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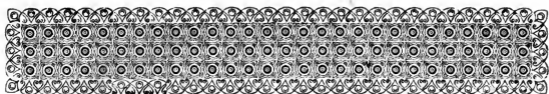
E N T I T L E D,

An Enquiry into the CONSTITUTION, DISCIPLINE, UNITY, and WORSHIP, of the *Primitive Church*, that flourished within the first Three Hundred Years after CHRIST.

By a Presbyter of the Church of *England*.

*London*: Printed for *Geo. Strahan*, at the *Golden Ball* against the *Royal Exchange*, and *J. Bowyer* at the *Rose* in *Ludgate-street*, 1717.

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## THE PREFACE.

THE following sheets will need the less apology for them, since all, who call themselves Christians, are so nearly interested in the subject of them; and the ‘particular Author’ of that learned tract they more immediately refer to, will find them little more than a friendly compliance with a modest request of his own. His collections from the venerable records of the primitive Church, entituled, “An Enquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity, and Worship of it,” were many years since made public, as I am now assured, though my little acquaintance with the modern business of the press made me a stranger to it, till some considerable time after the second

edition came abroad. In his preface to them (calculated, I presume, for the first impression) he shews an humble diffidence of his youthful performance; and desires another sense might be given of his several quotations, if need required, for better information of himself and others. I confess I saw need enough of that, at my first perusal of his book, and not a little wondered that no friendly hand had done that kindness for him long before. As to my own part, I had never walked in the unpleasant paths of controversy to that day; and, besides the consciousness of my unfitness for it, had aversion enough ever to set a foot in them; but seeing none had answered, or was answering, as I could hear of, so reasonable a desire, though men of letters in both kingdoms of our united island, had declared an earnest expectation of it, and the holy Church of England in particular has reproached the silence of her children in an argument that so plainly struck at her foundation; filial obedience, I may say, to so 'faithful' a parent, moved me to use the best endeavours I could, to vindicate her 'truly Apostolical' constitution, and to plead the cause



of 'injured antiquity,' as well as hers; for that 'both' are truly 'one,' in this case, the impartial reader will easily observe, when he sees the palpable mistakes corrected, and the unfair representations of the venerable Fathers of the Church (so obvious in almost every page of those plausible collections) restored to their genuine sense again.

This is what may be expected here: and I am not conscious I have strained any one passage in antiquity, beyond the true meaning of the venerable Authors themselves, to form a different construction of it from that of the ingenious Enquirer. I should count it the worst of sacrilege to do so; the 'goods' of the Church are not so sacred as 'her sense' is. What each quotation appeared to me, from the best authority, and closest attention I could use, I have fairly represented here; if defective in apprehending the true sense, or injudicious in the inferences from them, I heartily submit, in my turn, to the charity of better information. For as I write with a conscientious regard to undeceive some, so I am infinitely more concerned not to be deceived my-

self; and I wish no greater freedom, from prejudice or party, in any who read or censure these papers, than I am conscious of in the composing of them.

Every one too well knows, of what a large and extensive nature this unhappy subject is, and that the controversial books about it are sadly numerous, and full of different schemes and arguments, according to the genius of sects, and times, and persons; many of which might have fallen in with several parts of this discourse, had I been inclined to 'dispute,' as I bless God I am not, but I have kept close to the single treatise before me, and that for two reasons especially.

First, Because I heard from many hands, that the less learned, and more prejudiced, adversaries of the 'truly primitive Church of England,' have made their boasts of it, and from its not being answered yet, have proclaimed it an 'unanswerable' vindication of their separation from her.

Secondly, Because I think, that all the scattered arguments and pleas, for their 'unwarrantable' schism, are reducible to some one or

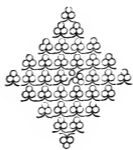
other of the great variety of quotations cited in it. For a good part of those mistaken brethren, we know, with great zeal plead, the authority of Holy Scriptures to be clear on their side, and 'these' sit down contentedly, and triumph in their own comments, and constructions of those holy oracles; others pay some deference also to venerable antiquity; and these two great witnesses seem to be agreed upon by 'all,' not only to give in their evidence, but even to be umpires for them, to determine all the fundamental points in difference between them. The reader will find the testimony both of one and the other fairly summed up here; and I only pray he may bring a prepared mind with him, to sit down by the peaceful 'award,' which those authentic arbitrators make for the blessed union of all Christians, in one and the same holy Catholic Church together; which individual Church of Christ, they visibly enough distinguish for us all, from every counterfeit image of it, by the truly primitive, single, and Apostolical constitution of it. And as for those who regard little, either one or the other, of these two great authorities, but overrule all 'outward'

testimony, of God or man, by an 'inward' witness of their own (subject to no trial of the Holy Scriptures themselves, and impatient to hear of a visible Church, and the teachings of men), I dispute not with them; they supersede all that trouble for me. I only recommend them to the divine compassion for their better instruction, with affectionate grief and prayer for them.

To the reader I have this only to observe further, that since these papers were nigh wrought off the press, an ingenious treatise came to my hands, entitled, "The Invalidity of the Dissenting Ministry, &c." wherein some particular quotations in the Enquiry, relating to the 'presbyter's power of ordination,' are judiciously explained, and with clear reasoning answered to the full; which might have shortened my work, and the Author's trouble in that single point, had I been so fortunate as to have known it in time. However, it is but one link of the chain of mistakes in that whole performance (to use that learned Author's phrase) which fell under his consideration; and therefore less offence will be taken, I hope, if something like

it, though in a more imperfect manner, should be met with here again.

I must add for the ingenious Enquirer's satisfaction too, that I have all along been mindful of his strict charge not to wander out of the straight bounds he set me, of the three first centuries of the Church; I think he will have little reason to complain of that. But as to the particular editions of the several authors he quotes, I cannot say I have been so happy as to have it in my power to make use of none but them, though I gladly would have done it, in answer to so reasonable a desire; but choice of impressions has not always fallen in my way. To make the best amends I could, I think I have seldom failed to mention the edition I use, which I hope will be accepted, where I could do no more.





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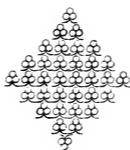
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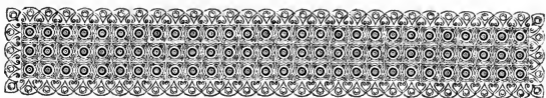
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AN ORIGINAL DRAUGHT OF THE  
PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

**I**T is a melancholy thing to see, that after so long a settlement of the Christian Church in the world, and that by the greatest evidence and demonstration of divine wisdom and power, that ever any work of God was wrought amongst men, still the constitution of this Church should want enquiring after—that this city of God, set on purpose, by the divine Founder of it, on a holy and conspicuous hill, to the end that every simple one who passeth by might readily see it, and comfortably enter in to be saved, should be hid from multitudes, even of serious enquirers after it, in these later times. I have little inclination to examine, what occasion has been given, in the last or present age, for such a wild variety of opinions about it, as has filled the minds of too many men with dangerous amusements only, and afforded little or no comfortable and solid assurance of the thing; for this, I fear, would

*which  
has been  
by Christ*

rather aggravate, than heal; and might teach our enemies to reproach us, instead of instructing mistaken friends. But wheresoever the blame of all must lie, in respect of men, I am sure it is a sorrowful instance to us all, of the too successful wiles of that noted adversary in the Oracles of Truth, who, throughout every age, has counterfeited the works of God that he might deceive the children of men; and because he can never extinguish the light of truth, has either raised mists to make it shine dim, or formed meteors of his own that might be mistaken for it. Things are come to such a height and warmth amongst us now, that nothing less, I fear, than the interposing hand of Heaven, in a more than ordinary way, will ever undeceive the multitudes of prejudiced brethren in the nearer and remoter parts of Christendom, and so entirely repair the breaches of this Holy city of God, as to make it what it ought to be, in perfect unity within itself.

Yet, when I meet with any promising appearance of a virtuous design to clear up all these difficulties for us, and help us to a better understanding with one another, the subject affects me; and I cannot but have some secret inclination to look into the management of it; not so much to satisfy myself in the knowledge of a true church, which I bless God I have long been satisfied in, as that I cannot be wholly unconcerned for others; and would gladly see why and how we came to differ in so great and plain a matter, who so generally agree in other fundamentals of the christian truth.



This is the main motive which induced me to look into the treatise before me: the title-page alone offering me a subject which I had a veneration for; and the short preface fairly intimating to me, that the learned author had a proper sense of the weightiness of the argument he undertook, and as fairly promised a suitable integrity in the performance of it: how far these encouraging hints and solemn promises are made good in the work itself, I shall leave to be determined by the reader, when I have particularly considered the several parts of this elaborate enquiry, which I now propose to do, in order as they lie.

## CHAPTER I.

**T**O begin with his first chapter then ; wherein his main business is to examine the primitive notion of the word Church ; upon a due apprehension whereof, he truly and ingenuously tells us, that a right understanding of a great part of his discourse does depend. Nothing can be more proper and material therefore in the whole enquiry before us, than to settle this first ; wherein, if we can happily agree, the whole work will considerably be shortened to our hands, and we shall make a great advance at once towards a friendly accommodation in several ensuing particulars, which have so near a relation to this.

He mentions many notions of a church in those early times, but fixes upon one only as “the usual and common acceptation of the word,” and which, he says (p. 7. sect. 2.) “he chiefly treats of ;” and, therefore, since I mean to differ or dispute as little as I can, I shall pass over most of the other less material notions of it, at present, how little soever I can consent to some particulars in them, and apply myself to

consider that main and principal one, which is indeed the great hinge upon which most of his other speculations turn.

“The word church,” says he, (p. 3. sect. 2,) “is frequently to be understood of a particular church, *i. e.* of a company of believers, who at one time, in one and the same place, did associate themselves together, and concur in the participation of all the institutions and ordinances of Jesus Christ, with their proper pastors and ministers:” and, “in this sense,” says he, “we must understand the church of Rome, the church of Smyrna, the church of Antioch, the church of Athens, the church of Alexandria, or the church in any other such place whatsoever, when we meet them in the earliest writers of the christian church.”

This is then his positive definition of a primitive particular church: and to represent all fairly, let us hear his instances or authorities for it from the venerable Fathers themselves. He begins with Irenæus; for “thus,” says he, that is, in the sense which I have given you of a primitive church, Irenæus mentions that church which is *in any place* (*ea. quæ est in quoque loco ecclesia*, or rather, *in quoquo loco*, as I find it in Irenæus.<sup>a</sup>)” Now this, I must confess, is a very dark authority to me, to prove what kind

<sup>a</sup> Iren. 1. 2. c. 56. [cap. xxxii. Benedict. Venet. 1734. Græca hæc Irenæi verba conservavit nobis Euseb. H. E. v. 7. ex quo ea etiam allegavit Niceph. H. E. iv. 13. Τοσοῦτον δὲ ἀποδέουσι τὸν νεκρὸν ἐγείρει, καθὼς ὁ Κύριος ἤγειρε, καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι διὰ προσευχῆς, καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀδελφότητι πολλακίς διὰ τὸ ἀναγκάιον, τῆς κατὰ τόπον ἐκκλησίας πάσης αἰτησαμένης μετὰ νηστείας καὶ λιτανείας πολλῆς, ἐπέστρεψε τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ τετελευτηκότος, καὶ ἐχαρίσθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος ταῖς εὐχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων.]

of church that holy Father meant by it. If there be any consequence in it, to the purpose it is here brought for, it must needs lie in these two plain words, *quoquo loco*, 'in any place;' and from them, as far as I am able to imagine, it can no otherwise be inferred than one of these two ways; either first, That there was no other particular church at that time to be *in any place* whatsoever, but just such a one as this learned author here quotes this place to prove for him, which would be such a singular fallacy in reasoning, if he should apply it in that sense, as I cannot suppose our ingenious enquirer can be guilty of: or else, secondly, it must be, that the word *place* has such a scanty notion necessarily tied to it, that it would have been no sense in that learned Father to have meant a larger circuit by it, than that of an ordinary Meeting-House in our modern phrase: for if *place* be such an affection of bodies as conforms itself to every dimension of the thing that is applied to it, as I think both naturalists and logicians will warrant us to say, then to be said to be *in any place*, unless the particular measure of that place were expressed too, adds nothing in the least to prove of what extent that thing is. So that Irenæus's church *in any place*, was such a sort of church, to be sure, as they then understood a christian church to be; but whether parochial, diocesan, provincial, or any other kind whatsoever, as to the extent or circuit of it, is not one jot the clearer to me, by his calling it a Church *in any place*, though our more discerning enquirer, it seems, saw his own scheme so visibly lie in it.

His second instance of such a primitive church, as he has defined for us, is taken from an expression of Dionysius Alexandrinus, when he was banished to Cephro in Lybia. I will give it in his own translation; "There came so many Christians to him," says he, "that even there he had a church<sup>b</sup>." Here was a christian Church, it seems, and that in a straight place of banishment too; though had it been translated a 'christian assembly' only, I am sure no wrong had been done to the original word; but I shall not insist on that. It is concluded, by applying it in this place, that it needs must be such a church as could meet together for religious worship in one place only, and no otherwise. I confess it may be so; and that will prove but little, that this ancient Father had no other notion of a particular christian church, than such a one as this; or, even that he meant it so, in this very quotation itself; for, by looking a little farther on in this continued relation of his, I think it will evidently appear, that he makes 'his own particular church' a quite different thing from it. This I shall consider by and by; only let me first leave one short remark or two upon this little church at Cephro.

Dionysius himself calls it, in our author's own quotation, *πολλὴ ἐκκλησία*, that is, in true English, I think, a pretty 'numerous church' at least: Valesius, in his translation, calls it, *magna multitudo fidelium*, 'a great multitude of believers.' Dionysius farther says, it consisted of

<sup>b</sup> Dionys. Alex. apud Euseb. l. 7. c. 11. p. 259. [vol. 2. p. 485. ed. Burton.] Πολλὴ συνεπιδήμησεν [ἡμῖν] Ἐκκλησία.

a threefold concourse of christians; first, of all the brethren that came from Alexandria to him; secondly, of others that came out of Egypt thither; and, thirdly, which I think is worth considering, he tells us, that before he left the place, οὐκ ὀλίγοι τῶν ἐθνῶν, not a few of the heathens left their idols, and came over to *his church*. Not a few, indeed, we have reason to believe, since the humble confessor himself ventures to speak, as the holy apostle did upon the like occasion, that God had opened a door to him there, to propagate the gospel amongst them, and he thought he had sent him thither for that very purpose to convert them. All this amounts not, I own, to an unquestionable *certainty* of more than a single congregation at Cephro, and I have no occasion to desire it should; but I think it bids so fair for it, that it looks like little choice of authorities in the case, when we search for such a one as this, to prove that a particular church in that age consisted of no more.

But the truth is, and I desire it may be noted all along in this discourse, that the point in question does not lie here; whether there was a church in that place, or indeed in any other, that *de facto* had but one congregation to denominate it so; for who doubts but at the first conversion of the heathen world, the number of believers, in some particular places, might not for some time amount to more than that; and records of many particular churches afterwards might be wanting (as our learned enquirer argues upon a like occasion in the 148th page of this treatise) to set forth the entire state

and condition of such primitive Churches to us? But the true question is, whether if more congregations than one had been actually gathered or converted in any place whatsoever, and exercised their offices of divine worship in distinct and separate places from one another, so that their first, proper, and chief pastor could not be able personally to attend the service of them all; whether the property, I say, must in such case be altered, and they could no longer be one church, or be subject to one and the same supreme ecclesiastical governor, call him what we please, but must of necessity be formed then into more particular independent churches, and a supreme pastor, unaccountable to the other, or to any one else, must have presided over each of them, and denominated them as many particular churches, as there were single assemblies that met together to celebrate the ordinances of the christian Church. This, I humbly conceive, our learned enquirer should have proved from this, or any other authorities he produces hereafter in defence of his own opinion, if he meant effectually to support his fundamental scheme by them. And since it nowhere does appear from one end of his elaborate enquiry to the other, that he has done so, I must needs say this is such a fundamental defect, as renders the whole performance of very little use to that pious design he professes in it, of reconciling differences about the constitution of the primitive church.

But it is time I make my promise good, and shew that Dionysius himself meant no such church, even in this very narrative of his, as he

is here quoted for: and this will require that a short account be first given of the present condition that holy confessor was then in. The case was thus; The persecuting governor of the province, breathing out greater threatenings still against the banished Christians, ordered them all to be removed into the inhospitable region of Marœotis, and particularly assigned the quarters of Dionysius himself at a place called Colluthio; the holy bishop was troubled at the thoughts of this change; for though he knew that region better than he did the other, yet they talked of it as if there were small hopes of many christian brethren, or indeed of any sort of good men to be found there. “But some of the faithful about me,” says he, “comforted me in this distress:” and what were the arguments of comfort that they offered to him? Why, “they put me in mind,” says he, “of this; that Colluthio was a place nearer to the city (of Alexandria) still; and though I had such concourse of brethren at Cephro,” says he, “that I could *πλατυτέρον ἐκκλησιάζειν*, that is, have a church of a very large compass, even in that remote and desolate country, yet they told me I should enjoy more constantly, at Colluthio, the company of them I loved most, and counted dearest to me in the world;” for “such as those<sup>c</sup>,” they said, “would come and make their abode there, insomuch that there would be congregations of them in sundry places up and down, as in so many suburbs re-

<sup>c</sup> Ἀφίξονται γὰρ καὶ ἀναπαύσονται, καὶ ὡς ἐν προαστείοις πορρότέρῳ κειμένοις κατὰ μέρος ἔσονται συναγωγαί· καὶ οὕτως ἐγένετο. Euseb. *ibid.* [sect. 15. ed. Burton.]



motely situated from the city; and this," says he, "I found to be very true;" that is, such a concourse of christians did resort to him there, and such distinct assemblies there were of them, during his abode in that place. And now, if these distinct congregations of believers were under the spiritual jurisdiction and government of Dionysius alone, and were peculiarly his Church and his people, as the only bishop or supreme ecclesiastical pastor over them, by whose order and direction alone ministerial offices could be performed to each of them; as the historian's account of that place and time does evidently prove him to be, and none but presbyters and deacons,<sup>d</sup> as they are subordinately now taken, are mentioned in the whole narration besides, some accompanying him in his troubles, some wandering to and fro in banishment, and some particularly named with marks of honour, for attending their charge and ministry in the city, in the heat of all the persecution; besides what Dionysius might himself ordain, if the necessity of his church required it; then I think it needs no farther proof, that this holy confessor, and Father of the church, could have no such notion of a particular church in his time, as our learned author's quotation, out of this very narrative of his, has imputed to him.

And yet there is one remarkable passage more in the sufferings of this holy confessor, that makes it much clearer still, if need should be. Take it in his own account of himself, as

<sup>d</sup> Ἠκολούθησαν δέ μοι συμπρεσβύτερός τέ μου Μάξιμος, καὶ διάκονοι Φαῦστος, καὶ Ἐυσέβιος, καὶ Χαιρήμων. Euseb. l. 7. c. 11. p. 210. [sect. 2. ed. Burton.]

Eusebius has transcribed it from him, in the same chapter with all that we have heard already. Germanus, an invidious christian bishop, had, it seems, reproached Dionysius, as if he had fled and deserted his church of Alexandria, without holding any religious assemblies before he went off; which was indeed the pious custom of the churches then, as often as any persecution was visibly nigh at hand; to the end that *catechumens* might be baptized, the eucharist administered to the faithful, and solemn exhortations to constancy and perseverance left with them all to prepare and fortify them against the trials which were immediately coming upon them. Now, how does the holy bishop answer this charge? He first shews that this early apprehension and sudden condemnation left no time or means for him to perform any one of those ministerial offices by himself in person: but then immediately subjoins and says, that “by God’s assistance he was not wanting in a visible assembly neither<sup>e</sup>; but with all diligence,” says he, “I ordered those in the city to assemble, as if I had been personally present with them, being absent indeed in the body as it is said, but present in the spirit with them:” using the apostle’s phrase, who so governed and presided over churches at a distance. Here is a solemn assembly then of the Christians in Alexandria, called together at the command of their

<sup>e</sup> Ἄλλ’ οὐδὲ τῆς αἰσθητῆς ἡμεῖς μετὰ τοῦ Κυρίου συναγωγῆς ἀπέστημεν· ἀλλὰ σπνουδαιότερον τοὺς μὲν ἐν τῇ πόλει συνεκρότου, ὡς συνῶν· ἀπῶν μὲν τῷ σώματι, ὡς εἶπον, [οἱ, ὡς εἰπεῖν, as some copies have it] παρῶν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι. Euseb. ib. p. 211. [sect. 10. ed. Burton.]

absent bishop: and I presume none will think they met on this occasion without celebrating some ordinances at least of religious worship. Nay, I cannot but say, that unless most or all of those holy offices were performed there, which I just now mentioned as customary and necessary to be done in such a juncture of time as this was, the holy confessor had but slightly answered the charge and accusation it was his business there to clear. But least of all could he have comforted himself, that by God's assistance he had caused such a considerable part of his cure to assemble there, if the offices which should minister all the spiritual help they then assembled for, were not dispensed to them too. To apply this therefore to the case in hand.

What manner of Church was this of Alexandria at this time? The bishop in exile had several congregations of his flock in and about the place where his miserable banishment had confined him; the presbyters in his absence, and by his order and authority, hold a religious assembly in the city itself: one only bishop all this while issues out precepts, and acts as chief pastor and governor of these distinct and so far distant congregations, and is by the general language of the catholic church, and of the authentic historians of that time, entitled bishop, without partner or competitor, of the particular church of Alexandria.

If this be consistent with the definition of such a particular church, as this primitive Father was produced to bear witness to, and that in this very narrative of his, where all that

I have here offered is recorded by his own hand, I am afraid such enquiries into antiquity will help but little to settle a wavering mind about the true constitution of the church.

There is one instance more brought by our learned author, to shew that the word church was anciently taken in his sense; and because it is a short one, I shall not pass it by, though it is more surprising to me than both the others. It is from Tertullian's *Exhortat. ad Castit.*, where that Father says, *Ubi tres, ecclesia est*; 'Where three are together, there we have a Church: now to stop at a comma, after four single words in any quotation, where two words more would bring him to a full period, and explain the author's meaning too, is a little strange to me; for Tertullian's whole sentence is only this, *Ubi tres, ecclesia est, licet laici*<sup>f</sup>, that is, 'Where three are there a church is, though they be all but laymen:' and is it not strange to any man, as well as me, that such an extraordinary church as this, with but three laymen in it, should be brought to explain the primitive notion of a particular church associating together with their pastors and ministers for participation of the ordinances and institutions of Christ? And yet to this very quotation our ingenious enquirer immediately subjoins; "in this sense," says he, "we must understand the church of Rome, of Smyrna, of Antioch, and in short, in any other such place whatsoever.

There is an observation in our inquisitive

<sup>f</sup> [Tertull. De Exhort. Cast. vii. p. 522. ed. Rigalt. Venet. 1744.]

author's fourth notation of a church, particularly calculated for the use of his own scheme, and therefore must briefly be considered: he observes there, (p. 4.) that "he never met with the word church, used in the singular number by any of the Fathers for a collection of many particular churches, except once only in Cyprian<sup>g</sup>, who mentions "the church of God in Africa, and Numidia. Now there is something in Irenæus, quoted by himself too in the very next leaf, which looks very like it; for all the christian churches which were gathered from among the Gentiles, that learned Father expresses by 'a church,' in the singular number, (the expression you have in the margin,<sup>h</sup> as quoted to my hand in the seventh page of the Enquiry,) and that implies 'a collection of churches sure beyond all exception. But the truth is, I am not aware in the least what advantage this can be to the point in question, to observe that a particular church is ordinarily expressed in the singular number; since it is a natural expression for it, and no otherwise explains the constituent parts of it, than to say, it is a church somewhere, in some place or another, which how much it clears up the notion of it, we have seen before. Nor is it of better use to observe, that national or provincial churches are usually expressed in the plural number, since it affords no evidence at all to prove what manner of churches they

<sup>g</sup> Cyp. Ep. 71. sect. 4. [*qui illo tempore in provincia Africa et Numidia ecclesiam Domini gubernabant.*]

<sup>h</sup> *Ea quæ ex Gentibus est Ecclesia.* Iren. l. iv. c. 37. [20. sub fine. Benedict. Venet. The Greek recovered from a Catena on the Pentateuch.]

were that were comprehended under them, which is the only point in question.

I make no doubt but our author's suggestion in it is this, that if a particular church had more congregations than one in it, it would surely be expressed in the plural number; and why? Because a single congregation and a particular church, he would have us take for granted, were one and the same thing in the sense and language of the ancients, which though he has not proved, (and I think by the little already said he will find it hard to do,) yet this is an early preparation for it, and something like begging the question beforehand; therefore I thought it not improper to take a little notice of it, especially since in matter of fact it is a mere oversight of the enquirer; for I shall shew instances to the contrary in the beginning of the next chapter.

The notion of a primitive church thus cleared, as we have seen, he proceeds in a regular and proper method, to enquire into the constituent parts of it, and to consider the particular offices, together with the joint and several acts of the respective members of the church he has before defined for us.

I am willing to set out and go along with him as far as truth and primitive authorities (fairly represented) will give me leave to do. His first division of the members of a church is just and unexceptionable; he distinguishes them both as primitive and modern Christians do, into 'clergy,' and 'laity,' shutting out Tertullian's wild conceit now, though offered unawares before as a notion of a church wholly

unaccountable. His division (p. 9.) of the clergy, afterwards, into their particular orders and degrees, as far as names and titles go, is as orthodox and primitive as the other; for *bishops*, *priests*, and *deacons* (so called, at least by him) are as approved ecclesiastical officers in his singular scheme, as, in a genuine and more proper distinction of them, we are sure they always were in every true church of Christ since the apostles' times. But I am sorry to say here, that this close adhering to a primitive form of words, without retaining faithfully the primitive and genuine signification of them, is only a more plausible and dangerous way of setting off mistakes, and makes men lose the truth, without being sensible how it steals away. And this, I am afraid, will prove the case of our ingenious enquirer himself, and has caused his performance to pass so insensibly with others; because there are some shades of antiquity in the draught, though, nearly examined, but very few natural and original lines are to be found. And when you have seen what bishops and priests he has settled in his church, what offices, acts, and powers he has assigned to the several members of it, you will need no other light to discover this by, or to discern the difference between 'things' and 'names.'

To proceed then; he seems fairly to derive all power and authority in the church from the true fountain of it, our blessed Lord Himself, and His inspired apostles, commissioned and empowered by Him to plant and govern churches: but the manner of their conveying this power to others, either for assistance or succession to

themselves in their great charge, which is a main part of this Enquiry, I am afraid will not appear so plain. Let us see his thoughts of it.

He begins with quoting two authorities from antiquity, to shew the apostles' method of constituting pastors and governors in the churches they gathered. The first is from Clemens Romanus, (Ep. 1 Cor. p. 54.), where that Father says, "The apostles went forth preaching in city and country," as our enquirer is pleased to translate and place the words, but in 'countries and cities', [as it is in Clemens himself; and perhaps that slight variation has some use in it afterwards, and therefore the Greek words are omitted in his quotation] appointing the first-fruits of their ministry for bishops and deacons.' Thus far Clemens. To which our enquirer adds, that 'the apostles generally left those bishops and deacons to govern those particular churches over which they had placed them, whilst they themselves passed forward,' etc. Now, if he means that they left them always as supreme church-governors there, I conceive the Holy Scriptures will be clear against him; for that supremacy of power over all the apostolical churches, for the greatest part, at least, of the apostles' lives, was reserved in their own hands, by which St. Paul so justly imputed to himself 'the care of all the churches<sup>k</sup>;' and his commands, censures, and peremptory precepts, so visible in most of his epistles to them,

<sup>i</sup> Κατὰ χώρας οὖν καὶ πόλεις κηρύσσοντες καθίστανον τὰς ἀρχὰς αὐτῶν—εἰς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους, κ. τ. λ. Clem. Rom. Ep. i. [42. Jacobson.]

<sup>k</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 28.



do evidently prove the same; and therefore, whatsoever assistants they were to the apostles by their ministry and regulation of the churches under them, they could not be ecclesiastical officers invested with a plenitude of church-power. I only note this here (which must be more at large considered afterwards) for the sake of his second authority immediately quoted from Tertullian, to the same intent with this: "For thus," says he, "Tertullian saith, Clemens was ordained bishop of Rome by St. Peter, and Polycarp bishop of Smyrna by St. John."

Now, see here, how the fundamental mistake insinuates itself, as it were, at unawares. Here are two quotations brought to prove that the apostles themselves ordained pastors and spiritual officers in the several churches they planted; and because the name of 'bishop' is attributed to them in both places, therefore they are to pass for church-officers, not only equal in their apostolical institution, but in the fulness of their commission, powers, and order too. Here lies the secret spring, indeed, that governs the motions of the whole discourse; and if it were set right by an even and unbiassed hand, the controversy would move in a regular and uniform manner on both sides, till the adversaries met, I verily believe, in a blessed harmony and consent with one another. For if these apostolical church-officers, expressed only by a common name with one another, were but understood to be of a 'different order' and degree by the very tenor of their first commission, as to the extent of powers, prerogatives, and jurisdiction, conveyed and assigned to each of

them, (as I think the epistles to Timothy and Titus alone would satisfy a sober Christian that such a difference there really was,) the most entangled knot of the dispute would then be untied, and probably whole churches and nations of divided Christians now, would, to the unspeakable joy of all good men, go hand in hand to the house of God together, upon the settling of that single point alone.

What unexceptionable authorities there are in the venerable records of antiquity for it, besides the Holy Scriptures themselves, and the uninterrupted harmony of the catholic church in it, before the modern innovation at Geneva against it, I shall have occasion enough to observe in the sequel of this discourse; and I shall only shew here, what considerable reasons our ingenious enquirer has given ‘in this very treatise of his *to persuade* himself,’ and all other sons of peace, like him, to consent to this distinction.

‘The first reason I observe from him is this; that for want of thus acknowledging this difference of order and prerogative in the church-officers ordained by the apostles’ hands, he has brought a perplexing difficulty upon himself, and set the Holy Scriptures and primitive Fathers of the church at ‘a seeming’ variance, at least, and well-nigh palpable contradiction with one another. For thus he tells us, in the very next paragraph after the two quotations above-mentioned, (p. 11. sect. 5.): “Whether,” says he, “in the apostolical and primitive days there were more bishops than one in a church, at first sight seems difficult to resolve • that the Holy

Scriptures, and Clemens Romanus, mention many in one church," says he, "is certain; and, on the other hand, it is as certain, that Ignatius, Tertullian, Cyprian, and the following Fathers, affirm, that there was and ought to be but one." These contradictions and seeming difficulties, as he calls them, he takes the pains of writing his elaborate Enquiry in hopes to reconcile. Surely, he had some extraordinary inclination to solve them in a peculiar and different way from others. For,

The second reason I observe from him for reconciling all at once, is, because he shews us a more plain, natural, and truly primitive way than that, in one single passage of his book before us. You may find it in his fourth chapter, p. 65, of this Enquiry; where his assertion is, that "the first who expressed these church-officers by the distinct terms of bishops and presbyters, was Ignatius," who lived in the beginning of the second century. And from hence I crave leave to observe these three things.

1st. That as often as we meet with the word bishop or presbyter in the Holy Scriptures, we cannot, by the term itself, determine which of the two, according to the more distinct language of the ages immediately following, we must necessarily understand by it; unless the context, or some peculiar circumstance besides, does more clearly explain it to us. And,

2ndly. That the same latitude of signification must for the same reason be allowed to Clemens Romanus's bishops and presbyters too, because

that holy bishop<sup>1</sup> suffered martyrdom before Ignatius's Epistles were written; wherein, the different and determinate sense of those words, as our learned enquirer affirms, were first established in the church. And therefore,

3rdly. It is but doing justice to Tertullian in his quotation, and allowing him and all the Fathers after him to mean by 'their bishops' such as the whole church did then understand, when the pre-eminence of that name above the name of presbyters was fully settled; and to interpret St. Clemens's bishops by that unwarrantable latitude of signification which is acknowledged to have been in general use in his time; and consequently no violence or injustice is done to his quotations, if we take them to be meant of such bishops as were afterwards determinately named and allowed to be no others than common presbyters, in subordination to a higher church-officer, (as to be sure they were at their first ordination in the apostles' times;) and then the great perplexity and doubtful contradiction of the Holy Scriptures and venerable Fathers, about one or more bishops in one and the same church at a time, does naturally, and in perfect analogy to the sense and language of the primitive church, resolve and reconcile itself. For, that many such bishops, indifferently called presbyters in the Holy Scriptures and first age of the church, were placed by the apostles in

<sup>1</sup> Clem. Rom. martyred A. D. 100; St. Ignatius sent to Rome, and in his way writing his epistles, A. D. 107. See Dr. Cave's Chron. of the three first centuries.

particular churches, is agreed, I think, by all. But that more presbyters than one of that determinate order or degree, which were peculiarly called bishops afterwards, such as Clemens placed by St. Peter at Rome, or St. Polycarp by St. John at Smyrna, were ever ordained or settled by an apostle in any particular church of theirs, I think I may freely say, is nowhere to be read in all primitive antiquity; and our author's own quotation from Tertullian here is one very pregnant instance of the thing.

Thus have I shewn what a peaceable and authentic way, agreeable to the sense and writings of the early ages our enquirer appeals to, he himself has pointed out for us to compromise that difference; and his labouring to do it in a more intricate and unprecedented way, I am afraid, will never attain his pious ends of peace and unity so well.

However, in the very next breath, he fixes upon this for a sure truth, that there was but one 'supreme' bishop in a place. This 'seems' a very orthodox and primitive assertion; but why such singular difference, in the expression itself, from the common language of the Holy Fathers within his own three centuries? They speak often enough of but one bishop in a church; but of one 'supreme bishop' in a church, I do not remember I have ever read in their writings. Nay, his own quotations in this very place, (as you may see them in the margin<sup>m</sup> here,) bear witness for me, that the venerable St.

<sup>m</sup> "Unus in ecclesiâ ad tempus sacerdos." Cyp. Ep. [59. Fell.] Οὐκ ἠπίστατο ἓνα ἐπίσκοπον δεῖν εἶναι ἐν καθολικῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ. Ad Fabium Antioch. apud Euseb. l. 6. 43. [ii. Burton.]

Cyprian and Cornelius did not express themselves so. And besides, the former of these, in the name of eighty-seven African bishops then in council with him, declared, that “none of them were bishops over bishops<sup>n</sup>.” What are we to understand then by this ‘supreme bishop,’ who is to be but bishop of a single church too? The answer is plain: The common language of the primitive Fathers would not do here; it would not suit with the following scheme of this Enquiry. For when those Fathers named a bishop of a church, they needed no epithet of a superlative degree to distinguish him from any other ecclesiastical officer within the church, but concluded the original ‘order’ he was of, did that of course for them. But our learned author, who discerns what primitive antiquity never saw, viz. That every presbyter who ministered in any church, had received episcopal authority by apostolical institution or succession, as properly and truly as any bishop in the Catholic church whatsoever, (which he positively affirms to be so, p. 70. of this Enquiry), stood in need of such a distinguishing epithet for his single bishop indeed; and as his phrase appears to be thus plainly singular and new, so we may well expect, that the notion itself, upon which it is grounded, which I shall not here prevent myself from considering in its place, will appear to be so too.

In the mean time, that orthodox observation he makes immediately after this, seems some-

<sup>n</sup> “Neque enim quisquam nostrum episcopum se episcoporum constituit.” Concil. Carthag. in præfat. apud Cypr. p. 229. [Fell.] [Anno 256.]

what extraordinary, if it were but only for the timing it. He had just said, there was but one 'supreme' bishop in a church; though, as I shewed just now, there might be many more bishops there of apostolical institution by their order, in his sense of them, as well as that one; and yet forthwith he observes to us, that "by the *διαδοχαί*, or succession of bishops, ordained by the apostles, the orthodox were wont to prove the succession of their faith, and the novelty of that of heretics;" and quotes two warrantable authorities from Irenæus and Tertulian (here noted in the margin <sup>o</sup>) for it.

Here was an early occasion given indeed for his singular distinction, if he could have warranted it, of a 'supreme bishop,' amongst many other apostolical bishops in the same church together. For without that, this great Catholic test to try the true faith by, would have proved no 'test' at all: for if more bishops than one, of equal original order and apostolical institution too, were ordinarily in the same particular church

<sup>o</sup> "Edant ergo origines ecclesiarum suarum, evolvant ordinem episcoporum suorum, ita per successiones ab initio decurrentem, ut primus ille episcopus aliquem ex apostolis vel apostolicis viris, qui tamen cum apostolis perseveraverit, habuerit autorem et antecessorem: hoc enim modo ecclesiæ apostolicæ census suos deferunt; sicut Smyrnæorum ecclesia Polycarpum ab Johanne conlocatum refert, sicut Romanorum Clementem à Petro ordinatum itidem; proinde utique et cætera exhibent, quos ab apostolis in episcopatum constitutos apostolici seminis traduces habeant." De Præscript. advers. Hæret. [xxxii. Rigalt.] "Ad eam traditionem quæ est ab apostolis, quæ per successiones presbyterorum [or successiones episcoporum, as it is in the next chapter] in ecclesiis custoditur, provocamus eos." ["Adversantur traditioni, dicentes se non solum presbyteris, sed etiam apostolis existentes sapientiores, sinceram invenisse veritatem." St. Iræn. iii. 2.]

together, as our learned author does affirm, then to prove the orthodoxy of a church's faith, by the succession of one particular apostolical bishop in a church, had no consequence in it at all; because some other of those apostolically ordained bishops might possibly be at the head of an heretical congregation too, and then the original order and succession of 'these' might have been as warrantable an argument for 'them,' as the like could be for the other; and by that means, heresy and the true faith would have stood upon an equal bottom with one another. This surely must have been the case, according to our learned author's modern scheme, unless this cautious epithet of 'supreme' had been expressly annexed to that particular bishop, upon whom this rule of orthodox succession did depend. And how Tertullian and Irenæus could so indefinitely appeal to such an episcopal succession as this, and fix no mark of distinction at all upon the bishops they peculiarly meant, is not otherwise to be accounted for, but that no such distinction of supreme and subordinate or assisting bishops was ever known in their time; and so the test in general terms was evident and plain enough to all the Christian world then.

This chapter closes with one remark more, which seems of so indifferent a nature, that one would be apt to pass it over; but because, like all the rest before, it is calculated for some greater uses which will be made of it afterwards, it must not be overlooked. The remark is only this (p. 14.); "The titles," says he, "of this supreme church-officer are most of them reckoned up in one place by Cyprian, which are, bishop,



pastor, president, governor, superintendent, [so he translates *Antistes*], and priest<sup>p</sup>;" and further, says he, "This is he which in the Revelations is called the angel of his church, as Origen thinks, which appellations denote both his authority and office, his power and duty," etc. Now would not any common reader be apt to think that these are the appropriated titles of his 'supreme' church-officer? and that whenever he met with them in St. Cyprian's writings, or any other of such primitive antiquity as his, he must always understand that supreme church-officer by them? else why so carefully noted here? But no such thing, it is quite the contrary; for in his fourth chapter, from p. 64—68, he labours with much reading and great zeal to prove, that most of all these supreme titles were equally given, and did of right belong, to any presbyter whatsoever in the Christian church. And what is the meaning, would one think, of this extraordinary way of arguing? why the case is plain. All the presbyters in any church whatsoever are in that place to be owned for primitive bishops, without any further authority or ordination for it than they had before; and amongst other great reasons for that extraordinary assertion, this is to be a considerable one, that the same name is very familiarly used by the ancients to express them both by. So that having first possessed his reader here, that these before-mentioned titles are peculiarly bishops' titles, and then shewing him there, that

<sup>p</sup> "Episcopus, præpositus, pastor, gubernator, antistes, sacerdos." Cyp. Ep. [lxvi. Fell.]

many of them are often attributed to presbyters, the inference will go smoothly down, that they are unquestionable bishops too; and I will only add, that by this argument they must every one of them be supreme bishops also. For his chief or supreme bishop was first set apart by him to preside over the whole church he had assigned for him, before he attributed these several titles to him; and then if they are common to others afterwards, those others must be chief too, so far as those titles can make them bishops at all. And this is more, I think, than our enquirer's own scheme can allow them to be; and consequently, this remark will not conclude the thing for which it was designed.

By what has been said, I hope it may appear with what caution this first chapter of the learned Enquiry should be read. If I have been thought long in it, it is because I found it true, that the whole discourse would very much depend upon it. A right notion of a primitive church is the very groundwork that all is to be built upon; this was undertaken to be settled here; how well it is performed, I leave now to others to determine.

## CHAPTER II.

THE great point to be cleared in the second chapter is this; that “as there was but one bishop in a church,” says he, “so there was but one church to a bishop.” This is primitive language indeed, and would be primitive truth too, if the singular notion of a particular church before had not turned a Catholic maxim into an equivocal proposition; for by ‘his bishop’s church’ we know he means a single congregation. And from one observation of his, which he here remarks to us, he would have us assured that the primitive Fathers meant so too. His observation is this; “that the ancient dioceses are never said to contain *churches*, in the plural, but only a *church*, in the singular.” Now what they contained in them, whether one or more of such churches as his, his quotations<sup>a</sup> say nothing of; but they shew, indeed, that a bishop’s church was usually expressed and named then in the singular number; and I will only add this observation to it, that they

<sup>a</sup> See his quotations in p. 15 of the Enquiry.

were just so expressed and named too in after ages of the church, as well as in the first and earliest of them all. In the fourth century, under Constantine the Great, it is notorious how the churches multiplied in the number of their people and their oratories too, yet the celebrated diocese of Antioch is called no more than ‘the single church of Antioch<sup>b</sup>’ still; for so that emperor himself styles it in his letter to Eusebius, where he applauds his humility for not exchanging his lesser diocese of Cæsarea for it. Eusebius<sup>c</sup> calls the mother diocese of Jerusalem no otherwise than so, in the same century, and about the same time. In later ages you will find the language of the church holds the same still; for the council of Carthage, under Theodosius and Honorius, in the fifth century, calls the extensive diocese of St. Augustin<sup>d</sup>, *the church* of Hippo only, in the singular number. And, to come nearer home, and be short in so clear a point as this is, which I have spoken to in the former chapter, the venerable Bede<sup>e</sup> in his church history of our native country, ordinarily calls both larger and lesser dioceses in the land, whether of Canterbury, York, Rochester, or the like, by this primitive name of the single church of each of those places; and that there were more than barely one congre-

<sup>b</sup> Τῆς κατὰ τὸν Ἀντιοχείαν ἐκκλησίας. Euseb. in Vit. Constant. l. 3. c. 61.

<sup>c</sup> Τῶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐπισκόπου. Ibid. cap. 29.

<sup>d</sup> Ἀυγουστίνου ἐπίσκοπος τῆς ἐκκλησίας Ἰππώνης.

<sup>e</sup> Doruvernensis ecclesiæ antistes. Bede's Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 18. Tobias Hroffensis ecclesiæ præsul, Wilfridus in Eboracensi ecclesiâ. Ibid. l. 5. c. 24. [Ed. Stevenson.]

gation of believers in each or any of these before-mentioned churches, I believe will not be made a question; and therefore what argument can be grounded on this remarkable observation, I confess I do not see. Yet, after all, the observation is not just or true; for Eusebius<sup>f</sup> names the church of Alexandria, Gaza, Emesa, etc. in the plural number, and their bishop in the singular. (See the quotations in the margin.)

A more popular one, but of no more force or evidence in it, is that which follows, drawn from the sound alone, and not the sense, of a single word. "The ancients," says he, (p. 15,) "frequently denominated their bishop's cure by the Greek word *παροικία*." The modern English use that word now to express a 'parish' by, approaching very near in sound indeed to one another. And hence he concludes it very probable, at least, that a bishop's cure then, and an English parish now, were both the same thing; nay he positively (p. 16, 17) affirms, that our present sense of the word is the very same that the ancient Christians took it in, and lays a great stress upon the genuine signification of the word itself for it.

Now, before I give any account of the use or meaning of this primitive word *παροικία* for a Christian church, I hope I need not say, that whatever gave occasion for the use of it, it could have no respect to any language then or now in use amongst us of this nation; it would be too

<sup>f</sup> Of Alexand. See Euseb. l. 5. c. 9. Of Emesa and Gaza. See Euseb. l. 8. c. 13.

absurd so much as to imagine such a thing; and therefore to suggest the modern affinity of the words by way of argument in the case, is directly to amuse only where we undertake to instruct.

The truest method I know, to learn the idiom or propriety of a primitive ecclesiastical word, is by one or all of these three ways. Either,

1st. By the sense it bears in the Holy Scriptures, if we find it there. Or,

2ndly. By the continued use of it in the Christian church for some time afterwards. Or,

3rdly. By the common signification of it in the original language from whence it is taken. And by these three tests I shall try at present what the word *παροιμία* anciently might mean.

In Holy Scripture, I find it used by St. Luke to denote a temporary residence of a stranger in a place remote from home. For in the question of Cleopas to our blessed Lord after his resurrection, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem?" etc.<sup>ε</sup> the original words are, *Σὺ μόνος παροικίης Ἱερουσαλήμ*; which evidently includes this *παροιμία* in it, as the immediate theme from whence it comes; and should it be rendered with any analogy to the member of a parish, or such like society in the city, the holy penman's sense would be very singular and unintelligible indeed. Again; St. Paul uses it in the very same sense and signification afterwards (Ephes. ii. 19); "You are no longer strangers and foreigners," says he, calling his foreigners there by the name of *πάροιχοι*· which

<sup>ε</sup> Luke xxiv. 18.

if we should take it in our learned enquirer's sense, must be rendered 'very near neighbours,' at least, or 'fellow members of one and the same society together,' which I think directly inverts the meaning of the holy apostle; and other such-like instances there are.

So that the Holy Scriptures, you see, suggested a very different notion of the word *παροικία* to the primitive Christians; and such a one as should sufficiently warrant, and, one would think, give fair occasion to those heavenly-minded saints to denominate their first societies and churches from it, since they ordinarily looked upon themselves as mere sojourners and foreigners in the world, and were no otherwise accounted by the heathen round about them. But,

2dly. We often meet with the word *παροικία* both in the Greek and Latin writers for several ages afterwards, denoting the same thing with a diocese of many parishes and congregations in it; which further proves that the ecclesiastical sense of the word had not so narrow a notion in it, till particular places determinately made it so.

In the code of the African church, published both in Greek and Latin by Justellus, we meet with *diæcesis* in one language, rendered by *παροικία* in the other. Thus it is in the title of the fifty-sixth canon<sup>h</sup>, and again and again in the body of the canon itself. So St.

<sup>h</sup> Vide Christ. Justell. Can. Ecclesiæ Africanæ, in Can. 56. edit. Paris. 1615. [περὶ τοὺς ἐν ταῖς παροικίαις χειροτονουμένους ἐπισκόπους μὴ τινα ἑαυτοῖς ἐκδικεῖν διοίκησιν. Can. Tit. Græc.]

Jerome, translating an epistle of St. Epiphanius<sup>i</sup> to John, bishop of Jerusalem, expresses both their large dioceses, as they surely were then, by the word *parochia* only. St. Augustin<sup>k</sup>, in his epistle to pope Cælestin, tells him, that the town of Fussala was forty miles distant from Hippo; yet both the place itself, and the country round about it, did before his time belong to the *paræchia* of his church of Hippo. And to come home to ourselves, the venerable Bede<sup>l</sup> calls the diocese of Winchester by the same name, even when the whole province of the South Saxons did belong to it. And then whether the word ‘diocese,’ so customarily used for secular districts and provinces in the empire, were immediately adopted into the church or no, I think it argues little; since when it was received, church writers themselves made no scruple to use both *diæcesis* and *parochia* oftentimes as terms synonymous in sundry ages and nations where diocesan districts were established, which makes it plain enough that it was not with reference to circuit or extent of churches that they used either, till later settle-

<sup>i</sup> Vide Epiphan. Ep. ad Johan. Hierosol. inter opera Hieron. [Ep. li. inter Epis. S. Hieron. edit. Vallars.] Item in Epiphaniï tom. 2. p. 312, Latini edit. Petav. Colon. 1682.

<sup>k</sup> Vide August. [Ep. cccix. secund. ord. Bened.] “Fussala simul contiguâ sibi regione ad parœciam Hipponensis ecclesiæ pertinebat.” Et infra, “ab Hippone millibus quadraginta sejungitur.”

<sup>l</sup> “Provincia Australium Saxonum ad civitatis Ventanæ parochiam pertinebat.” Bede, Eccl. Hist. l. 5. c. 19. [The words are — “Statutum est synodali decreto, ut provincia Australium Saxonum, quæ eatenus ad civitatis Ventanæ, cui tunc Danitrel præerat, parochiam pertinebat.” l. v. c. 18. Stevenson.]



ments gave more appropriated senses to them, as in sundry other ecclesiastical terms it is obvious enough to be observed and seen. But then,

3dly. The very signification of the word *παροιμία*, our learned author will assure us, does make all clear: for "it signifies," says he (p. 16), "a dwelling one by another, as neighbours do, or an habitation in one and the same place." But here I must take leave to say, and I hope shall prove it too, that it is taken in a very different sense by writers of unquestionable authority, and by glossaries and critics in the Greek language is sufficiently warranted to be so.

The inquisitive Suicer<sup>m</sup>, in his first observation on the word *παροικέω*, renders it by the Latin, *advena*, or *peregrinus sum*; that is, (as the inspired penmen I shewed you before always use it in the Holy Scriptures,) 'I am a stranger or foreigner in any place.' But this is not all; he adds immediately, that this very word is put in direct opposition to *κατοικεῖν*, which, according to ancient glosses, says he, signifies 'to dwell,' or 'have an habitation' in any place. And is this anything more or less than downright opposition to our learned enquirer's peremptory interpretation of it? And what this judicious glossary does thus affirm, he makes good by the unexceptionable authorities of Philo Judæus<sup>n</sup>, St. Basil the Great<sup>o</sup>, Theo-

<sup>m</sup> Suicer in vocib. *παροικέω* and *παροιμία*. *παροικέω* significat *advena peregrinus sum*, et opponitur τῷ *κατοικεῖν*, quod, juxta veteres glossas, *habito, incolo*.

<sup>n</sup> Philo Judæus de Sacrif. Abel et Cain. 'Ὁ [γαρ] τοῖς ἐγκυκλίοις μόνοις ἐπανέχων *παροικεῖ σοφία, οὐ κατοικεῖ*. [Cap. x. Lips. 1828.]

<sup>o</sup> Basil. m. in Ps. 14. 'Ἡ *παροιμία* ἐστὶ *διαγωγὴ πρόσκαιρος*.

doret<sup>p</sup>, and others, whose particular quotations you have here noted in the margin, which make it clearer still.

I am sensible it may be alleged, that the Greek preposition *παρὰ*, when joined in composition with another word, as it is here, does often signify the same as *juxta* with the Latins, that is, ‘nigh,’ or ‘near to any place.’ And this I take to be the sole motive, indeed, that induced our learned author to make this positive construction of the word. But let Devarius<sup>q</sup>, that accurate critic in the particles of the Greek tongue, be heard in this case, and he will teach us that we cannot, with any authority, attribute such a determinate sense to it: for his note upon it is this; *ἡ παρὰ*, says he, *non solum τὸ ἐγγύς, sed etiam τὸ πέρα καὶ ἔξω significat*; that is, the preposition *παρὰ* does not only signify ‘nigh,’ or ‘near to,’ but also ‘beyond,’ or from ‘abroad,’ and ‘without,’ according to the different phrase or authors we may meet it in; which sufficiently justifies the above-mentioned ancient writer’s using it, even in this very word before us, in direct opposition to that of dwelling nigh one another in one and the same place.

But too much of this; for I ever took criticism to be a slender way of arguing in so great a subject as this is, only I found no help for it here, the determination was so positive in the case

<sup>p</sup> Theodoret. in Ps. 119. *Παροικίαν καλεῖ, τὴν ἐν τῇ ἄλλοτρίᾳ διαγωγὴν.*

<sup>q</sup> Vide Matth. Devarii, lib. de Græc. Ænig. particul. Edit. du Gard. p. 206. A. D. 1657.

and such smooth insinuations advanced upon the plausibility of a single word.

To pass, then, from words to things; that if the bare name does not satisfy, we may, at least, by some following observations of matter of fact, consent to his main assertion (p. 17), "That a bishop's diocese and a modern parish were the same, as in name, so in thing;" that is, let Scripture, Fathers, and history say what they will of the numerous conversions wrought by the blessed apostles themselves, by their inspired fellow-labourers and successors in the ministry of the Gospel, either in Jerusalem, Judæa, or throughout the heathen world; yet the utmost result of all their labours amounted to no more, for three hundred years together, than just to such a competent society of believers, as could be enclosed within the walls of a single oratory in any of the largest cities upon earth, including the adjacent territories too.

I wish our learned author had begun his proof of this where the church itself began, and had thought Jerusalem, the mother-church of all, as worthy of his notice as any of the rest, and scripture evidence as fit to be considered as other authorities he is pleased to use. But he has cautiously declined both one and the other; for in his three first chapters, wherein the whole parochial scheme is finished, we find but one slight reference (c. i. p. 11) to holy writ, and that of no importance to the case, nor any text so much as named at all; and amongst all the particular churches he chose to treat of, which are pretty many, that of Jerusalem (which the whole college of apostles jointly founded, as it

were a model for the rest) is not so much as named. Was this for want of matter, can we think, suitable to the subject of his Enquiry there? or rather, that the stream of evidence ran too strong against his whole hypothesis in them both? Is it so obvious to common sense as not to deserve a little notice, and plainer explication of it, in his way, how the many thousands from time to time converted in Jerusalem alone, and the daily increase of them, (as it is specified in the texts here noted in the margin<sup>r</sup>,) should commodiously, or indeed possibly worship God in one and the same place together, since they neither had the capacious temple, to be sure, or any other place, that should be too much taken notice of, to hold such a numerous and indeed inconceivable assembly in? And yet St. James<sup>s</sup>, (the bishop of this church himself,) in a few years after, calls those thousands of converted Jews by the multiplied number of ‘myriads of them.’ Acts xxi. 20.

The inspired penmen who relate all this had little reason to record in sacred writ, or to amuse posterity with the number, method, or

<sup>r</sup> Acts i. 15. “The number of the names together were about one hundred and twenty.” Acts ii. 41. “There were added to them about three thousand souls.” Ver. 47. “The Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved.” Acts iv. 4. (Peter and John preaching afterwards upon healing of the cripple.) “Many of them which heard, believed; and the number of men was about five thousand.” Acts v. 14. “Believers were the more added to the Lord both of men and women.” Acts vi. 7. “Still the word of God increased, and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

<sup>s</sup> *Θεωρεῖς, ἀδελφεῖ, πόσαι Μυριάδες εἰσὶν Ἰουδαίων τῶν πεπιστευκότων* Acts xxi. 20.

nature of the churches, oratories, or meeting-houses (call them what we please) wherein those multitudes of blessed converts held assemblies for the offices and mysteries of their new religion, though 'their breaking bread from house to house,' the churches mentioned in 'private and particular houses' there, are no imperfect intimations of it, whatever other interpretations may be forced upon them. But, be that as it will, the matter of fact which they tell us commands our faith; and if common sense and reason can contract such numbers into a single congregation, all their other writings, I am afraid, will feel the dangerous effect of such an extraordinary sort of commenting upon them.

Tertullian says more than all this still, and that of every place in general too. The numbers of Christians<sup>t</sup> in his early age were well nigh the 'greater part' of 'every' city; for so he frankly tells the persecuting Scapula, who was not to be jested with. And again; to all the Roman magistrates, in his Apology, he glories in the multitudes of his profession thus: "We are of yesterday<sup>u</sup>," says he, "yet every place is filled with us, your cities, the islands, the forts, your corporations, the councils, the armies, the tribes and companies; yea, the palace,

<sup>t</sup> "Tanta hominum multitudo, pars pæne major cujusque civitatis." Tertul. ad Scap. c. 2.

<sup>u</sup> "Hesterni sumus, et vestra omnia implevimus; urbes, insulas, castella, municipia, conciliabula, castra ipsa, tribus, decurias, palatium, senatum, forum; sola vobis reliquimus templa." Tertul. Apol. cap. 37. "Si tanta vis hominum in aliquem orbis remoti sinum abruptissemus à vobis . . . proculdubio expavissetis ad solitudinem vestram, ad silentium rerum, et stuporem quendam quasi mortui orbis." Id. ib.

senate, and courts of justice; your temples only have we left you free. Should we go off and separate from you, you would stand amazed at your own desolation, be affrighted at the stop and deadness of affairs amongst you; and you would have more enemies than subjects left you." An incomprehensible account, sure, if the biggest city in the empire had no more than a single congregation in it.

Let me add a hint or two from the excellent Eusebius to the same purpose here. That accurate historian, when he speaks in general of the primitive Christian churches in every city and country, about the close of the apostolic age, uses such singular terms to express the multitudes and numbers of them<sup>x</sup>, as any impartial reader must needs confess, do rather denote them to be hosts and legions, than any such thing as mere parochial assemblies. His words are hardly to be rendered in our own tongue; for "the greatest number of thronged and crowded societies of them" are an imperfect translation of his original, (as you may see it in the margin,) and his comparison for them is this, that "they were like heaped grain upon a barn floor." It is strange if so exact an author as this should strain for such superlative words as these are to describe only a common congregation by. Yet thus he represents, we see, the state of Christian churches at the entrance, as it were, of that period of time to which our learned author all along appeals; and before he comes

<sup>x</sup> Καὶ δῆτα ἀνὰ πάσας πόλεις τε καὶ κώμας, πληθυούσης ἄλωνος δίκην, μυριάδων καὶ παμπληθεῖς ἀθρώως ἐκκλησίαι συνεστήκεσαν. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. 1. 2. c. 3. [s. 3. Burton.]

to the end of his third century, he confutes, I think, even to a demonstration, the whole hypothesis at once; for, speaking of the peaceful and blessed times that Christians enjoyed after the Valerian persecution ended, and before the Dioclesian began, which was the last forty years of the third century; "Who can describe<sup>y</sup>," says he, "the innumerable increase and concourse of them? the numbers of assemblies in each city? and the extraordinary meetings in their houses of prayer? So that not content with the buildings they had of old, they founded new and larger churches throughout every city;" which agrees directly with what Optatus<sup>z</sup>, the holy bishop of Milevis, tells us, that when Dioclesian destroyed the Christian churches, which was but five years after the third century at the most, there were above forty *basilicæ*, that is, public places for Christian worship in the single city of Rome. When were these forty churches built or dedicated to this holy use? None of them, can we imagine, so much as five or six years before? Had the Christians enjoyed forty years of peace and favour with the emperors just at that time, and not provided so much as two or three such houses of God for their solemn assemblies, and yet had occasion for forty of them, and actually had them too,

<sup>y</sup> Πῶς δ' ἂν τις διαγράψειε τὰς μυριάδους ἐκείνας ἐπισυναγωγὰς ; καὶ τὰ πλήθη τῶν κατὰ πάσαν πόλιν ἁθροισμάτων, τὰς τε ἐπισήμους ἐν τοῖς προσευκτηριοῖς συνδρομὰς ; ὧν δὴ ἕνεκα μηδαμῶς ἔτι τοῖς παλαιοῖς οἰκοδομήμασι ἀρκούμενοι, εὐρείας εἰς πλάτος ἀνὰ πάσας τὰς πόλεις ἐκ θημελίων ἀνίστων ἐκκλησίας. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 8. c. 1. [s. 4. Burton.]

