

CONFIRMATION

AND

RESTAURATION,

THE NECESSARY MEANS OF

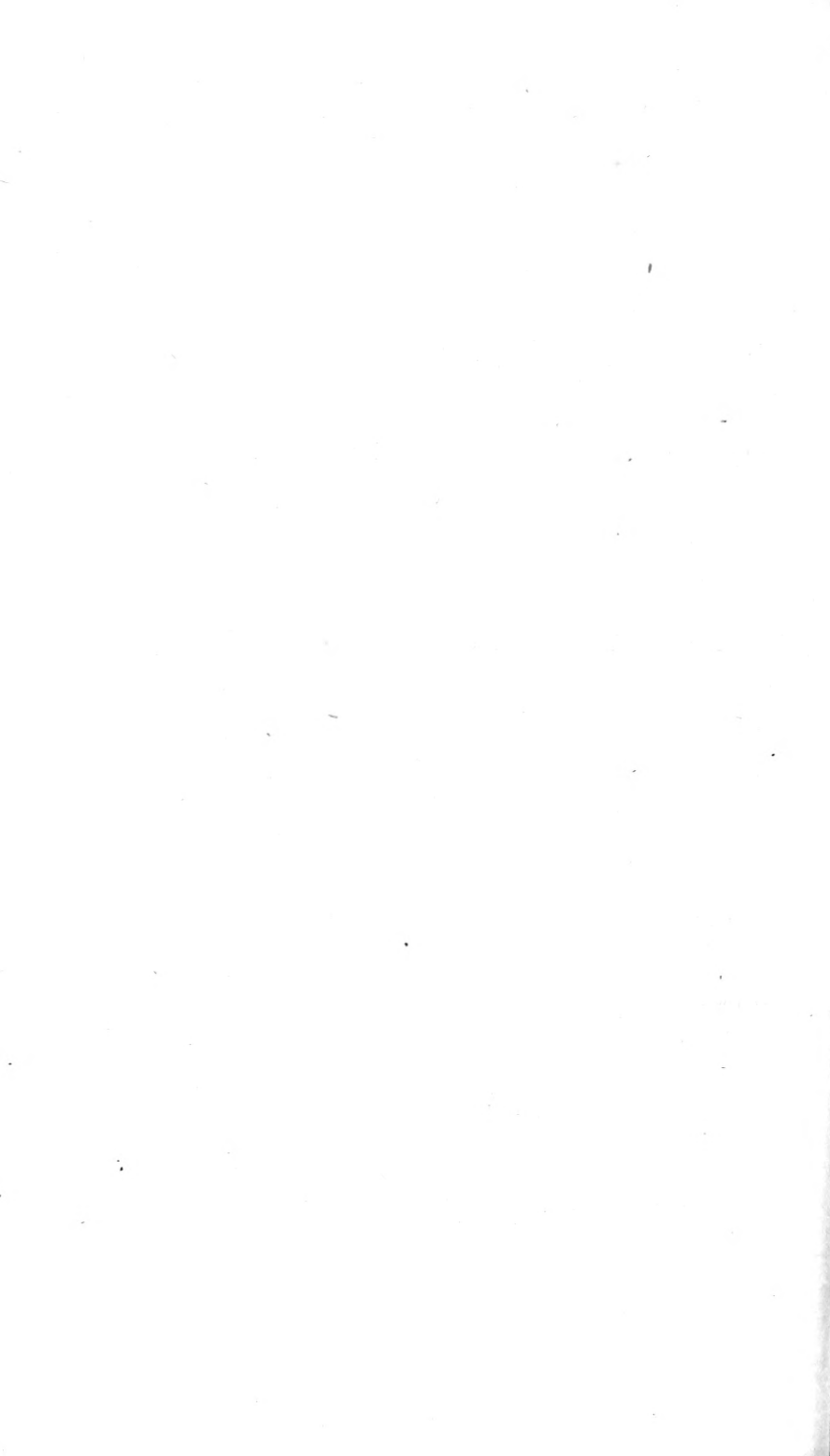
REFORMATION AND RECONCILIATION;

FOR THE

HEALING OF THE CORRUPTIONS AND DIVISIONS OF THE CHURCHES.

SUBMISSIVELY, BUT EARNESTLY TENDERED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE SOVEREIGN POWERS, MAGISTRATES, MINISTERS, AND PEOPLE, THAT THEY MAY AWAKE, AND BE UP AND DOING IN THE EXECUTION OF SO MUCH, AS APPEARETH TO BE NECESSARY, AS THEY ARE TRUE TO CHRIST, HIS CHURCH AND GOSPEL, AND TO THEIR OWN AND OTHERS' SOULS, AND TO THE PEACE AND WELFARE OF THE NATIONS; AND AS THEY WILL ANSWER THE NEGLECT TO CHRIST, AT THEIR PERIL.

“For I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring, and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.” Isa. xlv. 3, 4, 5.



TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,

HAVING in divers Writings, moved for the restitution of a solemn transition, of all that pass from an infant state of Church-membership, into the number of the adult, and are admitted to their privileges, and the Associated Ministers of this County, having made it an Article of their Agreement, at last came forth an excellent Exercitation on Confirmation, written by Mr. Jonathan Hanmer, very learnedly and piously endeavouring the restoration of this practice. Being very glad of so good a work, upon an invitation, I prefixed an Epistle before it; which hath occasioned this following Disputation. For when the book was read, the design was generally approved, as far as I can learn, and very acceptable to good men of all parties. But many of them called to me, to try whether some more Scripture proofs might not be brought for it, that the Preceptive, as well as the Mediate necessity might appear. At the desire of some Reverend godly Brethren, I hastily drew up this which is here offered you; partly to satisfy them in the point of Scripture Evidence; but principally to satisfy my own earnest desires, after the Reformation, and Healing of the Churches, to which I do very confidently apprehend, this excellent work to have a singular tendency. Here is a medicine so effectual to heal our breaches, and set our disordered societies in joint, (being owned in whole by the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Erastian, and in half, by the Anabaptists,) that nothing but our own self-conceitedness, perverseness, laziness, or wilful enmity to the peace of the Churches, is able to deprive us of a blessed success. But, alas, our minds are the subjects of the disease; and are so alienated, exulcerated, and so selfishly partial and uncharitable, that when

the plaister is offered us, and peace brought to our doors, I must needs expect that many should peevishly cast it away, and others betray it, by a lazy commendation, and so disable the few that would be faithful, practical and industrious, from that general success, which is so necessary and desirable.

As for them that lay all our peace on Episcopacy and Liturgy, I intend if God will, to send them after this, some healing motions on those subjects also. And if they have no better success, than presently to satisfy my own conscience, in the faithful performance of so great a duty, and to awaken the desires, endeavours and prayers of the more moderate and impartial, I shall not think my labour lost. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love it. Let us seek it of God, as well as men; which is the daily, though too defective practice, of

The most unworthy Servant

of the King of Peace,

RICHARD BAXTER.

April 7, 1658.

If Magistrates or others, who are obliged to promote the work, which is here commended to them, do want leisure, or patience to read the whole, I desire them to peruse the Contents of this book, and those parts of the work, in which they are most unsatisfied.

CONFIRMATION AND RESTAURATION

THE NECESSARY MEANS OF

REFORMATION AND RECONCILIATION.

