

## C H A P. II.

*Of the Formal Cause of a Particular Church.*

**T**HE way or means whereby such persons as are described in the foregoing *Chapter*, may become a Church, or enter into a Church-State, is by *mutual confederation*, or solemn Agreement for the performance of all the Duties which the Lord Christ hath prescribed unto his Disciples in such Churches, and in order to the exercise of the power wherewith they are intrusted, according unto the Rule of the Word.

FOR the most part, the Churches that are in the World at present, know not *how they came so to be*, continuing only in that state which they have received by Tradition from their Fathers. Few there are, who think that any *Act or Duty of their own*, is required to enstate them in Church Order and Relation. And it is acknowledged, that there is a difference between the *continuation* of a Church, and its *first Erection*. Yet, that that *continuation* may be regular, it is required that its first Congregating (for the Church is a Congregation) was so; as also, that the force and efficacy of it be still continued. Wherefore, the causes of that *first gathering*, must be enquired into.

THE Churches mentioned in the New Testament, planted or gathered by the Apostles, were *Particular Churches*, as hath been proved. These Churches did consist each of them of many Members, who were *so Members* of one of them, as that they were *not Members* of another. The *Saints of the Church of Corinth*, were not Members of the *Church at Philippi*. And the Enquiry is, How those Believers in one place and the other became to be a Church, and that distinct from all others? The Scripture affirms in general, that *they gave up themselves unto the Lord and unto the Apostles*, who guided them in these Affairs, *by the will of God*, 2 Cor. 8. 5. and that other *Believers were added unto the Church*, Act. 2.

THAT it is the Will and Command of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all his Disciples should be joined in such Societies, for the Duties,



Duties and Ends of them prescribed and limited by himself, hath been proved sufficiently before. All that are *Discipled by the Word*, are to be *taught to do and observe all his Commands*, Matth. 28. 20.

THIS could originally be no otherwise done, but by their own *actual, express, voluntary consent*. There are sundry things which concur as remote causes, or *prerequisite conditions* unto this conjunction of Believers in a *Particular Church*, and without which it cannot be. Such are *Baptism, Profession of the Christian Faith, convenient Cohabitation*, resorting to the *Preaching of the Word* in the same place. But neither any of these distinctly or separately, nor all of them in *Conjunction*, are or can be the *constitutive Form* of a *Particular Church*. For it is evident that they may all be, and yet no such Church State ensue. They cannot altogether engage unto those Duties, nor communicate those Powers, which appertain unto this State.

WERE there no other *Order in Particular Churches*, no other *Discipline* to be exercised in them, nor *Rule* over them, no other *Duties*, no other *Ends* assigned unto them, but what are generally owned and practised in *Parochial Assemblies*, the *Preaching of the Word* within such a precinct of *Cohabitation*, determined by Civil Authority, might constitute a Church. But if a Church be such a Society as is *intrusted* in it self with *sundry Powers and Privileges* depending on *sundry Duties* prescribed unto it, if it constitute *new Relations* between Persons, that neither naturally nor morally were before so related, as Marriage doth between Husband and Wife; if it require new *mutual Duties*, and give new *mutual Rights* among themselves, not required of them either as unto their matter, or as unto their manner before; it is vain to imagine that this State can arise from, or have any other *Formal Cause*, but the joint consent and virtual confederation of those concerned, unto these ends: For there is none of them can have any other Foundation; they are all of them resolved into the *Wills of Men*, bringing themselves under an obligation unto them by their voluntary consent. I say unto the *Wills of Men*, as their *Formal Cause*; the supreme efficient cause of them all being



ing the Will, Law and Constitution of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THUS it is in all *Societies*, in all *Relations* that are not merely *natural*, (such as between Parents and Children, wherein the necessity of Powers and mutual Duties, is predetermined by a Superiour Law, even that of Nature) wherein, Powers, Privileges and mutual Duties are established, as belonging unto that Society. Nor after its first institution, can any one be *incorporated* into it, but by his own consent, and engagement to observe the Laws of it. Nor, if the Nature and Duties of Churches were acknowledged, could there be any contest in this matter; for the things ensuing are clear and evident.

1. THE Lord Christ, by his Authority, hath appointed and *instituted this Church State*, as that there should be such Churches, as we have proved before.

2. THAT by his Word or Law he hath *granted Powers and Privileges* unto this Church, and prescribed *Duties* unto all belonging unto it, wherein, they can have no concernment who are not incorporated into such a Church.

3. THAT therefore, he doth *Require and Command* all his Disciples to join themselves in such Church Relations, as we have proved; warranting them so to do, by his Word and Command: Wherefore,

4. THIS *joining of themselves*, whereon depends all their interest in Church Powers and Privileges, all their obligation unto Church Duties, is a *voluntary Act* of the obedience of Faith, unto the Authority of Christ, nor can it be any thing else.

5. HEREIN do they give *themselves unto the Lord*, and *to one another*, by their Officers, in a peculiar manner, according to the *Will of God*, 2 Cor. 8. 5.

6. TO *give our selves unto the Lord*, that is unto the Lord Jesus Christ, is expressly to engage to do and observe all that he hath appointed and commanded in the Church; as that *Phrase* every where signifieth in the Scripture, as also *joining our selves unto God*, which is the same.

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7. THIS Resignation of our selves unto the Will, Power and Authority of Christ, with an exprefs ingagement made unto him of doing and observing all his Commands, hath the *nature of a Covenant on our part*; and it hath so on his, by virtue of the promise of his especial presence annexed unto this engagement on our part, *Matth. 28. 18, 19, 20.*

8. FOR, whereas there are three things required unto a Covenant between God and Man. (1.) That it be of *Gods appointment and institution.* (2.) That upon a *prescription of Duties* there be a *solemn engagement* unto their performance on the part of Men. (3.) That there be *especial promises of God* annexed thereunto, in which consists the matter of *Confederation*, whereof mutual exprefs *Restipulation* is the form; they all concur herein.

9. THIS Covenant which we intend, is not the *Covenant of Grace* absolutely considered; nor are all the Duties belonging unto that Covenant prescribed in it; but the principal of them, as *Faith, Repentance*, and the like, are presupposed unto it; nor hath annexed unto it all the promises and privileges of the New Covenant *absolutely* considered; but it is that which is prescribed as a *Gospel Duty in the Covenant of Grace*, whereunto do belong all the Duties of Evangelical Worship, all the powers and privileges of the Church, by virtue of the *especial promise* of the peculiar presence of Christ in such a Church.

10. WHEREAS therefore in the constitution of a Church, Believers do *give up themselves unto the Lord*, and are bound solemnly to engage themselves to *do and observe all the things which Christ hath commanded* to be done and observed in that state, whereon he hath promised to be *present* with them and among them in an especial manner, which presence of his, doth interest them in all the Rights, Powers and Privileges of the Church; their so doing, hath the *nature of a Divine Covenant* included in it, which is the *Formal Cause* of their Church State and Being.

11. BESIDES, as we have proved before, there are many *mutual Duties* required of all which join in Church Societies, and *Powers* to be exercised and submitted unto, whereunto none can



can be obliged without their own consent. They must *give up themselves unto one another by the will of God*. That is, they must agree, consent and engage among themselves to observe all those mutual Duties, to use all those Privileges, and to exercise all those Powers, which the Lord Christ hath prescribed and granted unto his Church. See *Jerem.* 50. 4, 5.

12. THIS compleats the *confederation intended*, which is the *Formal Cause* of the Church; and without which, either expressly or virtually performed, there can be no Church State.

13. INDEED herein most Men deceive themselves, and think they do not that, nor that it ought to be done, and dispute against it as unlawful or unnecessary, which for the substance of it *they do themselves*, and would condemn themselves in their own Consciences, if they did it not. For unto what end do they join themselves unto *Parochial Churches* and Assemblies? To what end do they require all Professors of the *Protestant Religion* so to do, declaring it to be their Duty by penalties annexed unto its neglect? Is it not, that they might yield obedience unto Christ in their so doing? Is it not to profess that they will do and observe all whatsoever he commands them? Is it not to do it in *that Society*, in those Assemblies whereunto they do belong? Is there not therein virtually a *mutual Agreement and Engagement* among them unto all those ends? It must be so with them, who do not in all things in Religion *fight uncertainly as Men beating the Air*.

14. NOW, whereas these things are in themselves, and for the substance of them, *known Gospel Duties*, which all Believers are indispensably obliged unto; the more *express* our engagement is concerning them, the more do we glorify Christ in our Profession, and the greater sense of our Duty will abide on our Consciences, and greater encouragement be given unto the performance of mutual Duties; as also the more evident will the warranty be, for the exercise of Church Power. Yet do I not deny the *Being of Churches* unto those Societies, wherein these things are *virtually* only observed; especially in Churches of some continuance, wherein there is at least an *implicit consent* unto the first Covenant-Constitution.

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15. THE Lord Christ having instituted and appointed Officers, Rulers or Leaders in his Church, (as we shall see in the next place) to look unto the discharge of all Church Duties among the Members of it, to administer and dispense all its Privileges, and to exercise all its Authority, the *consent and engagement* insisted on, is expressly required unto the constitution of this Order and the preservation of it. For without this, no Believer can be brought into that Relation unto another as his *Pastor, Guide, Over-seer, Ruler* unto the ends mentioned, wherein he must be subject unto him, partake of all Ordinances of Divine Worship administered by him with Authority, in obedience unto the will of Christ; *They gave their own selves to us* (saith the Apostle) *by the will of God.*

16. WHEREFORE, the Formal Cause of a Church consisteth in an Obediential Act of Believers, in such numbers as may be useful unto the ends of Church Edification, jointly giving up themselves unto the Lord Jesus Christ, to do and observe all his Commands, resting on the promise of his especial presence thereon; giving and communicating by his Law, all the Rights, Powers and Privileges of his Church unto them; and in a mutual Agreement among themselves, jointly to perform all the Duties required of them in that State, with an especial subjection unto the Spiritual Authority of Rules and Rulers appointed by Christ in that State.

