

A Congregation does not have the Whole Power of the Keys of Church Government from Christ

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1642

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Outline

Chapter 13

'Whether or not every particular congregation and church has of itself independent power from Christ to exercise the whole power of the Keys without any subjection to any superior ecclesiastical jurisdiction?'

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Chapter 16

‘Whether or not it can be demonstrated from God’s Word that all particular congregations have of, and within themselves, full power of Church discipline without any subjection to presbyteries, synods, or higher assemblies?’

Objection 1 20

Churches planted by the apostles (e.g. Corinth) had all power within themselves to exercise church discipline

Objection 2 29

Acts 14:2, ‘Then appointed they elders by the peoples consent in every church.’ Therefore, every congregation has power to choose their own pastors and elders.

Objection 3 32

From Col. 2:4, that the Church of Colosse had order, and so discipline, within themselves. Therefore, Colosse was an independent church. So was Thessalonica, which had the power of excommunication within themselves (1 Thess. 3:6).

Objection 4 33

The seven churches of Asia are commanded or rebuked by Christ for exercising or omitting discipline (Rev. 2,3). Every candlestick stood by itself and was independent.

Objection 5 35

If Christ bids church members to tell the particular church of offending brothers (Matt 18:19). Therefore, it may excommunicate and so has power within itself of the highest censures and is independent. Ursinus, Zwingli, Beza, Erasmus, Whittaker, etc. (they say) expound this of a particular congregation.

Objection 6 36

Every particular church is the Body of Christ, his Spouse, Wife, and Kingdom (1 Cor. 12:20,27 with 4:17; 5:12; 11:23,26; 14:33; Matt 18 r. 7, [...]0), and everyone has received faith of equal price (2 Pet. 1:1). Consequently everyone has equal power and right to the keys of the Kingdom (1 Tim. 1:3,15). Therefore one church is not above another.

Objection 7 37

Provincial and national churches are human forms brought in after the similitude of civil governments. There is no such church properly so called, but a parish church.

Objection 8 38

The Popish superiority of one Church over another would be lawful if a church be in bondage under another church. Better a great Lord Pope than to be under many national Lords in a national church assembly.

Objection 9 39

If a representative church consisting only of pastors, doctors and elders be a Church of Christ's institution, then it should have a pastor over it as all churches have. And if it be a general council, then the pastor thereof can be no other than the Pope.

Objection 10 39

That which concerns all should be handled by all. Matters of discipline concern the conscience and practice of all. Therefore, all and every believer should handle matters of discipline, and not some few of a whole nation who represents the rest.

Objection 11 40

It is a Popish abusing of the people of God to exclude them from all government of God's house, and to lead the people on in an implicit faith and blind obedience

Chapter 13

‘Whether or not every particular congregation and church has of itself independent power from Christ to exercise the whole power of the Keys without any subjection to any superior ecclesiastical jurisdiction?’

Introduction

It is known that these of the Separation (and others), whom we love and reverence, contend for the independency of every visible congregation, denying that they are subject to synods, presbyteries, and national assemblies of the consociated churches; holding that they can, and may, give counsel and brotherly advice in matters doubtful, but that presbyteries or synods have no ecclesiastical power to command in the Lord any congregation whatsoever.

I observed before that there are two degrees [types] of an independent church:

1. In every visible congregation there is a number of believers to whom (our Brethren say) Christ has committed the power of the Keys, who have power to choose and ordain their own officers, pastors, doctors, elders and deacons, and also to judicially censure, rebuke, sentence, depose and excommunicate these same office-bearers. We have disputed already against this [type of] Independent church.

2. There is another [type of] Independent church, which is that same congregation of believers newly clothed with a settled and constituted eldership: one pastor, and elders and doctors.

Of this [second type of] congregation is our present question. This congregation again has either only one pastor with a number of elders, or it has a number of pastors and elders who meet for discipline, which is a presbyterial Church, such as we esteem the church of Corinth and the church of Ephesus to have been. The question is of a visible Church in both senses.

For the former [such congregation], they have within themselves some power of discipline, so far as concerns themselves (as the arguments of our brethren do prove), but with subordination to the eldership of their own and other sister and consociate congregations who shall meet in a presbytery.

The Church in the latter meaning cannot conveniently meet in all and every one of the members thereof, but does meet in their rulers. So the eldership of Ephesus did meet (Acts 20:17), as well as Paul, James and the eldership of Jerusalem (Acts 21:18-21). Of this presbytery that ordained Timothy to be a pastor, we read in 1 Tim. 4:14. So met the eldership of Ephesus (Rev. 2:2), whereof there were a number of pastors (as we may read in Acts 20:28-29,36) who tried those who called themselves apostles but did lie and were found liars.

This presbytery, consisting of more pastors, is the first ruling and governing Church [in authority], having the power of the Keys in all points of discipline within themselves. They have the power of the keys intensively in all points and have equal intensive power with greater synods and assemblies (as ordination of pastors by them, 1 Tim. 4:14, is as valid in the point of Church discipline as the decrees made in the great council convened at Jerusalem, Acts 15:21,22, etc.) But provincial synods and

national assemblies have greater extensive power than the presbyteries, because they have power as a great body to exercise discipline that concerns the whole congregations of all the nation, which power is not in inferior elderships.

Arguments

1st Argument: There is not to be found in the Word a congregation with one pastor and an eldership that has the power of all discipline independently within itself. I prove this:

1. I reason from the apostolic church's practice, which must be a pattern to us: And first, let no man say the argument is weak, because the apostolic church being liable to persecution, and parishes not then settled, their order cannot be a rule to us: For:

1. We have not a perfect pattern if the apostolic church be laid aside, as no rule to us.

2. It is said, Acts 9:31. Then had the Churches rest throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy-Ghost, were multiplied. Hence if there be not a pattern of such an independent congregation by precept or practice, where one particular congregation with one pastor, and their eldership did exercise, or may exercise all power of the keys in all points: Then such an independent congregation is not to be held; but the former is true: For

1. An instance cannot be given in the point of ordination of ministers, by a congregation with one pastor. We desire an instance.

2. All ordination by practice and precept in the New Testament is by more pastors than one; yea by a college of pastors, which is clear, Acts 1:13, the eleven apostles were at the ordination of Matthias, and the apostle Peter presides in the action. And Acts 6:2, the twelve apostles did ordain the seven deacons, verse 6, and prayed and laid their hands on them, verse 6, It is vain that Turrecremata and other Papists say, that Peter himself alone might have chosen the seven deacons.¹ See for this Whitgift opposing Turrecremata, and Whittaker.² Also see Acts 13:1-3. Prophets and teachers with the apostles sent Paul and Barnabas to preach to the Gentiles, and they fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them. So Paul and Barnabas, if there were not more pastors with them, Acts 14:23, appointed Elders in every Church with fasting and prayer, Acts 20:17, verse 28. There was a College of preaching elders at Ephesus, and at Philippi, Phil. 1:2. Bishops and deacons at Thessalonica, 1 Thess. 9:12, a multitude, that is, more than one pastor that were over them in the Lord, and labored amongst them, and admonished them, verse 13, 1 Tim 4:14, a college or senate of Presbyters or Pastors, who ordained Timothy by the laying on of hands.