<sup>z</sup> Optat. de Schism. Donat. l. 2. [iv. Duperi quadraginta et quod excurrit.]

before the fatal edict was issued out, that levelled them all to the ground? I leave the reader to decide the probability of this; and that the city of Rome was not singular in this case, I believe any reasonable man would easily agree.

Neocæsarea, we know, the famed metropolis of Cappadocia, was long before this as happily stored as Rome itself proportionably could be, with such Christian oratories for the exercise of their religion. For when their apostolical bishop St. Gregory had converted that whole city, save only seventeen persons, by the mighty hand of God upon him, the zealous citizens pulled down their altars, temples, and idols, and in every place built ‘houses of prayer in the name of Christ’ in the room of them. The venerable father of the church, who relates this, lived in the fourth century indeed, which our strict enquirer, I know<sup>b</sup>, would in no case have concerned himself with in this matter; but since it is only a historical matter of fact, and that within his own period of time too, I hope so unexceptionable an author as St. Gregory Nyssen<sup>c</sup> may be allowed to bear witness to it. Though I can scarce forbear taking notice upon this occasion, that all the glorious lights of the Christian church in the fourth and fifth centuries, whose names can scarcely be mentioned without deference and veneration by any true sons of the church of Christ, must be wholly set aside, and (implicitly at least) stigmatized

<sup>b</sup> Βωμῶν τε καὶ Ἱερῶν καὶ Εἰδώλων ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀνατετραμμένων Πάντων δὲ κατὰ τόπον πάντα.

<sup>c</sup> Εὐκκτηρίους ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ ναοὺς ἀνεγειρόντων. Greg. Nyssen. in Vit. Thaum. tom. iii. p. 567. Paris edit. 1638.



with innovation, and prevaricating from the evangelical institution and apostolical establishment of the Christian church, to make way for this 'congregational scheme;' which makes the sagacious author of the Enquiry before us, lay such strict injunctions, as in his preface he does, upon any that should consider his elaborate work, not to stir a hair's breadth from the third century of the church; for to the glorious Basils, Gregories, Chrysostom, Austin, or any of their contemporaries, he dares not appeal; knowing how notoriously the Catholic church of God (then acknowledged in the world, and ever since) had dioceses and churches of a very different constitution from his. This consideration, I verily believe, would a little affect some sort of modest men, but I leave it to themselves. And having briefly shewn you in what manner Scripture, church-history, and ancient Fathers, applaud the honour of God, and do justice to the blessed labours of the holy apostles, in setting forth the innumerable souls they gained to God and his church, in so little a compass of time; I shall now, without further interruption, consider the important observations which our learned enquirer has made upon sundry passages in the writings of the primitive Fathers, which have prevailed upon him to affirm, that there was no more than one single congregational church of Christians for three hundred years together in the greatest city in the world.

He begins with Justin Martyr, and renders a passage in his first Apology thus: "On Sun-

day," says he<sup>d</sup>, "all assemble together in one place." Now Justin's words are these: "On Sunday all *throughout cities or countries* meet together;" and why do we think he left out these words, 'throughout cities or countries,' which were in the very middle of the sentence? Why? because those words of the holy martyr would undeniably shew it to be a general account of Christian practice in all places of the Christian world; whereas our enquirer's business was to make it a particular instance of a single bishop's diocese, and that all the members of it, both in city and country, met in one and the same place together at once; and if it were so, then 'cities and countries' in the plural number, would be too much for him; for if they proved anything in that sense, they would prove that 'cities and countries,' indefinitely taken, wherever there were any Christians in them, met 'all' together every Sunday, and made but one congregation; and therefore the [συνέλευσις γίνεται ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ], which properly signifies 'assembling together,' though it is expressed in the singular number, yet being spoken with reference to a complex body, as it evidently is here in relation to cities and countries at large, does severally refer to each distinct member and part, whereof that complex body does consist; and plainly denotes, that every part, as well one as the other, did hold an as-

<sup>d</sup> Enquiry, p. 17. Πάντων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συνέλευσις γίνεται. Just. Martyr. Apol. i. p. 98. Justin's words are these; Πάντων κατὰ πόλεις ἢ ἀγροὺς μερόντων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συνέλευσις γίνεται.

sembly on that day, or else the same absurdity would unavoidably follow as before, that all made but one assembly in the whole. So unwarily, at least, are this holy martyr's words misrepresented here, to prove what they nowise do prove, or never intended to do.

For the plain case was this; the pious Apologist writes to the heathen emperor, senate, and people, in vindication of the persecuted Christians throughout the Roman empire, and towards the close of his Apology sets forth the general method of them all in the exercise of their religion; I say, 'the general method of them all,' for otherwise his charitable plea for that profession had been very lame and imperfect indeed, and contrary to the tenor of his whole Apology, as is obvious to them that read it. So that his Sundays'-assemblies here, were a specification of the Catholic practice, whether in cities or countries throughout the empire, as the plural words, observed above, do unquestionably imply; and forasmuch as they were aliens to the Christian dispensation, to whom he wrote, he neither used the peculiar word *bishop* or *presbyter*, to express the president of their respective assemblies by, though our enquirer frankly translates it by the former of these, but only such a general term<sup>e</sup> as might instruct the heathens he addressed, that a person in peculiar authority did preside over each of them, and principally discharge the duties of the assembly, and the day; and what

<sup>e</sup> 'Ο προεστώς' Just. Apol. ib.

does this prove as to the certainty of but one congregation only in any city or diocese?

His next appeal is to sundry passages in the epistles of St. Ignatius. The quotations are pretty many in number; but the force and importance of them all, I conceive, when you hear them, will appear to be much the same.

To the church of Smyrna<sup>f</sup> he writes thus: "Where the bishop is, there the people must be." And again; "It is unlawful to do anything without the bishop." To the Trallians, thus: "There is a necessity that we do nothing without the bishop<sup>g</sup>." And to the Philadelphians: "Where the pastor is, there the sheep ought to follow<sup>h</sup>." And to the Magnesians: "As Christ<sup>i</sup>," says he, "did nothing without the Father, so do you nothing without the bishop and presbyters, but assemble into the same place (so he renders *ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ*, without any other word joined to it;) that you may have one prayer, one supplication, one mind, and one hope."

Now can any man see more in all this, than that the bishop must be in all the ministrations of the church, and none can rightly partake of

<sup>f</sup> "Οπου ἂν φανῆ ὁ ἐπίσκοπος, ἐκεῖ τὸ πλῆθος ἔστω. — Οὐκ ἐξόν ἐστιν χωρὶς ἐπισκόπου οὔτε βαπτίζειν, οὔτε ἀγάπην ποιεῖν. Ep. ad Smyr. [8 Jacobson.]

<sup>g</sup> Ἀναγκαῖον οὖν ἐστὶν ἄνευ ἐπισκόπου μηδὲν πράσσειν ὑμᾶς. Ep. ad Tralles. [2. Jacobson.]

<sup>h</sup> "Οπου δὲ ὁ ποιμὴν ἐστὶν, ἐκεῖ ὡς πρόβατα ἀκολουθεῖτε. Ep. ad Philad. [2. Jacobson.]

<sup>i</sup> Ἄνευ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων μηδὲν πράσσητε, ἀλλὰ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ μία προσευχή, μία δέησις, εἰς νοῦς, μία ἐλπίς. Ep. ad Magnes. [7. Jacobson.]

any of them, but by him? But how? By his personal ministry alone? Yes; or else all our learned enquirer's use and inference from them, will come to little indeed. But are we sure the holy martyr himself meant so too? Nothing plainer, I think, than that he did not; else how could he say immediately before his charge to the church of Smyrna, 'of doing nothing without the bishop,' "Let that eucharist be counted valid with you," says he, "which is celebrated by your bishop, or by such a one as he shall authorize to do it<sup>k</sup>." And immediately after it again, as soon as he had told them that without the bishop it was not lawful to baptize or solemnize their love-feast, (which implies communion too,) he adds, as it were by way of exception: "But what he (that is, the bishop) does approve, that is acceptable unto God<sup>l</sup>." The bishop's permission and approbation, it seems then, were, in the holy martyr's sense, as good as his very act and deed. And no less is plainly to be seen in that great argument, by which he enjoins this dutiful regard to the bishop, in his charge to the Magnesians: "As the Lord," says he, "did nothing of himself, or by his apostles, without the Father; so neither do you without the bishops and the presbyters<sup>m</sup>." In the relative part of this comparison, we see, what our Lord did either 'by himself, or his apostles,' commissioned by him, are implied to

<sup>k</sup> Ἐκείνη βεβαία Εὐχαριστία ἡγείσθω ἢ ὑπὸ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον οὐσα, ἢ ᾧ ἂν αὐτὸς ἐπιτρέψῃ. Ad Smyrn. [8. Jacobson.]

<sup>l</sup> Ἄλλ' ὃ ἂν ἐκείνος δοκιμάσῃ, τοῦτο καὶ τῷ Θεῷ εὐάρεστον. Ib.

<sup>m</sup> Οὔτε δι' ἑαυτοῦ, οὔτε διὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων. Ep. ad Magnes. [7. Jacobson.]

be the same thing; and therefore in the correlate which answers to it, what the church should do by the ministry of the bishop himself, or of the presbyters commissioned by him, by a just analogy of sense should be the same too; and for this reason, perhaps, our cautious enquirer, in quoting this passage in this place, left out the whole former part of this comparison in his original in the margin, and these words [‘By himself, or by his apostles’], in his translation of it in the text. I need not add, sure, how natural and undisputed a maxim it is, in all acts of government whatsoever, that the supreme magistrate is said and owned to do what is warrantably done by his commissioned ministers and authority; so little does St. Ignatius’s language, in this sense, and in his own interpretation of it, differ from the ordinary dialect and notion of all mankind.

That a bishop, then, might and did so act by deputed presbyters, I think is very clear in St. Ignatius’s own sense of it; and this sort of deputation so very nearly resembles even what we call ‘institution’ in an episcopal church at this day, at least as to the exercising of ministerial offices in it, that if the place, as well as office, were assigned, I should scarce know what we did dispute about. And that those primitive bishops could and did assign to presbyters, as well a separate place or places to minister in, as depute them to the ministry itself, I can bring this very learned enquirer himself to bear witness for me; for in the 38th and 39th pages of this very treatise of his, where he gives account of the populous church of Alexandria, he con-

fesses, that “because it was incommodious for all the people to assemble in their own usual meeting-place, which was very far from their own homes, and withal to avoid schism from their bishop, the people asked leave, and the good bishop Dionysius granted it, that they should erect a chapel of ease.” He might have said ‘chapels’ in the plural, if he pleased; for in the historian himself there is the<sup>n</sup> same authority for it; “and this, about the suburbs of the city, and to be under the bishop’s jurisdiction, and guided by a presbyter of his commission and appointment<sup>o</sup>.” This passage from Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 11. is represented in a very nice and arbitrary figure here, to suit the scheme it was produced for, as much as it could handsomely do; and yet how little it does so, nay, how directly it contradicts the whole, is obvious to any reader by the bare reciting of it. Here are several assemblies of Christians under the jurisdiction of one bishop; subordinate and accountable presbyters, by permission and commission of that one bishop, officiating separately in them; and distinct places assigned for their doing so. Judge if this be like our Enquirer’s congregational diocese, or can be reasonably opposed to a genuine episcopal one, even in after ages of the church, and down to these days of ours, if we will not still insist on bare names, and overlook things.

His only salvo is, that “on solemn occasions, they were all to assemble still in one church,

<sup>n</sup> Κατὰ μέρος Συναγωγαί. Dionys. apud Euseb. l. vii. c. 11.

<sup>o</sup> See my remarks on this passage at large, from p. 9. to p. 13. in the former chapter.

and with their one bishop together," which neither Dionysius himself, nor the historian from whence he quotes it, say anything of; and yet we know indeed, that it was a customary form, by which parochial churches, for many ages together, used to testify their union and dependence upon their several cathedrals; namely, to offer and communicate with them by proper representatives on the greater festivals of the year; and how much more than that the church of Alexandria ever did, especially in St. Athanasius's time, from whence, our author tells us, he could bring his proof, any man may pretty easily conceive; since that venerable Father affirms<sup>p</sup>, that the whole region of Mareotis and all the churches in it, belonged to the bishop of Alexandria alone; that the presbyters had their several portions of it, and each of them ten or more large villages under their particular care. What sort of congregation this whole region, with all the Christians in the great city of Alexandria, would make, I leave to any reasonable man to consider.

Having thus explained this familiar phrase, then, of that primitive martyr Ignatius, "That without the bishop nothing should be done," in a sense which no ways warrants the hypothesis it was quoted for; and that by the unexceptionable authority of the holy Martyr himself, and the very learned author's own concessions,

<sup>p</sup> Ὁ Μαρρώτης χώρα τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐστὶ τῷ Ἀλεξανδρείας Ἐπισκόπῳ αἱ Ἐκκλησίαι πάσης τῆς χώρας ὑπόκεινται. Ἐκαστος δὲ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἔχει τὰς ἰδίας κώμας, μεγίστας, καὶ ἀριθμῶ δέκα πού καὶ πλείονας. St. Athanas. Apol. 2. in Oper. vol. I. p. 802. edit. Colon. 1686.



who was here applying it to quite another end; I think there is no tittle in the before-mentioned citations, that does not in course fall in with the same interpretation; unless perhaps he will say, that the particular phrases, *Ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ*, and *μία δέησις*, will not consist with this; by the former of which, he concludes for certain, that the whole diocese or bishop's church assembled 'in one place' together; by the latter, that all public prayer, and religious duties, were 'so jointly' performed too.

But what necessity for this? Do these words so evidently imply it, that the holy Father himself could have no other meaning in them? Let the context direct us in the case; which, together with the sense, which approved commentators, and other ecclesiastical writers, give us of the words themselves, will help us to a fair construction of them.

In the words immediately before these, the holy martyr warns the Magnesians<sup>9</sup> "to account nothing for a reasonable service, that is done privately," or in their own private way. Agreeable, no doubt, to the apostolical charge (Heb. x. 25) that "they should not forsake the assembling of themselves together," but meet for public worship under the proper minister of their church; to avoid schism and heterodox opinions, as he proceeds to explain himself presently after. Now, if it had been undeniably proved by any expressions before, that there neither was, nor ought to be, any more than

<sup>9</sup> Μηδὲ πειράσητε εὐλογόν τι φαίνεσθαι ἰδίᾳ ὑμῶν. Ad Magnes. [7. Jacobson.]

one single house of prayer, or of public worship, within a bishop's diocese, and that his personal ministry was absolutely necessary in all divine offices; it might have been fairly inferred indeed, that they were 'all' obliged to assemble with him, in that one individual place alone: but since the holy Martyr himself had informed us elsewhere, that the most solemn offices of public worship "were valid in themselves, and acceptable to God too," when performed by any person whom the bishop should authorise and approve of for it, as we have seen before he did; sure, if any particular number or society of members in that diocese had assembled for public worship, under any presbyter so allowed and commissioned by him to officiate for them, they had answered the full import of the holy Martyr's charge here given them, against private and clandestine ways of worshipping; or else I cannot see how the bishop's approbation and permission of such a person could be to any purpose at all. Nay, if the same presbyter, by virtue of such permission, could not minister in places different from their bishop's church, or cathedral of his diocese too; our learned author's chapel of ease, as he calls it, in the Alexandrian church had been no better than a schismatical conventicle, at the least. So little can it be inferred from St. Ignatius's phrase in this place, that he confined a diocese to a single congregation.

But let us see what construction impartial commentators, and other ecclesiastical writers, have made of this phrase, *'Ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό'* to whose observations I shall only premise this

short and general key to them all; that as the phrase itself does, by no grammatical construction whatsoever, so much denote a 'place,' as it does a 'thing in general,' according to the known rule of all such neutral words as this is; so in the instances I shall mention, you will find it is accordingly taken and understood by them all.

Thus the learned Grotius, explaining this *Ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ*, in Acts iii. 1, he only translates it in these words, *Circa idem tempus*, that is, 'about the same time.' And in Beza's translation of the New Testament, the note and paraphrase upon it (Acts ii. 44), is this; that "the common assemblies of the church, with their mutual agreement in the same doctrine, and the great unanimity of their hearts, were signified by it<sup>r</sup>." Agreeable to which construction of it, is what we meet with in the Greek translations of Psal. xxxiv. 3, where that which the Septuagint render *Ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ*, by Aquila is translated, *Ὁμοθυμαδὸν*, that is, 'with one mind,' and 'one heart:' and I need not remind the reader of what we just now observed, that in Justin Martyr's use of the phrase, it could not be understood in the sense that our learned Enquirer here puts upon it, without the gross absurdity of bringing the Christians of whole cities and countries together into one and the same individual place at once (Acts iv, 26, 27). Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and people of Israel were gathered against Christ *ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ*,

<sup>r</sup> "Ita communes ecclesie cœtus significantur cum mutuâ in eandem doctrinam consensione, et summâ animorum concordia." Not. ad Bez. in Act. ii. 44. Vid. etiam Poli Synops. in Act. ii. 44.

were they all in one place, and at one time together?

How concluding that argument must then be, which proceeds upon a positive interpretation of a single phrase, that is indefinite in its own nature, and determined to signify otherwise by authors of no mean character in the learned world, and is not suitable to the author's own notions, from whence it is taken, neither; I shall not need to observe.

But is it possible, you will say, that *μία προσευχή* and *μία δέησις*, that is, one prayer and one supplication for a whole church, should be consistent with this plurality of congregations?

Let us see what we mean by it; and then, it is likely, we shall argue clearer about it. For if it should appear by the nature of the thing itself, and by the use and application which St. Ignatius makes of it, that it can consist so; that is all, I think, can be required in it.

Now, from the nature of the thing itself, it is clear, that prayer must be 'one,' either in respect of the phrase and words it is uttered or delivered in; or in respect of the sense and substance, the heads or subject matter of which it is composed: that is, it must be one, either in respect of the 'matter,' or in respect of the 'form' of it; for to say it must be 'one' here, upon the account of admitting but one place or one person in a diocese to offer it up, is to 'beg the question,' which it is brought to prove; and therefore unity in either of the other senses, if it agrees with the holy Martyr's sense too, is the fair account of it.

Now, that it is not meant to be 'one,' in the former sense, relating to the words or phrase of it, I suppose will readily be granted; for that would make the holy Father plainly to prescribe a stinted form, or mere common liturgy in the church; which our gifted congregational bishops, I conceive, would scarce allow. And therefore, 2ndly, it must be understood to be 'one,' in respect of the sense and substance of it; or in plainer terms, it must be 'prayer' made with strict analogy to the one common faith, and sound doctrine of the one catholic Church throughout the Christian world, as every true Christian prayer necessarily ought to be. And in no other sense than this, is it conceivable, I think, how even a single bishop in a congregational church, could be said to offer up this *μία δέησις*, or 'one prayer' with his people, which is here enjoined, who affects, as often as they meet together, to alter the phrase and language of his devotion for them.

And that this was St. Ignatius's meaning in it, we may reasonably infer, 1st, from the words he immediately joins with it, "one prayer, one supplication," says he, "one mind, and one hope;" the two latter words imply a plain unity in them, and yet have so diffusive a sense, as to extend to all the congregations of the catholic Church; and therefore why not the two former too? And, 2ndly, we may infer it also from the use he was then making of it; which, as I hinted before, was directly to secure them from schismatical conventicles, and heretical notions; and since the bishop himself was to approve, as we have seen St. Ignatius himself allowed him

to do, of any minister whatsoever that should officiate for them, and thereby reserve to himself the inspection, visitation, and censure of them, which is a natural consequence of it, whatsoever prayer the people of his diocese should join in, with such a commissioned and approved presbyter as this, could never bring them into that danger of schism the holy Martyr here warned them against; but being orthodox, and as conformable to Christian faith and doctrine, as the bishop's own could be, would, in the true sense of the primitive Father, and to the great end for which he intended it, be that *μία δέησις*, that one prayer, which the bishop and all his diocese were to offer up to God.

And that this was a true notion of the unity of prayer in the primitive churches, Tertullian would satisfy us, if we would allow him to speak only what he could justify and make good in his Apology for all the Christians in the Roman empire; for though we have no reason to believe that he frequented many more congregations than that single one to which he belonged, as other Christians did, yet he takes the freedom to declare to the Roman magistrates what kind of prayer the Christian churches used in general, how innocent their petitions were, and frankly mentions several particulars of them, by way of upbraiding them all for persecuting subjects that lived and prayed so loyally and harmlessly as they did\*. If he could do this without some common liturgies, then at least, in use amongst them, or some known canon of the ministerial offices, surely it could be upon no other grounds

\* "Oramus pro imperatoribus, pro ministris eorum, ac potes-

than this, that he was sure the Christian Church's prayers were one and the same in all places, in the sense we are now speaking; that is, they were bound to bear a strict analogy to that one creed, that one and the same system of Christian doctrine, and that one divine model of all prayer which our blessed Lord delivered to them, and every one of them were known to be guided by. Other Fathers, as ancient or ancients than Tertullian, speak in the same manner with him. But on this head, I think, there needs no more.

To proceed then: "The bishop," says our learned author (p. 18, 19), "had but one altar, or communion table, in his whole diocese, at which his whole flock received the sacrament from him, and that at one time." For proof of this, he offers those words of St. Ignatius to the Philadelphians; "there is but one altar, as but one bishop<sup>t</sup>." To explain which phrase, I shall use our Enquirer's own method (p. 21), by joining to it a parallel expression of the admirable St. Cyprian, which is so near akin to it, that it seems almost a mere translation of it; at least it is a most direct and immediate illustration of it. St. Cyprian's words are here in the margin; our Enquirer renders them thus: "No man can regularly constitute a new bishop, or erect a new altar, besides the one bishop and the one altar<sup>u</sup>." And here I am sorry I must

tatibus, pro statu seculi, pro rerum quiete, pro morâ finis." Tert. Apol. c. 39.

<sup>t</sup> "Ἐν θυσιαστήριον, ὡς εἷς ἐπίσκοπος, etc. Ep. ad Philadelp. [4. Jacobson.]

<sup>u</sup> "Aliud altare constitui, aut sacerdotium novum fieri, præter unum altare, et unum sacerdotium, non potest." Cypr. Ep. 43. [Fell.]

remark a fatal oversight, for I am loth to give even this unjust translation another name; but it is evident, what St. Cyprian here calls ‘a new priesthood,’ and ‘one priesthood,’ our learned author renders by a ‘new bishop,’ and ‘one bishop;’ which proves, indeed, that he believed it a directly parallel place to that of St. Ignatius, as it really is, because he translates both in the very same words. But, in the mean time, he so disguises this holy Father’s text, that he hides from the English reader’s sight the main key which would open the genuine sense and meaning of this, and all such expressions as these are; not only in these two venerable Fathers alone, but in all the writings of primitive antiquity besides: for the unity of the altar, the unity of the bishop, the unity of the eucharist, the unity of Christian prayer, and the very unity of the whole Church itself, are all founded upon the common bottom that the unity of the Christian ‘priesthood’ is; and no man ever so unlocked the evangelical secret of this catholic and Christian unity as the inimitable St. Cyprian has done. So that if his short and plain, but admirable account of it, were but duly weighed and credited, as it ought to be, we should hear but few enquiries after the constitution of the primitive Church, few amusements about the fundamental unity of it, drawn only from a scattered sentence, here and there, in the most uniform records of the best and ancientest writers in it.

St. Cyprian’s brief account of it lies in that noted passage, so familiar to all who ever read his works, or almost ever heard his name:



“Episcopacy<sup>x</sup>,” says he, in his small tract of the Unity of the Church, “is but one; a part whereof each (bishop) holds, so as to be interested for the whole. The Church is also one, which by its fruitful increase improves into a multitude, as the beams of the sun are many, as branches from trees, and streams from a fountain, whose number, though it seems dispersed by the abundant plenty of them, yet their unity is preserved by the common original of them all.” Apply this plain rule to all sorts of unities mentioned here; and see first, if the primitive expressions of ‘one church,’ ‘one altar,’ and ‘one bishop,’ do not evidently consist with as many churches, altars, and bishops, as can be proved to be undeniably derived from one and the same original institutor; the unity of whose divine power and Spirit, diffused at first amongst the chosen twelve, stamps a character of unity upon all who regularly descend from them, and upon every individual who only claims under, and owns his authority from, and his dependence upon such as them; nay, the unity of ‘sundry’ prayers too, as I have shewn before, by the same analogy of reason, may be owned to be such, if they all centre, as to the substance of them, in that original model which the divine author of Christian prayer first delivered in to us; those common articles of faith and doctrine

<sup>x</sup> “Episcopatus est unus, cujus à singulis in solidum pars tenetur. Ecclesia quoque una est, quæ in multitudinem latius incremento fecunditatis extenditur; quo modo solis multi radii, sed lumen unum, etc. Numerositas licet diffusa videatur exundantis copię largitate, *unitas* tamen servatur *in origine.*” Cypr. de Unit. Eccl. p. 108. [Fell.]

which he obliged us all to; provided they be offered up by a person duly authorised for such ministerial offices in the church. Nor will the ministration of the blessed eucharist by divers hands, or at sundry tables, though within the same particular diocese still, differ anything from the rest, if duly warranted by, and kept accountable to, the first and principal minister of that holy ordinance, who is the rightful bishop of the whole flock. The plurality of eucharists is thus made one throughout all the united provinces and dioceses of the catholic Church; because in the gradual progress of the Church from the beginning, both bishops and presbyters do all claim a power of commission to consecrate from one another, till they rise up to the blessed Apostles themselves, and they from Christ alone.

And thus St. Ignatius's catholic phrase, of 'one altar, one bishop,' and the like, does no more prove the necessity of but one communion-table in a primitive bishop's diocese, than it would do in the most extensive one of this or any former ages, or in the largest patriarchal province that was ever settled in the Church, provided every one who ministered at each of them had a just commission from their orthodox superiors for doing so: but what is otherwise than so, is altar against altar indeed, and no less than formal schism. Let us take care then, not to "draw up forces," as St. Ignatius's words import<sup>y</sup>, "against the bishop, if we mean not to withdraw our subjection from God."

<sup>y</sup> Σπουδάσωμεν μὴ ἀντιτάσσεσθαι τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ, ἵνα ὦμεν Θεοῦ ὑποτασσόμενοι. Ad. Eph. [5. Jacobson.]

By this account the reader will see what the ancients truly meant, when they called a schismatical usurpation of the episcopal power, by the name of ‘a profane altar;’ which yet our learned Enquirer urges again and again, as a fair argument to prove, that there could be no more than one single congregation in a whole diocese, though the ministers of a second, or third, or more, should never so much agree with the bishop himself in all his principles and ministrations, and be even authorised and approved of by him; as St. Ignatius expressly tells us<sup>z</sup>, a bishop might so authorise and approve him; in which case they were so far from being thought ‘a profane altar,’ that they were truly owned to be but one and the same.

Next to the one only communion-table, our author proceeds to prove the second part of his main proposition, “that all the people of the diocese received together at once.” His authorities for that are only two: first, from St. Cyprian, whose words he quotes and represents in the form of a direct and positive proposition, thus: “we celebrate the sacrament, the whole brotherhood being present.<sup>a</sup>” This is pretty near the author’s words, I confess; but his application of them to the whole flock of a diocese, either of St. Cyprian himself, or of any other bishop, is very hard to be gathered from them in the place where I find them lie. The case was this: St. Cyprian<sup>b</sup> was complaining to

<sup>z</sup> *Ἐν αὐτὸς ἐπιτρέψῃ.* Ad Smyrn. [8. Jacobson.]

<sup>a</sup> “Ut sacramenti veritatem fraternitate omni præsente celebremus.” Cyp. Ep. 63. [Fell.]

<sup>b</sup> “Quoniam quidam vel ignoranter, vel simpliciter in

Cæcilius of some persons in some places, who either out of ignorance, or simplicity of heart, celebrated the holy eucharist with water only in the chalice, without wine; the zealous bishop is full of argument and resentment against them: "What!" says he, "are they afraid the heathen should discover them in their morning sacrifices by the smell of wine? What will they do in time of persecution, if they are so ashamed of the blood of Christ in the very offerings themselves? Or do many of them excuse themselves thus, that though water only was offered in the morning, yet when they come to supper, they offer a mixed cup then?" I shall not amuse my reader with what the learned may say about their taking the eucharist thus in the morning, and completing it in the evening, or about any other sense that may be given of it, it is foreign to our case; but the words are plain<sup>c</sup>: to which St. Cyprian replies, "but when we sup," says he, "we cannot call the people to our feast, 'that we might celebrate the truth of the sacrament,' namely, in a mixed cup, as it ought to be, 'with all the brotherhood about us.'" This is the occasion then of the words. In which it is easy to observe:—

1stly, That they refer not at all to St. Cyprian in person, or possibly to any in his diocese, though in the name of Christians in general, he says, that 'we might celebrate' the sacrament aright, etc.; or if they did refer to

calice dominico sanctificando et plebi ministrando, non hoc faciunt, quod Jesus Christus sacrificii hujus auctor—fecit, etc." Cyp. ib. sub init.

<sup>c</sup> See the same, 63. Ep. §. 7.

him, they would demonstrate that he had more congregations than one in his church; for in his own cathedral, to be sure, he did not minister so, or else he reasoned very strangely indeed.

2ndly, It is plain that 'all the brotherhood' here is put in opposition to the Christians in their private families, which I think with sufficient propriety of speech might be said, if he meant only all the Christian brethren that used to meet in 'their own particular oratory' together for public worship, though there were twenty other suchlike oratories as those, united together with them under one common bishop, to make up a diocesan church; for certainly, what any private men should do in their own houses now-a-days, which ought to be done in their parish church, might very properly be re-proved, by saying, they ought to have done it when 'all the brotherhood' came together.

3rdly, I might observe what an useful turn our ingenious author gave to this quotation, by translating it with that insensible variation, "we do celebrate," instead of, "that we might celebrate;" which made it directly St. Cyprian's act and deed in his own diocese, and gave no occasion to imagine, that there could be any other possible meaning in it, than very plainly so.

Lay these few things together, and judge what an irrefragable argument this must be, to prove that no primitive bishop whatsoever, and particularly St. Cyprian himself, did ever minister the blessed sacrament; but that every soul under his respective episcopal care, who commu-

nicated at all, were always present with him, which was the thing it was brought to prove; nor has our learned author any one authority more here, to prove this grand point of his general proposition, but barely the repetition of 'Justin Martyr's sundays' assemblies' again, "where all in cities and countries," he says, "met in one place," which I conceive I have shewn already, to contain an irreconcilable inconsistency in it, and that it proves no such thing.

But to make all sure, he tells us (p. 19.) "the Christians, in Tertullian's time and country, received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper from the hands of the bishop alone <sup>d</sup>." But how do we know that Tertullian's 'presidents' in this place (for that is his word, as you see in the margin), were the 'bishops' only? Now, as far as our Enquirer can assure us of it, you may find in p. 67 of this tract of his, where we read, that "president was one discretive appellation of a bishop; and yet St. Cyprian," says he, "calls his presbyters presidents too:" may not we be very well assured then, do you think, that Tertullian, whom St. Cyprian familiarly called his master, could mean nothing else by his 'presidents,' but bishops of a diocese alone, since his great disciple, St. Cyprian, thought no such thing of it? At least, would not one think, that our ingenious author should satisfy his reader a little with some certain note here, that in this passage of Tertullian, it could be meant no otherwise, since he himself had

<sup>d</sup> "Nec de aliorum manu quàm *præsidentium* sumimus." Tert. de Coron. Mil. p. 121. Edit. Rigalt. Lutetiae, 1641.

made that observation for us? But to be short, and to give a fair account of the scope of that passage in Tertullian; it was thus: Tertullian was contending for the authority of tradition for many common rites then used in the Christian Church, without a scripture warrant for them<sup>e</sup>. Amongst these customs, he instances a general practice in the Church then, to communicate in the morning, different from the time of the institution itself; and together with that, this which we are now speaking of, “that they received the communion from the president’s hands alone;” both equally common in his days in the Christian Church; which, to make as clear an interpretation of it as we can, I think implies neither more nor less than this, that as the sacrament was then generally administered in the morning, so wherever it was administered, the consecrated elements were usually delivered to the communicants, as it is indeed most in use now, by the hands of them only, who presided in the several assemblies where those holy exercises were performed; that is, I humbly conceive, by the officiating ministers themselves<sup>f</sup>. And what appearance of proof there is in all this, for a bishop’s personally distributing the blessed elements to every communicant in his whole diocese, at one time, and in one place; I desire the words and context may be sifted, and I

<sup>e</sup> Eucharistiæ sacramentum, et in tempore victûs, et omnibus mandatum à domino, etiam antelucanis cœtibus, nec de aliorum manu, quam *presidentium* sumimus. Tertul. ib.

<sup>f</sup> “Whereas in many places,” as Justin Martyr tells us, “the deacons used to do it.”

should willingly set down by the reader's judgment of it.

Well! "But the bishop alone, generally §," says he, "baptized all in his diocese." How much the word 'generally' implies, I need not overnicely enquire: he himself, again gives me an easier solution of it; for (p. 55.) he tells us from the same Tertullian, "that the bishop hath the right of baptism, and then the presbyters and deacons; but for the honour of the Church, not without the bishop's authority."

I shall observe no more at present from this quotation, than this; that the presbyters and deacons might baptize in the diocese, if the bishop allowed them to do it; as St. Ignatius, we know before, admitted that baptism to be acceptable to God, which the bishop should approve; so that the whole of the matter, it seems, is this, that the bishop, with his presbyters and deacons, must baptize all in the diocese; and this is offered as a reason, that a diocese must be no more than a congregational church, because the bishop could not otherwise do all; for as for his 'generally' doing it, that is our Enquirer's own; neither quotation has a tittle of it.

I confess, that contestation mentioned here, which was the renunciation form, which all adult catechumens used in their own persons, to testify their forsaking the devil, the pomp, etc., before they actually were baptized; it is probable,

§ Enquiry, p. 21. Sub antistite contestamur nos renunciare diabolo et pompæ. Tertul. de Coron. Mil. c. 3. p. 121. ut suprà.



and possible enough too, it might be in the presence of the bishop himself, and the diocese have a sufficient plurality of congregations in it too<sup>h</sup>; since “it was a very large space of time,” as Tertullian expresses it, “which was set apart for this very ordering of baptism every year, even the fifty days, from Easter to Whitsuntide,” including the festivals, as you will see his account of it, in the margin, shews.

It is a hard task to attend such minute particulars, when I have produced before such general rules as might answer all at once: but I am willing to please. He tells us further then, that Justin Martyr assures us<sup>i</sup>, “the bishop was common curator, and overseer, of all the orphans, widows, diseased; in a word, of all that were needy and indigent;” and thence infers, “that the diocese could not be very large, where the bishop personally relieved them all.” Now, the seeming force of this argument does not lie in Justin Martyr’s words, but in the discreet manner of wording the inference from them, with a little help in the translation: the holy Martyr said just before, that the collection of the people’s alms was deposited in their president’s hands, and immediately subjoins, that he took care to relieve all kind of distressed

<sup>h</sup> Diem baptismo solennem pascha præstat exinde Pentecoste, ordinandis lavacris latissimum spatium est, quo et domini resurrectio inter discipulos frequentata est. Tertul. de Bapt. c. 19. Edit. Rigal. Lutet. 1641.

<sup>i</sup> Τὸ συλλεγόμενον παρὰ τῷ Προεστῶτι ἀποτίθεται, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπικουρεῖ ὀρφάνοις τε καὶ χήραις, καὶ τοῖς διὰ νόσον ἢ δι’ ἄλλην αἴτιαν λειπομένοις, καὶ τοῖς ἐν δεσμοῖς οὖσι, καὶ τοῖς παρεπιδήμοις οὖσι ξένοις, καὶ ἀπλῶς τοῖς ἐν χρεῖα οὖσι κηδεμῶν γίνεται. Just. Mart. Apol. ii. p. 99. Edit. Colon. 1686.

persons, there mentioned, and out of the offerings, to be sure, that were so intrusted with him. Our Enquirer infers that he 'personally' did this; by which he would have us understand that all whom the church's charity relieved, the bishop 'personally' visited, inspected every individual case from first to last, himself alone, and distributed relief to the poor sufferers with his own hand; for here the stress of all lies, which must necessarily prove them to be so few; and to give a better colour to his interpretation, he finds out a noted parish term for this episcopal almoner, and translates him an 'overseer.' Now let the common sense of all mankind judge for us, if any public trust of this nature was ever understood to be necessarily executed so in any sort of society whatsoever. I believe Justin Martyr himself, or any other Christian writer besides him, would have ventured to say as much, or more, than all we have here, of St. Paul's care in treasuring up and distributing the alms of many Christian congregations, for the relief of all his churches; and yet in the sense we here contend for, he had succoured but a poor number of the whole, and been but a small sub-almoner in the matter, if what he obtained of the several churches to collect, what the presbyters and elders did by his order in it, and the messengers of their own too, which he allowed to distribute it for him, had not been imputed to his own person, as common governor and guardian for them all. And why should it then be so impracticable a thing, as is here pretended, for any single person to take care of distressed Christians in more

than a single congregation? Besides, the charity of the Church in those days, was, among other uses, to be employed for relief of banished and captive brethren, in mines, in islands, in remotest barbarous countries: in what sense did the bishop personally do all this? But I am weary of serious reasoning, in so slight an objection as this is.

And yet what follows, (pp. 22, 23, 24.) I should less expect to meet with from so judicious a hand. For he observes, in no less than seventeen or eighteen instances here produced together, that when the ancient church-writers give an account of sundry public and solemn acts of discipline in a diocese, (as censures, excommunications, absolutions, elections, ordinations, or the like,) they tell us, they were done "before the whole church, before the multitude, before all the people, by the suffrage of all the brotherhood, with the knowledge, and in the presence of the people;" and from hence concludes, that all the whole diocese personally met together in one place upon these occasions, and consequently were no more than could make one single congregation.

And here I cannot but observe these three things:

1st, That this singular construction of such obvious and familiar forms of speech as these are, bears very hard upon the common sense and language of all mankind. Can no public act of civil justice, or solemn ministration in the church amongst us, be said to pass in "the face of the country, before all the people, openly, and in the sight of all men; nay, in

the face of the whole world," as some will think it no absurdity to say, unless the matter of fact will answer to the very letter of the phrase? Are not all public or solemn acts of Church or state, as to discipline and government, familiarly distinguished from any others by such a latitude of expression as this, and no otherwise taken by any man, that ever I heard of, than that a general liberty is given to all who either can, or will, or are concerned to be present at them, to come and offer what they think material; to judge, or bear witness of the regularity and justice of what is done? And if every individual member of each respective society were expected to be personally present at such solemnities as these, neither courts, nor halls, nor cathedrals, were ever yet erected, that could answer the occasions which the Church or state would have for them; and yet no English author, I am persuaded, would think it an impropriety to say, that such public acts of law or discipline as these were done in the presence, sight, and cognizance of the whole country, church, or people; and if no exceptions, but rather apparent acclamations were made, as is not unusual upon sundry such occasions, they would say they were done with the general consent, suffrage, and approbation of them all. But,

2ndly, That other way of arguing bears no less hard upon the very language of the Holy Scriptures themselves; and therefore there is little reason to fasten it on the writings of the primitive Fathers, who were the true guardians and assertors of them.

What more familiar phrase in the whole history of the law delivered by Moses, and during all the time of his government, than that "Moses himself spake to all the congregation of Israel whatsoever the Lord commanded him; nay, even in the ears of all the congregation of Israel<sup>k</sup>," he is said to "speak the words of that song<sup>l</sup>," which he left for a testimony amongst them. In what sense do we conceive he himself could be said to speak in the hearing of so numerous a host as the children of Israel then were? At different times, do we think? or tribe by tribe, and by piecemeals, in his own person? No, he himself gives us a better key for the understanding of such phrases as these: for at the twenty-eighth verse immediately foregoing, "gather unto me," says he, "the elders of the tribes, and the officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to record against them." So that it plainly appears, that whatsoever Moses spake in such a manner, and in such an audience, as was sufficient to convey his words and precepts to all the tribes of Israel, though not immediately from his own lips, that the holy prophet himself thought not improperly expressed, when he said afterwards that he spoke them "to the whole congregation of Israel." And if we can conceive any literal way of interpreting these, and many such-like expressions in the Holy Bible<sup>m</sup>, so that six hundred thousand men

<sup>k</sup> Exod. xxxv. 1. 4. Deut. v. 1. xxix. 2, etc.

<sup>l</sup> Deut. xxxi. 30.

<sup>m</sup> Of like phrases in the New Testament, see Matt. iii. 5; Job xii. 9; Acts xvii. 5, etc.

should at once be instructed by the ministry of one man, we need dispute no more about the greater or lesser numbers in the diocese of a primitive church, since one such extraordinary comment as that would answer all for us. But,

3rdly, To argue more directly *ad hominem* in this case: if that way of reasoning be right, then it will prove the dioceses of latter ages, as well as the ancientest of them all, to be but mere congregational churches too: compare the times and phrases, and you will find it to be so. Our Enquirer tells us from St. Cyprian, “that Sabinus was elected bishop of Emerita by the suffrage of all the brotherhood<sup>n</sup>.” This was in the third age.

Now Theodoret tells us that Nectarius was made bishop of Constantinople “by the suffrage of the whole city too<sup>o</sup>”; and Flavianus made bishop of Antioch, “the whole church, as it were with one voice, giving their suffrage for him<sup>p</sup>.” And this was towards the latter end of the fourth age. The like says Platina of Gregory the Great, that he was made bishop of Rome “by the unanimous consent of all<sup>q</sup>.” And again, “all the people chose him<sup>r</sup>,” says Gregory of Tours; and this at the very close of the sixth age.

<sup>n</sup> De universæ fraternitatis suffragio. Cypr. Ep. 68. p. 6. [Fell.]

<sup>o</sup> Πάσης ἐπιψηφισομένης τῆς πόλεως.

<sup>p</sup> Πάσης συμψηφοῦ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ὡσπερ διὰ μιᾶς φωνῆς. Theod. l. v. c. 9.

<sup>q</sup> Uno omnium consensu creatur pontifex. Platina in Vit. Greg.

<sup>r</sup> Gregorium plebs omnis elegit. Greg. Turon. Hist. Franc. l. x. c. 1.

The learned Enquirer again tells us (p. 24), from an African synod in 258, "that ordinations should be done with the knowledge and in the presence of the people, that so they might be just and lawful, being approved by the suffrage and judgment of all; and that accordingly St. Cyprian consulted his people so." And from hence he infers that his diocese could be no more than one congregation. Now the Roman presbyters, in their letter to Honorius the emperor, which was in the fifth century, speak just the same thing in relation to Boniface their bishop, whom they chose and consecrated in that very manner. "On a set day," say they, "calling all to an assembly, we went to a church we had all agreed upon, and there consulting with the Christian people, we chose him whom God had ordered; for by the applause of all the people, and the consent of the best in the city, we pitched upon the venerable Boniface, a man ordained and consecrated by divine institution<sup>s</sup>." Here is an election and ordination in one certain place, in a general assembly of the church, consultation with, and applause of all the people in it; and yet our learned Enquirer is very well assured, I doubt not, that there were many congregations in the church of Rome at that time; and therefore what proof such arguments can be, that there

<sup>s</sup> Altero die ad Ecclesiam ubi prius ab omnibus tum erat constitutum, habitâ *omnium* collatione, properavimus, ibique participato cum Christianâ plebe consilio, quem Deus jussit elegimus; nam venerabilem virum Bonifacium—acclamatione totius populi ac consensu meliorum civitatis asseruimus, divinæ institutionis ordine consecratum. Baron. An. 419. N. 8. Mag. 1601. p. 442.

were no more than one in St. Cyprian's time, I shall leave to himself to judge.

But can a bishop write a public gratulatory letter in his own name, and in the name of 'all his fraternity,' as our Enquirer observes<sup>t</sup> St. Cyprian did to Lucius, bishop of Rome, and not have all 'the fraternity,' i. e. all the people of his diocese present with him? Yes surely, in the sense St. Cyprian meant, he may; for if all the people of his own diocese were met together at the sending that letter, then all the people of many other dioceses, and probably of his whole province, were assembled together for it too: for his words are, "I and my colleagues, and all the fraternity, send this letter to you<sup>u</sup>." Now colleagues, in St. Cyprian's language, I think is unquestionably understood of fellow bishops, and given by him to no other order of ecclesiastics whatsoever; so that all the fraternity, subjoined to them, does most properly mean that they and their churches, as the occasion did require, sent unanimous congratulations to the blessed confessor Lucius, so lately returned from banishment.

If this be thought no clear construction of the place, let us compare it with the synodical epistle of the council of Antioch, from whence our Enquirer himself here quotes another authority to the like purpose. The bishops in that council, writing to Dionysius bishop of Rome, and Maximus bishop of Alexandria, first

<sup>t</sup> Enquiry, p. 25. *Fraternitas omnis. Cypr. Ep. 61. [Fell.]*

<sup>u</sup> *Ego et collegæ, et fraternitas omnis, has ad vos literas mittimus. Cypr. ib.*



prefixed their<sup>x</sup> own names to the epistle, and then join with them ‘the churches of God also;’ that is, unquestionably, the churches they presided over, who jointly with them sent greeting, and concurred in the account they there give of Paulus Samosatenus’s case; and do we think the whole dioceses of those several bishops were personally present with them in that council? That would mak<sup>e</sup> it such a synod as is surely without example, and I think beyond imagination. Certainly bishops, or the chief magistrates of any society or corporation, may, in consistory or council, write letters of a public importance in the name of the society or body they relate to, without convening or polling all the individual members of it: and their reading of letters of such public concern ‘to their numerous people,’ which is another argument our learned Enquirer insists upon<sup>y</sup>, is better accounted for in such an obvious sense as this is, than he will ever account for king Josiah’s “reading the book of the covenant in the ears of all the men of Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem<sup>z</sup>,” in his own literal and strained sense of such expressions. So that the triumph in the close of this head, might as well have been in softer words at least; for it is pretty much to say, for no better reasons than these,

<sup>x</sup> “Ελενος, καὶ Ὑμέναιος, καὶ Θεόφιλος. Καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ πάντες οἱ σὺν ἡμῖν παροικοῦντες τὰς ἐγγύς πόλεις καὶ ἔθνη Ἐπίσκοποι καὶ Πρεσβύτεροι καὶ Διάκονοι, καὶ αἱ Ἐκκλησίαι Θεοῦ ἀγαπητοῖς, etc.—χαίρειν.

<sup>y</sup> Enq. p. 24. Sanctissimæ atque amplissimæ plebi legere. Cypr. Ep. 59. [Fell.]

<sup>z</sup> 2 Kings xxiii. 2.

that a primitive diocese could not 'possibly' be more than one single congregation.

There are some few quotations amongst the rest in this place, which urge the necessity of all the people's presence indeed, upon account of the part and right they 'all' had to judge of any offence that was brought before the consistory of the church; but those will be more properly considered in the following chapters, where they are repeated to us again, and offered as undeniable proofs of such a right and practice in the primitive Church. In the mean time, I cannot but say, it is surprising to see how often the same quotations are brought over and over again in this short Enquiry to serve the different ends of it, and make it appear a work of great variety of reading, and strongly supported by primitive authority for it.

We have a pregnant instance of this in the four next pages before us, which are from p. 27 to p. 31. Our author had gleaned, as we have seen already, all the short phrases in St. Ignatius's epistles that he thought gave any countenance to his hypothesis, and offered them at once to prove his general proposition: these we had at p. 17 to p. 21. And now he gives us them all again by retail, and applies the self-same quotations by piecemeals to prove that each of those churches St. Ignatius wrote to were mere congregational churches, and no more. This makes the bulk of authority look great indeed, but adds not one grain of weight to it; and therefore the reader will excuse me, I know, if I take no more notice of his repeated arguments here about "one altar, one eucharist,

one prayer for the whole Church; that the bishop took one common care of them all; that nothing must be done without the bishop; that all must assemble together in one place," and the like. By which repetitions he here labours separately to prove that the dioceses of Smyrna, Ephesus, Magnesia, Philadelphia, and Tralium, were such sort of churches as he contends for.

The strength of all those arguments, I conceive, I have fairly tried already; and it is much there should scarcely be one new one found to make any of those five eminent churches bear a clear testimony for him, when he took the pains to consider each of them singly, and one by one.

It is true, to make the diocese of Smyrna appear such, he adds a short clause or two, omitted before: 1st, "That the bishop of that church could know his whole flock personally by their names<sup>a</sup>." So he translates the place, though St. Ignatius's words have no such affirmation in them, but are only a plain advice to St. Polycarp to do what the primitive bishops always did, that is, to keep the names of every member of his church enrolled in what the ancients called the *Matricula* of their church; the occasion of the words imply it to be so. He just before besought St. Polycarp "not to neglect the widows of the church<sup>b</sup>;" and immediately after desires him "not to overlook so

<sup>a</sup> Enq. p. 27. Ἐξ ὀνόματος πάντας ζήτει. Ep. ad Polycarp. [4. Jacobson.]

<sup>b</sup> Χήραι μὴ ἀμελείσθωσαν. Ep. ad Polyc. [4. Jacobson.]

much as the men-servants and maid-servants in it<sup>c</sup>;" and in the midst of this, as a means so to know the quality, number, and condition of his diocese, advises him "to enquire out all by name," that is, to get such a register of their names that upon occasion of any object of charity proposed to him, of any complaint or application made to him about any within his cure or jurisdiction, or in case of apostacy, or perseverance in time of persecution, or the like, by means of this general *Matricula*, he, as the other bishops did, might more directly know how the case stood with them. And which was more than all this, the names thus entered in this sacred record were personally entitled 'then' to all the public intercessions and spiritual blessings obtained by the eucharistical prayers, oblations, and sacraments of the whole Church; and to have their names blotted out of this, was a constant effect of excommunication, and was dreaded by all that had true veneration, as those primitive Christians had, for the holy ordinances of the Church. Those who know the right nature of the orthodox commemorations, and eucharistical offerings for the saints, before the Roman corruptions so wretchedly infected them, as they now do, cannot be unacquainted with this. And these were sufficient reasons for that apostolical Father to mind a bishop of the Church to be careful of keeping such a necessary *Matricula* as this, and an effectual way for St. Polycarp to take care of the meanest and poorest members of his diocese,

<sup>c</sup> Ἐξ ὀνόματος πάντας ζήτει. Δούλους καὶ δούλας μὴ ὑπερηφάνει. [4.]

which, the context tells us, was the occasion of St. Ignatius's using these words. But as to the matter of but one single congregation being then under his cure, and that "he must personally know them all by name," as one neighbour knows another, which our Enquirer's translation affirms of them, I think they no more imply it, than that Augustus Cæsar had but one town to command, and could know every subject he had, when, for many political occasions, he caused them all to be enrolled, and required the state of his empire to be brought in to him. For the censor's work, in such a case as that, was to give in an estimate of the age, children, family, and estates of all the people under him, as Tully gives us an account of it<sup>d</sup>.

But still, says our Enquirer, Smyrna could not have more than one congregation in it, because, as St. Ignatius says again, "it was not fitting that any should marry there without the bishop's consent<sup>e</sup>." Now I confess it seems to me no unpracticable matter for the same thing to be done in the very city of London or York at this day, if either bans or licences were managed with that proper care which the Church designed they should; nay, I think it may be said, even as matters stand now, that either the bishop in person, or such as are commissioned by him, which is much the same thing, have a necessary cognizance of all such

<sup>d</sup> Censores populi ævitates, soboles, familias, pecuniasque censento. Cic. de leg. l. iii.

<sup>e</sup> Πρέπει δὲ τοῖς γαμοῦσι, καὶ ταῖς γαμουμέναις μετὰ γνώμης τοῦ Ἐπισκόπου τὴν ἔνωσιν ποιεῖσθαι. Ep. ad Polyc. p. 13. [5. ed. Jacobson.]

solemn contracts, before the consummation of them, in the largest dioceses amongst us. And this gives opportunity, at least, to consent or disallow of them, without reducing their dioceses to fewer congregations than they have all along had.

Once more the holy Martyr is summoned to bear witness to this congregational cause; and if he fails them there, our learned Enquirer, for a very great while at least, gives him quite over. This last is a pretty close evidence indeed, as (p. 29) he manages it<sup>f</sup>, for he makes the holy Martyr expressly say, that the diocese of Magnesia had but barely ‘one church’ in it; and I will shew you how he says it. In his zeal for the unity of all the Christians there, he bids “them all run one way together, as to the temple of God” (or “as to the one temple of God,” as the old Latin translation has it, and the learned editor from the Florentine MSS. says it should be), and “as to the one altar<sup>g</sup>,” plainly exhorting them, by ‘way of similitude,’ to Christian unity and communion, after the pattern of the ancient Church of God amongst the Jews; who, though they had never so many synagogues, yet they all centered and were united in that one temple and one altar which God had fixed for them at Jerusalem. But that this comparative way of the holy Martyr’s arguing might the less be perceived, our careful Enquirer takes no notice of the little parti-

<sup>f</sup> *Eis ναὸν Θεοῦ.* Ignat. Ep. ad Mag. p. 34. [7. ed. Jacobson.]

<sup>g</sup> *Πάντες, ὡς εἰς ναὸν συντρέχετε Θεοῦ. ὡς ἐπὶ ἐν θυσιαστήριον* —etc. Ignat. ib.

cle, *ὄς* or *as*, but quotes the temple of God in the singular number by itself, as clear to his purpose, and gives it the name of a Christian church; though, besides this unfair dealing in the case, it may justly be a question whether St. Ignatius himself, or any contemporary writer, ever used that word, *Ναὸς*, for a place of Christian worship at all, it being generally a term in primitive writers applied to Jewish or heathen temples, and then judge what a proof this must be, for but one congregation in the whole diocese of Magnesia.

And now, though all the churches St. Ignatius wrote to, were eminent cities of the Lydian, or proconsular Asia; most of them the seats of public justice for the province where the Roman governor kept his residence, and, which is infinitely more, were dignified with a singular visitation by our blessed Lord in his great revelation to St. John; and therefore scarcely to be imagined such inconsiderable churches, as our learned Enquirer labours to represent them to us: yet, for fuller satisfaction in the case, he frankly appeals to Antioch, Rome, Carthage, and Alexandria, the undoubted metropolitan cities of the empire, to bear witness to the certainty of his congregational scheme; and therefore, not to neglect him, we must briefly survey them all.

Antioch was early blessed with the glad tidings of the gospel; the blood of the 'first Martyr' became the seeds of a Christian church there, as the Fathers took a pleasure to speak; for many Christians, dispersed upon that occasion, resorted thither; and the first account we

have of their labours is, that *the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord*<sup>h</sup>. Tidings of this came to the church of Jerusalem, where the whole college of Apostles were in readiness to consult for them. *They send Barnabas, a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith*, to improve this happy opportunity, and the success answered their expectation; for by his powerful exhortations, *much people*, says the holy text, *was added to the Lord*. But to forward this work of the Lord still more, Barnabas travels to Tarsus, and joins Saul, the great Apostle of the gentiles now, and returning with him to Antioch, *they continue a whole year together*, in that populous city, teaching *much people*. What a harvest of Christian converts those Apostolical labourers made in that compass of time, assisted by all that fled thither from Jerusalem besides, by the men of Cyprus and Cyrene<sup>i</sup>, fellow-labourers with them, to convert the Greeks as well as Jews to the faith; and by the several inspired prophets, so peculiarly noted to be amongst them<sup>k</sup>, I refer to the sober judgment of all who know the fruits of many single sermons preached by an Apostle, at the first promulgation of the gospel. Two things are sure, 1st, That the reputation and honour of the converts there was such, that they laid aside the derided name of Nazarenes or Galileans now, and openly assumed the

<sup>h</sup> Acts xi. 19. Ver. 21. to ver. 27.

<sup>i</sup> Acts xi. 20.

<sup>k</sup> Acts xi. 27, and chap. xiii. 1.



name of their Lord and master, and were first called Christians there<sup>1</sup>.

2ndly, That there were two distinct sects or parties of them<sup>m</sup>; Judaizing Christians, zealous of the law; and gentile converts, as earnestly insisting on their freedom and exemption from it: each party so considerable, as to call for an Apostolical council to decide the controversy between them.

Such was the very infant state of this church of Antioch; the oversight whereof, antiquity tells us, the great Apostle St. Peter, in a peculiar manner took upon himself, and for six or seven years, at least, made it his first and special Apostolic see. After him, Church-history acquaints us with fourteen bishops successively there, before the heretic Paulus of Samosata was promoted to that see: in the number of these were those mirrors of learning, zeal, fortitude, and piety, Ignatius, Theophilus, and Babylas, scarce to be equalled in all the monuments of the Church after the Apostles' time; whereof the first sat forty years, and each of the other two thirteen years together, were the watchful and laborious bishops of that "exceeding vast and numerous flock," as the words of the learned doctor Cave<sup>n</sup> are, where he speaks of St. Ignatius's charge at Antioch.

Yet notwithstanding all the united labours of so many Apostles, Prophets, holy Martyrs, and Confessors, to plant and improve a Christian

<sup>1</sup> Acts xi. 26.

<sup>m</sup> Chap. xv. 1, 2.

<sup>n</sup> Cave in the Life of Ignat. p. 108.

church in this renowned city of the east, in this *Θεόπολις*, or ‘city of God,’ as the ancients thought fit to name it; we are borne down, that there never were more believers in it for two hundred and seventy years after Christ, than what could meet together in one single house of prayer, and barely make a single congregation.

One would reasonably look for very unanswerable evidence, to prove so extraordinary an assertion; especially<sup>o</sup>, since this city of Antioch, according to St. Chrysostome’s calculation of it for St. Ignatius’s times, contained no less than two hundred thousand souls in it; and Tertullian<sup>p</sup>, as we have seen before, durst tell the persecuting Scapula, that the Christians then “were well nigh the greater part of every city.” Yet all that is offered us to the contrary is only this, that Paulus of Samosata, the heretical bishop of Antioch, after the middle of the third century, “refused to resign the church’s house,” when he was synodically deposed by a council held there; and this ‘church’s house,’ as our learned author will have it<sup>q</sup>, must needs be the only house of prayer or public worship for all that diocese, and consequently they could make but one congregation.

Now that the bishop of Antioch had a peculiar church, or house of prayer, for himself, as

<sup>o</sup> See Dr. Cave, ubi supra, p. 101.

<sup>p</sup> Tanta hominum multitudo, pars pæne major cujusque civitatis. Ad Scap. c. ii. p. 86. [ii. p. 69.—ed. Rigalt. Venet. 1744.]