17. THERE is nothing herein, which any Man who hath a conscientious sense of his Duty in a *professed subjection unto the Gospel*, can question for the substance of it, whether it be according to the mind of Christ or no. And whereas the nature and essential properties of a Divine Covenant are contained in them, as such it is a Foundation of any Church State.

18. THUS under the Old Testament, when God would take the *posterity of Abraham* into a *new peculiar Church State*, he did it by a *Solemn Covenant*. Herein, as he prescribed all the Duties of his Worship to them, and made them many blessed promises of his presence, with powers and privileges innumerable; so the people *solemnly Covenanted* and engaged with him, that *they would do and observe all that he had Commanded them*; whereby they coalesced into that Church State, which abode

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unto the *time of Reformation*. This Covenant is at large declared *Exod. 24*. For the Covenant which God made there with the people, and they with him, was not the *Covenant of Grace* under a legal dispensation; for that was established unto the Seed of *Abraham* Four Hundred years before in the Promise, with the Seal of Circumcision; nor was it the *Covenant of Works* under a Gospel dispensation; for God never renewed that Covenant under any consideration whatever: But it was a *peculiar Covenant* which God then *made with them, and had not made it with their Fathers*, *Deut. 5. 2, 3*. whereby they were raised and erected into a *Church State*, wherein they were intrusted with all the Privileges, and enjoined all the Duties which God had annexed thereunto. This Covenant was the sole *Formal Cause* of their Church State, which they are charged so often to have *broken*, and which they so often *solemnly renewed* unto God.

19. THIS was that *Covenant* which was to be *abolished*, whereon the Church State that was built thereon, was utterly taken away. For hereon the *Hebrews* ceased to be the peculiar Church of God, because the *Covenant* whereby they were made so, was abolished and taken away, as the Apostle disputes at large, *Heb. 7, 8, 9*. The *Covenant of Grace* in the promise, will still continue unto the *true Seed of Abraham*, *Act. 2. 38, 39*. But the *Church Covenant* was utterly taken away.

20. UPON the removal therefore of this *Covenant*, and the Church State founded thereon, all Duties of Worship and Church Privileges were also taken away; (the things substituted in their room being totally of another kind. But the *Covenant of Grace*, as made with *Abraham*, being continued and transferred unto the Gospel Worshippers, the *sign or token of it* given unto him is changed; but another substituted in the room thereof. But whereas the Privileges of this Church Covenant were in themselves *carnal* only, and no way *spiritual*, but as they were *Typical*; and the Duties prescribed in it were *burdensome*, yea, a *yoke intolerable*; the Apostle declares in the same place, that the *New Church State*, whereinto we are called by the Gospel, hath no Duties belonging unto it, but such as are *spiritual* and *easie*; but withal, hath such *holy and eminent*



*ment Privileges* as the Church could no way enjoy by virtue of the *first Church Covenant*; nor could be Believers made partakers of them, before that Covenant was abolished: Wherefore,

21. THE *same way* for the Erection of a Church State for the participation of the more excellent Privileges of the Gospel, and performance of the Duties of it, for the *substance* of it must still be continued. For the constitution of such a Society as a Church is, entrusted with Powers and Privileges, by a *Covenant* or mutual consent, with an ingagement unto the performance of the Duties belonging unto it, hath its foundation in the Light of Nature, so far as it hath any thing in common with other voluntary Relations and Societies; was instituted by God himself, as the way and means of erecting the *Church State* of the Old Testament; and consisteth in the performance of such Duties as are exprelly required of all Believers.

### CHAP. III.

#### Of the Polity, Rule, or Discipline of the Church in General.

1. THE things last treated of concern the Essence of the Church, or the *Essential Constituent* Parts of it, according unto the appointment of Christ. It remains in the next place, that we should treat of it as it is *Organical*, or a Body Corporate; a spiritually *Political* Society, for the exercise of the Powers wherewith it is intrusted by Christ, and the due performance of the Duties which he requires. Now, whereas it is brought into this estate, by the setting, fixing or placing *Officers* in it, Method would require that we should first treat of them, their *Nature*, *Names*, *Power*, and the ways of coming unto their *Offices*. But, whereas all things concerning them are founded in the *grant*



of Power unto the Church it self, and the Institution of Polity and Rule therein by Jesus Christ, I shall first treat somewhat thereof in general.

THAT which we intend on various considerations and in divers respects, is called the *Power* or *Authority*, the *Polity*, the *Rule*, the *Government* and the *Discipline* of the Church. The *Formal Nature* of it, is its *Authority* or *Power*. Its *Polity*, is skill and wisdom to act that Power unto its proper ends. Its *Rule*, is the actual exercise of that Power, according unto that skill and wisdom. Its *Government* is the Exercise and Application of that Authority according unto that skill, towards those that are its proper Objects. And it is called its *Discipline*, principally with respect unto its end. Yet is it not *material* whether these things are thus accurately distinguished; the same thing is intended in them all, which I shall call the *Rule of the Church*.

2. THE *Rule of the Church* is in general The exercise of the *Power* or *Authority* of Jesus Christ, given unto it according unto the *Laws* and *Directions* prescribed by himself unto its *Edification*. This Power in *Actu Primo*, or *fundamentally*, is in the Church it self; in *Actu Secundo*, or its exercise, in them that are especially called thereunto. Whether that which is now called the *Rule of the Church* by some, being a plain *Secular Dominion*, have any Affinity hereunto, is justly doubted. That it is in it self the acting of the *Authority of Christ*, wherein the power of Men is *Ministerial* only, is evident. For, (1.) All this *Authority* in and over the Church is vested in him alone. (2.) It is over the *Souls* and *Consciences* of Men only, which no Authority can reach but his, and that as it is his; whereof we shall treat more afterwards.

THE sole end of the *Ministerial* Exercise of this Power and Rule, by virtue thereof unto the Church, is the *Edification* of it self, Rom. 15. 1, 2, 3. 2 Cor. 10. 8. Chap. 13. 10. Ephes. 4. 14, 15.

3. THIS is the especial nature and especial end of all Power granted by Jesus Christ unto the Church; namely, a *Ministry* unto *Edification*, in opposition unto all the ends whereunto it hath



hath been abused. For it hath been so unto the Usurpation of a Dominion over the Persons and Consciences of the Disciples of Christ, accompanied with Secular Grandeur, Wealth and Power. The Lord Christ never made a grant of any Authority, for any such ends; yea, they are expressly forbidden by him, *Luk. 22. 25. Matth. 20. 26, 27, 28.* Jesus called his Disciples unto him, and said, *Ye know that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise Dominion over them, and they that are Great exercise Authority upon them: But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your Minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your Servant; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.*

ALL the Pleas of the *Romanists* are utterly insufficient to secure their *Papal Domination* from this Sword of the Mouth of the Lord Jesus. For, whereas their utmost pretence and defence consists in this, That it is not Dominion and Power absolutely that is forbidden, but the *Unlawful, Tyrannical, Oppressive* Exercise of Power, such as was in use among the Princes of the *Gentiles*; never was there any Dominion in the World, no not among the *Gentiles*, more Cruel, Oppressive and Bloody, than that of the *Pope's* hath been. But it is evident, that our Lord Jesus Christ doth not in the least reflect on the Rule or Government of the *Kings and Princes of the Gentiles*, which was Good and Righteous: yea, he speaks of *them* in an especial manner, whom their Subjects for their moderate and equal Rule, with their usefulness unto their Countries, called *Euergetas* or *Benefactors*. Their Rule, as unto the Kind and Administration of it in the Kingdoms of the World, he approves of. And such a Power or Preheminence it was, namely good and just in it self, not Tyrannical and Oppressive, that the *Two Disciples desired in his Kingdom*, which gave occasion unto this declaration of the Nature of his Kingdom, and the Rule thereof. For in this Power or Dominion two things may be considered. (1.) The *Exercise* of it over the Persons, Goods and Lives of Men, by Courts, Coercive Jurisdictions, Processes of Law, and External Force in Punishments. (2.) The *State, Grandeur, Preheminence,*



Preheminence, Wealth, Exaltation above others, which are necessary unto the maintenance of their Authority and Power. Both these in the least Participation of them, in the least Degree whatever, are forbidden by our Saviour to be admitted in his Kingdom, or to have any place therein, on what pretence soever. He will have nothing of Lordship, Domination, Preheminence in Lordly Power in his Church. No *Courts*, no *Coercive Jurisdictions*, no Exercise of any Humane Authority doth he allow therein; for by these means do the *Princes of the Gentiles*, those that are the *Benefactors* of their Countries, rule among them. And this is most evident from what in opposition hereunto he prescribes unto his own Disciples, the greatest, the best in Office, Grace and Gifts; namely a *Ministry* only, to be discharged in the way of Service. How well this great Command and Direction of our Lord Jesus Christ hath been and is complied withal, by those who have taken on them to be Rulers in the Church, is sufficiently known.

