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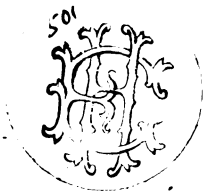

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The Dying man's TESTAMENT *to the Church of* Scotland;

OR,

A Treatise concerning *Scandal.*

Divided into Four Parts.

1. Concerning Scandal in the general.
2. Concerning Publick Scandals, or Scandals as they are the object of Church-censures, and more particularly as they are in practice.
3. Concerning Doctrinal Scandals, or scandalous errors.
4. Concerning Scandalous Divisions.

In each of which there are not a few choice and useful Questions, very shortly and satisfyingly discussed and cleared.

BY

That singularly faithfull and wise Servant of Jesus Christ,
Mr. *JAMES DURHAM*,
late Minister of the Gospel in *Glasgow*,

Who being dead (by this) yet speaketh:

And published by *John Carstares*, one of the Ministers in GLASGOW.

To which is prefixed an excellent PREFACE of famous Mr. *Blair*, Minister of the Gospel at St *Andrews*, (wherein he also vigorously driveth the main design of the blessed Author in this last Piece of his Labours)

Together with a TABLE of the CONTENTS of the several Chapters of each Part.

Matth. 18. 7 *Wo unto the world because of Offences: for it must needs be that Offences come: but wo to that man by whom the Offence cometh.*

1 Cor. 10. 32 *Give none Offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.*

Psal. 119. 165 *Great peace have all they which love thy Law: and nothing shall offend them.*

Edinburgh, Printed by *Christopher Higgins*, in *Harts* Close, over against the Trone-Church, 1659.

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The Preface.

The rise of the subsequent Treatise, the blessed Author, in the very first words thereof, declareth to be the occasion he had from *Revel.* 2. on the Epistle to the Church of *Pergamos*, to meditate on the nature and sorts of *Scandal*. And before I say any thing of this present work, I shall hence take occasion, to shew my thoughts of his Commentary on the Book of *Revelation*. In my humble opinion, that which was spoken of the vertuous woman, *Prov.* 30. *v.* 29. may well be applied to the pains this Author hath taken on that Book: Many Writers have done worthily, but thou excellest them all. The reason of my so high estimation thereof, is taken from a threefold excellencie I find therein. The *first* is, a brief, clear and accurate opening of the most difficult Text in the whole Bible, applying with great sagacity and admirable dexterity, dark Prophecies to their historical events: and yet with judicious sobriety, not restraining, as it were, to single stars of several persons, that which rather relateth to conglobate constellations of agents or patients: together with a modest, yet a diligent search of those things which are not yet accomplished. Whoever would compendiously have an experiment hereof, let him read the first Lecture on Chap. 6. (which parcel, with some others, were sent to me by the Author, some moneths before the printing) And as herein I did find great satisfaction, by reason of the clearnesse and notable coherence of the Interpretation, and convincing grounds and arguments proving the solidity thereof, So may thou, Christian Reader, be sweetly refreshed and strongly confirmed thereby. The

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Second excellencie hereof, is the great plenty of practical Divinity, relating to all Christians, but more especially to Ministers of the Gospel. I cannot name any Authors work, wherein I have perceived so many edifying overtures, so many searching discourses and encouraging helps as this Commentary abounds with. From the first *Lecture* on *Chap.* 3. both the carefull Christian and the well-gifted diligent Preacher, may be first allarmed, and then well strengthened, by that searching discourse on these words, *Thou hast a name that thou livest, but art dead.* The *third* excellency of this work, lieth not only in clearing and answering many doubts very succinctly, but also in discussing more largely, by way of digression, many weighty and important Truths, even to the number of *twenty five*: So that this Commentary, besides profitable opening of such a Text, and handling much practical Divinity, cleareth with great modesty, without any personal reflections, and discusseth edifyingly as much darkened Truth, as if the whole work had been written to dispute and determine pertinent and important questions.

But now, to say no more of that Work, which speaketh for it self, being in the hands of many, and I wish it be diligently perused with a blessing from Heaven: I come to say something of this Treatise of *Scandal*.

And well was he fitted to write of this subject, whose exercise it was, to have alwayes a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men: and very successfull was he in walking this way; for, in a time wherein scandals of all sorts did abound exceedingly, few there were (if any at all) who did stumble at his way, or he at the way of others, endeavouring still and by all means winning and edifying. And whoever knew his way of walking, they will read the same in this Treatise, set forth to others.

In the *first part* thereof thou wilt find, Christian Reader, the nature of Scandal dexterously opened, with the several sorts of it, and the variety of wayes whereby it

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it is both given and taken, with considerable grounds to make Christians loth and wary, both as to the giving of offence and taking. And withall, many intricate cases are cleared, as namely, what is to be done when the matter is lawfull, and the offence doubtfull: Also what ought to be our carriage, when there is a real difference between parties upon the account of a civil interest: Also what behaviour is requisit, when the command of Superiours and the eschewing of offence are in opposition: Also that very important case, is accuratly debated and wisely determined, what is to be done when offence is like to follow on either side. And finally, what course both private Christians and Pastors ought to hold when scandals and offences abound. The answer to which alone, holdeth forth a very excellent directory for christian walking toward others.

The *second part* treateth of Scandal as it is publick, and falleth under Ecclesiastick censure, wherein there are many excellent overtures for the wise and right exercise of Church-discipline. Among many, this is considerable, That the saving grace of repentance, is not to be enquired into, as the alone ground upon which Church-officers are to rest for removing an offence: but that a sober, serious acknowledgment of the offence, with the expression of an unfeigned-like purpose to walk inoffensively is sufficient. This is very accurately debated, and solidly and soundly determined. There is also, Chap. 12. a clear discussing of that tickle Question, What ought to be done by privat persons when Church-officers spare such as are scandalous, to wit, upon supposition that there is a real defect (in the truth wherof often there is a mistake) yet private professors are to continue in the discharge of the duties of their stations, and not to separate from the Communion of the Church, but to count themselves exonered in holding fast their own integrity, mourning for offences, representing the same to Church-officers, and, if need be, to superiour Judicatories. All this is strongly, convincingly, and very satisfyingly proven by Scripture.

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The *third part* is concerning Doctrinal Scandals, or Scandalous Errours, a Theme very neceſſary for theſe reeling times. If I ſhould offer to pick out thence points very remarkable, I would far paſſe the juſt bounds of a Preface. Wherefore, I ſhall only thereof ſay this, That both Chriſtian Magiſtrates, Miniſters and People, will find their duty laid before them, no leſſe ſolidly than accuratly, what to do in the caſe of ſpreading errour. And, O that the Moſt High would ſtrike in with His ſoveraign Authority upon the hearts and conſciences of all ſorts, eſpecially Magiſtrates, in whoſe hands this Tractate ſhall come!

But now I come to ſpeak a word of the *fourth part* of this Treatiſe, and that ſo much the more, 1. Becauſe it was the laſt labour of this precious man of God, and ſo it is his *Swan-like ſong*. The Only Wiſe thought it fit to recommend to all His People, eſpecially within this Land, in theſe diſtracted times (when paſſion and prejudice makes it moſt difficult, if not altogether impoſſible to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon acceptably) the hatefulneſſe of ſcandalous diviſion and the lovelineſſe of a godly union by the words of a Meſſenger, who was one of a thouſand, known to be moderate, wiſe and faithfull, very far from factiouſneſſe, ſharply perceiving what was duty, and very impartially uttering the ſame. At the dictating of this Part, the infirmity of the decaying tabernacle was ſo great, that he could not endure the labour of writing with his own hand, But being now ripe for glory, and having entered the ſuburbs of Heaven, he breathed-out his wiſe and godly thoughts to a borrowed pen.

Next, I have the greater reaſon to conſider diligently this piece of the work; and having conſidered it, to recommend it the more earneſtly to all Chriſts People, and eſpecially to my reverend and dear Brethren of the Miniſtery, becauſe it was ſent to me ſealed from the Author, in the beginning of his laſt ſickneſſe, as a *Depoſitum* committed to me to make it ready for publiſhing; which I per-

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performed carefully and faithfully, without the alteration of one material word: and having lately perused the Copie the Printer makes use of, I hereby testifie it is the same for matter, order, sentences and words, the Author sent to me and I transmitted to him a little before the Lord removed him.

And now, upon the matter, I think verily that this healing Tractate is so full of that wisdom, which is from above, first pure, and then peaceable, that it will speak plainly the Author fitted of God to bring forth a seasonable word. At the first reading thereof, my spirit was greatly refreshed, and my heart enlarged to blesse the Lord, conceiving that the Prince of peace, in compassion over our putrified sores, had provided this mollifying oyntment and cleansing plaister, in order to a cure of the same. And I doubt nothing but every true-hearted lover of Sions peace, who longs to see the Lord exalted, in binding up our hither-till incurable wounds, will magnifie the Lord with me and exalt his Name together. Herein thou wilt find excellently discovered, the rise of divisions, what hand the holy Soveraignty of God hath therein, and how the corruptions of men, even of the Godly, both raise and wonderfully heighten divisions; and how great influence occasional means may have in the same; together with the sad and dreadfull effects thereof; and the necessity of endeavouring unity herein. Thou wilt also find the cure and remedy singularly opened, not only general grounds and preparatory endeavours for uniting, but also what things are to be forborn, and what is to be done in order to uniting, and that as well in closing doctrinal differences, not fundamental, nor nigh the foundation, as for union in points not doctrinal, arising from diversity in external administrations, and especially practical differences in Church-government, and about the Constitutions and Acts of Synods, when the Authority thereof is declined and denied: Yea, remedies are proposed, of divisions arising from the misapplication of power, in censuring or spa-

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ring Church-officers, real or supposed. And finally, against the fears of misgovernment for the time to come, overtures are prudently given-in: and all closed with laying out briefly, and yet very effectually, grounds and motives of the desired union. That which I conceive is most eminent in this choice Treatise, lyeth in these two things: first, That this our Cancer is most tenderly handled, in a very abstract way, never so much as stating or particularly touching any difference among us, and yet, upon the matter, the whole discourse cometh home to the very point most pertinently. Herein appears the finger of God to them that will have eyes to see it. The next is this, That the holy Scriptures are diligently searched, both in order to the disease and remedy: and the ancient Church-history and purer Antiquity, is most plentifully and sweetly made use of. The judicious and impartial Reader will, I think, say *Miscuit utile dulci*, and that here are words fitly spoken, like apples of gold in pictures of silver. One thing I shall intreat, that the Reader judge not finally of any parcel or section thereof, till he read and ponder the whole. Stumble not at his asserting, That authoritative wayes at first are not the best to cure rents. A rent would be handled as a broken bone or a dislocation, where anointing and ligatures are so necessary, as without these, healing cannot in haste be attained. If the question be made, How a man in that case should carry himself? Ought he to stretch himself to the full and put forth his whole strength? Or is that then impossible? And if through passion in a fit it be practised, is it not obstructive to the recovery of strength and healing? Let the Reader remember this when he cometh to that part of the discourse, and he will, upon that consideration, make the better use of the whole remedy as it is proposed. I shall not detain much longer the Reader from the Treatise it self, having added these few considerations, for advancing heart-uniting in the Lord, which of all other, I conceive, ought to be most weighty in the judgment and on the affections of all

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all the lovers of our Lord Jesus Christ. *First*, from *Eph.* 2. v. 14. 15, 16, 17. the great Peace-maker, in offering-up Himself a sacrifice for the sins of the Elect, intended, with the reconciling of them to God, to unite them in one body among themselves: yea, even those who were at furthest distance and greatest enimity, *Jew* and *Gentile*, and consequently other His Elect in their several differences and divisions throughout their generations. He took on Him the debt of their sins and their enimities, and lifted up with Himself these on His Crosse, *representatively*, *virtually* and *meritoriously*, to expiate them in His flesh: and by His Spirit *efficiently* to slay and abolish them in due time, by making them one new man in himself. Mark, I pray, from that Scripture cited, that this complex business is the great design of our blessed and great Peace-maker. Also, *secondly*, in the Sacrifice-feast of His Supper, this is still represented and exhibited, till He come again: So that this standing Ordinance, destinated and appointed of God to carry-on and seal-up uniting with God, and one with another, till He come again; at His coming will stand up and testifie against all who comply not with Christ, but, following their own inclination, act rather against His design. And, *thirdly*, in His solemn prayer, *Joh.* 17. which is a *specimen* of His future intercession, He mainly presseth after the salvation and sanctification of those that are given Him, ver. 21. *That they also may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* Do not these words significantly and shyningly hold out, what the Mediator is still about, and that uniting in God is His design still? And *fourthly*, upon this same very ground, the great Apostle, speaking to *Jews* and *Gentiles* who had imbraced the Gospel, and in them to all dissentients who love the Gospel-truths and Ordinances, saith, *Rom.* 15. 7. *Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.* *Meritoriously* and *virtually* the Elect are received to the glory of God, and to the end they

may

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may be *actually* received, Receive one another, saith the Apostle, as it were suspending the one upon the other. And now upon these grounds, Christ our Lord his grand design being so conspicuous, His Supper-ordinance standing as a Land-mark in the way, having this engraven upon it, **Union Communion**, the glorious Mediator his intercession running in that same channel, and the blessed Apostle making this the upshot of his doctrine; what lover of our Lord, well advised and recollecting himself, dare stiffly stand out from complying with Him, to satisfie their own inclination and habituated custom and carriage. My fear is, that every one of us will look to some others rather than themselves, as obstructing the desired uniting in the Lord. But upon mature afterthoughts, it will be found the mind of Christ, that we narrowly search our selves, every one of us, how we have provoked the Holy One to smite us so in His displeasure, and accurately to try what yet remaines in us obstructive to this union: and withall to flie to our slighted duty, as in a City they run to the quenching of a publick burning, laying this evil to heart more than sword or pestilence. All the writings and actings against Presbyterial-government, which is the wall of the house of God, have never wronged or hurt it so much, as our ill-raised, and worse-continued contests. Our nakednesse-discovering writings, what have they done but added oyl to the flame? For Christs sake, my reverend and dear Brethren, hearken to this word in season, from the Oracles of God, and treasures of pure Antiquity, pointing-out the way of a godly and edifying peace. It will be no grief of heart, but sweet peace and consolation, when we are to appear before the Judge of the quick and dead. Now the God of patience and consolation, grant you to be like minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus; So heartily prayeth

St. Andrews,
April. 28.
1659.

Your Brother and fellow-servant,

ROBERT BLAIR.

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THE
Publiſher to the Reader.

There are, I ſuppoſe, few or none amongſt us, or about us, ſo great ſtrangers to the obſervation of Providential Occurrents in Scotland, *as to be altogether without the knowledge of what hath come to paſs here in theſe dayes, How the holy, juſt and ſoveraign Lord, who ſometime lifted us up, hath now caſt us down; who crowned us with glory and honour, hath ſtript us of our glory and made the crown to fall from our head, (though we have not ſaid, Woe unto us, for we have ſinned) who ſometime made us a praiſe in the earth, hath now made us a hiſſing, a by-word and reproach to all that are round about us; How He, who once by our unity and one-ſhoulder-ſervice did make us beautifull as* Tirza, *comely as* Jeruſalem, *and terrible as an Army with Banners, hath now, alas, (which is one of the moſt imbittering ingredients in our cup) inſtead of giving us one heart and one way, in His anger, divided, ſub-divided, weakned, diſjoynted and broken us; So that* Judah *vexeth* Ephraim, *and* Ephraim *envyeth* Judah, *and every mans hand almoſt is againſt his brother; and through our lamentable and moſt unſeaſonable inteſtine jars and diviſions we bite and devour one another, and are like to be conſumed one of another; O tell it not in* Gath, *publiſh it not in the ſtreets of* Askelon, *leſt the daughters of the* Philiſtines *rejoyce, leſt the daughters of the* uncircumciſed *triumph! that when God hath caſt us all down together, we endeavour to keep down and tread upon one another, That when He hath been juſtly angry with our mother, her children are ſinfully angry one with another, and when He hath caſt us all into the furnace, we are even there ſtrugling and wreſtling one with another to the encreaſing of the flame;*

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flame; And when brotherly love and lothnesse to give or take offence, is in a special manner called-for, love did never wax more cold, nor offences more abound. Now, *when our Church thus in a manner distracted and drunk with the wine of astonishment, is in so sad a posture, and but few of the sons she hath brought forth to guide her or take her by the hand, they all almost fainting and lying at the head of every street as it were so many wild bulls in a net, full of the fury of the Lord and of the rebuke of our God; Then steppeth forth (the Spirit of the Lord coming upon him) one of her sons, the Author of this excellent Treatise concerning* Scandal *(having made some serious essayes before to take his mother by the hand, though but with small acceptance with many of his Brethren, for which, it may be, the jealous God was in part provoked to remove him) whereby, as by his latter Will and Testament, especially to the Ministers of the Church of* Scotland, *he doth again renew his formerly fruitlesse and unsuccessfull attempt: In which Treatise as there breatheth a far more sweet and savoury spirit, than in most, if not all of the Papers published upon occasion of our late lamentable differences, (which I hope will by none be looked upon as any reflection) So there is throughout a most strong and fragrant smell of more than ordinary piety, that it may be averred of him, as once it was of* Cyril *of* Jerusalem, *in his last and best dayes, he was* magnæ sanctimoniæ vir, *a man of eminent sanctity: It plainly also speaketh forth special acquaintance with the Scriptures (for,* in all his discourses *(as it's said of* Basil*)* he doth exquisitly mingle divine testimonies of Scripture, that they are like precious stones, not sewed to, but bred in purple cloathes) *and intimacy with the mind of God, as to what may be duty under the various dispensations of his providence, So that it may be said of him, he was a man* that had understanding of the times, and knew what *Israel* ought to do; *for he doth with admirable perspicacity take up, and with no lesse dexterity direct unto, what ought to be done in this, and that, and the other case, as a most skilfull* Anatomist *dissecting the whole complex body of duties in reference to ordinary and extraordinary cases*

and

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and emergents, never missing, as it were, one lith or joynt, and like a left-handed Benjamite, *that in the greatest intricacies, and gravest difficulties* can sling stones at an hairs breadth and not misse. *It savoureth likewise all-along of a most sharp, strong and pregnant wit, in supposing cases, proposing pertinent overtures and expedients, in disposing of arguments, framing distinctions, anticipating objections, in cautious guarding against mistakes and inconveniences, &c. So that it's verified of him what was once said of* Origen, Origenis ingenium sufficiebat ad omnia perdiscenda, he had such pregnancy of wit that he could reach any thing; *and of* Joseph Scaliger, *he was* portentosi ingenii vir, a man of a stupendious wit. *It discovereth withall so very great insight in Church-history and Writings of the ancient Fathers, wherewith it is every where most beautifully illuminate, that it may well be said of him, as once of sweet* Bucholtzer, *that one would have thought* universam antiquitatem in ejus pectusculo latuisse reconditam, *that* all antiquity lay hid in his breast; *and of famous Mr.* Holland, *Regius Professor of Divinity in* Oxford, Adeo familiaris erat cum Patribus ac si ipse pater, *He* was so familiarly acquainted with the Fathers as if himself had been one of them. *As for his stile and manner of expressing himself, it savoureth very much of the primitive and Gospel-simplicity, So that what is spoken to the commendation of* Basil *by a learned man, may fitly be applied to the Author,* The Reader will find in him a simple and natural form of speech, flowing from his holy breast, much drained of all humane passions; *And that which is said of* Ambrose, *he studied* non aures titillare, sed corda pungere, not to tickle and please ears, but to prick hearts: *As likewise that which is said of another great man,* His words were, non inflantia sed inflammantia, not inflating but inflaming: *He sheweth himself here many wayes to have been indeed a great man; but I (having been his Colleague in the Ministery and of his very intimate acquaintance for some years) knew him to be such more particularly and several other wayes, So that while I*

reflect

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reflect upon, and call to remembrance what I have seen in, and heard from him, I am constrained to say, as once Urbanus Regius (*a man much more able indeed to discern*) *said of* Luther, *upon occasion of a conference with him,* Semper fuit mihi magnus, at jam mihi maximus est; vidi enim præsens & audivi quæ nullo calamo tradi possunt absentibus, He was alwayes to me a great man, but now very great; for I saw and heard things when I was present with him, which can hardly by any pen be communicated to those that were absent. *In a word, as to the whole Treatise, it may, I think, without any* hyperbole *be said, that it is universally most profitable and seasonably beautiful; For, in the* first part *of it concerning* Scandal *in the general* (*excellently compended and commended as all the rest are, by the stately-styling, profound and precious* Preface*r, like-minded in all these things with the blessed Author, whose sage mind in them, and not the lesse because of this co-incidency, would be more laid weight upon, lest we be put out of time to lament also the losse of such a Healer and Piller in this sorely sick and shaken Church*) *In the* first part, I *say, the ancient, primitive, long-dead, buried, and almost-forgotten tenderneſſe in the matter of* Offence (*a specially-adorning requisit to a Christian and Gospel-becoming conversation*) *is again revived and portraied as risen from the dead with a most amiable and comely countenance and taking aspect, so that it forceth the serious beholders to say, Peace be upon as many as walk according to this Rule. In the* second part *concerning* Scandals *as they are the object of Church-censures, there is a very compleat and compact directory according to the Scripture-pattern for Church-officers how to manage the great Ordinance of Discipline in its exercise, which, if it were diligently and conscienciously followed in the several steps of it, (as it was most convincingly so by the Author himself) would undoubtedly make that work both much more easie and much more successfull than it useth ordinarily to be. In the* third part *concerning* Scandalous Errours, *wonderfully suited to this time of so great infection, sickneſſe and mortality, by*

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the raging plague and botch of errour, exceedingly gathered to a head, ripened and made to break and run out, to the infecting, in a manner, of the very air wherein the Churches of these Nations breath, by the heat and warmnesse afforded to it from a lamentable liberty and vast Toleration; In this third *part, I say, there is, as it were, a Physicians Shop, full of choice preservatives against, and soveraign remedies of, poysonable errours and heresies. In the* fourth part, *concerning* Scandalous Divisions, *he doth, as another* Irenæus, *with much meeknesse of wisdom and singular moderation of spirit, without any the least reflection or irritation, most tenderly, singly, unbyassedly and impartially, and most affectionately, as a man burnt with the offence that waiteth on divisions amongst godly Ministers especially, strongly endeavour an innocent and wholesom union and composure, so that (as an eminent, aged and experienced servant of Jesus Christ, whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all these Churches, when he first saw this Piece in writ, said)* it will be unwelcom to none but such as are led with a bitter spirit; *to which may well be added, that as it's reported of* Nazianzen, he was of such authority in the Greek Churches, that whosoever durst oppose his testimony, was suspected to be an Heretick: *So may it be said of the piously and prudently-peaceable, and healing-spirited Author, that he deserveth to be of such authority, at least in the Scottish Church, that whoever shall adventure to oppose (as it's hoped none will) his wise, harmlesse, holy and healing Overtures, may be suspected to be no great friend to the union and peace of this afflicted and rent Church. I will not, Christian Reader, detain thee any longer from perusing this notable Tractate, but shall only offer to thy grave and serious consideration these* two *things, which I suppose will not a little commend the same unto thee, especially as to the last part of it;* one *is, That the Author, when he was (but a very little before his last sickness, and after his finishing the three first parts) most unexpectedly surprised with a motion suggested to him anent the expediency of handling somewhat of the* Scandal of Divisions, *it did so exceedingly affright him, and had such astonishing influence upon*

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on him through the apprehended difficulty and tickliſhneſſe of the ſubject (ſo tender was he) that (as himſelf did to ſome afterward profeſſe) he ſunk down in his ſeat, *and yet being convinced of the neceſſity of ſaying ſomewhat to it, the Lord having withall helped him in the other parts, he durſt not forbear; whereupon this choice diſcourſe (for it was not divided in Chapters till afterward) did follow, much whereof I know and am perſwaded did occur and was given unto him* inter dictandum. *The* other *thing is, That ſometimes before his death to ſome friends, he did humbly and gravely call it* his Teſtament to the Church of Scotland; *which* Teſtament *and* Latter-will *of a dead, but yet ſpeaking faithfull ſervant of God, will, I hope, in due time be* confirmed *by all godly, judicious, ſober, peaceable and unprejudicate men, as containing in it a moſt excellent and enriching* Legacy, *worthy to be put into the Churches* Treaſury. *Now, that it may go forth with a rich bleſſing from the God of truth and peace, to all the honeſt-hearted lovers of the truth in peace, for the advancement of truth and a holy peace, is the deſire of him, who deſireth to be*

Thine to ſerve thee in the

Goſpel of Peace,

J. C.

THE

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If there be any thing in the Collection and frame of these Contents *unsuitable to, or unworthy of, the precious Author, let it not be imputed to him, but to the Publisher.*

ERRATA.

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ERRATA.

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The Rise of this following Treatise.

Having had occasion to consider the Book of the *Revelation*, and being on the Epistle to the Church of *Pergamos* in the second Chapter, ground was given to speak somewhat of *Scandal*, by reason of several doctrines clearly arising from that place: upon this occasion I did first essay the writing of something of the doctrine of Scandal in general, intending only to have spent a sheet or two thereupon, as elsewhere on some other subjects: When this was brought to a close, I found the place to give ground to speak of publick Church-offences, as they are the object of Church-discipline and Censures; And being convinced, that that subject was not impertinent to be spoken of, I yeelded to spend some thoughts upon it also, which did draw to a greater length than at first was intended, or was suitable for a digression: This being finished, as it is, and any more thoughts of this subject laid by, it occurred again to me to think of doctrinal Scandals, or of scandalous Errors; And considering that the Scandals mentioned in that place, are of such nature, and that such are very frequent in this time, I yeelded also to put together what thoughts the Lord would furnish concerning the same; whereupon followed the third part of this Treatise. When this was even at the closing, there was a fourth part of the same subject that did occur

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to me to be thought on, which before that had never been minded, and that was concerning scandalous Church-divisions: To this my mind and inclination was exceeding averse at first, as knowing it not only to be difficult in it self to be medled in, but also exceedingly above me, who am altogether unsuitable to hazard on such a subject: Yet, considering the rise of the motion, and how the Lord had helped through the other parts, I did resolve to condescend to follow it, at least so far, till it might appear what was His mind to me therein, and accordingly did follow it till it came to the period (whatever it be) that now it is at.

This is the true rise and occasion of this Treatise, and of the several parts thereof, and therefore I have continued its entry in the original mould thereof, to wit, in laying down some general doctrines from that place of Scripture, and if there be afterward any more particular relation to the second and third chapters of the *Revelation* than to other Scriptures, this simple narration of the rise thereof may satisfie any concerning the same: whereof we shall say no more, but, first, lay down the grounds of all from that text, and then proceed in the Treatise, which is divided in four parts, upon the reasons formerly hinted at.

The Grounds of this Treatise.

AMongst other things that troubled the Church in the primitive times, *Scandal*, or, *offence*, was a chief one; and the many directions that are given concerning it, and the reproofs that are of it, shew that it is a main piece of a Christians conversation to walk rightly in reference thereto, and a great evidence of loosnesse where it is not heeded. On ver. 6. we shew that this was a foul fault of the *Nicolaitans* to be careless of offending, or of giving of offence, and not to regard Scandal; and here the Lord holdeth it forth to be so, by comparing it with *Balaam's*

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Balaam's practice, vet. 14. which is aggreaged from this, that he taught *Balac to lay a stumbling-block before Israel.* From which these doctrines may be gathered, 1. That there is such a fault incident to men in their carriage, even to lay stumbling-blocks before others, and to offend them. 2. That men ought to walk so as not to offend others, or so, as to lay no stumbling-block before them: So that it is not enough not to stumble themselves, (if this could be separated from the other) but also they ought to be carefull not to stumble others. 3. The Lord doth take special notice how men do walk in reference to others in this, and is highly provoked where He seeth any guilty of it. 4. The devil hath ever endeavoured to have offences abounding in the Church, and to make some lay such stumbling-blocks before others. 5. It is most hurtfull to the Church, and destructive to souls where offences abound, and men walk not tenderly in reference to these; so that the Lord expresseth it with a twofold wo, *Matth.* 18. as being a wo beyond sword or pestilence. 6. We may gather, that corrupt doctrine never wanteth offences joyned with it, and that ordinarily those who spread that, are untender in this. 7. That offences often accompany the rise and beginning of any work of Christ's amongst a people; these tares of offences are ordinarily then sown. 8. That some offences are of a publick nature, and that Church-officers should take notice of such, and that it is offensive to Christ when they are over-seen and not taken heed unto. 9. Church-officers, even such as otherwayes are approved in their carriage and ministery, may fall in this fault, as by comparing the Epistles to *Pergamos* and *Thyatira,* is clear. 10. When Officers fall in this fault, it is yet no reprovable thing in members that are pure in respect of their own personal carriage to continue in communion with such a Church, the Ordinances otherwayes being pure.

PART I.

The sum of it.

THese doctrins being in the words, and Scandal being a great part of the challenge of the *Nicolaitans*, or at least a great aggravation of their challenge, and also being a most necessary thing for a Christian's daily walk, to be carefully taken heed unto, there is ground here to speak to the same, (in a time especially wherein offences abound) and that in respect of what is called for, both in private persons and in Church-judicatories; or, of private scandals, and such as are publick. We shall draw what we would say of the first to these five, 1. To shew what an *offence* is. 2. To shew how it is given. 3. To shew some considerations that ought to deter from giving of it. 4. To shew what weight it ought to have on a Christian in his walk. 5. Point at some directions necessary to be adverted unto when offences are rise and multiply.

CHAP. I.

Several Distinctions of Scandal.

FOr clearing of the first two, we shall premit some distinctions; and we would advert, that by *offence* here, is not understood that which doth actually displease or grieve another alway: for there is a great difference betwixt displeasing and offending; as also betwixt pleasing and edifying: for, one may be displeased, and yet edified; well satisfied, and yet offended. *First Distinction.* First then, we are to distinguish betwixt displeasing and offending; for, here offence is taken

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taken in opposition, not to a man's being pleased, but to his edification; and so offence or stumbling in short here, is something that doth, or may mar the spiritual edification of another, whether he be pleased or displeased, as by comparing *Rom.* 14. ver. 13. with ver. 20, and 21. is clear: for what he first calleth a stumbling-block, or an offence, he expoundeth it afterward to be any thing that may be the occasion of a fall to another, and make him stumble, or weak, or to halt in the course of holiness, as some block would hinder or put a man in hazard to fall in the running of a race; And from this is the similitude drawn in this phrase.

2. Scandal is either given only, or taken only, or both. Given only, is, when one doth lay something before another which is apt of it self to cause him fall or sin; although the other do not fall by occasion of it, yet if it be inductive to sin of its own nature, it is an offence or stumbling-block, as Christ saith to *Peter*, *Matth.* 16. *Thou art an offence to me*; though there was nothing could stick to Him, yet that was in its nature such, which *Peter* had given Him in advice. 2. It is taken only, when no occasion is given, but when a man doth what is not only lawfull, but necessary, and yet others from their own corruption do carp thereat, and stumble thereon: Thus did the Pharisees offend at Christ, *Matth.* 15. 12. who did never give offence to any; and this is common to wicked men, that stumble where no stumbling-block is, and, as it is said, *they know not whereat they stumble*, *Prov.* 4. 19. This also is called *passive* offence, as the other is called *active*. 3. It is both given and taken, when there is something active on the one side, that is apt to draw another to sin, and something that is yielded unto on the other side, and the bait is accepted: This was it in that stumbling-block which *Balaam* laid before *Israel*; and thus ordinarily it is amongst men, who, having corruption, are soon inflamed in *Second Distinction.*

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lesse or more with every incitement. Thus, *Gal.* 2. *Peter* gave *Barnabas* offence, and he took it, when he was also carried away to dissemble. It is this active Scandal that properly is to be enquired in, and is meant here, which is, in short; any deed or word that in it self is apt to make another to sin, or to weaken them in their spiritual course, either in respect of life, or comfort, and that whether the person be actually stumbled or not, or whether the person actually intend offence or not. In all this we are to understand, that one act may be offensive in many considerations, as one deed may be against many commands, and be many wayes sinfull.

Third Distinction. 3. There are doctrinal offences, and there are some that are practical: doctrinal, are such as flow from matters of judgement, wherein men vent some untruth, and so lay a stumbling-block before others, this is to break a Commandment and to teach others so to do, *Matth.* 5. 19. And this is sometimes also in matters of practice, when a corrupt practice is defended, as these *Nicolaitans* strove to do theirs. Scandall in practice, without any doctrinal defence, is, when doctrine being kept pure, a person falleth in some practice, that of it self without any verball expression, is inductive to sin. Thus *David's* adultery was a scandal: and this was the fault of the Priests, that made the people stumble at the Law: And thus every publick or known irregular action is offensive, because it is of ill example to others, or otherwise may have influence on them to provoke to some sin.

Fourth Distinction. 4. We may distinguish offences according to the matter thereof. And, 1. some are in matters that are simply sinfull in themselves, and have this also following on them: Thus all errors and publick sinfull practices are offensive. 2. Some matters are not simply and in themselves sinfull, yet have the appearance of evil, 1 *Thess.* 5. 17. and thus dangerous and doubtfull expressions in doctrine, that have been, or

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use to be, abused; and practices also that are not becoming that honesty and good report which a Christian ought to study, as it is *Philip.* 4. 8, 9. are offensive. In the first respect, *David* would not take the name of Idols in his mouth, *Psal.* 16. because others did too much reverence them: Of the last sort was *Peter's* dissimulation and withdrawing, *Gal.* 2. because, that appeared to strengthen the opinion of the continuing of the difference betwixt Jew and Gentile, &c. for that cause, *Paul* would not circumcise *Titus*, *Gal.* 2. 3. and did condemn eating in the Idol-temples. 3. Some offences are in matters otherwise lawfull and indifferent, though not necessary, as the eating of, or abstaining from meats, or what was offered to Idols in the primitive times, which was indifferent to be done in the house of an Heathen, and so was sometimes lawfull, but was not indifferent to be done in the Idol-temple, because that had the appearance of evil, as if he had had some respect to the Idol; nor was it to be done, if any weak Brother had been at table in the house, because it grieved him, 1 *Cor.* 8, and 10. It is these last two, (and more especially the third) that are concerned in the doctrine of offences properly, and do rather arise from circumstances in the thing, as time, place, person, manner, &c. than from the deed considered in it self.

5. We may distinguish them in respect of the intent of the work, or of the worker: some things may be offensive in themselves as so circumstantiated, and yet not be so to the person that may give offence by them, I mean, not be esteemed so; and thus was *Peters* offence which he laid before Christ, *Matth.* 16. And sometimes the person may intend the others advantage, and yet may offend and stumble him, as *Eli* intended his sons good, but really by his too gentle reproof did stumble them by confirming them in their offence; And thus some, by unseasonable reproofs or censures, and commendations also, may re- *Fifth Distinction.*

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ally make another worse, although they intend the contrary.

Sixth Distinction. 6. Whence ariseth another distinction of offences, viz. from the matter of a practice, or from the manner of performing of it, or the circumstances in the doing of it: for, as it is not an act materially good that will edifie, except it be done in the right manner; so will not an act materially good keep off offence, if it be not done tenderly, wisely, &c. And often we find circumstances have much influence on offence, as times, persons, places, manner, &c. for, it is not offensive to one to pray or preach, but at some times, as before an Idol, or on an Holy-day it may be offensive.

Seventh Distinction 7. As sins are distinguished in sins of omission and commission; So offences may be distinguished also: for, some give offence when they swear, pray irreverently, &c. others, when there is no seeming respect to prayer at all, in the very form; for this fostereth profanity as the other doth: And for this *Daniel* will open his window, lest he should be thought to have forborn prayer: and this offence of omission, or omissive offence, is not guarded against only by doing what is duty, except there be also a doing of it so as conveniently, and as becomes it may be known to be done, as in the former instance: and this, *Rev.6.9.* is called *the holding of the Testimony*; and it is this mainly that is edifying to others, when the light of holiness doth shine; and when that is vailed, others in so far have darkness to walk in, and so it is as to them an occasion to stumble, because they hold not forth the light unto them; but still this is to be done without affectation or ostentation, lest a new offence should follow thereupon.

Eighth Distinction 8. Some offences contrare the graces of Gods People, and these make them sad; some foster corruptions, and these are too pleasant: thus, soft reproofs, corrupt advices, flatteries, &c. minister matter to many to fall on.

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9. Some offences may be called personall, when a person committeth them in his private carriage, that is, when his way of eating, drinking, living, &c. offendeth others, although he hath no medling with them, but live retiredly: Some again are more direct offences (as the first are indirect and consequential) that is, which flow from men in their publick actings, or in their mutual converse with others, which have more direct influence to offend. *Ninth Distinction.*

10. Offences may be distinguished as they hurt folks either by pleasing them in their corruptions and strengthening them in what is sinfull, or when they hurt by irritating and stirring up corruptions to vent. In the first respect, too much gentleness in admonitions, rashness or imprudence in commendations of what is good in one, or extenuation of what is evil, corrupt advice, and such like, do offend: Thus *Jonadab* offended *Ammon*, 2 *Sam.* 13. and *Eli* his sons. In the last, sleighting of men, wronging of them, or not condescending to remove a wrong, or to vindicate our selves, if there be a supposed wrong, doth grieve and offend; so do evil-grounded reproofs, or unadvertent admonitions that are not seasoned with love, hard reports, &c. *Tenth Distinction.*

11. We may consider offences with respect to the party offended; and so, first we offend friends in many respects, whom, it may be, we would not desire to grieve, yet unadvertingly we stumble them, and hurt their spiritual condition by unfaithfulness to them, carnalness in conversing with them, siding with their infirmities, and many such like wayes. Or, secondly, they are enemies, or such to whom we bear no such respect, these also are scandalized when they are provoked through the carnalness of our way to judge hardly of us, or of Religion for our sake, or to follow some carnal course to oppose what we carnally do, when we irritate them and provoke their passion, &c. and thus men in all debates are often guilty, whether *Eleventh Distinction.*

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their contest be in things Civil, Ecclesiastick or Scholastick, when, beside what may further their cause (suppose it to be just) they do not carry respectively to the adversary, and tenderly and convincingly, so as it may appear they seek the good of their soul, and their edification, even when they differ from them. Thirdly, we may look on offence as it offendeth wicked or profane men, possibly Heathens, Jews, or Gentiles; they are offended when hardened in their impiety by the grossnesse and uncharitableness of those who are professedly tender: thus it is a fault, 1 *Cor.* 10. 32. to give offence either to Jews or Gentiles, as to the Church of God. Fourthly, Amongst those that are tender, some are more weak, some are more strong: the first are often offended where there is no ground in the matter, as *Rom.* 14. 1 *Cor.* 8. *&c.* and it venteth readily by rash judging and censuring of others that are stronger than themselves, for going beyond their light, or because of their seeming to be despised by them, &c. which sheweth wherein the offence of the strong also lyeth; therefore these two are put together, *Rom.* 14. 3. *Let not him that eateth*, (that is, him that is strong) *despise him that eateth not: And let not him that eateth not* (that is, the weak) *judge him that eateth.*

Twelfth Distinction. 12. Offences may be considered as they directly incline or tempt to sin, either in doctrine or practice; or, as they more indirectly scare and divert from, or make more faint and weak in the pursuing of holinesse either in truth or practice: Thus a blot in some professor maketh Religion to be some way abhorred; this especially falleth out when Ministers and Professors that are eminent, become offensive: For that is as a dead fly in the box of the Apothecaries oyntment, that maketh all to stink: Thus, *Mal.* 1. the Priests made the people stumble at the Law; as also did the sons of *Eli*, 1 *Sam.* 2. and this is charged on *David*, that by his fall he made the Heathen blaspheme:

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pheme: and thus contention and division amongst Ministers and Disciples is insinuated to stand in the way of the worlds believing in, or acknowledging of Christ, as it is, *Joh.*17.21.

13. Sometimes Scandal is in immediate duties of religious worship, as praying, preaching, conferring, speaking, judging of such things, &c. that is, either by miscarrying in the matter of what is spoken, or by an unreverent, light, passionate manner, &c. or, it is given by our ordinary and common carriage in our eating, drinking, apparelling, manner of living, buying and selling, &c. that is, when something of our way in these things giveth evidence of pride, vanity, unconstancie, covetousnesse, addictednes to pleasure, carnalnesse, or some such thing wherby our neighbour is wronged: Thus the husband may offend the wife, and the wife the husband by their irreligious conversing together, whereby one of them doth strengthen the other to think exactnesse in Religion not so necessary. And so a servant who hath a profession may stumble a master, if the servant be not faithfull and diligent in his service. *Thirteenth Distinction.*

14. Again, some offences are offensive, and are given from the first doing of the action; thus where there is any appearance of evil, the offence is given in this manner. Again, offence may be at first only taken and not given, and yet afterward become given, and make the person guilty, although in the first act he had not been guilty. This is, first, when suppose a man eating without respect to difference of meats as he might do indifferently, if he were told by one that such meat were offered to an Idol, and therefore in his judgment it were not lawfull to eat it, although before that, it were not offence given, but taken, (he not knowing that any were present that would offend) yet if he should continue after that to do the same thing, it should be offence given upon his side. Secondly, If a man should know one to have taken *Fourteenth Distinction.*

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taken offence at him, or his carriage, in a thing indifferent (although he had given no just occasion thereof) and if, after his knowledge thereof, he should not endeavour to remove the same according to his place, In that case the offence becometh given also, because he removeth not that stumbling-block out of his brother's way.

Fifteenth Distinction

15. Some offences are offensive in themselves, that is, when the thing it self hath some appearance of evil, or a tendencie to offend in it self. Again, some but by accident in respect of some concurring circumstance of time, place, &c. Some offences also may be said to be given of infirmity, that is, when they proceed from a particular slip of the party offending, when they are not continued in, stuck to, or defended, or, when they fall into them, not knowing that they would be offensive; and when that is known, endeavouring to remove them. Again, other offences are more rooted and confirmed, as when a person hath a tract in them, is not much carefull to prevent them, or remove them, is not much weighted for them, but sleighteth them, or defendeth them, &c. This distinction of offences answereth to that distinction of sins, in sins of infirmity and sins of malice: which maliciousness is not to be referred to the intent of the person, but to the nature of the act; so is it to be understood here in respect of offences.

Sixteenth Distinction

In the last place, we may consider that distinction of Scandals in private and publick: both which may be two wayes understood; either, 1. in respect of the witnesses; or, 2. in respect of the nature of them. 1. It is a private scandal in the first respect, which doth offend few, because of its not being known to many, and so a publick offence in this respect is a scandal known to many. Thus the same offence may be a private offence to one at one time, and in one place; and a publick offence to another, or the same person, in respect of these circumstances. In the last respect, a privat

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vat offence is that possibly which doth stumble many, yet is not of that nature, as publickly, legally, or judicially it might be made out to be scandalous, for the convincing of a person offending, or of others, although it may have a great impression upon the hearts of those who know it. Thus the general tract of ones way and carriage (who yet may be civil, legal, and fair in all particulars) may be exceeding offensive, as holding forth to the consciences of those that are most charitable to him, much vanity, pride, earthly-mindedness, untenderness, want of love and respect, and the like; which saith within the heart of the beholders, that there are many things wrong, when yet no particular can be instanced wherein the person cannot have fair legal answers; Of this sort are unseasonable starting of questions, or doubtfull disputations, *Rom.* 14. wherein possibly the person may assert truth, yet by moving such things, at such times, and in such expressions, he doth confound and shake the weak: Those offences especially arise from a supposed unstreightness in the end, excesse in the manner of a thing, disproportionableness betwixt a man's way and his station, and such like, whereof a man may have much conviction in himself, from observing of such an ones way; yet it is not a publick offence in the sense spoken of here, because there is no demonstrating of those. Thus *Absolom's* insinuating, self-seeking way gave evidence of pride; and such as *Paul* speaketh of, *Philip.* 1, and 2. that *some preached out of envie, and others sought their own things, &c.* are of this nature, which by his discerning he was convinced of, yet did not found any sentence on them.

Again, oppositly to these, Offences may be called publick, when there is a possible way of bearing them out before others, or instructing them in particulars to be contrary to the rule, as drunkenness, swearing, &c. These may be called ecclesiastick or judicial

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judicial offences, as being the object of Church-censure, all the other may be called conscience, or charity-wounding offences, because they are the object of a persons conscience and charity, and do wound them, and are judged by them, and may be the ground of a christian private admonition, but not of publick reproof; or rather may be called unconscienious, and uncharitable offences, as being opposit to conscience and charity.

Other Distinctions of Scandal.

Many other distinctions of Scandals may be given, as, some are immediate, that is, when we hear or see what is offensive from the person himself; Some again are mediate, and so the very reporting of something that is true may be offensive to those to whom it is reported; As, 1. when it may alienate them from, or irritate them against another person. 2. When it may occasion some sinfull distemper, or incite to some corrupt course, or any way provoke to carnalnesse, those to whom it is reported; and thus *offence* differeth from *slander*: for, *slander* affecteth and wrongeth the party spoken of, who, it may be, is absent: *Offence* again, stumbleth those who are present, although the same act in a person may be both a calumny and an offence upon different considerations. Thus *Ziba* calumniateth *Mephibosheth*, but really stumbleth and offendeth *David*, 2 *Sam.* 16. (although *David* was not so displeased with him as *Mephibosheth* was) So also *Doeg* calumniateth *David* and the Priests in a thing which was true, but really offended *Saul*, as the effect cleared, 1 *Sam.* 21, and 22. Also some things offend others properly; as when a Minister faileth in giving of an admonition prudently, or seasonably. Again, some things offend virtually, when, it may be, a Minister giveth an advice in season, but in something hath not condescended formerly, whereby he hath not such accesse with his admonition to edifie; Thus *Paul* prevented offence, when by becoming all things to all, he made way for his being acceptable

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acceptable in his station. Again, some offences may simply be offences, as having hurt with them. Some again may be comparatively; so it is when a thing actually hurteth, not by an emergent losse, but when it keepeth from that growth and edification, that otherwayes might have been, it's a comparative losse, and so offensive.

CHAP. II.

Holding forth what Offence *is not, and what it is.*

THese generals may give a hint of what is signified by Offence and how it is given. To adde a word more particularly to the first Question, Let us consider, 1. what offence is not; 2. what it is. 1. It is not alwayes any hurtfull and actually displeasing thing to the party that is offended; and so is not to be constructed such, or not, from their pleasure, or displeasure. 2. It is not alwayes to be judged by the matter; for, an offence may be in a lawfull matter, that simply is not to be condemned, as in eating, drinking, taking wages for preaching, &c. 3. It is not alway to be determined by the effect; sometimes one may be offended, when no offence was given: sometimes again, offence may be given, and the person be guilty thereof (as hath been said) when no actual stumbling hath followed, but the thing of it self was inductive thereto. 4. Nor is it to be judged by the person's intention; one may be without all design of hurting, who yet may really wound, and offend another, and be guilty by rashnesse, omission, too much love and condescension in sparing, unfaithfulnesse (it being much to be faithfull to one that we love, and, which is a pity, we are readiest to offend them, as in *Jonadab's* case to *Amnon*; yea, in *Job's* friends to him, &c.) inconsiderate zeal, imprudency, or falling in some thing, that is as a dead

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a dead fly, which may make much that is profitable, become unsavoury. 2. Scandal then must be something accompanying some external deed or word (for internal give not offence) which being considered at such a time, in such a place, or in such a person, &c. may be inductive to sin, or impeditive of the spiritual life or comfort of others. When this doth flow from a sinfull act, it is not so difficultly discernable, readily all actions that are materially evil, are clear; but the difficulty is when the matter is lawfull or indifferent in it self; or when it is in the manner and other circumstances of a lawfull or necessary duty, then to discern when they become scandalous in such respects; and accordingly to be swayed to do or abstain in the matter, and to do in this or some other manner, as may eschew the same. This properly and strictly is that which is called offence, and is that wherein most wisdom is to be exercised in ordering and regulating us in the use of christian liberty; and concerning this are the great debates in Scripture, that men may know, that not only the Command is to be looked unto in the matter of the act, so that nothing be done against it in that respect, nor only that our own clearnesse be considered, that we do nothing doubtingly, but that others be considered also that they by our deed be not in their spiritual estate wronged or hurt, that is, to do or abstain for conscience-sake, not our own, but of him that sitteth with us, 1 *Cor.* 10. 24, and 28. for, if charity and love be the end of the Law, and men ought not only to seek their own things, but the things one of another, and love their neighbour as themselves, then ought they to seek their neighbours edification as their own, and to eschew the prejudging of them. Hence Scandal is opposite to that charity and love, and also to that respect which we ought to carry to our brother, *Rom.* 14. v. 10, and 15. yea, it is a scandal and offence as it is oppositе to, and inconsistent with, love to his spiritual well-being;

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being; and so, in a word, that which is apt to make him worse in that respect, or that which may impede and hinder his spirituall growth and advancement therein, is an offence and scandal, *Rom.* 14. 21. And thus a scandal differeth from an injury: for, this hurteth his person, name, or estate, or some outward thing; that, again, hurteth his spirituall condition, either by wronging his livelinesse, or activity, or comfort, &c. though the same thing often, which is an injury, is an offence also, but not contrarily.

CHAP. III.

Concerning the severall wayes that Offence *may be given.*

IT is hardly possible to shew how many wayes one may offend another, there being so many, yea, so very many wayes whereby men both wrong themselves and others; yet, by considering the effects that *offence given*, hath, or may have upon others (although the effect follow not) and by considering that upon which *active offence* worketh, and which usually is offended at in another, We may draw them to some heads accordingly; As, 1. men may be drawn to some sinfull action upon such an occasion: thus an action materially lawfull and good in it self, becometh a scandall, when by our deed another is fostered in some sin, or encouraged to commit it, as supposing himself to be strengthned therein by our practice; Or when it may occasion others to go beyond our intent, or to do what we do in another manner which may make it sinfull: So, zeal inconsiderately vented, may strengthen folks in passion; and thus eating in Idols temples (which in it self was nothing) was scandalous when done publickly, because it strengthned Idolaters to think somewhat of their Idols, and made others who were weak, to continue

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some respect to them, because they supposed such men, by such a practice to do so; or made some judge them to have respect to Idols, and so to be less in their esteem; or, caused others to eat with respect to the Idol, when they themselves did it without it: Thus doubtfull expressions in points of Truth, and uncircumspectnesse in not abstaining from all appearance of evil, or what doth appear to be evil to such a person, and at such a time, &c. may be offensive; as suppose one in their apparrel, diet, or other wayes, should by some be conceived to go beyond their station, and what is fit at such a time, or be an occasion to some others indeed to exceed, when, without such misconstructing beholders, there might be nothing offensive in the deed it self; and thus the deed of one person may be offensive (supposing him to be esteemed proud, covetous, unclean, &c.) which would not be so in another: So also, a thing will be offensive to one, and not to another. Wherefore, in reference to *Offence*, men would have an eye on themselves, and what generally they are reputed to be, and so would abstain from the least appearance of what is supposed to be predominant in them, as also they would have respect to others that are present, or may be hearers or beholders, considering what are their thoughts of them, or of such deeds, &c. and accordingly would carry, although it were to abstain from such a place, apparrel, diet, &c. which in reason, abstractly from offence, might be pleaded for, as becoming. Thus one walking abroad on the Sabbath, may be sanctifying it, yet by his example some other may be provoked to vage and gad and cast off all duties of the day, and to neglect what is called-for in secret, or in the family; in that respect, it becometh offensive to go abroad, although it be lawfull in it self to meditate abroad in the fields, as well as in the house.

2. When a lawfull act doth breed or occasion misconstruction or rash judging in an other, then it becometh

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cometh offensive to him; As, 1. when it maketh him think the thing unlawfull, which is lawfull, that is, (*Rom.* 14. 16.) to make our good to be evil spoken of: Or, 2. when it occasioneth our selves by that deed to be condemned as untender and unconscientious in the performing of such an act, that is, to make one judge his brother rashly, *Rom.* 14. 10. 1 *Cor.* 10. 30. Or, 3. when it occasioneth our profession, or the Gospel to be mistaken and mis-judged, or godlinesse to be accounted fancie, hypocrisie, &c. Thus by the indiscreet use of liberty, the Gospel was evil spoken of by some, as if it had given way to loosnesse, for so those that were zealous for the Law did esteem of it.

3. The effect of a Scandal, is to grieve and make heavie others; and so any indifferent action which is apt to do that, is a scandal, as we may see, *Rom.* 14. 15. because it marreth their spiritual comfort, weakneth them in love to us, fainteth them in the doing of duty, at least marreth their chearfulnesse in it, &c. and so is against charity, and becometh a breach of the fixth Command, *Rom.* 14. 15. This is the notion that most ordinarily we use to take up *offence* under, *viz.* when it may grieve some to hear that we have done such a thing, when it may lessen their esteem of us, (and so much incapacitate us to be profitable to them) or alienate them from us, &c.

4. We may try Scandal by our hazarding to disquiet the peace of our brother's conscience: that is, when by our lawfull deed we engage or virtually perswade him to follow our example, supposing him to doubt of the lawfulnesse of that practice, or to condemn the same. Thus, 1 *Cor.* 8. 10. one is emboldened to eat of things offered to Idols, with respect to them, because he beholdeth another that is more strong than he to do the same. And so by his eating, he giveth ground to his conscience afterward to challenge him, for which cause he that gave the example, is said to wound his weak conscience. The like also is,

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Rom. 14. 22, 23. in the case of doubting: for, supposing one to doubt whether such a thing be lawfull or not, meerly by our example to go before him, is to put him in that strait either to condemn our deed, or doubtingly to follow; for, the meer example of no man can warrant any other to follow, or satisfie a conscience in the lawfulnesse of such and such a deed. This also may be when a weak man, having possibly done something in another manner, (and that lawfully) than afterward he beholdeth one that is strong to do, (which also may be lawful in it self) he is brought to look over his own practice, and to condemn the same as sinfull, meerly because that other did it in another manner. For, though indifferency in the manner of practices in lawfull things, is sometimes edifying, yet in such cases when they have not sufficient information joyned with them, they drive men on the extremities foresaid, and so become offensive, especially then when such things are actually doubted of, or disputated in their lawfulnesse.

5. Things become offensive when they prove obstructive to the edification of others, and, as the word is, *Rom.* 14. 21. *do make them weak*, or *infirmeth them*, not only by fainting and weighting them, as is said before, but by confounding them in the Truth or practices of Religion, whereby they are either shaken in their former assurances, and so weakened, or made doubtfull whether such things be Duties and Truths, or not; or, by such and such things, are diverted from the more necessary practices of Religion. This is the scope of *Rom.* 14. *ver.* 1, *&c.* and of other Scriptures elsewhere, wherby the Apostle *Paul* doth guard against doubtfull disputations, which do not profit them that are occupied therein, *Heb.* 13. 9. And thus, not only writing and reasoning for what is not Truth, but writing and speaking of Truth in a new manner, with new expressions and multiplying moulds of these, or doing it unseasonably, passionatly, contentiously &c. doth

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deth prove offensive. Thus what is not actually edifying, is offensive; and upon this account, *Paul* becometh all things to all, that he may gain some, as in his circumcising of *Timothy* that he might have access to edifie the Jews, and such like; And thus often not condescending in indifferent things to please others, doth much incapacitate them to be edified by us, or doth give them prejudice at the way of the Gospel, whereby their edification is obstructed and they offended.

6. An action becometh offensive when it stirreth corruption, wakeneth passion, or confirmeth jealousie and suspicion &c. although that jealousie and suspicion be groundlesse. Thus *Paul's* taking of wages in the Church of *Corinth*, had been offensive, because it had confirmed the suspicion of his seeking of himself amongst them, and would have strengthened his traducers in their calumnie, and given them occasion of venting their carnall cheerfulnesse and insolency; And thus, when one is unjustly suspected of errour or inclination thereto, to dispute for such things, even when he disowneth them, to converse with persons of that stamp, or such like, are offensive, and are to be shunned, though it may be there would be no such construction put upon another doing so.

CHAP. IV.

Concerning that upon which Offence *worketh, or, the several wayes by which it is taken.*

THe considering of the second thing, to wit, that upon which Offence worketh, and by which it is taken, will clear this more: For, sometimes, 1. it affecteth the weaknesse of understanding and light; So it raiseth doubts, misconstructions, &c. 2. Sometimes through that it affecteth the conscience; whence cometh judging and condemning

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ning of others, and their deeds, and the awakening of challenges, &c. 3. Sometimes it stirreth the affections, either by awakening carnal joy, or carnal grief. 4. It affecteth corruption, when men, from prejudice, are fretted or grieved upon such an occasion; Thus often deeds become offensive, when they confirm mens jealousie, stir their pride, emulation, &c. 5. A deed may have influence on some folks infirmity or impotencie; So, some that are more given to passion, suspicion, or such like, will be offended sooner than others, and some things will be offensive to them that are not so in themselves. 6. Men as they are gracious may be offended; for, though grace, as such, is not capable sinfully to take offence, yet gracious persons may offend, or some actions may have an aptitude to offend a gracious zealous person rather than another. Thus *Peter's* dissimulation might be said to be offensive to *Paul*, *Gal.* 2. though more properly it was a scandal to *Barnabas*, yet it grieved and stirred *Paul*, though in a sanctified manner he did vent that which possibly some other gracious person might either have been irritated with, or, out of respect to *Peter*, led away, as *Barnabas* was; when an ungracious person would not have laid any weight on *Peter's* deed, as to any of these, that is, either to follow it, or be grieved with it.

From what is said, it may be someway clear how an indifferent or lawfull act may become offensive, to wit, as it doth, or is apt to work any of these effects upon others, whether they be weak or strong, gracious or prophane, and whether conscience or corruption doth rise at the offence that is taken: for, as giving of offence, doth imply uncharitableness and pride to be in the giver, so that he neither loveth nor regardeth his brother as he ought to do, neither doth in this as he would have others do unto himself; So offence taken, doth imply corruption and infirmity, (at the best) to be in him that taketh it; and therefore in this

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this matter of offence, respect would be had to the infirmity and corruption of others, as well as to their graciousnesse and affection. The not observing of which, maketh us take liberty in giving offence to many, because we do either esteem them to be wicked and prophane, or not affectionat to us, or, at the best, weak; and therefore not much to be regarded whether they be satisfied or not with our practices, which doth evidently shew, that there is despising and uncharitableneſſe in the heart, when there is this regardlesnesse in our practice, as may be gathered from *Rom.* 14. *ver.* 2, 10, and 15.

CHAP. V.

Concerning what ought to make men loath and wary as to the giving Offence.

TO come now to consider those things which ought to make men tender in this, we will find, first, that there is not any duty in the matter thereof more commanded than this of giving no offence, nor any sin more condemned than untenderneſſe in this, as we may find from the Epistles to the *Romans*, *Corinthians*, *&c.* wherin whole chapters are spent on this subject: Yea, *Act.* 15. The Apostles and Elders thought the regulating of indifferent things for preventing of scandal, worthy to be enacted in the first Synod and Council. Secondly, There is no sin that hath moe woes pronounced against it, the Lord Himself denounceth and doubleth a wo against it, *Matth.* 18.7. and the Apostle confirmeth it, *Rom.* 14. 20, *&c.* Thirdly, The hatefulneſſe of it may appear in the rise thereof, it being, 1. an evident sign of dis-respect to God, and want of the impression of His dread, 2. of inward pride and self-conceitedneſſe, 3. of uncharitableneſſe and regardlesneſſe of others, and setting them at nought, which may be gathered from *Rom.*

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14. 1 *Cor.* 8. and 10. and can there be any thing more to be shunned than these? And upon this we will find, that men are tender and conscientious in the matter of offence, and the use of their christian liberty, as they are tender or untender in the material duties of Religion towards God, and towards others. Fourthly, There can be no worse effects than follow upon this, It bringeth a *wo* to the world, and is in Christ's account a most grievous plague when abounding; for, it hath destruction with it to many souls, *Rom.* 14. 20. It bringeth reproach upon the profession of Christianity, cooleth love among brethren, begetteth and fostereth contention and strife, marreth the progresse of the Gospel, and, in a word, maketh iniquity to abound, and often, in particular, ushereth in error into the Church, which may be gathered from the places cited, and from *Matth.* 24. 10, 11, 12. And we suppose when it is tried, it will be found, that untenderness in the matter of scandal, hath been as prejudicial to the Church of Christ in respect of her outward beauty and peace, and the inward thriving of her members, as either errour or prophanity, which have been but the product of this. Fifthly, Untenderness in this, openeth a door to all untenderness in the person that giveth offence, because by it the conscience becometh lesse sensible of challenges, and so he hath the greater boldness to do things that are materially evil; by this also he becometh habitually regardlesse of others. And although where respect to others is predominant, it be no good principle; yet often hath it great influence in restraining men from loosness, and in its own place ought to have weight. And doth not experience teach, that once liberty being taken in this, even things materially sinfull do often follow? Sixthly, Tenderness in this adorneth the Gospel exceedingly, convinceth those we live among, entertaineth charity, and warmeth love, even as carelesness in this doth open mens mouthes, and

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make both profession and professors a reproach. Seventhly, Untenderness as to offences, striketh at the root of Christian communion: there can be no freedom in admonitions, little in conferences, and, it may be, no great fervour in prayers with, and for others, where these abound; And is it possible that Religion can be well where these are? And may it not from these appear why Christ hath said, *Wo to that man by whom offences come?*

CHAP. VI.

Holding forth the difficulty to lye mainly in practice, and shewing how far Offence *ought to have influence on a Christian in his walk.*

THe greatest difficulty is in reference to practice; (for Scandal cannot but be accounted abominable) We shall therefore answer some Questions for the clearing of this. 1. It may be questioned, How far offence ought to have influence on a Christian in his walk? In answering of it, we would, 1. consider the matter in which offence may be given or taken. 2. The persons who may be offended. For, some things in the matter are simply sinfull, some things are necessary duties; some things, again, are in themselves indifferent: So some persons are gracious and tender, some are prophane and malicious, &c. We answer therefore in these *Assertions*,

1. For no offence whatsoever should men forbear a necessary duty, or commit any thing which is materially sinfull. Christ would needs go up to *Jerusalem*, although His Disciples were displeased, and would continue in preaching the Gospel, and in doing what was intrusted to Him, although the Pharisees were offended, *Matth.* 15. This is clear: For *no evil should be done that good may come of it*, Rom. 3.

2. *Assert.* Yet in other things there ought to be great

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great respect had to offence, and men ought to be swayed accordingly in their practice, as the former reasons clear; As, first, If the matter be of light concernment in it self, as how mens gestures are in their walking, (suppose in walking softly, or quickly, with cloak or without) men ought to do, or abstain as may prevent the construction of pride, lightnesse, &c. or give occasion to others in any of these; of such sort are salutations in the very manner of them: of this sort was womens praying with their head uncovered amongst the *Corinthians*, it being then taken for an evil sign; yet, if it be necessary, there is nothing little, as *Moses* will not leave an hoof, *Exod.* 10. nor *Mordecai* bow his knee to *Haman*, because that it looked like fauning on an accursed enemy: Of this sort also are offences in the fashions of cloathes, as some mens wearing of ribbands, and such like, which being of small concernment, ought certainly to be regulated by offence. Secondly, If it be indifferent, that is, in the matter thereof, such as may be done, or forborn; as eating or not eating such a meat for such a time, (for although no action is indifferent when it is done, because the circumstances of end, motive and manner, do determine them either to be good or bad, as they are agreeable or disagreeable to the Law when they are done, yet some actions in themselves are such) in these actions a Christian ought to do or abstain accordingly, as his doing or not doing may edifie or give offence; yea, in such things he may be for ever restrained, according to that word of *Pauls*, 1 *Cor.* 8. 13. *I had rather not eat flesh while the world standeth, than by my meat make my brother to offend.* This is to become all things to all men for their gaining, 1 *Cor.* 9. when our practice in such things is conformed to others edification rather than our own inclination or light; And thus many things, which we are perswaded are lawfull, and that we desire to do, are to be forborn out of conscience, conscience, I say, not our own,

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own, but of some others that have not such clearnesse, as 1 *Cor.* 10. 28, 29. Thirdly, In positive duties of worship and things that are necessary by affirmative precepts, Scandal ought to have weight to time them so as not to give offence by them. For, although a Scandal cannot make duty to be no duty for ever, yet it may for a time suspend one from the exercise of a lawfull duty, although not alwayes: Thus to give alms, is a commanded duty, yet if there be hazard that an indigent person may abuse it, or others may take offence by that example either ostentatively in a selfie way to give, or to account so of him that doth give, or such like, in that case giving of alms is for that time to be forborn, except the persons first it make it necessary, or some other circumstance, and a privat way afterward is to be taken: So, preaching to a Minister, and hearing to a professour, are commanded duties, Yet supposing that a particular mans preaching at such a time, would stumble more than edifie, it is to be forborn. So in giving of admonitions, or in correcting of children, we are not to do these when we, or others, are in passion, although they be duties, but to take a fit time, lest more hurt follow than advantage: That being a rule anent affirmative precepts, that they bind continually (or *semper*) but not alway to the actual performing of them, (or *ad semper*) Thus a servant, or wife, or any other person are bound to pray alwayes, yet to do it then when the master, husband, or family calleth for some other thing necessary, would be an offence. Fourthly, In necessary things, offence ought to have weight according to the circumstantiat case, to sway one in the manner and circumstances of that necessary duty; Thus, supposing it necessary to pray, a man is to choose the place and posture of praying accordingly; Thus it is offensive in some cases to pray so as we may be observed, because that looketh hypocritical like, and is condemned, *Matth.* 6. Sometimes

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again, it is offensive not to be known to pray, as was in *Daniel's* case, *Dan.* 6. because his not evidencing of it by opening of his windows, had looked like his receding from his former piety, &c. And in this respect, what is offensive at one time, may be edifying at another, And what is edifying now, may become offensive afterward upon another occasion, As by *Paul's* circumcising of *Timothy*, and refusing to circumcise *Titus*, doth appear. So sometimes (suppose it when *Nehemiah* is standing before the King) to kneel down to pray, would have been offensive; at other times for a man to pray and not to kneel in his chamber, (as in *Daniels* case) may be offensive also. And in this sort of offence, custom guideth much in the indifferent circumstances; and alteration in these, is often offensive. Fifthly, In our particulars, in temporall things we ought rather to cede in what is our own, than to offend others, and mar their spiritual good. Thus Christ condescended to quit His priviledge, *Matth.* 17. 27. rather than to offend, And thus *Paul* shunned the taking of wages in *Corinth*, although he had right thereto, and did even then take from other Churches: The reason is, because the spiritual edification of our brother is of more value than our temporal right; much more is this to have influence in limiting and hedging us up from lawfull pleasures and contentments, or what our inclination and affection leadeth to, even though it be lawfull, if so be the following thereof may be an offence to any. It is for this also that *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 6. condemneth their contentious going to Law before Infidels, because of the scandal thereof, *And why* (saith he) *do ye not rather suffer wrong?* Our Lord also, as was just now hinted, went before us in this, *Matth.* 17. 27. when He payed Tribute, and in that ceded His own right, lest He should offend; and it's like they were not of the most tender men.

3. *Assert.* We say that there is equal respect to be had

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had to all kind of persons in the giving of offence, if the matter be equal, that is, we ought to shun the offence of the weak as well as of the strong, of the prophane as of the gracious, &c. For, 1. the command is general, 1 *Cor.* 10. 32. *Give no offence, neither to Jew nor Gentile, nor to the Church of God,* under which three, all sorts of persons are comprehended. 2. As we ought not to sin in reference to any person, so ought we not to give to any of them an occasion of sinning, because that is never good. 3. If we look to the good or strong, as we ought not to do any thing that is sinfull to please them or abstain from any thing that is necessary to prevent their offence; So ought we to do in reference to the weak and prophane. Thus *Paul* would not give the false teachers of *Corinth* ground of stumbling more than the Church-members; And in this respect we are debtors both to the Jews and Greeks, to the unwise as to the wise, *Ro.* 1. 14. Yea, we are in indifferent things to *become all things to all men,* even to those that are weak and without Law (though still we are to be under the Law) that the moe may be gained, 1 *Cor.* 9. 20, 21, *&c.*

CHAP. VII.

Shewing What the Scandal of the Pharisees or malicious is, and clearing several other important Questions.

IF it be said, What then is it which is called the Scandal of the Pharisees or the malicious, which ought not to be respected? We answer, 1. In constructing any maliciously to take offence, there is great need of spiritualnesse, lest we account men malicious because of some particular difference from us, or some other persons; even as from *David's* imprecations against his malicious enemies, we would not draw an example for regulating of our prayers, in reference to our

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our enemies. 2. There is need also here to take heed what spirit we be of in our accounting men to be such, as the Lord said to the Disciples, *Luke* 9. when they pretended *Elias* example: for, to make a man malicious in taking offence in this respect, so as not to be regarded. 1. It must be a necessary duty that he offendeth at, even the best, as the Pharisees did at Christ's preaching of the Gospel. 2. It must not be out of ignorance or weakness that this offence is taken. 3. It must not arise from any personal or particular account, but from a man's being instrumentall in furthering and advancing the Gospel, and so must be very sib to the sin against the holy Ghost, and therefore ought not to be pretended in our ordinary carriage.

What, when men stand not to offend us?

If it be yet said, that they do not stand to offend us, therefore they are not to be regarded by us, when the thing we do is lawfull. *Answ.* This were to render evil for evil, whenas we should overcome evil with good; and if it be a sin in them not to care for us in their practices, can it be otherwise in us? and our meeting of them in their untender way, is to harden them in it, and bring their bloud on our own head, whereas more tender dealing might edifie them, and, as by heaping coals of fire upon their heads, soften them and make them more pliable.

What, when the matter is lawfull, & the offence doubtfull?

If it be asked further, what one is to do in such a case when the matter is lawfull, and it be withall doubtfull whether it can be offensive or scandalous to any? *Answ.* 1. Beside the consideration of the thing, we would also consider circumstances of time, person, occasion, &c. 2. We would try what an action, so circumstantiated, hath formerly been thought of in the case of others in former times; Yea, 3. what use to be our own thoughts of such actions in other persons, if we have not counted them offensive in them? for often men more impartially judge, especially of what is offensive, in the persons of others than

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than in themselves. 4. The conscience would be reflected on what it saith; for often there is a murmuring in the conscience, which sheweth its suspicion, that such a thing is offensive and hurtfull, before it be acted, which is yet often born down by the impetuousnesse of mens inclination. 5. Others that may be more impartial, would be tryed; yea, the thoughts of these that we supposed to be the least tender of us are not to be neglected, for often they are most impartial in judging what is offensive. These things may have the more weight to sway one in their determination, because the trial runneth not to know what is duty, or lawfull in it self, but whether or not such a lawfull practice may be done or forborn without wronging the spiritual estate of any. 6. If it continue yet doubtfull whether it be offensive or not, the same rule is to be followed, as if it were doubted whether it were lawfull or not? to wit, It is to be abstained from, because as he that doubteth of the lawfulnesse of a thing, cannot do it in faith, because he knoweth not but it may be sinfull; So neither can he that doubteth whether a lawfull thing be expedient or not, do it with perswasion, because he knoweth not but it may be scandalous to some, and so cannot but be sinfull to him. Lastly, pains would be taken rightly to inform others, and to rectifie them that they may not take offence at things lawfull in themselves.

What, if sufficient pains have been taken to inform?

If it be said, that sufficient pains have been taken to inform them already, and that therefore their taking offence is inexcusable. *Answ.* 1. Men would beware of making this an excuse, for many have great ignorance and are not soon capable of instruction, others have prejudice which is hardly rooted out; Therefore I conceive it will not be easie to be able to assert an exoneration in this case. 2. If the thing continue to be indifferent (which is the matter concerning which the question is) there can be no terms set

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set to it: It is the Apostle's word, 1 *Cor.* 8. 13. *If meat make my brother to offend, I will not eat flesh while the world standeth.* If the case alter and the matter become necessary by some circumstances, as *Daniel's* opening of his window did, then that which formerly was indifferent, becometh necessary, and it would be offensive to omit it.

What to be done when there is a real difference betwixt parties, upon account of a civil interest?

It may be further asked, What is to be done where there is a real difference betwixt parties, suppose for a civil interest? for, a man, by seeking his owh, may irritate another, and, Is there a necessity of abstaining in that case? *Answ.* 1. There is no question but in some cases a man is to cede in his particular right, rather than to give offence by a legal pursuit, as when it may occasion the Gospel to be evil spoken of, and harden corrupt men in their hatred of the same. On this ground, 1 *Cor.* 6. the Apostle condemneth their going to Law before infidel Judges, and doth expressly say, *ver.* 7. *Why do ye not rather take the wrong? and suffer your selves to be defrauded?* And though the case now be not every way the same, yet we suppose Christians ought to lay weight on this, lest in their pursuits they give occasion to make the professors of the Gospel to be accounted contentious, covetous, &c. And therefore it would seem, that when they contend for civil things, it would be for something of moment, at least to the person, which also is clearly, or may be made appear to be clearly theirs, and that after friendly wayes are essayed for attaining satisfaction. 2. We say, it ought to sway Christians in their manner of pursuing differences, so as there be not heat, passion, carnalness, over-reaching and going beyond one another, nay nor the appearance of these to be seen in their carriage, but still following a civil difference, with respect to the spiritual good of the adversary, and that in such a manner as may be convincingly evidencing thereof both to him and others. 3. We say, that these cautions being observed, this doctrine

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doctrine of Scandal will not simply bind up a Christian from pursuing of a civil difference, because, in some respect, it may be a necessary dutie for a man to recover his own in a legall way, as it is for a man to labour, and otherwise by lawfull means to provide for his Family: for which end God hath appointed Judges and Magistrates to hear complaints, and to rectifie wrongs; and to hear complaints is a main part of their duty, without which humane society would turn like to the fishes of the sea, *Hab.* 1. Therefore we would distinguish here betwixt displeasing, yea angering and offending, and would desire rather not to stumble than to please; for there may be anger when there is no offence given, as suppose one should fret because they get not their will vented unjustly on some other in their person or estate. In that case, their satisfaction is not their edification, nor their displeasing their offence; So is it in this case, where a man pursues his own in a due manner, there is no just ground of offence given: because, 1. The thing it self is neither evil, nor hath the appearance of evil, but hath an approbation from God who hath appointed Magistrates for that end to hear and redresse wrongs, and cannot but be approven by others; yea, the deed it self cannot but be approven in the conscience of him that is offended, seing it is taught to men by nature to keep themselves from injury, and it is not in things so clearly approven by God, and taught by nature, that offence is given, but where the action is doubted in conscience to be unlawfull, at least, as so circumstantiat, which cannot be in this case. 2. It is no offence to complain to a Church-judicatorie of one that offendeth, if it be done in a right manner, though it anger him, because it is a legal allowed way, Therefore neither is it so here. 3. To condemn this, were really to offend many, even those, who from their covetous and malicious humour might clearly be emboldned to wrong others; wherefore we see *Paul*

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and others do approve legall defences for preventing or remedying of hurt, though, no question, malicious oppoſers were fretted therewith. Yet where two are Miniſters, or eminent in profeſſion, we ſuppoſe there ought to be more warrineſſe, becauſe ſo neceſſarily it is implyed, that the one hath the wrong ſide, which cannot but offend.

What, when the Commands of Magiſtrates and Offence are in oppoſition?

It may be further moved, what is to be done when there ſeems to be an oppoſition betwixt the command of a Superiour, and the eſchewing of offence, ſo that we muſt either diſobey him or give offence in obeying, as ſuppoſe a Magiſtrate ſhould command to preach upon ſome pretended holy day: the thing is lawfull upon the matter, but the doing of it is offenſive, either by grieving many, or ſtrengthening others in the eſteeming ſomewhat of that day? *Anſw.* In that caſe, the Scandal is ſtill active and given, and therefore no command or authority can warrand one in ſuch a deed: for, as theſe two worthy Divines (*Ames* in his Caſes of Conſcience, *lib.* 5. *cap.* 11. and *Gilleſpie* in his Diſpute of Ceremonies, *chap.* 7. *ſect.* 5.) obſerve, no man can command either our charity or our conſciences, or make up the hazard of a given offence; and therefore none can command us warrantably to hurt the ſpiritual good of our neighbour, that being contrary to the command of love that God hath laid on. And we may add, that an indifferent action, being involved with offence, cannot but be in its practiſing ſinfull as it is complexly conſidered, and therefore cannot be the object of a Magiſtrats command more than an action that is ſinfull in it ſelf. On this ground, many of the Saints in the laſt perſecution, did chooſe rather to ſuffer Martyrdom, than to be conſtructed to have ceded, or delivered the Bible, and therefore they would not redeem their life by giving of any piece of paper at the command of the Officers, leſt thereby they ſhould have been by others interpreted to have given up their Bible. It is to be remembered

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membered that we spake not of displeasing, seing by a Superiours command that may be done, but of Scandalizing, either by strengthening somewhat that is wrong, or seeming to do so, by wounding the consciences of others, provoking them to judge us, or some such way: And if it were not so, the three children, *Dan.* 3. might have escaped the furnace; for, to fall down at the Kings command, was not simply sinfull (and had they done that, no more had been called for) but to fall down at such a time, in such place, &c. had at least the appearance of evil, and therefore there was no room left for obedience. And, no question, *Joabs* resisting, and in part neglecting of *Davids* command for numbering of the People, was more approvable than his obedience, yet was the thing lawfull in it self; but considering it as circumstantiat, it tended to foster *Davids* pride, and to be subservient in that which brought on wrath, Therefore was not to be obeyed to the confirming of him in his sin. The same also may be said, when doing something that is offensive may seem a way to prevent a crosse; for, active offence being ever sinfull in respect of the complex case, it is not to be allowed whatever perill follow, as we may see in *Daniels* case who would not stumble others by shutting of his window, although it hazarded his own life, and the welfare of the hearers: And in this case *Paul* saith, that it were better for him to die than that any should make his glorying void, or make him an occasion for others to stumble upon, 1 *Cor.* 9. 15. &c.

What is to be done in a case when offence is like to follow on either side.

It may be said, that sometimes the case is so stated, that whatever be done there will be offence, as if *Paul* take wages, he is called a self-seeker, that is, one that maketh gain of preaching the Gospel, if he forbear, it is said he loveth not the *Corinthians*, and therefore he taketh not from them; again, some weak Jews are ready to stumble, and not receive the Gospel if he circumcise not *Timothy*; others again, are readie to take

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advantage and to plead the necessity of the ceremoniall Law if he circumcise *Titus*: It may be asked, what is to be done in such cases? In reference to which we answer, 1. That we would ever look what is most expedient as to edification, it is like it did displease *Peter* and the *Jews* more that he did not circumcise *Titus*, and the false Apostles that he did not take wages, than if he had done it, yet he did what was most edifying, and of it self apteſt to further their spirituall good; and a spirituall discerner will readily find what is most edifying in it self, or in that case, which is to be followed, although it may be most displeasing. 2. Respect would be had to these that are most unbyassed; prejudice possessed the Jews and these corrupt Teachers, and therefore whatever *Paul* did they stumbled at it; but it is like he had respect to others, and did what might most wipe away the calumnies that were cast upon him and the Gospel by these false Apostles. 3. In such a case, a man would look to what is most denied like, and it is ever safest to sway to that hand, as suppose a man were in hazard upon one side to be thought negligent, if he be not painfull, and even someway rigorous in his dealings with men, as on the other side, covetous, if he be but painfull. It is safest to hazard upon diligence without rigidity, although it should occasion him tobe accounted negligent: Because there is least selfinesse on that side, and that hath least to commend it unto mens corruptions. Thus *Paul* rather hazardeth upon what might follow upon his refusing to take wages than to take them, because taking is of it self more apt to give offence than refusing, and doth not look so single like, and there is not so easie accesse to vindicat that against clamorous mouths. 4. When the offence seemeth to follow both from omitting and committing, *Paul* chooseth often to commend forbearance, as in the cases of forbearing to eat meats, and to take wages, at least, in *Corinth*, seing he was other-

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otherwise supplied. So, when there is hazard of being accounted proud on the one side, if men take so and so on them, or live in such and such a rank, on the other side, they may be accounted silly, and of no spirit, if they be short of that; it is yet safest to eschew what may look like ostentation, because the tentation of self-seeking lyeth neerest that. 5. The present state of the time, and the temper of those we live among, would be observed; as sometimes folks are ready to count an indifferent thing necessary, then it is to be abstained from; Therefore *Paul* would not circumcise *Titus*: Sometimes again, the omitting of an indifferent thing may seem to import the condemning of some necessary duty, and therefore *Daniel* will not forbear his ordinary circumstances in prayer: thus it is to be observed, to what side (to speak so) the tide of offence doth run, and that is to be shuned. 6. The nature of the persons is to be observed, which we have to do with in the mentioned case. Some are weak, So condescending edifieth them, and grieving of them might stumble them at the Gospel; others are perverse, and condescending to them, strengthneth them in their opposition, and so proveth a stumbling to them. Upon this ground, circumcising of *Timothy* to the weak at one time is edifying, and forbearing thereof had been a stumbling-block: at an other time, and to other persons circumcising had been an offence, as in the case of *Titus* instanced; and *Paul's* refusing to circumcise him, was not that he regarded not their stumbling, but that he knew the circumcising of him would puffe them up and strengthen them, and so stumble them indeed, therefore he would not do it.

What, when doing will offend the weak and tender, and irritate the perverse, & contra.

If it be asked, what if the case stand so stated, that doing will offend the weak and tender, no doing will displease and irritate the perverse? as suppose in the case of eating things sacrificed to Idols; or contrarily doing offendeth the grosse, and no doing the tender, what is to be done in such a case? *Answ.* As there is never

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a necessity of sinning, so there is never a necessity that one should fall in an active offence, the offence therefore upon the one side must be taken, and that is not to be regarded in comparison of the other. As suppose in some cases the weak be really offended, and the perverse are but irritated, in that case their irritation is not to be stood upon: for often they are really edified when they are dissatisfied, as in the instance proposed; eating of things sacrificed to Idols, was really offensive to the Godly, as being ready to draw them to sin, but though it might possibly displease others that the Believers did not eat with them, yet was there nothing in that deed of it self apt to stumble them, and induce them to sin; Again, sometimes the Godly are displeased, and the perverse and profane are really stumbled, as when *Paul* refused to circumcise *Titus*, it is like his not doing thereof did really displease many godly Jews that were zealous in the Law, yet his doing of that had really been a stumbling to many corrupt Teachers who did teach the necessity of circumcision, and would have been confirmed by that practice. Therefore *Paul* will rather displease the godly Jews than stumble the profane Teachers by a deed which had also been a reall stumbling unto the Jews. This then is the first rule, to wit, that we would look well upon what side the active offence lieth, and upon what side the displeasure only, and to choose the eschewing of offence, who ever be displeased. 2. When the thing is in it self indifferent to be done, or not to be done, it is safest to forbear whoever be displeased, as we see in the instances given, *Paul* inclineth still to forbearance, he forbore to eat flesh, and to circumcise *Titus*, and to take wages, &c. when the case is so stated, because whoever be displeased, that is not of it self so inductive to sin, as doing is, Which either doth strengthen others to do doubtingly upon our example, or to judge us for doing what they account sinfull, or some such like. Indeed,

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Indeed, in some cases where there is no hazard of Offending by doing, we may do what is indifferent to prevent the irritating of any, that so there may be the greater access to edifie them: And therefore, *Act.*16. 2. *Paul* will circumcise *Timothy*, lest he make himself ungracious to the Jews in those parts; yet, had there been any there to take advantage from that to confirm their errour, he had not done it, as in the other instance of *Titus* doth appear; for so it had not been an offence, but somewhat which was displeasing to those Jews. Yet, 3. supposing it to be so, that neither have ground, but both may be displeased, Then the tender are to be respected, and the preventing their offence is to be preferred. 1. Because they are displeased out of conscience, and that is wounded; others are but irritat in respect of some lust, and so it is displeasure simply to them, but it's offence to the other, because on a ground of conscience they are displeased. 2. The Lord is most tender in the grieving, or not grieving of the godly (as is clear, *Matth.*18) Therefore ought we to be so also. Hence the Prophet professeth, 2 *Kin.* 3. 14. that had it not been respect to *Jehosaphat*, he had not stood much on the displeasing of others; or, suppose some prophane person should be displeased, because a man doth not drink so much, (although it be not inconsistent with moderation) and suppose some tender person should think his drinking thereof inconsistent with sobriety, I say, in that case he should respect the last, because this offence doth flow from a ground of conscience. Lastly, it would be looked to in such a case, what may be most in the upshot or event for edification, supposing there should be involvements on all hands; for some things being compared may be better discerned, than when they are abstractly considered in themselves; Now, edification and offence do never lie upon one side: therefore if it be found that such a thing comparatively be edifying, it is to be done, and what seemeth to oppose it, is not to be accounted offence.

CHAP.

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CHAP. VIII.

Holding forth what is called-for when Offences *abound.*

IT may be profitable to enquire what is called for from a Christian living in the time when offences abound, and when there is too great a readineſſe both to give and take offence? *Anſw.* It is hardly poſſible to condeſcend on all particulars here; yet becauſe the thing is uſefull, and the Scripture is full in reference to this matter, in the fourteenth Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, and in both the Epiſtles to the *Corinthians*, and elſewhere, We may hazard to propoſe theſe general directions.