QUEST. *Whether those that were baptized in Infancy, should be admitted to the privileges proper to adult Church-members, without Confirmation or Restauration, by an approved Profession of Personal Faith and Repentance? Neg.*

THOUGH the distempers of the Churches of Christ in England, are not so great as the Popish adversaries, or some discontented brethren do pretend, nor as some inconsiderate lamenters of our condition do imagine, who observe less our enjoyments than our wants, and that have not the faculty of discerning our true agreements, where there is any difference, but think that many things are wanting that are not, because they cannot find them; yet is our discomposure such as the wisest have cause to mourn for, and all of us should contribute our endeavours to redress. For the accomplishment of this blessed work, two things must be done: The first is, to discover the principles that must reform and heal us, if ever we be healed; and to acquaint the world with the necessary means. The second is, to concur for the execution, in the application and use of the remedy, when it is discovered. The first is a work, that is usually done best by a few at first; though the more receive and approve of the discovery, the better it will be brought into use. But it is here, saith Pemble, as in discerning a thing afar off, where one clear eye will see further than many that are dim, and the greatest conjunction of unfurnished intellects,

affords not so much assistance for the discovery, as the greater sight of a few may do. But in the executive part there must be many hands to the work. If the pastors and people do not consent, it cannot be accomplished; and if they barely consent, and be not up and doing, discoveries will lie dead, and nothing will go on: and if the Christian magistrate afford not his assistance, his guilt will be great, and the work will go the more heavily on. Though all the body be not an eye, and therefore be not as good at discovering as the eye is; yet must each member perform its own office, and none be idle, or withdraw its help, because it is not an eye, but all must execute by the guidance of the eye.

In order to the discovery of the healing means, among others, this rule is worthy our observation:—‘If any church-order, or administration seem offensive to you, before you wholly cast it out, consider whether there be not somewhat that is necessary and excellent either in the substance, or in the occasion and reason of it; and you will find, that Reformation is to be accomplished more by restoration of ordinances, and administrations to their primitive nature and use, than by the utter abolition of them.’—Satan found it easier to corrupt the ordinances of Christ, and to cause *them* to degenerate into somewhat like them, than to introduce such of his own as were wholly new, and as Christ had given no occasion of. I could give you very useful instances in many of the Popish administrations, which require a restoration, rather than an abolition, lest that which is Christ’s part, be cast out with that which is man’s, and we should throw away the apple which should be but pared; and lest we cast away our necessary food, and most precious jewels, because they have fallen into Romish dirt. But my present business is to instance only in Confirmation and Penitence, so far as is requisite to the decision of the question now before us.

I know you will easily excuse me from the needless labour of explaining any terms in the question which you understand already: I think the best method to lay the matter naked before your understandings, will be by approaches and degrees in the opening and confirming of these Propositions:—

PROP. 1. It is here supposed, that the Infants of Believers should by Baptism be admitted into the Church, and so be partakers of Infant Privileges.

THEIR sin and misery is come upon them without any actual consent of their own, by the will of others; and the remedy must be applied to them accordingly; not by any actual consent of their own, which is as impossible, but by the will of others, as the condition, and by the gift of God as the cause. In his dealing with mankind, God is not so much more prone to wrath and vengeance than to mercy, as to put infants into the comminatory terrible part of the covenant, with their parents, and not into the remedying part; and to condemn them for their first father's covenant-breaking, and give them no help from their gracious parents' covenant-keeping; and to fetch weight from parents' sins to weigh down the scale of vindictive justice, and to put nothing from the gracious parents into the other end. Yet is it not to infants, as the mere natural issue of godly parents, that God extendeth this grace. But (1.) As they are naturally their own, the parents have a power of them to dispose of them for their good. (2.) Every man that is sanctified, hath devoted himself, and in general all that he hath to God, according to the several capacities of what he hath, that every thing may be for God in its proper capacity. (3.) Virtually then the children of the godly, even in the womb, are thus devoted unto God. (4.) It is the revealed will of God, that infants should be actually dedicated and devoted to him. (5.) He that requireth us to make this dedication, doth imply therein a promise of his acceptance of what is dedicated to him by his command; for his precepts are not vain or delusory. (6.) He hath also expressly signified this in Scripture promises, extending his covenant to the seed of the faithful, and telling us that his kingdom is of such. (7.) This dedication is to be made by Baptism, the ordinance which God hath appointed to that end; and in which he is ready to signify his acceptance, that so there may be a mutual, solemn covenant.

The servants of God, before Christ's coming, were enabled and required to enter their infants into the covenant of God, sometimes and ordinarily in circumcision, and sometimes, as in the wilderness, (Deut. xxix,) without it. And they have the same natural interest, and as large a disco-

very that it is the will of God, for the dedicating of their children to God, and choosing for them, and entering them into the holy covenant, now as then. If then a child that had no exercise of its own will, might by the will of his parents choose the Lord, and be entered into covenant with him, it is then so still. God hath no where reversed or abrogated that command which obliged parents to enter their children into covenant with God, and devote them to him. Nay, Christ chided those that would keep them from him, because his kingdom, that is, his Church, is of such. A place that doth purposely and plainly express the continuance of his love to infants, and that the Gospel entertaineth them as readily as the Law or Promise before did. Often and again, doth Christ signify to the Jews that he would have gathered them wholly to his church, and not have broken them off, if they had not by unbelief been broken off, and in the same olive hath he engrafted the Gentile Church. Infants are members of all commonwealths on the face of the earth, though they know not what a commonwealth is, nor yet what sovereignty or subjection mean; and he that should say they are no members, because they are imperfect members, would but be laughed at: and Christ hath not cast them out of his family or commonwealth, nor shut the door against them.

And that in this infant state they are capable of many privileges is apparent: they have original sin, which must be pardoned, or they are lost. Most of the Anabaptists, that I hear of, do hold that all the infants in the world are pardoned by Christ, and shall be saved if they die in infancy, and run in the downright Pelagian road. But this is not only utterly unproved, but contrary to Scripture, which telleth us, that sin is not pardoned by the bloodshed of Christ, till men be brought into union with him, and participation of him, and for all his bloodshed, no man shall have pardon by it till it be given him by the act of pardon in the Gospel. Now the Gospel no where gives out pardon to every infant in the world; nay, it frequently and plainly makes a difference. The parents' will doth accept the offer, and choose for them that cannot choose for themselves; for others, whatever God will do with them, doubtless they have no promise of mercy. And it is strange that they should deny baptism to infants that deny not salvation to them; yea, that think, though ungroundedly, that they are all in a

state of salvation. For either infants have original sin, or not: if they have none, then they need no Saviour, and must be saved without a Saviour; for the whole need not the physician, but the sick. If they have original sin, and that it is pardoned to them by Christ, then how can men deny them the sign and seal of pardon, or the solemn investing means? If they are sure that they are washed with Christ's blood, how can they deny to wash them with that water, that is appointed to signify and invest?

Moreover, infants are capable of many other privileges; and of being the adopted sons of God, the members of Christ, the heirs of heaven, as having right thereto; and being the members of the church, and being under the special protection and provision of God, and in an especial sort partakers of the prayers of the church, with divers more. As in the commonwealth, an infant is capable of having honour and inheritance in right, though not actually to use them; and of the protection of the laws for life, reputation and estate; and of being tenant, and obliged to pay a certain rent and homage when he comes of age, and in the meantime to have provisions from the estate that he hath title to.

But all this I have more fully expressed elsewhere. Having lately read Mr. Tombes's last, and large Reply, to part of my book, and many others; I must needs say that it leaves me still persuaded that it is the will of Christ, that the infants of his servants should be dedicated to him in baptism, and members of his visible church; and though upon the review of my arguments I find that I have used too many provoking words, for which I am heartily sorry, and desire pardon of God and him, yet I must say, that I am left more confident than before, that the cause is God's which Mr. Tombes opposeth. Of which, if God will, I intend yet to give some further account: in the meantime I deal with this but as a supposition that is already sufficiently proved, though all men, yea, all good men, see not the sufficiency of the proof.