WHEREFORE there is *no Rule* of the Church, but what is *Ministerial*, consisting in an *Authoritative Declaration* and Application of the Commands and Will of Christ unto the Souls of Men, wherein, those who exercise it are *Servants unto the Church for its Edification, for Jesus sake*, 2 Cor. 4. 5.

IT hence follows, that the introduction of *Humane Authority* into the Rule of the Church of Christ in any kind, *destroyeth the nature of it*, and makes his Kingdom to be of this World, and some of his Disciples to be in their measure like the *Princes of the Gentiles*; nor is it oft-times from themselves, that they are not more like them than they are. The Church is the *House of Christ*, his *Family*, his *Kingdom*. To act any power in its Rule, which is not his, which derives not from him, which is not communicated by his legal grant; or to act any Power, by Ways, Processes, Rules and Laws not of his appointment, is an invasion of his Right and Dominion. It can no otherwise be, if the Church be his *Family*, his *House*, his *Kingdom*. For what Father would endure that any Power should be exercised in his *Family* as to the disposal of his Children and Estate, but his own? What *Earthly Prince* will bear



bear with such an intrusion into his Rights and Dominion? *Foreign Papal Power* is severely excluded here in *England*, because it entrenches on the *Rights of the Crown*, by the exercise of an Authority and Jurisdiction not derived from the King according unto the Law of the Land. And we should do well to take care that at the same time we do not encroach upon the *Dominion of Christ*, by the exercise of an Authority not derived from him, or by Laws and Rules not Enacted by him, but more Foreign unto his Kingdom, than the *Canon Law* or the *Popes Rule* is unto the Laws of this Nation, lest we fall under the *Statute of Premunire*, Matth. 10. 26, 27, 28. The power of Rule in the Church, then, is nothing but a *Right to yield Obedience* unto the Commands of Christ, in such a way, by such Rules, and for such ends, as wherein and whereby his Authority is to be acted.

THE persons concerned in this Rule of the Church, both those that Rule and those that are to be Ruled, as unto all their *Civil and Political* concerns in this World, are subject unto the *Civil Government* of the Kingdoms and Places wherein they inhabit. And there are sundry things which concern the *outward state and condition of the Church* that are at the disposal of the Governours of this World: But, whereas the Power to be exercised in the Church is meerly *Spiritual* as unto its *objects*, which are the Consciences of Men; and as unto its *ends*, which are the tendency of their Souls unto God, their spiritual obedience in Christ and Eternal Life, it is a *Phrensy* to dream of any other Power or Authority in this Rule, but that of Christ alone.

TO sum up this Discourse; If the Rulers of the Church, the greatest of them, have only a *Ministerial Power* committed unto them, and are precisely limited thereunto; if in the exercise thereof they are *Servants of the Church* unto its Edification; if all *Lordly Domination* in an exaltation above the Church or the Members of it, in Dignity and Authority of this World, and the exercise of Power by external Coercive Jurisdiction be *forbidden* unto them; if the whole Power and Rule of the Church be *Spiritual* and *not Carnal*, mighty through God  
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and not through the Laws of Men ; and be to be exercised by *spiritual means* for spiritual ends only ; it is apparent how it hath been lost in, or cast out of the World, for the introduction of a Lordly Domination, a Secular Coercive Jurisdiction, with Laws and Powers no way derived from Christ, in the room thereof. Neither is it possible for any Man alive to reconcile the present Government of some Churches, either as unto the *Officers* who have the Administration of that Rule, or the *Rules* and Laws whereby they act and proceed, or *Powers* which they exercise, or the *Jurisdiction* which they claim, or the *manner* of their proceeding in its Administration, unto any tolerable consistency with the Principles, Rules and Laws of the Government of the Church given by Christ himself. And this alone is a sufficient Reason why those who endeavour to preserve their *Loyalty* entire unto Jesus Christ, should in their own practice seek after the Reduction of the Rule of the Church, unto his Commands and Appointments ; in the publick disposals of Nations we have no concernment.

4. WHEREAS therefore there is a Power and Authority for its Rule unto Edification, given and committed by the Lord Christ unto his Church, I shall proceed to enquire *how this Power is Communicated, what it is, and to whom it is granted*, which shall be declared in the ensuing Observations.

1. THERE was an *extraordinary Church Power* committed by the Lord Jesus Christ unto his *Apostles*, who in their own persons were the *first* and *only* subject of it. It was not *granted unto the Church*, by it to be communicated unto them according unto any Rules prescribed thereunto. For their office as it was *Apostolical*, was *Antecedent* unto the existence of any Gospel Church State properly so called ; neither had any Church the least concurrence or influence into their call or mission. Howbeit, when there was a Church State, the Churches being called and gathered by their Ministry, they were given unto the Church, and placed in the Church for the exercise of all Office, with Power unto their Edification according to the Rules and Laws of their constitution, *Act. 1. 14, 15. Chap. 6. 1, 2, 3, 4. 1 Cor. 3. 22. Chap. 12. 28. Ephes. 4. 11, 12, 13, 14.*

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2. THIS Power is *ceased in the Church*. It is so, not by virtue of any Law or constitution of Christ; but by a *cessation* of those actings whence it did flow, and whereon it did depend. For unto this *Apostolical* Office and Power there was required, (1.) An immediate *personal call* from Christ himself. (2.) A *Commission* equally *extensive* unto all Nations for their Conversion, and unto all Churches equally for their Edification. (3.) An *Authority* in all Churches, comprehensive of all that power which is in the ordinary constitution of them, distributed among many. (4.) A *Collation of extraordinary Gifts*; as of infallibility in Teaching, of working Miracles, speaking with Tongues, and the like. Whereas therefore all these things do cease, and the Lord Christ doth not act in the same manner towards any, this Office and Power doth absolutely cease. For any to pretend themselves to be *Successors* unto these Apostles, as some with a strange confidence and impertinency have done, is to plead that they are personally and immediately called by Christ unto their Office, that they have Authority with respect unto all Nations and all Churches, and are indued with a spirit of Infallibility, and a power of working Miracles, whereof outward pomp and ostentation are no sufficient evidences. And certainly, when some of them consider one another, and talk of being the Apostles Successors, it is but *Aruspex Aruspicens*.

3. LEAST of all in the ordinary state of the Church, and the continuation thereof hath the Lord Christ appointed a *Vicar*, or rather as is pretended a *Successor*, with a plenitude of all Church Power, to be by him parcelled out unto others. This is that which hath overthrown all Church Rule and Order, introducing *Luciferian* Pride and Antichristian Tyranny in their room. And whereas the only way of Christs acting his Authority over the Churches, and of communicating Authority unto them, to be acted by them in his Name, is by his Word and Spirit, which he hath given to continue in his Church unto that end unto the consummation of all things, the *Pope of Rome* placing himself in his stead for these ends, doth thereby *sit in the Temple of God*, and *shew himself to be God*. But this is sufficiently



ciently confuted among all sober Christians; and those who embrace it, may be left to contend with the *Mahometans*, who affirm, that *Iesus* left *John the Baptist* to be his Successor, as *Haly* succeeded unto *Mahomet*.

5. ALL these, by whom the ordinary Rule of the Church is to be exercised unto its Edification, are as unto their Office and Power *given unto the Church*, set or placed in it, not as *Lords of their Faith*, but as *helpers of their joy*, 1 Cor. 2. 2. Chap. 3. 21, 22, 23. 2 Cor. 1. 24. Ephes. 4. 11, 12, 13, 14. 1 Pet. 5. 1, 2. For the Church is the *Spouse of Christ*, the *Lambs Wife*; and by virtue of that Relation the enfeoffment into this power is her Due and Dowry; all particular Persons are but her Servants for Christs sake. For though some of them be *Stewards*, and set over all their fellow Servants, yet he hath not given them the trust of power to rule his Spouse at their own will, and to grant what they please unto her.

6. BUT as this *whole Church Power* is committed unto the *whole Church* by Christ; so all that are called unto the peculiar exercise of any part of it, by virtue of Office-Authority, do receive that Authority from him by the only way of the communication of it, namely, by his Word and Spirit through the *Ministry of the Church*, whereof we shall treat afterwards.

V. THESE things being thus premised in general concerning Church Power, we must treat yet particularly of the *communication of it from Christ*, and of its distribution as unto its Residence in the Church.

I. EVERY *Individual Believer* hath Power or Right given unto him upon his believing to *become the Son of God*, Joh. 1. 12. Hereby, as such, he hath a Right and Title radically and originally unto, with an interest in all Church Privileges, to be actually possessed and used according to the Rules by him prescribed. For he that is a *Son of God* hath a right unto all the privileges and advantages of the *Family of God*, as well as he is obliged unto all the Duties of it. Herein lies the foundation of all right unto Church Power, for both it, and all that belongs unto it, is a part of the *purchased Inheritance*, whereunto right is granted by Adoption; wherefore, the first original grant of  
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all Church Power and Privileges is made unto Believers as such. Theirs it is with these Two Limitations; (1.) That *as such only* they cannot exercise any Church Power, but upon their due observation of all Rules and Duties given unto this end; such are *Joint Confession and Confederation*. (2.) That each individual, do actually participate therein, according to the especial Rules of the Church, which peculiarly respects *Women* that do believe.