1. A man would not only reſpect his own clearneſſe in conſcience as to the lawfulneſſe of a deed, but would even have reſpect to the ſatisfaction of the conſciences of others, as it is, 1 *Cor.* 10. 29. The neglect of this caſteth a door open to many evils; and did this abound, that men were burning with any offence taken by others, as was *Pauls* caſe, 2 *Cor.* 11. 29. there would be fewer offences given. It ought to affect us, as it were a pang or ſtound at our hearts, to hear or ſee of any that are offended. This is a principal remedy from an inward ſympathie to ſtudy this, and there will be directions furniſhed where that touch is, *Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?* Sooner would we put our head in the fire than hazard to offend any, if this were.

2. As men would be carefull not to give offence, ſo alſo not to take offence, or to ſtumble even when blocks are caſt in the way. It is a piece of our folly ſometimes to be exclaiming againſt the frequencie of offences and the givers of them, and yet not to be adverting, but to be ſtumbling at theſe our ſelves; either

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either by waxing cold in our love to the Godly, or faint in duties, or ready to take liberty to speak and to judge of others, even of their state that we offend at, or passionately to be irritate to some carnal revenge, &c. for, seldom are many offences given actively, but many also are offended passively, as *Matth.* 24. 10. and at such time, they are blessed who are not offended in Christ, it being both a good thing, and a rare thing in such a case, *Matth.* 11. 6. for, as it is in carnal contests, often and ill reply bringeth on more sinfull contention; so it is here: And offence taken by one, leadeth him to give another, as the result of that; whereas were it our care not to stumble our selves, we might be keeped from giving occasion of that to others, and brook much more peace, as it is, *Psal.* 119. 165. *Great peace have they who love thy Law: and nothing shall offend them.* Sometimes, again, the falls of others are matter of mocking and mirth, and we are puft up because of that, as if there were not such corruptions in us: This was the Corinthians fault, 1 *Cor.* 5. 2. and many other wayes are there of stumbling, and O but watchfulnesse is necessary when folks walk thus in the midst of snares, and are so ready to fall either upon one hand or another!

3. Folks would beware of despising or judging one another, but would by all means endeavour the entertaining and confirming of love, which is in this respect the bond of perfection. The Apostle giveth this direction, *Rom.* 14. 3. *Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth.* He that eateth is the strong professor, who is through in the knowledge of what is right and what is wrong; It is the fault of such readily to condemn and despise the weaker who cannot go alongst with them. Again, he that eateth not, is the weak, who, wanting clearnesse in what the other is clear of, is ready to judge the other as an untender person, because he doth what he cannot do.

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do. These evils are rife where offences abound, and are the oyl which nourisheth them: for, if there were not pride and despising in some, and untenderness and rash judging and jealousies in others that are weak, the plague that followeth offences would not be so great in the world. But these two are most directly opposit to the rule of charity that ought to be amongst Christians, both in guiding us in doing of our own acts, and in constructing and judging of the actions of others. And, in a word, love, that is the fulfilling of the Law, is the fulfilling of this precept also. See 1 *Joh.* 2. 10. *He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.* Offences could neither be given nor taken if love to our brethren were fresh.

4. We would beware of moving or fostering needless and perplexed disputings, these have ever proved exceeding hurtfull to the Church, and proportionally wronged edification, as errour and prophanity have done. It is the Apostle's first direction, *Rom.* 14. 1. Him that is weak receive, *but not to doubtfull disputations*; for such breed strife, and often waken carnalness in the contenders rather than pure zeal. And in this case, it is better for some to possesse clearness in their own judgment, and to condescend in their practice to others, than by venting their judgment unseasonably, to confound others, that is the meaning of the word, *Rom.* 14. 22. *Hast thou faith?* that is, clearness in such a particular, *have it to thy self*, that is, make your own privat use of it without troubling others with the same. And we will see, that this spirit of contention, and the abounding of offences, have ever been together in the Church. For certainly such contentions cannot but obstruct the growth of the weak, and grieve the strong, and stumble all. We conceive therefore, that at such a time it were more safe to abstain the wakening of new debates, raising of old, or using of new expressions, than

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than to hazard upon the offence which may follow upon mens mistaking of them, or taking advantage by them, which will be more hurtful than any advantage they can bring. We conceive also that it were fitter to overlook some mistakes in some Writings at such a time, than unnecessarily to table a debate on every thing that seemeth dissatisfying in the writings and expressions of others, which is become too common, and by this, professed enemies are let alone and have peace, and all the debates in the Church, are almost amongst men that agree in fundamentals, because of some lesser differences.

5. There would be an abstinence from things that are controverted either in doctrine or practice, if they be not necessary things: As we see the Apostle doth in the Epistles to the *Romans* and *Corinthians*. The reason is, because it is the strong who are clear to do, and it's the weak who are doubtfull. Now, it is more just and safe, that the strong should condescend to the weak, because that is within their reach, than that the weak should be driven up to the strong, which were to overdrive them.

6. At such a time folks would be much in the study and practice of the more necessary and materiall things, which come nearer the life and power of godlinesse. We see, when offences abounded in the primitive times, the Apostle withdraweth them from too much seriousnesse in more circumstantiall things, to the working-out of their salvation in fear and trembling, *Philip.* 2. 12. for, experience telleth us, that offences rise most, yea cannot rise, but in things which may be done or forborn, as in eating, and such other things as troubled the primitive Church. We see also, that where there is most heat in these things, there is an overvaluing of them, and an undervaluing of faith, repentance, prayer, communion with God, &c. Hence it is, (*Rom.* 14. 17.) that the Apostle correcteth this fault, saying, *The King-*

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Kingdom of Heaven (which is the Gospel in its power) *doth not consist in meat and drink*, that is, in the eating of, or abstaining from, such meats as were then disputable, much lesse in the disputes that were concerning them; but it consisteth *in righteousnes, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost*, that is, in material duties. Therefore he addeth, that he that serveth God in these (that is, *righteousnesse* and *peace* and the more material things) *is accepted of God, and approved of men.* Which sheweth, that they placed too much of religion in these extrinsick things, and in the mean time sleighted the main. For, in necessary things there is no hazard of offending, and few usually offend at these.

7. At such a time great care would be had to entertain peace, even publick Church-peace, and respect to the Ordinances, particularly to that of Discipline, because that is the proper remedy for removing offences, *Matth.* 18. 17. and without unity this hath no weight. Also offences of their own nature tend to make rents, and where unity is preserved many are keeped on their feet which otherwayes would have fallen. Therefore, *Rom.* 14. 19. that direction is given, *Let us follow those things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edifie another.* And often union and edification are joyned together, which sheweth, that it must be a great restraint to offences, which are so opposit to edification.

8. When offences abound, it is often most safe to be least appearing, except a mans call be the more clear and convincing: For, as *in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin*, So in much medling there wanteth not offence. This is also clear in experience, because offences come more ordinarily, and are more observed when something is done, than when something is forborn. Yet this is not to be extended so the omission of any necessary duty, but is to have great weight in indifferent things, that are not necessary, especially

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especially such as for the time are most ordinarily the stone of stumbling. Hence we find, that though in some questions the Apostle is full to dispute down adversaries, as in the case of Justification; Yet there are some other things that he seeketh rather to have restrained than moved, such as he calleth *doubtfull*, *Rom.* 14. 1. *endlesse*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 4. that gender strife, and are not edifying, but fooliſh and unlearned questions, 2 *Tim.* 2. 14, 16, 23. men are to flee, and to shun these, even when occasion is given. For, though every question hath a truth upon one side, and the searching into necessary truths be edifying, yet as to such, considering the contention that waiteth on them, and the difficulties that are about them, the Church gaineth more by silence in them, than by too fervent pursuing of them.

9. Men at such a time would be diligent in the duties of their stations, and keep themselves within these; and, as the Apostle saith, 1 *Cor.* 7. 20. would abide in the calling wherein they are called: for, by so doing there is no occasion of offence. When a Magistrate holdeth in the duties of a Magistrate, and Ministers, Masters, Servants, Husbands and Wives, and so all sorts contain themselves within the bounds of their respective stations, that is a thing offensive to none; But when they exceed or give occasion to others to think that they exceed, then it becometh offensive, and maketh the Gospel to be evil-spoken of. For which cause, the Apostle commendeth to Subjects, Wives, Servants, and all sorts, the doing of the duties of their respective stations, as that which doth adorn the Gospel, and stop the mouthes of gainsayers.

10. There would be mutual faithfulnesse, and a condescending upon their side who are offended, freely and soberly to admonish those by whom they are offended; and upon the other side, a condescending to satisfie and remove any offence taken by those who

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who have given it, or at whom it is taken. This is our Lord's rule, *Matth.* 18. 15. &c. There is nothing more needfull, when offences abound, than these, and yet often there is little or no accesse to them, or practice of them when they are most needfull. And this maketh offences to abound the more. And what thing is more unsuitable than for one to take or keep offence at another, and yet never to endeavour his recovery who hath offended, and by so doing to hazard both their souls? Or, when one hath given offence, and is admonished, to refuse to come out himself, or to keep another out of this snare?

11. This endeavouring to have offence removed, ought to be followed convincingly, and that in the several steps laid down, *Matth.* 18. and if privat reasoning and admonition prevail not, it is to proceed further till it come to the Church. But because the Scandal then becometh publick, we shall speak of it in the next branch. Only now it is to be adverted concerning these offences in reference to which we are to admonish our brother, and thus to follow them in case of sleighting, 1. They are not only wronge done to the person immediatly or directly, but it may be his being stumbled at his seeing a mans miscarriages towards others, So the injury may be to one, but the offence to another. 2. This duty is to be gone about, not only without all heat, prejudice, or contention, but with the spirit of love, as a duty proceeding there from for his good, even from that same spirit by which we pray for him, they being both equally necessary duties. And, 3. That this Order of Christ's is not to be interverted by any, nor the publick gone to, till the private may be effectually essayed.

12. There is a necessity in every thing (especially at such a time) to be single in our end, having the glory of God mainly in our eye. And that not only

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ly for our own peace, but also for the conviction of others. It is often our unsingleneſſe that maketh us careleſſe in giving offence, and also the evidence or appearance of that, that maketh others readily to take offence at our carriage. Hence we ſee, that the actions of ſuch who are ſuppoſed to be ſingle, are not ſo readily ſtumbled at. And this direction is expreſly laid down in reference to this end, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *Whether therefore ye eat or ye drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God: give none offence neither to Jew nor Gentile, &c.* It were fit therefore at ſuch a time, that a man ſhould examine his own breaſt, and try what leadeth him on ſuch a deſign, or act; for often by-ends and motives will ſteal in, when we ſeem to our ſelves to be moſt fervently zealous: ſelf-intereſts had need to be much denied in ſuch a time.

13. Much care would be had to keep up the authority of all Chriſt's Ordinances; they are the lights and means whereby men are to be directed, leſt they ſtumble, and to be ſtrengthened and comforted in their ſpiritual conſolations: and hardly offences ariſe, but the Devil ſeeketh to diſcredit theſe, becauſe then men are in the dark, and ſo cannot but fall when blocks are in their way. Hence often are the Ordinances of life the very pretended riſe of offences, as concerning a Miniſtery, Baptiſm, the Lords Supper, Sabbath Day, Singing of Pſalms, Conſtitution of a Church, Diſcipline, &c. becauſe by making theſe to be ſtumbled at, or ſtones of ſtumbling, men can have acceſſe to no other means, either for direction or conſolation. On this ground *Paul* endeavoureth ſo much to vindicate himſelf from what was imputed to him, 2 *Cor.* 12. 19. And for this end ſo many directions are given for keeping up the credit of the ordinances in the moſt difficult dark caſes, as *Song* 1. 8. *Eph.* 4. 12, 13. *Heb.* 13. 7, 8, *&c.* & 17. eſpecially *Mat.* 18. 17, 18, *&c.* And on the contrary, for eſchewing

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corrupt teachers, and those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine learned, &c. *Rom.* 16. 17. Then it is a time to try the spirits, and to fear snares, and to hate every garment that is spotted with the flesh; and we find in Scripture, and experience that ever these two go together, to wit, shunning of those who bring false doctrine, and the adhering to those who are faithfull on the other side.

14. At such a time especially, Christians in their walk toward one another, ought to be of a sympathizing and condescending temper. This is to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves, but our neighbour for his good to edification, even as Christ pleased not himself, &c. as the Apostle hath it to the same scope, *Rom.* 15. 1, 2, 3. Tenaciousnesse and self-willednesse do often breed offences, and continually stand in the way of removing of them, and although there is nothing more ordinary in a time of offences than that, to wit, for men to stand to their own judgement and opinion as if it were a piece of liberty and conscience, not to condescend in a thing that we judge lawfull, yet is there nothing more unsuitable for Christians in such a time: for, as *Solomon* saith, *Only by pride cometh contention,* Prov. 13. 10. So this self-pleasing humour is the great fomenter of offences in the Church. This condescending was *Paul's* practice in this case, 1 *Corinth.* 9. ver. 19, 20, &c. who became all things to all men, for their edification, being in the use of indifferent things so dependent upon the edification of others, and so denied to his own pleasing and inclination; yea, even to his own light, as if he had had none himself. And although this be incumbent to all Christians, yet these who are more eminent and strong, are especially called to this forbearance and condescending, as it is *Rom.* 15. 1. *We then that are strong ought to bear, &c.* Gal. 6. 1, 2. It is a great mistake in Religion, to think, that in indifferent circumstantiall things, the weak should follow

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the strong, and upon that ground to undervalue the offending of them: It is quite contrary to Scripture, the strong are to carry to the weak as men do to brittle and weak vessels, using tenderness to them lest they be crushed. What is said in all the directions, doth therefore specially concern the more strong Believers, that in these they may go before others.

CHAP. IX.

Holding forth what ought to be the carriage of Ministers when Offences *abound.*

15. THe last direction is, That then Ministers in a speciall manner, are called to bestir themselves for draining this torrent of Offences, even as they are to set themselves against the abounding of sins. And indeed we know no meanes fitter and more comprehensive for this end, than that Ministers cordially interpose for the removing thereof. For, this is a speciall end for which they are given to the Church, as was formerly said, and this is a special part of their charge, to watch over souls in reference to this. Hence we see, that the Apostle *Paul* doth not insist more in his publick doctrine, or in his private carriage, upon any thing, than upon this, to wit, That the Church may be made and keeped free of offences, as what hath been observed from him out of the Epistles to the *Romans*, *Corinthians*, *Galatians*, *&c.* doth evince. Nor doth he with any kind of persons deal so much to restrain strifes, contentions, janglings about words, and such things which do gender offences, as in the Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, charging them, that not only in reference to their own carriage, but, as Ministers of the Gospel, they would endeavour this in their charges; and there can be no reason of this, but because the matter is of such concernment to the Church, and because they by their stations have a

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main influence either on the restraint or growth of scandals and offences. Yea, doth not the blessed Prince of Pastors Himself, often take notice of offences in His sermons? sometimes reproving them, sometimes shewing the ill of them, and often purposly insisting in instructions for this very end, that His Disciples should not be offended, as *Joh.* 16. 1. and in His practice, condescending to prevent the offence, even of carnal men, *Matth.* 17. 27. and doth much insist on that doctrine, giving directions for preventing and removing thereof, *Matth.* 18. and particularly He giveth direction for the promoving of mortification, by cutting off the right hand, and plucking out the right eye, &c. which being given by the Lord, if well studied and practised, might be a compend of all other directions, it is so well chosen for that purpose, as all His directions were. All which sheweth, that when offences abound, much doth ly upon Ministers at such a time, and that both in reference to their own personall carriage, and also in their ministeriall stations; and in sum, in their whole walk, both amongst themselves, and towards others of all sorts, which we may hint at in some particular instances: As. 1. that their conversations be then grave, sober, holy, denied, &c. and eminent in all that is called for from private Christians, at such a time. For, as their carriages are more observed than others, So do spots upon them more discernably appear, and when appearing, are more readie to stumble and harden others. It is for this, that a Minister is to shew himself a pattern and as a copie or example to the Believer, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, &c. as it is, 1 *Tim.* 4. 12. Upon this ground also are they at such a time to flee youthfull lusts of contentions, strife, and such like, even when these seem to follow them; and on the contrary, to pursue righteousnesse, faith, charity, peace, &c. even when these seem to flee from them, as it is, 2 *Tim.* 2. 22. Both which places relate especially

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especially to perrillous times, as the scope in the preceeding words doth hold forth. And if this be not in Ministers, what can be expected amongst the people? and without this, can their carriage or publick Ministery have weight to this end? 2. Ministers would be watchfull, not only over sins, but even over offences, yea, even over passive offences, lest any by themselves, or any other be offended, which was our Lords way and the practice of the Apostles, as in the places cited. For, to be offended, is an infirmity and sicknesse, even when the offence is meerly taken; and for a Minister not to be affected with that, doth hold forth a most unministeriall cruell disposition; that is spoken of by the Apostle as a great part of the care of the Church, 2 *Corinth.* 11. 28, 29. *Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?* The hearing of a persons stumbling, ought to stound and will stound the heart of a sympathizing Minister, as if it were a fire in his bosome. And were this one thing in vigour, to wit, native sympathie with those that are offended, it would usher in all other directions: This would make Ministers pray much to have it prevented, as our Lord doth, *Joh.* 17. and *Paul* doth, *Rom.* 15. 5. This would make Ministers sparing to give offence, or to laugh at the offences of others, or to despise and sleight those that are offended, much lesse to spread rumours, entertain contentions, or so to aggrege miscarriages in others, as thereby the stoud of offences may rather be increased than dried up by them. And it is found, that seldom offences have been in the Church, but Ministers have had a prime hand therein, as if it had been a part of their duty to promove the same: which sayeth, that especially they had need to be watchfull at such a time. 3. Ministers would endeavour much unity amongst themselves, and unity amongst Professours. There is no keeping off of offences without this; for strife and contention are the fewell by which this plague of

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scandal is kindled and entertained, when offences are abounding in *Corinth*: it is the first direction that *Paul* giveth, 1 Epist. 1 chap. ver. 10. *I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same things, that there be no divisions among you, &c.* And when he hath been large in two Epistles, he doth almost close with this, 2 Epist. chap. 13. 11. *Finally, brethren, farewell: Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of peace shall be with you.* And he not only exhorteth to it, But, *Rom.* 15. 5. he prayeth for it upon the back of all his doctrine and directions concerning offences; Yea, it was the way that our blessed Lord Jesus took, to commend union, and to pray for it to His Disciples, lest thereby the world should be stumbled and keeped back from the acknowledging of Him, and the beauty of the Church should be obscured, so as the members thereof should not be known to be His Disciples, as may be at length seen in the Gospel, and particularly, *Joh.* 17. 4. Ministers would study the diverting of people from these things which ordinarily breed offences, as striving about words, and jangling in controversies not materiall, the judging and condemning of others, and such like; and they would study to be occupied themselves, and to have others exercised in these things that come nearer the power of Godlinesse and the life of Religion. We see when the rest of the Disciples offend at *Zebedee's* children for their suit, the Lord checks that, and proposeth to them the necessity of humility and mortification, and such like, that he might put the unprofitable question, (*Who should be greatest?*) out of their head, as it is in *Matth.* chap. 18. 1, &c. and chap. 20. ver. 20, and 25, &c. And this is frequent in *Paul's* Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, whereas upon the one side, he dehorteth from strife, contention, vain jangling, following of fables, and such like, So he doth, upon the other side, exhort to the exercise of godlinesse, and to the pressing of good works,

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works, as good and profitable to men in opposition to these, as may be gathered from 1 *Tim.* chap. 1. ver. 4, 5. and chap. 4. ver. 7, 8. 2 *Tim.* chap. 2. ver. 14, 15, &c. *Titus* 3. ver. 8, 9. Yea, the Apostle will have Ministers so serious in this, as to charge and obtest their hearers (as he did his, 1 *Corinth.* 1. 10. and *Phil.* 2. 1.) to eschew these things, and not to strive about words, 1 *Tim.* 1. 3, 4. 2 *Tim.* 2. 14, &c. Especially Ministers would beware of mentioning such things unnecessarily, as are the bone of contention, or which may foster mistakes of, or grudges against, others, or make themselves to appear to be carnal, and to walk like men, But rather they would endeavour to hush them to silence, as they would have blocks removed out of the peoples way, otherwise they cannot but lose of their ministeriall authority, and discompose the frame of the people, which by all means should be eschewed by them.

The considering of three Scriptures will give a view of *Pauls* carriage in reference to this. And O how commendable is it! The first is, 1 *Corinth.* 9. 19, 20, 21, 22, &c. *Though I be free from all men, yet have I made my self servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews, I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, that I might gain them that are under the Law; to them that are without Law, as without Law, (being not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without Law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.* Where, his condescending to others, his insinuating by all means to win the affection of people, his greedinesse to edifie and save souls, and his endeavouring by his own example to engage others to that same condescending way, are abundantly holden forth as an useful and excellent copie to be followed especially by Ministers, who should

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studie edification at such a time most seriously.

The second is, 2 *Corinth.* 6. from ver. 1. to ver. 11. It is a great word that he hath ver. 3. *Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministery be not blamed*: (for untenderness in offences maketh the Ministery obnoxious to contempt) *But in all things approving our selves as the Ministers of God*; that pointeth out a ministeriall walk which studieth more the Masters honour, the credit of the Ordinances, and the good of soul's both his own and others, than the pleasing of others, and the making themselves acceptable only as men, or as familiar companions to those they converse with. Then followeth, *In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness, on the right hand, and on the left; By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowfull, yet alway rejoycing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.* Wherein, as in so many steps, he setteth forth his ministerial walk, for the preventing of offence, being a most excellent description of a patient, diligent, faithfull, denied, impartiall, single, powerfull preacher, driving and pressing the great design of Reconciliation, as his main scope, as from the close of the former Chapter, and the beginning of this, is clear. And this is pointed out as his work at such a time, amongst such a people for such an end, as the preventing of offence.

The third Scripture is, 2 *Corinth.* chap. 11. ver. 28, 29. which was formerly cited, and is worthy to be engraven on a Ministers heart. *Beside that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the Churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?*

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not? Never man was more serious in quenching fire in his house than *Paul* was in removing of offences, and in recovering such as were offended. He was not only carefull not to give offence himself, nor only to keep others from giving offence, nor yet only for removing of such as were taken at himself; nay, nor only to satisfie those that were strong that had offended, but the very stumbling, although without cause, of the most weak, ignorant, silly persons, affected him more, than if it had peirced himself. It is not like that he could have continued careless of mens constructions of him, of their being grieved and made weak, or of their being offended any other way, (as, alas, it is like too many do now!) It was no matter of laughing to him to hear of the sadness of any, that did proceed even from mistakes; and there was no rest in his mind till such an infirmity was cured. These three places and others, being soberly considered in their matter and scope, will give the serious conscientious Minister insight in a great part of his duty, and (it may be) in no little part of his sin and challenge at such a time. The Notes also of the Reverend Master *Dickson* upon the same subject, (worthy to be taken notice of) do more fully confirm this. Happy were the Ministers that were of such a frame and of such a practice; And happy were the Church under their inspection. O that it may once thus be!

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PART II.

Concerning Publick Scandals, or Scandals as they are the object of Church-censures; and more particularly, as they are practical, or, in practice.

IT resteth now that we should speak something of Scandal as it is the object of Church-discipline; for that is implyed here, to wit, That this scandal, given by the *Nicolaitans*, was such as ought to have been taken notice of by the Church-officers: for, the neglect thereof is reproved by the Lord; and in such a case privat admonitions are not sufficient. We may therefore speak a word to these Questions, 1. When a Scandal is to be esteemed publick, that is, to be taken notice of by a Church-judicatory. 2. What Order is to be observed in proceeding therein. 3. What is to be accounted a sufficient ground for removing of such an offence, so as it may sist all ecclesiastick Processe, or may remove a Sentence when it is passed. 4. What is the duty of private Christians, when Church-officers seem to be, and possibly indeed are, defective in reference to this?

CHAP. I.

Shewing that every Offence *is not publick, and when it is so.*

COncerning the first Question, we lay down these grounds, 1. Every thing offensive is not publick, or immediatly to be brought before a Church-judicatory. Of this sort are, 1. sins of in-

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infirmity, which possibly may be offensive for the time, Yet the persons way being considered, they are to be thought to proceed from his infirmity, they being incident to such who are in some serious manner watchfull over their way; and therefore are not the object of Discipline, which is to curb and restrain the more grosse humours of Professors: Otherwayes the exercise of Discipline, in reference to infirmities, would utterly prove an intanglement both to Officers and Members, and so occasion more stumbling, contrary to Christ's scope. 2. Offences that are in disputable practices, or that flow from miscarriage in things indifferent, are not properly the object of Church-censure, because there is not solid accesse of through convincing the party. Hence we see, that in these disputes concerning indifferent things, or of practices following thereupon, the Apostles reprove mens untenderneſse in them, but do never make them the ground of Censure as such, except they be aggreged by some other circumstance. Of this sort also are offences that may proceed from mens carriage in legal pursuits and civil contracts which may offend; yet cannot they be legally convinced to have broken a rule, when the strain of their way is legal, although it may be sinfull before God, and be to be reproved by private admonition where men have accesse. 3. Some offences are grosse, and, it may be, known to some to be true; yet possibly there is no convincing way of demonstrating the truth thereof to others: in that case, it's more safe and edifying to forbear publick mentioning of that scandal, than to prosecute the same, seing it may more irritate the person, and weaken the Church-authority, than edifie. 4. Some scandals a re grosse, and may be made-out by two or three witnesses; yet are not immediatly to be brought to publick, except upon the supposition of following obstinacy, and not satisfying of those two or three, which especially is to be considered,

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dered, if the persons carriage be otherwayes cleanly; This is Christ's expresse rule, *Mat.* 18. and to bring it immediatly to publick, is not consistent with that love that we ought to have to one another: For, charity requireth that he should be admonished, and also if he hear, that it should sift; Otherwayes, such being satisfied as were offended, it were to waken a scandal, and not to remove one. But now especially we consider what is a publick scandal in respect of its nature, and afterward we shall enquire when it is so to be accounted publick in respect of its notority; and so when immediatly it is to be brought in publick: for, it is certain, that these two may be divided, and so are to be distinguished, as was formerly hinted. For, a scandal may be publick, to say so, for its notority, but yet not for its nature.

When a scandall is to be brought to publick.

2. Scandals may be of that nature, that it is fit to take publick notice of them, and to follow them with Church-censures till they be removed. This is clear in the Lord's reproving the neglect of publick Censure in these Churches; for, His finding fault that they *had* such, and *suffered* such (as in the next Epistle) can be constructed no otherwayes, but that they did not by Church-censure cut them off from their fellowship, which is elsewhere abundantly clear. And it is true in these cases, 1. When a scandal is of its own nature grosse and infectious, like a little leaven ready to leaven the whole lump. 2. When it is clear and in the matter of fact cannot be denied; the first is requisit to a publick scandal for convincing of the conscience of the evil it self; the second for making application of the consequents of such an evil to such a person. 3. An offence becometh publick, though it be not of its own nature so at first, if it be afterward aggreged by such circumstances as obstinacy and contempt of private admonition, frequent relapsing therein, and such like, as Christ's rule, *Matth.* 18. and the general nature of offence doth con-

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confirm: Scandals that are so circumstantiated, and they only, are to be taken notice of by Church-judicatories as the proper object of Church-discipline. Hence we may see a great difference betwixt offence as it is the object of private discretion, and as it is the object of Church-discipline. I call them grosse evils and of an infectious nature, which are against a clear Law of God, and of that influence in a man's christian walk, as any sober man, acquainted with the Word of God, and reflecting upon conscience, cannot but acknowledge to be sinfull, obstructive to the work of grace where they are, and tending to the marring the beauty of a Church, and the edification and salvation of her members if they should spread, such as Sabbath-breaking, swearing, and what doth directly contradict a moral command, these things are obviously censurable. And upon this occasion, I cannot but much wonder at, and regrate the unwarrantable expressions, at least, in the matter of fact, of a Learned man, Mr. *Baxter* against *Blake, pag.* 130. his words are, *In some Countries, where some oaths are grown customary and of no great evil repute, it is possible for a godly man to be long guilty of them, as it is known that many well reputed of for godlinesse are in Scotland, &c.* where he doth misrepresent the Church of *Scotland* in a twofold mistake (to say no more.) 1. as if some swearing were so customary in *Scotland* as to abound even amongst the Godly. 2. As if it were not taken notice of, or of no evil repute or scandalous: It is like, this may be his information, but certainly Christian charity would have pleaded, that such information should not have been received against a Brother, without some convincing ground; much lesse to have been vented as a thing known against a Christian Church, which, however she be otherwise afflicted and rent, and so obnoxious to much contempt and reproach, yet hath a witnesse both in Heaven and Earth of zeal against that sin, and in-

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nocencie in that respect, as to these that are Godly, even but seemingly, There being nothing more abhorred by a godly heart, and accounted a greater evidence of profanity amongst us, than customary irreverent medling with the holy Name of God, and swearing of any kind: and although we be many wayes guilty before God, even in this respect; yet we suppose she may hold up her face therein, beside, and with, any Church on earth.

Where offences are publick, yet difference is to made.

3. We say, That even among these Scandals that are in this sense publickly to be taken notice of, there is many wayes difference to be made in the prosecuting of them, and that in diverse respects. 1. Some scandals are of such grosse nature and publickness in the fact, that they cannot be passed without some publick rebuke, at least, even though the person should seem satisfyingly to resent his deed, because in this, respect is to be had to the edification of others, and not of the person only. 2. Some scandals again are such, as by authoritative admonition may be helped: and in this sense, if a person hear the Church-guides and take their admonition, there is no further progresse to be made. Again, 3. sometimes persons are to be followed with the *highest censure of Excommunication*, when open rebukes cannot do the businesse, as we see in the case before us, and other practices of *Pauls*. And we suppose, that such a scandal as hath this Sentence following upon it, would be in the grosnesse of its nature, and clearnesse of its proof, convincingly made out both to the person himself, and to others. Because, 1. otherwise it may make this great Ordinance contemptible, if upon like, or disputable grounds, it be drawn forth. 2. Neither can it have weight with the person to gain its end upon him natively, as a Church-ordinance ought to have, the first step whereof is, convincingly to argue him to the sense of his fault, as the word is, *Matth.* 18. 15. 3. Neither can it be expected to have such weight

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weight with others who ordinarily carry towards them that are under it, as they are convinced of the weightinesse or lightnesse of the ground of that Sentence. 4. The nature of this Ordinance cleareth this also; for (as Divines say) it is added to confirm Gods threatnings, as Sacraments do seal the promises; then it importeth, that there must be a clear threatning ere this can be appended; and there can be no such threatning applyed, but where both the sin in its nature, and the fact in its notority are convincing; and indeed all the precedents of this *Sentence* in Scripture are of this nature, to wit, they are both rare, and also upon most convincingly grosse evils. I cannot expresse it better than it is done by that Reverend Divine, Mr. *Thomas Hooker* of New *England* in his History, *part* 3. *pag.* 39. *Such evils*, (the words are his) which *are either heynous and abominable, as fornication, murther, adultery, incest, treason, &c.* or, *if not so grosse, yet carry the face of evil in their forehead, upon the first serious and well grounded consideration of reason; and have been pertinaciously and obstinatly persisted in after the improvement of all means upon them for conviction and reformation: These only deserve Excommunication by the rules of Christ*, 1 Cor. 5. Matth. 18. 17. thus far he. Advert, that what we speak here of a publick scandal, is spoken in respect of the nature thereof; what is to be accounted such, in respect of its manifestnesse and notoritie, followeth afterward to be spoken of.

CHAP.

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CHAP. II.

Concerning what order is to be keeped in the following of publick Scandals.

THe second thing, to wit, what order and manner is to be observed in the following of publick Scandals, is not easily determinable, there being such variety of cases in which the Lord exerciseth the prudence and wisdom of his Church-officers: and indeed the gift of Government (to speak so) doth especially kyth in the right managing of Discipline, in reference to the severall humours and constitutions (to say so) which men have to do with. For, as in bodily diseases the same cure is not for the same disease in all constitutions and seasons, and as Ministers in their Doctrine are to presse the same things in diverse manners, upon diverse auditories; So this cure of discipline, is not to be applied equally unto all persons; nay, not to such as are in the same offences. For, that which would scarce humble one, may crush another; and that which might edifie one, might be stumbling to another, of another temper. Therefore we suppose there is no peremptor determining of rules for cases here, but necessarily the manner of procedor in the application of rules, is to be left to the prudence and conscienciousnesse of Church-officers, according to the particular circumstantiate case. Yet we may lay down these generals,

The ends of Discipline.

1. All publick processing of scandalous persons, or judiciall taking notice of scandals, would be done with respect to the ends for which Discipline is appointed, and so as may attain the same. This, I suppose, cannot be denied: for, the mids must be suited to its end. Now, the ends of publick Censuring, are. 1. for vindicating the honour of Jesus Christ, that suffereth in the miscarriage of a member. 2. The

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preserving of the authority of His Ordinances, and the chastening of disobedience thereunto, Therefore it is called, 2 *Corinth.* 2. 6. The *punishment* that was inflicted, and chap. 10. 6. This is said to *revenge* all disobedience, it being appointed as an Ecclesiastick whip to keep up His Authority in His House, and thereby to note those that are unruly therein, 2 *Thess.* 3. 6, 14. 3. It is for the persons good, as it is said, 1 *Corinth.* 5. 5. for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved, that by this, admonitions, reproofs, yea, threatnings, may have the more weight, for the persons humiliation and up-stirring: and the constraining of them, at least to a more orderly walk in the Church, as the Apostle hath it, 2 *Thess.* 3. 6, and 14. 4. It is for the good of the Church, that the leaven of profanity spread not, and that others may thereby learn to fear: This reason is given, 1 *Cor.* 5. 6, 7. &c. and 1 *Tim.* 5. 20. Now, when we speak of the end of publick trial and censure, respect is to be had to all these, but especially to the more publick and generall ends, so as the persons particular edification be not neglected; and therefore in procedor, particular and speciall respect would be had to that manner (whether by meekness, or rigidity, by forbearing or proceeding) which may most attain these ends.

Hence, 2. we say, that the same offences, upon the matter, are not equally nor at all times, nor in all persons, and, it may be, in all places in the same manner, to be pursued and followed; and the reason is clear, because according to circumstances, that manner which is edifying at one time, and in one case, may be destructive in another, and so is not to be followed, because that *power which God hath given* is *for edification* and never *for destruction*, 2 *Corinth.* 13. 10. And accordingly, we see *Paul* in some cases censuring corrupt men, as *Hymeneus* and *Phyletus*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. Sometimes again, he threatneth and yet spareth, although

All offences of the same kind, not always equally to be dealt with.

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though the scandal in it self deserved Censure, as when he saith, *Gal. 5. I wish they were cut off that trouble you*, and yet doth it not, because he found not the Churches edification so to require. So also, 2 *Corinth.* 10. 4. and 6. *Having in a readinesse to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled*: which yet he thought not meet for the time to do, lest it should have irritated to more disobedience, and have bred some greater rent or schism, or have made the authority of the Ordinances lesse weighty, and so have marred his end, which was in all things (and so in this forbearing) their edification, as he expresseth it, chap. 12. 19. *Brethren, we do all things* (and so this also) *for your edifying.*

When I speak of *edifying*, I do not speak of pleasing the persons (for, that may be often destructive to them, and others also) But this is intended, that it is to be weighed in Christian prudence, whether considering the time and place we live in, the nature of the person we have to do with, and of those also among whom we live, it be more fit to follow this way with such a person, at such a time, or another way? and accordingly as it seemeth probable, that this way will honour God most, more fully vindicate His Ordinances, gain the person from sin to holinesse, at least, to a regular walk, and edifie others most; So accordingly ought Church-judicatories to take the way that leadeth most probably to that end. And therefore it ought not alwayes to be accounted partiality when such difference in Church-procedour *is* observed: yet these things would by all means be guarded against.

What is to be guarded against, when there is a different way taken in censuring the same offences.

1. That nothing be done with respect to persons, or appear to be done so; that is, for outward, civil, or naturall respects, to be more gentle to one than to another, than which nothing is more derogatory to ecclesiastick Authority, and stumbling to people.

2. This difference of proceeding, would rather be in the

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the manner and circumstances of proceeding in reference to some offences, than in dispensing with what seemeth to be materiall; or, it would be in such offences where there is no settled rule, and wherein Church-officers have more latitude: as for instance, some offences are of that publick nature that usually they are followed with a publick reproof; such cannot be conveniently past-by in any ordinary conceivable case, suppose it be fornication, or some such thing; yet, in the manner of citing and dealing with the person, or expressing or timeing of the reproof, there may be condescending; but to omit it altogether, would hazard the casting loose of that Ordinance of publick reproof, which would mar the edification of the Church more than advantage any particular party: Other offences again, are more occasional, in reference to which, there is no definit law, or practice; suppose it be speaking, reproachfull words of some persons, Officers, or others, in such there is more liberty to condescend which way may be most convincing to the party. Lastly, in trying what may be most edifying, we are not to look to one end alone, to wit, the persons particular good only, or the publick good only, &c. but to put all together, and to try how joyntly they may be best attained.

3. From this also it will appear, that Church-officers ought with such tenderness, love and sympathie to walk in publick Censures, as not only they may have a testimony in their own Consciences, but also that those who have offended, and others that observe their way, may also be convinced of the same; for, if this be not, what can their Censure gain? and if it be needfull for a Minister in preaching, to study that, it is in some respect more necessary here: because ordinarily, men out of their corruption, are more ready to mistake mens intentions in this: and we conceive, that in this a Church-judicatories procedour, ought discernably to differ from a civil Court,

How Church officers ought to carry in Censures.

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in that they are not only out of Justice censuring the party, with a respect to the common body, for whose good in some cases the most penitent member must be cut off, and cannot be reprived, but as endeavouring the Churches freedom from offences, that the offending member may be thereby with all tenderneſſe reſtored and cured; and in experience we ſee, that often Church-cenſures have weight, as they are conſtructed to proceed from love. And we conceive, that the following of theſe and ſuch like directions, may have much influence for attaining of this. 1. That nothing be raſhly and haſtily brought to publick, but that which is a convincing Scandal in it ſelf, clear in the matter of fact, and alſo after privat dealing with the perſon, and triall of his carriage afterward: if the ſcandal be not very groſſe and publick, Haſtie bringing to publick, irritateth: and if a private admonition of Miniſter and Elders might gain a Brother, what needeth further? And by ſo doing, a perſon is convinced, that that Miniſter, or Elder, deſireth his amendment, and on that condition to cover his offence. 2. There would be no rigid inſiſting in what is perſonall, in reference to any of the Judicatory, as ſuppoſe, they ſhould ſometimes get ſnarling anſwers, or unbecoming words, or be met with by irreverent carriage: in that caſe, there would be condeſcending, and what is offenſive beſide, would not be inſiſted on, and theſe perſonall things forborn. It is true, the authority of the Ordinances would ever be kept up, yet that is not alwayes done by a rigid proſecuting of perſonal reflections; but on the contrary, it often looketh likeſt Chriſts Ordinance, when meekneſſe is moſt prevalent, and ſo in the end, it cometh to have greater weight; for, many cannot diſcern betwixt Officers ſeeking their own authority, and the authority of the Ordinances; and when the riſe of the offence is from a miſcarriage to ſome perſon immediately, it looketh to them to be carnall and vindictive

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dictive like, and so hath the appearance of evil, and is to be eschewed. This we may observe also in *Pauls* carriage, and in the practices of most zealous men, who never wronged the Ordinances by denying of their own respect in such cases. And Church-officers would especially advert to this, because often in our hotest fits, it is rather respect to our own authority, than zeal for Christ that acteth us, which appeareth by this, that a practical contempt of the Ordinances in our own hands, will stir more than many other grosse evils, or doctrinall blasphemies, or contemptuous practices which immediately reflect on others, although these may be more dishonourable to Christ. 3. For attaining this end, the rigidity and strictnesse of law would not be stuck to, as the persons not appearing at such a day if afterward they condescend; their hastinesse in expressing themselves rashly at one time, or carrying themselves irreverently, which afterward they may passe from: these and such like, I say, are not to be stuck to, lest Church-officers seem, under pretext of Church-discipline, to take advantage of them; and it is an evidence of the contrary, when they are condescended unto in this. Advert, this is to be observed in practices that seem to flow from infirmity; but, suppose the person were some subtile, deceitfull, dissembling one, using his pretexts of repentance for furthering his design. this condescension may be hurtfull to the Church of God, in letting such an occasion slip, and therefore is not to be admitted. 4. It contributeth to this end also, that publick appearances and publick rebukes be not frequent, nor in cases but such as are in the nature and evidence thereof convincing, and that also after private admonitions have been fruitlesly given. We suppose that mid step in Christs direction, *Matth.* 18. doth warrand this, *Take to thee two or three before thou tell the Church.* Hastie bringing to publick reproof, is constructed by many to be a seeking of their shame,

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but when it is rare, and done in the order foresaid, and also with some reasons why a publick rebuke in such a case is just and expedient, seing other means have failed, and the condition of others calleth for that now, &c. it doth much allay that prejudice; for every man hath reason and a conscience, though many often want the exercise thereof. We find also publick rebukes rare in Scripture: And although sometimes, a publick appearing may be thought most edifying to the Congregation; Yet, 1. If they were very frequent, they would lose their weight. 2. One publick rebuke in this manner and order, will edifie more than many otherwise: for, it is not the multitude of them that edifieth, but the convincingness of the manner of proceeding. And therefore we conceive it is never fit to multiply publick rebukes, even supposing that scandals were multiplied, but that some should be pitched-on that might most convincingly edifie, and that private dealing with others for conviction be made the more weighty, which also is the judgement of the great *Augustine*. 3. Peoples offending for the omiting of publick rebukes, is, when the scandal thereof doth flow from this, that they conceive it to proceed from carlesnesse, negligence, partiality, or some such thing in the Officers, whereas, if by custome it shall be known to a people, that Officers are diligent observers of these things, and are not defective in dealing with scandalous persons for convincing of them, and do take this way as the most loving and tender mean of their gaining, such manner of proceeding will be more convincing and edifying, than if the thing were instantly brought to publick; for, people generally approve of tenderness and condescending in Church-officers, as looking like love to the gaining of souls, and so lay much weight on their Censuring, even of others, when they see them, as it were, constrained thereto. And on the contrary, there is nothing more offensive to them than

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than when this tenderneſſe is deſiderated. It is to be guarded here, that this be not made a cloak to negligence and unfaithfulneſſe; for, diligence and freedom is to be no leſſe uſed with the parties, yea more, than if they were brought to publick. Only, this forebearance is to be made uſe of as a mean for making that diligence and freedom the more ſucceſſull: otherwiſe, whether it be forborn or followed, it continueth ſtill to be hurtfull. Alſo, when one of theſe abounding ſcandals, or ſcandalous perſons is rebuked, then eſpecially the Miniſter would ſo gravely and zealouſly agrege that evil, that in ſome reſpect all that are under it may be reproved, and his indignation at it may be ſo diſcernable, that that one reproof may be in place of many, and yet the forbearance will give acceſſe for ſome to come off the ſame.

How Diſcipline is to be ordered, as it may not mar but further the Word.

4. It is alſo to be remembered, that this exerciſe of Diſcipline for reſtraining of ſcandals, is to be ſubſervient to the preaching of the Word: which is the main and great edifying Ordinance; Therefore Diſcipline would be ordered ſo, as it may not mar, but further that. In reference to which, theſe things are to be adverted to, 1. That no cenſure would be blindly or implicitely made uſe of, but both in reference to the party, and others, there would be inſtruction, exhortation, conviction, &c. by the Word, going before, or alongſt with the ſame. In which reſpect (though improperly) Cenſures may be ſome way looked upon as Sacraments in a large ſenſe in theſe particular caſes, becauſe there is in them both ſome ſignifying and confirming uſe; They being conſidered with reſpect to the end wherefore they were appointed. 2. Church-officers, eſpecially Miniſters, would not make Diſcipline the great uptaking buſineſſe, ſo as it may prove an intanglement unto them, or diverſion from the Miniſtery of the Word: The great Apoſtles, *Act.* 6. thought not fit to be

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diverted with the serving of Tables, but appointed Deacons to be chosen for that end, that they might give themselves principally, and, in comparison of other duties, fully (or as they say themselves, ver. 4. *continually*) *to prayer*, that is, to the private exercise thereof; *and the Ministery of the Word*, that is, the preaching thereof in publick. By which we may see, 1. what a Ministers great task is, wherein he should be taken up, to wit, secret prayer, (under which are comprehended, reading, meditation, and other duties meet for his own particular case, and preparation for the duties of his calling, as may be gathered from 1 *Tim.* 4. 13, 14, 15.) and the publick preaching of the Gospel. 2. We see also, that though Ministers are virtually both Elders and Deacons, (as the Apostles were) yet ought they to regulat their exercising of both these, with respect to the former two. And, 3. that Elders and Deacons ought in governing, and overseeing the poor, to have special respect to keep Ministers from being burthened or toyled with these, that they may have freedom to follow the Ministery of the Word, as the main thing: Yea, even to have much accesse to privacy and solitarinesse, which is both most necessary for, and a well becoming duty to a Minister; This is a special end of the appointment of these Officers, and in reference to which they are helps, 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. both to the people and to the Ministers. A third thing to be adverted to, is, that contentious and irritating processes be so followed, as by these there be no prejudice laid before persons, to make them stumble at the Word, or to render it the more unprofitable. It is true, sometimes such things are necessary for the good of the body, and for the vindicating of Christs Ordinances, yet as much as may be they would be shuned, and Ministers especially ought to carry so in the manner, as to keep room for the Word in the affections of the parties. And we conceive, that multiplying and lengthning

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ning of processes (except where there is grave and weighty cause) and the way of triall of members penitents, or such as are to be admitted to Sacraments, which is pleaded for by some, if it were put in practice, could not but much intangle Ministers, yea, become a more weighty and intolerable burthen to them, than the preaching of the Word: yea, could not but be obstructive thereto, contrary to the nature of Discipline, as said is.

CHAP. III.

Shewing that Christs order and method, Matth. 18. *is to be keeped, and what it doth imply.*

THe fourth generall concerning proceeding in publick Scandals, which we would lay down, is, that Christs order, *Mat.* 18. be indispensably kept. Which we conceive, being compared with other Scriptures, doth imply these things, 1. That offences whether they be in lesser particulars, or in more grosse things, yet if they be but known to few, are not instantly to be brought to publick, (except some circumstance necessitate the same for greater edification) and this order is to be observed both by Officers and private persons. It were not therefore unfit, when any delation cometh by an Elder, or complaint by a private Professor, to enquire if they had observed this rule with such a party? and if alone, and with some others, friendly and rationally they have endeavoured to convince them? and if not, that they be remitted to follow that way, and if they have done it, It would be enquired, if their so doing have had no weight? Or if the person hath continued in the offence notwithstanding? If none of these can be said, there is yet no ground for publick tabling of a scandal: and this we suppose would cut off many needlesse processes, and prove more edifying.

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2. It is clear from that place, that the offences to be complained of, are not injuries or wrongs to us under that notion as such, but what is offensive in its nature and under that consideration, whether any wrong be intended to us in it or not. It is not suitable to a Church-court to have only persons complaining of wrongs done to themselves, as if they be cursed, defamed, &c. and yet not to take notice of what is offensive, as wronging the honour of God, reflecting upon the profession of the Gospel, and really laying a stumbling-block before themselves and others. This is to neglect scandals, and to take notice of slanders, which, as we said, differ from these. Hence, such persons ordinarily follow their complaints with much bitterness, and never seek to convince the party privately. We conceive therefore, that such direct complaints, so circumstantiate, ought not to be admitted, at least, upon that consideration; lest the Ordinance of Christ be made subservient to mens particular passions and interests. It is therefore more fit when such offences arise, that they be taken notice of abstractly from such complaints, and that in the order that other scandals are to come in, whereof now we are speaking. 3. It is clear from that order, *Matth.* 18. that when the person offending, doth accept of the admonition, there is no mention further to be made thereof; yea, it would not be so much as reported privately, if it be not otherwayes known. 4. If that private admonition prevail not, then is the person to take two or three with him before it come to the Church, and this is not to be done superficially, and for exoneration meerly, but convincingly, and for the persons edification. Therefore we suppose, that this is not to be astricted to one time, either in private, or before these two or three: for, once speaking may be but little usefull; and seing the Church is to continue in dealing with the person before they give him over and proceed, and before they can account that he heareth

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heareth not them, So ought it to be in the preceeding two steps, seing the words are the same. Again, I say, this would be done convincingly, they would argue (as the word is) with the offending brother, and not rest satisfied with some passing word or admonition. Further, these two or three would be chosen, so as may be most fit for that purpose, and may have most weight with him, (we think some Elder, one at least, or two, were not unfit) and this would be done purposly, gravely and seriously, as the words, *Take with thee, &c.* import. All this is to preceed the bringing of a scandal to publick, which is to sist here if this prevail. Whence, 5. also we may see, that every scandal which is known to two or three, is not to be accounted a publick scandal, and at the first instant to be brought to the Church, because it is supposed, that these two or three may have knowledge of the same scandal, and yet may it warrantably never come to publick, if the person hear them. It looketh unlike this way to bring scandals to publick, wherein scarce two witnesses can be had. Indeed, after the fault noised and flagrant, and the presumption is great, and the party suspect like, such things are publickly to be taken notice of, though the proofs be not so pregnant. 6. If this do not the business, but the person continueth obstinate, although to the conviction of those two or three assessors, the fact be grosse, and the party guilty, then it is to be brought to publick, either immediately by the person that was stumbled, or by an Elder, (for which cause, we said, it was not unmeet that one of these should be among the former witnesses) When it cometh to the Church, we conceive, that with the parties, it were meet to call some one, or moe of those who were witnesses of the private admonition, that the Judicatory may be informed by them of the case, seing probably they may be more impartiall than the other. And it will be conduceable for attaining clear-

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clearnesse in the thing, to know what hath preceeded, and where it left; and this would make private admonitions and witnesses therein, to have the more weight with men; for, knowing that their carriage at such a time would be made manifest to others, it would have influence to make them at first more rationall and sober, if they knew that what they said then, would afterward be repeated to them before two or three; and what they spoke before those, were to be again impartially reported to the Eldership. And we conceive, it is for this cause amongst others, that Christ calleth them *witnesses*, and such witnesses, as may establish the matter, which must be rather in their testifying to the Church, than in private accompanying the offended party. For, when a person bringeth such an offence to a publick Judicatory, he must make out these two, 1. That such a person hath actually given offence, 2. That he hath effectually admonished him, and he hath not heard him, nor satisfied him. Now, though the first be made out by other witnesses, yet the last cannot be made out but by such as were called by him; and therefore with respect to that, they are called *witnesses* by our Lord, as is said.

When this is done, the convincing and recovery of the party is yet to be essayed; and for that end, pains are to be taken, with all patience, gentlenesse, and long-suffering: if that prevail, there is no further procedour called-for; if not, then publick admonitions and rebukes are to be added. If nothing prevail, the Sentence of Excommunication is to be added, the ground being convincingly scandalous in its nature, and clear in its evidence, as was formerly said; and it will not be found often in a Church where that progresse is keeped, that it will come to this.

If the offences be of that nature, that a publick rebuke be necessary, in respect of the circumstances and aggravations thereof, it is not to be neglected: Yet,

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Yet, it is not necessary that every offence that cometh to the Eldership, yea, even these that are known to many, should at all times be brought to a publick rebuke. For, if the Sessional or Eldership admonition have weight with the party, what needeth more in reference to him? And if there be no hazard that others be infected by that deed, or provoked by that example, there is no necessity alwayes in reference to them, especially, where it is known that such offences are not passed. For that is one end of publick rebukes, 1 *Tim.* 5. 20. *That others may fear.* Yea, much more we conceive that many offences may be brought the length of publick rebukes, which yet are not to be drawn out unto Excommunication, even though compleat satisfaction seem not to be given. Because, 1. that Sentence is not to proceed, but upon weighty convincing causes, as is said, 2. Because, if the cause be convincing, the person offending may be expected sometimes upon after thoughts to admit of conviction, though distemper or prejudice may for a time keep it off, as experience doth prove.

But where the case is such as hazardeth infection to others, and the persons such as are contemptuous and ready to spread their leaven, as was both in the case of the doctrine and deeds of these *Nicolaitans*, the Sentence is to proceed, and that more summarily: I say, more summarily in comparison of what is past, yet not altogether summarily; for, *Paul* alloweth an Heretick to be once and again admonished, *Tit.* 3. 10. And in this Chapter, the Lord giveth *Jezebel* time to repent: and here those corrupt persons are exhorted to repent before He come to fight against them with the sword of His mouth, ver. 16. which (as we take it) looketh to the same Sentence. We will not be peremptory to deny what may be done when the crime is atrocious, the evidence palpable, the scandal great, the contemptuousnesse of the party, by their former and present carriage, rendering all hopes of reco-

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recovering so desperate, that there is not so much as accesse to get a hearing, and a following of convictions, and the hazard of the scandal not admitting of delay: I say, in such a case, we will not deny what maybe done for the Churches edification more summarily; yet we are sure, ordinarily the way laid down is to be followed.

CHAP. IV.

Holding forth the frame wherewith Church-Officers should proceed in Censure, and helps towards the same.

IN the last place, *the manner of proceeding* in all this, is especially to be looked to, without which all the rest will be weightlesse. Therefore in all the procedure, the Church-officers especially would have a zealous, serious, grave and authoritative manner of carriage, having weight and authority in their least looks and words, with all gravity: For, can that admonition have weight with others, that appeareth not to have weight with those that give it? Or, can the scandalous be serious in hearing, when there is no conviction on them, that they are serious and affected that speak? Ministers therefore especially, as also Elders in their place, would endeavour seriously and zealously with all tenderness to the person, to expresse their indignation at, and abhorrency of such deeds; as it is commended in *Ephesus*, ver. 6, that they hated the deeds of the *Nicolaitans*. And certainly, a Court of Christs ought to look like Him, and like that businesse intrusted to them, and to have a different stamp from other Courts. And there is nothing that weakneth the authority of a Sentence more than the want of this. For helping therefore to it, we propose, 1. That the conversations of such as take notice of Scandals in others, should be shining themselves,

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selves, There can be no weightinesse without this; because the weight and authority that is to be studied here, is that which may be convincing to consciences, rather than compulsive to the outward man: and upon this ground, it is not the most honourable and rich that give Church-judicatories most authority, But those who are most shining and convincing in their carriage, particularly in reference to this trust: For, though outward place may gain more outward respect, yet this cannot but have more weight upon the conscience, which is especially to be affected by this Church-authority. 2. We would beware of founding this authority upon carnal grounds, or to lay the weight of it there, such as the power and authority of men; yea, or upon our own place, parts, or weight: and upon that account (as it were) to boast, rather than to perswade or convince. This sometimes may have weight as to some outward conformity, but doth ever lose more of its native weightinesse: Therefore Ministers and Elders in the prosecuting of this, would lay the weight here, that it is Christ's Ordinance, and that they act in His Name. 3. They would even in that procedure aim especially to deal with consciences to convince them, rather than to wrangle with corruptions, or to throw the outward man. 4. The Masters honour would ever be respected, yea, reverently and frequently mentioned, that all of them may be put and kept in minde that it is His Ordinance, and appointed for such an end: and the more room He get in the meeting, the more weight will their procedure have. 5. Ministers, and Elders particularly, would pray for the blessing to Discipline, as well as to the Word; and for the persons offending, even those that appear to be most stuborn, this becometh their ministerial authority well to acknowledge Him, and is the way to have His presence in the midst of them, without which they can expect no weight; and the more He be

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be seen that is the Master, the more authority will they have who are the Servants. 6. It helps this also to have the matter and proofs convincing. Therefore particulars that look self-like, or siding with interests, or such as are involved in civil debates and contests, are to be shunned, or at least, not to be insisted upon: for, readily a convincing weighty matter, will have some impression of it self upon consciences. Hence, we will find in Scripture that generally (if not alwayes) publick processes are tabled upon scandals that flow from commissions, and that of such nature, as is said. It is true, where an omission is owned, as suppose one should refuse to pray, or where palpably defended, and is not of infirmity, as idleness was in *Thessalonica*. 1 Epist. chap. 3. such are by their circumstances rather indeed commissions, and so to be accounted after admonition, and upon just ground are convincing. 7. There would be weight, gravity, impartiality, self-deniedness, and affection kything in every circumstance, that they may look like the servants of Jesus Christ, who are seeking thee good of His people; and so fooliſh sporting and laughing, idle and triviall questions, passionate words, heat, or particular and personall reflections, and the like, are most derogatory to the authority of a Church-judicatory, and do mar the weight of any Sentence upon a conscience, as is evident in daily experience, where sometimes Censures in their giving and receiving, are, upon the matter, an irreverent taking of the name of the Lord in vain. 8. There would be in all this, an holy boldness, and an undaunted fearlessness in respect of men. When it cometh to any difficulty, minding the authority of Him whom we represent; yet so, as in this boldness, conscience of duty and zeal may both in our own consciences, and to the conviction of others, be the ground, end and motive thereof, and not any carnall flash of passion or pride, or fit of naturall cou-

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rage,

rage, which may make Church-officers look like men, but not like their master; for, as His Kingdom is not of this world in these respects, so ought His Officers to administrate the same otherwayes than a worldly authority useth to be; our weapons are not carnall, but spirituall, and mighty through God, and therefore as such should be used.

Church-processes would be carried on with expedition.

The last general direction concerning this, is, that when Scandals are thus to be taken notice of, this proceeding ought to be with expedition: my meaning is not, that we should precipitate contrary to the former directions; But, 1. That after notice of an offence, with all conveniency, the first steps of this procedure would be essayed. 2. That there would not be long intervals betwixt these steps, although they may be frequently repeated. 3. That persons would not be kept long under processe, especially they would not have their appearances multiplied, except when it may be for good use. The reasons of all these, are, 1. Because when offences are fresh, then often the parties offending, and offended, as also others, are most affected therewith; whereas, if a long time interveen, that edge weareth away, and whatever the close be, it proveth not so edifying to any. 2. Men weary, and so fall from that zealous, serious manner of carriage in it that becometh, for our spirits are soon out of bensall, and that derogateth from the weight of the thing. 3. It proveth irritating and burthensom to the parties offending, rather than convincing, and so the end is missed. 4. It hath also influence upon the confusing and burthening of Officers when processes are multiplied and lengthened, and it cometh some way to look like mens civil Courts, and that in such things as they use to be grievous unto these who are necessitate to wait on them.

To close this, we conceive it were fit for the authority of Church-judicatories, the weight of admonition, and the edification of persons, that there were

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were some specially set apart for government, although they were fewer: And, O that this might be attained! for, ordinary conversing of Elders in common and ordinary Callings, doth not a little obscure the weight of that Ordinance to many, except the conversation of the Elder in such things be singularly convincing: And untill this be attained, there is the greater need for Church-officers to be as little in common businesse and discourses with those over whom they are set, as conveniently may be, that there may be the more accesse to converse with them as becometh Officers; and when necessity calleth to it, there is need of gravity and circumspectnesse, that it mar not their weight in the duties of their office at any other time. And also Church-officers in their meetings amongst themselves, would be alwayes grave and serious, as being about an Ordinance of Jesus Christ.

CHAP. V.

Concerning what is to be done, when offending persons give no satisfaction.

IF it be asked then, what is to be done, supposing persons not to give any satisfaction, even when they are brought to publick? This is indeed a difficulty, and will, no question, puzle any conscientious Church-officer; Yet we suppose, we may classe such offences that are brought to publick in these three sorts, and then answer. 1. Some offences are in matters that are lesse horrid and scandalous, and come neerer to sins of infirmity, which yet are scandalous, being continued in, suppose officious lying, angry passionat words, and such like, where these are repeated, the persons are to be rebuked in some cases; yet if they be not contemptuous, or the ills otherwise aggreged, we see not how there can be proceeding to Excommunication upon such grounds, because Ex-

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communication is a chastisement for some singular offenders, and is not for offences that are so common, as hath been formerly said. Of this sort may be the sparingnesse of charity in Church-members, in giving little to the poor, or lesse than proportionally they should, though they do not altogether shut their bowels. This may be the object of admonition, but we think hardly of Excommunication, except it have grosse contempt with it, and so hazard of making void, by evil example, the course that Christ hath appointed for overseing the poor in His house, for which He hath appointed Deacons: and if publick charity upon any pretext were restrained, that were to no purpose; which certainly highly reflecteth on Christ, and is a grievous scandal. We find the Reverend Master *Hooker, part 2. chap. 2. pag. 57.* lay these two conclusions, 1. That the Church is to stint her Members, and determine the *quota* of their charity and free-will-offerings, and that of her self. 2. That if after the Deacons private diligence, this be not given in, he is to follow the action before the Church. Although we think defect of charity, in this respect, a great sin and an offence, and may be justly reproved, and the person admonished that is defective palpably in that which is proportionable to his ability; yet, that such a particular stint should be made by Church-power, and exacted under such certification, we cannot yet find to be warrantable. Although we give the Magistrate that liberty, and where he exerceth it not, we acknowledge mutuall condescension may do much. And we are sure, that if any such like thing should be found in the Presbyteriall way, it had been charged with tyrannie, and encroaching on the place of the Magistrate long ere now: yet it may be (when it is well managed) no great corruption in a Church.

A second sort of offences are such, as are of themselves grosse and publick; yet not atrocious, or aggreged with contempt, such as fornication, some acts

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of drunkennesse, and such like. The party, I say, not being obstinate, but seriously acknowledging his fault, and promising to abstain and amend, in that case there is no ground to proceed to the highest Censure, though there may be a publick rebuke; yea, though their acknowledgment be not altogether satisfying; yet, if after the publick rebuke, the person abstain these evils, and renue not the offence, the processe is to close, and to proceed no further: Because, 1. In that case it cannot well be said, that he hath refused to hear the Church when that abstinence followeth. 2. The end of a publick rebuke is not alwayes to be an evidence of the persons full recovery, But, 1. to be a mean to recover him. 2. It is in it self a publick acknowledgment of the fault, and a virtuall engagement to abstain. And, 3. it hath a warning force and certification with it for the party offending, if he continue in his offence: Now, if he continue not, it cannot be said that he hath incurred the certification, or made the rebuke altogether ineffectuall: And therefore in such cases, a publick rebuke being accepted, it putteth a close unto such processes: for, such publick rebukes are not an exercising of the keys for letting-in any to the Church, that was not a member formerly; and therefore there is not such exactnesse required here, as in the first admission of heathens, yea, or in restoring of Excommunicate persons, who have been bound and shut out, but it is the warning of a member to prevent his being cast out. Seing therefore this rebuke louseth nothing, there can be no necessity alleged here of searching into his acknowledgements or profession; and we make no question, that offending persons being rebuked before all, and abstaining from such offences afterward, were still to be accounted Church-members, capable of all priviledges, notwithstanding of the former offence. For, although he was offensive before that rebuke, yet was he not actually

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bound or excluded from any Church priviledge by that offence (because offence giveth ground to exclude, if contempt follow, but doth not actually exclude of it self) neither doth the rebuke bind and exclude any if no further Censure follow and be added thereunto, but is intended to prevent both, And therefore, I say, that a person meerly rebuked for such an offence, and not continuing in, or renuing the same, hath right to all Church-priviledges, seing he is by no Ordinance of Christ excluded; and that way of publick rebuking, is appointed to prevent the falling of others, by that occasion.

A third sort of offences are such as of their nature are grosse, and in their evidence clear, suppose drunkenesse, fornication, grosse swearing, corrupt errours, &c. and the person offending, after much pains, doth yet continue obstinate, refusing to hear the Church; in that case the rule is clear to proceed with the Sentence of cutting off, If no accidentall thing call for the suspending thereof, for respect to the Churches good.

When is a person to be accounted obstinate.

If it be asked, when a person is to be accounted obstinate and guilty of not hearing the Church? We answer, It may be in these four cases, 1. When the persons do contemptuously refuse, or decline appearance, that is, either to hear private admonition, or to answer for removing of their offences before the publick Judicatory. This indeed is not to be astricted to once or twice refusing, even when no reasonable excuse can be given: for, sometimes offenders are ticklish for a time, while their distemper continueth; and Church-officers would be favourable in admitting of excuses, and in their condescending to them, (as edification may be most furthered) as Mothers and Nurses will do to children: which similitudes the Scripture sometimes useth.

2. It is contempt, supposing a person to appear, and yet either to justifie his offence, as if it were no

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wrong; or to deny an evident fact, or to refuse any way to remove an offence given, &c. yet in such cases there is both forbearance and gentleneſſe for a time to be eſſayed, and the offence is to be made inexcuſable both to the conſcience of the party, and to the conſciences of others.

3. Contempt may appear in this, when perſons offending appear, and do not deny the offence, yet by ſuch proud carriage, haughty reflecting, irreverent expreſſions, and ſuch like, do bewray contempt in the manner of their carriage, and thereby do give more offence than by their former miſcarriage, or than if they had not appeared at all: Becauſe, that doth reproach the Ordinance of Chriſt more, as it were in His preſence to affront Him, and like the ſouldiers, to ſay, *Hail, King of the Jews*, and to mock Him.

A fourth thing that may be judged contempt, and not hearing of the Church, is, when a perſon appearing, doth with ſome ſeeming reverence acknowledge the fault, ſuppoſe drunkeneſſe, ſlander, fornication, &c. and yet doth notwithſtanding continue in, or frequently reiterate the ſame offence, for theſe cannot be judged ſins of infirmitie, eſpecially when they are ſo frequent, and that after admonition; for, the Churches admonition doth not only tend to draw forth an acknowledgement of the offence paſt, but to prevent the like for time to come; and where that is not, it cannot be ſaid that Chriſts Ordinance hath had weight. And in ſuch a caſe, the accounting of verball acknowledgements enough, where there is a continuance in ſome ſeen evils, were to make the Ordinance of Chriſt obnoxious to reproach, and to fruſtrate it of its end, which is to remove and prevent offences, (for in that caſe they abound more) and it would ſtrengthen men that could diſſemble, to continue in their profanitie, ſeing by that they might ever eſcape the Sentence of Excommunication, and

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so profane persons might abound in Christs Church to the dishonour of his Name, and the reproach of the Gospel, and yet there be no accesse to His Officers by His Ordinances to purge them out. And seing this would be ridiculous in any humane Court, to account such a man a receiver of admonitions, it were absurd to assert it here.

What, when an offence is not grosse, yet hath contempt with it.

If it be asked, what is to be done in cases where the offence is not of a more grosse nature, and cometh neer to a sin of infirmity, and yet hath contempt added thereto, in one of these respects? *Answ.* 1. We have said already, that it is hard to ground Excommunication upon such a rise: Therefore, 2. Church-officers would warrily deal with such offenders, so as there be no seeming occasion given them to contemn; and much forbearance, and even a kind of overlooking (so far as is consistent with faithfulnesse) is to be exercised in such cases, in reference to some persons, for it hath prejudice with it to take notice of such Scandals, and thereafter without satisfaction to passe from them, and it is difficult and not alwayes edifying to pursue them: we conceive it therefore more fit, not to take Judiciall notice (at least) of them all, but to continue a serious and loving dealing with such persons in private, because possibly more rigid dealing might wrong them and the Church more than edifie. Yea, 3. If it come to publick, frequent trials would be taken of them before it be judged contempt, that so if it be found needfull to proceed further, the contempt may be so aggreged, that it may be seen, that edification requireth the same to be prosecuted, and then it is the contempt that beareth the weight of the Sentence, and not the first offence; Therefore this would be so manifest, as it may be convincing to the consciences of all to be insufferable.

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CHAP. VI.

Concerning what is to be accounted satisfaction, or satisfying.

THe great Question is, when a person doth appear and acknowledge his offence, and submit to a publick rebuke, what is to be judged satisfying here, so, as a Church-judicatory may sist Processe, and rest satisfied, and admit the person to Church-priviledges, as if the former offence had not been? In answering of this, we shall, first, shew what is not satisfying. Secondly, what is not necessary to be enquired after by a Church-judicatory, for this ecclesiastick satisfaction. Thirdly, we shall shew what is necessary and satisfying. Then, answer a Question or two, for absolving of this.

What kind of satisfaction is not sufficient for making a Church-judicatory to sist their processe.

1. We say, every verball acknowledgement of a fault, even though it have a promise of amending, is not sufficient; for, that may be in two of the cases formerly mentioned, to wit, in a person that doth, in his so doing but mock the Ordinance; or in a person that hath often relapsed after such a profession, or for the time doth continue in that or some other grosse evil: in that case to account such a profession of repentance satisfying, were to fall in the former inconveniencies, and would prove a manifest taking of the Name of the Lord in vain, which we may gather by this. Such a circumstantiat profession ought not to satisfie a Brother in a privat admonition, so that notwithstanding thereof (yea, the rather) he ought thereafter to take two or three with him, as being more offended, and if they meeting with the same, may put it to the Church, as not being well satisfied with such mockings; then much lesse ought the Church to be satisfied therewith, because they do more formally represent Jesus Christ and His Authority, and therefore mockings and contempt to them,

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is the greater offence. And that place, where the Lord speaketh to *Peter*, *Luk.* 17. 3. of forgiving his brother *seven times a day*, and elsewhere, *seventy times seven times a day*, is not to be understood to speak principally of such grosse publick offences, or of such discernable counterfeit turning (for that is not turning at all) but of private offences, or of the first sort formerly mentioned, and also where there seemeth to be ingenuity in the person, otherwise it were to remove one offence by another; and in that the Lord ordereth men in reference to their private carriage, for they ought to forgive wrongs, and doth not regulate Church-actings, as judicious *Calvin* doth give warning upon the place: Beside, the chastening, and humbling of the offending party, the making of others to fear, and the turning away of the reproach that cometh to Christs name by offences, being the great ends of Church-censure, by admitting of such a profession as satisfying, all of them would be utterly enervated and overturned, which were most absurd.

If it be asked, how this dissembling, mocking profession may be discovered? *Answ.* 1. By somewhat palpable in the very present gesture, words, expressions, &c. which evidence the same, and leave no room for charity; as when men (as it were) with a word, say *Hail* to Christ, and at the next, spit in His face, it is easie to say, that their *Hail* was not serious. 2. By comparing it with a persons former carriage in such a case wherein so much hath been professed, and yet he afterward hath been found to be mocking even in the time of his profession, his former carriage calleth men, at least, not to be soon satisfied, if no difference be. 3. By some words or expressions in other Societies and Companies, which being vented during the time of this publick profession, and that contrary thereto, cannot but evidence it to be a mocking. And, 4. When the fruit appeareth *How may dissembling be discovered.*

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peareth to be contrary thereto in a habituall way, as hath been saith, Indeed if there be not convincing evidence of this mocking, but it be doubtfull; or, if a person that at one occasion is irreverent, should afterward appear more sober, we conceive in that case, determination is to be suspended, till after carriage give more ground of clearnesse, either to the one hand or the other.

CHAP. VII.

Shewing what is not necessary to satisfaction.

TO the second thing, to wit, what is not necessary, or to be enquired for, by Church-officers to be an ecclesiastick satisfaction for removing of an offence. We answer, That the saving grace of repentance, or godly sincerity therein in the person, is not to be enquired into, as the alone ground upon which they may rest satisfied. For, 1. That would put a Church-judicatory so far as they could to determine of the state and graciousnesse of every offending person before they were satisfied, which were absurd, that not being the object of Church-discipline, and it's nowhere to be found that men are called judicially to determine of the state of another. 2. It would lay this ground, That none should be after any offence recovered and admitted to priviledges, except they were thought really to be gracious; which would infer, that none should be admitted to the Church, but such; yea, that none should be continued in the Church, but such; because readily there are none, but in lesse or more give offence, so far as may be the ground of a private admonition, which doth once table them; and if nothing can be satisfying but what giveth ground to account them gracious, it would come to that, that men are to be excommunicated because they are not thought to be gracious, and

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and cannot give evidence of that. 3. So every person that were received after an offence, would have a Sentence of a Church-judicatory standing to prove them to be converted, which certainly would prove offensive, and a stumbling to many who are too apt to ground presumption on a lesser occasion. 4. It would put Church-officers upon the rack, and prove a tortour to them: For, 1. There is no evidence given in the word whereby one may know the gracious estate of one another infallibly; And shall that be only satisfying to us, which by no means we can know? 2. God hath not given men dominion over consciences to search or censure them in their ends, motives, &c. but as appeareth in their outward actions, and there being nothing that can evidence soundnesse in the outward action it self, because Hypocrites may come that length, it cannot be that that must be their task, to decide where there is no possibility to attain to a satisfying decision. If it be said, that they are to proceed as in charity they judge the person to be sincere, Then we oppose, procedure in Church-judicatories must be according to such rules as a person that judgeth wrong may be convinced that he judgeth wrong, if a wronged party should complain; But if the man's own thoughts and charity of such a man were the rule, whereby he is to judge, then suppose some Judicatories unwarrantably to admit, or to debar some, there were no way to convince them that they had judged wrong, because none could judge their singlenesse. Again, if it be said, that that may be gathered from evidences, Then we desire to know what evidence is to charity a sufficient ground to make a man to be accounted gracious, and without which he is not to be accounted such? If there be no such evidence, then the decision lieth upon the persons judgement and inclination, which falleth in the former inconvenience: If there be such evidences,

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1. It will behard to condescend upon them. 2. They are either such evidences as may be judicially demonstrated to be in such a person, or not to be in him: If they may be demonstrated to be in him, then *it is* not charity that decideth, but a law, which we will acknowledge when it is discovered, if they cannot be judicially demonstrated to be in such a person, or not to be in him; then the redressing of any corrupt decision is still made impossible, and there is no more but the conjectures of such mens charity in such a case; Then, how can these absurdities be answered? As, 1. What if such Church-officers should be partial? in that case their charity will either be too narrow, or too broad, and can that be the rule of procedure in Christ's House? and yet Church-officers are men subject to such infirmities. 2. What if the person should think himself wronged by their accounting him not to be gracious, would that be sufficient to convince him, because they thought so? and yet it cannot be said, that according to Christ's order Church-officers should Sentence an offending party, and not be able to convince him; and he cannot demonstrate it to them so as to convince them, and so it is for ever undeterminable, which is most absurd. What if he appeal to a supream Judicatory? how could they defend their Sentence? Or, what if the superiour Judicatory judged him to be sincere? how could one of these Judicatories convince the other, if charity only were the rule? And yet it cannot be thought, that by Discipline and Censures, which are appointed by Jesus Christ for entertaining of union, that such inevitable grounds of division should be laid? Again, could it be but irritating to a person judicially to be declared unregenerate, and would it not afterward both make such Sentences, and those that pronounce them to have the lesse weight? 3. Suppose in the same Judicatory some persons charity should be larger nor others, what is to be done in that case?

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There is no possibility for one of them to convince the other; yea, can it but stir up new offences? for, the one of them is ready to judge the other, either unacquainted with spirituall conditions, or uncender; for, the judging upon the sincerity of grace, requireth the exercise of a christian and spiritual discerning; and therefore accordingly as it is exercised differently, so are men ready to account of others to be at best Christians of different sizes: and we suppose that in nothing a man's grace hath more occasion to vent than in his uptaking and judging of the gracious estate of another, because this supposes acquaintance and sympathy with, and experience of sincere grace, more than is either in preaching, prayer, or such exercises. And this certainly would be no little stumbling to Church-officers, to be so frequently put to give triall of their own graciousnesse, whereas if we walk by setled rules, there is no such occasion to stumble. 4. Do not we see that one mans charity doth differ from another, and so diverse men in the same extrinsick action of judging in a Church-court, should have diverse rules to judge by in the same act, possibly leading them to judge contrarily, which were absurd. 5. Doth not oftentimes the same one mans charity differ from what it was at another time, and he will be more and lesse in extending it according to the frame of his own spirit, the dulnesse or confusion of his mind, or possibly accordingly as he hath some relation or obligation to, or prejudice at the person, which may steal in on his judgment, and (as it is said) blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the understanding of the just, and he really think himself single in judging? And can such a fleeting unconstant rule be that which Christ hath appointed in His Church to order the removing of offences? 6. Do we not know, that often mens charity, in such cases, is swayed much by the judgment of some one or other who is esteemed of? and so

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this way which pretendeth to give most liberty, doth indeed bind up most: For, men either in that case satisfie themselves, that such a man is sincere, or not, because such another saith so, and so he goeth on implicitly, not doing what he doth in faith; or, he hath his own suspicions that others do not determine rightly of such a person's sincerity, and then he is at this strait, either to contrary his own light, and go on with the other, or to judge otherwayes, and by so doing to give out his own spiritual discerning to be beyond that others, and therefore to judge him for mistaking in it. And contradiction in this, is not as in other cases, where only mens moral light and understanding do vary; but here, as we said, it is in a thing that is most purely spirituall, and peculiar to the People of God onely, whereof naturall men and hypocrites are not capable.

What the Reverend and most convincing Writer, Mr. *Wood*, hath in his Examination of Mr. *Lockiers Little-stone*, to prove that sincerity of true grace is not to be enquired for, as the constitution or complexion (as Mr. *Lockier* speaketh) of visible members in the visible Church, doth fully make out this also; for, there is the same reason against the enquiring after the sincerity of grace, in respect of the impossibility thereof in this case, as in that; and there needeth nothing further to be added for confirming of this, till those his pregnant Arguments be answered.

CHAP.

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CHAP. VIII.

Holding forth what may be satisfying.

THe answering of the third Question, to wit, what is to be accounted satisfying, and what is to be rested on in such a case by Church-officers, will clear and confirm this more. Before we answer, we premit, 1. That a difference is to be made between what is satisfying to a Church-judicatory, so as to admit an offending person to all priviledges, as if the offence had not been, and what may be satisfying to sist further procedor, and prevent Excommunication. For, I suppose, a persons satisfaction may not be sufficient as to the first, which yet may be sufficient as to the second, as (for instance) it may be thought of *Simon Magus*, *Act.* 8. 24. who, after *Peter's* rebuke, carried so, as he did not proceed to cast him out, yet may he well be esteemed of, notwithstanding of such professed conviction, not to have had the full priviledge of a Church-member instantly; and this may proceed either from the grosleneese of an offence (such as that was) or the unsatisfyingneese of a persons satisfaction; or both; in which cases edification requireth some time of triall, before there be a proceeding either to an off-cutting, or to admitting to the former liberty. 2. We would distingish (which is sib to the former) between that which is not fully satisfying, and that which is altogether dissatifying; for there may be a mids, as suppose, that a man by silence should accept a reproof; or in words and carriage expresse something which neither doth speak seriousneese, nor mocking. We suppose it is hard instantly to judge that person either to be obstinate, or yet to have full accesse to all Ordinances.

To the Question then we answer that for full satisfaction,

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faction, so as to have accesse to all the priviledges, there is requisit *a sober, serious* acknowledgement of the offence with the expression of an unfeigned-like purpose to walk inoffensively, especially in reference to these former offences; and where this is, we say, it is sufficient. When we speak of a *sober, serious* acknowledgement, we speak of it as it standeth contradistinguished upon the one side from sincere grace; for one may have this, and not have that: And, as upon the other side, it is distinguished, not only from grosse contempt and profane mocking, but from grosse dissimulation appearing to be such, or from carnall indifferencie and unseriousnesse. By Divines, this is called *morall seriousnesse*, or sincerity, (as it is distinguished from that which is gracious) and usually is in subtile legall hypocrites, and sometimes may be in some grosse persons in fits. It cannot be better expressed, than it is by the forementioned worthy Author Mr. *Wood, part.* 1. *pag.* 30. that is, *That which is not openly and discernably simulate, histrionick, scenicall, and hypocriticall in that hypocrisie which is grosse: but all circumstances being considered, by which ingenuity is estimate amongst men, giving credit one to another, there appeareth no reason why the man may not and ought not to be esteemed, as to the matter, to think and purpose as he speaketh from whatsoever habituall principle it doth proceed*, viz. *whether from a saving principle, or whether from a common operation of the spirit only*. Thus far he.

How morall seriousnesse may be discerned.

If it be asked, how this seriousnesse may be discerned. It may be again enquired, How useth a man to be thought serious in his pursuit after any thing? I grant, this is not only to be gathered from his words, or carriage possibly at one time, But, will not seriousnesse, even in a particular, kyth in a mans manner of urging it? 2. It kyths in a mans using of fit means for attaining of it, which are suitable to that end. 3. By his carriage, abstaining from such things as

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as may any way make his profession to be suspect-like. And, 4. not doing this for a day, or upon a particular occasion, but for a time continuing constant and instant therein, with such affectionateness and earnestness in the circumstances that are necessary, that whatever be the motive that swayeth such a man, yet that he appeareth to be morally serious and through in the thing, cannot be denied. So in this case, often there may be a conviction that persons are serious, and are affected so, that we may expect they will endeavour really the preventing of such an offence, and yet we may not be able to judge them so convincingly sincere, because to that there is more required, to wit, a new decision whether that seriousness, be morall only, or gracious, according to the principles, ends, motives, &c. which cannot be so evidenced externally, as seriousness in the generall may be.

If always charitie should judge a person to be sincere, who is thus morally serious.

If any say, that charity ought to judge such a man sincere, seing it can have no more? *Ans.* 1. What may be a persons privat thoughts upon these grounds we are not to determine; we only say, that this acknowledgement cometh not to be judged by a Church-judicatory upon that account. And, Secondly. These who desire more for the constituting of Church members, require beside this, evidences of the work of grace upon the heart, and expressions and narrations to that purpose. And indeed if the accounting of a person to be gracious and sincere, were the alone account, upon which a person were to be admitted or restored to an actuall right to the Ordinances, such a serious profession would not be sufficient for the convincing of Church-officers of a persons graciousness even *probably*; for that which is to be accounted a probable signe of saving grace, must be that which though it doth not alwayes hold and be convincing, yet for the most part doth so; for if it doth more ordinarily fail than hold, it cannot be called *probable*:

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but experience in all times will confirm this, that more frequently such a profession faileth, and afterward the person is found not to be gracious; therefore it cannot be a probable signe, nor are we to account it such: we suppose, that if all the Churches of Christ that have been gathered, and all the penitents that have been received, were compared together, it will be found, that there have been many moe hypocrites than sincere Believers, yet in these cases this serious profession was called for. And, though it might be pleaded, that charity may construct the best of a person, where the case is doubtfull, yet (to speak abstractly of a signe) to account that a *probable* signe of sincerity, and such which ought to sway charity to account a person gracious, when yet it is clear in reason, that such a sign is ordinarily but an *indicium* or evidence of moral sincerity, but not of saving grace, were against reason; for, even in bodily diseases, that cannot be counted a probable signe of health, to ground a judgement of such a persons livelinesse, with which many moe do die than recover. Nor can it be called uncharitablnesse, because the profession is not so accounted; for, it is charity here to account the person serious, and to think as he saith, and not be dissembling therein, although it be not impossible for a dissembler to come all that length in outward evidences and profession. But to believe that he is indeed so, as he saith, or thinketh, is not a thing which charity is bound positively to conclude, but, at the most, by judgeing nothing to the contrary to forbear any judgeing of the partie till time evidence more afterward. And, I suppose, there are few who have experience, but know that there are many cases wherein they are fully satisfied to judge the person serious, and yet dar not determine of their sincerity and graciousnesse, yea, even as to the probability thereof, although they dar not deny but it is possible; yet durst they not found a Sentence of absolution upon

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upon that as such, to their own satisfaction, although upon the former account they can: which evidently sheweth that these two considerations may be separated.

Hence, the first doth follow, that whatever, be a private persons account of such a profession, yet it is not considered by the Judicatory as the evidence of sincerity in their being satisfied with it: Because, 1. It can be no evidence thereof, as is said; and we would be necessitated then to say, (if sincerity were the account upon which a Church-judicatory were to be satisfied) that either they behoved to have that evidence proven, and made evident to them, or they behoved to proceed, without any certain, yea, or probable evidence: for, certainly, that which giveth a Judicatory warrand to proceed to declare a person to have right to any priviledge, must both be a thing that is relevant in it self, and evident in the proof thereof, in reference to that party; But, none of these can be said: Therefore the judging such a thing to be sincere, is not the account on which they proceed. This cannot be said to be a certain proof of sincerity, yea, none will deny but it is difficult, if not impossible, for one to have infallible proof of an others sincerity: Then it must be said, that it is but a probable proof that can be given of sinceritity. To which we reply, 1. That this profession formerly described, cannot be called such, as hath been shown, So it would follow, that a Church-judicatory doth account a man sincere, and doth admit him to such priviledges as they ought to admit only such unto, and yet it was not made so much as probable to them that he was such. 2. Although it did probably evidence him to be such, yet that were not enough, if that were the alone account upon which they were to proceed, because no judiciall procedour in determining a mans right, will go upon probabilities, because the Law decideth not upon a probable, but upon a real right;

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and indeed, if in this case sincerity were the ground of procedour, no man could judge but doubtingly and upon conjecture, and so could he not have peace afterward, because it was still uncertain to him whether he had determined warrantably or not: yea, if it should be said, (which yet will not be sufficient) that it may give a man peace, if in his charity he account the person sincere, although indeed he be not so: this will not quiet the mind, because I put no question but experience will teach any that are tender, that there are many cases, that if they were put to it, they durst not, even according to their own charity and opinion, determine of a persons sincerity, so as to take upon them a decision in that, either by determining of the person to be sincere or not, and so of his admission or seclusion to, or from Church-ordinances and priviledges.