¹ De P[...].tif. l. 2. ch. 1, p. 64

² Whittaker, *De Conc.*, question 5, p. 150

2. If ordination of pastors in the Word be never given to people, or believers, or to ruling elders; but still to pastors, as is clear, 1 Tim. 5:22; Tit. 1:5; Acts 6:6; Acts 13:3; 2 Tim. 1:6; 1 Tim. 4:14. And if ordination in the word of God be never in the power of one single pastor (except we bring in a prelate into the church) then one pastor, with one single congregation cannot exercise this point of discipline, and so not all points of discipline.

3. If the preaching elders be charged by the Spirit of God to watch against grievous wolves speaking perverse things, Acts 20:29,30,31[...], and rebuked because they suffer them to teach false doctrine; and commended, because they try false teachers, and cast them out, Rev. 2:14, verse 20, verse 2, if they be commanded to ordain faithful men, 2 Tim. 2:2, and taught whom they should ordain, Tit. 1:5-7; 1 Tim. 3:2-5; 1 Tim. 5:22, and whom they should reject, as unmeet for the work of the Lord: Then one pastor and a single congregation have not the power of this point of discipline, and so they are not independent within themselves; but the former is said by God's Word. Therefore, so is the latter.

2nd Argument: That government is not of God, nor from the wisdom of Christ the Lawgiver, which devises means of discipline for edifying the people by the Keys and omits means for edifying by the Keys the elders of every particular congregation. But the doctrine of Independent congregations is such. Therefore, that doctrine is not of God.

The proposition is clear, Christ's perfect government has ways and means in his Testament, to edify all ranks and degrees of people, for the perfecting of the body of his saints, Eph. 3:11; 1 Cor. 5:4,5; Matt 18:15,16; John 20:21-23. I prove the assumption: If a pastor and six or twelve elders turn scandalous in their lives, and unsound and corrupt in the faith: there is no way of gaining them by the power of the keys; for there be but three ways imaginable.

1. That they should censure and use the rod against themselves, which is against nature, reason and unwritten in the Word of God.
2. They cannot be censured by presbyteries and synods; for the doctrine of independent congregations does abhor this.
3. And thirdly, they cannot be censured by the multitude of believers; for 1. The Lord has not given the rod and power of edification, such as Paul speaks of, 1 Cor. 4:20,21, to the flock over the overseers. 2. This is popular government and worse, the flock made overseers to the shepherds, the sons authorized to correct the fathers. 3. We desire a pattern of this government from the word of God.

3rd Argument: Our third argument is from many absurdities. That doctrine is not sound from whence flow many absurdities contrary to God's Word. But from the doctrine of Independent congregations without subordination to synods, flow many absurdities contrary to God's Word. Therefore, that doctrine is not sound.

The major [premise] is out of controversy, and is clear; for the Scripture's reason from absurdities, 1 Cor. 15:14,15; John 8:55. I prove the assumption, as:

1. The prophets shall not be authoritatively judged by prophets and pastors, but by the multitude, contrary to that, 1 Cor. 14:29. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.
2. Authoritative and judicial excommunication was in the pastors and elders power, 1 Co. 5:4; 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Cor. 10:8; 1 Cor. 4:21, this doctrine puts authoritative and judicial excommunication into the hands of all the people.
3. All the assemblies of pastors in the apostolic church, for the discipline which concerned many churches, upon necessary causes shall be temporary and

extraordinary, and so not obliging us now, as Acts 1; Acts 6; Acts 11:1; Acts 8:14; Acts 13:1-3; Acts 15; Acts 21:18,19; 1 Tim. 4:14, and yet these same necessary causes of such assemblies, as divisions between Grecians and Hebrews, heresies, schisms remain in the church to the world's end.

4. Those who authoritatively govern and edify the church, are men separated from the world, not entangled with the affairs of this life, 2 Tim. 2:2-5, therefore if all the multitude govern and oversee both themselves and their guides: they are not to remain in their callings, as tradesmen, servants, merchants, lawyers, etc., but to give themselves wholly to the overseeing of the church, contrary to that which the Word of God says, ordaining every man to abide in his calling, 1 Cor. 7:20-22; Col. 3:22; 1 Thess. 4:11.

5. [If] Believers are overseers to excommunicate, deprive, censure, and authoritatively rebuke their pastors, and so:

1. Are pastors of pastors, overseers and watchmen, over their overseers and watchmen.

2. The relation of pastor and flock, of feeders and a people fed is taken away.

3. That which the Scripture ascribes to pastors only, 1 Tim. 5:19,20. Tit. 1:13, verse 9, is given to private professors.

6. The brotherly consociation of the authority and power of jurisdiction in many sister-Churches united together, is taken away, there is no Christian communion of Church officers, as Church officers.

7. All particular churches are left, in case of errors, to the immediate judgment of Christ, and obnoxious to no church censures, suppose they consist of six or ten professors only.

8. The grounds of the doctrine are these same arguments, which Anabaptists and Socinians use against the places of kings, judges, magistrates, to wit, that believers are free, redeemed, bought with a price, all things are theirs; and therefore all power, which consequence is no stronger the one way, than the other.

9. It lays a blot upon Christ's wisdom, who has appointed congregations to be edified by no power of the keys in case of aberration and incorrigible obstinacy.

10. It makes the Word of God imperfect, which sets down no canons, how the believers of an independent church should govern, and Paul teaches how Timothy and Titus, and all churchmen should govern.

11. It excludes not women from usurping authority over men, by judging, excommunicating, ordaining pastors, seeing they are the body and spouse of Christ as believing men are.

12. It makes the sacraments no sacraments, the baptized non-baptized, and in the place of Turks; if possibly the pastor and the ten professors of the Independent church be unbelievers, which is too ordinary.

13. By this an assembly of pastors and elders from diverse congregations, have no more the power of the keys, than one single man, who may counsel and advise his brother.

14. Extreme confusion and inevitable schisms hence arise, whilst such a sister-church says, I am Paul's, and her sister-church says, I am Apollo's, and there is no remedy against this fire.

15. The pattern of a church governing and ministerial, consisting of only believers, is neither in all the scriptures, antiquity, nor in the writings of divines. But of these I shall speak more fully hereafter, God willing.

4th Argument: That doctrine is not to be held which tends to the removing of a public ministry; but the doctrine of independent churches is such. Therefore, the doctrine of independent churches is not to be held.