2. WHERE-ever there are *two or three of these Believers*, (the smallest number) *Right and Power* is granted unto them, actually to *meet together* in the name of Christ, for their mutual Edification, whereunto he hath promised his presence among them, *Matth. 18. 19, 20.* To *meet and to do any thing in the name of Christ*; as to exhort, instruct and admonish one another, or to pray together, as *v. 19.* there is an especial Right or Power required thereunto. This is granted by Jesus Christ unto the least number of *consenting Believers*. And this is a *second preparation* unto the communication of Church Power. Unto the former, *Faith* only is required, unto this, *Profession* with mutual consent unto, and agreement in the Evangelical Duties mentioned, are to be added.

3. WHERE the *number* of Believers is encreased, so as that they are sufficient as unto their *number* to observe and *perform all Church Duties* in the way and manner prescribed for their performance, they *have Right and Power* granted unto them, to make a *joint solemn Confession of their Faith*, especially as unto the Person of Christ and his Mediation, *Matth. 16. 16, 18.* as also to give up themselves unto him and to one another, in an holy Agreement or *Confederation* to do and observe all things whatever that he hath Commanded. Hereon, by virtue of his Laws in his Institutions and Commands, he gives them *power to do all things in their Order* which he grants unto his Church, and enstates them in all the Rights and Privileges thereof. These Believers, I say, thus congregated into a Church State, have immediately by virtue thereof, *power to take care that all things be done among them, as by the Lord Christ they are Com-manded to be done, in and by his Church.*



THIS therefore is the Church *Essential* and *Homogeneous*, unto which the Lord Christ hath granted all that Church Power which we enquire after, made it the Seat of all Ordinances of his Worship, and the Tabernacle wherein he will dwell. Nor since the ceasing of *extraordinary Officers*, is there any other way possible for the congregating of any Church, than what doth virtually include the things we have mentioned.

4. BUT yet this Church State is not compleat; nor are the ends of its institution attainable in this State. For the Lord Christ hath appointed such things in and unto it, which in this State it cannot observe. For he hath given *Authority* unto his Church to be exercised both in its Rule and in the Administration of his solemn Ordinances of Worship. The things before mentioned, are all of them acts of *Right* and *Power*, but not of *Authority*.

5. WHEREFORE the Lord Christ hath ordained *Offices*, and appointed *Officers* to be established in the Church, *Ephes. 4. 13, 14.* Unto these is all *Church Authority* granted. For all *Authority* is an act of Office-Power, which is that which gives unto what is performed by the Officers of the Church, the formal nature of Authority.

6. THEREFORE unto the Church, in the State before described, *Right and Power* is granted by Christ to *call, chuse, appoint and set apart* persons made meet for the work of the Offices appointed by him, in the ways and by the means appointed by him. Nor is there any other way whereby *ordinary Officers* may be fixed in the Church, as we have proved before, and shall farther confirm afterwards.

THAT which hereon we must enquire into, is, How or by what means, or by what acts of his Sovereign Power, the Lord Christ doth communicate *Office-Power*, and therewith the *Office* it self unto any persons whereon their Authority is directly *from him*; and what are the Acts or Duties of the Church in the collation of this Authority.

THE *Acts* of Christ herein may be reduced unto these Heads,



1. HE hath instituted and appointed the Offices themselves, and made a *grant* of them unto the Church for its Edification. As also, he hath determined and limited the *Powers* and *Duties* of the Officers. It is not in the power of any or of all the Churches in the World, to appoint any *Office* or *Officer* in the Church, that Christ hath not appointed. And where there are any such, they can have no Church Authority properly so called; for that entirely riseth from, and is resolved into the institution of the *Office* by Christ himself. And hence, in the first place all the Authority of *Officers* in the Church proceeds from the Authority of Christ in the institution of the *Office* it self; for that which gives *being* unto any thing, gives it also its *essential properties*.

2. BY virtue of his *Relation* unto the Church as its *Head*, of his *Kingly Power* over it and care of it, whereon the continuation and edification of the Church in this World do depend; where ever he hath a Church called, he furnisheth some persons with such *Gifts*, *Abilities* and *Endowments*, as are necessary to the discharge of such Offices, in the Powers, Works and Duties of them. For it is most unquestionably evident, both in the nature of the thing it self, and in his institution, that there are some *especial Abilities* and *Qualifications* required to the discharge of every Church Office. Wherefore, where the Lord Christ doth not communicate of *these Abilities* in such a measure as by virtue of them *Church Order may be observed, Church Power exercised, and all Church Ordinances administred according to his mind unto the Edification of the Church*, it is no more in the power of Men to constitute Officers, than to erect or create an Office in the Church, *Ephes. 4. 11, 12, 13. 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, &c. Rom. 12. 6.*

THIS collation of spiritual Gifts and Abilities for Office by Jesus Christ unto any, doth not immediately constitute all those, or any of them, Officers in the Church, on whom they are collated, without the observation of that *Method and Order* which he hath appointed in the Church for the communication of Office-Power; yet is it so *prerequisite* thereunto, that no person not made partaker of them in the measure before mentioned,



mentioned, can, by virtue of any *outward Rites*, Order or Power, be really vested in the Ministry.

3. THIS *communication of Office-Power* on the part of Christ, consists in his institution and appointment of the *way and means*, whereby persons *gifted and qualified* by himself, ought to be actually admitted into their Offices, so as to administer the Powers, and perform the Duties of them. For the *way of their Call and Ordination*, whereof we shall speak afterwards, is efficacious unto this end of *communicating Office-Power*, meerly from *his institution* and appointment of it. And what is not so, can have no *causal influence* into the communication of this Power. For although sundry things belonging hereunto are directed by the *light of Nature*, as it is, that where one Man is set over others in Power and Authority, which before he had no natural right unto, it should be by their own consent and choice: And some things are of a *moral nature*, as that especial prayer be used in and about affairs that need especial divine assistance and favour; and there may be some *circumstances* of outward actions herein, not to be determined but by the Rule of Reason on the present posture of occasions; yet nothing hath any *causal influence* into the communication of Office-Power, but what is of the institution and appointment of Christ. By virtue hereof, all that are called unto this Office, do derive all their Power and Authority from him alone.

4. HE hath hereon given *Commands* unto the whole Church to *submit themselves* unto the Authority of these Officers in the discharge of their Office, who are so appointed, so prepared or qualified, so called by himself, and to obey them in all things, according unto the limitations which himself also hath given unto the Power and Authority of such Officers. For they who are called unto Rule and Authority in the Church by virtue of their Office, are not thereon admitted unto an *unlimited Power* to be exercised at their pleasure in a Lordly or *Despotical* manner; but their Power is stated, bounded, limited and confined as to the objects of it, its Acts, its manner of Administration, its Ends, and as unto all things wherein it is concerned. The swelling over these Banks by *Ambition*, the breaking up of these bounds



bounds by Pride and love of Domination, by the introduction of a Power over the persons of Men in their outward concerns, exercised in a Legal, Coercive, Lordly manner, are sufficient to make a forfeiture of all Church Power in them who are guilty of them. But after that some Men saw it fit to transgress the bounds of Power and Authority prescribed and limited unto them by the Lord Christ; which was really *exclusive* of Lordship, Dominion and all Elation above their Brethren, leaving them *Servants to the Church for Christs sake*, they began to prescribe bounds unto themselves, such as were suited unto their Interest, which they called *Rules or Canons*, and never left enlarging them at their pleasure, untill they enstated the most *absolute Tyranny* in and over the Church, that ever was in the World.

BY these ways and means doth the Lord Christ *communicate Office Power* unto them that are called thereunto, whereon they become not the Officers or Ministers of Men, no, not of the Church, as unto the actings and exercise of their Authority, but only as the good and edification of the Church is the end of it; but the Officers and Ministers of Christ himself.

2. IT is hence evident, that in the communication of Church Power in Office unto any persons called thereunto, the work and duty of the Church consists *formally* in *Acts of Obedience* unto the Commands of Christ. Hence, it doth not give unto such Officers a Power or Authority that was *formally* and *actually* in the Body of the Community, by virtue of any Grant or Law of Christ, so as that they should receive and act the Power of the Church, by virtue of a Delegation from them; but only they design, chuse, set apart the individual persons, who thereon are intrusted with Office-Power by Christ himself, according as was before declared. This is the Power and Right given unto the Church *essentially* considered with respect unto their Officers, namely to design, call, chuse, and set apart the persons by the ways of Christs appointment unto those Offices, whereunto by his Laws he hath annexed Church Power and Authority.



WE need not therefore trouble our selves with the disputes about the *first subject* of Church Power, or any part of it. For it is a certain Rule, *That in the performance of all Duties which the Lord Christ requires, either of the whole Church, or of any in the Church, especially of the Officers, they are the first subject of the Power needful unto such Duties*, who are immediately called unto them. Hereby, all things become to be done in the Name and Authority of Christ. For the Power of the Church, is nothing but a right to perform Church Duties in obedience unto the Commands of Christ, and according unto his mind. Wherefore all Church Power is *originally* given unto the Church *essentially* considered, which hath a double exercise; First, in the *call* or choosing of Officers; Secondly, in their *voluntary acting* with them and under them in all Duties of Rule. (1.) All Authority in the Church is committed by Christ unto the Officers or Rulers of it, as unto all Acts and Duties whereunto Office-Power is required; and, (2.) Every individual person hath the liberty of his own judgment, as unto his own consent or dissent in what he is himself concerned.

THAT this Power under the name of the *Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven* was originally granted unto the whole professing Church of Believers, and that it is utterly impossible it should reside in any other who is subject unto Death, or if to be renewed upon any *occasional intermission*, is so fully proved by all *Protestant Writers* against the Papists, that it needs not on this occasion be again insisted on.