<sup>q</sup> Μηδαμῶς ἐκστῆναι τῆς Ἐκκλησίας οἴκου. Euseb. l. vii. c. 30. [s. 17.—ed. Burton.]

bishop, more immediately to worship or officiate in, need not be disputed; and this so peculiarly the church's house, that so long as he was rightly possessed of that, he was possessed of the church or diocese whereof he was bishop; and to be legally and canonically ejected out of that, was to be ejected out of the church, be the diocese great or small, of more or fewer congregations belonging to it: for so, when Constantius the emperor was resolved to eject Paulus of Constantinople<sup>r</sup> out of that bishopric, he ordered Philip the prefect to turn him only out of one church, in the singular number, and place Macedonius in; that is, out of that single church where the bishops of Constantinople used to reside and officiate, though there were sundry other churches, long before that, built by Constantine<sup>s</sup> in that city, and an undoubted part of that bishop's diocese. But this single church, or house of prayer, was so peculiarly the 'church's house,' that, by being dispossessed of that, he was entirely thrown out of the whole church or diocese of Constantinople: and instances enow of this kind might be given, if need required; but I think the case is known to be the very same in respect of any modern bishop's cathedral at this day. Yet, to come more directly to the case before us, I think the synod of Antioch's account of Paulus Samosatenus, from whence this very objection is taken, does pretty fairly prove to us, that that heretical

<sup>r</sup> Τὸν μὲν Παῦλον τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐκβάλλη, ἀνεισάγη δὲ εἰς αὐτὴν Μακεδόσιον. Socrat. E. H. l. ii. c. 16. [p. 92.—ed. Vales. 1677.]

<sup>s</sup> Euseb. de Vit. Const. l. iii. c. 48.

bishop had more churches under him besides that 'house of the church' which he kept possession of; which it is questioned, indeed, whether it was a house of worship or no, because, amongst the many accusations of him, they tell us "he sent presbyters out to preach up his own praises in their sermons to the people<sup>t</sup>;" and who should these be, but presbyters, that officiated under him within his own jurisdiction; for the phrase imports no entreaty, as if it were to aliens not subject to him, but an act of authority rather, for "he sent them out to do so:" nay, should they have been presbyters related to another see, they are, at least, an instance of religious assemblies held by such, in contradistinction to the bishops to whom they did belong, which overthrows the Enquirer's congregational scheme, take it in what sense you please. I will not conceal what is further said here, that he sent out "bishops of adjacent villages and cities" to do the same thing for him, which our learned Enquirer makes further use of in another place, and shall be considered there; I shall only say here, that the judicious Valesius understands those bishops to be no other than flattering *chorepiscopi*, which makes them a further part of his own diocese still. But this alters not the present case; and so the bishopric of Antioch, I hope, will lose but little of its glory and extent by one such unconvincing argument as this.

Rome, the metropolis of the empire, is ap-

<sup>t</sup> Πρεσβυτέρους ἐν ταῖς πρὸς τὸν λαὸν ὁμιλίαις, καθήσιν διαλέγεσθαι. Euseb. lib. vii. c. 30. p. 229. [s. 9.—ed. Burt.]

pealed to next, and allowed no greater honour than the rest: their faith was early spoken of throughout the whole world: their church, founded by the two great Apostles both of Jews and Gentiles, and Martyrs and Confessors, were zealous pastors over them for many generations after: yet, for above two hundred years after Christ, our learned Enquirer will assure us they were not improved to more than a single congregation. His demonstration is this (p. 32), that Natalis<sup>u</sup>, a penitent Confessor in that church, returning from the heresy of Theodotus, “fell down at the feet of the bishop, clergy, and people, to bewail his fault before them; and at length the church was touched with compassion towards him.” I shall take no advantage of his transposing the historian’s words here, so as to make neither sense nor grammar in his quotation of them, but only set them right in the margin, and allow the full importance of them. The penitent Natalis<sup>x</sup>, it appears, went early to the place where the bishop paid his devotions, falls down before bishop, clergy, and people there; and with prayers and tears, besought the merciful church of Christ to admit him to communion again; which, with great difficulty, was granted to

<sup>u</sup> Προσπεσεῖν τῷ Ἐπισκόπῳ, κλήρῳ, λαϊκῶν, τὴν εὐσπλαγχνον ἐκκλησίαν τῇ δεήσει χρησάμενον. Euseb. l. v. c. 28. [s. 8.—ed. Burton.]

<sup>x</sup> Μετὰ πολλῆς σπουδῆς καὶ δακρύων προσπεσεῖν Ζεφυρίῳ τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ, κυλιόμενον ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας οὐ μόνον τῶν ἐν τῷ κλήρῳ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν λαϊκῶν, συγγέαι τε τοῖς δάκρυσιν τὴν εὐσπλαγγνον Ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ ἐλεήμονος Χριστοῦ πολλῇ τε τῇ δεήσει χρησάμενον—μόλις κοινωνηθῆναι. Euseb. l. v. c. 28. p. 160. Edit. Pariss. 1678. [s. 8.—ed. Burton.]

him. Now this could not be done, it seems, in this particular manner; but that the whole diocese, under the bishop Zephyrinus's jurisdiction and care, must needs be then with him, and consequently make but one congregation; and if we would argue so, we might affirm as well, that Christ had no part of a church in the world but what was there; for it was the merciful church of the merciful Christ that he begged to be admitted into, and which he moved with his tears; and if that particular assembly was no otherwise so, than as it was in unity with the one only Church of Christ upon earth, then it would be as much so, if there were twenty other congregations belonging to it, in the same union and communion with it, as if it were the only one that the whole diocese had. But, to be plainer in the case, and bring it home to our own times, should such a case as Natalis's was, happen in any Christian church at this day, and the bishop be found at his devotions with any of his clergy about him, as in his own cathedral it is scarcely to be known when he can be found without them, and in the primitive Church, where the orders of 'them' they called the clergy were many more than now, to be sure they never were, and should the penitent supplicant kneel before them all, and, in a full congregation of the people, ask the pardon of the church, might not an English historian, do we think, say that this humble penitent fell down "at the feet of the bishop, clergy, and people," and yet the bishop have considerably more of both kinds within his diocese and jurisdiction, than were personally present at this

particular solemnity? Surely one would think he might. And yet not a tittle more than this is said in the penitent Natalis's case; for there is not so much as the useful phrase of 'all the clergy,' or 'all the people,' offered us to help us out here, which in many of our Enquirer's foregoing quotations he laid so great a stress upon, though the construction was far from being just and reasonable there.

To strengthen this instance of Natalis's case, there are five reasons more offered us, but every one of them repetitions of what had been said before. For here (p. 32, 33) we are twice told again, that "all the brethren met together in the church to choose a bishop when the see was vacant," which I have expressly shewn to be affirmed of elections in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, when all the world knows the dioceses had congregations enow in each of them. Two other reasons are, that "all met to concur in sending salutations and letters to other churches, and to hear such read." And lastly, that "the church of Rome had so peculiarly but one altar, that the second, which Novatian erected, was called a profane altar." For each of which reasons I only refer the reader to what has been said of them before, who, I believe, will be sorry with me to see such arguments relied upon in so important a cause; and so often repeated, to appear many.

In the mean time the church of Rome is far better represented to us by Cornelius, the truly Apostolical bishop of it, in the third century; who tells us, there were then no less than forty-

six presbyters in it, which, if compared with “the number of assemblies in each city, the erecting new and larger Christian churches in them all,” mentioned by Eusebius within the same century (Eccl. Hist. l. viii. c. 1.), fairly implying that they had ‘old’ and ‘smaller’ ones even ‘before’ them; we need not be at a loss to conceive what sort of services those numerous presbyters were engaged in: for it was to minister, no doubt of it, in many of those particular oratories they were then possessed of; as you will the easier agree to, if you consider what Cornelius further says of it, that besides those “forty-six presbyters,” they had “seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, forty-two acolyths; exorcists, readers, and door-keepers fifty-two; all necessary,” says he, “to the service of the church,” besides “widows, impotent, and poor above fifteen hundred<sup>y</sup>,” living on the alms of the church; and answerable to all this, “a vast innumerable multitude of people in it,” as the holy bishop’s words expressly are.

This is so authentic an account of that primitive church of Rome, as I believe the most zealous advocates for the congregational way will not pretend to call in question; but how they can reconcile it to their own scheme I leave to themselves.

<sup>y</sup> Πρεσβυτέρους τεσσαράκοντα ἕξ, διακόνους ἑπτὰ, ὑποδιακόνους ἑπτὰ, ἀκολύθους δύο καὶ τεσσαράκοντα, ἐξορκιστὰς δὲ καὶ ἀναγνώστας ἅμα πυλωροὺς δύο καὶ πενήκοντα· χήρας σὺν θλιβομένοις ὑπὲρ τὰς χιλίας πεντακοσίας, οὓς πάντας ἡ τοῦ δεσπότου χάρις καὶ φιλανθρωπία διατρέφει· τοσοῦτο πλῆθος καὶ ἀναγκαῖον ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ πληθύνων ἀριθμὸς μετὰ μεγίστου καὶ ἀναριθμήτου λαοῦ. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. c. 43. [s. 12. ed. Burton.]



I enlarge not here on the transcendant liberality of this single church, by which “they supported many other churches in every city,” as Dionysius of Corinth bears witness for them, “relieving their poor, and maintaining their Christian slaves that were condemned to the mines<sup>2</sup>.” Nay, the other Dionysius of Alexandria affirms, that “the whole country of Arabia and all the provinces of Syria were abundantly relieved by the church of Rome alone<sup>a</sup>.” Compute then the ‘numerous clergy,’ the list of ‘widows,’ of the ‘afflicted’ and ‘poor,’ which we have just now seen this single church continually maintained at home; and if *not many rich, not many noble were called*, one would be even forced to think that legions, at least, of a middle fortune must be in it, to raise such extraordinary contributions as these.

Nor will I insist on the positive account the judicious Mr. Mede<sup>b</sup> gives us of particular churches or ‘titles,’ as they were then called, that were founded in this church of Rome in the second century, though he quotes the very names and qualities of them that founded them. Enough has been said, I hope, to vindicate this imperial city from the hard imputation of yielding no better fruits of the ‘great Apostles,’ Saints, and Martyrs’ blood, that was shed in it, than what amounted to a single congrega-

<sup>2</sup> Ἐκκλησίαις πολλαῖς ταῖς κατὰ πᾶσαν πόλιν ἐφόδια πέμπειν, ἐν μετάλλοις δὲ ἀδελφοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἐπιχορηγοῦντας. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. iv. c. 23. [s. 7. ed. Burt.]

<sup>a</sup> Αἱ μὲν τοι Συρία ὅλαι, καὶ ἡ Ἀραβία οἷς ἐπαρκεῖτε ἐκάστοτε. Ib. l. vii. c. 5. [s. 2. ed. Burt.]

<sup>b</sup> See Mede’s Works, book ii. p. 327. edit. 4. in 1677.

tional church for three hundred years together.

Carthage shares with Rome in this; and as she was rival once in glory, she must be as little in her Christian converts now: the great Tertullian<sup>c</sup> magnified indeed that native city of his, and well nigh defied the persecuting governors, with glorying in the numerous multitudes of believers there; but all, it seems, were a mere parochial congregation. This is somewhat strange, especially to those who know the glorious figure the church of Carthage made, and the mighty influence it had in all affairs of the Christian world, in the Cyprianic age. Yet let us hear the evidence that is given for it, for that is but just and reasonable.

The first reason offered is this (p. 34), because “the bishop of that diocese could know every one therein<sup>d</sup>.” Now I will but state the case of this quotation, and you will quickly see the determination in it. St. Cyprian was now in banishment; he writes to two African bishops, Caldonius and Herculanius, and with them to Rogatian and Numidicus, two of his own presbyters<sup>e</sup>, that they should take care to relieve the necessities of the poor, out of the contribu-

<sup>c</sup> Tertull. ad Scapul. c. 2. p. 86. edit. Rigalt. 2. Lutet. 1641.—[Vid. supra p. 84.]

<sup>d</sup> Ut omnes optime nossem. Cypr. Ep. 38. § 1. [41. Fell.]

<sup>e</sup> Cumque ego vos pro me vicarios miserim, ut expungeretis necessitates fratrum nostrorum sumptibus, si qui etiam vellent suas artes exercere, additamento, quantum satis esset, desideria eorum juvaretis; simul etiam et ætates eorum, et conditiones, et merita discerneretis; ut jam nunc ego, cui cura incumbit, *omnes optime nossem*, et dignos quoque et humiles et mites ad Ecclesiasticæ administrationis officia permoverem. Cyp. Ep. 41. ut supra.

tion of the brethren; and if any of them would work at their own trades, and yet could not fully provide for their families, they should allow them something towards it; and in doing this, he directs them to inform themselves carefully of the different ages, condition, and merits of the men, to the end that "I myself," says he, "upon whom this care lies, may forthwith thoroughly know them all, and if any of them be humble, meek, and worthy of it, I may put them into some office of the church." I appeal to the words, context, and learned annotations upon the place, if this be not the genuine sense of it; wherein, therefore, these two things are plain:

1st, That the 'all' here spoken of, were only the list or matricula of the necessitous and poor ones in the diocese. And,

2ndly, That St. Cyprian had so little personal knowledge of them and their condition, that he employed the bishops and presbyters he wrote to, to send him the best information they could get of that matter; and this is brought as a proof that "the bishop of that diocese could know every one in it," which, I think, is as clear a proof of the contrary as one could expect to meet with.

And yet, the second argument upon this head, is drawn from this very passage again; for from this direction to the bishops and presbyters, to relieve all that wanted "out of the contributions of the brethren," by making a wrong stop in the construction of it, he possesses his reader "that the debts and necessities of all the brethren were defrayed at the single

expense of the bishop<sup>f</sup>;" and then breaks out into admiration at the many thousand pounds he must needs have expended, if his diocese had some 'scores' of parishes in it! which is a mere chimera of his own forming; for St. Cyprian's words import no more, than that he was common almoner or curator for the poor of his diocese, and therefore gave order to his agents, in trust for him, to take what care they could in it; which how far it is from proving any diocese to be a mere congregational church, I have shewn at large already.

A third argument is the very same which he gave us before at p. 19, viz. "that the bishop celebrated the sacrament, the whole brotherhood being present (p. 35);" and I have shewn here above, at p. 61, the unfair representation of that passage, and that the inference was not true.

4thly, But it is further urged (p. 35), that "all the people could hear and see the reader Celerinus, when he read from the pulpit<sup>g</sup>;" and I doubt not but 'when,' and 'where' he read, it was so. But these general expressions, throughout this whole cause, without regard to the common acceptation of all mankind, admit of no limitations; but if 'all' the 'people' heard him, it must not be understood of 'all' that 'were present,' but of all the diocese to a man; though St. Cyprian<sup>h</sup>, not above six lines lower,

<sup>f</sup> Rigaltius's note, approved by bishop Fell, upon the place, is this, "*cujus necessitas beneficentiâ fratrum sublecebatur. ejus et nomen expungebatur.*"

<sup>g</sup> Plebi universæ. Cypr. Ep. 34. [39. Fell.]

<sup>h</sup> Lectoris fidem quisquis audierit imitetur. Ib.

speaking of him again, says only, ‘whosoever hears him’ should imitate his faith: and Balsamon, I find, describing the office of a reader in general, at a time when every church that had any reader at all had many congregations in it, expresses himself in much the same terms; and, as the translator renders it, makes him read so, that “every one heard him<sup>i</sup>,” as Suicer observes from him. Besides, that there were several readers in this church of Carthage is very sure: this Celerinus, with Aurelius, were two new ones just ordained by St. Cyprian in his exile, and added to them that served the church in his absence: and he tells them, “he is sure they would wish to have many more such<sup>k</sup>.”

The number of his presbyters is as visible in all his writings too; and though men may form imaginary offices and employments for so many chargeable ministers in one congregation, when Christians had reason enough to be as frugal as they possibly could; yet a more natural and reasonable account of them, I believe, will never be given, than that they had several oratories to attend, especially in that state of dispersion they were then in, when it is scarcely conceivable they should hold so formidable an assembly together, even if they could; and it is not a little remarkable how often St. Cyprian complains of such and such presbyters admitting the lapsed to communion, whilst others were

<sup>i</sup> Ἐπὶ κοινῇ ἀκροάσει ἀναγνώσκειν *Omnibus audientibus.*  
See Suicer ad vocem Ἀναγνώστης.

<sup>k</sup> Scio vos optare tales in Ecclesiâ nostrâ quamplurimos ordinari. Ep. 38. [Fell.]

commended for not doing so; which, if they all united in one assembly together, I think is not to be conceived.

It is plain the barbarous proconsul Paternus, who condemned St. Cyprian himself, understood they had more places for religious assemblies than one, when he told him the emperors Valerian and Gallienus<sup>1</sup> commanded there should be no "meetings in any places," and that they should not enter into their 'cemeteries' (in the plural number), as the words in the margin shew.

If I could attend repetitions, with more patience than I have already done, here was a great deal more work for me still; for here we have the current arguments again, of "all the people being present, consulted, and approving ordinations, elections, church-censures, absolutions," and the like. Now so far as this manner of their being present at these acts of discipline prove the diocese to be a bare single congregation, I have fully considered them before, and therefore may justly supersede them here. And so far as they refer to a pretended right or jurisdiction of the people in the government of the church, we shall find them pressed upon us again and again still, and under that consideration I shall examine them further as they lie in my way. In the mean time I shall leave the church of Carthage with this authentic testimony for her; that as little as she was in her

<sup>1</sup> Præcipiunt ne in aliquibus locis conciliabula fiant, nec cœmeteria ingrediantur. Cypr. in Pontii Vit. Cyp. [Fell. p. 12.] "quod qui facere deprehensus fuerit, capite plectatur."

flourishing times of peace and safety the number of her 'lapsed members only,' was such in the Decian persecution<sup>m</sup>, that thousands of tickets were daily granted by the Martyrs and Confessors on their behalf, to procure their reconciliation to the Church; and many of those tickets, not for single persons, but for themselves and friends together<sup>n</sup>; for so their holy bishop expressly tells the Roman presbyters and deacons, and reprov'd the over-forward Martyrs and Confessors themselves for it; and what manner of single congregation such a church should make, before the fatal fall of so vast a number of her members, and after their blessed union again, I leave to any impartial man to judge.

The last diocese considered by our learned Enquirer is that of Alexandria; and had he happily begun, instead of ending, with this, one would be apt to think it might have prevented the trouble of all the rest; for if ever any author gave up his whole cause at once, I think it may be seen here. His main point all along contended for was this; that every primitive diocese for three hundred years together, consisted only of a single congregation; but now the force of truth constrains him to confess (p.

<sup>m</sup> Sine ullo discrimine atque examine singulorum darentur quotidie libellorum millia. Cypr. Ep. 20. [Fell.] In a note Fell adds—"Quantus lapsorum in Decianâ persecutione numerus vel hinc constare poterit; præsertim cum uno libello totas familias Martyres passim includerent."

<sup>n</sup> Quibusdam sic libellos fieri, ut dicatur, *communicet cum suis*— et possunt nobis viceni, et triceni et amplius offerri, qui propinqui et affines, et liberti ac domestici esse asseverentur ejus qui accipit libellum. Cypr. Ep. 15. [Fell.]

38), that “the Christians of Alexandria, within the third century, divided themselves into several distinct and separate congregations, and all subjected to one bishop.” These are his own words, and what need have we then, you will say, of any further controversy? I confess I should think no need at all; only it is not amiss we should see what management is used with this dangerous evidence, who extorted this candid confession from him, that he might not hurt the congregational cause after all.

It was a passage in Dionysius, the holy bishop of Alexandria himself, that inclined our zealous Enquirer to this gentle temper; for “this,” says he (p. 39), “is clearly enough asserted by Dionysius, who mentions the distinct congregations in the extremest suburbs of the city.”

To make this hard testimony a little more pliant to this purpose, we have this ingenious comment upon it; that these congregations were only a “chapel of ease within the suburbs of Alexandria,” for the conveniency of some members who lived too far off to come to their ‘one’ usual meeting-house, so often as they held assemblies there, being every Lord’s-day, Saturday, Wednesday, and Friday; and therefore it was concerted between the bishop and his people, that they should “erect this chapel, or these chapels for themselves; and, upon solemn occasions, should all meet in the one mother-church, and so continue but one congregational church still.”

<sup>o</sup> Ἐν προαστείοις πορρωτέρω κειμένοις κατὰ μέρος ἔσονται συναγωγαί. Advers. Germanum apud Euseb. l. vii. c. 11. [§ 15. ed. Burton.]



In which comment we have a great example of what zeal will do for a bad cause. For,

1st, This single chapel, or these distinct congregations, for they are named in both capacities, are positively said to be within the 'extremest' suburbs, at least, of the city of Alexandria, though Dionysius himself says only, "as it were within such suburbs<sup>p</sup>;" and thus you may remember this wary author did, in another quotation, leave out this little particle<sup>q</sup> [ὡς, or *as it were*] to very good purpose: and so it is here; for a chapel within the suburbs, though it were in the remotest of them all, in the vulgar acceptation of them amongst us, would suit pretty well with an English parish still; which more congregations, a little further off, would scarce do so well. And,

2ndly, All this matter must be represented as a singular case, concerted between the bishop and his people, that they should not only erect this chapel, or chapels for their own ease, but engage themselves upon solemn occasions to assemble in one and the same church with him still, and so be a mere congregational diocese, notwithstanding these multiplied congregations in it. For all which there is not one tittle of warrant or authority in Dionysius's own narrative of it, but enough to shew a very different case from it.

I have had occasion given to consider this whole case of the church of Alexandria before<sup>r</sup>,

<sup>p</sup> Ὡς ἐν προαστείοις πορρωτέρω κειμένοις κατὰ μέρος συναγωγαι. Euseb. ib.

<sup>q</sup> Vide p. 80, supra.

<sup>r</sup> Vide supra, p. 6, and p. 49.

to which I refer the reader, for fuller information in it; and only remind him here, as a help to understand this short comment, that the place where these distinct congregations were held was in and about Colluthio, in the region of Maræotis, which was a different 'nomos,' or district, of Ægypt from that of Alexandria, both in the Macedonian and Roman division of it. Ptolemy distinguishes each of them as separate regions by themselves, as our learned Dr. Heylin<sup>s</sup> also does, who tells us that Plinthine and Hierax were the chief towns in the region called Maræotica; and how large a country it was, and distinct from Alexandria, the contrivance of the Arians shews, who set up Ischyras, the pretended presbyter, for another bishop there; knowing, doubtless, there was scope and district enough for another diocese, (even in the notion and practice of the fourth century,) for they never presumed so far as to make him bishop of Alexandria itself. But we need no other evidence, sure, in our present case, than that the holy bishop of Alexandria we are now speaking of, was, at this time, confined in this very place in the condition of a banished man, and where, he tells us<sup>t</sup>, Christians never had resided before, till his name and sufferings had brought these several congregations of them into the country round about; it being a place infested with vagrants and robbers to that very day, and where he was much

<sup>s</sup> See Heylin's *Cosmog.* p. 929. edit. 2. Lond. 1657.

<sup>t</sup> Ἐρημον μὲν ἀδελφῶν τὸ χωρίον· ταῖς δὲ τῶν ὁδοιπορούντων ἐνοχλήσει καὶ ληστῶν καταδρομαῖς ἐγκείμενον·—ἠχθέσθην καὶ λίαν ἐχαλέπηνα. Euseb. *ib.* l. vii. c. 11. [§ 14. ed. Burton.]

afflicted, as he says himself, to hear that he must go. Judge what a kind of suburb this must be to his own city of Alexandria then; I mean, in our modern and English notion of ‘a suburb,’ for whose sake this comment is made, and in which sense only the plausible contrivance of a ‘chapel of ease’ could have any show of reason in it. For if he would allow it to be understood in the ancient acceptation of the word, wherein suburbs<sup>u</sup> comprehended large adjacent countries, whose towns and villages were the peculiar cures of presbyters under the bishop of the diocese wherein they lay, we should not need to dispute about it. But such a primitive construction as this could no ways clear his point here, but would give his citizens’ ‘chapel of ease’ a most unwarrantable situation; and yet it is plain that Dionysius himself did not then take the place here mentioned for a suburb of this city, even in his extensive notion of it neither; else he had never said, “as it were in remoter suburbs,” had it actually been there. Not to mention how unprecedented a thing it is, to affix the more modern term of a ‘chapel of ease’ to any place of public worship in those primitive times, where, I conceive, neither name nor thing is in any author to be found.

To speak the least we can then in this present case, it is very plain that some fair symptoms of a modern episcopal church did appear in this primitive one of Alexandria; and no

<sup>u</sup> See Valesius’s Annot. on these very words, *κατὰ μέτρος συναγωγῶν*. In Euseb. *ib.*

wonder it should be so, since the great evangelist St. Mark had, in his own time, converted and settled many congregations of Christians in the very city itself, as Eusebius tells us<sup>x</sup>, who calls them churches (in the plural number), without any cautious distinction of chapels of ease, or anything in name or nature like it, to make them a parochial diocese still, but took care to leave upon record that one single bishop successively presided over all. And one cannot but think it strange to see an English pen so very industrious to deface the genuine characters of this primitive church, when they do no more than bear witness to the venerable Apostolical constitution, which the providence of God, and our own spiritual superiors, have provided for ourselves at home.

But, once more, though great imperial cities may make a show of being more than congregational churches, yet what can we say of bishops placed in villages? Does not that prove that their diocese could be no greater? If it proves anything, it must prove their jurisdiction to reach no further than their village too, which I never yet could hear of. To be a bishop 'in a village,' and 'of a village,' are very different things; and should an Englishman read no more than the history of his native country only, he would find a bishop's see, ever and anon, fixed in a village, as properly so called as any episcopal village in ancient or modern history whatsoever, and yet his territories and

<sup>x</sup> Ἐκκλησίας ἐπ' αὐτῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας συστήσασθαι. Euseb. Hist. Ec. l. ii. c. 16.

dominions as fruitful in parishes and churches under him, as any city diocese in the land besides.

But this argument is exhausted by the excellent Dr. Maurice long ago; and episcopal villages surveyed with such patience, and the objections from them confuted with such learning and reason, in his admirable defence of diocesan episcopacy, that one would little think it should appear in public again. Yet I will not wholly pass by the authorities that are offered for it here.

I shall join the two first of them together, because in the application here made of them, they really are an answer to one another. Clemens Romanus tells us, that “the Apostles preaching both in country and city, constituted bishops and deacons there<sup>y</sup>.” Thus he translates the words of Clemens in the margin, though ‘through regions and cities’ are at least as genuine a translation, as that; and by the precedency of ‘regions’ in the text, they may more naturally be understood of ‘provinces’ or countries in the largest sense of them, than of mere country villages. But let us hear what St. Cyprian adds to this: “bishops,” says he, “were ordained throughout all provinces and all cities.”

Now by our author’s quoting these two Fathers to the same purpose, as he tells us he did, he has all the reason in the world to understand St. Clemens’s ‘countries,’ and the ‘provinces’

<sup>y</sup> Κατὰ χώρας οὖν καὶ πόλεις κηρύσσοντες καθίστανον — εἰς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους. Ep. 1. ad Corinth. [§ 42. ed. Jacobson.]

mentioned by St. Cyprian, to be the same thing. And since the latter never understood 'provinces' in any other sense than as 'large tracts of countries,' containing cities, towns, and villages in them; so by parity of reason, he ought to allow, that St. Clemens meant such sort of 'countries' too; and then both 'cities' and 'countries' might originally have bishops set over them, and not a village have a bishop in it still; which I have only taken notice of, to shew how little these two quotations prove the thing they were intended for; since, if they were equivalent, or 'much to the same purpose,' as our author says they are, they make no proof, I think, of village-bishoprics at all. But I have<sup>z</sup> elsewhere otherwise accounted for the doubtful and undetermined sense of St. Clemens's bishops, in the age he wrote in; to which I may refer the reader for further satisfaction in the case.

Another argument there is from an instance of a bishop in Comane<sup>a</sup>, which, I am free to own, the historian calls a village, and dispute not but it really was so; for I have shewn above, that villages may have a bishop's see in them, though examples in antiquity are rarely to be found indeed, and yet their jurisdiction be large enough too; and that Comane was of that kind, may the rather be presumed, since it appears<sup>b</sup>, that that particular place had a bi-

<sup>z</sup> Vide supra, Ch. I. p. 22, 24.

<sup>a</sup> Ζωτικὸν ἀπὸ Κομάνης κώμης. Euseb. H. E. l. v. c. 16. [§ 16. ed. Burton.]

<sup>b</sup> Episcopus Comanenus memoratur in Epistolâ Episcoporum Pamphyliaë ad Leonem Aug. See Vales. in Euseb. ubi supra, et Concil. Chalced. part III. p. 391.

shop's seat in it, even in the fifth century, and at the time of the council of Chalcedon; when, I believe, no man thinks there was any one bishop in the Christian Church that had no more than a single village for his diocese. In a word, it is strange to see what narrow search is made, to find here and there an instance of this kind, amongst so many thousand bishoprics as the history of the Church affords; whereas, had villages been bishops' sees by Apostolical institution, wherever any congregation could be gathered in them, the advantage in number, one would think, should soon have been on their side, in the general account of episcopal churches in the Christian world.

But it is surmised still, that there must have been many bishops of villages, and very obscure villages too, amongst those seventy-eight bishops that sat in council with St. Cyprian, in the year 258, because we do not meet with the names of many of their sees in Ptolemy, or the old geographers. Now whatever may be missing in the ancient geography here referred to, it is plain that every diocese named in that council, is very learnedly accounted for by the venerable editor of the Oxford edition of St. Cyprian's works, in his notes upon it; partly from those ancient geographers themselves, and partly from other authors of unquestionable credit in the case; such as Antoninus, Optatus, St. Austin, Victor Vitensis, the *Notitia Africae*, *Collatio Carthaginensis*, and the like. And as they are generally styled 'cities' in direct terms, so, if one in twenty of them should be suspected to be otherwise, it neither proves their dioceses

to be single congregations, as we have seen before, nor should be thought strange in the confines of those inhospitable countries, where the natives rarely multiplied their cities, yet were numerous in their lesser dispersed corporations, and becoming Christians must have their bishops seated in the most convenient mansion for them all. Such instances in the more uncivilised and desert parts of the world are unquestionably to be found: but to take a model of the Christian Church from them, is peculiar only to a few authors in our own times.

To close this cause and the second chapter together, we have Justin Martyr's Sunday's-assemblies once more recommended to our better consideration, and St. Ignatius's strict charge to the Magnesians to keep in close union with their bishop; which, without going all to his single house of prayer, our Enquirer seems to think impracticable. But how different the sense of those holy Fathers is from what is here put upon them, I have shewn at large before<sup>c</sup>; and hope so genuine a construction of them, being plainly conformable also to the principles and practice of the Catholic Church of Christ, will find no hard admittance with any peaceful friend of the like primitive constitution in our own native country and times.

<sup>c</sup> Vide supra, p. 43, and p. 45.



## CHAPTER III.

*Enquiry into the Constitution, &c. of the Primitive Church, &c.*

THE bishop's flock, we have seen in the former chapters, is moderate and small enough; his duty is now represented to the full: the particulars are many, and yet but little controverted, as this learned author observes, on either side; they are with great exactness summed up in this place, to introduce the absolute necessity of his 'residing constantly' upon his cure; which in the next paragraph is so earnestly insisted upon. And in that view of them, I cannot but take notice, that the several acts of the episcopal function, here mentioned, are many of them so represented by the authors he quotes about them, as to imply an inherent right in the bishop of ordering and disposing the discharge of them, as much as a personal obligation upon him to discharge them all himself. Thus, for instance, in the act of 'preaching;' Origen, here quoted to prove it was the 'bishop's duty,' elsewhere in-

forms us<sup>a</sup>, that the “bishop commanded him to preach,” and enjoined him the very subject he should preach upon (Enquiry, p. 58); which shews the bishop to be as much, at least, a spiritual guardian of the holy ordinance, obliged by his function to provide effectually for the doing of it, as that he was personally bound to do it himself; and allowing but one congregation in a diocese, it was a temporary dispensation to him, from performing that duty; and what could any one say, should that bishop have oftener done such an innocent thing again? Sozomen<sup>b</sup> goes further indeed, and tells us, “it was a custom in the church of Rome, for neither bishop nor any one else to preach there;” upon which the learned Valesius notes, that no sermon of a bishop of that church was ever extant before those of Leo the Great, which was in the fifth century, and quotes Cassiodorus to confirm what Sozomen said; (an authentic witness, who was both senator and historian, in the city of Rome itself). I infer no more from this, that what barely relates to the case before me, namely, that the “bishop’s continual preaching to their people,” which our Enquirer here (p. 44. § 2) asserts, was not universal, at least, in the primitive churches themselves.

Again, as to the administration of the holy sacrament of baptism, Tertullian is here brought

<sup>a</sup> Origen. in Ezek. Hom. 3. Origen. Hom. de Engastrim. p. 28. vol. i.

<sup>b</sup> Οὕτε δὲ ὁ ἐπίσκοπος, οὔτε ἄλλος τις ἐνθάδε ἐπ’ Ἐκκλησίας διδάσκει. Sozom. Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 19. et Vales. Annot. ib. [§ D. ed. Vales. 1677.]

to prove it an 'act' of the bishop's function, and undoubtedly it is included in it: but let us take it in the ancient Father's own words, which are these; "the right of giving baptism is in the bishop, and from thence in the presbyters and deacons, if he authorise them for it<sup>c</sup>." I only note this language of the ancients, and this practice in the primitive times, to shew that the flock of Christ might be fed, and the ordinary saving ordinances of the Church administered in a diocese, though the bishop should not 'constantly' act in his own person; and that he was not wanting to his function, where he effectually provided that every act of it was performed to the edification and occasions of his people. Personal presence is undoubtedly the truest and most faithful means of discharging any trust in the world, and much more of this high and heavenly one; but it is more extraordinary to hear it pressed so hard from a congregational hand, who makes a diocese but a single auditory, and though there should be forty or fifty presbyters, which, in his account of them, are as truly Apostolical bishops in their order, as the very 'supreme one' himself, yet cannot allow 'that single pastor,' upon the most important affair, to be absent for a while, though he should depute them all to watch over his little flock, which could make but one congregation for them. But,

He urges St. Cyprian's awful opinion in the

<sup>c</sup> "Dandi quidem (baptismum) habet jus summus sacerdos dehinc presbyteri, et diaconi, non tamen sine episcopi auctoritate."—Tertull de Baptismo. § 17. p. 230. [ed. Rigalt. Venet. 1744.]

case, who reckons this sin of ‘non-residency,’ as one occasion of God’s wrath upon the Church, in the Decian persecution: and I believe indeed, it would be thought no better of, ‘even in this,’ or in any other age besides, if we should take in all the other aggravations that holy Martyr there charges it withal. He complains, “that bishops left their dioceses to follow sordid merchandise abroad, to purchase farms by fraud and extortion, to enrich themselves by use upon use, neglecting to relieve the brethren that were starving in the church<sup>d</sup>.” Such ‘non-residency’ might draw down judgments upon a church indeed, but will hardly prove, that no occasions, how just, innocent, or important soever, can excuse the temporary absence of a bishop from his see, where every district in his diocese has subordinate pastors provided for it, to administer every necessary ordinance of the Church to all his people in it. That holy bishop and Martyr, we know, was a considerable time absent himself; the occasion was extraordinary it is true, and I mention it for no other end than this, that matter of fact may inform us a diocese is capable to be provided for in such a case as that; and the example of that blessed bishop will shew us how: for “though absent in body,” says he, “I was neither wanting in spirit, in act, or admonitions to them;

<sup>d</sup> *Episcopi plurimi derelictâ cathedrâ, plebe desertâ, per alias provincias oberrantes, negotiationis quæstuosæ nundinas aucupari; esurientibus in ecclesiâ fratribus non subvenire, habere argentum largiter velle, fundos insidiosis fraudibus rapere, usuris multiplicantibus fœnus augere. Cypr. de Lapsis. § 4. edit. Oxon. p. 123. A. D. 251.*

but by my episcopal authority, I still restrained such presbyters and deacons, as were remiss and negligent in the discipline of the church<sup>e</sup>." In a word therefore, those spiritual stewards of the Lord's household will have a hard account to give, they may be sure of it, if whensoever their Lord cometh, he finds them not watching: but by what rules of equity, that watchfulness he enjoins them, shall be judged acceptable at the last day, is reserved to himself alone, who knows the heart, and knows the occasions of man, and judgeth not by appearance, but judgeth according to truth. This is matter of awe enough to every servant in his family; and, at the same time, proves how unwarrantable it is too, for any but their Lord and Master alone, to judge of their service: as the excellent St. Cyprian elsewhere speaks, even in respect of one bishop censuring another.

The next enquiry is, how a bishop was anciently elected into a vacant see; which is thus determined for us: 1st, (p. 46, 47, and 49,) "That all the members of the 'parish or bishopric,' (for we must admit them for equivalent terms still,) both clergy and laity, commonly met, to choose a fit person for his successor, to whom 'they might commit the 'care and government of their church.' 2ndly, Whomsoever the people had thus elected a bishop, they presented to their neighbouring bishops for their approbation and consent, 'lest the people, through ignorance or

<sup>e</sup> Absens corpore, nec spiritu, nec actu, nec monitis meis defui—presbyteris et diaconibus non defuit sacerdotii vigor ut quidam minus disciplinæ memores—comprimerentur, intercedentibus nobis. Ep. 20. [p. 42. Fell.]

affection, should choose an unfit or unable man for that sacred office,' (as our learned author modestly surmises for them;) 'it being supposed,' says he, 'that a synod of bishops might be wiser judges in the case.' 3rdly, A bishop thus elected and confirmed, is to have his 'ordination' or 'instalment,' (for these must pass for equivocal words too,) in his own church, by the neighbouring bishops, and that by imposition of their hands."

These were the three necessary requisites, it seems, for the filling of any vacant bishopric in the primitive times; and the two former so equally necessary, that it is concluded (p. 49), "neither the choice of the bishops of the voisinage, without the consent of the people, nor the election of the people, without the approbation of those bishops, was sufficient and valid of itself:" and after both, the ceremony of 'ordination' or 'instalment' was to finish all.

Here is an excellent primitive practice, with variety of reading, and not a little art, I fear, represented to us. And, because it has somewhat more than ordinary relation to some unfortunate controversies in our own times, which our ingenious author so affectionately desired to compose and heal for us, I must take leave to observe, that it is not the ancient practice of the Church which has so much occasioned unhappy controversies in the case, as the representation of it in such a singular manner as we have it here. By examining the particulars apart, we shall see more of it.

"In the vacancy of a see," says he, "all the members of it, clergy and laity, met together,

to choose a fit person for a successor;" and it need not be disputed between us, but that in many dioceses, though not in all, they commonly did so; provided that by 'choosing' here, we may be allowed to understand, what our Enquirer himself fairly intimates to us, that it was no more than to pitch upon a person acceptable to themselves, whom they might propose and recommend to the neighbouring bishops, for their consent and approbation; for his own scheme runs so; that is, for those bishops to accept or refuse him, as they should think fit; for where we sue for approbation or consent, we must allow a right and power to disapprove and dissent too.

But then the next words in the Enquiry run higher than so, and may mislead the reader, if he be not well aware of it: "they met," says he, "to choose a successor, to whom they might commit the care and government of their church." This is somewhat more, sure, than preparing to recommend to others; it is plainly attributing to them a considerable share, at least, of original right and power invested in them, to dispose of their bishopric to the person they should please to choose. And we need not doubt, but that our learned author intended they should be understood so; since in another place (p. 103), where he treats directly of the acts and powers of the lay-members of a church, he affirms, in plain terms, that 'they had a power,' not only to 'elect' the person of their bishop, but to 'depose him too,' in case he proved scandalous, heretical, or the like.

Now what this lay-power was, in constituting bishops of old, and from whence it came, is the point in question; and for the easier solution of it, we need only carefully observe these two things: 1st, What the Holy Scriptures themselves teach us concerning the divine institution of this sacred office and power of constituting and ordaining bishops and pastors in the Church, together with the manner it was first executed and put in practice in the very Apostolical age itself. And, 2ndly, what account we meet with of the same thing, in the following ecclesiastical records of Fathers, councils, or historians, in the ages very near approaching to the first.

These two great authorities, impartially compared together, will teach us to distinguish fairly between a divine right, authority, and power, of ordaining elders in the Church, completely and absolutely conveyed, by the fountain of all power, to the single persons of the first spiritual rulers of it, without the concurrence of any popular election, on the one hand; and the wise and prudent rules and methods which the succeeding governors in many parts of the Church laid down for themselves in the use and practice of that ordaining power, so entirely conveyed down to them, on the other. And if this short and clear distinction were but duly attended to, and without prejudice applied to the present dispute before us, the adversaries on both sides might happily find their account in it, and come nearer to compromise their fatal, though unnecessary, difference about it.



For, if the former part or member of this distinction appear true, which I shall particularly consider by and by, then such as disallow the necessity of popular elections in the case, call them by what name we please, must, at least, have a fair appearance of a very important plea, even from the Holy Scriptures themselves, for their opinion of it; and on the other side, if very primitive bishops, succeeding in the places, character, and power of those earlier predecessors of theirs in the Christian Church, did form rules or canons by mutual consent amongst themselves, not to exercise that ordaining power and office, so invested in them, any otherwise than in the presence, and with the general approbation of the church or people, over which the person so ordained was intended to preside; then the advocates for this popular claim, interest, or right, call it what you will, of bearing some part also in electing and constituting a bishop over them, may have plausible precedents of ecclesiastical antiquity to recommend their plea for it too. Which two points, I humbly conceive, contain the main substance of what is generally offered on one side or the other; at least, they seem to me, more immediately and directly to answer all the reasonings of our learned Enquirer about it; who, through all his management of this argument, grounds his whole scheme upon such ancient ecclesiastical authorities alone; and as for texts of Holy Scripture, or any authentic charter of popular election contained in them, at the first divine or Apostolical institution of it, has thought fit not to mention one; [as the reader

may see, by consulting the references noted in the margin here <sup>f</sup>.]

To begin then with the former part, or member of the distinction itself; which is this, that the Holy Scriptures set forth to us a divine right, authority, and power of ordaining elders in the Church, completely and absolutely conveyed, from the fountain of all power in it, to the single persons of the first spiritual rulers of it, without any previous or concurrent election of the people in it; and further, that the Apostles themselves, or Apostolical men, eminently so called, and adopted into the number of them, did accordingly both execute and convey the same ordaining power, in the same manner, unto others at their first planting of Christian churches in the world. This evidence of fact, I shall briefly shew the Holy Scriptures do set forth to us.

And first, as to the peculiar Apostolic college itself, which we know was first consecrated and ordained to this holy function, as the spring and fountain from whence all the rest is undoubtedly derived, I presume it will not be disputed, but that they received a fulness of power for ordinations, as well as every other part of their ministerial office, from the blessed Jesus himself, whether before or after his resurrection, without any imaginary appearance of such a popular choice or approbation in the case: and therefore I do but barely name the thing; though I must make this short remark upon it, that it is no inconsiderable circumstance to the point in

<sup>f</sup> See Enq. p. 23, 24, and p. 46, to p. 49.

hand, that the Catholic Church was thus founded upon governors and pastors ordained to rule over every part of it, before there was any formed church or settled congregation in the world to have any hand in it. This comes as near the root, I am sure, of all divine right or power in ordinations, as it is possible to do; and in what other sense can we reasonably conceive those first plenipotentiaries of Church-power could understand their blessed Lord's express commission to them, *as my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you*<sup>g</sup>, than as a personal power to ordain others in the same manner likewise, according as the occasion of converting all nations, and gathering churches in them where there were none before, did most naturally require.

That they did so understand, and execute their commission so too, if a very short digression may be allowed me here, that one venerable record of antiquity, which our Enquirer himself (p. 49) singled out to prove 'the contrary' by, will manifestly shew; I mean St. Clement's first epistle to the Corinthians, where the holy Father's words are these: "The Apostles," says he, "constituted [or ordained] bishops and deacons for such as [were not yet converted, but] should, in some time to come, be brought over to the faith<sup>h</sup>." There needs no comment upon this testimony; for sure, whatever imaginary people may be suggested

<sup>g</sup> John xx. 21.

<sup>h</sup> Οἱ Ἀπόστολοι — καθίστανον τὰς ἀρχαὶς αὐτῶν — εἰς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους τῶν μελλόντων πιστεῦειν. Clem. ad Corinth. Ep. 1. [§. 42. ed. Jacobson.]

to have bore a part in the election or ordination of such bishops and deacons as those, it is plain enough the people they were afterwards to preside over, or minister amongst them, could have none at all; which is the only thing contended for, and should be proved, in the case before us.

But to return to Scripture evidence again: as the principal Apostles themselves, according to the testimony of that truly primitive Father indeed, for he was contemporary with many of them, did unquestionably constitute and ordain pastors in the Church, without any suffrage or election of the people in it; so the Holy Scriptures affirm no less of such as were adopted into that sacred college, dignified with that title by the Holy Ghost, and called of God himself to the holy function, as well as the blessed twelve were; I mean St. Paul and St. Barnabas, whose ordinations are particularly recorded for us in holy writ itself. The text which mentions them is obvious enough, and has seldom escaped the observation of any who have wrote on this argument, on one side or the other. It is Acts xiv. 23, where, in our translation, we read thus: *And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on Whom they believed*<sup>i</sup>. I know the original word, here used for this Apostolical ordination, is with great assurance insisted upon by the advocates for popular election, as including in it the votes or

<sup>i</sup> Act. xiv. 23. Καὶ χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς πρεσβυτέρους κατ' ἐκκλησίαν, προσευξάμενοι μετὰ νηστειῶν, παρέθεντο αὐτοὺς τῷ Κυρίῳ, εἰς ὃν πεπιστεύκεισαν.

suffrages of the people, because it signifies “the stretching out, or holding up, of the hand;” which ceremony was commonly used by the ancient Greeks, to express such an action of the people in giving their voice or suffrage either in courts of judicature, or at the choice of magistrates amongst them. This is the main stress of all the glosses I meet with, to evade the clear evidence of this text for the Apostles ordaining those elders by their own free ‘choice’ and authority alone. “The clear evidence of the text,” I call it; for if there be any regular and grammatical construction of the holy penmen’s words to be allowed at all, it must necessarily be this; that the same persons who held forth their hands for the act of ordination here, did, in the words immediately following, “commend the people, then present, to the Lord, in Whom they believed.” The word ‘commended’ in the latter clause, and the persons who ordained, or stretched out their hands for orders, if we had rather translate it so, in the former, having as direct a reference to, and connection with one another, and appropriating the action of the one to the persons of the other, as entirely as it is possible for true syntax to do in any sentence whatsoever; and therefore, unless the people “commended themselves to the Lord” in the latter clause, they could not be included amongst the persons that stretched out their hands for ordination in the former; for they that did one, as clearly as language can make it, did the other also. Besides, though it might signify either, yet it must signify both here, if it imply the people’s votes,

else no imposition of hands in this ordination; and how absurd is that?

I might balance, at least, all the proofs that could be given for a popular election necessarily implied in this original word, by a cloud of witnesses both of Greek and Jewish writers, in and about the time that the New Testament was wrote, who familiarly apply the same word, not to the votes or suffrages of a multitude only, but to the bare authoritative act of a single person, nay, even of God himself<sup>k</sup>, in constituting or ordaining officers to the respective places or purposes that they treated of. I might add also the venerable and received authorities of Christian Fathers, historians, critics, and grammarians, eminent both in ancient and modern ages of the Church, who affirm the word to be so taken in the ‘ancient ecclesiastical’ notion of it: insomuch that the inquisitive Suicer, who was friend enough to popular elections, amongst other significations of the word, undertakes to prove by many testimonies and examples, that “the stretching out of the hand<sup>l</sup>” included in it, imports no more than barely ‘creating, constituting,’ and ‘designing’ persons to the place or office intended for them, as distinct from suffrage and election; and, which is not a little

<sup>k</sup> So the Holy Scripture attributes it to God’s choice of witnesses, Acts x. 41.—*Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead.*

<sup>l</sup> Exempla et testimoniis præbemus χειροτονεῖν nihil aliud declarare quàm *constituere, creare, designare*: patet hoc ex Acts xiv. 23, ubi de Paulo et Barnaba, χειροτονήσαντες αὐτοῖς πρεσβυτέρους κατ’ ἐκκλησίαν. Suicer. Thesaur. Ecclus. in verbo χειροτονέω, et in voce χειροτονία. Num. 2.

to the purpose, produces this very text, at the head of many other authorities, for a clear testimony and example of it. [But they who would see a plain and compendious account of the authorities I here appeal to, need only read the excellent doctor Hammond's annotations on this single text, and those of the late bishop Beveridge on the first Apost. Can.] But,

I have chosen rather to leave the sacred text to its own naked evidence, than amuse the reader with numerous quotations of that kind, which are so readily to be found elsewhere; especially, since authorities of that nature, though justly thought to have a considerable weight in them by unprejudiced men, yet, I know not for what reasons, are very often slightly passed over by some of the greatest patrons of popular election and the congregational cause. Witness that remarkable passage in the celebrated J. Owen's Plea for Scripture Ordination; who, speaking of valid ordinations, thus explains himself: by "valid," says he, "I mean, not what old canons make so," (and yet it is remarkable by the by that our learned Enquirer urges such authorities in the case,) "but what the Scriptures determine to be so. Those sacred oracles, which are of divine inspiration, and not arbitrary canons which are of weak men's devising, are the foundation of our faith, and the infallible standard, by which truth and error must be tried;" which though it be an unaccountable contempt of those venerable records of the Church, and of all other humane authority besides, yet so far as any original

right or power in that solemn act of ordination can be claimed as 'divine,' he may be owned to speak a very important truth in it; for after that sacred code was once complete and sealed, I know of no such authentic power as that granted to any, either in part, or in whole.

I shall therefore pursue the evidence of those holy oracles a little further still, and prove from thence, that as the Apostles received and exercised such an ordaining power, independent of any popular election in it; so they conveyed the same, without any such condition annexed to it, to the individual persons of some of the chief pastors of the churches which were planted by them. The two noted instances of this kind, within the sacred canon itself, are Timothy and Titus; in whose commission and 'instructions' together, which are very particular, we know, in the point of ordinations above all things, we might reasonably expect to hear of this 'material' right and privilege of the people, if such a right there was, and not without some solemn directions, one would think, for a due regard to it; lest their ordinations should prove defective and 'invalid,' after all the authority the Apostle had given them, for want of this popular election in them. But that neither their commissions or instructions for ordaining bishops and deacons in the church, do either require, or imply any such elections in them, will appear evident, I think, from a very few texts which immediately relate to them.

The commission to Timothy is directly referred to in 2 Tim. ii. 2. *The things that*



*thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, says the great Apostle, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

The substance of Titus's commission is at Titus i. 5. *For this cause left I thee in Crete, says the same Apostle, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.*

Nothing can be plainer, I think, than these three things are here: 1st, That there was a full right and power of ordaining elders in the Church unquestionably invested in these primitive pastors of the Apostolical churches. 2ndly, That each of them in their single persons are expressly specified, addressed, and pointed to, for the discharge and execution of it, *commit thou to faithful men, &c., and that thou shouldst ordain elders, &c., as I had appointed thee.* And, 3rdly, That there is not the least direction, or so much as hint or intimation, given to either of them to call in the assistance, or wait the approbation of the 'people' in the case; neither texts, nor contexts, if we please to look into them, will suggest the least imagination of any such thing: and therefore, without further remark upon them,

I proceed, in the next place, to consider the larger instructions given to them by the great Apostle, for the due execution of their important charge. These lie dispersed in the several epistles directed to them: and here, if anywhere, we might hope to find the secret of a popular election enjoined in all their ordinations. But, on the contrary, instead of clear

instructions for it, we find they had the strongest cautions given them 'against it,' that a holy prophet and Apostle together, whose commission alone they acted by, could well have left with them. For St. Paul, instructing Timothy in the genius of the people of the province he had placed him in, in plain terms foretells him what they would one day do, if they were left to their own elections, and might choose pastors for themselves. *The time will come, says he, when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears* [2 Tim. iv. 3]. This was a pretty fair warning, one would think, both to Timothy himself, and to his successors too, for it was an indefinite prophecy, in point of time, to them all, that they should beware of trusting too much to the votes and suffrages of the people, in that particular affair especially of providing pastors for themselves. And that Titus had a caution to this purpose much of the same kind with this, is visible enough in St. Paul's confirming the Cretian poet's hard testimony of his own countrymen, that *they were always liars, evil beasts, and slow bellies* [Tit. i. 12]. For that the Apostle meant it not of such as were unconverted only, but chiefly of such as were then become members of the Church, and indeed of them alone, in respect of the use he made of it, is manifest from the words immediately following, wherein he enjoins Titus *to rebuke them sharply, that they might be sound in the faith*; which, surely, was to judge and censure them for it; and that had been contrary to his own doctrine in an-

other place, if they were not members of the Church: for (1 Cor. v. 12) he disowns his right of judging them that are without; *what have I to do*, says he, *to judge them that are without?* If the lay-members of the Cretian church therefore had such a character as this fastened upon them by the very Apostle himself, which, at least, must affect a considerable part of them, let any man judge what probability there is, that Titus should have it given him in his instructions to let the people choose their pastors for themselves, or that he should take up that method himself in conferring holy orders on any in that island.

It is true, indeed, they have this excellent instruction amongst the rest, that *bishops and deacons must be proved first, and found to be blameless* [1 Tim. iii. 2. 10, and Tit. i. 6]; which does undoubtedly suppose a careful inquisition and wise trial to be made of the personal qualifications of every candidate for holy orders. And upon this indefinite advice, and single intimation, which, when we have said the most of it that we can, leaves the whole matter to the discretional judgment of the ordainers themselves, do many advocates for popular election ground their plea, for a necessary appeal to the votes and suffrages of the people in all ordinations: nay, our learned Enquirer himself, though he offered no Scripture authority for it, when he was directly treating of the point, yet when he comes to the method of his consistory, in examining into the life and conversation of such candidates for holy orders, he first tells us (p. 88), “they were proposed to the people for

their testimony," and then immediately subjoins the former of these texts as an Apostolical canon, to countenance, at least, if not to enjoin the practice of it.

In answer to which, I offer these few considerations:

1st, That the holy Apostle's meaning in it appears not to be so, by the cautions given to Timothy and Titus, which I mentioned but now.

2ndly, That the nature of the thing itself, namely, the qualifications required in this case, seem very unsuitable to such a popular or congregational inquest as this. And,

Lastly, That our judicious Enquirer himself, where he most explains his sense upon this subject, does not a little countenance the contrary opinion of it.

The first of these particulars, of the Apostle's sense of it, is cleared already, and needs no repetition.

The second, which is the nature of the thing itself, or the qualifications required in the persons to be ordained, (and note, episcopal orders in the sense of the Enquiry are included here,) I shall take from the Enquirer's own pen. "The gifts, or qualifications," says he (p. 84, &c.), "touching which a candidate for the ministry was examined, may be reduced to these four heads."

1st, His age, to prevent admitting a novice or a stripling, as he explains the thing.

2ndly, His condition in the world, in respect of being free from all secular employments, or mundane affairs.

3rdly, His conversation, that he might be known to be meek and humble, and of an unspotted and exemplary life.

4thly, His understanding, that he might be of a good capacity, and fit to teach others; under which head he falls in clearly with Origen and Clemens Alexandrinus, that all sorts of humane learning, and logic, and philosophy in particular, were "not only useful, but necessary for a presbyter;" they were "amiable, and profitable for him," as his own words are [p. 94].

The ingenious author, who drew up these particulars, was very sensible, I doubt not, that three in four of them needed no appealing to any congregation of men to be satisfied in them. Little need of bringing whole multitudes to a poll, to know what, or whereabouts, the age of any candidate should be; or whether involved in secular or worldly affairs, or no; and more absurd still, to enquire there of his skill or abilities in those depths of humane learning, which are thought proper for him.

The only qualification then which could fall under the cognizance of such judges as those, must be that of his moral virtues, or of his life and conversation; and why should the bishops of different provinces be called in to judge of that? No man ever questioned, I think, but that neighbourhood or societies, friends or familiars, whether laity or clergy, which any man whatsoever has been more familiarly conversant with, are the properest evidence, before all others, to give a just and satisfactory information of this kind of qualification. But how, and

in what manner, would a reasonable man conceive such information should be had? By an universal suffrage and critical majority of voices, in so mixed a multitude? Sure, if natural reason, and common sense and experience does not startle at that, yet our blessed master would teach us to be very cautious, at least, in such hazardous trials as these; when he plainly tells us, there will be *tares as well as wheat*, and it is well, if we must not understand it in more than equal proportion too, *in that very field* which is a symbol of the kingdom of heaven, or of the visible Church of God upon earth; and to measure out one and the other without distinction, as this case supposes, could have little good come of it. *Not this man, but Barabbas*, is a tremendous instance of this kind, in the most eminent congregation of the only Church of God then amongst men: and whosoever shall seriously consider how expressly the Spirit has foretold us what degeneracy of faith, what corruption of manners, what perilous times should come in the latter days, when men should be *false accusers, and haters of those that are good*, and the like; yet still *retaining the form of godliness, though without the power of it*; whosoever, I say, should impartially consider this, must be inclined to think, that the wisdom of God, who both foresaw and foretold it all, should scarcely ever grant such an unchangeable charter to every individual member of a church, to approve his bishops and pastors for him, in all generations to come; as we see, indeed, there appears no footsteps of it in the holy code of His laws, by the view we have already had of

them. The wise heathen speaks a natural truth, not very foreign to this purpose, which I am afraid the Christians in our age would find hard to contradict: "things do not go so well with mankind," said the excellent Seneca, "that the best please the most where number and multitude is, it is an argument rather of the worst<sup>m</sup>." The inference from all I have said here is this; that notwithstanding the whole corporation, or society, whether sacred or civil, which any person is an immediate member of, and the whole region or district he ordinary lives and converses in, be the most suitable places and persons from whence we should seek a moral character of him; yet a few select ones out of all the rest, if judiciously chosen, and with an upright mind applied to, are as likely, at least, to give a just and sober account in the case, as the promiscuous votes of the mixed multitude together can reasonably be thought to do; and if what I have said seem too little for it, I shall further add, what I learn from the judicious Enquirer himself, namely, that 'ignorance' and 'affection,' that is, weakness in understanding, and bias upon the will, are generally to be found amongst the vulgar people of any Christian church or congregation whatsoever.

And this will clear, I hope, the third particular I promised to make out, that the Enquirer himself, where he most impartially explains his sense upon this subject, does not a little coun-

<sup>m</sup> Non tam bene cum rebus humanis agitur, ut meliora pluribus placeant, argumentum pessimi, turba est. Seneca de Vit. Beat. c. 2.

tenance our opinion of it: for these are the two qualities he fastens upon the common people (p. 48.), even of primitive churches and congregations in general [as I just mentioned once before]. They served his turn then indeed in another view of the case: he was representing to us the primitive custom of neighbouring bishops being called in, as necessary to consent to the people's election of a bishop; and because it would eclipse the popular power, to speak out the whole of their business, office, and authority, in constituting a bishop over them, he smooths it over with this gloss, and one or two more not much unlike it, which I may consider afterwards; "I suppose," says he, "the reason of their presenting him to those bishops for their consent was this, lest the people, through ignorance or affection, should choose an unfit, or an unable man for that office." What manner of representation this is of an episcopal part and office in primitive ordinations, I shall not stay to observe now; I only make good the observation I raised from it to the present purpose, viz. that he charges the congregation with suspicion of such 'ignorance' and 'affection' in the choice of their bishop, that they needed better judges to be called in; as in another place he makes them subject to 'giddiness, envy,' or 'pride' (p. 105). He may apply, it is likely, the 'weakness of their understanding' to the point of judging of the candidates' 'humane learning' only; but the bias of their affection, which with equal justice perhaps he supposes to be in them, together with the other qualities of giddiness, envy, or pride, can never pass for



a tolerable disposition in them, to give their suffrage in any other qualification whatsoever. And therefore I think it can be no injury to say, that where his sense is most impartially explained, he countenances, at least, our present opinion in the case.