2. The account upon which we admit, and the proof thereof also, must be proportionable and opposit to the account and proof upon which we debar: for, binding and loosing are both of the same nature, acts of the same power, in reference to the same end, and the one of them answereth to the other. Now, when we bind a man for a Scandal. 1. It is not accepted as a ground of binding, untill it be proven and made evident, and not probably only, Therefore nothing can be the account upon which we can loose but that which may be evidently proven also; for, it looketh not suitable-like to bind a man upon clear evidence, and to exclude him from a right, and to admit him again, only upon probabilities and presumptions, much lesse where the proof doth not amount so high. Again, 2. When a person is shut out, he is not shut out upon the account that he is unrenued, or upon the account that such an act was nor sincere, or that he appeared to be such, But he is shut out, because it was scandalous to others, and unbecoming the Gospel, even though the persons

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sincerity should not be questioned: Therefore, by the rule of contraries, it followeth, that it is not sincerity which is the account upon which Church-officers are to loose.

If it be asked then, under what notion, or upon what account that morall serious profession is to be accepted as satisfying? We answer, upon this account, as it is apparently serious and edifying, without determining whether it be sincere or not, but as convinced that by such a profession the prejudice and offence that came by the former miscarriage, and left a blot upon the Church, and a stumbling-block before others, may be removed. So, that as it was unbecoming a Church-member to commit such a scandalous sin, So now by such a serious profession, that blot of making Christianity to be accounted a fostering of profanity is wiped away, that stumbling-block of his example is taken out of the way, so that this profession may be edifying to prevent the stumbling of any other upon his Scandal, and the accepting thereof may look like a hopefull mean of edifying the person for the time to come, and recovering of him from that snare he was into; and so as his scandalousnesse in these respects was the account upon which he was actually, or was to have been Sentenced, So oppositly thereto this serious profession having a proportionable edification, or of it self a tendencie to edifying, in all the respects mentioned going alongst with it, it is the account upon which it is accepted as satisfying, without determining of the sincerity thereof, leaving the person to answer before God for that, and before men to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*, which was *Johns* way in dealing with such as came to his Baptism, *Matth.* 3. upon whose sincerity we think its clear that he did no way decide; but of this enough: We come to confirm our answer.

For confirming of this, to wit, that such sober and

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That this morall seriousnesse is sufficient, confirmed.

serious profession of repentance, is sufficient without further enquiry after the graciousnesse of the sincerity thereof, We may consider these grounds, 1. If such a profession be sufficient for admitting members to the Church, Then such is also sufficient for the removing of offending members and continuing them in their former priviledges; for, no reason can be given why there should be greater rigidity for readmitting to the actuall use of Church-priviledges, a Christain after he hath fallen in drunkenesse, fornication, &c. than was requisit for the admitting of a Heathen, possibly guilty of these same sins beside; But the first is true, as is irrefragably and convincingly demonstrated by the forementioned worthy Author Mr. *Wood*. *Ergo*, &c.

2. It may be supposed, that a gracious man, of whose graciousnesse there is no question in the charity of any, doth fall in some Scandal, what is to be accounted satisfying in him, must be satisfying in others. Now, it is not any conviction of the graciousnesse of his state that can be satisfying in this case, nor yet is that the account upon which we can proceed, because that is never questioned even when he is under the offence. If it be said, it must be the sincerity and graciousnesse of his particular act of repentance. *Answ.* 1. It is difficult to give judgement of the state of the person, but more difficult to give judgement of the graciousnesse of a particular act. 2. Suppose such a person had a particular acknowledgement so circumstantiated as is formerly described in this morall sincerity, would not that be sufficiently satisfying? And if it be satisfying in one, in reference to a particular offence, why not in another? Because, 1. There is one rule given by Jesus Christ to all. 2. The removing of one offence relateth to the offence given, and not to the state of the person who gave it. Therefore if that satisfaction be sufficient to remove that particular offence in one, it must also be so in reference

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ference to another, because the question here, is not what may be sufficient to evidence a person to be gracious, but what may be sufficient in a person to remove such a particular offence? If it be said, that it is accepted of that gracious person as satisfying, because he is accounted to be gracious, it may still be urged, The Question is not, whether the person be gracious, but whether that act of repentance of his be so, or not? for, it cannot be denied, but a gracious person may have acts of hypocrisie, and in particular acts be carnall: either then such a person must be excluded though he be gracious, and in this respect seriously doth professe repentance, which were hard to do; or, he must be upon that profession admitted, and so that must be sufficient for Church-satisfaction, as is said.

3. That which ought to satisfie a Brother in private, or after his taking of two or three witnesses with him, and which may be accounted a hearing of a private admonition; that sort of repentance ought to be satisfying to the Church-officers: Because, *tell the Church*, succeedeth to the contempt of private admonition, and therefore they are to obtain by their interposing of authoritative rebukes, what the other did not obtain, and so they are to rest satisfied when that is obtained, as the gradation, *Matth.* 18. is clear, *hearing of the Church*, being in respect of the effects, that same which *hearing* of the private admonitions is, to wit, the obtaining of satisfaction. But the former is true, to wit, a Brother ought to rest satisfied with such a sober serious profession and acknowledgement as giveth him ground to judge him really affected for his offending, and under a purpose to abstain and amend for the time to come: and who will say, that a Brother in such a case can rationally complain of an other, as not having had his admonition? So, neither can the Church proceed further, when her admonition hath that weight; seing there had been

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no acceſſe for her judicially to have admoniſhed, if ſo much had formerly been obtained: and if it may be ſaid, that ſuch a private admonition ſo ſucceſsfull, did gain the offending Brother, Is not that ſame to be ſaid of the Churches admonition having that ſucceſſe? and when he is gained; are not they to reſt ſatisfied? and yet we ſuppoſe, that none will ſay, that by gaining in that place, real converſion is intended, and that a private Brother ſhould inſiſt to the uttermoſt, till he be ſatisfied in that.

4. We may argue thus: If ſuch a profeſſion, and a perſons amendement in the manner ſpoken, be the *hearing* and *gaining* that is intended, *Matth.* 18. Then are Church-officers to be ſatisfied therewith; But the former is true, as appeareth thus, The Churches ſatisfaction muſt be in reſpect to her ſpeaking, her ſpeaking to the party muſt be with reſpect to the complaint made to her by a particular perſon; that complaint, again, muſt have reſpect to what offended *him*, which is ſome particular act having offence with it; and it was not the ungracious ſtate of the perſon, (for ſo the word, *If thy brother offend thee, &c.* importeth) Now, from the firſt to the laſt, ſuch ſatisfaction as is deſcribed, may be ſatisfying in reference to ſuch a particular offence, and be ſufficient for removing the ſame, and reſtoring the perſon to the eſteem and condition which formerly he was into, And therefore it is to be accounted as ſatisfying by the Church. And if more were to be enquired for, it were to make the ſatisfaction beyond the offence, which were unjuſt.

5. That which may be accepted as a ſatisfaction from an Heretick, as the ſatisfying fruit of a publick admonition, cannot be refuſed as ſatisfaction in other caſes; for, if circumſpectneſſe and rigidity be to be uſed in any caſe, it is in this: But a ſerious acknowledgement of an error, and an abandoning of it *indeed*, is to be accepted for Church-ſatisfaction from an Heretick, and as the fruit of an publick admoniti-

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on,

on, and he in that respect is supposed to be gained: *Ergo, &c.* That this is to be accepted from him, may be gathered from *Tit.* 3. 10. *A man that is an heretick, reject after the first and second admonition.* Where these things are clear, 1. That an Heretick that continueth so, and heareth not the Church, is to be rejected. 2. That an Heretick renouncing his errors after admonition, and not continuing such, is not to be rejected, and so is not to be accounted an Heretick or under that scandal of heresie, and therefore his disclaiming of it, is to be accounted satisfying as to the Church-officers; otherwayes, it would follow, that although he renounced his heresie in that serious and morally sincere manner, yet were he still to be dealt with as such by the Church, except they were satisfied in the sincerity of his grace, which is contrary to *Paul's* direction, and the end of that publick admonition: which is not given him because of his unrenued state, but because of his heresie. Now, that being taken away and satisfied by his submission, the admonition must be acknowledged to be satisfied, and so he is neither to be dealt with as an Heretick, nor as obstinate, but as one who hath heard the Churches admonition.

6. From the 2 *Thess.* 3. 6, 14, 15. we may gather the same: for we have these things clear, 1. That there were some there who walked disorderly as to some particular acts. 2. That the Apostle accounteth that disorderly walking to be scandalous, and judicially to be taken notice of, if it be not removed. And, 3. what that satisfaction is which removeth the same, is expressed by him, ver. 14. *If a man obey not our word by this epistle, &c.* So that it was actuall amending of what was scandalous, and thereby giving obedience to his direction, which was so to be accounted. And in that case, a brother offending, was neither further to be noted, nor to be esteemed scandalous, without any further enquiry to be had of

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the graciousnesse of his state, or the principle ends or motives of his obedience.

7. It may appear thus, That which may remove reproach from the Ordinances, and offence in reference to these that are without, is to be accounted satisfying, because that is one of the ends of Discipline to stop the mouths of such as are without: Now as it is not any thing within, or the want of sincerity which doth offend them, and open their mouths, So this morally sincere and reall change, (to speak so) is sufficient to satisfie them, at least, it cannot be said that they can reach further. This argument alone we acknowledge might not seem to be cogent, yet considering, that what is offensive, is some externall thing having a proportionable offensiveness, both to those that are within, and also to those that are without, and a thing is offensive, because it is apt to offend such, There ought therefore also a proportionablenesse to be between what removeth an offence in reference to both.

Differences between the key of Doctrine and Discipline.

8. If we consider the proper object, nature and end of the key of Discipline, as it is abstractly considered, as contra-distinct from the key of Doctrine, we will find that no more by it can be expected. For, 1. its proper object is somewhat, that is scandalous, and so it reacheth only to restrain, regulate, and judge the outward man, or somewhat in the outward conversation firstly, though the fruit of that hath a further look mediately. The key of Doctrine again, or the Word reacheth in, and becometh a judge of the thoughts and intents of the heart; and to make Discipline judge the inner-man, in this respect, were to confound these two keys which the Lord hath made distinct: and therfore, if Discipline have any influence upon the inner-man savingly, it is but mediately by condemning his outward practices, and him as such, or making of directions, reproofs, &c. in the Word, more weighty. 2. The key of Discipline doth only

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only shut from outward priviledges, and doth not shut from any spirituall interest in Christ, but as it concurreth to confirm some threatning in the Word, which debarreth many from saving promises and the things contained in them, which Discipline may admit to outward priviledges. 3. There is a difference in respect of absolution also, to wit, the Word when it absolveth, it doth absolve from the curse of God, and giveth accesse to the promises, and a title to the things promised; Discipline again, doth but absolve from outward Censures and restraints, and doth but give right to Church-priviledges. 4. There are different conditions and qualifications upon which these two keys bind and loose: for, the Word openeth to none but upon condition of sincere faith and repentance, and absolveth none but reall Believers, pronouncing all unbelievers to be under the curse; Again, Discipline (as such) cannot shut out men from externall priviledges, because they are not regenerate, and sincerely gracious; and so in that respect, it must have a different condition of shuting men out, or it must consider them upon another account, in excluding them from Church-priviledges, than the Word doth in excluding them from saving promises, to wit, it considereth them as scandalous, and unbecoming the Gospel whatever their state be, and so it may censure Believers, as the key of Doctrine may shut out the most subtile hypocrite which the other cannot reach. Therefore also must it be a different account upon which Discipline doth admit, or restore men to outward priviledges, and absolve men from outward Censures, than that upon which the Word doth admit to saving priviledges. And seing this last is sincere faith and repentance, the other must have somewhat different from this, upon the account whereof it doth give right, which can be no other thing than the moral sincerity mentioned. 5. Upon these differences followes another (which doth con-

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firm all the former) to wit, a diversity that is in the manner of binding and loosing by these two keys; for, when a Minister useth the key of Doctrine, he doth exclude from heaven and saving priviledges but conditionally, and he can warrantably exclude no particular professour absolutely; So no Minister can absolve absolutely, by the key of Doctrine, but conditionally, to wit, if the person believeth that he speaketh unto; for, it runneth on these tearms, If thou believest, thou shalt be saved. But, again, in the exercise of the key of Discipline it is not so, no Church-judicatory doth debar a man from priviledges conditionally, if he believe not, but absolutely he is debarred because of some present scandal; and although the person were or should become a real Believer, yet he continueth bound from outward priviledges by the key of Discipline, untill that scandal be removed: So when they receive any into Church-communion, they do not absolve them from their former Censure, and give them right to Church-priviledges upon condition they believe, but absolutely that Censure is removed, and they are admitted unto these priviledges.

If it be asked, What is the reason of this difference betwixt these two keys? *Answ.* It is, first, because the ground upon which we loose and bind with the key of Discipline, is something obvious to men's view, wherein they may warrantably judge and proceed, and therefore that is done absolutely: But in the key of Doctrine it is not so; for, men cannot tell who really believe, and who not; and it cannot by judicial proofs be made-out, Therefore they cannot bind or loose but conditionally. Secondly, God hath committed the outward man to be the object of Discipline, but the inner man and conscience is reserved to the Word and Doctrine, and men have not gotten authority over consciences and hearts; Therefore what concerneth the outward man, and out-

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ward priviledges, may be determined absolutely. But what concerneth the conscience and inner man only conditionally, because He hath reserved the absolute decision of that to himself, Therefore there is a sixth difference also. The word may and doth bind indefinitly, that is, persons so and so qualified, without making application in binding or loosing to individual persons, and doth not so bind or loose but conditionally, as is said; But Discipline striketh at individual persons, and as such, doth not otherwayes affect: for, suppose an indefinit Sentence of Excommunication, against persons so qualified, to be pronounced, it doth debar none from Church-priviledges, as it is such; and for what influence it hath further, it is as it cometh under the key of doctrine, which doth bind or loose such, but not as it is under the key of Discipline, and that for the reasons mentioned.

From these grounds we may see how warrantable and necessary it is to put difference betwixt saving grace, which is the condition upon which the key of Doctrine absolveth, and serious profession, and a fair inoffensive carriage, which is the condition upon which the key of Discipline absolveth: And we may see also what absurdities would follow the confounding of these. And indeed we see no other way how these two keys may be kept distinct, but this.

To sum up this, from what is said, we may ninthly, conclude, If every simulat profession be not sufficient, and if gracious sincerity be not to be enquired for, Then this morall sincerity and amendment is to be accepted as satisfying, and that which properly Church-judicatories are to enquire in, for a fourth cannot be conceived. But the former is truth. *Ergo, &c.*

Lastly, That which was satisfying for giving accesse to the Ordinances amongst the Jews after uncleanesse, must be satisfying now for removing of offences; But such a serious profession was satisfying then: For, 1. it cannot be denied that there was a sepa-

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separating of some for uncleanness from the Ordinances; and it is at large and strongly made-out by that learned vindicater of Church-government and Discipline, Mr. *Gillespie*, that there was separation for moral uncleanness; But however, ceremonial uncleanness did then prove ground enough of exclusion, because so the Law of God had appointed it, even as now He hath appointed other grosse sinners to be cast-out. 2. It is clear, That there was some satisfaction required, as washing, offering of sacrifices, and such like, before they could be admitted. 3. It cannot be said, that a mocking, palpable, irreverent manner of performing these things would have been accepted by the Priest, but would have been more offensive; nor yet can any say, that enquiry was made after their end, principles, or graciousness of their act; So the assumption is clear: Neither can the connexion of the *minor* be denied, if we consider, 1. That there was no lesse moral holiness called-for from the Jews, than from us. 2. That there was as great external strictness for keeping-up the sanctity of external Worship. 3. If we consider that their Ordinances and ours are materially the same. 4. If we consider that Christ, even in respect of the external administration of His Kingdom and Discipline, is not more rigid or restricted in His admitting to priviledges now, nor then, yea, that He is even in that more condescending to us under the days of the Gospel. 5. If we may reason from the Lord's manner of admitting unto His Church then, to His admitting unto the Church now upon the same qualifications that were satisfying then, Then we may also conclude from what was satisfying then for the admitting of persons excluded, unto the admitting of them now; and this is fully made-out, beside others, by worthy Mr. *Wood*, in that fore-cited solid and learned Treatise, and before him, (to which he relateth) by learned Mr. *Baxter*, in his dispute with *Tombs*.

CHAP.

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CHAP. IX.

Concerning what is to be done, when men appear neither serious nor obstinat.

IT may be now asked, What is to be done in reference to those who, after some grosse offence, can neither be counted thus serious, nor yet obstinat? *Ans.* Such cases may be frequent; Concerning which we say, 1. That it is neither fit altogether to absolve them, as being fully satisfied, nor yet to proceed to the highest Sentence with them, nor to leave them altogether without a rebuke. But in the second place, we say, That it is fit to proceed to rebuke them according to the direction, 1 *Tim.* 5. 20. Because, 1. This rebuke may be a mean, through God's blessing, to humble them, and to restrain such an offence. And, 2. it is also usefull in reference to others, although the mans own carriage and acknowledgment be not every way satisfying; for, the Apostle's direction to rebuke him openly, doth respect more the offence past and the fruit that may follow to him and others, than any present satisfying frame in the person to be rebuked.

How is a publick rebuke to be given.

When it is found meet thus publickly to rebuke, the circumstances and manner are to be adverted to, 1. Although the designing of a particular place be not in it self necessary, nor in every case expedient, yet for the solemnity of the reproof, it is not unsuitable, it being such as is rather accommodated for the edification of the whole Congregation, than otherwise pointed at as a place of pennance or punishment, or yet as a mark of reproach, and such like, which wrongeth the nature of Christ's Ordinance; And circumstances would be so ordered as the appearance of that may be eschewed. 2. It would be gone about with much gravity and reverence in respect

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spect of all that are concerned. The Minister especially is to carry weightily and authoritatively, having words fitted for the edifying of the Congregation, the humbling of the person, the convincing of both, and for the credit and weight of Christ's Ordinance before all; The party rebuked would minde whose Ordinance it is, and be suitably affected as the receiving of a particular rebuke from Jesus Christ doth call for; The on-lookers also would be grave, having respect to Christ's Ordinance, tenderness to the person offending, but indignation at the offence; and this would be testified by their carriage, so as thereby the authority and solemnity of all may have the deeper stamp upon the person. And for attaining of this, something would be gravely spoken to the hearers, as their use thereof, according to the case; and it may be, that some addresse to God in prayer together, in reference thereto, before or after the rebuke, would not be unusefull for that end.

If it be alwayes necessary that the offender speak.

If it be asked, if speaking in publick by the person rebuked be alwayes necessary? *Answ.* 1. Although it may be often usefull and expedient, yet in ordinary rebukes, for ordinary scandals, where no contempt hath preceeded, we conceive it not simply necessary, 1. Because, though the rebuke be clear in the Word, yet is not this by the same evidence, alwayes required. 2. Their appearing to receive it, hath an implicit assent to, and acceptation of it. 3. The effect of the rebuke is rather to be gathered from their after carriage, for it hath with it an obliging weight to them, and a virtuall certification before the people, whether they expresse any thing or not. Beside, every one cannot edifyingly speak, and in that case, the Ministers rebuke is appointed to edifie others, and to remove that offence from them.

Yet there are two cases especially wherein we think this is expedient and necessary unto edification, 1. When either by the atrocity of some offence, or con-

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continuance in contempt, a person hath been in processe towards Excommunication; or, when there is a relapse after a former rebuke: in such cases it is for the edification of the people, to know upon what grounds the Eldership doth sist from proceeding; And engagements publickly and explicitly taken on before a Congregation, are often more weighty to the person. And if there be a failing, there is the greater evidence against them for after proceeding.

2. Suppose there hath been some Sentence binding or shuting out the person formerly, in that case, we conceive, speaking in publick to be necessary for confirming the people in their love to him again, which was hazarded by his former evident fall; and an implicit accepting of a reproof is not sufficient in such a case.

There may be also other cases, as suppose one hath been carried away with error, which he hath frequently vented before men, or in some such case where it may be edifying to have it from the parties own mouth, especially if the person be in such a frame, or of such ability, as by so doing he may edifie. But this is to be decided by the prudence of the overseers.

If it be asked again, how is he to be accounted of after this rebuke? We answer, Even as by some competent continuance of time, he doth discover the seriousnesse, or unseriousnesse of his profession. So that if he relapse, he is the more inexcusable, and to be proceeded with in due manner: but if he take up himself, and carry to the view of others seriously, he is not to be accounted as scandalous, because it cannot be said, that he hath refused to hear the Church in that publick admonition: and a publick rebuke doth not of it self bind any and shut them out as scandalous, (yea, it giveth not ground for it, if obstinacy followeth not) but if it be hearkened unto, and received, it doth prevent that, it being a right satisfying

How is an offender to be reckoned after a rebuke.

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fying part of Christianity to admit of, and to improve a rebuke. Yet we think it incumbent to Church-judicatories, after some competent time, to enquire in the after carriage of such, and so accordingly to determine, whether they have satisfyingly accepted of the admonition, or not. And that therefore the person so rebuked, ought to have such a Sentence before he can plead full admission to all priviledges, if at the time his profession was not satisfying. This is usefull for the persons behove, when he knoweth he is still to be looked upon in a speciall manner, as a sickly member of the body. And it is also agreeable to reason; for, if when a private person giveth an admonition he be to judge of the fruit of it, whether it be satisfying; and if the Church-judicatory, when they admonish judicially, be to weigh, whether the effects be satisfying or not: So by the like reason, when an admonition is publickly given, ought they to enquire what hath followed, and if that be satisfying or not.

If an offence may at first instant be brought to publick.

If it be asked, if in no case an offender may be brought immediately to publick, but by the former steps, and upon supposition that these be fruitlesse? *Ans.* It may be in these two or three cases, 1. When the offence, being of a grosse nature, is publick and open, so that many are in hazard to be infected, in that case a private rebuke would not be sufficient: Because, respect is to be had to the good of others. And so in some cases, even though as to the persons own conviction and carriage, a Church-judicatory may be satisfyed; yet there is a necessity for the reason foresaid of a publick rebuke. Yet every offence that is known to moe than one, is not to be accounted an offence of this nature: Because from that word of Christs, *Take with thee two or three witnesses, &c.* it is evident, that even after those are made acquaint with the scandal, it is not publick, except obstinacie follow. Yea, it would appear, that such a scandal might

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might be known to others, when yet one private person might only admonish; and if the admonition were accepted, might sist. And in case the fact be denied, then he is thereafter to bring two or three conjunct witnesses, who may convince the party offending of the truth of the fact, as well as of the nature thereof, by their joynt testifying, that the party offended had reason to seek satisfaction in such a thing: Otherwayes, if that were only a privat offence which is known to one, supposing the party offending to deny the fact, there were no accesse to an offended brother to pursue the same, and by witnesses to make it out, if his private admonition should be rejected. And this may be one reason also why those two or three are called *Witnesses*, whose part is to confirm the matter of fact, as the Law cited there to that purpose doth evidence. Nor is it alway necessarily thus publick when it is made known to a Church-officer or a Church-judicatory, because in that case, even they may find it more edifying to admonish privately than publickly; And it is their part rather to hinder the spreading of a scandal, than to make the same needlesly more publick. An offence then that is to be accounted publick, that is, which is so in respect of its notority or publickness, and such as is not the object of private admonition, but whereof a Church-judicatory is immediatly to take notice, may be considered in respect of its first instant, or in respect of some following circumstance: for what is required in the nature of the sin it self, hath been spoken to already. It is publick in the first respect, 1. When it is done before so many as probably cannot be satisfied with private admonition, so that thereby there is a hazard to many to be scandalized. 2. It is publick, when it seemeth to be done with contempt and an high hand, as if a person were owning the same; Thus a scandal that hath fewer witnesses, may be accounted publick, when another, it

When an offence is to be accounted publick.

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may be, actually known to as many, is not to be accounted such, because in this case there is no access to private admonition, the person being like a swine, ready to turn on the admonisher. Thus suppose *Absolom's* incest had not been actually known to many, yet the very circumstances of his doing it openly, and purposly that it might be known, made it of a publick nature: Thus sometimes it is more necessary to take notice of an offence committed in a publick place, though, it may be, few know the same, than of a thing done more privatly, because as to them it might have been publick to many; and it sheweth an humour and corruption that is beyond privat admonition, when a thing is so circumstanciated. 3. Sometimes offences will have an horrour, and an indignation wakened against them, even in respect of such circumstances, as to be drunk, lascivious, and such like, are offences; but to be so in a Market-place, or in publick streets, even supposing it to be in a day when few do actually see it, doth waken an indignation in the hearts of sober men, as being an affront to Religion and Order, and inconsistent with Christianity and Civility, much more than if it had been in a private place, or privatly; for, that is before the Sun to do so, as *Zimries* act was, which provoked *Phineas's* zeal. 4. An offence is publick, when it is generally accounted to be a certain truth, and not a suspicion only; as being a thing in its evidence known to so many (beside what is reported to others) that it cannot be supposed that an ingenuous mind can have access to deny or shift the same, without some indignation in the hearts of those that know it. 5. Sometimes an offence is to be accounted publick when, though it may be, many are not witnesses thereof, yet when many are in hazard to be infected thereby; as suppose those witnesses to be such as cannot rest quiet in a private satisfaction, but they have either spread it, or are in hazard to spread it, and, it

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may be, long afterward they make it a ground of reproach: In this case it becometh a scandal not only to the first witnesses, but also to those to whom it is reported; So that although it was not at first publick, yet it becometh so by the rumour thereof. This infectiousness may also proceed from the time wherein it is committed, the person who committeth it, the nature of the fact that is committed, (which may more readily insnare others than facts of some other nature) from those also before whom it was committed; Therefore in such cases it is necessary that publick notice be taken thereof.

Therefore, in the second place, we said that some offences not very publick in respect of the fact, yet may, by some concurring circumstances, be such as the bringing of them in publick, may be necessary for the edifying of the Church at such a time, then that way is to be taken; As suppose, 1. that such a sin is in some places scarce counted a sin; Or, 2. if it be secretly and frequently in use among others; Or, 3. if the person found guilty be generally suspected of loose and untender walking in such things, although particulars be not publick; Or, 4. if they be under false pretexts of tenderness, ready to seduce others to something sinfull, or in the like cases. In which, though the fact be not so publick, yet the scandal, or hazard, and the benefit of a rebuke are publick; and therefore that way is to be followed, Because they are necessary for the edifying of the Church, which is the end wherefore publick rebuks are appointed. The same may be said of atrocious horrible crimes, which being but known to few, yet are not to be, nor cannot be past with a meer private admonition, such as witchcraft, incest, &c. which are defiling sins, the bringing whereof in publick doth honour God the avenger and discoverer of such works of darkness, suppose also, that the evidencing of somewhat, may serve to remove some former pre-

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prejudice, as if it had been thought that an innocent person had been father of such a childe, or actor of such a murther; if God bring it about, that those who truely are guilty be discovered, it is not to be keeped close, because it is the removing of a former stumbling-block, and may keep others from sinning in mis-judgeing an innocent, and it also glorifieth God whose wise way is to be observed in such dispensations.

2. Although a fact be not publick, yea, in some cases although it be not true that there hath been any ground of offence given: Yet, 1. If the report of such an act be publickly rumoured; Or, 2. if such presumptions thereof be publick, which are ready to leave the impression of the thing; Or, 3. if the fame or brute of such a thing be come to such an height, that either it be believed by many to be true, (and that by such who are neither too simply credulous without all presumptions, nor malitious or infected with prejudice in reference to the person) Or, suppose that a person is accounted to be habitually in secret evils, the riping up whereof might be edifying; in such and such like cases, a Church-judicatory is at the first instant to meddle with, and enquire in the same: because, although possibly there may be no ground, yet the offence is great, and may stumble many as if it were so: and the neglecting thereof cannot but be offensive, whereas inquiry therein is usefull, whether the fame be grounded or not. But in this there would be great tenderneſſe and prudence used in considering, both upon whom, by whom, and upon what occasion the report is raised and entertained, and whether dipping therein be edifying or not.

3. Upon supposition that private persons be defective in giving admonitions, or following of them before a Church-judicatory, and yet there be pregnant presumptions of miscarriages in such and such per-

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persons, although they be not publick; or, suppose, through fear, ill grounded affection, or other carnall respects, others should concur to keep from publick view the offences of some person, to the stumbling of themselves, in becoming partakers of their sin, and to the prejudice of others: I say, in such like cases, a Church-judicatory is to enquire into the carriage of such a person, and to put others to declare and testifie therein, although they be not complained of, and although the Scandal be not so every way obvious: Because admonition is needfull both for the good of the person offending, and of others also: and when private persons become defective, Church-officers are bound rather to interpose immediately than to suffer such a person to continue under sin, to the hazard of himself and others; for, they must either do it, or it is to be left undone, which would be a stumbling-block to many, and strengthen wickednesse exceedingly, in case untender men fell only to be accessory to the knowledge of the offences of each other (as often it is) yet though it be necessary for a Church-judicatory to interpose, it is not alwayes necessary to bring the matter to a publick rebuke, but as from consideration of the thing, person, or, other circumstances it shall be thought fit to rest in a private admonition or not.

From which we may see the necessity of processing parties, and leading witnesses (in case the matter be denied) without any particular accuser or delater: because in such cases, either publick Scandal of the thing, the nature of the Church-officers oversight, or the edification of the body, which they are to prefer to every thing, do require that such a thing or person be put to triall.

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CHAP. X.

Clearing whether in Church-processes an Accuser be alwayes necessary.

IF it be asked, concering an accuser, Whether it be necessary in all Church-processes, that one, under such a consideration, be fixed, before there can be proceeding against any party, in reference to triall. We answer in these assertions,

Asser. 1. It is not alwayes necessary in every case that there should be a formall particular accuser, as may appear from the cases formerly instanced; for, that any offence or offender should passe without being taken notice of, (especially if offences be continued in) is contrary to the end for which Church-censures are appointed, and yet neither *de facto* is there alwayes an accuser where there is an offence; nor *de jure* can any be constrained to be an accuser: therefore it is necessary that in some cases there must be a processe without an accuser, in this way of enquiry.

Asser. 2. Where an offended Brother followeth Christs way in pursuing of an offence, he is not to be accounted an accuser formally, as the terme of *accusation* useth properly to be taken: Because, 1. To accuse, often is a thing that may be omitted, but this kind of pursuit is laid on as a necessary duty. 2. To accuse, respects some particular wrong and injury usually, and the following thereof, importeth a prejudice and hurt to the party accused. But this which respects offence without any particular injury, proceedeth from love, tendeth to the advantage and recovery of the party, and so properly cannot be called accusation. Yea, 3. When a person hath followed the second step, and made out his private admonition by two or three witnesses which he cometh to the Church with them, neither of them can be accounted accusers

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more than when he did privately speak to the person, or after that to those witnesses, because all is duties, and a piece of that Christian mutuall communion, that brethren and members of the same body, owe one to another, and to the body in common; yet is he who so entereth a complaint, oblieged to make it evident to the Judicatory; and if he hath rightly performed the second step, and made it appear before two or three, there is no hazard or difficultie in this; but if he hath failed in that, he ought not to have proceeded to this.

Asser. 3. We say, that to have a formal accuser, seemeth not so well to agree to the nature of ecclesiastick processes, and looketh liker a civil Court. For, 1. If the offence be publick, there is no accuser needfull, as is said. 2. If it be privat, no accuser is to be heard, but in the ordinary method, because Christs Ordinance is not to be subservient to mens passions, or to be the mean of their seeking revenge for injuries: And therefore in some cases, though an accuser would undertake the pursuing of some processe against a person, where neither the Scandal is flagrant, nor the party accused, after private admonition and conviction, obstinate, in that case the accusation might be rejected; because so the accuser looketh not like a Brother, that is stumbled, seeking the gaining of the other, and his own satisfaction upon that account, but rather like a person that is irritate, vindictive or malicious, to whose humour Church-officers ought not to give way; neither doth such an accusation become Christs Court. Yet, if the thing be indeed scandalous, Church-officers are to enquire therein, and not to sleight any mean of evidence which may be had, lest profane persons mouths be opened; but that rixal and contentious way of following of processes by particular accusers, against particular persons, as useth to be in other Courts, we conceive no way becoming the gravity and convincing way that ought to be in

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this; And we suppose in experience is not often found to be edifying, but rather doth ingender hatred, prejudice, contention, and such like, which is altogether contrary to Christs scope.

Again, on the other side, there may be no particular accuser against the person, and yet it be necessary that he be tried, as hath been said.

Asser. 4. There may be some cases in which it is expedient to admit an accuser, and not to admit a processe without one. As suppose one were under no ill report, and yet some grosse scandal were imputed to him, which were not of such fame, or had not such presumptions, as to give ground for a Church-judicatory immediately to interpose, and the scandal being of such a nature as the trial thereof could neither be omitted, nor closed in private; in that case, suppose one should complain of the Churches negligence in the same, asserting the evidences to be clear, and offering to make them out; In such a case, I say, the Church can hardly refuse to hear him, lest they be thought partiall; nor is there ground, nor is it fit for them immediately to pursue it: Therefore an accuser is expedient, that so, upon the one side, the Churches impartiality may be vindicated, in refusing the complaint of no sober man, nor the uttermost of any triall, that in well grounded reason they may expect; And, on the other side, that the mouths of some needlesse and too importunate complainers may be stopped, and they themselves found censurable, if either without cause they traduce the Church-officers as negligent and partiall, while there is accesse to make out before them such a truth, if it be truth; or if precipitantly and inconsiderately (if not maliciously) they have tabled a scandal against another as a publick scandal, which they cannot make out, and so have needlesly troubled a Church-judicatory in such a matter, and sinfully wronged their neighbour.

For, a processe in such cases where it cannot be

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made out, is scandalous: therefore if a person rest not satisfied, so as to abstain till he have triall put to the utmost, he is to be dealt with as a scandalous person, lest men take liberty, under the pretext of pursuing offences, to defame others, and abuse the Ordinance of Christ. And though it be just in such a case, that he be materially dealt with as unjust accusers use to be in civil courts, yet this doth not only flow from the consideration of such a persons being a formall *accuser*, but from the nature of the deed which is scandalous in such a measure, and that publickly, and therefore is to be restrained, whether the person take on him that formall consideration or not, lest yet, upon the matter, he continue publickly and importunately to presse the pursuit. And we conceive, the imposing the title of *accuser* in such a case, or the making of it necessary, that one take on him that formall notion, is rather for coveniencie to restrain mens inordinateneesse, and stop their mouths, and to add weight to the matter of the sentence, if they fail, than as being simply necessary for making such a person to be accounted scandalous, if he come short.

CHAP. XI.

Concerning what is to be done when the complaint is of some enjury done to the complainer.

THere is one case yet to be enquired in, *viz.* how to account of a particular person his complaining or pursuing an offence which carrieth with it a particular enjury unto himself? As suppose, that such a person did calumniate him, calling him false, covetous, hypocrite, thief, or such like, or did imprecate curses unto him? *Answ.* 1. If the way laid down were followed, and a publick complaint made the last step, it may be, there would be few of these complaints. Of this we have spoken already. 2. Although

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though such injuries have with them a spirituall hurt also, and so indeed are real stumbling-blocks to the spirituall state of the party injured. Yet, 1. it is hard for men injured, singly to abstract the scandal given them from the injury done them, and so to follow the offence with respect to their own and the others edification, as to entertain no thoughts of revenge in the pursuing thereof: for certainly, often it is the reparation of a wrong, and to vindicate folks own name and credit, rather than edification, which in such cases is aimed at: Therefore we find ever the most irreligious, carnall and proud persons, hotest in such a pursuit, and with greatest difficulty to be satisfied; and the satisfaction intended by them, is not any Christian gaining often, but some publick shame, or such like: And therefore if that follow, although the person fall over again in many other scandals that are worse, or others shall sin more grosly; yet that stirreth them not, neither are their complaints in such cases heard of. 2. We find, that such a case hath often great difficulties with it, and readily much heat and carnalnesse; yea, in things that are personall between parties, it is more difficult for them to abstain from carnalness, or the appearance thereof, and also for Church-judicatories to walk so as not to be thought partiall to one of the sides, and so by intending the removall of one offence, more may be given. Therefore we would suppose such a procedor to be suitable to Christs order and ordinance, 1. That as much as may be, these personal things may be waved by private persons themselves who are so offended. Certainly men lose not by condescending in their particulars, and it may afterward tend more to the convincing of the party and others, and to the vindicating of themselves that they forbear (at least, till the fervour be abated, both in them and in the offending party) than by kindling of their own passions by the passions of others, to hazard upon more sin and offence.

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fence. 1. When such things occur, its fit that Church-officers should endeavour to compose and to remove them privately; yea, if any complaint come in a persons heat, that yet notwithstanding, means be used to compose and allay the same; and if that fail, that the scandal be brought to publick, rather by the Eldership it self, than by the party offended, because so the thing, as scandalous, may be more abstractedly considered, the person easilier convinced, and the heat of parties prevented, which often mar the beauty of the Ordinance, and so there is nothing overseen that ought to be redressed. 3. If persons will needs enter their own complaint, Then it would be enquired, 1. Whether it be really the enjury to their name, or outward condition that swayeth them? or, if it be the offence, that is, the stumbling-block that goeth alongst therewith, and it is ready to hurt their spirituall estate, that doth move them? This question is fit for curbing of carnall humours, and keeping the Ordinance of Christ from being abused, and made subservient to mens sinfull passions.

If it cannot be hid, that it is the injury which affects them, Then would they be admonished for that, and remitted to follow their injury otherwise, and to pardon it, as to any vindictive humour; yet the thing as it is scandalous, would be still followed without them. 2. It would be enquired, if they followed the privat steps? And, 3. what sort of satisfaction they aim at, and if it be the parties gaining that they seek with their own satisfaction?

Sometimes there ariseth a new difficulty in such cases, as suppose one complained of for calumniating another, should offer to make good his word, or what he hath said; In such a case it is difficult for a Church-Judicatory to carry rightly, if probation be refused, the slanderous mouth is not stopped, And to admit it, it seemeth neither pertinent nor profitable to any Church-end. This sometimes is one of the evils

What, when a calumniator complained of, offereth to make it out.

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evils of making Church-judicatories the stage of mens passions: Yet in such a case we say, 1. That whether the thing be true or not, the casting of it up at such a time, and with such circumstances, was offensive; and therefore no following probation can exempt the offender from being accounted scandalous, because the end of bringing forth that, was really the hurt of his brother, and neither private nor publick edification. 2. Some manner of offered probation is indirect, (as also some sort of slandering) as, suppose one would complain of another as guilty of theft, or some other sin, and give for the ground thereof some instances of corruption or deceit in their trade of merchandizing, or taking some advantage by law or otherwayes, to the hurt of another. These are causes and matters wherein properly Church-officers are neither fit nor called to decide; and the event thereof doth depend upon some civil contest, therefore are not meet to be admitted as the ground of a complaint or probation in a Church-judicatory. Again, some manner of probation is more direct, as suppose one would prove by witnesses direct theft upon another, Yet considering that Church-judicatories are not to be sub-servient to mens passions, as hath been said, and also, that their end ought ever to be edification, and there being no probable ground to expect it in such a processe, we conceive it were fit altogether to wave such contests. For, though there be a shaming of offenders allowed in Church-discipline, yet it looketh harsh-like to make it the mean of bringing civil shame and infamie upon any; Because such a blot, as to be accounted or declared infamous, even as to civil things, is a civil punishment; and therefore is not to be the effect of a Church-judicatory, properly, Although we will not deny but by accident, these may be sometimes necessarily joyned.

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What if a profane offending confessing party refuse to give satisfaction.

It may be asked, What if an offending party appearing, professe repentance for their fault, &c. as hath been desired, and should yet refuse to give obedience to such things and in such manner as is thought fit to be done by the Church-officers for the removing of the offence? *Answ.* 1. It is not like that any who are serious in their profession of repentance, will stand on such a thing; and where that is, it is too probable-like an evidence of their dissembling, if some convincing reason cannot be given by them for swaying to that refusall. 2. Their disobedience is either in materiall things, or such as are but circumstantiall. Again, it is either done with contempt, or with professed continued respect and a desire to satisfie. As for instance, some may refuse to receive a publick rebuke where edification requireth it, or to acknowledge their offence to an offended party, or they may be willing to appear, and willing to acknowledge their offence, but differ as to the time, place, manner, &c. For the first, Though a Church-judicatory may wait for a time, yet can they not in some cases dispense with them, because otherwayes, they are not heard, nor is the end obtained; and therefore may processe proceed, especially if that disobedience look contemptuous-like: For the second sort of disobedience, to wit, in the manner or circumstances of giving satisfaction, although in this also, those that are serious to have offences removed, will not readily stick, yet if it be, there is difference between this and the former, if there be no discernable evidences of contempt in it; and in this, no question, Church-judicatories have a greater latitude to do as may edifie: wherein they are especially to take notice of these things, 1. That by too much rigidity in circumstances, they seem not unnecessarily to wrong them, or to lay too much weight of satisfaction upon such formalities. 2. That by too easie passing from such, they do not strengthen any to follow that example for the

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the time to come. And, 3. that even in circumstances there be an equality in reference to these same scandals in all persons. And if there be hazard in reference to any of these by condescending, to alter or forbear a circumstance in a publick rebuke, we conceive it is safer to abstain from that forbearance, and not to yeeld it; and yet not simply upon that account to pursue a processe, but to continue dealing with the person, while either he be convinced and brought, for the good of order and edification of the Church, to yeeld, or there be more clearnesse to do otherwise.

CHAP. XII.

Concerning what ought to be done by private persons, when Church-officers spare such as are scandalous.

WE come now to the last Question proposed, to wit, supposing that Church-officers should be defective in trying and censuring scandalous persons, what is the duty of private Christians in such a case, and if notwithstanding, they ought to continue in the communion of such a Church, or to separate from her?

This Question hath troubled the Church, and been the occasion of many schisms in many ages, the devil thereby under pretext of indignation at offences, hath made them to abound in the Church, as the Church-histories and Writings of the Fathers, in what concerneth the Novatians, Donatists, and such like, do fully evince; And although we have great ground to acknowledge Gods mercy, in the sobriety of His people amongst us, so that we have unity, with purity; yet, seing in order this doth follow, we shall answer shortly, in laying down these grounds.

1. It cannot be denied, but such a case may be, and often

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often *de facto* is, that Church-officers are defective in the exercising of Discipline upon scandalous persons, what from negligence, what from unfaithfulnesse, what from fainting, or some other sinfull infirmity at the best, as may be gathered from the second and third Chapters of the *Revelation*.

2. Though this be true, yet possibly it is not alwayes their fault when it is charged on them: as suppose, 1. That no private person, or, possibly even the complainer, hath admonished such persons as are counted scandalous, nor have given in sufficient proofs of their scandal to any Church-judicatory; or, it may be, many are counted scandalous who cannot legally and judicially be found to be such; for it is more easie to assert a scandal, than so prove, even often when it is true: and it being rather a ground of irritation than edification, when a processe is entred, and not convincingly made out, Therefore often in duty some processes are abstained. Sometimes also Church-officers may be faithfully dealing with persons to recover them from scandals, and yet not find it fit for edification to proceed to high Censures; In such cases, Church-officers cannot reasonably be blamed, and those who complain would pose their own consciences, if they have exonered themselves and done their duty, and have put it to the Officers doors, before they accounte it their fault: And it is most unbecoming for persons to charge others and to be defective in their own duty, which necessarily inferreth the other. And if it were as difficult and weighty a task to calumniate and groundlesly to charge Church-officers with this, as it is, faithfully to follow private admonition, there would not be so much of the one, and so little of the other. And if it be rightly looked to, it will not be easie to charge them with grosse defects (and if they be not grosse, the matter is not so to be stumbled at, they being in the exercise of Discipline as in other things) for, that

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must be upon one of these accounts, either, 1. Because such scandalous persons, after refusing of private admonitions, were complained of to them, and that evidence of the fact was offered, and Church-officers refused to put the same to trial: Or, it must be because when they did try, they did determine such a thing to be no scandal, or not to be proven, or that (supposing it to be proven) they did not censure it; or, at least, when scandals were open and obvious, and palpable, they did not take notice of them. Now, is it probable that such a Church-judicatory will frequently be found that will fail grosly either of these wayes? And if they do, then there is acceſſe to convince them, by an appeal to a superiour Court, which in that case is a duty. If it be said; that their failing and neglect, is, in some covered manner, so carried-on as there is no acceſſe to such legal complaints. *Answ.* 1. We suppose if the things be that grosse, and the fact so clear and frequent, as that there be just ground to complain, then there will be also acceſſe to such a proof. 2. If it be so carried and not owned, then it may be their sin before God; but it is not to be accounted a proper Church-offence in the sense before-mentioned, seing they could not be convinced judicially even before the most impartial Judge. And as in such a case we cannot account a private brother ecclesiastically scandalous, although the general strain of his way may be dissatisfying to us, So ought we not to account this; for, there is a great difference, betwixt that which may be offensive to a persons private discretion, and put him possibly in a christian way to desire satisfaction, and that which is to be noised as a publick Church-scandall.

Asser. 3. Upon supposition that the defect be true, yet private professors are to continue in the discharge of the duties of their stations, and not to separate from the Communion of the Church, but to count them-

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themselves exonered in holding fast their own integrity. It's true, it cannot but be heavie to those that are tender, and, if it become scandalously excessive, may give occasion to them to depart and go where that Ordinance of Discipline is more vigorous; and concerning that, there is no question, it being done in due manner; Yet, I say, that that can be no ground for withdrawing from the Ordinances of Christ, as if they or their consciences were polluted by the presence of such others. For, 1. That there were such defects in the Church of the Jews, cannot be denied, and particularly doth appear in the instance of *Elies* sons, who made the Ordinances of the Lord contemptible with their miscarriages; yet that either it was allowable to the people to withdraw, or faulty to joyn in the Ordinances, can no way be made out. If it be said, there was but one Church then, Therefore none could separate from the Ordinances in it? *Answ.* 1. This doth confirm what is said, to wit, that the joyning of scandalous persons in Ordinances doth not pollut them to others; for if so, the Lord had not laid such a necessity upon those that were tender, that they behoved to partake of polluted Ordinances, or to have none; and if it did not pollute them then, some reason would be given that doth evidence it now to do so. 2. If there be an unity of the Church now, as well as then, then the consequence must be good; because, so where ever folks communicate, those many that communicate any where, are one bread, and one body, as the Apostle speaketh, 1 *Cor.* 10.17. compared with chap 12, 13. And so by communicating any where, we declare our selves to be of the same visible Church and politick body, with those who communicat elswhere, even as by Baptism we are baptized into one Church, and into communion with all the members of the body any where. And therefore, if this be considered, it will not be enough to eschew pollution (if the ob-

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jection be true and well grounded) to separate from one Society, or one particular Congregation, except there be a separation from the whole visible Church; for so also Jews might have separated from particular Synagogues, or have chooſed times for their offerings and sacrifices distinct from others. Famous *Cotton* of New *England*, in his *Holineſſe of Church-members*, pag. 21. grants that there were many scandalous persons in the Church of the Jews. 2. He saith, that that was by the Priests defect, for they ought not to have been retained. And, 3. though he say that that will not warrand the lawfulneſſe of admitting scandalous persons to the Church, yet he asserteth, that it may argue the continuance of their Church-estate notwithstanding of such a toleration; and if so, then it approveth continuing therein, and condemneth separation therefrom; and consequently a Church may be a Church, having the Ordinances in purity, and to be communicate in, notwithstanding of the former fault. 3. What hath been marked out of Learned Writers, for paralleling the constitution of the Church under the Goſpel, with that under the Law in essentiall things, doth overthrow this objection; for now separation is as impoſſible as formerly.

2. This defect is to be observed in severall of the Primitive Churches, as we may particularly see in the second and third Chapters of the *Revelation*, yet it is never found that any upon that account did withdraw, or were reproved for not doing so, even when the Officers were reproved for defect: Yea, on the contrary, these who keeped themselves pure from these Scandals, though continuing in that communion, are commended and approven, and exhorted to continue as formerly. Now, if coutinuing in communion in such a case be of it self sinfull, and personall integrity be not sufficient to professours where the defect is sinfull to the Officers, even though in other perſonall

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all things and duties of their stations they were approveable, How can it be thought that the faithfull and true Witnesse should so sharply reprove the one, and so fully approve the other at the same time?

3. The nature of Church-communion doth confirm this, because such influence hath the scandalousnesse of one to make another guilty, as the approven conversation of the other hath to make the Ordinances profitable to him that is scandalous, for we can no otherwise partake of the evil than of the good of another in Church-communion; But it is clear, that the graciousnesse of one cannot sanctifie an Ordinance to one that is profane; and therefore the profanity of one cannot pollute the Ordinance to one that is tender. And, as he that examineth himself, partaketh worthily in respect *of himself* and his own condition, but doth not sanctifie communicating to another; So, he that partaketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to *himself*, and not to another: and for that cause, is both the precept and the threatning bounded, *Let a man examine himself, &c. For, he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself*; for, upon doing or omitting of duty in himself, doth follow worthy, or unworthy communicating to him. And if in the most near conjugall fellowship, the company of a profane Husband may be sanctified to a gracious Wife, even when hers is unsanctified to him, (because that dependeth upon the persons own qualification and way of usemaking of Gods Ordinance of marriage) much more may it be here: this last might be a distinct argument of it self.

4. If continuance in communion with such persons be sinfull, Then it must either be because communion with such as are profane indeed, whether we know or think them to be so or not, is sinfull; or, it must be because we know them, or think them to be such; But neither of these can be said: Not the first,

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becauſe ſo to keep communion with an hypocrite, or a Believer in a carnall frame, were ſinfull, although we thought them to be ſincere, which cannot be pleaded: nor can it be ſaid, it is becauſe we know them to be ſo, Becauſe, 1. If we knew a man to be ſo, and another knew not, in that caſe, the Ordinances were polluted to one, and not to another, at the ſame time, though poſſibly both were exerciſing the ſame faith, and having examined themſelves, were in the ſame frame, which were abſurd. Yea, 2. If it depended on our knowledge of it, Then our very ſuppoſing it to be ſo, although it were not ſo, would pollute the Ordinance; and what confuſion would be there, may be afterward hinted. Nor can it be ſaid, it is becauſe we think ſo, becauſe, ſuppoſing ſome to think otherwiſe, it would be ſtill an Ordinance to them, and a duty to continue in it, and not to us, which is the former abſurdity; and this doth not flow from the binding nature of an erroneous conſcience (which may be alleged in other caſes) but from the difference of perſons light, charity, or other apprehenſions of things, whereby one is induced to eſteem that ſcandalous, which another doth not.

5. If communion with profane perſons that are ſuch to our knowledge be ſinfull, and polluteth Ordinances, Then theſe things may be enquired, which will inſer diverſe abſurdities, 1. Ought perſons to try all thoſe that they keep communion with, whether they be profane or not? For, if any profane perſon be in that communion which they might have known if they had tried, then their ignorance cannot excuſe. 2. It may be enquired, what degree of triall and ſearch doth ſufficiently exoner, becauſe poſſibly a further triall might have diſcovered ſome to be profane? 3. It may be enquired, what evidences may demonſtrate perſons to be ſcandalous, and make them to be ſo accounted of? If only ſomething ſeem

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by themselves, or if something reported by others; and that whether it be judicially made out or only asserted? and how manies report is to be taken for proof; or if any that be so reported of, be so to be accounted? 4. What sort of scandals are to be enquired in to make a person such as polluteth the Ordinances? If it be any kind of scandal, or but scandals of such a nature? If one scandal be sufficient, or if there must be many? and how many are to be laid weight upon in this? and some satisfying grounds how, and where to fix the difference, are to be laid down? 5. It may be asked, if one scandalous person alone doth pollute the Ordinances? or if there must be moe? and if so, How many? 6. Suppose such a scandal were known to us alone, charity, and Christs command do say, it is not to be published; conscience saith in that case, the Ordinance is polluted, time straits either to communicate doubtingly, or with offence to abstain and hide the cause, or contrary to charity to signifie the same. These and many such like things are requisit to satisfie one, upon this supposition, that communion in such a case is sinfull, Therefore it is not to be admitted.

6. If the Ordinance be polluted to one that is clean. Then it is either the deed of the Church-officers that doth pollute it, or the deed of the scandalous person that doth communicate; But neither of these can be said: Not the first, for that would suppose that all the Ordinances were polluted, although no scandalous person were present actually, because they were not actually excluded, and though they were absent, yet there being no impediment made to them by Church-officers, as to their guilt, it is the same. Nor the second, Because, supposing a person not to be debarred, it is his duty to communicate; and can it be said, that he in doing of his duty upon the matter, should make that not to be a duty to us, which lieth on by a joynt command, which requireth eating

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from him and from us, as it requireth praying?

7. The Lords ordering it so in His providence, that He admitteth unsanctified Officers to administrate His Ordinances, and yet withall, accounting them Officers, and the Ordinances in their hands to be His Ordinances, and that even when they are known to be unsound (till in His own way they be removed) doth demonstrate this, that pollution in joynt worshippers doth not pollute the Ordinances to others. For, if any did pollute them, Then most of all scandalous Officers; But these do not. *Ergo, &c.* We may see it, first, in the scandalousnesse of Priests under the Law; for we must either say that there were no scandalous Priests, or that the people did then offer no sacrifice and joyn in no worship, or that sinfully they did it: All which are absurd. 2. We see in Christs time, the Scribes and Pharisees were pointed out by Him as scandalous, *Mat.* 23. v. 3. Yet even there doth He require continuance in the Ordinances administrate by them, notwithstanding. 3. Doth not *Paul* speak of some that preached out of envy, *Philip.* 1. 15. which is a most grosse scandal, and of others who sought their own things, and not the things of Christ, *Phil.* 2. 21? Both which are grosse, and clearly evidenced by his testimony, yet is he content that people continue, yea, he supposeth that they may profit in communion with them, which he would not, had the Ordinances been polluted by them to others. And the same may be said of several Churches in these second and third Chapters of the *Revelation*, where both grossnesse of Ministers, and of many Professors, is notified by Christ to the Church, yet it cannot be supposed that that might have been made the ground of separation afterward from them, more than not doing of it was reprovable before.

8. If known evil in any that doth communicate, pollute the Ordinances in themselves, Then how can a Believer communicate with himself? Because, 1. he

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1. he hath corruption. 2. He hath as full knowledge of it as of any other mans, yea, that which may make him think it more than what he knoweth of any other man. 3. That corruption is as near him as the corruption of any. 4. The Law doth more particularly strike against corruption in him as to himself, than that which is in any other. Yea, 5. this corruption doth certainly, in so far pollute the Ordinance to him, and make him guilty. Now the same grounds that say he may communicate with a good conscience, notwithstanding of his own corruptions, will also say, he may communicate notwithstanding of that which is in another, much more: because the sins that follow his corruption are his own sins, which cannot be said of the sins of others. And if repentance for his own sin, resting upon Christ, protesting against the body of death (which yet are but the acts of the same person, in so far as renued, differing from himself as unrenued) If, I say, such acts may quiet his conscience, and give him confidence to partake, notwithstanding of his own corruption, and that even then when he as unrenued may be accounted guilty, may they not much more give him confidence in reference to the sins of another, which are not so much as his deeds.

9. In that directory which Christ giveth, *Mat.* 18. this is implied, because he doth warrand an offended brother to bring obstinate offenders to the Church, as the last step of their duty, and as their full exoneration, *Tell the Church*, saith he; and no more is required by him after that, but conforming of his carriage to the Churches Sentence in case of obstinacie. And none can think, upon supposition that the Church did not their duty, that then they were from that forth, not to joyn in that Church, but to separate from them, as from heathens and publicans: because so a particular person might Excommunicate a Church, whom yet Christ will not have to withdraw from

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communion with a private member, till obstinacie and the Churches censuring interveen; Yea, by so doing, a private person might account another a heathen and publican without any publick Censure, which is contrary to Christs scope, which subjoyneth this withdrawing of communion from him to the Churches Censure. This will bind the more if we consider that Christs words have an alluſion (as is commonly acknowledged) to the Jewish Sanedrim, which being but one, could not admit of any separation from its communion, though there had been defect in this: What may be done in abstaining of personall communion in unnecessary things, is ever to be acknowledged; yet if separation in such a supposed case, were called-for as a duty, that direction would not be a sufficient direction for an offended brother, because it leaveth him without direction in the last step: Yet Christs progresse so particularly from one step to another, saith, that it is otherwayes intended.

Who would have more full satisfaction in this, may look the Learned Treatises that are written against Separation, which will hold consequentially in this; and therefore we may here say the lesse, And shall only add the consideration of one Scripture.

A particular consideration of 1 Cor. 11. 17, &c.

For confirming of this Assertion then, we may take more particular consideration of one place, which seemeth more especially to relate to this purpose, That is, 1 *Corinth.* 11. from the 17. ver. foreward. Where it doth appear, first, That there were divisions amongst that people, even in respect of communicating together at the Lords Table, so that some of them would not communicate with others: for that there were divisions is clear. Now, these divisions are expressed to be in the Church when they came together to eat the Lords Supper, ver. 18, and 19. and some did communicate at one time, and some at another, without tarrying one for another, as is expressed, v. 33.

Secondly,

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Secondly, We may also gather what might be the reason of this divided communicating, or, at least, what some might alleage why they would not communicate joyntly with others: For, it is like, they fell in this irregularity deliberately, as thinking they did well when they communicated apart, and not with others. So much is insinuated in the Apostles expostulation, ver. 22. *What, shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.* Now these reasons might be alleged, to justifie their divided communicating, 1. That the Ordinances were not reverently administred, nor with that gravity and discerning of the Lords Body, as was fit. 2. That many unworthy persons were admitted to communion, even such as were drunken, ver. 21, &c. and therefore it might be alleged by them, that joynt communicating with such was to be abstained.

Thirdly, It is evident also, That notwithstanding of these grounds, the Apostle doth condemn their practice, and presseth them to joynt communicating, as appeareth from ver. 22. and 33. From which, this clear argument doth arise, If the members of the Church of *Corinth*, who did separate from the Ordinances, because of the sinfulnesse of these that did joyntly partake with them, were condemned by *Paul*, and required to communicate joyntly, and if it be made clear by him how they might do so and not be guilty, Then separation in such a case cannot be a duty but a sin: But the former are true. Therefore, &c. I know nothing can be objected against this argument, but either to say, That the Apostles scope is in that eating together, to regulate their love feasts, and to condemn their practice in these; or, that he commends joynt communicating simply, but not in such a case, because it is not clear whether any of them did scruple upon that ground or not: for, the removing of these, we say to the first, That the main scope of the place is to regulate them in going about the Sacra-

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Sacrament of the Lords Supper: And therefore it is that the Apostle doth so clearly and plainly insist in clearing the institution thereof, thereby to bring them back to the way that was laid down and delivered to him by the Lord. And for any other sort of eating or drinking, the Apostle doth send them to their houses, ver. 22. and more expresly he repeateth that direction, that if any man hunger and desire to eat his ordinary meat, Let him do it at home, ver. 34. So that no direction for the time to come can be interpreted to belong to common eating in the Church, or in the publick meetings thereof, but such as is sacramentall only.

To the second, to wit, if the Apostle doth dip in this question, with respect to that objection of the impurity of joynt communicants, we do propose these things for clearing of the same,

First, We say, that whether they did actually object that or not, yet there was ground for them to object the same if it had weight, as the Text cleareth: Neither could the Apostle, knowing that ground, and having immediately mentioned the same, have access to presse them all indifferently to communicate together, if his direction meet not the case; for this might still have stood in the way, that many of them were such and such, and therefore not to be communicated with; and if it be a sufficient reason to keep them from joynt communicating, then the case being so circumstantiated, it would also be a sufficient reason to keep him from imposing that as a duty upon them, at least, so long as the case stood as it was.

Secondly, We say, that it is not unlike there was such hesitations in some of them; and that (whatever was among them) it is clear, that the Apostle doth expresly speak to this case, and endeavour to remove that objection out of the way, to wit, that men should not scare at the Sacrament, because of the profanity of others: and that therefore they might without

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out scruple as to that, communicate joyntly, and tarry one for another, which is his scope, ver. 33. This will appear by considering severall reasons whereby he presseth this scope, for that, ver. 33. *Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together, tarrie one for another*, is the scope laid down as a conclusion from the former grounds which he hath given. Now, when he hath corrected their first fault, to wit, their irreverent manner of going about the Ordinance, by bringing them to Christs institution, ver. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. He cometh, in the last place, to meet with this objection, What if others be present who palpably cannot discern the Lords Body, and so cannot communicate worthily? Can it be safe to communicate with such? Or, is it not better to find out some other way of communicating apart, and not together with such? The Apostle giveth severall answers to this, and reasons, whereby he cleareth, that their division was not warrantable upon that ground, from ver. 28. And so concludeth, ver. 33. that notwithstanding thereof, they might tarry one for another.

The first reason, is, ver. 28. *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat.* Which sheweth, 1. That a mans comfortable preparation for this duty, is to examine himself; and that the fruit may be expected, or not expected, accordingly as it shall be with himself: Otherwayes, it were not a sufficient direction for preparation, to put him to examine himself. Again, 2. these are knit together, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat.* Which is in sum, this, when a man hath in some sincerity looked upon his own condition, and hath attained some suitableness to the Ordinances, as to his own private case, then, (saith the Apostle) *Let him eat*, without respecting the condition of others. Otherwayes, a man having examined himself, yet could not eat, though his own disposition were as it should be, if the case of others might hinder him in eating. And

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we conceive, it is a main part of the Apostles scope, by knitting these two together (to wit, a mans eating with the examining of himself) purposly to prevent such a debate.

The second reason which he giveth, will confirm this also; for, saith he, ver. 29. *He who eateth and drinketh unworthily, he eateth and drinketh unto himself damnation*, or judgement. Which is, in sum, this, a man that hath examined himself, may eat of the Sacrament, though many persons communicate unworthily with him, because (saith he) he that eateth unworthily, doth not bring damnation or judgement upon others, nor is his sin imputed to them that communicate with him, but he doth bring it upon *himself*, and therfore no other hath cause to scare at the Ordinance because of that, if he hath examined himself. This reason he again confirmeth from experience, ver. 30. *For this cause* (saith he) *many are sick, and many among you are weak, &c.* that is, not because they did communicate with those who are scandalous being in good case themselves; but for this cause, saith he, many are sick, &c. and have brought upon themselves great plagues, because by not examining of themselves, they did communicate unworthily, and so, by their own sins brought these stroaks upon themselves.

He gives a third reason for making out of his scope, ver. 31. For, *if we will judge our selves, we should not be judged*, that is, men need not be anxious in this case, whether others judge themselves or not; for, saith he, Gods absolving or judging of us, doth not depend upon what they do, but upon what we our selves do. And therefore presseth them still to look to themselves, because the judging and humbling of our selves before God, is the way not to be judged by Him, even in reference to that Ordinance, whatever others do.

Now, when he hath fully cleared the reasons, and,

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as it were, made out this proposition, that if a man be right in his own frame, the sin of another joyne communicant, cannot be hurtfull to him, or be ground to mar him in eating, and when by an interserted parenthesis, he hath obviated a doubt, v. 32. he concludeth, ver. 33. *Wherefore*, saith he, *my brethren*, (seing it is so) *tarry one for another*, and be not anxiously feared to communicate joyntly; Now, seing all alongst the Apostle hath been giving such grounds as may clear a conscience in that case, and doth in these words lay down the direction of tarrying one for another, or of joyne communicating, as a conclusion drawn from the former grounds, It cannot be thought, but that purposly he intended these reasons to be grounds for the quieting of consciences, to obey that direction in such a case; and that therefore it cannot be warrantable to separate upon that ground.

CHAP. XIII.

Shewing more particularly what it is that private persons are called to in such a case.

IF it be asked then, What is that which private persons ought to do in such a case? *Answ.* They are certainly to contain themselves within their station, yet so, as some things are called-for at such a time more than at another time; As, first, There is need of much circumspectnesse in our own personal walk and watchfulnesse, in observing of opportunities wherein we may edifie others, as *Heb.* 3. 13. Secondly, There is need of more frequency, and of a more weighty circumspect manner in giving private admonitions and exhortations, &c. Thirdly, There would be much exercise of prayer, and even fasting therewith (though in a secret inoffensive manner) both for the restraining of offences, which dishonour God, and for zeal to Officers to perform their duty; if

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if in this respect, rivers of tears were running down our cheeks, because of the abounding of offences, there might be much more solid peace (we are perswaded) in keeping communion with others, than without that to separate with much, at least seeming pride and uncharitable cruelty in giving of offence to them, and thereby confirming them in their profanity. Fourthly, It is private persons duty to represent such offences, with their evidences, to Church-officers, or Church-judicatories, thereby to put them to the removing of such offences. Fifthly, They may freely, though humbly and reverently, expostulate with Church-officers, when they are defective, and endeavour to convince them of that offence: The force of that precept, *If thy brother offend thee, go and tell him, &c.* warranteth so much; and this the *Colossians* are to say to *Archippus*, that he be not defective in his Ministery which he had received, &c, *Col.* 4. 17. This decently and convincingly done, is usefull. Sixthly, If all that prevail not, private persons may communicate it to other Church-officers; and no redresse following, it is their duty to follow it before the competent superiour Judicatories: for, Christ's direction, *Tell the Church*, importeth and warranteth the same.

If it be asked, What further is to be done, if that fail? *Answ.* We know no other publick redresse; Christ hath left it there, and so may we also. Neither can it be instructed from Scripture, that Christ hath appointed separation to be the next step of a private persons duty for removing of offences, much lesse to go before these. Indeed the Scripture calleth for with-drawing from personall communion with grosse, scandalous persons, as a thing necessary; as also from communion in the corrupt designes and courses of any, though they may have a form of godlinesse, as 2 *Tim.* 3. 4, 5, *&c.* which doth belong to, and is comprehended under the first particular

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cular direction. And if these be faithfully observed by private Christians, we are hopefull that either there would be lesse ground of complaint for the defect of Church-officers, or more accesse to remove such as continue unfaithfull, and more peace to the consciences of particular private Christians, and lesse offence and more edification to all, than any other way whatsoever.

Why it is necessary to acquiesce in the Churches Determination as to practice.

That it is thus necessary for private persons to acquiesce in the Churches determination, in manner as is said, may appear from the unsetledness and confusion, both in private and publick, which otherwise would follow: For, either there must be a sisting in this determination of the Church, or, there must be some other period to fix at, or, there must be no fixing at all. Neither of the two last can be said, Therefore, &c. Not the last, to wit, that there is no fixing at all; for so a particular person that were offended, would not know what were duty, or what to follow; and it would infer a defect in the Lord's Ordinance in reference to His Peoples direction and peace in such cases, which is most absurd.

If the second be said, *viz.* That there is some other thing to fix on for quieting of consciences in such a case, as to their exoneration beyond that publick decision; We desire to know what that is which is called-for, and by what rule we are to proceed in it? If it be said, that in such a case the duty is to separate from that Church, where the plurality of Officers do admit such as are accounted to be scandalous; Then we ask, 1. What is next to be done? it must either be to continue as no member of a Church, which is both impossible and absurd. It is impossible that there can be any particular visible baptized member, and not belong to the visible body, at least, being considered, as the Church maketh one integral visible body. It's absurd, because it would say, That either Christ had no visible Church, or, that He hath an

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an ordinary way of edifying by external Ordinances without His visible Church; or, that a person might be regardless of, and without His Church and Ordinances, and be approven of Him, and expect the benefit; yea, upon this supposition, the unfaithfulness of Church-officers in not casting-out of scandalous men, would infer the actual unchurching of those that were not scandalous, and so the sin of the one should be the punishment of the other, which is absurd.

If it be said that another Church of more pure members is to be gathered, in which persons in such cases are to joyn for obtaining of pure Ordinances; Then we ask further, What if such a Congregation cannot be had? Then, what is duty in that case? Is there a necessity of living without a visible Church-state, wanting all Church-ordinances to our selves, and Baptism to our children? What can be the fruit of that? Is it not a more uncontrovertible hazard to put our selves without all communion of Church-ordinances, than to enjoy them where they are pure, though some joynt partakers be offensive? Is not the other the way to make our children heathens, and for ever to be without Baptism, seing warrantably they cannot be entered where we cannot abide? Doth not this also make way to make all the Ordinances contemptible, and to be undervalued by the profane, seing such persons do so contentedly live without them?

Further, we ask, What if other persons and we cannot agree upon joynt members; for, if it be left to mens particular discerning, that rule is uncertain and various, being involved in many difficulties, as was formerly hinted: in that case, either there must be no separated Church, or diverse separated Churches, according to the latitude of diverse persons charity. This being certain, that one will think a person scandalous, which another doth not esteem so; and one will approve that, which another will condemn.

Again,

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Again, we ask, What if such persons that withdraw and seek to enter a more holy society, should be refused? Then, how could they evidence their own holinesse, and convince these refusers that they were graciously qualified, and so to be admitted if that were stuck upon, for whatever profession were made, it behoved still to be tried by no other rule, but by folks particular discerning and charity?

Again, suppose this difficulty to be overcome, and such a congregation to be settled, Is it not possible that even some of those members should become scandalous? Then, supposing that by the plurality of that Church, such persons were not accounted scandalous, or not cast out, what were to be done? According to the former grounds, these who suppose themselves only pure, could not continue in communion, but behoved again to separate; and if so, then upon the renuing of the former supposition, there behoved still to be a separation *in infinitum*. For, there can no Church be expected on earth, in which these cases are not supposable and possible. And so now we may resume the conclusion, Either a private person must acquiesce, as being exonered when he hath followed the action before the Church, or he shall have no ground of peace any where, till he be out of the world, or out of all visible Churches. And so also there can be no other way of keeping publick order and ordinances, and of eviting scandal and confusion.

This truth is fully made out by those three worthy and pious Divines of New *England*, *Cotton*, *Hooker*, and *Norton*: The last whereof, by many reasons evinceth this in his answer to *Appolonious* his last question, *pag.* 162, 163. and doth from the Church of *Corinth* in particular confirm this: "There (saith "he) was impurity or corruption in worship, for "women taught in the Church; There was corrupt "Doctrine, many denied the Resurrection; in man-

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"ners, she was most corrupt, there being so many "fornications, sects, palpable love of the world, &c. "Yet (saith he) the Apostle did not command those "that were worthily prepared to abstain from the "Supper, but, rectifying abuses, he did command "every one to try himself, and so to eat, &c. And many other things hath he excellently to this purpose, and laieth this for a ground, that "*per alios indigne* "*accedentes non polluitur communio, licet minuitur conso-* "*latio*, that is, the communion in worship is not pol- "luted, though the consolation be diminished by "such joynt worshippers.

The second, to wit, Mr. *Hooker* doth confirm this Maxime fully, *part* 1. *chap.* 9. *pag.* 119, 120. and doth call it *irrationall, that the fewer should be judges of the deed of the plurality*: and elsewhere, *that to admit separation in such a case, were to lay a ground for separation in infinitum.* Only, we may add these two observations thereon. 1. May not this be allowed to the Presbyteriall Church where the plurality of Church-officers think fit not to cast out? 2. That the Presbyteriall government is upon this consideration, unjustly loaded with an absurdity, as if necessarily upon their grounds, the minor and better party being overswayed (suppose a particular Congregation were wronged by the plurality of a Presbyterie) could have no redresse; for, according to his grounds the same would follow upon the congregationall way; for, suppose the plurality of the Congregation should wrong some officer, contrary to the vote of the minor and better party, there can be no other redresse there, than for men to keep themselves free: For, it still recurreth, if the minor part should claim to have their Sentence weighty, because it is upon the matter right, which the other is not, he hath already determined in the place cited, that that is, contrary to all orderly proceeding and rules of reason and layeth open the gap to endlesse dissention, and the dis-

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annulling of all publick proceeding; for, men in such cases, being their own judges, are ever ready to think themselves in the right.

By the first, to wit, Mr. *Cotton*, it is laid down as an unquestionable agreed ground, with this note upon the back of it, *By hasty withdrawing, Reformation is not procured but retarded.* Thus he, *pag.* 2. of *the holinesse of Church-members.* And hath not experience confirmed this? Might not Discipline have been more vigorous in many Congregations, if this had not been? And what can be expected of Reformation in the body of the Christian world, if to the offence of the rest, those who suppose themselves to be more tender, should instantly withdraw from them.

CHAP. XIV.

Clearing whether the Ordinances of Christ be any way polluted by corrupt fellow-worshippers.

BUt yet two things are to be satisfied. 1. It may be said, But are not the Ordinances of Christ someway polluted by the unworthinesse of such scandalous partakers? and if so, can polluted Ordinances be partaken of without sin? *Answ.* We may consider polluting of Ordinances in a threefold sense. 1. An Ordinance may be said to be polluted, when the essentials and substantials thereof are corrupted, so as indeed it ceaseth to be an Ordinance of Jesus Christ: Thus the Masse in Popery, is a fearfull abomination, and a corruption of the Sacrament: in this respect, the Ordinance (if it may be called an Ordinance after that, for indeed it is not an Ordinance of Christ) is pollured, and this may be many wayes fallen into, and communion in this, is indeed sinfull and cannot but be so.

2. An Ordinance may be said to be polluted when it

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it is irreverently and profanely abused, though essentials be keeped: Thus the Lords Sabbath may be polluted, which yet is holy in it self; So was the Table of the Lord polluted, *Mal.* 1. And in this sense the Sacrament of the Lords Supper was indeed polluted by the *Corinthians*, 1*Cor.* 11. when some came drunk or otherwayes irreverently to the holy Ordinances; in this respect, an Ordinance may be said to be polluted to him that so goeth about it, because to the unclean all things are unclean; but it is not polluted in it self, nor to any other that examine themselves, as the former instance doth clear, because that pollution cometh from nothing in the Ordinance, (it being in its essentials compleat) but doth arise from the sinfulnesse of such and such persons, and therefore must be commensurable with them.

3. An Ordinance may be said to be polluted, upon this extrinsick consideration, to wit, when by some circumstance in it, or miscarriage of those that are about it, it is made common-like, and so wanteth that luster and honourableness that it ought to have; by such a fault the Ordinance is made obnoxious to contempt, and is despised by others, contrary to the Lords allowance. Thus the Priests of old made the offerings of the Lord vile and contemptible, which was not by corrupting them in essentials, nor making them cease to be Ordinances, but by their miscarriages and corrupt irreverent way of going about them, they did lay that stumbling-block before others, to make them account these Ordinances contemptible. This may be diverse wayes fallen into, As, 1. when the Officer, or Minister, hath a profane carnall carriage, So he maketh the Ordinance of the Ministery, and every other Ordinance vile in this sense: Thus, if an Elder or any others should take on them to admonish while they are in drunkenness or passion, or such like, they do pollute that admonition, yet still these Ordinances are Ordi-

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Ordinances, and that admonition an admonition. 2. It is fallen into, when an Officer doth indiscreetly and indifferently administrate Ordinances to precious and vile, as if they were common things. Thus a reproof may be polluted when a manifest known contemner is reproved, because, so a pearl is casten before swine, which is derogatory to the excellency thereof. Thus a Minister may profane or pollute the most excellent promises or consolations of the Word, when he doth without discretion apply the same indifferently; or, without making difference between the tender and the untender and profane; yea, even between the hypocrites and the truely godly. This is not to divide the Word of God aright, and is indeed that which the Lord mainly accounteth to be *Not separating of the precious from the vile*, when peace is spoken to them to whom he never spoke it. This is also committed, when grosly scandalous persons are permitted, without the exercise of Discipline upon them, to live in the Church, or are admitted to Sacraments, because so Gods institution is wronged, and the luster thereof is lessened, and men are induced to think lesse thereof. 3. This may be also by the irreverent manner of going about them, when it is without that due reverence and gravity that ought to be in His worship. Thus one may make the Word and Sacrament to be in a great part ridiculous; and so suppose, that at the Sacrament of the Supper, in the same Congregation, some should be communicating at one place, some at another, some should be palpably talking of other things, some miscarrying by drunkennesse, &c. as its clear was in the Church of *Corinth*. All those may be said to pollute the Ordinances, as they derogate from their weight and authority, and miscarry in the administration of them, and are ready to breed irreverence and contempt in others where the Lords Body in the Supper, or the end of His institution in other Ordi-

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nances, is not discerned and observed: yet all these do not pollute the Ordinance in it self, or make it to be no Ordinance; nor do pollute it to any that doth reverently partake of the same, and doth not stumble upon the block that is laid before him: Because an hearer that were suitably qualified, might comfortably receive and feed upon a sweet promise, even when it might be extended in its application beyond the Lord's allowance; yet doth not that alter the nature thereof to him: So may worthy Communicants that have examined themselves, and do discern the Lord's Body, partake of that Sacrament with His approbation, and to their own comfort; Because they might discern Him, and by that come to get the right impression of the Ordinances, although many blocks were lying in their way: for, it is not others casting of snares before them, but their stumbling at them, that doth pollute the Ordinance to them. Hence we see, that though all these were in the Church of *Corinth*, so that there was neither reverence in the manner, nor discretion in respect of the Receivers (for, some came drunken, and some came and waited not on others, some came hungry, and others full) yet was it still the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and unpolluted to those, who by examining of themselves, and discerning of His Body (which others failed in) did reverently and duly partake of the same.

Besides these wayes of pollution mentioned, we cannot conceive of any other (for now legal and ceremonial pollution, such as was by touching a dead body, &c. and was opposit to ceremonial holiness, is not in this case to be mentioned) yet we see the first cannot be alleaged here, and none of the other two ought to scare tender persons from the Ordinances of Jesus Christ.

If it be said, That communicating in such a case, doth seem to approve such an admission, and to confirm those in some good opinion of themselves who are

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are admitted, and so there is a necessity of abstaining, though not upon the account, that the Ordinances are polluted, yet, for preventing the foresaid offence, which might make us guilty. *Answ.* If weight be laid upon offence, we make no question but it will sway to the other side. O what offence hath this way given to the Church of Christ! how hath it hardned those that had prejudice at Religion? How hath it opened the mouths of such as lie in wait for something of this kind? How hath it grieved and weighted others? how hath it made the work of Reformation, profession of Holinesse, exercise of Discipline, &c. to stink to many, and so to be loaded with reproaches, as hath marred much that accesse to keep the Ordinances unpolluted in the former respect, which otherwise might have been? 2. Is not reverent and exemplary partaking of the Ordinances at such a time, a more edifying and convincing testimony against such untenderneſſe, than by withdrawing to give a new offence? 3. The Lord's precept in such a case, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat*, doth not leave the thing indifferent upon that ground; And therefore that objection is not here to have place, as the grounds formerly laid down do evince: For, we are not to be wise or holy beyond what the Lord hath commanded.

CHAP. XV.

Shewing if any thing further in any imaginable case be allowed to privat Christians.

2. IT may be yet further moved, Can there be no more allowed in any supposable case? *Answ.* It is most unsuitable, in a matter of practice, when folks are not contending for curiosity, but for direction, to suppose cases hardly or rarely possible in a constitute Church, which is worthy of that name, or, upon that ground, to found a contest in dispute, or

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schism in practice, in cases palpably different; At least, union should be kept till such a case come about. And is it likely, where the order formerly laid down is observed, that there can be habitual admission of notoriously or grievously scandalous persons, though, it may be, there be lesser failings of several sorts: Yet, supposing that any, out of infirmity or affection, not having such knowledge, or otherwise, should stick to joyn in the Ordinances at some times, or in some places, upon such an account, who yet do not love separation, or the erecting of a different Church, We say further,

1. That, in such a case, such persons may remove from one Congregation to another, where such grosness cannot be pretended to be; and the persons being otherwise without scandal, can neither be pressed to continue (they being so burdened) nor yet refused to be admitted where orderly they shall desire to joyn, seing this could not be denied to any. And, we suppose, few will be so uncharitable, as to think there is no Congregation whereunto they can joyn, or yet so addicted to outward respects, as to choose separation with offence to others, disturbance to the Church, and, it may be, with little quietness to themselves, whenas they have a remedy so inoffensive allowed unto them.

2. Although separation be never allowable, and secession be not alway at an instant practicable; yet we suppose, in some cases, simple abstinence, if it be not offensive in the manner and circumstances, if it be not made customary, and if the ground be so convincing, and the case so grosse that it will affect any ingenuous hearer, and so evident that there is no access to any acquainted in such places, to deny the same, or that there be a present undecided processe concerning such things before a competent Judge; in some such cases, I say, as might be supposed, we conceive abstinence were not rigidly to be misconstructed, it being for the time the burdeen of such persons, that

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that they cannot joyn; and, it may be, having some publick complaint of such a thing to make-out, and in dependence elsewhere: Although we will not strengthen any to follow this way, nor can it be pretended to, where the case is not singularly horrid; yet supposing it to be such, we conceive it is the safest one way for the persons peace, and the preventing of offence together; yet, much christian prudence is to be exercised in the conveying of the same, if it were by removing for a time, or otherwayes, that there appear to be no publick contempt; but we conceive this case is so rarely incident, and possibly that there needeth be little said of it, much lesse should there be any needlesse debate or rent entertained upon the consideration or notion thereof. And certainly, the case before us of the admitting of the *Nicolaitans* and *Jezebel*, considering their doctrine and deeds, is more horrid than readily can be supposed; and yet it would seem, that though this defect should still have continued, the Lord doth require no other thing of private professours, but their continuing-in, or holding fast of, their former personal purity, which is all the burden that He doth lay upon them.

To shut up all, we may see what evils are to be evited in the prosecution of publick Scandals, and what a commendable thing it were to have this in the right manner vigorous; if private Christians were zealous, loving and prudent in their private admonitions; if Officers were diligent, single, grave, and weighty in what concerneth them; if offending persons were humble and submissive, and all reverent and respective of the Ordinances, and studious of private and publick edification, How beautiful and profitable a thing would it be? Certainly this manner of procedure, would be more beautifying to the Ordinances of Christ, more convincing to all onlookers, more sweet and easie both to Officers and People, and more edifying and gaining to all, and, by God's

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God's blessing, were the way to make the mistaken yoke of Discipline to be accounted easie and light. And if all those ends be desirable, and the contrary evils be to be eschewed, then unquestionably the right manner of mannaging this great Ordinance of Discipline, is carefully to be studied and followed both by Officers and people.

PART III.

Concerning Doctrinall Scandals, or Scandalous Errours.

CHAP. I.

Holding out the expediency of handling this matter.

ALthough somewhat hath been spoken in reference to practicall Scandals, (to call them so) Yet there hath been little or nothing at all spoken of Doctrinal Scandals, and what may be called for in reference to them.

It is true, that these cases are so various and difficult, that there can hardly be any thing particularly spoken to them; also what hath been said, may, for the most part, proportionably be applied to them: yet considering that this place doth look so directly to such Scandals as are in Doctrine; and that the case of these times doth call for some consideration of such, lest what hath been formerly said, be altogether defective as to this, it will not be impertinent to insist a little on it also, although already this Tractate hath drawn to a greater length than was at first intended.

We may in prosecution of this, 1. consider some generall Doctrines. 2. Some generall Questions. 3. More

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3. More particularly speak to the severall duties according to particular cases and remedies that are called for. 4. Shew the necessity of orderly Judicial procedour here, in reference to such Scandals, as well as in reference to Scandals in practice formerly mentioned.

For Doctrines, we find here. 1. That Errour, vented by these that are corrupted therewith, is no lesse scandalous; and no lesse to be accounted so, than grosse practices; for it is as ready to be an occasion of stumbling, and to marr the spirituall edification and well-being of the people of God, as any scandalous practices: Which is confirmed, 1. By the consequents of Errour, it destroyes the soul, 2 *Pet.* 2. 1. 2 *Thess.* 2. 12. yea, it bringeth on swift damnation, 2 *Pet.* 2. 1. overthrows the faith of many. 2 *Tim.* 2. 18. perverts the Scripture to mens destruction, 2 *Pet.* 3. 16. deceives many, *Matth.* 24. Therefore for this cause, it is called also, 2. *Pet.* 2. *damnable, pernicious*, and such like: which sheweth, that really it becomes a stumbling block where it is.

2. This will appear if we consider the titles that the holy Ghost usually giveth to such in Scripture, as are promotters of corrupt Doctrine: there are not titles bearing greater indignation and abomination, given to any, than to such, as they are called *dogs, evil workers*, Phil. 3. 2. *wolves*, yea *grievous wolves*, Matth. 7. 15. Act. 20. *deceitfull workers, ministers of Satan*, as if expressly they were commissionated by him, 2 Cor. 11. 13. *deceivers, liars*. Rev. 2. *ill men and seducers, that wax worse and worse*, 2 Tim. 3. 13.

3. Consider the many threatnings and woes that are in Scripture against them, *Matth.* 23. the many warnings that are given to Ministers to watch against them; *Acts* 20. the plain directions that are to censure them, *Tit.* 3. 10. the particular examples of censuring them recorded in Scripture, (as after will appear) Christs commending it where it is, His reproving

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ving of it where *it is* not, as in these second and third Chapters of the *Revelation* is manifest: these and such like, do evidently make out how exceedingly scandalous the venting of corrupt Doctrine is, which *Rev.* 2. 6. the Lord saith, He hates, and therefore it cannot but be loathsome and abominable.

4. Consider the many warnings that people have to eschew such, and that upon this account as being offensive, as *Rom.* 16, 17. *Act.* 20. *Phil.* 3. 1, 2. 2. *Joh.* 10. which evidently showeth the scandalousnesse thereof.