PROP. 2. There are many Privileges belonging to the Adult Members of the Church, which Infant Members are not capable of.

THIS is true both of natural and moral capacities. The privileges which I mean are, the pardon of many actual sins, committed since they are adult; the exercise of all holy

graces ; knowing God ; loving him ; trusting him ; serving him ; the communion that we have with God herein ; as particularly in prayer, in holy praises and thanksgivings, in heavenly meditations ; the peace and joy that followeth believing, and the hopes of everlasting life ; the communion which we have with the Church of Christ in hearing, praying, praises, the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ ; in distribution by giving and receiving, and an endearing holy love within. These and many more privileges are proper to the adult.

That infants are not naturally capable of these, is as needless to prove, as that they are infants : and then that they are not morally capable, is an inseparable consequent. For though natural capacity may be without moral ; yet moral cannot be without natural ; in point of duty, infants are not bound to the work ; as to hear, pray, praise, &c. beyond the natural capacity of their intellects and bodies. And so in point of benefit we must have more sobriety than to suppose God to make over any benefit to them which they are not capable of : all this is plain.

PROP. 3. *The continuation of Privileges received in Infancy, is part of the Privileges of the Adult ; or the Restoration of them if they be lost.*

IF the cause discontinue, the effect will cease. Adult privileges comprehend the infant privileges, partly as that which is perfect comprehendeth the imperfect, and partly as the whole comprehendeth the parts, and partly as the thing continued is the same with the thing begun. Infant privileges would all cease with infancy, if the causes or conditions cease, and there be no other cause for their continuance. God never took infants into his church and covenant, with a purpose so to continue them, without any other condition than that upon which they were admitted. This is past denial, and will be more cleared in the next.

PROP. 4. *The Title-condition of Infant Church-membership and Privileges, is not the same with the Title-condition of the Church-membership and Privileges of the Adult ; so that if this new Condition be not performed when Men come to Age, their former Title ceaseth, and there is no other that ariseth in its stead.^a*

1. WE are agreed I think, that our title, (which is ‘ Funda-

^a See the Rubric of the Common Prayer-Book before Confirmation after cited.

mentum Juris' is God's covenant, grant, or gift.^b As it is his precept that constituteth our duty, so it is his promise or deed of gift which is our title to the benefit.

2. And we are agreed I hope, that this promise, or grant from God is conditional; for if church-membership and privileges be absolutely given, then it is to all, or but to some: not to all: for then the church, and the world are all one; and then it is not 'Ecclesia cœtus evocatus;' and then Heathens and Infidels have right; which are things that no Christian, I think, will grant. If it be but some that have title, then there must be some note to know them by; or else the some will be equal to all, or to none. And if they be marked out, then it must be by name or by description: not by name; for we find the contrary. Scripture doth not name all that have title to church-privileges. If it be by description, it is either by mere physical or by moral qualifications that they are described: the former, none doth imagination, that I hear of. If they are moral qualifications, then either they are such as are prerequisite to our right and privileges, or not: that they are prerequisite all must confess that read the promise, and all do confess that they are prerequisite to all the following privileges: and if prerequisite, then either as means or no means. The latter none can affirm, without going against so much light, as ordinary Christians have still ready at hand to confute them with: and if they are required as means; then either as causes or conditions. And I think you will sooner yield them to be conditions than causes, though either concession sufficeth to the end that is before us. But of this we need to say no more, both because it is commonly confessed, and because that the words of the promises are so plain, and undeniable, being uttered in conditional terms. Nor is this either inconsistent with, or any way unsuitable to an absolute decree; for as a threatening, so the conditionality of a promise, are instruments admirably suited to the accomplishment of an absolute purpose or decree. He that is fully resolved to save us, or to give us the privileges of his church, will deal with us as men, in bringing us to the possession of the intended benefits; and there-

^b G. Cassander Consult. de Confirm. Hujusmodi sane Institutionem seu Catechismi explicationem in pueris fieri debere, et Veteres præcipiunt, et Recentiores quoque ex utraque parte consentiunt. Vide August. Sermon. 116. in Ramis palmarum, et Wallafridum de rebus Ecclesiast. cap. 26. et quæ scripsit Ruardus Tappenus Lovan. tom. 2. ad illud Calvinii Instit. c. 17.

fore will by threats and conditional promises excite us to a careful performance of the condition in us; and that grace which is resolved to effect the very condition in us, is also resolved to make a conditional promise, yea, and a threatening the instrument of effecting it.

3. Note, that the great question, Whether all the infants of true believers are certainly justified, or whether some of them have but lower privileges, is not here to be determined, but in a fitter place: and therefore I determine not what privileges they are that will cease, if our infant title cease; but that according to the tenor of the promise, the continuance of them, with the addition of the privileges proper to the adult, are all laid upon a new condition.

4. Note also, that when I call it another or different condition, I mean not that it is different in the nature of the act, but in the agent or subject. It is the same kind of faith which at first is required in the parent, for the child's behoof, and that afterward is required in ourselves. But the condition of the infant's title is but this,—that he be the child of a believer, dedicated to God; but the condition of the title of persons at age is, that they be themselves believers, that have dedicated themselves to God. The faith of the parent is the condition of infant title: and the faith of the person himself, is the condition of the title of one at age.

That their own faith is not the condition of an infant's title, I think I need not prove: For (1.) They are incapable of believing without a miracle: (2.) If they were not (as some Lutherans fondly think), yet it is certain that we are incapable of discerning by such a sign. I think no minister that I know, will judge what infants do themselves believe, that he may baptize them. (3.) And I think no man that looks on the command, or promise, and the person of an infant, will judge that he is either commanded then to believe, or that his believing is made the condition of his infant title.

But that a personal believing is the condition of the title of them at age, is as far past doubt; and it is proved thus:—

Arg. 1. The Promise itself doth expressly require a faith of our own, of all the adults that will have part in the privileges; therefore it is a faith of our own that is the condition of our title. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not, shall be damned.” (Mark xvi. 16.) “And the Eunuch said, See here is water, what

doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." (Acts viii. 36, 37.) "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," &c. (Acts ii. 38. 41.) Then they that gladly received his word were baptized. Acts x. 44, 47, 48; xvi. 14, 15. 30. 32, 33; Rom. x. 13—14, with many other texts, do put this out of doubt.

Arg. 2. We were engaged in our infant baptismal covenant to believe and repent, when we came to age, as a means to our reception of the benefits of the covenant, proper to the adult; therefore we must perform our covenant, and use this means, if we will have the benefits.

Arg. 3. If another condition were not of necessity to the aged, beside the condition that was necessary to them in infancy, then Turks, Jews and Heathens, should have right to church-membership, and privileges of the adult; but the consequent is notoriously false, therefore so is the antecedent.

The reason of the consequent is evident; because a man that hath believing parents may turn Turk, (as is known in thousands of Janizaries), or Jew, or Pagan; and therefore, if it were enough that he was the child of a believer, his title to church-privileges would still continue. And so among professed Christians, the child of a believer may turn Heretic, or notoriously profane and scandalous, and yet have title to church-privileges, if his first title still hold, and a personal faith be not a necessary condition of his right. Add to these, the many arguments tending to confirm the point in hand, which I have laid down on another occasion in my "Disputations of Right to Sacraments." But I think I need not spend more words to persuade any Christians, that our parents' faith will not serve to give us title to the church-privileges of the adult, but we lose our right even to church-membership itself, if when we come to age, we add not a personal faith, or profession at least, of our own.

