

A
MODERATE ANSWER

UNTO

Dr. BASTWICKS BOOK

CALLED,

Independence not God's Ordinance

Wherein,

**Is declared the manner how some churches in this city
were gathered, and upon what terms their members
were admitted; That so both the Doctor and the
Reader may judge, how near some believers
who walk together in the Fellowship of the
gospel, do come in their practice to these
apostolic Rules which are propounded
by the Doctor as God's method in
gathering Churches And
admitting members**

By Hanserd Knollys

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The Two Different Concepts

Passing by many things less considerable, because I intend brevity; in the 7th page of the Doctors book, There is a twofold question between them called Presbyterians and their Brethren who are termed INDEPENDENTS; The first is concerning the Government of the Church, viz. whether it be Presbyterian-dependent, or Presbyterian-Independent? The second question is, concerning the Gathering of Churches.

Concerning the Government of the Church

Touching the former question concerning the Government of the Church, the Doctor acknowledgeth in the same 7th page, that the brethren on both sides agree that the Government of the Church is a Presbyterian-Government, both acknowledging a presbyter. But whether it be dependent, or independent is the main thing in the question, which the Doctor doth determine, and faith in the Title page of his book he hath evidently proved. **'That the Presbyterian-Government-Dependent is God's Ordinance, and not the Presbyterian-Government-Independent.**

I intend not to strive with the doctor about words, and therefore touching the two terms, to wit, Dependent, and Independent; I shall only say this at present. That if by Independent the Doctor indeed means (as it doth appear so to my understanding by many passages in his book, he doth intend) a Presbyterian-Government, which hath not Dependence upon any in matters merely ecclesiastical (but upon the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Church). And if by Dependent he also indented (as in many other passages in his book seemeth to me to be his meaning) a Presbyterian-Government, which hath a Dependence upon a supreme Judicature of a common-counsel of Presbyters, and who must in matters Ecclesiastical be subject unto the decrees, sentences, constitutions, and commandments of a common-counsel, college

or consist of classical, provincial, or synodical Presbyters; then I do conceive the Doctor hath not proved, (nor will he ever be able to prove) that the Presbyterian-Government-Dependent is God's ordinance; and I hope to make the contrary plainly appear both from clear texts of Scripture, and the Doctors own books. And seeing that the Doctor hath in the 6th page of his book desired all his Christian brethren in the deciding of this question to take the Word of God into their hands, and with the noble Bereans to sit down and examine, whatsoever shall be said on either side according to the Scriptures: I willingly make the same request, as most desirous, that this short answer may abide the like trial, and be weighted in the other balance of the Sanctuary against the Doctors book.

Now that all things may be handled in good order, and in a methodical way, the Doctor hath reduced the whole disputation concerning this first question into four propositions, page 11.

Concerning the First Church at Jerusalem

The first, that there were many congregations and several assemblies of believers in the church of Jerusalem, in the which they enjoyed all acts of worship, and all the Ordinances among themselves, and did partake of all acts of church-fellowship, especially of preaching, and in administration of the sacraments, and prayer, and that before the persecution we read of, Acts 8:2.

The Second, that all these congregations, and several assemblies made but one church.

The third, that the Apostles and Elders governed, ordered, and ruled this church jointly, and by a common-counsel, and Presbytery.

The fourth, that this church of Jerusalem, and the government of the same is to be a pattern for all several congregations and assemblies in any City or Vicinity to unite into one church, and for the Officers of those congregations to govern that church jointly in a college or presbytery. These are his four propositions.

But before he comes to the proof of these particulars he saith it will not be amiss in general to take notice, that all the churches we read of in the New Testament, were aristocratically and Presbyterially governed, and were all Dependent upon their several Presbyters, and produceth divers places of Scripture to prove the same, and two sheets are spent wholly in proving thereof from page 12 to page 29.

All which (should it be granted) only proves. First, that in every City or Church there was a Presbytery, Acts 14:23 When they had ordained them Elders in every Church by the suffrage or stretching forth of hands, also Titus 1:5 and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: that is, And thou mayest ordain Elders town by town, or city by city, or Village by Village.

Secondly, that as there were apostles and Elders in the church of Jerusalem, Acts 15:2,4. So there were Elders in the Church of Ephesus, Acts 20:17,28. And in the Church of Corinth, and in the church of Galatia, and in Philippi, &c.