VI. THESE things have been spoken concerning the *Polity of the Church in General*, as it is taken *objectively* for the constitution of its State, and the laws of its Rule; we are in the next place to consider it *subjectively*, as it is a *power or faculty of the minds of Men, unto whom the Rule of the Church is committed*. And in this sense it is the *wisdom or understanding* of the Officers of the Church, to exercise the Government in it appointed by Jesus Christ, or to rule it according to his Laws and Constitutions: Or,

THIS *Wisdom* is a *Spiritual Gift* (1 Cor. 12. 9.) whereby the Officers of the Church are enabled to make a due application of all  
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the Rules and Laws of Christ, unto the Edification of the Church and all the Members of it.

UNTO the attaining of this *Wisdom*, are required, (1.) *Fervent Prayer* for it, *Jam.* 1. 5. (2.) *Diligent study* of the *Scripture*, to find out and understand the Rules given by Christ unto this purpose, *Ezra* 7. 6, 7, 9. *1 Tim.* 2. 14, 15. (3.) *Humble waiting on God* for the Revelation of all that it is to be exercised about, *Ezek.* 43. 11. (4.) A *conscientious exercise* of the skill which they have received. Talents traded with duly will encrease. (5.) A continual *sense of the account* which is to be given of the discharge of this great trust, being called to rule in the House of God, *Heb.* 13. 17.

HOW much *this Wisdom* hath been neglected in Church Government; yea, how much it is despised in the World, is evident unto all. It is skill in the *Canon Law*, in the proceedings of vexatious Courts, with the Learning, Subtilty and Arts which are required thereunto, that is looked on as the *only skill* to be exercised in the Government of the Church. Without this a Man is esteemed no way meet to be employed in any part of the Church Government. And according as any do arrive unto a dexterity in this *Polity*, they are esteemed eminently useful. But these things belong not at all unto the Government of the Church appointed by Christ; nor can any sober Man think in his Conscience that so they do. What is the use of this Art and Trade, as unto political ends, we enquired. Nor is the *true wisdom* required unto this end, with the means of attaining of it, more despised, more neglected by any sort of Men in the World, than by those whose pretences unto *Ecclesiastical Rule* and Authority would make it most necessary unto them.

TWO things follow on the supposition laid down.

1. THAT the *Wisdom* intended is not promised unto *all the Members of the Church in General*; nor are they required to seek for it by the ways and means of attaining it before laid down; but respect is had herein only unto the *Officers* of the Church. Hereon dependeth the equity of the obedience of the people unto their Rulers. For *Wisdom for Rule* is

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peculiarly granted unto them, and their Duty it is to seek after it in a peculiar manner. Wherefore, those who on every occasion are ready to advance their own Wisdom and Understanding in the affairs and proceedings of the Church, against the Wisdom of the Officers of it, are proud and disorderly.

I speak not this to give any countenance unto the out-cries of some, that all sorts of Men will suppose themselves *Wiser than their Rulers*, and to know what belongs unto the Government of the Church better than they; whereas, the Government which *they* exercise belongs not at all unto the Rule of the Church, determined and limited in the Scripture, as the meanest Christian can easily discern; nor is it pretended by themselves so to do: For they say that the Lord Christ hath prescribed nothing herein, but left it unto the Will and Wisdom of the Church to order all things as they see necessary, which *Church* they are. Wherefore, if that will please them, it shall be granted, that in *skill* for the management of *Ecclesiastical Affairs* according to the *Canon Law*, with such other Rules of the same kind as they have framed, and in the legal proceedings of *Ecclesiastical Courts*, as they are called, there are none of the people that are equal unto them, or will contend with them.

2. IT hence also follows, that those *who are called unto Rule in the Church of Christ*, should diligently endeavour the attaining of, and encreasing in this *Wisdom*, giving evidence thereof on all occasions, that the Church may safely acquiesce in their Rule. But hereunto so many things do belong, as cannot in this place be meetly treated of; somewhat that appertains to them shall afterwards be considered.

CHAP.



## C H A P. IV.

### *The Officers of the Church.*

**T**HE Church is considered either as it is *Essential* with respect unto its Nature and Being ; or as it is *Organical* with respect unto its Order.

THE constituent causes and parts of the Church as unto its *Essence* and Being, are its *Institution, Matter* and *Form* ; whereof we have treated.

ITS Order as it is *Organical*, is founded in that communication of Power unto it from Christ, which was insisted on in the foregoing Chapter.

THE *Organizing* of a Church, is the placing or implanting in it those *Officers* which the Lord Jesus Christ hath appointed to act and exercise his Authority therein.

FOR the *Rule* and *Government* of the Church, are the exertion of the Authority of Christ in the hands of them unto whom it is committed, that is the *Officers* of it ; not that all *Officers* are called to Rule, but that none are called to Rule that are not so.

THE Officers of the Church in General are of two sorts ; *Bishops* and *Deacons*, *Phil.* 1. 1. And their Work is distributed into *Prophecy* and *Ministry*, *Rom.* 12. 6. 7.

THE *Bishops* or *Elders* are of two sorts ; (1.) Such as have *Authority* to *Teach* and Administer the Sacraments, which is commonly called the *power of Order*, and also of *Ruling*, which is called a *Power of Jurisdiction* corruptly : And some have only *Power for Rule* ; of which sort, there are some in all the Churches in the World.

THOSE of the first sort are distinguished into *Pastors* and *Teachers*.

THE distinction between the *Elders* themselves, is not like that between *Elders* and *Deacons*, which is as unto the whole kind



kind or nature of the Office ; but only with respect unto *Work* and Order, whereof we shall treat distinctly.

THE first sort of Officers in the Church are *Bishops* or *Elders* ; concerning whom there have been mighty contentions in the *late Ages* of the Church. The Principles we have hitherto proceeded on, discharge us from any especial interest or concernment in this Controversy. For if there be no Church of Divine or Apostolical constitution, none in Being in the Second or Third Centuries, but only a particular Congregation, the foundation of that contest which is about *Preheminence and Power in the same Person over many Churches*, falls to the ground.

INDEED, strife about *Power, Superiority, and Jurisdiction* over one another, amongst those who pretend to be Ministers of the Gospel, is full of scandal. It started early in the Church ; was *extinguished* by the Lord Christ in his Apostles ; rebuked by the Apostles in all others ; yet through the Pride, Ambition and Avarice of Men, hath grown to be the stain and shame of the Church in most Ages. For neither the sense of the Authority of Christ forbidding such ambitious designings, nor the proposal of his own *example* in this particular case ; nor the experience of their own insufficiency for the least part of the work of the Gospel-Ministry, have been able to restrain the minds of Men from coveting after and contending for a prerogative in Church-Power over others. For though this *Ambition*, and all the fruits or rewards of it, are laid under a severe interdict by our Lord Jesus Christ, yet when Men (like *Achan*) saw the *wedge of Gold*, and the *goodly Babylonish Garment*, that they thought to be in Power, Domination and Wealth, they *coveted* them, and took them, to the great disturbance of the Church of God.

IF Men would but a little seriously consider, what there is in that care of Souls, even of all them over whom they pretend *Church-Power*, Rule or Jurisdiction ; and what it is to give an *Account* concerning them before the Judgment Seat of Christ, it may be it would abate of their earnestness in contending for the enlargement of their *Cures*.

Matth. 18.  
1, 2, 3, 4.  
Chap. 23.  
7, 8, 9, 10,  
11.  
Luke 22.  
24, 25, 26,  
27.  
1 Pet. 5. 1,  
2, 3, 4, 5.  
2 Joh. 9.  
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THE claim of *Episcopacy*, as consisting in a rank of persons distinct from the Office of *Presbyters*, is managed with great variety. It is not agreed whether they are distinct in *Order* above them, or only as unto a certain *degree* among them of the *same* Order. It is not determined, what doth constitute that pretended *distinct Order*, nor wherein that *degree* of pre-eminence in the same Order, doth consist, nor what *Basis* it stands upon. It is not agreed whether this Order of *Bishops*, hath any Church-Power appropriated unto it, so as to be acted singly by themselves alone, without the concurrence of the *Presbyters*; or how far that concurrence is necessary in all Acts of Church-Order or Power. There are no Bounds or Limits of the *Diocesses* which they claim the Rule in and over, as Churches whereunto they are peculiarly related, derived either from Divine *Institution*, or *Tradition*, or general Rules of Reason respecting both or either of them; or from the consideration of Gifts and Abilities, or any thing else wherein Church-Order or Edification is concerned. Those who plead for *Diocesan Episcopacy*, will not proceed any farther, but only that there is and ought to be a *superiority in Bishops over Presbyters* in Order or Degree. But whether this must be over *Presbyters* in *one Church* only, or in many *distinct Churches*; whether it must be such, as not only hinders them utterly from the discharge of any of the Duties of the *Pastoral Office*, towards the most of them whom they esteem their Flocks, and necessitates them unto a Rule by *unscriptural Church-Officers*, Laws and Power, they suppose doth not belong unto their Cause; whereas indeed the weight and moment of it, doth lie in and depend on these things. Innumerable other *uncertainties, differences* and variances there are about this *singular Episcopacy*, which we are not at present concern'd to enquire into, nor shall I insist on any of those which have been already mentioned.

