



*A Defence of the Offices of Apostles; and
of the continuance thereof in the Church
till the end.*

FOr men to strain more at the Word Apostle, [as some do at the word Bishop] then at the work or Office signified thereby, is no other thing (as I conceive) then groundless humility, or hypocritical subtilty; seeing it is evident that those Titles are as lowly as any that can be given to suite with the matter, thereby intended.

The first signifying a *Messenger*, or one sent, the other an *Overseer*. Wherefore that I may avoid this humour, I will not fear to call old things by their old names, and therefore shall call the Officers of the Church by the same names which the wisdom of God hath given them, not to make them proud, but rather humbled, and to be as a *Memento* concerning the work, which by their Office they stand engaged to do.

Nor

Nor shall we need at this time to say much of the Officers of the Church generally, but only of the Office of Apostles, or messengers, & this because some of our Brethren do not only doubt (but endeavour to make others doubtful also, whether God hath given to his Church ANY Apostles or Messengers to succeed the Primitive Apostles, as a constant Ministry in the Church to the end of the World.

And albeit, we say that the Apostles have Successours (as well as Bishops, &c.) yet our meaning is not that there are any that succeed them in all respects; for there was in the Office of the chief Apostles, something ordinary and fixed, and something extraordinary and temporary, the latter was, first their immediate mission; * Secondly, they

learned their Doctrine either from the Sacred Lips of the Lord Christ, or by infallible Revelation, and were not taught it by man, as * Timothy and

* Math. 28. 19, 20.

Gal. 1. 1.

other their Successours * 2 Tim. 1. 13. were, *Hel. 2. — Great sal-*

vation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard him.

That which. — we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have look'd upon, and our hands

hands

hands have handled of the word of Life.— that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, 1 John 1.1,5. But I certifie you Brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me was not after man, for I neither received

* And yet it is true that Paul was taught the knowledge of some of the principles of Religion by Ananias.

Acts 9. 6, 17, 18.

Acts 22. 16.

it of man, * neither was I taught it but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Gal. 1. 11.

Thirdly, They were to lay a Foundation, and to propose a form of Doctrine for other Teachers to build on, and to keep as their pattern, and a Standard by which to trie others Doctrine and Spirits, 1 Cor. 3. 10. --- as a wise Master builder, I have laid the Foundation, and another buildeth thereon. He that is of God heareth us, he that is not of God heareth not us, hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and the Spirit of error, 1 John 4. 6.

* I. e. as a Concomitant; not as a part of their Office.

Fourthly, they were * Necessarily endowed with the gift of Tongues, Miracles, &c. to demonstrate

that they were sent of God, and that their Doctrine was from Heaven, Luke 24. 49.

--- But tarry ye in the City of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high, 2 Cor. 12. 12. Truly the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in Signs and Wonders, and mighty deeds.

deeds. In these and the like respects the Apostles have no successours, for if they have, then must their Words and Writings have the like force, and Authority, and then we should be still receiving new Oracles, and never know when the whole Council of God was made known to us.

Now the things which were ordinary and fixed, in the Apostolical Office were such as these, their Authority to preach the Gospel in all places, at all times, to all persons, as occasion and opportunity by Gods providence was given to them, Mark. 16. 15. *Preach the Gospel to every Creature*, Math. 28. 19, 20. *Teach all Nations*---and lo I am with you, always even to the end of the world; this work could not be tied only to the chief or Primitive Apostles, sith they were to leave the World by death Zech. 1. 5, 6. *The Fathers where are they, and the Prophets do they live for ever?* Acts 20. 29. *I know after my decease grievous Wolves shall enter in.*

Secondly, their unwearied diligence in Teaching both the Churches and Pastours in all the will of God, their care for the well-setting and governing the Churches, Acts 20. 31. *Therefore watch and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears,* 2 Cor. 11. 28.---; *but which cometh*

upon me daily, the care of all the Churches, 2 Pet 1. 12, 13, 14, 15.

I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things---yea, I think it meet as long as I am in this Tabernacle to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, moreover I will endeavour that you may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

The rest will I set in order when I come; and perfect that which is lacking concerning your Faith.

Tit. 1. 5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders in every City, as I had appointed thee.

3. Their being set for a defence of the Gospel against false Apostles, Phil. 1. 16, 17. the one preach Christ of Contention--supposing to add affliction to my bonds. The other of Love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel.

