

THE PROPOSITIONS AS VOTED IN THE ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES

THE THIRD PROPOSITION Concerning Presbyterian Government, as it was voted in the Assembly and sent up to both the Honourable Houses of Parliament

The Scripture does hold forth that many particular congregations may be under one Presbyterian government.

Doc. 35. Third
Proposition
Doc. 45. Draft
Directory for
Government
Minutes,
5:90, 134

This Proposition is proved by instances.

I. Instance, of the church of Jerusalem, which consisted of more congregations than one, and all those congregations were under one Presbyterian government.

This appears, thus,

i. The church of Jerusalem consisted of more congregations than one, as is manifest.

1. By the multitude of believers, mentioned in divers texts collated:

Both before the dispersion of the believers there, by means of the persecution (mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 8, in the beginning thereof). Witness Acts 1:11, and Acts 2:41, 46, 47, and Acts 4:4, and Acts 5:14 and Acts 6:1, 7. And also after the dispersion, Acts 9:31 and Acts 12:24, and Acts 21:20.

2. By the many apostles and other preachers in the church of Jerusalem. If there were but one congregation there, then each apostle preached but seldom, which will not consist with Acts 6:2.

3. The diversity of languages among the believers, mentioned both in the second and sixth chapters of the Acts, does argue more congregations than one in the church.

ii. All those congregations were under one presbyterian government, because,

1. They were one church, Acts 8:1 and Acts 2:47, compared with Acts 5:11, Acts 12:5 and Acts 15:4.

2. The elders of that church are mentioned Acts 11:30 and Acts 15:4, 6, 22 and Acts 21:17, 18.

3. The apostles did the ordinary acts of presbyters as presbyters in that church; which proves a presbyterial church before the dispersion, Acts 6.

4. The several congregations in Jerusalem being one church, the elders of the church are mentioned, as meeting together for acts of government (Acts 11:30 and Acts 15:4, 6, 22 and Acts 21:17, 18, and so forwards); which proves that these several congregations were under one presbyterial government.

And whether these congregations were fixed or not fixed, in regard of officers or members, it is all one as to the truth of the proposition.

Nor does there appear any material difference between the several congregations in Jerusalem, and the many congregations now in the ordinary condition of the church, as to the point of fixedness in regard of officers or members.

Therefore the Scripture does hold forth, that many congregations may be under one presbyterial government.

II. Instance of the church of Ephesus; for,

Minutes,
5:136 i. That there were more congregations than one in the church of Ephesus, appears by Acts 20:31, where is mention of Paul's continuance at Ephesus, in preaching for the space of three years; and Acts 19:18, 19, 20 where the special effect of the Word is mentioned, and verses 10 and 17 of the same chapter, where is a distinction of Jews and Greeks, and 1 Corinthians. 16:8, 9 where is a reason of Paul's stay at Ephesus until Pentecost, and verse 19 where is mention of a particular church, in the house of Aquila and Priscilla then at Ephesus, as appears, chapter 18, verses 19, 24, 26, all which laid together do prove that the multitudes of believers did make more congregations than one in the church of Ephesus.

ii. That there were many elders over these many congregations as one flock, appears, Acts 20: 17, 25, 28, 30, 36.

iii. That those many congregations were one church, and that they were under one presbyterial government, appears, Revelation 2:1-6 joined with Acts 20: 17, 28.

Concordat Cum originali.
Adoniram Byfield, Scriba

The Propositions concerning the Subordination of Assemblies as they were voted in the Assembly of Divines.

1. Synodical assemblies may lawfully be of several sorts, as provincial, national, and ecumenical. *Minutes*, 5.136
2. It is lawful and agreeable to the Word of God that there be a subordination of congregational, classical, provincial and national assemblies for the government of the Church. Gillespie, 84
 {Proof of it,
 Matthew chapter 18 holding forth the subordination of an offending brother to a particular church, it does also by a parity of reason hold forth the subordination of a congregation to superior assemblies. 3.360-366
Gillespie, 86
3. In the several sorts of assemblies of the government of the Church, it is lawful and agreeable to the Word of God that appeals may be from the inferior to the superior respectively. Gillespie, 23, 81
 The proof brought for the subordination of Assemblies, proves the lawfulness of appeals from the inferior to the superior.
 It is agreeable to the light of nature, that he who is wronged and deprived of his right by one power, should have recourse to another power, which may restore unto him his right again, and rescind the sentence whereby he was wronged; else there would be no powerful remedy provided to remove wrong and to preserve right.} *Minutes*, 2.503
Lightfoot, 162
Gillespie, 84

*The text in braces does not appear in the draft Directory of December 11, 1644, and the three points without proofs are condensed to one with an additional paragraph added, in the final version of the Directory (see *Minutes*, 5.212).

The Proposition concerning Ordination, as it was voted in the Assembly of Divines.

- It is very requisite that no single congregation that can conveniently associate, do assume to itself all and sole power in ordination. *Minutes*, 3.51-77; 5.138
1. Because there is no example in Scripture that any single congregation which might conveniently associate, did assume to itself all and sole power in ordination; neither is there any rule which may warrant such a practice. Lightfoot, 262
Gillespie, 58-64
 2. Because there is in Scripture, example of an ordination in a presbytery over divers congregations; as in the Church of Jerusalem, where were many congregations; these many congregations were under one presbytery, and this presbytery did ordain.

Concordat Cum originali.
Adoniram Byfield, Scriba

To the first of these [Propositions], 1. The Dissenting Brethren gave in after the debate reasons against the proposition itself. 2. Against the proofs of the proposition, 1. From the instance of the Church of Jerusalem. 2. Of Ephesus, in this order as follows.

Die Lunæ 24. January 1647.

Ordered by the Lords in Parliament assembled, That Maſter Adoniram Byfield, one of the Scribes of the Assembly, do take ſpecial care in the printing of theſe things following; And that no other ſhall preſume to print the ſame, *viz.* The Reasons of the Diſſenting Brethren againſt the third propoſition concerning Preſbyterial Government, and the Answer of the Assembly to thoſe Reasons, as well thoſe formerly printed for the uſe of the Houſes, as any other reasons and answers never formerly printed. As alſo the papers and answers of the Diſſenting Brethren, and the Committee of the Assembly put into the Committee of Lords and Commons and Assembly of Divines for Accommodation. And that none ſhall preſume to print or reprint any of the particulars above recited, but ſuch as ſhall be thereunto appointed by the ſaid Adoniram Byfield, as they will answer the contrary at their peril. John Browne Cler. Parliamentorum.

I do appoint Humphrey Harward, and no other perforce to print the reasons, answers, and papers above mentioned.

Adoniram Byfield, Scriba

Die Jovis 3. February 1647

Ordered by the Lords in Parliament Assembled, That Mr. Thomas Goodwin and Mr. Whitaker, ſhall have the oversight and perusal of ſuch papers and writings as Mr. Byfield hath order to print; and that the ſaid Mr. Goodwin and Mr. Whitaker have free liberty to peruse the originals of the ſaid papers and writings before they go to the preſs.

John Browne Cler. Parliamentorum.

The papers and writings above mentioned have been examined and perused, this we teſtify.

Tho. Goodwin.

Jer. Whitaker.

The Diſſenting Brethren entered their diſſent with reasons in writing to be preſented to the Honorable Houſe by the Assembly, only to thoſe propoſitions. *Viz.*

1. The third propoſition concerning Preſbyterial Government.
2. The propoſitions concerning the ſubordination of aſſemblies.
3. The propoſition concerning the power of ordination, whether in a particular congregation, though it may aſſociate.