I only add, that this is a truth so far past doubt, that even the Papists and the Greeks have put it into their Canons. For the former you may find it in the Decrees, part 3. dist. 3. p. (mihi) 1241, cited out of Augustin in these words, 'Parvulus qui baptizatur, si ad annos rationales veniens, non crediderit, nec ab illicitis abstinuerit, nihil ei prodest, quod

parvulus accepit.' That is, an infant that is baptized, if coming to years of discretion, he do not believe, nor abstain from things unlawful, that which he received in infancy, doth profit him nothing.

And for the Greeks; that this is according to their mind, you may see in Zonaras in Comment. in Epist. Canon. Can. 45, cited ex Basilli Mag. Epist. 2. ad Amphiloeh, thus, 'Siquis accepto nomine Christianismi, Christum contumelia afficit, nulla est illi appellationis utilitas:' that is, if any one having received the name of Christianity, shall reproach Christ, he hath no profit in the name. On which Zonaras added, 'Qui Christo credidit, et Christianus appellatus est, cum ex Divinis præceptis vitam instituere oportet, ut hoc ratione Deus per ipsum glorificetur, quemadmodum illis verbis præcipitur, sic luceat Lux vestra coram hominibus, &c. Siquis autem nominatur quidem Christianus, Dei vero præcepta transgreditur, contumeliam irrogat Christo, ejus de nomine appellatur, nec quicquam ex ea appellatione utilitatis trahit:' that is, Seeing he that believed in Christ, and is called a Christian, ought to order his life by the commandments of God, that so God may be glorified by him; according to that "Let your light so shine before men, &c." If any one that is called a Christian, shall transgress God's commands, he brings a reproach on Christ, by whose name he is called; and he shall not receive the least profit by that title, or name. This is somewhat higher than the point needs, that I bring it for.

And indeed it were a strange thing, if all other infidels should be shut out of the privileges of the church, except only the treacherous covenant-breaking infidel; (for such are all that being baptized in infancy, prove no Christians when they come to age;) as if perfidiousness would give him right.

PROP. 5. As a personal Faith is the Condition before God of Title to the Privileges of the Adult; so the Profession of this Faith, is the Condition of his right before the Church; and without this Profession, he is not to be taken as an Adult Member, nor admitted to the Privileges of such.

THIS proposition also, as the sun, revealeth itself by its own light, and therefore commandeth me to say but little for the confirmation of it.

Arg. 1. The church cannot judge of things unknown; ‘non entium, et non apparentium eadem est ratio:’ not to appear, and not to be, is all one as to the judgment of the church. We are not searchers of the heart, and therefore we must judge by the discoveries of the heart, by outward signs.

Arg. 2. If profession of faith were not necessary ‘coram Ecclesia’ to men’s church-membership and privileges, then Infidels and Heathens would have right, as was said in the former case, and also the church and the world would be confounded, and the church would be no church; but these are consequents that I hope no Christians will have a favourable thought of; and therefore they should reject the antecedent.

Arg. 3. It is a granted case among all Christians, that profession is thus necessary. The Apostles, and ancient Churches admitted none without it; no more must we. Though all require not the same manner of profession, yet that profession itself is the least that can be required of any man, that layeth claim to church-privileges and ordinances proper to adult members; this we are all agreed in, and therefore I need not add more proof, where I find no controversy.

But yet as commonly as we are agreed on this, yet because it is the very point which most of the stress of our present disputation lieth on, it may not be amiss to foresee what may possibly be objected by any new comers hereafter.

Object. Perhaps some may say, 1. That we find no mention of professions required in Scripture: 2. It is not probable that Peter received a profession from those thousands whom he so suddenly baptized: 3. Our churches have been true churches without such a profession, personally and distinctly made; therefore it may be so still. To these I answer briefly, yet satisfactorily:

1. The Scripture gives us abundant proof that a plain profession was made in those times by such as were baptized at age, and so admitted, by reason of their ripeness and capacity, into the church; and to the special communion and privileges of the adult at once. To say much of the times of the Old Testament, or before Christ, would be but to interrupt you with less pertinent things; yet there it is apparent, that all the people were solemnly engaged in covenant with God, by Moses, more than once; and that

this was renewed by Joshua, and other godly princes; and that Asa made the people not only "enter into covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their hearts, and with all their souls; but that whosoever would not seek him should be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman: and they sware to the Lord with a loud voice, and with shoutings, and with trumpets, and with cornets." (2 Chron. xv. 12—14.) So following princes called the people to this open covenanting. But this is not all; to take "the Lord only to be their God," (with the rest of the law,) was the very essence of an Israelite's religion, which they did not only openly profess, but excessively sometimes glory in. As circumcision sealed the covenant, and therefore supposed the covenant to infants and aged whoever were circumcised, so had they many sorts of sacrifice, and other worship, in which they all were openly to profess the same religion and covenant. Many purifications also, and sanctifyings of the people they had; and many figures of the covenant. "I am the Lord thy God," &c. "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me," &c. was the tenor of the covenant which every Israelite expressly, and by frequent acts, professed to consent to; The law is called a covenant, which all were to own, and avouch the Lord to be their God, and themselves his people. See Deut. xxvi. 17, 18; xxix. 10, 11, 14, &c.; 2 Kings xxiii. 3; 2 Chron. xxiii. 3, 16; xxix. 10; Ezra x. 3; Neh. ix. 38; Psal. l. 5; Ezek. xx. 37; Jer. l. 5; Isa. lvi. 4, 5; Exod. xxxiv. 27; Psal. ciii. 18; xxv. 10; xviii. 10, &c.

And yet I hope no Christian would wish that we should deal no more openly and clearly with God, the church, and ourselves, in days of Gospel light and worship, than the Jews were to do in their darker state, under obscure types and shadows.

We find that when John Baptist set up his ministry he caused the people to "confess their sins;" (Matt. iii. 6;) And "if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." (1 John i. 19.) And whereas some say, that John baptized them, that he calleth "a generation of vipers;" I answer, (1.) We will believe that when they prove it. It seems rather that he put them back. (2.) If he did baptize them, it was not till they "confessed their sins" (because that all did;) and it seems by his charge, till

they promised to “bring forth fruits meet for repentance.” (Matt. iii. 8.)

Christ would not have so instructed Nicodemus in the nature and necessity of regeneration, before he was a disciple, if a professed, or apparent preparation had not been necessary; nor would he ordinarily have taught men the necessity of denying themselves, and forsaking all for a treasure in heaven, with such like, if they would be his disciples, if the profession of so doing had not been necessary, to their visible discipleship.

I grant that so full a profession was not made before Christ's resurrection as after; for many articles of our belief were afterwards made necessary: and the Apostles themselves were unacquainted with what the weakest Christian did afterwards believe. But still the essentials of faith, then necessary in existence to men's justification, were necessary in profession to men's visible Christianity or church-membership.