Fourthly, To strengthen the Hands of particular Pastours against Usurpers, and such as despise the Ministers of Christ, Acts 20. And from Meletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the Elders of the Church. And when they were come unto him, he said unto them---if your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things---Therefore watch, &c. 3 John 5. Beloved thou dost faithfully whatsoever thou dost to the Brethren, and to stran-

gers. -- I wrote to the Church, but Diotrephes who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them receiveth us not, wherefore if I come, I will remember his deeds as he doth, prating against us with malicious words, 1 Tim. I. 17. Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, Gal. 4. 17, 18. They zealously affect you, but not well: yea, they would exclude us, that you might affect them.

Now that the chief Apostles have some to succeed them in the Apostleship, as we have affirmed will appear first from the consideration of that Commission which our Lord gave for the Teaching of the Nations, or for the preaching the Gospel to every Creature.

Secondly, from the duration of those gifts in the Church which our Lord obtained and gave, by virtue of his Ascension.

Thirdly, from the consideration of the Primitive Churches, their having such Apostles or Messengers.

Fourthly, from the practice of those who most question the necessity of Messengers at this day.

Fifthly, from the state of the World, their necessity to be taught the truth as it is in Jesus. And in regard of the danger they lie under by means of false Apostles.

And

And first it is evident from *Math.* 28.19,20. and *Mark* 16 15. that it is the will of God that the Nations be taught, and that every Creature should have the Gospel preached un-

If the Church have not a Ministry of Messengers, then none are bound by virtue of Office to preach to the Nations.

to them, wherefore it remaineth that we stick to one thing out of three, and that is, either some body in special are bound to preach the Gospel to those that are without; or else that all Christians are equally bound to perform this work if capable in respect of gifts, or else that this work ended with the Apostles.

The last will not be said by any that considers, that the making one branch of that Commission, *Math.* 28. and *Mark* 16 void or not obliging or binding to the Church now, or any persons in it, is in effect to make the whole commission void, for if none have power by virtue of this Commission to teach the Nations, how can it be that any hath power from hence to baptize? both works being commanded as it were in one breath. Nor can the Church observe all things whatsoever Christ commanded his Apostles, if they be not to observe this great work, to preach the Gospel to the World.

Nei-

Neither can it rationally be said that this work belongs to every gifted Christian alike; because the imployment of the Gospel consists in divers Offices, and all such Members have not the same Office.

2. Again, meer gifts do not make men Officers (and that the Teaching, *Math. 28.* and the preaching, *Mark 16.* is a preaching not by virtue of gift only, but by Authority also cannot be denied) *1 Tim. 1. 18. This charge I commit to Son Timothy, 1 Tim. 6. 20. O Timothy keep that which is committed to thy trust, 2 Tim. 2. 2. and the same commit thou to faithful men, and let these also first be proved, and then let them use the Office of a Deacon being found blameless, 1 Tim. 3. 10.* Surely if this care must be had, that none use the Office of a Deacon, but upon such proof had of their fitness, it cannot be imagined that the greater matters of the Gospel should be taken in hand without the like care and circumspection.

3. They that would have this work of preaching to the World, no mans concern, by virtue of Office, whiles they speak against Messengers, do make more than any body else, otherwise we may well enquire how shall they preach except they be sent? *Rom. 10.* We conclude then, if those that preach must be sent; and if that commission, *Math. 28. Mark 16.*

be yet in force, then the Apostles have some to succeed them in their Office Apostolical.

Which is yet more evident by the consideration of those gifts which our Lord obtained and gave to his Church by virtue of his Ascension, Eph. 4. 11. *And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastours, and Teachers, for the perfecting the Saints for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Till we all come into the unity of the Faith, &c. See 1 Cor. 12. 28.* It were certainly a very dangerous thing to say that any of these gifts are taken away from the Church of God, albeit some of them are perhaps but rarely found, at least in that part of the World which do profess the name of Christ; especially Miracles, &c. which yet may not be said to be wholly absent from the Churches in these days, and in this Nation, of which I could say something, partly from such information as I know to be true, and partly from what I have heard and seen in that behalf. But as touching the gift of Offices here repeated, why any of them should be taken away from the Church, I see not any ground at all, they being so evidently fixed in the Church till the whole Church be compleated; and the use of these Offices respectively, as before we have defined, so needful, that the Church