The proposition is out of doubt, seeing Christ has ordained a public ministry for the gathering of his Church, Eph. 3:11; 1 Cor. 11:1; ch. 14; 1 Tim. 3:1-3; Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12,13; 1 Cor. 5:4. Matt 16:19; Matt 28:18; John 20:21-23.

I prove the assumption. By the doctrine of Independency, two or three, or ten or twelve private Christians in a private family, joining themselves covenant-wise to worship God is a true visible Church:

So the *English Puritanism*. So a treatise called, *Light for the Ignorant*.³ So the *Guide to Zion*.⁴ So the Separatists⁵ holding Independent congregations, define a visible church, every company, congregation or assembly of true believers, joining together according to the order of the Gospel, in the true worship, is a true visible church. This being the true definition of an independent congregation from the writings of the patrons thereof, I prove that it takes away the necessity of public ministry:

³ *English Puritanism*, me, ch. 2, article 1, p. 4; *Light for the Ignorant*, 1641, p. 20

⁴ *Guide to Zion*, position 11, p. 7

⁵ Separatist. 3. petition to King James [...] p. 44

1. Because every twelve in a private family is this way joined together, and is an independent church.
2. This congregation being independent, it has within itself the power of the keys, and is not subject (says the *English Puritanism*⁶) to any other superior ecclesiastical jurisdiction, than to that which is within itself.

Objection 1: But, Katherin says,⁷ private Christians have the Spirit. Therefore they may pray.

Answer: God forbid we deny, but they both may and ought to pray continually: but hence it follows not affirmative, a *genere ad speciem*, therefore they may authoritatively, not being called of God, as was Aaron, and invade the pastors chair, and pray and fast and lay on hands by ministerial authority, as the pastors do, Acts 6:6, Acts 13:3.

Objection 2: The Church (says the feminine author, p. 8) is not blind so that none have power of seeing but only the officers.

Answer: All believers see and discern true and false teachers, 1 John 4:1; Heb. 5:14; 2 Cor. 3:18; Ps. 119:18; Eph. 1:17, but it follows not, *affirmative, a genere ad speciem*, therefore they do all see as the eye of the body, with an authoritative and pastoral light and eye; for then all the body should be an eye, where were then the hearing? (2 Cor. 12:17)

⁶ *English Puritanism*, ch. 2, article 3, p. 4

⁷ *Against Mr. Edwards*, p. 7,8

Objection 3: Within itself there is no ministerial jurisdiction. For in the definition of a ministerial Church there is a deep silence of ministers or office bearers, and good reason by their grounds, who hold it: For it is a society of believers joined together covenant-wise in the true worship of God, which society has power to ordain and elect their own pastors and elders. Here is the power of the keys to bind and loose on earth, as Christ binds and looses in Heaven, Matt 18:18; 16:19, and a ministerial act of these keys, to wit, the ordaining of pastors, doctors, elders and deacons; before there be any pastor, doctor or elder or deacon. A ministry then must only be necessary, *ad bene esse, non ad esse simpliciter*, 'to the better or well-being of the independent church, and not to the simple being of the church,' for the thing must have a perfect constituted being and essence, before it can have any operation, and working proceeding from that being: as one must be a living creature endued with a sensitive soul, before it can hear, or see, or touch; now this independent church, must have the perfect essence and being of a ministerial church, seeing it does by the power of the keys within itself constitute and ordain her own ministers and pastors; and if they were joined in the worship of God before they had ministers, they did in a visible way (being a visible church in the complete being of a visible church) worship God, before they had ministers; for before they ordain their ministers, they must keep the apostolic order, fast and pray, and lay on their hands, for so did the apostles, Acts 1:24; Acts 6:6; Acts 13:3; Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:5. So here are, public fasting, public praying, public ordination of a visible and independent church, and as yet they have no ministers; So in case the eldership of a congregation shall all turn scandalous and heretical, this same independent congregation may excommunicate them. Therefore, before excommunication, they must publicly and by the power of the keys, convince them of heresy, rebuke them, pray for them, and finally by the spirit of Paul a pastor, 1 Cor. 5:4, judicially cast them out. Now let all be judges, if this be far from pastoral preaching, and if here be not ministerial acts, and the highest judicial and authoritative censure exercised by no ministers at all; and what hinders by this reason, but the independent church (that does publicly and authoritatively pray, fast, rebuke, convince gainsayers, make and unmake, by the

power of the keys, pastors and ministers) may also without ministers preach, and administer the sacraments? against which the Separatists themselves do speak⁸ and give reasons from scripture, that none may administer the sacraments, until the pastors and teachers be chosen and ordained in their office.

But hence we clearly see [according to them] an independent church constituted in its complete essence, and exercising ministerial acts, and using the keys without any ministry and edifying their ministers, so that a ministry is accidental, and a stranger to the independent church both in its nature and working, and seeing they edify others without a ministry: why may not private families, where the independent church dwells, edify themselves without a public ministry? I read in Arminian⁹ and Socinian writings, that seeing that the scriptures are now patent to all:

1. A sent ministry is rather useful and profitable than necessary.
2. The preaching of the Word by ministers is not necessary: So Episcopius:¹⁰ The Arminians in their Apology,¹¹ and the catechism of Raccovia:¹² I will not impute these conclusions to our dear brethren, but I entreat the Father of Lights to make them see the premises.

⁸ Separatists' Confession, article 34, p. 25

⁹ Remonstrants in confession, ch. 21, sec. [...], 4

¹⁰ Episcopius, Disputation 26, 23

¹¹ Remonstrants, Apol fol. 246

¹² *Catechism of Raccovi* | e[...s de eccles. C[...i] | sti a · 11. [...].l. 305. 306. & 16. fol.[...]01 30[...]

3. Three or four believers this way in covenant joined together to worship God, have intensively and essentially all the power of the keys, as the Council convened at Jerusalem, Acts 15:4, the power of ordination, public praying, public and authoritative convincing of the gainsayers, and judicial rebuking, which Paul ascribes to the pastors and preaching elders, 1 Tim. 5:20,21; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:9; 2 Tim. 4:2, as essential parts proper to their calling, do not agree at all to pastors, but by accident, in so far as they are believers, or parts of an independent congregation by this doctrine; for if the keys and the use of the keys, in all these ministerial acts, be given to a society of believers so joined in covenant to serve God, as to the first, native and independent subject: all these must agree to ministers at the second hand, and by communication. For if God has given heat to the fire, as to the first and native subject; all other things must be hot by borrowing heat from the fire; and so pastors rebuke, exhort, ordain pastors, censure and excommunicate pastors only by accident, and at the by, in so far as they are believers, and parts of the independent congregation: And all these are exercised most kindly in an independent congregation by some of their number, suppose there be no pastors at all in the congregation. Robinson¹³ and Katherin Childly¹⁴ say, as a private citizen may become a magistrate: So a private member may become a minister in case of necessity, to ordain pastors in a congregation, where there is none, and therefore (say they) the church may subsist for a time without pastor or elder.

