?

§. 16. Object. *We do not mean too many Teachers, but too many Bishops; that is, too many Governours of the Church.* Answ. 1. God knoweth no Governours Ministeriall but teachers: It seems you would have somewhat that you call *Government*, and leave the labour of Teaching to others: As if you knew not that it is they that are especially worthy of the double honour that labour in the word and doctrine, 1 Tim. 5. 17. Or as if you knew not that even the Government of Pastors is mostly by teaching. 2. Government and Teaching go together, and are both necessary to the Church; And the diminishing the number of Governours and of Teachers is all one: As a Physitian doth Govern all his Patients in order to their cure, and a Schoolmaster all his schollars in order to their learning; so doth a Pastor all his flock, in order to their sanctification and salvation. And for the Government of the Ministers themselves, the number shall be increased as little as may be. Parish Bishops will Govern but a few; and therefore they can wrong but few, by their mis-government.

§. 17. Object. 4. *But by this means we shall have unworthy, raw, and ignorant men made Bishops: What kind of Bishops shall we have, if every Parish Priest must be a Bishop? Some of them are boyes, and some of them empty, silly souls to make Bishops of.*

§. 18. Answ. I shall lay open the nakedness of this Objection also, so that it shall be no shelter to domincering in the Church. 1. Awake the sparks of humility that are in you, and tell us openly, whether you think your selves more able worthy men to Govern a County, or a hundred Parishes, then such as we are to Govern one? Though I have been many and many a time tempted with Jonas to run away from the charge that is cast

upon me, as a burden too heavy for me to bear, and I know myself to be lamentably insufficient for it: yet I must profess, that I am so proud as to think myself as able to be the Pastor or Bishop of this Parish, as most Bishops in *England*, yea or any one of them, to be the Pastor and Governour of a County, or an hundred or two hundred Parishes. Were you humble, or did you dwell at home, or take an account of your own abilities, when you reproach others as unable to be the Bishops of a Parish, and think yourselves able to be the Bishops of a Diocese and contend for it so eagerly?

§. 19. And 2. I further answer you: We will leave you not a rag of this Objection to cover your nakedness. For if any Pastors or Parish Bishops be more ignorant than others, and unfit to Teach and Rule their flocks without the assistance, teaching or direction of more able men, we all agree that it is the duty of such men to *Learn* while they are *Teachers*, and to be *Ruled* while they are *Rulers*, by them that are *wiser*. For as is said, a *Parity* in regard of *office*, doth not deny a *disparity* of *gifts* and *parts*: And we constantly hold, that of men that are equal in regard of office, the younger and more ignorant should learn of the aged that are more able and wise, and be *Ruled* by their advice, as far as their insufficiency makes it necessary. And will not this suffice?

§. 20. And 3. If this suffice not, consider that Associated Pastors are linked together, and do nothing in any weighty matters of common concernment (or of private, wherein they need advice) without the help and directions of the rest. And a young man may govern a Parish by the advice of a Presbyterie and also of Associated able Pastors, as well as such Bishops as we have had, have governed a Diocese.

§. 21. And yet 4. If all this suffice not, be it known to you that we endeavour to have the best that can be got for every Parish: and Novices we will have none, except in case of meer necessity: And we have an act for rejecting all the insufficient, as well as the scandalous and negligent: and any of you may be heard that will charge any among us with insufficiency. Sure I am we are cleansing the Church of the insufficient and scandalous that the Prelates brought in, as fast as we can: if any prove like them, that since are introduced, we desire that they may speed

speed no better. What side soever they be on, we desire able faithfull men, and desire the ejection of the insufficient and unfaithfull. And youth doth not alway prove insufficiency. Witness *Timothy*, whose youth was not to be despised. At what age *Origen* and many more of old began, is commonly known. *Vigilius* was Bishop at twenty years of age (the *Tridentine* Bishop). We will promise you that we will have none so young to be Parish Presbyters, as *Rome* hath had some Popes and Cardinals and Archbishops and Bishops. Nor shall any such ignorant insufficient men, I hope, be admitted, as were commonly admitted by the Prelates.

§. 22. Object. 5. *But the Apostles and Evangelists had a larger circuit then a Parish, and therefore so should their Successors have?* Answ. I grant you that they had a larger circuit, and that herein, and in their ordinary work they have successors: And we consent that you shall be their Successors. Gird up your loins, and travail about as far as you please, and preach the Gospel to as many as will receive you (and sure the Apostles forced none) and convert as many souls as you can, and direct them when you have done in the way of Church-communion, and do all the good that you can in the world, and try whether we will hinder you. Have you not liberty to do as the Apostles did? Be ye servants of all, and seek to save all, and take on you thus the care of all the Churches, and see who will forbid such an Episcopacy as this?

§. 23. Object. 6. *But it seems you would have none compelled to obey the Bishops, but they only that are willing should do it: and so men shall have liberty of conscience, and anarchy and parity and confusion will be brought into the Church.* Answ. 1. I would have none have liberty for any certain impiety or sin: And yet I would have no sin punished beyond the measure of its deserts. And I would not have preachers made no Preachers (unless the Church may spare them) because their judgements are against Diocesan Bishops: and therefore I would have none silenced, or suspended for this. 2. And what is it that you would have that better? Would you have men forced to acknowledge and submit to your Episcopacy? And how? Small penalties will not change mens judgements, nor consciences. Silencing or death would deprive the Church of their labours: and so we must