Church would easily find the want of them if indeed they be taken from her as we shall see more anon. And although we said before that the gift of Miracles, Tongues, &c. was necessary to the Office of the chief Apostles, and yet was only temporary: and now say the gifts of Miracles may not be denyed to have a being or continuance in the Church. In this there is no contradiction; for, the making those gifts temporary (or but for a time) as they were necessary to the Office of those which first preached the Gospel, doth not at all conclude that they are wholly abnegated, or taken away from the Church. And when we say that these gifts were necessary to the Office of the chief Apostles, our meaning not that Miracles was a part of their office, but only a necessary concomitant thereto; so that though this concomitant should not be found, it is no prejudice to the Office considered as we have defined it.

We come now to enquire into the order of the Primitive Churches, who certainly had many Apostles beside those that were Foundation layers and Master-builders, such were *Andronicus* and *Junia*, Rom. 16. 7. who are said to be men of note among the Apostles (some conceive they were of the seventy Apostles) then they were, for it were a strange interpretation to say they were noted by the Apostles; it being to wrest the words of *Paul* from their

native signification which clearly gives *Andronicus* and *Junia*, a place among the *Apostles*; not among the chief Apostles, but those that were called the Messengers of the Churches, and the glory of Christ, as such we read of 2 Cor. 8.23. And such in all probability were those, 3 Ep. *John*, who are said to go forth for the names sake of Christ taking nothing of the Gentiles, whom *Gaius* is commended for courteously entertaining, and *Diotrephes* for rejecting. Had not these brethren been sent to preach. I see not how *John* should reprove them that received them not, or stir up *Gaius* to bring them on their journey. **WHETHERSOEVER** they would go, but *John's* care of them, and his holding them in reputation, and defending them against opposers of their Ministry, and therewithal their forsaking all for the name of Christ, and their freely preaching to the Gentiles that they might be saved, shews that they were the Messengers of the Lord, and of his Churches, otherwise if they ran before they were sent, they could not manage the great affairs of the Gospel among the Gentiles. And though it is true, *John* calls them Brethren only, yet this doth not argue that they were not in Ministerial capacity, for we find the same phrase used by *Paul*, concerning those who were Messengers of the Churches, 2 Cor. 8.22. --- Or if the Brethren be enquired of, they are the Messengers of the Churches,

ches, and the glory of Christ. To say that those Brethren were messengers, only as they were sent to carry the contribution from the *Gentile Churches*, to the Church at *Jerusalem* (as some would have it) is a very cold exposition; for first, it cannot be proved that they were employed in that business; but secondly, if they were, how should they for this service only be called *the glory of Christ*. Surely this character must needs refer to their being intrusted with better treasure than Silver and Gold, sith either Brethren or Sisters of very ordinary capacity (if faithful) might have been sent with earthly treasure. Again, *Epaphroditus* is not only called the *messenger of the Church at Philippi*, but also *Paul's companion in labour*, and his fellow soldier, which shews, that though he might bring the Churches bounty to *Paul*, yet this did not confer upon him the Title of *Apostle* or *Messenger*; sith he had a greater employment than that, namely to labour in the work of the Gospel, and to war in that holy warfare even as a *companion of Paul himself*, and therefore worthily might he be called a messenger of the Church of God.

Of this sort of the Ministers of the Gospel was *Barnabas*, *Luke*, *Marke*, *Silas*, *Sylvanus*, *Titchicus*, *Trophimus* and *Apollos*, as appears from their being frequently fellow Travellers and

Labourers in the Gospel with the Apostles, concerning whom I argue thus. *These persons were Ministers of the Gospel. But they were not intrusted with the care of particular Churches, therefore their Office was general, and by consequence travelling Ministers or messengers of the Gospel.*

The major is true, otherwise they ran before they were sent; and then how could they preach? *Rom. 10.* or be *Paul's* fellow-souldiers and fellow Labourers? The minor is out of doubt, because of their unfixedness in respect of place, as before we have said; and beside, some of them are expressly called the Apostles of Christ, *1 Thes. 1. 1.* where *Silvanus* is joyned with *Paul* as speaking to the *Thessalonians*, and so throughout that Epistle, and chap. 2. 6. it is thus said, *nor of men sought we glory. We. What we? Paul and Silvanus, when we might have been burthen-some. How might Paul and Silvanus have been burthen-some? why as the Apostles of Christ, for such they were, otherwise they might not have been burthen-some as such.*