Answer:

1. In an extraordinary case a private man, yea a prophet as Samuel has performed, by the extraordinary impulsion of the spirit, that which King Saul should do, to

¹³ *Justification of Separatists*, p. 121-2

¹⁴ *Against Mr. Edwards*, p. 3

wit, he may kill Agag; but an independent congregation of private men ordaining pastors (say our Brethren) is Christs settled ordinance to the world's end.

2. The question is, whether the church can subsist a politic ministerial body without pastors and elders.

3. By this the independent way is extraordinary, where a private man may invade the pastor's chair; then synods must be ordinary: else they must give us another way than their independent way or presbyterial churches, that is ordinary. I desire also to know, how our brethren who are for the maintenance of independent churches, can eschew the public prophesying of some qualified in the church, even of persons never called to be pastors, which the Separatists do maintain to the grief of the godly and learned; for in an independent congregation, where pastors and elders are not yet chosen, and when they are in process to excommunicate them, who shall publicly pray, exhort, rebuke, convince the eldership to be ordained or excommunicated? I doubt, but a grosser point than the prophesying of men who are in no pastoral calling must be held, to the discharging of all these public actions of the church; yea, I see not but with a like warrant, private men may administer the sacraments; because Christ from his mediatorial power gave one and the same ministerial power to pastors, to teach and baptize, Matt 28:18,19.

5th Argument: If God's word allow a presbyterial Church, and a presbytery of pastors and elders, then we are not to hold any such independent congregation; for our brethren acknowledge they cannot consist together.¹⁵

But the former is clear, 1 Tim. 4:14; Matt 18:17,18, and is proved by us already. Other arguments I shall (God willing) add in the following questions.

¹⁵ Ch. 7, question 7, conclusion 4

Chapter 16

‘Whether or not it can be demonstrated from God’s Word that all particular congregations have of, and within themselves, full power of Church discipline without any subjection to presbyteries, synods, or higher assemblies?’

Very reverend and holy men hold the affirmative part of this question, and deny all subjection of congregations to presbyteries and assemblies.¹⁶

Objection 1: Their first argument is: If churches planted by the apostles (such as Corinth) have power within themselves to exercise church discipline, as to rebuke, excommunicate, loose and relax from excommunication, then particular congregations now ought not to stand under any other ecclesiastical authority outside of themselves.

But the former is true: 1 Cor. 5:2,3 [therefore so is the latter]. So Mr. Best, Parker, the Separatists,¹⁷ Robinson,¹⁸ and the authors of *Presbyterial Government Examined*¹⁹ prove that all believers in Corinth had a voice in excommunication [by these reasons]:

1. They who the fornicator was amongst were they who were puffed up and sorrowed not that he was not cut off. They were to be gathered together in one [group] and to judge and excommunicate (v. 12). But the fornicator was not amongst the elders only but amongst all the believers. Neither were the elders

¹⁶ Mr. Best, Church’s Plea, sect. 7. at. 1. and 4. p. 68; Parker de Polit. l 3. c. 4

¹⁷ Separation, 3 Pet. Pos 8 and 3

¹⁸ Robinson against Bernard, p. 70

¹⁹ *Presbyterial Government Examined*, anno 16[...]. p. 12, 13

only puffed up, nor were they the only [ones who did] not sorrow that the incestuous man was not cut off, but the believers also were puffed up and did not sorrow that he was not cut off. Therefore, all the believers had voices in judging and excommunicating.

2. Of old not only the Levites were to purge out the leaven, but all Israel also. Therefore here it is not the elders only who are to purge out this leaven.

3. Paul writes not only to the elders not to be mixed with the fornicators, but to all the faithful.

4. The faithful, and not the elders only, were to forgive, 2 Cor. 2.

Answer: I will first answer these reasons and withal show how the people had a hand in excommunication, and might prove that there was a presbytery of many pastors at Corinth (and not a single congregation of one pastor and some few elders and believers) who did excommunicate. I retort these arguments:

1. [Assuming that the Independents' major proposition is true:] These with whom the fornicator did converse (and so leavened them), these who were puffed up and sorrowed not at the man's fall and at his not being cut off by excommunication, these were judicially to excommunicate with the elders. But the fornicator conversed amongst believing women and children and did leaven them. Believing women and children were puffed up and sorrowed not. Therefore, believing women and children did judicially excommunicate. But this conclusion is foul and against the argumentators. Therefore, so must some of the premisses be foul and false. But the assumption is most true; therefore their major proposition must be false. Therefore they must first acknowledge a representative church with us and that men only did judicially excommunicate (and not all the faithful), except they

make women ordinary judges usurping the authority over men. Then the number of these who were puffed up and sorrowed not at his fall, etc., must be more than the number of the persons who should judicially excommunicate.

2. The authors of *Presbyterial Government Examined* say:²⁰ Elders are principally to judge and to be leaders and first actors in excommunicating and the people are to follow in the second room and assent. So say our divines, Walleus,²¹ Bucanus,²² Rollock,²³ Beza.²⁴ Therefore [Rutherford concludes against the Independents], Paul cannot rebuke private believers [as the Independents say] because they did not excommunicate judicially in the first room. For then Paul should have rebuked the elders and leaders for not excommunicating in the order answerable to their place and power, and because they did not judicially and authoritatively lead, and go before as first actors and prime moderators in the judicial act of delivering of the man to Satan. And so Paul cannot in reason rebuke all the faithful amongst whom the scandalous man did converse and who were puffed up and sorrowed not at the man's fall, because they did not excommunicate judicially [as the Independents claim]. At most they can be rebuked only for not excommunicating in the second room and in that orderly and subordinate way suitable to their place and power.

3. I see no footstep of any tolerable ground in the text why it should be alleged that all the faithful men coming to age (to speak nothing of believing women and children) are rebuked for not judicially excommunicating the fornicator. But, rather the contrary: that the faithful [lay-persons], being out of office, were not to

²⁰ p. 23

²¹ Antonius Walleus, location in *Commentary*, p. 1012

²² Bucan, *Commentary* in location, 44. q. 13

²³ Rollock, *Commentary* on 2 Thess. 3

²⁴ Beza, Maj., in 1 Cor. 5:4

excommunicate judicially. For applying these words as a reproof to believing men (v. 2 'And you are puffed up and have not rather sorrowed, that, to the end that he that has done this deed may be taken from amongst you. '), he uses the passive verb (not the active), whereby it appears that the believers were patients rather than agents in not judicially and authoritatively taking away the man from amongst them, and that their fault was that they mourned not to God for the man's fall, and [their fault includes] the remiss negligence of the elders by whose authority he might have been authoritatively delivered to Satan. Pareus says,²⁵ that he blames the believers' security; Calvin, their not being humbled at the fall, and Cajetan²⁶ that they boasted that the fornicator was the sinner, not they.