Now, to sum up all that has been offered from Scripture evidence relating to the argument before us, the particulars are briefly these.

1st, That the principal Apostles themselves were unquestionably chosen and ordained supreme governors and pastors of all that did, or should believe in their time, without the concurrence or consent of any. And this was the root and fountain of all Church power granted from above.

2ndly, That the same Apostles must have had the like ordaining power personally and entirely invested in themselves alone, upon these two accounts; 1st, because their commission, in this respect, was, in express words, the very transcript of the Fathers to their Lord and Master, who sent them [*as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you, John xx. 21*]. And 2ndly, because their pastoral work in converting unconverted nations, and constituting or ordaining spiritual governors for them, being, in that respect, the same also, did naturally require the same authority and power for it. [And that those holy Apostles did actually exercise such a power, I proved by the collateral authority of Clem. Romanus, who, in so many words, assures us, that they ordained both bishops and deacons so.]

3rdly, I shewed, from the evidence of the sacred text itself, that those adopted Apostles, St. Paul and St. Barnabas, did ordain elders for the churches, in the same manner, as to their sole and personal act in it; referring the reader to many unexceptionable authorities, for that exposition of the holy penmen's words.

4thly, That the same St. Paul conveyed the like power to Timothy and Titus, requiring no concurrence of a popular election with them, either in his commission or instructions given to them; but, on the contrary, left cautions with them to beware of trusting too much to any such elections.

And, lastly, I considered at large that single instruction so often strained to prove a popular election by, viz. "that bishops or deacons must be first proved, and found to be blameless;" and shewed, that neither in the sense of the Apostle himself, nor from the nature of the thing, or in the more impartial sense and judgment of the learned Enquirer himself, any such popular claim or title could be implied in it.

From these particulars, I conceive the first part, or member, of the general distinction I proposed, to be made good, viz. that the Holy Scriptures set forth to us a divine right, authority, and power, of ordaining elders in the Church, absolutely and entirely conveyed, from the fountain of all power in it, to the single persons of the first spiritual rulers of it, without any previous or concurrent election of the people in the case; and that it was so executed and conveyed down to others also.

To proceed to the other part of that distinction then: what account do we find of this matter in the records of primitive antiquity nearest approaching to the first age of the Church? And here I might produce variety of instances, wherein neither election, nor so much as a convention of the people, was to be found, or heard of, at the consecration of many of those primitive bishops within that period of time. Clemens Romanus constitutes Euaristus his successor by his own assignment, and a kind of surrender, as it were, before his death; for so Eusebius's words<sup>n</sup>, here noted in the margin, do plainly imply: Phædimus, bishop of Amasea, had no other hand but that of heaven and his own, in making the renowned Gregory bishop of Neocæsarea, as the whole circumstances of that affair, related by the learned Dr. Cave<sup>o</sup>, from Greg. Nyssen, do sufficiently shew. But, not to amuse ourselves with enquiring after particular cases, what sense can we make of that very primitive canon of the Church, "which taxes the people of a diocese with great iniquity, who would not receive a bishop ordained for them, and sent to preside over them?" Nay, "suspended the clergy of that city, for not instructing such an insolent people any better;" which are the express words of the thirty-sixth Apostolical canon<sup>p</sup>? What sense, I say, can

<sup>n</sup> Κλήμης Εὐαρίστῳ παραδοὺς τὴν λειτουργίαν ἀναλύει τὸν βίον. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. iii. c. 34.

<sup>o</sup> See Dr. Cave's Life of Greg. Thaumaturgus, § 6. p. 271.

<sup>p</sup> Εἰ χειροτονηθεὶς ἐπίσκοπος — μὴ δεχθῆ, οὐ παρὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γνώμην, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὴν τοῦ λαοῦ μοχθηρίαν, αὐτὸς μένητω ἐπίσκοπος, ὁ δὲ κληρὸς τῆς πόλεως ἀφοριζέσθω ὅτι τοιοῦτου λαοῦ ἀνυποτάκτου παιδεύεται οὐκ ἐγένοντο. Can. Apostol. 36.

we make of so ancient a canon as this, if it were not familiarly in use in those primitive times, to ordain a bishop for a vacant see without the people having any concern in it? And they who can believe that canon to be of later date than the third century, at the most, after all the evidence which learned antiquaries have given to the contrary, will hardly be brought to reason I am afraid. And yet we need not insist on this neither; for the constant and settled custom of the church of Alexandria is so pregnant an instance in this case, as supersedes all further enquiry in the matter.

That the twelve presbyters alone chose their bishop there to the middle of the third century, at least, is evident enough from St. Jerome's account of it, though in other respects, the same passage is too often misapplied. But his account is this: "At Alexandria," says he, "from Mark the Evangelist to Heraclas and Dionysius's time," who were the thirteenth and fourteenth bishops in succession there, "the presbyters always nominated one their bishop, chosen from among themselves, and placed in a higher station<sup>q</sup>." Add to this evidence the same account given us, only more fully and particularly still, by Severus, who wrote the lives of the Alexandrian patriarchs, and by the Arabian and Ægyptian Annalists of that church, as Abra-

<sup>q</sup> Nam et Alexandriae a Marco Evangelista usque ad Heraclam et Dionysium episcopos, presbyteri semper unum ex se electum, in excelsiori gradu collocatum, episcopum nominabant. Hieron. Ep. ad Euagr. edit. Erasm. Basil. 1516. tom. 3. fol. 150.

ham Ecchellensis<sup>r</sup> has recorded them for us; and we shall find it was not only a stated custom in that primitive church for the presbyters alone thus to choose their bishop, but that it was a fundamental constitution there, and of St. Mark's own appointment. What must we think then? Could the people have a general right, or charter of election granted them, either from Christ or his Apostles, and this holy evangelist know nothing of it? Or, if he had known it, would he have established a standing rule, in that eminent church of his own founding, so directly contrary to it?

But, not to insist on these approved records of the Church neither, though the testimony they bear is strong and plain enough, I shall willingly go along with the Enquiry before me, as far as fact and truth will give me leave.

I dispute not, therefore, that very early custom of provincial bishops repairing to a vacant see, and in the 'presence of the people' settling the election of the intended bishop, and ordaining him there, in most provinces I mean, though not in all; which is as far as his quotations require<sup>s</sup>.

But, to bring the question to a short issue; what was the part or office of the people in those public ordinations? The Enquiry, treating of the presbyter's examination for his holy orders, which, in his sense, is the making of him bishop too, as to the orders that he takes, allows of "testimony and attestation" (p. 88)

<sup>r</sup> See Abrah. Ecchellens. de Eccl. Alex. originib. Romæ, 1661. 4to. c. 6. p. 82, 83, 84, et p. 103 to 107.

<sup>s</sup> Fere provincias universas. Enq. p. 43.

only of the people in the case; but when he comes to be made a 'bishop indeed,' in the true and universal sense of the Catholic Church, then the people's testimony improves itself into 'a claim of power sufficient to elect him bishop,' if they please, or 'to depose him afterwards,' if they think he proves unfit for it.

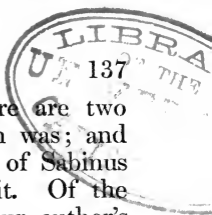
Now, there are two short questions to be observed in this case.

1st, Whether the primitive Church itself, who so commonly ordained 'in the presence of the people,' acknowledged any such power in them, or no?

2ndly, From whence was this power given, if such an one there was, and by what authority was it claimed?

To prove that the primitive Church did acknowledge such a power, the Enquiry produces two articles. 1st, That of an African synod, related by St. Cyprian, [Ep. 68. § 6, or in the Oxon. edit. Ep. 67,] and translates it thus: "The neighbouring bishops of the province," says he, "met together at the church of a vacant see, and chose a bishop in the presence of the people, who knew his life and conversation before; which custom was observed in the election of Sabinus, bishop of Emerita in Spain, who was ordained to that dignity by the suffrage of all the brethren, and of all the bishops there present<sup>t</sup>." [See Enquiry, p. 48.]

<sup>t</sup> Apud nos et fere per provincias universas tenetur, ut ad ordinationes rite celebrandas, ad eam plebem, cui præpositus ordinatur, episcopi ejusdem provinciæ proximi quique conveniant, et episcopus deligatur, plebe præsentē, quæ singulorum vitam plenissime novit, et uniuscujusque actum de ejus con-



In this account of the case, here are two parts; 1st, what the general custom was; and 2ndly, that the particular ordination of Sabinus was in all points conformable to it. Of the general custom, it is affirmed, in our author's own translation, that the neighbouring bishops met together at the church of a vacant see, and 'chose' a bishop. Here is as plain a proof, I think, of the neighbouring bishops 'choosing' the person, as words can make it. What then is said of the people? Only this; "That it was in their presence, who knew his life and conversation before:" if any man can see a popular election here, he must be quicker sighted than I can ever hope to be. That their knowledge of his life and conversation before, should qualify them 'to give testimony' of his moral conduct and behaviour amongst them, and so encourage or discourage the bishops in making or confirming their elections, is a natural and genuine inference from that expression; and if we will allow St. Cyprian to make his references and similitudes apposite and agreeable to the subject he applies them to, we must conclude it was his own meaning too: for upon this very argument, and in the same page, he refers to God's instructions to Moses, to bring forth Aaron, with Eleazar his son, and place them before his congregation, in order to consecrate the son his father's successor; and I presume, no man infers from hence, that the congrega-

versatione perspexit. Quod factum videmus in Sabini ordinatione, ut de universæ fraternitatis *suffragio*, et de episcoporum *judicio* episcopatus ei deferretur. Cypr. Ep. 68, aut edit. Oxon. 67. [Fell.]

tion of Israel chose or voted Eleazar to the high-priesthood, because it was appointed to be done in their presence; and why this reference, then, to illustrate Christian ordinations by, if they were so very different in that particular circumstance for which alone they were produced? which was to shew that the judgment and testimony about them both, should be as public as it well could be; for that is the very reason given by St. Cyprian<sup>u</sup> for quoting the sacred text, and applying it to the argument he had in hand.

For anything that appears in this quotation, the general custom of the Church made the election of the person to be the bishop's part, and left the 'presence' and 'testimony' of the people only to be theirs; and doubtless in Sabinus's case it could be no otherwise, for it is introduced here with this attestation to it, "that this custom of the Church was accordingly observed in the ordination of Sabinus." Where lies the evidence then, that the people chose there, though the general custom is declared in this quotation, not to be so? Not in St. Cyprian's affirming it, I am sure, in such plain terms, as he affirmed before that the provincial bishops met and 'chose' too; but it wholly lies in a 'positive' construction of a dubious and mistaken word in this quotation, and the Enquirer's ingenuity in joining two different terms, in one and the same sense, in his translation,

<sup>u</sup> Ut sacerdos, plebe præsente, sub omnium oculis deligatur, et dignus atque idoneus publico iudicio ac testimonio comprobetur, sicut in Numeris Dominus Moysi præcepit. Cypr. Ep. 68, aut edit. Oxon. Ep. 67. [p. 172. Fell.]



which the accurate St. Cyprian had carefully distinguished himself. For the holy Father's words, to translate them right, are these; "that the bishopric was conferred upon Sabinus, by the suffrage of all the brethren, and by the judgment of the bishops there:" so that 'judgment' and 'suffrage' are plainly distinguished, we see, by St. Cyprian; the former attributed to the bishops alone, and the latter to all the brethren; whereas the Enquirer was pleased to unite them in his translation, and says, "that Sabinus was advanced to that dignity by the suffrage of all the brethren, and of all the bishops there present." So that 'suffrage' being made the same with a 'judicial act,' by this ingenious union of them, insensibly conveyed an equal share at least, of right and power to the people in this election, with that of the bishops themselves; and that purely, so far as any man can see, because the word 'suffrage' was taken of course to signify no less; which I desire the reader more particularly to take notice of, because a very great stress of this ingenious author's arguments for popular election, and that which innocently influenced, it is possible, his own judgment in it too, seems to lie in a mistaken construction of this single word, in the writings of St. Cyprian.

I must be forced, upon this occasion, therefore, to spend a little time in clearing up the holy Martyr's notion of it, which I shall do as briefly as I can.

And were there no other instance in all the venerable monuments we have of his excellent works, to prove that 'suffrage,' in his ordinary

use of the word, implied no right or power at all, in them that gave it; or conveyed any title, or part of title, to the person they gave their suffrages for: this single passage before us would go a great way to persuade an unprejudiced man that it was so. For to find it distinguished, as it is here, from the 'judicial part' of the whole proceedings, and the decisive act (which 'judgment' expressly is) attributed afterwards unto others, who were fewer in number too, does naturally enough imply, that there was no actual power, but purely either precedent testimony, or a subsequent approbation in the suffrages of the people; else their very number would have made them judges, rather than the bishops themselves; and it makes not a little to the same purpose, that those very words were carefully distinguished also, in the account of Eleazar's public consecration, (just before,) where we are sure they must be taken so.

But to shew how familiar this notion of the word is, in the writings of that primitive Father, let these further instances, out of many more which might be produced, be added to the former. In his tract, *De Zelo et Livore*, speaking of the people's transport of joy and satisfaction at David's slaying of Goliath, he expresses it thus; "they broke forth," says he, "into commendations of David, with suffrage of applause<sup>x</sup>." What can this 'suffrage of applause' signify, but plainly a testimony of the people's

<sup>x</sup> *Populus admirans in laudes David prædicationis suffragio prosiliit. Cypr. de Zelo et Liv. p. 223. Oxon. edit.*

highest approbation of the thing done; not expressed by way of votes, to be sure (it would be absurd enough to imagine that), but by public acclamations of them all, as infinitely pleased with what the holy champion had done; and this St. Cyprian thought properly expressed, by calling it the 'suffrage' of the people.

Again, in his treatise, *De Vanitate Idolorum*, speaking of the Jews earnestly urging Pilate to crucify our blessed Lord, "they delivered him up," says he, "to Pontius Pilate, requesting of him by force, and importunate suffrages, that he should be crucified<sup>y</sup>;" and what meant these 'importunate suffrages' more, than to shew their wicked inclination, desire, and highest approbation of the thing, if Pilate should pass such a bloody sentence upon him? for they declared themselves, they had no power, in the act of putting any man to death [John xviii. 31]. Yet this the accurate holy Father again, in his language, calls the "suffrage of the Jews."

One instance more I shall name, because it contains in it 'his own' explication of the word, and plainly shews, that, by 'suffrage,' he meant the same thing as he did by 'public testimony,' and nothing more. In his sixty-eighth epistle, he says of Cornelius's ordination, that it was "by the suffrage of the clergy and the people<sup>z</sup>;" and of the same ordination, in another place, he says, it was "by the testimony of almost all the clergy, and by the suffrage of the people

<sup>y</sup> *Magistri eorum Pontio Pilato tradiderunt crucem ejus, et mortem suffragiis violentis et pertinacibus flagitantes.* Cypr. de Vanit. Idol. p. 16. edit. Oxon.

<sup>z</sup> *De cleri et plebis suffragio.* Cypr. Ep. 68. [Fell. p. 177.]

that were there<sup>a</sup>." Now if the 'testimony' of the clergy in the latter clause be not the same with their 'suffrage' in the former, then it was something less than so; and consequently the clergy's personal part and interest in elections falls short of the common people's, to whom a suffrage is imputed in the same clause; which I presume is not intended neither. But if the terms be allowed to be equivalent, the case is plain, the holy Father appears consistent with himself; and in no other sense, I apprehend, it can be so.

These few instances, I think, may shew, that to take the word 'suffrage' in the sense of solemn testimony, good-liking, approbation, or the like, in the works of St. Cyprian, is an authentic and warrantable interpretation of it, as being directly suitable to his own manifest and familiar notion of the word; and therefore I leave the reader to judge, whether the Enquirer's promiscuous joining of it with the word 'judgment' in the quotation now before us, as if they were synonymous terms, and laying the whole stress of the quotation upon it, when the holy Father himself had cautiously distinguished them in both places, where occasion was offered him to do so, does not seem, at least, a mistaken apprehension of that great author's sense; and by that means strains the whole quotation, to prove a 'popular election,' when, by what has been offered, we may clearly see, there is no such evidence to be found in either part of it.

<sup>a</sup> De clericorum pœne omnium testimonio, et de plebis, quæ tunc affuit, suffragio. Ep. 55, p. 104. edit. Oxon.

The other authority brought to prove the same thing (p. 49), is a passage in St. Clement's first epistle to the Corinthians, where our learned author observes, "that Apostles and Apostolic preachers ordained bishops and deacons with the consent of the whole church<sup>b</sup>;" that is, by their votes given for the candidate to be ordained in the manner of a regular election; for so the subject he applies it to, obliges us to understand it. Now this evidence so far agrees with the former, that the whole force of it lies in the signification of a single word again, and will not want many, I hope, to shew the invalidity of it. St. Clement's word for 'consenting' here, is [συνευδοκησάσης] and if any word in the Greek tongue could aptly render St. Cyprian's sense of 'suffrages' in the notion I have just now given of it, I should think it might be this. But let the language of the inspired penmen determine it for us. *Εὐδοκέω* is of near affinity to it; and this we often meet with in holy writ. God's 'complacency' in his own Son is expressed by that word in three of the Evangelists; *this is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased<sup>c</sup>*. St. Paul uses it for *taking pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities<sup>d</sup>*; and for the *wicked's being pleased in unrighteousness* [2 Thess. ii. 12]. And other places in holy writ might be produced to the same purpose, which the learned commentators expound by

<sup>b</sup> Κατασταθέντας ὑπ' ἐκείνων καὶ μεταξύ ὑφ' ἑτέρων ἐλλογίμων ἀνδρῶν, συνευδοκησάσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας πάσης. Clem. Rom. Ep. 1. ad Corinth. [§ 44. ed. Jacobson.]

<sup>c</sup> Ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα. Matt. iii. 17. Mark i. 2. Luc. iii. 22.

<sup>d</sup> Εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, &c. 2 Cor. xii. 10.

*rejoicing, resting highly satisfied, and acquiescing in them*<sup>e</sup>. And how can the right of election be grounded on such a term as this? St. Luke<sup>f</sup> expresses Saul's consent to the death of St. Stephen, indeed, by the very same word which St. Clement used here: but if that tragical act was all over rage, and riot, and lawless violence of a barbarous and incensed multitude, as the holy penman's relation of it does sufficiently shew, then Saul's consenting to such an act as that, can have no other sense, I think, so fairly put upon it, as that which we have found to be in all the foregoing particulars upon this head; that is, he highly approved the thing, had a thorough satisfaction in it, and his heart went along with theirs, who were principal actors in it: so that the sense of St. Clement's word, even in the language of Holy Scripture itself, does in nowise warrant such an inference from it as can establish a popular election in the least.

To strengthen these two authorities, the Enquiry offers three or four examples of matter of fact, where bishops were actually chosen by the people; and therefore the primitive Church did own such a power in them. I will propose them fairly as they are, and consider them as briefly as I can.

His first example is that of Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem (p. 46), "chosen there," says he, "by the compulsion or choice of the members of that church." So he translates the quotation

<sup>e</sup> Εὐδοκήσαντες ἐν ἀδικίᾳ τοῦτ' ἐστὶ χαίρω, εὐφραίνομαι, μετ' εὐθυμίας δέχομαι. Theodor. in loc. Προσετέθησαν ἀσμένως τῇ ἀδικίᾳ. Theophyl. in loc.

<sup>f</sup> Σαῦλος δὲ ἦν συνευδοκῶν τῇ ἀναιρέσει αὐτοῦ. Act. viii. 1.

for us, which, in plain English, is thus: "that the brethren would not suffer Alexander to return home<sup>g</sup>." The matter of fact was this; Alexander was a bishop in Cappadocia long before that time, but came to Jerusalem out of devotion, to pray there, and visit the country. Here, by one divine vision to himself, and another to the people of Jerusalem, God was pleased to signify, that he should stay amongst them, and be an assistant bishop to the superannuated Narcissus, who was now one hundred and sixteen years old; upon which visions, with an audible voice from heaven to confirm them, "the people would not suffer him to return home again." This is the first example of the people's choosing a bishop for themselves. I shall join the second to it, because of the resemblance they have to one another: it is that of Fabianus's promotion to the bishopric of Rome<sup>h</sup>. This looks a little fairer to the purpose indeed; for the people were met in consultation about nominating a person whom they liked: and whilst they were thus together, a dove miraculously lights upon Fabianus's head, in the same manner as the Holy Ghost formerly descended on our blessed Saviour; at which divine vision, in so miraculous manner, the people ('as it were by inspiration,' for so the historian's express words are<sup>i</sup>) cry out with one heart and one mind, that Fabianus was worthy of the bishopric; and straightway they hastily set him on the throne.

<sup>g</sup> Ἀδελφοὶ οὐκέτ' οἴκαδε αὐτῷ παλινοστεῖν ἐπιτρέπουσι. Euseb. l. vi. c. 11. [§ 2. ed. Burton.]

<sup>h</sup> See Euseb. l. 6. c. 29. Hist. Eccl. [p. 434. ed. Burton.]

<sup>i</sup> Ὡσπερ ὑφ' ἑνὸς πνεύματος θείου κινήθεντα. ib.

These are the two leading instances or examples of a popular election in the primitive Church; and to speak my thoughts freely of them, they incline me much more to admire, than to reply: to admire, I say, that so important a right and privilege of all Christian congregations in the world, as that of electing their own bishops surely would be, should be supported in the very foundation of it, by two such singular examples as these.

Yet, because St. Cyprian furnishes me with a short answer to all extraordinary occasions of this nature, I shall leave it with the reader, and hope it may excuse a further reply. "We must not wait for the testimony of men," says that excellent Father, "where the testimony of God is given in before<sup>k</sup>." By this maxim that holy martyr himself practised, when he ordained the eminent confessor Aurelius, a deacon of his church, without the people's 'character' or 'testimony' of him; which, I freely own, he ordinarily used to inform himself by. And if the constancy of Aurelius, under his several trials and persecutions, deserved the name of God's testimony for him (for that was all in the case), surely the heavenly voice and visions, in each of the foregoing instances, both of Alexander and Fabianus too, may well be taken for no less; and consequently the humane suffrages, whether of laity or clergy, in those elections, were but very indifferent precedents to shew how far they might go.

There are two examples more proposed to us;

<sup>k</sup> Non expectanda sunt testimonia humana, cum præcedunt divina suffragia. Cypr. Ep. 33. Edit. Oxon. [p. 74. Fell.]



1st, that of Cornelius, the successor of Fabianus at Rome; and lastly, that of St. Cyprian himself at Carthage. But forasmuch as all the force of both of them (p. 47) lies in that construction of the word "suffrage" again, and in the language of that holy Father too, which we have seen already, can warrant no consequence from it, I conceive the answer to them both to be given there. It is true, indeed, Pontius the deacon calls it "the favour of the people<sup>1</sup>," in St. Cyprian's case, if that would mend the matter; and our Enquirer has not failed to quote it here. But let Pontius be his own commentator, who, in the same page, calls the people's part in it, "their earnest spiritual desire<sup>m</sup>" to have him for their bishop; which shews their favour and inclination strong enough in it, but little of authority in the case.

Having considered, then, both authorities and examples here offered us, to clear the first question by; viz. whether the primitive Church, which so commonly ordained in the 'presence' of the people, acknowledged any such 'electing power' in them, or no? I determine nothing for others, any further than the evidence of fact and reason I have laid before them, shall incline them to; though I confess I think it clear, beyond all dispute, that the first and nearest ages to that of the Apostles owned no such right or power to belong to them, whatever the encroachments of the people, upon account of their testimonies so prudently asked in the case, or the

<sup>1</sup> Quod iudicio Dei, et plebis favore ad officium sacerdotii, &c. Pont. in Vit. Cypr. p. 3. Edit. Oxon.

<sup>m</sup> Plebs spirituali desiderio concupiscens.—Episcopum, &c.

condescension of some provincial synods, might bring it to at last.

Yet, to go as far with this hypothesis as I can, I proceed to the second question, which was this: from whence was this power given, supposing such a power there was, and by what authority was it claimed?

The foregoing particulars will make the answer short: we have found it neither practised by our blessed Lord Himself, nor given in commission to His principal Apostles: we have found those principal Apostles manifestly ordained both bishops and deacons, in such a manner as was inconsistent with it: we have seen that the Apostles next in order to them, and adopted into their college, ordained elders for the churches by their own personal authority and choice alone; and further, that St. Paul himself, being one of them, conveyed the like ordaining power to other supreme pastors placed by himself over the respective churches he committed to their care, neither in commission or instructions enjoining or advising them to make use of such a popular election, but rather indeed cautioning them to be very wary in that matter: and lastly, we have seen that many ordinations in the ages following, and particularly in the great church of Alexandria, at least for near three hundred years together, were performed without any such election at all; no one of which particulars, had it been of Divine or Apostolical institution, could tolerably be accounted for.

Whence then, to speak the most of it, could such a right or power arise, but from the free

consent and prudential laws or canons of ancient bishops in some provincial synods amongst themselves? For as for general councils in the three first centuries, I am clearly of the Enquirer's mind (p. 141), there was none such within that period of time. And since we are agreed so far, that none but provincial synods were held within those early ages of the Church, I hope I may affirm with him also (p. 146), that "their decrees were binding and obligatory to those particular churches only, whose representatives they were:" and as a consequence of that, whatever they decreed for discipline or order within their own precincts or jurisdiction, which had not the stamp of divine institution or command upon it, they had also power to disannul or repeal; and the power of all provinces in this respect was the same.

From whence this plain truth, I think, may naturally be inferred, that whatsoever province in the Catholic Church had never once consented to such a canon of discipline amongst themselves, as this of popular election is; or had they once decreed it, yet directly or virtually had, by their own canons or constitutions, repealed or disannulled it again: the Christian laity within the district or jurisdiction of any such province, could have no warrantable right or charter whatsoever, to claim such an 'electing power,' in any of the ordinations there. For a claim of power, right, or privilege, within the Christian Church, without a warrantable grant from that head or fountain of power (whether it be originally divine, or purely ecclesiastical, from whence alone it can proceed), approaches

near to the very definition of usurpation itself.

In the mean time, I freely own, that all which the primitive Church declares to be their reason for ordaining bishops in the presence and cognizance of the people, was not only warrantable, but wise, and worthy of the imitation of all succeeding ages of the Church; for their reasons were manifestly these: “that the crimes of ill men might be brought to light, and the merits of good men openly proclaimed<sup>n</sup>.” And thus far, I believe, there could be little objection made against the constitution or practice of almost any Christian churches in this very age, and particularly against the established church of England, where ordinations are enjoined to be celebrated in a public manner<sup>o</sup>, and the congregation invited to make what objections they can; and at every confirmation of a bishop elect<sup>p</sup>, citations are appointed to be issued out, proclamations six times made, to summon all opposers before the consecration be allowed. And in this sense only it is, that St. Cyprian so solemnly declared the ancient custom, then in use amongst them, of “repairing to a vacant see for ordaining a new bishop there, to be of divine

<sup>n</sup> Ut plebe præsentē, vel detegantur malorum crimina vel bonorum merita prædicentur. Cypr. Ep. 67. p. 172. edit. Oxon.

<sup>o</sup> “In some Sunday or holiday, in the face of the Church.” See Rubr. before Priests’ Orders, and Pref. to Eng. Ordinat. § ult., “The bishop shall say unto the people thus: ‘Brethren, if there be any of you who knoweth any impediment, or notable crime, &c., let him come forth in the name of God, and shew what it is.’” See the office for ordaining deacons and priests.

<sup>p</sup> See Godolph. Repertor. Canon. cap. 3. 26. and Clark’s Praxis in Cur. Eccles. Titul. 329.

tradition, and Apostolical observation<sup>q</sup>;" (which is so mightily insisted upon, to prove an indispensable obligation to popular elections;) for that he grounded all his 'divine tradition' upon God's instructions to Moses only, for consecrating Eleazer before all the congregation, is manifestly clear from the whole context of the place; and the Apostles themselves, 'observing' those very "magisteria divina," as his words are, that is, those very directions again given unto Moses, when they ordained afterwards; he therefore calls it also 'Apostolical observation<sup>q</sup>.' Thus the direct connection of those two paragraphs in St. Cyprian, obliges us to understand his words; and how little those directions countenance a popular election, the example of the fact itself does sufficiently teach us, as we observed before; and indeed St. Cyprian, closing up all with that very application of it to the Christian practice of his own times, namely, that a bishop should be chosen 'in the presence' of the people, 'who knew their life and conversation<sup>r</sup>,' and saying no more, would convince any impartial man, that he all along meant no more by it.

It is true, he instances the cases of St. Matthias, and the seven deacons; where the people were not 'present' only, say the common advocates for the congregational cause, but in all appearance absolutely chose the persons too.

I shall consider these two plausible examples,

<sup>q</sup> Propter quod diligenter de traditione Divina et Apostolica observatione tenendum est, &c. Cypr. Ep. 67. Edit. Oxon. p. 172.

<sup>r</sup> — Ut episcopus deligatur, plebe præsentē, quæ singulorum vitam plenissime novit, &c. Ep. 67.

so much triumphed in by many, with all the fairness and brevity that I can, and hasten to dismiss the argument.

As to that of St. Matthias, it seems a very unaccountable precedent for a standing practice in the Church, in whatsoever manner it was done; since, properly speaking, the foundation of the Christian Church, as it is a spiritual corporation or society of believers, was not then laid, because the Holy Ghost was not yet given, Who was to endue the very master-builders themselves with all that power and wisdom from above, by which they were to found and govern the Church of God upon earth. The eleven there present were Apostles elect, by the infallible nomination indeed of their Lord and Master; but their commission was not yet sealed, nor were they furnished with those credentials and instructions, which the Spirit was to give them afterwards; insomuch as they presumed not to act in that extraordinary ordination by their own personal judgment, as at other times, but referred the determination to God alone, casting lots, and appealing to God by prayer for it.

Which makes it stranger still, as to the case at present before us, that the votes and suffrages of the people should be sought for, in a case where the Apostles themselves dare so little interpose, and where God himself made choice of his own Apostle.

But it will be said, perhaps, that the brethren then present nominated, at least, or proposed the two candidates; if so, it must be granted still, that their humane suffrages could have nei-

ther authority, direction, or any kind of influence upon a divine election, which gains but little to the purpose it is chiefly urged for. But after all, the very nomination of the persons in this case of St. Matthias, will very hardly, if it can at all, be proved to have been the brethren or congregation's part, by anything we meet with in St. Peter's whole discourse. There were about a hundred and twenty persons present, it is sure, and what St. Peter spake, was in the audience of them all; but 'to whom' he immediately addressed his discourse, and upon 'them' imposed the obligation of providing a successor in the room of Judas, is another question, which the sense and substance of the speech itself can best resolve for us.

Now, two expressions in it afford no small light to this purpose.

First, in speaking of Judas, who was fallen from his Apostleship, St. Peter's words are these: he was numbered with us, and had obtained a part of 'this ministry;' that is of the Apostolic ministry, no doubt. Was Judas thus numbered then with all the brethren there present, as partaker 'with them' of that Apostolic function? or with St. Peter only, and the other ten Apostles, in the midst of whom he then spake? Surely this latter sense alone is the utmost the words can bear, when he says, 'he was numbered with us;' and consequently they were his Apostolic brethren only, to whom he addressed them.

2ndly, In the directions he gives, from whence the successor of Judas should be chosen, his expression is this: "Wherefore, of these men,"

says he, "that have accompanied with us, &c." 'Of these men!' Why not 'of some amongst yourselves?' or some words equivalent to that? if the persons to be elected were not only to be chosen 'from among them,' but 'themselves' to be the electors also. That seems the direct expression for recommending the election to the brethren, and enjoining them to elect one from among themselves too: whereas the other, which St. Peter uses, is as plainly an address to some other electors there present, to choose out of those very brethren before them, pointing at them, as it were, by that natural expression; Out of 'these' persons that have accompanied with 'us,' &c.

We need no more, I think, though more remarks might be made, to prove, that the Apostles there present were the peculiar persons St. Peter addressed his speech to; and I presume it will not be disputed then, but that those words (at ver. 23), "And they appointed two," did refer to 'them' likewise, and to 'them only:' so that the people had no part so much as in the nomination of the persons to be proposed as candidates for that divine election.

I am sensible 'the title' of St. Peter's address in these words of our translation 'men and brethren,' has not a little contributed to the contrary exposition of the whole discourse: but let it be considered that the particle 'and' is not in the original text, and owned by our translators not to be so, by the different letter it is printed in; and therefore the holy penman's language denotes no more than if St. Peter had said, 'my brethren' only; and that the whole



congregation were so in a general sense, is not to be disputed; but that the Apostles there present were in a singular and more eminent sense St. Peter's 'brethren,' as united in the Apostolic college with him, cannot be denied neither. And therefore, since the subject of the discourse appropriates the speech peculiarly to 'them,' there is greater reason that that evidence should explain the meaning of an indefinite term in the title, than that the equivocal sense alone, against the tenor of the whole discourse, should determine for us otherwise. And perhaps the *ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί*, on which the contrary is grounded, does rather add an emphasis in the title, to denote the sense we take it in; for I should think it no exceptionable translation of it, were it rendered thus: "Ye men that are peculiarly my brethren;" which shews a kind of emphatical distinction of some there present from all the rest. Upon the whole matter, I think we might very well subscribe to the learned Grotius's conclusion in this case: "It is a wonder to me," says he, "how some men have persuaded themselves, that Matthias was chosen by the people to his Apostolic charge; for in St. Luke I find no footstep of it<sup>t</sup>."

As to the case of the seven deacons, they were left to the enquiry, choice, and nomination of the brethren, there is no doubt of it; but in what particular respect, with what special limitations, and how far it may be made a pre-

<sup>t</sup> Matthiam a populo ad Apostoli munus electum, miror quo argumento sibi quidam persuaserint, nam in Luca nullum ejus rei invenio vestigium. Grot. de Imp. Sum. potest. circa sacra. Cap. x. § 5.

cedent for the people's choosing their own bishops and pastors in the church, a very short view of the matter 'of fact' may inform us. For,

First, Whatever offices in the Church the Apostles' imposition of hands might entitle those deacons to, it is plain their referring the nomination of them to the brethren was upon that single score of finding out persons they could intrust with the contributions of the Church, for the daily ministrations, and for the serving of tables; for that was the only thing in open agitation, and the holy Apostles assigned that special part to them; "Look you out men," &c. whom we may appoint over this 'business.'

Secondly, The Apostles leave not the whole matter to their arbitrary and unlimited inclinations neither; but, amongst other qualifications, enjoin them to choose out persons 'full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,' not of faith, surely, with 'the ordinary, inward, and sanctifying' graces of the Holy Ghost only, for those were scarce discernible, with any certainty at least, by men; but they were to choose believers, as the event also shewed in the persons of St. Stephen and St. Philip, to be sure, who were endued with those miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, which our blessed Saviour promised<sup>u</sup> should follow some that believed, able to cast out devils, speak with new tongues, heal the sick, and the like, after the manner that Cornelius's family and the disciples at Ephesus were 'filled with the Holy Ghost<sup>x</sup>', as soon as they believed, or were

<sup>u</sup> Mark xvi. 17, 18.

<sup>x</sup> Acts x. 44, 46; and Acts xix 5, 6.

baptized and confirmed upon it: and by this limitation the holy Apostles both secured their choice to be of God's approbation, by the power he endued them withal, and also provided persons fit for the greater offices in the Church, which by their holy orders they designed them for.

So that these deacons, so far as it was needful they should be faithful and trusty stewards of the contributions and treasure of the Church, were ordered to be chosen and recommended by the members of it, whose stock and treasure they were to be intrusted withal; and for the like reason, no doubt of it, that another Apostle gives us on the like occasion; namely, "to avoid this, that no man should blame us," says St. Paul, "in the abundance which is administered by us<sup>v</sup>:" for such sort of censures might the Apostles have been liable to, had they assumed the nomination of the persons to themselves; but by the course they took, 'they provided for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of men.' And in the mean time, as to the qualifications required for those higher offices of evangelists or preachers of the gospel, to which the holy Apostles ordained those deacons also, they had the divine testimony, as I observed but now, by the miraculous gifts bestowed upon them; and where that testimony was, St. Cyprian has taught us before, there needed not the testimony of men; and accordingly we find them not so much as proposed to the people under that capacity, when

<sup>v</sup> 2 Cor. viii. 20, 21.

it was referred to the brethren to make choice of them.

After these few observations upon the case, I leave it to the reader to determine, how far this singular and extraordinary precedent can go towards establishing a standing right and authority in all Christian congregations, to choose their own bishops and pastors for themselves: leaving only the learned Beza's judgment with him too, who naming these two instances of St. Matthias and the deacons<sup>z</sup>, when he was treating of the people's right of suffrages in ecclesiastical affairs, pronounces of them, "That they are nothing to the purpose; and that the French churches had sufficiently proved that against Morell, and his party, in their public synods."

I have been long upon this argument; but it was chiefly, I may say, at the ingenious Enquirer's request, who, in his preface (p. 7), desired another sense might be given of the passages he had cited in his book. This I have endeavoured to do with as much sincerity, I think, as he solemnly professes he collected them at first: and, upon reflection on the whole, I am sorry I must repeat what I observed at the beginning; that his singular manner of misrepresenting the primitive custom of electing and constituting a bishop in a vacant see, appears to me a greater occasion of the unhappy controversies and divisions about it, than the primitive

<sup>z</sup> Quod enim ex historia electionis Matthiæ et Diaconorum profertur, nihil ad rem facit.—Sicut adversus Morellium et alios deinceps ejus sectatores in synodis Gallicis est abunde probatum. Beza Tract. Theol. Genev. 1582. vol. 3. Ep. 83. p. 307.

custom, truly stated, could ever have given to the most exceptionous adversaries of the Church.

I will mark out the particulars, though you have heard the most of them already, that we may view and judge at once.

First, He makes that to be a stated 'right' of 'election' in the people, which, by the genuine sense of his own quotations, as well as the apparent practice of the Church, we have seen amounts to no more, within his period of time, than their public testimony, information, or cheerful approbation of the candidates which the provincial bishops should think fit to ordain.

Secondly, He has asserted that right of the people under such general terms of a 'primitive' practice, as to lead the reader into an easy persuasion, that it must have been of original institution, either from Christ or his Apostles: whereas the Holy Scriptures declare no such institution, nor set forth any such divine charter for it; but assure us of the contrary, that the full power of ordaining elders in the Church, was a personal charge intrusted wholly with the first founders and governors of the Apostolical churches, and conveyed down so accordingly, without any such condition in it.

Thirdly, He has pronounced the ordaining, or constituting a bishop, in a vacant see, to be absolutely 'invalid,' without such a popular election in it; and by not defining wherein that 'validity', he means, does consist, has led the vulgar reader again into a ready opinion, that at no time, in no place, or province whatsoever, a Christian bishop could be warrantably ordained,

and set over any church without such an election of the people to authorize and qualify him for it. Whereas it may be seen, I think, by what has been proved upon this subject before, that the utmost validity any such sort of ordinations in any age of the church has had, was grounded only on the prudential consent, or canons of such provincial bishops as had agreed to exercise that ordaining power they were entirely intrusted with from above, in that particular manner, so long as times and persons should encourage them to let those canons remain in force; and all this obliging no further than within their own districts or jurisdictions, and repealable at will, as having no divine command for it.

Fourthly and lastly, To finish all, he has advanced a singular and unheard-of notion, as I humbly conceive, of two noted ecclesiastical terms in use amongst us, 'ordination' and 'instalment,' making them equivocal (p. 49) and convertible terms, and offers it for current truth, that 'ordaining' and 'installing'; of a bishop are one and the same thing, frankly translating the word *ordinare*, in the ancient writings of the Fathers, by this English word, of 'installing;' and, which is stranger still, makes this installing act to be performed by imposition of episcopal hands. Now if ecclesiastical records, either ancient or modern, could warrant this sort of language, I wish he had, at least, pointed to them: and yet suppose it could be so, which I confess is unimaginable to me, yet to write to English readers in their own tongue, where episcopal

imposition of hands, and instalment of a bishop, are so apparently different things<sup>a</sup>, gives an unhappy suspicion of some secret notion to be insinuated into men, which was not to be spoken out. And so, indeed, the present case in hand did require; for if the sacred act of ordination by imposition of episcopal hands, imprinted any other character upon the person so consecrated or ordained, than the mere act of instalment does, in the English notion and practice of it, then these two unfortunate consequences, as our learned Author thinks them, would ensue upon it: 1st, That the provincial bishop's part in ancient ordinations was something more than their bare consent and approbation of the peoples' election, which is the chief part he allows them in the case. And, 2ndly, That their imposition of hands at this installing ordination might look like advancing of the candidate to a new order, which would lessen the peoples' part too much in making bishops for themselves, and overturn the whole scheme of his next chapter; which is to prove, that the orders of bishop and presbyter in the church are plainly one and the same. This shall be considered further in its own place: in the mean time, let any impartial man seriously consider what probability there is, that such representations of antiquity as these should answer the pious ends of our ingenious Enquirer, and contribute to heal the unhappy di-

<sup>a</sup> See Godolphin's Repert. Canon. p. 26 and 44. edit. 3. Lond. 1687. Where he shews us, that a bishop is complete to all intents and purposes, both as to temporalities and spiritualities, after consecration: but instalment is performed afterwards, in a manner different enough, by officers and ceremonies, very little akin to those of consecration.

visions of the Church in the case and controversy now before us ; since, as far as I am able to observe, these, and such-like misunderstandings of the primitive practice, are the sad occasions of their being so many, and so unhappy as they are.



## CHAPTER IV.

**T**O heal divisions in a church, and displease none that make them, are two such works of charity as can scarce consist together. Yet, to carry this as far it would go, the good Enquirer seems to aim at both; the former he solemnly professes in his preface, the latter as visibly appears in the performance itself: but with what success, and by what means he has done it, in a great measure appears by what has gone before, and in this fourth chapter will be much clearer still.

There are three or four parties, as he tells us himself (Pref. p. 54–57), which he aimed to reconcile: he began with the ‘independents’ cause, and in order to make them and the rest agree, he has strained antiquity, you see, to make it speak ‘their’ sense in the ‘points of congegational dioceses,’ and the ‘popular right of choosing their own bishops,’ the main matters they contend for, which, no doubt of it, will offend none of them; but as to clearing up the truth in their case, and bringing them to a peaceful disposition for compromising matters with such as differ from them; we may justly fear,

by the palpable violence he has done to the holy Fathers' writings for their sake, he has done little or nothing that can tend to that happy end.

He now proceeds to bring the 'presbyterian' party to a temper, by much the same way; that is, by allowing them fairly, as fast as he can, without regard to such as differ from them, the chief and fundamental point they insist upon, 'the equality of order in the bishop and the presbyter;' and to clear his way for that, he defines his presbyter thus: "A person in holy orders, having thereby an inherent right to perform the whole office of a bishop; but being possessed of no place or parish, not actually discharging it without the permission and consent of the bishop of a place or parish."

The main difference in the argument before us, lies in the former part of this definition; but our learned Author chose to prove the latter clause first, viz. that 'without the bishop's leave, a presbyter could discharge no single part of his function;' and for plainer evidence in that case, he reckoned up most of the particular acts relating to it, and beyond exception proved, that in every point it was so. Yet after all, he had so wonderful and singular a notion of this evident subjection of the presbyters to their bishops, in every ministerial act of theirs within their bishop's jurisdiction, that he could affirm without scruple, in another place, that 'presbyters ruled in those churches they belonged to,' and placed this 'ruling' power of theirs amongst the several other premises, from whence an equality of order in bishop and presbyter was to be inferred at last, notwithstanding the palpable inequality

he had so plainly owned, you see, in this particular before; which, to speak the most of it, might serve as well to prove, that kings and viceroys, or any deputed officers of theirs, are one and the same 'order' of men in any civil state, because in some capacity, and in subordination to one another, they are all rulers within the same jurisdiction, though it is sufficiently known how vastly different their 'order' and 'authority' are, considered in themselves. But to come closer to the point.

It is in the former part of our learned Author's definition, that the question in debate is stated all at once, and with great assurance determined by him too. "A presbyter," says he, "is a person in holy orders, having thereby an inherent right to perform the whole office of a bishop."

Now, two things, directly contrary to the declared sense, as well as language and practice of the primitive Church, are manifestly included in this single proposition.

First, That the solemnest rites or holy offices which the primitive Church ever used for promoting any presbyter into the station of a bishop, added nothing more to his former character and order, than a right and title only to exercise those powers, to the full, which were inherent in him before. And,

Secondly, That all the clerical offices which any bishop of the Church could perform, a presbyter also, by virtue of his orders alone, had a right and power invested in him, by the bishop's leave only, to perform the same.

Let this great controversy be tried then by

the clear evidence of antiquity in these material points; and if in both, or either of them, the primitive Church be found notoriously to declare a contrary judgment in the case, and their practice as direct a contradiction to them too, it must follow of course that a presbyter in their times, and in their opinion of him, had not an inherent right by his orders to perform the whole office of a bishop, as this learned Author affirms.

To begin with the first of these, the sense and judgment of antiquity, concerning that holy rite or solemn office of promoting a presbyter to the station of a bishop; wherein I observe, after the example, and by encouragement from the Enquirer himself (p. 10),

First, That the same 'word,' which all antiquity uses for expressing the promotion of a layman to a deacon, or a deacon to a presbyter, they used also for the promotion of presbyters into the station of a bishop: it is 'ordination, of bishops, as well as of priests and deacons, in the familiar language of the Fathers. This our Enquirer owns, for he has quoted an authority from St. Cyprian for it (p. 49), and it is too obvious a matter to need any proofs. Hence I argue then, in his own words (p. 67), "If the same appellation of a thing be a good proof for the identity of its nature," then the rite of consecrating a bishop must confer a new order upon him, because the same name is familiarly used for it, as for the rite of ordaining a presbyter, who, undoubtedly, had a new order conferred upon him by it. In this manner, our Enquirer proves his bishops and presbyters to be one of and

the same order, from the identity of their names (Enq. p. 67), and those names sufficiently liable to distinct constructions of them; as we shall see in due time and place; and though the argument would have had considerable weight in it, if he had proved the main thing necessary there, namely, that a presbyter was ordinarily, or indeed ever called a 'bishop,' after the Apostolical age was a little over; yet for want of that, which he did not, and I am free to say he cannot, prove, his argument, I think, cannot come up to the application I make of it here; since the word 'ordination,' for making of bishops, has been authentic in all ages of the Church, without any mark of distinction put upon it; and for Fathers, councils, and historians generally to make use of it, where no 'order' is given at all, not only puts a force upon the word itself, but is little less than an imposition upon all posterity also, by applying one and the same common term to solemn rites of the Church, of so near a resemblance to one another in all visible appearance, and yet so vastly different in the intention of the Church, as our Enquirer's singular notion of it would make it to be; though, I believe, he is the first who ever ventured to tell the world, that ordination in the making of a bishop did, in our language, signify no more than mere 'instalment,' as I observed before, and now again will have the meaning of it to be a presbyter's 'institution' and 'induction' into a cure; which to have proved as well as said, had been no more than was necessary to his cause. But,

Secondly, As the name, so the rite itself of

constituting a primitive bishop, deserves to be considered: a single bishop, by the ancient canons of the Church, and by sufficient evidence besides, might ordain a presbyter or deacon; but to make a 'bishop,' a whole province of bishops, our learned Enquirer knows, did most commonly assemble, and with the like holy ceremony by which all orders of the Church were conferred; that is, by imposition of hands, and prayers, did collate that power and character upon him, which ever after, and never before (as far as fact and words together can prove it), he was invested in; and if the former be the giving of 'an order' by a single hand, and this latter but a license, as it were, to use it; or as our learned Author chooses to express it, but a formal 'instalment' into an episcopal chair; then the greater sacred solemnity, this united application of an Apostolical rite to it, and this joint synodical invitation of the Holy Spirit for it, are all of them to so singular and indifferent a purpose as is not to be paralleled, we may safely say, in any other ministerial solemnity in the whole economy of the Christian Church.

Thirdly, By this 'ordination' the promoted presbyter became a member of a distinct ecclesiastical college from all other officers or ministers in the Church, from whence St. Cyprian so peculiarly calls the bishops his 'colleagues' in that higher function with him, which, as humble as he was, he never once applied to presbyters or deacons<sup>a</sup>; and we know one immediate

<sup>a</sup> The Enquiry affirms the contrary (p. 74). But no proof, as I shall make appear in its proper place.

effect of it was, that he gained a 'ruling power' over both of them, though he was but a co-ordinate brother to the highest of them before; and such as are curious to see how such distinct colleges implied distinct orders in them, in the nature of the thing, may find it learnedly argued by the late singularly learned and inquisitive antiquary, Mr. Dodwell, in his tenth dissertation upon St. Cyprian. But,

Fourthly, This promoted presbyter, from the time he had passed under the provincial imposition of hands, acquired a prerogative and jurisdiction parallel to that of God's high-priest amongst the Jews. Thus St. Cyprian not only makes the rebellion of his presbyters and others against him of the same kind with that of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram against Aaron, but affirms, the same law which God gave for the high-priest, or any the supremest ruler whatsoever, to judge decisively in the great council of their sanhedrim, and to punish the offender, did authorize the Christian bishop to judge and censure rebellious schismatics within his jurisdiction. So he assures Rogatian, a bishop of his province<sup>b</sup>, and applies it to his own and Cornelius's case, in another epistle<sup>c</sup>; where he gives us a further character of his promoted presbyter's dignity too, viz. that he was then become the 'one judge, as well as the one high-priest,

<sup>b</sup> Cum pro episcopatus vigore et cathedræ autoritate haberes potestatem, qua posses de illo statim vindicari, habens circa hujusmodi homines præcepta divina, cum Dominus Deus in Deuteronomio dicit, et homo quicumque fuerit in superbia ut non exaudiat sacerdotem, &c. Cypr. Ep. 3. § 1. edit. Oxon.

<sup>c</sup> Cypr. Ep. 59, § 4. Unus in Ecclesiæ ad tempus sacerdos, et ad tempus iudex vice Christi.

and Christ's vicegerent in the Church.' Further, he is from that time peculiarly ranked in the number of the 'Apostles' successors,' to whom they themselves 'committed their churches,' and delivered up to them their place 'of mastership, or magisterial authority' in them. So Irenæus<sup>d</sup> says in plain terms, and in that very place where he was proving orthodoxy from the personal succession of them, which our Enquirer (p. 12, 13) owns related to the supreme presbyter or bishop alone. Again, St. Cyprian minds Cornelius, bishop of Rome, 'to be zealous with him of the unity of the Church, because it came from the Lord, and by the Apostles,' says he, 'to us their successors<sup>e</sup>.' Firmilian styles bishops 'the Apostles' successors by a vicarious ordination<sup>f</sup>.' And the confessor Clarus à Mascula (a bishop in the Carthaginian council, under St. Cyprian), gives this unanswerable suffrage for it: "The sentence," says he, "of our Lord Jesus Christ is manifest, who sent his Apostles, and granted to them alone the power which was given to him of the Father, whom we succeed, governing the Church of the Lord with the same power<sup>g</sup>". Lastly, he presided in the

<sup>d</sup> Habemus annumerare eos qui ab Apostolis instituti sunt episcopi in ecclesiis—his vel maxime ea [sc. recondita mysteria] traderent, quibus etiam ipsas ecclesias committebant—successores relinquebant, suum ipsorum locum magisterii tradentes. Iren. lib. 3. cap. 3. [p. 175. ed. Ven. 1734.]

<sup>e</sup> Ut unitatem a Domino et per Apostolos nobis successoribus traditam, quantum possumus obtinere curemus. Cypr. Ep. 45. ad Cornel. p. 88. edit. Oxon.

<sup>f</sup> — Et episcopis, qui eis [sc. Apostolis] ordinatione vicaria successerunt. Ep. Firmil. inter Ep. Cypr. 75. p. 225.

<sup>g</sup> Manifesta est sententia Domini nostri Jesu Christi Apostolos suos mittentis, et ipsis solis potestatem a patre sibi datam



consistory, to use St. Ignatius's words, "in the place of God, whilst the presbyters (in analogy to that comparison) sat as a college of Apostles under him, and then the deacons, as intrusted with the ministerial service of Jesus Christ<sup>h</sup>." Very singular phrases! for expressing officers, whereof any two were of the 'same order.' These, and many such characters of a common presbyter, after ordination by provincial bishops, which it would be tedious to set down, are frequently to be met with in the writings of the primitive Fathers, whereof not one of them was attributed to him till then, or to any in that inferior station wherein he stood before; and if these accessions of superlative titles, prerogatives, and jurisdiction, denote no other order conferred upon him than he had before, it will be very difficult to conceive in what sense the Jewish high-priest, the Christian Apostles, the supremest judges and rulers in societies, or the peculiar vicegerents of God himself, are of a higher order in church or state, than all other men of whatsoever dignity or station in any of them besides. Not to mention the unaccountable notion of an inherent character, fully and completely stamped, and virtually resting in every presbyter, from their first ordination, of the same nature with this of a bishop; which is as much as to say, that the Holy Spirit, in the

*permittentis, quibus nos successimus, eadem potestate Ecclesiam domini gubernantes. Concil. Carthag. apud Cypr. Suffrag. 79. p. 242.*

<sup>h</sup> Προκαθημένου τοῦ ἐπισκόπου εἰς τόπον Θεοῦ, καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων εἰς τόπον συνεδρίου τῶν ἀποστόλων, καὶ τῶν διακόνων πεπιστευμένων διακονίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ignat. Ep. ad Magnes. § 6.

government of the Church, does, by sacred ministerial acts, confer such spiritual powers and characters upon numbers of men beforehand, which not one in twenty, by modest computation, shall, in the course of providence, ever stand in need of; for in such proportion, it is more than likely, I think, that every presbyter shall not be made a bishop. It is time enough to have all, when they are called to use them, and the provincial ordinations were undoubtedly instituted that they should not want them then.

But all this must be nothing; let bishops be never so sacredly ordained for their particular function, and govern every order of men in their churches with an Apostolical authority and jurisdiction, as peculiar to them alone, as it was to the Apostles themselves; their order is no whit advanced by it, though such sort of qualifications distinguish orders of men in every society besides, so long as the presbyters also 'had a right and power to discharge all clerical offices (there the crisis lies) as fully, to all intents and purposes, as any bishop in the world' (p. 57).

I'll join issue with our learned Author in this enquiry also; and doubt not but we shall meet with great mistakes here: though we shall find an 'equality of sovereignty' in the government of the Church, as nicely contended for all along, as that of clerical offices are, notwithstanding he disavowed such an equal sovereignty as that, at the first stating of his presbyter's case. This is evident, I think, in the first instance of his presbyter's authority; which is this, "They presided," says he, "in Church consistories, and composed the executive part of the ecclesiastical

power;" that is, they were joint commissioners in the 'judicial power there,' and so far 'upon the level' with the bishop himself, in judging causes that came before them; else they might be as justices of the peace to judges in civil courts, if they had not a judicial power as well as he; or as privy counsellors to a king, which would, doubtless, lower their order below their bishops, and not come up to his case: but by the choice of his quotation for it, we may be sure he meant no less; for 'approved elders presided,' says Tertullian, which our learned Author here applies to his presbyters sitting in their peculiar consistory<sup>1</sup>; and to shew how great stress is laid upon this short quotation, it is offered us in the next leaf again; to help a weak authority out, which otherwise could not prove what our Author was zealously contending for there; namely, that bishops and presbyters had an equal power in them to 'baptize, confirm, and ordain.'

These are pretty material points, you will say, to depend so much, as really they do here, upon this short disputed sentence at the best, and that with this supposition in the case, that both this and the other parallel quotation in the next leaf, 'were spoken of the discipline exerted in one particular church or parish, in which there was but one bishop; and if only he had presided, then there could not have been elders in the plural number.' Thus he states the argument himself (p. 61).

<sup>1</sup> Probati præsidet seniores. Tertul. Apol. c. 39. [p. 31. A. edit. Ven. 1744.]

The reader will excuse me if I am a little more particular than ordinary in examining these authorities; the case is of moment, though the words are few; and to lay the supposition here insisted upon in a clear light, I shall be obliged to consider these three things: 1st, the occasion of the words; 2ndly, the plain sense and meaning of them; and 3rdly, compare the parallel places, to shew how they illustrate one another.

First, The occasion of Tertullian's words was this; the Christians were under a general persecution in the Roman empire<sup>k</sup>. Tertullian, dedicating an Apology for them to the several governors of the empire, vindicates them as they lay jointly charged, under the general name of a factious sect in the state<sup>l</sup>. Accordingly, at the very entrance of that part of his Apology, wherein he represents the innocent manner both of the Christian discipline and worship, and whereof the quotation now in question is a part, he prefaces it in these words: "Now," says he, "I'll shew you plainly what this Christian faction is taken up about, or how they are employed<sup>m</sup>;" surely this 'Christian faction,' which is not only a noun of multitude, but, in the sense which the Roman governors understood it, comprehended the whole body of Christians in it, must be meant in the same sense by the sagacious Apologist too, who professedly undertook

<sup>k</sup> Operata sectæ hujus infestatio — odii erga nomen Christianorum. Apol. p. i.

<sup>l</sup> Vobis, Romini imperii antistites. Apol. in Exord.

<sup>m</sup> Edam jam nunc ego ipse negotia Christianæ factionis. Cap. 39. [p. 30. ed. Venet. 1744.]

to vindicate them ‘all;’ and not for any single congregation of them in some private quarter of the empire; else the Roman governors, to whom he addresses in all parts, had but slender motives offered them to cease their persecution in every province; and the good Apologist had but little regard to the common cause of all his brethren.

But, Secondly, To come to the plain sense and meaning of the words themselves, ‘approved elders preside:’ and here I am contented the learned Enquirer himself should be his own interpreter and commentator for me; for at the 19th page of this Enquiry, he was zealously proving from the testimony of antiquity, that a bishop could have ‘but one communion table in his diocese;’ and amongst other authorities, insisted earnestly upon these words of Tertullian, “That Christians received the sacrament of the Lord’s supper from the hands of the bishop alone<sup>n</sup>;” so he translates the passage, which, as you may see in the margin here, is ‘from the hand of those who preside.’ Now if those ‘who preside,’ in Tertullian’s language, must needs be no other than the ‘supreme bishops’ themselves; without which construction, all the argument in it, which the Enquirer makes for a congregational diocese, is utterly lost there; then his ‘approved presiding elders,’ in the quotation now before us, must necessarily be spoken also of the bishops or heads of several churches or congregations within the Roman empire, be-

<sup>n</sup> Nec de aliorum manu, quam de præsidentium sumimus. Tert. de Cor. Mil. c. 3. p. 102.

cause a single one could have but one such elder belonging to it, in the declared opinion of the learned Enquirer himself; and then what will become of the two important points built upon this supposition alone, that Tertullian spake but of one congregation? I shall trust to this evidence for the plain meaning of the words, and proceed,

Thirdly, To consider that parallel place of another primitive Father, which, in the opinion of our judicious Author himself (p. 61), and, as he tells us, of most learned men with him, is so plainly of the same import and signification with this, that they mutually explain one another. The passage is in a noted epistle of Firmilian to St. Cyprian; and, in the Enquirer's own translation, is rendered thus: "All power and grace is constituted in the church where seniors preside, who have the power of baptizing, confirming, and ordaining<sup>o</sup>." Now I readily agree, that this passage, and the former in Tertullian, do help to explain one another; and chiefly in these following particulars, upon which the present application of them does mainly depend.