Timotheus and *Titus* are evidently Ministers of the same rank, as appears partly from the Scripture even now alleadged; where, as *Paul* and *Silvanus*, so also *Timotheus*, is expressly called an Apostle of Christ. And partly from those Epistles which *Paul* wrote to them respectively, *1 Tim. 1. As I besought thee to abide still at Eph-*

phesus, when I went into Macedoian---that thou might warn some that they teach no other Doctrine, so do. Had *Timothies* charge been only at *Ephesus* as Pastour only of that Church, there had been no need to beseech him to abide there; it being not unknown to him that it was by all means requisite for such Pastors to reside near their respective flocks, and not to go to foreign Countreys, to mannage the Affairs of other Churches. But evident it is, that *Timothy* was not fixed in any particular Church, but was Pauls fellow-traveller among the Churches in divers Countreys, and frequently sent by him to sundry places, from the time that he was called by the Apostle to go forth with him, till *Paul* sent for the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, which was not long before he was taken prisoner, for all which see. *Act. 16.1.2,3, 4. and 17.25. &c 18,5. the 19.22. the 2. 4. to 18.*

And though in a certain *Post-script* added to *2 Tim.* it is said, that *Timothy* was ordained the first Bishop of the Church at *Ephesus*, yet this cannot be true, seeing the Church of *Ephesus* had Bishops, *Acts 20. 18.* even whiles *Paul* and *Timothy* were companions in preaching the Gospel in divers Countreys. Nor are the ancients positive in this matter, for I find *Eusebius* only saying that it is reported that *Timothy* was the first Bishop of *Ephesus*, and *Titus* of *Cree*; but he

affirms nothing in this matter. But that *Tim-*
otheus his care was for other Churches, as much
 as for that at *Ephesus* is evident *Philir. 2. 19, 20.*
But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus
unto you---for I have no man like minded, who
will naturally care for your state--- But ye know the
 proof of him that as a Son with the Father he hath
 served with me in the Gospel.

OF *Titus* the same consideration may be had,
 seeing he was left in *Creet* to set in order the
 things which were wanting, and to ordain Elders
 in *EVERY Church*, plainly shewing that his
 power in the Affairs of the Gospel, and, his
 care for the Churches was the same for every
 Church, that it was for any one; which is a far
 different charge from that which was given to
 the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, *Acts 20.*
 for they are not bid to look to all the Churches
 in *Asia*, but only to the flock (in the singular
 number) over which the *Holy Ghost* had made
 them *Episcops, Overseers* or *Bishops*, nor was *Ti-*
tus, his care, for the Churches in *Creet* only; for
Paul calls him his partner & fellow helper con-
 cerning the Church at *Corinth*, *2 Cor. 8. 23.* whe-
 ther any do enquire of *Titus* he is my partner, and
 fellow helper concerning you.

Of the same import is that place, *Gal. 1. 18,*
19. I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter---but other
of the Apostles saw I none save James the Lords

bro-

brother : here *James* the Lords brother is called an Apostle, he was not one of the 12. for that *James* is called the Son of *Alpheus*, Math. 10. 3. of this mind is *Eusebius*.

But *Jerom* would sometimes make these two one self-same man, and yet otherwhiles doth call him *Decimum tertium Apostolum*, that is, the thirteenth Apostle; but that *James* the Lords brother was not one of the 12. is evident 1 Cor. 15. 5. to 8. where it is said that our Lord appeared first to *Cephas*, then to the 12. after that he was seen of *James* then of ALL the Apostles. Two things are hence to be noted. 1. That *James* is distinguished from the 12. and so are those persons signified by ALL the Apostles; for it cannot be that by all the Apostles should be meant the chief Apostles, for they were mentioned before, and *Paul* himself who was an Apostle of the same dignity, is mentioned afterwards, but by ALL the Apostles, is most like to be meant the 70. Disciples whom our Lord sent out as messengers to preach the Gospel in every City whither himself would go, and who no doubt became famous Ministers of the Gospel after the Ascension of our Lord, and with this *Eusebius* doth seem to agree; we see then, partly from evident Texts of Scripture, and partly from rational probabilities, that the Primitive Church

Churches were endued with a Ministry of many messengers or Apostles beside those who were the Foundation layers and Master-builders in the Church of Christ; And hence we infer that God hath ordained such a ministry to continue in his Church till the body of our Lord be perfected.