4. That great divine Junius does excellently observe that Paul joins himself as an extraordinary elder with the ordinary eldership of Corinth, v. 4: 'When you are gathered together with my spirit.' For, as I observed before, Paul requires not only that they be gathered together in the name of Christ, which is required in all meetings for God's worship in prayers, Word and sacraments, but also here he requires that they meet (says he) with 'my spirit', that is, with my presbyterial power of the keys (1 Cor. 4:21) and with the authority which the Lord has given us for edification (2 Cor. 10:8), as I am an elder. So said the prophet to Gehazi (2 Kings 5:26), 'went not my spirit with you?' that is, my prophetic power, Col. 2:5, 'For though I be absent in the flesh, yet I am present in spirit.' Now the believers out of office [lay-persons] did not convene in this meeting endued with Paul's ministerial and pastoral spirit. For single believers receive not a ministerial spirit from God; neither is such a spirit promised to them. Give an instance in scripture of this promise and we shall lose this cause. But this spirit for doctrine and discipline is so given to pastors: 1 Cor. 4:21; 2 Cor. 10:8; Col. 4:17; 2 Cor. 4:1; 2 Cor.

²⁵ Pareus, *Commentary*, *ibid.*; O[...]*lvin.*

²⁶ [...]. *Jactatis vos incu[...]*pali[...]*es esse. Iu[...]*u[...]** Eccl. 1. 2. c. 1, & 9. n. 14**

5:18; 1 Cor. 12:28,29,17. Therefore the coming together with Paul's spirit, that is, with his ministerial power of the keys as an elder, must be restrained to the eldership of Corinth and cannot be applied to single believers, men, women and children, who yet were puffed up and sorrowed not (v 2). Therefore this is not a gathering together of an independent congregation of believers, men and women, meeting with Paul's spirit and his presbyterial power of the keys in an authoritative and judicial way to excommunicate, but it must be a gathering together of these who had such a pastoral and ministerial spirit and power as Paul had. I deny not but the faithful convened (or were to convene in this meeting with the eldership) for praying and hearing the word preached (which must be conjoined with excommunication), but the meeting is denominated pastoral and presbyterial with spiritual power from the specially intended end in that act, which was authoritatively to deliver the fornicator to Satan.

And Ursinus²⁷ thinks (not without reason) that the man was excommunicated, and there being a space intervening between Paul's writing of the first, and his second epistle to the Corinthians, that Paul (2 Cor. 2) writes for relaxing him from the sentence of excommunication. Also, Paul, when he says, 'I have already judged as present', means not a popular or private judging (as we say the physician judges of the disease by the pulse and the geometer judges of figures, as Marsilius speaks,²⁸), but understands a joint authoritative judging with the eldership, otherwise he needed not to add 'but present in spirit' (as if I were present, having already judged), for whether he had been absent or present, he might have given his private mind of the due demerit of so scandalous a sin.

²⁷ Ursinus, in exp[...] Ca[...]e. de excom.

²⁸ Marsilius, pata. p dict 1 c. 2

5. The main thing that our brethren rest much on is that one command of delivering to Satan (v. 4), purging out the old leaven (v. 7) and the word of judging that Paul takes to himself (v. 4) is given (v. 12), to all believers, and to all that he writes unto. But Paul [the independents say] would not say that they command the believers to do that which they had no authority and power from Christ to do, if all believers had not power judicially to excommunicate. But I answer:

1. Beside that this is to bring in a popular government in God's house, they consider not that they presuppose as granted what we justly deny: that all and every verse of this chapter is spoken jointly and equally to all (both elders and people). This cannot in reason be said, as in other parts of the epistle, he sometimes speaks of all, (as 1 Cor. 11:4,5), both pastors and people, sometimes of the people (1 Cor. 1:12; 1 Cor. 4:1), sometimes of teachers only (1 Cor. 3:12; 1 Cor. 4:2).

2. One and the same word [...], ('to purge out the leaven', v. 7), applied to both elders and believers, has diverse meanings according as it is applied to diverse subjects, so that: the elders did excommunicate and purge out one way (that is authoritatively and with Paul's spirit and ministerial power; I mean that same power in kind and speech that was in Paul was in the elders, for Paul was no prelate above other pastors), and the people did purge out the leaven another way, by a popular consenting that he should be excommunicated.

And this is well grounded on scripture; see Acts 4:27,28: Herod, Pilate, the gentiles and Jews crucified Christ. Now it is certain they did not crucify Him one and the same way: Pilate judicially, the people of the Jews in a popular way, of asking and consenting, crucified Him. So 1 Sam. 12:18, 'All the people greatly feared the Lord, and Samuel'. That same verb [...] *jara*,

'to fear', expresses both the people's fearing of God, which is a religious fear commanded in the First Commandment and due to God only, and the people's fearing of Samuel, which civil reverence given to Samuel as to a prophet is a far inferior fear and commanded in the Fifth Commandment. So Prov. 24:21, 'My son fear the Lord and the King.' 1 Chron. 29:20, 'And the people worshipped Jehovah and the king.' The verb is [...] *shachah*, which signifies 'to bow and incline the body religiously', but the meaning cannot be that the people gave one and the same religious worship to God and the king, for that should be idolatry.

So howbeit elders and believers were rebuked for not excommunicating, and both commanded to excommunicate and purge out the leaven, it will never follow that both has one and the same judicial power to excommunicate. But every one should purge out the leaven according to their place and power. Israel is commanded to put out the leper, yet the priest only put him out judicially. And Israel is commanded to put to death the false prophet, and so to put away evil out of the midst of them (Deut. 13:5), and yet the judge did put away the evil judicially and authoritatively and the people as executioners by stoning him to death (v. 9,10). And what I say of excommunicating, that same is said of the authoritative pardoning of the fornicator (2 Cor. 2), for [...], as Ursinus observes,²⁹ is by authority to confirm their love to him, as Gal. 3:15, the testament is confirmed, [...], and so do Kemnitius, Calvin and Bullinger take the word.³⁰

It is also more than evident that the church of Corinth was not a congregation of believers only, or a congregation with one pastor only, and

²⁹ Ursinus, [...]t. q. 85. p. 490, art. 3

³⁰ Kemnitius, *Exam, conc. Trid. de indulg.* par. [...]. p. [...]9. Calvin con[...], ib. Bulling.

so not an independent congregation; for there was at Corinth a college of pastors and so a presbytery of elders, doctors, teachers and prophets. For:

1. Paul was but a founder of this church, there were many others that built upon the foundation Christ Jesus, and some built gold and silver, that is good and sound doctrine, some hay and stubble (1 Cor. 3:11-13). 1 Cor. 4:6: 'And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself, and to Apollo for your sakes, that you might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written.' Whence I collect: howbeit Paul, Apollo and Cephas were not constantly resident teachers at Corinth, yet there were other pastors there of whom Paul and Apollo were named as figures [examples] that with the less envy he might rebuke them. And amongst these many teachers, some said this is the best preacher, others said nay, but another preacher likes my ear better. And so there were so many choice pastors there (as the proverb was true amongst them, 'Wealth makes wit to waver') who Paul sharply rebukes as a schism (1 Cor. 1:12,13; 1 Cor. 3:4,5). So Paul says: Though you have ten thousand instructors, yet have you not many fathers (1 Cor. 4:15). [Therefore] Then, they had amongst them many teachers.