2. As to those, Acts ii. 37, &c. It is plain, that they made an open profession, if you consider, (1.) That they were openly told the doctrine which they must be baptized into, if they did consent: (2.) It is said, “They that gladly received that word, were baptized.” (3.) It is certain therefore that they first testified their “glad reception of the word.” (4.) We may not imagine that Peter was God, or knew the hearts of all those thousands, and therefore he must know it by their profession, that “they gladly received the word.” (5.) Their own mouths cry out for advice in order to their salvation. (6.) It had been absurd for the Apostles to attempt to baptize men, that had not first professed their consent. (7.) The Scripture gives us not the full historical narration of all that was said and done in such cases, but of so much as was necessary. (8.) The institution and nature of the ordinance tells us, that baptism could not be administered without a profession, to the adult; for they were to be “baptized into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” and therefore were to profess that they “believed in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” Yea the very receiving of baptism was an actual profession. (9.) The constant practice of the Universal Church, hath given us by infallible tradition, as full assurance of the order of baptism,

and in particular of an express profession and covenant then made, as of any point that by the hands of the church can be received by us. (10.) And it was in those days a more notorious profession to be so baptized, and to join in the holy assemblies than now it is. When the profession of Christianity did hazard men's liberties, estates, and lives, to be openly then baptized upon covenanting with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and openly join with a hated, persecuted sort of men, was an eminent sort of profession. It being also usually private in houses, as separated from the main body of the people, and not in public places like ours, where men are justly driven to come as learners for instruction.

Moreover, it is said of all that were baptized, being then at age, that they first believed; and how could the baptizers know that they believed, but by their profession? Yea, it is said of Simon Magus, that he believed and was baptized; which (though he might really have some historical faith, yet) implieth, that he openly professed more than he indeed had, or else he had scarcely been baptized: which hath caused interpreters to judge that by *faith* is meant *a profession of faith*. And if so, then surely a profession was still necessary. Yea, Christ in his commission directeth his apostles to "make disciples," and then "baptize them;" promising, that "he that believeth, and is baptized shall be saved." And who can tell whether a man be a Disciple, a Believer, or an Infidel, but by his profession? How was it known but by their profession, that "the Samaritans believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ," before they were "baptized, both men and women?" (Acts viii. 12.)

Philip caused the Eunuch to profess, before he would baptize him, that he "believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;" which upon his teaching the rest, did import the rest, if it were not more fully professed. (Acts viii. 37, 38.)

Saul had more than a bare profession before baptism. (Acts ix. 5. 15. 17.)

Cornelius and his company had a profession, and more, for they had the Holy Ghost poured on them, "speaking with tongues, and magnifying God;" that use of the gift of tongues importing more than the gift itself. (Acts x. 46.)

Yea, the Spirit bid Peter, "Go and not doubt." (Acts xi. 12.) And it was such a gift of the Spirit, as caused the apostles to conclude, that "God had granted the Gentiles repentance unto life." (Acts xi. 18.)

How was it known but by their profession, that that "great number believed and turned to the Lord," and the "grace of God" was such as Barnabas saw. (Acts xi. 21. 23.)

And when Saul after his baptism "assayed to join himself to the disciples at Jerusalem," they so suspected him, that they would not receive him, till Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles, and declared to them, how God had dealt with him, and how boldly at Damascus he had preached in the name of Jesus; which shews they did not admit men to their communion, till their profession seemed credible to them; for no doubt Saul told them himself that he was a believer, before he was put to make use of the testimony of Barnabas.

The converted Gentiles, (Acts xiii. 48,) shewed their belief and gladness, and openly glorified the word of the Lord. How but by a profession did it come to pass, that the great multitude at Iconium, both Jews and Greeks, were known to be believers? (Acts xiv. 1.) The same I may say of the jailor, (Acts xvi,) who by works, as well as words, declared his conversion. Likewise the Bereans; (Acts xvii. 12;) and the Athenians; (Acts xvii. 34;) and Crispus, with the Corinthians. (Acts xviii. 8.) The believing Ephesians, "confessed and shewed their deeds, and many of them burnt as many of their books of ill arts as came to fifty thousand pieces of silver." (Acts xix. 18.) In a word, it is the standing rule, that "If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." He that bids us "receive him that is weak in the faith, but not to doubtful disputations," implieth, that we must not receive them that profess not at least "a weak faith." (Heb. v; vi. 1—3.) Shew that the "principles of the doctrine of Christ," were first laid as the foundation before baptism. And who received those principles could not be known but by a profession. To this let me add, that '*Pœnitentiam agere*' was judged by the ancient

doctors, the repentance that was prerequisite to baptism; and that is, a manifested, professed repentance.

God's order is, to the adult, first to send preachers to proclaim the Gospel; and when by that men are brought so far, as to profess, or manifest that "their eyes are opened, and that they are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," then must they be "baptized for the remission of their sins, and to receive the inheritance among the sanctified by faith in Christ." (Acts xxvi. 17, 18.) As their sins are not forgiven them till they are converted, (Mark iv. 12,) so they must not be baptized for the forgiveness of sins, till they profess themselves converted, seeing to the Church '*non esse, et non apparere*,' is all one. "Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," is the sum of that preaching that maketh disciples, (Acts xx. 21,) and therefore, both these must by profession seem to be received, before any at age are baptized.

"If as many as are baptized into Christ, are baptized into his death, and are buried with him by baptism into his death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead, so we also should walk in newness of life, (Rom. vi. 4, 5,) then no doubt but such as were to be baptized, did first profess this mortification, and a consent to be buried and revived with Christ, and to live to him in newness of life. For Paul was never so much for the '*opus operatum*' above the Papists, as to think that the baptizing of an infidel, might effect these high and excellent things. And he that professeth not faith, nor ever did, is to the church an infidel.

In our baptism "we put off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, being buried with him, and rising with him through faith—quickened with him, and having all our trespasses forgiven." (Col. iii. 11—13.) And will any man, yea, will Paul ascribe all this to those that did not so much as profess the things signified, or the necessary condition? Will baptism, in the judgment of a wise man, do all this for an infidel, or one that professeth not to be a Christian?

Baptism is said to save us, (1 Pet. iii. 21,) and therefore they that will be baptized must profess the qualifications necessary to be saved.

“The keys of the kingdom of heaven” are put into the church’s hands; and they that are loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven (if the key do not err); and therefore pastors of the church must absolve none, by baptism, that do not by profession seem to be absolvable in heaven. They must profess to have “the old man crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth they might not serve sin.” (Rom. vi. 5—8.)

“As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, and are all one in Christ Jesus, and are Abraham’s seed, and heirs, according to promise,” (Gal. iii. 27—29,) Thus speaks the Apostle of the probability grounded on a credible profession; and therefore it is clear, that the profession was presupposed, that might support this charitable judgment. Our baptism is the solemnizing of our marriage with Christ; and it is a new and strange kind of marriage, where there is no profession of consent.

The baptized are in Scripture called men *washed, sanctified, justified*, &c. (1 Cor. vi. 11; 1 Cor. xiv. 33.) They are called *saints, and churches of saints*, (1 Cor. i. 2.) All Christians are called *sanctified ones*, or *saints*; therefore it is certain that they professed themselves such.

But why should I go any further in this, when the main substance of my “Dispute of Right to the Sacraments” proves it? I entreat the reader that would have more, to prove not only the necessity of a profession, but also of the profession of a saving faith, to peruse that book, or at least the second Disputation, where are twenty arguments for it; and the sense of all the ancient churches there cited out of Mr. Gataker’s Collections. See also Dr. Hammond’s many testimonies to prove the use of the Abrenunciation, Parænes. p. 18—20. I love not needlessly to recite what others have already cited; but he that knows not that the Universal Church from the days of the apostles, hath baptized the adult, upon a personal profession of faith, and repentance, and vow, or promise, or covenant for obedience, knows little of what the church hath practised. And I hope few sober men will be found that will be so singular and self-conceited, as to contradict the practice of the Universal Church in such a case as this, and set up their own private judgment against it, and go about to persuade us to a new way of church entrance, and admission, now in the end of the world. Blame

me not to be confident with you, where I have so good ground as Scripture, and so good company as the primitive Universal Church.