BUT yet, because it is necessary unto the clearing of the *Evangelical Pastoral Office*, which is now under consideration; unto what hath been pleaded before about the *non institution* of any Churches beyond *particular Congregations*, which is utterly exclusive of all pretences of the *present Episcopacy*, I shall



I shall briefly, as in a diversion, add the Arguments which undeniably prove, That in the whole *New Testament*, *Bishops* and *Presbyters*, or *Elders*, are every way the same Persons, in the same Office, have the same Function, without distinction in Order or Degree; which also, as unto the Scripture, the most learned Advocates of Prelacy begin to grant.

1. THE Apostle describing what ought to be the Qualifications of *Presbyters* or *Elders*, gives this Reason of it, *because a Bishop must be so*, Tit. 1. 5, 6, 7. *Ordain Elders in every City, if any be blameless, &c. for a Bishop must be blameless.* He that would prove of what sort a *Presbyter* that is to be Ordained so, ought to be, gives this Reason for it, That *such a Bishop ought to be*, intends the same Person and Office by *Presbyter* and *Bishop*, or there is no congruity of Speech, or consequence of Reason in what he asserts. To suppose that the Apostle doth not intend the same Persons, and the same Office by *Presbyters* and *Bishops* in the same place, is to destroy his Argument, and render the context of his discourse unintelligible. He that will say, that if you make a *Justice of Peace* or a *Constable*, he must be magnanimous, liberal, full of clemency and courage, for so a *King* ought to be, will not be thought to argue very wisely. Yet such is the Argument here, if by *Elders* and *Bishops*, distinct Orders and Offices are intended.

2. THERE were many *Bishops* in one City in one particular Church, Phil. 1. 1. *To all the Saints that are at Philippi, with the Bishops and Deacons.* That the Church then at *Philippi* was one particular Church or Congregation was proved before. But to have many *Bishops* in the same Church, whereas the nature of the *Episcopacy* pleaded for, consists in the Superiority of one over the *Presbyters* of many Churches, is absolutely inconsistent. Such *Bishops*, whereof there may be many in the same Church, of the same Order, equal in Power and Dignity with respect unto Office, will easily be granted; but then they are *Presbyters* as well as *Bishops*. There will, I fear, be no end of this contest, because of the prejudices and interests of some; but that the identity of *Bishops* and *Presbyters* should be more plainly expressed, can neither be expected nor desired.

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3. THE Apostle being at *Miletus*, sent to *Ephesus* for the Elders of the Church to come unto him, that is the Elders of the Church at *Ephesus*, as hath been elsewhere undeniably demonstrated, *Act. 20. 17, 18.* unto these Elders he says, *Take heed unto your selves, and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Bishops, to feed the Church of God, ver. 28.* If Elders and Bishops be not the same Persons, having the same Office, the same Function and the same Duties, and the same Names, it is impossible, so far as I understand, how it should be expressed. For these Elders are they whom the Holy Ghost made Bishops; they were many of them in the same Church; their Duty it was to attend unto the Flock; and to feed the Church, which comprize all the Duties, the whole Function of Elders and Bishops, which must therefore be the same. This plain Testimony can no way be evaded by pretences and conjectures unwritten and uncertain; the only answer unto it, is, It was indeed so then, but it was otherwise afterwards; which some now betake themselves unto. But these Elders were either Elders only and not Bishops; or Bishops only and not Elders; or the same Persons were Elders and Bishops, as is plainly affirmed in the words. The latter is that which we plead. If the first be asserted, then was there no Bishop then at *Ephesus*; for these Elders had the whole oversight of the Flock: If the Second, then were there no Elders at all, which is no good exposition of those words, *that Paul called unto him the Elders of the Church.*

4. THE Apostle Peter writes unto the Elders of the Churches, that they should feed the Flock, *ἐπισκοπῶντες*, taking the oversight, or exercising the Office and Function of Bishops over them, and that not as Lords but as ensamples (of Humility, Obedience and Holiness) to the whole Flock, *1 Pet. 5. 1, 2, 3.* Those on whom it is incumbent to feed the Flock, and to superintend over it, as those who in the first place are accountable unto Jesus Christ, are Bishops; and such as have no other Bishop over them, unto whom this charge should be principally committed. But such, according unto this Apostle, are the Elders of the Church. Wherefore, those Elders and Bishops are the same.

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And such were the *ηγούμενοι*, the Guides of the Church at Jerusalem, whom the members of it were bound to obey, as those that did watch for, and were to give an account of their Souls. Heb. 13. 17.

5. THE substance of these and all other Instances or Testimonies of the same kind, is this; *Those whose names are the same equally common and applicable unto them all, whose Function is the same, whose Qualifications and Characters are the same, whose Duties, Account and Reward are the same, concerning whom there is in no one place of Scripture the least mention of inequality, disparity or preference in Office among them, they are essentially and every way the same.* That thus it is with the Elders and Bishops in the Scripture cannot modestly be denied.

I do acknowledge that where a Church is greatly encreased, so as that there is a necessity of *many Elders* in it for its Instruction and Rule, that *Decency and Order* do require, that one of them do in the management of all Church Affairs *preside*, to guide and direct the way and manner thereof. So the *Presbyters* at Alexandria did choose one from among themselves that should have the preheminance of a President among them. Whether the Person that is so to preside, be directed unto by being first *Converted* or first *Ordained*, or on the account of *Age*, or of *Gifts* and Abilities, whether he continue for a *Season* only, and then another be deputed unto the same Work, or for *his Life*, are things in themselves indifferent, to be determined according unto the General Rules of Reason and Order, with respect unto the Edification of the Church.

I shall never oppose this *Order*, but rather desire to see it in practice; namely, that particular Churches were of such an extent, as necessarily to require *many Elders* both Teaching and Ruling for their Instruction and Government; for the better observation of Order and Decency in the publick Assemblies; the fuller Representation of the Authority committed by Jesus Christ unto the Officers of his Church; the occasional instruction of the Members in *lesser Assemblies*, which as unto some ends may be stated also, with the due attendance unto all other means of *Edification* and Watching, Inspecting, Warning, Admonishing, Exhorting



Exhorting, and the like; and that *among these Elders* one should be chosen by themselves, with the consent of the Church, not into a New Order, not into a *degree of Authority* above his Brethren, but only unto his part of the common work in a peculiar manner, which requires some kind of *Precedency*. Hereby no New Officer, no New Order of Officers, no New *degree* of Power or Authority is constituted in the Church; only the Work and Duty of it is cast into such an Order, as the very light of nature doth require.

BUT there is not any intimation in the Scripture of the least imparity or inequality, in Order, Degree or Authority, among Officers of the same sort, whether extraordinary or ordinary. The *Apostles* were all *equal*; so were the *Evangelists*, so were *Elders* or *Bishops*, and so were *Deacons* also. The Scripture knows no more of an *Arch-Bishop*, such as all *Diocesan Bishops* are, nor an *Arch-Deacon*, than of an *Arch-Apostle*, or of an *Arch-Evangelist*, or an *Arch-Prophet*. Howbeit, it is evident, that in all their Assemblies, they had *one* who did preside in the manner before described, which seems among the *Apostles* to have been the prerogative of *Peter*.

THE *Brethren* also of the Church may be so *multiplied*, as that the constant meeting of them all in *one place* may not be absolutely best for their Edification. Howbeit, that on all the solemn occasions of the Church whereunto their *consent* is necessary, they did of old and ought still, to meet in *the same place* for advise, consultation and consent, as was proved before. This is so fully expressed and exemplified in the two great Churches of *Jerusalem* and *Antioch*, *Act. 15.* that it cannot be gain-said. When *Paul* and *Barnabas*, sent by the Brethren or Church at *Antioch* (*v. 1, 3.*) were come to *Jerusalem*, they were received by the Church, as the *Brethren* are called in distinction from the *Apostles* and *Elders*, *v. 4.* So when the *Apostles* and *Elders* assembled to consider of the case proposed unto them, the whole *multitude* of the Church, that is the *Brethren* assembled with them, *v. 6, 12.* neither were they *mute Persons*, meer Auditors and Spectators in the Assembly, but they concurred both in the debate and determination of the Question; inso-

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much as they are expressly joined with the *Apostles and Elders* in the advice given, *ver. 22, 23*. And when *Paul and Barnabas* returned unto *Antioch*, the *multitude* unto whom the Letter of the Church at *Jerusalem* was directed, came together about it, *ver. 23. 30*. Unless this be observed the *Primitive-Church-State* is overthrown: But I shall return from this Digression.

THE first Officer or Elder of the Church is the *Pastor*. A *Pastor*, is the Elder that *Feeds and Rules the Flock*, *1 Pet. 5. 2*. that is, who is its *Teacher* and its *Bishop*; ποιμαίνετε, ἐπισκοπείτε, Feed, taking the oversight.

IT is not my present design nor work to give a full account of the *Qualifications* required in Persons to be called unto this Office; nor of their *Duty and Work*, with the *Qualities* or *Vertues* to be exercised therein. It would require a large Discourse to handle them practically, and it hath been done by others. It were to be wished, that what is of this kind expressed in the Rule, and which the nature of the Office doth indispensably require, were more exemplified in practice than it is. But some things relating unto this *Officer* and his *Office* that are needful to be well stated, I shall treat concerning.