4. *From the practice of those brethren who most question the being of messengers, as a ministry in the Church at this day. It will appear that such an Office doth remain.*

For, do they not frequently send out men to act Authoritatively both in preaching the Gospel to them that are without? in setting things in order in remote Congregations? to exercise Discipline by Excommunication of offenders? and remitting the penitent? by ordaining them Elders, and dispensing to them the holy Ordinances? &c. As these things cannot be denied, so we may justly enquire how it comes to pass that they do thus? if indeed the Church hath none to act in the capacity of Apostles, or messengers of the Gospel, at least as we have defined them, seeing it cannot be proved, (neither I think do our Brethren affirm) that Elders of the Churches have equal power in other Congregations, as in that which they are chosen to serve; neither is it in the power of any Congregation to take the

Pastour

Pastour of any Church from them; neither
 may any Church impose their Pastour upon
 another Church, wherefore unless there be a
 ministry remaining in the Church which is re-
 lated to all Congregations indifferently, we
 may perceive what confusion is like to ensue.
 Moreover if those who go to preach to the
 World cannot justifie their calling, how shall
 they comfort themselves in their undertaking,
 or answer opposers when questioned concer-
 ning their Commission? especially in such
 places where the Scriptures are received, sith
 all that have read them may easily perceive,
 that as the Gospel is to be preached, so those
 which go forth as Ministers thereof, must be
 sent either by immediate mission from Hea-
 ven (which our brethren pretend not to) or
 some mediate mission from the Church of
 God, which none can pretend to, that deny the
 Office of messengers sith other Officers are not
 by vertue of their Office to go out into the
 World to teach the Nations, or to preach the
 Gospel to every creature. If to that which we
 have said it should be replied, *That Churches*
which are distant one from another may by consent
let the Elders of one Church act as Elders in ano-
ther, &c. this is sooner said than proved, for
 seeng Officers have their Commission at what time
 they are ordained, it cannot be that they should
 have

have their power (*de jure*) made either less or greater by the consent or non-consent of any person or persons whatsoever.

Again, It would be understood *how long the power our brethren gives to men to act as Elders in those Congregations doth remain?* Whether they thenceforth stand equally engaged to Oversee those Churches, as the Church that first called them to serve as Pastors? And also *how many several Congregations they may act in as Pastours by consent?* Whether two only, or ten only, or an hundred, and so *ad infinitum*. Surely if once they give particular Pastours, power to act as Elders in more Congregations then they were at the time of their Ordination, appointed to Oversee; they can never bound their power; and then what messenger of the Church did ever exceed them in that respect. And further, if our brethren can give their particular Pastours power to act as Pastours in many Churches *for a month or half a year*, then why not *a year 2. or 3.* and so for the term of life, the occasions still being the same? And how much comes this short of the power committed to any messenger in the World at this day? Wherefore seeing that our brethren do exercise as great Authority in sending men to preach to the World, and to settle their Churches as we do, it is strange they should dislike

our

our calling those Offices by such names as the Scripture gives them, rather than by such names as are exclusive of that Authority, which is exercised either by those who go out to preach the Gospel to every creature, or those that take the care of all the Churches. True it is, that *Peter* calls himself an *Elder*, and that he was *Elder* in one Church as well as in another, but this was because he had an Office which was comprehensive of all Offices in the Church, and hence it is that we find the Apostles sometimes performing the Office of *Deacons*, when it might be done without lett to the preaching of the Word, but though it be true that the *Acts 6. 2.* greater contains the less, yet *Gal. 2. 9, 10.* the less doth not contain the greater; for it cannot be denied, that the Office of a particular *Elder* of a *Congregation*, only, and a charge to *Teach all Nations*, are things inconsistent to one and the same person.