To this let me add, that most, or too many, that we are to receive to the privileges of adult members, have violated their baptismal covenant, and proved ungodly after baptism, and that by open, notorious scandals. Now Scripture, and the practice of the universal ancient church direct us, to require of these an open confession of sin; for they need an absolution, and not a mere confirmation. It is past all controversy, that such have both an open confession and profession to make. Yea, how scrupulous the ancient church was of receiving and absolving such violators of the baptismal covenant; and on how severe terms they did it, is known to all, that know any thing of those times. I pray amongst others see what Grotius (*Discus. Apol. Rivet.* pp. 221, 222,) cited from Irenæus, Tertullian, Pacianus, Jerom, &c. ad p. 235. n.

3. As to the last objection, that our churches were true churches, when we made no particular professions, I answer, (1.) Without some profession of true Christianity, our churches could not have been true churches. And therefore against those that would prove them no churches, we plead, and justly, that a profession was made by them. (2.) But I pray you mark, that that will prove a church to be a true church, which will not prove every person in the parish, to be a true member of that church. (3.) And he that thinks it enough, that our churches have a mere metaphysical verity, (such as Bishop Hall, and multitudes of learned Protestants allow the church of Rome itself) is as good a friend to it, as he is to his wife and child, that will let them go naked; yea, and be contented that they catch the plague, or leprosy; yea, and plead for it too; and all because they have still the truth of human nature.

I know that any thing that may truly be called a profession, will, in that point, seem to prove the being of the church. But as it will not seem to prove the well-being; so an obscure profession doth but obscurely prove the being of it, which an open, plain profession doth more clearly prove. Let us not befriend either the kingdom of darkness, or the Separatists so much, as to leave our churches so open to their exceptions, and so apt to cherish and befriend their

ignorance, and infidelity of the world. If coming to church, and sitting there, be somewhat a probable argument that men do implicitly believe as that church believes; yet it is a very dark proof, that they understand what the church believes; especially when experience hath acquainted us with the contrary of many of them.

But now I have said this much for a personal and plain profession, I would fain know what any man hath against it. The church, through the great mercy of God, hath yet liberty to use it; and we see how many thousands make a blind kind of show of Christianity^c, going from one public duty to another, and knowing not what they do. And is there not need that they should be brought out into the open light, and see their way? If covenanting with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be the essence of our Christianity; in the name of God, I desire you to consider whether it be a thing to be huddled up in the dark? Unless it be men's design to hide the nature of Christianity, and keep people in destructive ignorance, and delude their souls with a name and show of a religion, which they understand not; they will surely be willing that men should know the covenant that they make, and understand what they do, before they enter into a marriage-bond with Christ, if at age, or own it, if they have been entered in infancy. Why should we choose darkness rather than light? Why should an implicit covenant and profession be pleaded for, when the being of a profession is 'palam fateri,' openly to make known; and when we know by sad experience, that when we have all done the best we can, to make our ignorant people understand, we shall find enough to do to accomplish it? Ignorance hath no need of friendship; and from ministers it deserveth none; especially in so great a point as the covenant that men make with Christ. We have wares that deserve the light, and need not a dark shop. We have a Master that we need not be afraid, or ashamed, explicitly and publicly to confess. It beseems not so high and honourable a profession as that of a Christian, to be wrapped up in obscu-

^c Albaspin. in Tertul. de Præscript. c. 43. p. 308. Non nisi magna cum deliberatione quenquam in societatum et communionem Ecclesiarum venire patiebantur —Ait igitur diu multumque Orthodoxos deliberare, quorum Sententiis subscribere, quosve in societatem ejusdem Ecclesiæ et corporis recipere debeant: contra vero hæreticos ullo discrimine cum omnibus hæreticis pacem miscere.

rity. Such a glorious state as sonship to God, to be an heir of heaven &c. should be entered into with great solemnity, and owned accordingly at our first rational acceptance and acknowledgment. Kings are crowned more solemnly, than poor men take possession of their cottages. Christ will be ashamed of them before the angels, that are ashamed of him before men : and will confess them before his Father. that confess him before men. Christianity is not a game to be played under-board. Why then should any be against an open professing, and covenanting with Christ? If it be needful that we covenant, certainly the plainest and most explicit covenanting is the best. And what will be his portion that hath a male in his flock, and offereth the worst, yea, the halt and blind to God?

Let us therefore deal as openly, plainly, and understandingly in the covenant of God as we can, and not contrive it in the greatest darkness, that is, consistent with the essence of a church. Nay, let us not tempt men to unchurch us, or separate from us, by leaving our cause to such arguments as this: 'such a man sitteth among other hearers, in the congregation, therefore he maketh a profession of the Christian faith;' lest they think it followeth not 'therefore he seemeth to understand the Christian faith,' much less 'he professeth it;' especially when it is known that so many understand it not; and that the Papists in their writings, maintain it lawful for them to be present at our assemblies; and infidels tell us, that they can hear any man, and do come thither^d.

Nehemiah caused the Jews "to subscribe the covenant, and seal it." (ix. 38.) Even under the law it was the character of visible "saints, to make a covenant with God by sacrifice," (Psal. l. 5,) at least now God "hath caused us to pass under the rod." Let us yield to be "brought under the bond of the covenant," (Ezek. xx. 37,) and let us as weeping Israel and Judah, "seek the Lord our God, and ask the way to Zion, with our faces thitherward, saying; come and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten." (Jer. l. 4, 5.) Let us "take hold of his covenant, and choose the things that please him, that he may bring us into his holy mountain, and make us joyful in his house of prayer, and our sacrifices may be accepted on his altar." (Isa. lvi. 4, 6, 7.) Are not these the

^d Vid. Thom. a Jesu de Convers. Omn. Gentium de hac quæst.

days of which it is said, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." (Isa. xlv. 3—5.) I would have as little covenanting for doubtful, needless, or mutable things, in church or state, as is possible; but in the great things of our salvation, even the essence of Christianity, we cannot be bound too fast, nor deal too understandingly, and openly with God.

PROP. 6. *It is not every kind of Profession, that is the Condition, or necessary qualification of those that are to be admitted to the Privileges of Adult Members; but such a Profession as God hath made necessary, by his express Word, and by the Nature of the Object, and the Uses, and Ends, to which he doth require it.*

THE negative is not controverted among us. If any were so quarrelsome or ignorant, it is easily proved. And I shall do it briefly, but satisfactorily in the opening of the affirmative.

I have proved in my first "Disputation of Right to Sacraments," (which I desire the reader, that would have further satisfaction, to peruse,) the necessity of these following qualifications of this profession.

1. In general, as to the *object* of our faith, it must be a profession of true Christianity, and no less. It must be a profession of our entertainment, both of the truth of the Gospel, and of the good therein revealed and offered. More particularly, it must be a profession that we believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as to the nature, persons, and works, which they have done or undertaken for us. Yet more particularly, and explicitly; it must be a profession, (1.) That we believe in God the Father, and so the pure Deity, as our Creator, Sovereign, and chief Good, who gave us the law of nature, by breaking of which, we have lost ourselves, and all our part in everlasting life. (2.) That we believe in Jesus Christ, God and Man, that taking our nature, fulfilled the law, overcame the devil, died as a sacri-

fice for our sins, rose again, and conquered death, ascended into heaven, where he is Lord of all, and the King, Prophet, and Priest of his Church, in glory with the Father. That he hath offered himself with pardon, and eternal life, to all that will accept him on his terms ; that he will come again at last to raise us from death, and judge the world, and justify his saints, and bring them to eternal glory, and cast the wicked into utter misery. (3.) That we believe in God the Holy Ghost, that inspired the prophets and apostles, to deliver and confirm the word of God, and who is the Sanctifier of all that shall be saved, illuminating their understandings, and changing their hearts and lives, humbling them for their sin and misery, causing them to believe in Christ, the remedy, and heartily and thankfully accept him ; possessing them with an hearty love of God, a heavenly mind, a hatred of sin, a love of holiness, turning the principal bent of their hearts and lives, to the pleasing of God, and the attaining of eternal life. This much must be believed, and the belief of this much, must be somehow professed.