THE name of a *Pastor* or *Shepherd* is *Metaphorical*. It is a Denomination suited unto his Work, denoting the same Office and Person with a *Bishop* or *Elder*, spoken of absolutely without limitation unto either *Teaching* or *Ruling*. And it seems to be used or applied unto this Office, because it is more comprehensive of, and instructive in all the Duties that belong unto it, than any other Name whatever; nay, than all of them put together. The Grounds and Reasons of this *Metaphor*, or whence the Church is called a *Flock*, and whence God termeth himself the *Shepherd of the Flock*; whence the *Sheep* of this Flock are committed unto Christ, whereon he becomes the good *Shepherd that lays down his Life for the Sheep*, and the *Prince of Shepherds*; what is the interest of Men in a *participation* of this Office, and what their Duty thereon, are things well worth the consideration of them who are called unto it. *Hirelings*, yea, *Wolves* and *dumb Dogs*, do in many places take on themselves to be *Shepherds* of the Flock, by whom it is devoured and destroyed.

WHEREAS

Alt. 20. 18.  
29.  
1 Pet. 5.  
2, 3.  
Cant. 1. 7.  
Jerem. 13.  
17.  
Chap. 23.  
2.  
Ezek. 34.  
3.  
Gen. 49.  
24.  
Psal. 23. 1.  
Psal. 80. 1.  
Job. 10.  
11, 14, 16.  
Heb. 13.  
20.  
1 Pet. 2. 25.  
Chap. 5. 4.



WHEREAS therefore this *Name* or Appellation is taken from, and includes in it *Love, Care, Tenderneſs, Watchfulneſs* in all the Duties of *going before, preſerving, feeding, defending* the Flock, the Sheep and the Lambs, the Strong, the Weak and Diſeaſed, with accountableneſs as Servants unto the *chief Shepherd*, it was generally diſuſed in the Church; and thoſe of *Biſhops* or *Overſeers, Guides, Presidents, Elders* which ſeem to include more of Honour and Authority, were retained in common uſe; that though one of them, at laſt, namely that of *Biſhops*, with ſome elating compositions and adjuncts of power, obtained the preheminance. Out of the Corruption of theſe Compoſitions and Additions in *Arch-Biſhops, Metropolitans, Patriarchs*, and the like, brake forth the *Cockatrice* of the Church, that is the *Pope*.

BUT this name is by the Holy Ghoſt appropriated unto the *principal Miniſters* of Chriſt in his Church, *Ephes. 4. 11.* And under that name they were promiſed unto the Church of old, *Jerem. 3. 15.* And the Work of theſe Paſtors, is to *feed* the Flock committed to their charge as it is conſtantly required of them, *Act. 20. 29. 1 Pet. 5. 2.*

OF *Pastoral Feeding* there are two parts. (1.) *Teaching* or *Inſtruction*. (2.) *Rule* or *Discipline*. Unto theſe two Heads may all the Acts and Duties of a *Shepherd* toward his Flock be reduced. And both are intended in the term of *feeding*, *1 Chron. 11. 2. Chap. 17. 6. Jer. 23. 2. Mic. 5. 4. Chap. 7. 14. Zech. 11. 7. Act. 20. 28. Joh. 21. 14. 1 Pet. 5. 2, &c.* wherefore he who is the *Pastor*, is the *Biſhop*, the *Elder*, the *Teacher* of the Church.

THESE Works of *Teaching* and *Ruling* may be diſtinct in ſeveral Officers, namely of *Teachers* and *Rulers*; but to divide them in the ſame Office of Paſtors, that ſome Paſtors ſhould *feed by Teaching only*, but have no right to *Rule* by Virtue of their Office; and ſome ſhould attend in exerciſe unto *Rule only*, not eſteeming themſelves obliged to labour continually in *feeding the Flock*, is almoſt to overthrow this Office of Chriſts Designation, and to ſet up *two* in the room of it, of Mens own projection.



OF the *call* of Men unto this Office, so many things have been spoken and written by others at large, that I shall only insist, and that very briefly, on some things which are either of the most *important consideration*, or have been *omitted* by others: As,

1. UNTO the *call* of any person unto this Office of a *Pastor* in the Church, there are certain *Qualifications* previously required in him, disposing and making him fit for that Office. The *outward call* is an act of the Church, as we shall shew immediately. But therein is required an obediential acting of him also who is called. Neither of these can be Regular, neither can the Church act according to Rule and Order, nor the person called act in such a due Obedience, unless there are in him some *previous Indications* of the mind of God, designing the person to be called by such *Qualifications*, as may render him meet and able for the discharge of his Office and Work. For *ordinary vocation* is not a *collation* of *Gracious Spiritual Abilities* suiting and making Men meet for the Pastoral Office: But it is the communication of *Right* and *Power* for the regular use and exercise of Gifts and Abilities received antecedently unto that call, unto the Edification of the Church, wherein the Office it self doth consist. And if we would know what these *Qualifications* and Endowments are for the substance of them, we may learn them in their *great example* and pattern, our Lord Jesus Christ himself. Our Lord Jesus Christ being the *good Shepherd*, whose the Sheep are, the *Shepherd* and *Bishop* of our Souls; the *chief Shepherd*, did design in the undertaking and exercise of his *Pastoral Office*, to give a *Type* and *Example* unto all those who are to be called unto the same Office under him. And if there be not a *conformity* unto him herein, no Man can assure his own Conscience or the Church of God, that he is or can be *lawfully called* unto this Office.

THE *Qualifications* of Christ unto, and the gracious *Qualities* of his Mind and Soul in the discharge of his *Pastoral Office*, may be referred unto Four Heads.

1. THAT *furniture with spiritual Gifts and Abilities* by the communication of the Holy Ghost unto him, in an unmeasurable fulness, whereby he was fitted for the discharge of his



his Office. This is expressed with respect unto his undertaking of it, *Isa.* 11. 2, 3. *Chap.* 61. 1, 2, 3. *Luk.* 4. 14. Herein was he *anointed with the oyl of gladness above his fellows*, *Heb.* 1. 9. But this *unction of the Spirit* is in a certain measure required in all who are called, or to be called unto the Pastoral Office, *Ephes.* 4. 1. That there are Spiritual Powers, Gifts and Abilities required unto the Gospel Ministry, I have at large declared in *another Treatise*, as also what they are. And where there are none of these Spiritual Abilities which are necessary unto the Edification of the Church in the Administration of Gospel Ordinances, as in Prayer, Preaching, and the like, no outward Call or Order can constitute any Man an *Evangelical Pastor*. As unto particular Persons I will not contend, as unto an *absolute nullity* in the Office by reason of their deficiency in *Spiritual Gifts*, unless it be gross, and such as renders them utterly useless unto the Edification of the Church. I only say, that no Man can in an *orderly way and manner* be called or set apart unto this Office, in whom there are not some *Indications* of Gods designation of him thereunto by his furniture with Spiritual Gifts, of Knowledge, Wisdom, Understanding and utterance for *Prayer and Preaching*, with other Ministerial Duties, in some competent measure.

2. *COMPASSION and love* to the Flock, were gloriously eminent in this *great Shepherd of the Sheep*. After other evidences hereof, he gave them that signal confirmation in *laying down his Life for them*. This Testimony of his *love* he insists upon himself, *Joh.* 10. And herein also his example ought to lie continually before the eyes of them who are called unto the *Pastoral Office*. Their entrance should be accompanied with *love* to the Souls of Men; and if the discharge of their Office be not animated with *love* unto their Flocks, Wolves or Hirelings, or Thieves they may be, but *Shepherds* they are not. Neither is the glory of the Gospel-Ministry more lost or defaced in any thing, or by any means, than by the evidence that is given among the most, of an *inconformity* unto Jesus Christ in their love unto the Flock. Alas! it is scarce once thought of amongst the most of them, who in various degrees take upon



upon them the *Pastoral Office*; where are the fruits of it? what evidence is given of it in any kind? It is well, if some instead of laying down their own lives for them, do not by innumerable ways *destroy their Souls*.

3. THERE is and was in this great Shepherd a *continual watchfulness over the whole Flock* to keep it, to preserve it, to feed, to lead and cherish it, to purify and cleanse it, until it be presented unspotted unto God. He doth never *slumber nor sleep*; he watereth his Vineyard *every moment*, keeps it Night and Day that none may hurt it; looseth nothing of what is committed to him; see *Is. 40. 11*. I speak not distinctly of previous *Qualifications* unto an outward call only, but with a mixture of those *Qualities and Duties* which are required in the discharge of this Office. And herein also is the Lord Christ to be our example. And hereunto do belong, (1) *Constant Prayer* for the Flock. (2.) *Diligence* in the dispensation of the Word, with Wisdom as unto Times, Seasons, the state of the Flock in general, their light Knowledge, Ways, Walking, Ignorance, Temptations, Trials, Defections, Weaknesses of all sorts, Growth and Decays, &c. (3.) *Personal Admonition*, Exhortation, Consolation, Instruction, as their particular cases do require. (4.) All with a design to keep *them from evil*; and to present them *without blame* before Christ Jesus at the great day. But these and things of the like nature, presenting themselves with some earnestness unto my mind, I shall at present discharge my self of the thoughts of them, hoping a more convenient place and season to give them a larger Treat; and somewhat yet farther shall be spoken of them in the next Chapter.

4. ZEAL for the *Glory of God* in his whole Ministry, and in all the *ends* of it, had its continual residence in the holy Soul of the great Shepherd. Hence it is declared in an *expression* intimating that it was *inexpressible*. *The zeal of thy House hath eaten me up*. This also must accompany the discharge of the *Pastoral Office*, or it will find no acceptance with him. And the want of it, is one of those things which hath filled the World with a dead, faithless, fruitless Ministry.



5. AS he was absolutely in himself *Holy, Harmless, Unfiled, separate from Sinners*; so a conformity unto him in these things, and that in *some degree of eminency* above others, is required in them who are called unto this Office.