Thirdly, that these several churches were Dependent upon their several Presbyters, and were to obey them who had the rule over them, Heb. 13:7,17,24. Or who were their guides, that is obey your guides.

Fourthly, that this Presbyterian-Church-Government, God hath appointed as his Ordinance, to be continued to the end of the world, the which whosoever resisteth, resisteth the ordinance of God, but it doth not prove, that this Presbyterian-Church-Government is dependent upon a supreme judicature of a common counsel of presbyters, or that they must submit, and subject themselves and their churches unto the decrees, sentences, constitutions, and commandments, of a common-counsel, college, and court of classical, or synodal Presbyters, which the Doctor should have proved, for such a Presbyterian-Government he intends, as may appear by the Doctor's own words, page 17-18.

As for the Presbyterian Government (in the sense that I understand it) there is nothing more clear to me in all the scripture: Yea the very word and name of Presbytery signifith, magistracy, or aristocracy, or signore, or court. And as the word is taken in the civil polity and government, so in the Ecclesiastical, by a presbytery we understand (saith the doctor) page 18. A religious, grave, so hid, learned, and wise counsel of Divines, Ministers, &c. Without whose joint and mutual accord, or agreement and common-consent nothing ought to be done or transited of public concernment. And to make this good, to wit, that the Presbyters of particular congregations or assemblies of believers, and their Churches ought to be subject to a common-counsel or Court of Presbyters. The Doctor urgeth that Scripture, the third epistle of John verses 9,10,11, as an invincible argument.

You shall find it thus expounded by the Doctor on page 15. And therefore when Diotrephes assumed to himself, and his particular congregation's power and authority to rule according to his will and pleasure, without the consent of the Presbytery, and opposed John the Presbyter, He sharply reproves his proceedings, and signifies to the Church; that when he came he would remember his words, and teach him how to prate against the presbytery with malicious words; which is an evil thing in him saith St. John. It was evil in him to assume unto himself, and his particular congregation, that power that belonged unto the college or counsel of Presbyters, and was to be moderated and exercised only by the conjoint, and common-consent of the Presbytery. For God hath appointed, that the church should be governed by a Presbytery; and Diotrephes would have his congregation Independent, and have a absolute jurisdiction within itself, which saith St. John is an evil thing.

Now the reader judge, whether the Doctor be not much mistaken in his commentary-exposition and application of this place of Scripture. And let me give you to understand, that St. John saith verse 9. I wrote unto the Church. Or as be upon that verse, that is, I have written something to the church. But seeing no mention is made of any particular congregation, how can the Dr. so confidently affirm that it was his particular congregation? Now the reader may see plainly, that the Doctor can expound those brethren and their Elders or Presbyters, which the Scripture calls a Church, to be a particular Congregation. And what it was which St. John had written to the church is not in this Epistle, nor any other Scripture, declared, except it was, to receive those brethren, which he saith verse 8, ought to be received, and verse 10. When Diotrephes would not receive, how

then doth the Doctor say? That Diotrephes assumed that power to himself, which belonged unto the college and counsel of presbyters; without whose joint and jutula agreement, and common-consent nothing ought to be done or transacted of public concernment. Is the receiving of Brethren, or casting out of Brethren a power which belongs to a college of Presbyters, and neither the one nor the other may be transacted by the elders and brethren of a particular congregation, unless the court or common-consent of presbyters conjointly consent unto it? Let it be also considered, that Diotrephes opposed the brethren and forbade them that wold have received those, who St. John saith verse 8, we ought to receive, yea cast them ought, verse 10. That is, and forbiddeth them, that would (or are willing to admit them) and casteth them out of the church, to wit, excommunicates them. Doth it hereby appear that Diotrephes would have his congregation independent? And have an absolute jurisdiction within itself. No, but Diotrephes would Lord it over the church, and have the preeminence above his brethren, whether fellow Elders or fellow saints, verse 9. That is, but Diotrephes loving the primacy amongst them. He would be the primate and Metropolitan of the church, and have the Pre-eminence of all the Presbyters in it, and Brethren of it.