2. As to the *acts* of the thing professed, it must be, not only the naked assent of the understanding ; but both this assent that the Gospel is true, and a consent of the will, to take God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to the forementioned ends, in the forementioned relations ; and to give up ourselves unfeignedly to him, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil.

3. As to the nature of the profession itself. (1.) It must in general be credible ; for no man is bound to believe that which is incredible. The words are the signs of the mind, and as such they are to be uttered, and received. If they be contrary to the mind, they are false ; and if wilfully contrary, they are a lie : and God doth not make a lie to be the condition of church-membership, or privileges ; nor doth he bind his ministers, or church, to believe a known lie : nothing but real, or seeming truth is to be believed^e. (2.) More particularly, the profession which we speak of, must have these qualifications.

[1.] It must be, or seem to be *understanding*. ‘ Ignor-

^e Therefore it is to be made at years of understanding. The Papists themselves say in their catechism, composed for the Armenians, translated by Peter Paulus, p. 194, *Tum recipiendum est sacramentum hoc, quando ad usum rationis pervenit homo, fidemque profiteri incipit, et ut confirmetur, et stabiliatur in gratia opus habet.*

rautis non est consensus.' If a parrot could say the creed, it were not a credible profession of faith. Therefore the ancient church was wont, by catechists, to prepare them to understand the doctrine which they were to believe, and profess. This is past controversy. I think no minister would take that man's profession, that seemeth not to understand what he saith.

[2.] No profession is credible, but that which is, or seems to be *serious*. He that speaks in scorn, or jest, is not to be believed, as one that speaks his mind; nor is it to pass for a profession.

[3.] No profession is credible or sufficient, but that which is, or seems to be free and voluntary. Though some force, or outward urgencies in some cases may help to incline the will, yet *willing* it must be; or it is not a credible profession. He that professeth himself a Christian, when a sword or pistol is at his breast, is not to be credited, if he continue it not when he is free. And also, that which is done in a mere passion, without deliberation, is not to be taken as the act of the man, and a true expression of the bent of his mind; unless he afterwards stand to it upon deliberation.

[4.] It must be a profession not nullified by a contradiction in word or deed. Though there may an obscure contradiction, not understood, consist with it; or a contradiction only in degree: as, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief;" yet there must be no contradiction of the essentials of our profession, that nullifieth it, by shewing that we lie, or speak against the bent of our hearts. If a minister can by contrary words or deeds disprove the profession of the party, he is not to believe it, or accept it; for we are not to believe without evidence of credibility, much less against it. I have given instances of this in the aforesaid "Disputation of the Sacrament," p. 10.

[5.] When by covenant-breaking, and perfidiousness, or often lying, a man is become incredible, having forfeited the credit of his word, with wise and charitable men, this man must give us a practical, as well as verbal profession, before we can again admit him to the privileges of the church. For though we are not to be so strict, as some old fathers seem to have been, and the Novatians were, that would not admit such penitents again into the church at all, but leave them to

God's own judgment; yet must we not go against reason and Scripture, and the nature of the thing, in believing that which is not to be believed; nor to cast by all order and discipline, and prostitute God's ordinances to the lusts of men, and make them a scorn, or level the church of Christ with the world.

The testimonies cited by me on another occasion, in the aforesaid disputations, shew the judgment of Protestants in these points, and somewhat of the judgment of antiquity. I shall recite but those on the title-page of the third Disputation.

Tertullian Apologet. cap. 16. "*Sed dices etiam de nostris, excedere quosdam à Regulis disciplinæ. Desinunt tum Christiani haberi penes nos: Philosophi vero illi cum talibus factis, in nomine et honore Sapientiæ perseverant:*" that is, But you will say, that even of ours, some swerve from, or forsake, the rules of discipline.

Answ. They cease then to be counted Christians with us: but your philosophers with such deeds, do keep the name and honour of wisdom.

The judgment of the French professors at Saumours, you have in these words, *Thes. Salmuriens. vol. 3. p. 39. Thes. 39. "Sacramenta non conferuntur nisi iis, qui vel fidem habent vel saltem eam præ se ferant, adeò ut nullis certis argumentis compertum esse possit, eam esse e mentitam:"* that is, Sacraments are conferred on none, but those that either have faith, or at least pretend, or profess, to have it, so that it cannot by any certain arguments be proved to be feigned.

The judgment of the Scottish divines, may be much discovered in these two testimonies following: Gillespie, Aaron's Rod Blossoming, p. 514. "I believe no conscientious minister would adventure to baptize one, who hath manifest and infallible signs of unregeneration. Surely we cannot be answerable to God, if we should minister baptism to a man whose works and words, do manifestly declare him to be an unregenerated, unconverted person. And if we may not initiate such a one, how shall we bring him to the Lord's-table."

Rutherford, *Due Right of Presbyteries*, p. 231. n. 2. "But saith Robinson, most of England are ignorant of the first rudiments and foundations of religion; and therefore cannot be a church."

Ans. Such are materially not the visible Church, and have not a profession : and are to be taught ; and if they will fully remain in that darkness, are to be cast out.

If you would have the testimonies of Protestants, you may read above threescore of them, expressly maintaining that it is a profession of saving faith, that is prerequisite to our right of Sacraments, cited in my forementioned second Disputation. To which I add thirty-three more, cited to a like purpose in my fifth Disputation of Sacraments. And to these add the large testimony of Davenant, with his many arguments, on Col. i. 18, too large to recite.

And for the latter sort of episcopal Divines, that they also agree in the same, I will satisfy you from an eminent man among them, Mr. Herbert Thorndike, in his Discourse of the Right of the Church, p. 31, 32, where he saith, “ And hereby we see how binding and loosing sins, is attributed to the keys of the church : which being made a visible society, by the power of holding assemblies, to which no man is to be admitted, till there be just presumption, that he is of the heavenly Jerusalem, that is above.” I shall add more from him anon.

Somewhat I have elsewhere cited, of the Fathers’ judgments in this point, and more anon I shall have occasion to produce. But in a point that we are agreed on, that is, not every profession, but only a credible profession of true Christianity, even of faith and repentance, that must be taken as satisfactory by the church, I hope I may spare any further proof.

PROP. 7. The Profession of those that expect the Church-state and Privileges of the Adult is to be tried, judged, and approved by the Pastors of the Church, to whose office it is, that this belongeth.

THIS proposition hath two parts : 1. That it is not a profession untried, and unapproved, that must serve the turn. 2. That the trying and approving of it, belongeth to the office of the pastors of the church.

The *first* is granted by almost all Christians that I know of, and therefore need not many words.