AGAIN, none can or may *take this Office upon him*, or discharge the Duties of it, which are peculiarly its own, with Authority, but he who is *called and set apart thereunto* according to the mind of Jesus Christ. The continuation of all Church-Order and Power, of the regular Administration of all sacred Ordinances, yea, of the very Being of the Church as it is *Organical*, depends on this Assertion. Some deny the continuation of the Office it self, and of those Duties which are peculiar unto it, as the Administration of the Sacraments. Some judge, that Persons neither *called nor set apart* unto this Office, may discharge all the Duties and the whole Work of it; some, that a *temporary delegation* of Power unto any by the Church, is all the warranty is necessary for the undertaking and discharge of this Office. Many have been the contests about these things, occasioned by the ignorance and disorderly affections of some Persons. I shall briefly represent the Truth herein with the Grounds of it; and proceed to the consideration of the *call* it self, which is so necessary.

1. CHRIST himself in his own Person, and by his own Authority, was the Author of this Office. He gave it, appointed it, erected it in the Church, by virtue of his Sovereign Power and Authority, *Ephes. 4. 11, 12. 1 Cor. 12. 28.* As he gave, appointed, ordained an extraordinary Office of *Apostleship*; so he ordained, appointed and gave the ordinary Office of *Pastorship* or Teaching. They have both the same Divine Original.

2. HE appointed this Office for *continuance*, or to abide in the Church unto the consummation of all things, *Ephes. 4. 13. Matth. 28. 19.* And therefore he took order by his Apostles, that for the continuation of this Office, *Pastors, Elders* or *Bishops*, should be called and ordained unto the care and discharge of it in all Churches; which was done by them accordingly, *Act. 14. 22, 23. Chap. 20. 28. 1 Tim. 3. 1, 2. Tit. 1. 5.* Wherein



Wherein he gave Rule unto all Churches unto the end of the World, and prescribed them their Duty.

3. ON this Office, and the discharge of it, he hath laid the whole weight of the Order, Rule and Edification of his Church, in his Name and by virtue of his Authority, *Act. 20. 28. Col. 4. 17. 1 Tim. 3. 15. 1 Pet. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Rev. 2. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.* Hereon a double necessity of the continuation of this Office doth depend; *First*, that which ariseth from the precept or command of it, which made it necessary to the Church, on the account of the obedience which it owes to Christ; and *Secondly* of its being the principal ordinary means of all the ends of Christ in and towards his Church. Wherefore, although he can himself feed his Church in the Wilderness, where it is deprived of all outward instituted means of Edification; yet where this Office fails through its neglect, there is nothing but disorder, confusion and destruction, that will ensue thereon; no promise of Feeding or Edification.

4. THE Lord Christ hath given Commands unto the Church, for Obedience unto those who enjoy and exercise this Office among them. Now all these Commands are needless and superfluous, nor can any obedience be yielded unto the Lord Christ in their observance, unless there be a continuation of this Office. And the Church loseth as much in Grace and privilege, as it loseth in Commands. For in obedience unto the Commands of Christ, doth Grace in its exercise consist, *1 Tim. 5. 17. Heb. 13. 7, 17.*

5. THIS Office is accompanied with Power and Authority, which none can take or assume to themselves. All Power and Authority, whether in things Spiritual or Temporal, which is not either founded in the law of Nature, or collated by Divine Ordination, is Usurpation and Tyranny. No Man can of himself take either Sword. To invade an Office which includes Power and Authority over others, is to disturb all Right, Natural, Divine and Civil. That such an Authority is included in this Office, is evident, (1.) From the names ascribed unto them in whom it is vested; as *Pastors, Bishops, Elders, Rulers*, all of them requiring of it. (2.) From the Work prescribed unto



unto them, which is *feeding by Rule and Teaching*. (3.) From the execution of Church-Power in *Discipline*, or the exercise of the *Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven* committed unto them. (4.) From the Commands given for *Obedience* unto them which respect Authority. (5.) From their appointment to be the *means and instruments* of exerting the Authority of Christ in the Church, which can be done no other way.

6. CHRIST hath appointed a *standing Rule of the calling of Men* unto this Office, as we shall see immediately. But if Men may enter upon it, and discharge it, without any such *Call*, that Rule, with the way of the *Call* prescribed, are altogether in vain. And there can be no greater affront unto the Authority of Christ in his Church, than to act in it, in neglect of, or opposition unto the *Rule* that he hath appointed for the exercise of Power in it.

7. THERE is an *accountable Trust* committed unto those who undertake this Office. The whole Flock, the Ministry it self, the Truths of the Gospel as to the preservation of them all, are committed to them, Col. 4. 17. 1 Tim. 6. 20. 2 Tim. 2. 2, 16, 23. Act. 20. 28. 1 Pet. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Heb. 13. 17. *They who must give an account*. Nothing can be more wicked or foolish, than for a Man to *intrude himself into a Trust*, which is not committed unto him. They are branded as profligately wicked, who attempt any such thing among Men, which cannot be done without impudent falsification: And what shall he be esteemed who *intrudes himself* into the *highest Trust* that any Creature is capable off in the Name of Christ, and take upon him to give an *account* of its discharge at the last day, without any divine call or warranty?

8. THERE are unto the discharge of this Office *especial promises* granted and annexed of present Assistances, and future eternal Rewards, Matth. 28. 19. 1 Pet. 5. 4. Either these promises belong unto them who take this Office on themselves *without any Call*, or they do not. If they do not, then have they neither any *especial assistance* in their Work, nor can expect any *Reward* of their Labours. If it be said they have an interest in them, then the worst of Men may obtain the



benefit of *divine promises*, without any divine designation.

9. THE general force of the *Rule*, *Heb. 5. 4.* includes a prohibition of undertaking any *sacred Office* without a *divine Call*; and so the instances of such prohibitions under the Old Testament, as unto the Duties annexed unto an Office, as in the case of *Uzziah invading the Priesthood*, or of taking a Ministerial Office without Call or Mission, as *Jerem. 27. 9, 14, 15.* having respect unto the order of Gods Institutions, may be pleaded in this case.

10. WHOEVER therefore takes upon him the *Pastoral Office* without a lawful outward Call, doth take unto himself *Power and Authority* without any divine Warranty, which is a foundation of all disorder and confusion; interests himself in an *accountable Trust*, no way committed unto him; hath *no promise* of Assistance in, or Reward for his Work, but ingageth in that which is destructive of all Church-Order, and consequently of the very Being of the Church it self.

11. YET there are *three things* that are to be annexed unto this Assertion by way of *Limitation*: As, (1.) Many things performed by virtue of Office in a way of *Authority*, may be performed by others not called to Office, in a way of *Charity*. Such are the moral Duties of Exhorting, Admonishing, Comforting, Instructing and Praying with, and for one another. (2.) *Spiritual Gifts* may be exercised unto the Edification of others, without Office-Power, where order and opportunity do require it. But the constant exercise of *Spiritual Gifts in Preaching*, with a refusal of undertaking a Ministerial Office, or without design so to do upon a lawful Call, cannot be approved. (3.) The *Rules* proposed concern only ordinary cases, and the ordinary state of the Church; extraordinary cases are accompanied with a warranty in themselves for extraordinary Actings and Duties.

12. THE Call of Persons unto the *Pastoral Office* is an Act and Duty of the Church. It is not an Act of the *political Magistrate*, not of the *Pope*, not of any *single Prelate*, but of the whole Church, unto whom the Lord Christ hath committed the *Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*. And indeed, although there be  
great



great differences about the nature and manner of the Call of Men unto this *Office*, yet none who understand ought of these things, can deny, but that it is an *Act* and *Duty* of the Church; which the Church alone is impowered by Christ to put forth and exert. But this will more fully appear in the consideration of the nature and manner of this Call of Men unto the *Pastoral Office*, and the actings of the Church therein.

THE *Call of persons* unto the *Pastoral Office* in the Church consists of Two Parts. (1.) *Election*, (2.) *Ordination*, as it is commonly called, or sacred Separation by Fasting and Prayer. As unto the former, Four things must be enquired into. (1.) What is *previous* unto it or preparatory for it. (2.) *Wherein* it doth consist. (3.) Its *necessity*, or the demonstration of its Truth and Institution. (4.) What influence it hath into the *communication* of *Pastoral-Office-Power* unto a Pastor so chosen.

1. THAT which is *previous unto it*, is, the *Meetness* of the Person for his *Office* and *Work*, that is to be chosen. It can never be the Duty of the Church to call or choose an *unmeet*, an unqualified, an unprepared Person unto this *Office*. No pretended necessity, no outward motives can enable or warrant it so to do, nor can it by any *outward act*, whatever the Rule or Solemnity of it be, communicate *Ministerial Authority* unto Persons utterly unqualified for, and incapable of the discharge of the *Pastoral Office* according unto the Rule of the Scripture. And this hath been one great means of debasing the *Ministry*, and almost ruining the Church it self; either by the neglect of those who suppose themselves entrusted with the *whole power of Ordination*, or by Impositions on them by *Secular Power*, and *Patrons of Livings* as they are called, with the stated Regulation of their Proceedings herein, by a defective Law, whence there hath not been a due regard unto the antecedent preparatory Qualifications of those who are called unto the Ministry.

TWO ways is the *Meetness* of any one made known and to be judged of. (1.) By an *evidence* given of the *Qualifications* in him before-mentioned. The Church is not to call or choose any one to *Office* who is not *known* unto them; of whose frame of spirit, and walking, they have not had some experience;