First, That whereas there was some scruple raised from the words of Tertullian, whether he was speaking of the collective body of Christians, or no; there is no room for any such question to be made here, since the immediate occasion of Firmilian's words was to prove this, that out

<sup>o</sup> Quando omnis potestas et gratia in ecclesia constituta sit, ubi præsent majores natu, qui et baptizandi, et manum imponendi, et ordinandi possident potestatem. Apud Cypr. Ep. 75. [p. 221. edit. Oxon.]

of the 'Catholic Church' there was no grace or power given to ratify any one ministerial act whatsoever. Every one knows, who ever read that epistle, it was the invalidity of heretical baptism which he was there contending for, against the contrary decree of Stephen, bishop of Rome, about it; and that controversy, I presume all men will allow, was between the Catholic Church, collectively considered, on the one hand, and all manner of heresies and schisms, of whatsoever kind, on the other; so that the church, wherein Firmilian affirms, the *majores natu*, or 'seniors,' did preside, invested with such a fulness of power for effectually executing every ecclesiastical office in it, was no less than the universal Church of Christ upon earth, as it stood distinguished from all sorts of sects, who separated from her; and in this material particular, this parallel place of Firmilian may help a doubting reader to understand what sort of church Tertullian also meant, wherein his 'approved elders' did preside. And then,

Secondly, as to the common word of 'presiding,' used by both the venerable Fathers alike; if Firmilian's sense of it should not be clear enough for us, yet Tertullian's notion of a 'president,' or 'presiding elder' in a church, being so plainly interpreted by our learned Enquirer (as we have seen already) to be the single or supreme bishop of the church he presided in, in this particular Tertullian may be said to expound Firmilian's meaning for us, and satisfy the reader that his 'presiding seniors' were no less than such supreme bishops also; in exact conformity to St. Cyprian's language, too, who says of the

Christian bishops in general<sup>q</sup>, that they were *etate antiqui*, ‘ancient in years,’ that is, *seniores*, as well as sound in faith. And yet,

Thirdly, let Firmilian be allowed to explain himself more fully. In the next paragraph he had a fair occasion to do it; and accordingly he did: he was arguing (as we observed before, and the whole epistle shews it) against Stephen, bishop of Rome, and his party, who maintained imposition of hands sufficient for admitting a baptized heretic into the Church, without any further baptism than what they had in their heresy; and his argument against it runs thus: “How is this,” says he, “that when we see Paul baptized his disciples again after John’s baptism, we should make any doubt of baptizing them who return from heresy to the Church after that unlawful and prophane baptism of theirs, unless Paul was less than these bishops, of whom we are speaking now, that these indeed might give the Holy Ghost by imposition of hands alone, but Paul was insufficient for it?” Here we plainly see what kind of ‘seniors’, in the Church, Firmilian was speaking of, and to whom he attributed the right of baptism, imposition of hands, and ordination, just before; for those who were to lay their hands upon the returning heretics, the immediate subject then

<sup>q</sup> Per omnes provincias et per urbes singulas, ordinati sint episcopi in *etate antiqui*, in fide integri. Cypr. Ep. 55. p. 112. Edit. Oxon.

<sup>r</sup> Quale est autem — &c. — nisi si *his episcopis, de quibus nunc*, minor fuit Paulus, ut hi quidem possint per solam manus impositionem venientibus hæreticis dare Spiritum Sanctum, Paulus autem idoneus non fuerit. Apud Cypr. Ep. 75. § 6. p. 221. Edit. Oxon.



in hand, he calls by the proper and express name of bishops, an incommunicable term to any inferior elders of the Church, if we may believe approved antiquaries<sup>s</sup>, in that Cyprianic age; and, I make no doubt of it, could any instance to the contrary be given, our learned Author, who has a collection of honorary titles for his presbyters, and argues zealously upon them, would scarce have overlooked it, or failed to have told us where it might be found.

Thus I have given the clear and genuine sense both of Tertullian and Firmilian's expressions together; from whence it appears,

First, that the presbyters' 'ruling power' in the consistory, as joint commissioners with their bishop there, which was the first main point they were brought to prove, cannot be grounded upon either of them, since they have no relation to the private presbytery of a particular church at all, but were manifestly spoken with reference to the single supreme governors, or bishops of all the several dioceses, either within the Roman empire, or the whole Catholic Church. And, indeed, I would gladly understand how our ingenious Author disposes of the *Πρωτοκαθεδρία*, or right of the 'first chair' in the primitive presbyteries, by which he and his friends so nicely evade the bishop's 'higher order' in the Church, if all his presbyters were 'presidents' there, as the application of these quotations to them does literally make them to be. But,

<sup>s</sup> See bishop Pearson and Mr. Dodwell in Pearson's Dissert. prima de Succes. prim. Rom. Episc. c. 9. p. 97. in 4to. Lond. 1683.

Secondly, by this apparent sense of the holy Father's words, it appears also, that the only passage in antiquity our 'inquisitive' Author could present us with, to prove the presbyters' right and power to ordain, contains no such matter in it; but, on the contrary, places all power of baptism, confirmation, and ordination, in the bishops' possession, for such we find Firmilian's 'seniors' in the Church to be.

Yet, since a 'full' power to ordain could not be found for his presbyters, our Enquirer claims a share, at least, from that noted case of Timothy's being ordained by, or rather with, *the laying on of the hands of the presbytery*<sup>t</sup>. Now this is saying more for Calvin's cause, than Calvin could say for himself; for he disowns it plainly, that a college of presbyters was meant by the presbytery there<sup>u</sup>, and maintains it, as his opinion, that St. Paul ordained Timothy alone, from 2 Tim. i. 6. And the assembly of English divines<sup>x</sup> go so far with him, as to own, that all the gifts which Timothy received at his ordination, were from the Apostle's hands upon him. It cannot be denied, therefore, that the two different accounts, though not contrary ones to be sure, of Timothy's ordination, 'with the presbytery' in one text, and 'by St. Paul's own hands' in the other, has occasioned variety of speculations upon them; and therefore it

<sup>t</sup> 1 Tim. iv.

<sup>u</sup> Paulus ipse, se, non alios complures, Timotheo manus imposuisse commemorat—Quod de impositione manuum *presbyterii* dicitur, non ita accipio, quasi Paulus de *seniorum collegio* loquatur. Calv. Instit. l. iv. c. 3. in fine.

<sup>x</sup> See Assemb. Annot. on 2 Tim. i. 6.

must be a feeble argument, at the best, which depends on a positive construction of either of them. And yet, the utmost it can afford so, is only a concomitant act of an inferior order with an Apostle himself, and in a case of divine designation by prophecy too: which, since it can be no great ground of controversy amongst ourselves, where the like kind of practice of presbyters joining in imposition of hands with their superiors in every ordination of their own order, is constantly in use, I need say the less; and shall only observe here, that our learned Enquirer grounds his sense of it upon this (p. 62 and 78), “that the constant signification of the word presbytery, in all the writings of the ancients,” is such as he here insists upon; that is, it “always denotes the bishops and presbyters of a particular church or parish,” as his terms for a diocese are.

Yet, I am very sure, St. Ignatius calls the ‘Apostles alone’ the ‘presbytery of the Church:’ for he tells the Philadelphians<sup>y</sup>, in his way to the crown of martyrdom, that he betook himself to the ‘Apostles as the presbytery of the Church.’ And since Timothy was ordained whilst these superlative presbyters were alive, and by an eminent one of them, I know no fairer comment upon the Apostolical phrase of his being ordained “by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery,” than that he was ordained by a special member of this “Apostolical presbytery;” and if by more than so, it was

<sup>y</sup> Προσφυγῶν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις, ὡς πρεσβυτερίῳ ἐκκλησίας.  
Ignat. ad Philad. [§ 5. ed. Jacobson.]

neither impossible, nor unlikely, then, that some other Apostle, or Apostles, might concur with St. Paul in it; especially, if we consider that Timothy's first ordination may reasonably be dated from the time that St. Paul *would have him go forth with him*, Acts xvi. 3, which surely was for the work of the ministry, and that at Derbe or Lystra, not much above four<sup>2</sup> years after the gospel was first preached there, when a settled consistory of inferior presbyters, and a form of ecclesiastical discipline in it, could scarcely be expected amongst them.

How far the presbyters' part in the ordination is mentioned in this sacred text, together with the testimonies of Tertullian and Firmilian before, which are all the authorities our inquisitive Author offers us, has proved the power of ordination to be 'fully' inherent in 'them,' I must leave the reader to judge; and whether they are of weight enough to balance the unanimous consent of the Catholic Church to the contrary, for fifteen hundred years together; whilst not so much as a single example can be found of the presbyters practising such a power, without public censure and protestation against it, in all that time.

Two other instances of 'ruling power' in the presbyters are these; they "excommunicated," says he, and "they restored penitents to the Church." The proof of the first is thus: Felicissimus, Augendus, and some others, had made a schism in St. Cyprian's church; the holy

<sup>2</sup> See bishop Pearson's Annal. Paul. ab A. D. 46. ad A. D. 50. inclusive.

bishop, in exile, is acquainted with it by two of his presbyters, Rogatianus and Numidicus, whom he had left in joint commission with two bishops of the province, Caldonius and Herculanus, to inspect his diocese in his absence. To these four St. Cyprian writes a letter, and having told them what evidence he had had of Felicissimus's notorious wickedness, sends this positive order to them; "Let him receive the sentence," says he, "which he has first passed himself, that he may know he is excommunicated by us<sup>a</sup>;" (for he had threatened excommunication to such as adhered to St. Cyprian;) and "let any other who joins to that faction, know also, that he shall not communicate in the church with us<sup>b</sup>." Little advice with presbyters here, and less left for them to do. In answer to this letter, Caldonius, with the two presbyters, and other bishops together, send word to St. Cyprian, that "they had shut out Felicissimus, Augendus, and others, from their communion<sup>c</sup>." Now what Caldonius, and the other bishops, here concerned, did, in conformity to catholic practice, shutting out from their churches also, such as St. Cyprian had thus excommunicated from his, is no great matter to us; but that the two presbyters did no more than execute St. Cyprian's censure in his church, is as plain matter of fact, I think, as

<sup>a</sup> Accipiat sententiam, quam prior dixit ut *abstentum se a nobis sciat*. Cypr. Ep. 41. Edit. Oxon. p. 80.

<sup>b</sup> Sed et quisquis se conspirationi et factioni ejus adjunxerit, sciat se in Ecclesia non esse nobiscum communicaturum. Ib.

<sup>c</sup> Abstinuimus communicatione Felicissimum, Augendum, &c. Ep. 41.

words can make it; and accordingly the learned bishop Fell's note<sup>d</sup> upon it, does in so many words make it so. This excommunicating power, then, of St. Cyprian's presbyters, is just such an one as any vicar or curate in the Church of England exercises, when, by virtue of an order from their bishop's court, they deny communion to a censured member, and make their return of it; and that it was no more than so in respect of the presbyters' power of excommunicating and absolving again in St. Cyprian's church at that time, will need no more proof, I hope, when we consider, that that holy bishop authorized the "very deacons," as well as presbyters, in his absence, "to receive the penitents' confession, and by the solemn ministerial act of imposition of hands, to absolve them, if need required<sup>e</sup>;" that is, to bind or loose them as effectually as if he had done it himself; and I believe our learned Enquirer will not infer from hence, that those deacons had 'a power of the keys' inherent in their orders, because they could thus exercise it with their bishop's leave; and yet if he will argue after the same manner, as he does from one end to the other of this scheme, he must grant that; for his fundamental hypothesis is nothing more than this, that the presbyter's order was equal to the bishop's, because they could, with his leave, exercise

<sup>d</sup> *Abstinuimus sententiam a Cypriano latam executioni mandando. Fel. in loc.*

<sup>e</sup> *Non expectata præsentia nostra apud presbyterum quemcunque præsentem, vel si presbyter repertus non fuerit, et urgere exitus cœperit, apud diaconum quoque exomologesin facere delicti sui possit, ut manu eis in pœnitentiam imposita veniant ad Dominum cum pace. Cypr. Ep. 18. Edit. Oxon.*

every clerical office which the bishop himself could do. Some of those acts I have already shewn, and particularly that of ordination, they never did, nor can it any ways be proved they could do; and I shall prove it afterwards, I think, in more; and I hope our ingenious Author will think it worth his considering, what a confused equality of all orders in the Church will ensue, if every ecclesiastic be allowed to have the same order with the supreme, who can execute such ministerial offices as he shall require him, in his stead, to do. The case of St. Cyprian's deacons, just now mentioned, is a sufficient instance of it; and more of that kind will appear in considering the next head, which is this:—

“Though, as to every particular act of the bishop's office,” says our learned Author (p. 62), “it could not be proved that a presbyter did discharge them; yet it would be sufficient, if we could prove in general that he could, and did do so.”

To make this out, he quotes two letters of St. Cyprian to his clergy, wherein he “exhorts, begs, and commands them, to discharge their own and his office also, that so nothing might be wanting, either to discipline or diligence<sup>f</sup>.” And again, “that they would, in his stead, perform those offices which the ecclesiastical dispensation requires<sup>g</sup>.” This is partly answered,

<sup>f</sup> Fungamini illic et vestris partibus ac meis, ut nihil vel ad disciplinam vel ad diligentiam desit. Cypr. Ep. 5. § 1.

<sup>g</sup> His literis et hortor et *mando* ut vos — vice mea fungamini circa gerenda ea, quæ administratio religiosa deposcit. Ep. 6. § 2. alias Ep. 14. Edit. Oxon.

by what we have heard of the presbyters' and deacons' ministerial acts, by his leave and his instructions above. Yet I may further ask this plain question still: Why are these letters quoted to prove the presbyters 'only' could do the bishop's business for him? They are both<sup>h</sup> directed to the deacons as well as presbyters expressly by name, and the command given to both jointly without any distinction; which, since the deacons, as we see before, had used the keys for him, why were not they intrusted with such an executive part of his episcopal power as was intended here, being addressed to one as well as the other? especially since St. Cyprian, in the close of the latter epistle, "grieved to hear that his people would not be governed by deacons or presbyters either<sup>i</sup>;" implying fairly enough, that he had intrusted his 'governing power,' as far as it could be discharged by a deputation, to 'both of them.' So little does it prove an equality of order in St. Cyprian's sense and practice, for inferior ecclesiastics to do those clerical offices by his bishop's order and leave, which his character otherwise did not allow him to do.

We have a form of words in our own church discipline, which very much resembles this; for an English bishop instituting a parochial priest, says thus: "Take my cure upon you, and your own too<sup>k</sup>;" and I believe no man ever imagined

<sup>h</sup> Cypr. presbyteris et diaconis fratribus. Tit. Ep. 5. et 14. Edit. Oxon.

<sup>i</sup> Doleo enim quando audio quosdam improbe, &c. — nec a diaconis aut presbyteris *regi posse*. Ep. 14.

<sup>k</sup> Accipe curam tuam et meam. Godolph. Repert. Canon. c. 24.



that the instituted clerk had a power in him to visit, confirm, or ordain, in any one part of the diocese; though a trust of 'his bishop's cure,' in our Author's way of reasoning, would infer so much: but St. Cyprian's commission to his presbyters and deacons, had a clause in it sufficient to explain this; which is likewise implied in our institutions, and in all such general commissions as those; "Perform such offices," says he, "for yourselves and me, as the ecclesiastical dispensation requires<sup>1</sup>;" that is, as much of it as your orders and station in the Church can allow of. Could our Author have proved that the presbyters or deacons had 'ordained,' for instance, so much as one single clerk in the church in St. Cyprian's absence, by virtue of this great trust reposed in them, it had been something to the purpose; but since there is no tittle of any such thing in all St. Cyprian's works, or in any collateral history, to be found, but on the contrary that St. Cyprian himself in his retirement<sup>m</sup> ordained such as the necessities of the church required, I must confess I cannot see that the argument proves anything that it was brought for.

Upon the whole matter, I rather conceive that ingenious Author, by unwarily offering to public view this commission of St. Cyprian to his presbyters and 'deacons together,' to discharge his part for him, without any mark of discrimination in either of the epistles, has discovered that plain truth which overturns his whole hypothesis at once: namely, that to be

<sup>1</sup> See the quotation before.

<sup>m</sup> See Cyp. Ep. 29, 38, 39, &c.

qualified to discharge a clerical office by the bishop's leave for it, is no proof at all that the person so discharging it, had a power to do it before, inherent in his own orders; for some share of government in the Church, at least, and the power of the keys, in some signal instances of it, might be proved inherent in the deacons' orders from this very commission of their bishop to them, and from what we have seen them intrusted to do before; if that way of reasoning were true. And yet on this single thread hangs all that our Enquirer has hitherto offered, to make the orders of his presbyters equal with the highest in the Church.

He strengthens the two authorities from St. Cyprian's letters, with a third (p. 63) from the presbyters at Rome to them at Carthage; both those churches were destitute of a bishop at that time; Fabianus of Rome newly martyred in the Decian persecution, and St. Cyprian retired upon the account of it. The Carthaginian presbyters, on this occasion, write to their brethren at Rome; and those at Rome, in their answer to them, write thus: "And since it is incumbent on us, who seem to be governors, and to keep the flock instead of a pastor; if we should be found negligent, it will be said to us, as it was to those careless governors (the shepherds of Israel) before us (Ezek. xxxiv. 3, 4), that we looked not after that which was lost, we did not correct him that wandered, nor bound up him that was lame; but we did eat their milk, and were covered with their wool<sup>n</sup>."

<sup>n</sup> Et cum incumbat nobis, qui *videmur præpositi* esse, et vice pastoris custodire gregem, si negligentes inveniamur, dice-

Now the argument from this passage runs thus: the presbyters in these churches, having no bishop amongst them, 'seemed themselves to be, as it were,' bishops of the churches, and therefore they not only 'seemed so,' but 'in power and order,' actually were such, even as much as any before them ever were, or the next in succession could be; for so the argument supposes.

And if that be so, I wonder what those 'very presbyters' meant, to tell St. Cyprian in their letter to him very soon afterwards, "that there was a greater necessity lay upon them, to put off the restitution of the lapsed in their church for the present, because they had no bishop amongst them, who should order all those things, and could with authority and council take a proper course with them<sup>o</sup>." It seems those presbyters were conscious of a peculiar 'authority' in a bishop, which was wanting in themselves. And so just they were, indeed, in the words of the quotation before us, as to say no more of themselves than that they were 'seemingly' the governors of the church, or, 'as it were,' bishops in it, as our Enquirer chooses to translate it; very suitable phrases for such 'guardians of the spiritualities' as dean

tur nobis quod et antecessoribus nostris dictum est, qui tam negligentes præpositi erant; quoniam perditum non requisivimus, errantem non correximus, et claudum non colligavimus, et lac eorum edebamus, et lanis eorum operiebamur. Cypr. Ep. 8. § 1. Edit. Oxon.

<sup>o</sup> Quanquam nobis differendæ hujus rei *necessitas* major incumbat, quibus — nondum est *episcopus* constitutus, qui omnia ista moderetur, et eorum, qui lapsi sunt, *possit cum auctoritate* et consilio habere rationem. Cypr. Ep. 30. § 6. Edit. Oxon.

and chapter usually have been (and in many cases are at this day) for a vacant see; and yet their 'order' different enough from his, who in a little time is to put an end to their trust. Such trustees do all which for a time may be necessary, not every act of clerical or ministerial power which a proper officer, when invested in it, can do. This would appear to be the very sense of the Roman presbyters, to any who perused their epistle, without prejudice in the case; for they specify, as well as speak in general, of the care which was incumbent on them; but not a tittle, amongst all, of supplying the Church (if need were) with new ordained ministers, or confirming after baptism, or the like. What sort of care do they mention then? Why! that of "exhortations to the flock, not to fall away; to administer to the wants of all; to give Christian burial to the martyrs;" and, to speak all freely, without reserve, one material advice they give to the Carthaginian presbyters, which may be a key to us to solve a very nice difficulty in the present argument; and that is, they exhort them, after their example, "to move the lapsed to repentance, if peradventure they might obtain their absolution from him, who was able to give it<sup>p</sup>;" which

<sup>p</sup> Non minimum periculum incumbere, si non hortati fueritis fratres vestros stare in fide immobiles — separatos a nobis — hortamur agere pœnitentiam, si quo modo indulgentiam poterunt recipere *ab eo qui potest præstare*. — Si qui cœperint apprehendi infirmitate, et agant pœnitentiam facti sui, et desiderant communionem, utique subveniri eis debet. — Corpora martyrum si non sepeliantur, grande periculum imminet eis quibus incumbit hoc opus — faciat Deus — ut omnes nos in *his operibus* inveniamur. Cypr. Ep. 8. Edit. Oxon. p. 17, 18.

must either be meant of God alone, since absolution of apostates to idolatry had not yet been decreed in the Church, (as the excellent bishop Fell observes upon the place,) or at least must signify their own incapacity for it at Rome, for want of that authority to do it, which they owned to St. Cyprian belonged to the bishop only; and yet forasmuch as the Catholic Church had solemnly agreed<sup>a</sup> that ‘her’ peace should be given ‘to all’ in the dying hour, so far, by that general authority from episcopal power, they practised themselves, and advised the Carthaginian presbyters to do. How far these three authorities, then, do prove in general what the particulars could not do, viz. that presbyters could do all which a bishop did, I must also leave with the reader to consider again.

One particular I have postponed indeed, because the former and that fell in so much with one another; I shall now consider it, to shew I pay regard to all this learned Author offers; “the presbyters,” says he (p. 60), “confirmed.”

He brings no proof for it here, but promises ‘most evident’ ones in another place; he means, I doubt not, in the second part of his Enquiry. I will step out of my way a little, to bring his arguments nearer into view. The sum of all his thoughts there is this (part ii. p. 85, &c.); that confirmation was a mere part or appendix only of Christian baptism, and ‘withal’ the very same thing with (p. 92) ‘absolution of peni-

<sup>a</sup> Additum est — ut lapsis infirmis et in *exitu constitutis pax daretur*; quæ literæ per totum mundum missæ sunt, et in notitiam Ecclesiis omnibus et universis fratribus perlatae sunt. Cyp. ad Antonian. Ep. 55. p. 102. Edit. Oxon.

tents,' in the sense of the primitive Church; and then concludes (p. 91. part ii. and p. 101), "since presbyters could baptize and absolve, they could confirm also."

To prove it a mere appendix of baptism, he tells us (p. 80), he meets with 'unction, signation,' and 'imposition of hands,' as it were immediately applied to baptized persons, by some of the primitive Fathers, at their coming out of the water; and I believe he may do so; and he might add, that they were forthwith introduced into the sacred 'synaxis,' or solemn assembly of the faithful, to join in all the service of the Church, and receive the holy eucharist, before they parted. Were all these, therefore, a mere appendix of their baptism, because so immediately following upon it, as Justin Martyr<sup>r</sup> plainly represents it to us? As well one as the other, for any force there is in this way of arguing. When catechumens of old had been thoroughly disciplined, and by baptism made complete disciples and members of the Church, there was no holy rite or ordinance by which grace was usually conveyed, but the zealous pastors piously administered it to their new admitted members, to call down all the blessings of heaven, as far as in them lay, for strengthening their faith, and carrying on that Christian warfare they were just engaged in: insomuch as new baptized infants, we know, had the blessed eucharist itself then administered to them, and each of these holy rites and administrations, we are sensible enough, were very different in themselves.

<sup>r</sup> Justin. Apol. 2. p. 97. Colon. 1687.

Not to dwell on words therefore, which, all who know primitive discipline must own, are 'common' to sundry rites and ministrations in the Church, and therefore conclude nothing of themselves; nor yet to gather scattered sentences to prove a stated practice by them; let us take a fair view of 'confirmation,' in a short and full scheme of it, as the excellent St. Cyprian has drawn it up for us at once. It is in a noted passage of an epistle of his, to this purpose; which surely must displease some men very much, else they would own something more in it, than our learned Enquirer does, who quotes it upon this very subject, and thinks it proves confirmation to be a mere part of baptism, and nothing more. Let the reader judge from the holy Martyr's words, which are these: "Those who believed in Samaria, had believed with a true faith, and were baptized within the pale of the Church (which is one, and to which alone authority was given to confer the grace of baptism, and to forgive sins), and that by Philip the deacon, whom the same Apostle had sent forth; and therefore since they had a lawful and ecclesiastical baptism, they ought not to be any further baptized. But only that thing which was wanting," (plainly after their lawful and ecclesiastical baptism) "that was done by Peter and John, viz. that by prayer offered up for them, and by imposition of hands, the Holy Spirit should be called upon, and poured forth upon them. The same which is in use also amongst us at this day, where such as are baptized in the Church are presented to the governors of the Church, that

by our prayer and imposition of hands, they may receive the Holy Spirit, and be consummated by the seal of the Lord<sup>s</sup>.”

A few plain questions may help to clear this passage.

First, Did St. Cyprian, do we think, believe Philip's baptism to be imperfect, who was sent forth by the Apostles themselves for that purpose?

Secondly, Would he call a 'defective baptism, a lawful and ecclesiastical baptism,' which is no less than to say, in other words, that the lawgiver himself, the blessed Jesus, and the Church too, would own it for 'their' baptism?

Thirdly, Did St. Peter and St. John go to Samaria to perform a ministerial office which Philip could have done without them?

Fourthly, Could St. Cyprian say, 'they continued the same practice in his time,' and yet the baptizing ministers 'then,' either did, or could as effectually lay their hands on such as they baptized for conveying the graces of the Holy Spirit on them, as 'those very governors' of the Church, to whom he affirms they were

\* Illi qui in Samaria crediderant, fide vera crediderant, et intus in Ecclesia, quæ una est, et cui soli gratiam baptismi dare, et peccata solvere, permissum est, a Philippo diacono, quem iidem Apostoli miserant, baptizati erant. Et idcirco, quia *legitimum et ecclesiasticum baptismum* consecuti fuerant, baptizari eos *ultra* non oportebat. Sed tantummodo quod deerat; id a Petro et Johanne factum est, ut oratione pro eis habita, et manu imposita, invocaretur et infunderetur super eos Spiritus Sanctus. Quod nunc quoque apud nos geritur, ut qui in Ecclesia baptizantur, *præpositis* Ecclesiæ offerantur, et per *nostram* orationem ac manus impositionem Spiritum Sanctum consequantur, et signaculo dominico consummentur. Cypr. ad Jubaian. Ep. 73. p. 202. Edit. Oxon.



presented to receive that solemn benediction, after the manner it was done at Samaria? .

Fifthly, and lastly, Since presbyters, as well as deacons, did unquestionably baptize in St. Cyprian's time, and in his church; what could the Catholic Church itself, or the holy Martyr mean, by such a general custom of offering baptized persons to the 'governors' of the Church upon this occasion? ('such governors,' I mean, as St. Cyprian himself was, for so he explains his meaning, when he calls it, 'our prayer and imposition of hands,' by which they were to obtain such spiritual gifts, and be consummated with the 'seal of the Lord.')

What could they mean, I say, if 'any' who had the power of baptizing, by virtue of their orders, might have done that as well? Or how could the parallel hold indeed in the whole comparison, if such 'præpositi' or governors of the Church in St. Cyprian's time bore no analogy of difference from the baptizing ministers, to that which was between St. Philip and the Apostles, from whence the precedent, he assures us, was immediately taken?

I can conceive no answer to these questions, sufficient to remove the evident truth contained in the holy Martyr's words; namely, that there was a sacred ministerial rite then practised in the Church, 'after' baptism, and distinct from it; imposition of hands and prayers the principal and constant symbols of it; the rite and power of administering it not inherent in the powers or orders of any baptizing ministers, 'as such,' but peculiar to the highest order in the Church; as the Apostles unquestionably were

in this original pattern at Samaria; and consequently, in our holy Martyr's sense of the thing, who allowed the bishops only for peculiar successors to the Apostles in the Church, was appropriated to them alone.

The misapprehension of this testimony of St. Cyprian, and of the primitive Church with him (I perceive by our learned Enquirer, Daillé, and others) lies here; they 'distinguish' not the operations and gifts of the Holy Ghost in the two sacred rites of baptism, and 'imposition of hands after it,' as those primitive Fathers did. The Fathers affirm, that the Holy Spirit was present, operated, and effectually sanctified both the elemental water, and the person baptized in it, 'before' this imposition of hands upon him; and therefore St. Cyprian himself calls a baptized person, on whom hands had not yet been laid, "a sanctified person, spiritually formed into a new man; one that has put on Christ, and that Christ cannot be put on without the Spirit<sup>t</sup>." And yet, in reference to the imposition of hands, which was to follow, he accounted him only 'fitted for receiving the Holy Spirit,' which was further to be infused into him. The reason was this, that forasmuch as the Spirit was given 'by measure' to all men, except the blessed Jesus alone, they understood, that the sanctification of the Spirit in the 'holy laver' did principally, if not wholly,

<sup>t</sup> Qui peccatis in baptismo expositis *sanctificatus est*, et in novum hominem spiritualiter formatus, ad accipiendum Spiritum Sanctum idoneus factus est. — Quotquot in Christo baptizati estis, Christum induistis — quasi possit sine Spiritu Christus indui, &c. Cypr. Ep. ad Pomp. n. 74. p. 213. Edit. Oxon.

consist in purging away all sin, in forming the new creature, as the quotations above imply, and making the baptized person a ‘temple of God<sup>u</sup>,’ fit to receive all other gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, which Christ promised to his Church; but that these manifold gifts, and the respective measure of them (according as every Christian should stand in need of them), were to be communicated to them by the several ordinances and ministrations of ‘the Church;’ as St. Paul says, that *the ministry of reconciliation with God was committed to them* (2 Cor. v. 18). And the first solemn ministerial act of the Church, by which she dispensed such divine grace to all her children, after they were brought forth from her womb by their perfect new-birth in the holy sacrament of baptism, was this ‘imposition of hands with prayer for them,’ as the holy eucharist, soon after, was an addition to both. And accordingly, St. Cyprian, with above thirty more in council with him, in their answer to the synodical epistle of the bishops of Numidia about heretical baptism, in a separate and distinct manner, tells those prelates, that heretics could administer none of those three holy rites or ordinances for want of having the Spirit amongst them. And, 1st, not baptism, because the Spirit was necessary there “to sanctify the water for washing away of sin.” And having cleared that in three paragraphs, then in the fourth they further add, “neither can spiritual unction be amongst heretics, nor yet the eucharist;” because they cannot “sanc-

<sup>u</sup> Templum Dei fieri. Ib.

tify the creature of oil, nor can an eucharist be made by them<sup>x</sup>;" distinguishing plainly the three holy ministrations, and ascribing the grace of the Holy Spirit differently to each of them; insomuch as, in the close of that epistle, they plainly intimate each of them to be different 'sacraments of the Church' (as they used that word then in a larger sense than we do now). For, having proved that heretics could administer none of them, they conclude in these words: "we therefore who are with the Lord, and hold the unity of the Lord, ought to give the truth of unity and faith to as many as return by all the sacraments of divine grace<sup>y</sup>;" which looks very little like making any one of the three a mere part, or appendix, of either of the other, no more than Vincentius a Thibari's suffrage does in the council under St. Cyprian; where, speaking of the manner of receiving penitent heretics, he prescribes this threefold means for it; 1st, "by imposition of hands in exorcism; 2ndly, by regeneration of baptism; and then," says he, "they may come to the pollicitation of Christ<sup>z</sup>," a noted phrase for this conferring of the gifts of the Spirit by imposi-

<sup>x</sup> Cypr. Ep. 70. § 1. Neminem foris extra Ecclesiam baptizari posse. — Oportet mundari et sanctificari aquam prius a sacerdote, ut possit baptismo suo peccata hominis, qui baptizatur, abluere. Ib. § 4. Nec unctio spiritualis apud hæreticos potest esse, quando constet oleum sanctificari et eucharistiam fieri apud illos omnino non posse.

<sup>y</sup> Dare illis per omnia divina gratiæ sacramenta unitatis et fidei veritatem — debemus. Ib. § ult.

<sup>z</sup> Primo, per manus impositionem in exorcismo; secundo, per baptismi regenerationem; et tunc possunt ad Christi pollicitationem venire, alias autem fieri censeo non debere. Conc. Carthag. Suffr. 37. in Op. Cypr.

tion of hands, because it was grounded upon that faithful promise of our Lord, *that such as believed in him, should have rivers of living water, meaning of the Spirit of God, flowing out of them.* Which accordingly was made good by those ‘miraculous and saving graces’ together, conferred upon the first disciples by this holy rite of the Apostolical imposition of hands; the miraculous ones temporary, the other believed to be perpetual, in the judgment and practice of the primitive Church, wherein we find the successors of those Apostles (as the bishops were owned to be in the government of the Church) continuing that sacred rite amongst them for infusing the Holy Spirit into every baptized Christian, as St. Cyprian’s express words are, in the manifest account he gives us of this whole matter, which I have cited to you but now.

This is that which was ‘still wanting’ then, after St. Stephen’s perfect baptism, to the disciples at Samaria, according to the Apostles’ own practice, and that of the primitive Church after them. And for want of this observation of the gifts of the Spirit being gradually dispensed by the ministrations of the Church, according to the occasions and capacities of all men (which I take to be the foundation of the institution of any ordinances, or holy rites in the Church), our learned Enquirer and his friends, wherever they met with any such expressions as these, “that the water without the Spirit could not sanctify,” and that, “by imposition of hands the Spirit was given to baptized persons,” and the like, which are frequent in

St. Cyprian and other Fathers too, they inferred, that 'naked baptism' had nothing of the Spirit in it, in those holy Fathers' sense of it; and therefore 'imposition of hands' was added to make that perfect; which is an absolute mistake: and by that means, the thing which St. Cyprian here mentioned, as 'yet wanting,' is constantly perverted, and made to signify what he never meant by it; for they all affirmed, and held for certain, that the blessed Spirit was present, and operated powerfully in both of them, in such proportion as was needful to make each of them effectual to the great ends for which they were first instituted; the one to perfect the new birth, the other to sustain the future infirmities of the person who was so born. This latter, in respect to the nature, effects, or ceremonies used in it, they sometimes called the 'seal of the Lord,' the 'pollicitation,' or 'promise of the Lord,' the 'holy chrism, or unction' (in a singular and eminent manner distinct from any other), the 'invoking and infusing of the Spirit' into persons fitted for it; 'imposition of hands by the governors of the Church,' and the like. And this is what our church declares she understands by the solemn rite of 'confirmation,' both in her liturgy and canons<sup>a</sup>. This the baptizing evangelist and deacon at Samaria could not do. This, no less officers in the Church than the blessed Apostles, St. Peter and St. John, went on purpose from Jerusalem to do. This St. Cyprian ex-

<sup>a</sup> See Order of Confirmation, and the Collects there. Also Can. 60. Edit. A. D. 1603.

pressly tells us, such 'præpositi,' or rulers of the Church, as he himself was, did constantly perform in his time, let the baptizing minister be whom they would, provided they were not bishops themselves; and therefore I can do no less, than own my conviction from such evidence as this, that presbyters (as distinguished from bishops ever since that distinction made, which is from the very close of the Apostolical age) could not confirm.

It is true, our Enquirer strengthens this argument, taken from his notion of confirmation being a mere part of baptism, with that paradox in primitive discipline, that it was the very same thing with 'absolution of penitents' also; which is as much as to say, that the new baptized person is even just now cleansed and purged from all his sin; [for baptism before imposition of hands, the Enquirer (part ii. p. 86) himself says, does that, as indeed all antiquity says so with him] and at the same instant, as it were, he makes this cleansed and purified soul enter into the forlorn class of 'penitents,' as one who wants immediate 'absolution' to reconcile him to God and the Church. Such harmony mistakes will make, if we listen to them; but I am apt to think they will sound so harsh to most Christians' ears, that I shall proceed no further on this subject.

I have done then with the first general proof offered for presbyters' equality with their bishops, in respect to orders; namely, that they discharged all offices which their bishops did, by his leave and permission for it; and therefore their 'orders equal.'

And, by what has been said, I conceive three things may appear:

First, That they neither did, nor could discharge all, even with such permission for it; and particularly as to 'ordination and confirmation.'

Secondly, That several of the ministerial offices, so discharged by them, did not imply that their orders alone qualified them for it; and particularly as to 'excommunications and absolutions;' else the deacons' orders might claim the like character too.

Thirdly and lastly, That a bare capacity, if it were inherent in them, to discharge such offices by a lawful superior's permission, 'so long' as they were not empowered actually to do it of themselves, does imply an inferiority of order in the very nature of the thing itself.

If every one of the clerical acts here specified by the Enquirer, and which we have been considering so long, do still appear to be inherent in his presbyters, by virtue of their orders alone, then his ingenious and triumphant comparison may pass, that, as a man who can truly be said to have 'all his senses,' must of necessity be allowed 'to see;' so presbyters, who can do all that a bishop could do, may be owned, as to all these clerical capacities, to have received an episcopal character in their ordination. But if there be any act or acts amongst them, which, by the evidence we have here produced, they neither did, nor could do, in the practice or judgment of the primitive Church; then, though we own them to be as perfect in their kind, as any order of reverend ministers which



the Church is happy in, yet they will as certainly want something to complete their 'episcopal character and order,' as a blind or deaf man (pardon the comparison the Enquirer has framed for me) does want something to perfect all his senses. I leave the evidence to clear the case.

In the mean time, I think it is plain, that presbyters were invested with important trusts in the Church; partly as the bishop's curates (to use the Enquirer's proper phrase) in such portions of his general ministerial charge, as he should commit to them; and this their orders alone qualified them for; and partly, as 'proper' and 'usual' delegates to execute some extraordinary parts of the peculiar episcopal power, by his authority and commission for it. These things sufficiently required that they should be "upright, merciful, sincere persons, impartial in judgment of men and things, not hastily receiving reports, or rigid in judging of any<sup>b</sup>," which I take occasion to mention here, because St. Polycarp giving such advice as this to presbyters, in his epistle to the church at Philippi, our learned Author (p. 59) inferred from it, that it must needs imply no less than a 'ruling power' in them, of the like nature with that of the bishops themselves, for so his argument required. Whereas their charge, I think, is great enough to stand in need of such Apostolical counsel to them, without setting them on the level with their bishops, if we have no better proof for it than so.

<sup>b</sup> See Polycarp's Ep. ad Philip. § 5. ad finem vit. Polycarp. in Dr. Cave,

I come now to the second general proof, which is this; "That presbyters were originally called by the same titles and appellations as the bishops themselves, and therefore their order equal" (p. 64). I must desire the reader to see what has been said to this, at the close of the first chapter, p. 21, &c. and in this chapter, p. 179. And yet because the promiscuous and indifferent use of these titles in the New Testament, and to the end of the Apostolical age, occasions some amusement to particular men, I shall further offer such a short account of that matter, as is visible in Holy Scripture, and the earliest writers of the Church together.

The Scriptures teach us, that when the Apostles had founded churches, they ordained elders for each of them; intrusted those elders to administer the word and sacraments amongst them, or (to use St. Paul's words to the elders at Miletus) to take care to themselves and all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost, by orders and commission from the Apostles' hands to be sure, had made them 'overseers,' which in our translation is rendered 'bishops' now; and to feed the Church of God, as good shepherds ought to do. The titles, doubtless, suited with the charge and ministry they were intrusted withal; and as they were ecclesiastical officers, and commonly not novices in years besides, they were as properly called, in the ancient language of the synagogue, "presbyters of the Church" too; and accordingly we find both these titles indifferently applied to them then. Yet all this while, nothing is plainer in Scripture, than that the Apostles reserved to them-

selves the prerogative of a ruling power over them, kept a rod of discipline in their own hands; censured such as deserved it<sup>c</sup>; delivered unto Satan the disorderly amongst them, that is, excommunicated their members<sup>d</sup>; expected whole churches to be obedient to them in all things<sup>e</sup>: in short, had the sovereign cure of all the churches in their own hands<sup>f</sup>; moreover, all the elders we read of, ‘who were ordained’ in any church, (before Timothy and Titus’s special commissions, which I shall take notice of by and by,) had “the Apostles’ hands laid upon them; and no confirmation, or giving of the Spirit by imposition of hands” mentioned throughout the New Testament, but by the “Apostles alone<sup>g</sup>.” This great prerogative of power, then, the Apostles retained still; and no specious titles of ‘presidents, governors, bishops, pastors<sup>h</sup>,’ or the like, attributed to the presbyters or elders under them in the New Testament, lessened it in the least, or brought it into question: their superior character amongst them was owed by all. So that during their lives or personal government over them, those titles might safely and properly enough be promiscuously used for any of their subordinate ministers, whereof they ordained many, as our Enquirer (p. 78) believes, in particular churches.

But before the Apostles died, or when Pro-

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 21.

<sup>d</sup> Ib. v. 3.

<sup>e</sup> 1 Tim. i. 20.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 9.

<sup>g</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 28.

<sup>h</sup> Προϊστάμενοι, 1 Thes. v. 12. Ἡγούμενοι, Heb. xiii. 17. Ἐπίσκοποι, Act. xx. 28.

vidence<sup>i</sup> removed them from a personal visitation of their several churches in this or the other province, we read in the earliest records of the Church, that they ordained many single persons (taken notice of without any fellow-presbyters besides) over large cities and churches; as our Enquirer (p. 11) observes from Tertullian, that “St. John placed Polycarp in the church of Smyrna, and St. Peter ordained Clement for the church of Rome;” and Tertullian adds, that “the rest of the churches could prove their bishops to be derived from the Apostles in the same manner<sup>k</sup>, and calls those episcopal sees, “the Apostles’ chairs” in the next leaf; as Irenæus, you may remember, told us before, that “the Apostles delivered the Church to those single bishops, and their *locus magisterii*, or place of government with them<sup>l</sup>.” And the Scripture tells us plainly enough, that Timothy was ordained such a singular ecclesiastical governor for Ephesus, where there were many presbyters before<sup>m</sup>, and Titus for Crete; for it is plain, they had a special commission to ordain elders (1 Tim. iii. 15; 2 Tim. ii. 2; Tit. i. 5), to rebuke and censure ‘them’ as well as others

<sup>i</sup> Rom. xv. 23.

<sup>k</sup> Perinde utique et cæteræ exhibent, quos ab Apostolis in episcopatum constitutos Apostolici seminis traduces habeant. Tertul. de præscript. p. 213. ed. Venet. 1744.

<sup>l</sup> “Apostoli his — quibus etiam ipsas ecclesias committent. Valde enim perfectos et irreprehensibiles in omnibus eos volebant esse, quos et successores relinquebant suum ipsorum locum magisterii tradentes.” Iren. 3. c. 3. p. 175. Ven. 1734.

<sup>m</sup> See bishop Pearson’s Proof of the Time when Timothy was left at Ephesus.

(1 Tim. v. 19), and that with all authority (Tit. ii. 15) to judge of doctrine, and reject heretics; in a word, to set in order the things which were wanting (Tit. i. 5), the very claim of 'Apostolical power' in St. Paul's express words for it (1 Cor. xi. 34); and all this so personal a charge, that the Apostle conjured Timothy, and no others with him, *before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that he observed these things without partiality* (1 Tim. v. 21); and as a special reason for his investing him with all this fulness of power now, and for enjoining him so strictly to watch and make a full proof of this his ministry, he concludes thus: for *I am ready to be offered*, says he, *and the time of my departure is at hand* (2 Tim. iv. 5); as if he had further said, "And now this former care of mine must be yours."

It is manifest, I think, from hence, that these singular presidents of the several churches had sundry parts of the Apostles' 'reserved sovereign power' conferred upon them; never imparted to presbyters of any denomination before, as far as Scripture and primitive antiquity can inform us. These consecrated presidents then take possession of the churches assigned to them, either by the Apostles' personal induction of them, as the case of many of them was, or with their full credentials to be sure. In all, or most of those great churches which this Apostolical institution had allotted for them, they must find presbyters ministering at that time, in such capacity as they all along had done with entire subordination to the Apostles' supremacy over them. These ministering presbyters then,

together with the whole church, receiving such new-commissioned presidents amongst them, must manifestly see by those ‘reserved’ Apostolical powers, of ‘ruling, ordination, censure,’ and the like (expressed in Timothy and Titus’s commissions to the full, and, no doubt of it, signified sufficiently to every church by the Apostles themselves, who thus placed them there), that they had an authentic and unquestionable right of succeeding in the ordinary jurisdiction and prerogatives of their ‘departing Apostle’ over them.

This is a plain and natural reason, why the first order of ecclesiastics in the primitive Church were so familiarly called the ‘Apostles’ successors,’ and perhaps it would be very hard to assign any other. No wonder then, if such apparent successors in that eminency of ecclesiastical power as these were, should be thought worthy of a distinct and singular title from all others, as the Apostles had before them; and that the Catholic Church did accordingly agree it should be so. The title of ‘Apostle,’ indeed, was not thought unsuitable to them by many of the primitive writers<sup>n</sup>. Tertullian, as we heard just now, calls them, “the offspring of the Apostolic seed.” But in a holy reverence to the blessed twelve, and of the miraculous gifts in them, the primitive Church (though those very persons themselves presided in it) declined the venerable title of ‘Apostles’ for them; but

<sup>n</sup> ‘Ο ἀπόστολος Κλήμης, says Clemens Alex. speaking of Clemens bishop of Rome. Stromat. l. 4. p. 516. Cologn. 1688. See Blondel’s quotations of several such instances in his Apol. p. 85.

amongst the several appellations, common to many ecclesiastical officers before, they so appropriated that of 'bishop' to them, that St. Ignatius declares, at the very close of the Apostolic age, 'every Christian church, to the very utmost bounds of all<sup>o</sup>,' had a supreme governor of that singular and peculiar name, by which he was then known.

Thus I have briefly shewn, how the names of 'presbyter' and 'bishop' were indifferently used at first; and no danger of misunderstanding about it, so long as it continued so, that is, throughout the Apostolic age; and yet, how great occasion was given afterwards for appropriating 'one' of them to the supreme governors of the Church, whose peculiar character and powers required no less? and accordingly we find it has been so from that very time to this. Had our learned Enquirer therefore proved his presbyter to be indifferently styled a 'bishop' still, after this epoch of time we are here speaking of, in the familiar language of the Church, he had done more for him than all his collection of equivocal titles besides can amount to; for one incommunicable title to denote a superior 'order' by, is as much as the highest orders of men in all humane society ordinarily have, whilst they have variety of inferior ones besides, common to others with themselves; and here I leave the argument so mightily triumphed in by our ingenious Author (p. 67, 68) from this 'identity of names.'

<sup>o</sup> Ἐπίσκοποι οἱ κατὰ τὰ πέρατα ὁρισθέντες ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ γνωμῆ εἰσίν. Ep. ad. Ephes. § 3. ed. Jacobson.

But the reserved forces are still behind, and are to do all at last; for “if this second reason be not thought cogent enough,” says our learned Enquirer (p. 68), “yet the third and last will unquestionably put all out of doubt, and clearly evince the sameness of bishops and presbyters, as to order.”

The demonstration is this: “It is expressly said by the ancients,” says he, “that there were but two distinct ecclesiastical orders, bishops and deacons, or presbyters and deacons, therefore presbyters cannot be distinct from bishops, for then there would be three.”

The venerable Clemens Romanus is brought to prove this, for he says, that “in countries and cities where the Apostles preached, they ordained their first converts for bishops and deacons over those who should believe<sup>p</sup>.” The Apostles it seems then, in their course of planting the churches, ordained but two orders to take care of them. In the mean time, what were the ‘ordainers themselves?’ Were they of no order in the Church, or were they of the same order with either of the two they ordained? If neither one nor the other be so; then in their time there were three orders, it is plain; and how they continued so, both ‘from’ and after them, without ‘splitting’ any of the two (which our Enquirer (p. 69) fears we do), I think may appear from what I have said already. The Apostles had a reserved power, we have seen from Holy Scripture itself, both of

<sup>p</sup> Κατὰ χώρας οὖν καὶ πόλεις κηρύσσοντες καθίστανον τὰς ἀρχὰς αὐτῶν εἰς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους τῶν μελλόντων πιστεῦειν. Clem. Ep. 1. ad Corinth. § 42. ed. Jacobson.



government in general, and in special ministerial or clerical acts besides, which they did not impart to all the presbyters or bishops they at first ordained for the churches. If any time could be assigned therefore, or any general grant produced, when or whereby it might appear, that they conferred or bequeathed those reserved powers (so necessary to the Church for ever) to 'all' the presbyters they ever ordained in it; it is but a modest question to ask, in what text of Scripture, or in what record of the Church, is such an important grant to be found? If no such evidence is to be, as I think the ablest advocates for them have produced none, then the grants I have mentioned and proved above to particular presidents over many churches, by their own 'act' and 'deed,' even where other bishops or presbyters were before, as they were indifferently called till then, does infer such an evident translation of their own third order, with the reserved acts all along peculiar to it, to those particular presidents and the whole succession of them, as, I think, no ministers in the Church besides have any shadow of a charter like it to produce for themselves. For, to say, the Apostles had no successors to any ordinary and permanent prerogatives of theirs, is to contradict all antiquity barefaced; and it is plainly no less, to say, the primitive Fathers owned any ministers in the Church to be such, besides those they peculiarly called bishops after them; and therefore their reserved ordinary powers of government, ordination, confirmation, censure, and the rest, did continue their third order in the Church, in those episcopal successors of

theirs. And what St. Clemens says is far from being inconsistent with this; for when he tells us the Apostles ordained bishops and deacons, or presbyters and deacons, to take care of the respective flocks, which either were or should be further provided for them; he very well knew the Apostles who ordained them were a superior order to them; and therefore his words have no respect to the number of orders in the Church, for which they are here produced; nor indeed did the argument he was upon require they should; his only business was to awe the mutinous Corinthians from rebelling against the presbyters of the Church, because they were of Apostolical institution, and upon that account as much of God's appointment, as the tribe of Levi were for the sacred ministry of the Jewish Church, which is therefore so particularly described in all the orders and offices of it, and so closely applied to the Christian dispensation immediately upon it, that an impartial reader would rather infer<sup>a</sup>, that three orders might rationally be concluded, as well in one as the other, than imagine that Clemens had the least thought of no more than two orders in either.

Especially, if two things be considered. First, that Clemens himself, who wrote this, was undoubtedly such a single successor, as we have

<sup>a</sup> Τῷ γὰρ ἀρχιερεῖ ἰδία λειτουργία δεδομένη εἰσὶ καὶ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν ἴδιος ὁ τόπος προστέτακται καὶ Λευίταις ἰδία διακονία ἐπίκεινται· ὁ λαϊκὸς ἄνθρωπος τοῖς λαϊκοῖς προστάγμασιν δέδεται. Ἐκαστος ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί, ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι εὐχαριστεῖτω Θεῷ ἐν ἀγαθῇ συνειδήσει, μὴ παρεκβαίνων τὸν ὠρισμένον τῆς λειτουργίας αὐτοῦ κανόνα ἐν σεμνότητι. Clem. Ep. ad Cor. 1. § 40. ed. Jacobson.

been speaking of, set over all other ecclesiastics in the church of Rome. And, secondly, that the presbyters here insulted at Corinth, were many in number in that single church alone, who could not therefore be of the same kind (or 'order,' as I have shewn) with Polycarp or Clemens himself, whereof that there was but one only in a church, is too noted a truth, to need any proof of it.

One word to our Enquirer's closing 'dilemma' here, and I will proceed. "To what end," says he, "should Clemens exhort the schismatical Corinthians to obey their presbyters, from the consideration of the Apostles' ordination of bishops, if their presbyters had not been bishops?" I answer, to a very good end, because the two names were indifferently used so long as Clement lived, and without any influence upon the far different powers inherent in one of them, when the name of 'bishop' came to be appropriated to him, which our Enquirer (p. 65) imputes to St. Ignatius as the first author of it, and places it in the beginning of the second century; and that was not before, but indeed very soon after the martyrdom of Clemens, which the Church chronology<sup>r</sup> places in the last year of century the first.

Irenæus is quoted next (p. 71), to strengthen this evidence of Clemens Romanus, for two orders only in the Church.

The force of his authority, from one end to the other, lies in this single point, that he calls 'bishops' by the name of 'presbyters,' and,

<sup>r</sup> See Cave's Chron. Tables of the Three First Centuries.

which need not be wondered at after that, he calls their orders, the ‘orders of a presbyter too.’

This language our learned Enquirer, I doubt not, will readily own is very rare in Irenæus’s time, and in his own works too; but there is little to be gathered from it, to the purpose it is brought for here, if we consider these few things.

First, The caution this venerable bishop used, to let us know who he meant. In the entrance of the discourse he describes them thus: “You must obey the presbyters of the Church; those, I mean, who have a succession from the Apostles, as I shewed you before, who with the succession of their episcopacy, have the sure gift of truth according to the good pleasure of the Father<sup>s</sup>.”

Now what Irenæus shewed us before, was this: “We can reckon up to you,” says he, l. iii. c. 3, “those who were instituted bishops in the churches by the Apostles themselves,—to whom they committed the very churches themselves also;—left them their successors, delivering up to them their own proper place of mastership or prerogative in them.”

The persons here meant, are clearly enough described we see, and the Enquirer agrees with us, that they were bishops in the sense of the Church at that time; but he did not like to

<sup>s</sup> *Eis qui in Ecclesia sint presbyteris obaudire oportet. His qui successionem habent ab Apostolis, sicut ostendimus, qui cum episcopatus successione charisma veritatis certum, secundum placitum Patris acceperunt. Iren. l. iv. c. 26. p. 262. Edit. Venet. 1734.*

give us this special evidence, which Irenæus himself does, of their being so, because it contains such broad marks of more than ordinary prerogatives, conferred by the Apostles upon this order of men, above the common presbyters in the Church, by appointing them their peculiar successors over it, and delivering up the whole Church itself to their single care alone, as, through the singularity of their commission and powers, would look a little like another order from the rest; and therefore he would not begin his quotation here, but in general tells us, that they were surely 'bishops,' which Irenæus was speaking of, and then, from three lesser circumstances in the account of them, would assure us, they were of no higher 'an order' than any common presbyters were.

The first circumstance was this, that 'they were called by the name of presbyter,' as well as the others.

To which I answer, that it very well might be so, and not the least proof of an 'equal order' in that. The argument from names, as I am forced to observe again, does not lie here; for though the name of 'presbyter' did by degrees become the peculiar title of the 'second' order in the Church, upon occasion of the name of 'bishop' being solely appropriated to the 'first;' yet that was not a necessary consequence of it, nor the immediate business of the Church to make it so; it was but one ecclesiastical officer only, and that the 'chief of all,' who came with such extraordinary commission from the Apostles to preside over them, as I have shewn you before, which they wanted a peculiar and dis-

tinguishing title for; and accordingly fixed that of 'bishop' upon him. So that the name of 'presbyter,' which had been common to all the ministers of the Church before, even up to the highest order of the Apostles themselves, and had been a term of dignity and honour in the Church of God among the Jews, by long prescription there; and in respect to the 'venerable age,' which it naturally signified, might by any Father of the Church be attributed to a bishop still, especially if they fixed such a note of discrimination upon it, as Irenæus does here; and no fear of derogation to the bishop's character in it, and much less of levelling him to the lowest order that should be called by that name. A bishop therefore might be called a presbyter then, though it was rarely so, and but for a short time; but a presbyter, as distinguished from him, since the Apostolical age expired, had the name of bishop no longer attributed to him in the language of the Catholic Church.

Since Irenæus's bishops, then, were still the same as their predecessors were, which the Apostles constituted at the first, and such as the Church then owned for 'bishops,' notwithstanding the name of 'presbyter' was applied to them; what further lessening of them could it be, to express 'their order,' by an 'order' of the same name too? Which is the second circumstance in Irenæus's words, that our learned Author so mightily insists upon? Such as the persons were, such was their order, to be sure: if these presbyters, then, 'by name,' were genuine bishops in the nature and character of

them; it follows, that the order of presbyter, as applied to them, was such a bishop's order also. It is hard, I know, to allow of any other possible notion, either of words or things, where time immemorial has fastened one before; and therefore the phrase of 'presbyter's order,' to men in our age, can scarce ever be thought in any author to signify more or less than just what we understand by it now. But if things may take place instead of words and sounds with us, I think it is clear in this quotation, that the 'orders of a presbyter' here spoken of, are such as the Apostles' proper successors had in the sense and practice of the primitive Church. Irenæus declares himself to speak of such, and I have shewn what prerogatives such presbyters originally had, not only of 'ruling power,' but of several 'clerical acts' too, not common to all the rest; and our Enquirer himself assures us, that a presbyter promoted to such a bishop's chair, was first to receive 'imposition of hands' from all the provincial bishops, in the age Irenæus lived in. Now such singular acts of ecclesiastical power conferred upon a common presbyter, who had them not before, and by such a solemn Apostolical rite as that was, which the ancients called 'ordination,' in as plain and express terms, as they did in the act of ordaining presbyters or deacons. This, I own, is what I understand by the bishop's supreme order in the Church; and Irenæus, as his language all along imports, meant nothing less by it here, though the name of presbyter, which in several respects suited every

order in the Church, was peculiarly affixed to him.

And as to the text of Isaiah, lx. 17, applied here, as it was in Clemens Romanus before, I shall remark only thus much; that Clemens's old translation of the place<sup>t</sup> answered his own language about the Apostles ordaining 'bishops' and 'deacons' in the Church; for so his Greek Bible, it seems, had rendered it in the copies of his time, and by that authority he made the names to be awful and venerable to the Corinthians, as he was endeavouring to do. But Irenæus here, who was speaking of supreme presbyters only, applied the text, as it is in our present translation of the LXX<sup>u</sup>, whereby they are rendered by the names of 'princes' and 'bishops;' so that both words answered the argument he was upon, which was to enjoin obedience to the true supreme governors of any one catholic church; and neither in one place nor the other, does it any ways prove, that either of the Fathers understood but two orders only in the Church; as I conceive may now appear by what I have observed from them.

Clemens Alexandrinus, as the last evidence, is to clear all; two passages to that purpose are quoted from him. I will shew the occasion of both, that we may judge the better what the holy Father probably meant by them.

<sup>t</sup> Clemens's copy rendered Isa. lx. 17, thus: *Καταστήσω τοὺς ἐπισκόπους αὐτῶν εἰς δικαιοσύνην, καὶ τοὺς διακόνους αὐτῶν ἐν πίστει.*

<sup>u</sup> Irenæus used the LXX. which renders it thus: *Δώσω τοὺς ἄρχοντας σου ἐν εἰρήνῃ, καὶ τοὺς ἐπισκόπους σου ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ.*



Clemens was setting forth the utmost advancement of a perfect Christian under the title of a complete and 'true Gnostic.' He represents him "a master of all his passions, and then improving in good works till he becomes equal to an angel here; and being bright and shining as the sun, hastens on through his righteous knowledge, and the love of God, to a holy mansion, as the Apostles did before him\*." And, on this occasion, tells us further, that "every one who exercised himself in the commandments of the Lord, and lived as a perfect Gnostic according to the Gospel, might be admitted into the Apostolic roll<sup>y</sup>;" that is, undoubtedly, in his seraphic sense of it, be as fair a candidate for perfection of happiness hereafter, as an Apostle himself could be, if he was equal to him in Gnostic wisdom and holiness here; characters and orders of men, from the highest to the lowest of them in the Church, in this view of them, making but little difference in the case. And to explain himself further in the point, he goes on in these words, which our Enquirer quotes for his use; "he is a presbyter in the Church indeed," says he, "and a true deacon of the will of God, if he does, and teaches, the things of the Lord; not ordained of men, or therefore thought a righteous per-

\* Μετριοπαθήσας τὰ πρῶτα καὶ εἰς ἀπάθειαν μελετήσας, αὐξήσας τε εἰς εὐποιίαν Γνωστικῆς τελειότητος ἰσάγγελος μὲν ἐνταῦθα. Φωτεινὸς δὲ ἤδη καὶ ὡς ἥλιος λάμπων — σπεύδει ἐπὶ τὴν ἁγίαν μονήν, καθάπερ οἱ Ἀπόστολοι. Edit. Oxon. Strom. l. vi. p. 792.

