

David Dickson's
Truth's Victory Over Error
Chapter XXX. (Part 2.)
Of Church Censures.

QUESTION I — Continued.

Hath the Lord Jesus as King, and Head of his Church, appointed therein a Government in the hands of Church-Officers, distinct from the Civil Magistrate?

Yes. *Isaiah* 9.6,7. *1 Tim.* 5.17. *1 Thes.* 5.12. &c. &c.

[Questions regarding Erastian claims already discussed.]

Do not likewise the Socinians, Anabaptists, Quakers, many Independents, and others err, who maintain, that the key of Doctrine, or the public preaching of the Word, is proper to any man furnished with suitable gifts, though not called, and sent to that employment?

Yes.

By what reasons are they confuted?

(1) Because, no man can believe in Christ of whom he hath not heard, and how shall he hear without a Preacher; and how shall he preach unless he be sent; *Rom.* 10.14,15. (2) Because, Women may have suitable, and competent gifts for Preaching, and yet they are forbidden to speak in the Church; *1 Tim.* 2.12. (3) Because, the Scripture blames such, as have run, and yet have not been sent; *Jer.* 23.21,32. (4) Because, no man taketh this honour to himself (that is, he ought not to take it) but he that is called of GOD, as was *Aaron*; *Heb.* 5.4. (5) Because, the Scripture mentioneth, *that GOD hath set apart certain peculiar Ministers, for the preaching of the Word*; *Rom.* 1.1. *Eph.* 4.11. *Titus* 1.3. (6) Because, no man can take the office of a *civil Magistrate*, or of a *Deacon* of the church upon him, unless he be called thereunto; *Luke* 12.14. *Acts* 6.5. *1 Tim.* 3.10. And therefore no man ought to take upon him the *publick preaching of the Word*, unless he be called thereunto likewise. (7) Because, he that taketh upon him this office, without a call, he *usurpeth Authority* in the church, seeing Preaching is an *Act of Authority*; *1 Thes.* 5.12; [*1 Tim.* 2.12.] (8) Because, the Titles which are given to the Preachers of the Gospel, are names of Office; they are called the *Ambassadors of Christ*; *2 Cor.* 5.20. *Stewards of the Word*; *Titus* 1.7. *The Men of GOD*; *1 Tim.* 6.11. And *Angels*, *Rev.* 2.1. (9) Because, there is not one approved example, in all the *Word of GOD*, for a *gifted brother* to Preach without a *call*; and therefore seeing it is not done in Faith, it must be Sin. Must every Fellow that takes a *laxity* in his tongue, go up to the Pulpit and ease himself? (10) Because, there are Precepts and Rules set down in Scripture, for all the *Ages of the church*, to the end of the *world*, anent the calling of men to be Ministers of the

Gospel; 1 Tim. 3.2, 3, 6, 7; and 1 Tim. 5.21,22.

Do not likewise the Independents, Brownists, and Anabaptists err, who maintain, that the Right and Power of Governing the church, belongs no less to the multitude and community of Believers, than to the Officers of the church?

Yes.

By what reasons are they confuted?

(1) Because, the Scripture expressly teaches, that GOD hath committed the Government of his Church, and the care of his people, to certain chosen Persons, and not to all, and every one; *Ephes.* 4.11-13. *1 Cor.* 12.28. (2) Because, if the power of the keys were given to believers, in common; either they are given to them as believers, or as they are gifted by GOD, with gifts, and qualifications above others, for Governing the church, and chosen out of the rest, for performing that office. If the last part be affirmed, it follows, that the power, and right of the keys, is committed not to a community of believers, but to some select persons, which we own, and maintain: but the *Independents deny*. If the first be asserted, then it follows

1. First, that the care of *Governing the church* is committed to *Women*, and *children*, being believers; and so they must necessarily have the power of *seeing*, as being *eyes*, and *watchmen* to the church; the power of *hearing*, as being the *ears* of the church; and the body of the church must be deformed; because the whole body is the *eye*, and the whole body is the *ear*, and whose many members are made one member; *1 Cor.* 12.12-19.
2. It follows, that the power of the keys, is not only given to all, but to Believers only: but it is evident by the example of *Judas*, and other *Reprobates*, that many in Christ's name have preached, who were not Believers; *Matth.* 7.22,23; *Phil.* 1.16-18.

(3) Because, to whom Christ has given the power of *Governing the church*; to them also, he hath promised to give gifts, and endowments largely for performing that office; *John.* 20.21-23. *1 Cor.* 4.6,7. *Matth.* 28.19-20. But to a *community of Believers*, God has never promised a *Spirit* for the *Ministry*, nor gifts for that *employment*. Nor did he ever bestow, or *confer* any such *endowments*. (4) Because, Christ our *Mediator*, appointed *Ecclesiastical Officers* and *Church-Governours*, before ever there was a *formal church*, under the *New Testament* gathered, and set up; *Luke* 9.1. *Luke* 10.1-3. *John* 20.21-23. *Matth.* 28.19-20. This was all done before *his death*. And before *his ascension* he did the like; *Ephes.* 4.8, 11, 12. *Acts* 2. *1 Cor.* 12.28. Now it is evident, that there was no *formal gathering together* of a *church*, before the *Feast of Pentecost*; *Acts* 2. *Ecclesiastical Ministers*, and *Officers* were appointed for *calling in*, and *gathering together* the *Mystical body of Christ*, to wit, his *Members*: therefore it was needful, that *Ministers baptizing*, ought to be before *Persons baptized*; That *Gatherers* of the *church* ought to be before *Persons gathered*; That *callers* and *inviters* to *Christ*, ought to be before *Persons called* and *invited*. (5) This *Democracy* or *popular Government*, cannot but bring in *great confusion*, whence many absurdities will follow. As the *church of GOD* should not be an *organical body*. That *Women* who are forbidden to speak in the *church*, must have the *keys of the kingdom of Heaven hanging at their Belt*, forsooth. All must govern, and none must be governed. All must attend the government of the *church*. All must be rendered *uncapable* for going about their *particular callings*, which *God calls* them to every day. Therefore seeing this sort of *Government*, brings so much *confusion* with it, it is most *probable*, that it is not of *God* who is a *God of Order*, and not of *confusion*; *1 Cor.* 14.33.