5. Consider the nature of Errour more particularly. 1. It is contrary to the truth of God, and therefore is a lie, as scandalous practices are contrary to the holinesse of God: now Gods truth and veracity is no lesse an essentiall attribute than His holiness. 2. This is not only to lie, but it is to attribute that unto the most High, by fathering these lies upon Him; and saying, thus saith the Lord, when He hath said no such thing but the contrary. 3. It teacheth others to lie, as it is, *Matth.* 5. 19. and that more forcibly and impudently than any practice can do. 4. It hath its original from the devil, who was a liar from the beginning, and the father thereof, *Joh.* 8. 44. And spreaders of corrupt Doctrine, have special influence on the upholding and spreading of his kingdom. 5. It is a fruit of the flesh, even as murther, adultery, witchcraft; and seing it is so ranked by the Apostle, *Gal.* 5. 19, 20. can it be but scandalous?

6. The effects of it will evidence this. 1. It spoileth the vines, *Cant.* 2. 15. for, there is a wronging of purity where it is. 2. It spoileth Government and order, it hath confusion with it. 3. It spoileth unity, and it hath ever contention with it, and (as it is, *Gal.* 5. 15.) a biting and devouring one of another; and contention cannot be eschewed but by harmony in evil, which is far more desperate. 4. Which followeth on all, it destroyeth souls; and infecteth more speedily,

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speedily, dangerously and spreadingly than other practicall Scandals; never hath the Church been so defaced, nor so many souls destroyed by any scandalous practice, as by the venting of corrupt Doctrine; and however we take scandal, as in the general was laid down, as that which is apt to stumble others, and occasion their fall, or to weaken the confidence and jumble the peace, and disquiet the minds of some, or as it grieves the hearts of others, or, as it maketh the wayes of God to be ill spoken of, it will be still found, that such kind of errours, are still to be accounted scandalous; and that nothing opens mouths more against Religion than that, See 2 *Pet.* 2. 2. By all which it appeareth, that grosse errour is not only a sin, but a scandalous sin, and that of a most grosse nature.

CHAP. II.

Concerning the spreading of Errour; Gods displeasure at the suffering thereof, and the fainting even of good men in restraining the same.

BEside this, there are three things considerable, which from this and other Epistles we have occasion to observe and enquire a little into, before we propound any particular question.

The first, is, concerning the spreading and increase of Errour, and that of the most unreasonable and absurd Errours, even in the Primitive times. The second is, anent the Lords detesting of it, so that the very suffering of the spreaders of it, is hatefull to Him in His Angels and Churches, that otherwise are approvable for their own particular carriages, as in *Pergamos*; and their not induring thereof is commendable, even when their own inward condition is not altogether approvable, as may be seen in *Ephesus*. The third is, how that sometimes there may be fainting

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fainting, as to zealous restraining of Errour, even in men that are not the worst.

What height delusions of this kind may come unto.

For the first, Can it but be thought strange that delusion should come to this height so soon: and it may make all to tremble at the impetuousnes thereof. 1. It is a most foul absurd errour, this of the *Nicolaitans*, even against natures light. 2. It spreadeth and encreaseth in severall persons and Churches: and Church-story doth show that it abounded, and no lesse is insinuated in these Epistles. 3. That it spreadeth not only among heathens, but in the Church, and among *Christs Servants*, who are seduced therewith; which sheweth, that even some of note were carried away with it. 4. This is in the Churches most pure times, some of the Apostles (at least *John*) being yet alive when this was vented. 5. It is carried-on by despicable instruments in comparison of others, a woman calling her self a prophetesse, some fellows calling themselves Apostles and new lights, that men would think, should rather have been counted distracted, than to have been so reverenced. 6. This is done against the testimony of their own faithful Ministers, and in such Churches where God had witnesses keeping themselves from that evil, yea, where many Professors were in that respect pure, yet others are following that errour, receiving and reverencing these seducers more than any faithfull Pastors. 7. This is done where there neither wanted light nor authority to convince them; for, no question, both were, as may be gathered from the trial of these in *Ephesus*; yea, *John* writeth from the Lords own mouth to confute them; and though there could be no exception against the application of his Doctrine, yet it was adhered to for many years after that. 8. *John* or some other Apostle was the instrument to convert them from Paganism to Christianity, yet, now can he not recover them from a foul errour in Christianity when they are bewitched therewith: and though

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no question his authority and arguments had lesse weight with them now than before they were Christians; yet what can be thought of more force for their conviction and reclaiming, than these considerations? The like was often *Paul's* case, who at first had an easie work with people, when they were heathens, in comparison of what he had with the same when they became Christians, and tainted with false doctrine, or listeners to corrupt teachers, as in the Epistles to the *Corinthians* and *Galatians* is clear. Which doth shew, 1. The unreasonablnesse and power of a deluding Spirit, that nothing can convince, when once people come to like that way they go on, deceiving and being deceived, and, as *Peter* saith, 2 *Pet.* 3. 16. pervert the Scripture to their own destruction; And as may be gathered, they do so by corrupting, first, that which doth appear to be more obscure, and then they mould other Scriptures so as may consist with their fancies, that they have conceived to have ground in the former, and so they, first, form notions out of obscure places, and thereafter conform the more plain Scriptures to these, whereas the just contrary is most safe; and when the ignorant and unstable shall account themselves the only learned in the mysteries of God, what wonder is it that they be thus given up? and when they think the plain truths, and duties wherein there is no shaddow of a ground of stumbling, are below them? and thus they may attain so much dexterity to wrest the Scriptures, even the plainest (as is implied there) as may be judicially subservient to their own destruction, and to prevent their being convinced, which might put them to shame; and occasion their abandoning of that. 2. We may see, that it is no easie thing to recover a misled people into errour; that *peradventure*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. is not accidently put in, but to show that it is a hundred to one if such get repentance, whereby the Lord would scare all from that evil, and

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the more grosse their error is, often men are the more unreasonable in the defence thereof, and obstinate in adhering thereunto, because there is most of a judiciall stroak seen there, in giving up men to such foolries, it is not credible that otherwise they could fall in them, and so being smitten of God, is it possible that any reason can prevail with them, while that plague lieth on? Was there any errour like to that of worshipping stocks and stones? it being even against sense and reason, that men should burn a part thereof, and make some common work of another portion, and of a third make a deity and fall down and worship it, as the Prophet doth expostulate, *Isa.* 44. 19. which upon consideration might be found to be absurd: this is premitted as the reason of such blockishnesse, ver. 18. *For he hath shut their eyes that they cannot see, and their hearts that they cannot understand.* 3. The unreasonablnesse of this Spirit in men, would not be thought strange in any of the former respects, even although no person could stop their mouth, but they should seem to themselves to triumph in the bringing-in of unheard-of senses of Scripture; the more they abound in that, it is the more judicial to them, even as the moe they carry after them, and the more they be forborn by others, it worketh the more to their destruction: men would keep a distance from these infections, none can tell what they may turn unto if once entred in, a giddy unstable soul, carried with the spait of a spirit of errour, and being given-up of God thereto for itching after it, and not receiving the love of the truth, may come to the most horrible things, and that without shame or remorse, ere there be any end; and on-lookers would acknowledge God's justice in such stroaks, and learn to reverence and fear him the more.

The suffring of gross error is a most displeasing thing to Christ.

The second cannot but be clear from this: for, if errour be such an evil that thwarteth, 1. both with Gods holinesse and truth; And, 2. that hazardeth so many

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many souls, (for, never a plague hath so destroyed the face of the visible Church, nor carried so many souls to hell as errour hath done) Then the suffering of it cannot but be hatefull to Him who loveth His Church. 3. There is no way by which the devil reproacheth Ordinances and the Word more than this, by turning them to the quite contrary end, as if he would out-shoot the Lord in His own bow, (which is abominable to mention) and invert His own means, and turn His own weapons on Him; and suffering of this, is a conniving at his design. 4. There is no way by which the devil may so win in on Christ's Servants to seduce them as by this, as in the Epistle to *Thyatira* is clear. And can there dangers come so nigh to Christ, and He not be displeased with what strengtheneth their snares? 5. This doth equal, yea, in some respect, prefer the devil to Him, so far as in us lieth, and so cannot but provoke His jealousie; for, so the devil hath liberty to vent his lies with Truth equally; and there being many lies, though there be but one Truth, he hath by this moe doors opened to him than the Gospel hath. 6. This doth make even the Truth, Ordinances, and Religion it self to be thought light of; when all these have toleration, it is, on the matter, a proclaiming an indifferency to be in these things, than which nothing can more reflect on the jealous God, who in His Word putteth such a difference, and showeth such detestation at indifferency. 7. This bringeth hudge confusions on the Church. For, 1. If these errours and corrupt teachers prevail, they carry souls after them, and destroy them; and ought that to be thought light of? 2. If they prevail not, yet they crosse, afflict and offend them, and so prove a snare and burden to them of whom the Lord is tender. 8. Toleration doth either account little of errour, as being no hurtfull thing, and so there can be no esteem of truth; or, it doth account little of the destruction of souls: both

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which must be abominable. 9. Errour doth not only break God's Law, but doth teach others to do so; and suffering thereof, must be a maintaining of Teachers to teach Transgression and Rebellion against the Lord.

Sometimes those who want not affection, are yet too condescending to erroneous Teachers; and why?

The third thing observable is, That though zeal in a Minister, especially against errour, be exceedingly commendable; yet oftimes is there fainting, even among Ministers who are not of the worst; and the Angel is here reproved for sparing of these *Nicolaitans*, at least in being faint and defective in pursuing them in a ministerial way, as *Antipas* is commended for his faithfulnesse, and the Angel of *Ephesus* for his not fainting in prosecuting of this trial; the Lord hath put these two together, the faithfull and wise Steward; and when they are carried equally on, O how commendable are they! yet in the reckoning the one is but mentioned, *Well done thou good and faithfull servant*, not to give a dispensation in reference to the other, but to shew the necessity and excellency of this, that thereby Ministers may be put to it, lest, under pretext of prudence, they incroach upon that freedom and faithfulnesse which is called for from them, whether in undertaking, or in prosecuting of this charge, in which there will not want many difficulties, that will be ready to occasion fainting, if they be not boldly in the Lord's strength set against, as we may instance in these respects, 1. In respect of the time: there are some evil times, wherein it is hard to know what to say, for which the prudent may be said to keep silence, and often that pretext may be the occasion of fostering too much faineing, when the Lord calleth for faithfulnesse. 2. It may arise from a man's sensibleneſſe of his own infirmities and unequalneſſe for that charge, as seems to be in *Jeremiah*, *Jer.* 1. when a mans own self, or thoughts of himself, without respect to his call, is made the rule whereby he proceedeth. 3. It may arise from the message which

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which he is called to carry: sharp messages are heavy and burdensom, that maketh *Jonas* to shift for a time to undertake that denunciation against *Nineveh*, especially considering that these Messengers ordinarily are not acceptable to hearers; and that there are withall usually not a few who sew pillows under arm-holes; and are ready to destroy, in that respect, what others build. 4. It may arise from hearers, and that of diverse tempers; some are ready, like swine, to turn back on the Carriers, as if they did hate them, as *Micajah* was met with by *Ahab*, 2 *King.* 22. who yet had four hundred flattering liars in request. Some, again, are of an itching humour, and do not abide convincing doctrine and faithfulnesse, such are ready to breed a separation from them that do faithfully reprove, at least much to cool their affections to them, which (as it is, 2 *Tim.* 4.) is no little piece of trial to a Minister: Many also that are affectionate, are yet hasty, and cannot abide plain dealing; and it is no lesse difficulty to win to be faithfull to these, than to others who are openly prophane. 5. There is a fainting that ariseth from distrust of God, as not being confident of the performance of His promise, and of their being countenanced in His work; and so seeing it impossible in themselves and in their own eyes, they give it over as if it were so simply. 6. There is a fainting that ariseth from supposed events, either as thinking there will be no fruit of such a thing, or, that some inconvenience will follow it: It is like that *Moses* was not free of the first, when he saith, *Israel doth not*, or, will not *hear me*; *And what will Pharaoh do?* And the last is common, when once flesh and bloud are admitted to consult of duty from the supposed inconveniencies that will follow, then readily it decideth, that it is not duty at all. It may be somewhat of that was here, that the Angel feared the disquieting of the Church, or some schism that might follow on it; and the Lord's threatning to take another way of

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fighting against them with the sword of His mouth doth insinuate this: for, a carnall shift, to prevent some inconveniences, often draweth on that which men feared, the more speedily. Other grounds of it also may be given, which yet are not approvable before God.

CHAP. III.

If any of the People of God may be carried away with grosse delusions.

FRom these Doctrines several Questions may be moved. And, 1. If any of the People of God may be carried away with such abominable errours in doctrine? We shall answer in these Assertions.

It is not simply impossible but some may, in a great measure, for a time, be carried away.

Assert. 1. There is no errour so grosse materially, but Believers may fall into it: For, although they have a promise that errour shall not separate wholly betwixt Christ and them, nor that finally they shall be carried away therewith; yet, seing they have corruption that is capable to be tempted to all sin, and so to this among other sins, they cannot be exempted from this, neither is there any promise by which they can expect absolutely to be kept from heresie, more than murder or adultery, which are fruits of the flesh with this: yea, except the sin against the holy Ghost and final impenitencie, there is no absolute exemption to the Believer from any sin; which the Lord hath wisely ordered so, to keep the Believer from security, even in reference to such tentations: Beside, in experience it is found, that grace exempteth not from error in judgment; for, it is like, that *Solomon*, if he did not actually commit idolatry himself, yet became too inclinable that way, as we may gather from what is in Scripture recorded concerning him; Neither can we altogether, as to their state, condemn these in *Corinth*,

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rinth, in *Galatia*, and in other Churches, who were drawn from the Truth after their conversion, as if none but unregenerate professors had been so. Yea, it is possible, if not probable, that some of these, whom the Lord calleth His Servants, and yet were seduced in the Church of *Thyatira*, were not still in the state of nature.

Yet not so easily as unto grosse practical evils.

Assert. 2. Although we dare not altogether say it's impossible, yet we think that it is more rare for a Believer to fall in grosse errours, and for any considerable time to continue therein, so as to be accounted an Heretick, than in other scandalous practices. For, 1. The Scripture doth more rarely mention this, than other sins of Believers, which are more frequently recorded. 2. There are very special promises for preserving of the Elect from being seduced by false christs and false teachers: and though it do not hold universally in all particulars, except in as far as reaches their everlasting state; yet it may be extended in some good measure, even to seduction it self; and we suppose may be more clear from these considerations, 1. Becoming erroneous in such a manner, doth not proceed from some sudden surprising fit of tentation, as grosse practices oftentimes may do; but it implieth a deliberateness therein, which is not so readily incident to a Believer, and it cannot so well be called a sin of infirmity; and therefore the Scripture doth ever set out such teachers of false doctrine as most abominable, to wit, as *not serving the Lord Christ, but their own bellies*, Rom. 16.18. as being *enemies to the crosse of Christ*, Phil. 3.19. as being *ministers of Satan*, 2 Cor. 11.15. Other men (as it were) that are unrenewed, are common subjects and servants to the devil; but corrupt teachers they are apostles to him, and prime officers in his kingdom: These titles, and such like, cannot well be applicable to Saints in respect of their infirmities; and therefore, we think, that (at least) it is more rarely incident to them, to be carriers on and promoters

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of corrupt doctrine. 2. It appeareth from this, that an Heretick is said to be self-condemned, *Tit.* 3. 10. because ere one can be so denominated, there must be a rejecting of admonitions, which stands not so very well with the nature of a Saint. 3. This consideration will also make it evident, that the Scripture speaketh of repentance of, and recovery from corrupt doctrine, as a very rare and uncertain thing, *Gal.* 4. 10. the Apostle fears he did bestow labour in vain in this businesse; and 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. the Apostle doth put a *peradventure* upon this, *If peradventure God will give them* (to wit, those that oppose themselves) *repentance unto the acknowledging of the Truth.* There is not such a *peradventure* put to any kind of sin: which sheweth that it must be more difficult to be recovered from it, than from other sins; and that therefore Believers, ordinarily at least, must be in a special manner preserved from it. 4. Which doth confirm the former, This delusion is a main spiritual plague; and is often the punishment not of former sins of infirmity, but of not receiving the love of the Truth, and of hypocrisie and proud presumption; and although the Lord is not to be limited and bound up from chastening His own with this rod, yet we may say from experience in the Word, and from the nature of the plague, and other grounds, It is neither the ordinary spot nor rod of His Children; and if at any time it be, it doth speak out readily much spirituall pride, self-seeking, lightnesse, security, wantonnesse of spirit, ignorance and conceitednesse joyned with it, want of exercise, or some one thing or other of that kind. And, as we hinted, when they are overtaken, we will not readily find in Scripture that such are heads to promote and carry on the design of error.

When any believers fal in such evils usually the Lord singularly chastiseth them for the same.

Assert. 3. When a Believer falleth in such an evil, the Lord usually chastiseth him, either with more grosse out-breakings, or with some sharp way of restoring, or with removal under a cloud, without much seen evi-

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evidence of recovery, as we see in the case of *Solomon*, who became some way guilty of this ill, of whose recovery the Scripture is very silent, even though his sin be fully recorded, and the remainders of his idolatry are marked to be standing in the dayes of *Hezekiah*; and indeed there is but little on record in Scripture of the recovery of those that have been carried so away, though we may judge charitably of some of them in the general: The Lord wisely ordereth this, partly, as a chastening to them, partly, as a warning to others, and to make all men, especially Believers, to fear, and to take heed lest they fall; because, recovery is not so easie, and even they that are spiritual may be tempted, *Gallat. 6. 1.*

Usually corrupt teachers set more upon professors to withdraw them than others that want profession, although such may also be set upon.

Asser. 4. These that are spreaders of errour, do most frequently set upon these who have some profession of Religion, more than upon others who walk not under that name. For, the spreading of grosse errour, although it do not carry away many really godly, nor finally any at all, yet doth it often prove the most searching triall to them, and doth prove exceedingly strong and successefull against many unhumbled Professors.

There are two things comprehended here, 1. That this tentation to errour doth often prevail more among Professours, and doth prove a stumbling to them, more than any other grosse practices; they may stand out against these, and yet be prevailed over by it.

2. It comprehendeth this also, that this tentation of errour doth rather attempt the gaining of those that are eminent for profession, than others who have no such name, although such sometimes may be carried also away therewith. We see that these *Nicolaitans*, and false Apostles, and the prophetesse *Jezebel*, are not teaching nor seducing heathens, but the Church of Christ, and such as he calleth His Servants, *Rev. 2. 20.* which may take in even such as

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eminently gave out themselves to be Christs Servants; yea, it is clear, that neither did this errour have such successe amongst heathens, as amongst Christians, nor did the teachers thereof so intend the leaving of them, as they did vehemently endeavour the corrupting of the Church; we see it also in other Churches, Was there any Church more shining with gifts, than that of *Corinth*? and yet there did false Apostles breed great distractions and opposition to the Apostle *Paul*, and that as taking occasion from the giftednes and eminencie of that Church beyond others, to drive on that design. Again, was there any Church that did more tenderly receive the Gospel, than these of *Galatia*? as we may see from chap. 4.14,15. They received him as an Angel of God, and as Christ Jesus, they would have plucked out their own eyes for him; and yet there is no Church so soon shaken and infected by corrupt teachers, and so bewitched with them and their tentations, as we may gather from chap. 1.6. chap. 3.1,2. and throughout the Epistle: It is like the devil took occasion of their warmnesse instantly to set upon them before their setling, more than on other places or Churches, where such hopeful beginnings did not appear; And thus we see in experience daily, that where profanity aboundeth, there are fewer onsets to tempt to errour, and lesse successe, than where the Gospel hath had more welcome and fruit; as it were, the devil bendeth this tentation against the last, with more vehemencie and subtilty, than he doth against the former: for which we may give these Reasons. 1. His hatred is most at them, and he would fainest have them overturned. 2. Because he hath other baits that are more suitable to profane men: and so long as they are his, he doth not so much seek to engage them by this, for that is no gain to him. 3. Because especially, these who have a form of Religion, if withall weak in knowledge, are most capable, in some respect, of a tentation to

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to errour; for, profane men, care not (like *Gallio*) what be truth, and what be errour; but a poor soul that hath some conscience, is ready to debate, and desireth the truth to be cleared, and when not so strong as to rid it self, it is readily drawn away like these silly women *Paul* speaketh of, 2 *Tim.* 3. 6. 7. who were ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 4. Because grosse tentations to profanity (wherewith others are carried away) are not so taking with them, therefore the devil essayeth them with errour under colour of some truth, or new discovery of some more strict and holy way, which often prevaileth when the other would not. 5. Because it is most advantagious to errour, and make it digest with others, to have one of name or parts, or piety for it, this being ordinary among most men, to look more to these who maintain such a thing, and what such a man thinketh of it, than to the thing it self. Therefore doth the devil drive this as a main design whereby he may prevail over many; this was ever a great mean made use of to induce to errour, that many who were accounted godly, did imbrace the same, as may appear from the histories of the *Novatians*, *Donatists* and others, who called themselves *the pure and holy Church of Martyrs*, and took other such like titles in opposition to the Orthodox Church, whom they accounted carnall; and by this mean they did brangle many. 6. He doth this also, that he may divert the exercises of these that look honest like from self-searching repentance, &c. that if he cannot get them engaged to errour, he may bring them, at least, to dispute truth, whereby he essayeth to extinguish the former conviction, or to give it a wrong mould before it be setled; or to keep them, as it were, taken up about the shell, while he intendeth to rob them of the kirnell, and so one way or other, if he gain not all, he doth yet disquiet them, and weary them by wakening of questions and

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and debates, which are without their reach, and possibly also beyond their station.

CHAP. IV.

How it is that grosse delusions may come to such height, as they often do.

IT may be also questioned, How it cometh that such absurd errours can come to such a height, and prevail so against the Church? Or, what way the devil by corrupt teachers doth so delude Professors?

There are some reasons that are more generall, and others more particular and usefull in the consideration of them for practice; that we may not be ignorant of the devils devices, we shall insist most in these, all of them may be drawn to three heads. 1. The Lords over-ruling, holy, just and wise (though often secret) way of punishing mens ingratitude. 2. There is something in the devils way of carrying on the tentation. 3. There is something in the distemper of Churches and persons to be considered; Which three, being put together, will make it not seem strange that the most grosse and absurd errour prevail. For the first, The Lord hath an over-ruling hand in such a design, which is partly, to try his own, therefore heresies must be, 1 *Cor.* 11. 19. partly, to punish the generation of ungrate hypocrites, who receive not the love of the truth, as it is, 2 *Thess.* 2. in both which he is to be glorified, either in his grace, or justice, or both: Now these being the Lords designs, the absurder that the errour be, it attaineth his end the better; and appeareth to be the more judiciall-like, as by comparing, *Isa.* 44. 18,19. and *Rom.* 1. 21, 25, 28, &c. and 2 *Thes.* 2. 10, 11, 12. is clear. All which places speak not only of the most grosse spirituall abominations, but of the Lords judiciall hand therein. If

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If it be asked, What hand the Lord can have in such a plague? Or, how He may be said to send it? *Answ.* It is not so much to our purpose here, to dispute the Question of Gods providence in such actions; But for clearing of this reason, we may lay down these grounds, *What hand the Lord may have in such a plague.*

1. There are spiritual plagues, wherewith God justly punisheth the ingratitude and other sins of people, aswell as there are external and corporal plagues; these places cited, *Isa.* 44. 18, 19, *Rom.* 1. 21. 2 *Thess.* 2. 10, 11. *Rev.* 7, 8, and 9. Chapters, and almost that whole Book doth confirm this: only this would be adverted, that most ordinarily grosse practices, as adultery, murther, uncleanesse of all sorts, are punishments for abusing the light of nature, as may be gathered from *Rom.* 1. 21. 25. 28. But to be given up to strong delusion, and to believing of lies, is a plague that ordinarily followes the abuse of the light of the Gospel, as we may see from 2 *Thess.* 2. 9, 10. and this may be one reason, why more commonly such grosse scandals and practices abound, where the Gospel is not, or at least, is in lesse power, and why errour prevaileth most, where the Gospel hath been, or is with more clearnesse, because they are plagues to such respectively. This, I say, it is most generally, though it be not alwayes and universally, especially where there are some other concurring reasons to make a difference.

2. We say, that the Lord is no lesse just, holy and pure in punishing men with such plagues, than when He maketh use of some other rods or judgements, neither is there any thing in this to be attributed to Him, that is unbecoming His absolute purity and holinesse. For, 1. He doth not punish any with this plague, but such as have by their former abuse of light and other miscarriages justly deserved the same. 2. He doth not infuse any maliciousnesse in the heart, nor increase what was, but justly permits what

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what is to break out, and overules the same for His just ends. 3. He doth not strain them to any such course, but doth make use of their own willingnesse thereunto, and of their free choosing to follow such a way for the glory of His justice. 4. He doth not connive at, nor dispense with the sinfull practice of any instrument, but doth really abhor, and will also severely punish the same. So, that as the same act hath a twofold consideration, to wit, as it is sinfull, and as it is penall, So it is diversly to be ascribed, to wit, in the first respect, to man only; and in the last, to Gods overruling providence, who can bring good out of evil, seing there is nothing so evil, but He can bring some good out of it, and make it subservient to Him, otherwise He that is Omnipotent and only wise, would never suffer it to be.

3. We say, although the Lord be not, neither can he accessory to this delusion, as it is sinfull, (for this impossibility belongeth to His infinite and blessed perfection) yet hath He a just hand in the complexed designe, which doth add exceedingly to the strength of the delusion. As, 1. He may justly give the devil way to set on with his tentations, at one time, and on one person, more than at another time, or in reference to an other person, as by proportion we may gather from the case of *Job*. 2. He may furnish men with gifts that are of themselves good, and justly permit them to use the same, for the promoving of errour; this hath been often exceedingly instrumentall, in the furthering of Satans design in all ages, wherein he hath made use of some great Schollers, and men of subtile wits to oppose the truth, and to pervert the Scriptures of God, as is clear in all the heresies that ever have been; and this is no lesse just in God, to furnish with parts, an instrument of a spirituall plague, than to give strength and power to some whom he imployeth, in temporall judgements, who also may be found guilty before him, for abusing

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sing of the same. Hence it is said, 2 *Thess.* 2.2. that there is not only a *word* and *letter* to shake the minds of people at such a time, but there is also a *Spirit* or gift in an eminent degree, and therefore it is called, ver. 10. *All deceivableness*; and, no question, these that called themselves Apostles, 2 *Cor.* 11. 13. and made *Paul's* gifts to be accounted weak in respect of theirs, had more than ordinary gifts; and in this respect, sometime the Lord saith, a false Prophet might foretell something that was to come to passe; and so truly have an extraordinary gift, when yet the Lords design is by such, to try the peoples adherence to him, *Deut.* 13.1,2,3. Thus often promovers of errour may be gifted with ability to reason, make querees, shift arguments and places of Scripture, preach well, pray well with a great deal of eloquence, and liberty of plausible expressions, yea, they may possibly not want, as it were, signs and wonders (as in the place formerly cited) and yet the Lords end be to try, as is said: of this sort are such as are spoken of, 2 *Pet.* 3. 16. Who *wrest or pervert Scripture to their own destruction*; it is a strange word, they are unlearned and unstable, (and, it may be, are crying down learning in others) yet, saith he, they have a dexterity to *wrest* the Scriptures, to coin new interpretations, possibly never heard of before, to the admiration of others. And what is the consequent thereof? It is *their own destruction*. It had been advantage to many such themselves and others also, that they had never had such a gift. 3. The Lord also may someway arme the devil, as His executioner to carry on this design, by furnishing him with such instruments, giving him time, opportunities and occasions to tempt, and suffering him in many things to prevail: thus, 2 *Thes.* 2. Satan is said to have a power, and to exercise the same, by bringing forth of lying wonders; and, no question, the devil when he getteth way, may do much, when it is said that he put it in the heart of *Judas*

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das to betray his master, who yet was furnished with parts, and admitted into Christs company by Himself; all which was subservient to carry on the *devils* and the Pharisees design, of betraying the Lord; which, notwithstanding, tended to the greater ruine of his own kingdom.

4. In such a case also, the Lord doth justly deprive men, whom He mindeth to plague with that delusion, of these means, which might be usefull to discern and resist the same. As, 1. he may take away all outward restraints, which usually keep corrupt teachers from open and professed spreading of their errours; and in His providence, give them full way to multiply, and avowedly to pursue their design. This is to pluck up the hedge, *Isa.* 5. and to suffer the winds to blow, *Rev.* 7. which are ever great inlets to this judgement of delusion, when, to say so, there is a flood spewed out, and there is no earth to help the woman, and to dry up that flood. 2. He may take away prime lights and guides, which are usefull to keep people right; or, if they continue, he may suffer jealousie, division and other things to interveen so, that thereby their weight and authority is lessened to such persons: in which respect, *Ahab* becometh jealous of *Micajah*, whereby the devil hath occasion to make the lies of the false Prophets the more to be commended to him. 3. The Lord may withdraw the light that persons have (and, it may be, some common gifts of the Spirit) and by depriving them of that, they become the more obnoxious to temation, although it may be they think themselves wiser, and more understanding than they were: thus the Apostle calleth the *Galatians* foolish and bewitched, *Gal.* 3. 1, 2. as having fallen from that light which at first they had. 4. He may remove common convictions of the Spirit, and challenges of a natural conscience, so that they may go on in their delusion without a challenge; yea, (as it is said, *Joh.* 16. 2.) think that they

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they do God good service in so doing: this is, to have the conscience seared with an hot iron, 1 *Tim.* 4. 2. that waiteth upon seducing Spirits; and thus we see, that the most vain and reasonlesse confidence doth often wait upon the foulest errours, as, *Isa.* 44. 9. unto 20. This is called, *Gal.* 5. 8. a *perswasion* in respect of its confidence, which yet cometh not of God. And the Lord may not only justly deprive of such common gifts, but even of ordinary season and judgment, whereby men become, at least, in the prosecution of their errours, absurd and unreasonable, without all capablenesse of seeing the weight of a reason, or receiving a conviction, or observing their own folly, and to carry without all respect to credit, honesty, good manners, and such things as are even respected among civil men; yea, sometimes without respect to their own estates, or their own persons, as we may see in the prophets of *Baal*, 1 *King.* 18. and many others in Antichrists kingdom; these are called by the Apostle, 2 *Thess.* 3. 2. *unreasonable*, or absurd beastly men, as if they wanted reason: this is also a companion of delusion, and a piece of Gods judgement, as is clear from that of *Isa.* 44. The Lord thinking good, for the abuse of light, to deprive men of reason, as he did *Nebuchadnezzar*, whereby the vilest and absurdest tentations have accesse to men, (that otherwayes may be reasonable) to carry them on with greedinesse, and without all reluctance or contradiction.

5. When men are in the Lords justice thus deprived, and being set upon with the tentation, which he hath letten louse upon them, the Lord may in His providence tryst many things that may be abused, for the carrying on of this judgement, As, 1. he may tryst such a person with such a tentation, to live in such a place, to have such acquaintance, &c. 2. He may tryst such a tentation to fall in such a time, as there is no externall aw-band to restrain; yea, in his wisdom,

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wisdom, order it so, as that then there may be many occasions of stumbling among the Professors of the truth, what by scandals in practice, what by division and other distempers, as the way of truth may be ill spoken of by many; and the Ordinances in that respect made vile, as is said in the case of *Elies* sons, 1 *Sam.* 2. Sometime he may tryst such tentations with some ignorant, unskilfull inexterous hands, who may rather harden than help any in the removing of their doubts: These and many such like things may the wise and just Lord order in His providence, which may be as snares and stumbling-blocks to proud secure hypocrits, who by their corruption may fall thereon; yea, sometime the very Ordinances and the exercising of them, to wit, the Word, Sacraments and Discipline, may, through mens corruptions, be stumbled at more than if they were not; in this sense, when the Lord reproveth the unfaithfull Prophets and Priests, *Jer.* 6. 14. and the peoples not hearkening to his faithfull Prophets, ver. 17. although they keeped the form of Religion, ver. 20. he doth threaten to lay stumbling-blocks before them, upon which they should fall, ver. 21. All which and many moe wayes, (as sometimes following of errour hath applause attending it, as, 2 *Tim.* 4. 1. Sometimes it hath gain waiting upon it, as, 2 *Pet.* 2. 3. 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. and *Gal.* 6. 12. *Philip.* 3. 19.) being trysted in the Lords just providence, have often much influence, through mens corruption, to make delusion the more successefull.

6. Beside these, the Lord hath a judiciall upgiving of proud, corrupt men, unto the hands of such tentations: so that when, as it were, the devil setteth on by such a blast of wind, and seeketh to winnow such and such persons, the Lord doth, as a just judge, sentence them to be committed thereto, as to the executioner of His justice; in this sense, he is said to *give them up*: and in this respect, such defection, as it is a punish-

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punishment, is judicially permitted and ordered by Him, who willingly and purposly Sentenceth such persons to be so given up, because of former sins, whereas others whom He doth not so Sentence, are not so carried away with that same tentation.

Also the Lord, who is wonderfull in counsel, and whose wayes and judgements are past finding out, may have many other wonderfull and inconceivable wayes in the carrying on of this judgement; for, if all His judgements be a great depth, much more are His spirituall judgements. It is upon this ground, to wit, the considering of the Lords just severity of concluding all under sin, all in unbelief, of the rejecting of the Jews, &c. that the Apostle doth cry out, *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements, and his wayes past finding out?* Therefore we shall search no further in this. Only, from what is said, we may see, that the Lord hath a just hand in the over-ruling of such delusions; and also, that they cannot but be strong and successfull which are guided so, as to be executioners of His justice; this also may make men tremble the more, considering that the opening up of sluces, to let in the spait of delusion, is no lesse Gods judgement, and no lesse to be feared, than the sending of Sword or Pestilence, or the opening up the fountains of the great depths, to let in a deluge upon the earth; and were men so looking on it, and affected with it, it might possibly be much more bounded.

CHAP. V.

How errour may be known to be a judiciall stroke, and why the Lord smiteth with it.

IT may be asked here, 1. How errour may be known to be a judgement or judiciall? And, 2. for what cause most ordinarily the Lord doth send such a judgment?

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We cannot insist in every occurring Question; Yet to the first, We say, 1. there is no errour or delusion, but may be well accounted *penall* and *judiciall*, either as to the persons who fall therein, and vent the same, or as to others who may be infected therewith, (although it may be but a *triall* in reference to some) for, blindnesse of mind was a fruit and consequent of the first sin, and followeth not only as a sin, but as a punishment upon all the children of *Adams* house. And therefore as in some respect, all following sins may be accounted punishments of the first, this may be so in a speciall manner. 2. Beside this generall consideration, it is often the punishment of some speciall sins, and in some cases is more judiciall and penall than in other cases, as may be gathered from these Characters. 1. When in the nature of it, it is very absurd and unreasonable, as is said, such as these delusions of the *Nicolaitans* were, because in such delusions the judgement of God doth especially appear, when they cannot be thought to be consequent in any reasonable way, or, to flow from common infirmity. 2. When the persons that vent it, are, in respect of their conversation, parts, place or profession, someway eminent, as was formerly cleared, because so the tentation seemeth to be armed of the Lord, which usually is not for nought. 3. When it is trysted with such a time and with such circumstances as hath been described; for, such things happen not by chance, but are ruled by providence. 4. When it breaketh in violently, and, it may be, carrieth away some whom men would not have suspected, that is judiciall-like, when, as it were, the Dragon with his tail and subtility, doth bring stars from heaven, and surprise some that thought themselves without the reach of such a tentation. 5. It may be known by the gifts (to speak so) of such as carry on the same; for, as in carrying on the work of the Gospel, the Lord doth furnish His Ministers, with gifts

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gifts and painfulneſs, when He hath to do with them; So, upon the contrary, when He hath a work of judgment on the wheels, and the devil a deſign of carrying-on deluſion, the inſtruments are fitted proportionably, to wit, there is a zeal carrying them here and there, So that by all means, as it were, they compaſſe ſea and land to make Proſelytes; there is dexterity, quickneſſe and nimbleneſſe in ſtarting of doubts, wreſting of Scripture, &c. as is ſaid; and there is a ſort of patience in enduring, boldneſſe and confidence in attempting, and ſome ſucceſſe, as in the caſe of the falſe Prophets againſt *Micajah*, 1 *King.* 22. and againſt *Jeremiah*, *Jer.* 29. When, I ſay, corrupt inſtruments are fitted by theſe and ſuch like means, it is probable, that the Lord intendeth ſomething by them which they themſelves do not minde. 6. It is judiciall-like, when it tryſteth on the back of a peoples having the truth, and being unfruitfull under it, becauſe, ſo it ſpeaketh out the very end of its appearing, eſpecially, if there be in people an itching-new-fangleneſſe after novelties, and if there have been needleſs and affected ſtirings and queſtionings about leſſer truths, If then greater deluſion come, it doth look judiciall-like, as being a ſtroke for their former unſettledneſſe; this is to give men up to heap up teachers to themſelves, that have itching ears, 2 *Tim.* 4. 3. and this is, to give men teachers according to their own hearts, that there may be like people like prieſts, which is often threatned by the Lord. And thus of old, when the people began to miſcarry in the wilderneſſe, in reference to the ſecond Command, He gave them up to worſhip the hoaſt of heaven, and to miſcarry in the firſt, as is mentioned, *Acts* 7. 41. 7. It appeareth to be judiciall indeed when it doth hurt, either by corrupting of truth, or maring of unity, or wakening of diviſions, &c. which are conſequents of the firſt four trumpets that bring ſpiritual plagues, *Rev.* 8. Theſe and ſuch like chara-

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ters may sufficiently convince that the Lord is angry.

What causes do most ordinarily procure this plague of delusion.

To the second we may soon answer: And, 1. we say, that such a plague is not the consequent of common out-breakings and sins of infirmity; Nor, 2. of ingratitude for, and abuse of, common mercies; Nor, 3. ordinarily is it the punishment of grosse sins of the flesh, to speak so; for, this is rather a fruit of that: but it doth follow upon, 1. the abuse of sprituall mercies, such as the light of the truth of the Gospel, sleighted convictions, smothered challenges, broken promises made for further Reformation, and such like, as may be gathered from 2 *Thess.* 2. 9, 10. 2. It followeth upon spirituall sins, such as spirituall pride, security, hypocrisie and formality, keeping up of the form without the power, having truth but not the love thereof, as in the place formerly cited, and elsewhere. 3. There are some sort of distempers, which especially procure this, beside others. As, 1. an itching humour, that beginneth to loath the simplicity of truth. 2. A hastie partial humour that cannot abide sound Doctrine, if it be not someway curiously drest, especially if it reprove their miscarriages: both which are spoken of, 2 *Tim.* 4. 3. 3. There is a proud self-conceitednesse, whereof the Apostle speaketh, 2 *Tim.* 3, 4. when persons are selfie, proud, boasters, &c. such are a ready prey to such tentations. 4. Little respect to faithfull Ministers that preach truth, may procure this plague, to get Pastors according to their own heart, and judgements that are not good, as the Lord threatneth, *Ezek.* 20. and is threatned by the Lord, *Joh.* 5. ver. 43. *I have come in my Fathers Name, and ye have not received me; if another shall come in his own name, him will ye receive.* 5. It may be procured by lightnesse and unstablnesse, when folks goe vainly beyond their reach to seek or meet a tentation, the Lord justly may smite them with their own sin; and thus reading of corrupt books, hearing of corrupt preachers, con-

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verſing with corrupt men, and ſuch like, which the Lord hath cōmanded to eſchew, doth not only prove, in Gods righteous judgement, a ſnare or mids of folks inſnaring, but alſo the procuring deſerving cauſe of being given up to that deluſion, which they make themſelves obnoxious to, by going without His call, although at firſt, poſſibly there was no poſitive affection to that way, but, it may be, the contrary; even as ſuppoſe one hazarding, contrary to the Command, to go nigh the door of the adulterous womans houſe, ſhould for that cauſe be given up to fall in her ſnare and to enter, although at firſt he did not intend it, as theſe places do inſinuate, *Prov.* 5. 8. and 6. 26, 27, 28. where he ſaith, to this purpoſe, that a man cannot take fire in his boſome and not be burnt, &c. And it is ſaid, *Prov.* 22. 14. ſuch as are abhorred of the Lord, ſhall fall in that pit. 6. There is a jangling queſtioning ſtrain; this often brings on this ill, when all truths are not received, but folks begin to caſt at the leſſer truths; this procureth deluſion in a greater height, as is ſaid, becauſe every truth is precious, and when men become untender in the ſmalleſt truths, (if any may be called ſo) it is juſt with God to deprive them of all, even as ſmaller ſins in practice, being connived at, do bring on more groſſe outbreakings: and thus the viſible Church, by her declining from the truth, in the Primitive times, and becoming more to be taken up with Ceremonies and other unneceſſary debates, did draw on upon themſelves Antichriſts deluſion at length: of this ſort are ignorance in the fundamentall truths, that doth proceed from negligence, little love to, and delight in, the Word and Ordinances, little bemoaning of the falls and miſcarriages of others, when we hear them to be overtaken with ſuch ſnares; and many ſuch like things might be named, but we will not inſiſt further.

We come then to the ſecond thing propoſed, and that is to conſider how corrupt Teachers do carry on

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their design; and what means the devil useth by them to prevail with poor souls, for to cast at the truths of God, and to drink up the most absurd delusions: and although we cannot reach Satans depths, he having much subtilitie, and many wiles, to carry on his designe, as it is, 2 *Cor.* 11. 3. and it is called, *Eph.* 4. 14. *a cunning craftinesse, whereby they lye in wait to deceive*, Yet seing we ought not to be ignorant of his devices, 2 *Cor.* 2. 11. We shall gather somethings from Scripture, that may be usefull to arm us against the same: and to take up his way the better, we may consider, 1. The instruments which he chooseth. 2. The method that he keepeth in tempting by them. 3. The means which he useth, or common places from which he draweth his arguments. 4. The manner how these are carryed on.

CHAP. VI.

By what means, and how Satan drives on this plague among people.

1. SAtan doth not act in this design immediately, nor doth he act indifferently by any instrument, but he hath his special *ministers*, as it were, set apart for that end, as the Apostle speaketh 2 *Cor.* 11. 15. He hath many subjects indeed, but beside these, he hath some special *ministers* for this designe, as our blessed Lord Jesus hath Ministers specially set apart in His Kingdom. Concerning which we may observe, 1. That he employeth some more eminently to traffique, as it were, in this very imployment, who, by compassing sea and land, and travelling to and fro, may further his designe, such were these who were called false Apostles, 2 *Cor.* 11. 13. *Revel.* 2. 3. and in the history of the *Acts* we will find such coming from one place to another, as from *Jerusalem* to *Antioch*, *Act.* 15. and elsewhere, purposly to spread their errours, as the Apostles did travel for preaching the truth. 2. He hath particular instruments, preaching

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ing in particular places, that are, as it were, his ministers of such and such bounds, as in the place cited. 3. Beside these, he hath stickling underhand-dealers, who, not appearing openly, yet creep into houses; and ordinarily he hath some women, who are specially employed in this, as he hath *Jezebel* the Propheteſſe in the Church of *Thyatira*, Rev. 2. and such he had in the primitive heresies, particularly one of the Montanists, because such are often vehement in what they are engaged in, and have access to pervert and seduce, which others cannot easily have; his assisting of them withall to speak sometimes to the admiration of others, seemeth more wonderful like. 4. Whom ever he maketh use of, they are someway fitted (to say so) for the designs they are employed in, although their manner of carrying on these designes may be diverse, as experience showeth.

What is his method of proceeding.

2. In the method which he followeth, we will find this progresse, 1. He setteth himself by all means to make the Ministers of the truth odious and contemptible, and that either by crying down a Ministery altogether, or making all indifferently to be Ministers, which is, upon the matter, one with the former: this was *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abirams* fault, *Numb.* 16. which is applied to corrupt teachers, *Jude* 11. or if that fail, he endeavoureth to make their persons odious, who are in the station: thus we see, even *Paul* is traduced by the false teachers of *Corinth* and *Galatia*. The reason of this, is, 1. because Ministers are appointed, and gifts are given to men by Jesus Christ, purposely to guard the Church from being tossed to and fro with corrupt Doctrine, by the sleight of men, as it is *Ephes.* 4. 11, 12, 13, 14. that he may therefore have the more easily his will, he endeavoureth to bring the Watchmen in suspicion, and to render them useless. 2. Teachers of the truth, and corrupt teachers cannot both together have peoples affection, and no teacher readily will have

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weight, if he have not affection from his hearers: Therefore he by all means endeavours to traduce Ministers, that by excluding them, he may make way for his Emissaries, for they are like corrivall wooers suiting the same Bride, So that both cannot have her affection, to this purpose is the Apostles word, *Gal.* 4. 17. they zealously affect you, but not well, yea, *they would exclude you*; it is in the Originall, and on the Margent, they would *exclude us*, (that is, the true Apostles) *that you might affect them.* And considering the great accesse that the devil hath to destroy, when once Ministers are in contempt, it is no marvell he begin at the removall of this impediment out of his way; and seing he attempted this against the great Apostle *Paul*, so often and frequently, it cannot be thought strange that he seek to defame others.

How he prosecuteth it. If it be enquired how he prosecuteth this? We may observe these particular wayes; As, 1. Although he question not a Ministery in the general. Yet he wakeneth Questions, 1. concerning the calling of such and such men, if they be duly called Ministers or not; thus *Paul's* Apostleship is questioned, because he had not conversed with the Lord; and for this cause he is put, in the Epistles to the *Corinthians* and *Galatians*, so largely to vindicate his Calling and Apostleship, and to produce, as it were, not only his Commission, but the Seal thereof also, particularly, 2 *Cor.* 3. 2, 3. and the occasion thereof is expressed, 2 *Cor.* 13. 3. *since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me.* 2. He endeavoureth the discrediting of their gifts, as if the matter spoken by them were common, their expressions mean, and their carriage base and contemptible, as we may see in the instance of that same great Apostle *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 1. and 11. 6. he is called rude in speech. 3. This is especially by comparing them with the fair shew of corrupt teachers in their flourishing, spiritual, ravishing-like discourses, which are by many counted mysteries, and are called

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called *depths*, *Revel.* 2. 24. The Lord indeed calleth them *depths of Satan*, but it is not to be thought that they themselves meaned so, who yet are said to give them the name of *depths*; sometimes unconceivable non-sense, will be admired, and plain truths and duty despised. 4. They cry-up their revelations and spiritual attainments in an immediate manner beyond what is in the Ministers of Christ: Therefore, 2 *Cor.* 11.12. *Paul* is put to compare himself with them, and particularly in revelations and singular manifestations of God to him. 5. They endeavour to make the Ministers of Christ to be esteemed covetous, self-seekers, earthly-minded, and such like, because of their taking wages to preach the Gospel, as if they were making a prey of the people, which is often objected to the Apostle, and answered by him in these Epistles to the *Corinthians*. 6. When evidences fail, then they raise suspicions of Ministers craftiness and underhand dealing, as if in every thing they were seeking their gain, as that Apostle answereth it, 2 *Cor.* 12. 16, 17. 7. Whatever the Ministers carriage be, they lie in wait to traduce it, if he be more meek and familiar in his conversing, they say he is a carnal man, a friend and lover of sinners and corrupt men, as was said of our blessed Lord; if he be more austere in checking their faults, or retired in shunning their company, he is called intolerable and devilishly proud, as was imputed to *John*; if he take wages or gifts, he is accounted greedy and covetous; if he refuse and abstain, it is expounded to be want of love and respect to them, as was also said of *Paul* when he continued firm in his former resolution, 2 *Cor.* 11.10, 11. 8. They are usually counted proud, exalters of themselves above, and despisers of, the people, and to take too much on them to the prejudice of the Flock, whose liberty and priviledges corrupt teachers ordinarily pretend to vindicate against Ministers tyrannous encroachments (as they say) This was pretended by *Korah*, *Dathan*, and

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and *Abiram* against *Aaron*, and was revived and followed in the primitive times by these corupters, spoken of, *Jude* 11. 9. They endeavour to have the people suspecting the Ministers love to them, as 2 *Cor.* 11.11. yea, that all his freedom to them, and his speaking against their faults and errours is bitternesse, railing, and the like, which the Apostle toucheth, *Gal.* 4.16. *Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?* 10. It is ordinary to charge Ministers with lightnesse and changeablnesse, and that therefore much weight is not to be laid on them, for, they think one thing this year, (say they) and alter the next, when yet, it may be, edification hath moved them in such a change; this hath been imputed to *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 1.17. purposedly to make his word to have little weight, and it is no marvell that that same way be followed in reference to others. For this end also, where there is any personal fault in a Minister, it is not past over but exceedingly aggreaged; yea, though it hath been in his youth, before his conversion or entry into the Ministery, it is not forgotten, if it may serve to defame the holy Calling: For preventing of this, it is required of Ministers, that they be of *good report*, even among those that are without; and it is like the false apostles spaired not to upbraid *Paul* with his former conversation and persecution. 11. Differences of judgement and divisions among Ministers, are much made use of for that end, even sometimes when they are but apparent: Thus *Paul* is said to preach another doctrine, by the false teachers, than those at *Jerusalem* did, whereupon he is often put to show the harmony that was betwixt them, as particularly in the Epistle to the *Galatians*; And *Josephus* marketh, that *Ahab's* false teachers did oppose *Elias* his Prophecy (wherein it is said that dogs should lick *Ahab's* bloud at *Jezreel*) to *Micajah*, who said he should die at *Ramoth-gilead*; Also, that others did harden *Zedekia*, by this that *Ezekiel* said, that he should not see *Babylon*, and

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that *Jeremiah* said he should be carried thereto; which they took to be contrary, and did thereby seek to defame the Prophets, and to weaken the esteem of their Prophecies; and though there was no real difference there, yet it sheweth how, and to what end, they lie in wait to aggreage the differences of God's Servants, though but apparent, which should make Ministers carefully avoid those things. Again, secondly, Though at first, principal truths are not altogether and plainly denied, Yet by degrees he doth engage many. 1. To reject some lesse fundamentall truths concerning Government, communion with others in the Ordinances, and such like. 2. He draweth them to separate in practice from the fellowship of others, under the pretext of more purity and spiritualnesse; this seems to be exprest by *Jude*, v. 19. *These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit*, although it is insinuated that they did pretend to it: And indeed this way was followed in the first heresies, which began at small things, as those of the *Novatians, Donatists, &c.* who at first only separated to eschew the impurity of promiscuous communion. 3. He cometh then to quarrel expressions that are used by the Orthodox, and to commend, as it were, a new kind of language; for which cause, the Apostle commendeth the holding fast the form of sound words, 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. And these corrupt teachers are said to speak *great swelling words of vanity*, and to have expressions much more weighty like, than what formerly hath been used, *Jude* 16. Thus the *Arians* will not admit the word ὁμοούσιον, or *consubstantial*, and a Council must be called to lay by that: and so they come to question, in the next place, the Truth it self, alleaging men are too confident to determine such things, It's not clear, much may be said against it, and such like; whereby, under pretext of doubting, they endeavour to awake scruples in others, that they may be disposed the more to admit of their resolutions.

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tions. 4. Absurdities are laid down as consequences that follow upon Truths; and thus the doctrine of Providence, Election and Reprobation, &c. are loaded with horrible consequences and absurdities, pretended to follow on them, and so the doctrine of Gods absolute Soveraignity, and Justification by free grace, were loaded in the primitive times, as if thereby *Paul* had taught that men might do evil that good might come of it; That the Law was wholly made void; That men might sin securely, because grace did so much the more abound, as in the second, third, and sixth Chapters of the Epistle to the *Romans*, is clear. 5. He endeavoureth to diminish mens hatred and zeal against errours and the most absurd opinions, that he may either obtain some actual toleration to them, or, at least, keep off such hard constructions of them; for, if that be gained at first, although errour get not a direct approbation, yet a great point is gained, if he can get some to tolerate, and others to hear: This is condemned in the Church of *Thyatira*, that the Officers suffered *Jezebel* to teach, and that the people, who are there called Christ's servants, did countenance and hear her; And it seems something of this was in *Corinth*, which maketh the Apostle say, that *evil communication corrupteth good manners*, and that therefore men should not become cold in reference to errour, although they be not tainted with it, 1 *Cor.* 15, 33. And upon this ground the most grosse Hereticks of old and of late, as *Socinians*, *Arminians*, those of the *Family of Love*, and others of that kind, have maintained a liberty in propheſying a problematicknesse in the main truths of the Gospel, and a toleration in matters of doctrine, &c. as principles subservient to their design. 6. He proceedeth then to have the persons of such as are tainted with errour, much beloved and esteemed of by others, that they may be the more familiar accesse to converse with them, and the readier disposition to receive their lea-

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ven from them: this he doth sometimes by making mens gifts in their quickneſſe and nimbleneſſe to be commended, sometimes by the seeming gravity, austerity and holineſſe of their carriage, for which cause they are said to be *wolves in sheeps cloathing*, *Mat.* 7. and he is said to transform himself into an angel of light, and his ministers into the ministers of Christ, 2 *Cor.* 11. 14. Sometimes by flattery, and seeming sympathy and affection, for which the lying Prophet is called the *tail*; and if it were by no other mean, he doth it by their reproaching of honeſt and faithfull Ministers, and, it may be, hitting upon some real ills among them, which is often but too too pleasing to the carnall humour of the generality of people, as in the instances formerly given is clear. Lastly, when this is obtained, then there is easie acceſſe to make the most groſſe Doctrines and deluſions to be drunken in, which at first would have been abhorred: by these degrees Antichrists deluſion came to its height, and by such steps, some, that at first only separated from the *Novatians* and *Donatists*, came at last to that height of deluſion, as to become *Circumcellians* (a strange wild kind of deluſion) *Anthropomorphits*, and such like.

The means and arguments that are used to carry on this design.

3. The means and arguments that are used to carry on this deluſion, are to be observed, which are these or such like. 1. The carriage and converſation of the abetters thereof, is made very plauſible, fair and approveable-like, that there may be no suſpicion of the devils influence on such a work; Therefore they are said to be transformed into the Ministers of Christ; thus the Phariſees make long prayers, live austerely, &c. thereby to gain reputation to their traditions: for, the devil would mar all his design, if he did not look like an Angel of light: yea, there will be much seeming like zeal, patience and suffering in such, as may be gathered from 2 *Cor.* 11. 23. and in experience it will be found, that the most groſſe Hereticks in doctrine,

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ctrine, have had (at least for a long time) a great shew of holinesse before others, as might be instanced in the greatest deluders.

2. It is usefull in this design, to have some that have Church-power, and beareth the name of *Officers*, engaged, that they may come in, not under the name of Ministers of Satan, but as it is, 2 *Cor.* 11. 23. as Ministers of Christ; and therefore, if no ordinary call can be alleged by them, they readily disclaime all such, and yet pretend a calling to be Preachers of Christ, of his Gospel, and such like: as we may see by these false teachers of old, who called themselves Apostles and Propheteses, as having some extraordinary call from God, thereby making way for their delusions.

3. They follow their designs under a pretext of advancing holinesse and spirituality, to a higher degree, and of having a more humble way of living, and of being a further length in high attainments, than other men can win at, or are capable of: thus some are outwardly despisers of all pride, and of giving respect to men, and that as the Apostle saith, *Col.* 2. 18. by a sort of voluntary humility, and intruding upon things which they have not seen, casting, in the mean time, at common and plain truths.

A 4. mean, is, the pleasing of ears and itching humours, with great swelling words, new notions, and large discourses of non-sense, delivered with great confidence, when as the Apostle saith, 1 *Tim.* 1. 7. They know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm, yet often such discourses are sublime mysteries to the ignorant, and such as loath the simple truth.

5. They make use of a pretext of good will and advantage to these that they speak unto, as it is, *Rom.* 16. 18. by good words and fair speaches they deceive the simple, and by pretending to wish their souls well, and to pity their blindnesse and hazard they are in, they creep into their houses and affecti-

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ons, 2 *Tim.* 3. 6. and lead simple persons captive; By this pretext, the serpent beguiled *Eve* at the first, promising some advantage by hearkening to him, and this way is followed by corrupt teachers still, as it is, 2 *Cor.* 11. 3.

6. Sometimes there is much more pretended strictnesse, especially in outward things: thus some of old added the observation of *Moses* Law to the Gospel, as if that were a more perfect and strict way, and upon this ground have so many traditions been brought in into the Church.

7. There is a pretending to more Christian liberty and freedom from the bondage of Ordinances of whatever sort, so as men must not be tyed to hear preachings, keep Sabbaths, Pray, Praise and such like, which are (say they) but formes and burthens to Saints, and unbecoming that freedom and spiritualnesse that grown Believers should have. Thus such deceivers and these that are deceived with them, are said to promise liberty to whomsoever they propose their delusions, while in the mean time all of them are made servants to corruption.

8. There is great pretending to know Christs mind, and confident alleaging of the writings of His Apostles, and that in a seeming convincing way: Thus, 2. *Thess.* 2. 2. there are mentioned Spirit, Word and Letter, as proceeding from *Paul*, whenas he himself is disclaiming such interpretations as they did put on him.

9. They use to alleage the authority of men, and to oppose such to these who oppose their errours: thus the Pharisees alleaged *Moses*, and the *Nicolaitans Nicolas*; and it is like, the false apostles that came from *Jerusalem*, did oppose other Apostles authority to *Pauls*, as if they had preached nothing but what they preached in *Jerusalem*; and very often the infirmities of some great men, are stumbled upon, and made arguments against truth.

10. Many

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10. Many are stirred up to vent queries and captitious questions, (as often the Pharisees did, by sending their emissaries to Christ) that some advantage may be gotten that way, and these that are for truth entangled.

11. Sometimes he maketh use of humane reason, and cryeth down every thing that seemeth not consonant to it: upon which ground the resurrection was denied by the Sadduces, and some of the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* 15. and the most fundamentall truths of the Gospel, are by the *Socinians* and others unto this day. Sometimes again, all use of reason, learning or prudence is disclaimed; in which respect, such men are called unreasonable, 2 *Thes.* 3. and bruit beasts, 2 *Pet.* 2. and *Jude*, 10.

12. They endeavour by all means to carry the favour of the civil Magistrates, and to have Ministers especially such as are zealous against them, made hatefull and suspected unto them, and the gaining of this hath a double advantage with it to their cause, as it strengtheneth it, and weakeneth the truth: this we see the false Prophets did of old, 1 *King.* 22. *Jer.* 26. *Amos* 7. 10. and so endeavoured the Scribes and Pharisees to engage the Romans against Christ, and against His Apostles; So also did the *Arrians* and other Hereticks, and so hath Antichrists emissaries ever endeavoured to stir up civil Magistrates against faithfull Ministers, as most hatefull persons: This they carry on by such like means. 1. They pretend to give the Magistrates more submission, and charge faithfull Ministers with sleighting of their authority, for they know this to be a thing well pleasing to Magistrates: Thus the faithfulnesse of honest Ministers is accounted disobedience and hatred, and the lying flattery of such is given out for respect and obedience, so was it in the case of *Micajah*. 2. They cry out upon faithfull Ministers, as factious and turners of the world upside-down, sowers of sedition, as

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Acts 24. 5. troublers of the peace, who do keep the people in a continuall stir, and crosse their designs, and mar the absoluteness of Magistracy; So, *Elijah* is counted an enemy to *Ahab*, and a troubler of *Israel*. 3. They vent many groundlesse calumnies against them, as if they were guilty of many grosse evils; Thus *Athanasius* and many others were charged by the *Arians*, as murderers and adulterers, and some pretended proofs made thereof: Yea, it was alleaged to *Constantine*, that *Athanasius* had medled with civil matters (which was derogatory to his authority) by inhibiting all Corns to be exported from *Egypt*. 4. They bring the Magistrates in tops with them, by appellations from Church-judicatories to them, and seeming to plead an absoluteness to Magistrates in things Ecclesiastick; Thus Hereticks in all times have sheltered themselves under this pretext, till Magistrates declared against them, and then they cast them off also, as of late in the practices of the *Socinians* and *Arminians* hath been made out. 5. They represent them to Magistrates as unsufferable, in respect of their plain threatnings, and that such are not to be endured so to affront Authority, and to weaken these that professe so much to respect the same; thus *Amos* is represented, chap. 7. 10. by *Amaziah* Priest of Bethel, and often *Jeremiah* is so by the false Prophets in his time. 6. They propose faithfull Ministers as unwarrantably arrogating a kind of infallibility to themselves, and thereby derogating from all others; so is that word, 1 *King.* 22. *What way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to you?* and by a certain audacious confidence, seek, as it were, to put out faithfull Ministers as despicable men, not worthy to be credited, as in the case cited; and *Jer.* 28. and elsewhere, and often by such means their insinuations and flatteries do exceedingly prevail for promoving their designs. *Augustine* chargeth the *Donatists* with this, that in their application to *Julian*, they used this phrase, *quoniam*

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apud te solum justitia habet locum: and this was (saith he) when they knew he was an apostat, *Epist.* 48.

The manner how this design is carried on.

The last thing in this, is the manner how this design is carried on by such corrupt teachers, which is not alway the same in all, and may in part be collected from what is said; Yet we may name these particulars. 1. It is covertly and subtilly done, therefore they creep in with insinuations, looking far otherwise than they are. 2. It is done hypocritically, 1 *Tim.* 4. *They speak lies in hypocrisie*, and do pretend both to be Religious and friends to Religion and Truth, while they do so. 3. It is done sometimes vehemently, as it were knocking with force at hearts, So it shaketh the hearet by the bigness of words, peremptorinesse of threathings, confidence of Assertions, and vehemency in the manner, so that it hath (as the Scripture saith) a strength and power with it, and therefore is compared to a spait or flood, *Rev.* 12. and is called strong delusion, 2 *Thess.* 2. 4. This is done with all diligence, compassing sea and land, leaving no means unessayed. And, 5. with a kind of seeming simplicity, zeal and singlenesse, and with many professions thereof, as may be gathered from the instances formerly given; and from *Gal.* 4. 17. where it is said, they zealously affect you, but not well, and from *Rom.* 10. 2. 6. This is done with great boldnesse, which appeareth, 1. In pretending to eschew no suffering, or to fear no hazard that may follow on their opinion, if it were to give their body to be brunt, and, it may be, doing much in this. 2. It may be stuck to by them at their sicknesse, even in their death beds, as it is not unlike it was with *Jezebel* and some of her followers, *Rev.* 2. 21, 22. for, neither is the devil silenced, nor corruptions removed by sicknesse or death. 3. It appeareth in confident undertaking to dispute with any; yea, oftentimes seeking occasion of that: Thus the *Libertines* arise and dispute with *Stephen*, *Acts* 6. and it is like, the false teachers of *Corinth*

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Corinth, that said of *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 10. that his bodily presence was weak, and his speach contemptible, would not have declined to have disputed even with him. 4. It kythes in their confident trusting to their own judgements, and their undervaluing of all others. 5. It appeareth in confident asserting of any thing, and not only in the reproaching of any private person, but of Officers and Ordinances, 2 *Pet.* 2. 10. they are not affraid to speak evil of dignities.

What accession a people may have to the bringing of this plague upon themselves.

By these considerations, we may in part see how delusion cometh to such strength and height, in respect of these who carry on this corrupt doctrine. We come now to consider a third thing, to wit, What accession is from the peoples side for the promoving thereof, which we may draw to these three. 1. There is something sinfull in a peoples former carriage, whereby delusion is exceedingly strengthened against them, when it cometh as a just plague for former miscarriages; But of those sins we have already spoken.

2. A peoples present temper, or rather distemper, may have much influence on this, and exceedingly dispose them for, and cast them open to, the temptation. As, first, lightnesse of mind, unsettlednesse in the truth; these the Scripture calleth unstable souls, 2 *Pet.* 2. 14. 2. There is an itching new-fangle humour, desirous of some new thing, and loathing simple Doctrine, as it is, 2 *Tim.* 4. 3. 3. There is too great facility in believing the spirits, without trying of them, which its like hath been in *Galatia*, whereby they were soon drawn away to another Gospel, and to credit some insinuaters foolishly, as; chap. 1. 6. and 3. 1. 4. A secure carnall frame, wanting exercise of conscience, is dangerous. So are also proud presumptuous persons, (that have an high esteem of themselves, and such as are self-willed, who are mentioned, 2 *Pet.* 2. 10.) in great hazard of this: The temptation will also sometimes take advantage of

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some persons who are jumbled in mind, and under some weight and heavinesse, and come in under pretext of remedying the same; many such distempers there are, whereof some may be gathered from what is said of the sinfull causes that procure this, because that which doth meritoriously deserve to be so punished, proveth often also a disposing mids for receiving of the tentation; But we forbear.

3. People often by their carriage do promove this plague of delusion upon themselves, casting themselves in the snare, 1. By needlesse familiar conversing with such persons. 2. Going to hear them. 3. Purchasing or reading their books. 4. Hazarding to entertain their doubts, and to prosecute their arguments and questions, to plead for their opinions, and such like, shunning withall of such means and wayes as might recover them, and entertaining prejudice at such as would aim thereat, and such like, whereby that of the Prophet is verified, *The prophets teach lies, and my people love to have it so.* Now, if all these be put together, can it be thought strange to see the greatest delusion prevail? We have been the longer on these, not only for the confirming of that truth, but for drawing together in some short view, a little map, as it were, of these wayes, whereby the devil driveth on his design by the cunning craft of these that lye in wait to deceive.

CHAP. VII.

What is called-for as duty in such a case.

IT resteth now that we should consider what is duty in such a time, or case, when delusion in lesse or more doth prevail, or is very like to prevail?

It cannot be denied, but that something is called-for, and is necessary where the danger is so great; and also it is evident, that something more than ordi-

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nary is necessary, because the ill is more than ordinary. The remedy therefore must be proportionable and timous; for, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, *Gal.* 5. 8. And experience proveth, that such ills do fret and corrupt, as doth a gangrene, 2 *Tim.* 2. 17. The difficulty is in determining what is to be done, wherein, not only the piety, zeal and conscience of men will have exercise, but also their prudence and parts.

The loosing of this question will relate to three ranks of men. 1. To Church-officers, especially to Ministers. 2. To Magistrates. 3. To people in private stations. Yet before we positively say any thing, We shall, 1. shew what is not the remedy called-for. 2. We shall shew what is called-for, but is not sufficient. 3. What seemeth to be called-for as sufficient.

As to the first, There are two extremities to be shunned, which we shall lay down in two Assertions.

What is not the proper remedy or duty in such a case.

Assert. 1. An absolute and unlimitted forbearance and toleration of all errours, and of the promoters thereof, is not the due remedy that is called-for in such a time, in reference to such evils. This, I suppose is clear, if there were no more in Scripture than what is comprehended in these Epistles, *Rev.* 2. and 3. For, 1. the Angel of *Ephesus* is commended, chap. 2. 2. that he could not *bear* or endure them that were evil, to wit, the false Apostles: This enduring then cannot be the duty, seing Christ commendeth the contrary. 2. He doth reprove *Pergamos*, ver. 14. because they *had* such amongst them that held the doctrine of *Balaam*, that is, because they suffered them. And, 3. this is clearly expressed in the Epistle to *Thyatira*, ver. 20. I have a few things against thee, because thou *sufferest* that woman *Jezebel* to teach and seduce My servants. There can be nothing more clear than this; and it is the more observable, that this not-forbearing is commended in *Ephesus*, where

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things in their own particular condition are not altogether right; and the other Churches are reproved for neglect of this, even when their own particular conditions are right. Which sheweth, That the Lord loveth zeal against such scandals, and abhorreth forbearance of them. What was formerly said in the Doctrine, What is clear in the practice of Scripture, both in examples and commands that are given therein in reference to this, and what may be further said in the positive part of this direction, will clear this.

And whatever humane prudence and carnal fainting would suggest concerning such a way, as that it were fittest to deal with persons in such a distemper, no otherwayes than absolutely to forbear them, at least, so far as relateth to these distempers as such; yet it is clear, this is not Gods Ordinance so to do, nor the remedy that is by Him appointed: And therefore there is no promise by which we may expect a blessing to it, although sometimes the Lord, who is absolutely Soveraign, may condescend without any means, to dry up and bound a floud of errour, even when men are guilty of forbearing; The effect is not to be attributed to mens sinfull forbearance, but to Gods gracious condescendence.

Extreams to be of shewed

Assert. 2. We say on the other hand, That an indifferent, rigid, equal pursuing, or not enduring of every thing that is an errour, or of every person who may be in some measure tainted, is not the suitable remedy or duty that is called-for in reference to such a case. For, as neither all errours, nor all persons are alike, So neither is the same way at all times to be followed, because, what may be edifying in one case, may be destructive in another. And as therefore there is prudent difference to be made, in reference to scandals in practice, and persons in respect of different scandals, yea, even of different tempers are diversly to be dealt with, So is it also to be here. Men

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Men are to walk, as they may most probably attain the great end, *edification*, which ought to be the scope in this, as in all other Ordinances: And therefore there can be no peremptory rule concluded, that will meet all cases and persons, as hath been said: We see even the Apostles putting difference between persons and scandals, according to the severall cases; for, sometimes they Excommunicate, as in the instance of *Hymeneus* and *Phyletus*, sometimes they instruct doctrinally, as *Paul* doth the Church-members of *Corinth* and *Galatia*; others he threateneth, and yet doth not actually Sentence them, as he doth false teachers in these Churches: Sometimes again, no particular Apostle alone, doth decide the question (although doctrinally they might) but there is a Synod called judicially and authoritatively, to decide the same, as, *Act.* 15.

The reason of the 1. is, because these errours of *Hymeneus* and *Phyletus*, were of themselves grosse, destroying the faith, and obstinately and blasphemously adhered to. 2. He instructeth and expostulateth with the people of *Corinth*, and proceedeth not to the highest Censure, 1. Because they were not seducers, but were seduced by others. 2. They could not be accounted obstinate, but might be thought to have sinned of infirmity, Therefore more gentle and soft means are to be applied for reclaiming of them. 3. They were a numerous body, and therefore Excommunication or cutting off, could not be expected to attain its end. 4. They were in a present distemper, questioning the Apostles authority; he seeketh rather therefore to be again acknowledged by them, that so both his word and his rod might have weight, whereas if he had smitten in their distemper, they had rather broken off further from their subjection. These are clear, beside what may be said of the nature of the scandal or errour.

3. He threateneth the corrupt teachers with off-

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cutting, because they were leaders and seducers, and so deserved to be more severely dealt with, than those that were seduced by them, although, possibly, as drunk with these same errours: Yet, though he threaten, He doth spare for a time to strike, not out of any respect to those corrupt teachers, or from any connivance at their errour, but out of respect to the poor seduced people, for whose edification *Paul* forbare, even when the weapons were in readinesse to avenge all disobedience; he abstained, I say, because such people having a prejudice at him, and being bewitched by these teachers, might more readily in that distemper have cleaved unto them, and have forsaken *Paul*, which would have proven more destructive to them; he seeketh therefore, first, to have their obedience manifested, and so not only forbeareth them, but even those corrupt teachers, for a time, for the peoples edifying, as may be gathered from 2 *Cor.* 10. 6. and chap. 12. v. 19.

Lastly, I said, Sometimes Synods or Councils are called, as in that place, *Act.* 15. which in other cases we find not, 1. Because then that errour was new, and it's like wanted not its own respect from many of the Church, Therefore a Council of Officers joyned together to decide it, which is not necessary again, after that decision is past; but Ministers are doctrinally and by discipline to maintain the same, as we see *Paul* doth maintain, in the Epistles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, the conclusion of the former Synod. 2. This Synod is convocned not for want of light (for, any of the Apostles, as such, were infallibly inspired to decide in the same, and had in their preachings decided it) but it is to make it have the more weight with others, and therein to be a precedent to us. 3. That was a spreading errour, which did not affect one place only, but many Churches; and it's like that many Believers were in hazard to be shaken therewith: Therefore the most weighty remedy

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remedy is called-for. 4. There was need now, not only of light to decide the doctrinal things, but there was also need of directions for helping folks how to carry in reference to such times, so as to eschew the snare of errour on the one hand, and of giving offence upon the other, as we may see by the decrees of that Synod: Therefore in such cases, not only would men severally endeavour the duty of their stations, but they would joyntly concur and meet judicially, or extrajudicially, as occasion calleth, to deliberate and consult in these things of so great and common concernment: for, seing the Church is one city, and one lump, a little fire may hazard all, and a little leaven corrupt all, and unwatchfulnesse at one part, or post, may let in enemies to destroy all. It is needfull therefore, that in some cases there be mutual concurrence, although it be not necessary at all times to have a judicial meeting, nor at any time is a present duty to be suspended by any person, if no such meeting can be had. What is said, doth demonstrat that there is a difference to be made in reference to errours, persons and cases.

CHAP. VIII.

When some errours are to be forborn.

IF it should be enquired, how this difference is to be made? or, how it may be known when without guilt there may be some forbearance, and when not? *Answ.* This is indeed difficult, and we will not undertake in particulars either to be satisfying or peremptory; yet we supose the considering of these generall *Distinctions* will be helpfull, and the application of them necessary, in this case. 1. We would distinguish betwixt some errours and scandals and others, and that both in respect of their grosnesse and evidence: for, some errours are, as Peter calleth

Some necessary and usefull distinctions.

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calleth them, 2 *Pet.* 2.1,2. pernicious and damnable, as striking against the special Truths of the Word of God, or inferring grosse practices with them, as this of the *Nicolaitans* did, and hazarding the souls of the maintainers of them, not as other sins of infirmity, but in respect of the principles which they imply; and of this sort are many both errours and practices. Again, Other things may be errours, that are contrary to Truth, but not destructive unto, nor altogether inconsistent with, the foundation, but such a thing, as possibly many true Saints may be taken with, and yet have accesse to God and may enter Heaven, although they should die in that opinion; of which sort are many things that are debated amongst orthodox Divines; and indeed there is nothing but it hath a truth or a falshood in it, yet are not all of equal necessity and weight. Of the first sort was that errour, which the false apostles endeavoured to bring-in, that is, the adding of the practice of the ceremonial Law to Christ in justification, and the mixing-in of works moral and ceremonial therein, as from the Epistle to the *Romans* and *Galatians* may be gathered. Of the second kind, was the debate for meats and other things, mentioned, *Rom.* 14. and in the Epistles to the *Corinthians*. Of the first, we say, there ought to be no tolerance, Therefore the Lord doth here reprove it; and in the Epistles to the *Romans* and *Corinthians*, *Paul* doth plainly and powerfully refute them and reprove them, even when it was exceeding ill taken, and they were ready to count him an enemy, because he told them the truth, *Gal.* 4. Yet will he not forbear, because a little leaven of that sort will leaven the whole lump, and hazard the making of his labour among them to be in vain.

Of the second sort, we say, That there is a moderation called-for in it, and Ministers are not alwayes called either doctrinally, or by Discipline, judicially to reprove or censure them: I will not say but sometimes

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times it may be meet to discover the least errour, and it may be by circumstances so aggreged, that it may be needfull judicially to take notice of it, as when it's involved with offence and ready to breed Schism or Scandal, or in such like cases (in which respect there are some things mentioned in the decree, *Act.* 15. which are not very material in themselves, as the eating of things strangled) yet, we say, it is not simply and alwayes necessary for Ministers to presse at the convincing of all who maintain something different from truth, or which is supposed to be so by them, if it be of things extra-fundamental, or, which have not direct or palpable influence upon the violating of faith, or corrupting of manners, much lesse to censure for the maintaining of it. For, it is not of such that these Epistles speak: And we see, *Rom.* 14. and in the Epistles to the *Corinthians*, in the debate about meats and eating of things sacrificed to idols, and such like, wherein though there was still a right side and a wrong, yet doth he rather presse the forbearing of these debates, than the dipping into them, not astricting men alwayes to follow this or that, providing it be done without breach of unity and charity. Hence it is, that although there be somethings he will give no forbearance unto, but authoritatively and ministerially he decideth in them, yet in the same Epistles there is something amongst the Saints that he seeketh rather to heal, and to obtain mutuall forbearance in, than peremptorily to decide. See *Rom.* 14. 1 *Cor.* 8. 2, 3, *&c. Phil.* 2. 3.

2. There are some truths and practices evident, which by the light of the Word may be solidly demonstrated to an impartiall and unbyassed searcher; and some contrary errours and scandals, that are at the first obvious (and, it may be, even to a naturall conscience) to be such, so that although men would use tergiversations, and say as *Hymeneus* and *Philetus* did, 2 *Tim.* 2. 17. that there were no resurrection to come,

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come, because the Scripture speaketh of a spirituall resurrection, which in the Believer is passed already. And although many deluded persons, who will not admit of distinctions according to reason, in such a case, may be drawn away with them, and adhere still to them; yet are the things demonstrable to these that are even but of ordinary reach, by sound grounds from the Scripture, and that convincingly: Other things, again, may be truths, and there may be to some persons a possibility of reaching them by many consequences from Scripture, yet are they not so clear to many; whereupon it is, that men, yea, even learned and godly men, do differ in their apprehensions of several truths, the Lord so thinking good to bridle mens humours and to let us see the necessity of humility and soberness, and this may be in the meanest-like things; these the Apostle, *Rom.* 14. 1. calleth *doubtfull disputations*, as being things wherein too many, at least there is not such evidence attainable as to stay the minds of ordinary people, or to refute the contrary assertions of any adversary, of which are Genealogies, and other things that *Paul* mentioneth to *Timothy*, 1 *Tim.* 1.4. and calleth them *endlesse*, because there is no setled ground to rest on, but one question doth generate another; and so the principle that must be laid down for clearing such a thing to one, is also disputable to another as the thing it self is, and men know but in part, even those that are eminent, so that an universal harmony in these cannot well be expected: In reference to this, we say, That greater peremptorinesse is required in the first sort than in the second, wherein, by reason of the practice of the Apostles in Scripture, yea, and of necessity there is a forbearance requisit, Yet we would beware of partiality in accounting truths, either evident or disputable, as men (according as they are judged) are too apt to do; it is better therefore to try these by the common account that the Godly and Learned have had

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had in all times of such truthes, if there hath been still difference, and yet moderation in these differences; Nor would this be tryed onely by an age or time (wherein a point may be more agitate than at another time) but more generally, especially when the arguments on either side want that evidence that the reasons brought for other truths have, and are so fully set down in Scripture, That amongst godly and learned men in all ages there hath been a generall consent.

Again, 3. We would distinguish betwixt errours and the consequents of them, or practices following thereupon; there may be somethings truly errours that may and should be forborn in themselves, yet their consequents ought not to be forborn, and this also may be at one time, and in one Church more necessary to be adverted to, than in another, because consequents of schism, faction, division, &c. may sometimes follow on the meanest errours. And seing these are alwayes enemies to edification, even when they arise from the least ground, they are never absolutly to be forborn; for, to say, I am of *Paul*, and I am of *Apollos*, and for one to think such a man a better Preacher than an other, seemeth to be no great matter; yet when it beginneth to rent them, and to make factions in *Corinth*, it is not to be forborn, but to be reproved: And in the former difference of meats, the Apostle condemneth alwayes the offence and Schism that followed on it, although he did not peremptorily decide any thing as to mens practices, or censure for the opinion it self: thus one might think the first day of the week not to be *Jure Divino*, and this might possibly be forborn, But if he were pressing the change of it, and refusing to observe it, or venting it to offend others, that were intolerable; thus the differences and errours concerning Church-government by Bishops, and in the Congregational way, may, we conceive, in themselves be forborn in persons where they are not vented to the shaking

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shaking and drawing away of others; but if pressed in practice, to the renting of a Church, and preferred or equalled to the true Government that is established by the Word, in that case they are not to be forborn, because then truth is to be vindicated, and obstructions to edification in the renting or distracting of a Church to be removed, and at one time more than at another, as such an offence doth waken a Schism, and disturb order and Union in one Church or at one time more than another: hence we see, *Acts* 15. somethings are put in that decree in reference to that time, only for preventing of Schism and Scandal, while the doctrine of the abolition of the ceremoniall Law was not so clear; And somethings were forborn amongst the Gentiles, which were not so amongst the Jews for a time, as circumcision and all the ceremonies of the Law, which yet for a time the Jews observed; and experience and reason make the thing clear, according to that of *Paul*, *To the Jews I became as a Jew, and I became all things to all men, &c.* which is not to show his counterfeiting, or his dallying in any necessary thing, but the squaring of his practice in lawfull things according to the several cases of these he had to do with, which will be applicable both to persons and Churches.

4. We would distinguish betwixt things, and persons; Sometimes it will be meet to censure a fault or errour in persons, as *Paul* doth in the *Corinthians* and *Galatians*, and yet it not be fit to censure the persons; he doth indeed threaten these, but doth forbear, least thereby he should have hurt more by a subsequent and following rent, than by his stroak he had cured. So also are persons to be distinguished, some whereof only erre, but others teach others so; and in that respect are Hereticks and Schismaticks, which, had that been their own opinion only, could not have been imputed to them; these last cannot plead that forbearance that ought to be had towards the former.

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Also distinction is to be made in the manner of forbearance; it is one thing to forbear *simply and altogether* one that is infected with errour and spreadeth it, it is another thing to forbear, *in some respect*, to wit, of censure only, or it may be in respect of degree, something may be more gently censured, and yet not altogether forborn; and one may Ministerially reprove a fault and person by the key of Doctrine, in applying of it, when yet he may forbear the exercise of Discipline and Censure, as in the forecited place, *Paul* is reproving false teachers in *Corinth*, yet sparing the rod for a time; and so, willing that some were cut off in *Galatia*, yet not doing it; and this is not so much respect to the persons of these teachers, as to the Church and to the multitude of their followers, whom hasty Censures might rather have stumbled than *edified*, which is the great end of that and of all other Ordinances: Therefore seeketh he first to recover them, and again, to bring them back to the acknowledgement of his authority, and thereupon to exercise the weapons that he had in readinesse for the avenging all disobedience, when their obedience is made manifest. 2 *Cor.* 10. 6. which he would not do before that, lest they (being addicted to these teachers) had sided with them against his authority, and so it had been both more hurtfull to them and to the Church than edifying, by which alone he is swayed. These and other such considerations being had, Ministers by christian prudence, are to gather when to be silent, and when to speak, when to Censure, and when to forbear; but by all means, are ever to be watchfull, lest the grounds that plead for forbearance sometimes for the Churches edification upon the one side, be not stretched out so broad, as to foster our lukewarm temper, coldnesse, and fainting cowardlinesse in the things of God; and there is much need to try from what that moderation doth flow, and whether even then the heart be not with holy indignation

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against

againſt theſe; Even as on the other ſide, true zeal would be guided towards the ſcope of edification, leſt that duty of exerciſing Diſcipline, which is acceptable to God, and uſefull to the Church, be rejected of him, becauſe proceeding from our own ſpirits, and prove more hurtfull than edifying in the effects thereof; Some few inſtances whereof have given ſome occaſion of ſpeaking evil of this Ordinance of Jeſus Chriſt, to theſe who at all times ly in wait, to catch at what may be wreſted to the reproach thereof. But to conclude this, without inſiſting on particulars, there muſt be a ſingle, impartial and prudentiall walking, ſo as may attain edification, and as men may be anſwerable to Jeſus Chriſt in their truſt, having an eye to theſe things, that moſt contribute to edification.

Some things not at all to be forborn.

But, 1. if what is vented be blaſphemous, and deſtroyeth the foundations of faith, that comes not within this debate, as in *Paul's* dealing with *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. is clear; for zeal for the Majeſty of God, and love to the ſalvation of ſouls (which is the ſubſtance of the two great commandements of the Law) will admit of no forbearing in ſuch a caſe. 2. If it corrupteth or defaceth the Church, and maketh her a reproach to the profane, it is not to be forborn. 3. If the things become not the Ordinances of Chriſt, but reflect on them, and conſequently on Him whoſe Ordinances they are, they are not to be connived at. 4. If ſuch things hazard the publick beauty, order and government of the Church, without which there is no keeping up the face of a viſible Church, theſe are not to be over-looked. 5. If they mar the union and love that ought to be in the Church (which is to be preſerved, and every thing that may mar it, removed) they ought not to be tolerated. 6. If they turn to be offenſive and ſcandalous, either by making the wayes of the Lord to be ill ſpoken of, 2 *Pet.* 2. 2. or by grieving the godly,

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or by infecting others; they are not the object of forbearance, except some circumstance concur, as hath been said, in which case it cannot properly be called *forbearance*: By these and other things, this may be tried, when an errour is to be forborn and when not; in which, consideration is to be had, both of the nature of the errour, and of the person that doth hold it, as also of the case of the Church and people, who may be edified or hurt by the forbearing or Censuring of such a person.

What is needfull, but not sufficient, will appear when we come to consider *what is called-for*; for, what is lesse than what is required, must be defective and not sufficient: as it is requisite that men not only keep themselves free, but also that by admonition and exhortation, means be used to reclaim these that have fallen; yet these are not sufficient if there be no publick mean, yea, though there were publick authoritative preaching and exercising of the *key of Doctrine*, yet that is not sufficient, if there be not also censuring by discipline, and an exercise of *the key of Jurisdiction*; and in some cases every censure will not be sufficient, if it be not extended to the utmost, for Christ hath not given that *key* for nought to His Church, in reference to all her scandals, nor are men exonered till they reach themselves to the uttermost in their stations, but this will appear more afterward.

CHAP. IX.

What is called-for from Church-officers in the case of spreading errour.