The Doctor could have urged this Scripture against the domineering prelates, and why should he marvel, that his brethren should now urge it against the court of Presbyters. It is confessed Diotrephes did that which was evil in usurping authority over the church, and those brethren, whom he cast out of the church; but that he was the first that opposed the Presbyterian Government, or that he did affront a court and common-counsel of presbyters, is more than I know, or the Doctor can prove. For had Diotrephes, done so, why was he not converted before them, surly the Apostle and Elder St. John would rather have written to the college of Presbyters (if there were any such) than to the church or in writing to the Church, would rather have sent him a summons to appear at some consistor before the Court and common-counsel of Presbyters, than to warn them to take heed of his evil, that they did not follow it: And doubtless St. John would have written thus, Distrephes loves to be primate among you, wherefore when the presbyteries that is to say, the Magistracy or Signore of grave, solid, learned, religious, and wise Divines and Ministers come to keep order, and met together in a court and common-counsel, I will remember his deeds, and inform, or complain to the Court and common-counsel of Presbyters, that he prates against us (the Presbyters) with malicious words. But the Apostle St. John (did not know any court or common-counsel of Presbyters, neither Classical, nor Synod call, to appeal unto) [Nor can the Doctor make good those appeals he mentions on page 10, to be according to the Scripture of Truth, to wit; that every particular man, as well as any assembly or congregation, may have their appeal to the presbytery of their precinct, hindered, or division under whose jurisdiction they were; and if they find themselves wronged there, then they have appeals to some other higher Presbytery or counsel of Divines for relief and justice. I only ask the Doctor how he can prove these appeals by Scripture; and if he could whether that higher Presbytery or counsel of Divines, (especially if they may say the Holy Ghost and we) be not as independents as these Brethren and their churches, against whom the Doctor hath written: And if so, then such a high Prespbtery or Counsel of Divines, is not God's Ordinance, by the Doctors own confession and affirmation.] Therefore the Apostle writes to the Church or particular congregation whereof Diotrephes was a member and an elder, whom he knew had power to judge him, as well as the church or particular congregation of Corinth and power to judge them that were members therein. 1 Cor. 5:12-13. And therefore might as warrantable admonish Diotrephes, as the Church of Colosse might Arckippus: Col. 4:17. "And if no

thing of public concernment ought to be done or transacted without the joint and mutual accord or agreement, and common consent of the Presbytery; John the Presbyter would not have transgressed so far, as to take upon himself this authority over Diotrephes to tell the church of his faults, and to say he would remember him and sharply reprove him, and teach him to prate against the Presbytery with malicious words, which belong to the court and common counsel of presbyters: But I shall have a just occasion to say more touching this matter in the answer unto the third question, and there fore passing by the objection with its answer mentioned page 19 to page 29, unto its due place. I shall desire seriously to consider the Doctors proof of his first proposition, which he laboreth first by producing such Scriptures, as conceiveth make for the manifestation of the Truth, and from thence frames and forms his arguments. His Scriptures are these, viz. Matt. 3:1-6; Mark 6:20-21 Matt. 14:5; Luke 20:4-6 and divers other Scriptures, which you have at large set down in the Doctors Book with his Arguments framed from thence, Page 29 to 82. Where this first proposition ended. The sum of all which, I shall give the reader to understand as briefly as I can, to wit: Where was an infinite multitude of believers, or a very City of Believers, so that they ---- ----- king in awe, and all the Magistrates and Elders in whose hands was all the power and authority, even a world of believers with many rulers and men of great place and --- ----- such as increase of multitudes of believers, 8,000 new converts besides women and children, yea many 10,000 of believers, and were there were almost an hundred preachers and Ministers, besides the 12 apostles, and all these continually taken up in Prayer and Preaching, there could of necessity be many congregations and assemblies. But in the Church of Jerusalem there was an infinite multitude of believers, and a very City of believers (which kept Herod himself the tyrant in awe, and all the Magistrates and Elders) even a world of believers, with many rulers and men of great place and office, With an increase of multitudes of believers, and 8,000 new converts besides women children, yea and many 10,000 after all the persecutions, and almost an hundred preachers and Ministers besides the 12 Apostles, and all these were continually taken up in Prayer and Preaching; Ergo, they must of necessity be dispersed into many congregations and several assemblies. I do deny the minor proposition of this argument. Neither hath the Doctor proved, that there was an infinite number of believers, nor a very City of believers in the Church of Jerusalem. The Scriptures quoted by the Doctor speaks no such thing; those places in Matthew, Mark and Luke, tell us of very many who were baptized by John, and by Christ's disciples, but do not declare how many of these baptized persons were of the Church in Jerusalem; and the Scripture witnesseth Acts 9:31 that there were Churches throughout all Judea, as well as in Jerusalem, and for ought I know, or the doctor either, many of those baptized persons might be in these Churches, yea the most of them, and but a few, it may be no more but those 120 mentioned in Acts 1:13-15. To whom were added about 3,000 souls, who continued in the Apostles Doctrine, and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers. Acts 2:41-46. And as for the world of believers mentioned in another argument drawn from John 12:19 behold the world is gone after him. That Scripture doth not say they believed in him, much less that there was a world of believers in the Church in Jerusalem. Neither is there mention in any Scripture quoted by the Doctor of 8,000 new converts besides women and children. Neither does that scripture produced Acts 4:4 prove any such thing: For the reader may consider that the number of them there mentioned are but 5,000 men were added to the Church, and joined to the formers-believers page 57. Yet there is a twofold mistake in the doctors addition, to wit; first, that some of the 3,000 (may be) were women, and how then can the doctor say, there was 8,000 new converts besides women. Secondly, these 5,000 are only called