† Ἐξεστίν οὖν καὶ νῦν ταῖς Κυριακαῖς ἐνασκήσαντας ταῖς ἐντολαῖς, κατὰ τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον τελείως βιωσάντας καὶ Γνωστικῶς, εἰς τὴν ἐκλογὴν τῶν Ἀποστόλων ἐγγραφῆναι. — p. 793.

son, because made a presbyter, but because righteous, therefore chosen into that presbytery; and although he be not honoured with the first seat here on earth, yet shall hereafter sit down on the twenty-four thrones, judging the people, as St. John says in the Revelations<sup>2</sup>.” The sense of this whole speculation, I think, appears plainly to be this; that, in respect of true intrinsic excellency here, and of a title to perfect bliss and happiness hereafter, neither Apostle, presbyter, deacon, or layman, have any great advantage of one another, by any outward character, title, or difference of order they may have below, but purely as they excel one another in Christian virtue, divine knowledge, wisdom, and goodness; and so are more perfect ‘Christian Gnostics’ than the rest. And therefore if a presbyter, in particular, be such a qualified saint as this, though he be not honoured with the ‘first seat’ here; that is, says he, with as high a seat as any I have named to you now, which, in plain connection with the whole argument, is with an ‘Apostolical chair’ in the Church (for an Apostle was one of the orders, in his comparison, amongst the rest), yet he shall sit in the twenty-four thrones, judging the people, as St. John speaks in the Revelation; as if he had directly said, though he may not sit in a bishop’s place, (whose see

<sup>2</sup> Οὗτος πρεσβύτερός ἐστι τῶ ὄντι τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ διάκονος ἀληθῆς τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ βουλήσεως, ἐὰν ποιῇ καὶ διδάσκη τὰ τοῦ Κυρίου, οὐκ ὑπ’ ἀνθρώπων χειροτονούμενος, οὐδ’ ὅτι πρεσβύτερος, δίκαιος νομιζόμενος, ἀλλ’ ὅτι δίκαιος ἐν πρεσβυτερίῳ καταλεγόμενος· κὰν ἐνταῦθα ἐπὶ γῆς πρωτοκαθεδρία μὴ τιμηθῇ ἐν τοῖς εἴκοσι καὶ τέσσαρσι καθεδεῖται θρόνοις, τὸν λαὸν κρίνων, ὡς φησὶν ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει Ἰωάννης. Ibid.

Tertullian, contemporary with Clemens, calls an ‘Apostolical chair;’ and the Church of that age, I have proved above, acknowledged bishops to be their proper successors), yet he shall sit, says St. Clemens, at the last day, among the chiefest saints, to judge the world with Christ; and how the mentioning of a first chair of a presbytery, in the sense wherein this holy Father names it here, should imply, that every presbyter who sat in the presbytery also, should be of equal order with him who sat the first and highest in it, by this evidence of Clemens for it, I leave now to the reader’s judgment on the place.

But this venerable Father affords our Enquirer a further testimony for his cause; which though some men think, as he observes himself (p. 72), to be more against him than for him; yet he roundly affirms, it is evidently on his side. Clemens mentions, says he, advancements (or ‘processes,’ as he renders them) of bishops, presbyters, and deacons: but “these are evidently meant,” says our discerning Author, “only of degree<sup>a</sup>,” and there are but “two orders between them all:” For Clemens immediately adds, says he, that “those offices are an imitation of the angelic glory, and of that dispensation, which, as the Scriptures say, they wait for, who treading in the steps of the Apostles, live in the perfection of evangelical righteousness; for these, the Apostle writes, shall be took up into the clouds [1 Thes. iv. 17], and there first as deacons attend, and then ac-

<sup>a</sup> Προκοπῶν ἐπισκόπων, πρεσβυτέρων, διακόνων. Stromat. 6.

ording to the process, or next station of glory, be admitted into the presbytery (for glory differs from glory), till they increase to a perfect man<sup>b</sup>.”

Hence he argues, that since the Scriptures mention but two orders of angels, viz. ‘arch-angels’ and ‘angels;’ and the stations of glorified saints are here explained by being deacons awhile, and then taken into the presbytery, and so, as he says, “their glory perfected.” It therefore appears, that the holy Father meant his ‘bishops, presbyters,’ and ‘deacons,’ to have but ‘two orders’ amongst them.

This is his argument faithfully stated, and I think to the full. Upon which I take leave to make these few observations.

First, That since deacons and presbyters, which are two of Clemens’s three progressions in the Church, have unquestionably a distinct order from one another, and yet but one common word is used to express ‘those’ two progressions, and that of the third together with them; it is a forced and unwarrantable construction, I conceive, of the venerable Father’s phrase, to make him mean a difference of order between two of these progressions, and no difference at all in the third. For that a difference ‘of order’ was to be understood amongst

<sup>b</sup> Μιμήματα οἶμαι Ἀγγελικῆς δόξης, κ’ακείνης τῆς οἰκονομίας τυγχάνουσιν, ἣν ἀναμένειν φασὶν αἱ γραφαὶ τοὺς κατ’ ἴχνος τῶν Ἀποστόλων ἐν τελειώσει δικαιοσύνης κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον βεβιωκότας, ἐν νεφέλαις τούτους ἀρθέντας, γράφει ὁ Ἀπόστολος, διακονήσκειν μὲν τὰ πρῶτα, ἔπειτα ἐγκαταλλαγῆναι τῷ πρεσβυτερίῳ κατὰ προκοπὴν δόξης, δόξα γὰρ δόξης ἀναφέρει, ἄχρις ἂν εἰς τέλειον ἄνδρα αὐξήσωσιν. Id. ib.

these progressions in general, is clear from our Enquirer's application of them, who insists upon it, that they were an imitation of the 'archangels' and 'angels orders.' So that not only three progressions must here be taken to be a natural pattern and imitation of two only in heaven 'above;' but one of the three also, who had no distinct order, but what was common to another, must help to make up the true representation of the state of angels and archangels, who had each of them a very distinct and different order to themselves. And this will appear the harder construction of Clemens's words still, if we observe, that in this very quotation itself, when he expresses the two orders of glorified saints afterwards, by their advancing from the order of deacon-saints first, to that of glorified presbyters at last (upon which the force of this argument depends), he uses the same numerical word for it<sup>c</sup>; it is a *Προκοπή δόξης*, which makes the higher order of saints or angels there; and why must not this *Προκοπή* of bishops then, in his language, be thought to do as much for them, if the 'relatum' and 'correlatum' in the comparison duly answer one another; I conceive it must be so. But,

Secondly, What warrantable grounds can we have to determine the number of the orders of angels, by reading 'only' of angels and archangels in the Holy Scriptures? St. Augustin durst not do it; but thought a "cautious ignorance less to be blamed, than a rash presumption in this very case<sup>d</sup>;" and was so humble as

<sup>c</sup> Κατὰ προκοπήν δόξας ἐγκαταλλαγῆναι τῷ πρεσβυτερίῳ. Ibid.

<sup>d</sup> Magis in istis temeraria præsumptio, quam cauta ignorantio

“own it in himself.” That “there are thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers, in the heavenly parade above,” says he, “I steadfastly believe; and it is my undoubted faith, that there is a difference between them; but what that difference is, I know not, nor do I think that ignorance is any hurt to me.” He seemed to be mindful of St. Paul’s awful hint, ‘not to intrude into things he saw not.’ The learned Grotius, from the common opinion of the Jews, affirms somewhat more of them, and says, “they were names of the sublimest classes of angels<sup>e</sup>,” familiarly taken to be such by that ancient Church of God; which is little less than attributing so many ‘orders’ to them. Nor do I apprehend, indeed, that the general division into ‘archangels’ and ‘angels,’ supposing our revelation of them to be full and entire, does any more conclude their orders to be but strictly ‘two,’ than the division of English subjects into peers and commoners, is an evident proof that there are but two orders of subjects in this kingdom. And to draw proofs for any part of the Christian dispensation from so precarious an hypothesis as this, to say the best of it, is to argue in the dark. Clemens himself gave but little occasion to be so represented;

culpanda videatur. — Esse itaque *sedes, dominationes, principatus, potestates*, in celestibus apparatibus firmissime credo, et differre inter se aliquid indubitata fide teneo — sed quid inter se differant, nescio. Nec ea sane ignorantia periclitari me puto. August. lib. ad Oros. cap. 11. fol. 141. inter opera, tom. 6. Paris, 1555.

<sup>e</sup> Nomina sublimissimarum classium angelicarum, frequentia apud Hebræos. Grot. in Ephes. i. 21. inter opera. tom. 3. p. 520. Lond. 1679.

for he does not so much as name ‘the orders’ of angels, but only mentions the ‘angelical glory’ in this quotation; and immediately joins it with the glory of humane saints in heaven, as making both of them the subject of his comparison; and that he assigned a threefold state of glory to them, will appear by the last observation I shall make; which is this:

Thirdly, That when Clemens advanced his glorified saints from the inferior state of deacons into the presbytery afterwards, he did not so consummate their bliss there, as our Enquirer positively does; but adds, that “glory differs from glory,” as the quotation owns, till they “increase into a perfect man.” And that this ‘increasing into a perfect man’ was a further advancement than that of his ‘deacon and presbyter saints’ before, is not only evident by what he adds immediately upon it, viz. “that such as those rest in the holy mount of God, in the uppermost Church, where the philosophers of God do meet together<sup>f</sup>,” so his platonic phrase is, and a great deal more of that superlative character of them; but, I think, is undeniably clear, at his summing up this whole argument a leaf or two after, in these express words: “You see,” says he, “what wisdom says of these Gnostics: and, in proportion to this, there are different mansions, according to the dignity of believers. Solomon says, a select grace of faith shall be given to him, and a more delightsome lot in the temple of the Lord.

<sup>f</sup> Ἀχρὶς ἂν εἰς τέλειον ἄνδρα αὐξήσωσιν· οἱ τοιοῦτοι — καταπαύσουσιν ἐν ὕρει ἁγίῳ Θεοῦ, τῇ ἀνωτάτῳ ἐκκλησίᾳ, καθ’ ἣν οἱ φιλόσοφοι συνάγονται τοῦ Θεοῦ.—Strom. 6. p. 793.

This comparative shews there are inferior ones in God's temple, which is the universal Church; and it gives us to understand, there is a superlative one too, where the Lord is. These three elect mansions are signified by the numbers in the Gospel, of thirty, sixty, and an hundred fold: and the perfect inheritance is theirs, who attain to the perfect man, according to the image of the Lord<sup>s</sup>."

By this clear evidence of the venerable Father's sense, I conceive he now appears consistent with himself, and that the three orders in the Church are so far from being lost by the parallel, that it could not be made out without them; and I should think I very unfairly represented him, if I contracted them into two.

Between these two authorities of Clemens, 'for only two orders in the Church,' the Enquiry (p. 74) describes the form of session in the ancient presbytery; which I should pass over without any controversy about it, but that he tells us there, that St. Cyprian calls the presbyters 'his colleagues' in the session. This obliged me to consider his authority for it, because I had appropriated that title to 'bishops only' by which they spoke of one another; and

§ 'Ορῶς οἷα περὶ τῶν Γνωστικῶν διαλέγεται ἡ σοφία ἀναλόγως ἄρα καὶ μοναὶ ποικίλαι, κατ' ἀξίαν τῶν πιστευσάντων. Αὐτίκα Σολόμων, δοθήσεται γὰρ αὐτῷ τῆς πίστεως ἡ χάρις ἐκλεκτῆ, καὶ κληρὸς ἐν ναῷ Κυρίου θυμηρέστερος. Τὸ συγκριτικὸν γὰρ δείκνυσι μὲν τὰ ὑποβεβηκότα ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅς ἐστιν ἡ πᾶσα Ἐκκλησία, ἀπολείπει δὲ ἐννοεῖν καὶ τὸ ὑπερθετικόν, ἔνθα ὁ Κύριός ἐστιν. Ταύτας ἐκλεκτὰς οὖσας τὰς τρεῖς μονὰς οἱ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ ἀριθμοὶ αἰνίσσονται, ὁ τριάκοντα, καὶ ὁ ἐξήκοντα, καὶ ὁ ἑκατόν· καὶ ἡ μὲν τελεία κληρονομία τῶν εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον ἀφικνουμένων, κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ Κυρίου. Ib. p. 797.



had accordingly argued, as you may remember, for their prerogatives upon it. I presumed he had found some singular passage in St. Cyprian, to warrant what he had said. The place he quotes for it, is in his 28th epistle, § 2<sup>h</sup>. [Edit. Pamel. or Ep. 34. Edit. Oxon.] I carefully perused the whole epistle, and found St. Cyprian mentioning 'his colleagues' four times in it. First, He commends his presbyters and deacons, to whom he writes, for 'not communicating with a presbyter and deacon of Didda, as his colleagues had advised them<sup>i</sup>.' Were these 'colleagues' his own presbyters, do we imagine, by whose advice they themselves acted so agreeably to his mind? Secondly, He takes notice to his presbyters, that they had acquainted him by letter, how the said presbyter of Didda and his deacon had been admonished again and again 'by his colleagues,' and yet went on in their fault<sup>k</sup>. Did the presbyters mean themselves, by 'those colleagues,' in their letter to Cyprian? Why not 'admonished by us?' when the letter was their own, and why not 'by you,' in St. Cyprian's again to them? but no remark can make it so plain, as the epistle itself does; yet I must go on to the place peculiarly quoted still. Thirdly, then, he orders his presbyters and deacons to read his letters to his "colleagues also, if there were any there, or

<sup>h</sup> Pag. 168, supra.

<sup>i</sup> Consilio collegarum meorum — censuistis non communicandum. Cypr. Ep. 34. Edit. Oxon.

<sup>k</sup> Semel atque iterum, secundum quod mihi scripsistis, a collegis meis moniti — pertinaciter perstiterunt. Ib.

happened to come thither<sup>1</sup>.” Strange sense, if he meant such persons as he wrote to, and questioned whether any of them were there. Thus far I think his colleagues and presbyters were somewhat different persons with him; and do we think he used the same term a fourth time after this, and meant quite another thing by it? In the last place, then, he acquaints his presbyters and deacons, what should be done in the case of two sub-deacons and an acolyth, which they consulted him about; and tells them, that many of his own clergy were yet absent, and he would not privately decide that cause, which was likely to be a standing precedent concerning ministers of the Church, and therefore ought to be examined, ‘not only together with his colleagues, but with all his people also<sup>m</sup>:’ letting them plainly know, that the hearing of that cause should be as public as the concern was, and not only he, and his own clergy to whom he wrote, but ‘his colleagues also,’ and even his own people too should be present at it; where by his ‘colleagues,’ surely he meant the same persons, as he had three times before, you see, in the same letter, that is some bishops of the province, whereof he was metropolitan; as the solemnity of the case did manifestly invite him to call in their assistance,

<sup>1</sup> Legite has easdem literas *et collegis meis*, si qui aut præsentibus fuerint, aut supervenerint. Ib.

<sup>m</sup> Hæc singulorum tractanda sit et limanda plenius ratio, non tantum cum *collegis meis*, sed et cum plebe universa, expensa enim moderatione librandæ et pernunciandæ res est, quæ in posterum circa ministros Ecclesiæ constituat exemplum. Ib.

and require their presence, according to his account of it. And this confirms me more still, that 'colleague' was unquestionably a term appropriated to 'fellow-bishops' only, in St. Cyprian's language; since the fairest instance so inquisitive an Author could single out to disprove it, appears to fall in with it too.

I have now considered, and too particularly, I am afraid, the tired reader will think, the three general arguments for equality of orders in the bishops and presbyters of the Church, with every single authority, I think, which the ingenious Enquirer has offered for the proof of it; and if it still appears, that the presbyters could do every 'clerical act' which the bishop could do, by virtue of their inherent powers alone, without his authority for it; that their different powers made no difference of orders in them; that the identity, and sameness of name, proved them to be the same with one another; and that the primitive Fathers did expressly own and declare that there were but two orders in the Church: it is no more than that learned Author foretold, would surely be the effect of such a vain attempt as this. For though he humbly questioned for a while (p. 75), whether his premises were fully proved or no; yet he concluded soon, that upon the narrowest enquiry he could make, 'they could not be evinced.' I have no 'opinion' of all that I have said, any further than of the sincerity of it, and that it keeps me unavoidably, through the evidence of truth I verily think to be in it, from consenting to any one of the arguments he offers for his cause. What others may think

of it, I leave only to God and themselves; having as unfeigned and hearty a concern (I may say it before Him, who knows my thoughts long beforehand) as that affectionate Author professes to have for the unhappy divisions this fatal controversy causes in the Church.

The close of this chapter is an innocent speculation about the reason of the number of presbyters in the primitive Churches, and of the time when their office began. The scheme required something of this, since a diocese was allowed by it to have no more than a single congregation for three hundred years together; and reading of forty or fifty presbyters in one, the question might be asked, he pretty well foresaw, what need there should be of them all? He answers therefore, they were partly as curates are to our rectors now, though more necessary ones, says he, upon account of the variety of accidents then, and of the uncertainty of the times; and because the number might be a little surprising still, he further makes his presbyters to be young pupils to his parochial bishops, and in a state of education under them, to be fit to succeed them in time. This harmless thought, since it is pressed upon us with no authorities of Fathers, councils, or historians, to give the reader much trouble about it, shall be left undisturbed by me; and I will conclude this chapter, as the Enquiry does, with a short reflection upon a remarkable account which Clemens Alexandrinus gives us of St. John the Apostle; "He went," upon request, "to the neighbouring provinces," says Clemens, "in some places to constitute bishops; in others, to

plant whole churches; and in other places to ordain such into the number of the clergy, as were signified to him by the Holy Ghost<sup>n</sup>." Here is a sacred example of primitive bishops indeed, 'instituted,' we may truly say, by the Holy Ghost himself, for who assigned the persons? it was that Holy Spirit, you see, in this quotation, and 'inducted' by an Apostle, for so St. John placed them in their churches; and if our learned Author meant such an 'institution' and 'induction' as this, derived from this original upon all their successors in the like station in the Church, we should differ but little about his words, when he calls the 'bishops, the presented, instituted, and inducted' ministers of his diocesan parishes. [Enq. p. 57.] But then the obligation of the presbyters, not to invade these bishops' places, would have something more in it, than he thinks fit to allow; for he will have it, that 'for peace, or unity, or order sake, they could not or would not do it,' as if it were mere gentleness, or love of peace in them, which withheld them from invading a bishop's function, being as fully qualified for it as the bishops themselves; whereas here is an eminent superior by God's institution ordained to preside over them; and as I have proved above, with additional clerical powers too, which were never imparted to them; and as the bishops were thus Apostolically settled at the first, so the orders of presbyters and deacons, as distinct

<sup>n</sup> Ἀπῆει παρακαλούμενος καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ πλησιόχωρα τῶν ἐθνῶν. Ὅπου μὲν ἐπισκόπους, καταστήσων, — Ὅπου δὲ ὅλας ἐκκλησίας ἀρμόσων. Ὅπου δὲ ἐναγέ τινα κληρώσων τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ Πνεύματος σημαινομένων. c. ult. et Euseb. l. iii. c. 23. p. 185. ed. Burton.

from them here, had the like institution and induction into their respective places in the churches, so early as St. John's time; for our Enquirer tells us, he believes, that by the word 'clergy,' in the last clause of this quotation, both those orders most probably should be understood. So that a 'divine right' for each of them, in the language and acceptation of those times, wherein Clemens and Eusebius lived, is as clearly affirmed here, as the venerable Clemens, in so few words, could possibly have said it.

## CHAPTER V.

THE fifth chapter begins with the order and office of ‘deacons;’ and it is a comfort to hear ‘there is no great controversy about them” (p. 79). I hope I shall occasion none, by barely using the learned Vossius’s authority for restoring a ‘negative particle’ to a short clause quoted out of St. Ignatius, here. The Enquiry leaves it out, as some copies had done before, and by that means makes that venerable Father call this third order in the Church, ‘the deacons of meats and cups<sup>a</sup>.’ Whereas it is plain<sup>b</sup>, St. Ignatius’s intention was to remove that meaner character from them, and give them their proper title of ‘servants, or ministers, of the Church of God,’ in contradistinction to it, and immediately thereupon he requires all to reverence them accordingly. The nature of the period itself, and the holy Father’s ordinary notion of the deacons, agree with this reading. The rest upon this head I willingly leave as I find it, and

<sup>a</sup> Βρωμάτων και ποτών εισι διάκονοι. Enq. p. 80.

<sup>b</sup> Οὐ γὰρ βρωμάτων και ποτών εισι διάκονοι, ἀλλ’ Ἐκκλησίας Θεοῦ ὑπηρεταί — Πάντες ἐντρεπέσθωσαν τοὺς διακόνους. Ignat. Ep. ad Trall. § 2. 3. ed. Jacobson.

wish I could have done the like to all that is gone before.

Sub-deacons are briefly considered next; not for anything this learned Author thought material to say about them, but purely, one would think, to give one plausible turn more to what he seems to have so much at heart, 'the equality of bishops and presbyters' orders.' For all he observes of them is this, that the orders of deacons and sub-deacons, in his opinion of them (p. 81), were 'probably' the same; the one intended only to assist the other in the same ecclesiastical offices, common to them both, that so the account he gave of the like equality between bishops and presbyters might pass the better for being so directly parallel to these. Now all he could hope for from hence, amounts to no more than what uncertainty and supposition could afford him; for he concludes it doubtful, after all, whether deacons and sub-deacons' orders were the same, and supposes it only upon this presumption, that "in no church whatsoever it was usual to have more than seven deacons, because of the original number instituted by the Apostles; and therefore sub-deacons were ordained to discharge their necessary ministrations for them in the greater and more numerous churches." But that a sub-deacon could not discharge the necessary ministrations of a deacon, I think is plain enough, from what our learned Author himself knows, and owns (p. 80), a deacon did in the primitive Church; that is, "assist in the celebration of the eucharist, preach, and baptize;" for what monument of antiquity ever affirmed the sub-deacons could



do all this? So far from that, that the council of Laodicea (which the learned Dr. Cave observes was peculiarly held to revive the discipline of the primitive Church) assures us, “subdeacons were not suffered to have any place in the diaconicum<sup>c</sup>, or sacred apartment of the deacons, nor so much as to touch the holy vessels<sup>d</sup>.” That “they might not wear the sacred fascia, or linen wreath, called the orarium, appointed for the deacon’s office<sup>e</sup>;” and for this very reason, as Zonaras notes upon it, “because every sacred order had their peculiar habit<sup>f</sup>.” That sub-deacons ministered ‘to,’ and not ‘for’ the deacons, is observed by the inquisitive Suicer<sup>g</sup>, from no less authority than the first great council of Nice. All this does little less than directly contradict the hypothesis before us, of sub-deacons being ordained to discharge the deacons’ ministrations in their stead; and, one would think, were evidence enough to prove their orders to be different, unless some authentic ordinal, within our Enquirer’s period of time, were extant to demonstrate the contrary. And lastly, As to the primitive churches confining themselves to seven deacons only, from the example of the first institution in the Acts,

<sup>c</sup> In eo præcipue id agebatur, ut collapsa primitivæ Ecclesiæ disciplina resarciretur. Hist. Liter. part. 2. p. 122. Edit. Lond. 1698.

<sup>d</sup> Οὐ δεῖ ὑπηρέτας ἔχειν χώραν ἐν τῷ διακονικῷ, καὶ ἄπτεισθαι ἱερῶν σκευῶν. Conc. Laod. Can. 21.

<sup>e</sup> Οὐ δεῖ ἡπηρέτην ὠράριον φορεῖν. Ib. Can. 22.

<sup>f</sup> Ἐκάστῳ ἱερῷ τάγματι ἀπονενέμηται καὶ στολὴ οἰκεία αὐτῷ, &c. Zonar. in Can.

<sup>g</sup> Suicer in voce ὑπηρέτης. Ὑπηρέται in Ecclesia dicuntur subdiaconi, qui episcopis, presbyteris, et diaconis ministrant. Act. Conc. Nic. 1. par. 2. p. 172.

I refer the reader to the judgment of the sixth general council about it, where he will find, in their 16th canon, that that original precedent in the Acts<sup>h</sup>, did not affect the number or office of the deacons ‘who ministered at the altar of the Church.’ And the testimony of an œcumenical council about the sense of the Catholic Church, is of some weight, I think, though at a distance from the three first centuries of it.

But to pass from this, and all the other antiquated orders in the primitive Church, I proceed to consider the next general head in this chapter; which is, the manner of ordaining presbyters in use amongst them then.

And in no point is our learned Author more curious and particular than in this: he presents us with every circumstance of the ancient manner of ordaining presbyters, in a more exact method than any author who lived amongst them, or near those early ages he speaks of, ever did; and for that reason, I shall oblige the reader with the whole scheme of it, in his own words.

“Whosoever desired to be admitted,” says he (p. 83, 84), “into this sacred office, he first proposed himself to the presbytery of the parish where he dwelt and was to be ordained; desiring their consent to his designed intention; praying them to confer upon him those holy orders which he craved. Now we must suppose,” says he, “this petition to the whole presbytery, because a bishop alone could not give

<sup>h</sup> Τοὺς προειρημένους ἑπτὰ διακόνους μὴ ἐπὶ τοῖς μυστηρίοις διακονουμένων λαμβάνεσθαι. Conc. 6. in Trullo. Can. 16.

those holy orders; as is most evident from Cyprian, who assures us, that all clerical ordinations were performed by the common council of the whole presbytery. Upon this application<sup>i</sup>, the presbytery debated their petition in their common council (*ibid.*), and proceeded to examine, whether he had those qualifications and endowments which were requisite for that sacred office," viz. these four, "his age, his condition in the world, his conversation, and his understanding." If they approved all, they declared him capable of the function. (p. 95, 96.) Then his name must be propounded to the people, that, if worthy, he might have their testimony and attestation; if unworthy, he might be debarred and excluded from orders. If they approved his fitness for the office, then followed ordination, by imposition of hands, usually of the bishop and presbyters of the parish, according to 1 Tim. iv. 14.

Here is a formal abstract, one would verily think, of some primitive 'ordinal' or another; though not a syllable quoted from any one record, so public, proper, and necessary in the case; here is a candidate for holy orders, made an humble supplicant to a whole parochial, or 'diocesan,' presbytery for them, and not a text of Scripture to direct, or one single canon (so much as of a provincial synod) to require it of them. And lastly, here is a Catholic practice set forth to us, upon a bare 'supposition' (for the learned Author himself says no more), that

<sup>i</sup> Communi consilio omnium nostrum. Cyp. Ep. 24. alias 29. Edit. Oxon.

three or four words in a particular bishop's writings, relating purely to his own peculiar practice, as we shall see by and by, must 'evidently' imply so much.

This is a singular method, I must needs say, of proving the general practice of the Christian Church; and to say the most we can of it, amounts only to this, that if the excellent St. Cyprian did upon any consideration whatsoever generally consult his presbytery (and we may say his people too) whensoever he ordained in his Church; then he, and all other Christian bishops besides, were so far obliged, by the constitution of the Catholic Church in his time, to do so, that none of them could ordain a single presbyter without them. For upon that holy Father's account of himself alone (and that in much larger terms in the translation, than we find it in his own text) this formal scheme of 'primitive ordinations' is drawn. Let the reader consult the whole, and he will find it so; though whatever less material quotation intervenes, I shall both mention and weigh it too. In the mean time, to prove the translation of the present quotation to be far wider than the text itself, before we go any further, we need only set one against the other.

The Enquiry makes St. Cyprian say, that "all clerical ordinations were performed by the common council of the whole presbytery," implying by his general terms, and the application of them here, that he and all other bishops practised so. Whereas the words, 'all clerical ordinations,' are neither named, nor so much as implied, in that epistle, from whence this quo-

tation is taken. The whole case there was this: "St. Cyprian had formerly designed to ordain a certain lector and sub-deacon, by the common advice and counsel of his presbyters and deacons; therefore he assures us," says our learned Enquirer, that "all clerical ordinations were performed by the common council of the whole presbytery<sup>k</sup>;" for from this very place the quotation is taken. But having occasion<sup>l</sup>, as the holy bishop further tells them, to make use of such 'clerical officers' in the time of his absence from them, he lets them know, that he had ordained them there by himself alone; which, by the way, is proof enough that the orders were complete, and valid to all intents and purposes, without them. It is true, he plainly wishes, as his manner was, rather to have had them in council with him, and excuses himself for doing it alone; and why? "Because he had solemnly purposed with himself," as he tells them in another epistle, "from the time of his first promotion to the see, that he would do nothing of his own private opinion, without consulting them, or without the consent of his people<sup>m</sup>." The only needful enquiry here is this:

Was this resolution of St. Cyprian grounded upon any law of God, or the Church, by which

<sup>k</sup> Quod jam pridem communi consilio omnium nostrum cœperat, &c. — oportuit me per clericos scribere.

<sup>l</sup> Fecisse me sciatis lectorem Saturum et hypodiaconum Optatum. Ep. 29. Edit. Oxon.

<sup>m</sup> A primordio episcopatus mei *statuerim* nihil sine consilio vestro, et sine plebis consensu mea privatim sententia gerere. Cyp. Ep. 14. § ult. Edit. Oxon.

he was obliged and bound to do so? Or was it by the mere free motion of his own discretion and goodness, that he determined so with himself? The former would imply Catholic practice and duty in the case, if it had been proved; the latter will amount to no more, than a personal virtue and prudence in the peculiar circumstances of that meek and holy Martyr; worthy of all imitation indeed, where times and persons suited so properly with it, as this did then. But, otherwise, obliging unto none.

That no constitution, law, or canon whatsoever, obliged St. Cyprian to it; these following particulars must incline us to believe.

First, That the whole college of presbyters and deacons in the Church of Rome, who were cotemporary with the holy Martyr himself, and continually corresponding with him, give a quite contrary account of it. For in the preface of an epistle to him, they represent his practice thus: "Although a good conscience," say they, "supported by the vigour of the discipline of the Gospel, and made a true witness of itself, by the decrees of heaven, commonly contents itself with appealing to the judgment of God alone, and neither courts the praise, nor fears the accusations of another; yet they are worthy of double honour indeed, who, knowing their own conscience, ought of right to be judged of God only, yet desire all their actions to be tried and approved by their own very brethren themselves; which we do not wonder, brother Cyprian, that you do; who, according to your native modesty and care, are willing that we

(the presbyters and deacons of another church) should judge, or rather be partners of all your counsels with you<sup>n</sup>.”

This is pretty clear language, and the holy Martyr himself says little less, when he speaks out to the lapsed brethren of his own diocese, that “the Church was constituted upon bishops, and every act of it was to be governed by them<sup>o</sup>;” and his stated sense, repeated over and over again, throughout his whole works, is this; “that every bishop had the ordering and disposing of his own act in the administration of the church, and was accountable for it to God alone<sup>p</sup>.” The learned Dr. Cave<sup>q</sup> understood this in the same sense that the Roman presbyters and deacons did, and therefore speaks of this holy Martyr’s practice in the same language with them; “he was so modest,” says that judicious author, “that in all great transactions concerning the church, he always consulted with his colleagues

<sup>n</sup> Quanquam bene sibi conscius animus, et evangelicæ disciplinæ vigore subnixus, et verus sibi in decretis cœlestibus testis effectus, soleat solo Deo iudice esse contentus, nec alterius aut laudes petere aut accusationes pertimescere; tamen geminata sunt laude condigni, qui cum conscientiam sciant Deo soli debere se iudici, actus tamen suos desiderant etiam ab *ipsis suis fratribus* comprobari; quod te, frater Cypriane, facere non mirum est, qui pro tua verecundia et *ingenita industria* consiliorum tuorum nos non tam iudices voluisti, quam participes inveniri. Ep. 30. § 1. Edit. Oxon.

<sup>o</sup> Per temporum et successionum vices episcoporum ordinatio, et Ecclesiæ ratio decurrit, ut *ecclesia super episcopos constituitur, et omnis actus ecclesiæ per eosdem præpositos gubernetur.* Cypr. Ep. 33. § 1. Edit. Oxon.

<sup>p</sup> Actum suum disponit et dirigit unusquisque episcopus rationem propositi sui Domino redditurus. Ep. 55. p. 110.

<sup>q</sup> In ecclesiæ administratione voluntatis suæ arbitrium liberum. Ep. 72. p. 198.

and his flock, and determined not to adjudge anything without the counsel of the clergy and the people<sup>r</sup>." A singular modesty! if he were 'obliged' to act no otherwise. But,

Secondly, St. Cyprian's own expression, upon which this question more immediately depends, implies no manner of obligation in it; but on the contrary, denotes a free determination of his own will; "a primordio episcopatus mei statuerim," says he, "I have purposed or determined with myself, from the time I entered upon the bishopric<sup>s</sup>," that I would act in common concert with you all. This was a rule, indeed, for the holy man to act by; but all the authority in it taken upon himself alone. So the learned Grotius expressly declared it to be, even when he was speaking in favour of the presbyters and presbytery of the Church; for quoting this passage of St. Cyprian, "the word (statuerim)," says he, "signifies a voluntary act of his own<sup>t</sup>;" and I presume the most partial reader finds no more of any legal obligation in it, than that discerning critic did. But,

Thirdly, It is instead of many arguments to me, that no law, ecclesiastical or divine, obliged that humble bishop to his ordinary condescensions in the case; that our accurate Enquirer himself could not find so much as a single one in all antiquity for it. For, had he found one, he had never left his plausible scheme, so per-

<sup>r</sup> Cave's Life of St. Cyprian, p. 263.

<sup>s</sup> Ep. 14. § ult.

<sup>t</sup> A primordio episcopatus mei *statuerim* [hæc vox rem arbitrariam significat.] Grot. de Imp. Sum. potest. &c. c. xi. § 14.



fectly precarious as it is, without it. For what can be more so? than thus formally to represent a candidate for orders, tendering his petition to a parochial presbytery for them, the presbyters in solemn debate upon 'such petition,' and the whole success of the supplicant to depend on 'their declaring him capable or incapable of them,' and the 'people's authority in it,' little less than theirs too; insomuch as the bishop himself was not able, by any power or commission of his own, to ordain so much as a single clerk in his diocese, but as 'they' should please to approve or disapprove of him. And 'all this,' without one sacred text, one single canon, general or provincial, one clear precedent of matter of fact, or so much as a positive affirmation of a single Father of the Church, that it was Catholic custom and constitution to do so; but 'purely,' because a wise and humble bishop would have a chapter called, and take what counsel and information he possibly could from his presbyters, and from his people too, before he would proceed to ordinations. For St. Cyprian's 'commune consilium,' the 'consistorial convention' he was pleased to call upon such occasions, is the very fundamental argument here for the whole scheme: of which convention, the holy Martyr himself tells us plainly enough what assistance he ever expected from it, when he acted most in common council with them all; for speaking in full and plain terms about it to his presbyters, deacons, and people together, he expresses the whole of his expectations from them to be no more, than their evidence, information, or 'testimony,' about the

qualifications or merits of the persons he purposed to ordain. 'Humana testimonia'<sup>u</sup> are the very words he uses, to denote their part in all his clerical ordinations, as you will see in his 38th epistle, where this custom of his is drawn up by his own pen.

Now to draw such pregnant inferences as we have heard but now, and to raise such imaginary suppositions as are offered us here, from these consistory councils alone, is much the same thing, as if we should suppose, that 'some branch,' at least, of royal authority must needs belong to the privy counsellors of a wise prince, because he will seldom, or never, collate honours, or exert any important act of his sovereign power in the state, without entering first into council with 'them;' and that a cautious and wise judge, who gets all the evidence and information he possibly can, before he decides a cause, and probably forms his judgment in a great measure by the advantage of it, should therefore be said to allow a negative or casting voice to those witnesses, because they have some useful influence, in all appearance, upon his determination. St. Cyprian's case with his presbytery and people, both in his own account, and from the impartial judgment we have heard of others about it, has a plain and near resemblance to these; at least, I may say, the Enquiry before us offers nothing that can prove it to differ from them: for he proves no more, but that St. Cyprian had such a consistory council

<sup>u</sup> Sed expectanda non sunt testimonia humana. Cypr. Ep. 38. § 1. Edit. Oxon.

in his church, and made some use of it in his clerical ordinations; and I doubt not but other churches did so too. But as to the candidate's petitionary application for 'craving orders from them,' and his success depending upon 'their conciliary declaration' in the case, and the people's authority to 'debar or exclude him,' if they thought him unfit for them, and the 'bishop's incapacity to ordain alone,' he allows his fancy to infer and suppose all that, without one single proof or authority for either of them, unless his quotation (p. 96) from St. Cyprian's 68th Epistle, § 4, must pass for a proof of the 'people's' great interest and authority in ordinations, which, I have shewn at large before<sup>x</sup>, implies no such thing at all.

We have seen then what St. Cyprian's 'commune consilium,' or his ordinary consultations with his presbytery and people, means. And 'in that,' how much authority the learned Enquirer had to represent the primitive manner of ordaining presbyters in such a singular and unprecedented form, as he has done here: and if the reader please to reflect upon what I have offered from Holy Scripture and primitive antiquity before, to prove, that 'all ordaining power' was originally a 'personal trust,' fully and entirely invested in the single persons of the first governors of the Church, by divine and apostolical institution, and derived down so; I shall need to leave no other test with him to try this extraordinary scheme by. Yet, because the Enquirer himself has suggested one particular

<sup>x</sup> Chap. iii. p. 137, *supra*.

more, immediately relating to this present case, I shall briefly mention it, forasmuch as it is his own.

In the close of the former chapter he observes (p. 77), that "all churches were not furnished with presbyters, and especially new-planted ones, where either the number or abilities of the believers were small and inconsiderable," which I make no doubt of; and therefore cannot but ask a few obvious questions about them. Can we think such new-planted churches were never so blessed with an increase of converts, as to stand in need of assisting pastors to dispense the word and sacraments to them? Do we believe there was no authority in the single pastors or bishops, to whom those churches were entirely committed, to supply that important want in them? Could the discipline of such churches be executed by a joint council of bishop and presbytery (in the known Catholic sense of such an ecclesiastical body) where no ordained presbyters were? Or have we any precedent or rule, for the bishops of such sees to seek abroad in other churches for necessary ministers to assist them in case they stood in need? Unless all this can be supposed, besides what we have so liberally supposed before, we must allow that single bishops of those primitive churches had a power in their original commission to ordain assisting elders for the necessities of their increasing flock or diocese, and, to be sure, to execute the discipline of the church, without a regular presbytery to give any kind of force or sanction to it. And the case of Titus's commission in Crete is evidence

enough of all this, if we would impartially judge of it. For that there were no Church-ministers of any denomination at that time settled there, is highly agreeable to the sacred account of it; and then, it is clear, he must have ordained in that island, without any such presbytery to assist in it; for to that very purpose was he left there. Or if St. Paul had ordained any elders there before, that would look very favourably on the episcopal prerogative again, that such a single and peculiar church-governor, as Titus was, should be nominated and sent thither with that special article at the head of his commission, if 'any' presbyters or elders, already resident amongst them, could have done it as well as he.

Having seen then where the full power and right of 'ordination' always lay; if a candidate did petition for 'his orders,' one would think it should be directly 'there,' even to the venerable bishop alone. Or if, peradventure, for a 'testimonial' of his qualifications and moral conversation, the presbytery might not improperly be addressed to for it, or the more eminent of the people either; for recommendations from them had a considerable influence, to be sure, on every wise and careful bishop in the Church; though, should the candidate not proceed in such 'a form,' which we have little evidence to prove he did, yet the bishop's voluntary consultations with them in the manner that the excellent St. Cyprian used it, did sufficiently supply that; and more than so, neither the Enquirer's own quotations, nor any other records of antiquity I meet with, do amount to.

As to the particular ‘qualifications,’ there mentioned to be usually enquired into, we need have little difference about them. Such as the ingenious Author names, are primitive and genuine: and in the canons and ordination-offices of ‘our own church,’ such suitable provision is made for each of them, that if the spirit of peace and unity in the blessed primitive times were not more altered amongst us, than the ‘constitution’ of the church is, we should hear of few exceptions against it. For,

First, As to the age of a candidate, I find but little particularly determined about it within the three first centuries; only, in general, that he should not be a ‘novice;’ a word often used with little good intention in our times, and as little understood; for in the Scripture sense of it, and as the word itself literally imports, ‘a novice’ can scarcely ever be ordained here now; because it signifies an adult person ‘but very lately converted to the faith, and newly planted in the Church,’ as the best commentators<sup>y</sup> agree in the exposition of it. But as to maturity of years in general, it has little or no reference to it, though St. Paul’s use of the word to Timothy is by this learned Author here applied to that purpose. Whereas to be early baptized rather, and to have the advantages of a happy education after it, for the improvement of knowledge in sacred and humane learning together, are the proper considerations, in this respect, to form a reasonable judgment of matu-

<sup>y</sup> See St. Jerome, Chrysostome, Œcumenius, Theophylact; and, of later times, Erasmus, Menochius, A Lapide, Dr. Hammond, Grotius, in 1 Tim. iii. 6.

rity of age by; and in view of both these, in the age and nation wherein we live, our holy mother the Church has enjoined the age of candidates<sup>z</sup> to be always enquired into, and allowed none to be ordained sooner, than in all probability, with these advantages, they may have attained to it; though she commands a strict examination<sup>a</sup> for further assurance in it too, and suffers none to be advanced from the lowest to the highest order afterwards<sup>b</sup>, without a gradual promotion to them, and a space of time given to try how they behave themselves in the first. And,

Secondly, No less care does she take to confine all her ministers to that holy employment alone, to which she has consecrated each of them; enjoining them “to lay out every hour they can get, either in reading or hearing the Holy Scriptures; or some such laudable study or exercise as that; and to be ever doing what tends to piety and virtue, and to the advancement of the Church of God<sup>c</sup>;” interdicting “all mean trade or employment in the world, and much more every loose and scandalous course of life, under penalty of all the censures she can inflict upon them<sup>d</sup>.” And,

<sup>z</sup> Vide Can. 34. Edit. A. D. 1604.

<sup>a</sup> Ib. Can. 35.

<sup>b</sup> Ib. Can. 32, and last Rub. in off. for Ord. Deacons.

<sup>c</sup> Horis omnibus opportunis vel scripturis legendis aut audiendis incumbent, vel alii cuiquam studio aut exercitio laudabili vacabunt; ea *semper* facientes quæ ad probitatem et virtutem spectent, seduloque operam dantes ut Ecclesiam Dei promoveant, &c. Can. 75.

<sup>d</sup> Nec vero sordidæ alicui aut illiberali operæ assuescent, nec potationibus et crapulæ se dedent, tempusve otiose transigent in alea, &c. Ib.

Thirdly, That she imitates the primitive Church in getting what testimony and information she possibly can, even from the people themselves, before her bishops ordain any, I have shewn already<sup>e</sup> from the public manner of celebrating those sacred offices, and the holy bishop's solemn appeal to the congregation to assign what crime or impediment they can, and even conjuring them in the name of God to do so; and whosoever will, has timely notice, and a free liberty for it; and the testimonials expected from the neighbourhood where they lately lived, is a further occasion for the same. And,

Lastly, As to the trial of the candidate's understanding, and his advancement both in sacred and humane learning; she is far from neglecting that. She enjoins<sup>f</sup> the venerable bishop himself, if able to be present, to be strict and diligent in his examination; together with all the presbyters who are to join in imposition of hands with him; requires it to be solemnized in the cathedral itself, or the bishop's parochial church, and the reverend dean, arch-deacon, and two prebendaries at least, to be present and assisting in it, or, in case of legal absence, four of the gravest preaching ministers who may be had. Besides testimonials required either from colleges of presbyters and graduates, where they have had their education, or some grave, learned, and judicious persons, who have known their conversation for some years last past; which, should we calculate the num-

<sup>e</sup> Chap. iii. p. 150, supra.

<sup>f</sup> Vide Can. 31, 35.



bers of the fullest presbyteries in most of the primitive churches, would perhaps amount to as considerable 'a multitude' of proper 'counselors' in this case, as could ordinarily be had in those carefullest and purest ages of the Church; and consequently as much 'safety' in it now (to use the words and judgment of the wisest of men<sup>s</sup>) as they could hope for then.

What can any sons of peace then complain of here? Ordinations, we have seen, are an unquestionable part of the bishop's commission alone; the manner of them is no otherwise set forth in Holy Scripture, than as prayer, and fasting, and imposition of hands were the Apostolical way of conferring them. All other circumstances in them were referred to the wisdom and judgment of the ordainers themselves; and in our own constitution, we find such provision made for each of them, that had we but first learnt the most essential rules of Church-membership, commanded in the Gospel, *to love the brotherhood, obey them who are set over us in the Lord, and to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*, we should find little difficulty to own, that they were proper and sufficient means, if duly executed, to obtain the end for which they were designed.

I should here close this subject and chapter together, but that our learned Author has one insinuation, in the course of this argument, against the modern custom of 'receiving tithes,' which he may think, perhaps, deserves to be considered.

In quoting a passage from St. Cyprian's 66th

<sup>s</sup> Prov. xi. 14.

Epistle, he met with these words, relating to the maintenance of the ministry: "In honore sportulantium fratrum, tanquam decimas, ex fructibus accipientes" (p. 86, 87), which he translates thus: "As tithes receiving subscriptions from the brethren." And with nearer analogy to the words, and quite as much kindness to the Church, he might as well have rendered them, "the clergy's living on the basket." For some allusion there is indeed to 'that,' but to 'subscriptions of the brethren,' not the least, that I can see. The true account of this phrase will occasion some digression; but it shall be as short as I can make it.

That the primitive Christians paid their first-fruits to God, Origen assures us, when he says, "to whom we pay first-fruits, to Him we also offer up our prayers<sup>h</sup>." Irenæus further, when speaking of 'the oblations of the Christian Church,' "we ought," says he, "to offer to God the first-fruits of his creature, even as Moses says, *thou shalt not appear empty before the Lord thy God*<sup>i</sup>;" and that these first-fruits, in the language of the Fathers, included even 'tithes' in them, I might offer Clemens Alexandrinus's authority for it, who in one short sentence makes them both to be terms equivalent; "the tithes of fruits and cattle," says he, "taught piety towards God; for out of these

<sup>h</sup> Ὡδε τὰς ἀπαρχὰς ἀποδίδωμεν, τούτῳ καὶ τὰς εὐχὰς ἀναπέμπομεν. Orig. c. Cels. Edit. Hæschel. August. Vind. 1605.

<sup>i</sup> Ecclesiæ oblatio, quam Dominus docuit offerri, &c. — Offerre igitur oportet Deo primitias ejus creaturæ, sicut et Moyses ait, Non apparebis vácuus ante conspectum Domini Dei tui. Iren. l. iv. c. 18. p. 250.

first-fruits," which he called 'tithes,' you see just before, "I conceive the priests also were maintained<sup>k</sup>." But Irenæus needs no illustration of his sense in this case, who expressly says, that "the law of paying tithes was no more abrogated by our Saviour's doctrine, than those two precepts in the decalogue, against adultery and murder, were; but," like them, "more enlarged and completed by it;" inso-much that, "as the Jews consecrated the tithes of their possessions to God, so Christians," says he, "gave all they had to such uses as the Lord had for it<sup>l</sup>;" and what uses the Lord had for it, St. Paul tells us, where he calls it 'an ordinance of the Lord<sup>m</sup>,' *that such as preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel, even so, as such as ministered in holy things (before) lived of the things of the temple, and such as waited at the altar were partakers with the altar.* [1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.]

To apply this therefore to the case before us: out of these first-fruits, these holy oblations, these tithes, and overplus of tithes thus depo-

<sup>k</sup> Αἱ δεκάται τῶν καρπῶν καὶ θρεμμάτων εὐσεβεῖντε εἰς θεῖον — ἐδίδασκον· ἐκ τούτων γὰρ οἶμαι τῶν ἀπαρχῶν καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς διετρέφοντο. Strom. l. ii. p. 397. Edit. Lutet. 1629.

<sup>l</sup> Et quia Dominus naturalia legis, per quæ homo justificatur — non dissolvit, sed extendit, sed et implevit, ex sermonibus ejus ostenditur — pro eo quod est, *non mæchaberis*, nec concupiscere præcepit; et pro eo quod est, *non occides*, neque irasci quidem; et pro eo quod est, *decimare* omnia, quæ sunt pauperibus dividere; hæc omnia non dissolventis erant legem, sed adimplentis, et extendentis, et dilatantis in nobis. Iren. 4. § 13. p. 242. (ed. Venet. 1734.)

<sup>m</sup> Et propter hoc illi (sc. Judæi) decimas suorum habebant consecratas, qui autem perceperunt libertatem; omnia quæ sunt ipsorum ad *Dominicos* decernunt *usus*. Idem. ib. c. 34.

sited by the primitive Christians in the holy Apostles' hands at first, and in the hands of the venerable bishops of the Church for some considerable time after; those faithful stewards of this consecrated treasure allotted a suitable proportion to each presbyter, deacon, and other inferior officers in the Church; and withal, to such poor brethren as stood in need of maintenance. In which distribution, every clerical officer's part was called his 'sportula<sup>n</sup>,' or basket of the consecrated offerings, in allusion to that custom prescribed by the Jewish law, that every Israelite who dwelt remote from the temple at Jerusalem, should bring his first-fruits in a 'basket' thither [Deut. xxvi. 2]; and accordingly, the several ministers who received such portion of those 'hallowed oblations,' were called the 'sportulantes fratres,' by St. Cyprian here and elsewhere; that is, 'brethren who had their maintenance from those dedicated things.'

How fairly, then, this manner of maintaining the priesthood in the primitive Church is, without any further note upon it, but as in an ordinary notion of the word, represented to be by the 'mere subscription' of the brethren, I leave with the unprejudiced reader to judge.

The holy Fathers themselves, we see, own a 'natural obligation<sup>o</sup>' to pay such tithes and offerings to the great author of all we possess, as the heathens did indeed; which we may see

<sup>n</sup> Caterum presbyterii honorem designasse nos illis jam sciatis, ut et *sportulis* iisdem cum presbyteris honorentur, et divisiones mensurnas æquatis quantitatibus partiantur. Cypr. Ep. 39, ad finem. Edit. Oxon.

<sup>o</sup> Dominus naturalia legis per quæ homo justificatur, non dissolvit. Iren. (upon this subject) ut supra.

clearly set forth, in a short comment of the late venerable bishop Fell, upon the close of St. Cyprian's treatise of 'the unity of the Church.' They argued the obligation of it also, from the morality of the Mosaic law 'in that particular:' they profess that our Lord's doctrine did not dissolve, but complete that obligation, by enlarging the former bounds and measures of it.

What is wanting here then, to make the sense and practice of the primitive and modern Christians agree in this matter, unless we amuse ourselves about forms and circumstances of a duty, and overlook the thing? Little difference, as I can see, between us; but that there was no secular law then to enforce the duty upon primitive Christians, as indeed it was scarcely possible there should be, all power of that kind being lodged then in persecuting heathen hands, from whence it were absurd to look for it. Nor probably did any canon of the Church so explicitly enjoin, or require it then, as they have done since; for which Mr. Selden himself has given a sufficient reason. For "it had been little to the purpose indeed," says he, "to have had tithes of annual increase paid (and I may say 'required' or 'demanded' by the Church too), while that most bountiful devotion of good Christians continued in frequent offerings, both of lands and goods, to such large value<sup>p</sup>;" and this, as he observes, continued to the end of the fourth century [Hist. of Tithes, c. 4. n. 2. p. 40]. In the mean time, those primitive Christians, we have seen, performed the

<sup>p</sup> See Selden's Review, annexed to his Hist. of Tithes, c. 4. p. 462

thing itself, in as 'direct,' and 'more eminent' a manner, as they themselves relate it, than the true Church of God ever did, either before or since; and that by virtue of a natural, conscientious, and evangelical obligation lying upon them to do so, wherein the very essence and reason of the duty (in the sense of modern Christians also) wholly does consist. But I have stayed longer than was intended in this digression: if St. Cyprian's expression be something cleared by it, it is all I designed. I shall therefore leave this subject, and close this chapter together, and proceed to what follows in the learned Enquiry before me.

## CHAPTER VI.

**H**ITHERTO we have heard the proper acts of the clergy only; those peculiar to the 'laity' are considered next. He briefly mentions, 1st, the means of becoming members of the Church; and then tells us what powers and actions the 'laity' exerted distinctly by themselves. No controversy need be raised about the former: that baptism makes members of the Church, I think is agreed by all, who own any; and that it gives a right to all the peculiar privileges of the Church, that is, to all the spiritual means of grace and salvation, in such order as by divine and apostolical institution they are administered in it, till such time as they forfeit that right by just censures for their faults; I take to be equally true. But our learned Author, in his latter clause upon this head, entitles his lay members to powers and privileges of another nature. 'They had power, he says, to 'elect their bishops;' and in case they proved scandalous, heretical, or apostates from the faith, to 'depose' them too. And these powers he makes so full and proper to 'them,' that he reckons them among the

‘discretive and particular acts of the laity’ (p. 103); insomuch that if they called in any particular bishops, or a synod of bishops, to assist or concur with them in it, he (p. 105) represents that as an act of modesty or discretion only in them, and the power entirely their own.

Now the laity’s ‘electing power’ I have at large considered before, and refer the reader to what I have offered there. Their ‘deposing power,’ so far as it is maintained here, is wholly grounded upon a single passage in the answer of St. Cyprian and his African synod to the clergy and people of Legio, Asturica, and Emerita in Spain. The case of which churches, at that time, was this; their late bishops, Basilides and Martialis, being notoriously convicted of idolatry, blasphemy, and other crimes of the highest nature, Felix and Sabinus were, by a synod of the province, constituted bishops in their stead. The ejected bishops secretly applied themselves to Stephen, bishop of Rome; who, knowing little of the merits of the cause, or over-forward, as it is most likely, to shew some prerogative of his see, admits them into his communion, and restores them to their bishoprics, as far as his power would go. Upon this, they return to their respective churches, and claim a right to their sees again: the people meet with two great difficulties in this case;

First, Whether their old bishops, being received now into communion with an orthodox bishop of the Catholic Church, had not recovered, by that means, a title to their own churches; according to the Catholic rule, that



communion with one church, gave a right of communion with all. And,

Secondly, Whether it were warrantable for them, be their claim never so good, to communicate in all holy offices with such idolatrous and apostate bishops, as Basilides and Martialis were certainly known to be.

For satisfaction in these points, as appears by the epistle<sup>a</sup>, wherein the present quotation lies; they write to a provincial synod in Africa, wherein St. Cyprian himself presided at that time. The synod, in answer to the first of their scruples, flatly tells them, that all which pope Stephen<sup>b</sup> had done through the deceitful insinuations of their deprived bishops, could not disannul the regular and just ordination of their new ones, but that Basilides and Martialis were justly deposed, and the others duly ordained in their room. And if we would know by what power this charge was made, St. Cyprian will satisfy us; who in express terms tells us, that “Sabinus’s ordination into Basilides’ see was by the regular authority of a synod of bishops, who met upon the place for it<sup>c</sup>;” and surely Felix’s case must have been the same,

<sup>a</sup> Cypr. Ep. 67. Edit. Oxon.

<sup>b</sup> Nec rescindere ordinationem jure perfectam potest, quod Basilides — Stephanum collegam nostrum longe positum, et gestæ rei ac tacitæ veritatis ignarum fefellit, ut exambiret reponi se injuste in episcopatum, de quo fuerit juste depositus — sed nec Martiali potest profuisse fallacia — Cypr. Ep. 67.

<sup>c</sup> Quod et apud vos factum videmus in Sabini collegæ nostri ordinatione, ut de universæ fraternitatis suffragio, (and what that *suffragium* means I have shewn before,) et de *episcoporum*, qui in præsentia convenerant — *judicio*, episcopatus ei deferretur, et manus ei in locum Basilidis imponeretur. Cypr. Ib. § 3.

since that was the known Catholic practice in those times and places, and both those new bishops were sent by their respective churches<sup>d</sup>, to represent their common case to the African synod, and both recognised alike as fellow-bishops by them all. The deposition therefore was over, and new ordinations 'synodically' passed, before the people wrote to the African council for any advice in their case, and all declared by the council to be just and valid, and such as the bishop of Rome could not disannul. What a groundless imagination must it then be, to think that the laity of those churches should enquire anything of that synod about their 'own' deposing or electing power, when all of that kind was over in a 'synodical' way before, and that they themselves had approved of what was done? No! It is plain enough, by the whole tenor of the council's answer to them, that the two queries above mentioned were the difficulties they wanted to be resolved in; and that the latter of them, relating to their joining in religious offices with those idolatrous bishops, (supposing their claim to be good,) was directly referred to, and clearly answered by that very quotation, which is here so unduly applied to a 'deposing power.' The circumstances they were in, explain the thing; they had two sorts of competitors, claiming a right of ministry amongst them, the deposed idolaters Basilides and Martialis on the one hand, and the orthodox synodically ordained Felix and Sabinus on the

<sup>d</sup> Legimus literas vestras, quas ad nos per Felicem et Sabinum *co-episcopos nostros* pro fidei vestræ integritate — fecistis. Ib. § 1.

other; neither of them of their own setting up, or putting down, but both by the synodical authority of the province. Now, which of these competitors they thought themselves obliged to communicate with, the African council told them, 'they had a liberty in that to choose and refuse;' which is just such a power of making and deposing bishops, as the Israelites had in that solemn competition for the priesthood in the wilderness, when they separated themselves from Corah and his usurping Levites, and kept close to Aaron their lawful high-priest; and the African synod, it is plain, thought no otherwise of it; for they make that very comparison in this place, and apply the quotation here insisted upon immediately to it<sup>e</sup>.

And however our learned Author came to strain this clear passage to so very different a sense, he himself (p. 105) was conscious, we find, that at the deposing of any bishop, a convention of bishops was always present wherever it could be had; nay he confesses, the deposing power is directly ascribed (ib.) to synods by the Fathers of the Church; and gives us remarkable instances of it in the cases of Paulus Samosatenus, and Privatus bishop of Lambese, and might have added several more, even where he had these<sup>f</sup>. But all this synodical solemnity

<sup>e</sup> *Separamini, inquit, a tabernaculis hominum istorum, &c. propter quod plebs — a peccatore præposito separare se debet, nec se ad sacrilegii sacerdotis sacrificia miscere, quando ipsa maxime habeat potestatem vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes, vel indignos recusandi.* Cypr. ib.

<sup>f</sup> Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 30. et Cypr, Ep. 55. § 11. Edit. Oxon.