2. And it is clear from 1 Cor. 12:14-17,28-30, that there were amongst them apostles, prophets, doctors, governments, and ruling elders, and that this fault was amongst them: that the higher contemned the lower (which is, as if the eye should say, 'I have no need of the hand', and that they were not content of that place in Christ's body, as they would all be pastors and all eyes, and so, where then were the hearing? v. 17). And to these especially Paul directed his rebuke (1 Cor. 5), because of their neglect of discipline against scandalous

persons (not excluding the multitude of believers who also in their kind deserved to be rebuked).

3. We may see 1 Cor. 14. There was amongst them a good number of prophets who both prophesied two or three after the other, by co[...] [...]e, and who also by the power of the keys did publicly judge of true and false doctrine (v. 29), which is indeed our presbytery. See verses 1-3, 12-13, 24-26. So that it is a wonder to me that any learned men should think that the church of Corinth was one single and independent congregation and that they met all in one house (where the Lord had much people),

2. Where we are not to think in such a plentiful harvest of Christ, that so many pastors and teachers, and so many apostles and prophets, as there were there (as you may gather from 1 Cor. 14:24, 31-32), and so many speaking with diverse tongues, so many who wrought miracles, so many who had the gift of discerning, verses 26-27, that all these were employed to edify one single congregation who were all ordinary worshippers of God within the walls of one house.

4. We see how the false apostles and teachers labored to make Paul a despised apostle amongst them (as is clear in 2 Cor. 10-12), and so their meeting together (1 Cor. 5, 11, 14) must be expounded of their meeting distributively (not collectively, as though all met in one house). And suppose [on the Independents' assumption] that the pains of so numerous a company of prophets should do nothing but feed one single congregation which met all in one house, yet there was here a college of many pastors, prophets, doctors and elders

who have power of excommunication. So says [the separatist] Robinson,³¹ that there were many doctors and teachers in this church; and he proves it well from 1 Cor. 12. For which [text], see what our own divines say, as Calvin, Beza,³² Pareus,³³ Bullinger, Martyr, Pelican, and Pomeran.³⁴ So also Chrysostom, Theoph., Oecumen., Ambrose,³⁵ Lyra and Cajetan.³⁶ So I think this place thus discussed is much against independent churches and for the presbytery's power.

Objection 2: They object: Acts 14:2, 'Then appointed they elders by the peoples consent in every church.' Therefore, every congregation has power to choose their own pastors and elders.

Answer:

1. Paul and Barnabas (the apostles of Christ) chose elders in every church with the people's consent. Therefore, a congregation (wanting pastors) which ordains elders, can and may of themselves ordain pastors and elders. What a weak consequence is this? Pastors in an apostolic church ordained pastors. Therefore, the multitude have power to ordain pastors. I rather infer the contrary. Therefore there are no congregations of independent believers who have power to ordain

³¹ Mr. Robinson against Mr. Yates, p. 28

³² Beza a[...]. in 1 Cor. 12

³³ Calvin, Pareus, commentaries on 1 Cor. 12

³⁴ Bullinger, Martyr, Pelican, Pomeran, com. in 1 Cor. 14

³⁵ Chryso. Theoph. Oecumen. Ambros.

³⁶ Lyram, 1 Cor. 14, Caiet[...]

pastors without a college of pastors. And observe (says Cajetan on that place³⁷) that the fasting and prayers of the apostles were at the ordination of presbyteries.

2. Suppose [...] were applied to the people, I see not what can in reason be said against Vasquez,³⁸ who says it will follow only that they [the elders] were created by the consent of the people. And a man more to be respected than Vasquez, Francus Junius, says that 'lifting up of the hands' may well be meant of Paul and Barnabas: their hands.³⁹ See also Tilen,⁴⁰ Calvin, Beza and Bullinger.⁴¹ Ordinary election (says he) is from this commended, and this form of rite of lifting up of the hands was borrowed from the Grecians who gave suffrages with lifted up hands. However the people's free election is hence authorized, which form was used in Cyprian's time:⁴²

"Quando ipsa (plebs) maximè habeat potestatem, vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes, vel indignos recusandi, quod et ipsum videmus de divina autoritate descendere, ut sacerdos plebe presente sub omnium oculis deligatur, et dignus, at{que} idoneus publico iudicio ac testimonio comprobetur."

It is nought which Bellarmine says, that they had not *jus eligendi*, 'a power of choosing', but *jus ferendi testimonium devitâ ac moribus*, 'a power to give testimony of the life and conversation' of the pastors chosen. But this good man sees not that this is a power of election by Cyprian's testimony and no power of choosing, which [alternative] is a contradiction. And so says Theodoret,⁴³ avouching this

³⁷ Cajetan, on Acts 14:23

³⁸ Vasquez in 3. par. Thom. tom. 3 disp. 24 [...] c. 5

³⁹ Junius, de cloric., c. 7. n 61

⁴⁰ Tilen., disp 25 de voc. min thes. 15, 16

⁴¹ Calvin. com[...]b. Beza. in mai ib. Bullinger, ibid.

⁴² Cyprian, l. 1. epist. 4. Bellar.

⁴³ Theod, l. 1. c. 9

[the right of election from this passage] to be the mind of the Council of Nicea (in an epistle to the bishops of Alexandria) and the first general Council at Constantinople.⁴⁴ Only from the time of Frederick the ij. who died, A.D. 1300, were the people excluded from the power of choosing pastors and elders, and this was the deed of Gregory IX as Krantzius reports. Vasquez defends Illyricus in this,⁴⁵ whom Bellarmine refutes, It is true some say the election of Alexander the iij. which was four hundred years before, was made by the cardinals only, without the people's consent: But 1. What may the Antichrist not d[...]? his deed is not law.

2. Who can believe such a dreamer as Radevicus, who alleges this.⁴⁶ Platine (I grant) says, that Gregory the 7th was chosen 500 years before, by the cardinals only: But to these I add Gregory was a lawless man, and from lawless facts without the authority of scriptures and synods no lawful election, without the consent of the people, can be concluded. But what can be said against Chrysostom, Leo and Gregor. Magn. and many clear testimonies for us,⁴⁷ which are to be seen in Gratian,⁴⁸ all affirming that the ancient Church required the consent of the people to the ordination of elders, but all these expressly speake of popular cognition of the good parts, gifts and holiness of the chosen elders, and do still ascribe authoritative ordination of elders to the presbytery of elders, as all ancients with one pen affirm.