men and not converts, not believers, for Howbeit many of them hearing the Word believed, yet it is not said the 5,000 men believed: and the truth is the text well considered --- ---- forth, that, the number of men was about five thousand, and the number of men was made about 5,000, and not 8,000. And as for the many 10,000 mentioned in acts 21:20 (and though the word --- do so in times signified --- ----- , yet not always, but for some great number which could suddenly be told) as Luke 12:1 and ---- both according to the old and new version of the Greek into Latin, reads it -----10,000 not ----- 10,000 and so we have it in our English Bibles translated thousands. And the following verse 21, will make probable that there were not many 10.000's, for there we thus read; This multitude must needs come together, so that I say its probable, that they were not so many 10,000's but they could, yea must assemble together. Neither can the Doctor make good from those Scriptures he produceth Page 62, to wit, Acts 1: 21-22 Acts 6:2-4 Acts 8:1. That there was almost a hundred preachers and ministers besides the 12 Apostles in the Church of Jerusalem. The twelve are named indeed in Acts 6:2-4, but not 100, besides, not any one preacher but them 12. And as for the other two places Acts 1:21-22 and Acts 8:1, there is not any word concerning Preachers or Ministers, only some directions touching the choice of Matthias, who was one of the 12 mentioned in Acts 6:2. And although they who were scattered preached the Word Acts 3:4 yet the Scripture doth not declare that they were Preachers or Ministers of the Church in Jerusalem.

But the Doctor hath one argument, which is more to the purpose than all the other, which I desire the reader seriously to consider, page 64. He thus further argueth.

That, which the Holy Scripture in express words, and in divers places hath declared unto us, that every Christian is bound to believe. But the Scripture in express words, and in divers places hath declared unto us, that there were divers assemblies, and Congregations of believers in the Church of Jerusalem, and that the Apostles and all the believers in Jerusalem, did continue daily with one accord in the Temple, and that they brake bread from house to house: and that daily in the Temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

Ergo, There was divers congregations, and several assemblies, of believers in the Church of Jerusalem, where they did only partake in all the Ordinances, and enjoined all the acts of Worship.

Now I do desire the reader to consider how the Doctor proves his minor, which he saith is manifest from Acts 2:46; 5:12,43; 3:11-12; and many more places, that might be produced. Page 64-66. In all which discourse, the Doctor gives you nothing, but his own suppositions, and conclusions, for the proof of his minor proposition which is his manner of discourse throughout his book.

This argument I answer; First, by denying the assumption, or Minor proposition, and the reason of my denying all, is because the Scriptures produced by the Doctor, do no in express words declare, that there were divers assemblies, and Congregations of believers in the church of Jerusalem, the Scriptures quoted do in express words declare the contrary to what the Doctor would prove; for, Acts 2:44,46. All that believed were together, and they continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and Acts 3:11-12. It is expressly said; that all the people came together to them, in the porch, which is called Solomon's. Acts 5:12. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. So that these Scriptures produced by the Doctor to prove, that there were divers assemblies and Congregations of Believers in the Church of Jerusalem, who met together in several places, at one and the same time, to wit, upon the first day of the week, where they did partake daily in all Ordinances, doth expressly prove the contrary, to with, that the Apostles, and all the believers in the Church of Jerusalem, met together with one

accord, in one place, to wit, the Temple, and in Solomon's Porch, and brake bread from house to house, --- --- -----, not --- ---- --- ----- ----. And thus they did --- -----, -----.