(in our Enquirer's account of it) was only through the gracious condescension of the humble people, who would not, though they might and could, do all (p. 105), by virtue of their own power. This is a glorious account of the honourable use and great power of the sacred synods of the primitive Church; they were to be ready at the summons of any people, who thought it needful to change their bishop; and why? that the people's actions in it, says he, might be more 'authentic' and 'unquestionable;' more 'authentic,' it seems, though they themselves, he says, had full authority to do it; and less 'questionable,' though the African council had just before asserted, and that 'flatly' too (as his words are, that is, 'beyond all question, I think'), the people's power to depose. But further, they allowed the synod to 'examine,' says he, 'their complaints and accusations too;' and so they were commissioners, besides, to examine witnesses for them, and when that was done, 'they might concur,' he says, 'in the deposition with them;' and if they only 'might' do so, then they 'might not too;' as this whole hypothesis of his 'popular power' implies it to be needless indeed. Thus the sacred synods were to be ornaments and under-officers in this great solemnity, whilst the 'venerable court of laity' proceeded to depose their bishop by their own inherent right and power, and chose another in his room. And which is stranger still, the holy Fathers and historians of these times took a liberty to tell the world, that bishops in their times were deposed 'by synods

of bishops' in the Church (for so the learned Enquirer himself immediately shews us that they did), and in the very next breath, unwarily owns also (p. 106), that such a provincial synod was 'necessary' in the election or deposition of a bishop, against the plain sense of all that he had said before. Such pregnant instances of the 'discretive and particular acts of the laity,' as our learned Author undertook to prove them, were these two important privileges of 'deposing' and 'electing' bishops for themselves.

The rest of this chapter sets forth the admirable discipline of the 'primitive Church,' in leading her 'adult converts' through all the stages of 'catechetical instruction,' till she fitted them for the heavenly blessing of her 'holy baptism.' A precedent! of piety and wisdom, fit for all ages to set before their eyes, in training up the younger and unexperienced members of the Church, though not directly applicable (or very rarely, at least, in the primitive and original use of it) to our own times; since most Christians are baptized in their infancy now.

And yet, if we will distinguish justly here (and I am sorry there should be need of 'that') between 'constitution itself,' and 'personal' neglects of it; between the pious 'laws, orders,' and 'canons,' of our most holy mother the Church of England, and the too-imperfect executing of them indeed, by her sons at this day; we must own that that faithful parent of ours has not been wanting in making suitable provision for a due instruction of all the tenderest, and

more undisciplined members of her communion.

Her care for her very infant members, commences with the first hour of their entering into covenant with God. She requires 'duly qualified' sureties, as so many spiritual guardians for them, (besides what God and nature gives them in their Christian parents,) to look to their religious education, as soon as the first seeds of reason spring up in them. She conjures these, as a charge then taken upon them, in the presence of God and his Church, to see that they be forthwith taught, as soon as they be able to learn, the nature and importance of their baptismal vow, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to the saving of his soul; dismissing them with her own fervent addresses first to the throne of grace, that that infant Christian might lead the rest of its life according to that beginning: and not content with this, she enjoins<sup>s</sup> every minister of hers in their respective parishes, to attend continually on this very work; commanding them under penalty of the highest censures she can inflict, 'to catechise' children, youth, and every ignorant person within their cure, upon every Lord's day, and other holy festivals throughout the year, till they become thoroughly instructed in all the articles of the Christian faith, in the duty of prayer, and all practical rules of a holy life; and that none may want it, she lays as strict an obligation upon all those, to whom God, nature, and civil laws, have given author-

<sup>s</sup> Vide Can. 59. Edit. A. D. 1604.

ity over the youth and servants of their families, and even upon the young and ignorant ones themselves too, as the power of the keys allows her, to use their respective authority, and do their several parts in carrying on this blessed work, for the good of them all; that, if possible, no soul might miscarry, or the Church be reproached, through the ignorance or immorality of any of her members.

Thus far she goes in the first stage of the excellent primitive discipline; and before she allows them to be perfect communicants with her, she commands examination to be made of the progress of these younger members of hers in this catechetical discipline, and requires all who can give a good account of it, to come and receive greater helps of the Holy Spirit, for their establishment and perseverance in faith and a good life, by the sacred rite of her solemn 'confirmation;' and so gradually admits them into the highest class of her blessed children, by the holy eucharist at last.

Here is some visible resemblance, an impartial eye must see, of the incomparable discipline of the purest ages of the Church; copies of this nature, we must expect, will fall short of their originals; and more and more so, by distance of time: but whatever our uncharitable adversaries may say, it is a comfort to see so fair a draught of it preserved within our own national constitution, to these very last and worst of times. And if we looked calmly 'into things,' instead of aggravating our resentments against 'personal abuses' of them, we should find our

holy mother the Church has suffered more reproaches from her enemies, and from too many of her unnatural children too, both in this, and many other parts of her wise and pious constitution, than she has ever deserved of them.

But to return to the Enquiry again, which after the extraordinary account it has given us of the 'peculiar acts' and 'special powers' of the laity of the primitive Church, proceeds to treat next of the 'conjunct acts' of clergy and laity together; wherein the general proposition is this; "that all things belonging to the government and policy of the Church, were performed by their joint consent and administrations" (p. 106). The people, on one hand, could do nothing, says he, without their bishop, as St. Ignatius, he owns, affirms in general terms; and seems satisfied, that in every church it was so. But that the bishops, on the other hand, could do nothing without their people's consent, he offers nothing more to prove it here, than what I have shewn already is no proof of Catholic practice at all, and much less of ecclesiastical law for it; and that is, St. Cyprian's 'private purpose' again, to act in concert with his clergy and people in the chief affairs of the government of his church; which as himself explained it, and other cotemporary witnesses, I have shewn, confirmed it to us, was a voluntary condescension of his own; and that he used their 'advice' and 'information' only in the causes which came before him, and owned no other power or authority in them, or



was any ways obliged or bound to do so much as he did in it; and more than this need not be said here, till we meet with new arguments upon this head, which we must look for in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE constitution of the primitive Church has been the general subject of all that has gone before. The 'discipline' of it is to be considered now. It is introduced with proper observations of the necessity, nature, and admirable advantages of it; about which there need be no dispute. For that the Christian Church is a true 'society,' and has a government annexed to it as such; that it is a spiritual one, and therefore her own proper laws, orders, and penalties, purely spiritual too; that admonitions, excommunications, suspensions, and the like, as our learned Author here observes, are peculiar acts of this spiritual power, is readily agreed; and all the brightest characters and glorious encomiums, which from the elegant pen of St. Cyprian are here transcribed, concerning the usefulness, excellency, and necessity of this holy discipline, are no more than what are due to it; for, to use the Apostle's words, *whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, or of good report, if any virtue or any praise*; they all fade or flourish in proportion to the remissness of it; and may the re-

spective trustees or stewards in the house of God, to whom any part of this important charge is committed, be ever mindful of it! Who they specially are, and in the primitive Church were ever owned to be, is the question now before us.

Our learned Enquirer, you see, has just now told us, that the clergy and laity together have a right to this ecclesiastical power, as in joint commission with one another; "they were all judges," as he here further affirms (p. 112), "in the ecclesiastical court;" insomuch that "they perform all things belonging to the government and policy of the Church, by their joint consent and administrations."

His fundamental proof of this, is taken from such interpretations, as he tells us some of the primitive Fathers made of those two eminent texts, where the 'power of the keys' is expressly promised; namely, Matt. xvi. 18, 19, where they are promised to St. Peter only, 'by name;' and Matt. xviii. 15, 16, 17, 18, where, in general terms, they seem to be given 'to the Church;' and it is somewhat strange, that he takes no notice of a third text, where 'this power' was more solemnly promised, and by a sacred symbol from the mouth of the blessed Jesus, assured to those persons, for whom it will appear, I think, it was peculiarly designed: I mean, that text in St. John xx. 21, 22, 23, where our Lord breathed on those disciples, whom He then *sent, as the Father had sent Him*, and that is surely the 'Apostles alone' (that very 'mission' confirming the name and title to them), saying, *receive the Holy Ghost; whose-*

*soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them, &c.* But I shall not interrupt our learned Enquirer's method, on account of this omission here, but fairly state his arguments in the way he offers them to us.

This power of 'the keys,' as promised to St. Peter, in St. Matt. xvi. 18, 19, he confesses (upon Origen's authority<sup>a</sup>, truly quoted for it) "the bishops of the primitive Church applied to themselves;" and owns also, that very ancient Father "allowed it to be orthodox in those bishops to do so, so long as they held Peter's confession, and were such as the Church of Christ might be built upon;" and that is, surely, so long as they were true and orthodox bishops of the Catholic Church. But, what is more surprising to me, he tells us (p. 114) that St. Cyprian himself was of the same opinion also; and quotes that very passage for the proof of it, which I have elsewhere cited from that holy Martyr upon much the same occasion; "the Church," says St. Cyprian, "is founded upon the bishops, by whom every ecclesiastical action is governed<sup>b</sup>." St. Cyprian then thought just the same, it seems, as Origen did in this matter; that the orthodox bishops might justly claim the power of the keys to themselves alone: though others of the ancients, as the Enquiry adds here, mention this power as given to the 'whole Church,' according to that in St.

<sup>a</sup> See Enq. p. 113, et Orig. Comment. in Matth. tom. 12. p. 279. vol. 1. Edit. Huetii, Rothomagi, 1668.

<sup>b</sup> Ecclesia super episcopos constituatur, et omnis actus Ecclesiæ per eosdem præpositos gubernetur. Cyp. Ep. 27. Edit. Pamel. or Ep. 33. Edit. Oxon. § 1.

Matt. xviii. 15, &c.—And how clearly that appears, we shall quickly see.

But, in the mean time, here is a truth acknowledged now; which, if earlier owned, might have prevented a considerable part of this 'elaborate Enquiry;' for what numerous quotations have we met with? and still shall meet with more, from the venerable St. Cyprian's works, to prove, that not only presbyters had a 'ruling power' inherent in their orders, in respect of excommunications, absolutions, and such-like manifest acts of the sacred power of the keys; but that the laity also, as well as they, had a share of 'legislative, decretive,' and 'judicatorial' power in the consistory of the Church. And yet this very St. Cyprian himself is now declared to have been wholly of that opinion, that the bishops alone, by virtue of the original grant of the keys to St. Peter, did in the primitive Church justly appropriate all that power to themselves. What can more directly confirm all that I have proved at large before in these several particulars? namely, that whatever part either presbyters, deacons, or people had, in any such authoritative acts of discipline or government in his church, it was upon one or other of these two accounts; either that St. Cyprian commissioned some amongst them, whose character and station made them the proper officers, in many cases, to execute some parts of discipline, which he authentically decreed to be done by virtue of the power of the keys invested in himself; or else, that he purely condescended, according to his humble purpose at the first, to take counsel, information, and ad-

vice only, from his clergy and people, in all important acts of his administration: and if there had been more in it, he must have practised otherwise than his own opinion of these matters is here truly owned to have been.

Thus far, then, the 'joint administration' of clergy and people, together with their bishop, in the government of the Church, is set aside by Origen and St. Cyprian's interpretations of the original promise to St. Peter, as to any power the two former were entitled to by it; 'from which promise and commission,' as our learned Enquirer (p. 113) owns, 'all power that any church court exerted,' was derived.

What is offered, then, to balance such evidence and authority as this? Why! others of the ancients, says our learned Author, mention this power as given to the 'whole Church,' according to that in St. Matt. xviii. 17, 18, *Tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen and publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, &c.* "By the Church here," says he, "is to be understood the whole body of a particular church, or parish, unto which some of the Fathers attribute the power of the keys." And yet it is remarkable, that neither of the two Fathers he produces to prove it, argue upon this text at all, but from the two others I have mentioned before; the one from the grant to St. Peter, in Matt. xvi. 19, the other from St. John, xx. 21, &c. But let us hear their evidence: Tertulian's, so far as the Enquirer is pleased to give it us, is this: "If thou fearest heaven to be

shut, remember the Lord gave its keys to Peter, and by him to the Church<sup>c</sup>." The rest of the sentence is; "which keys, every one who is brought to the question here, and confesses [Christ,] will carry along with him." If our Author had thought fit to give us this period 'entire,' and the occasion of it too, we should have needed little more to understand what Tertullian meant. For in what sense do we imagine this penetrating Father should say, that the keys given to Peter were thereby given to the Church; so that every Martyr, or confessor in it, should carry them to heaven with them? Was it in such a sense, do we think, as it is here required to be taken in? namely, that they should exercise an ecclesiastical discipline with them? By that construction we might as well conclude, that they were to continue such a discipline in the other world still. No! the plain occasion of the words will expound them clearly for us; he was arguing against heretics, who held it needless for persecuted Christians to confess Christ on earth<sup>d</sup>: it was enough, they said, to confess him hereafter in heaven. Tertullian replies<sup>e</sup>, there is no coming thither, unless first approved here; no occasion for such trial there, where no persecution can be; no fanciful porters, as the chimerical pagans dream, to stop a Christian's coming in; Christ had

<sup>c</sup> Si adhuc clausum putas cœlum, memento claves ejus hic Dominum Petro, et per eum Ecclesiæ reliquisse, quas hic unusquisque interrogatus atque confessus feret secum. Tertul. Scorpiac. p. 496 a. Ed. Rigalt. Venet. 1744.

<sup>d</sup> Adseverat diabolus illic confitendum, ut suadeat hic negandum. Tert. ib.

<sup>e</sup> Ib. p. 494.

opened heaven for every true Christian by his own entrance thither. Or if “you think that heaven is shut still,” says he, “remember the Lord left the keys to Peter, and by him to the Church, which every one who is brought to the trial here, and confesses Christ, will carry along with him.” Here is a manifest advantage declared indeed to every member of the Church by the grant of the keys to St. Peter, and of such a nature, that, if they made a right use of it, would help them all to heaven, in reference, no doubt, to our Saviour’s words at the first delivery of them, that whatsoever should be bound or loosed on earth by these keys, should be bound or loosed in heaven; which is a clear comment on Tertullian’s words here, and implies, that the keys were so given to all the Church in general, that if they made that advantage of them which was intended for them, by duly fitting themselves for the holy absolution appointed to be administered by them, they would find that comfortable sentence ratified above; and, peradventure, the virtue of that grant should extend further to martyrs and confessors, through their very confession alone, where no more was to be had, as the common opinion of the ancients was. This comes up, I think, to the sense of Tertullian’s whole period, but makes out no particular persons; and much less the whole Church, as entitled to the present power of those keys, but only that such an universal blessing accrued to the Church by them, and to every member of it, who would fit themselves for that benefit of them.



Firmilian, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, is joined with Tertullian, as another of the ancients, who understood 'this promise of the keys' to be made to the 'whole Church.' This venerable Father was arguing, pretty warmly indeed, against Stephen, bishop of Rome, for allowing, that remission of sins could be given 'within the synagogues of heretics,' as his own words are, that is, amongst such as were out of the Catholic Church, urging those two eminent texts to prove the contrary: First, that 'it was Peter alone<sup>f</sup>,' to whom Christ said, *whatsoever thou shalt bind in earth, shall be bound in heaven* (Matt. xvi. 19); and afterwards, it was the 'Apostles alone,' upon whom he breathed and gave the same power (John xx. 22, 23); and therefore concludes, in the quotation here insisted upon, 'that the power of forgiving sins was given to the Apostles, and to the churches which they planted, and to the bishops who succeeded them, by being ordained into their places<sup>g</sup>.' Now, one would be apt to ask this plain question here; Why did Firmilian so distinctly say this power of the keys was given 'to the bishops,' when he had said, but just before, it was given 'to the churches?' Were these bishops no part of the churches? Were they not included in them? Or had his argument been any ways more imperfect without that special

<sup>f</sup> Qualis error sit, et quanta sit cæcitas ejus, qui remissionem peccatorum dicit apud synagogas hæreticorum dari posse. Apud Cypr. Ep. 75. p. 225. Ed. Oxon. Fell.

<sup>g</sup> Potestas ergo peccatorum remittendorum Apostolis data est, et ecclesiis, quas illi a Christo missi constituerunt, et episcopis qui *eis ordinatione vicaria successerunt*. Ibid.

addition, who was only proving that remission of sins was peculiarly and solely within the churches, and had no need to prove more? The least I can conceive of it is this, that the keys, in his opinion, were given 'to the churches' in one sense, and 'to the bishops' in another; else it was rather tautology, than propriety of speaking, to have distinguished the grant so. And if we nearly consider the holy Father's period entire as it is, and observe the application he was to make of it there, we shall see a very different nature of grant affirmed by him; and discover plainly too, where that difference lies. "The power of remitting sins," says he, "was given to the Apostles," and, as the sacred text speaks, (from whence he just then proved it to be so,) it was 'the Apostles alone<sup>h</sup>,' and that was, doubtless, without any joint commission to Apostles and brethren together; and then in the same breath, he tells us, that it was "given to the bishops as their successors, by a vicarious ordination". What was this less, than in plain terms to say, that the bishops were ordained to enter upon the Apostles' title and possession of that power he was then speaking of, and to hold it in such a manner as they themselves had held it? so far, I think, Firmilian's own period explains itself. But what did the holy bishop mean, you will say, when in the intermediate comma he tells us, that the "power was given to the churches which the Apostles constituted?" The subject he was upon as clearly explains this clause, as his own

<sup>h</sup> In *solos* Apostolos insufflavit Christus, dicens. Ibid.

words did the other. He was to prove against pope Stephen, that baptism without the pale of the church was of no force, because remission of sins was only to be had within it. Now, having only proved, by the other two clauses of this period, that the Apostles first, and bishops after them, were in sole and full possession of that power within the churches: this did not undeniably prove yet, but that some one or more of those bishops, being either by just censure or voluntary separation, removed out of their churches, might exercise all their ministry still, with as good effect as before; and so remission of sins might by their means be had as well 'without' as 'within.' Now to obviate such exceptions as these, and to make his argument every way perfect, he adds this clause, "that the power was given to the churches," that is, so peculiarly to 'them,' and 'them' only, that none could either validly use or exercise that power, if once they were gone out of them, or any receive any fruit or benefit of it, but from the hands of such as were in them; and this comes up in every point to the argument he was upon, against the validity of heretical baptism. And that this construction of the whole period agrees with the sense, and language too, of this very Firmilian himself, upon a like occasion, will evidently appear; by repeating only a quotation from him out of this very epistle, which we met with some time since in the Enquiry (p. 61) now before us. "All power and grace," says Firmilian, "is constituted in the Church," where elders preside, "who possess the power of baptizing and laying on of hands,

and ordaining<sup>i</sup>." Here 'all power' is at large said to be 'in the Church' (an expression every way equivalent to what we dispute of now in this very quotation), and then immediately it is added, that "elders preside there, who possess the power of baptizing, laying on of hands, and ordaining;" and doubtless, had Firmilian's argument required it there, he had gone on and proved that possession of power to have been in the same elders in respect of any other act of government or discipline besides; for the reason had been the same, and the limitation of 'all power' in that manner imports no less. Now that those 'presiding elders' were true and proper bishops, I have proved at large before, though so much is not required here, since it unquestionably proves these two things:

First, That though all power was absolutely said to be in the Church, in general terms, yet the 'possession' of it, and that is, I think, the 'very power itself,' was in particular hands only. And,

Secondly, That they were 'presiding elders' only, and that is, in our Enquirer's own application of it above, they were 'clerical presbyters' at least, and consequently the lay brethren, in Firmilian's opinion, had no share of it; and therefore upon the whole matter, this latter quotation, I conceive, does no ways prove the thing it was brought for.

To sum up this present argument then, Ori-

<sup>i</sup> *Omnis potestas et gratia in Ecclesia constituta sit, ubi præsident majores nati, qui et baptizandi et manum imponendi et ordinandi possident potestatem.* Ep. 75. ut supra, p. 220.

gen and St. Cyprian did unquestionably own, that true bishops in the primitive Church appropriated the 'power of the keys' to themselves, and that warrantably and orthodoxly too. Tertullian and Firmilian, the two only Fathers here quoted to entitle 'all the brethren' to a joint interest in them, appear to have meant no such thing, in those passages of their works which this learned Author had so carefully sifted out for it; and therefore I may leave the reader to judge, from what groundless and unfair premises he has drawn this fundamental inference (upon which all that follows in this chapter depends), namely, that "the power of the keys was so lodged both in bishops and people, that each had some share in it" (p. 115); and, as he distributes it, 'the legislative, decretive,' or 'judicatorial power,' was held in common 'between clergy' and 'laity;' and 'the formal executive power only,' consisting merely in 'pronouncing sentence,' or the empty 'ceremony of imposing hands,' was allowed 'peculiar to the clergy.' How he has proved antiquity to agree with him in all this, you have seen already; for this 'general thesis' of his has no other of the ancients to vouch for it, than what you have heard just now. Some particulars follow, for better security to the lay brethren, of 'their share' in this common stock of ecclesiastical power, which it will be expected I should consider in order as they lie.

First, then, that "the laity were judges and sharers with the clergy in the judicial power of the spiritual court," he tells us (p. 116), "does most evidently appear" from what he reads in

Clemens Romanus's first epistle to the Corinthians. I shall briefly state the subject that holy Father was upon, and then recite the words of this quotation. The church of Corinth was fallen into a miserable faction: "a few giddy and audacious men had stirred up the meaner sort against their betters<sup>k</sup>; a crew of vile and ignorant wretches," as the holy Father styles them, "had got a head against the men of wisdom and reputation in the Church, and were for turning out the presbyters, who had been duly placed over them, and had faithfully discharged their ministry amongst them<sup>l</sup>." The peaceful Clement affectionately bewails this; exhorts the heads of those seditions to peace, humility, and charity, with an Apostolic spirit indeed; for many pages together, conjures them to prefer the public interest before their own; and, in the end, goes so far, as to recommend the great example of Moses to them<sup>m</sup>, that as that meekest saint on earth had consented that his name should be blotted out of the book of God, rather than the people who had sinned so presumptuously against him, should be consumed by him. So he advises the unhappy authors of that fatal faction, to imitate, if possible, this 'superlative perfection<sup>n</sup>,' and wishes each of them, singly for him-

<sup>k</sup> Ὀλίγα πρόσωπα προπετῆ καὶ αὐθάδη — ἐπηγέρθησαν οἱ ἄτιμοι ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐντίμους, οἱ ἄδοξοι ἐπὶ εὐδόξους, οἱ ἄφρονες ἐπὶ τοὺς φρονίμους. Clem. Epist. ad Corinth. I. § 1. et 3. Ed. Jacobson.

<sup>l</sup> Ἐνίοις ὑμεῖς μετηγάγετε καλῶς πολιτευομένους ἐκ τῆς ἀμέμεπτως αὐτοῖς τετιμημένης λειτουργίας. Ib. § 44.

<sup>m</sup> Ib. § 52.

<sup>n</sup> Ἀνυπερβλήτου τελειότητος. Ib. § 53.

self, to make this heroic declaration in the audience of all: "if this sedition, strife, schisms, are upon the account of me, I withdraw, I go whither you will, and am ready to do whatsoever the [τὸ πλῆθος], the multitude, the majority, the people [English it as you please], shall order to be done; so the flock of Christ may live in peace with the presbyters who are set over them<sup>o</sup>." Now the τὰ προστασσόμενα ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθους here, that is, the conditions this incensed multitude would insist upon in this case, how unreasonable soever, before they would be quiet, our learned Author offers to us as an act or precept of a regular power invested in them; and that all who loved peace in that church were obliged to do what they thus required to be done; for he quotes these words 'alone,' as a proof of the people's authority in a consistorial capacity. And methinks, if this be so, then in the example which the holy Father here proposes for their imitation, it must be taken for no more than an account of justice and duty in holy Moses, to consent to have his name blotted out of the book of God, to save the wicked Israelites from a just punishment of their sin; for to me the comparison plainly seems to lie there, and to import no less. Besides, I cannot but take notice that the word πλῆθος, in this place, is a very extraordinary term to express the laity of any church by, in contradistinction to the clergy of it, and

<sup>o</sup> Εἰ δὲ ἐμὲ στάσις, καὶ ἔρις, καὶ σχίσματα, ἐκχωρῶ, ἀπειμι, οὗ ἂν βούλησθε, καὶ ποιῶ τὰ προστασσόμενα ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθους· μόνον τὸ ποίμνιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰρηνεύεται μετὰ τῶν καθεσταμένων πρεσβυτέρων. Ib. § 54.

much less the laity in consistorial council together, as the application of it here must imply. I am sure it is the very same word that Clement expresses the idolatrous rebels by, in the case of Moses's controversy with them just before; and I am apt to think it would be no hardship upon them to translate it 'a tumultuous multitude or rabble,' in the circumstances we find it here, and much more agreeable to the vile and sordid character which Clement himself, you see, gave us of them just before.

After this 'evident proof,' as the Enquiry calls it, from Clement's epistle, the subject runs low, and seems to be exhausted. For to tell us (p. 116) that Origen describes a criminal as appearing 'before the whole church or congregation;' and that Dionysius of Alexandria should say the like of Serapion, and that 'no one ever took any notice of him,' is such a singular way of proving, that all persons present sate with a 'judicial authority' in the Church, as would make every individual person, even women or children, 'a magistrate,' who in any capacity were a proper member of either sacred or civil assemblies. The force of such arguing, if there be any force in it, has been at large considered upon sundry occasions before, especially in the second chapter; and therefore I may leave it as I find it here.

All the rest upon this head are only quotations from St. Cyprian again, whom he (p. 116) affirms to be more full in this matter (of the 'judicial power of the laity' in the spiritual court), than any he has named before. And who can help observing here:



What a paradox it is in this learned Author to bring St. Cyprian's authority for a 'popular jurisdiction' in the Church, when he had so freely owned but just before (p. 114), that Cyprian was of Origen's opinion about the 'power of the keys?' Both agreeing, 'that primitive bishops appropriated the grant of them to themselves, and were very orthodox in doing so.' From whence it must follow also, in the second place, that no personal condescensions in St. Cyprian's practice, (upon which the Enquirer's arguments all along run,) can amount to any proof in this matter before us, unless we will make the self-consistent Martyr not to believe and act alike; which is very hard indeed.

And yet, since two or three passages in that eminent Father's writings are offered to us, after this, with a peculiar air of plausibility in them, I will fairly represent them, before I leave the subject.

First, then, we are told<sup>p</sup> of the great difficulties St. Cyprian had to win his people's consent to the absolution of some penitent schismatics; and, it is true, he had a very affectionate conflict with them in the case; but for what? Was it to gain their 'authoritative vote' as 'fellow-judges' with him, and without whose concurrence he could not do it, as is here pretended? Three or four particulars in St. Cyprian's rela-

<sup>p</sup> Enq. p. 118. O si posses, frater charissime, isthic interesse nobiscum, cum pravi isti et perversi de schismate revertuntur, videres quis mihi labor sit persuadere *patientiam* fratribus nostris, ut animi dolore sopito recipiendis malis curandisque consentiant. Vix plebi persuadeo, imo extorqueo, ut tales *patientur admitti*. Cyp. Ep. 59. p. 137. Ed. Oxon. "

tion of it sufficiently shew the contrary. 1st, He calls it their 'patience' in the case, which he had so much trouble to persuade them to, (as the Enquirer's quotation, noted in the margin, shews,) which is a very extraordinary word indeed, to express an 'authoritative suffrage' by. 2ndly, In the foregoing paragraph, St. Cyprian tells Cornelius, that "the people were so much against the restoring of some of the more profligate schismatics," that for fear of "scandal, and endangering others by it, he was put to it to know who should, or should not, be admitted into the church<sup>q</sup>;" and further adds, "he should be no profitable or well-advised pastor, who should so mingle the infected sheep with the flock, as to grieve the whole flock with a resentment of so much evil amongst them<sup>r</sup>." From whence it is plain, not only that point of scandal was the great controversy betwixt him and his people; but also, that it was a single pastor's act and deed which might occasion or prevent that scandal; sufficiently intimating to us, that that single pastor had the power of receiving or keeping out such exceptionable schismatics from the communion of the Church; and this directly spoken with reference to himself. But,

3rdly, and lastly, To make all clearer still,

<sup>q</sup> Nobis sollicite examinantibus qui recipi et admitti ad Ecclesiam debent; quibusdam enim ita crimina sua obsistunt, aut fratres obstinate et firmiter renituntur, ut recipi omnino non possunt, [nisi] cum *scandalo* et periculo multorum. Ib. p. 137.

<sup>r</sup> Nec utilis aut consultus est pastor qui ita morbidas et contactas oves gregi admiscet, ut gregem totum mali cohærentis afflictatione contaminaret. Ibid.

St. Cyprian further tells Cornelius, in the same paragraph where this quotation lies, that "he had actually absolved one and another of those schismatics through his own tenderness to them, though the people stiffly withstood and contradicted him in it<sup>s</sup>;" which shews sufficiently what he knew he might have done to all the rest.

Weigh these few circumstances together, and judge if it were an 'authoritative consent' which St. Cyprian wanted of his people. The whole case suits his settled resolution indeed, of tenderness and condescension to his diocese, but does not in the least impair the fulness of his power.

Secondly, We are told again (p. 119), that the clerical presbytery, as being more at leisure than the rest, prepared matters for the court, wherein the 'clergy' and 'laity together' were to pass sentence at last. The proof is thus: some eminent schismatics of Novatian's party, begged to be admitted to communion with Cornelius again; that holy bishop, having been personally applied to before, and thoroughly instructed in the case<sup>t</sup>, 'was pleased' to call his presbyters together to consult about it; and when he, and they, and five bishops more with them, had concerted that matter there; and, as the next sentence, wherein the 'quotation' lies, does imply, had absolutely agreed that those

<sup>s</sup> Unus atque alius, *obnitente* plebe et *contradicente*, mea tamen facilitate suscepti. Ib.

<sup>t</sup> Omni actu *ad me* perlato *placuit* contrahi presbyterium; adfuerunt etiam quinque episcopi. Cypr. Ep. 49. p. 92. Ed. Fell.

penitent schismatics should be admitted to communion again; then says Cornelius, "what followed was, that all which had been done should be notified to the people<sup>u</sup>;" and why was it to be notified to them? Cornelius is not wanting to add the reason for it; "that they might see those very persons," says he, "established in the Church again, whom they had a long time seen as forlorn vagabonds before, and had lamented their condition." Judge you, if this matter had not been thoroughly agreed upon before this; and whether Cornelius would have spoken thus of 'the people,' if he had wanted their 'authoritative consent' to receive the criminals into his church; and accordingly, when a great concourse of the people appeared upon this notice of the matter, an universal joy and praise to God ensued upon it, with tears and mutual embracing of the brethren, which in his language indeed, (as I have elsewhere<sup>w</sup> evidently proved, I think,) he called an 'ingens populi suffragium,' in the close of this relation; that was, 'their joyful approbation of the restitution of them;' and exclusively of any act of the people at all, he says, in the same breath, "we commanded Maximus the presbyter to take his place again<sup>x</sup>."

Now when our learned Author had 'thus' settled, 'as you have seen,' an equal share of

<sup>u</sup> Quod erat consequens, omnis hic actus populo fuerat insinuandus [so far the Enquiry quotes, and leaves out this], ut et ipsos viderent in Ecclesia constitutos, quos errantes et palabundos jam diu viderant et dolebant. Ibid. p. 93.

<sup>w</sup> Chap. iii. p. 140, supra.

<sup>x</sup> Maximum presbyterum locum suum agnoscere jussimus; ceteros cum ingenti populi suffragio recepimus. Ib.

‘legislative, decretive,’ or ‘judicatorial’ power in the laity of the Church: the next thing was to shew the ‘manner’ of their executing this power in the solemn acts of public discipline. To which purpose he has set before us the ordinary form of an ‘ecclesiastical consistory’ in the primitive Church; wherein, had he assigned to the several members of it their respective offices and powers, as ingeniously as he had represented the thing, we should have found indeed a general scheme of admirable discipline for preventing any long infection of vice or heresy in the Church of God. But one would wonder to see what strained constructions he has made of a few plain passages in St. Cyprian ‘again,’ to secure to the laity of the churches their pretended share in the administration of that discipline.

Censure, and absolution of criminals, are without doubt the two principal acts of ecclesiastical discipline; and to prove that ‘censures’ passed by the votes and suffrages of ‘the people,’ as well as of any of the ‘clergy’ in the Church, he tells us, St. Cyprian writes thus; “whoever was excommunicated, it was by the divine suffrages of the people<sup>y</sup>.” The original words he quotes, are in an epistle to ‘his people’ indeed; but so miserably pointed, so mistranslated and misapplied here, that, to speak the truth, I am surprised at it. St. Cyprian wrote to his people a zealous letter against the schismatical presbyters who had sided with

<sup>y</sup> Enq. p. 121. Secundum vestra divina suffragia conjurati. Ep. 43. p. 82. Ed. Fell.

Felicissimus; telling them “that by God’s providence they had met with the punishment they deserved; for without my knowledge,” says he, “and beyond what I wished, and even whilst I said nothing, and excused their fault, those confederate and wicked wretches,” says he, “not cast out by us, have of their own accord turned out themselves; convicted in their own conscience, they pronounced their own sentence, according to your divine suffrages<sup>2</sup>.” What can be plainer here, than this: That neither St. Cyprian, nor his ‘clergy, nor his people,’ had any hand in this extraordinary excommunication? It was the schismatics’ own act and deed, by a voluntary separation, and nothing more in it. But what mean those words of the holy bishop, you will say then, “according to your divine suffrages?” They plainly mean, as I just now said, and have proved before, what this word ‘suffrage’ does almost always signify in this holy Father’s language; namely, that those self-condemning schismatics had done ‘what the people very well approved of, and liked it should be so.’ What sort of translation therefore this learned Author gave us of this passage, and what a groundless application he made of it, I conceive is pretty clear; and how unintelligibly it is pointed also, to countenance that application of it, the reader may see, by comparing the Enquirer’s small

<sup>2</sup> De Dei providentia, nobis nec volentibus, nec optantibus, imo et ignoscentibus et tacentibus, pœnas quas meruerant rependerunt, ut a nobis non ejeti *ultro se ejicerent* ipsi in se pro conscientia sua sententiam darent, secundum vestra divina suffragia, conjurati et scelerati de Ecclesia sponte se pelle-  
rent.

clause of it, with the entire transcript of the whole period, which I have joined together in the margin.

This is all the authority offered for the people's judicial power in 'the censures' of the primitive Church. But then,

Secondly, To prove 'they' could 'loose,' as well as 'bind,' he assures us (p. 130), the penitents applied themselves to 'this ecclesiastical court of his for their absolution.' For St. Cyprian, he finds, amongst other things, tells us, that the "life and demeanour of the penitent was to be looked into<sup>a</sup>," before he was absolved, and therefore concludes, it needs must be, that the penitent offender went to beg his absolution 'of the consistory;' and if that clause, or any context in the place where it is, warrants such a conclusion as that, I must own it is a way of reasoning I cannot comprehend; and therefore shall leave it to the more judicious reader to make the most of it he can.

And by the same way of reasoning again, he supports all those positive and important assertions of his, relating to this matter; namely, that the joint assembly of all the laity and clergy in the Church had the proper right of judging (p. 126) the sufficiency or insufficiency of a censured person's repentance; the right of (ibid.) admitting him by degrees into part, or a full communion with the Church; the right of (p. 129) continuing offenders for a longer or shorter time in the 'penitentiary station,' and

<sup>a</sup> *Inspecta vita ejus qui agit pœnitentiam.* Cypr. Ep. 17. p. 39.

lastly, a full right or power (p. 130) to ‘assoil’ or ‘absolve’ them; insomuch that the imposition of the bishop’s and clergy’s hands upon them, was a mere ‘declarative act’ (p. 133), and no more than a barren ‘form’ of admitting them to the Church’s peace. Now, not to trouble the reader with a repetition of what has so largely been cleared before, concerning the use St. Cyprian made both of his clergy and people, as well in all causes within his own private consistory, as in that eminent council for trial of the lapsed brethren (from whence all that is offered from him, upon these several points, is taken and misapplied again), I shall, once for all, shew how very different that holy Father’s judgment was from that of this ‘learned Enquirer,’ in relation to all the main points he here quotes him for. And,

First, The Enquiry tells us (p. 112, 113), that “both clergy and laity were all of them judges in the ecclesiastical court,” and (p. 117) that “the people as well as the bishops had each of them a negative voice.” St. Cyprian as expressly says, “there is but one judge in the Church at a time, as Christ’s vicegerent there<sup>b</sup>.”

Secondly, The Enquiry tells us (p. 130), the “consistory court did actually assoil or absolve the penitent<sup>c</sup>.” St. Cyprian says, “absolution was a remission of sins effected by the priests, and acceptable to God.”

Thirdly, The Enquiry says (p. 133), that

<sup>b</sup> *Unus in Ecclesia ad tempus sacerdos, et ad tempus, judex vice Christi.* Ep. 59. p. 129. Ed. Fell.

<sup>c</sup> *Remissio facta per sacerdotes apud Dominum grata est.* Cypr. de Lapsis, p. 134. Edit. Oxon.



“imposition of hands by the bishops and clergy, was a mere formal ceremony, declarative only of an absolution passed by the consistory.” St. Cyprian says, “the hand of the priest conduced to the purging of the conscience<sup>d</sup> ;” and where he describes the whole course of a censured person’s recovery, “if he repents,” says he, “does good works, and prays to God for it, God can pardon such an one, and what the martyrs should request, and the priests should do for such persons, might be accepted of him<sup>e</sup>.”

Fourthly, Whereas the Enquiry says (p. 126 and 129), that “his ecclesiastical court was to judge of the reality of a censured person’s repentance, and according to their will and pleasure they were to continue a longer or shorter time in the penitentiary station ;” St. Cyprian says, “it was the peculiar part or province of the governors of the Church (exclusive of the lay-brethren, to be sure) to order ignorant or over-hasty penitents in that matter<sup>f</sup> ;” for “to grant them,” says he, “those things which would turn to their destruction (that is, for those governors to permit them to be absolved before they judged they were fit for it), would be plainly to deceive them, and they would be rather butchers than pastors of the sheep.” The office of ordering their absolu-

<sup>d</sup> Ante purgatam conscientiam sacrificio et *manu sacerdotis*, pacem putant esse. De Lapsis, p. 128.

<sup>e</sup> Pœnitenti, operanti, roganti, potest clementer ignoscere (Deus,) potest in acceptum referre quicquid pro talibus et peccaverint martyres, et *fecerint sacerdotes*. Ib. p. 138.

<sup>f</sup> *Præpositorum* est, properantes vel ignorantes instruere, ne qui ovium pastores esse debent, lanii fiant ; ea enim *concedere*, quæ in perniciem vertant, decipere est. Ep. 15. Edit. Oxon.

tions sooner or later, and the guilt of an overhasty absolution, is fastened, you see, upon the governors or pastors of the Church alone; where must we think then the power lay? And agreeable to this, when the martyrs were importunate to have some lapsed brethren absolved, who were unqualified for it, St. Cyprian argues, they “could not put the bishops upon doing that which was against the command of God<sup>s</sup>.” Why put the ‘bishops only’ upon it? How is the whole consistory forgot in such an important act of their power as this? Sure, if they had had a negative, and it had been done amiss, the guilt as well as power would have been shared amongst them, and they would not have been overlooked. But,

Fifthly and lastly, St. Cyprian assures us, that his own presbyters sent to him alone for his ‘authoritative order,’ upon the like occasion with this; for so the ‘forma,’ as the holy bishop calls it, plainly does imply; which he immediately explains thus: “you desired a form,” says he, “of me, in relation to some lapsed brethren, who were very pressing with you to be speedily absolved; I wrote my mind very fully,” I think, “upon that matter, in my last letters to you<sup>h</sup>;” and then proceeds to tell them the contents of them, which was no less than a positive ‘au-

<sup>s</sup> Ut ab episcopis contra mandatum Dei fiat, auctores esse non possunt.

<sup>h</sup> Significastis quosdam immoderatos esse, et communicationem accipiendam festinanter urgere; et desiderastis in hac re *formam a me* vobis dare. Satis plene scripsisse me ad hanc rem proximis literis ad vos factis credo, ut qui libellum acceperunt, &c. — manu eis in poenitentia a vobis imposita — cum pace — ad Dominum remittantur. Ep. 19.

thority and order' for them to act by, in absolving some, on such conditions as he there prescribed, and leaving others as they were, till public peace should be restored again.

Endless were quotations from that excellent Father upon these heads. What part he allowed the lay-brethren of the Church in each of them, I leave the world to judge from the few I have produced here, and only hope and pray that truth will clear itself at last, on whichever side it lies, and be impartially embraced by all the lovers of it.

## CHAPTER VIII.

WE have heard, at large, the excellent discipline of the primitive Church. Our learned Author makes this remark upon it here; “that all those judicial acts were exerted in and by every single parish;” which being wholly grounded upon his own precarious principle, that a primitive Church, or diocese, and a modern parish, or congregation, were one and the same thing, I shall refer the reader to what I have said before<sup>a</sup> in answer to that unwarrantable notion of ‘congregational dioceses,’ and only confirm the authorities, then produced against it, with one single instance here; which I take to be a clear proof, though nothing had been said before, against that whole hypothesis, and the present observation from it.

The instance is this: Nepos, a bishop in Egypt<sup>b</sup>, had corrupted most of the Christians

<sup>a</sup> Vide supra, cap. ii.

<sup>b</sup> Ἐν τῷ Ἀρσινόεϊ τῇ γενόμενος, ἔνθα πρὸ πολλοῦ τοῦτο ἐπεκόλαζε τὸ δόγμα — συγκαλέσας τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους καὶ διδασκάλους τῶν ἐν ταῖς κώμαις ἀδελφῶν, παρόντων καὶ τῶν βουλομένων ἀδελφῶν, δημοσίᾳ τὴν ἐξέτασιν ποιησασθαι τοῦ λόγου προετρεψάμεν. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 24. § 5. Ed. Burton.

about him with the erroneous doctrine of the Millenaries; Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, goes into that region of Egypt, called Arsinoe, where he had done that mischief, and (Nepos himself being lately dead) summoned in “the presbyters and teachers of the brethren in the several villages there, together with as many of the brethren as were willing to come,” to hold a solemn conference and public disputation upon that subject; and after three days’ reasoning with them, happily brought them off from their mistaken opinions.

Now who, do we think, were these ‘presbyters and teachers of the brethren in the several villages there,’ summoned in by Dionysius upon this occasion? And in what capacity did they exercise their ministry in teaching the brethren committed to their care? Not as supreme pastors over the several congregations of them; for Dionysius himself, and the whole Catholic Church in that age, ever distinguished such pastors by the proper name and title of ‘bishops;’ and accordingly the late deceased Nepos is so styled here<sup>c</sup>. If they were not village curates, therefore, instituted and deputed to their respective cures there by the bishop of the neighbouring city of Arsinoe (and possibly of some others in that province too), these congregations, or religious assemblies of Christians under teaching ministers, were members of no church at all; for, without a bishop, all agree, they could not be so; and that Dionysius, and Eusebius with him, should call ‘bishops’ by the

<sup>c</sup> Νέπως ἐπίσκοπος τῶν κατ’ Αἴγυπτον. Ib.

name of ‘presbyters and teachers of the brethren in villages and hamlets up and down the country,’ is what no modest antiquary, I verily believe, will affirm. It remains, therefore, that they must have been ‘congregational parishes’ relating to some mother church, where their bishop resided; and consequently no one of them was an entire, ‘particular’ church, in the sense of antiquity, or ‘could exercise judicial acts of ecclesiastical discipline within themselves;’ for St. Ignatius’s maxim is owned by this learned Enquirer himself, and by all the ancients with him, ‘that without the bishop it was not lawful to do anything<sup>d</sup>.’

What follows, is a just account from antiquity of the admirable harmony and mutual correspondence of every particular church with one another in those primitive times; which was so blessed a precedent of unity indeed throughout the Catholic Church, as every succeeding age, how degenerate soever, must have a veneration for, and all good men must lament the fatal breaches which uncharitable schisms have made in it since, and with a holy, though hopeless emulation, I am afraid, in these divided times of ours, must wish and pray, at least, to see such heavenly concord in the churches upon earth again. Yet, however irrecoverable so great a blessing may seem to be, let every disciple of the peaceful Jesus so far contribute to it still, as to ask his own heart, with all the strictness and sincerity he possibly can, what occasion he, in particular, has given for so mi-

<sup>d</sup> Οὐκ ἐξόν ἐστιν — ἀναγκαῖον ἐστιν ἄνευ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου μηδὲν πράσσειν. Enq. p. 17.

serable a change ; by which means he may happily find a way to acquit himself, at least, (which would be no small comfort to him,) though, for the present, he has but little further hopes in view.

The rest of this chapter treats of the intercourse and government of the primitive churches by synodical assemblies ; the proper members of which assemblies, the Enquirer tells us (p. 143), were “bishops, presbyters, deacons, and deputed laymen, in behalf of the people of their respective churches.” Though a little after (p. 148), he says again, that Firmilian’s yearly synods were rather mere ‘clerical convocations,’ and consisted of ‘bishops’ and ‘presbyters’ only. However, to prove that all those orders of men were members of a primitive synod, he produces two passages from Eusebius, which make it not unlikely that some of each of them might be present at the councils he there refers to. And,

First, In the great council of Antioch, which condemned Paulus Samosatenus, there “were present,” says he, “bishops, presbyters, deacons,” and the “churches of God<sup>e</sup> ;” (by their lay-representatives, as he explains it) because, in the synodical epistle which the Fathers of that council sent to the Christian churches abroad, after the council was over, they sent the joint salutation of all of them, together with their own. And,

Secondly (p. 143), “When the heresy of the Montanists was fixed and preached, the faithful

<sup>e</sup> Enq. p. 143. Ex Epist. Synod. Apud Euseb. l. vii. c. 30.

in Asia," says an anonymous author in Eusebius, "met together several times to examine it; and, upon examination, condemned it."

The argument from the former of these authorities is plainly no more than this: there were, 'probably,' present in that council of Antioch, some of all those orders of men; therefore they were all there as 'proper members' of the council.'

Now, to be 'really present' in any court or council, and to have a 'right of membership' and 'session' there, are, doubtless, very different things. And, to judge aright where this difference lies in the present case before us, let these few particulars be considered:

First, That bishops were so absolutely necessary and essential members of the primitive councils, that a 'convention of bishops' and a 'primitive council,' in the familiar language of the ancients, were convertible terms. And this our learned Enquirer is very sensible of, who tells us, from Eusebius, that "Polycrates presided over a synod of bishops<sup>f</sup>," which was no other than the great 'council of Asia' assembled about the controversy of keeping Easter. And, in another place, he says (p. 105), "Privatus, bishop of Lambese, was deposed by a synod of ninety bishops." In both which places, it is manifest, a convention, or synod of bishops, and a primitive council, were one and the same thing; and it were endless to produce instances of this kind. The ancients, therefore, bear sufficient witness, that bishops were necessary, at

<sup>f</sup> Enq. p. 145. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. v. c. 23, 24.



least, if not the only, members of a primitive council. Whereas,

Secondly, No passage in antiquity, I have ever heard of, affirms so much, in either respect, either of presbyters, deacons, or people, how often soever we may hear of them, as being present at them; nor do I think our diligent Enquirer could have overlooked it, had there been any such passage to be found; and sure it is, he offers no such thing.

This express evidence, therefore, of antiquity on the one side, and entire silence on the other, gives a fair occasion to distinguish who were necessarily present, and who occasionally, or prudentially called thither; especially, if we consider in the third and last place,

Thirdly, That whosoever were present in any primitive council, the 'whole right' of vote, or suffrage, in passing any acts or canons there, was peculiar to the 'bishops' alone. And this our learned Enquirer has made clear to my hand in one of the most eminent instances, which the writings of the ancients can afford us. For, in the page just before referred to (p. 145), he tells us, "the office and duty of a moderator in a synod was," amongst other things, "to take the votes and suffrages of the members of the synod; and last of all, to give his own; as is evident," says he, "in the proceedings of the council of Carthage, which are extant at the end of St. Cyprian's works. Cyprian, being moderator, sums up all, telling the synod what they had heard: and that nothing more remained to be done, but the declaration of their judgment thereupon. Accordingly, the

bishops gave their respective votes and decisions; and last of all, Cyprian, as president, gave in his."

In this account you find,

First, That St. Cyprian, as moderator, took the votes and suffrages of 'the members' of that council; and if St. Cyprian's own authority may be taken, they were 'bishops only,' whose votes and suffrages he took there; and therefore 'bishops only,' in the Enquirer's account, were 'members' of it. The proceedings of the council, at the end of St. Cyprian's works, which this Author appeals to, manifestly prove as much. At the opening of the council<sup>g</sup>, we find there, some few learned letters were read, containing the full sense and substance of the controversy they met about; as any one who pleases to peruse them will quickly see. As soon as those letters were read, St. Cyprian, the moderator, addresses to his fellow-bishops to this effect: "You have heard, my beloved colleagues," says he, "what has been 'written' on one side and the other; and now what remains, is only this, that each of us ['the bishops here present,' for so the context obliges us to read it] do give in our respective votes and suffrages, or declare our opinions in the case, which accordingly the bishops there present immediately did, being in number eighty-seven;" and their suffrages alone

<sup>g</sup> Cum in unum convenissent, et lectæ essent literæ, Cyprianus dixit; audistis, *collegæ* dilectissimi, quid mihi Jubaianus co-episcopus noster scripserit, et quid ego ei rescripserim — lectæ sunt vobis et aliæ Jubaiani literæ — *superest*, ut de hac re, singuli quid sentiamus, proferamus. Cypr. in Exord. Conc. Carthag. A. D. 256.

(so obtained and given, as I have shewn you now) are recorded by St. Cyprian himself, as the 'whole' of that council. And what room is left here, for any one order of men, there present, to have any part or interest in it, besides the 'bishops only?'

Nor does our Enquirer's own representation of it imply less than this. St. Cyprian, says he, in summing up all, told the 'synod' what they had heard, and called upon 'them' (that is, upon the 'synod' again), to declare 'their judgment;' and how did this 'synod' (which were surely all the members of it) declare their 'judgment' in the case; Why, the 'bishops accordingly,' says he, 'gave their respective votes and decisions, and last of all Cyprian gave in his.' Can anything be clearer, than that the 'bishops alone' are owned in this account to be the 'whole synod,' to whom alone their president applied himself for votes, and that no others gave in any?

And if this eminent council (which I may justly call the brightest precedent of primitive synods, within the times prescribed by the Enquiry) had presbyters, deacons, and a great part of the people present at it, and yet the bishops only were addressed to under the name and title of 'the synod,' had the sole right of suffrage, and determined all there; what would our learned Author gather more from Eusebius's account of the council at Antioch<sup>h</sup>, which condemned Paulus Samosatenus, supposing that historian had plainly said, that all those orders

<sup>h</sup> Euseb. H. E. l. vii. c. 30.

of men were present there also, both at the time of debate, and when the sentence passed too? Why should we think they proceeded otherwise there, than the practice of synods in those times appears to have been, by the evident example of St. Cyprian's council now mentioned? The reason of the thing itself must incline us to believe they did not, and no particular reason is offered to make us think otherwise. Though, after all, the quotation from Eusebius, wherein the 'churches' in general terms, as well as bishops, presbyters, and deacons, are named, is no part of any 'synodical act,' or so much as of a 'debate' in that council, but barely a part of the formal salutation in the synodical epistle sent by the Fathers of the council to the Catholic Churches abroad, after the council was over, (and the Enquiry (p. 143) quotes it as such,) wherein those venerable prelates, who in the sense of antiquity were the proper representatives<sup>i</sup> of the churches they presided in, sent the salutation of their respective churches to the sister churches in all other parts, together with their own. By which, the historian himself so little understood 'them,' or any lay-representatives of theirs, to be proper members of that council, that when he speaks expressly of the first meeting of it, it was a 'convention of bishops,' as he tells us, who assembled at Antioch, to suppress that open enemy of the Church; and no other order of men does he make mention of, as belonging to that council. His words are these: "Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria<sup>k</sup>,

<sup>i</sup> Ecclesia in episcopo, Cypr. Ep. 66. Edit. Oxon.

<sup>k</sup> 'Ο κατ' Ἀλεξάνδρειαν Διονύσιος — γῆρας αἰτιασάμενος — δι

by reason of his old age, sent his suffrage by a letter to them; but the rest of the pastors of the churches [that is, plainly, such as Dionysius was,] came together there from every quarter to oppose that destructive ravager of the flock of Christ<sup>1</sup>;" and when he mentions the last session, wherein Paulus was actually condemned, he calls it "a synod of innumerable bishops, which met there, and cast him out of the Catholic Church." This was Eusebius's Antiochian council, which deposed Paulus, and no others mentioned to concur with them in it.

The other authority from the same historian will soon appear to be much the same with this. "The faithful in Asia," says an anonymous Author cited there<sup>m</sup>, "met together to examine and condemn the growing errors of the Montanists." Now the 'οί πιστοί,' or the 'faithful,' here mentioned, must not be understood, I conceive, in the 'peculiar and appropriated' notion of them in the primitive Church, by which they signified only the "highest station of the Christian laity, admitted to all the mysteries of it<sup>n</sup>;" for then those Asiatic synods would have had neither bishops, priests, nor deacons in them, which I presume is not pretended; they must

*ἐπιστολῆς τὴν αὐτοῦ γνώμην παραστήσας. Οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ποιμένες ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν ὡς ἐπὶ λυμεῶνα τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ ποίμνης συνίεσαν.* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. vii. c. 27. p. 518. Ed. Burton.

<sup>1</sup> *Τελευταίας συγκροτηθείσης πλειονῶν ὄσων ἐπισκόπων συνόδου — καταγνωσθεῖς τῆς Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐκκηρυττέται.* Ib. cap. 29.

<sup>m</sup> Euseb. H. E. l. v. c. 16.

<sup>n</sup> See Dr. Cave's Prim. Christian, part 1. c. 9. p. 219. Edit. 3. in 8vo. 1676.

be taken therefore in the more general sense, for 'true and orthodox believers;' in opposition to infidels on the one hand (as our blessed Lord uses that distinction, John xx. 27), and of heretics on the other, as the distinction between the Montanists and them require them to be understood indeed in this present quotation; and then what sort of evidence is given here, to prove that this or the other order of Christians acted with synodical right and authority in those assemblies; or indeed to prove what 'particular orders' of them were present there, by telling us only, that true and orthodox Christians met together to examine and condemn the heresy of the Montanists? Which is all that anonymous author says of it.

To strengthen these authorities from Eusebius, we are put in mind again (p. 143) of that eminent council, which St. Cyprian so often promised to call, as soon as the Church's peace was restored, about the 'case of the lapsed;' assuring his people again and again (p. 144), that "bishops, presbyters, deacons, and the standing laity should all be present at it;" and further, that the "Martyrs, Confessors, and whole body of the Clergy of Rome highly approved of such a general convention upon that occasion." And why such careful and repeated assurances, one would be apt to say, of calling all those orders of men to that particular council, if all of them had a right of session in every council, of course? Or why such signal notice taken of the Roman Martyrs, Confessors, and whole clergy's approving so much this wise proposition of the venerable bishop of Carthage

upon that occasion, if he could not hold a synod without them? These very circumstances would incline a man to think, that all those orders of Christians were not the ordinary and necessary members of every ecclesiastical synod; but that something extraordinary made it advisable to have them present then; and that St. Cyprian himself assigned such a peculiar reason for it, is observable wherever he made mention of it; and because the clergy of Rome (whose authority is here quoted) not only confirm, but further explain that reason of his, I shall briefly shew you their declared opinion of it, as being one and the same with his.

They approved St. Cyprian's whole scheme, as they tell him<sup>o</sup>, of that great council, 'in so momentous a case,' upon account of a double advantage of it.

First, "Because it seemed a hard matter to them, how so great a number of persons," as were likely to appear criminals in that case, "could duly be examined, without a great number assisting in it." And,

Secondly, "That it would be an invidious thing," in their opinion also, "for any one single person to pass his sentence upon criminals

<sup>o</sup> Quamquam nobis in *tam ingenti negotio placeat*, quod et tu ipse tractasti prius — perquam enim nobis et *invidiosum* et *onerosum* videtur, non per *multos examinare*, quod per *multos commissum* videatur; et *unum* sententiam dicere, cum tam grande crimen per *multos diffusum* notetur exisse; quoniam *nec firmum decretum* potest esse, quod non *plurimorum* videbitur habuisse consensum; aspice totum orbem pene vastatum — et *idcirco* tam grande expeti concilium quam late propagatum videtur esse delictum. Cypr. Ep. 30. Edit. Oxon.

in so universal a cause as that was, wherein the whole world, in a manner, was concerned as well as himself; and that such a private decree, without the concurrence of more with him, would scarcely be thought authentic enough in so very public a concern."

In which declaration these particulars seem clear.

First, That the Roman clergy conceived St. Cyprian must either try the lapsed brethren of his diocese, by a private consistory of his own, or else in a public council convened for that purpose.

Secondly, That if he had tried them the 'former way,' then he himself had been the 'one only judge' in the case; for what other sense can be made of their 'unum sententiam dicere' here urged as an invidious thing, in case he had not called a council for it? where I desire the reader to take notice, by the way, how plainly this Roman clergy place the 'whole judicial power' of a diocesan consistory in a single person, that is, in the bishop alone.

But Thirdly, and lastly, They therefore approved his whole design of calling so numerous a council, both of his own clergy and people at home, and of as many bishops as could be got from abroad; because, not only the examination of so many criminals would be managed with greater ease and less envy, if all the brethren were present, and assisted the bishops in it (which plainly shews they argued upon no right belonging to them there), but likewise the decree and censure, which should pass upon the offenders at last, would be more firm and satis-



factory to the whole Christian world, who had so great an interest in it; because, it would not be the decree or sentence of one only bishop then, as it must have been in the other case, but would have the consent of ‘many;’ that is, of many such as that ‘one’ was; for the word ‘*plurimorum*’ in the latter clause, is set in plain opposition to the ‘*unum*’ in the former. By which it appears, what an entire synodical right and power this Roman clergy attributes to the bishops in that council, and what an occasional and prudential reason they assign for so many others being present there also; which agrees with St. Cyprian’s own account of the same council; who, as often as he wrote about the vast number of the lapsed, the importance of that case, and the public interest of all the churches in it, assured his people and all his correspondents, that every order of the Church should be present at the solemn trial of those lapsed brethren. But when he acquainted Jubaianus, how that trial was carried on, he expresses himself only thus: “a numerous assembly of us bishops,” says he, “met after the persecution was over, and such and such moderate decrees we passed there<sup>p</sup>; and if such a number of bishops in Africa,” as he further relates the matter, “may not seem to be sufficient<sup>q</sup> (placing the sufficiency of the council, you see,

<sup>p</sup> Persecutione resopita in unum convenimus copiosus et episcoporum numerus, et temperamentum libravimus. Cypr. Ep. 55. Edit. Oxon.