What may or ought to be done in preaching the Gospel by persons gifted in the Church, as a general privilege or duty, it is not my business here to discourse, but only to shew what it is which necessarily is to be done by vertue of those Offices which God hath ordained in his Church, otherwise it were easie to shew that God hath not only provided a *Liberty* in his Church for the

the *modest exercise of the gifts of his Spirit*, in the way of *Prophecie, Exhortation, &c.* That the body may be edified. But also when by his providence any of the *members of the body* are exposed to *remote places*, or otherwise called to *testifie their Faith*, they may lawfully *Evangelize* or preach the Gospel, as is evident both from the holy Scriptures, *Act. 8.4, 5.* And other very ancient Authors. See *Socrates Scholasticus*, l. 1. the 15. 16. Chapters.

5. The necessity of messengers or Apostles (in the sense we have defined) is yet more evident from the state of the world, in respect of their continual need to be taught the Gospel in the ancient purity thereof; and the rather because of that great danger they lie under, by reason of the many *deceivers or false Apostles*, which are gone out into the world, who corrupt the word by mingling therewith their own Traditions.

The world is the Lords Harvest, into which he is pleased to send his Labourers, and the Church is commanded to pray that the Lord of the Harvest would send forth painful Labourers into his Harvest, *Luke. 10. 1, 2.* It will not be denied that these labourers are (at least chiefly) some that are in a ministerial capacity to preach the Gospel. And they cannot so well be understood of any particular function in the ministry, as that of messengers, partly for that
the

the other Officers in the ministry are bound to particular congregations, as we have shewed before, and partly for that our Saviour gives this direction to the Church, upon the occasion of his sending forth messengers to preach the Gospel. If then it be the duty of the Church at this day, to pray to the Lord that he would send forth painful Labourers to preach to the world (as sure none can deny that) there is not any room left to doubt of the continuance of such an Office, as that of messengers of the Gospel, for that very clause touching their being sent forth, and that as Lambs in the midst of Wolves, doth sufficiently instruct us what Labourers these are. A necessity therefore lieth upon the Church of God to dispose of her Members to that needful work, as the Lord vouchsafes to fit them for; least otherwise she be like those who make many prayers for that which they never intend to do.

It is certain the Church hath no power to cause the world to come to her Assemblies, nor is it like that the world will send to the Church of God for instruction. It remaineth therefore, seeing the Gospel is for the illumination of all, that as God hath wont to send forth his Ambassadors to beseech the world in Christs stead to be reconciled to God even so, one fruit of the Ascension of our Lord (at this day) is a
gift

gift even for the Rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them, *Psal.* 68 18. which being compared with *Ephes.* 4. may very well be interpreted of a gifted ministry to turn Rebellious sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. To which agrees that place, *John* 16.8. where our Lord doth assure his Disciples, that when he should send the Holy Ghost, he should convince the world of sin, of Righteousness and judgment, and this (no doubt) as he should operate or work upon men by the ministry of the word, which promise either ended with that age (which is absurd to think) or else if it remain to these days, then it supposes a ministry to hold forth to the world the everlasting Gospel for the obedience of faith, I mean such a ministry as are bound even by virtue of their calling, as debtors to the wise and unwise, to preach the Gospel to those that are without.

There is no doubt but *Satan* hath his *Apostles*, *Ministers* or *messengers* in the world, as well as in times past. *2 Cor.* 11. 13, 21. It were strange now if our *Lord Christ* should have none to withstand these, if need be with an *are they Apostles?* so am I, as well as with an *are they Ministers of Christ?* so am I. Nor doth the Apostle hear disallow the Appellation of *Apostles* or *Mini-*

Ministers of Christ to others beside himself and the rest of the chief Apostles : But that which he doth disallow, is, that men should be called either the one or the other, when their works declared that they were false Apostles, and such as only transformed themselves as the Ministers of Righteousness. But had it been unlawful for any to be called Apostles beside the Foundation-layers, Paul had a very easie way to confute these deceivers even by telling them that their professing themselves Apostles was proof sufficient that they were deceivers; yet he never makes that an Argument at all, but goes about to vindicate his Apostleship as being nothing inferiour to those Transformed-Apostles, sith he was not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles. The same consideration may be had of that place, Rev. 2.2. Then hast tryed them which say they are Apostles and are not, and hast found them Lyars : For had there been no more Apostles but the chief Apostles, there had been no need to try whether these were Apostles of Christ or not, for still their very saying they were such, had, without more ado proved them Lyars, and like as if any should arise and say I am Christ the Saviour of the world, his very saying so were the greatest evidence that the same is a deceiver. But why

M

so?