Day by day, and they continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers, and all that believed were together Acts 2:42,44,46. Yea, the Doctor himself saith in his answer proposition, the latter part of it. That the Apostles and all the believers in Jerusalem did continue daily with one accord in the Temple, and that they brake bread from house to house. And this shall suffice for refutation of what the Doctor hat written touching the first proposition.

The Second now follows page 81, viz. that all the congregations and several assemblies made but one Church. And to this the Doctor saith, the Brethren themselves acknowledge, that all Believers in Jerusalem were all members of that Church, and they accord further, that it was but one Church. And it is manifest out of the Holy Scripture, Acts 2:3,45,46. To which I also consent; but the brethren have not acknowledged, neither hath the doctor by Scripture proved, that in this one Church of Jerusalem there were averse Congregations and several Assemblies of believers; and there in I must manifest my dissent from the Doctors opinion, promising him, that whenever he shall soundly prove it by express words of Scripture (which he hat undertaken) I will acknowledge it.

The third proposition, which the Doctor comes next to prove, is, that the Apostles and Elders, or presbyters governed, and ordered, and ruled this Church jointly and by common counsel and presbytery, page 82. Which the Doctor saith in evidence by these places following: Acts 11:27 to the end. The words of this Scripture which the Doctor makes use of, to prove his assertion, and these, verse 30, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. Here is these last words (saith the Doctor) We see, that the Presbyters, and none but the Presbyters received the Alms, which sufficiently proveth, that the Presbyters in all Churches were, the men of Government: page 82. It is not denied by the Brethren, that the Presbyters in all Churches were the men in the Government of the Churches in which they are Elders. But this I conceive (by the Doctors favour) doth not prove it, to wit: Because the alms was sent to the Elders, much less doth that scripture that the Apostles and Presbyters governed and ruled the Church in Jerusalem by common counsel and Presbytery, which is the assertion that the Doctor undertakes to prove. But in the Acts 15:2,4,6,22 and Acts 16:4 and in Acts 21:17,18, the Presbyters of Jerusalem by name (saith the Doctor page 83) are expressed. Out of which places of Scripture before the Doctor frame his arguments, he pleaseth to make a digression from page 48 to 90. Wherein he highly extols the presbyters, making them equal with the Apostles in all the Acts of Church-Government, (as appears by the doctors own words, page 88, I do verily believe (saith the Doctor) that the presbyters did act as authoritatively as the Apostles: and that the Presbyters might as well conclude, it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us as well as the Apostles, and not only the Presbyters, who were Ordained Elders by the Apostles; and the Assembly now of Divine, or any other, may congregate, and meet together in some one place, for the deciding of controversies, and differences of opinions in religion, to state the questions, and debate them from scripture, or warrantable authority and evidence of reason deduced from thence, and may determine the question by joint consent, or by the most voices, and may say it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and us. Page 87,88. And that presbyters have their authority as well grounded in the Word of God, as Kings and States have their, page. 89. And the Doctor doth more especially extol the Presbyters of this kingdom in these our days, telling what they have deserved from the Church, Parliament, and Kingdom more than any of their predecessors, having ended his digression, he gives you his argument, page 90 to wit: They that in the holy Scripture

are called Presbyters, and acted and ordered things in a joint body, and common-counsel with the Presbyters, and exercised that ordinary power committed to them in Matthew 18, they acted as Presbyters, but the Apostles in governing the Church of Jerusalem, consisting of many Congregations and Assemblies, acted and ordered things in a joint body and common-counsel with the presbytery of that Church, as Presbyters. Ergo, the church of Jerusalem was Presbyterianly governed, and by a Common-Council of Presbyters. The major, and minor of this sillogisme being proved (saith the Doctor) the conclusion will necessarily ensue. I know no that the Brethren ever denied, that the Church of Jerusalem was Presbyterianly governed; and although the Doctor be pleased to make that his conclusion, yet (under reformation be it spoke) that conclusion doth not follow upon the premises. For if the Doctor please to review his argument, he shall find, First; that the subject of his Major proposition is left out both in his Minor, and in his conclusions: The first part of the Doctors answer should have been this, to wit: But the Apostles in the Holy Scripture are called Presbyters, and who ever denied this: Also the first part of the doctors conclusion should have been this, from these two premises, to wit: Ergo, The Apostles acted as Presbyters which conclusion is not the thing in question. Secondly, that from the second part of the Doctors two propositions (to wit, they that acted and ordered things in a joint body and Common-Council, which the Presbyters, acted as Presbyters: but the Apostles in governing the Church of Jerusalem acted and ordered things in a joint body, and Common-Council with the Presbytery, (or Presbyters either) of that Church: Ergo, the Apostles acted as Presbyters.) This should have been the doctors conclusion.