WE begin now to speak particularly to the Church-officers *duty*, and what is *called-for* from them, especially from *Ministers*, which we may consider in a fourfold respect. 1. There is something called-for from the Minister in reference to God. 2. In reference to himself. 3. In reference to the Flock

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and people who are not tainted, but, it may be, under the tentation. 4. In reference to these that are in the snare, especially the promotters of these evils.

The first two are interwoven almost, Therefore we shall speak of them together: and we say,

What a Minister is called to, in reference to God and himself, at such a time.

1. When such a tentation setteth on upon a people, and beginneth to infect or hazard the infection of a particular Flock, or of many together, (for, the hazard of one, is the hazard of many in such a case, as is said) the Minister would look first to God as the great over-ruler, even of these things that are *evil* in the Churches; and he would consider if things be in good case betwixt God and him, especially in respect of his Ministery; for, such an infection in a Flock is a prime stroak upon a Minister, because the spreading thereof threatneth the unchurching of that Church and blasting of his Ministery, as, *Rev.* 2. is threatned against the Angel of *Ephesus*, and it never cometh but it hath with it a spirit and spait of bitterness against, and many crosses, faintings and vexations unto, the Minister; he is therefore soberly and composedly to look to God as his party, and is not to think, that such things come by guesse, and spring out of the dust, nor from the corruptions of some giddie people only, but that there is a higher hand; without this there can be no right use made of such a dispensation; and this is it that should humble the Minister and make him serious, lest by the peoples sin, God may be smiting him: *Paul* hath this word when he speaketh of the Schisms and contentious debates that were in *Corinth*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 20, 21, *I fear*, saith he, *lest when I come, my God will humble me amongst you*, he did so construct of their miscarrying, as making for this humiliation: yet it is to be adverted, that it is not the Minister or Flock that the Lord is most displeased with, that alwayes is so assaulted and shaken, although it be ever matter of humiliation.

2. When the Minister is composed to take up Gods hand

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hand in the matter, then is he not only to look to Him for direction and guiding in his duty, and without fretting to reverence His dispensation, but he is to reflect upon himself, and to consider his bygone carriage, especially in his Ministery, if he may not be chargeable before God with some sinfull influence upon his peoples distempers and miscarriages. And particularly, he is to look to these *four*, 1. If he be in good terms with God, in reference to his own particular state and condition, and if there was that due tenderneſſe and watchfulneſſe at the time of the outbreaking of such an ill: I grant, it may be that things were right, as in the case of *Job*, *Job* 3. 26. yet it becometh him to try; for, such a thing may be tryſted with security and negligence, that thereby he may be awakned to see his former defects. 2. A Minister would then reflect on his clearneſſe to that calling, and particularly to such a charge; and though to both he may be called by God, yet it is his part to try, that he may meet the reproaches with the greater confidence, as we see *Paul* doth in the Epistles often mentioned; for, in such a case a Minister will be put to it, and who knoweth but possibly expectation of ease, quiet accommodation or credit in such a place, and tractablneſſe in such a people, and such like, might have had weight with a good man to sway him to one place more than another? and by such a dispensation the Lord doth chasten that, to learn Ministers at their entry to be swayed alone with the Churches edification. But, 3. to come nearer, a Minister would try if he hath any sinfull meritorious influence (to speak so) in procuring that stroak to the people, to be given up to these deluſions; for, it is certain, a Minister may be smitten in some stroak of this kind upon his people, as is clear from that threatning to the Angel of *Epheſus*, Rev. 2. even as a Magistrate may be smitten by a stroak that is immediately upon his people, as we see in *Davids* case, who thus pro-

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cured the Pestilence, 2 *Sam.* 24. because, first, the people themselvs are not guiltless, so that there is no injustice. And. 2. Because there is a great sibness betwixt Minister and people, so that a rod upon one, doth indeed prove a rod to both: he would therefore try if possibly he hath been somewhat proud or vain of his authority, or respect amongst them, of their knowledge, orderly carriage, or dependance on the Ordinances, especially if he have any way affected such a thing, and hath withall sleighted the trying of their spiritual estate, and bettering of it, or if he hath been neglective to pray for them, and for their stability in the truth; if he hath been defective to warn or to keep up the authority of the Ordinances, and of a Ministery among them; if he hath been too familiar and triviall in his carriage with them, and such like; also, if he hath been affected with zeal for Gods honour, when other Congregations have been infected, if he hath sympathized with such Ministers, and born burthen with others in such cases; or, if on the contrary, he hath been careless, or, it may be, puffed up because himself was free: these and such like sins would be searched, because their is a Justice, and, if I may say, a congruity in Justice, in punishing such sins with such a rod; for its often when the husband men are sleeping that the enemy doth sow such tares. 4. He would try if he hath had any sinfull influence on such evils, as if he hath not been full and diligent in grounding them in the fundamentall truths, and clearing to them the Doctrines of the Gospel, as well as preaching duties, cases, and such like, or if he hath needlesly fostered curiosity in starting any questions, or in giving people way to follow them, if he hath made a sport of some errours publickly or privately, if he hath laughen at, or lightly spoken of, the errours and miscarriages of others, before them, if he hath not been faithfull to admonish and reprove the first gadings, or if he hath fed the people with empty notions and wind,

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wind, and builded hay and stubble upon the foundation, and hath not seriously discovered to them their guiltinesse, and hath not put them to the exercise of Repentance for their corrupt inclinations, thereby to presse humility, fear, watchfulnesse, diligence, &c. that so their hand might be filled with a more solid work, and Christ by them imployed to preserve them, even from this tentation. These, I say, and such like, would be tryed, because where they are, the Minister wants not accession to their sin, as if in some respect he had combined with these seducers.

3. When this is done, the Minister would be affected with his own guilt, and then his sympathy with the peoples condition will be the more lively; and he would, *first*, endeavour the recovery of himself, and his restoring to good tearms with God through Christ Jesus. 2. As he would confesse his own faults, so also the faults of the people; and as he would pray for pardon for himself, so would he do for them, who, it may be, do reproach and curse him, yet would he not cease to pray for them, having that word fresh under such a stroak, *As for these sheep, Lord, what have they done?* 3. There would be special dealing with God, and dependence on Him for fitnesse rightly to manage such a case; for, the charge becomes more heavie: God therefore should be acknowledged for obtaining suitable furniture, even in reference to that particular: And Ministers would know, that it is not their abilities, gifts, nor parts that can do this; and if we cannot speak profitably to one that is not in such a distemper, what can we do where the person is so prejudged and distempered, if the Lord do it not? Ministers therefore would be in reference to every word, unto such persons, in a holy fear and jealousie, lest, lippening to themselves, they mar the Master's work, and stumble a poor soul rather than edifie the same. 4. He would aim seriously not only at *exoneration*, but at *edification*; and for that cause would

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begin, by dealing with God for succesſe, and that either the Lord would immediatly Himſelf convince or bleſſe His furniture to him for that end; yea, He would be blyth if any mean were provided and bleſſed, though in another hand than his own.

4. The Miniſter would *now* uſe ordinary means for fitting of himſelf to diſcover ſuch errours as his people are guilty of, that he may be able ſolidly to convince them that are ſtumbled, and to eſtabliſh others that ſtand; and pains would be taken in this, aſwell as for preaching, or in the ſtudying of common heads at the paſſing of tryals, which is but a proof of the man's gifts in a more remote reference to ſuch a caſe, which now is ſpecially to be put in exerciſe; Therefore he would, *firſt*, endeavour to be through in the wole body of Divinity and grounds of Chriſtian Religion; for, there is ſuch a connexion among truths, that when one is wronged, many are wronged, and one errour may overturn many foundations: And if a Miniſter have not ſome generall impreſſion of the whole, he cannot with confidence ſearch in, or undertake the refutation of, any one particular errour: Neither ought a Miniſter, who poſſibly for a time hath forborn ſtudies of that kind, think it unbecoming him again to return to them, ſeing it is duty, and there is no ſhame to be learning what may fit one for his duty; And who knoweth but among other ends, this may be intended, that Miniſters may be put to more conſtant ſtudy and ſearch in the fundamentall truths of the Goſpel? 2. He would then, like a wiſe Phyſician, endeavour to know the malady that hath infected and diſtempered his people, what are the errours they maintain, what are the arguments that have weight with them, what are the tentations they have had, or who are the tempters or inſtruments that have ſeduced them, and ſuch like; What alſo is their natural humour, haſty or meek, proud or humble; What hath been their former

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former way of walking, what are their parts and abilities, with whom they converse, who hath weight with them, or are esteemed by them, that by these and such like means he may be in better capacity to know how to apply the remedie, and to deal with them himself, or to make use of others for that end. 3. He would endeavour the furnishing of himself, especially in reference to these errours beyond others which they are tainted with, and for this cause would provide fit Books, converse with others that are able to help him, and gather his own observations from Scripture and other grounds, that through Gods blessing upon his labours he may be able to speak of these things confidently as to himself, and convincingly as to others. It is to be observed, that the former order laid down, doth not require a succession in time, in reference to the several steps (for, in some cases a Minister will be instantly put to what is beyond all these, and to deal by some other means) but it sheweth the order of nature, and what way is to be followed according as there is accesse and opportunity.

Union amongst Ministers and their flocks, is in such a case carefully to be studied.

Further, It is necessary for Ministers, at such a time especially, to endeavour *union* among themselves and amongst the people of their flocks; for, oftentimes division and delusion are trysted together, whereby the deluders are exceedingly strengthened, Truth, and the Ministers thereof, made exceedingly contemptible and put in an incapacity to edifie, or have weight, till that be removed. Therefore we see, that in the Churches of *Corinth*, *Galatia* and *Philippi*, where Seducers were driving their designs, and division had taken great footing, the Apostle hath a special regard to the recovering of their union at such a time: We may read it also in the Life of *Basilius* the great Antagonist of the *Arians*, who, being by some division with *Eusebius*, then Bishop of *Cesaria*, necessitated to withdraw for the Churches peace, Where-

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upon *Valence* the *Arian* Emperour, and other *Arians*, thought that a fit opportunity to vent their errour in *Cesaria*, which they could not successfully do, while union continued there. To disappoint this design, *Gregory Nazianzen* advised his return and uniting with *Eusebius*, as the only mean to prevent the growth of that heresie amongst the people, which being accordingly done, and both of them forgetting their particular discontents for the publick good, the Church was so established, and the errour so opposed, that the forenamed enterprisers were constrained to give over their design upon that union.

What is his duty in reference to his flock.

In the third place, We come to consider a Ministers duty in reference to the flock in generall (and certainly by proportion it may be gathered what seriousnesse, gravity and diligence ought to be amongst *Ruling-elders* in their concurring with him in such a case, who are also to joyn with him according to to their places in the former search and triall of their carriage, and in fitting of themselves for being usefull in such a time) for, it cannot be denied, but somewhat peculiar is called-for from the Minister, in reference to his Ministery in common amongst the people, more than is called-for at another time. As, 1. he is to be in respect of all Christian qualifications in his carriage and all ministeriall duties in his charge, singularly serious and eminently exemplary, because it is now a main and prime thing to have a testimony of sincerity, faithfulnesse and love to the peoples edification in their own consciences; and this cannot be obtained at such a time without the former. For, in experience we see that declining to errour, and falling from esteem of the Minister, go together: and where this is preserved, either the fall is prevented, or there is the greater accesse to recover the person that is fallen. Ministers therefore would especially study that, as a main mean of the peoples edification. And for that cause, would observe, 1. If

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any thing hath escaped them in their way, which might have given offence, and would by all means endeavour to remove it. 2. If any thing hath been unjustly imputed to them, they would condescend to clear it. 3. They would take notice of what particulars they use to be charged with, though it may be, unjustly, or what usually Ministers are charged with by the corrupt men of the world, as pride, covetousnesse, self-seeking, hypocrisie and the like; and at such a time, Ministers would not only eschew these evils, but also the very appearance of them, which is a part of *Paul's* becoming all things to all, that he might gain and save some, 1 *Cor.* 9. And, in a word, a Minister would so carry in that time, as every look, word, action, gesture; yea, as every thing lesse or more in his Ministery, in his family, diet, cloaths, and such like, may abide the triall of the most narrow and watchfull observers, yea, of one that is a more high and narrow observer than they.

2. There are some things wherein particularly he would insist and seek to have born in upon the people. As, 1. to have them sensible of the evil of errour, and of the hazard that cometh by it, also of the devils subtilty and craft in carrying on of such a businesse. 2. To have them instructed and cleared in the truths of the Gospel, especially in such things as are controverted, that the errours and consequents following thereon, may be made as obviously clear and hatefull as may be. 3. This would be done so as they be not diverted from practice in the main duties of godlinesse by any speculation; but, searching, up-stirring and materiall Doctrines, with powerfull and convincing applications of all kinds, would be in a speciall manner pressed then, as we see in these directions to *Timothy* and *Titus* is clear: where, upon the one side, the taking head to fables and vain janglings is deterred from, and convincing, exhorting,

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ing, reproving with all authority, pressing of good works, and exercising to godlinesse, are, on the other side exhorted unto. 4. People would be pressed by all means, to eschew snares and the company of seducers, which was both our Lords practice, and the practice of His Apostles. There is no duty more frequently pressed than that: It is true, this is sometimes mistaken by people, yet it is the duty of Ministers to presse it; yea, they are *charged* to *charge* others in reference to this, as in the 1. to *Tim.* 4. 11. and 6. 13. being compared with the directions that are given in these Epistles. 5. It may be it were not unmeet in such a time, that something were done in *writ*, for clearing of these things which are especially controverted, and that some in particular might be designed for this part of the work: for, often seducers spread their errours by writ, as we may in see in *Jer.* 29.25. And sometimes there will be accesse to instruct and edifie by *writ*, when it cannot be done by *word*, yea, so, some persons may have objections moved and answered to them, before they be confirmed in such and such opinions, which possibly they would have thought shame to move till they had settled in them; and so have been in a greater prejudice against the truth, and in a greater incapacity to be gained from them; and we see, that the Apostles used this way unto Churches and People, to confute materiall errours in *writ*, and so also to confirm the truth against all cavils of adversaries, even as they did it by *word* of mouth and preaching.

3. In all this, the Minister would take good heed to his manner of proceeding, that it be grave, weighty, serious, loving, and in every thing such as may convince the people, 1. Of his own seriousnesse, and being much affected with such a businesse, Therefore light and mocking expressions would be shunned, but the Minister would be affectionate and serious, like one travelling in birth, while Christ be formed

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formed in them again, as *Paul* speaketh, *Gal.* 4. 19. 2. To convince them of the evil of the thing, and for that cause would so carry, as he may make errour also hatefull and loathsome to the people, as any scandalous practice whatsoever; for which cause Ministers would rather endeavour to stir the peoples zeal against such evils, by grave, convincing, affectionate expressions, regrates or expostulations, than to move their laughter with triviall mocks or taunts, in reference to such principles or persons; for, (as holy Master *Greenham* used to say) that doth but make sin ridiculous, when it ought to be made hatefull. 3. He would endeavour to convince them of his singlenesse in seeking of their good, and of love to them, and pitty to these that are misled; for which cause any thing that may make him be supposed to resent personall reproaches or indignities, or aim at upholding of his own credit, or to vent bitternesse against the persons of others, would be carefully abstained from: for, these things derogate much from the weight of what a Minister can do; and we see the great Apostle *Paul*, doth not stick to condescend in such cases to vindicate himself from such mistakes, and to use great expressions of love, yea, sometimes to attest God as to the sincerity of his professions, and such like, which are frequent in the Epistles to the *Corinthians* and *Galatians*, which may be an example to Ministers in such cases. 4. Their whole carriage would be affectionate, even to the persons of opposers; for, nothing prejudgeth more, than for a Minister to be thought carnall and passionate, whereas tender dealing and usage to persons and to their outward estates, doth prove as coals of fire to soften them, as in experience is found; however its becoming of a Minister; yet it is to be done without marring zeal and indignation against their errours, and without prejudice to his seeking to censure them for these, or his restraining them from venting of the same.

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It is here to be adverted, 1. That what was spoken of the manner of a Ministers carriage in reference to practical scandals, and of his duty in a time when offences abound, is also to be remembred here and in what followeth. 2. That what is spoken of Ministers duty, will by proportion agree to *Ruling-Elders* according to their stations; for, they should no lesse endeavour the preventing and suppressing of corrupt doctrine than of other scandalous practices, and they especially are to endeavour to have the means used by the Minister, made weighty amongst the people; and for that end, are to endeavour to have himself weighty also.

What is a Minister's duty in reference to those that are seduced.

We come now to the fourth step of a Ministers duty, and that is, as it relateth to those that are tainted with errour, (we mean grosse errours and delusions, such as this discourse runneth upon) We may consider it in these four steps, as it relateth, 1. to *discovery*, or *tryal*, 2. to *conviction*, 3. to *admonition*, 4. to *rejection*.

For the first, as the Apostle saith of men in general, 1 *Tim.* 5. 24. Some mens sins are open before hand, going before to judgment, and some mens follow after: So here, sometimes errour discovereth it self, and there is no need of search; yet sometimes also there will be many secret objections moved and harboured against truths, which will not be avowed, though they be privately muttered; yea, sometimes corrupt teachers will endeavour the vailing and hiding of their tenets, or errours, by many shifts, even when they are studying to leaven others with their delusions. There is therefore a necessity in such a case, 1. to try what opinions are held and vented, and to discover the absurdnesse and grossnesse of them; for, many will maintain the premisses ignorantly, who will not know that such absurd conclusions do follow thereupon; It is fit therefore to lay by the names and expressions used by seducers, and to expresse the thing

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thing as it is, especially if it be the reviving of some old absurdity under some new coat and pretext; Thus the Lord doth discover the abomination of the *Nicolaitans* doctrine, by comparing it unto, and evidencing it to be, upon the mater, indeed one and the same with the practices of *Balaam* and *Jezebel*, *Rev.* 2. 14. 15, and 20. This way is also followed by *Peter*, 2 Epist. 2. and by *Jude*, who compared corrupt teachers to *Balaam*, *Korah*, *Dathan*, *&c.* thereby to take the visorn off old newly revived errours, that they may appear as they are; for, often errour is commended to people under some new representation, and many will love it so represented, who yet will abhor former errours, which are still the same, though under another name, which are two tricks of the devils subtility, 1. To make old errour passe under the opinion and construction of some new light. And, 2. for that end to disguise it in some circumstances, and to change its name: And indeed, it is no little piece of spirituall dexterity to remove that mask. Secondly, There is a discovery to be made of the persons who hanker after such opinions, that it may be found who are infected thereby: This would be done to reclaim the persons, and to cure that distemper, before it break out, or come to a height; for, it is more easie often to cure one at the beginning than afterward: also, when it becometh publick, it hath with it some kind of engagement on the person, and he is more hardly recovered, lest he should seem thereby to appear weak, erroneous, unstable, or such like. Beside, it is more gaining-like when the Minister privately findeth them out, and endeavoureth to recover them secretly, before any publick notice be taken thereof, and often hath more successe with it, than after debats, as seemeth to be held forth in that place, *Gal.* 2. 2. where *Paul* saith, that he communicated with them of reputation, the Gospel, first, privately, lest by any means he should have run in vain.

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vain. Therefore we conceive, persons suspect of errour, would not hastily be brought to publick, but in some respect, the publickness of their offence, would be, as it were, dissembled, or not positively so publickly taken notice of, that thereby there may be the fairer access for them to retreat. 3. If there be any retreat, the person would be waited upon, although at first it be not fully satisfying, and all due care and diligence would be used to have his former errour buried, as if it had never been, without any publick hearing, except some extraordinary circumstance perswade to another way. For, (besides the reasons given) errour becometh not readily a publick scandal, except there be tenaciousness therein, or some actuall stumbling-block laid before others thereby, which often the persons reclaiming, will remove more than their censuring. Therefore, upon supposition of a persons recovery, there is no great fear of hazard in abstaining from bringing such a thing to publick, except he hath been instrumentall to seduce others, or in some such case which doth make his carriage *open before hand*, as is said. 4. This secret discovery before things break out, is needfull to prevent the defection of others, because, if the persons be not reclaimed, they may be found out to be dangerous, and may so be *noted*, for the preventing of their being a snare to others, which they might have been more easily, had they not been marked to be such, which is the reason of that exhortation, *Rom.* 16. 17. *Mark them that cause divisions, and avoid them.* When a person is discovered and found to be tainted, then all means are to be used for his *conviction* by conference, reasoning and other such means as may gain the end, this is a speciall qualification of a Minister, *Tit.* 1. 9. that he may be able by sound Doctrine to *convince* gainsayers. And (as it is, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25.) *in* meekness to instruct these that oppose themselves: Which step may be considered under diverse respects,

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1. As it tendeth to the gaining of the person directly, so especially private debatings are requisit, which are to be carried on with all meekneſſe and long-ſuffering, although they meet with reproaches and reflections in the proſecuting thereof. 2. Although there be little hopes of gaining the perſon, yet there is need of ſuch means for the ſtopping of his mouth, and the edification of others, that thereby he have not occaſion to ſeduce them; for, often ſuch debatings ſolidly, and judiciouſly carried on, though they do not convince the perſon, ſo as to make him ſilent, yet do they convince others of the abſurdneſſe of theſe errours, and the unreaſonableneſſe of ſuch a perſons carriage; and experience hath proven, that often ſuch debats have been bleſſed for the credit and vindication of the truth, in reference to many others, and by that place, *Tit.* 1. 9. ſeemeth to be clear duty, though there be little hopes of coming ſpeed, as to the perſons ſeduced.

CHAP. X.

Whether at all times a publick debate be neceſſary with ſuch perſons upon theſe points.

IF it be queſtioned here, 1. Whether in all caſes there be a neceſſity of a publick debate? 2. What is to be accounted conviction? 3. What is to be done, when the perſons are not ſilent? 4. How this debate is to be managed?

We ſhall anſwer by laying down ſome Aſſertions promiſcuouſly in reference to all theſe Queſtions.

Aſſert. 1. We ſay that there are ſome times and caſes wherein publick debates are not altogether to be ſhunned; I will not ſay, that every perſon is to accept of ſuch a challenge, leſt thereby truth be wronged; (neither is it alwayes the ableſt man that manageth ſuch a buſineſſe beſt) but in general the thing is neceſſary *In what caſes it is called for.*

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ceſſary in theſe and ſuch like caſes: As, 1. when errours ſeem to be new among the people. 2. When the promotters of them become inſolent, as if they durſt come to the light with their deeds. 3. When by forbearance and ſilence, people are in hazard to think ſomething of theſe inſolent boaſters, and of their opinions. In which caſes, I ſay, and the like, there is ſome neceſſity of this, for the Churches edification, as may appear from *Tit.* 1. 9, 10, 11. *There are many*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *who are unruly and vain talkers* (ſuch as vainly boaſt of their own ability, to maintain their opinions) *whoſe mouths muſt be ſtopped*, leſt they get advantage to ſeduce others; and this is given as the reaſon why Miniſters ſhould be qualified with abilities to convince gainſayers, becauſe ſometimes the inſolencie and vanity of ſome ſuch, doth neceſſitate to this; and on this ground we will find our bleſſed Lord Himſelf, and *Stephen* and *Paul*, frequently diſputing even in Aſſemblies and Synagogues. *This* will not infer a neceſſity for every Miniſter to diſpute at all times. even in ſuch a caſe, but ſometimes it may be referred, and put to others; for if truth be maintained, and errour be confuted, it may ſtop the gainſayers mouth, although every one do it not.

In what caſes it is not called for.

Aſſert. 2. Yet there are ſome caſes, when ſuch entering of debats is not neceſſary nor expedient. As, 1. ſuppoſing theſe things not to be new, but to have been ſufficiently confuted formerly, and it may be in other places not far off, nor long before that; for, if there ſhould be a continuing ſtill to debate, there would be no truth acknowledged to be ſetled, nor acceſſe to other and further duties. 2. When ſome perſons are known vainly and purpoſly to ſeek to put all in confuſion, by multiplying ſuch debats, and irreverently to proſecute the ſame, as if they made it their trade or vocation to do ſo: The anſwering of ſuch men according to their folly, would be an acceſſion to their guilt of taking the bleſſed Name of God in

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in vain, and for satisfaction to mens humours, and not for the great end of edification. 3. When men become unreasonable, and in their debatings, shew irrationall contradiction and blasphemy; in such a case, it is to be forborn or broken off with indignation, and with zeal to the glory of God, as we see *Paul* and *Barnabas* do, *Act.* 13. 45, 46. 4. Some erroneous persons are so grosse and absurd, that they are not to be disputed with, but rather to be reproved and abhorred: and therefore we see in these Epistles, *Rev.* 2. 3. there is no disputing against the *Nicolaitans*, as *Paul* useth in other cases, because, where such absurdities are owned, there is no accesse to fasten a conviction from reason, when men by such opinions appear to be unreasonable. 5. When men deny principles, as the authority or sufficiency of the Scripture, or when they lay new principles, as a light within, revelations, enthusiasms, or such like; or, when they grosly and absurdly wrest and pervert the Scripture, as *Peter* speaketh of some, denying most clear senses, and forging senses which are most ridiculous: In such cases, there is no accesse to dispute, not only because it cannot be done without admitting of them to blaspheme, but also because there is no mean by which they may be convinced, seing the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is rendered useless unto them: As for instance, *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, said, there was no resurrection to come, because it was past already; they wanted not dexterity to abuse the Scripture, which saith, that there is a resurrection from sin, and by the new birth Believers are raised from the dead. Now, the applying of what is spoken of the generall and second resurrection to this particular and first resurrection, is so grosse, that *Paul* doth not dispute with but Sentence such blasphemers and abusers of the Scripture; for, it is clear, that they did not deny the Scripture, or a resurrection simply, but did grosly and irrationally misapply

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the same: of this sort, are such as will admit of no distinctions, nor consequences, nor different acceptions of words and phrases, and such like: for according to these grounds, the Scripture is made to disagree from it self, to give no certain sound in any thing, and to infer many absurdities, which is blasphemous to think.

What is to be accounted as the sufficient conviction of a gainsayer.

Assert. 3. It is not to be thought that that only is conviction, which putteth the adverse party to silence, or that when convincing of gainsayers is commanded, that that only is intended: for, men of corrupt unruly spirits (as the Apostle saith) wax worse and worse, and do resist the truth, as *Jannes* and *Jambres* withstood *Moses*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 8. and are therefore called *reprobate concerning the faith*; yea, sometimes the more they be pinched and bound, the more they cry out, and will not yeeld to convincing truth, as we see, *Act.* 6. 9, 10, 11. and *Act* 13. 45, 46. and certainly there were none of *Paul's* opposers able to dispute with him, yet we will never almost find his adversaries silent, though he put them to silence, and did actually convince them; notwithstanding they are still muttering and contradicting, so that oftentimes he breaketh off, shaking the dust off his feet against them, when arguments did not the businesse. Oftentimes also, this continuing of contradiction with some dexterity to pervert Scripture to their own destruction, is to them *penall* and *judiciall*, as was formerly observed, and doth follow upon their hazarding and daring to oppose the manifest truth. And who would have thought, but that these Magicians that resisted *Moses*, should have been convinced by so many miracles, not to have essayed further to oppose him? which yet notwithstanding they continue to do; and if it was so then, and with *Paul* and the other Apostles afterward, can it be expected to be otherwayes now? seing the spirit of *Jannes* and *Jambres*, and the gainsaying of *Core* is marked by the Scripture to wait on such.

If

If it be asked then, What can be understood by *conviction*? and if a person may be accounted convinced, who yet may be keeping the last word, and confidently bragging of the victory? *Answ.* That *conviction* is not to be bounded with acknowledgment or silence in the party convinced, we suppose is already cleared; yea, those that are convinced, may, as it were, cry the others out of the company by multitude of words and confidence of expressions, as those Jews did cry down *Paul* and *Barnabas*, *Act.* 13. 46. Therefore we see in that precept, *Tit.* 3. 10, 11. that the Heretick which is to be rejected, is both said to refuse admonition, and also to be condemned of himself; yet it cannot be said that he was put to silence by these admonitions, or did forbear to vent his errours; this therefore must be accounted certain, and is confirmed by 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. where the recovery of opposers, even after sufficient instruction, with meekness, hath a *peradventure* in it, as a thing most rarely to be found. We must therefore place conviction in some other thing, than that: and so in answer to the question, What is to be accounted *conviction*? We say, 1. it is when a person is so far convinced, and the truth with his errour so far cleared to be truth and errour respectively, that his continuing obstinate, cannot be supposed to be of infirmity, which often will evidence it self in foolish, weightless and unreasonable shifts and answers, or when there cannot be weight in such an answer, to satisfie a mans own reason or conscience, if he were sober and at himself: upon this account, the Heretick is said to be condemned of himself, *Tit.* 3. 11. not because actually his conscience doth condemn him for dissimulation; for even then it is supposed he may be in a delusion, which keepeth off such challenges; and their consciences are said to be seared with an hot iron, 1 *Tim.* 4. 2. which importeth, they were not capable of positive convictions within themselves; but it must be understood

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derstood thus, that they are the cause of their own blindnesse, as wilfully and maliciously refusing and rejecting light when it is offered to them, and so the cause of their own damnation doth not flow from the neglect of others, in not holding forth to them sufficient light, but from their own obstinacy, prejudice and maliciousnesse. 2. They may be said to be convinced when the thing is made clear to sober serious men, even as some stupid ignorant persons are inexcusable in their ignorance, when they live under such means as others of ordinary capacity thrive by; although such plain preachings, discourses or doctrines be no way understood by them, yet may it justly be said, that that light was sufficient to instruct them, or that Gospel to convince them, seing others have been profited by the same. 3. They may be said to be convinced, even when they speak again, when there is no answer to purpose in their speaking, but absurd denying or asserting of things without any reason, or when there is a granting of absurd consequences, or an asserting of an absurdity, that possibly is greater nor another which they would eschew; or, bitter railing against mens persons seeking to defame them for strengthening of their cause, as the false teachers did *Paul* among the *Corinthians* and *Galatians*, and as the *Libertins* did to *Stephen* by venting calumnies on him, and provoking others against him, *Act.* 6. or, when in their answers or debates, they break out in blasphemy against God, against His Scriptures, against His Ordinances; such, in such cases, are to be accounted sufficiently convinced, and their obstinacy is to be accounted malicious; and this we may gather, as from others places, so from that, *Act.* 13. 45, 46. when they come to wilfull contradictions and blaspheming, *Paul* and *Barnabas* will reason no more. And, *Act.* 28. 24, 25. some Jews are accounted to be sufficiently convinced, and their contradiction to proceed from judiciall blinding, when they reject that word

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word which did sufficiently convince others. Also, we see, *Act.* 17. 32. when men begin to mock at the fundamentall things of Religion, or to shift clear places of Scripture, by putting strange and absurd expositions upon them, as was formerly marked of *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*; such persons are not to be disputed with any more, but to be accounted abundantly convinced, Notwithstanding of the most confident contradiction: and what was said of some cases, wherein publick debate was not to be admitted, the same may be applied in this case, as being evidences of sufficient conviction and self-condemnation of such persons.

How a publick debate is to be managed when necessary.

Assert. 4. When any such debate is found necessary, there is much spiritual zeal and prudence required in the managing thereof: in which, beside what is generally required in the manner of every thing, these things are to be observed, 1. That it be not tumultuary and confused, because so the Name of God is irreverently dealt with, and made obnoxious to reproach: Therefore order and reverence, and what is needfull and fit for such an end, is to be provided for; otherwise, such confused meetings are to be left when entered into, as dishonourable to the Name of God, and unbecoming the gravity that Ministers should follow, as we see, *Act.* 13.45,46. and *Act.* 19.30, 32. for, in such a case there is no access to edification. 2. Men would deniedly undertake such a thing when called to it, as being convinced how difficult the task is, how feckless they themselves are, and how subtile the principall adversary which they have to do with is. Therefore there would not be an undertaking upon the account of gifts, parts, or learning, nor would it be managed only or mainly by subtile arguments, nor would advantage be much sought for, that way, but simple truth would be plainly, gravely, and zealously proposed, with respect to the affecting the conscience of the party, and of the hearers.

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And as it is in preaching, not the subtileſt and learneſt diſcourſes do alwayes prove moſt taking, So in debates that concern conſcience, materiall plainneſſe demonſtrating the truth with power unto the conſcience, hath often the cleareſt evidence with it. There is a notable inſtance recorded by *Ruffinus*, Eccleſ. hiſt. lib. 10. chap. 3. which was thus, at the Councill of *Nice*, great Schollers were conveened from all places, upon report of that famous meeting, to which alſo did come ſome chief Philoſophers, of whom one moſt eminent did diſpute frequently with the greateſt Schollers, who were never able to bind him, becauſe ſuch (ſaith he) was his nimbleneſſe, that like an eel he ſlipped them, by one ſhift or other, when argumentes did ſeem moſt conſtringent. But God, that he might ſhow that His Kingdom did not conſiſt in word, but in power; one of the Confeſſors, being a man of a moſt ſimple nature, and knowing nothing but Chriſt Jeſus and Him crucified, when he ſaw the Philoſopher inſulting and boaſting of his quicknеſſe, deſired liberty to ſpeak with him a little, others did ſhun it, knowing the mans ſimplicity, and fearing leſt he ſhould become a reproach to ſubtile men: notwithſtanding, he perſiſted, and began thus. Philoſopher, in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt hear theſe things that are true, There is one God who made Heaven and Earth, and formed man out of the duſt, and gave him a Spirit, who made all things which are ſeen and unſeen, who ſent His Son, born of a Virgin, to deliver us miſerable ſinners from everlaſting death, by His ſuffering of death; and hath given us life eternall by His Reſurrection, whom we expect to come as Judge of what ever we do: Philoſopher, believeſt thou theſe things? Then he, as if he had not known how to contradict, aſtoniſhed with the power of what was ſaid, and put to ſilence, only could anſwer, that *it appeared ſo, that there was no other thing but truth in what he had ſaid.* Then ſaid the aged Confeſſor,

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fessor, *if thou believest so, rise and follow me to the Church, and receive the seal of this faith*: Then the Philosopher turning to these that were with him, and other hearers, said, *Hear, O Learned men, while the matter was managed with me with words, I opposed words to words: but when for words vertue proceeded out of the mouth of him that spake, words* (said he) *could not resist power, nor man God. And therefore, if any of you have felt what I have, let him believe in Christ, and follow this old man, in whom God hath spoken.* Thus far *Ruffinus*: a story not unworthy to be observed. 3. It would be known what principles may be laid down, or what rules may be binding, otherwayes there may be an asserting of any thing or denying of every thing. 4. There would be still a ministerial gravity and authority preserved, lest that Ordinance become despicable, and so Ministers would both improve their reason, light, authority, and ministerial commission from Christ upon the conscience of those they have to do with, as we see *Paul* doth in his debates, even where his authority was much questioned.

CHAP. XI.

Admonition is necessary, and how to be performed.

THe third step, is *Admonition*, that is, when convictions have no successe, then ought Ministers to proceed to judiciall and authoritative admonitions, as the word is in the direction, *Tit.* 3. 10. *A man that is an Heretick, reject, after the first and second admonition.* This *admonition* hath no new reason to inform the judgment, which is already presupposed to be done, but it addeth these two, 1. It hath a concurring weight to affect the conscience which hath withstood or smothered the light; and so it is, with Gods blessing, usefull to make former despised light more seriously and impartially to be

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weighed and considered, when in His Name the admonition is particularly upon that account directed to them. 2. It is a warning, giving advertisement of some sadder thing coming, if they shall continue to reject the Truth, and so it is a shoring of them for that particular fault, before the stroak be laid on, that either, by Gods blessing, it may humble and soften them, and so put them to endeavour the preventing of the coming stroak; or, if they continue stubborn, it may make them more inexcusable; and thus there is the clearer accesse to proceed to *rejection*. This admonition may be considered in these three steps, 1. It may be in privat, after the Minister's conferring with the persons and his finding them guilty, he may not only instruct them, but afterward, if they continue, admonish them, and that as a Minister, in the Name and Authority of Jesus Christ, which is more than the admonition of a privat person. 2. There is a step of this admonition to be past judicially by a Church-judicatory when the person is brought before them, whereby they judicially interpose their authority to admonish such a person of the evil of his way, and of the necessity of the present duty of repentance for the same, like that which sinfully and most abominably was misapplied by the Priests and Pharisees, *Act.* 4. 5. yet, that in the general there is such an admonition, is apparent. The 3. step is publickly before the people, wherein (after the former hath failed in reaching the desired end) the party infected is solemnly and publickly admonished before the Congregation. In which step, 1. The parties good is to be respected, that now it may be tried if the admonition both of officers and people (who are supposed to joyn in this publick admonition) may have weight. 2. It is usefull for the people to guard them against such an evil, and such a person. 3. If it succeed not, it leaveth the person more inexcusable, and convinces all of the justice and necessity of proceeding

The several steps of admonition.

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ceeding further, and so tendeth to make the Sentence to be the more respected by all. This, we conceive, is the admonition intended, *Tit.* 3. 10. and answereth to that publick rebuke, spoken of, 1 *Tim.* 5. 20.

Some things observable in the way of admonishing

In carrying-on these admonitions, these things would be observed, 1. That there be no great hasting, except the persons readiness and diligence to infect others require the same, in which case there is no delay to be admitted. 2. All these steps of admonition would be so carried-on as becometh an Ordinance of Christ, and that the weight of them may lie there. 3. There is difference to be put betwixt giving of an admonition, and entering of a debate for conference; Therefore there is no necessity of suspending an admonition, because the person is absent, more than there is of suspending of a warning or citation: And, on the other side, If the persons were present, and should contradict and oppose themselves, there is no necessity nor conveniency of entering in debate again, because that is not the present work, but authoritatively to admonish those who have resisted sufficient conviction, and so they are to be left under the weight of the admonition, from which the renewing of debate would diminish.

That rejecting of an obstinat Heretick, is to Church-officers a necessary duty, & a mean to be made use of for the Churches edification.

The fourth thing and that which followeth fruitless admonition, is *rejection*, Tit. 3. 10. *A man that is an heretick, reject.* This rejection is the same with *Excommunication* or *delivering to Satan*, 1 Tim. 1. 20. Concerning which these things are clear,

1. That a man, continuing an Heretick, may and ought to be rejected and excommunicated as well as for any other grosse Scandal: For, 1. the precept is plain in the place cited, *A man that is an Heretick, reject*; which must be a casting of him out from Church-communion, and a giving of him over in respect of the use of any further means for his edification, which is in effect, to account him as an Heathen man and a Publican, which is called, 1 *Cor.* 5. 13. a putting away

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away from amongst our selves a wicked person. 3. The example and precedent is clear, 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. 3. Where this is followed, it is commanded, as in *Ephesus*, *Rev.* 2. and where it is forborn, and corrupt teachers suffered to be in the Church, it is very sharply reproved, as in the Epistles to *Pergamus* and *Thyatira*. 4. The general grounds of Scandal and of Discipline against the fame, and the reasons which inforce the exercise thereof in any case, have weight here. For, 1. It is scandalous exceedingly. 2. It is hurtfull to the Church. 3. Discipline, and particularly that Sentence, is appointed for remedying the hurts of the Church, and the removing of offences from the fame; which grounds have been formerly cleared, Therefore it palpably followeth, that this Sentence is to proceed against such: But for further clearing of this, there are some Questions to be answered here, As,

What if the person scanced be judged to be truly gracious.

1. It may be questioned, What if the person be godly, or accounted so? *Answ.* I shall not say how unlike it is that a really gracious man will be a minister of Satan, we have spoken of that already; but, supposing it to be so, 1. If it be scandalous in a gracious man, is not the same remedy to be used for the Churches good? 2. That supposition of *Paul* *Gal.* 1. 8, 9. doth put it above all question, *Though we* (saith he) *or an Angel from Heaven, preach another Gospel, let him be accursed.* And, again, he saith it, to put this out of controversie, *If any man shall preach another Gospel, let him be accursed.* And, if *Paul* will except no man, no, not himself, nay, nor an Angel from Heaven, who can be excepted? The mistake is in this, that Excommunication is not looked upon as an Ordinance of Christ, usefull through His blessing for humbling and reclaiming of a sinner more than if it were not applied; whereas, if it were looked upon as medicinal in its own kind, it would not be so constructed of; For, by comparing 1 *Cor.* 5.

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5. with 2 *Cor.* 2. we will find that it was more profitable to the excommunicated person himself that this Sentence was past, than if it had been forborn.

2. It may be asked, What if the person be no fixed member of any particular Congregation, who yet doth infect others? *Answ.* This cannot be sufficient to exempt from Censure, Because, 1. he is a member of the Catholick Church, Therefore Censures must some way reach him: otherwayes, supposing a man to disclaim all particular Congregations, he might be a member of the Church, who yet could be reached by no Censure. 2. He might claim the priviledges in any particular Congregation, if he should carry fairly as he is a member of the Church-catholick: Therfore it would seem by proportion and rule of contraries, that Presbyteries may reach him with their Censures, if by his miscarriages he become offensive to the people. 3. We see that the Church of *Ephesus*, *Revel.* 2. did judicially try and censure those who called themselves Apostles, who, it's like, being strangers, obtruded themselves, under that title, upon them, and so could not be accounted members of that Church; And indeed, there is no lesse needfull for the edification of the people of such particular Congregations, and for guarding them from the hurt that may come by vageing persons, than that either they be censured somewhere by one Congregation, or many, in associated Church-judicatories; or, at least that some publick *note* and mark be put upon such, that others may have warning to eschew them, as the word may be taken, *Rom.* 16. 17, 18. and 2 *Thess.* 3. 14. which is there spoken of, busie bodies and wanderers without any certain calling or station. *What if he be no fixed member of any particular Congregation.*

3. It may be questioned, What if Magistrates in their place concur not, or, if the case so fall out, that they be displeased with the drawing-forth of such a Sentence? *Answ.* This may require the more prudence, zeal and circumspectnesse, but ought not to mar *What if Civill Magistrats concur not for the backing of the sentence.*

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mar the progresse: Because, 1. Excommunication is an Ordinance instituted by Jesus Christ for the edification of His Church, as Preaching and giving of the Sacraments are. 2. That same might have been asked in the primitive times when *Paul* did excommunicate, and when the Lord did reprove the want thereof, *Revel.* 2. There was then no concurrence of Civil Power. Yea, 3. in this case it seemeth most necessary; and the greatest enemies of Church-discipline do allow the Church to Sentence her members in such a case. 4. The weight of this Sentence doth not depend upon Civil Power, but upon Christs Institution, Therefore the weight of it is to be laid here, whatever Civil Powers do. 5. We will find the primitive Fathers hazarding upon Martyrdom even in this very thing, So that when corrupt Emperours have inhibited them to excommunicate *Arians* and other Hereticks, they have done it notwithstanding; and by designing whom they desired to have succeeding them in their places before they past the Sentence, did declare themselves ready to suffer, upon this account, any thing that might follow, and accordingly some of them have been immediatly put to suffering.

Two limitations to be adverted in the rejecting of Hereticks.

2. We say, That although an Heretick be to be rejected, yet is there a twofold limitation to be adverted to in that place, *Tit.* 3. 9. first, That it is not every erroneous person that is so to be dealt with, but he must be an *Heretick*: Which doth imply these three, 1. A perniciousnesse and destructiveness in the errour maintained. 2. An actual venting thereof, to the destruction of the Church, either by corrupting the doctrine, marring the order, or breaking the unity of the same, or some other way spoiling the vines that have tender grapes. 3. It implieth a pertinacy in such evils.

It is true, that sometimes lesser errours, in respect of their effects, and other aggravating circumstances, may

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may become intolerable and to be proceeded against by this Sentence, as was said of lesser Scandals in practice. Yet, we conceive, that properly it is some grosser errour than what may be accounted to be of infirmity (such as many godly, sober, unprejudged men may have) that is to be the ground of such a Sentence. Therefore we refer the decision of this to be gathered from the Distinctions formerly laid down.

2. We find it qualified by this, That this rejection is not to proceed hastily, but to follow upon rejected and sleighted admonitions: Therefore, if an admonition be received before, and the Church therein be heard, there is no further proceeding to be in in reference to this Sentence: Because, 1. the limitation is expresse. 2. The reason is clear; for if the lesser do the turn, and prevail to the recovery of the person, and removing of the offence from the Church, What needeth more?

CHAP. XII.

What is to be accounted a satisfying and successefull admonition.

IF it be asked, What is to be accounted a satisfying and successefull admonition? And how men are to judge of, and walk in reference to, the same? *Answ.* We would distinguish satisfaction or successe as to an admonition, which may be either *full* satisfaction or only *partiall*. Full satisfaction is, When the person is so fully convinced of his ill, as not only to forbear the venting thereof, and to give no offence for the time to come, but also fully to abandon the same as being grieved therefore, and willing to edifie others, by a suitable acknowledgement.

Some useful Distinctions of satisfaction.

Again, we call that a partial satisfaction or successe, when though there is not a fully satisfying length obtained;

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tained; yet can it not be said to be altogether fruitlesse. As suppose, 1. a person should not be brought wholly to disclaim his errours, yet should professe a conviction of the ill of venting them, and troubling the Church with them, and afterward should engage to abstain from offending in that kind. 2. Suppose one should be convinced of the more grosse errours, and be content to disclaim these, yet should stick at some others, professing scruple in them.

We would also distinguish these that give partiall satisfaction. 1. Either they are such as appear to be sincere in the length they come, and in the professions they make, as also to be docile and ready to be informed; or, they are such who discover the want of ingenuity in their proceeding, and themselves but to be lying at the wait to return to their vomit.

Now to apply this, We say, 1. When this satisfaction is full, there is no question; for, thereby not only all further processe is to be stifled, but the person is to be admitted to have communion in Church-priviledges.

2. Where this partiall successe is of the first sort We conceive it may be sufficient to stit processe for a time; and to continue the persons under means within the Church, so long as they contradict not their profession; yet it is not sufficient to give them free accesse to all Church-priviledges, as if the scandal were fully removed.

3. Where that satisfaction is but of the last kind, that is, mocking and dissembled, We say, that though it may put a Church-judicatory to try the evidences of this dissimulation, and during that time possibly to stop a little their proceeding; yet ought it not to mar the drawing forth of the Sentence, lest there be an accession to the hurt which is intended to the Church by that dissembler: And here we are to apply both the reasons against, and characters of, dissimulation, which were spoken to on practicall offences.

4. If

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4. If there be no seeming satisfaction at all, then after admonitions given, the person despising the same is to be rejected, as one that is infectious and unfit to have communion in the Church, or the benefit of any Church-privilege and Ordinance: And, in a word, to be, for his scandal and obstinacy against Christs Ordinances, declared to be Excommunicate, and casten out of His visible Kingdom, as an out-law to the same; Which is to be done with such gravity, weightinesse, sympathy and authority, as it may look like the Ordinance of Christ, and have an impression of His dread and Majesty upon all that are witnesses thereof.

Whether any thing be required of Ministers towards hereticks that are rejected.

If it be asked, Whether any further duty be required from a Minister towards such a person after the Sentence is past? *Answ.* He is not then properly under pastorall charge, since he is no member of Christs visible Church, at least, in that respect, as members fall under comuon and ordinary actuall inspection. Yet we conceive, 1. That the Minister is to continue to deal with God for him (at least in private) if so be he may be recovered out of this snare, because he is under the last cure, which will either prove life or death; Gods blessing therefore to it, is to be sought; and it becometh well the naturall care of a kindly Minister, that is thirsting for the blessing, to deal with God for it. 2. Although there be not actuall accesse to any thing; yet ought there to be a lying at the wait to observe any opportunity which may be for his good, and when it offereth, it would be carefully improven. And therefore, 3. for that end, whatever indignation be shown against a mans wayes or errours, to make these loathsome to others, yet still there would be evidence of tender respect to the persons, and, if need be, means used to supply them, especially if they come to any strait, although in all this they would keep such a distance as may keep up the weight of the Sentence, both to them and others: But

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But, by this way, their suspicious mistakes of Ministers, carnalnesse against their persons, are best removed, and accesse is thereby made to be edifying unto them, Some examples whereof are recorded in the life of *Musculus*, as to his tendernesse to most desperately deluded persons, when they were in affliction, and discountenanced exceedingly by Magistrates, which God blessed in the end for their recovery; this is suitable, severity in Magistrates, and tendernesse in Ministers. And amongst other ills and snares that that cruell indulgencie (which is indeed cruell to the poor souls, to whom it becometh a snare) hath following it, this is one, That the Magistrate is accounted mercifull, and the zealous Minister cruell, whereby they are put in an incapacity to be edified by the one, and in a capacity, as it were, to miscarry as they will, by the indulgence of the other.

CHAP. XIII.

What is required of Magistrates for restraining of seducing spirits.

THe second thing that we proposed to speak to in this remedy, was, as it relateth to Magistrates, to wit, Whether any thing be? or what it is that is called-for by the Word of God from them, to be performed in their stations for the drying up of such a floud, and removing of such a plague? It is not our mind to insist so much in this as in the former, Yet it is fit that we say something: And who knoweth but it may fall in the hand of some Magistrate, who may be desirous to hear and know his duty? which we shall lay down in an Assertion or two, thus,

Assert. 1. Although God hath not made Magistrates, as such, Church-officers, nor intrusted them with the Ecclesiastick Government of His Church; yet

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yet doth he allow them, and call them to improve their civil power for the good of His Church in Ecclesiastick things in some respect, as well as in civil things. And therefore if a Magistrate see not to the providing of Ministers for a people, and of maintenance to them, and such like, that are necessary for the being of a Church, as well as he provideth Officers, and furnisheth them that are needfull in the State, he is faulty and unfaithfull to his trust. For, the Lords design in setling of Societies, and appointing of Magistrates, is to be expounded as subservient to that great end of mens *glorifying of God, and enjoying him.* And certainly, Magistrates are to have that as their own end, even in the actions of their station, and to endeavour to promove that amongst these over whom for their good they rule. This is clear in all the Governments and Commonwealths that the Lord did immediately model Himself, Magistrates had this for a speciall part of their task, to keep His Ordinances pure, and to restrain the corrupters of them: This is expressed in the Morall Law, where Masters are no lesse to oversee their servants, that they work not on the Sabbath, from respect to the Lord, than to direct their work all the week from respect to themselves; and by the rules of interpreting of these commands, what belongeth to a Master to be done by him as a Master, in reference to these over whom he hath power according to his station, that doth belong to all Magistrates in reference to these under their charge, according to their stations. Also, where one instance is named, all of that kind are comprehended. And therefore as this Ordinance of sanctifying the Sabbath, is to be overseen by Superiours, so also are all others; yea, it is acknowledged also, that what is expressed in one command, in respect of the extent thereof, is to be understood in all. And therefore this obligation lyeth on Superiours, to make inferiours observant of Gods Ordinances in reference

They are called according to their places to interpose.

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to all the commands; this is not doubted of the duties in the second Table: yet there is no expression in it inferring the same, so expresse as is in the first; and this is a common assertion, *Magistrates have both Tables of the Law committed to their keeping.* This is fully made out by many godly and learned men, and we need not to insist upon it; for, readily, no Magistrate doth question his own power, but that he may do what is fit, all the matter is to consider what that is.

And not meerly to look to outward order.

Assert. 2. It is not a Magistrates duty in the case of overspreading delusion, meerly to look to outward order and civil peace and enjury, and to give *liberty* to any or many sorts of dangerous errours and delusions to spread; or, to give *toleration* unto the maintainers thereof, in their spreading the same. For, 1. such errours, are *ill deeds*, and such spreaders, are *ill doers*, bringing great prejudice to people, *Gal.* 5. 20. 2 Epist. of *John* 11. 2. Magistrates ought to be a terrour to evil doers indefinitly; and, I suppose, if the sword be born in vain in reference to them, the conscience will not have ground of quietnesse in the day of judgement, upon a distinction of evil doers, when the Lord hath made none such in their commission. 3. They ought to be zealous of His honour who is their Superiour, that His name be not blasphemed: and can such be tolerate without this construction, upon the matter, that men have liberty to blaspheme the Name of God, to abuse His truth, reproach His Ordinances, and to take His Name in vain as they will? Would any supream Magistrate take it well, to have some inferiour officer, or Magistrate of a Town or Province, to give such liberty to these under his jurisdiction in reference to him? And is there any such distance between the supream and inferiour Magistrate, as there is between the Majesty of God, and the most supream power on earth? And what if He judge between Him and them out of their own

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own mouth, and, according to the measure that they met out to others, met out to them? 4. Are they not to seek the peoples good? And is there any such good, as their spirituall good? Or, are there any such enemies to that as seducers? We conceive therefore, it will not be found agreeable to the intent of their office and scope which they ought to aim at therein, that Magistrates should give this liberty or connivance to men, to vent and propagate such errours as may destroy souls, and actually overturn the face of a visible Church, so that if something overspread universally, (as Popery, and some other grosse errours and delusions have done in some places of the world) there should be no visible Church within such dominions; And indeed, upon these principles, men cannot impute it to their own care, that it is otherwayes. Also, such loosnesse may overturn Ordinances, and set up abominations in the room thereof, remove all Ministery, Sacraments, Discipline and Preaching, and all upon pretext of conscience: such delusions have been in the world; and if by Magistrates connivance, they should overspread a Nation, so as there could be no remedy applied, would it be satisfying or comfortable to him (supposing him to have a conscience) to see his people under him in such a posture? What if under pretext of conscience, Magistracie should be denied to be an Ordinance of God, and he put therefrom, upon that account; that the people thought it unlawfull to obey him? Would not readily his conscience say, That seing he restrained not others from casting at these Ordinances, in which the honour of God, and good of souls were so much concerned, that it was just with God to permit them to cast at that Ordinance also, wherein he is so mainly concerned? And indeed, this hath not been unfrequently seen, that these who have begun to cast at Church-ordinances, have come at length (as if they had been thereto disposed by the former) to cast at

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Civil Ordinances (to speak so) also; and what wonder is it, seing there is no more clear warrant from God for the one than for the other?

That the grounds against toleration concern Magistrates as well as Ministers.

If it be said, that what hath been spoken in the doctrine, and on these places, *Rev.* 2. concerning the not suffering of corrupt teachers to vent their errours, doth belong to Ministers and Church-officers, and not to Magistrates. *Answ.* 1. If thou be a Magistrate that moveth this objection, pose thy own heart, if that which is so displeasing in Ministers and Church-officers, to wit, *toleration* of corrupt men to spread their errours; If, I say, that will be well pleasing and approven in Magistrates, when Christ Jesus shall come to judge both in reference to this thing; Or, if in that day when the great Judge will Sentence Ministers for *tolerating* in such a case, He will take another rule to proceed by, with the Magistrate? Or if it be like, that Christ out of love to His Church, shall peremptorily require Ministers, not to suffer false teachers, but to restrain them, according to their stations, and not to *endure* them to teach and seduce His Servants, and yet, that the same Lord, for the good of His Church, should require Magistrates to *tolerate* and maintain the same. 2. Consider if the grounds and reasons that bind this duty on Ministers, will not equivalently and proportionably bind all men according to their stations; for, the grounds are in sum, love to God, and love to the edification and salvation of others, which are the substance and fulfilling of the morall Law. 3. If in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, or in History since, these two be not ever joyned together, the most commended Magistrate, and one who is most zealous against corrupt teachers; the fathers of old were not to spare their children, *Deut.* 13. nor suffer them to teach or seduce to the dishonour of God, and hazard of souls; and can it be said that souls now are lesse precious, or errour now lesse infectious and dangerous.

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rous, or these things lesse to be cared for now in the dayes of the Gospel than formerly, that concern the glory of God, and edification or destruction of souls? 4. Consider if in the Book of the Revelation, the suffering of *Antichrist* to delude souls, be not mentioned as reproveable; and if the destroying of *that beast*, and putting him from corrupting the earth, be not spoken of as a main piece of the commendation of such as shall be instrumentall therein. Now in the Scripture-language, all deluders and seducers are *Antichrists*, being led with the same spirit, and driving the same design against the Kingdom of Jesus Christ; Can there be therefore any reason to make such difference, where the Lord hath made it? 5. Consider if it can be accounted single zeal, that perswadeth to permit the Name of God to be dishonoured, when any reflection upon our own, doth so much move us; for, it doth infer, that either there is an indifferency as to truth and errour, So that in the one, the Lord is not more dishonoured than in the other, which will be found exceeding contrary to His own expressing of Himself in Scripture, and will not, I suppose, be pleaded in the day of judgement, when He will avenge Himself on such seducers; or, it must infer, that men are not to take notice of what dishonoureth Him, even though many things be within their reach to impede it. And indeed, if a conscience seriously pondering the thing, will not be provoked out of zeal to God, whose glory suffereth, out of respect to the salvation of many souls, that are hazarded and destroyed by such means, and to prevent the many offences that wait necessarily upon such ills, and the many inconveniencies, divisions, jealousies, rents, &c. that follow in Families, Congregations, Cities and Nations, and the great prejudice that the Commonwealth suffereth, by the distracting of her members amongst themselves, the incapacitating of many for publick trust, the fostering of diverse interests and

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contrary principles in one body, to the marring of honest publick designs: If by these, I say, the zeal and conscience of these who are concerned, be not provoked, by what will, or can, they be?

That totall forbearance is not like the Gospel.

If it be said, That it looketh more Gospel-like, and for the furtherance of Christs Kingdom, that Magistrates should leave men to follow their light, and to be dealt with by the preaching of the Gospel, and force thereof. We shall propose these Considerations in reference to this. 1. Consider if it looketh christian and tender-like, for men so to stand *by* in the Lord's Cause, and to let Him do (as it were) for Himself: It was indeed once said of *Baal*, *Judg. 6. If he be a god, let him plead for himself*: But will a tender heart think or speak so reproachfully of the Majesty of God? He indeed can and will plead for Himself; and it is not for defect of power He maketh use of men, to defend His truth, or to restrain errours; yet it is His good pleasure to make use of Magistrates therein, (and thereby to honour them) as He doth of *Gideon* in that same place. 2. Consider if it look christian-like, to give the devil equal accesse to follow his designs with Jesus Christ in the setting up of his kingdom: Now *absolute toleration* doth this, and more, because there is but one Truth, and there are many Errours, and each of these hath that same liberty and indemnity (to say so) that Truth hath, and may with the same confidence come forth to the open light as Truth may, in respect of any Civil restraint. 3. Consider the case of *Antichrist*, there is no errour against which the Lord hath more directly engaged Himself to fight with the sword of His mouth, than against this of *Popery*, and yet we suppose none will think that Kings might warrantably suffer it to be spread and preached to the infecting of their People, without adding or injoyning any restraint by their Civil power; certainly their *hating of the Whore*, and *making her desolate*, doth imply some other thing: And

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And where-ever true hatred of Errour is, there will be more effectuall stretching of mens power and places for restraining the same. 4. We may adde this Consideration, That hitherto *toleration* of Errours and diversity of corrupt opinions have ever been looked upon, and made use of, as a most subtil mean for undermining and destroying of the Church. It is marked of that skilfull enemy of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, *Julian*, That having improven his subtility to the utmost to find out means to destroy the Church by *craft*, which his predecessors by *violence* could not obtain, amongst other means he concluded this, Not to raise open persecution, but to give liberty to all the differing Bishops and Teachers (which then, after the Council of *Nice* and *Constantins* death, were very many and bitter in their differences) to follow their own way, and to vent their own opinions, without all fear of any restraint: and therefore did call them that he might make intimation thereof to them for their further encouragement therein; The words which he used to them, as they are marked by *Ammianus* and cited by *Lodovicus Molinæus*, pag. 560. are, *Ut consopitis civilibus discordiis, suæ quisque Religioni serviret intrepidus*, that is, in sum, *That every one forbearing Civil discords, should worship in his own Religion without controle or fear*: And is it like, that this shall prove a mean usefull for the good of the Church, which that expert childe of the devil did make use of to destroy the same?

Our third Assertion then is, That Magistrates in their places ought to prevent the infection of their people under them by corrupt doctrine, and the recovery of them when they are insnared: and that therefore they ought to *restrain* and marre corrupt teachers from spreading of their errours to seduce others. This Assertion, we suppose, is clear from the former two: for, if Magistrates be allowed to improve their power for the good of the Church, and

It's Magistrates duty to prevent the infection of the people under them.

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if it be not their duty to give common *protection* to Errour, and the venters thereof, with Truth: Then this will follow, that they ought to use their power to *restrain* the same, and, by the exercise thereof, to procure the good of their people, in preserving of them from such a great evil.

CHAP. XIV.

What may be justly acknowledged to be within the reach and power of the Magistrate in such a case, and so, what is his duty.

IT may be more difficult to explicate this, and to shew what is within the Magistrates reach, or, what way he is to follow this. Before we answer, we would premit,

1. That it is not intended, that Magistrates should rigidly and severely (much lesse equally) animadvert upon all that in their judgment are erroneous, or differ from what is truth, that is not called-for from Ministers. Therefore here the former distinctions are to be remembred and applyed: for, there is great odds betwixt animadverting upon an absurd errour, or taking notice thereof, as it is a thing of the mind, and, it may be, a scruple in some conscience, and as it is an external deed, having with it real offence, prejudice and hurt unto others; in which case the Magistrate forceth no mans conscience to another Religion, but doth keep his own conscience, by keeping one that is deluded from seducing of others, or wronging the Name of the Lord or His Church.

2. It is to be adverted, that we speak not here of the Magistrates duty in punishing of corrupt teachers with civil or capital punishments, (though we doubt not but in some cases their power doth reach to that) much lesse are the highest punishments to be understood here; whatever be truth in these, we do not now

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now search into it, because the Scope is according to the Assertion, to consider what is called-for, for the preventing of the spreading of corrupt doctrine, and the preserving or recovering of a people therefrom.

3. This doth not give way to Magistrates to condemn and restrain what they think errour, or what others think errour; for, Ministers that ought to reject Hereticks, are not warranted to reject whom they account so, but who indeed are so; So is it here, it is what is indeed errour, and who are indeed the teachers thereof, that the Magistrate is to restrain, as those who teach rebellion against the Lord.

We come then to consider what may be a Magistrates duty when seducing spirits assault the people under their charge, and what is obviously in their power to do for preventing of hurt by them, without insisting in any difficult or odious-like case. Their duty also may be considered in a fourfold respect, as that of Ministers was. 1. It would be considered with respect to God, and so they ought to fear some stroak coming upon their people, and by looking to Him to endeavour to carry so in reference thereto, as they may be countable to Him: for, if it be a priviledge for Magistrates in the Christian Church to have the honour of being *nursing fathers* therein, *Isa.* 49. 23. then it must be a great credit, mercy and satisfaction to them, to have their people or *foster* (to say so) the Church, flourishing and thriving upon their breasts; and if so, then the mis-thriving of the Church by unhealthsom milk of errour should and will exceedingly affect them. And certainly that expression doth both shew what a Magistrate's duty is, and how tenderly he ought to nourish the Church and preserve her from any thing that may hurt her, as also it showeth how nearly any thing that may hurt the Church, ought to touch and prick him.

2. In respect of themselves, they are to consider if by any guiltiness of theirs the Lord be provoked to let

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let loose such a spirit, as *Solomons* sins did procure the renting of the Kingdom. So might they be also counted a cause, bringing-on that idolatry and defection of *Jeroboam* from the Truth, as well as from him and his posterity: Also if by their negligence in not providing faithfull Teachers to instruct the people, by their conniving at errours, or *tolerating* them, or otherwayes they may be charged with accession thereto: Thus *Jeroboams* appointing the meanest of the people to be Priests, and his beginning defection by his example, (though he seemed not altogether to forsake the true God) disposed the people for a further length, and had influence upon their going a whoring after *Baal* and other Idols of the Nations: Thus also *Solomon* was guilty of much grosse idolatry by his connivance at it, and taking himself to worldly pleasures and miskenning the things of God, although it's like he did not actually fall in that grosse idolatry himself. And if Magistrates were seriously reflecting on themselves, and affected with their own negligence and carelessnesse in preventing of such things, whereof possibly they might find themselves guilty, this were a great length, and other questions would be the sooner cleared, and seriousnesse would make them find out remedies for such an evil.

3. Their duty may be looked upon in reference to others, wherein they may and ought to extend themselves for preventing the spreading of the infection amongst these that are clean, by such like means, As, 1. by their example, to show themselves zealous against that ill, and to abhor the questioning and disputing of the truth; thus the example of a Magistrate is often of much weight, yet can it not be accounted any coaction. 2. They ought to endeavour to have faithfull and honest Ministers, who by their diligence and oversight may exceedingly conduce to the confirming of these that stand, and to the preventing of more hurt. 3. They may and ought to countenance and

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and strengthen such as are faithfull, whether amongst Ministers or people, which often hath no little influence upon the disappointing of seducers: thus it is said, 2 *Chron.* 30. 22. that for promoving of Reformation, *Hezekiah spoke comfortably to all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the Lord*; which is added, to shew, that by this encouraging of honest and faithfull Ministers beyond others, he did design the thriving of the work in their hands, both by heartning them to be zealous in it, and also by making them to have the more weight with others: this is also marked of *Constantine* and other good Emperours, that zealous and faithfull Ministers were particularly taken notice of, and honoured by them, beyond others. 4. They may and ought to employ and make use of some fit instruments, for the preventing of seduction, and may provide such as may be set apart for studying such controversies, and confuting of such errours, that the truth may be the more clear. 5. They may and ought to endeavour according to their place, the composure and allayment of all the lesser and more petty differences and heart-burnings that may be found amongst these that are, in the main, one for truth; for often (as was said) a vehement spirit of errour and delusion is trysted with heart-burnings, divisions and offences in the Church, and amongst the Officers thereof: there were petty contests in *Corinth*, biting and devouring one of another in *Galatia*, trysted with the harmony that was amongst the followers of the seducers: and at the Councell of *Nice* there was not only difference with *Arians* and other grosse hereticks, but also there were petty differences and contests amongst the Bishops and Confessors who stood for truth; and these differences are most advantagious to the spreading of errour, and the removing thereof is a great bulwark against the same. It is marked of *Constantine* at that Councell of *Nice*, that amongst other means which he used to suppresse the *Arian*

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Arian hereſie, he did moſt carefully endeavour the removing and burning of ſuch differences and diviſions, and by ſerious Oration preſſed the oblivion of all ſuch, that they might the more unitedly and with the leſſe diverſion be in capacity to oppoſe the common enemy. For certainly, when Miniſters are armed one againſt another upon ſome leſſe concerning, and more unprofitable debates, (as, alas! too much of them is in the Chriſtian reformed-Church at this time) there cannot but be the leſſe ſtrength, zeal, and vigilancy againſt profeſſed enemies in the moſt ſubſtantiall things. 6. They may, and ought to interpoſe their Authority, for inhibiting the receiving and hearing, or converſing with known and manifeſt ſeducers: for, this is but to diſcharge, and thereby to preſerve the people from runing to their own hazard, even as men ought to be commanded to keep at diſtance with a place or perſon ſuſpected to be infectious becauſe of the Peſtilence; neither could ſuch a reſtraint be accounted any diminution of their juſt liberty, yea this were but a putting to of their ſanction to the clear direction which the Lord layeth upon His people, and therefore there could be no hazard to miſcarry in it, eſpecially where the application to ſuch and ſuch perſons, might be as clearly diſcernable from the Word as the duty is. 7. They might and ought to give their countenance unto, and joyn their Authority with, ſuch eccleſiaſtick ſtatutes, overtures, or means, as Church-judicatories or Officers might be about to make uſe of for this end in their places; and this can be no more prejudice to liberty, to countenance with their authority the Ordnance of Diſcipline, than to confirm by their Authority the Ordinance of preaching the Goſpel. 8. They may and ought to preſerve the Ordinances from being interrupted, and the adminiſtrators thereof from being reproached, and might juſtly cenſure theſe things when committed. 9. In recovering a people, in a reeling

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reeling and staggering time, a Magistrate may engage them to formerly received truth, and interpose his authority for this end, as is recorded of *Josiah*, 2 *Chron.* 34. 31, 32, 33. Also, 10. He may and ought to remove all false worships, and endure no corrupt preaching, or writing, or meetings for that end, or administrating of corrupted Sacraments, or any Ordinance other than what is allowed; for, *Josiah* did cause the people *stand to the Covenant* that was made, and having removed all Idolatrous worship, *he made Israel to serve the Lord*, that is, he made them abandon corrupt worship, and waiton pure Ordinances, as keeping of the Sabbaths, offering of sacrifices, &c. and that according to the manner prescribed by the Lord. Neither was it a wronging of their liberty, to do so: Because, 1. it was the preservation of their liberty, to keep them from the abominable bondage of these evils. 2. It was their duty to abstain from these, and to follow the Ordinances purely, and the Magistrate may well put people to that. 3. It is one thing by force to keep folks from dishonouring God in a corrupt Religion, (as *Josiah* did) another to force them to a Religion; the one belongeth to the ordering of the outward man, the other to the inward. 4. He might order them to keep the Ordinances, and in going about them to keep the rule, because that is but a constraining of them to the means whereby Religion worketh, and a making them, as it were, to give God a hearing, leaving their yeelding and consenting to him, when they have heard him, to their own wills, which cannot be forced; yet it is reason that when God cometh by His Ordinances to treat with a people, that a Magistrate should so far respect His glory and their good, as to interpose His Authority to make them hear. 5. Also, there is a difference between the constraining of a circumcised or baptized people, to worship God in the purity of Ordinances, as they have been engaged thereto, which was

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was *Josia's* practice, and the constraining of a people to engage and be baptized, which were not formerly engaged; because, actuall members of a Church have not even that liberty as others have, to abandon Ordinances: and this putteth them to no new engagement in Religion, but presseth them to continue under former engagements, and accordingly to perform: Hence we see, that both in the Old and New Testament, Church-members have been put to many things, and restrained from many things, which had not been pertinent in the case of others. See, 2 *Chron.* 15. 13.

In the fourth place, there are many things also in their power, in reference to these that are seducers or deluders, or actually deluded, which might be and ought to be improven for the Churches good; (not to speak now of any thing that may infer civil or capitall punishment, upon men for their opinions, or any way looke like the enforcing of Religion upon consciences) As, 1. Magistrates might and ought to put Ministers and Church-officers and others to their duty (in case they be negligent) in trying, discovering, convincing, &c. such as by their corrupt doctrine may hazard others. 2. They may and ought to discountenance such in their own persons, and, by their authority, inhibit them to vent any such thing; yea under certifications: yet this cannot be called a forcing of their conscience to any Religion, but is only the restraining of them from hurting of the consciences of others. 3. When such certifications are contraveened, he may and ought to censure the contraveeners, and so he may by his authority put them in an incapacity of having accesse to infect others; yet this is not the censuring of a mans opinion, for he might possesse his opinion without censure, but it is the censuring of his disobedience, and the prejudice done by him to others: Nor is it the restraining of him from personall liberty, because of it, but because

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cause he doth not, nor will not use his personall liberty without prejudice to the whole body, which is to be preferred to him: even as a man, infected with the pestilence, ought justly to be restrained, though against his will; yet cannot that be accounted a restraint of just liberty; for, it is no just liberty to have liberty to hurt others. 4. They may and ought to destroy such books as they use to spread for the infecting of others, and inhibit and stop printing of them, or actuall selling, spreading or transporting of them, as they may stop carrying of suspected or forbidden goods. 5. They may and ought to restrain idle and vagabound travelling of such suspected persons, without representing of their necessary businesse to some, appointed for that effect, in which case their doing hurt by such a voyage, might be prevented, and they have a passe. Also, they might constrain them to follow some lawfull occupation, and to be diligent therein; both these are well consistent with ordering of a State, And yet it is such *busie bodies* (as the Apostle speaketh) and vagabonds, that go without their station, that often prove most hurtfull to the Church, and instrumentall to the devil, as being Apostles to him in such a businesse. 6. They may and ought to restrain and Censure all blasphemous and irreverent expressions and speaches against the Majesty of God and His Ordinances, and all calumnies and bitternesse against faithfull Ministers or Professours that adhere to truth: for, these are moral sins; and blasphemy, calumny, and such like, are no more to be passed over without Censure in such, than in others who are not professedly tainted with errour: and the pretext of following light and conscience, cannot make these sins tolerable, more than the *Nicolaitans* pretending the same for their committing adultery and other filthinesse: And this is not to punish mens opinions, or force their consciences, but to punish their vices, even such as have been hatefull unto,

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and punished by, many naturall and heathen men; 7. They may and ought by their authority to cause them hear conferences orderly and reverently, give answers discreetly, wait on their trial, and such like, before Ecclesiastick Assemblies. 8. They may and ought to make such incapable of publick places of trust, and remove them from such: Because, 1. they cannot be supposed to imploy their power singly. 2. Because such trust agreeth not to men and subjects as such, but are voluntarily conferred as tokens of respect put upon men eminently qualified, and as may be for the good of the Commonwealth: And therefore it cannot be justly accounted a marring of their liberty as *men* or *subjects*. Upon this ground was *Maachah* the mother of *Asa* removed from being Queen, or having any government, 1 *King.* 15. 13. 2 *Chron.* 15. 16. yet it cannot be said she was wronged when she was so dealt with.

In these steps mentioned, we have not aimed to lay down what might be done to the utmost in such a case, but what we suppose cannot be in reason denied by these of the widest principles in reference to this matter, if so be they degenerate not utterly to loosnesse.

It is not sufficient to a Magistrate to maintain civil peace.

If it be said, That it seemeth sufficient for the Magistrate to maintain civil peace, and to restrain civil disturbances: We may look to these considerations in answer to this, 1. This is no more than what *Julian* did restrain, as the place cited before, cleareth; and certainly, he who ruleth for Christ will not think his example a good pattern. 2. This is that which heathens do out of meer respect to themselves: and shall Christian Magistrates have no respect to Christ but to themselves? or, do no more for Christianity than heathens who owned it not? 3. Is it possible to separate growth in delusions and variety of absurd errours, and civil faction and discord? or, in experience have they ever been separated? We see they

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they made men carnall in *Corinth*, they made them bite and devour one another in *Galatia*, as, chap. 5. of that Epistle to them; yea, provoked to debates, envying, wraths, strifes, back-bitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults, 2 *Cor.* 12. 20. and can such things be with the entertaining of civil peace? For, doth not the interruption of civil peace, flow from hatred, bitterness, alienation of mind, envy, contradictions, and such like? And do not these necessarily wait on debates, and diversities of opinions? For, it is not to be supposed, that such differences, proceeding from want of light, can be in men that are altogether mortified, and without corruption: Therefore may it be expected, that that corruption will flame out upon such occasions; and that order is observable which the Apostle hath, 2 *Cor.* 12. just now cited, where he beginneth with *debates*, and proceedeth by diverse steps, till it close with *tumults*: and these who are acquainted with the Histories of older and latter times, will acknowledge this to be a truth. 4. There is almost but very little in the foregoing particulars mentioned, but what is necessary for the preserving and restoring of civil peace, or the preventing or censuring of the disturbance thereof, seing there can be no solid ground whereupon to maintain peace, except the springs of debates and tumults be stopped, and such distempers from which they spring, be either cured and purged away, or restrained. 5. It may be considered in experience, if ever such a way hath done good to the Church, (whose divisions and offences have often thereby come to an height) or to these that were seduced, seing thereby not only the tentation was armed against them, but they, at least, permitted to harden themselves therein, as in a thing not so gross to wise States-men, as some conceitie Ministers would make it to appear: Or, in the last place, it may be considered, if ever it hath done good to the State, wherein it was permitted, or to the Magistrates

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who did permit the same; or, if thereby secret jealousies, heart-burnings, divisions and factions have not been fostered and brought up to such height as hath proven dangerous to the body, and hath hazarded the eating out of the belly, where it was bred, or the stinging of the bosome that did give it heat.

CHAP. XV.

What is called-for from people who are desirous to keep themselves pure in such a time and case as the increasing of errours and seducers.

IT resteth now, that we speak something of a peoples duty, that are members of the Church where such delusions are vented: in speaking to which, we shall follow almost the same method as in the former.

1. Then, people would be affected upon the appearance of such an ill, as upon the news of sword, famine or pestilence; for then, as it were, the trumpet soundeth like that Angels proclamation, *Rev.* 8. 13. *Wo, wo, wo* to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the Angels that are to sound, when as yet all these Angels did principally forwarn of spirituall plagues, and particularly of delusions. This would make people wary and serious; this would curb vanity, mocking, laughing and puffing-up; this would make him that standeth, take heed lest he fall, if the judgement were considered as a thing coming from God, and evidencing Him to be angry, and to threaten: and without this, there is little ground to expect profiting by any other direction.

2. People would be seriously affected with the falling or hazard of the falling of any they hear of, as being touched with zeal for God, and sympathie with them, and for this cause, would humble themselves before

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before God to deprecate that ſtroak and plague as they would do ſword, famine or peſtilence.

3. People would try in what tearms themſelves are with God, and if things inwardly be in good caſe, if there be any guiltineſſe procuring, or diſpoſing for the ſame plague, ſuch as little love to the truth, little ſtudy of the knowledge of the truth, little zeal againſt errour, or ſimpathy with infected Churches that are at a diſtance, laughing, it may be, at ſuch things without any other uſe making thereof, little prayer for others, or exhorting or admoniſhing of them, (which is a mean for preventing of unſtedfaſtneſſe) little indeavour, according to mens places, to have others inſtructed, or to have faithfull, able, and godly Miniſters for that end; but, it may be, on the contrary, much ſpiritual pride, ſelf-conceitedneſſe, tenaciouſneſſe, and addictedneſſe to our own wills and opinions, prejudice at able and faithful Teachers, and readineſſe to hear every thing, and every perſon. Theſe, and ſuch like, may be tried, and when found, ought to be mourned for, as cauſes of humiliation to them for their acceſſion to ſuch a plague.

4. They would endeavour the ſtrengthening and confirming of themſelves in the knowledge of neceſſary Truths, and would exerciſe themſelves in the practice of uncontroverted Godlineſſe, and, by all means, would eſchew jangling debates in unneceſſary things, knowing that that is a piece of the enemies ſubtility, once to engage, if it were but in the meaneſt thing; for, thereby he doth not only divert from more neceſſary things, and weareth away livelineſſe, but doth diſpoſe for greater things, as was formerly marked in his method of dealing: For, as in corrupt practices, men are not at firſt brought to an height of prophanity, but by degrees; So is it in corrupt doctrines: and therefore there is warineſſe called-for here in debating or queſtioning the meaneſt Truth, if any Truth be mean.

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5. If any thing be really doubted of, means would be used in a sober prudent way for attaining information, either by providing and reading of some fit Book, wherein often reasons are more deliberate and full, and may be more deliberately studied and digested than in a transient discourse; but in this, special respect would be had to a right choice, and for that cause the judgments of such as are sound and able to discern, would be followed in this; or, where God giveth occasion, it may be done in sober and christian conference with others of ability and integrity, especially with Ministers, who ought neither to decline, nor rashly misconstruct the same, but affectionately and tenderly to welcom any such sober persons, lest they be provoked to consult with others, who may prove Physicians of no value. In this, people would not expresse their doubts in all companies at random, nor to, or before, such as may possibly more easily take up the doubt, and with more difficulty be brought off; when therefore such a doubt is to be moved, the party and the time would be deliberatly chosen, that men may be serious therein, and no doubt, would be moved for debate, but either such as the mover can himself loose, or in such company where he may expect to have it loosed.

6. People would endeavour exceedingly to have good esteem of their Ministers and Guides, and to be diligent and reverent observers of all Ordinances, especially at such a time; for, Ministers are Guides, *Heb.* 13. 17. And Ordinances are appointed to keep people from being staggered, *Eph.* 4. 11, 12, 13, 14. and it is to such that the *Bride* is directed, to wit, to keep near the shepherds tents, for being preserved from wandering, *Song* 1. 9. And the more that the devil driveth to bear in prejudice at Ministers, and blast the Ordinances in their repute, the more are people to wrestle against that, and, in some respect, to be more blind and deaf to what may be seen and heard con-

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concerning Ministers faults, not so much for the Ministers respect, as their own good: Therefore the Apostle giveth this reason for his pressing of obedience and submission to Ministers, *Heb.* 13. 17. because the want of that, was not only prejudicial to the Minister, but unprofitable to themselves.

7. People would have an eye upon the way that faithfull and eminently godly men have gone to Heaven by, before them; This is *to follow the foot-steps of the flock*, *Cant.* 1. 9. and the faith and patience of those that inherit the promises, *Heb.* 6. 12. and readily we will find such to be most sober and serious, and farthest at a distance from novelty, curiosity, or absurd opinions. And it's no little part of the boldnesse and impudency that often accompanieth new delusions, that they generally condemn the generation of Gods People, as if no way were to Heaven but by their vain inventions, this will be no little stick to a tender mind, at once to condemn the Religion and practice of such a cloud of witnesses.

8. They would be carefull when they hear others questioning things, or expressing their prejudice at Ministers, Ordinances, or established Truths, to endeavour the present stopping of the same, and not to foster any thing of that kind by moving new doubts, suspicions, or giving new grounds of jealousie against Ministers or others, but rather would gravely and wisely endeavour the removing of the same.

9. They would then be much and serious in the exercise of christian fellowship, observing or considering one another, provoking one another, and, as the word is, *Heb.* 10. 24. and 3. 12, 13. taking heed, lest there be amongst them an evil heart of unbelief, and lest any of them be hardened: but, exhort (saith he) one another daily, as the remedy of that. There is no time wherein christian fellowship is more called for, and wherein it may be more profitable, than at such a time, if it be rightly ordered and managed: I

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say, rightly ordered and managed; for, often the pretext of christian fellowship is abused to the hatching and propagating of the most absurd opinions, when people turn light and frothy, taking up their time with vain janglings and diverting from the main scope, to wit, edification. These things are indeed to be shunned, but christian fellowship is not to be disclaimed, but wisely to be ordered in respect of the persons with whom, and occasions upon which it is used, and, in respect of the matter and duties insisted on, which is to be the confirming of themselves in some truth, faithfull freedom in admonishing one another of what is wrong, serious endeavour to keep repentance, humility, self-denial, and the like graces, fresh; These and such like things are good and profitable to men, when gravely, singly, faithfully, tenderly and inoffensively followed.

What is their duty in reference to the persons infected, and if they ought to refrain from their company.

In respect of persons infected, the peoples duty may be considered in these steps, 1. As they are to be affected with their fault, and to pray for their recovery. 2. As they have occasion, to testifie their dislike of their way. 3. Such as are noted or known to be instrumental in the carrying-on of novelties, ought by all means to be shunned. As, 1. their company and fellowship is to be avoided, *Rom.* 16. 17, 18. Men are to beware of them, *Matth.* 7. *Philip.* 3. 2. Secondly, They are not to receive such into their house, nor to give them a salutation, or bid them God-speed, 3 Epistle of *John*, ver. 10. They are to have no company with them, 2 *Thess.* 3. 14. We conceive there is no duty that is more pressingly urged upon the People of God, both in the Old and New Testament, as may be clear by considering, not only the fore-cited places, but many other places of Scripture, especially that place, *Prov.* 19. 27. *Cease my son, to hear the instruction* [*that causeth*] *to erre from the words of knowledge.* And there is this double reason for it, 1. There is nothing conduceth more to preserve those that are intire; For,

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For, it is hard to walk upon fire, and not be burnt, *Prov.* 7. 27, 28. and the experience of not a few confirmeth this; for, many had not declined, had they keeped distance even from the garments that were so defiled and infected; and it's a *bearing* of such instruction that causeth to erre from the way of understanding. 2. There is nothing more usefull to convince the persons infected, and to make them ashamed; which is another reason why the Lord doth command this. And we may adde, that there is nothing that doth more evidence respect to God, and reverencing of Him; and nothing that is more becoming a sinner, that is sensible that he hath corruption, than that he standeth in aw to come near a seen tentation; For, God is jealous, and will not abide mens hazarding of themselves to be carried a whoring from Him: and men are not free of corruption, and so readily are capable of what is corrupt. It may be that people do think that there is no ill and hazard in trying any thing, that so, proving all things, they may hold fast what is good; and also, that it may be Ministers fearing the diminishing of their own particular respect, that doth make them presse this, and that it proceedeth from their carnall passion; But such would consider,

1. If our blessed Lord Jesus, and His Apostles, did restrain people from any due liberty, when they expressly prohibit their companying with such, and hearing of such, especially where it is done purposely, usually and deliberatly. And, we suppose, that there is scarce a direction in reference to any particular in the Word more frequently, weightily, and peremptorily pressed than this, as the places alleaged do clear.

2. They may consider, if our blessed Lord Jesus, or the Apostles, had any fear of losing their respect, or of inability to maintain their point against any Seducers; yet do they presse this themselves, and com-

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mand and charge other Ministers after them, to presse this also upon their hearers.

3. They would consider, if these (to wit, our blessed Lord and the Apostles) did foster carnal passion, whileas yet they so pressed the people, and did reprove the suffering of such to continue in fellowship; Yea also, they did so practise it themselves, the Church-history recordeth, that the Apostle *John* having entered a Bath, where the heretick *Cerinthus* was, he did immediatly in hast go out, professing fear to be ruined with him, if he should continue under the same roof.

4. They would consider, if the meaning of such places, as, *Prove all things, Try the spirits*, be such as necessitates folks to give hearing unto every novelty. For, 1. that is not possible, that every person should enquire and put to trial every errour and every opinion. 2. The people are not in capacity to do so. 3. This directly croseth the letter and scope of the former precepts, which were given even then, when this command, of proving all things, was given. It must be understood therefore, as agreeing therewith, and to point out that no doctrine should be admitted without proof, upon the trust of any bearer, but ought to be tried, if it be the Word of God, as the *Bereans* did, *Act.* 17. but it doth not allow them positively to try every thing, especially how grosse soever it be, without trial, though it command them not to admit any thing without proof.