<sup>q</sup> Ac si minus *sufficiens* episcoporum in Africa numerus videbatur, etiam Romam super hac rescripsimus ad Cornelium — qui ipse cum plurimis *co-episcopis habito concilio* — consensit. Cypr. Ep. 55. Edit. Oxon.

in the number of the bishops there), we wrote also to Cornelius of Rome, who, holding a council with many of his fellow-bishops, fully agreed with us." The councils, therefore, as such, are familiarly styled 'a pure convention of bishops only,' in St. Cyprian's language; as we saw they were in that of the accurate Eusebius also: though the learned Enquirer has been as careful to conceal this, as his own authors are clear in it. For quoting many canons from St. Cyprian's works here, he barely tells us, that such and such things were declared 'in synods;' and notwithstanding St. Cyprian is as clear in telling us, they were 'synods of bishops' who decreed them, as that they were decreed at all; yet in no one canon which he quotes in this place, was he willing we should hear that. As, for instance, St. Cyprian tells us, "it was long since decreed in a council of bishops, that no clergyman should be trustee of any man's will<sup>r</sup>." The Enquirer had occasion to cite this canon, but 'only' tells us (p. 149), 'statutum sit,' it was so decreed; though in 'concilio episcoporum,' in 'a council of bishops,' be part of the same comma; and there are four canons more, quoted in the same page; which I do not say the learned Enquirer had any necessity to tell us what sort of synods they were made by; but he must be sensible himself, by perusing the several places from whence he cites them, that in St. Cyprian's account they were 'synods of bishops only,' who made them; and therefore I chiefly

<sup>r</sup> Cum jampridem in concilio episcoporum statutum sit. Cypr. Ep. 1. Ed. Oxon.

take notice of them, for a further confirmation of that holy Father's sense of the synods in his time.

That presbyters, more or less in number, were generally present with their bishops in those provincial synods, is not to be doubted; that they should all of right be there, we may be sure the necessities of the churches could not admit of; and that there were any stated representatives assigned for them, by the usage or appointment of the Church, as necessary members of a synod, we find no evidence in antiquity for it. And lastly, that they had no right of suffrage in passing any canons or censures when they sat there, I think is manifest by what is said before. All which particulars considered, seem to point out this determination for us, that they came to councils, in those primitive times, according as each bishop of the several dioceses in the province chose out some one or more of them to be proper counsellors and assistants to them, in such synodical debates and consultations as should come before them, whose judicious opinions were of eminent advantage and considerable weight, no doubt of it, with the venerable Fathers themselves, who alone sate as 'necessary' members, 'proper' judges, and 'sole' legislators there.

As to the people's part or interest in 'all primitive councils,' because we read they were present 'in some,' I shall only observe,

First, That their being present 'only in some,' and not 'in all,' is a fair argument against 'their right of session in any;' for right and claim are seldom wanting to themselves, and popular rights

the least of any. Yet how often we hear nothing of them amongst the many synods we meet with in antiquity, their greatest advocates must be very well aware of. And,

Secondly, Where we hear the most of them, there are special reasons given for the 'particular' occasions of their being there, and such as little related to the essence or constitution of the council itself; for such, we find, St. Cyprian and the Roman clergy gave for the 'standing laity's' coming to that extraordinary council, where their 'lapsed brethren were to be tried. And,

Thirdly, Though this learned Author has produced two or three instances where 'lay-brethren' were present in the primitive councils (and we have seen what sort of instances they were), yet in his 'general' account of them, which is more material by far, you may remember he told us from the great authority of Firmilian, that the eastern synods of those times consisted of "bishops and presbyters, who met every year to dispose those things which were committed to their charge" (p. 148). And can we think that excellent Father could be so defective in his account of St. Cyprian, or so injurious to all 'the laity' of those churches, as to give no intimation in the least of 'their' meeting with the rest; if either personally, or by representatives, they were members of those synods, as well as any of the others who met there?

To close this point then, since we neither meet with the name nor notion of 'lay-representatives' in any synod of the primitive Church;

nor any footsteps of a claim of right, pretended by the 'people,' to sit and act in the councils of those times; nor so much as a single Father bearing witness to any such 'right' invested in them; but barely read, that in some particular councils, 'lay-brethren' were present (which is accounted for above), and in the most we read of, they are not so much as mentioned at all; and nowhere affirmed, that they either came or acted in a true synodical capacity there. Since antiquity, I say, goes no further than this, I must take leave to differ from this learned Enquirer here, who has (p. 143) placed 'such members' in the provincial synods of those times (as the synods themselves nowhere owned for 'proper members' of their body) under this modern title of 'deputed laymen, in behalf of the people of their respective churches.'

There are other circumstances, relating to these primitive synods, wherein this learned Author and other antiquaries do not agree; but they are less material, and may the sooner be dismissed.

And first, as to the extent or first division of ecclesiastical provinces, he concludes (p. 141) that depended wholly upon the mere conveniencies, or accidental circumstances of the churches they consisted of: whereas approved antiquaries assign a more regular original of them. The judicious Du Pin's opinion is, that "after the Apostles' decease, the Christian Church did of course, as from the reason of the thing, apply themselves to the bishop of the metropolis, or chief city in that province of the

empire, wherein they first were founded, in case any bishop were to be ordained or deposed, or any controversy arose amongst them; who called together the bishops of the same" civil "province, and jointly managed all those ecclesiastical affairs which the Apostles themselves had done in their life time; by which means, the distribution of churches, though not by canon, yet by general custom, was quickly modeled after the form of the empire itself<sup>s</sup>." The learned Dr. Hammond<sup>t</sup> proceeds further, and with great evidence of reason shews, that the Apostles themselves invested those bishops of the chief cities with a right of regulating the common discipline of all the churches within the peculiar provinces adjoining to their sees. But whatsoever occasion we assign for it, the matter of fact, I think, wants no other evidence, besides the sixth canon of the first Nicene council, which expressly calls such a peculiar pre-eminence of many 'chief churches' in several provinces of the empire, by the name of 'Ἀρχαία ἔθνη,' or customs of an ancient standing in

<sup>s</sup> Du Pin, speaking of the civil distribution of the Roman empire, *Simile aliquid (inquit) in rebus ecclesiasticis fecere Christiani, et sive cum ordinandus aut deponendus erat episcopus, sive cum aliqua divisio erat in Ecclesia, &c. cum jam non amplius superessent Apostoli, per quos hæc antea componebantur, urbis metropoleos episcopum adire par fuit, idque paulatim per consuetudinem invaluit, ac tota Ecclesiarum distributio ad formam imperii facta est, urbesque metropoles, metropoles quoque fuerunt ecclesiæ, et illarum episcopus super universam provinciam potestatem habuit — tum ad ordinandos, &c. tum ad componenda ecclesiarum dissidia, tum ad convocandas synodos.* Du Pin, *Dissert. Ecclesia prima de Antiq. Eccl. Discipl.* § 7.

<sup>t</sup> See Hammond of Schism, p. 42. to p. 54. in 8vo. Edit. Lond. 1654.

the Church<sup>u</sup>; and then canonically decreed them to continue so still. These bishops then of the more eminent cities, as Du Pin, you see, observes, did likewise call councils, and ‘preside in them too, long before the first general council ordered anything synodically about it; to which the accurate Valesius agrees, in his notes upon Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. v. cap. 23. Where, the historian speaking of Theophilus bishop of Cæsarea’s presiding in the council of Palestine, he observes upon it, that “the bishop of Cæsarea, both before and long after the first council of Nice, had the dignity of a metropolitan, so that he presided in all the councils of Palestine, as bishop of the first see<sup>x</sup>; and where it was otherwise (as in Africa it often was) there the same privilege devolved of course upon the eldest bishop of the province; as the same Valesius observes upon “Palma’s presiding in the synod of Pontus, because the eldest bishop there<sup>y</sup>.”

So that our Enquirer’s notion of primitive synods “assembling themselves by their own

<sup>u</sup> Τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἔθνη κρατεῖτω, τὰ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ Λιβύῃ καὶ Πενταπόλει ὡσπερ τὸν ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ ἐπίσκοπον πάντων τούτων ἔχει ἐξουσίαν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῷ ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ ἐπισκόπῳ τοῦτο συνηθές ἐστίν· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις ἐπαρχίαις τὰ πρεσβεῖα σώζεσθαι ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. Conc. Nic. l. Can. 6.

<sup>x</sup> Cæsariensis episcopus ante Concilium Nicænum, et diu postea, metropolitani honorem ac dignitatem semper obtinuit, ita ut omnibus Palestinæ conciliis præsideret tanquam primæ sedis episcopus. Vales. in loc.

<sup>y</sup> Palmam præsedisse ait ob antiquitatis prærogativam. — Simpliçissima sessionis fuit ratio, ut antiquissimus episcopus cæteris præsideret. Vales. ib.

authority and appointment<sup>2</sup>," if he mean so much by it, that every order of Christians in his mixed councils of laity and clergy concerted that matter together, and by a joint authority determined, that a council should be called; as his account of it would imply. This is very different, you see, from the sense of other antiquaries, who place that prerogative of calling councils in some peculiar chief bishop in each province of the primitive Church, from the very time of the Apostles' decease, as they also do their right of presiding there when they met; so that there seems to have been no such great concern again at the opening of a council about finding out 'some grave and renowned bishop,' one or more, to moderate for them (as our learned Author (p. 144) conceives), since the person, to whom, of common custom, that belonged, was known to them all beforehand; and if the observation be made of the bishops presiding in the several councils of the three first centuries, which either Fathers or historians give us any account of, I presume it would appear, that these learned antiquaries' remarks upon them were just and true.

What is further said of provincial synods, that they ordinarily met once a year, at least, and oftentimes more than so; that their canons were binding to the several churches of the province whereof they did consist, and to none but them, unless otherwise confirmed. And, lastly,

<sup>2</sup> See also Du Pin in his ninth section of the fore-cited first Hist. Dissert.



that the general end and use of them was for the regulation and management of all ecclesiastical affairs within their respective jurisdictions, needs no dispute about it, and therefore I shall close this subject and this chapter here.

## CHAPTER IX.

HAVING seen what sort of enquiry has been made into the 'constitution' and 'discipline' of the primitive Church, I leave it to the reader to judge, how impartially the learned Author of it has represented them.

He proceeds, next, to consider the 'unity' of the Church, in order to clear up the sense of antiquity in that important point of 'schism;' which is rightly defined here, 'a breach of that unity.'

This enquiry might be short; but, as the case is stated for us, we have three or four sorts of 'unities' to enquire into, instead of one. For "Church-unity," says he, "is to be differently understood according to the different acceptations of the word Church; that is," as he explains himself, "there is one sort of unity peculiar to the Catholic or universal Church (p. 154); another to a church collective (p. 160); a third," we may say, "to a provincial church, for he distinguisheth them also (p. 161);" and lastly, "a fourth kind of unity belonging to a particular diocesan or parochial church (p. 162)," which

terms, you may remember, are all along equivalent in this Enquiry.

These are offered to us for primitive notions of 'Church-unity,' though not a single instance given of any of the ancients who so diversified it; nor do I think all the records of the primitive times could afford him one. 'Unity' or 'schism,' upon whatsoever occasions the ancients speak of them, are represented in uniform terms, and everywhere alike; 'a parochial, a diocesan, a provincial, a total or a partial schismatic,' is very foreign language from any we meet with in the Fathers of the primitive Church; and consequently such sorts of 'unity' are so too.

However, I will consider this ingenious Author's singular speculations; not doubting but they will all centre in the one, true, and individual unity at last.

He begins with the unity of the Church-universal; which, "negatively considered," says he, "did not consist in an uniformity of rites or customs."

This proposition is so far true, that the Catholic Church did not enjoin 'particular rites and customs' to all particular churches. Nor, on the other hand, did particular churches impose their own rites and customs upon one another; and, therefore, I see no reason why the unity of the Catholic Church, and that of particular churches, should be distinguished upon this 'negative' account. In the mean time, each particular church might lawfully impose indifferent rites and customs upon her own members, as this learned Author elsewhere (p. 163) owns; and if they could lawfully im-

pose them, then they might lawfully censure such as would not comply with them for contumacy, or opposition to the lawful orders of their own church, was a just cause of censure in St. Cyprian's opinion, and the Enquiry (p. 121) quotes him for it; now to such as were justly censured by their own church, the laws of the Catholic Church, we know, denied communion in any part of her. So that a contentious member of any particular church might find himself wholly cast out from the Catholic Church, though it were for mere nonconformity to indifferent rites and customs in his own; and therefore this indefinite negative, I think, does not hold good, that the unity of the Catholic Church did in nowise consist in an uniformity of rites and customs, since it was liable to be lost for want of it. But,

Secondly, "Neither did it consist," says he, "in an unanimity of consent to non-essential points of Christianity."

To waive the 'undefined' term of 'non-essentials,' I may justly say of this, what I said of the former; though the Catholic Church enjoined them not, yet where any of them were decided one way or the other, and enjoined to be received either by authority of a particular or provincial church; if any member of such church or churches should break communion, and be censured on account of them, the Catholic Church would no more receive such a censured person, than she would the former. I will put the case in that very instance which the Enquirer (p. 156) gives us of non-essential points. St. Cyprian, and the African bishops

of his province, decreed that heretical baptism should not be valid 'amongst them;' this decree was binding to the whole province, (as the Enquirer owns, where he speaks (p. 146) of the obligation of provincial canons in general), and if binding, then such as would act contrary to it, were justly liable to censure; and would the Catholic Church, do we think, receive into communion any such member, which either St. Cyprian, or any bishop in his province, should have censured for not observing that decree of theirs, though the point itself is here acknowledged to be non-essential? By the laws of the Catholic Church, we know they could not. So that the general 'negative' seems not to hold in this particular neither.

But let us see the learned Enquirer's special authority, in this case of 'non-essentials.' "Justin Martyr," says he (p. 155), "would receive the Jewish converts who adhered to the Mosaical rites into Church-fellowship and communion with him, if they did it only through weakness, and did not persuade others to it; therefore every one was left to believe in those lesser, non-essential, matters," says he, "as God should inform them." Now, if 'every one' were so left to God and themselves, then why not the Gentile converts as well as the Jews in this particular instance? And yet St. Paul tells them, *if they should be circumcised, Christ would profit them nothing*<sup>a</sup>. Nor did Justin himself allow them that liberty. The observation of the Mosaical rites therefore was, either not

<sup>a</sup> Gal. v. 2.

thought a non-essential point (and then it is unduly quoted for an instance of it here), or else the Church did not allow that 'every one' should believe in those matters as they thought fit; or, if it pleases better, 'as God should inform them;' so that this instance so little proves the proposition it was brought for, that it rather proves the contrary; besides, most men are sensible, I believe, that Justin Martyr in that early age<sup>b</sup>, and peculiar country he lived in<sup>c</sup>, was not swayed by his own private judgment in that extraordinary case, but had a fair plea of the opinion and practice of the highest authority in the Church for what he did; which I take to be the only true warrant indeed for concluding any difficult part to be non-essential; for if every one might do it for himself, it is scarce conceivable how the Church of God should secure the fundamentals themselves, which are committed to their trust.

How little then the two negative definitions of Catholic unity distinguish it from any particular kind besides, appears by what has been said. The inference drawn from the former is this; "whosoever imposed on particular churches the observance of their peculiar rites and customs, were esteemed not as preservers and maintainers, but as violators, and breakers of the Church's unity and concord; for so Victor of Rome was," says he, "for exacting of the Eastern churches to keep Easter as they did in the West (p. 156).

<sup>b</sup> Ἀποστόλων Μαθητής. Ep, ad Diognet. prope finem.

<sup>c</sup> Ἀπὸ Φλαουίας νέας πόλεως τῆς Συρίας, τῆς Παλαιστίνης. Apol. secunda ad init.

This inference seems carefully calculated for the Author's own singular notion of a primitive 'particular church;' and not so much to inform us (what his example shews), that a church in the West could not impose customs on a church in the East (which none would dispute with him), as that no bishop of any church whatsoever, from east to west, could impose their rites and customs on more 'congregations' than one; because every congregation, in his opinion, was a particular church, and always should be so. But since this 'ingenious inuendo' does, 1st, suppose that he has clearly proved the primitive dioceses to have been no more than mere congregational churches (which I take to be sufficiently spoken to before), or, 2ndly, that they could not have been truly Catholic or Apostolical churches, if they had consisted of more; which he has not so much as attempted to prove, though it might well have been expected from him, I shall leave the reader and him to make the best use they can of the arguments he has offered for it within the three first centuries; and to censure, as they think fit, all the celebrated bishops of the ages immediately following; which I make no doubt they freely own to have presided over churches of more congregations than one, and consequently to have enjoined the same rites and customs to be observed in all.

The inference from the latter negative definition is more extraordinary still; "whosoever," says he (*ibid.*), "should impose the belief of non-essential points upon particular persons, were in like manner esteemed as violators of

the Church's unity and concord. For thus," says he, "Stephen, bishop of Rome, was condemned by other bishops for anathematizing Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, because he held the baptism of heretics to be null and void."

In this inference you may observe, that the words 'whosoever,' and 'particular persons,' are indefinitely named, and in general terms, at first; but in the instance given for the proof of it, they are explained by the bishop of one church imposing his non-essentials on the bishop of another. Now, if the instance explains the full meaning of the Author, as it ought to do, then the inference is just, and may pass without exception, and the imposer deserves all the hards words of 'cruelty, tyranny,' and the like, which this zealous Enquirer fixes upon him; and the reason is plain, because the one bishop had no manner of jurisdiction over the other; and besides, the bishop of a church is not looked upon in a private capacity as 'other particular persons' are, especially when a foreign bishop attempts to impose a point of doctrine upon him, which is otherwise determined in his own church. St. Cyprian's maxim is peculiarly applicable in such a case; "the church is in the bishop, and the bishop in the church;" at least, it was notoriously so in the present case between Stephen and St. Cyprian; for Stephen's controversy was not with "the person of St. Cyprian only," as it is here made to be, "but with his whole diocese, nay, his province indeed, insomuch as he proceeded to censure all alike, for not receiving that non-essential point in dispute between them, as he and



his bishops had decreed it at Rome<sup>d</sup>." This was tyranny with a witness, and if the Enquirer had meant no otherwise than this (as his example and quotations prove no more), it had been fair to specify his 'whosoever,' and his 'particular persons' with some note of restriction upon them. But they are left at large, you see, that the inference might remain an universal proposition still, though the proof of it was in a particular and singular case only; to the end that his freedom in non-essentials might be liable to no sort of check or control, either from abroad or at home. Insomuch that if a synod of bishops in any province of the Christian Church, should pass any canon relating to a non-essential point, though for the better security of some fundamental doctrine in their impartial judgment and opinion of it (as both the African and European bishops plainly did in that case we have been speaking of), and should require the subjects in their respective jurisdictions to consent to it (as those bishops on one side and the other certainly did), they must be censured as schismatical violators of the concord of the Church, according to the inference drawn by this learned Author from his negative definition of unity in the Church universal; notwithstanding we are fully assured, that the universal Church itself did peaceably allow all those celebrated churches to use that

<sup>d</sup> Stephanus non tantum sententiam suam adversus Cyprianum et synodum Africanam etiam iteratam protulit, sed et ipsum et episcopos contraria sentientes, abstinendos esse putavit, ut tum Cyprianus tum Augustinus disertis verbis testantur. *Annal. Cypr. ad A. D. 256. § 3. p. 54. Edit. Oxon.*

liberty within themselves, and none but the furious bishop of Rome himself, whom all Christian churches besides exclaimed against for it, did ever think the sacred unity of the Church was violated by it. But to proceed to his 'positive' definition, which is this:

"The unity of the Church universal," says he, "positively consisted in an harmonious assent to the essential articles of religion, or in an unanimous agreement in the fundamentals of faith and doctrine." This is true; but whether the whole truth, is not so clear.

The unity of the Catholic Church was two ways liable to be broken: by 'heresy,' and by 'schism;' so the Enquirer tells us from St. Cyprian, under this very head, "that the devil found out heresies and schisms to divide the unity<sup>e</sup>." Now, in opposition to heresies, 'the unity did consist,' no doubt of it, 'in an unanimous agreement in fundamentals of faith and doctrine.' And this Irenæus particularly meant in the quotation here produced from him, as the subject of his whole book indeed implies, which was directly wrote against heresies. But does our learned Author's definition tell us wherein the unity of the universal Church consisted, in opposition to schism also? which was the main motive of his Enquiry into it, as he says himself, § 1. of this chapter. If the 'unity of the episcopacy' be admitted by him for one of his 'fundamentals,' I need raise no further controversy about it at present; but if he ex-

<sup>e</sup> Enq. p. 160. Diabolus hæreses invenit et schismata, quibus scinderet unitatem. Cypr. de Unit. Eccl. p. 105. Edit. Oxon.

clude that (as his manner of explaining it, and his different use of it afterwards, give us just reason to think he does) I must take leave to say, 'his positive definition' is imperfect, and appeal to the primitive Fathers themselves, if the 'unity' of the 'episcopacy' was not absolutely essential to the unity of the Catholic Church.

St. Cyprian, in the same breath, I may say, wherein he exemplifies the unity of the Church in the words of St. Paul, *One body and one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God*<sup>f</sup>; adds, as parallel to the rest; "Let no man deceive the brethren with a lie, let no man corrupt the truth of our faith with any treacherous prevarication, the episcopacy is one;" making it a treacherous corruption of the truth of the faith, you see, to deny that. And that it was the episcopacy of the 'universal Church,' and not of any particular one, which he so affirmed to be but one, is evident beyond exception, by what he immediately says of it, "that each bishop held no more than a part of it," though they were interested for the whole.

But notwithstanding this evidence, which runs throughout all St. Cyprian's works, and the same principle received by the whole primitive Church, our learned Author seems so little to allow this unity of the episcopacy for a

<sup>f</sup> Unum corpus, et unus Spiritus, una spes vocationis vestrae, unus Dominus, una fides, unum baptisma, unus Deus. — Nemo fraternitatem mendacio fallat, nemo fidei veritatem perfida prævaricatione corrumpat; episcopatus est unus. Cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur. Cypr. de Unit. Eccl. p. 108. Edit. Oxon.

common bond of unity to the Church universal, that he mentions nothing of it, you see, either in his negative, or positive, definitions of it. But, on the contrary, to make it patronise his own singular opinion (p. 168), "that primitive schism respected only a particular Church," he produces St. Cyprian's notion, under that head, as a current proof of his 'particular' or 'parochial' unity, in contradistinction to that of the Church-universal; though, to make it bend to that design, he was obliged to translate the holy Father's words, as he had done once before (p. 21), contrary to his plain meaning in them, and the genuine signification of them. I will repeat the quotation<sup>s</sup>, and let the reader judge. The words, as he translates them (p. 166), are these; "God is one, Christ is one, the Church is one, the rock on which the Church is built is one (a very unlikely preface, you will say, to introduce the unity of a single parish church by); but observe what follows: "wherefore," says the Enquirer's translation, "to erect a new altar, and constitute a new bishop, besides the one altar and one bishop, is impracticable." And had St. Cyprian said this, one might have thought, indeed, by his speaking of 'one bishop,' and a 'new bishop,' and no more than so, this clause of the period might have had some reference to the unity or schism of a 'particular church,' and for that reason, no doubt, the Enquirer translated it so. But St.

<sup>s</sup> Deus unus, et Christus unus, et una Ecclesia, et cathedra una super Petrum Domini voce fundata: aliud altare constitui, aut *sacerdotium novum* fieri, præter unum altare, et *unum sacerdotium*, non potest.

Cyprian's words, we see, are *unum sacerdotium, et novum sacerdotium*, "one priesthood, and a new priesthood;" which are complex terms, and denote not a single bishop, but the entire order of them in the Church, or (in his own language, as we observed but now) the 'one episcopacy,' whereof each bishop held a part. And this is that principle of unity in the Catholic Church, which the holy Martyr, in this quotation, declares to be so absolutely 'one,' that he introduces it with all those solemn instances of indivisible unity which we find here in the same period with it. A plain proof, that no breach of it could be made in any single church whatsoever; but the whole episcopacy was broken, and consequently the schism must, 'ipso facto,' extend to the Church universal.

In few words, the difference between the primitive Church and the Enquirer, in this matter, lies here. The Enquirer takes notice only, how 'that' particular church 'alone,' wherein the schism began, had a new bishop imposed upon them; and therefore seems to see no further injury or innovation yet made in the Church of Christ besides. Whereas the primitive Church was sensible, that there was not only a new bishop schismatically made in that 'particular church,' but a new 'priesthood,' or a new 'episcopacy,' springing up by means of it, which stood in open competition with that one priesthood, or one episcopacy, derived down to them all from Christ and his Apostles, and might, from generation to generation, propagate another pretended church, distinct from, and independent of, the only true one; usurping an

equal right and title to scriptures, creeds, and sacraments (as well as a 'new priesthood'), with the Apostolical succession itself, and the authority as good in the one as the other; unless they all jointly disavowed the usurpation, and every bishop of the Church, as soon as they had any cognizance of it, utterly renounced all correspondence and communion with the authors or abettors of it; for it equally injured them all. So immediately did every particular schism, without any other intervening act in the case, influence the universal Church, and violate the sacred unity of it.

From whence these two things appear.

First, That it was no slight error in the 'learned Enquirer' to render St. Cyprian's 'novum sacerdotium,' by that undue translation of a 'new bishop,' instead of a 'new priesthood;' since it was the main hinge on which the controversy turned; and had it been rightly rendered, would have discovered wherein the primitive Church and he differed about those important points of 'unity' and 'schism.' And,

Secondly, That the two only ways, whereby the Enquirer afterwards says (p. 177), the "schism of a particular church might influence other churches, namely, by admitting excommunicated schismatics, their legates, messengers, or followers;" or else, by "receiving letters from them, and approving their pretensions;" are of a very different consideration from the point in question here. For the question is not, how other churches might actually become schismatics, as well as the 'principals themselves;' but how all Christian churches, in the judg-

ment of the primitive Fathers, were 'ipso facto' injured, and their Catholic unity immediately broken, by a schism breaking out in any particular church, though no other church besides either favoured or approved of them. Which was not, you see, by becoming schismatics themselves, as the Enquirer's argument implies, but by the schismatics introducing a new priesthood or episcopacy into the Church of Christ, wherein they were wholly passive, but universally concerned.

It is true, St. Cyprian very well knew, from the nature of the thing itself, that every schism must be formed by some members of a 'particular' church breaking off from their own bishop, and therefore inveighs against that violation of their spiritual allegiance, and aggravates the guilt of such a breach, as the 'necessary cause' from whence schism must arise, and so much the Enquirer's several quotations<sup>b</sup> from him shew; but he produced them as plain evidences that schism respected only those particular churches, and no more; whereas when the same St. Cyprian comes to close those discourses, and to tell the schismatics how their guilt came to be so great; he gives them this reason for it, which the Enquirer<sup>i</sup> has transcribed amongst the rest too, "because," says he, "the Catholic Church, which is one, is not

<sup>b</sup> Neque aliunde nata sunt schismata, &c. Hi sunt ortus atque conatus schismaticorum, &c. Inde schismata et hæreses abortæ sunt, &c. See Enq. p. 166, 167.

<sup>i</sup> Enq. ib. p. 167. ad finem. Quando Ecclesia, quæ Catholica una est, scissa non sit neque divisa, sed sit utique connexa, et coherentium sibi invicem sacerdotum glutino copulata. Cypr. Ep. 66. Edit. Oxon.

rent nor divided, but knit and coupled together by the cement of her bishops united to one another." As if he had plainly said, that no schism can be made, but the Catholic Church and all the bishops of it must be injured at once; and this plain consequence of revolting from a single bishop, was a sufficient motive for the holy Martyr St. Ignatius also, to lay such frequent and pathetic injunctions upon all Christians to obey their 'respective pastors,' and live in unity 'with them (which the Enquirer (p. 169) makes a great argument again for his primitive parochial schism) whereas if the sin of schism was the consequence of their disobedience, which is agreed as well on one side as the other; the reason was equal at least, take it in which sense we please, for that zealous Martyr to warn them so affectionately against it; or if any difference, the argument would rather look the other way; that their crime extended further than our learned Author allows it to do, because the holy Father's injunctions were so 'frequent' and 'pathetical,' as he observes them to be. And this cannot be doubted indeed, if we remember St. Ignatius's notion of 'the one altar,' which he unquestionably meant, as all the ancients did, with reference to the universal Church, as I have shewn before.

After all, the Enquirer (p. 172) undertakes to make his 'thesis' clear, beyond exception, by the noted instances of Felicissimus's schism in the church of Carthage, and that of Novatian at Rome; and to that purpose shews at large, that they were called schismatics, and proceeded against as such, whilst they neither



caused nor attempted any separation from any other churches, but those respectively of Carthage and Rome; and they very well might be so, and yet nothing less injurious to the universal Church, as you have seen already. But let us hear what St. Cyprian says of these very schisms, which are offered as a pattern for all. Of Felicissimus and his accomplices, says that holy Martyr to Cornelius of Rome, "What manner of persons do you think they must be, who are enemies of the bishops, and rebels against the Catholic Church<sup>k</sup>?" Did their schism respect himself and his church 'only,' and yet that good man fix so hard a charge upon them, beyond what they deserved? No, it was on account of his settled judgment in the case, and that of the whole Christian Church with him, according to the Catholic principle we are now speaking of. And of Novatian, more plainly still; "he separated himself," says he, "from the bond of the Church, and from the college of bishops, and would neither keep the unity of the episcopacy nor the peace of it<sup>l</sup>." How this suits with primitive schism, again, respecting a particular church only, I confess I cannot see.

This, and such-like evidence from antiquity, pressed so hard upon the Enquirer's singular notion, that he found himself obliged to fly to these cautious distinctions; That schism in its

<sup>k</sup> Quales putas esse eos, qui *sacerdotum* hostes, et contra *Ecclesiam Catholicam* rebelles? Cypr. Ep. 59. Edit. Oxon.

<sup>l</sup> Qui se ab ecclesiæ vinculo, atque a *sacerdotum collegio* separat — qui *episcopatus* nec unitatem voluit tenere, nec pacem. Cypr. Ep. 55. p. 112. Edit. Oxon.

“larger sense was a breach of the Church universal; but in its usual and restrained sense, of a church particular” (p. 180). And again, “that schism, principally and originally, respected a particular church or parish; though it might consequentially influence others too” (p. 162). And again, that it “actually broke the unity of one church, and virtually of all” (p. 173).

In the first of which distinctions, he owns, you see, that schism, in ‘some sense,’ was a breach of the ‘Church universal;’ and in what ‘large sense’ that should be, if it ‘respected’ no more than a ‘particular church only,’ as he affirms of it (p. 168) is too much for me to conceive. ‘Originally,’ indeed, it respected a ‘particular church,’ so far, that in one or other of them, it must ‘originally’ break out; but that it respected other churches ‘consequentially only,’ is but the same mistake again, which I answered before, “that none were affected with it,” in his opinion, “but such as became schismatics themselves.” And lastly, how this Catholic unity ‘was broken,’ and not ‘actually broken,’ is too nice for me again. But such uneven ground we may expect to meet with, when we leave the plain way.

I have wondered, I confess, from whence the singular way of reasoning in this Enquiry should come; but the secret of it, if I mistake not, and I ask pardon if I do, seems to lie here; some charitable expedient was to be found out to support some sort of schismatics with this comfortable hope, that though they broke the unity of the ‘particular church’ whereof they were members, yet they might continue in the unity

of the 'Church universal' still; especially, if the points in controversy between them were matters only of rites or non-essentials; and if the unity of the episcopacy had been admitted for an essential bond of Catholic unity, as it really was in the judgment of the primitive Church, that 'comfortable expedient,' and this whole 'scheme of diversity of unities,' had been lost together; as appears, I think, by the particular account I have here given of them.

I have taken but little notice indeed of his difference between the unity of a church 'collective,' and that of the Church 'universal;' because he had prevented me in his own account of that. For the "unity of a church collective," says he (p. 160, 161), "may have consisted in a brotherly correspondence with, and affection towards each other; which they demonstrated by all outward expressions of love and concord; as by receiving into communion the members of each other's, mutually advising and assisting one another by letters or otherwise; and other marks of love and concord." And, on the other hand, "the relation," says he, "between each particular church and the universal Church, in general, was this, that as one member of the natural body has a regard to all the other members thereof, so a particular church had to every member of the Church universal; the bishops employed a general kind of inspection over all other churches besides their own, observing their condition, and giving them an account of their own; and sent to one another for advice and decision in difficult points. In these, and in many other such-like cases, there was a cor-

respondence between the particular churches of the universal." Now, where the 'distinct unity of a collective' church, from that of the 'universal,' lies in this account of them, I must leave the reader to enquire; for I confess I can discover none.

And thus having considered the several kinds of unities proposed, I may conclude, I think, what I first expected of them, that, in respect of schism at least, for the sake of which this singular diversity was contrived, they all centre in that one individual unity, which all antiquity attributed to the Catholic Church of Christ.

One point under this head is still behind, and so necessary to be settled, that the subject of the whole chapter is of little use without it. "Schism," as our learned Author has defined it (p. 163), "was a causeless separation from their lawful pastor." This gave him occasion to enquire, what causes could justify such a 'separation,' and what not; an enquiry, proper on all sides; whether the schism were 'particular' only, or an 'universal' one, since schism was a certain and immediate effect of it. But to be clear in this enquiry with him, the principal term in the question must first be rightly understood.

'Separation,' if it be meant according to the point in question here, must imply, not a bare abstaining from communion with the lawful pastor, but setting up another also in his stead; for otherwise a formal schism was not yet made; which distinction I briefly hint to the reader, because, though the question itself does so ne-

cessarily suppose this 'setting up of altar against altar,' as well as 'forbearing to communicate;' yet in the proofs and precedents offered for it, and in the inference drawn from them (p. 166) at the last, he will find they are promiscuously used without this due distinction; whereas it is evident by the whole economy and principles of the primitive Church, that causes might be given for not joining in communion with a pastor, through some fundamental corruption, for example, in the very service of his church; and yet the same persons, who leave him for it, may not be authorized to deprive that pastor, or to substitute another in his place. The necessary requisites for 'deposing' or 'constituting' bishops in the primitive times, as we have seen at large before<sup>m</sup>, is sufficient proof of this; and the learned Enquirer, in the close of this very head, declares (p. 165), that "it was avouched by all, that synods did depose all those bishops that were guilty of criminal or scandalous enormities." As he owned before also (p. 47, 49), that the bishops of the province were to be called in, at least, and their consent obtained, before any bishop of the primitive Church could be legally instituted, as he calls it, or settled in their place. From these considerations of confessed matter of fact, it must follow, that the people's part in any separation, be the occasion never so justifiable, could amount to no more, than a bare abstaining from communion, till a 'regular authority' should de-

<sup>m</sup> Cap. 3. et 6. supra.

pose their criminal pastor, and provide another for them.

And if we bear these premises in mind, whilst we examine all this learned Author offers upon this subject, we shall find it comes to just the same thing; whatever more might be intended by it. His whole account of it is as follows:

“The justifiable causes,” says he (p. 163, 164), “for such a separation, I think, were two, or at the most, three.” First, “Apostacy from the Faith.” Secondly, “Heresy.” And Thirdly, “A scandalous and wicked life.”

His instance for apostacy, is that of the Spanish bishops, Basilides and Martialis; whose relapsing to idolatry in time of persecution was notorious; and that the people should separate from them, and join in communion with others, was approved by St. Cyprian and his synod, in that epistle<sup>a</sup> the Enquirer refers to for it. But how stood the case, when the African council thus advised them? and how far did the people's part in that separation go? Did the people, or any of the inferior clergy of their churches with them, turn their apostate bishops out of their places, and, by their own act and deed, substitute others in their room? Nothing like it, if you will believe the synod itself in that case. For, as they represent the matter (in the same epistle), those idolatrous bishops were ‘synodically’ deprived; and others, in the ‘same manner,’ placed in their sees, before the

<sup>a</sup> Cypr. Ep. 67. Edit. Oxon.

people ever applied to St. Cyprian and his council about communicating or not communicating with them; only by the unjust interposition of the bishop of Rome, in favour of those idolaters after they were deprived, they claimed their former right still; and, in 'that case,' the African council advised and warranted the people to separate from their first idolatrous bishops, and join communion with those who were so regularly provided for them; as I have shewn more at large in the sixth chapter foregoing. And now a 'separation,' in any case whatsoever, thus managed, is justifiable without dispute. And this is all 'the Enquiry' proves in the first justifiable cause for it, namely, that of notorious idolatry. For what the instance or example proves, is presumed to be the substance of the argument which the Author grounds upon it. But,

Secondly, What sort of separation he approved of, in case of an heretical pastor, is not so easily to be known, from his short quotations under that head; for all he says of it is<sup>o</sup>, that Irenæus advises us 'to fly from all heretics<sup>p</sup>;' and that Origen allows the people to separate from their bishop, 'if they could accuse him of false and heretical doctrine<sup>q</sup>;' which, no doubt of it, all good Christians ought to do. But this is speaking at large. If we would know the practice of the primitive Church in this matter, the case of Paulus Samosatenus is as clear a

<sup>o</sup> Enquiry, *ibid.*

<sup>p</sup> Enq. *ib.* Oportet longe fugere ab eis. Iren. l. i. c. 13.

<sup>q</sup> Si habueris accusationem doctrinæ pessimæ, et alienorum ab ecclesia dogmatum. Orig. Hom. 7. in Ezek.

precedent as antiquity can afford; and as evidently shews, that the separation both of laity and inferior clergy from an heretical bishop, was managed in the same manner then, as we have seen it was in the case of the idolatrous bishops before. The proceedings against Paul are at large recorded by Eusebius, and in the synodical letter of the council called against him, which that historian has in great part preserved for us; where we read of no new altar or second bishop set up by presbyters, deacons, or people (notwithstanding they were conscious enough of his blasphemous notions), till such time as the great council solemnly deposed him, and promoted Domnus to his see. Nay, we find his orthodox people still present at the public service of the Church with him (his heretical blasphemies not being yet inserted there), though "they suffered reproaches from him all the while, for behaving themselves more decently and gravely than his wretched flatterers did<sup>r</sup>," as the holy Fathers of the council relate the case themselves. The separation in this case therefore was managed thus: the watchful bishops of the several churches of God about him took the alarm of his heresy, and provided a more faithful pastor in a regular and authentic manner for his people, who waited for that warrantable course of being duly separated from him; trusting to the providence of God (without going out of his way), which every Christian safely may de-

<sup>r</sup> Τοῖς οὖν, ὡς ἐν οἴκῳ Θεοῦ σεμνοπρεπῶς καὶ εὐτάκτως ἀκούουσιν ἐπιτιμῶν καὶ ἐνυβρίσεων. Euseb. H. E. l. vii. c. 30.



pend upon, from the faithful promises of our blessed Lord, that he will be with his Church for ever. But,

Thirdly, As to the matter of a scandalous and wicked life, the learned Enquirer himself, and the venerable authors he cites, are divided about 'the modes' of separation in such a case. "An African synod," he tells us (p. 164, 165), "affirms, that the people of their own power and authority, without the concurrent assent of other churches, might leave and desert a scandalous bishop; and Irenæus," he says, "agrees with them in it, though Origen seems to be of another mind."

Now by "leaving and deserting their bishop, of their own authority, and without the assent of other churches," it is plain he means no less than a full power in them to discharge him of his pastoral care over them, and to provide another bishop or pastor for themselves; for he sets it in direct opposition to Origen's opinion, which, in his own construction of it (p. 165), was "to wait for a synodical authority to depose their bishop in any such case."

His meaning being plain then, we shall soon see, (or rather have seen already, indeed,) that the African synod he refers to, allows no such popular liberty, of placing and displacing pastors for themselves, in case of a 'scandalous or immoral life;' for it is the very same synod, and the same epistle of theirs he here appeals to, which he cited just before in the case of the 'idolatrous' Spanish bishops; who being, not apostates only, but vicious and immoral men

too, the synod considered them in both respects, in their answer to the clergy and people of their churches who wrote for their advice about them; and as this gave occasion to the synod severally to declare, in many passages of that epistle, how unworthy either vicious or idolatrous bishops were to minister at the altar of God; so it did to this Enquirer also to make a double use and application of it; whereas, in respect to the people's separation from one, and joining in communion with another (which is the case before us here), the synod's judgment was the same, as well in regard to the immorality, as to the idolatry of their bishops. In both cases it had immediate reference to the condition the people were in, and the difficulties they were driven to, of having rival bishops (on one side synodically deprived, and on the other synodically set up), and the synod's determination for them was this. That since they had bishops so regularly provided for them, and the other so justly deprived, they should separate from the one who were guilty of such open idolatry and immoral lives, and join communion with the other, who could be charged with neither, notwithstanding the bishop of Rome, and some other nearer home, discouraged them from doing so; and this was the 'very separation' that synod had occasion to speak to, upon the clergy and the people's application to them; and the only kind of 'popular election' they maintained, which has so mightily been insisted upon, in a very different sense, before (chap. vi.). Let the impartial

reader have recourse to the synodical epistle<sup>s</sup> itself, and judge if he can find this dispensation granted there to any Christian churches whatsoever, "to desert their criminal bishops of their own authority, and without assent of other churches," in such a sense as is affirmed here. To proceed then to the other authority for it.

Irenæus, says he (p. 164), was of the same mind with this African council; and I doubt not, but he was; but not in the sense intended here. The passage quoted<sup>t</sup> for it from that Father, neither implies so much, nor is directly applicable to the point in hand, if the learned commentator upon it understood it right. The question before us is, what the people are to do in case of 'scandal' and 'immorality' in their bishops, his faith and principles in the mean time being sound and orthodox; but Irenæus, in the place quoted here, was speaking of the "most vicious heretics of those times, such as Nicolas the deacon, Cerinthus, Ebion, and the like<sup>u</sup>;" as the judicious annotator verily believes. This alters the case, and many circumstances would persuade any reader that Irenæus meant so. First, because he does not name the presbyters he was speaking of there, as 'genuine presbyters' of the Church, but 'such as

<sup>s</sup> Cypr. Ep. 67. Edit. Oxon.

<sup>t</sup> Qui vero presbyteri serviunt suis voluptatibus, &c. — ab omnibus talibus absistere oportet. Iren. l. iv. c. 44. § 1.

<sup>u</sup> Qui vero crediti quidem sunt a multis presbyteri, &c. Annot. Nicolaum, Cerinthum, Ebionem, et id genus hæresiarchas hic atro carbone notari existimo. Ad Iren. ubi supra.

were thought by many to be so<sup>x</sup>;' which character of them the Enquirer was pleased to leave out, though in the midst of the first comma he cites. Secondly, because Irenæus introduces what he says of them, with plain terms of distinction from the presbyters he was speaking of before, who were "such as had succession from the Apostles, and with that succession the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father<sup>y</sup>;" as the context shews. And, thirdly, because in the quotation itself, where he advises all Christians 'to abstain from them,' he exhorts them, by way of distinction again, "to keep close to those, who, as he told them before, preserved the doctrine of the Apostles<sup>z</sup>;" pretty plain signs, one would think, that he was speaking of heretics, as well as vicious men, though the same persons still.

And yet, after all, be it of one or the other, or both, he says no more, you see, to our present case, than that 'we should abstain from them;' which determines nothing, how the Church of God in general should be regularly freed from such wretched presbyters, or any particular people provided with a more worthy pastor for themselves; but leaves his reader

<sup>x</sup> *Qui vero crediti quidem sunt a multis presbyteri.*

<sup>y</sup> *Eis qui in Ecclesia sunt presbyteris obaudire oportet, his qui successionem habent ab Apostolis, et cum episcopatus successione charisma veritatis certum secundum placitum Patris acceperunt, l. iv. c. 43. Qui vero crediti sunt a multis, &c. Ib. c. 44. § 1.*

<sup>z</sup> *Ab omnibus igitur talibus absistere oportet, adhærere vero his qui Apostolorum (sicut prædiximus) doctrinam custodiunt. Ib. cap. 44.*

there to the warrantable rules and method of the Church, having taught him just before what sort of Apostolical successors all Christians were obliged to cleave to; and further warned him to “suspect all others who go off from that succession, and hold their meetings in any place whatsoever, as heretics or schismatics, or proud, or pleasers of themselves, or else as hypocrites who do it for the sake of interest or vain-glory<sup>a</sup>.” Which gives as little license, I think, to the people of any ‘diocese, particular church, or parish,’ name it as you please, to provide themselves a pastor of ‘their own authority, and without the assent of other churches,’ in the sense it is pretended here, as the African council itself did before; and so far Irenæus and that council do agree, neither of them warranting that ‘popular right and authority of heaping up teachers to themselves’ (to use the Apostle’s phrase), however unfortunate they may be, to have an immoral pastor at any time among them.

And that Origen comes nearer to the sense of both of them, than our learned Author thought he did (though he endeavoured to reconcile them too), I believe the reader will perceive by the very quotation he gives us from him here, which I shall transcribe in his own translation, together with the text itself; not only as the true sense of the African council

<sup>a</sup> Reliquos vero qui absistunt a principali successione, et quocunque loco colliguntur, suspectos habere, vel quasi hæreticos et malæ sententiæ, vel quasi scindentes, et elatos, et sibi placentes; aut rursus ut hypocritas, quæstus gratia et vanæ gloriæ hoc operantes. Iren. ubi supra, cap. 43.

and Irenæus, but of the whole primitive Church with them; in this point of scandal and immorality in any minister of the Church of God.

He "that hath a care of his soul, will not be scandalized at my faults, who am his bishop, but considering my doctrine, and finding it agreeable to the Church's faith, from me indeed he will be averse, but he will receive my doctrine, according to the precept of the Lord; which saith, *the Scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses's chair; whatsoever therefore they say unto you, hear and do, but according unto their works do not, for they say, and do not.* That scripture is of me, who teach what is good, and do the contrary, and sit upon the chair of Moses, as a Scribe or Pharisee. The precept is to thee, O people; if thou canst not accuse me of false doctrine, or heretical opinions, but only beholdest my wicked and sinful life; thou must not square thy life according to my life, but do those things which I speak<sup>b</sup>."

Here Origen "must needs be understood," as

<sup>b</sup> Qui curam habet vitæ suæ, non meis delictis, qui videor in Ecclesia prædicare, scandalizabitur, sed ipsum dogma considerans, et pertractans Ecclesiæ fidem, a me quidem aversabitur, doctrinam vero suscipiet secundum præceptum Domini, qui ait, supra cathedram Moysi sederunt Scribæ et Pharisei, omnia enim quæcunque vobis dicunt audite et facite, juxta autem opera illorum nolite facere, dicunt quippe et non faciunt. Iste sermo de me est, qui bona doceo, et contraria gero, et sum sedens supra cathedram Moysi quasi Scriba et Phariseus; præceptum tibi est, O popule; si non habueris accusationem doctrinæ pessimæ et alienorum ab Ecclesia dogmatum, conspexeris vero meam culpabilem vitam atque peccata, ut non habeas, juxta dicentis vitam tuam instituere, sed ea facere quæ loquor. Orig. Homil. 7. in Ezekiel.

the learned Enquirer (p. 165) remarks upon him, "to restrain the people from present separation, till they had the authority of a synod for doing so;" and can the African council be said to differ from him in this, when all they wrote upon this subject, was in the particular case of the Spanish churches, where such a regular synod had already settled all in the same manner that Origen would have it done? Or, supposing Irenæus referred to this special case of immorality (which it is likely, you see, he did not), could he be said to allow the people to provide another bishop for themselves, "of their own power and authority, and without the assent of other churches," because he said "they should abstain from the former?" determining nothing for them which way they should be better provided for in the case, but plainly leaving them, as I observed before, to the ordinary methods of the Church for that; which, as the Enquirer owns, in this very place, "was avouched by all to be this; that synods did depose all scandalous and criminal bishops; and to understand it otherwise (in Origen's case, says he) was to contradict all other writers besides." It were hard upon Irenæus then, to say, he did not understand it so, who had so strictly charged all Christians (as you heard but just now) to keep close to the Apostolical succession, to whom the certain gift of 'truth' was so peculiarly bequeathed, and to be so jealous of all others, who would meet anywhere, without regard to that.

And thus the three authorities produced agree, I conceive, in this, that neither one nor

the other justify the people of any church, to deprive or set up a bishop or pastor for themselves 'of their own power and authority,' in this last case of 'a wicked and scandalous life;' any more than the Catholic practice of the primitive Church did in the greater ones of heresy and apostacy itself, which we have nowhere found was done; and with this I shall close the material point of the 'justifiable causes of separation,' and at the same time the general head of this last chapter, concerning the unity or schism of the primitive Church.

And by the particular survey which has been taken of these two important points, it is no hard matter, I think, to know what 'schism is,' and in every division of the Church, 'who the schismatics are.' The learned Enquirer indeed, differs widely from the primitive Church about it, in the case of non-essentials; but then he differs little less from himself too; for all kind of imposers in that case are schismatics of the highest nature with him; he taxes them with 'cruelty, tyranny, violation of the Church's concord,' and a great deal more, beyond his usual temper; and yet in his own account of the discipline of the primitive Church, he shews us there was as much imposition of that nature practised then, as he can anywhere complain of, in any orthodox church at this very day. For his account of primitive provincial synods is this; "they were assembled," says he, amongst other things, "for resolving all difficult points that did not wound the essentials of religion (p. 147);" and what were those 'resolutions,' but so many determinations one way



or the other, what the churches of the provinces they belonged to should believe, in such non-essential matters as they so considered and resolved? especially, since he further adds (p. 148, and 149), that "what they there enacted, they decreed to be observed by all the faithful of those churches whom they represented," or "by all the members of them." Now this right of debating non-essential points in ecclesiastical councils, of resolving and determining about them there, and requiring all the churches they belonged to, to acquiesce in such synodical determinations of them, is all the imposition, I am sensible of, that any orthodox church, primitive or modern, can be charged with in 'any difficult points that wound not the essentials of religion;' and therefore I cannot see, I confess, what sort of imposers he can be so highly angry at in this case, without reflecting on the sacred synods of the primitive Church, in his own manifest account of them.

But it is too visible, with what partiality to his own opinion he (p. 158) applies the venerable Irenæus's censure (of 'all' inexcusable schismatics in his time) to the single persons of such 'imposers only,' as he is pleased to call them; that is, to all ecclesiastical authority whatsoever, which should determine anything in 'these difficult points, which no way wound the essentials of religion,' let their considerations of unity, peace, or order, in it, be what they will; and notwithstanding the right and practice he had owned, you see, before, in primitive provincial synods to do so. And that St. Cyprian and his African province drew up

a solemn decree in such a case (as our learned Author himself allows the case to be), for the observation of all belonging to them, I have shewn at large before.

But I shall leave Irenæus's own words with the reader, that he may judge how the bias of an author's mind must be set, to apply such general language to any special sense he has first prepared for it, which the holy Father himself gives no manner of occasion for. The words are these :

The "spiritual man," says he, "will judge, or discern those who make schisms, who are inhumane, not having the love of God, but preferring their own advantage before the unity of the Church, for trivial and slight causes, rend and divide the great and glorious body of Christ, and, as much as in them lies, destroy it; who speak peace, but wage war, truly straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel<sup>c</sup>."

Here is a fearful character of schismatics, every one sees; but the Enquirer thinks he sees more; he discerns a 'special' kind of schismatics marked out here, to whom he frankly applies it all: and those are 'imposers' of non-essentials, as I hinted but now, be their authority what it will, or the articles they decree never so innocent or useful in their kind. In

<sup>c</sup> Discipulus vere spiritualis recipiens Spiritum Dei — judicabit eos qui schismata operantur, qui sunt immanes, non habentes Dei dilectionem, suamque utilitatem potius considerantes, quam unitatem Ecclesiæ, propter modicas et quaslibet causas magnum et gloriosum corpus Christi conscindunt et dividunt, et, quantum in ipsis est, interficiunt; pacem loquentes, et bellum operantes, vere liquantes culicem, et camelum transglutientes. Iren. l. iv. c. 53. et 62.

such cases, all inferior members of a church, by his construction of the place, may be left at liberty to disturb the peace, and rend the unity of the Church for such mere non-essential points, and be all the while innocent and blameless in it; for the whole guilt is removed, you see (*ibid.*), from them, and placed where it cannot touch them. But, what one syllable is there in Irenæus's words, which looks that way? unless we will be great imposers ourselves, and oblige the reader to believe that there could be no 'inhumanity, or want of the love of God in it,' if any subordinate members of a Church should break the unity (and disobey their spiritual superiors too) for such slight matters as Irenæus speaks of there; or that it could not be said of them, that 'they preferred' their own advantage before 'the Church's unity,' who, from being subjects in it, make themselves heads and governors of faction and a party, by excepting against non-essential matters, and forming a schism upon it. Or that it could not be supposed, that such mean and ordinary schismatics should make 'professions of peace and piety,' whilst they 'wage war against the Church of God.' Or lastly, that to 'strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel,' could with no propriety of speech be said of them, with whom a harmless 'non-essential' will not down, and yet the dreadful guilt of schism be easily digested by them.

The words make no distinction of persons from one end to the other; nor exempt any from the common guilt of the same unnatural schism, where the cause of controversy and di-

vision is the same; that is, for slight or non-essential matters; and it is strange to think the venerable author of them (who held the highest station in the Church) should mean to clear all 'other' members of it, and leave them free to rend the 'great and glorious body of Christ,' for such slender matters as he was speaking of, except himself alone, or such as he was.

Had his first words been fairly translated, there could have been no umbrage for such a construction; for the schismatics Irenæus censures, are, in his own express terms, such as actually make or form a schism<sup>d</sup>, upon some slender occasion or other, and not such as should more remotely 'cause,' or 'occasion, such a schism to be made, as the Enquirer has rendered them; and by that slight turn alone, made them so plausibly countenance his own peculiar application.

But I will leave the quotation now to speak for itself, and only excuse myself for differing in one particular more from the learned Enquirer, in translating that first sentence of it. He renders it thus; "that, at the last day, Christ shall judge those who cause the schisms" (there spoken of); and I doubt not but all such schismatics will sadly find it so. But Irenæus's sense, I conceive to be this, that "the spiritual man will judge (or discern) those who actually make such schisms, &c." And my reason for it is, because the holy Father for nine or ten short chapters together, was speak-

<sup>d</sup> Qui *schismata operantur*.

ing in one continued discourse of this particular judge, who should try and discern all sorts of adversaries to the truth. And in the fifty-third chapter, where he first began it, he expresses by name the *spiritual disciple*, who should so *discern and judge all, and himself be judged of no man*, according to the sacred text, 1 Cor. ii. 15. And answerable to that, in the sixty-second chapter, where he speaks of judging 'schismatics' amongst the rest (in the words of this quotation before us), he shuts up the whole discourse with repeating that clause again, "but he himself will be judged or discerned by no man;" which made it plain to me, that the 'spiritual man' was the judge spoken of, from one end to the other; and therefore I translated it so.

Some little attention then seems to have been wanting here, both as to the context and application of this primitive Father's words. But take them in what sense we will, they are an evident instance of that awful sense which the first and best of Christians had of the dreadful sin of 'schism;' not much unlike to what the learned Enquirer (p. 180) has observed from St. Cyprian to the same purpose; and since his Enquiry was professedly written to heal such unhappy divisions in the Church, and 'my heart' tells me I had no other ends in all my observations upon it, I shall leave the authorities of both those ancient Fathers to the serious consideration of the sons of peace, as no unsuitable conclusion to this whole discourse.

St. Cyprian's words are very close and affect-

ing indeed: "the schismatic," says he, "can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother, but is out of the number of the faithful; and though he should die for the faith, yet should he never be saved<sup>e</sup>."

And Irenæus's sense is this; that schism is such "a rending and dividing of the great and glorious body of Christ, as equals the guilt of schismatics<sup>f</sup>" to that of apostates from the faith, censured by St. Paul, *who crucify to themselves afresh the Lord of glory, and put him to an open shame<sup>g</sup>*; and this guilt he makes more monstrous and unnatural still, when men 'actually form their schism for slight and inconsiderate matters<sup>h</sup>;' that is, as the learned Enquirer explains it, upon account of non-essential points, which wound no fundamental article of Christian faith or doctrine; to this sort of schismatics his censure more immediately belongs. And if the joint suffrage of these two eminent Martyrs of the primitive Church were duly weighed and solemnly attended to, it might have a comfortable influence upon the unhappy divisions of our times. For should all divided parties in the reformed churches of this age, have the same awful fear of the dreadful guilt and danger of schism, and the same

<sup>e</sup> Alienus est — habere jam non potest Deum patrem, qui Ecclesiam non habet matrem, tales etiamsi occisi in confessione nominis fuerint, macula ista nec sanguine abluitur. De Unit.

<sup>f</sup> Magnum et gloriosum corpus Christi conscindu et dividunt, et, quantum in ipsis est, *interficiunt*. Iren. ubi supra.

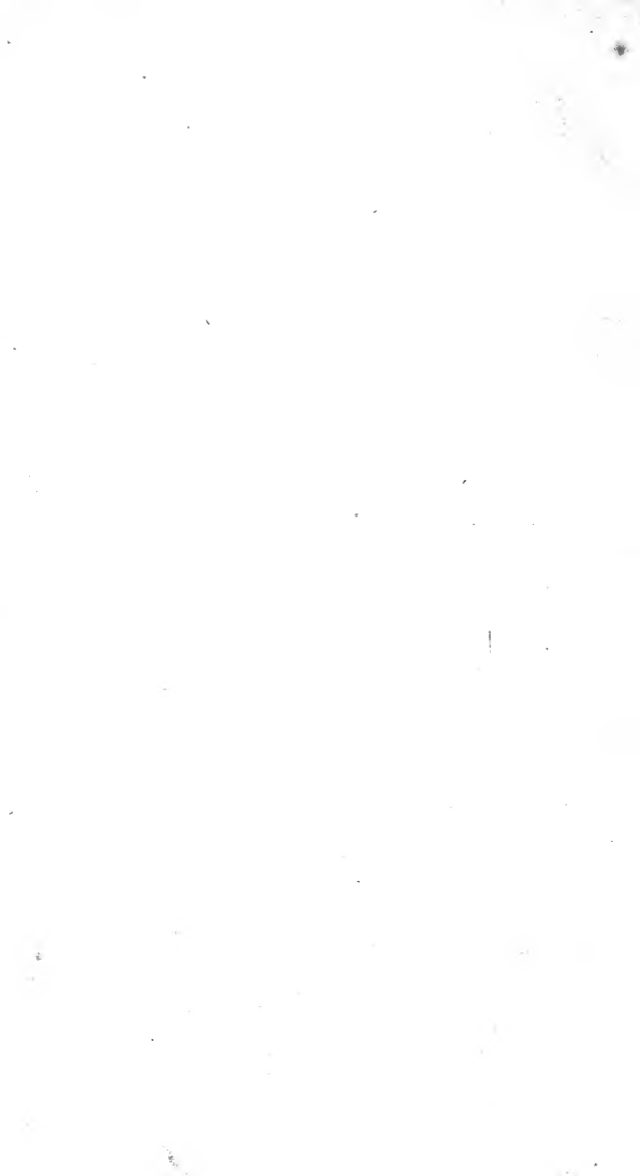
<sup>g</sup> Heb. vi. 6.

<sup>h</sup> Propter modicas et quaslibet causas. Iren. ut supra.

peaceful indifference to non-essential points, as it is manifest these holy Fathers of the primitive Church had; the sorest divisions amongst us would well nigh heal of themselves; we should need no litigious volumes of controversy to apply to them, which rather fret than cure; they would insensibly dissolve within every man's own breast, through the gentle, but powerful, influence of that spirit of peace, humility, and love, which, for so many ages together, kept the universal Church of Christ in so amiable and admired an unity within itself. May the dying petition of the great Lord and Redeemer of the Church, so often and so affectionately repeated to the Father, for the peace and unity of us all, procure that miracle of mercy for us, that *we all may be one, even as the Father and He are one*<sup>i</sup>. Amen, Amen.

<sup>i</sup> John xvii. 11, 21, 22, 23.

THE END.







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