Now the truth is, though the Apostles were called Presbyters in the Scripture, yet it followeth not, that they acted as Presbyters, but as Apostles Acts 15. And they cannot therein be a pattern and president of Presbyters; First, because the Apostles had the care and charge of and over all Churches. 2 Cor. 11:28. But the Presbyters had the care and oversight of some one Church only, as Ephesus Acts 20:28; or Philippi, Phil. 1:1; and this the Doctor often inserts in his book. That all the Churches we read of in the new Testament (though they were presbyterially governed) were dependent upon their several Presbyters, page 12. And secondly, because this would make the Presbyters independents indeed, for so the Apostles were in the Government of all the Churches; the Presbyters of Jerusalem, of Ephesus, and of all the Churches were dependent upon the apostles, and the Apostles only depended on Christ, by whose holy Spirit, they were all always guided in the government of their Churches, and therefore they said Acts 15:28. It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and us. And though the Doctor say the presbyters might say so, as well as the apostles because the Elders or Presbyters are mentioned there: The Doctor might have also considered that the brethren, even the whole church, the multitude (how many soever the Doctor can make of them) were present as well as the Presbyters. Acts 15:4,12,22,23,25,27,28;. And so have made the brethren, the multitude, even the whole Church independent also; and the Doctor might as well have affirmed, that the brethren even the whole Church might say, It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us.

To the fourth proposition: That the Church of Jerusalem and the Government of the same, is to be a pattern for all congregations and Assemblies in any City or Vicinity to unite into one Church, and for the Officers and Presbyters of those congregations to govern that Church jointly in a college or Presbytery. Page 97. And for the proof of this fourth proposition, the Doctor saith; That all men acknowledge, that the mother Church must vive an example of Government to all the Daughter Churches. Neither d the Brethren deny (saith the Doctor) but the Government of the Church of Jerusalem must be the pattern to all churches. But the Doctor knows, that the Brethren deny that the

Church of Jerusalem consisted of diverse Congregations and several assemblies under a Common-Council, Consistor, College, or court of presbyters. And this they have not granted, neither hath the Doctor proved. And this may be sufficient to be said in answer to the four propositions touching the first question.

And now I come to the second question, which is concerning the manner of gathering of Churches, and admitting of members and Officers page 98. Which question the Doctor thus states, viz. Whether Ministers of the Gospel may, out of already gathered assemblies of believers, select and chose the most principle of them into a church-fellowship peculiar unto themselves, and admit of none into their society, but such as shall enter in by a private Covenant, and are allowed by the consent, and approbation of all the Congregation? And this question the doctor brancheth into fix Queries page 98-99. Wherein the judicious reader may perceive the Doctor (through misinformation I conceive) hath mistaken the stating of the question, which he partly acknowledgeth page 100.

But now I shall set down (saith the Doctor page 100) God's method and the Apostles practice in gathering of Churches, and the manner they used in making members in every Church, and compare it with the method our Brethren (the Independents) use, &c. And to this purpose the Doctor begins with Christ's commission, Matt. 28:19-20.