Further, a main part of the peoples duty is to concur in their places, for countenancing and adding weight unto the respective Sentences, and steps, which are called for from Ministers in their stations: As, 1. to contribute what clearnesse they can for the discovery and triall of such persons. 2. To add their testimony to the truth, and thereby to make the means of conviction the more weighty to them. 3. By evidencing of their dislike of the persons obstinacy, and

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and their acknowledgement of the justice and necessity of drawing forth further Sentences against them. 4. In shunning of their company, abstaining from familiarity, and otherwayes, to expresse their indignation against their way. 5. In carrying to them accordingly as they are Sentenced, that so they may ratifie the same, and in their place, endeavour the making of it weighty, and effectuall upon the persons, that thereby, they being made ashamed, may the more readily be humbled, and turned therefrom. And people are by all means to shun such familiarity, especially with *Excommunicate* persons, as may lessen the weight of their Sentence, or mar their being ashamed, which indeed will make people guilty of despising the Ordinance of Christ, and obstructing the fruit thereof unto a brother, and also make themselves obnoxious to Censure, as being scandalous by so doing.

CHAP. XVI.

What further duty is required of private Professors towards Heretiks that are cut off.

IF it be asked, What duty further is called for from private persons towards a person cut off?

Answ. I suppose these things are called for,

1. Abstinence from unnecessary civil fellowship, as, not to frequent their company, to visit them, to dine or sup with them, or to have them dining or supping with us, or to use such familiarity in such things, as useth to be with others, or possibly hath been with them: So it is, 1 *Cor.* 5. and it is no lesse the peoples duty to carry so, that it may be a mean for their edification, than proportionally it is the Ministers duty to instruct, passe Sentence, &c.

2. Their would be an abstinence from Christian fellowship, that is, we would not pray with them,

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read or confer of spirituall purposes, (purposly at least) nor do any such thing that belongeth to Christian-communion, that is, to *reject him* in that sense from Christian fellowship, and *to account him as an heathen man or publican.* In this respect, we cannot walk with an excommunicate man, as we may walk with other Christians; And, in the first respect, we cannot walk with them, as we may walk with other heathens, that, it may be, are guilty of as grosse sins upon the matter; for, the Word of the Lord, putteth this differeece expresly between them and these who are simply heathens, 1 *Cor.* 5.

3. Yet even then prayer may be made for them; for, excommunication is no evidence, that a person hath sinned the sin against the holy Ghost; or, that their sin is a sin unto death, and their necessities, if they be in want, may and should be supplied, because they are men, and it is naturall to supply such; they may be helped also against unjust violence, or from any personall hazard, if they fall in it; and as occasion offereth, folks may give a weighty serious word of admonition unto them, and such like, because by such means, the end of the Sentence and its weight are furthered, and not weakened.

4. These that are in naturall relations, ought to walk in the duties of them, as Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Masters and Servants, Magistrates and Subjects, &c. for, what nature bindeth, the Church doth not loose.

5. Men may follow civil businesse, as paying or exacting payment of debts, buying or selling, and may walk in such things as are requisit for humane fellowship and society, because, though Church Censures be to humble and shame men, by bearing in on them their sinfulnesse, yet it is not to undo them, and simply to take away a being from them.

6. Yet all these things would be done with them in such a manner, As, 1. the persons may shew their indignation

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dignation at their way, even when they expresse tenderneſſe to their perſons. 2. It would be done in a different manner from what uſeth to be with others, not under ſuch a Sentence, that ſo they may bear out their reſpect to the Sentence, even when they ſhew reſpect to them. Therefore, there would not be ſuch frequencie in medling with ſuch perſons, nor would it be with familiarity or many words, and long diſcourſes to other purpoſes, nor with laughing, and with ſuch chearfulneſſe, intimacie or complacencie, as is uſed with others. But, in a word, the buſineſſe would be done, and other things abſtained from. 3. When, what is neceſſary is paſt, except it be on neceſſity, folks would not eat or drink with them at the time of doing their buſineſſe, or after the cloſing of the ſame; becauſe that doth not neceſſarily belong to them as men, and by ſo doing, the due diſtance would not be keeped; and this is the great practick, ſo to carry to them as the weight of the Sentence be not leſſened, nor they prejudged of what otherwayes is neceſſary to their being, but that ſo every opportunity may be taken, whereby their edification may be advanced.

If what is before ſaid, be conſidered, We ſuppoſe there will be no great need to add arguments to provoke either Miniſters or others to be zealous in proſecuting their reſpective duties; Yet theſe few conſiderations may be taken notice of, and pondered to this purpoſe,

Some Conſiderations to provoke Miniſters and others to the faithful diſcharge of their duty in all the forementioned particulars.

1. That ſcarcely hath deluſion, though never ſo groſſe, ever broken in into a Church, and for a time been forborn, but it hath carried away many therewith, and hath proven exceedingly inductive to much ſin, offence, reproach, diviſion, bitterneſſe and ills of all ſorts into the Church of Chriſt: Very little acquaintance with the Hiſtory of the Church, will put this out of queſtion.

2. Conſider that this ſpirit of deluſion, is in a ſpeciall

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cial manner fore-prophesied of, to have a great reviving and strength in the latter dayes; it is said, 1 *Tim.* 4. 1. That the Spirit speaketh *expressly*, That in the last times, some shall depart from the faith: And why is that *expressly* added, but to give warning the more clearly, that men may be at their duty? Again, 2 *Tim.* 3. 1. This know, that in the last dayes, perillous times shall come. It is the observation of a holy and learned man, that in this place, it is the *last dayes*; in the former, the *last times*, as if this did relate to a time nearer the end of the world: and so the first looketh to the Popish superstitions and abominations, (and indeed, the nature of the Doctrines there reproved, doth seem to favour this) and this last place doth relate to the grosse delusions, that under the pretext of the form of godlinesse, were to succeed to these; And therefore men, according to their places, ought in these times to be so much the more watchfull and zealous, seing the Trumpet hath given so distinct a sound.

3. The dreadfull effects which such ills necessarily bring with them, may be considered; it is not ruine to bodies or estates, but to souls; it is not simply to sin, and to permit that, but its *rebellion*; and which is more, It is to *teach rebellion*, and to carry on the same with a high hand against God; and what will stir zeal for God, or what will waken love to, and sympathie with, the souls of others, if this do not?

4. It would be considered, how often zeal, diligence and faithfulnesse of men in their severall places (as hath been laid down) have proved exceeding helpfull for preventing and restraining the growth of such evils, so that thereby such a flood hath been dryed up, as it is *Rev.* 12. which otherwayes might have drowned the Woman and her seed; and, *Matth.* 13. it is marked, that such tares are sown and spring up, not while men are watchfull and diligent, but while they sleep and are defective in their duty.

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ver. 25. for, diligence in the use of means, hath the blessing promised which others cannot expect; and if wrath be come to such an height, as the Lord will not be intreated in that matter, yet the person that is diligent may look for his own soul for a prey, and to be kept on his feet in the midst of tentations.

5. It may be a provocation to humility and watchfulnesse, to consider how great men have been carried away with the most vile delusions: the Church of *Corinth* did abound in most eminent gifts, yet corrupt teachers wanted not influence upon them. The Church of *Galatia* hath been most singularly zealous and tender, yet what an height delusion came to amongst them, is evident, so that they were bewitched therewith, *Galat.* 3. 1. In Church-history also it is evident, that most eminent men have been carried away with the vainest delusions: that great Light, *Tertullian*, became tainted exceedingly with the delusions of the *Montanists*: and after-times have letten us see, that the eminentest of men are capable of defection; and even Stars are often made to fall from heaven by such storms.

6. It is dreadfull also to consider how difficultly men are recovered from these delusions. It's a rare thing to find in Scripture, or in History, any observable recovery of a person that hath slipped in this kind. Sometimes indeed persons, that through fear have been brought to deny Christ, or to countenance Idolatry in a particular act, are marked with much tenderneſse and satisfaction to acknowledge their failing, and to abandon it; for, often such a failing is the fruit of some surprizal, and is of infirmity; but the recovery of a person, who hath with a kind of deliberation drunken-in errour and rejected convictions, is a most rare thing, and hath a *peradventure* added thereto, 2 *Tim.* 2. 23. (as was formerly marked) which will not readily be found in any other case; yea, often

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ten such persons do *wax worse and worse*, and one delusion draweth-on another till it come to the greatest height of absurdity.

PART IIII.

Concerning Scandalous Divisions.

CHAP. I.

How heresie, schism and division differ, together with the several kinds of division.

HAving now come this length, there is one thing of nigh concernment to what is past, which possibly might be usefull to be enquired into, Concerning such scandals as cannot be called in the former sense doctrinall, nor yet personall; because there may be purity in the one, and regularity and orderlinesse in the other respect, and yet actually there may be a scandal and an offence or occasion of stumbling lying in the way of many, and that is, by *schisms* and *divisions* in the Church, or amongst the people of God. This we confesse is no lesse difficult to speak to, than any of the former, because there is often more that can be said for both sides, and the side from whence the offence riseth, is not so easily discernable, which maketh, that we are the more unwilling and lesse confident to undertake to speak any thing in reference thereto; Yet seing we have in providence been led to the former purposes, without any previous design; and now, having this occuring to us, before we close, we shall endeavour shortly to speak a word in reference thereto, in a generall abstracted manner, without descending to any particulars, which may be dangerous to be

The introduction.

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be touched upon; but shall give some generall hints concerning the same, which we are induced unto upon these considerations,

The scandal and hurtfulnesse of divisions.

1. Because such divisions are as really scandalous and hurtfull to the Church, as either scandals in practice or doctrine are. 2. Because the Word of God hath as fully discovered and abundantly condemned the offensiveneſse of this, as of any of the former. 3. Because there is such a connexion amongst these sorts of scandals, that often one is not without the other. Hence we see, 1. that contention and offences and the wo that followeth them, are joyned together, *Matth.* 18. 1, 2, 3, &c. 2. Divisions and corrupt doctrine, or heresies, are knit together, 1 *Cor.* 11. 18, 19. so that seldome there is corrupt doctrine, but it hath division with it; and never is division, but it hath offence, As in the Epistles to these of *Corinth* and *Galatia* is clear: Hence *dogs* and *evil workers*, that is, the spreaders of corrupt doctrine, are also called the *concision*, *Phil.* 3. 1, 2, &c. and in experience we often find, that a spirit of division waiteth upon delusion, and oftentimes doth take up and prevail, even over those who have been preserved from the delusion; As in a great storm, some places have great and dreadfull blasts and drops, who yet may be keeped free from the violence of the tempest; Even so, this deluge of errour, hath showrs of divisions waiting upon it, which often may affect these who are preserved from the violence of delusion it self; which maketh, that the speaking something to this, doth not impertinently follow upon the former. 4. Because if this be wanting, what is said in the former cases, is palpably defective, especially at such a time, when there is no lesse cause to observe this evil, than any of the former. This being, as to them, in some respect a cause that bringeth them forth and fostereth them, and, in some respect, an effect which necessarily and naturally followeth upon them: for,

divisions

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divisions breed both scandals in practice and doctrine; And again, scandal in these, doth breed and entertain divisions.

The heads of the ensuing part of the Treatise.

2. What we would say, shall be drawn to these four heads. 1. To consider what division is, or of what sort it is, which is properly to be spoken of here. 2. What are the causes which do breed and foster the same. 3. What are the evil effects which ordinarily flow from it. 4. What may be thought to be duty in reference to such a time, and what may be looked upon as suitable remedies of such a distemper.

For the first, We take it for granted, that there is such a thing as division in the Church; which is not to be looked upon as any new or strange thing; for, the Scripture maketh it clear, and the History of the Church putteth it out of question: Concerning which we may premit these few things,

1. That the division which is intended here, is not every contest, and alienation of mind, and diffesence of practice incident to men; but that which is proper to the Church concerning Church affairs, and so is to be distinguished from civil debates and contentions. We would advert also, that there may be Church differences that fall not under the charge of Scandal, as when in some things, men of conscience are of different judgements, yet carry it without any offence or breach of charity; Or, when in some practices there is diversity with forbearance, as was in *Policarpus* dayes, and the time of *Irœneus* (about *Easter* matters) These we speak not unto. 2. Although sometimes titles and expressions may be used more generally and promiscuously; yet, in this discourse, we would distinguish between these three, *Heresie*, *Schism* and *Division*, without respect to what otherwayes useth to be done.

What heresie is.

And, first, *Heresie*, is some errour in doctrine, and that especially in fundamentall doctrine, followed with pertinacie, and endeavour to propagate the same,

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same. Again, *Schism* may be where no heresie in doctrine is, but is a breaking of the union of the Church, and that communion which ought to be amongst the Members thereof, and is either in Government or Worship. As, first, in Government, when the common Government, whereto all ought to be subject, is rent, and a Government distinct, set up. This may be, either when the Government is altered; as, suppose some should set up Episcopacy in opposition to Presbytery, yet keeping still the fundamentall truths; Or it may be, where the same Government is acknowledged, but there be difference concerning the persons to whom the power doth belong; so, sometimes men have acknowledged Popery, yet followed diverse Popes; So often, Sectaries have not disclaimed Councils and Bishops, but have set up their own, and refused subjection to these to whom it belonged. The first kind implieth a doctrinall errour concerning Government; The second may consist with the same principles of Government, but differeth in the application of them, and becometh a schism, when men act accordingly in acknowledging diverse supream Independent Governments: Because so, when there ought to be but one Church, it becometh, as it were, two: and this is exclaimed against, and regrated by the Fathers, under the expression of erecting *altare contra altare*, that is, *altar against altar*, whenas the Lord allowed but one, even in reference to His own worship. 2. Schism may be in worship, that is, when, it may be, both the same Doctrine and Government is acknowledged, yet there is not communion keeped in Church-ordinances, as in Prayer, Word and Sacraments; but a separate way of going about these is followed. It seemeth, that this was in part the schism of the *Corinthians* (whatever was the rise thereof) that they had a divided way of communicating, and of going about other duties, and other Ordinances, as may be

What schism is; and the kinds thereof.

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gathered from, 1 *Cor.* 11. 18, 19, 20, 21. with 33. This kind of schism hath been frequent in the Church, and hath flowed not so much from dissatisfaction with the Doctrine and Government thereof, as with the constitution of the Members, or failings of the Governours. Thus it was in the case of the *Novatians*, *Donatists*, *Melitians*, *Cathari* and others, of whom it is recorded, that their fault did not consist in setting up any strange Doctrine, or in rejecting of the truth (at least at the first) but in breaking the band of communion, as *Augustine* hath it often; for, saith he, *Schismaticos facit non diversa fides sed communionis disrupta societas, contra Faustum, lib.* 20. Again, he saith of the *Donatists*, *Ad Bonifac. Epist.* 50: *Nec de ipsa fide vertitur quæstio, sed de sola communione infeliciter litigant, & contra unitatem Christi rebelles inimicitias, perversitate sui erroris, exercent.* And this sort of schism doth often draw with it the former, there being no way to maintain this without the other. Of this schism there are many kinds, according to its several rises and degrees; and also, according as it extendeth to the breaking of communion in whole, from Ordinances, or in part only from some, or in some Ordinances, as appeareth to have been in the Church of *Corinth*, where there hath not been a totall schism, though it hath been in that Ordinance of the Supper especially; and it is like also, that that schism hath been occasioned, because of the corruption of some members, with whom others have scared to communicate; and therefore have not tarried for them: for, the Apostle doth particularly condemn this, and exhort them to tarry one for another; and to attain this, he doth clear them of what was necessary for right partaking, to wit, the examining of themselves, ver. 28. and doth declare unto them, that who so did eat unworthily, and did not prepare himself, did eat and drink damnation; but to himself, and not to others: wherefore, saith he, ye need not be so anxiously solicitous

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citous how they be prepared, or of what sort they be that are with you, but examine your selves, and tarry one for another, that there be not a schism amongst you. And this he speaketh, even when he hath been reproving drunkennesse among the Communicants, yet will he not admit that as an excuse, why private persons should Communicate separatedly, which was their practice. This was spoken of in the first part.

This *Schism*, however it be understood, hath ever proven exceeding hurtfull to the Church, and hath been an inlet and nursery to the greatest errours; It is most pressingly condemned in the Scriptures, even with as great weight as corrupt doctrine and heresie are, and it is attributed to that same originall, to wit, the flesh, with witchcraft, idolatry, heresie, &c. *Gal.* 5. 20. It hath ever been most weighting to faithfull Ministers, most offensive to people of all sorts, most advantageous to the enemies of the truth, and hath made the Church most vile and contemptible before the world, as we may see in the sad complaints and writings of the Fathers, in reference to the *Novatians*, *Donatists* and others of that kind: It hath also proven most dangerous to these who have been engaged therein, and often hath been a snare to bring on some spiritual desertion, deadness of spirit, security, self-confidence, or some other spirituall evils of that kind, or to dispose for receiving a more grosse tentation, as was formerly marked. Also, it may be observed, that such schisms have spread very suddenly in some places of the world, but have not been easily removed; for, these schisms of the *Novatians* and *Donatists* did trouble the Church for severall generations, which might be enough to make men think the breach of unity, in that respect, to be no little evil, and to make them fearfull to fall in the same. But because every schism properly doth imply some errour in doctrine, although it doth not arise from the same,

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therefore we shall forbear to speak any thing particularly to this, because what hath been said of errours in doctrine, may in part be applyed here: For, we will find, that schism doth imply one, or all of those. 1. That such apprehended corruptions do either make such a society to be no Church, or communion with that Church in other Ordinances, to be unlawfull because of such corruptions, or of such corrupt members. 2. That there may be a distinct erected Church beside a Church, which yet may not be of communion with that other Church. 3. These or such consequences, that either the Church of Christ in the earth is not one, (which truth of the unity of the Catholick visible Church, is the main ground of all Church-union and communion) Or, that that one Church may be of such heterogeneous or dissimilary parts, as the one of them ought not to have communion with the other; Or, at least this, that a person ought to seek his own satisfaction and consolation, though to the prejudice and renting of the Church, and to the generall offence and stumbling of all others; The fairest schism and separation, must imply one of these: for, it cannot be conceived, that otherwayes men would act so directly, according to these principles, if they did not take them for granted.

It is to be adverted, that as there is an unjust schism, that is, a separation without any cause at all; so there is a rash and scandalous schism, that is, when it is beyond the ground given; or, when the ground given, is not such as will warrant such a separation: Which may be, 1. when the separation or schism is upon some occasion, which is indeed a defect in the Church, but not such as doth make communion therein sinfull, as that in *Corinth*. Or, 2. when, it may be, the schism is extended beyond the ground, that is, when suppose one could not communicate in the Lords Supper in such a Church, because of some sinfull corruption in

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in that Ordinance, if, upon that occasion, one should separate from communion in all Ordinances, that were to exceed the ground given. Or, 3. when no professed schism is owned; yet when really and indeed it is practised, so as men can neither justifie a schism, or separation upon such a ground, nor yet altogether vindicate their practice from inferring the same, in which respect, the schism and rent floweth from affection, or inclination, and not from well grounded light, or reason, and so cannot be but rash and unwarrantable. 4. It may be, in the manner, precipitant, when either means have not been used to remove that ground if it be just; or, when men so heighten some lesser defect in a Church by aggreging it with such circumstances, as may make it appear to themselves or others, a ground sufficient to bear and warrant separation; or, in such a way, to vent their dissatisfaction with things, or persons, as thereby to hurt the unity of the Church, or to occasion a rent, or division, or schism in the same, when, it may be, others beside their intention may thus conclude, A Church so corrupted, &c. is not to be keeped communion with, (and, it may be, the proposition is sound and so qualified, as it is acknowledged by all Divines) But this or that particular Church is such. This again, is offered to be made out by the too vehement aggravation of some lesser defect, which may seem to confirm that assumption: and in practice, it may be observed, that as some will lay down premisses concerning a schism, who yet dare not act according to the conclusion, and actually separate, So others will keep the conclusion, and actually separate in practice, who yet durst not in *Thesi* absolutely maintain schism to be lawfull upon such a ground. It is to be adverted, that schisms and divisions are so nigh in nature and names, that we may use instances for illustration of either promiscuously.

The third word, is *Division*, which doth not at

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the first view differ from Schism; yet we do take it here as different, and to agree to such Divisions and Dissentions in the Church as are consistent with communion both in Government and Worship, and have not a divided Government or Worship following them, as in the former case. Of such there are many instances in Scripture and Church-history, as we may observe by considering these Distinctions thereof. 1. There is a *Doctrinal Division*, as when the matter is not fundamental, nor yet is it pleaded for as such, to the breaking off of communion amongst these that differ, yet possibly being a meer indifferent matter, is followed with too much eagerness, vehemency, bitterness, &c. by these who owne the same respectively. Thus contentions were hot in the primitive times for meats, and such things which were neither of themselves destructive to the foundation of Faith on either side, at least in that time, and so were not heretical; nor did they break off communion in Church-ordinances, and so were not schismatical; yet was the Church troubled therewith by division amongst her members. Of this sort are the divisions that may be amongst godly and orthodox men in some points of Truth, when they too vehemently presse their own opinion to be received with a kind of necessity, or load the other with too many absurdities beyond what will follow from the nature thereof.

What is here meant by the word Division.

The several kinds thereof.

2. There are some Divisions that may be called *Practical*, and do indeed imply some difference of opinion, but do also infer somewhat in practice: Of this sort was the division about *Easter* in primitive times before it came to a schism, some keeping one day, some another. And in after-times it abounded, when some acknowledged the ordination of such a Bishop, and others not; when some acknowledged the authority of such a Council, and others not, and so had divided practices.

3. Some

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3. Some Divisions are betwixt particular men, some have influence upon Churches, and are, as it were, one party against another. The first is more properly a difference, and may be betwixt eminently godly and zealous men, such as was betwixt *Paul* and *Barnabas*, *Act.* 15. 39. and is called a *contention*. Such also we will find in Church-history betwixt *Augustine* and *Jerome*, *Chrysostom* and *Epiphaneus*, which indeed hath a contention with it, and, if the Lord prevent not, is apt to make parties, and to rent the Church; but the other, to wit, the acting of one party against another, as hath been seen in many Councils, and appeareth to have been amongst the *Corinthians*, when one adhered to one person, and one to another; This, I say, looketh like faction, and is properly division.

4. Division may be considered in all these respects as it is in *judgment*, or in *affection*, or in *practice*. It is in judgment, when they are not of the same mind, but have diverse apprehensions concerning Truths. 2. It is in affection, when upon that difference of judgment alienation followeth, whereby that love, and affection, and charity that one oweth to another, is somewhat cooled or discomposed. 3. It is in practice, when they speak and act differently and oppositly; as if it were an advantage to Truth for the one to crosse and undermine what the other doth: This distinction is clearly insinuated, 1 *Cor.* 1. 10. *I beseech you, brethren, that there be no divisions amongst you*; Which is branched-out in union in these three, to wit, *speaking the same thing*, that relateth to action; Of *being perfectly joyned together in the same mind*, that relateth to affection; And of *being one in the same judgment*, that relateth to opinion: which supposeth that there were divisions opposit to all these, which also often go together.

5. There are some Divisions, which (to say so) are negative, and are in the manner and circumstances

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of doing some duties. Thus men may differ and take diverse wayes, yet both of them be endeavouring the thriving of the work of the Gospel, and no way labouring to crosse each other, or to make one another lesse weighty and successful. Thus *Paul* and *Barnabas*, after their contention, did indeed differ in their manner of prosecuting the work of the Gospel, yet both of them did continue faithfull therein, and neither of them did counterplot nor counteract to others. Again, some divisions are positive (to say so) when men do not only differ from each other, but do oppose each other, and do not set themselves singly to prosecute the work, which possibly their opposit may be prosecuting with them; but there is an endeavour to lessen the authority and mar the actings of the other, and to engage men in the approbation of that particular wherein they do differ, which savoureth of division and faction properly, and is more hurtfull and intolerable, when as the first is more tolerable amongst men who have their infirmities; and it's like, that such were the divisions of *Corinth* when there was an endeavour to cry up one, and down another.

6. Some are in *doctrine*, for difference of judgment; some are in *government*, for precedency; as sometimes was amongst the Disciples, a contest who should be greatest: which is not so much for Government abstractly, and considered in it self, or about what should be done, as it is for the persons, who should be the governours and doers thereof; as amongst the Disciples, it is not the question, What kind of government shall be? or, What should be the Governours duty? But, who should be chief and have the main hand in ruling?

7. Sometimes Divisions are more stated and deeply rooted, when some way mens designs are crosse, though not in the main, yet in the manner of carrying them on. Sometimes again, they are more occa-

sional,

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sional, and arise from some particular act or circumstance, wherein men may differ, and may be when neither side draweth on a division; So that particular of taking or not taking *John Mark* in the company, was the occasion of that contention and division betwixt *Paul* and *Barnabas*, *Act.* 15. when otherwayes there was an harmony in the series and strain of their whole way.

8. Sometimes Divisions are betwixt godly and orthodox men upon the one side, and corrupt men upon the other; as were the divisions of the Church with the Arian Hereticks, and others of that nature. Sometimes again, they are amongst godly and orthodox men on both sides, and this is a main ingredient in, and aggravation of the scandal of Division, when it is amongst Christ's own Disciples; and this is that which we would especially speak to: Concerning which we say,

Division among the Godly.

1. That there is such a thing incident to the Church as division amongst godly, able, and orthodox men, as betwixt *Paul* and *Barnabas*, *Act.* 15. The Disciples of Christ and the disciples of *John*; yea, oftentimes betwixt the Disciples of Christ amongst themselves. And afterward the instances of *Augustine* and *Jerome*, *Chrysostom* and *Epiphanius*, with many others of later times, do demonstrat it. In the Old Testament we find *Job* and his friends keeping up a long dispute right sharply. And, *Numb.* 12. something is recorded of a division between *Moses*, *Aaron* and *Miriam*.

It may continue long, and come to a great height.

2. This Division may continue long, and come to a great height, that is, it may be very sharp, although it may be, the rise thereof be small; for, contentions are, as *the letting out of waters*, *Prov.* 17. 14. and they often grow, even amongst good men, so as to provoke much sharpnesse against each other, and that with much confidence, as the instances given do clear.

3. Though it be frequent to them to come to an height

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height, yet they are not easily removed, even amongst the best; This being true, *Prov.* 18. 19. That *a brother offended, is harder to be won than a strong city*, and that *their contentions are as the bars of a castle*, they are so strongly rooted. Hence, we see, that there is no breaking off between *Job* and his friends, till the Lord interpose; there is no composing of the matter between *Paul* and *Barnabas*, but their contention continueth so hot, that they must separate; Neither is there any thing expresly recorded of their meeting together again, although they had long been of most intimate fellowship as neerest colleagues in their journeying and travelling in the Lords work, and that appointed thereto, even by Himself extraordinarily, *Acts* 13. It is recorded, that *Chrysostome* and *Epipheneus* did sunder so imbittered one at the other, that *Epiphaneus* did wish, That *Chrysostome* should not die a Bishop: He again did wish, That the other might not see his home, to wit, *Cyprus*, to which he was then making his voyage; both which accordingly fell out: which is a dreadfull instance of this evil, and looketh like the Lords making use of their passion, to signifie His displeasure against both their distempers.

And not easily removed

CHAP. II.

Whence Divisions do arise, and how they are fostered and encreased.

THis division doth frequently arise, and is continued upon very small occasions; for, it is not ordinarily grosse heresies or palpable abominations, that do draw godly and learned men to side in the defence thereof, but things of lesser concernment; which we will find to be such as these,

Various apprehensions of inferiour truths.

1. Some various and different apprehensions of truths, that are lesse fundamentall, such as was the debates

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bates about meats, genealogies, and other questions in the primitive times, concerning which, there was no little jangling even amongst good men; thus is it when Divines presse too hotly some truth, not simply necessary. It cannot be supponed, that all men who yet see but in part, should be of that same mind; and the Lord hath left some things, as it were, to be the matter of doubtfull disputations, as the Apostle speaketh, *Rom.* 14. 1. and though there be truth upon the one side of every debate, yet considering that that is not alway easily demonstrable, too peremptory deciding and pressing of such things, cannot but occasion strife.

The mistake of some dispensations.

2. Sometimes it floweth from the mistake of some dispensations, and the suspecting of the sincerity and integrity one of another; whereby sometimes men are engaged ere they wit, to maintain their prejudice, and to lay the lesse weight upon light holden forth by others. It was thus with *Jobs* friends, who, mis-interpreting Gods hand upon him, and concluding uncharitably of his state, are brought to maintain an unwarrantable *Thesis* for making out of their point.

Different apprehensions about some persons and things.

3. It may arise from different apprehensions about some persons, or from a different manner of doing the same thing, or from the use-making of different persons; As when one would have such a man to be a Minister, another doth not think him worthy; When one doth think such a man deserveth not to be a Minister, and another thinketh that he doth; when such different thoughts about persons, means or manner of doing things, (which are incident to the best of men) are followed with different actings accordingly, and none doth cede to another, then necessarily followeth contention and division; So *Paul* thought *John Mark* not meet to be taken to the Ministery again in their company, seing he had left them; *Barnabas* did think him meet and would have him, whereupon the contention and division followed

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lowed. Often also, we find in the Church-history, that good men have divided upon this, that some would ordain such to be Presbyters or Bishops, whom others did not think worthy of that office; and that some would not condemn persons or writings, which others did condemn: for, learned men often think the condemning of a person or doctrine which is owned by them, or the refusing to condemn a person or doctrine which they do condemn, to be a reflection on them, and that therefore they are engaged to deal with such, as with the principall party: It is marked, that the rise of *Chrysostome* and *Epiphaneus* their difference, was, That *Chrysostome* did not so go alongs in the condemning of *Origen*, and his writings as the other did; and that some of the Clergie of *Constantinople* had refused the same: whereupon *Epiphaneus* began in preaching to enveigh against the other, which came to that height that is said. Also, somtimes some have been too favourable constructers of deluders, as if they had been of some honesty, wherby difference hath grown with others who knew the deceit, As witnesse the first Divisions that were in *Phrygia* concerning *Montanus*, because some being simple, and not knowing that prophesie, in an extraordinary manner, was laid aside by the Lord, did dispute, that possibly there might be some more than an ordinary thing in his way, and that he might through accesse to God do such things, when as yet they were not infected with his errours: This did breed a schism; when others necessarily behoved to condemn the deeds, and also the persons, as not serving the Lord, but their own bellies, *Rom.* 16. ver. 16, 17.

Heart burnings at the credit of others.

4. It usually ariseth from secret grudges at being sleighted, or heart-burnings at anothers credit and reputation beyond them, and sometimes indeed, not because of the fact done, but because such persons were the doers thereof, and one way or other springeth from

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from the root of pride, envy, or emulation, which hath many branches whereby it venteth its malignant distempering dispostion in sundry shapes. It is indeed sad that such things should be amongst the Disciples of Christ yet often we see, that this, *Who should be the greatest*, was a bone of contention among them, especially when some had evidenced their too great proneneſle and inclination to prefer themselves to others; This also had influence upon that muteny which *Aaron* and *Miriam* did stir up against *Moses*, *Numb.* 12. and it is the Lords word by the wise mouth of *Solomon*, *Only by pride cometh contention.*

5. Too much insisting on, and aggreging of the infirmities or opinions of others, and loadening and aggreging them with many fearfull consequences, hath much influence upon this, especially where words are wrested beside the intention and sense of the speaker, because such an humour sheweth little love and respect to the person, and by the nature of the work, doth tend to hold him forth as odious, ignorant, absurd, or some way despicable; which even good men, being but men, are not easily brought to digest. We see this in *Job's* friends, who frequently carp at his expressions, and study to aggrege them, which indeed were not alway altogether excusable; yet their scope (at least, in the work) was, to represent them and him much more absurd, than indeed they were. And this was in these debates between *Augustine* and *Jerome*, and usually is where such differences are, as too many reproachfull and bitter differences now in the Church, almost every where, do hold forth. *Aggreging the infirmities of others*

6. They are occasioned by a carnal and factious-like pleading for, and vindicating even of Truth. Often it is not the matter whereabout godly and learned men debate, that maketh division, (for, there may be difference where there is no division) but it is a carnal manner of prosecuting either side of the *A factious vindicating of truth.*

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difference, even that side whereon the truth doth lye, that doth engender the division; and often, we see men differing about greater points than others do, and yet carrying so as it cannot be called Division. It's marked, 1 *Cor.* 3. that some were for *Paul*, some for *Apollos*, some were for none but *Christ*; and yet this is counted a side of the faction aswell as any of the other; not because being for Christ is wrong, but because that factiously they walked under that pretext: Which we may take up in these respects, 1. When a man too peremptorily presseth his light upon others, or upon a Church, in a matter that is not fundamental, or necessary, which is condemned, *Rom.* 14. 22. when men in these debates keep not their faith, or light, to themselves, but do trouble and distract others therewith. 2. It is, when men too vehemently presse such a thing, as if the contrary thereof, or those who maintain the same, were intolerable; and so in a fiery violent way seek to bear down that which is indeed an errour, though of infirmity. It is marked by some that write Church-history, and *Augustine* is of that same mind, That *Stephanus*, Bishop of *Rome*, did more hurt to the Church by his too vehement opposing of *Cyprian*'s errour (which was, That those that were baptized by Hereticks, or Schismaticks, ought again to be baptized) because he did therby hazard the dividing and renting of the Church, by refusing communion with such as were against him, than *Cyprian* did in his maintaining of his errour; Because, though it was still his opinion, he did meekly and condescendingly carry in it, with respect to the unity of the Church. 3. This is also, when things are followed with Sentences and Censures on the opposit opinion, and the abbetters thereof, as if it were a matter of Faith. It's known what influence those Sentences of *Victor*, Bishop of *Rome*, had upon renting of the Church; and stating that divisive distinction betwixt the *East* and *West* Church, and

Unlaw Censures.

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that

that for a matter of nothing, to wit, What day of the moneth precisely *Easter* was to be keeped; and he was for that sharply reproved, even by *Irenæus*, who was of that same judgment with him: And many such instances are in History. 4. It is, when in the prosecution of such things, men leave the matter, and fall on personall reflections, and become bitter in these respects, as to cast up pride and arrogancy, hypocrisie, ignorance, heresie, or erroneousnesse, or some other personal fault, if any be known or imputed to them, or one way or other to sleight them and make them despicable: So *Aaron* and *Miriam* murmur against *Moses*, *Numb.* 12. that he had married an *Ethiopian* woman, that he seemed to sleight them, as if God had only spoken by him, and not by them also; *Epiphanius* also did upbraid *Chrysostom* with hypocrisie; *Jerome* hugely revileth *Vigilantius*, whose tenents seem to be as near truth as his are; so it was between *Demetrius* and *Theophilus*, when in the matter of fact, each giveth to other the lie. 5. It is, when the manner of carrying on a thing, is factious, as endeavouring, to make sides and parties under hand, and indirect dealing to engage others in their differences, and to stir up men by such means against others: It is like it was so in *Corinth*, even amongst the people who adhered not to false teachers; It is marked also in that vehement bitter contention that was between *Jerome* and *Ruffinus*, that he did endeavour by all means, to waken hatred against *Jeromes* person, and to defame his writings more than in any convincing way to make out his point; and yet all this arose from *Jerome* his alleaging the other to be a favourer of *Origens* heresie, because he had translated some books of *Origens*, which was indeed condemned by others as being dangerous; yet seing *Ruffinus* did disclaim these errours, and deny that he approved them, there was no such ground to presse him with it; and this became the occasion of that irreconciliable hatred,

Leaving the matter and falling upon reflections.

Engaging of others.

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hatred, which was never removed; in which also it is marked, that *Jerome* doth object to the other, obscurity, and harshnesse of stile, adding withall many other sleighting expressions.

Too much liking of some upon fair pretences.

7. It may be by the imprudencie of such as have good affection: As, 1. expressing too much good liking of some corrupt men, because they pretend fairly: Thus the Church was divided in *Phrygia* for *Montanus*, because some did too imprudently construct well of him, as if indeed he and his Prophetesses had truly had the gift of prophecy; others again vehemently upbraided them for it. 2. It is when things are pressed unseasonably, or in an offensive manner, without respect to the manner of things if they be satisfied in the matter. There followed many divisions upon the back of the most famous Councill, (which made *Greg. Nazianzen* to say, He never desired to see many Bishops together) and the *Centuriators* give this reason or occasion, *Dum quidam fidem* Nicenam *imprudenter urgebant, alii eam acriter impugnabant.*

Peremptorinesse without condescending.

8. Too much peremptorinesse where there may be some condescending, hath much hand in this; when men become not all things (so far as is lawfull) unto others. It is marked in the Church-history, That sometimes too tenacious adhering unto Canons and Councils, by some who would not condescend in a syllable, when others did condemn the matter, hath been in this respect prejudicial; Such was the cause of the schism betwixt the *East* and *West* Church, and particularly the tenacious adhering in all things, even as to the very manner, to the Council of *Chalcedon*, (which was indeed a famous and orthodox Council in the matter) The former instance cleareth this also.

Dissatisfaction about some persons

9. Sometimes this doth come from dissatisfaction in some particulars of Government, as when some have been displeased that such and such men, formerly cast out, should have been again admitted to communion;

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munion; or, that a person, cast out of communion in one place, hath been admitted in another; This is frequent, as after instances may clear.

10. It is often occasioned by the encroachment of one upon another in the exercise of their power, as to preach, ordain, and such like, within the bounds of others beside, or without their knowledge or against their will. *Mutuall encroachment.*

11. It hath sometimes arisen from the Churches meddling in extrinsick or unnecessary things; and seldome Church-men have been too much taken up and occupied about such things, but it hath had such a consequent: As when they are too much taken up about ceremonies and things not commanded, as Easter was; or about indifferent things, as the prescribing of forms in every thing, and such like; Or, about precedency in Government, and what might conduce to the externall splendor of the Church in immunities, priviledges, fabricks, dotations, &c. whereof instances are very many. Or, when Church-men have become too pragmatick in civil things, or affairs of the world, thereby to carry on a temporall grandour in the spirituall Kingdom of Christ; which was often the rise and occasion of difference amongst the Apostles; and although there was scarce accesse to this occasion in respect of practice while Magistrates were heathens, yet in after times, this is evident; and sundry divisions followed upon such occasions, as the approving or condemning of such and such an Emperours Election; the transferring of the Empire from East to West, or from one Family to another. *Meddling in extrinsick things.*

12. New manner of expressions, or new moulds of the Doctrine of the Gospel, different from what hath been formerly delivered, have given occasion to this; that is, when there is either a new form of speaking, and an affectation of novelty in words, different from the form of sound words which Ministers ought *Novelty of expressions and notions.*

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to hold fast; or, when things are so proposed, as if all former moulds had been defective, and all other Divines in their Preaching and Writings were nothing to such. It seemeth that this newfangleness of speech had no less influence in dividing the Church of *Corinth*, and begetting factions therein, than the diversity that was in the matter, wherein they are not so generally found guilty, as being carried away with errour, as, of being itched with a humane kind of eloquence in the manner of Preaching. This same also may be in Writtings, and indeed when some cry up one manner or mould, and some others the contrary, it may breed siding and division, even as well as diversity of Doctrine may do. And it is not for nought that the Lord hath commanded simplicity in the manner, and the *holding fast of the form of sound words*, even as he hath commanded soundness in the matter; and oftentimes there doth arise no less tastiness or itching amongst people, nor less emulation amongst Ministers, from the one than from the other.

CHAP. III.

The height of evil that division bringeth.

HAving now seen a little the rises of this evil, we may look to the height it hath come to from such beginnings: which we may consider in these steps. 1. It engendereth heat, strife and contention; and in that respect, maketh men carnall, 1 *Cor.* 3. 2. It breedeth alienation in affection, and separateth these in fellowship that have been most intimate, as if their companying together had lost that sweetness and refreshfulness that sometimes it had, and thereby even their Christian communion is interrupted; both those may be seen in that strange and hot contention, which came to this height betwixt

Heat and contention.

Alienation

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twixt *Paul* and *Barnabas*, *Act.* 15. 3. It breedeth jealousie and suspicion of one anothers actions and intentions, yea, it may be, of the sincerity of their state: it breedeth envy at one anothers prosperity and respect, and maketh them lesse weighted with any crosse or adversity that the other falleth into. *Paul* is suspected, not only by the false teachers, but even by the professors, to be an enemy to them, and not to be single in his designes amongst them: some have counted others hypocrites, as is before marked. *Jealousie.*

4. It bringeth forth violent and virulent expressions and reflections upon each other, and greater heat almost is not to be found than amongst differing Divines, that yet do aggree in the main. It is a wonder to read some of the expressions that are betwixt *Jerome* and *Ruffin*, and betwixt *Demetrius* Bishop of *Alexandria*, and *Theophilus* Bishop of *Jerusalem*, with many others; or to consider the sad regrates that *Basilius*, *Gregorius Nazeanzenus*, and others, have of these differences; something may be seen of it in the instance of *Job* and his friends. And what there is for the present amongst Orthodox Divines abroad, and in this Island, I fear, out of honour to the men, to mention them; yet I suppose such things may be read in the Prefaces and Writings of the most eminent Divines, as may make the hearts of all to loath such divisions. *Virulent expressions.*

5. It hath come to that height, as not to spare to publish even personall reflections; yea sometimes, it hath come to that, that men have condemned deeds in others, after such begun differences, which formerly they did highly commend in them; (thus their estimation & construction of their actions, doth ebb and flow according to their estimation of their persons) It is marked of *Demetrius* of *Alexandria*, that whiles he and *Origen* did continue in fellowship, he was a great commender of that deed of *Origen's*, to wit, his gelding of himself while he was young; yet after difference arose betwixt them, upon very *Personall reflections.*

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mean grounds, (*Origen* not being come to his grosseneſſe) he did moſt vehemently object that to him in his Writings. 6. Often it hath come that length, that they have imprecated evil to one another, as in the instance of *Chryſoſtom* and *Epiphanius*; ſometimes they have informed and moſt vehemently inſtigated civil Powers againſt one another, that they might procure their depoſition, baniſhment, and ſuch like, as *Ruffinus* did againſt *Jerome*, the Clergie at *Antioch* againſt *Flavianus*, and ſome at *Conſtinople*, particularly *Severianus*, did ſtir up the Emperour againſt *Chryſoſtom*. 7. Alſo, it hath been followed in Councels and Synods by the Sentences of Depoſition and Excommunication, as was frequent in the caſe of that debate about Eaſter, and in that debate betwixt *Stephanus* and *Cyprian*; *Tertullian* alſo was Sentenced upon a prejudice, without juſt ground; ſo was *Chryſoſtome* depoſed even by Biſhops that were not heterodox; and many others. 8. It hath extended to divide Churches although it began amongſt Miniſters, and hath come to that height, that they have withdrawn from the communion of one another, and have choſen different Biſhops and Miniſters without communion one with another, or without dependence one upon another, and yet neither of them have been Hereticks, nor profeſſed Schiſmaticks, but becauſe of ſome diſſatisfaction, it may be, with the perſon, or ordination of ſuch a Miniſter; or upon ſome miſtake of a particular act of a Councell, even when both did acknowledge the ſame, as particularly is marked to have been betwixt *Euſtachius* of *Antioch*, and *Euſebius* of *Pamphilia*; and again at *Antioch* in the caſe of *Miletus* and *Paulinus*; and again betwixt *Flavianus* and others; which is marked to be in the fourth Century. 9. It hath extended to great heat and furie, even amongſt the followers of each other; whereby much jealouſie, heat and diſſention hath been occaſioned. 10. In both thoſe there hath been ſuch a fervour, and

Impreca-tions and in-ſtigation of the civill Power.

Sharp cen-ſures in-flicted.

Renting of whole Churches.

Furie of their fol-lowers.

Furious madneſs of

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as

as it were fury, that there hath been no uptaking nor removing of the same: And although we find difference to have arisen from little, even amongst good men, yet often we will find that most difficultly it hath been removed, but for many generations it hath continued, when the first authors have been away, and that with very great heat, as almost in all the instances given, so that, that sweet and moderate Divine *Melanchon*, did usually call the difference of Divines *rabies Theologorum*, and at his death did blesse himself, that amongst other sins and miseries he was to be fred from this *rabies* or furie of Divines, which was evermore sadder to him than any opposition of open adversaries. 11. Usually, it hath diverted most serious Divines, both from the pressing of piety, and reproving of vice; as also from maintaining of truth against open adversaries, and the pursuing of their errours. *Augustine* doth complain of this to *Jerome*, and doth for this end, as it were, crave a cessation; and it cannot be otherwayes, for such debates do not profit these that are occupied therein. *Heb.* 13. ver. 9. and when mens edge is hot and sharp against others in such particular differences, it cannot but cool and blunt them in more weighty things, and is no little part of the devils subtilty to make way for errour and profanitie, thus to entangle Ministers. Which occasion he hath ever taken to sow tares, which that great Father and Divine *Basilius* doth condole to this purpose, That while there was concord in every occupation, only in the Church and amongst Ministers there was dissention, and that so hot, that no commiseration of the Flock, which was set upon, and drawn away by perverse men, was prevalent with them, to abstain from such differences. 12. Hence, it hath followed, that though there hath been no considerable difference upon the matter at the first, yet notwithstanding it hath grown and come to a height, and that in respect both of

Diversion of them from their main work.

Both schism and heresie following division.

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Schism and heresie; And it is rare to find in History, that a division hath continued long, but it hath turned to separation in communion, and a Schism; and again, Schism hath not continued long, but it hath brought forth heresie, for divided practices lead men to lay down and maintain such principles as may defend them, and the band of unity being broken, there is no stay or hold, because, as that forenamed Father *Basilius* saith, men take on them then to speak, write, and do as they please. 13. Although sometimes the fault of division may be more on one side than another, yet seldom is any side free, at least, in the manner of prosecution, and therefore often it turneth in the close to the hurt of both, and the one side becomes more schismaticall and erroneous, at least, in many of their members, as fell out in the case of the *Novatians*, and *Donatists*. The other side again, have often become more cold and secure in the practice of holinesse, carnall and formall in pursuing ceremonies and externall things, with lesse affection and life in the main, because the edge of their zeal was bended toward these differences; and generally people have been stumbled and offended by them; and by the miscarriage of some affectionate persons, men more formall and not very zealous in the main thing, have come to have more weight and sway in the Government of the Church; and thus we see that after these hot debates that were in the Church about lesser things, schisms and heresies grew up on the one side; lukewarmnesse, formality, and inclination to ceremonies, and a formall lazie way of worship, did grow up and increase in the Church, upon the other side. 14. Though we find men sadly regrate these, yet was there alwayes a difficulty to get them removed; there being often a kind of inconsideratnesse whereby the publick good hath been overlooked, and men have walked too much by particular inclination and affection, and so have come to hate whom formerly they praised, and to

Commonly both sides faultie, though not equally.

Division hardly cured.

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to praise whom formerly they hated; by which the Ordinances have become weightlesse to all; and the Ministers, who sometimes were counted a gazing, a reproach and the off-scouring of all men because of afflictions, have become much more despicable because of their own intestine divisions, as one of the Fathers doth pathetically expostulate for the dissentions of his time, writing to *Nazeanzen.*

CHAP. IIII.

The causes why Division usually cometh to so great an height.

WE may now enquire what be the causes why Divisions usually come to such a height, and are so difficulty removed, even amongst men that are affectioned in the work of Christ, and otherwayes sound, zealous, and sober; which is indeed strange, especially considering, that they do often see the evil, regrate it, and professe their desire of a remedy themselves? In answering to this, we are to look, 1. to the Lords soveraign hand even in this. 2. To what accession there is to it from those that differ. 3. To some occasionall accidentall causes that concur therein. 4. We may consider the strength of the tentation in respect of some other circumstances.

1. That the Lord hath a Soveraign hand therein, cannot be denied, and that in these two respects, not to insist in all, 1. As it is a triall whereby both mens soundnesse and unsoundnesse have occasion to be manifested; This is asserted, 1 *Cor.* 11. as a reason of the necessity of schisms and divisions, as may be gathered by comparing, ver. 18, with 19. But this we insist not on. 2. The Lord hath a judiciall hand in it, that is, as He ordereth divisions for the just chastisement and punishment of some, even as was for-

The severaignty of God trying good and bad.

Chastizing also and punishing.

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formerly said of heresies and delusions; and to this purpose, we may consider that *Wo* which floweth from offences unto the world, to relate especially unto divisions amongst Church-officers, as the subjoyning thereof to the contention amongst the Apostles doth evince; and in the nature of it, and in respect of the consequents that follow thereon, It is indeed a *Wo*, and a very great *Wo* unto the world, and an evidence of the Lords displeasure; when thus in His anger, divisions come amongst Ministers or People, as it is, *Lam.* 4. 16. Which we will find true in these respects. 1. It looketh angry like against Ministers; for, thereby they become despicable, the Lords countenance and presence seemeth to be withdrawn, and much carnalnesse of frame, and many other evils steal in; which do both eat up much of that inward livelinesse which otherwayes they might have, and also discompose that tranquillity and composednesse of minds, which love and unity entertain, and doth propose Ministers unto people, as men destitute of that badge, whereby they may be known to be the Lords Disciples, to wit, *love to one another*. 2. It is often a great snare to many carnall Professors; for, thereby some are hardened in profanity, and become Atheists, as if all that is spoken by Ministers concerning Religion, were not to be believed; Therefore the Lord prayeth for unity, and against differences amongst His Disciples, for this cause, *That the world might believe that Christ was sent by God, and that these are loved of him*, Joh. 17. 21, 23. which importeth, that this plague of Atheism followeth in the world upon such divisions. Again, others are stumbled so, as they cast at the Truth preached by them, and thereby become a prey to be carried about with every wind of doctrine; for preventing of which, Ministers, and union among Ministers are required, *Eph.* 4. 1, 2, 3. with 11, 12, 13, 14. 3. It becometh an burden, grief and offence to the weak, such divisi-

Yea plaguing the world.

Division burdens the godly.

on

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on being a main ſtumbling-block to the little ones that believe, *Matth.* 18. 1, and 6. 4. It proveth a great confirmation and ground of hardening to the adverſaries of the truth, who are thereby exceedingly hardened, and brought to applaud themſelves in their own way, as if ſuch divided inſtruments could not be of the one body, the Church, which is guided by one Spirit; And this was caſt up by heathens in the primitive times, as we may find by the apologies of many of the Fathers; and the ſame way hath been followed by Antichriſt and his followers unto this day; they inſult in nothing more than the diviſions of the Orthodox, and are more proud of nothing than their pretended unity, which they make a mark of the true Church. And when all theſe are conſidered, we ſuppoſe, it may be evident that ſuch diviſions are, when they are, a great plague unto the Church, and may juſtly be called a *Woe* unto the world.

Hardeneth the adverſaries of the truth.

We need not inſiſt upon characters of a judiciall-like diviſion, ſeing hardly there is diviſion in a Church, but it is judiciall in ſome part; Yet theſe things may be conſidered to this purpoſe, 1. When the diviſion is amongſt the more eminent and godly men, as amongſt the Diſciples. 2. If the matter be light comparatively for which the difference is keeped up, as *Auguſtine* calleth that with ſome *Donatiſts*, *parva diſſentio*, as to the matter or occaſion, which was yet great in its effects, *Epiſt.* 203. 3. If it be for dominion, or preheminence, or ſuch things as may look carnall like before men, like that, *Matth.* 18. 1, *&c.* Or, 4. if the manner of following it be carnall, or irrationall-like without that reſpective tenderneſſe of edification and offence, which rationally might be expected from ſuch men. 5. When there are many palpable convincing reaſons, and that in reſpect of the particular time and caſe, which might draw men from ſuch diviſions. Or, 6. when ſometimes healing is eſſayed, and beyond probable reaſons

Characters of judiciall diviſion.

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reasons and expectation, it doth break off and turn worse, when it appeared to be near a close. 7. When it spreadeth, and cometh to occupy and take up Professors, it may be, beyond many more concerning things. This especially is discernable, when the division ariseth suddenly upon the back of a great calm, and after such sins as may procure the interrupting thereof, and when it cometh, in an unexpected way, from such persons, and upon such an occasion, as, it may be, none could have looked-for, or thought of; when it is under afflictions, and other cases and reproaches, as the Jews divisions were, even when besieged by the *Romans*, and when under them, as *Josephus* writeth. These and such like may evidence somewhat to be judiciall therein. Because, 1. It doth so further what is penall the more in all the former respects, and it cannot but have such effects. 2. Because there being no other probable reason how ordinarily such a thing may come to passe, the Lords hand is to be acknowledged therein so much the more, when even His Servants are drunken but not with wine, and He hath powred upon them the spirit of deep sleep, and covered even the Prophets and Seers therewith, as the word is, *Isa.* 29. 9, 10. and when they are as so many wild bulls caught in a net, full of the fury of the Lord, and of the rebuke of their God, as it is, *Isa.* 51. ver. 20. Whereby it cometh to passe, that neither one sort or other can particularly understand the duty called-for in reference to their healing, more than if all visions, and directions concerning the same were sealed up, as, *Isa.* 29. ver. 10, 11. and *Isa.* 59. 10. And none of all Zions sons are in capacity to take her by the hand, *Isa.* 51. 18. 3. Besides these two, the Lord sometimes hath a wise design for promoving of His work, even by occasion of such divisions, as thereby to make the Gospel to be spread further than otherwayes it had been; for, by discontents and differences, sometimes men have been put

to

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to go elsewhere and preach the Gospel; and in that instance of *Paul* and *Barnabas* their separating, this is brought about; the Gospel is preached by both in their severall journeys, which had not been so extended had they been together; but this, and others of this kind being only proper to the Lords soveraign wisdom, we will not insist on them.

In the *second* place, If we consider mens own accession who are engaged in such divisions, that is manifold. 1. Men by former guiltinesse may procure the same, as by abuse of former unity, carnalnesse in it, not improving of it for edification, pride and conceitednes of it as if it could not be interrupted, not being thankfull to God for it, nor praying for continuance of it. These and such like, may draw on such a dreadfull stroke as division; wherefore not only is there a *Wo* to the world because of offences, but also to him by whom they come; *Matth.* 18. even when notwithstanding, the necessity of them is asserted. 2. Some present sinfull distemper in Ministers frame or dispositon, may have influence upon this, as it were disposing them the sooner to take fire upon any occasion. As, 1. distance with God, and coldnesse of love to Him, without which, love cannot be keeped up with others in Him. 2. Pride, conceitinesse, desire of preheminencie, respect and applause, which was amongst the Apostles. 3. Which followeth upon this, envy at the respect which is given to others, or the weight that they have in the managing of matters, and carnall emulation at their persons and actions. 4. There is a secret discontentednesse at mens being sleighted by others, or apprehending themselves to be so. 5. There is a credulousnesse and readinesse to receive wrong impressions, a jealousie or suspicion of others in their designs, ends, or particular respects to them; All which proceeding from want of charity, that thinketh not evil, &c. they cannot but some way dispose for division. 6. There is an

Former guiltinesse.

Present distempers.

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an itching newfangle humour, not after new Doctrines, but after new expressions, formes, or changes in other things. 7. There is sometimes a prejudice at severity and strictnesse, as if it were pride, ambition, or something that is intolerable; which is marked to be the cause of the Clergie of *Constantinople*, their dissention with *Chrysostome* their Bishop: Of this kind, to wit, sinfull and disposing causes, are ignorance, imprudence, tenaciousnesse, or self-willednes, and such like; whereby a Minister is the easilier engaged, and the more difficultly brought off.

Inconsiderat expresions or actings.

3. There are some acts whereby men have accession to the raising and heightening of division, and oftentimes they are mutuall: As, 1. some mens doing of some inconsiderate act, or writing some inconsiderate expression upon the one hand; and others, too passionatly and vehemently exaggerating such a fact, and condemning such an expression by a torturing deduction of absurdities therefrom, beyond what was intended; So it was between *Jerome* and *Augu-*

Severity in stine, &c.

2. When some presse severity in Dis-

Discipline.

cipline and Censures, somewhat too hotely, others,

Sleighting of the persons, writings, or actings of others.

with no lesse discontent, repelling the same. 3. When men sleightingly expresse their mind of the persons, writings or actings of others; and they again are engaged by the like reflections, to vindicate the same.

Hunting after credit.

4. When men study not the instruction of themselves or others affectionedly, but hunt after a kind of credit to themselves, though with the reproach of

Little condescending, &c.

others. 5. Little condescending to remove mistakes and prejudices, abstinence from society, and fellowship with such as they differ from in some particular; hasty preaching, and publishing differences of small moment, as *Epiphanius*, and some others, formerly cited, did, no condescending in particular facts that

Acts that state schism

might be condescended on, and such like. 6. Especially such acts as state a schism, and break communion in Government, Worship, and other Ordinances,

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nances, are exceedingly instrumentall in this. As, 1. to have distinct Bishops or Ministers, Governours or Officers, and so to have opposit Judicatories, and opposit Ordinations, which is often found to be the result and great cherishment of divisions in the primitive times. Whereupon followed, 2. division in administration of Sacraments, when such and such could not acknowledge men so ordained to be Ministers, and so could not communicate with them, if they were ordained in oppositon to them, or such as were ordained by them: And this hath a connexion with such an act, because the acknowledging of such to be lawfully ordained, would question their own Ordination. Whence, 3. follow divided Congregations and meetings, according to the oppositon amongst Ministers, some meeting in one place, and some in another, and so withdrawing communion one from another, although both do continue in the same Faith and Government; As may be seen in severall of these divisions mentioned at *Antioch*, *Constantinople*, *&c.* Upon which again followed, 4. oppositt preaching amongst Ministers, each condemning others as Schismaticks, and not to be keeped commuon with; one calling that a duty which the other called a sin, and matter of humiliation, and contrarily: As also, mutuall railing and reviling amongst the followers of such sides, which often hath come to tumults; whereby it appeareth how great influence such things have upon division. Yea, 5. it hath come to divide families; Often *Augustine* regrateth in his Epistles, that their division made the man and wife whom one bed did contain, in an incapacity to be contained in the same Church, where the same faith was preached, and so he urgeth it also in reference to parents, and children, and to masters and servants. There are many moe things might be named, as censuring of men upon such difference; for, then often some adhere to them, which maketh

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a rent, as in these instances of *Eustachius* and *Chrysostome* is clear, urging the condemning of some writings and tenents not fundamentall; Thus the pressing of the condemning of *Origens* writings (which are not supposed by some to have been so grosse as now these which are called his, are) did give much occasion of contention and division amongst men, who otherwayes did acknowledge all the fundamentall truths comprehended in the generall Councels, and it is alike also, did not agree with him in his grossest errours, yet would not judicially condemn him, and others such like.

CHAP. V.

What occasionall means may have influence upon division amongst the godly.

WE come now in the *third* place to consider, what occasionall means may have influence upon this division amongst godly men; And such may be, 1. Some talebearers and secret whisperers, who may have much influence to alienate good mens affections, by misrepresenting the words and actions of others, under pretext of respect to them, when, in the mean time, it may be some particular discontent that putteth them on: It is marked, that one *Serapion* had much influence to alienate *Chrysostome* and *Severinus*, who formerly were exceeding intire, who suggesting to the first, many evidences of the others disrespect to him, as if he had been endeavouring to draw the peoples affections from him; and for that cause, picked out some words of *Severinus*, which being considered alone, did sound grosly, but being considered in the Sentence as spoken by him, they were not of such a meaning. 2. Often when differences arise amongst honest men, there wanteth not many, who out of particular designs do them

Talebearers

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then foment that fire, especially such as from some other fear, take occasion to exaggerate such a difference, because the softening of that difference is the preventing of what they fear: As for instance, *Chrysostome* had threatned the censuring of many of his Presbyters for their faults, whereupon they took the occasion of the differences betwixt him and *Epiphanius*, *Severinus*, and others, to irritate and stir up them against him, and to side with them in these differences; whereby the division against him, and such as followed him, was maintained till it came to the height thereof, yet were neither the differences betwixt him and these other men, nor the persons of these other men his opposites respected by them, further than served to their end of bearing him down, and so of preventing the threatned and feared censure. *Feats of censure.*

3. Sometimes Magistrates have had no little influence upon this, either by pretending to side with one party in these differences against the other, when yet it was not these differences but some other prejudice, as from free speaking or the like, which did engage them. It is marked in that same case of *Chrysostome*, that the Emperour and Empresse did concur to bear down his followers, and those that sided with him, because of some particular discontent at his free preaching, for which cause they were zealous executers of the Synods Sentence; As these again that were opposite to *Chrysostome* of the Clergie, did take no little advantage of that discontent, which they knew the Empresse had at him. *The influence of civil Powers.*

Or on the other side, they are sometimes accessory by weakening Government, and giving men accesse to do what they will: when *Basilius* hath regrated the great differences of the Church in *Julian*, and *Valens* their times, and setting himself to find out the cause thereof, he settleth on this word in the Book of the *Judges*, *In those dayes there was no King in Israel, every man did what seemed good in his own eyes*: which he

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he doth not speak simply, as if there had been no Government; but that by such as was, no course was taken, as the calling of Synods, or such like means, to restrain such things, but rather they were entertained. 4. Sometimes also the peoples engaging and siding in such differences, hath no little influence to heighten and lengthen the same; hence we find that in some debates, wherein Church-men have been alone engaged, there hath been some stop; but when it hath encreased, to the stating of parties amongst the people, it hath ever been more difficult; because so Ministers were the more encouraged and engaged to be tenacious; yea sometimes fear of displeasing the people that adhered to them, hath not wanted its weight. Also, so it turned more easily to schism and faction in practice, when one part of the people would only call such a man of their Judgement; another part of the people, such another man of theirs; whereupon followed great dissentions and factiousnesse in Elections, and opposite ordinations, by Bishops of several judgements: Whereupon followed, 1. a rent in that particular Church; one part withdrawing with their Bishop and Minister, and the other part with theirs, and neither keeping communion with, but seeking to overturn one another. And, 2. a rent among neighbouring Bishops and Ministers, according as they were pleased to admit either side to their communion, and acknowledge or condemn either of the opposite ordinations. And, 3. Often also, there followed opposite and eager applications to the supream Magistrates and Emperour, to have their own respective Elections ratified, and that which was opposite, by his Authority, crushed; which often hath been followed with much bitternesse, and sometimes not without calumnies against good men; and also not without prejudice to the Churches liberty, and advantage to corrupt men or Magistrates, that were not tender of truth; who thereby

Peoples engaging.

Applications to Magistrates for ratifying elections.

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thereby had occasion to interest themselves, and advance their own ends the more; and it is marked of *Anastasius* the Emperour, who was a *Monothelite*, that he took occasion upon hot differences in the Church amongst Divines, (who did in both sides differ from him, though one of them was but sound) without respect to right or wrong, equally to endeavour the suppressing of both by sending them into exile; and when Magistrates were more equal to and tender of the Church, as *Theodosius*, *Gratianus*, &c. yet they were exceedingly troubled with such adresses, and put to hear such complaints even amongst and against men fully Orthodox and sound, only differing in some particulars which had brought on opposite ordinations, as in the cases of *Miletius* and *Paulinus*, *Eustachius* and *Flavianus*, with their respective competitors: all which concuring with that heat and fervour wherewith Churchmen do usually of themselves follow their differences, did not a little contribute to the heightening and lengthening of divisions and rents, upon the smallest occasions. 5. Occuring miscarriages of persons differing, have often had influence to increase and continue a breach, that is, when some persons on either side become more grosse in other points of Doctrine, or in practice; or follow their designs by means that seem grosse and unwarrantable to the other; or when some of one side expresse unjust calumnies on the other: this doth exceedingly alienate affections, confirme jealousies and suspicions, and readily doth engender new Questions and controversies; because some are led to oppose and condemn, and others to defend such practices; therefore there must be oppositie principles suitable thereunto, and so they multiply from one step to another: whereby it cometh to passe, that often where there is but one difference at first, after a time many do arise; which doth make the removall of divisions to be alwayes the longer the more difficult:

Miscarriages of persons.

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Whence we see, that seldom one difference continued any time, but there was an addition of many, and that of greater concernment, that, it may be, stuck, whenas the first rise might have been removed.

Occuring dispensations of providence.

6. Sometimes also occurring dispensations in providence will give occasion to this tenaciousnesse, as suppose there be a seeming advantage on the one side to through their point, and bear down the other without uniting, it is supposed to be conscience and prudence to make use of the same: Hence we will find in History men more or lesse inclinable to unite, as they apprehended their party to be more or lesse strong; sometimes also some singular-like stroak upon the persons names or families of eminent opposers, proveth a confirmation to the others who escape, as if their way were more approveable, and the others more remarkably condemned; for so are men ready to misinterpret the most occasionall thing, which for other ends may come upon any with whom they differ. Thus *Zuinglius* his death did not only prove matter of insulting to Papists, but even by *Luther* and others was misapplied; and *Carolostadius* his foul defection, afterward became an occasion to harden many, in condemning his condemning of keeping Images in Churches, though without any worship; because, upon the back of that debate, *Luther* had set him forth as a light, unsettled, unstable person, whose judgement was not to be valued; which accordingly falling out, made many keep up the opinion contrary to his, as if by his fall it had been ratified; And we think, that if either *Chrysostome* or *Epiphanius* their wishes to other respectively had fallen out but upon the one side, it also might have had influence; but seing both came to passe, we conceive that thereby the Lord would keep men from being confirmed in their differences upon such dispensations, and shew himself angry at the carnalnesse of good men, even in their smallest difference on both sides.

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In the fourth place, we have to consider, wherein the strength of the tentation to keep up division doth lie, in respect of several circumstances that may have influence, especially upon Church-men.

Personall credit acting under covert of zeal for God.

1. There is engagement, credit, and such like, which steal in, and vent in heat and tenaciousnesse under other appearances, as of zeal for Gods honour, respect to the credit of the Ministry, and of the Ordinances: And in this it seemeth not to be any personall credit or respect that swayeth them, but zeal for, and respect to the Master, as is insinuated in the Disciples carriage, *Luk.* 9. in their seeking to be avenged on the place that would not receive Christ, by fire from heaven, ver. 54. and also in their forbidding some to cast out devils, even in his name, because they thought it not for Christs honour, *ibid.* vers. 49.

Evill grounded confidence.

2. The tentation hath often with it great confidence of the justness and equity of their own side, and of the unreasonablnesse of their adversaries. There may be in part much ground for this, where the controversie is some doubtfull, disputable thing: How great confidence have both *Job* and his friends in their debate, So that both of them are frequent in desiring Gods decision, when as neither of them in both matter and manner was fully approveable. Sometimes also there may be a perswasion very satisfying to the party, when yet it is not from God; this was in *Galatia*, cap. 5. ver. 8. it is like on both sides, even when they were biting and devouring one another; for, we find often in experience, that a disputable thing, being for a time pleaded for, will become as palpably clear, and altogether necessary to these who have disputed for the same, because engagement bribes the light, and perverteth even the wisdom of the just. Hence we see, that the longer one plead for a thing, he becometh more confident therein, because his own pleading secretly prevaileth more with himself, than

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than reasons proposed by any others to the contrary can.

3. There is a strength in the tentation, in this, that not only the matter is thought just, but it is thought necessary and of great concernment, if it be, 1. a Question of the most circumstantiall truth, (if we may speak so) it looketh out as necessary, and a thing that cannot be quit, yea, even those who are engaged to maintain that side where the errour lies, will cry up the controversie as in a high point of Christianity. Amongst the Fathers, these that maintained the *Millenarie* opinion, and Christs personall reign, thought it a point of high concernment; *Justine Martyr* in his Dialogue with *Trifo*, saith, he is no Christian, Orthodox in all things, who doth think otherwise; and in later Popish Writers, how is the necessity of oyl, chrisme, and such like pleaded for? which sheweth what impression the appearing weightinesse of such things will have on them, as if it were a main foundation of Religion. And, 2. if it be a matter of fact or Government, it is thought of such concernment for the good of the Church that they cannot quit it, without being accessory to the corruption and hurt, or to the marring of the authority thereof: Hence so often are the faults and consequents of the adverse part aggreged; canons and constitutions alleaged to be broken, as we may see (amongst other instances) in that debate betwixt *Rome* and *Constantinople* for precedency before Antichrist was revealed, one alleaging an act of *Nice*, the other, an act of the Councel of *Chalcedon*, and *Rome* pretending the interest of Saint *Peter*, and the good of the universall Church. And, 3. if it be a difference about persons, as who is to be acknowledged Bishop or Minister, or if such be lawfully ordained, deposed, &c. then such as they oppose, are conceived to be notoriously hainous; and such as they are for, are believed to be incomparably singu-

A particular mistake of mens persons and actions.

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lar and eminent, and therefore it is no wonder that they presse vehemently their point, as thinking that much of the good or evil of the Church doth depend upon the admission, or rejection of such men respectively, and this floweth inadvertingly from the former differences; because, when they are confident that themselves are right in a main point, they necessarily must think these wrong and untender who are opposit in such a thing, and the hotter the opposition grow, they think still each other the more grosly obstinate: By this also they are disposed to hear and receive reports and mis-informations concerning their opponents; whereby they come verily to believe, that they are even in all other things, and in their very ends and designs, most grosse. And, I suppose, that beside the instances formerly given in all these respects, the differences that arose first betwixt *Luther* and *Carolostadius*, and afterward betwixt him and such as followed him on the one side, and *Zuinglius*, *Calvin* and others upon the other side, do fully demonstrate this; How little were these beginnings at first, and yet how were even the smallest differences aggreged, and the persons differing mistaken, even before these differences came to the height which they are at? And we may observe also, that this mistake of mens persons and actions, and bitternesse that followeth thereupon, is most ordinarily discernable to be upon that side, where there is least to be said in conscience and equity for the defence thereof.

A conviction of singleness in prosecuting and adhering.

4. Adde to these a conviction of singleness, that persons may seem to themselves to have in all the former steps, wherein there may be no positive, corrupt end proposed nor any palpable dissimulation in their professions, entertained or approven by them: but as they have some confidence of the equity of their side; so may there be an apprehended testimony of their own singleness in the following thereof: and there is a great strength in the tentation to continue division, that

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that lyeth here; for, when men apprehend their own singleneſſe and ſtreightneſſe, and, it may be, have acceſſe to God, and have liberty to pray, even in reference to ſuch things, it is not eaſie for a man to ſtop himſelf in that way; and yet it cannot be thought, but amongſt the inſtances of ſuch divisions that are given, that men on both ſides had a ſingle end and mind, did pray and had acceſſe in prayer; yea, no queſtion, many of them might go to heaven with ſuch differences on both ſides; for, we will find them continue zealous in ſuch, even to death. Neither ought this to be thought ſtrange; for, the beſt but know in part, and are ſubject to miſtakes, and their zeal and ſingleneſſe is ſquared according to their knowledge: It was ſuch zeal, that is not according to knowledge (though in the moſt fundamentall things) that made *Paul* and others, with a kind of ſingleneſſe, perſecute the Church; therefore proportionally, there may be a zeal and ſingleneſſe in leſſer things when there is ignorance of them.

Fear of loſing credit by relenting.

5. After engagement the tentation is ſtrengthened by this, leſt, by after-ceding, their former practice in being ſo eager, be condemned, and they loſe the weight of their Miniſtery in other things, and their reſpective followers, which poſſibly may be more tenacious and zealous than themſelves, ſhould be irritated and provoked; which things look to them as greater prejudices, even to the work of the Goſpel, than their continuing divided. It is written of *Luther* in his life, That being in conference with *Melanthon* and others in his laſt voyage, he did acknowledge to them, that he had been too vehement and peremptory in the Doctrine of the Sacrament; and when they urged him then to publiſh ſomething concerning the ſame, he replied, That he feared by that to diminiſh the authority and weight of what he had elſe appeared into for God, and therefore did forbear it; withall, allowing *Melanthon* after his death, to do in that as he thought fit.

6. Some-

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6. Sometimes also, the tentation is strengthned by apprehended consequents of hurt and prejudice to these that side with them in such a thing from others, in case there should be ceding in such and such particulars for union, or that by so doing, they might make themselves and their cause odious to others, who possibly may be thought to have more respective thoughts of them, because of their differing in such things from others. It is written of *Luther*, that he gave this as a main reason why he keeped up the Sacramentary difference, and would not unit with *Calvin* and others in that Head, because, said he, that opinion which the *Sacramentaries* (as they were called) hold, is generally more hatefull than that of *Consubstantiation*, and will make the Princes and others more obnoxious to malice and hatred. *Fear of hurting their followers.*

7. It strengtheneth the tentation also, when men do not look upon the difference simply in it self, but comparatively with respect to the principles and carriages of others their opponents, and by considering things that are displeasing in them and their way, they are made the more tenacious, and brought to justifie themselves the more. Hence it is in such divisions, that the great stresse of debates lyeth in reflections, criminations and recriminations, as if this were the only vindicating argument, They that are opposit to us in many things of their carriage are wrong, Therefore our way is right, or we have reason to divide from them; And hence it is, that almost necessarily such reflections are used in such debates, where the matter is not of such moment and evidence, as the most convincing defensive arguments upon either side, as in these debates, between *Jerome* and *Ruffinus*, cited, where there is no dispute on either side but criminations on both; Also in the *Donatists* their reflections, this may be observed. *The tentation strengthened by looking-on the failings of opposits.*

8. In such differences also, men are ready to think that the other should and will cede to them, and will not *Hope of the ceding of others.*

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not hazard division upon so little a thing. Hence, many have been drawn on to division from small beginnings, which they would not have yeelded to, had they known the consequents thereof, or had they not expected that the other should have yeelded, wherein being disappointed, the engagement thereto becometh more strong, and the division more irreconciliable. This is marked of *Victor*, of whom it is said, that he had not been so peremptory, had he not supposed, that in such a thing the other should have yeelded.

CHAP. VI.

What be the sad effects of division, and the necessity of endeavouring unity.

HAving now some way discovered the nature and causes of the evil of division, it may be easily conjectured what will be the effects thereof, which ever have been most deplorable, as to the torturing of these that are engaged, to the scandalizing of the weak, to the hardening and breaking of the neck of many profane light persons, to the spoiling of the Church in its purity, Government, order and beauty of her Ordinances, and which is more, to the wearing out of the life and power of Religion; yea, which is above all, there is nothing that doth more tend to the reproach of the blessed Name of our Lord Jesus, that maketh Christianity more hatefull, that rendereth the Gospel more unfruitfull, and more marreth the progresse and intereſt of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus; and, in a word, doth more shut out all good, and let in by an open door every thing that is evil into the Church, than this wofull evil of division doth, according to the word, *Jam. 3. 16. Where envy and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work.* And we are perswaded, that who hath read the

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the *Scriptures*, and the many and great motives whereby union is prest, and have considered the *Fathers* what great weight they lay upon unity, and with what horrour they mention division, even as *maximum malum*, or the *greatest evil* that can befall the Church; Or, have observed in Church-history; the many sad consequents and effects that have followed upon this, and the lamentable face of the Church under the same: when friends thought shame, and were made faint; enemies were encouraged and delighted, and on-lookers were either provoked to mock at, or pity the same; Or, who have had some taste in experience of the bitter fruits thereof, will, and if they be not altogether stupid, cannot but be convinced of the many horrible evils, that are in this one evil of division. Sure there is no evil doth more suddenly and inevitably overturn the Church than this; which maketh her fight against her self, and eat her own flesh, and tear her own bowels: for, that a Kingdom divided against it self cannot stand, is the infallible maxime of Him that was greater and wiser than *Solomon*. And when things are compared, it will be found, there is no more compendious way to blast the fruit of Ordinances, when they cannot be removed or corrupted, and by so doing, to destroy and carry souls headlong, than this, That a Church in her Ministers and Members should be engaged thus, to bite and devour one another, and to counteract to the actings one of another; This we suppose will not be denied.

The necessity of endeavouring unity, granted by all.

It will also readily be granted, That it is the duty of all Christians, especially of Ministers of the Gospel, to endeavour the preserving of unity, and the preventing of division, and the recovering of unity, and removing of division, by healing of the breach when it is made. Never did men run to quench fire in a City, lest all should be destroyed, with more diligence, than men ought to bestir themselves to quench this

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this in the Church; never did mariners use more speed to stop a leak in a ship, left all should be drowned, than Ministers especially, and all Christian men, should haste to stop this beginning of the breaking in of these waters of strife, left thereby the whole Church be overwhelmed; And if the many evils which follow thereupon, the many commands whereby union is pressed; yea, the many entreaties and obtestations whereby the holy Ghost doth so frequently urge this upon all, as a thing most acceptable to Him, and profitable to us; If, I say, these and many other such considerations, have not weight to convince of the necessity of this duty, to prevent, or heal a breach, We cannot tell what can prevail with men, that profesſe reverence to the great and dreadfull Name of God, conscience of duty, and respect to the edification of the Church, and to their own peace at the appearance of the Lord in the great Day, wherein the peace-makers shall be blessed; for, they shall be called the children of God.

CHAP. VII.

General Grounds leading to Unity.

The cure of division most difficult.

BUt now, it may be of more difficulty, to speak particularly, to what indeed is *duty*, at such a time when a Church lyeth under rents and divisions. For, though the general be granted, yet often, it is difficult to take up the particular cure, and yet more difficult singly to follow the same: It being still more easy to prescribe rules to others, than to follow them our selves, especially in such a case, when spirits are in the heat and fervour of contention, whereby they are some way drunken with affection to their own side, and prejudice at the others, and distracted, as it were, with a sort of madness in pursuing their adversaries, as that great and meek Divine *Melanchon*

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Melanchon did expresse it, so that it is hard to get affections, that are in such a temper, captivated to the obedience of light. And although we will not take on us to be particular and satisfying in this, wishing and hoping that it may be more effectually done by some other; yet, having come this length, we shall, in an abstracted manner, consider some things in reference thereunto, and endeavour to hold forth what we conceive to be *duty*, especially to the Ministers of the Gospel, that have interest in such a Church; As also what may be required of others, that may possibly think themselves lesse concerned therein: Wherein we shall keep this order, 1. we shall lay down some general Grounds, which we suppose as granted. 2. We shall premit some preparatory endeavours agreeable to the same. 3. We shall speak negatively to what ought not to be done, or ought to be forborn. 4. Positively to the healing means called-for in reference to several sorts of division, with some questions incident thereupon. And lastly, We shall consider the grounds that do presse the serious and condescending application of these, or other healing means in such a case.

An absolute necessity laid upon a rent Church to unite.

The *first* generall ground, which we take for granted, is this, That by way of precept there is an absolute necessity of uniting laid upon the Church, so that it falleth not under debate, Whether a Church should continue divided or united in the *These*? more than it falleth under debate, Whether there should be preaching, praying, keeping of the Sabbath, or any other commanded duty; seing that union is both commanded as a duty, and commended, as eminently tending to the edification of the Church, and therefore is so frequently joyned with edification? Nor is it to be asked by a Church, what is to be done for the Churches good, in a divided way, thereby supposing a dispensation, as it were, to be given to division, and a forbearing of the use of means for the attaining

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taining thereof; or rather supposing a stating or fixing of division, and yet notwithstanding thereof, thinking to carry on edification? It is true, where union cannot be attained amongst orthodox Ministers, that agree in all main things, (for, of such only we speak) Ministers are to make the best use of the opportunities they have, and during that to seek the edification of the Church; Yet, that men should by agreement state a division in the Church, or dispense therewith, and prefer the continuing of division, as fitter for edification than union, we suppose is altogether unwarrantable. 1. Because, that is not the Lord's Ordinance, and therfore cannot be gone about in faith, nor in it can the blessing be expected, which the Lord doth command to those that are in unity, *Psal* 133. 2. Because Christ's Church is but one Body, and this were deliberately to alter the nature thereof: and although those who deny this Truth may admit of division; yea, they cannot have union, that is proper Church-union, which is union in Government, Sacraments, and other Ordinances, because union, or communion in these, doth result from this principle; yet it is impossible for those that maintain that principle of the unity of the Catholick visible Church, to owne a divided way of administrating Government or other Ordinances, but it will infer either that one party hath no interest in the Church, or that one Church may be many; and so, that the unity thereof in its visible state is to no purpose: This then we take for granted. And though possibly it be not in all cases attainable, because the fault may be upon one side, who possibly will not act unitedly with others, yet is this still to be endeavoured, and every opportunity to be taken hold of for promoting of the same.

Union a thing attainable among Orthodox Divines.

The *second* ground which we suppose, is this, That as union is ever a duty, So, we conceive, if men interessed will do their duty, there can be no division amongst

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amongst Orthodox Divines or Ministers, but it is possible also to compose it, and union is a thing attainable. For, 1. We are not speaking of composing divisions that are stated upon the fundamentall things; nor are we speaking of removing all differences, as if all men were to be one in judgment in every point of Truth; there may be difference where there is no division as hath been said. Nor, 3. when we speak of mens doing their duty, do we mean a full up-coming of every thing in knowledge and practice, and that in a sanctified manner, though that ought to be endeavoured; but it looketh principally to the doing of duty in reference to this particular (if it may be called so) of attaining union, a great part whereof doth consist in outward obvious things, which do neither require simply sanctification in the person (though in it self most desirable) nor perfection in the degree, some whereof we may afterward mention; so that the meaning is, if we consider union in it self, without respect to mens corruptions, (which will make the least thing impossible when they are in exercise) it is a thing possible, according to the acknowledged principles, that sober, orthodox men usually walk by, as experience hath often proven, and reason doth demonstrat in the particulars afterward to be instanced. And this consideration ought the more pressingly to stir up the endeavour of this duty, although oftentimes through mens corruption it hath been frustrated.

Thirdly, we premit. That in endeavouring union and healing, men would not straiten it to an universall union in every thing, in judgement and practice, but would resolve to have it with many things defective that need forbearance in persons that are united, which we may take up in these particulars. 1. There may be difference of judgement in many things, I mean in such things that are consistent with the foundation, and edification; and such a forbearance

Endeavouring union, doth not infer union in all points of judgement and practice.

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rance would be resolved upon, and to do otherwayes, were to think that either men had no reason at all, or that their understandings were perfect, or at least of equal reach. 2. There may be dissatisfaction with many persons, whether Officers or Members; and to expect a Church free of unworthy Officers, or Members, and to defer Church-union thereupon, is to expect the barn-floor shall be without chaff, and to frustrate the many commands whereby this duty is pressed; for, so this command should be obligatory to no Church, but that that is triumphant; yet certainly our Lord Jesus gave this command to His Disciples when *Judas* was amongst them; and *Paul* gave it and practised it, when some preached out of envy, *Philip.* 1. and when almost all sought their own things, and not the things of Christ: And certainly, if people ought to carry even to corrupt Ministers who yet destroy not the foundation, as Ministers, in the duties that becomes them to Ministers in communion with them, while they continue such, Then certainly Ministers ought to keep that communion with Ministers, that becometh their relations, seing they are still Ministers in that respect, as well as in the other. And if this corruption will not warrant separation in other Ordinances, as was said in the close of the second part, Then neither will it warrant division in the ordinance of government. 3. It may also be consistent with many particular failings, and defects in the exercise of government; as possibly the sparing of some corrupt Officers and Members; yea, the Censuring of some unjustly, or the admission of some that are unfit for the Ministery, and such like: These indeed are faults, but they are not such as make a Church to be no Church; and though these have sometimes been pretended to be the causes of schisms and divisions in the Church in practice, yet were they never defended to be just grounds of schisms and divisions, but were ever condemned by all Councels and

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and Fathers, and cannot be in reason sustained. For, 1. there should be then no union expected here, except we supposed, that men that have corruption, could not fall in these faults. 2. It is not unlike, but some of these were in the primitive Churches; somewhat is insinuated thereof, *Rev.* 2. in those Church-officers, their tolerating of *Jezebel* and the *Nicolaitans* to seduce the people, and to commit fornication; yet neither is separation or division called-for, or, allowed either amongst Ministers or people. Sure there were such corrupt acts of all kinds amongst the Jews Church-officers; yet is it clear, that *Nicodemus* and *Joseph* of *Arimathea* did continue to govern joyntly, notwithstanding thereof, who yet cannot be counted accessory to any of their deeds; Because (which is a third reason) men in such cases have accesse, even when they are present, to discountenance such corrupt acts, by not consenting thereto, and testifying against the same, (yea, they may by so doing, stand in the way of many wicked acts, which by dividing they cannot do) which is sufficient for their exoneration both before God and men: As we may see in the instances of *Joseph* and *Nicodemus* mentioned, who continue united in the government, keeped the meetings even when Sentences passe against those who will acknowledge Christ, and orders for persecuting Him and them; and yet they are declared free, because they dissented from, and testified against the same; yea, their freedom and exoneration by vertue of their dissent being present, is more solemnly recorded to their honour in the Gospel, than if they had divided; And yet the unity of the Church now hath the same ground, and no fewer motives to presse it than it had then. 4. It may stand with some defects in Worship, manner of Government, and rules that are necessary for good government in a Church. It is like, that many things of that kind, were defective in the Church of *Corinth*, where the Sacra-

Union may stand with some defects in Worship and manner of Government.

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Sacrament was so disorderly administrated (as hath been marked) confusion in many things of Worship, and some things still to be set in order; yet doth the Apostle no where press union more than in these Epistles, as formerly hath been marked; neither can it be thought that perfection in all these is ever to be expected, or that union, untill such time is to be delayed. And if there be defects of that kind, it is union and not division that is to be looked upon as the commended mean for redressing of the same.