So? verily because there is only one *Lord Jesus* our Saviour, whom the *Heavens* must retain till the times of the restitution of all things; even so, if there were not a succession of *Apostles*, it were one of the easiest things in the World to discover a false *Apstle*.

Finally, The Gospel must be preached in all the World for a witness to all people, and then shall the end come, *Meth. 24.14.* which supposes the being of a ministry, whose work it is to preach *To all Nations*, even to the end of the world, *Rev. 14.6.* The *Angel* [*a definite for an indefinite number*] messenger or *Messengers* must preach the everlasting Gospel immediately before great *Babylon* fall. It followeth then, that though darkness hath much prevailed since the first publication of the Gospel, yet a ministry shall go forth, even the messengers of the Gospel by whom the earth shall be enlightened.

And here let it be noted that the preacher (or preachers) of the everlasting Gospel, hath not a Gospel to confirm with Signs and Wonders, but a Gospel to preach to every Nation, Kindred, Tongue, and People, even the same that was preached by our Lord, and confirmed to us by them that heard him.

The sum of that which we have said is this; That as God hath given to his Church a fixed
Mini-

Ministry of *Bishops, Elders, Pastors, &c.* to take the care of particular Congregations so he hath given her a travelling ministry, or unfixed, in respect of particular Societies or Congregations, to whom it appertains by virtue of their Office to take all occasions to cause the *Light of the glorious Gospel to shine unto such as sit in darkness* to plant Churches, to confirm and settle them in the Faith and Order of the Gospel. To visit and comfort those which have believed through grace.

Go ye, preach the Gospel to every creature. Jesus Christ who was preached among you by *US*, even by me, and Silvanus, and Timotheus. Thanks be to God which maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by *US* in every place.

Mark 16. 16.

2 Cor. 1. 19.

Silvanus, and Ti-

2 Cor. 2. 14.

And when they had preached the Gospel to that City, and taught many, they returned again to *Lisra*, and to *Iconium*, and *Antioch* confirming the souls of the Disciples: For this cause have I sent un-

Acts 14. 21, 22.

into you *Timotheus*, who is my beloved Son and faithful

1 Cor. 4. 17.

in the Lord, who shall bring you in remembrance

Aa, 14. 36.

of my wayes which be in
 Christ, as I teach every where
 in every Church, let us go a-
 gain and visit our brethren in every City where
 we have preached the Word, and see how they do.

Mich. 28. 20.

And Lo I am with you
 alwayes, even to the End
 of the World.

When we say the messengers of the Gospel
 are *unfixed ministers*. Our meaning is not
 thereby to deny, but that for the more con-
 venient managment of the great Affairs of
 the Gospel, they may divide themselves into
 divers parts, and so may be called the *messen-
 gers of such Countries, as with whom they most
 frequently converse of the Gospel of Christ, Gal. 2.
 9. when James, Cephas, and John perceived the
 grace which was given to me and Barnabas, they
 gave unto me and Barnabas the right hand of fel-
 lowship that we should go to the Heathen, and they
 to the Circumcision. In Asia we read of seven
 * messengers, and these re-*

* See the Old
 Transl.

lated to seven Churches in
 seven principal Cities in that
 Country. yet it may not be
 doubted but there were many Congregations
 and scattered Disciples in Country Villages, and
 so, many Elders also: yea, and that in those ve-
 ry

ry Churches which are particularly nam'd, for in the Church of *Ephesus* (which is the first of the seven) we find divers *Bishops* or *Elders* before *John* wrote from *Pamos*, *Acts* 20. 17, 28.

It is true, the *Ancients* call these seven Angels or messengers, *Bishops* or chief *Ministers*. But then we know by *Bishops* they commonly mean such as had the charge of many particular Congregations. Thus they make *Timothy* a Bishop, yet confess him to be a preacher of the Gospel from *Ephesus* unto *Illyricum*, and throughout *Hellas* in *Achaia*. *Titus* they make Bishop of *Creet*, yet such an one as preached the Gospel in all that Country. They also make *Silvanus* Bishop of *Thessalonica*, but the Scripture as we have seen calls him an *Apostle*, as well as the rest. Now whether it be more safe to call those travelling Ministers of Christ *Bishops*, after the manner of men; or *Apostles*, after the manner of the Scripture, is the business for the sober and unprejudiced Reader to consider.