Out of these several Scriptures the Doctor observes these three things, page 101. To Wit, First, That they should teach no other things but what Christ commanded them, and appeared to them in, and for which they had his Word and warrant. Secondly, the condition, which they were to propound unto all nations and people, upon which they were admitted into the Church, was Faith, Repentance, and Baptism. And Thirdly, that this commission was delivered only to the Apostles and Ministers of the Gospel, that they should admit whosoever believed, and were baptized; and they that believed not would not be baptized, were not to be admitted. These are the Doctors own words, page 102 and page 103. The Doctor for proof quotes the third chapter of Matthew, and Luke 3:7. And the sum of John's preaching (saith the Doctor) is mentioned, verse 3. It was the baptism of Repentance for the remission of sins. Also he cites Luke 7:19. That all the people that heard him and the Publicans justified God, being Baptized with the baptism of John; but the Pharisees and the Lawyers rejected the council of God against themselves, being not Baptized of him. Page 103-104. But now to go on (saith the Doctor page 104) after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, &c. where he quotes, Acts 2:37-38. Then they that gladly received the Word were baptized, and the same day were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Hence the Doctor observes, that the Apostles propounded no other condition or terms for the making all and every one of them members of the Church, but Repentance and Baptism, the which, when the people had accepted of (saith the Doctor) They were forthwith admitted, &c. page 104. For another proof the Doctor produceth, Acts 10:44,47,48. Where the Doctor affirmeth, page 106. That those brethren who came with Peter did not intermeddle in that business, to wit, of their admittance (by Baptism) into the church. Now I conceive the reason, why those brethren did not intermeddle to hinder their admittance to that Ordinance of Jesus Christ, (to wit, Baptism in water) and so to an entrance into the Church; was, not because they had not such Liberty, but because the Brethren had no just objections or hindrance to declare to Peter.

That the Brethren had a liberty to have declared any thing, which might justly have hindered the administration of that Ordinance of baptism unto them, doth appear by the question which the Apostle expounded verse 47. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized? And the Doctor. Himself acknowledged, page 102 that the

brethren or Disciples of the church of Jerusalem (who must be a pattern [saith the Doctor] of all churches) had this liberty to except against some sorts of persons, and hinder their admittance into the church, though baptized according to Christ's commission, and preachers chosen and sent by Christ himself. And that in case such persons have been formerly known to be open enemies, and persecutors of the church, and then they are justly to be suspected (saith the Doctor page 102) until they have given public evidence by witness to the Ministers of their true conversion, and there produceth a plain instance to prove this page 102. Acts 9:26-28 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

Now this liberty have all the disciples in the like case, because Jerusalem the mother church is the pattern of all other the Daughter Churches, as the Doctor confesseth, yea affirmeth, page 97 and saith, all men acknowledge, that the Mother Church must give an example of government to all the Daughter churches. And that is also by the Doctor, acknowledged, page 102, to be a part of the power of the Keys, to open and shut the doors of the church; that is, to admit such as are for their Faith, Knowledge and Repentance sufficiently qualified, and fitted to be members, and to refuse such, as are not fit to be received into the fellowship of the church; either for their ignorance or other sins and offences, &c. Now then when it doth evidently appear, that the Disciples or brethren (not to say sisters, though they are Disciples also) or the Church in Jerusalem (in her most flourishing condition) had this liberty to declare their fears, and the ground thereof against Paul, who was at that time a believer, a baptized person, and a Preacher, or minister of the gospel, so that although, he came, and assayed, to be joined to the Disciples, and be admitted a member among them, that he might have fellowship with them in the worship, and ordinances of the gospel: Yet was thereby hindered from admittance! Barnabas witnessed his condition and conversation to the Apostle, and then was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. How can the doctor make good, that the Presbyters alone without the consent of brethren may admit members, and cast out members, and that the Brethren or the Congregation hath nothing to do to hinder any such thing, page 102, 106.

For further proof hereof: The Doctor urgeth Acts 8:35-40. The example of the Eunuch, to whom Philip being sent preached Jesus, and Baptism in his Name, and it is related, that when they came to a certain water the Eunuch said unto him; See here is water? What doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest, ---- ----- . And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God: And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he Baptized him. Here we see (saith the doctor) that Philip admits him into the number of believers, and makes him a member of the church. But the Doctor saith, this was without consulting with the Congregation, by his own authority, and upon the Eunuch his own testimony page 106.

I answer, that Philip had a special command from God for what he did herein, and so had Ananias. Acts 9:15 touching Saul, which is the next instance which the Doctor brings in this same page 106 and albeit the Doctor affirms; that Ananias did not say to Saul, I will consult with the Church to see whither they will admit thee to be a member, for thou hast greatly wasted the Church, and made havoc of the Saints, and therefore I will have their approbation, and consent, and thou shalt give in evidences of thy true conversion, &c. and so be received and admitted.