With what kind of defects union may be made up.

If it be asked then, With what kind of defects or discontents may an union be made up? or, what Rules may be walked by therein? For answer, We offer these Considerations or Rules,

1. What cannot warrant a breach where there is union, that cannot warrantably be the ground to keep up a division; Now there are many miscarriages or defects, which are really grosse, and yet will not warrant a schism, as all that write thereon do clear, and is obvious to all. The reason of the consequence is, Because making up of a breach is no lesse a duty, than preventing thereof; And further, if it began upon such a ground, Then the continuing thereof upon the same ground, is but the continuing in the same sin; and it cannot be thought that any party by dividing upon an unjust ground, can afterward be justified upon the same ground; It remaineth therefore, that if the ground was not sufficient at first to warrant a separation or division, it cannot be sufficient afterward to continue the same.

Rule 2. Such defects as do not make communion in a Church, and in its Ordinances sinfull, will not warrant a separation or division from the same; for, this followeth on the former. It is acknowledged by all, that there is no separation from a true Church in such Ordinances, as men may without sin communicate into, although others may be guilty therein; as, suppose men to have accesse to Government without such

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such bonds and engagements, and such like, as may mar their freedom in following the light of the Word, in deciding whatever shall come before them, even though others should step over the same.

Rule 3. Men may keep communion with a Church, when their calling leadeth them thereto upon the one side, and they have accesse to the discharge of the same upon the other; this also followeth upon the former: for, if some acts of a mans station lead him to an united way of acting, (as the duties of a fixed Minister do) then he is obleiged to follow the duties of his calling, whilst there is no physicall or morall impediment barring him in the same, and others being defective in their duty, will not absolve him from his, which he oweth by vertue of his station.

Rule 4. While the generall rules tending to edification in the main are acknowledged, union is to be keeped, even though there be much failing in the application; because, so there are fit weapons to make use of, and who knoweth but single and zealous improving of them, may help the application thereof; and if there be a failing therein, it is the persons deed, that by his vote so misapplyeth, and doth not involve any other in that guilt, beside that by joynt and united acting much of that misapplication may through Gods blessing be prevented.

Rule 5. Then there may and ought to be uniting when the evils that follow division or schism, are greater and more hurtfull to the Church, than the evils that may be supposed to follow on union. I speak not of ills of sin, (for, the least of these are never to be chosen) but of evils and inconveniencies that may indeed be hurtfull to the Church in themselves, and sinfull in respect of some persons, yet are not so to all: Now, in such evils the lesser is to be chosen, because uniting and acting joyntly in a Church-way, doth belong to the policy and government of the Church, wherein Christian prudence is to have a main

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hand, So that when things cannot be done as men would simply, they are to do as they may comparatively, that is, to chooſe and make uſe of what may be moſt edifying, and leaſt hurtfull to the Churches edification (which is the great end that ought to ſway in Government) amongſt all theſe means that ſeem probable and poſſible; So that the conſcience may have teſtimonie in this, that the way that had feweſt inconveniencies, and manyeſt advantages to edification, was choſen; and though ſome inconveniencies fall out afterward, yet the conſcience may be quiet on this ground: Becauſe, ſometimes the Lord in His providence will order ſo in the matters of Government, that there is no ſide can be choſen without inconveniencies; As ſuppoſe, there is not full ſatisfaction in any way that occureth in planting ſuch a Congregation, in removing of ſuch an offence, healing ſuch a rent, and the like; but whatever ſide be looked to, many hinderances to edification appear, yet ſomething muſt be choſen, and may be with peace to the conſcience; becauſe we are to regulate our own act ſuitably to the providences, and caſes we meet with, and to the tempers of theſe we have to do with; but we are neither to regulate nor anſwer for providences, and the diſtempers of others. Indeed in ſuch a caſe, the mind may be diſquieted becauſe of fear; and the conſolation of the duty may be diminiſhed, becauſe of ſuch circumſtances; and affections may be grieved and jumbled, becauſe there is not full ſatisfaction; yet may the conſcience have quietneſſe and peace in its duty notwithſtanding; and men are ſpecially to diſcern and to put difference between peace of conſcience and the former diſcompoſures: otherwayes there will be many caſes wherein it is impoſſible for a zealous Miniſter to have peace, whatever ſide he chooſe, yea, whether he do or forbear.

When inconveniencies are on all hands, what ſide is to be followed.

If it be asked then, What way men may diſcern the ſide that is to be followed in ſuch a caſe, when incon-

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inconveniencies threaten on all hands? *Answ.* By these and such like wayes. 1. It is to be looked, what side hath the most dangerous and destructive inconveniencies. 2. What inconveniencies are most certain and inevitable, and the greatest and most inevitable inconveniencies are to be shunned, and men would not choose a certain hurt to eschew that which is uncertain. 3. It would be looked, what side duty lieth upon, or to what the command doth presse; and although inconveniencies seem to follow that, yet it is to be followed as most safe. Now, as to all these, union hath the advantage o division: Because, 1. it is a commanded mean tending to edification, which division is not. 2. Division hath no lesse nor fewer inconveniencies following it, nor lesse destructive to the Church, than union in the case supposed; yea, schism is one of the greatest hurts that can come to an orthodox Church, it being next to heresie in Doctrine; and therefore no particular evil can be laid in the ballance with it. 3. The ills of division are most inevitable, for the ills that follow union, through Gods blessing may be prevented, it is not impossible, but in the way of division it is, because it self is out of Gods way.

Rule 6. When men may unit without personall guilt, or accession to the defects or guilt of others, there may and ought to be union, even though there be failings and defects of severall kinds in a Church. The reasons before given will clear this, because men are to reckon not for other mens carriages, but their own, and no such Church-state is to be expected as is free of defects. Beside, can it warrand a man to abstain from his duty, because others do not theirs; whileas there is no sinfull impediment lying in the way of his accesse thereto. If it be asked, What may be accounted such impediments, as a tender conscience may be justly scarred by from uniting? It may be answered in these and such like, 1. If a

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person be put to condemn any thing he thinketh lawfull in his own former practice, or the practice of others, or in some point of Doctrine though never so extrinsick, if it be to him a point of truth. 2. If he be put to approve the deed, and practice of some others which he accounteth sinfull, or to affirm somewhat as truth which he doth account an errour. 3. When some engagement is required for the future, which doth restrain from any duty called-for, or that may afterward be called-for. These and such like involve persons in the sin of what is past, and also maketh them accessory to the inconveniencies which may come; because they are bound up with their own consent, from endeavouring the preventing thereof in the way of duty, at least it is so to them, and so defileth their conscience. Therefore such entanglements are by all means to be forborn; but where no such thing is in condemning or acknowledging any thing that is past, nor any such restraining bond inconsistent with duty for the time to come, there may be accesse to union, even where there are many publick defects, which is the thing laid down to be cleared.

Mutuall condescending necessary.

In the *fourth* place we premit, That for attaining of union there would be, and there ought to be, large mutuall condescending, that is, that both sides ought to streach themselves, not only to forbear what is sinfull; nor only to condescend to what may be thought simply necessary, and may be extorted as duty in any case; Nor yet ought condescending to be upon one side levelled according to the length that another goeth, but condescending would be levelled mutually according as expediencie calleth for, with respect to the edification of the Church; for which end even many infirmities of others are to be forborn, and things otherwayes unreasonable in respect of these men we have to do with, yet respect to the Churches peace, ought to make men cede in these; for,

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for, if there ought to be condescending for private peace, much more ought it to be for Church-peace and publick edification: and though we cannot nor will not now be particular in this, yet concerning it, we may lay down these considerations,

1. In what may involve a man in sin, or in the approbation thereof in others, there is no condescending, but what length may warrantably be gone, even to the utmost border of duty, men ought to go for this end; so that nothing ought to be a stop or march in condescension, but this, I cannot do this and sin against God; otherwayes, one ought to be all things to others. This consideration will be more clear, by comparing it with the former Rules, and what afterward may be said. *Wherein there must be no condescending*

2. This condescension would be mutuall upon both sides, that is, one party would not expect full submission from the other, for that is not union, but dominion; Hence the Apostle in his pressing of union in such cases, doth ordinarily pray, and obtest both sides. And seing affection is the main ground of union, it is fit, there should be condescension for mutuall testifying of respect each to other. This is also confirmed by an Epistle of *Calvines* to Mr. *Knox* (afterward cited) wherein he presseth that condescension be mutuall for removing of a division that was in his Congregation at *Frankford*. *It ought to be mutual.*

3. Even that party that seemeth to be righteest in the matter, or to have authority on its side, or to have countenance from others, ought yet to condescend, yea in some things to be most condescending, because such are in some sort parents and strong; they ought therefore the more tenderly to bear and cover the infirmities of the weak: and because they are more sober and at themselves, they therefore ought to carry the more seriously toward others, whom they suppose to be in a distemper, and not to be equally groffe in handling the tender things of the Church, whereof *What side ought to be most condescending*

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Even that which is right and hath authority.

whereof union is a main one: And considering that authority is given for edification, it is not unsuitable for it to condescend for attaining its end; for which cause we find often *Paul*, laying by his authority in such cases, and intreating and wooing, as it were, even the meanest dissenters, in this matter of union, as we see him, *Phil.* 4. beseeching *Euodias* and *Syntiche* (who were it is like but very private persons) to be of one mind. And in ancient times we will find, 1. sometimes the innocent party ceding and condescending, as in the case betwixt *Basilius* and *Eusebius* at *Cesarea*: *Basilius*, though having the best side, and of greatest account, yet did first cede, by withdrawing for the peace of the Church; and afterward, for the good thereof, to wit, the preventing of its being tainted by the *Arian* heresie, he did return, and condescend to be subject to him who was in competition with him, which tended exceedingly to the good of that Church, to the removing of that Schism, and the great praise and commendation of his zeal and singleness. 2. We find that oftentimes the most tender and sincere, and these who were upon the right side, have been most condescending, and oftentimes these who did the wrong (such as it was) were most averse from condescension, as in all the Schisms that have arisen upon frivolous grounds will appear. 3. These who condescended most in such things, have ever been thought the greatest friends to the Church, even sometimes when they have been deepest in the rise of the Schism, and when their side was not so justifiable as the other, yet by condescending they have commended themselves more to the Churches friends than their opposites. It is marked in that schism at *Antioch*, betwixt *Miletius* and *Paulinus*, who were both Orthodox, yet had they divided governments, and Congregations in the Church, because of different Ordinations which had keeped them rent for some time; and although *Miletius* his

They who did the wrong, ordinarily most averse from condescending.

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Ordina-

Ordination and entry was not so justifiable according to the Canons, as the others was; yet the parties tenacious upon either side being strong, there was accesse to settle it by no authoritative decision: wherefore it came to a treaty by means of these that were appointed Arbiters, that so union and communion in the Ordinances might be made up in that Church; at which conference *Miletius* overtured, that they might joyn together as Bishops to take care of one Flock while they lived, and after the death of either, he who survived should be only Bishop of the united Flock, unto whom one only should succeed to have charge of all, for preventing of division for the time to come; to which overture, *Paulinus* would not acquiesce, but stood to the formality of order without valuing the Churches peace, or proposing any just ground of exception against *Miletius* person or Doctrine; he, to wit, *Paulinus* was counted unworthy to govern such a Church, and removed therefrom, and the other as more worthy because of that his condescending, was therefore alone invested in the government therof. 4. We will find them sometimes yeeld in all particulars that do not involve any consent unto, or approbation of what is wrong. It is marked by *Augustine* in his Writings against the *Donatists*, that sometimes Councels that have condemned men, have for peace without any satisfaction, again restored them upon after thoughts; and he marketh it as a great condescension of the Bishops of *Spain*, that they did so in the case of *Osius* when he was found innocent by the *French*: *they did not* (saith he) *pertinaciously with animosity defend their former Sentences, lest they should fall in the sacriledge of a Schism, which doth exceed all wickedness; and with that humility, peace was keeped, because* (saith he) *they had rather be against their own Sentences, than the unity of the Church.* And he doth upbraid that principle of the *Donatists* in the case of one *Primianus*, who was refused to be restored

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by an after Councell of theirs, because a former pretended Synod of their own had deposed him, alleaging, and abusing that word of the Apostles for that end, *Gal.* 2. If I again build what I have destroyed, then am I found a transgressour; and he doth more commend the practice of *Pretextatus* and *Felicianus*, who being condemned (it is like unjustly) by three hundreth and eighteen Bishops, yet did, (saith he) for concords sake, return and joyn with these who did condemn them; and by them were without all losse or diminution of their honour, received into fellowship. And wat ever may be in the justice or injustice of any of these former deeds, upon the matter, yet doth he only make use of them, to shew what condescension ought to be in such cases for peace, both upon the part of Judicatories and particular persons, how ever the matter doth appear unto them; for he condemneth not the rejecting of *Primianus* because he was unjustly Sentenced, but because there was not due respect had to the Churches peace; nor doth he commend the *Spanish* Bishops for recalling an unjust Sentence, which ought to be done for Justice sake; but that (though it is no question they did think it just) they did condescend to remove it for preventing of a Schism, when they saw their deed dissatisfying to others. And it is so in the other case also, it is these mens submission to these that condemned them, as it evidences respect to concord, and not as considering any equity of the Sentence which is commended by him; this is in what he writeth *contra Epistolam Parmeniani.* lib. 1. cap. 2. 3, 4, &c.

From what is said, we may lay down these negative conclusions, concerning the upmaking of a breach amongst Godly and Orthodox men, where a Church hath harmony in the fundamentall points, Faith, Worship and Government, and where the thriving of the Gospel is mutually designed.

1. Divi-

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1. Division ought not to be endeavoured to be removed in such a case, in such a way as doth undo or destroy either side, because that is not the good of the whole; for every part and side in such a case, is a part of the body, although it may be not so very considerable, and it is no wisdom to cut off a member of the body, and that way to cure a distemper therein, when possibly the purging away of corrupt humours from the body, or more gentle applications might recover the same. *Division not to be cured by destroying any Orthodox side or party.*

2. We say, that way of uniting is not to be admitted, but shunned, which may incapacitate any Minister or member of the body that is fit for edifying of the same, from having access thereunto; for so the Church is prejudged, and men are rendred unable for edifying thereof. And this is not only when Sentences are past, or restraints laid on; But it may be in such like cases. As, 1. when by the terms of union some person is grieved and weighted, by annexing of some unnecessary thing which may be forborn, because by this, men go about duty with heavinesse, which is unprofitable to the Church. 2. It may be, when something that reflecteth upon any side, or person, unnecessarily, is interwoven; because such things still keep up suspicion, and make the union the more heartlesse, and doth both make such persons more faint, and also in the lesser capacity to have weight with others for their edification, and doth leave a ground of dissatisfaction with such an agreement, that is ready afterward to break forth; Therefore union would be essayed with all due respect from each to other, and without any note of disrespect. *Union is to be essayed with due respect each to other without any note of disrespect.*

3. We may gather, that no simply authoritative mean is the fit and only way of healing a rent-Church: That is indeed the way of governing an united Church, but not the way of uniting a rent-Church, especially a Church rent in particulars of practice *No simply authoritative way is the fit mean to begin the healing of a rent Church.*

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practice and government; because the remedy must be extensive to both sides, and in such cases, at least, as to these particulars, Authority usually is declined; and though it be unjustly declined possibly, yet when it is declined, it is unable to effectuate this end; and the remedy is to be applied, not as to what agreeth to a Church that is whole, but what agreeth to a Church in such a distemper; even as a sick body is to be nourished not alwayes with the strongest and wholesomest meats which agree with such as are in health, but it is to be nourished with things suitable to its distemper, and are fit to cure it; yea, sometimes, with such things as may please the taste, when more healthfull things are not admitted. Also when both judgments are to be informed, and affections are to be gained, there must be prudentiall and affectionat wayes used for gaining these ends. Hence we see, that not only in Church-history, but in the Scriptures especially, the duty of union is more pressed by perswasions, intreaties, reasons to move to it, ills that follow the want thereof, and such like, than by an authoritative way, such as is used in the condemning of Hereticks, and other scandalous persons. And indeed union hath such conjunction with the will and affections, that it must be perswaded and cannot be so commanded. And amongst such persons as are supposed to be in this difference, privat and particular condescension is most becoming that respect which each ought to other.

Though one side fail in condescending, the other ought not to fail.

Fifthly, We premit, That supposse sufficient condescension should fail upon one side, yet ought the other to condescend fully the length that is possible.

1. Because Church-union amongst Church-men is no civil bargain to use prigging therein, but what is possible is duty out of obedience to God, who commandeth peace in other things (and so, much more in this) as far as is possible, or as in men lyes. And, 2. because respect is to be had to the Churches good, whose

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whose advantage we should seek, even though others were defective; and often such condescending gaineth more for the advantage of the Church, and commendation of the party condescending, than if there had been more sticking, as we may see in that praiseworthy instance of *Basilius* his carriage, who stuck on nothing, but absolutely did lay by what was contended-for, without respect to his own right or injury, for the Churches good. And oftentimes it's one party their waiting for the others condescension, or taking occasion from their tenaciousnesse to stick, that doth keep the distance at a height.

6. Oftentimes in such debates as are amongst orthodox Divines and Ministers, it seemeth they might be removed if one party should condescend according to the qualifications and cautions formerly laid down; yea, it seemeth it were safer for the Churches good in such a case, that either party should practically condescend to the way of the other, than that division should be keeped up upon such grounds. For, 1. It is not supposed here, that there is any matter of faith in question, amongst such, often there was full harmony in the Confessions of Faith, as in the instances cited. 2. There is no question for Government simply, nor for Councils and Canons, these also were acknowledged; none did disclaim the general Councils, nor their acts. 3. The question often is not amongst them, Whether others should be brought to their opinion or not, I mean as to the stick of the division; But often it is either, 1. upon some mistaken expression of another, or errour in some lesser point of Truth; And, in such a case, it is that great *Augustines* word, *Disputable errours, or uncertain faults, are not in their pursuit to be preferred to certain peace.* Or, 2. it is for some particular act of Government, or other miscarriages by misapplying of rules, or not walking according to them, or something of that kind, as was in contrary Ordinations of orthodox

men,

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men, and such like: In which cases, we say, (and it will be found from History) That it had been ever better for the Church, that either side had practically condescended to suffer the other to rule and govern, and personally to have keeped themselves free from accession to their guilt, whether of crookedness, negligence, or the like, than to have raised or entertained divisions upon such accounts. For, often orthodox, and otherwayes blamelesse men, have been made, by such divisions, factious and carnal in their carriage, and much unusefull; who otherwayes had they been free of that tentation, might have proved sober, and profitable; and, when the tentation was over, were found to be such.

7. We may observe, that though in the primitive times there were diverse schisms and divisions, concerning Synods and Government, yet we will find that these contests and divisions did flow from the matter and particular acts and actings thereof, and that there was hardly ever division tabled upon the formality of the constitution of a Council or Synod; nor yet, that much difference was put betwixt declining of their authority, and of the Acts or Censures past by them. Concerning which we may observe these generals,

It was the actings and not the formality of Synods that occasioned division of old.

1. If the matter was right and satisfying that was concluded by many Bishops and Church-men, there was an acquiescing in the authority thereof. 2. If the matter were displeasing and hurtfull, of whatever form it was, and of whatever number, its authority was not much respected, because it consisted only in adding weight to these things, as we may see in the *Arian* Councils, which were often very numerous, and others also that were erroneous, and otherwayes corrupt, although there was no formal declinatour of them, or protestation against them as null; though there were sometimes some dissentients in them, yet was not their authority any way confirmed by the for-

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forbearing of such Protestations or Declinatours. 3. Sometimes we will find worthy men appearing before and answering unto most corruptly constituted Synods, as was in those same times, and although they were sentenced and deposed by them, yet did they never esteem these Sentences to have the more authority, as we may see in the case of *Athanasius*, *Chrysostom*, and many others. 4. Sometimes they did protest against Synods as null, when they saw violence and iniquity prevail in them, as was done in the Council of *Antioch*, in the case of *Eustachius*; and was done in the second Council of *Ephesus* by *Flavianus* and *Anatolius*. Sometimes also upon seen hazard, and designs of professed corrupt enemies, Protestations were drawn in writ antecedently; as in that Protestation which the Reformers in *Germany* gave out against the Council of *Trent*, after its indiction; because there was no probable accesse for Truth to have liberty in speaking, and equity in judgment; And as *Sleydan* hath it set down, they alleaged *Cyrillus* for the first practiser of this, in the time that the Arians prevailed. This we may see is their practice when they have to do with professed enemies; not sticking on formalities, but on what was materiall. And again, amongst themselves, the Orthodox used not to stick upon the trying and scanning of the formality of any of these Councils (for certainly in such corruptions as were so universal, Synods corrupt for the plurality of them, might have been had with all the formalities and solemnities that could be required in the external constitution of any lawfull Synod) but when they had occasion to meet, they went to the doing of what was for the present good of the Church, condemning the matter of such corrupt Synods; which they did account sufficient in such cases: And for difference amongst themselves, when they were of a right temper, they did also endeavour to redresse such particulars as needed, and to

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to restore persons unjustly sentenced, and the like; Whereby it appeareth that the *matter* both in things of general and particular concernment, did ever bear most sway.

Debates concerning government more difficultly removed.

8. Although such debates concerning Government seem most easie to be removed, yet often and almost ever, they have been most difficultly healed, and have been followed with greatest bitternesse and contention in the Church; for, different Judgements simply, and also different Ceremonies, and different practices in other things, may consist without direct opposition or counteracting, and may either be the more easily born or removed: but when it comes to Government, whose Sentence shall stand, whose Ordination shall be acknowledged, who shall have place to decide such and such things, and the like, it is far otherwayes. Hence it came to passe that men could keep union and communion with others that differed from them in far greater points of Truth; but to persons that did not acknowledge their Authority, or did acknowledge those that did controvert with them thereanent, they could by no means so condescend: Because, 1. in Government, mens own particular interest is more concerned than in points of Truth, and that inadvertently stealeth in upon men. 2. Because, in Government the question is not only for what is past, but there is a fear of what may come: Hence men that have some testimony in themselves that they are not ambitious of Government, yet having taken up a prejudice against others, they are suspicious that if such had power, they would miscarry, not only in reference to them, but in reference to publick concernment; And therefore in removing such a division that is in point of Government, the great difficulty is not so much to heal and remove what is past, as to prevent the fear of what may come, if such continue to govern. And this maketh, that the result of such division is, That either

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either they themselves, or such as they have confidence in particularly, may have the weight of government upon them, which may indeed be aimed at with some sincerity; because being someway alienated with prejudice, they do not think it fit for the good of the work, at least during that time, that any others should have such trust; and this made the heat of debates in the time of division, to break out mainly in the ordination of Bishops, and planting of Churches; because by that means their interest in the government was keeped up, whereby there was after-accesse to the management of every other thing according as this succeeded.

CHAP. VIII.

Some preparatory endeavours for uniting.

ALthough we have been somewhat large in these generals, because of the falling in of severall things, yet we conceive it may be usefull to the point, and we may have the speedier progresse afterward in loosing this great question, What an orthodox Church divided in it self in some circumstantiall truths (to speak so) or contrary practices and actings, when still agreeing in the fundamentals of Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, and having mutuall esteem of the integrity one of another: What, I say, such are called to do for the healing of that breach? In reference to which, these things, or this method would be followed.

1. All, especially Ministers, would walk under the impression of the dreadfulnesse and terriblenesse of such a plague; It is like, if God were looked to as angry at a Church, and at Ministers in such a time, men would be in the greater fitnesse to speak concerning a healing. Some time therefore would be bestowed *Walking under an impression of the dreadfulnesse of such a plague*

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stowed on this, to let that consideration sink down in the soul, that the Lords hand may be taken up therein; the many sad consequents thereof would be represented to the mind, and the heart would be seriously affected and humbled therewith, as if sword, pestilence or fire were threatened; yea, as if the Lord were spitting in Ministers faces, rubbing shame upon them, and threatning the making of them despicable, the blasting of the Ordinances in their hands, the loosing the girdle of their loins, and authority amongst the people, the plucking up of the hedges to let in Boars and Wolves to spoil the Vines, and destroy the flock; and, in a word, to remove His candlestick, so that Ministers or other persons in such a case, have not only men that are their opposits to look to as angry at them, but they have the Lord to look to as their party, whose anger hath thus divided them; and the not observing of this, maketh men the more confident under such a judgement; Whereas, seing it is a plague, men, even such as suppose themselves innocent, as to the immediate rise thereof, ought to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, with respect to this as to other plagues.

A fearfull snare in division.

2. Men would also look upon it as a snare; O how many tentations have such divisions accompanying them, especally to Ministers; and also how many afflictions, crosses and reproaches, upon the back of these! Might it not make a Minister tremble to think upon the matter of divisions, that now beside all his former difficulties and straits, there is a snare and trial in every thing; in every Sermon that he preacheth it is thus, lest his own affection steal in for the zeal of God, to make him hoter and more vehement against those that oppose him in such things that are controverted, than he useth to be in things more nearly concerning to the glory of God, and lest by discovering his carnalnesse, he make his Ministery despicable before others, when he heareth he is in hazard

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hazard to be irritated by a contradiction; and though there be no contradiction, he is in hazard to lay the leſſe weight upon what might be for his edification, becauſe it is ſpoken by one who in ſuch and ſuch things differeth from him. When he is in any Judicatory, there is a tentation waiting on, by the leaſt motion of ſuch things, to diſcompoſe all, and make ſuch meetings ſcandalous and burdenſome; by this all converſing almoſt becometh heartleſſe and comfortleſſe, the moſt intimate brother is either ſuſpicious, or ſuſpected; all conſtruction of mens ingenuity and ſincerity in any thing, are, for the moſt part, grounded upon mens intereſts, as if men after that had no conſcience of ſinning, there is a failing of ſympathie amongſt brethren, *&c.* And may not theſe and many ſuch like, make Miniſters circumſpect in ſuch a caſe, that they may be ſlow to ſpeak to what may foment diviſion, and wary in hazarding upon ſnares. Alas, it is unlike this, when men uſe more confidence and liberty in conſtructing, ſpeaking and acting, and with leſſe tenderneſſe in times of diviſion than at other times; and were men once impreſſed with the fear of ſinning upon the occaſions of diviſions, they would be much more diſpoſed for ſpeaking of union.

Diligent viewing of our inward condition.

3. Miniſters and others would ſoberly retire to take a view of their own ſpirituall condition, and ſee if they have keeped their own vineyard: and particularly, before the Lord, put themſelves to theſe. 1. How union with him hath been prized, and if there hath been ſtudying to be, and abide, in Chriſt, and to keep themſelves in the love of God. 2. If there be any ground of quarrell in the preſent ſtrain or bygone practice, that might have influence to provoke the Lord to ſmite them in the generall. Or, 3. and eſpecially, If by their negligence and unfaithfulneſſe, imprudency, heat, paſſion, tenaciouſneſſe, addictedneſſe to other men, and too much loathneſſe to diſpleaſe them, prejudice at, and uncharitablneſſe

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unto others, or the like, they have been any way accessory to the bringing in of this evil; for which cause they would take a view both of the sins that procure it, and the evils which do dispose for it, and increase it, (which were formerly mentioned) and would be impartiall and through in this; for, it is prepostrous for men to meddle in removing publick differences, while they know not how it standeth with themselves.

Repentance suitable.

4. When that is done, there would be repentance suitable to what is found, and extraordinary humiliation and secret prayer to God, not only for themselves and for their own particular condition, but for the publick, and particularly for healing of that breach, and that thereby God would spare His people, and not suffer His inheritance to be a reproach. It is no little furtherance to union, to have men in a spirituall, abstracted and mortified frame; for, we are sure, if it remove not difference, it will in a great part moderate the division, and restrain the carnalnesse that usually accompanieth it, and dispose men to be more impartiall to hear what may lead further.

Union would by all warrantable means be commended unto, and pressed upon those that differ, and by those that differ one upon another.

5. Men would not sift in this, but as they have interest, and are led by their places, they would endeavour soberly, warily and seriously, by speaking, writing, obtesting and otherwayes, to commend union to these that differ; yea, even they that differ, would commend it to these that differ from them. We see the Apostles do this frequently in the New Testament, and that not onely in the generall to Churches, but some persons are particularly by name obtested, as, *Philip.* 4. 2. And in the primitive times, Bishops and Churches who were not engaged, did seriously write, and sometimes did send some of their number to Churches and eminent persons that were divided, and often their interposing did prove effectuall. And when that difference between *Augustine* and *Jerome*

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Jerome did come to some height, he (to wit, *Augustine*) pressed himself so on the other, for the begetting of a better understanding, and the abating of that difference, that he did prevail with him, and by their mutuall apologies, and better understanding one of another, they came notwithstanding of their difference to have much respect one of another. For this end *Policarpus* came from *Asia* to *Rome*, to stay the division about *Easter*, which prevailed so far, that it sisted for a time. Also men, especially of the same judgement, would deal with others with whom in that they agree, to be condescending, and seriously obtest them; and when they exceed, would objurgate them for the Churches good. This is often of great weight, and often also, men that appear most in a difference, will be hoter and carry things further than lesse engaged men of the same judgement will allow, and such ought not to be silent in such a case. Thus *Irenæus* (though of *Victors* judgement in the matter of *Easter*) yet did boldly expostulate with him for his vehemency in pressing of the same, to the hurt of the Churches peace, charging him to forbear and to follow union notwithstanding; which act of his, is still highly commended, and (as *Eusebius* observeth) counted answerable to his name.

6. Serious and single thoughts of union would be laid down, and that would be purposly driven as the great duty; so that endeavours would not principally tend to strengthen a side, or exoner themselves, or get advantage to others, &c. but to make *one* of both; and therefore when one mean or occasion faileth, another would be essayed; neither would men weary or faint herein, although it prove often a most fainting businesse. *Constancy and singlenesse herein*

7. Men would endeavour all this with tenderneſſe and respect to mens persons, actions and qualifications; for, oftentimes the rise of a division, is in the alienation of affections between some persons; which *With tenderness and respect.*

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afterward disposeth to construct hardly both of their opinions and actions: and indeed often the stick is here, that mens affections are not satisfied one with another, and that maketh them that they do not trust each other: Hence we see, that in the Scripture, the commending of love, and of honouring and preferring of others in honour to our selves, is ordinarily subjoyned to the exhortations to union, or reproofs of division, as, *Philip.* 2. *Eph.* 4. *Matth.* 18, *&c.* And we see in the primitive times, when no mean could cure schisms, one party shewing respect to another, or to some eminent head of the opposit party, (it may be even after their death) did alley the same, and engage these that formerly shunned communion, to joyn with them. It is particularly observed, That when at *Constantinople* some had continued separated from the Bishops government, and the Church thereof, after *Chrysostom's* deposition, for the space of thirty five years, and were called *Johanits*; yet *Proclus*, who by some interval succeeded in that See, by recording *Chrysostom's* name amongst eminent persons, and making honourable mention of him, and bringing his body from the place where it was buried in his exile, and burying it honourably at *Constantinople* in the great Church of the holy Apostles, did so appease and engage those that had disclaimed all the interveening Bishops, that instantly they did acknowledge him and joyn with the Church. The like also is mentioned to have been the end of that Schism at *Antioch*, because of *Eustachius* his removal from them, when *Callaudion* the Bishop did return his body honourably to be buried, and went out with his party to receive the same solemnly some miles from the Town; those also, who out of respect to him (to wit *Eustachius*) had continued separated from the succeeding Bishops for above an hundred years, now seeing the adverse party put respect on him, they also did from that time forth joyn with them. Both these

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are recorded in the fifth Century; and if respect to dead men be prevalent to engage affections, certainly mutual respect and evidences of confidence amongst men living, would be much more weighty. This giving of respect would be manifested in these and the like. 1. Respective mentioning in word or writ of the persons, and what concerns those that differ, especially such as are most eminent and leading amongst them. 2. There would be good constructions put upon their end and intentions, and sincerity, even in such actions as are displeasing. 3. Mens opinions and actions would not be loaded with grosse absurdities and high aggravations, especially in publick; because that tendeth but to make them odious, and standeth in the way of a future good understanding, when one hath proposed another as so absurd and hatefull a person. 4. All personal reflections would be abstained, as also sleighting answers, disdainfull-like words and salutations, and such like, would be shunned; But on the contrary, there would be love, familiarity, tenderness; and if there have been any reflection or bitterness to occasion mistake, yea, if it have been unjustly apprehended, there would be condescending to remove the same. I have heard of a worthy person, who being led away in an hour of tentation, was by many of his former friends afterwards discountenanced, whereby he was, as it were, engaged in a kind of discontent to defend his deed, and resent the disrespect of such persons, which almost grew to a rent: but having occasion to encounter one who was most opposit to his present way, who yet notwithstanding of all, did lovingly and familiarly, as ever, imbrace him, without mentioning any such thing; it is said, That his heart melted instantly with the conviction of his former opposition, and so any further procedure towards a rent was prevented, when he saw there was yet again access to the affections of the most eminent of those he did differ from.

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Expressions of mutuall confidence.

5. There would be expressions of mutual confidence in one another, which would appear not only in personall respects, but with respect to the Ministery of such as they differ from, endeavouring to strengthen and confirm that, which was the thing that endeared *Basilius* to *Eusebius*, that even while he differed, he endeavoured to have his Ministery weighty amongst the people. 6. Respect would be shewn to men of that judgment and side (it being such a difference as is supposed) they would be helped and furthered, and counted, notwithstanding thereof, (if otherwayes qualified) fit for trust and charge; for, this is not only engaging of a particular person, but of all the party, and doth hold forth a confidence in them notwithstanding of that; whereas the contrary is disobliging and irritating of all, because it proposeth all of such an opinion or practice to be unworthy of charge or trust, which no man can well digest; and it some way necessitateth them in a divided way to endeavour some other way of entering, and to increase their diffidence of them who so partially (in their esteem at least) manages matters, and prefers the strengthening of a side, to the edification of the Church; as any different party cannot but expound it, seing they seem to themselves to have some perswasion of their own integrity in the main work. 7. There would even be mutual visits and fellowship, civil and christian, as hath been; yea, rather it would be increased; for if men have some confidence that others love their persons, respect them as Ministers, and esteem of them as Christians, they will be easily induced to trust the other as such also. 8. If reflections and bitterness be vented by some (as even good men are too ready to indulge to themselves a liberty in debate to exceed in this) yet there would be no such meeting given. *Luther* is censured for exceeding in this, even by such as loved him; and it is a most excellent advertisement that *Calvin* giveth to

Kind visits

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Bullen-

Bullenger and others, thus provoked by him, *Epist.* 57. That either they would not answer such a Paper at all, or, in answering it, to remember, That they had a most eminent servant of Christ to answer, and so not to be provoked by his vehemency, seing he also had corruptions; and thus expresseth his own resolution, *Etiamsi me Diabolum vocaret, me tamen hoc illi honoris habiturum, ut insignem Dei servum agnoscam, &c.* It is upon this ground, that *Augustine* and others, most zealously affected with the schism of the *Donatists*, yet because they keeped in other things sound in the Faith, they mention such of them as were sober, very honourably, and carried to them very brotherly; and particularly he used to visit their Bishops, if he had been going elsewhere for Ordination or other affairs; and some of them also used to visit him, whom he entertained most kindly, ever speaking to improve both for begetting a better understanding, as may be gathered from instances cited out of his Epistles in what is before and after this. Sometimes also when he wrote to some of them, he desired them to write so to him, as he might acquaint his people with both their Writings, and with his own, if they returned no Answer, that thereby he might constrain them to reasonableness, yet saith, it shall be past *Discessum militum*, that it might appear he intended not to make them odious. He doth also observe, that a main thing that made the *Donatists* averse from yeelding to union, was a suspicion which they had, that the *Catholicks* would still persecute them if they had occasion, speaking of a Conference, *Epist.* 163. he saith, *Dictum erat* (meaning by the *Donatists*) *quod adhuc nostri eos persecuturi essent*; which he with many words rejecteth, shewing from *Eph.* 4. that they had learned to keep union with forbearance: elsewhere also, as *Epist.* 147. he excuseth the too great vehemencie of the expressions of some that were on his own side in that difference. All which sheweth the great necessi-

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ty that there is to recover affections in the pressing of union, and how far men ought to condescend in reference thereto, both in order to what is past, and for the preventing of what may be feared.

Stirring up to the life and practice of Religion.

8. Then Ministers would not only in their own practice, but in their doctrine, and otherwayes, stir up others to the practice and life of Religion. We ever find the Apostle useth this way upon the back of his exhortations to union, to presse the working out of their salvation with fear and trembling, &c. And in the Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, when he dehorts Ministers from foolish and jangling questions, strifes and contentions, this remedy is either premitted or subjoyned, that they would presse the Believers to be zealous of good works, and carefull to maintain these, *Tit.* 3. 8, 9. That they would follow after love, righteousnesse, faith, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart, 2 *Tim.* 2. 22, 23. for, when either Ministers or Professors are exercised and taken-up with these things, there is little accesse to other things: then also they discern the necessity of union the more, and are the more disposed for it themselves, and others are the more easily induced to unite with them. Besides it is never in such things that godly and orthodox men do differ, but it is in diverting from these; and therefore often much heat in particular differences, carrieth with it, a decay and lukewarmnesse in more practicall things; As on the contrary, zeal in these materiall things, doth ordinarily alley and mitigate heat and fervour in the other.

Solemn addresses to God.

9. It is fit that there were solemn addresses to God for directing and guiding in the way to this end; for, He is *the God of peace*, and ought to be acknowledged in removing this great evil of division: Hence the Apostle subjoyneth prayers for peace, unto his exhortations thereto; and we are commanded to pray for *Jerusalems* peace, even Church-peace no lesse than Civil peace. It may be that the neglect of this is the

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the cause that sound, godly and peaceable men, who love the welfare of Zion, do yet continue divided, and cannot fall upon means of healing, that thereby the necessity of the Lords interposing may be discerned, and that there may be purposed addresses for this same thing, and that men may not undervalue the thing, nor their adversaries in it. so as not to account it a rod, seing it is God they have to do with, nor be content to lye under it without aiming and dealing to have it removed by Him, as we would deal for the removall of any temporall plague, or expect a blessing upon this Gospel.

CHAP. IX.

What things are to be forborn in order to uniting.

HAving laid down these generall helps, we are now to consider what is yet to be forborn and abstained from in reference to union: For, as ordinarily divisions rise and are fomented, from and by doing and driving of some things, which others cannot concur in, or come up to; So when such things are abstained from, there is the nearer accesse to union; at least, it stoppeth the impetuousnes of division, and maketh it to look liker a difference, which (considering humane infirmity) is neither so intolerable in it self, nor hurtfull to the Church. Beside therefore what hath been said for abstaining of personal reflections, or what may irritate persons, or parties, or what may entertain jealousie or diffidence amongst them, whereof something hath been touched upon, We shall add these things further,

1. All things that contribute to weaken the repute of others, or to beget an hard impression of them in our selves or in others, in the general, would be forborn; such as telling of reproachfull reports, even though they be true, much more if they be but reported, *Avoiding of all things that weaken the reputation of others.*

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ported, yea, or the hearing of such with any delight, endeavouring to waken up discontents in others against opposits, by such informations, solicitations and the like. These are condemned in private mens carriages, and are the causes of continuing such differences (for, where no tale-bearer is, strife ceaseth, *Prov.* 26.) much more amongst Ministers who ought not to walk as men. Also good heed would be taken to such as may have influence on advices, counsels and resolutions to that purpose, lest underhand-whisperers, who really may mind some further alteration in the Church, and may really be imbittered at honest men for their honesty, should yet insinuat themselves with eminent men on both sides, and so carry on the division, and disappoint the union; As for instance, Some, not altogether purged from *Arianism*, and imbittered at honest Bishops, as *Athanasius*, *Osius*, and others, did steal in upon the one side of a debate, and held on the controversie against faithfull men; So *Epiphanius* was intangled by *Theophilus* of *Alexandria* to oppose *Chrysostom* upon pretext of another difference; Sometimes again, on the other side, such as inclined to the *Novatians*, wanted not influence to strengthen the opposit party, and to keep them at a greater distance from the other, as being grosse in receiving *Traditores* (as they called them) unto their society. Sometimes men justly censured, or fearing censure from faithfull Bishops, did spread calumnies against them, and made them odious, under pretext of their pride, arrogance, unsoundnesse and such like, even unto other orthodox men; Sometimes again, time-serving men, by flattering Magistrates did execute their revenge against faithfull Bishops, by keeping up Divisions against them, driving on Sentences of Deposition, and such like, under pretext of other faults; whereby the Churches peace hath been often marred and her divisions continued, as is clear in those schisms and divisions at *Constantinople*, first, in rese-

Evil counsel

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reference to *Chrysostom*, and afterward in reference to *Ignatius*, who, by a faction in the Church, was deposed, really to please the Emperour, whose incestuous marriage he would not approve as they did: therefore I say in the removing of differences, and resolving of duties in reference to union, there is great need of circumspectnesse in trying and choosing whose counsels are to be laid weight upon; for, all men love not peace, neither seek singly the good of the Church, and want not their own prejudices and grudgings at particular eminent persons, who (where men are not very denied and mortified) will easily steal-in to mar a publick good, under pretext of particular respect to the person, whom, by so doing, they stir up. It's marked by *Sleydan* as the cause of that unreasonable and unnatural division that brake-out and grew in *Germany*, almost to the undoing of Religion therein, betwixt the Elector of *Saxony*, and *Maurice* afterward Elector, that some Counsellors not well-minded to Religion, but favourers of the wicked way of *Henry*, to whom *Maurice* succeeded, who for that cause had hatred at the Elector and those who were eminent for Reformation, and now having taken on a profession, and insinuated themselves in the counsels and affection of *Maurice*, and finding some begun matter of dissention in other particulars, did so kindle and foster it, till they brought the division to that height, that one part of the Protestants were engaged with Antichrist and his followers to destroy the other; and yet so closely carried, that the difference was never stated upon the real account, which indeed such did intend. Also men not so nearly concerned in the Churches divisions, as suppose they be of another Church, or men not so immediately concerned in the debates thereof, and the effects that follow thereupon; As in that Council of *Carthage*, they enact that tenderneſſe be used to the *Donatists*, and means be used to reclaim them; and for that end did acknowledge their Ministers

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sters, though ordained in a schism, to be Ministers, although the Church of *Rome* did write otherwayes to them, and did act otherwayes themselves: These would be looked unto. Sometimes also there are a sort of persons who long not for union; for, as there is an itching after new doctrine in some, so is there for divisions and changes amongst others, who may be found in doctrine, who in this are to be adverted to.

Forbearing to engage judicially pro or con.

2. Men would eschew in such a case judicially to engage in such differences, either by passing decisions in these things *pro* or *contra* in Judicatories, or by censuring, or noting with any reproach such as differ from them. For, 1. that maketh the division the more difficuldy removable in it self. And, 2. it engageth both sides the more, and proveth a let to retiring when men would, and heighteneth the difference exceedingly. In that difference that was between *Cyprian* and *Stephanus*, and other Bishops of *Rome*, concerning the rebaptizing of such as had been baptized by Hereticks and Schismaticks, It is marked that *Stephanus* did presse the condemnation of it, did censure and refuse communion with such as joyned with *Cyprian* in his opinion: On the contrary, *Cyprian* did indeed call Synods and decide, but neither pressed any man to his opinion or practice, nor Censured any that differed in such a matter; And because his carriage is so much commended by the *Ancients*, especially by *Augustine*, against the *Donatists*, not because he counted *Cyprian* right on the matter; for, he disclaimed that, and owned the contrary opinion; but because he carried in his opinion so tenderly to the Churches union and peace. We shall observe two or three passages of his, and of *Augustines* concerning him. 1. In his Epistle *ad* Jubiannum, *Hæc rescripsimus, inquit, nemini præscribentes aut præjudicantes quo minus unusquisque Episcoporum, quod putat faciat. Et ne quisquam pellendus à cæterorum con-*

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consortio videretur (dicit) nos quantum in nobis est propter hæreticos cum collegis & Coepiscopis nostris non contendimus, cum quibus divinam concordiam & pacem tenemus. Et Paulo post, Serventur (inquit) à nobis patienter & leniter charitas animi, collegii honor, vinculum fidei, concordia sacerdotii. Which words and many others are cited by *Augustine de Baptismo, lib. 6. cap. 17.* And in another place, when he hath cited this same last Sentence and other words, giving the reason which the Apostle hath, 1 *Cor.* 11. *If any man will be contentious, we have no such custome, nor the Churches of God*: after which a little, *Augustine* subjoyneth this approbation of his carriage; *Majus quippe in eo robur virtutis eminuit, cum ista quæstio nondum discussa nutaret, quod aliter sentiens quam multi collegæ, tantam moderationem obtinuit, ut Ecclesiæ Dei sanctam societatem, nulla schismatis labe truncaret, quam si omnia non solum veraciter, sed etiam pariter sine ista virtute sentiret; De Baptismo, lib. 5. cap. 17.* This he saith, even though *Cyprians* opinion was confirmed by diverse Councels of *Carthage*. Which sheweth what influence such abstinence hath on the Churches peace, which is the more observable, that he used this forbearance when he had the generality of the Church of *Africk*, and the authority of their Councels for him; and also was provoked by the vehemency of his opposits, and their Censuring such as were of his opinion; yet he forbare, not because he doubted of the soundnesse of his judgement, but because he respected the Churches peace, and even then did he write sweetly in many Epistles, and a particular treatise, pressing the unity of the Church; for which he is eminently esteemed of as an excellent pattern in such a case by all sober and judicious men.

3. In such cases when union is desired, men would abstain the propagating of their opinions in any purposed and publick way. This is not to restrain a mans sober, christian and necessary vindicating of him-

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Abstaining from propagating their opinions factiously.

himself in a due way. But, 1. All unnecessary traffick that is principally for strengthening of a party. 2. Publishing in print, things to that purpose, when there is no conveniency for the Churches good. 3. Making motions in Judicatories that awaken siding. 4. Insisting thereon in publick preaching. And, lastly, (When there is some necessity to speak or write on such things) all reflections and irritations, would be abstained; yea, it is fit that sometimes every word spoken, or written upon one side, should be past over by the other, without reply, for peaces sake. Because, 1. the broader such differences spread, they take the deeper root, and increase siding more amongst the people. 2. Because, they irritate more and keep off men from thinking of peace. 3. Because the memory of these things is ready to riffle mens minds. Therefore most eminent men have wished, that all Papers *pro* or *contra* in such differences might be buried; for, one difference begetteth another, and one paper draweth forth another, none being willing that his adversary should have the last word; and oftentimes papers propagate a controversie to a succeding generation, to whom it had been good that many things had never been in writ. Also often, such writings prove edifying to few, and they but make Church-division the subject of more discourse, and Ministers to be the more contemptible; and do in themselves often involve many contradictions against one another, which readily are not possible to be cleared in matters of fact, and reflections one upon another; which derogateth exceedingly from the honour of the Ministery. It is marked of *Constantine*, that when at the Council of *Nice*, there were many opposit papers of differences amongst Bishops presented, he took them, and having gravely admonished the Bishops for their contending amongst themselves, would not have one of them read, but said, he would cover such infirmities as

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as they were bringing to light, by their contradictions, with his purple. This way also hath been followed for stopping of divisions in diverse reformed Churches.

4. All contrary acting would be abstained, as in Elections, Ordinations, or the like, because these fix, as with a nail, the difference, as may be gathered from history. It were better many a time for the Churches good, that any one side had suffered the Bishop, ordained by the other, solely to possesse the place, or that none had been ordained at all, than that opposit Ordinations had been; because, that so the Church was divided even in communion, and such particulars have been ever difficultly composed, and ever exceedingly instrumentall to continue a breach, and it led men in Congregations to be factious, and to seek to gain men and affections to their party. *Contrary acting.*

5. All separated and divided meetings would be eschewed, whether the separation be totall in respect of all Ordinances and communion in generall, as sometimes divisions have come amongst orthodox men to such a height; Or, whether it be partiall, suppose in Government, Sacraments, &c. or any of these; because so not only way is made to a totall separation, but thereby there is a divided shape put upon the *one* Church, and occasion is given for one party to condemn another, and so to beget more strife; and especially, because it habituateth men to think themselves not of one body, and, as it were, erecteth a Church or Altar against another (as the Fathers were wont to speak) and so becometh a *drawn line* of division, and doth really make the difficulty of uniting the more difficult; because ere union be made up, that partition must be pulled down. It is fit therefore that either all such occasions of Fasts, &c. wherein all cannot joyn, should be forborn; or that they be so ordered, as there may bee union in them. *Separated meetings to be eschewed.* *And separated Fasts.*

6. Such

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Acts and Principles laying restraints upon either side.

6. Such acts and principles as put restraint upon either side, making others incapable of Church-trust or the like, or which declareth them to be so, would be prevented; and if established, would be orderly removed; because such things make a partition betwixt two, and heighten such a difference beyond the nature thereof: Also they evidence much prejudice and alienation of mind, and they seem to constrain men to an union, which is never right if it be not voluntary. Hence we see that the great friends of peace have ever endeavoured to prevent or remove such; as in the instances of *Policarp*, *Ireneus* and *Cyprian*, is clear, who did not only endeavour to remove Censures, but even censurableness from persons so differing. This also is very obliging to the opposit party. In that 163. Epistle of *Augustines* (which is much to this purpose) mention is made of one *Cenetblius*, a Catholick Bishop, who (saith he) was much esteemed of by the Donatists, *Quod constitutionem datam contra eos, compresserit, & effectum habere non siverit.*

CHAP. X.

What is to be done in order to Uniting.

NOw we may be the shorter in speaking to what is to be done in reference to particular differences, seing much may be gathered from these generals premitted, and it is not our purpose to be particular; Yet we say,

Seeking Meetings.

1. That it is the duty of such to be seeking union one with another, and for that cause to be making offer of, and desiring meetings and conferences, and to be urging harmony one upon another. In that Council of *Carthage*, whereof *Aurelius* was Moderator, they did appoint Conferences to be sought for with the *Donatists*, although they had been long in a schism; and for that end did appoint Commissioners,

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missioners, and did give instructions to go from place to place, and to endeavour a settlement, whereof these were a part, That their former schism and separation should be prejudiciall to none; That Ministers and Bishops should continue in their charges if otherwayes they were worthy, notwithstanding of their former separation: which is observed not to have wanted fruit in many places, as the acts and events are recorded by *Balsamon*. And this is according to the generall rule of following peace, even when it seemeth to flie from men; And questions that may engender strife are to be avoided and fled from, when they seem to follow after men, because, as *Paul* saith, 2 *Tim.* 2. 22. *&c*: *The servant of the Lord must not strive, &c.* On this ground we find, that many of *Augustines* Epistles, direct to *Donatists* and others, are to this purpose, craving friendly communings; and when he hath had occasion to be in cities where *Donatist-Bishops* were, he used to visit them, and enter conference friendly with them; and if any hope was, he wrote to others to entertain the same, as particularly may be gathered from *Epist.* 147. where he honourably mentioneth *Promelianus* in the desire of a conference; and because he knew the too great vehemency of one *Evodius*, though of his own side, had offended him, he did excuse it, saying amongst other things, *Id hominis ætati ignoscendum est, &c.* The like he also hath, *Epist.* 163. when he mentioneth *Fortunius*, whom he had conferred with, with this testimony to these he writeth to, *Quantum enim arbitror difficillime potestis invenire in Episcopis vestris tam utilem animum, & voluntatem, quam in isto sene perspeximus*; And therefore presseth them to entertain the begun conference, though he might not stay. *And offering fair conditions.*

2. In carrying on such meetings, respect would be had to union in the ordering of every circumstance; as in the *persons* chosen, that they may be men inclined to peace, respected by the other party concerned in *A right way of carrying on such meetings.*

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the Churches differences, and free of the ſuſpicions formerly hinted, and ſuch like, leſt by an intended union there follow a greater rent and diviſion, as oftentimes hath been ſeen in conferences amongſt diſſentient men. Here alſo a ſpeciall reſpect would be had to the expreſſing of mutuall benevolence in words and carriages, leſt ſome hard impreſſion ſeize on men at the entry. Choiſe alſo would be made of the *ſubject* firſt to be ſpoken of; as what may be thought moſt ſubject to miſtake, heat or contention, would be left to the laſt place; and what may be conceived more plauſible-like to both, would be begun at, that it may be rather known wherein men agree, than wherein they differ, at the entry at leaſt. Poſſibly alſo union in fundamentall things, being accorded unto, it may make way for moderating affections in other things leſſe fundamentall. This method was ever urged by *Bucer*, *Beza* and other *Reformers*, who keeped conferences at firſt with the *Lutheran* party; becauſe, beginning at ſome point of Doctrine, or particular in practice, wherein the difference is higheſt, doth often at the entry riſle mens humours, and break off conferences abrupdly with the more heat, as experience in theſe debates at that time did make too too manifeſt.

Contention about formalities to be forborn.

3. Such meetings for conference would be ſeriouſly and condeſcendingly improved for the end deſigned: As, 1. protractings of time, or janglings about circumſtances would be eſchewed; as alſo tenaciouſneſſe, and contentiouſneſſe about formalities of proceeding, and particular inſiſting upon contradictions in matters of fact, becauſe ſuch things become not the gravity and ſeriouſneſſe of men aiming at ſuch an end. But the main buſineſſe would be ſoberly and ſeriouſly gone about, and that timeouſly; for, men ſhould not meet to take advantage one of another by ſuch formalities, but to procure the good of the Church. 2. Criminations, or objecting of perſonall

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nall faults one to another, or difference in particulars, would either be altogether forborn, or left to the last place, and the main matter would be first handled, and particulars accordingly squared. 3. Their would be condescending to follow some circumstances, even though they seem not so reasonable, lest by the wilfull adhering of one party to a circumstance, the end be disappointed; yea, sometimes more materiall things, at least till there be a better understanding begotten, are to be ceded in, when it may be without sin, if so be it may contribute for the carrying on of such a design, and we will almost ever find these that are most tender of the Churches good to be most condescending in all these; As amongst other instances, we will find in that conference between the *Catholicks* and *Donatists*, at which *Augustine* was present, and which is set down by him; wherein amongst other things, these are clear, 1. That not only the *Catholicks* sought the meeting, but also pressed the speaking unto the main businesse, which the other did sometimes deny, saying, It was not lawfull for the children of Martyrs to meet with the children of a apostate or wicked men; and sometimes by formalities, jangling questions, they protracted time to eschew the main thing. 2. It is clear, that also the *Catholicks* condescended to many of their suits, and yeelded to account them Bishops, and did not contradict, but cede at the entry, that Churches should be rendered to these from whom they were taken, if so be that might have enclined them to union, and that even by benefits they might be mollified, and stood on no circumstantiall thing with them. Such meetings have often been disappointed with such vain janglings, especially when numbers have been confusedly admitted, and when each party hath charged another with former miscarriages, As *Augustine* observeth, *Epist.* 163. and therefore hath that word to them, *Neque nos illis debere objicere suorum scelera, neque*

Personall criminations.

The most tender of the Church, most condescending

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neque illos nobis. And, because the *Donatists* upbraided the *Catholicks* (as the orthodox are called in all these debates) that they were guilty of persecuting them, because they had proceeded to some Sentences, and procured commission from Civil powers against them to put them from their charges, (These times they called *tempora Macariana*, because of such a person that was eminent in the executing thereof) And again, the Catholicks used to object to them, beside their schism, Headiness, irregular violences, and the like, because of the practices of the *Circumcellions*, who, having fallen off with the *Donatists*, went also in many absurdities beyond them; therefore when he is pressing a conference, *Epist.* 203. *Tollamus* (saith he) *inania objecta, nec tu objicias tempora Macariana, nec ego sævitiam Circumcellionum.* And in *Epist.* 107. saith, that in his conference with *Fortunius*, *Placuit omnibus in talibus disputationibus violenta facta malorum hominum nobis ab invicem objici non debere.* And there is no little furtherance or prejudice to a conference accordingly as this advice is followed or not, seing often such bygone particulars will heat more, than that which is of greater concernment in the main cause.

4. To make the instances more particular, the matter concerning which debate arises and falls to be the subject of the conference, may be distinguished, and so more clearly spoken unto: Which is, 1. either a difference in some doctrinall thing: Or, 2. some particular practice, or some personall miscarriage. Or, 3. something in Worship. Or, 4. something in Government, or such like.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XI.

What is to be done in closing doctrinal differences.

1. FOr doctrinal differences of judgment, there are *three* wayes to close them; (it is to be adverted, that the difference is not supposed to be in any fundamental thing) *First*, By sober and serious conference, one party may bring another to the same judgment with them; or, both parties may quit something of extremities, and joyn in a middle opinion. This is the most solid union, when men come to think and speak the same thing, and sometime hath been attained. Yet concerning this, we say, 1. That all union is not to depend on this, as hath been said. 2. It hath been very rarely attained, especially when difference hath spread and rooted it self by debating and contradiction, seing even good men have both infirmity and corruption. 3. We say, that publick dispute, either by word or writ, hath never proven very usefull, even amongst good men, to attain this end, But ordinarily such debates have heightned the controversie, and engaged men more; so that if any thing prevail towards this, it is friendly, familiar conferences opening truth, rather than formal stated disputations; because in such, men are (as it were) upon their guard, and fully do exercise their wit; in the other, there is more access to inform the judgment, by a loving, grave, serious manner of speaking of the truth, and that privatly to others, especially to such as are of reputation for parts and ability, and that it be not done in vain, as *Paul* hath it, *Gal.* 2. 2. And it's observable that he speaketh this in reference to his way, when he intended the evidencing of his agreement with the chief Apostles in the matter of doctrine. Also we find *meekness* and *instructing* put together, when there is any expectation to re-

The first way of closing doctrinal differences.

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cover one from a difference, 2 *Tim.* 2, 15. and *convincing* or *disputing* is more especially applicable to these of whom there is little hope, out of respect to the edification of others. Hence we find the Apostles *disputing* with false teachers in some points of truth, but rather *intreating* and exhorting Believers to have peace amongst themselves, notwithstanding of lesser differences.

The second way of composing such differences

A *second* way of composure, is, when such agreement in judgment cannot be obtained, To endeavour a harmony and keep unity notwithstanding of that difference, by a mutual forbearance in things controverted: which we will find to be of two sorts. The *first* is, to say so, *total*, that is, when neither side doth so much as doctrinally in word, writ, or Sentences of Judicatories, presse any thing that may confirm or propagate their own opinion, or condemn the contrary, But do altogether abstract from the same out of respect to the Churches peace, and for the preventing of scandal; and do in things wherein they agree according to the Apostle's direction, *Philip.* 3. 16. *Walk by the same rule, and minde the same things* mutually, as if there were no such differences, and waiting in these till the Lord shall reveal the same unto them. This way is safe, where the doctrine upon which the difference is, is such, as the forbearing the decision thereof, doth neither mar any duty that the Church in general is called to, nor endanger the salvation of souls through the want of clearness therein, nor, in a word, infer such inconveniences to the hurt of the Church, as such unseasonable awakening and keeping up of differences and divisions may have with it; Because the scope of bringing forth every truth, or confirming the same by any authoritative sanction, &c. is the edification of the Church; and therefore when the bringing forth thereof doth destroy more than edifie, it is to be forborn. Neither can it be ground enough to plead for such decisions in preach-

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preaching, that the thing they preach for is truth, and the thing they condemn is errour. Because, 1. it is not the lawfulnesse of the thing simply that is in question, but the necessity and expediency thereof in such a case? Now, many things are lawfull that are not expedient, 1 *Cor.* 10. 23. 2. In these differences that were in the primitive times concerning meats, dayes, genealogies, *&c.* there was a truth or an errour upon one of the sides, as there is a right and a wrong in every contradiction of such a kind, yet the Apostle thinketh fitter, for the Churches peace, that such be altogether refrained, rather than any way (at least in publick) insisted upon or decided. 3. Because no Minister can bring forth every truth at all times, he must then make choice; And I suppose some Ministers may die, and all do so, who have not preached every truth, even which they knew, unto the people. Beside, there are (no question) many truths hid to the most learned. Neither can this be thought inconsistent with a Ministers fidelity, who is to reveal the whole counsel of God; because, that counsel is to be understood of things necessary to mens salvation, and is not to be extended to all things whatsoever; for, we find the great Apostle expounding this in that same Sermon, *Act.* 20. ver. 20. *I have keeped back nothing that was profitable unto you*; which evidenceth that *the whole counsel of God*, or the things which he shewed unto them, is the *whole*, and *all* that was profitable for them, and that for no by-respect or fear whatsoever he shunned to reveal that unto them. Also, it is clear, that there are many truths which are not decided by any judiciall act; and amongst other things, sparingnesse to decide truths that are not fundamentall judicially hath been ever thought no little mean of the Churches peace, as the contrary hath been of division.

The *third* way (which is the *second* sort of the former) of composure, is mixed, When there is some

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The third way of composing such differences

medling with such questions, yet with such forbearance, that though there be a seen difference, yet there is no schism or division, but that is seriously and tenderly prevented; as upon the one side, some may expresse their mind in preaching and writing on a particular question one way, others may do it differently; yet both with that meekness and respect to those they differ from, that it doth beget no rent, nor give just ground of offence, nor mar union in any other thing: Or, it may possibly come to be decided in a Synod, yet with such forbearance upon both sides, that it may prove no prejudice to union; those who have authority for them, not pressing it to the prejudice of the opinion, names, consciences of the other, or to their detriment in any respect; but allowing to them a liberty to speak their minds, and walk according to their own light in such particulars: And on the contrary, the other resting satisfied in the unity of the Church, without condemning them, or pressing them to condemn themselves; because so indeed their liberty is no lesse than others who have the decision of a Synod for them: And thus men may keep communion and union in a Church, even where by the Judicatories thereof, some lesser not fundamental errour, which doth also infer unwarrantable practices, is authoritatively concluded. We have a famous instance of this in the Church of *Africa* in the dayes of *Cyprian*, which by the *Ancients* hath ever been so much esteemed of. There was a difference in that Church concerning the Rebaptizing of Hereticks and Schismaticks after their conversion, or, of such as had once fallen in to them; *Cyprian* and the greatest part thought their first Baptism null, or, by their fall, made void; others thought it not so, who were the lesser part, yet right as to this particular; There was meetings on both sides for defence of their opinions. Also in a Council of near three hundred Bishops, it is judicially and authoritatively concluded;

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ded; yet that Synod carried so, as they did not only not censure any that dissented, nor presse them to conform in practice to their judgment; but did also entertain most intimat respect to them, and familiarity with them, as may be gathered from what was formerly hinted. And upon the other side, we do not find any in that Church making a schism upon the account of that judicial erroneous decision (though at least by three several Synods it was ratified) but contenting themselves to have their consciences free by retaining their own judgement, and following their own practice, till time gave more light and more occasion to clear that truth. And we will never find in the Writings of any time, more affection amongst brethren, and more respect to peace, than was in that Church at that time amongst those that differed; And there is not any practice more commended in all the Church-history and Writings of the *Fathers*, than this practice; as partly may be gathered from what was formerly touched out of *Augustine*. And if we will consider the case rationally, we will find that it is not impossible to have union in a Church where there is in such a difference an authoritative decision, even supposing that side, on which the errour lyes, to be approved. For, 1. There is no necessity for such as have authority for them, to presse others in their judgment or practice in such things; neither can it be thought that such a decision can of it self satisfie all scruples, neither yet that men doubtingly may follow; Nor, lastly, that such controversies can bear the weight of troubling the Church, by censuring such as otherwayes may be faithfull, seing sometimes even unfaithfull men have been spared with respect to the Churches good, as hath been said. And, secondly, upon the other side, such a constitution of a Church, doth not involve all that keep communion therein, in the guilt thereof, if personally they be free; as in the instance of the Jewish Church is clear: where, no question,

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question many corrupt acts have been established, yet did it neither make communion in Worship or Government to be unlawfull, where the matter and manner of carriage was lawfull. Beside, this would infer, that no Judicatory could keep union, where there were contrary votes, or a Sentence past without unanimity: because that is certainly wrong to them who think otherwayes, and if so, there could be no Judicatory expected either in Church or State; for, it cannot be expected, that they shall be still unanimous, or, that the greater part shall cede to the lesser, and rescind their own act. Also, suppose there should be such a division upon one difference, can it be expected that those who unite upon the divided sides respectively, shall again have no more difference amongst themselves? and if they have, shall there not be a new division? and where shall this end? And seing men must resolve to keep unity where there are faults of such a nature, or to have none at all, it is as good to keep it at first, as to be necessitated thereto afterward. The Orthodox urge this argument against the *Donatists*, who would not keep union with them, because of pretended corruptions in the proceedings of Judicatories and Ordinations; yet were constrained to bear with such amongst themselves, and particularly to receive, and unite with the *Maximinianists*, whose communion they had once rejected, though a branch of their own faction, because they saw no end of divisions if they did not resolve to dispense with such things amongst themselves. And *Augustine* often asserteth, that they were never able to answer this argument when it was propounded to them, to wit, Why they did not give them that same latitude, in keeping communion with them, which they had given to the *Maximinianists*, who were guilty of such things as they imputed to them? We conceive then, that even in such a case there may be union for prosecuting the main work of the Gospel, notwithstanding

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standing of such a circumstantial difference, if men otherwayes set themselves to it; and the generall grounds, formerly laid down, do confirm this.

CHAP. XII.

What to do for union in points not doctrinall, but about matters of fact or personall faults.

IF the difference be not doctrinall in point of judgment, at least only, but being in matter of fact, as personall faults and corruptions; whereby the one is ready to object to the other some bypast failings, and miscarriages: whereupon by inconsiderat upbraidings, pressing of Censures, or condemnation of what hath been done, the Churches peace is in hazard to be broken, and men like to be rent and divided in their communion. And oftentimes such things prove exceeding fashious, where men wilfully, or imprudently pursue such things without respect to the Churches peace. This often waited upon a time of darkness, or persecution, when men, being in the dark, and in a distemper, were led away by tentation, and overtaken with many faults, and sometimes amongst others, made to juffle with, and trample one upon another (as it were) not knowing what they were doing; and when this time was over, some were ready to carp at what was past in the dark, and to quarrell at others for such juffling, when they were so through-other. This indeed was ordinary, but most unbecoming grave men, to make that a ground of contending, which inadvertently was done by others in the dark (as the great *Basilius* saith) *In nocturno tempore, & densis tenebris.* Such contests are of four sorts. *Contests about these, are of several sorts.*

First, Sometimes in generall, there is a dissatisfaction with the constitution of the Church, in respect

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Dissatisfaction from constitution of Officers and Members.

spect of the grosseness of the Officers and Members thereof. This cannot be removed upon the one side only, because tares cannot but be in the Church, and that discernably, as *Cyprian* saith; it is removed then by meekness and tenderness upon the one side towards such as have withdrawn, and by their yeelding to return who have withdrawn, which when it came to passe, hath been matter of gladness to all the Church. Amongst *Cyprians* Epistles (*Epist.* 50. *edit. Pameli*) mention is made of *Urbanus*, *Maximus*, and others of the Church of *Rome*, who being *Confessors* and imprisoned in the time of persecution, and after their delivery finding many grosse Members to be in the Church, and meeting with the doctrine of *Novatus* that commended separation to the godly for their more comfortable communion together, that they came to be tickled therewith, and for a time to separate from the communion of *Cornelius*, and others of the Clergy, pretending there could be no communion in such an evil constituted Church; but afterward, finding the great hurt that came thereby to the Church, they overcame their own affections and inclinations, and out of respect to the good of the Church, did unit, which was exceedingly welcomed by all, as their Epistle to *Cyprian*, and his to them, do manifest. And as their fall sheweth, that it is not impossible, but that zealous Ministers, who have keeped out against defection, may be overtaken with such a fault; So it giveth a sweet copie of Christian deniedness and tenderness by others to be followed in the like case. Their words to *Cyprian* are worthy the observing. *Nos habito consilio utilitatibus Ecclesiæ, & paci magis consulentes, omnibus rebus prætermissis, & Judicio Dei servatis, cum* Cornelio *Episcopo nostro, pariter & cum universo Clero pacem fecisse, cum gaudio etiam universæ Ecclesiæ, prona etiam omnium charitate.*

The alleaging of faults either not true, or not cert.

A *second* sort of such contests, are, When faults are alleaged which either are not true, or cannot be proven,

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proven, although possibly they may be both grosse and true, for both of these did the *Novatians* and *Donatists* trouble the Church, insisting long in charging many crimes upon men particularly upon *Cecilianus*, and *Osius*, which they could never be able to make out, although they alleaged that such faults were cloaked by the *Catholicks*, and that they were not to be communicated with. In this case the Orthodox took three wayes to remove such a difference. 1. By pleading forbearance of awakening such contests, and exhorting rather to keep union, than to hazard to break it upon such grounds, and so (as *Augustine* saith) *ut quædam incerta crimina pro certa pace Deo dimitterentur*, *Cont. Epist. Parm. lib.* 1. *cap.* 3. 2. If that could not be acquiesced in, they admitted the thing to proof, over, and over again, that by lawfull triall it might be decided, as we will find in the former instances, the same case of *Cecilianus* was often tryed, even after he was absolved. It is true the *Donatists* did not acquiesce, but did separate, (for which cause they were ever accounted most grosse Schismaticks) yet is it of it self, a way wherein men may satisfyingly acquiesce. A third way sometimes used, was, That when divisions were like to be occasioned by dissatisfaction with a particular person against whom things could not be judicially made out so as to found a Sentence, nor yet possibly was there so full satisfaction with him in every thing, as by owning of him to hazard a rent, where a people were stumbled by him, they did without judiciall processing, or Censuring, interpose with the Bishop to cede, and wrote to the people to choose another. So in that Council of *Carthage*, *Canon.* 91. letters are written to *Maximianus* (called *Episcopus Bagiensis*) and the people, that he might cede the Bishoprick, and they might choose another; yet there is no mention of any made-out accusation, or Sentence, but that for the good of the Church, *Synodo placuit*, *&c.*

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There is mention made elsewhere in history of a Bishop of that place, of that name, who had been a *Donatist*, and did return to the communion of the Church; but, if this be he, or what was the cause of this appointment, is neither certain, nor of great concernment in this.

Pleading for such as are most justly censured, or censurable.

A *third* sort of contests of this kind are, When crimes are grosse and clear, and men are either justly censurable, or Censured; some (possibly honestly minded) may be engaged to do for them, by their insinuating upon them, and giving misinformations and prejudices, and so be brought to endeavour the preventing or removing of Sentences against, or from, such as justly deserve the same. In this case we find a threefold way of composure. 1. An endeavour used to clear to others the justice of such a Sentence when it hath been traduced. Thus when *Basilides*, and *Martialis*, were justly deposed by a *Synod of Spain*, they did, by false pretexts, engage the *Clergie of Rome* to owne them, and write for their recovery, which did exceedingly offend the Bishops of *Spain*; whereupon they wrote to *Cyprian* and these in *Africk*, for advice, who, being met in the Synod, approved their deposition, and advised them not to readmit them, because none such who had any blemish and were not holy, ought to minister in the holy things, and that rather they should bear with *Stephanus* his mistake, who out of ignorance and misinformation was led to side with such: Thus *Cyprian* hath it in his Epistles to the Church of *Spain*, *Epist.* 68. So that schism was stopped, and the Churches continued to acknowledge the lawfully ordained Bishops that succeeded these. And the readmission of such, had neither been in it self lawfull, nor yet had compassed the end of obtaining peace in these Churches where the people was stumbled by their carriages. A second way was, When the men were orthodox and profitable, though failing in some grosse particular, yet when they were owned

The justness of the Sentence to be cleared.

Or, the Sentence recalled, when the person might be profitable

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owned by others in the Church, Synods did not stand, for concord, to remove such Sentences, as was formerly instanced in the case of *Osius*: *Augustine* also in a certain Epistle, 164. doth approve the not-censuring of one *Optatus*, lest thereby a schism should be occasioned, because of manies adhering to him. We will find also a third way, That when men have been Sentenced, and some have continued to owne them, and others to oppose them, such have been brought to submit themselves, and so the division hath been removed; It was so in that hot contest that continued long between the Bishops of *Rome*, and the Church of *Africk*, in the case of *Apiratus* Bishop of *Sica*, &c. who being deposed by the Synod of *Carthage*, was pressed to be admitted by the Bishops of *Rome*, whom by no means these of *Africk* would admit; at last, these that were Sentenced, came to acknowledge the Sentence; whereby the division was stopped.

Mutuall upbraidings for failings.

A *fourth* sort of contests or divisions for matters of fact, is, When both sides have had their failings in a time of darkness and tentation, some one way, and some another, and after some breathing they fall, by mutual upbraidings, to hazard the Churches peace; one casting up this fault to him, and he again upbraiding him with another. The way taken to prevent this, is most satisfying, when both, acknowledging their own guilt to other, did forgive one another, and joyn cordially for the good of the work. In the debates with the *Donatists* there is much mention made, not without great commendation of the practice of a *Synod*, which is called *Concilium Cirtense*, wherein the members did mutually confesse their faults, and (saith he, to wit, *Augustine*, in the conference formerly cited) *sibi invicem ignoscebant ne schisma fieret.* And by the scope of the *Catholicks* in urging that example, and by the vehemency used by the *Donatists* in denying the same, it would seem, that

Removed by a mutuall forgiving.

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that they looked upon this as a most excellent and satisfying way of removing differences amongst godly men, when every one acknowledgeth their own fault, and doth not upbraid but forgive one another, endeavouring to have the remembrance of bypast miscarriages rather forgiven and buried in oblivion, than mentioned. Because good men being but men, usually there are failings on both sides, and the denying of it, provoketh others to insist the more thereon, as the acknowledging thereof doth stop the upbraiding of them with the same; and usually it is to be seen, that the best men had rather mention their own faults in their acknowledgements, than hear the same done by any other. *Beza, Epist.* 23. also hath such an advice as this to a Church that had fallen into division, *Utinam utraque pars acquiescere malit, quam si curiose nimium & φιλονεικῶς quis sit in majori culpa, inquiratur.*

CHAP. XIII.

What to do toward uniting in divisions arising from diversity of circumstances in external administrations, and especially arising from Church-government.

Diversity of circumstances in externall administrations.

A *Third* matter that occasioneth divisions, is, a diversity in Worship, Ceremonies, or things that relate to externall administration of Ordinances, when some follow one way in Preaching, administrating of Sacraments, Catechising, &c. and others another. This ordinarily breedeth janglings, and oftentimes troubled the Church, as we see in the business about *Easter* and Ceremonies. It is not our purpose to insist in this, because ordinarily such debates pretend some lawfulnesse, or unlawfulnesse in the thing contended for, and are to be counted amongst

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amongst the jangling debates that the men of God are to eschew. And also, because these things are often fully and clearly discussed, We shall only say concerning them. 1. That, as there is a necessity of suffering some difference in Doctrine, So is there also a necessity to bear with some differences in circumstances in the externall manner of Worship, &c. and men would not soon offend at every difference, nor be displeased if it proceed not from affectation of singularity, unfaithfulnesse, or some other corrupt rise. And we will find great condescendency in the greatest men, both of old and late, in things that are not sinfull in themselves, for keeping of union in the Church: And thus far, the Apostles practice of becoming all things to all, will warrand. *Zanchius* in an Epistle to this purpose, giveth both many examples of, and reasons for this. 2. We say, that men especially in a time of divisions, would by all means endeavour to keep the trodden and approven way that hath been used, and is in use in a Church in such administrations; because the lesse men be sticking in the manner of these things, and the more simplicity they use, and the lesse they differ from what is most ordinary and approven, the lesse will the hazard of division be in these things, which doth arise from the multiplying of them; the changing of the old, or bringing in of a new manner, the condemning of the way and manner used by others, as having some great absurdity in it, and the pressing of their way, even in circumstances, upon others; These and such things are to be eschewed: and so indeed there is no way to peace in these things but to forbear; for it is more easie to forbear some new thing, than to make others alter what is old, except there be some reason in the matter to move to this.

Condescendency therein.

Better to forbear some new thing, than to alter the old, without some considerable reason.

The great, and usually the most bitter contentions of a Church, as was said before, are in things that belong to *Government*; which are of many

Divisions about Church-government.

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kinds, and have their own proportionable cures when blessed of God, We shall instance in these *five* kinds of contests in this matter. The *first*, is concerning the form of Government. The *second*, is concerning the formality of Church-judicatories. The *third*, concerning the matter enacted or decreed by them. The *fourth*, concerning particular miscarriages and abuses of power in Government. And the *fifth*, concerning the persons who ought to govern, or to whom the Government is due, and whose determinations are ultimatly to be obeyed.

Concerning the form of Government.

For the *first*, Debates about the nature and form of Government, may be considered doctrinally, and so it is a difference of judgement; Some think one form of Government lawfull, and others not that, but another. If this difference be fairly carried, it needeth make no division in the Church, as was in the foregoing part hinted. 2. It may be considered practically, that is, when men not only think so differently in their judgement, but accordingly they act, driving opposit designs, as if they were two parties, seeking to get one Church subdued to them, and neither of them doth acknowledge the other. This cannot be without division; for, the ground of all union and communion in the visible Church in all the Ordinances of Christ, is, the *unity* of the visible Church; as even in old time *Augustine* did presse: So Ecclesiastick union, must be made up and entertained in a Church, by an unity in the Government thereof; for though there may be a forbearance and a kind of peace where the unity of the visible Church is denied, or where there are divided Governments that are not subaltern; yet there can be no Church-union, nor communion in Ordinances, of Word, Sacraments and Government, which results from the former, and doth necessarily presuppose the same. We dare not, nor cannot offer any directions for making up an union here, save that men would unite in *one* form

Practicall difference herein maketh division.

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form of Government that can extend to the whole body, and that in such a Government as is allowed by Christ, otherwayes it can be no union; because so it were not a duty, as union is.

If it were asked, What kind of Government that may be most probably, wherein men ought to unite? *Answ.* We mind not to digresse to a doctrinall debate; yet these characters may be given of it. 1. It must be a Government that can extend unto, and reach all the body; for, one main end of Government is union, *Eph.* 4. 3, 10, 11, *&c.* and the removing of offences which make divisions, *Matth.* 18. And this union is not to be in this or that particular part of the body, but in the whole, 1 *Cor.* 12. that there be no schism in the body: therefore it must extend to all, or be in a capacity to do so. 2. It would be in a proportionable fitnesse to remove these causes that breed divisions, (for, there cannot be union in a Government that is not fitted for that) and therefore must be able to purge corrupt teachers, and the leaven of corrupt doctrine out of the whole Church, or any part thereof. Hence, both in the Scripture, and primitive times, and all alongs, there hath been still a joynt authoritative concurrence for removing these causes of this evil in whatsoever place they did appear. 3. It must be such a Government as hath an unity amongst the whole Governours for this end, and so it must answer to the unity of the body: Hence, in the *Epistle* to the *Galatians*, *Paul* commendeth the remeeding of that evill to them all in a joynt manner, as being one lump, without respect to their subdivision in particular Churches; and if this Authority did not imply unity amongst the Governours wherever they lived, and a capacity to act unitedly upon occasion, there could be no accesse authoritatively to remove such evils from the Church, nor such weight in the mean applied. 4. It must be a Government wherein there is a coordinatenesse amongst

Characters of Government fit for uniting.

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the Governours; because so not only the union of the Church is made up, but her communion is represented; and to place the Government in one, as Papists do in the Pope, doth not make an union in the Government, which implieth a mutuall and kindly co-ordinatnesse and associating one with another; but whatever they pretend of union in it, it is really but tyrannie, and such as the most arbitrary ruler may have, when by violence he seemeth to keep down all divisions under him, neither so can that body be said to be united in him. And we see in the primitive times, even after *Bishops* and *Patriarchs* were brought in into the Church, that still the supream Government, whereby union was entertained, did reside in a mutual co-ordination, and combination, even of such *Bishops, Metrapolitans, Patriarchs, &c.* acting in an united and joynt way: whereby manifestly it appeareth, that such a Government as is to be united into, must be extensive unto the body, at least be in capacity so to be extended, and it must be in a co-ordination and consociation of many Church officers together; and that such subordinations as mar this coordination and equality, must be swallowed up, ere there can be an united Government for the preservation of the union of the Church, because the supream Government and decision must be in many; and many of different degrees and places, cannot be so *one* as these who are of the same order, to speak so.

Yet we think, that where such an union cannot be had in Government, men that have liberty, without entanglement to their own consciences, to follow their duty, ought to do it with all tender respect to the edification and union of the Church wherein they live, and to make the best of their particular case that may be for that end. But seing the wisdom and goodnesse of God hath made it our lote in this Land, to live under a Government, to which the abovementioned characters do well agree; it is hopefull, if as we

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we ought we conscionably adhere to the principles thereof, we may, yea, shall unite in the Lord.

Secondly, Supposing, that men agree in that same supream government, to wit, *Councils and Synods*, there may be some debate concerning the *formal constitution* thereof, what is to be accounted a rightly constitute Synod, and such as ought to be acknowledged so? It cannot be denied, but that there is a right and a wrong in this, and that there are rules to be keeped, and that also *de facto* they may be broken, even where there is no failing in the mater. It is true also, that we will sometimes find worthie men quarrelling the constitution of Synods, and declining them, as was formerly hinted, refusing to appear before them, till some persons were removed from them, as *Chrysostom* and fourty two Bishops with him, did in reference to that particular Synod at *Chalcedon*: and sometimes their Acts were declared void, because the meetings were not numerous, as *Balsamon* doth instance in the case of one *Johannes Amathuntus*, whose deposition was declared null, because all the Bishops of *Cyprus* were not conveened to his tryall, which might have been; and because, in strict reckoning, there was one fewer at his deposition than was allowed by the Canons. Yet concerning this we say, 1. That it will be found very difficult to pitch on such defects in the constitution of a Synod, as will make the same null without respect to the matter thereof, seing there may be many defects that will not infer this. 2. It will be hard to gather from *Church-history*, or *Writings of the Ancients*, or *Canons of Councils*, what hath been a peremptory rule to them to walk by in such a case. Their practices in this are so various, that it appeareth, the matter hath ever been more headed by them, than the formality of the constitution. And therefore, 3. We will find their practice to be according to this; When the matter was sound and profitable, it was accepted, and the Synod was reverenced, although it hath had lesse

Debates about the constitution of Synods.

Defects in constitution cannot easily annull without defect in the matter.

In ancient Councel, soundnesse of matter more regarded than formality or number.

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lesse formality, and hath been of a fewer number; So the *Council of Sardica, Laodicea*, and some particular Provincial Synods, have ever been of great authority because of their matter, when more numerous Synods, with moe formalities, have never been so accounted of, nor reckoned amongst the *General Councils*, although their number hath been far greater than many of these other. 4. When they come to determine any thing after the close of corrupt Synods, they do not usually sift the constitution thereof, but examine and condemn the matter thereof, and do repeal their Sentences, and account them null from the beginning; not because of questioning their Authority that did it, but because of their doing the same unjustly, as in the cases of *Athanasius, Eustachius, Chrysostom*, and *Ignatius*, that followed him in the same *See*: All whose depositions were accounted null, because of the unjust violence that was used in them. 5. We say then, that hardly it will be observed, that this consideration of a particular Synods constitution, hath been the rise or ground of division amongst godly and orthodox men agreeing in the same Truth, Form of Government, and Rules for constituting of Assemblies or Synods. But we will ever find where Declinators or Protestations are mentioned, 1. That the party declined hath been palpably corrupt in fundamental doctrines. Or, 2. palpably driving on that general design, and violence against particular persons, as subserving the same. And, 3. it hath been also, after many evidences of such corruptions and violences, as in the former instances that are given of Declinators is clear; where we find, that Synods have been acknowledged, and yet upon the discovery of their corrupt designs and violence, have been declined and protested against as null, as that *second Council at Ephesus* was. Whereby it appeareth, that if their proceedings had been acceptable, their constitution and authority had not been called in question.

If

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If it be asked upon supposition, That a difference concerning the constitution of a particular Synod, and a division upon that account fall to be amongst godly and orthodox Divines, agreeing in the same Truths, form of Government, general Rules, for constituting of Synods, &c. What should be done for union in such a case?

What should be done for union, when division ariseth about the constitution of a Synod.

Answ. It would seem there should be no great need to give directions here, the difference being so narrow; certainly many of the *Ancients*, and also of our *Reformers*, and *eminent Divines*, who have groaned and do groan under many sad pressures, corruptions, and divisions in the Church, would have thought, and think it a great mercy to have had, and to have the difference brought to such a point, and betwixt such parties; Yet, seing it is too too possible to be stood upon, we do conceive it is no such thing as may make union, amongst parties so differing, impossible. We say therefore,

Little usefulness as to the Churches edification in the thing controverted.