⁴⁴ Council Nicea, epist. ad episc. Alexand. Concil. Constantin[...]. Greg [...].x. i[...] Missana de electione. Kran[...]zius l 8. Metrop. c. 3

⁴⁵ Vasquez. in 3. Tho. tom. 3. disp. 244 c. 5. n. 55

⁴⁶ Radevicus, de gest. F[...]de, 1, c. 50

⁴⁷ Leo, epist. 89. ad episcop. per V[...]jennensem provinc. Gregor. Mag epist. l 2 c. 69

⁴⁸ Gratian, dist. 32, 34 [...], 63

Objection 3: They object from Col. 2:4 that the Church of Colosse had order, and so discipline, within themselves. Therefore, Colosse was an independent church. And that same they allege of the church of Thessalonica, which had the power of excommunication within themselves (1 Thess. 3:6).

Answer:

1. Seeing Epaphras (Col. 1:7) and Archippus (Col. 4:17) and others were their pastors at Colosse, it is no marvel that they had discipline within themselves, but what then? therefore they had discipline independently, the congregation not standing under subjection to the presbitery, it follows in no wise.

2. They had discipline within themselves, not being compassed with sister-churches in a Christian consociation, it will not follow therefore churches consociated with other churches. 2. Churches in case of aberration. 3. Churches in points of discipline that concerns many churches. 4. In the case of difficulties that cannot be expedited and determined by the particular churches, it will not (I say) follow, that they have power of discipline independently, and without subordination to superiour judicatures.

3. The conclusion to be proved is, that one pastor with some ruling elders and believers is the most supreme ministerial church, subordinate to none other church assemblies now in Thessalonica, 1 Thess. 5:12,13, there were many pastors who warned and admonished them. The Syrian says (who stand before your face to teach you) Beza says they were teachers: so Erasmus, Calvin, Bullinger, so he stiles the pastors: so Marlorat, Sutlu. Brightman, Scultetus.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Syrus [...]inistror[...] periphraasis. Beza. ib. Erasm. Calvin. Bulling. Marlorat. Su[...]vius. Brightman. Scultetu[...].

Objection 4: They object, the seven churches of Asia are commanded, or rebuked by Christ for exercising or omitting discipline, every candlestick stood by itself, and held forth her own light, if they had had dependency one upon another, one message would have served them all; but only Thyatira is charged for suffering Jezabel to teach, if they were one Church, the whole would have been guilty of the sins of the part, the whole being negligent to discipline the part, but every Church is rebuked for its own fault, Therefore, every one was independent within itself. So Mr. Best, Author of *Presbyterial Government Examined* and the female doctrix Childley.⁵⁰

Answer: The first of these seven, to wit, Ephesus was not a particular congregation, but had a presbytery of elders in it, Acts 20:17,36. Paul prayed with them all; this is not said in the word, but of a reasonable good number of persons; Brightman⁵¹ under the name of an angel, he writes to a college of angels or pastors. Bullinger⁵² he writes to many pastors. Didoclav. proves by good arguments against Downname, his angel-prelate that he writes to a college of angels in every church. Augustine⁵³ he speaks to the rulers; so says Gregor. Magnus,⁵⁴ Primasius, Beda, Haymo, Fulk, Perkins, Fox:⁵⁵ neither has one single pastor the power of the keys, but at the second hand, the beleivers have it as the prime ministerial fountain of all Church discipline, and so they by our brethrens learning, should have been principally rebuked.

2. Also Asia was of the Roman Empire, and contained Phrygia, Mysia, Caria, Lydi[...], Troas andThessalonica, and every one of these must be proved to be single congregations, and suppose they were, they have many pastors in them, as Ephesus had, they had power

⁵⁰ [Mr. Best, *Presbyterial Governmenrt Examined*; Katherin Childley, p. 19]

⁵¹ [Brightman, *Apocalypse*, ch. 2]

⁵² [Bullinger, *ibid.*, Didoclav. 11. alta Damasc. p. 132, 133, 135]

⁵³ [August. hom. 2. in Apoc prapositionis ecclesiarum]

⁵⁴ [Gregor. mor. in Iob l. 34. c. 4]

⁵⁵ Primasius. Beda. Haymo. Fulk against Rh[...]| mest. Rev. 1:20, Perkins, Fox

of discipline in all points that concerned themselves, but in things common to all, they had it not, but in dependence, and what? howbeit synods could not so conveniently be had under the persecuting Domitian, no absurdity will follow, discipline may be exercised without provincial synods.

3. It is a weak ground, every candlestick stood by itself, and held forth it's own light: For the light of the candlestick is a preaching pastor shining in light of holy doctrine: We dispute not about independency of preaching ministers in the act of preaching; but about independency of churches in the acts of church discipline; And so this is a weak ground (I say) for independent churches; yea neither is the pastor in the act of pastoral shining in sound doctrine independent; for our brethren teach that private persons by the power of the keys ordain him, call him to office, censure and depose, and excommunicate him, if need require, and this is no small dependency.

4. It is no less loose and weak to allege they are independent churches, because every church is reproved for it's own faults; reproof is a sort of censure: What, because the fornicator, 1 Cor 5, is reproved for a sin that is scarce named amongst the gentiles, yea and judged worthy to be excommunicated? Shall it hence follow that the fornicator is no member dependent, and in ecclesiastical subjection to the church of Corinth? So some of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 15:12, are reproved for denying the resurrection; for this was the fault of some, and not of all: But will it follow, these some were no independent parts of the church of Corinth, but an independent church by themselves? The faults of remiss discipline may be laid upon a whole national church in some cases, when it comes to the notice of the national church, that such a particular church fails in this and this point of discipline; but we teach not that these seven churches made up one national church; yet this hindere not, but parts of an independent and subordinate church may be rebuked for their faults, and yet remain dependent parts.

Objection 5: They object: if Christ bid an offending brother tell the particular church whereof he is a member, then that particular church may excommunicate, Matt 18:19, and so has power within itself of the highest censures, (Mr. Best) and is independent, but the former is true, Matt 18. Therefore, Ursine (say they) Zuinglius, Andrewes, Kemnitius, Aretius, Pelargius, Hunnius, Vatablus, Munster, Beza, Erasmus, Whittaker, etc., expound this of a particular congregation.