But with out all this ado (saith the Doctor page 107) he baptized Paul, and admitteth him into the number of believers, and makes him a member of the Church. Yet if the reader look back into page 102 of his book, the Doctor there makes an exception from

the power which he a little before had affirmed the Presbyters have to admit Members, by virtue of Christ his Commission, upon the profession their faith and repentance, and receiving baptism, without any further testimony; unless (saith the Doctor) they had been formerly known to be open enemies, and persecutors of the Church, and then they were justly to be suspected, till they had given public evidence by witness of their true conversion: And gives an instance in Paul, who for a time the Disciples feared Acts 9:26-27, till they had better information, and proof, that he now preached the faith, that he had once persecuted, and had suffered for it, page 102. To rehearse all the Scriptures alleged to prove this method of God and practice of the Apostles were needless. But passing by such as are not so plain and clear for the proof thereof, and also omitting, what the doctor hath said touching the Brethren, in comparing their practice with the Apostles: Because the Doctor is mistaken in stating the question, and also in his queries as before I mentioned in the 14 page of this my answer, and the reader may see pages 98,99 and 100 of the Doctors book. I shall give the reader the result of all, that the Doctor hath written from page 100 to the end of his book, touching God's method, and the Apostles practice in gathering of churches and admitting members, viz. First, that Christ having given a commission to his Apostles to teach all Nations, and baptize them Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; the Apostles practiced accordingly. Acts 2:37-38; 10:44-48 and so did Philip Acts 8:35-38. And Ananias Acts 9:10,18. Secondly, that the condition or terms, which they were to propound unto all Nations and people upon which, they were to be admitted into the Church were Faith, Repentance and Baptism. Mark 15:15-16. For the commission was delivered to the Apostles, that they should admit whosoever believed, and would be baptized, and they, that believed not and would not be baptized, were not to be admitted, page 102 and 104. The Apostles (saith the Doctor) propounded no other condition or terms for making all and every on members of the Church but repentance, and baptism, acts 2:37-38. Thirdly, that the Apostles and all succeeding ministers of the Gospel should admit whosoever believed, and were baptized, to be members of the Church, and teach them to observe no other things but what Christ commanded them, and for which they had his Word and warrant: Pages 101 and 103. Matt 28:19-20. And this (saith the Doctor) the Apostles did practice, without requiring them to take a private covenant, or enter into the church by way of a particular covenant, Page 105. Acts 2:37-38. This being the sum and result of that method and practice, which the Doctor conceives should be done in gathering Churches an admitting members, which the Scriptures will warrant, and Christ Jesus approve of as his fathers will, I shall now take liberty to declare, what I know by mine own experience to be the practice of some Churches of God in the City. That so both the Doctor and the reader may judge how near the Saints, who walk together in the Fellowship of the Gospel, do come in their practice, to these Apostolic rules and practice propounded by the Doctor as God's method in gathering Churches, and admitting Members. I say, that I know by mine own experience (having walked with them) that they were thus gathered; viz. Some godly and learned men of approved gifts and abilities for the Ministry, being driven out of the countries, where they lived by the persecution of the Prelates, came to sojourn in this great City, and preached the Word of God both publicly, and from house to house, and daily in the Temples and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ: and some of them have dwelt in their own hired houses, and received all that came n unto them, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things, which concern the Lord Jesus Christ. And when many sinners were converted by their preaching of the Gospel, some of them that believed, consorted with them, and of professors a great many, and of the chief women not a few. And the condition which those Preachers both publicly and privately

propounded to the people, unto whom they preached, upon which they were to be admitted into the Church was Faith, Repentance and Baptism; and none other. And whosoever (poor as well as rich, bond as well as free, servants as well as masters) did make a profession of their Faith in Christ Jesus, and would be baptized with water into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, were admitted members of the Church; but such as did not believe, and would not be baptized they would not admit into Church-communion. This hath been the practice of some Churches of God in this City, without urging or making any particular covenant with Members upon admittance, which I desire may be examined by the Scriptures cited in the Margent, and then compared with the Doctors three conclusions from the same Scriptures, whereby it may appear to the judicious Reader, how near the Churches some to them come to the practice of the Apostles rule, and practice of the primitive Churches, both in gathering, and admitting members. And my humble request to the Doctor is; That he will use all means, that he method of God, and practice of the Apostles in gathering of Churches, and admitting members, may be conscionable practiced by his brethren of both sides according to the revealed Word and Will of the Father.

The End