1. That such would consider the little usefulness and weightiness, as to the main of edification that is in the thing controverted whatever way it be decided: For, 1. the declaring of such a Synod valid, or null, as to its constitution, doth not corrupt any point of Truth, nor bring-in any new Form of Government, nor alter any Rule concerning the Form agreed in; because the question is not in *thesi*, what is the form and rule according to which a Synod ought to be constituted? that is agreed upon: But the question is, Whether such a particular Synod be agreeable to such a Rule? and respect to the Rule makes the one that they cannot approve it, and the other that they cannot condemn it: And is it of great concernment to the main of the Churches edification to say it is so, or not, considering it abstractly, or supposing it should never be determined at all? 2. We say, That it is not of much concernment, even to Government, to say that such a particular Synod is right or wrong

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constituted: for, though a Church cannot want Government, and that cannot be casten; yet a Church cannot lose much by questioning the constitution of one Synod, suppose rightly constituted, abstracting it from the consideration of its matter contained therein; and if its matter be warrantable, it hath weight in it self without such consideration of a constitution, if it be not warrantable, such a consideration of a lawfully constituted Synod cannot make it warrantable. Again, upon the other side, The counting of a particular Synod to be rightly constituted when it is not, cannot be of great hurt to the Church where the Rule is acknowledged. For, 1. It doth not alter the nature of the matter; Nor, 2. doth it alter the manner of constituting Assemblies, because one particular failing in misapplying the Rule cannot incapacitate a Church for all time to come to keep the same, especially if it be guarded that no precedent be drawn from that pattern, to bind any new sense upon the rule. 3. We say, that it would seem if any debate be such as decision may be forborn therein, this may be accounted of that nature, to' wit, Whether such a particular Synod be rightly constituted, or not? because, if more corruption and inconvenience, that may be feared, follow, there are more material things to debate, and to differ upon; if more follow not, but that there may be accesse to an united Government whereby these suspicions may be put out of question, then it seemeth unsafe to mar that, and the fruit which may follow by the disputing of what is past.

This difference is either in judgement, and may be forborn.

But more nearly to take notice of such a difference, we may consider it two wayes. 1. As it implieth a difference in judgement. 2. As it inferreth a different practice. *First*, then, As it inferreth the *difference of judgement*, there ought certainly to be a forbearance, seing such things are often involved with many difficulties and contradictions in matter of fact, that

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that it is not possible, by debating fully, to convince either party to assent to the other, especially where heat and prejudice hath someway fixed and preoccupied the judgement; and certainly, forbearance here cannot be inconsistent with the duty of Ministers, although there were not such a motive to perswade it. By forbearance we understand, 1. That none peremptorily presse the other either to acknowledge the validity or nullity of such a constitution. 2. There would be a forbearance of publick debating of it, or of any thing that may occasion the same, as pressing of the Acts thereof, if no other ground support the same, but the Authority of such a Synod. And we conceive in the by, this occasion may be prevented by a mutual condescending, or joynt authoritative enacting, that such and such things, as possibly may be usefull afterward, be of force to all, if not by the former constitution, yet by the present appointment, and so both may agree in the matter. 3. A condemning of others for approving or disapproving the former constitution, would be forborn; and seing the question is so little and inconsiderable in it self, it would not be odiously aggreaged or insisted upon.

Secondly, Considering it as it relateth to *practice*, something is to be forborn, and something is to be done. 1. For forbearance, What might involve either party in the matter of fact contrary to their judgment, would be abstained; and this forbearance in practice would be as broad as forbearance in judgment, that, as *Cyprian* saith, (in another case) differing brethren may both have their judgment and practice in such things at their own free arbitrements, as to such restraints. Neither can this forbearance mar the peace of any, because if such things be indifferent, and although lawfull, yet not necessary, the preserving of the Churches peace, and the preventing of what offence would follow, is ground enough to abstain from such things, out of respect to the consciences of others,

Or it relates to practice, and so something is to be tolerate and something done.

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others. If the thing be neceſſary, then indeed it is not to be forborn, neither is that pleaded-for here; yet the doing of it upon the account of ſuch an authority, is not neceſſary; but the matter of the thing or ſome uncontroverted ground may be had for warranting the ſame. 2. That which is to be done, we conceive, is this, That there be endeavours to have ſome united, uncontroverted authority eſtabliſhed, by whoſe authority things neceſſary may be done, without infringing the authority of what was paſt in reſpect of thoſe who acknowledge the ſame, and alſo without leaving the weight of the authority upon the former to thoſe who queſtion the ſame: And we conceive this being done, neither is there any conſcience ſtraitened, nor any thing neceſſary for the Churches good omitted; yea, by this means there is acceſs unitedly to ſeek the Churches edification, without any prejudice by the former contention; becauſe by laying this new foundation poſteriour to the former, the Church is put beyond that ſtumbling-block, and carried over, or by the ſame; And therefore there is no reaſon to fear falling upon ſuch a difficulty, but rather with the greater ſpeed to make progreſſe when men may win by it and leave it behind them. This was the way that the *Ancients* took in the primitive times, even when Synods in this reſpect might have been ſaid to have been corrupted, when God gave opportunity they ſet themſelves to rectifie the matter, and to do upon it what was fit for the good of the Church, without mentioning the nullity of the form thereof, or inſiſting thereupon. And indeed, the doing otherwayes ſeems to lay too much weight upon the authority or conſtitution of a Church-judicatory, as if when the ſame is every way regular, it could adde ſomething, or ought to have weight, where the matter is not in it ſelf approvable; which hath been eſchewed by Orthodox Divines both of old and late, who ever there-

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therefore looked most unto the matter determined or decided.

If it be asked, What usually was done in such cases where the Authority seemed to be declined? From what is said, the Answer may be gathered, to wit, That both sides satisfied themselves with the rectifying of the matter wherein there was any grievance. And therefore, 1. it will hardly be found, when such a Declinatour was expressed in one Synod that any mention is made thereof in the next ensuing Synod that did rectifie the matter, but instantly they fall upon that. 2. We will find, that where no expresse Declinatour was, yet did not that any way strengthen such an Authority, nor mar the condemning thereof more than in other Synods where it was, and therefore neither is so much weight to be laid upon it, whether it be or not; for, its standing doth not weaken Authority where it is, and its removing or not being at all, doth not adde Authority where it is not, because Authority must stand and fall according to its own intrinsick grounds and warrant. And we conceive that it is not suitable to the Authority of Christ's Ordinances, and the nature of His Courts, that either the removing or standing of such a legall formality, should be rigidly pressed, and it maketh proceedings in Christ's Courts to be involved in too many subtilties that are used in humane Laws. And also supposing, that a corrupt constitution may be without such a formal Protestation, it seems to give too much advantage thereto, as if there were lesse accesse afterward to condemn the same; And upon the other side, supposing that a lawfully constituted Synod should be declined, as the *Synod of Dort* was lately by the *Arminian Remonstrants*, the pressing too vehemently of the removing thereof, doth suppose some way the constitution to be lesse valid if such a thing should stand. This is only to be understood in the case presupposed, to wit, Where the question is

What usually hath been done when Authority was declined.

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Great difference between the declining of Synodicall Authority simply, and the constitutions of a particular Synod.

not about the authority of Synods simply, but of this or that constitution of a particular Synod: the first indeed, that is, the questioning of Synodical Authority, hath been thought intolerable in all times, because it strake at the root of Church-government and Order, without which the Church cannot subsist; But the second, which acknowledgeth the same Government in general, and Rules of Constitution, and professeth respect to that same Authority, is indeed not so intolerable, because it doth suppone still the Church to have power, and the exercise thereof to be necessary. Hence we will find, that in the primitive times they did utterly condemn appellations from Synods simply, that is, the betaking them to another Judge, as more proper than, or superiour unto, such Synods; and there are severall Canons in the Councils of *Africk* that threaten Excommunication to such as decline their Authority and appeal to *Rome*, or any forreign power as a superiour Judge; Yet we will find, that the Councils do allow Appeals from a lesser number to a greater, or from particular Councils to a general. Yea, from their own particular Synods to a more general hearing of others in the Province; yea, they allow even adjacent Provinces to be appealed to in case corruptions should be in one particular Province: This was enacted in the *Council of Sardica*, and Bishops are requested by severall Canons not to think this derogatory from their authority, because this did consist well with respect to Church-authority and Government in it self, but tended only to prevent or remedy exorbitances and abuse therein; which of it self, if it be not abused, is not ill.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XIV.

What is to be done in order to union about divisions concerning doctrinall determinations.

THe Question may be concerning the *matter enacted* by some Synod, even when there is no exception against the constitution thereof, that is, when the matter approven by it, is unsound, or when a truth is condemned, at least it is judged to be so. We are not here speaking of such matter as is fundamentall, but such as is consistent with soundnesse of judgement in the main, and piety in these who may be upon either side. Such as were these debates concerning the rebaptizing of Hereticks, and Schismaticks; or for the admitting them unto the Church by confirmation only, and questions of that nature, which may fall to be amongst orthodox men. I suppose it were good, that judicial decisions of such things, were not multiplied; yet upon supposition that they are past, somewhat would be said. Such determinations are of two sorts.

Doctrinall, not fundamentall, or nigh the foundation.

First, Some are meerly doctrinall, and of this kind are such questions as are concerning the object of Predestination, order of Gods Decrees, and such like, and others, it may be, which are of lesser concernment than these. These being meerly doctrinal and inferring no diversity in practice, or Worship, there is the easier accesse to union notwithstanding of such, respect being had to the mutuall forbearance mentioned, so that none be constrained to acknowledge what is enacted by vertue of such a decision, because such a determination in matter of Doctrine is but ministeriall, and declarative: And therefore as one man may forbear another to speak his own mind in some things that differ from his, and, it may be, from truth also, and not instantly divide from him,

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or much contend with him; So ought he to bear with a Synod and not to divide from them upon that account, he having acceſſe ſo to declare his own mind and the reaſons thereof, and otherwayes to carry himſelf, as may keep him free of that apprehended guiltineſſe; and ſo a Synod ought to bear with ſome particular men that differ. But by adding the ſecond kind, there will be ground to ſpeak more.

Some doctrinal decisions infer division, others but diverſity.

The *ſecond* kind is of ſuch determinations as have not only a doctrinall deciſion, but alſo ſome practicall conſequents following thereupon: which we may again diſtinguiſh theſe wayes. 1. They are either ſuch conſequents and practices as infer a *diviſion* and oppoſition, or a *diverſity* only; ſome conſequents infer a diviſion or ſeparation, As ſuppoſe a Church-Synod ſhould enact, that no perſons ſhould keep communion with ſuch as they judge not to be godly, nor joyn in Ordinances, nor ſo much as ſit down with them; Or that no perſons, thinking otherwayes, might lawfully be ordained Miniſters, or admitted to that office, as ſometimes appeareth, hath been determined in very numerous Synods of the *Donatiſts*. Indeed the ſtanding of ſuch Sentences in force, and having execution accordingly following them, are ſuch, as there can be no union had upon ſuch tearms. Again, ſome practices imply no diviſion in Worſhip, or Government, but only ſomething which poſſibly is in it ſelf unwarrantable, as that Act of rebaptizing was, which was determined and enacted by ſeverall Councils in *Africk*: which kind of determination may be conſidered either as peremptory, and excluſive, that is, allowing none to do otherwayes, or to be admitted to Miniſtery and Ordinances which ſhould not engage to do ſo; Or moderated, ſo as though it held forth ſuch a determination concerning the fact, yet doth not peremptorily preſſe others beyond their own light. Of the firſt ſort were the peremptory Acts of the Weſt-church concerning *Eaſter*, holy

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holy dayes and other ceremonies; Of the last, were these Acts of the Council of *Africk* concerning the rebaptizing of Schismaticks wherein none were presled beyond thir own judgement.

Again, such consequents and practices that follow Church-determinations, may either be presently necessary to be practised and dayly practicall, as suppose a Church should make constitutions for administration of Baptism and the Lords Supper, by mixing in with the essentials thereof, such and such corrupt ceremonies and additions; Or, they may be such practices as are only supposable and possible; but it may be exceeding improbable-like, at least for the future, that there shall be occasion to put them in actuall exercise; though, it may be, there was some present exigent giving occasion to such a determination, which possibly may never recur; As suppose, a Church should determine, that a converted *Jew*, or *Turk*, should not be baptized in the manner that others are baptized, but some other way; it may be there was some *Jew* or *Turk* to be baptized when that determination passed; but that particular Act being by, there is no probability that ever there may be accesse to put the same in practice again, although it be not simply impossible. Now there is great odds betwixt these two; and in effect this last case, doth look liker a doctrinall determation when the occasion thereof is past, than any way to be practicall.

Some determinations are of things dayly practicable, others only for an exigence, scarcely ever again occurring.

Further, we may distinguish these also in such practices, that are positively enacted to be practised, by an authoritative Act, ordaining in such possible cases, that it be so done, that is, when such a case occurreth, men should be astricted to follow the same, and Ministers should accordingly act; Or they are such cases, as do not ordain any practice to be done, but do declare such a thing to be lawfull; As suppose they should declare, a Minister might lawfully baptize a *Jew* so as is formerly said, without any peremptory

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tory ordaining of the same, which is still, rather a doctrinall decision than a positive ordinance.

Some determinations are for Ministers practice, others are answers to the questions of Rulers.

We may yet *add* one distinction more, which is this, determination is either to declare such a thing lawful to Church-men in some Ecclesiastick matter, as suppose (as was sometimes in the primitive persecutions) upon some *Querie* from some Ministers, it should be enacted, that in such and such cases Ministers might flie, sell the Church-goods, or use such and such shifts and means for their escape and deliverance, as others, it may be, would think unlawfull. Or it is, when the practising of the supposed case belongs to Magistrates, or men in civil stations; as suppose, upon some Queries from Magistrates or others, enquiring if it were lawfull to admit *Jews* to dwell in such and such places meerly for civil traffick; or if they might eat and drink with an Ambassador of the *Cham* of *Tartaria*; or help *Chinas* against the *Tartars*; or such cases, which possibly, beside the occasion of the Querie, might never occur: now supposing the case to be decided affirmatively by a Church-judicatory, and a rent to have followed thereupon, and to continue after the case is not probably practicall, because of the former decision, and so in the rest of the former suppositions, it is to be enquired, If? and, How union may be win at in them respectively?

Now these distinctions being premitted, we come to consider accordingly, How union may be made up, where division standeth upon such accounts?

In reference to all which, in the general, we say, That peremptorinesse and self-willednesse being excluded (which are expressly prohibited to be in a Minister) it is not impossible to attain union amongst faithfull, sober, and orthodox men, who will acknowledge that mutuall condescending and forbearance is necessary; which by going through the particular steps will appear: wherein we may relate to the former generall grounds laid down, and be the shorter

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shorter in instances and reasons, because this draweth out in length beyond our purpose; and also, because *Verbum sapienti satis est*: and these especially that are concerned in this, need not by us either to be instructed, or perswaded to their duty, many of whom the Lord hath eminently made use of to teach, convince, and perswade others. We shall only, as in all the rest, offer some things to their view, which may occasion the remembering of what they know, and the awakening of the zeal and affection that they have, to act accordingly.

There doctrinal decisions in smaller points ought to make no division.

To come then to the *first* sort of determinations, which are doctrinall; it may appear from what is said, that there can be no just ground of division upon that account; for, in such things a Church may forbear particular persons: and again, particular persons may forbear a Church. It is not to be thought, that all orthodox Divines are of the same mind in all things that are decreed in the *Synod of Dort*, particularly in reference to the object of predestination; yet the Synod hath not made any division by Censuring of such, neither these who differ from that determination have broken off communion with the Church, but have keeped communion: and union in the Church hath not been thereby interrupted; yet these who apprehend themselves to be right, cannot but think the other is in an errour: and if this forbearance be not allowed, there can never be union in the Church, except we should think that they behoved all to be in the same mind about such things, and that there should never be a decision in a Church, but when there is absolute harmony; for, supposing the plurality to decide right, yet these, whose judgement were condemned, were obliged according to their light to divide, seing they are in their own judgments right. It is true, I suppose that it is not simply unlawful, or hurtful to truch for a Church-judicatory, out of respect to peace in the Church, to condescend abstractly to wave a ministe-

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riall decision without wronging of the matter; As suppose these in *Africk*, for peace had waved their judiciall decision of the necessity of *rebaptizing* in such a case; or these who determined the contrary, might have waved theirs, yet neither of them had hurt their own opinion. Or suppose, that in the decisions that were concerning *Easter*, upon both sides of the controversie, either had past from their decisions, and left the matter in practice to mens arbitrement without any decision, I suppose this had not been a wrong to truth (supposing it to have been on either side) And indeed considering what is written in the History, some thing like this may be gathered. For, first, It is clear, that there were determinations on both sides, and particularly, That the *West Church*, and these that joyned with them, did determine the Lords Day necessarily to be keeped for distinguishing them from the *Jews*. 2. It is also clear, That *Policrates*, with many Bishops in *Asia*, did judicially condemn that deed, appointing the fourteenth day of the month to be keeped, So that necessarily both decisions could not stand. And, 3. this is clear also, That the way that was taken to settle that difference so stated, was, That judiciall decisions should be waved, and men left to their own arbitrement to observe what day they thought good, whether in the *East* or *West* Church, whereupon followed an union; and *Policarpus* did communicate with *Aniscetus* at *Rome* upon these tearms, *Ut neuter eorum sententiam suam urgeret aut defenderet* (as the *Centuriators* have it out of *Ireneus*) that is, that neither of them should urge or defend their own opinion: and upon this there followed peace notwithstanding of that difference. It brake up again more strongly in the time of *Victor*, and although *Ireneus* was of his judgment, yet did he vehemently presse him not to trouble the Church by pursuing such a determination, and did exceeding weightily expostulat with him for it; He wrote also to the other party, that both of them might forbear the

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the pressing of such decisions, and that the thing might be left to mens arbitrement, without prejudice to the Churches union, as formerly it had been used: this is clear from Church-history, and that word of *Sozomen, lib. 7. cap. 19.* is weighty, *Frivolum enim, & quidem merito, judicarunt, consuetudinis gratia, à se mutuo segregari eos qui in præcipuis religionis capitibus consentirent*, that is, They judged it, and upon good ground, most frivolous for men to be separated or divided one from another, because of a custome, who did agree together in the main points of Religion. And though this matter be of it self no controversie decided in the Word, (at least as it was stated) yet considering their thoughts of it, and the grounds which they alleage for it, it was not so to them: and that peremptorines of *Victors*, who afterward would not be reclaimed from that second determination, is condemned by all, as being the ground of that following schism. And indeed in such cases, where two parts of a Church are divided, having independent authorities as to one another, and there being contrary determinations in the same question, it seemeth convenient and necessary for peace, that either both should wave their decisions, or that both should permit the decisions of each other to stand and be in force, to such only as should acquiesce therein, and willingly acknowledge the same.

How the smaller number should yeeld to the greater.

Again, where there is nothing like a party or equality, but the division is in the same one Church betwixt a greater and smaller number, and the greater will not be induced to remove their determination; It is no way sinfull to the lesser to joyn with them notwithstanding thereof, they having their own freedom and liberty cautioned, as was formerly said; Yea, this seemeth not unexpedient that they should do for the good of the Church. 1. Because it is not so readily to be expected, that men who have such an advantage will cede to these who have it not. 2. It may have inconveniencies, if a smaller dissenting number should

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necessitat a Church to wave former determined truths though possibly not fundamental, because of their dissatisfaction therewith, who esteem them not to be truths, and strengthen others in a schism, as if they could not keep union and communion with a Church where any thing contrary their mind were determined. Also, 3. it seemeth most agreeable to reason, that in sinlesse cedings, the lesser number should cede to the greater. And, 4. because by so doing, this accidental confirmation of an opinion, by having the plurality of a Church or Synod for it, is left open to the other side, when they may be the plurality. Hence we see generally, that the minor part cedeth to the greater (if the not pressing of the removal of such a decision be a ceding) yea, even when the plurality were wrong, as in that case of *Africk*, these who differed, did not presse the rescinding of that determination, having their own liberty: Nor did these that had the plurality then for them, impose any bond to keep the other from rescinding their determinations, if they should come to be in such a capacity, but both keeped peace for the time; and afterwards, in the dayes of *Augustine*, we will find *Councels* of the Church of *Africk*, determining the just contrary concerning that case of *Baptizing*, and yet still entertaining peace and communion amongst themselves, although the authoritative decision stood alwayes upon the side of the plurality.

CHAP. XV.

What shall be done in order to union about such decisions, as have practical consequents following thereon.

TO come to the *second* case, to wit, anent such decisions as have some practicall consequents following thereupon; For the more short answering, we shall lay down these *Assertions.*

Assert.

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Assert. 1. In such practices as are opposit, and infer division in the cases mentioned, there can be no union or communion expected, as we see in all the cases where such have been practised, as of the *Novatians*, *Donatists*, and such like; there may be more or lesse heat and bitternesse betwixt men that differ so: but there cannot be union, because, such determinations and practices do draw a line, and build a wall of separation betwixt the one and the other, and so makes one side to be accounted as not of the same body.

Contrary practices build a wall of separation.

Assert. 2. Where the consequents only infer some difference, or are not peremptorily pressed, they do not infer necessarily a division, as we see in the cases of *Africk*, and others mentioned; and *Sozomen* in the chapter cited, giveth many instances of diversities of this kind in Churches, without any breach of communion, and saith it is necessary, because, *Neque easdem traditiones per omnia similes, in omnibus Ecclesiis, quamvis in omnibus consentiant, reperire possis*, that is, *Ye will hardly find the same traditions alike in all things in all the Churches, even though they agree in all things that are material.* And, upon the matter, such determinations are but indeed as if they were doctrinall to such as acknowledge them not, and men are accordingly to walk in them.

Diversity there may be without division.

Assert. 3. In such practices as are daily practicable, in respect of the occasions thereof, union is more difficult (though not impossible) than in such cases, where the occasion of practice is not probable, because there being no present occasion to practise the same, it looketh most unwise like, to bring in, or keep in, a more certain and greater evil in the Church, for eschewing of what folks may never be put to; and suppose the case to be past, that may probably never recurre, it is more for the Churches good by abstaining the approbation of such an act, and by not being involved in the apprehended guilt thereof, to make up again the communion of the Church, for the preventing

Great folly to make, or keep division for what is rarely or never practicable.

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ting of a greater hurt, because that continueth to be a duty, and is necessary to edification; and the thing being past, ought not to be the occasion of a present and following division, as was formerly said.

If it be said, How can there be union in such a case upon the principle supposed, till (as may be said by one side) those who have decided and acted corruptly should repent, and (as may be said by the other) till those who have divided unjustly from the Church, and wronged the authority thereof, should acknowledge their offence, without which there cannot be union? For answer to which we say, 1. What if neither party shall ever be brought to repent or acknowledge an offence? shall the Church in such a case never attain to union? Repentance implyeth a conviction, and this implyeth information and clearness in the judgment that such a thing is wrong. Now, it being often seen that it is impossible to get men of one judgment concerning such a thing, Must therefore union be impossible till men be of one judgment? This hath been formerly disproved. 2. What if this had been the mind of the Churches and Servants of God from the beginning of the world? there had never been publick-ecclesiastick, nor privat-christian peace; for they were never all of one judgment: and to assert or write what is supposed to be an errour, is proportionably a sin and an offence, as to determine it judicially; and it would infer the necessity of repentance, even in such cases, for the attaining of peace and making up of differences; And shall we thus at once condemn the generation of Gods People, who have, without proposing, or, at least, pressing of such a thing, entertained peace and union amongst themselves? 3. This would enervate all the former grounds that plead for union with forbearance, and such like, which, I suppose, will not be warrantably done. 4. This way is indeed either to make union the more impossible, or if union be attained in any measure, both

Union is not impossible notwithstanding diversity of judgment.

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both the lesse hearty amongst themselves, and the lesse profitable unto others, as hath been formely cleared. 5. We are not to respect in this, mens particular carriage or desert (which possibly would not be thought of great concernment by others, not engaged in that debate) but the Churches good is to be looked to, and what it doth require, as we may gather from what hath been formerly said. And if Church-censures (such as the enjoyning of publick repentance, or acknowledgment of an offence, are) be to be abstained from, even in reference to open corrupt teachers sometimes for respect to the union of the Church, and for the preventing the stumbling of those that are weak, and prone to divide or miscarry (if such should be censured) as we see in *Paul*'s abstaining to censure the false teachers, *Gal.* 5. and 2 *Cor.* 10. (spoken to in the former part) much more are Censures of any sort to be abstained from upon that ground, in the case proposed, as it is considered in its matter and persons differing. Hence we may find what condescendence hath been formerly used in such cases, when union hath been closed, or proposed to be closed, (in matters possibly of greater moment than are supposed) *Sine detrimento honoris, aut charitatis*, that is, *Without prejudice to reputation, or charity*. 6. We therefore say in opposition to that objection, That union is to be studied, by endeavouring to joyn in what is for the good of the Church, and by burying the resentment of each others wrongs, rather than (as *Beza* saith in that forecited Epistle to *Grindal* concerning division) *There should be too curious, and, as it were, contention-affecting enquiry made, who is most in the wrong, and thereby a bringing the matter to that passe, that the whole body cannot be saved, but by cutting off of some members*: 7. We adde, If repentance be necessary, will any think that division is the way or mean to attain the same, which doth imbitter and confirm men in their opinion and opposition respectively, as formerly hath been said?

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It will be now no great difficulty to answer in the *last two cases*, to wit, When the decision is a simple declaration of the lawfulnesse of a thing, without any positive appointment that such a thing should be put in practice, &c. For, if upon the former grounds union may be attained, and division removed in the former cases, it may be much more in this; most of all, where the matter determined, concerneth such practices as actually are to be performed but in some extraordinary case by Civil Powers. Because in such cases men may more easily condescend to forbearance, than in matters of greater necessity and concernment; and there can be but little prejudice alleaged to follow unto the Church (to be put in the ballance with the Churches peace) either by condescending that such a determination should be waved, or stand with the qualifications foresaid; It's true that tenaciousnesse in the least particular, and peremptory refusing to condescend therein, will breed a rent and schism, and make union as impossible, as if it were the greatest matter that were the ground of distance; yet it would seem, that in the case presuppoted, (especially these last three being put together) that judicious, sober, and godly men should be very easily indueed to condescend to each other, with the qualifications foresaid, for the Churches peace.

For, 1. The matter, although it hath a right and wrong in it, yet it is among the least of the truths that may be accounted to relate to the foundation. 2. It's in a matter most improbably practicable, and which may possibly never occur. 3. It's a determination, or an exercise of Church-power that hath least influence upon Church-matters, seing it positively ordaineth nothing. 4. It's in a thing most extrinsick, which might have been put in practice, and usually is put in practice without the Churches intermedling therein, either *pro* or *contra*. It seemeth therefore unsuitable that such a determination in reference to such practices

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ces, should be greatly contended-for, when neither the standing of such a decision can procure, nor the removing thereof mar, the practices concerning which the decision is. 5. Supposing the qualifications foresaid, the standing of such a decision doth not strengthen the affirmative opinion, because it doth not infer any bond or obligation upon others who do not of their own accord acquiesce in the same; nor doth it give ground for alleaging such a decision to any but to such as of themselves are swayed with the matter thereof: And therefore seing it hath no force to bind moe than would be bound with the matter if it were not; nor can infer that it is the judicial decision and judgment of such a Church, more than this, to wit, That it is the judgment of the plurality for the time, yet so as it is not acknowledged by others, and who are not to be constrained to any alteration in their judgment, or in their practice, by that determination, more than if it had never been (which is a necessary qualification of the forbearance mentioned) and supposing the said decision to be waved, these particulars would be true. Again, upon the other side, The removing of that decision doth not strengthen the negative (for that cannot be intended by such a composure that either side should be strengthened) nor doth the standing thereof weaken the same; because, according to the qualifications foresaid, not only there can be no Censure following upon it, but even as to the Determination it self, though it be not formally removed, to be no decision simply, it is no decision to them, nor can be alleaged to them against their opinion, more than if it were not: And thus it becometh of equall extent with those who approve the matter, and so it doth bind only such as account themselves bound; and if men account themselves bound, the removing of such a decision, will not loose them; and if they account not themselves bound otherwayes, the standing thereof in such a case, will not bind them;

and

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and therefore, upon the matter, we suppose, it is hardly imaginable that there can be a lesser ground of division, (the qualifications necessary for union in the cases of greater concernment being granted in this) sure we are there was never division continued upon a lesser account, to whatsoever side we look; for, in effect, it is for the time to come as if that decision had never been, as to its efficacie and weight in producing any effect. And we are sure that the great Divines that have so eagerly pursued, and so much coveted union, would have thought themselves happy if they might have had it by condescending and yeelding either to the one side or the other. And though the moderate divine *Bucer*, was thought to thirst after peace in the Church so vehemently, that some zealous men said, that out of love thereto he was like almost *haurire fæces*, that is, *to drink down the dregs with it*; yet I am confident, that had the state of the controversie come so near, and in such matter, and amongst such men, as is formerly presupposed, he would not have been so charged by the most rigid, although for the peace of the Church he had drunken-over all the dreggs that might be in both the cups, the mentioned qualifications being observed; For, I suppose, that the removing or standing of such a decision in the former respects, will neither be found inconsistent with any Confession of Faith, even the most full that ever was in any Orthodox Church; nor with the Fundamentals of Religion that are laid down in any Catechisms or Writings of any sound Divines; nor with the Constitutions and Acts that have been thought necessary to be inrolled amongst the Acts of any Council or Synod; nor, for ought we know, will be found to have been the matter of debate, even in the most contentious times amongst Orthodox Divines: It would seem then, that if there be a latitude allowed without hazard for one to condescend to another for the good of the Church in any thing, it must be in the case presupposed.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XVI.

The remedies of divisions, arising from misapplication of power in ordination of Ministers, and admitting to, or debarring from, communion.

THe *fourth* matter of controversie in reference to Government, is usually some *misapplication* of that power, or what is apprehended to be so in some particular acts. As, 1. Ordaining such as were not thought to be worthy. 2. Deposing others (as was thought) unjustly. 3. Admitting unto, or debarring from communion without ground respectively, and such like cases. Upon the first ground arose the great schism of the *Donatists*, because of the Ordination of *Cæcilianus*, esteemed by them to be a *Traditor*. Of such sort also were the schisms frequently at *Antioch*, *Constantinople*, *Alexandria*, and other places, because some were ordained to the dissatisfaction of others. And sometimes the dissatisfaction was well grounded; because the persons ordained, were not worthy: Sometimes it was groundlesse; But often it tended to double Ordination, and Separation in the close. These things had need to be prevented, so as there be no just ground of dissatisfaction given by the Ordination of an unworthy man in such a time, nor any opposit Ordination to fix a schism; because these things are more difficultly removed, as hath been said: Yet supposing them to be, these generals may be proposed for healing of the same. 1. We will not find an Ordination easily counted to be null, even though done in a schism, as all the instances do clear; yea, the *Orthodox* stood not to account the Bishops and Presbyters ordained amongst the *Donatists*, to be such, because they had the essentials of Ordination, and were ordained by Church-officers. 2. We suppose it needfull for peace, that there be no rigid sticking to have some

The Ordination of a person worthy of the Ministery, ordained by Church-Officers, is not to be accounted null for some defects.

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some particular Ordinations rectified, to the prejudice of the Church in general, especially, where the unfitnesse or unworthinesse of the person is not easily demonstrable. 3. It seemeth right and just, that no Ordination of such a kind should establish one that is unworthy in the Ministery; for, that is not to be dispensed with; although it be not a valid ground to keep up a division, where the removall of such a person cannot be attained: and the most unquestionable Ordination for the form, cannot make one a worthy Minister, who otherwayes is not a worthy person. In the conferences with the *Donatists*, the *Catholicks* offered to quarrell the Ordination of none amongst them that otherwayes was worthy, nor to maintain any amongst themselves who were not worthy. 4. Yet union would not be suspended till this be done, but it is to be made up, that it may be done, as in the instance formerly given. Because, 1. this trial is the work of an united Kirk, and will require joynt strength and concurrence for the same. 2. Because union is a present duty, although there were defect in such a trial, and a defect in that, will not warrant a division. 3. It is not only a duty commanded, but it is a mids necessary for promoving the triall and censuring of unworthy Ministers, for times of division are ever times of liberty, and thereby Authority is weakened, men are discouraged to follow it, and are otherwayes diverted, &c. 4. Because division can never be looked upon as the mean to effectuate that tryall, but it strengthens the person who is to be tryed, and lesseneth the number of zealous pursuers of such a design, and incapacitates men for this duty, who otherwayes might be instrumental therein. 5. Beside, if the guilt be not so very palpable, as it may be demonstrated to be in persons, at such a time, it is safer to preserve certain peace in the Church, than to hunt for an uncertain crime, as hath been often said.

Union would not be suspended on such tryals.

Fiftbly, Where a persons being in a place, is the ground

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ground of contention, and things look not satisfying-like in his way, even though grosneſſe be not demonſtrable, we think it not unbecoming the authority of Church-judicatories, which is given for edification, to appoint the removal of ſuch a perſon from ſuch a place, (as was formerly hinted) for, it looketh ſad like, that a Miniſter's being in ſuch a particular place, ſhould be more obſtructive to edification and to the Churches peace, than if he were not a Miniſter at all. And it becometh well that fingleneſſe that a Miniſter ought to have in ſeeking the edification of the Church, to yeeld to ſuch an advice and appointment, or, of himſelf willingly to overture the ſame. For, Miniſters are not to plead intereſt in a Congregation ſimply, as a man doth his particular right; becauſe every thing of this kind ought to be done with reſpect to the edification of the body, the promoting whereof, ought to regulate both entries and removals. It's true, there would be warineſſe here, leſt dangerous precedents be given; yet conſidering, that a Miniſter who may ſomewhat peremptorily plead intereſt, and that *jure* in the Miniſtery, that yet cannot with that ſame ſtrength of reaſon plead it in ſuch and ſuch a particular Congregation; and conſidering, that it is a publick good that is reſpected, and not the ſatisfaction or diſſatisfaction of ſome in a particular Congregation, we conceive the former aſſertion cannot be ſimply denied.

Where contrair Ordinations are, it is more difficule; Yet it would be conſidered that all theſe things we ſpeak of now, are but particulars and therefore although full ſatisfaction ſhould not be obtained in them, yet ought they not to be ſtumbled upon to the prejudice of union in generall, in which the good of the Church is more eminently concerned, as hath been ſaid; Yet where peace is intended, we ſuppoſe this difficulty may be win over, one of theſe wayes, which have been formerly in uſe in ſuch caſes. As, 1. Some-

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times

times one person did willingly cede to another for the good of the Church; So did *Basilius* in a case formerly mentioned, for which his condescendency he is ever highly commended. Neither can this be thought to be a casting by of the care of such a people, but rather the contrary, it is more their good, that they should be united under one orthodox Minister, though the more weak man, than to continue a division with two that are more able. 2. Sometimes where two were, it was thought good to unite them in their meetings, and that the longest liver should alone be acknowledged, if no other occasion offered, and neither were unworthy of the place, as in a case at *Antioch* formerly mentioned. 3. Sometimes both have been laid aside, where neither have been worthy, or factions have been strong for either party, and so rooted prejudice of the adherers to the one side against the other. This overture is offered by *Augustine* to the *Donatists*, for composing that difference of opposit Ordinations, which was frequent amongst them, each city almost having two Bishops; And this way hath been followed in composing many schisms, even of late. 4. Sometimes the party offended and wronged by an opposit Ordination, hath keeped division down in some respect, by ceding, or withdrawing, or hiding their offence, till some probable or regular way hath occurred; rather choosing never to possesse such a place than to do it by wronging of the Church, in keeping up an irregular schism, when there was no accesse orderly to redresse it. Thus *Eusebius* being offended that *Lucifer* had ordained *Paulinus* a Bishop in *Antioch* to a party disclaiming him, who were called *Eustachians*, he moderated his carriage and withdrew, waiting to have had a lawful decision, and resolving to be submissive to that. Where men mind the good of the work, it is not like but some such way will compose these things; and if these fail, we will find also adjacent Bishops travelling to compose the same; Yea, sometimes men of authority coming from very

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very far; And also some by civil Authority appointed to treat therein, as in the closing of that schism at *Antioch*; for, schisms, arising from such discontents, are not ordinarily by meer Authority removed, because there is often something both of affection and conscience in the businesse: there is need therefore of mutuall friendly conferring for giving and receiving of satisfaction therein.

CHAP. XVII.

Remedies of divisions arising from the misapplication of power, in censuring, or sparing Ministers, reall or supposed.

ANother part of the exercise of this power (which often in its misapplication, or its being pretended to be so, is the ground of Church-divisions) is The matter of *censuring* and *deposing* of Ministers, and that two wayes.

The one is, When some good men are deposed, or such as are supposed to be so, whereby persons that apprehend the injustice of the fact, do disclaim such a power, and adhere to such a person notwithstanding. Thus did the schism at *Constantinople* arise for the unjust deposition of *Chrysostom*, and his adherents were called *Ihoannitæ*, as if they had been of another Religion; Such also was that of the *Eustachians* at *Antioch*; which being driven against honest men, and there being no condescending, at least what was once condescended unto, being again recalled, there was no stopping of such divisions, till in the manner formerly hinted, and that being after both their deaths. In such cases extremities are to be shunned, for, its extremity that maketh rents, that is, too little condescending on the one side, and too much tenaciousnes on the other.

In what cases extremities are to be shunned.

One extremity to be eschewed, is, When Church-judicatories are too tenacious of a past Sentence, or the

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the formality of some legall advantage which seemeth to justifie the Sentence, as in that case of *Chrysostoms*, almost all the weight was laid on this at first, That he refused to appear before them, or acknowledge their Authority as they were constituted: and although both the people and others did adhere to him, yet there was no condescending, which occasioned a great schism, and was exceedingly condemned by the generality of faithfull men in these dayes. Another extremity is, upon the other side, When for satisfaction of a Judicatory too little is ceded; or upon supposition, even of an unjust Sentence, a schism is stated, to the hurt of the Church. In this case we may observe these things, 1. That sometimes the Judicatory hath condescended to re-admit a person, otherwayes of esteem, although possibly some particular slip hath been, that in strict justice might have deserved the Sentence: this was in the case of *Osius* formerly cited. It is true, there is no mention of the cause wherefore the *Synod of Spain* did depose him, nor is it clear whether it be that famous *Osius*, whom the *Arians* deposed and whipped till he approved *Athanasius* his deposition; yet this is clear, that he being a man esteemed of in the Church, though possibly out of infirmity having fallen in that fault, he was for concord restored, *Sine detrimento honoris*, without prejudice to his credit. 2. Where men have been deposed upon the breach of some legality, or contempt, if otherwayes they have been men of gifts, and approven integrity in the main, though possibly thought proud and rigid by others, as in that case of *Chrysostom*; they were again received into the Church, and the Sentences with consent laid by, as appeareth in the readmitting of *Chrysostom* after his first deposition (of the justice of whose Sentence of deposition, because there was no convincing evidence to satisfie the people, *Severinus* in preaching did say, That his pride was reason sufficent) which for a time removed the division, and brought a chearfull calm-

Judicatories wisely remitting rigour.

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calmneſſe, till ſhortly after his old enemies interrupted it, and did enter a new proceſſe with him, becauſe he had re-entered his Biſhoprick being once depoſed by a Synod, and not having their authority; (which was grounded even upon the conſtitutions of *Arian Councils*) this being the ſecond time driven-on againſt the intreaties and obteſtations of many worthy Biſhops and good people who adhered to him, did again renew and fix that ſchiſm. 3. When the men were otherwayes corrupt, or diſcovered to be groſſe and prophane, although many other orthodox men did interpoſe for them, yet by all means it was reſiſted; becauſe they ſtill ſuppoſed ſuch worthy men that ſided with ſuch to be miſ-informed. And it's obſervable, that the moſt peaceable Synods who did moſt for union, as thoſe in *Africk*, and that of *Spain*, who had received *Oſius*, becauſe of the Churches of *France* their interpoſing, by that to prevent a ſchiſm, yet were they moſt peremptory, as it were, in this, and refuſed to receive *Barſilides* and *Martialis*, as that of *Carthage* did refuſe *Apiarius*, notwithſtanding that *Rome* interpoſed for them, giving this reaſon, That there was a neceſſity of having the Churches provided with faithfull and holy Miniſters. 4. Sometimes, and oftentimes men ſentenced, though poſſibly with too much rigidity, if not with injuſtice, have yet ſubmitted with reſpect to the Churches peace, either totally, and upon that ground have again been admitted; or partially, by abſtaining to act any thing contrary to ſuch a Sentence, but for reverence thereunto waiting for ſome legal redreſſe, as in hiſtory is frequent; and it is fit it ſhould be ſo in ſuch caſes where the hurt is particular, and proceedeth not from a common deſign of undoing all faithfull Miniſters; becauſe the making of a ſchiſm, doth more hurt than the contending for their particular Miniſtery doth edifie in ſuch a caſe; and therefore ſometimes though ſome men have been preſſed to undervalue an unjuſt

Corrupt, groſſe, and prophane men, for no interpoſition to be received.

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Sentence, and to continue to officiate notwithstanding; Yet out of respect to Church-authority and order, have refused till they should be admitted orderly unto the same. Indeed when the *Arians* drave on the deposition of their most eminent oppofers, it was otherwayes, because (as is marked in the *Councill of Sardica*) in bearing down of them, they endeavoured to bear down the truth which they maintained: But, where the controversie is not such, but the men orthodox and sound on both sides, though possibly there may be some particular faults or mistakes; in such a case, it is safer for either side to cede in part, or wholly, than to keep up a division: and we conceive, when one side cedeth not, if the other should cede wholly, it would be most to the advantage of their cause, and to the commendation and strengthening of their authority in the Churches of Christ.

Debates about conniving at guilty men

The *other* occasion of debate in such Church-matters, is upon the defect, that is, when some are really, or are thought to be, connivers at guiltie men, or at least defective in putting of them to triall: others again, may be thought too forward and precipitant in that, whereupon ariseth difference; and if one cede not to another, it becometh the occasion of division, as may be seen in instances formerly given: Concerning which, we say,

1. That men would remember, this is but one particular of many, that tend to the Churches good, (though indeed a main particular) and so ought not to be the rise of a division, nor of continuing thereof, to the marring of the Churches peace in other things, but men ought singly to do their duty, and therein to acquiesce, without partaking of the faults of others, whether it be by being defective, or by exceeding in that mater; and seing there may be no corrupt design in either who may be upon these extreames, it would not be so highly aggreaged on either side.

2. We say, that as often difference in this, may breed

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breed divisions; so again, divisions do occasion mens differing more in this: and it cannot be expected where division is, that men who are men and subject to be byassed, can be so single in receiving testimonies of the innocency of these that differ from them, or of the guiltinesse of these that agree with them, as if there were no division at all: And again, it is impossible, that where there is a difference in some other thing, that men can think others differing from them so single and unbyassed, as they suppose themselves to be, but are still ready to construct their differing from them in this to be occasioned from some former prejudice; for, as was said, division breedeth jealousie, suspicion, and distrust among men, and men are naturally inclined to suspect that others drive the design of strengthening themselves by the sentencing of such a person, whereby they are secretly induced, even unawares, to disappoint such a supposed unstreight end, which maketh them on both sides suspect every thing, dispute every thing, and readily reject every thing that cometh from the other.

Union rather to be followed that satisfaction herein may be had.

3. We say therefore, that union would not be suspended upon satisfaction in this, but rather union would be pressed, that satisfaction in this may be attained; because satisfaction in this cannot be expected till there be mutuall confidence of one anothers integrity: and till there be some walking together, and some further evidence of the sincerity of each other in the main businesse, this mutuall confidence cannot be expected: and again, this cannot be obtained without an union, and so consequently union would be laid as a foundation for attaining of satisfaction even in this.

4. It would be considered, that oftentimes such apprehensions of extremities, which are imputed to honest and zealous men, are most groundlesse; but there being something in them as men, it is conceived on the other hand, because of secretly entertained jealousie;

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to be much more. There was nothing more caſten up to the *Orthodox* by the *Novatians* and *Donatiſts*, than that they were defective in this, in admitting to, and retaining in the Miniſtery, men that were corrupt, Yet after many trials they were never able to prove what they alleaged upon ſome eminent perſons when it came to triall, even when ſuch things were generally accounted true amongſt them. This would be adverted, that every general rumour be not accounted a truth, eſpecially in the times of diviſion, for ſo few of the moſt eminent on both ſides ſhould be innocent. Again, on the other ſide, it occaſioned much heat againſt *Chryſoſtom*, that he had cenſured many of his Biſhops, and threatened many of his Clergie; this did exceedingly provoke envy againſt him, and made ſuch men to vent many calumnies on him, which were too much regarded, even by ſome orthodox and good men, who differed from him upon another account (as *Epiphanius* did upon the occaſion of *Origens* writings) yet in no hiſtory it is recorded, that he aimed at the cenſuring of any unjuſtly, though he did cenſure with a naturall vehemency, as he did every other thing; but the hiſtory ſaith, men ſpake much of the number of theſe that were ſentenced by him, and of the vehemency of his manner in reproving and cenſuring of their faults, which they accounted to be pride, not conſidering the faults for which he did cenſure them; But men having conceived prejudice at him, were the readier to admit of their accuſations againſt him, as if they had been unjuſtly dealt with by him, and upon that ſame ground of prejudice at him, were the more inclinable to reſtore them whom he ſentenced.

In times of diviſion, rumours concerning eminent perſons, not to be ſo regarded.

Zeal in juſtly cenſuring, well conſiſtent with a ſpirit of union.

5. It is to be conſidered alſo, That zeal againſt ſuch as are juſtly cenſurable, is moſt conſiſtent with a ſpirit of union in the Church, as appeareth by the former inſtances of men moſt tender of union, and yet moſt zealous in this: yea, theſe two go together; becauſe

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becauſe zeal for the Churches edification, conſtraineth to union, and doth alſo preſſe the removing of corrupt unfaithfull Miniſters, which, next to diviſion in a Church, is the greateſt plague of a Church. Therefore theſe things would be adverted, 1. That the purging of the Church of ſuch, and the work of union, would be joyntly reſpected, otherwayes if union be sleighted, it will hazard the falling in too nearly with the ſchiſms of the *Novatians* and *Donatiſts*, which have been ſo hurtfull to the Church. 2. Union when it is in competition with the depoſing of ſome unfaithfull men, and both cannot be obtained together, it ought to be preferred, as we ſee the Apoſtle doth, 2 *Cor.* 10. 6. who will not cenſure in ſuch a caſe, leſt he ſtate a ſchiſm; for, the continuing of ſuch in a Church, is indeed a hurt, ſeing they are uſeleſſe, and in a great part hurtfull, yet ſo, honeſt Miniſters may have acceſſe to do good beſide them: but when ſchiſms enter, the hurt thereof is more comprehenſive, and they do render unuſefull the Miniſtery both of good and bad. 3. It would be conſidered alſo, that the diviſion being in the caſe ſuppoſed, where men are orthodox and pious on both ſides, it is not ſo exceedingly to be feared, that either men, palpably corrupt in doctrine, or converſation, ſhould be entertained upon the one ſide or that men uſeful in the Church, and blameleſſe in their converſations, ſhould be cruſhed upon the other. 4. It would follow alſo, that union ſhould be no prejudice to the ridding of the Church of corrupt Miniſters, but that it ſhould be ſtudied where there is need, becauſe it is a fruit of the ſame ſpirit (to be zealous againſt corrupt men) from which meekneſſe and moderation toward theſe who are not ſuch, do proceed; and therefore if there be any ſuch object of zeal, as an unfaithfull Miniſter, (as it is not like that ever the Church was, or ſhall be free of ſuch) then ought men to beſtir themſelves faithfully in the removing of ſuch. It is marked and commended in the Angel of *Epheſus*, *Rev.*

Yet union is to be preferred to the cenſuring of ſome unfaithfull men.

Union no prejudice to the purging out of corruption.

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Rev. 2. v. 2,3. That he was eminent in patience and enduring, and yet so zealous in this, that he could endure no unsent Minister, but tryed such as called themselves Apostles, &c. which contemperature of mixture is exceedingly commended: And in reference to the scope which we are upon, zeal in this, is not only a duty as at other times, but a speciall mean having influence on the procuring of union; because so, one of the great stumblings that hath been in the Church to make the Ministery contemptible is removed, and a practicall evidence of mens zeal is given, which tendeth to lay a ground of confidence of them in the hearts of others; so, also men are keeped from falling under the tentation of luke-warmnesse, and forgetting of every duty, but the supporting of the side, at least, that which usually is imputed in such a case, is removed; and also by this, men would find the necessity of bearing with many things in others, who may in the main be supposed to be honest: And however, it is the way to be approven before God, and to have a testimonie in the consciences of others. All which conduce exceedingly to union; whereas universall cessation from this, as if there were no such matter to work upon, and obstructing formally, yea, or materially or virtually any thing thereof, doth exceedingly tend to the fixing of division, and cooling of the affections of many that look on, without which, that is, warmed affections, there is little accesse to hearty union.

Purging not to be much prest till union be fixed.

6. We say, that this duty of purging would not be so in its vehemency pressed, either under a division, or while union is not confirmed, as when a Church is in a good condition; because, that were to give strong physick to an unsettled weak body, that might rather stir the humours to the prejudice of the whole, than remove them: Therefore we conceive, that sobriety and prudence would be used here, in moderating of the exercise of this duty, till the union be confirmed, and

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and, as it were, by preparations the body be disposed for the same: Therefore if faults be not grosse, evidences clear, and a persons unfruitfulnesse or hurtfulnesse demonstrable, (in which cases no difference amongst such parties as are to be united, is to be feared) It is safer for the Church to abstain the same, than to hazard the opening or ruffling of a wound scarcely cured, by the unseasonable pressing of such a duty. The Apostle doth in severall cases spare censures of unfaithfull men, out of respect to the Churches good, as hath been formerly hinted; and as the judicious divine Mr. *Gillespy* (who yet cannot be branded with lukewarmnesse in this duty) in his *Aarons rod*, maketh out, and doth give instances of severall cases, wherein this forbearance is called for. In sum, we suppose that having to do in such a case with such persons, it is more safe for men to do their own duty, keeping the peace of the Church, and to leave others to do according to the manifestnesse of things as they shall answer before God, as to their seeking the good of His Church; and if this prevail not with such men for ordering them in their duty, will any think that the keeping up, or threatening of division, will prevail?

Lastly, It would be considered, if such ends as any side would propose, either in keeping in, or purging out of men who are thought fit or unfit respectively, can be attained without union, so as with it. Therefore seing that is a thing which belongeth to Government, and men are to be swayed in such Acts by what conduceth most to edification, when they cannot attain the length they would (as we suppose men shall never do, in this matter of purging) they then are to walk by this rule of choosing what comparatively is most edifying, as was formerly said. Sometimes also difference hath been about the *excommunicating* of persons, or *readmitting* again to *communion*: but what concerneth this may be somewhat understood from the former grounds, wherein extremities would be

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shunned, and the Churches peace, and the Authority of the Ordinances studied: Also, we have other wayes beyond our purpose become so long, (and possibly *ad nauseam usque*) in other things, we shall therefore forbear particular descending into this, but proceed in the generals proposed.

CHAP. XVIII.

The fears of mis-government for the time to come, and remedies thereof.

THe last thing in Government, which was proposed, as that whereabout differences and divisions do arise, is, in reference to *Government for the time to come*, and resolves in this, Who shall have chief hand in the decision of matters that after may fall out, supposing the union to be made up. This resulteth from the present diffidence and prejudice which each hath in reference to other, and from that impression that men have, that there will be a driving of sides, according to power, even under a concluded union: And indeed somewhat may be feared and expected, at least for a time, considering mens distance in such a case; for, if diffidence and suspicion be come to that height under divisions, that one will not trust another in some petty particular fact that is past; or lay by jealousie where no proof is, notwithstanding of all solemn attestations; it's no marvel that in matters of greater consequence which are to come, they do not easily give them credit. This is often the greatest business to be composed in a difference: hence it is, that sometimes bygones, which have been the rise of the division, may be removed, when as yet this cannot be composed, because there is no way conceivable how both parties may have the chief hand in Government, and neither being willing to cede to the other, either from a secret ground of

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of sleighting one another, or from that root of suspicion whereby they conceive all loss that the other is able to carry over them, whereby from fear of hazarding the Churches good condition, they run here in a certain prejudice, and, in some sense, fall in that inconvenience, which a Writer observeth on the contending of two Bishops, expressed in this as the ground of their division, *Unus ut præesset alter ne subesset, sed neuter ut prodesset*; which is often-times, on the matter, too true in all such contests, this last being a consequent of the former two.

This difference may be considered two wayes, 1. As it pretendeth a dissatisfaction with the persons who are to govern; some, upon the one side, thinking it unfit to joyn with prophane men; some, upon the other, disdaining to joyn with Schismaticks. In this strait were the *Fathers* of the Council of *Carthage* in their dealing with the *Donatists*; some of them asserting, on the one side, That there was no uniting with such as the generality of the *Catholicks* were; and *Augustine* often citeth the word of *Primianus*, given-in to them as an Answer to the desire of a Conference, *Indignum est ut in unum conveniant filii Martyrum, & progenies traditorum*; that is, *It is a most unseemly thing that the sons of Martyrs, and the brood of Traditors should assemble together in one place.* On the other hand, they were pressed from *Rome* and parts adjacent, not to unite with these Schismaticks the *Donatists*, as may be seen in that Council; yet did they find it their duty to seek union with them notwithstanding, and to admit, that such of them as were put before from their Churches, should be repossessed by him that was appointed *Cognitor*, and deputed by the *Emperour* in that Conference, *Ut eo modo eos ad conferendum etiam beneficiis invitaret*; that is, *That so he might invite them to conference at least by such benefits.* This principle, we suppose, ought not, nor will not stick in the hearts of such men, and in such a case, as is presupposed, and it

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it leadeth to a *These*, That there is no communion in Government to be keeped, where, upon any of the former accounts, men are displeased with such persons as are joyned therein with them: and though affection, and sometimes inclination, being stirred with prejudice and discontent, will be ready to make some such practices to be plausible, which do infer this; yet, I suppose, the *These* it self will not be maintained, more than such a ground will warrant Separation in any other Ordinance; and the grounds formerly laid down in several parts of this discourse, will not admit of such a principle, which if admitted, would exclude union for ever. We shall therefore passe this.

The second and main difficulty then, is, In the ordering of things so for the time to come, as the ends of union and government may thereby be obtained, and that nothing that may be justly feared by one side or other, may be altogether sleighted. In reference to this, it will not be expected that we should be particular or satisfying, yet not to leave it altogether imperfect. We shall, *first*, propose some general considerations, to mollifie the sharpnesse of division upon this account. 2. Offer some general helps, which in such cases may be thought on. 3. Lay down some advertisements upon supposition that full satisfaction be not obtained.

It must be such a satisfaction as neither is fully satisfied.

We propose these considerations to be thought on concerning this. 1. In such a thing it is impossible that men on both, or either side, can expect full satisfaction to their mind, or even simply to their light; because men have not the carving out of what is good to the Church simply before them, but comparatively and in reference to such and such a circumstanciate case; and therefore must resolve, that respect must be had to the satisfaction of others as of themselves; for, it is not the satisfaction of one side that maketh up union, but of both: and therefore it must be resolved to be such a satisfaction to both, as neither is fully

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fully and simply satisfied therein; and for that cause it's not to be expected that in such a case all inconveniences which are possible, can be satisfyingly prevented, or questions concerning the same answered. I doubt if in any case there will be full satisfaction as to these.

2. Let it be considered, if the abstaining of uniting will prevent these inconveniences upon either side, and if it doth not rather bring on greater, and moe upon the Church; and if inconveniences sway, which are lesser and more uncertain in the one case, those which are greater and more inevitable, ought to sway more in the other; for, it's already presupposed, that joyning doth not make one guilty in these inconveniencies, more than abstaining doth.

Yea, 3. Let it be considered, if by continued division, men be not necessarily guilty of the inconveniences that follow it; because (to say so) they follow it *per se*, or naturally and necessarily, whereas the other follows upon union but *by accident* at the most: Other considerations, formerly mentioned, are also to have weight, and ought to be remembred here.

We come now to consider the helps which may in part be usefull to prevent these fears. In reference to which we would, 1. consider, that the matter feared, is not the bringing-in of unsound doctrine in the general, nor the altering of practical rules to the strengthening of prophanity, But it is the misapplication of good rules already made, especially in reference to these. 1. The admitting of unfit Officers in the Church. 2. The deposing of such as deserve the same. 3. The decision of some particular differences that may occasionally occur in the carrying-on of Church-affairs, wherein men may apprehend and fear partiality, as they shall occur: which grounds of fear upon either side, we may gather from what hath been formerly hinted.

The thing feared is not corrupt doctrine nor a wrong Government.

Concerning the matter of deposition, we have spoken

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ken already and shall say no more. Concerning the other two points, we may consider them either as they are concerning things past, before the union be made up during the division; or, as they relate to what may occasionally fall out afterward.

Concerning what is past in such debated particulars we have spoken already, and, it seems, one of these three wayes must be taken in reference therunto. 1. Either by waving of these things (if they be such as may be waved) so that without insisting in them, they may be buried; or, by one parties ceding; or, by a mutual composure, they may be instantly setled. 2. If that cannot be, the union is not to be suspended thereon, but some mutually may be appointed to labour in the same afterward, that with consent it may be brought to a point, which is not to be thought desperate, although it be not ended for the time. This way of mutuall conferring is naturall, as being an approven mean for composing of differences of any sort, in any place, at any time. 3. If that please not, or attain not the end, the matter may be amicably referred to some acceptable to both, who may be trusted with the ultimat decision in such particulars: neither is this unbecoming Church-authority so to condescend, nor Ministers in such matters to be submissive. For, 1. it is no matter of doctrine wherein they are to decide, or wherein either party is to acquiesce, but it is in some particular practicall thing. 2. The Submission is not in a difference betwixt a thing sinfull and a thing lawfull, but betwixt two things that are lawfull, which of them comparatively is the most expedient to the Church in such a case; wherein I conceive, it were not implicit walking, though men should acquiesce in the judgment of some others in such things, more than in their own. 3. It would seem, that that advice of the Apostle's, 1 *Cor.* 6. (*Is there not a wise man amongst you? &c.*) is proposed in the general, to prevent all such strife and contention

Union not to be suspended upon every particular.

Some particulars to be referred to some acceptable to both

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contention, as doth bring scandal with it; and therefore ought not to be excluded in this case, seing there is a gift of prudence and wisdom given unto the Church for the governing of her self, and is more eminently given to one than to another, even as the gift of knowledge is for doctrine; and therefore we conceive that in such cases, such may warrantably be trusted with such particulars, seing it might be expected that they would endeavour to make the best thereof for the good of the Church. In that conference with the *Donatists*, we find that the *Donatists* are desired to name one for themselves, who might joyn with the *Cognitor* appointed to judge of such particulars and matters of fact, as were in debate betwixt the *Catholicks* and them; and their refusing thereof was looked upon as an evidence of their not desiring an end of the controversie: Neither is it to be thought, that *Augustine* and nigh 300. Bishops with him who yeelded thereto, did undervalue the matter in debate between them, though they were content to have differences in fact so decided. We find also, that for the removing almost of all the forementioned schisms, there were particular men, either deputed by Synods, or commissionated by adjacent Churches, or called by themselves, for the composing amicably of such practical differences as were the occasion of their rents: And, it may be, that were this more used for composing of Church-differences, the height that oftentimes they come to in particulars, might be prevented.

Such things are not to be decided by a meer authoritative way.

We here think not fit, that such things should be decided by Church-judicatories by a meer authoritative decision: not out of any dis-respect to Church-Judicatories; but because, as was formerly hinted in the generall grounds, Church-judicatories are fitter for preventing such divisions than for removing of them: And further, a Church-judicatory being in all publick divisions a party, such decision would look

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look liker submission (which men are not so easily induced unto) than union. Beside, such a way is more ready to breed heart-burnings in such things as have been the matter of contest formerly, and so is palpably in hazard to brangle an union scarce begun: Also, men will more easily bear any decision wherein themselves have a consent, though it were mediately by committing it to some others, than where there is only a necessity of obeying; and especially where such prejudice is conceived to be in the Judge, as in the case supposed. This may be clearer from what may be said afterward.

Better for a time to forbear many things, than to brangle union.

For regulating things which may occasionally fall out, for the time to come, we may propose these generall helps to be considered. 1. That there be an abstinence from what may readily seem to prove the occasion of any difference, at least for a time: and it is better to forbear many things, than to brangle union, or grieve a party with whom we have united; Yet generally it appeareth, that it is driving and not forbearing, that breedeth division, and also grieveth men after union, and tempts them to rue the same. Neither is this a bar to any from a necessary duty, it only regulateth men in the doing of necessary duties, so as they may eschew the guilt of renting the Church, or grieving of others; or, at most, it relateth but to the tyming, manner, or some other circumstance of a necessary duty: As suppose in the matter of planting a Church, a division should in all appearance be like to arise, It is more fit that it should be for a time suspended, and other endeavours for facilitating the same used, yea, ere a breach be, that even other persons be sought out; for, though it be duty to plant the Church, and that with none but such as are worthy, yet it is not alway a necessary duty to plant such a particular Church, at such a time, and in such a manner, and with such a worthy person; Yea, it were better for the Church, and more peace to the persons mind,

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mind, that such a particular place should take for several years, than that the peace of the Church, or composedness of her Judicatories, should be marred thereby, and so in other matters wherein forbearance is called for.

Doubtfull practices to be abstained from.

2. In such a case, doubtfull practices would be abstained; and whatever side men choose in any occurring particular, it would be such, and in such a manner done, as may be convincingly approvable unto any of whatsoever side; for, it is often uncertain things, or disputable at the most, that breed differences amongst judicious sober men: men therefore would someway confine themselves within unquestionable things for a time, and not only have respect to their own consciences in such things, and to what is right in it self, but also to others, who want not their own suspicions and jealousies, and who by their deed may either be soon tempted, or grieved; both which they ought to shun.

Many brotherly conferences to prevent abrupt surprisals.

3. We conceive, that it is usefull in such a time to have many brotherly consultations, and conferences, concerning such things as may be moved, that things come not in abruptly; for, so sometimes men may be surprised with somewhat they have not heard of, and become jealous where there is no ground: Also, it is an evidence of respect so to communicate thoughts, and men may thus know what is fit to be moved, and what not; whereas otherwayes, men may be soon engaged in opposition to a motion, and not so easily brought off. This communication would not so much be by appointment of others, as voluntary, and out of respect between particular persons: Also, it would be respectively done to the person with submission to his reason, that is, if he seem reasonably dissatisfied therewith, and do not relish the same, the motion would be forborn, at least for a time, and the other waited upon therein, till he come up to it, or at least connive at it; this would breed confidence

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and make the designs joynt. And this way that is to be followed in the first moving of things, would also be continued in the promoving thereof.

Matters of difficulty rather committed, than instantly decided.

4. Matters of difficulty would rather be committed to deputed persons than instantly decided, especially in superiour Judicatories. The reasons are, 1. Because ordinarily superiour Judicatories cannot wait the time that fretted spirits will require to bring businesses of difficulty to any cordial close. 2. It seemeth respective like when they are so taken notice of, and sleighting like when things are hastened. 3. Neither so are all after-murmurings and risings of heart prevented, when things are not heard to the full. 4. Because time may do many things, and that may be easie ere long which is difficult now. 5. In such deputations there is more access to have respect to the appointing of such persons, as may most probably effectuate the thing for the Churches good; and, no question, a Church-judicatory is to take the way which may do the thing best, as well as a particular person, and they are to abstain from debatable things and hasty conclusions, even as particular persons are: and oftentimes experience teacheth, that such Commissions expede many things, which more frequent Assemblies could not so well do. Hence we will find, that it was ordinary in the primitive time upon such grounds, to give Commission to some few to do things, and particularly, that often-mentioned *Council of Carthage* did think good to dissolve, and to depute so many for deciding that, in matters of discipline, which they could not by themselves so well be able to compasse.

Not unfit, some persons were designed for a time to compose occasionall differences.

5. We conceive also, that it were not unfit in such cases (for a time at least) to have some designed by mutual consent, who might compose such occasional differences as possibly might arise; or, who at least might have so much power as to restrain and keep down the same from being a new ground of division

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to the Church, or matter of great grief to any party. This is not to constitute a new Judicatory, but according to the light of nature to provide a mean for keeping up of order, and preventing of confusion, when, in respect of the present distemper of spirit, there is no possibility for attaining that end by the constituted Judicatory: Nature in such a case teaches all men to seek for order in every society, and it being supposed that there cannot be a joyning in ordinary Judicatories without this, and that it might be attained with this, it's hard to think, that that is denied to the Church which agreeth to all other societies; or, that it can be said, that it is better to want union in Church-judicatories, than to have it so qualified. Sure some Churches would, and do think much to attain this length, as appeareth by the many voluntary associations which worthy men have been led unto, for the keeping of order, and attaining of some union, who are yet good friends to Church-government; and the reason that warranteth them in their deed, to wit, the necessity of union and order in the Church, and the impossibility that there is of any further mean for attaining the same, will warrant this practice in the case supposed; for, the question is not simply, What is the best constituted Government of a Church in a good condition? but it is, Whether a Government with such a qualification, be better than no Government, or a divided Government, it being supposed that no other in the circumstantiat case can be attained?

It would be considered also, That such a voluntary reference to such persons, doth not include any authority, as to ordain Ministers, or depose, *&c.* but it is to be in matters of fact, as in the fitnesse or unfitnesse of such a Plantation, of such a Processe, and the like; which was mentioned in reference to differences past; for, what was said there, is also binding here.

Neither can this be thought any limitation or

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weakning of Church-authority and power: For, 1. It doth make that authority and power stronger than formerly it was without this, in the case so circumstantiate; and the question still is to be considered not in *thesi*, but in *hypothesi*. 2. Because this is for the recovery and strengthening of an authority that for the time is not in exercise, at least in such an extent, and it is to give the same a being, as it were, and to bring it to its former lustre; as if a weak man should be led, or get a staff in his hand till he recover; or, as if a disjoynted leg should be fenced about otherwayes than one that is whole, and so be the sooner in capacity to walk without these. 3. This is but a temporary accessory help, and is not pleaded-for as an essential of Government, but only as a lawfull expedient when it cannot be wanted. 4. It may be considered that possibly no use may be thereof, and if so, it can be no encroachment; and if there be need thereof, so as things cannot cordially be composed otherwayes, Is is not expedient then, for the preventing of a further inconvenience? 5. I suppose it is not inconsistent with Civil Authority, when union is made-up betwixt two Nations, or in the same Nations, especially where Authority hath been brangled, that some by joynt consent be chosen for deciding of such things as may occasion a new breach: and there are many instances of this in history; for, the being of Authority is cumulative to the means that men are naturally furnished with, for the preserving of union and order, and therefore it cannot exclude such prudential considerations.

This tendeth to recover strength to Judicatories.

Neither can it be thought inconsistent with the nature of Church-authority and Government: For, 1. If it be agreeable to the principles of nature and sound reason, it cannot be inconsistent with Church-government, which hath its own *policy* grounded upon these: And although the form of Government be not to be gathered from these, nor the ends which they should

And is consistent with Ministeriall Church-authority.

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should aim at who govern. yet the manner how such a Government is to attain these ends, is in positive things to be regulated by them: hence sometimes men are to use intreaties and perswasions, somtimes threatnings and authoritative means, according as the end may be attained. 2. Although Church-government in the general be determined, and men be not free to associate or not, yet there is much, as to the exercise thereof in associating, and the particular manner mutually agreed upon, which still may regulate circumstances, though they cannot alter the nature of the thing. 3. It is not necessary that Church-authority should be alwayes exercised in every thing; for, it is not to be exercised but when it is to the Churches edification, and there is no such Church-authority as edifies not; and therefore, if in such cases the interposing of Church-authority in the ultimat decision of matters be not edifying, it is no encroachment upon it to say it should not be exercised in that case; and so at the most, that which dependeth upon this reference, is, only prudentially to discern and judge, if in such and such a case, it be fit for the Churches edification, that Church-authority should decide in such a particular matter, wherein not the authority or power, but the prudence, zeal, and faithfulness of such persons are to be respected for the obtaining of a forbearance. 4. We will find the great Apostle oftentimes condescending to lay by his authority, and to intreat and beseech, especially in the matter of union; and sometimes to advise, when he thought his intreaties might more kindly prevail; or, when he thought his authority might be questioned, or his authoritative acting hazard a schism: which grounds, being moral, may warrant a Church in such a case unto the end of the world to follow his example. 5. Seing union is maintained when it is weak by the same means by which it is begun, (for union is not compleated when some agreement is closed) and seing, as we said, an

The great Apostle often layeth aside Authority.

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authoritative way is not fittest for conceiving and bringing forth the same; So neither will it be for giving of it suck and milk till it be able to abide stronger meat. 6. Seing Church-authority is parental, and that of the tendereſt sort, it is not unbecoming that it condescend even to the weakneſſe and childish distempers of some members, supposing there be such standing in need thereof; and if such condescending may joyn them in and keep them in, in their own place, and prevent even their snares and miscarriages more effectually than authoritative means will do, which are for the time suspected by them; ought not such means to be followed? And if they should continue in their infirmity to stumble at the peremptory using of authoritative means and the denial of this; will it be thought a sufficient ground to exoner men from having acceſſion unto their fall? or will it look like that tenderneſſe and condescendency which *mothers* and *nurses* ought to have to children, even in their childish and unreasonable moodes? 7. This also mis-states the queſtion, because its here to be considered (as was said) not what is the nature of Church-authority simply, but comparatively, what is fittest for procureing the edification of the Church, and for a time to be a mean for recovering her to a full authoritative manner of acting, which is now supposed to be brangled. Beside, if the recovery of Church-authority be a duty requiring means to be used suitable to that end; then the use of this mean must be a duty: because, in the case supposed, it is the most probable mean for attaining to that. If it be said, that it is a more easie way to acquiesce in the authoritative determination, and it were more fit for men to submit to that. *Answ.* That supposeth no present distemper to be, and answereth not to the case stated, which is upon the supposition that men do not that; Is not this more fit for present edification, and more probable for attaining to a full authoritative

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way of acting, than the continuing of a division without condescending in this? In the last place, also it may be considered, That the exercising of Church-authority in particular cases, *hic & nunc*, is an affirmative precept, and therefore doth not bind *ad semper*, according to the common rule of affirmative precepts; it cannot therefore be unsuitable to it, or the precepts by which it is commanded, to adde such qualifications as are mentioned in the case presupposed.

CHAP. XIX.

Some advertisements concerning the overtures proposed.

TO come now to some advertisements according as we did propose; we must shortly put them together, lest we be too prolix in every thing.

1. Then it would be adverted, That there is no peremptorinesse urged in any of the former helps or remedies, but if other means may be found more effectuall, all these are to cede. Only this is intended, that if no more probable and effectuall means be found out, or applied, that it is better on such like grounds to unite than to continue a division.

2. It is to be adverted, That there may be, and ought to be such a condescending, in the concluding of, and fixing on the means, (especially for the time to come) as by the expressing of time, manner, and other particular circumstances of things, the fears of both may be someway guarded against, and each by shewing respect to other, may endeavour the removing of their mutuall jealousies; for, seing jealousies are mutuall, it will be too much for one side to think that the other should wholly credit them, if there be no condescending by them.

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3. Although there should be fears that things should again break out, and that therefore it is to no purpose to undertake a way of union, not every way satisfying; yet it would be essayed, and if the Lord prevent that fear, such an objection is looſed; if some interruption come again to hazard an outbreaking, these who are accessory thereto, will be the more guilty, and others who are innocent therein, may have more peace, than if it had not been essayed.

4. If union cannot be compleated in every thing, then their would be endeavours to fix it so far as is attainable, and to prevent the increasing of division, that if there may not be a positive union, at least, a positive division and opposition may be shunned.

5. It would be endeavoured, that notwithstanding of such divisions, men may mutually concur in that wherein there is no division for the edification of the Church: for, division in one particular ought not, nor will not warrantably hinder mutuall acting in other things where there is none: As for instance, if it be an interruption in carrying on the work of God joyntly in Government, becauſe of some difference concerning that; yet if there be acceſſe to promove the edification of the body by an united way of preaching, that is to be followed and improven, as we see it is done in some places where Government is not allowed.

6. Whatever the case be, we suppose it is duty to make the best thereof, when men cannot win the length they would.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XX.

What is incumbent to Magistrates and People for remedying this evil.

IT resteth now that we should speak something, to what is incumbent to *Magistrates* and *People*, for remedying of such an evil in the Church; but being keeped so long on the former, we cannot enter on this; We shall only lay down these few generals,

1. That neither of them ought to be offended or stumbled at such divisions, or thereby be brought to have lesse esteem either of the Gospel, the Ordinance of Government, or Worship, or the Ministery and Ministers of Jesus Christ; much lesse would there be insulting over, or advantage taken against, these upon this occasion, as is recorded to the infamy of several persons; but on the contrary, all would be affected therewith, as with a most dangerous snare, and fearfull plague: And to this purpose *Augustine* doth seriously presse his *Boniface*, Governour of *Africk*, that he should not stumble at the divisions of the Church, and particularly *Epist.* 50.

2. All would search if they have had any sinfull influence upon the procuring of such a stroke; for, if it be a plague and wo to them, they would look back to the rise thereof; who knows but the sins of Magistrates or People in their fretting at the Ordinance of Government, despising of the Ministery, not receiving of the Word nor walking answerably therto, and such like, may have procured this division from the Lord, as a judicial stroke on them to harden them in their former sin, and thereby to strengthen their tentation to despise all the Ordinances more to their own ruin, as may be gathered from what hath been formerly spoken?

3. All would be carefull to abstain from what may

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further or heighten the breach, and by all means endeavour not to be engaged in such sidings; for, that often encourageth others, and encreaseth and fixeth a rent; and in experience it is seen, that these schisms were ever most dangerous, and most difficultly removed, wherein people came to party, and side with opposit sides in the division: and seing the Spirit in the Scripture, doth forbid people as well as Ministers to divide, this must be their duty, not to joyn in such a division. Also, it unfits them to get good from Ministers, or to do good for removing of a rent amongst them. And we are sure, If doubtfull disputations, vain janglings, and such like questions, that tend not to edification, be to be eschewed by people, then we conceive that such as are in the cases presupposed, may be so esteemed of.

4. They are by all respective means seriously to presse the abstaining from, and composing of such differences, by their serious representations of the ills thereof, and exhortations, according to their places to have the same remedyed. And were this more amongst people, upon occasions in due manner, to testifie their sober resentment of such evils in the general, and desire of union, and condescendency for attaining the same, so far as is fit, it would much more become the sobriety of tender Christians, and be much more effectual for this end, than to be heightening and aggreging the miscarriage of any one party to another, or carrying reports or informations true or false, which may kindle humours to a flame that are hot and smoaking already. It would affect a heart to hear the regraits and expostulations that *Constantine*, *Gratian*, and others, have anent the divisions of Church-men in their times and their exhortations to remedy the same.

5. All sorts would endeavour to be in good tearms with God, in respect of their own particular conditions: and when all faileth, they would still be instantly dealing with God by prayer for healing of the same

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same, as accounting it a great plague, even to them, while this continueth.

CHAP. XXI.

The grounds and motives of the desired union.

THe last thing proposed to be spoken to, was, the grounds whereby union on such like tearms, in such cases, might be pressed: but seing somethings to this purpose have been already here and there inserted, upon severall occasions; and seing these who are mainly concerned in this, are supposed to be most tenderly zealous of the Churches good, and so not to stand much in need of many motives to perswade to this which doth so nearly concern the same; and fearing to heap up too many words in a matter so clear, we shall forbear to insist, and only propose some considerations to the conscience of the tender Reader, especially in reference to some particular circumstances, which sometimes may occur in the case of division. And let God Himself, who is the God of peace, of love, and of order, put them home to consciences with a strong hand.

First, The consciencious Reader may consider, when all is well weighed that is formerly proposed, with what may besides occur to himself, If the study of union be not a most necessary thing, and if without the essaying of these and such like means, according to his interest and calling, he can have peace, as being sufficiently exonered in his duty, in reference to this great end; and if there can be solid quietnesse to continue division upon the grounds mentioned, and to sleight the pursuing after union, if attainable, upon these or such like tearms as are proposed, especially in these and such other cases.

1. When a Church is under externall crosses and afflictions, and by Gods dispensation is cast into the fur-

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furnace; to be therein strugling and wrestling one with another, and, as if it were in the time of the Churches greatest peace and calm, to be contending for matters of such concernment. O how unsuitable is it! Though indeed condescending be called-for at any time, yet certainly, much more and in an especiall manner at such a time. The judicious, and great Divine *Calvin*, doth, upon this account, exceedingly aggrege the divisions amongst some *English* in *Frankford*, who being banished in the dayes of Queen *Mary* for the same Religion, did even there contend for matters of little moment. This (saith he, *Epist.* 200.) was exceeding *intempestive*, or untimous, and exceeding offensive to the Church of Christ, and unbecoming their case: And although he utterly disapproved these ceremonies, as unbecoming the Church of Christ; Yet doth he (*Epist.* 206.) presse moderation on both sides, using these words, *Sicuti autem eos qui à vobis dissentiebant hortatus sum, ut qua possent moderatione inflecterent; ita mihi displicuit, nihil vicissima parte vestra recedi vel remitti*, that is, *As I did exhort these who were not of one mind with you, to stretch themselves with all possible moderation; So it did displease me, that there was upon the other hand by you, nothing ceded or remitted.*

The second case is, When a Church by division, is laid open to grosse hereticks, who wait the occasion of such a division, that they may make (as it were) an infall upon her. Division should be shunned at any time, but in such a case, union should be at any rate, of warrantable condescendency, purchased. In that difference between *Eusebius* and *Basilius*, at first it was sufficient to eschew division; for which end at *Nazianzens* desire, *Basilius* removed; but when the *Arians* were like to take advantage thereof, he did again return, and by his condescending made up a perfect union, thereby to stop the door against the inbreaking of errour upon that people: Which fact is ever highly commended, even in respect of the seasonablnesse

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sonablneſſe thereof, in reference to that tentation.

3. A third caſe wherein union would eſpecially be ſtudied, is, When there is little help from without, to the ſuſtaining of the Government and order of the Church; but men in that reſpect, have and take liberty to act as they will: becauſe then union is the only wall, and if that fall, there is nothing to guard. Hence it is, that neceſſity, eſpecially in ſuch a caſe, hath made men think upon aſſociations and mutuall bonds, for the eſtabliſhing and confirming of union.

4. It is, when ſome of the Ordinances, eſpecially the Ordinance of Government, is queſtioned, or when they are deſpiſed, and ſomeway made contemptible before men: in ſuch caſes, for reſpect to the Ordinances of Chriſt, men ought to condeſcend to the uttermoſt, and to endeavour the recovery of the Ordinances of Chriſt to their former beauty, which is impoſſible to be attained without this; becauſe diviſion maketh all to appear contemptible.

5. It is, when there ſeemeth to be ſome ſpeciall nick, or choak, or *criſis* (to ſpeak ſo) that is, When, if there be not preſent uniting and gripping, in all probability, the diviſion and breach will grow greater and wider, and be more difficultly removable. In ſuch a caſe men ought to ſtretch themſelves *with all the moderation that is poſſible* (as *Calvins* expreſſion is) if they may now, at leaſt, through Gods good hand upon them, come to ſome agreement, and taking grip (to ſay ſo) while it is poſſible. And if each of theſe alone, ſtrongly preſſe the ſtudy of union, even beyond what is ordinary; O how very ſtrongly will all of them, put together, preſſe it! And how actively ſhould men, zealous for God and His precious Ordinances, and tender of the edification of ſouls, beſtir themſelves to follow after peace in ſuch a vehemently urging caſe?

The *ſecond* thing that would be ſeriouſly conſidered and thought upon, is, What is the poſſibility, and feaſable-

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feasableneſſe, and acceſſe to attainment, of ſuch a deſirable end. It is true, tenaciouſneſſe in ſome, may make union in the leaſt things impoſſible, eſpecially ſuch as may by his grace, gifts, eſteem, or the dependance of others upon him becauſe of theſe, have ſome ſpeciall ſtroke and influence upon the thing: But the Reader would conſider,

1. If ſomeway the ſtick be not at himſelf, and if there be not ſomething poſſible to him, in reference to union, which yet he hath not condeſcended to; for, although he hath not power over the wills of others, yet hath he over his own.

2. Let him conſider, If the ills that follow diviſion be not great and certain: and if ſo, if the ſtopping at any ſtep of the condeſcending called-for, will bear out the conſcience againſt the cryes of ſo many reproaches that are caſten upon Ordinances by ſome; againſt the many challenges that will ariſe upon the miſcarriages of others, that are occaſioned by ſuch diviſions; and againſt the impreſſion that the weighting and ſadning of many honeſt hearts, will have with it one day? And if he dare ſtep in to judgment, without fear of being found faulty in any meaſure in reſpect of the forementioned inconveniencies; if his condeſcending, as is called-for, might have prevented them.

3. He would conſider, if at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt, when all ſuch affections ſhall be laid by, and diſputings will not have place, nor recriminations be admitted; if, I ſay, in ſuch a caſe he may not have more peace in condeſcending upon either ſide, as is propoſed, for the good of the Church, than by refuſing the ſame to keep up the diviſion.

4. It would be ſeriouſly pondered, whether union by ſuch condeſcendency, or diviſion without it, may be moſt profitable and edifying to the Church; and if any of theſe things be of ſuch conſequence, as to ſtand in the way of the Churches further edification.

5. The Reader may conſider, if ever in the practice of

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of the primitive times, or in the writings of orthodox and sober Divines, old or late, any so circumstantiated division will be found warrantable, or if, out of the heat of debate, they would probably have stuck at any condescension that is here required upon either hand.

6. It may be considered, If all the present reformed Churches being appealed unto in such a case, were singly and impartially to give judgement thereanent, whether it could upon any ground be thought, that they would judge such condescending unlawfull upon either side, if by it and no otherwayes union were to be attained?

7. It would be considered, That if all that ever have written on this subject of old or late were consulted, that (for aught I know) it will be found that the condescension that they allow for attaining, and preserving of union in the Church, will be of a larger extent, than any thing in this case required; And, I suppose, hardly will it be found, that from such writings there will be a sticking allowed upon any such thing as is proposed. And will it be safe, at once to condemn so many?

8. The Reader may reflect on himself, and try what are his thoughts of former divisions, and if he doth not approve most ordinarily these that were most peaceable, and alwayes these that in such a circumstantiated case did study condescendency; and if he doth not within himself judge, that it had been more for the Churches good, that such divisions had been removed upon such like tearms, than that they should have been continued; and if there be not in his bosome a kind of indignation at the rigid drivers of such a division, whereby he may know and discern what is fit to be done in the present case, if he were as impartiall in it, as in the other.

9. He may consider, If union be not made up upon such or the like tearms; and if upon other tearms it

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it be impossible. What will follow, or what usually doth follow in such cases? Doth not bitterness grow to a height amongst orthodox men, as if each of them were enemies to the truth of Christ, and enemies to one anothers persons? names also are often imposed upon each by the other, as if they were not both of the same body; or, as if it were good service to God, and advantage to the Truth, by such designations to render one another odious, contemptible and useless: As these that refused to joyn with the Church of *Rome* in *Easter*, were called *Quartodecimani*; whereupon followeth abstinence in communion with one another, turning aside unto errour and novelty amongst some; indulgence if not connivance at, and compliance with grosse and corrupt men amongst others; coldness in zeal to God, and love one to another; and upsitting in the power and practice of godliness amongst all, and many such like wofull effects. And shall, alas, shall the weight of all these sad and Religion-ruining consequents, be stated upon the refusing of such condescendency as is here called-for? God forbid.

10. It would be seriously considered, what may be the thoughts of the generation that shall succeed? Shall such a division be propagated to them, and they made heirs thereto? Shall not they either continue miserable under such a condition, and that for ever, with such heightening circumstances as cannot but follow? (and will any ingenuous and posterity-compassionating Reader think of this, and not be affected therewith?) Or they must endeavour the recovery of union with much more difficulty than it may now be; and if so, certainly that generation will be in hazard to curse these that went before them, who did bring them forth under the necessity of continuing under the sin, snare, and torturing-plague of divisions; or, at least, of being in so greatly-puzling and perplexing straits, ere they could expede themselves out of the same.

11. If

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11. If yet the Reader be not convinced positively to joyn and further union in such a case, let him yet consider if he hath sufficient clearnesse to oppose and cry down the same as sinfull, and if he hath liberty and freedom to cry down all that ever have approven or do approve the removing of a division upon such terms as these proposed? and if he dare with confidence from his own particular dissatisfaction, mar the same amongst others? and if possibly he might not have more freedom negatively to lye by, and neither directly nor indirectly to be the occasion of such an offence; and if the Church might not have more profit, and he more peace in so doing? and if he be satisfied, he may consider whether it were not better to endeavour such a composure, though to the dissatisfaction of some (who possibly may afterward lay by their discontent) than out of prepostorous respect to them, to hazard the ruine of all? which is, as it were, to bring a leaking ship to land in a storm, though some of the company, upon some mistake, oppose the same.

12. Let him consider, if ever condescending in such things hath been observed to bring any hurt to the Church; whereas selfwilledneſse (whereof a Minister especially should be free) hath alwayes been dangerous. It's true, *ἀμυσία* in points fundamentall, such as that which *Anastasius* pressed, hath been most zealously opposed as hurtfull, because thereby the foundation was strucken at, and errour in fundamental things got equal footing with truth; But can ever this be said in such things as are supposed in the case laid down?

Lastly, The Reader may consider, if in soberneſse, and in an abstracted manner *extra æstum disputationis*, he were giving his advice to a Church so divided, and immediatly thereafter to step in to judgment, he would not readily incline to commend union on these or such other terms, as necessary for the good of the Church

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