Answer 1:

1. We shall also expound this of a particular church, but not of such an one as has but one pastor, neither do these divines mean any other church then a colledge of pastors and elders.
2. Your own Parker,⁵⁶ the learned Voetius,⁵⁷ and Edmundus Richerius,⁵⁸ and the doctors of Paris⁵⁹ cite this place to prove the lawfulness of synods, yea even hence they prove Peter, and so the Pope is answerable to a general council.
3. When an eldership of a particular congregation is the obstinate brethren, to be censured, I desire our reverend brethren to shew in that case a ministerial, governing, and censuring church, consisting only of private persons out of office, to whom the offending person shall complain? I appeal to the whole Old and New Testament, to all antiquity, to all divines writings the word 'church' in this notion. See also Gerson.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Parker de Poli[...]. 3. c 24

⁵⁷ Gu[...].l. Voe[...]. *de Pol. [...]*ccl. thes 7

⁵⁸ Edmund Richer., *de Pol. & Eccles. potest*, p. 14

⁵⁹ Doctors of Paris, *de Pol. Eccl.* p 13

⁶⁰ Gerson, *de Potest. Eccl. consid.* 4

Objection 6: They object: every particular church is the body of Christ, his spouse, wife, and kingdom (1 Cor. 12:20,27 with 4:17 and 5:12 and 11:23,26 and [...]4:33, Matt 18 r. 7, [...]0) and every one has received faith of equal price (2 Pet. 1:1), and consequently of equal power and right to the Tree of Life and Word of God, and the holy things, the keys of the Kingdom (1 Tim. 1:3,15) and the promise and use of Christ's power and presence (Rom. 12:4,8). Therefore there is not one church above another. So the Separatists⁶¹ and Best.⁶²

Answer:

1. If this argument from an equal interest and right to Christ, the promise, life eternal stand good, not only one church shall not be over another; but also pastors and elders cannot be over the flock in the Lord, nor have the charge of them, nor watch for their souls: The contrary whereof you shall read, 1 Cor. 12:17,28,29; 1 Thess. 5:12-14; Heb. 13:17; Eph. 4:11, and the reason is good, but truly better with Anabaptists, than with men fearing God; because pastors and people, king and subject, doctor and scholar, being believers, have all received like precious faith, and right to the Tree of Life, etc., for God is no acceptor of persons. (Act. 10:34)
2. By this argument three believers in an independent congregation consisting of three hundred shall be no dependent part in ecclesiastical subjection to three hundred, and every three of independent churches shall be a church independent, and twenty independent Churches shall be in one independent church, because all the three hundred believers have received alike precious faith, etc.

⁶¹ [Separatists 3. petition]

⁶² [...] pos., p. 43]

3. The consequence of the argument is most weak, for precious faith and claim and interest in Christ is not the ground why Christ gives the keys to some, and not to others, but the ground is the good pleasure of God's will. Christ gave not the keys, nor any Church authority to Judas, Demas, and the like, because of their precious faith; but because he calls to labour in his vineyard, whom he pleases, and whom he pleases he calls not.

Objection 7: They object: Provincial and national churches are human forms brought in after the similitude of civil governments amongst the Romans, and there is no church properly so called, but a parish church. See Dr. Ames.⁶³

Answer:

1. [...], The lifting up of the hands in voicing at the election of elders, Acts 14:23, so taken from a civil form of peoples giving their suffrages amongst the Lacedemonians, as our brethren say: Yet it is not for that unlawful, or an human form, a parishional meeting of the people to hear the word, is taken from a civil form of both Romans and Grecians convening to hear declamations and Panygerics, yet a parish church is not for that a human and unlawful church.

2. We say not that a synod is a properly so called mystical church, yet its a proper ministerial and teaching church, such as is, Acts 15.

⁶³ Ames, Medul. Theol. l. 1. c 32. [...] thes. 22

Objection 8: They object: The Popish superiority of one Church over another should be lawful, if a church be in bondage under a church, better be under a great Lord Pope, and a little Lord prelate, as under many national Lords in a national church assembly.

Answer:

1. We make no other subjection here then our brethren make; for they make ten to be subject to five hundred in an independent congregation: As the part is in subjection to the laws of the whole, so make we many churches in cities, towns and provinces subject in the Lord to all their own pastors and elders convened in a national assembly: Papists make their synods to:

1. Lay bonds upon the consciences of men.
2. Their synods cannot err.
3. The Lord Prelate over rules them.
4. They make things indifferent necessary.
5. People may not examine decrees of their synods according to God's Word.
6. People may not reason or speake in their synods. We acknowledge no such synods.

2. Papists, as Bellarmine, Costerus, and Pierius do not think that synods are very necessary.⁶⁴ They call the Popes determination an easier way for ending controversies than councils; and therefore Pierius says here, frustra sit per plura, etc.

⁶⁴ [...] Fuchr. P[...]e[...]r in Ex. 10

Objection 9: They object: If a representative church consisting only of pastors, doctors and elders, be a church of Christ's institution, it should have a pastor over it, as all churches have; and if it be a general council, the pastor thereof can be no other than the Pope, and there behav'd to be also an universal consistory of cardinals.

Answer:

1. I deny both these consequences, a feeding, governing and ministerial Church does not necessarily require a pastor over it. Timothy is a pastor to himself, and by preaching both saveth himself and others, 1 Tim. 4:16.
2. Cardinals are degrees above pastors and prelates, our synods are made up, as Acts 15, of pastors, elders and brethren, whereof we acknowledge no pastor of pastors but Christ Jesus, no doctor of doctors, no elder of elders, and so I see not what this consequence means.

Objection 10: They object: That which concerns all should be handled by all. *Quod omnes tangit ab omnibus tractari debet*; but matters of discipline concern the conscience and practice of all, Therefore, all and every believer should handle matters of discipline, and not some few of a whole nation who represents the rest.

Answer: That which concerns all, one and the same way and the manner, should be handled by all. That which concerns all, diverse and sundry manner of ways should be handled by all diverse manner of ways: If ten men be owners of a ship, nine of them cannot sell the ship without the consent of the tenth owner: If all both elders or ministers, and the whole company of believers had one and the same power of the keys, we see not but all, ministers and people should have a like hand in voicing and concluding; nor do I well see, that if the keys be given to all believers, upon our brethrens former ground,

because they are the body and spouse of Christ, how women and believing children can be excluded from joint governing and use of the keys (except in the act of public teaching, 1 Cor. 14:34,35; 1 Tim. 2:12) with pastors, doctors and elders, seeing they are the body and spouse of Christ, no less than men: God accepts no persons, nor sexes, male or female, in these spiritual privileges, Gal. 3. [...]8; 2 Cor. 6:18; 1 Pet. 3:4-6. But seeing discipline concerns all diverse ways, according as God has seated and placed persons in his church; some in higher, and some in lower places of Christ's body; therefore ministers are to handle points of doctrine and discipline in synods authoritatively. People also by electing commissioners to synods, by consenting, reasoning, proposing and advising, and according to their place, [...]ot authoritatively.

Objection 11: They object: it is a Popish abusing of the people of God to exclude them from all government of God's house, and all means of edifying one another, and lead on the people in an implicit faith and blind obedience.

[More follows]

The End