(1.) If every man should be the sole judge of the soundness and validity of his own profession, then heretics and heathens, and infidels may all crowd into the church ; for

when there is any outward advantage, or other common motive to induce them to it, they would all join with the church, as if they were Christians. And we see that it is the custom of heretics to intrude: and who shall say to any of them, why do you so, if themselves are the only judges? We meet daily among our own neighbours, with many that know not whether Christ be God or man; nor who he is, nor what he hath done for us, nor why he came into the world, and are ignorant of almost all the essentials of the Christian faith; and with many more that live in common drunkenness, scorning at holy duties, and at a godly life, hating those that use it, and giving up themselves wholly to the flesh, and the world: and yet all these men are so confident of the soundness and validity of their own profession, that they will hate that minister, that shall make any question of their right to the privileges of the church. I speak not by hearsay, or conjecture, but by sad experience. And if they be their own judges, all these will be approved, and admitted where Christianity is in credit, or hath any worldly advantages. So that it is certain, that this would pluck up the hedge, and lay open the vineyard of Christ unto the wilderness. For self-love is such a powerful, blinding thing, that it will make every man almost, especially of the worsers sort, approve of that which is their own.

(2.) If every man should be the sole judge of his profession, and fitness for church-privileges, then there could be no Communion of Saints; for all the most ignorant and impious persons would intrude into our communion; and it would be a communion not only of actual, but of professed impious men. But the consequent is intolerable, as being contrary to an article of our Belief, and a principal part of Christian practice.

(3.) If each man were the only judge of his own profession, then there could be no exercise of Church Discipline, nor keeping, or casting out the wicked: but the consequent is insufferable: therefore,

(4.) If each man be the only judge of his own profession, then the church is an unguided, ungoverned society: but the consequent is false; therefore so is the antecedent.

2. And now I prove that it belongeth to the office of the ministers to judge of, and approve the profession of such as expect admission, or the privileges of the church.

Arg. 1. If persons are not the sole judges themselves, then it must belong to the minister to judge : but the antecedent is before proved. The consequence is proved thus : It must belong either to the pastors, or the magistrate only, or the people only ; or to all, or some of these conjunctly. Not to the *magistrate only* ; for, 1. No man that I know of affirmeth it. 2. It is another man's office. Not to the *people only* : for, 1. None that I know of affirmeth this ; they all include the pastors. 2. As I said, it is made part of the pastor's office. If you say that it belongs to *magistrates, people, and pastors jointly*, then you include the pastors : and I grant that in some sort it belongs to them, but in a different sort, as I shall tell you under the next Proposition.

Arg. 2. It is to ministers, as such, that the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed ; but to approve of the profession of such as are to be admitted into the church, or to its privileges, is part of the exercise of the keys of the kingdom : therefore it is ministers, to whom it belongeth thus to judge and approve.

I have proved in another place, (and so have many others, more at large,) that the keys were not given to Peter, or to the Apostles, as to private men ; for so they were not ; nor as to a church of private Christians ; for so they were not ; nor the representatives of any such : nor yet as to Apostles only ; for then they should have belonged to none but themselves ; the contrary whereof is certain ; not as to fixed diocesan bishops ; for such they were not ; and it is generally granted that the keys belong also to Presbyters, either wholly, or the chief of them, and particularly, that in question : nor yet were the keys given them only as a Synod, or Presbytery ; for Peter was not such : and this in question hath ever been exercised by such ministers.

Arg. 3. The rulers of the church are the lawful judges, or approvers of the profession of those that come into the church, or demand the privileges of it : but it is the ministers of Christ, that are the rulers of the church, as is expressed, 1 Thess. xii ; Acts ii. 28 ; Heb. xiii. 7 ; xvii. 24 ; 1 Tim. v. 17 ; therefore,

Arg. 4. Those that are by office the stewards of the mysteries of God, and rulers over his household, to give them meat in due season, which they must do as faithful and wise servants, till their Lord cometh, are the men that must judge

of and approve the qualifications of those that come under their stewardship, government, and administration, of these mysteries. But such are the ministers of Christ; (1 Cor. iv. 1; Matt. xxiv. 45—47;) therefore,

Arg. 5. To whom it belongeth, to receive men at age into the church; to restore by absolution, them that fall off, and to administer Christ's ordinances to those that are within; to them doth it belong to try, judge, and approve of them, that are to be thus received, absolved, or that expect the privileges of the church. But it belongeth to Christ's ministers to receive men, absolve them, and administer the ordinances to them: therefore the antecedent is commonly granted, and plain in Scripture. The consequence hath reason so evident, as needs no confirmation.

Arg. 6. If all that enter into the church, or that are restored by absolution, or are stated in a right to church privileges of the adult, are therewithal engaged into a mutual, voluntary relation to Christ's ministers, then must their profession be judged of and approved by Christ's ministers: but the antecedent is certain: therefore so is the consequent. The antecedent is clear, because, 1. All that enter into the Universal Church, do enter under the hand of the ministry, and thereby acknowledge their relation to them, and authority to admit them. 2. Because all such do engage themselves to be Christ's disciples, and learn of him as their master, not as coming down from heaven, to teach them personally, but as teaching them by his word, Spirit, and ministers conjunctly, saying, "He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me." (Luke x. 16.) 3. Because they all engage themselves to take Christ for their king, who ruleth them by his laws and officers; and his ministers are his ruling officers. (1 Tim. v. 17; Heb. xiii. 7; xvii. 24; 1 Thess. v. 12.) 4. Because they are all engaged to take Christ for the great High Priest of the Church, who hath appointed his ministers to officiate under him, in leading them in public worship of the church; and in offering up the praises of God, and blessing the people, and praying for them, and celebrating the commemoration, and representation of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. 5. Because they that enter into a particular church, where only the constant stated use of holy ordinances, and privileges, are to be had, (though occasionally elsewhere,) do enter into a relation to

the pastors of that particular church, as members of their flock and church, whom they must oversee and watch over: all this is past controversy.

And then for the consequent of the major proposition: 'that therefore ministers must approve of their profession,' I prove it thus: Ministers are naturally freemen, as well as others; and therefore no man can become a member of their charge, and put them upon so great a duty as the relation doth require, against their wills, without their consent, and contrary to their judgment and consciences. It is an exceeding great burden that lieth on us, and a great deal of work that is required of us, to each particular soul. In our charge we must exhort, instruct, admonish, in season, and out of season, publicly and privately, and watch over, and govern them, visit them in sickness, comfort, strengthen them, &c. O what a mountain lieth on me, and how should I bear it, if God did not support me! And if every man that *will*, shall make me more work, and put himself under my care, without my consent, then I am so far from being a free-man, as all others are, that I am enslaved, and undone in slavery. For, 1. They may oppress me, when they will, with number; and so many may flock into my charge, in despite of me, as shall nullify the particular church, and by the magnitude make it another thing, by making it incapable of its ends. 2. And hereby they may force me to leave undone my duty, both to them and others, by oppressing me with work; for when I have ten times more than I can teach and oversee, I must needs neglect all or most of them. 3. And they may abuse the church, and me with the evil qualities, as well as the excessive quantity of members; and we shall be obliged to give that which is holy to dogs, and to use those as church-members, that are enemies to the church; and to administer sacraments to any, that will have them, how unfit soever; and to profane all God's ordinances, and turn them to a lie. 4. And by this means, the church will be utterly ruined, and made a den of thieves, and a sty of swine; for besides that all the worst may at pleasure be members of it, all men that are faithful, or most at least, will run away from the ministry, and sooner turn chimney-sweepers than pastors. For what man dare venture his soul on so great a charge, for which he knows he must give an ac-

count, when he is certain to leave undone the work of his office, in so great a measure, and when he knows he may be thus oppressed in soul and body, and so undone by wicked men, whenever they please; yea, if they purposely do it to despite him.

Arg. 7. That which belongeth to all other superiors, in voluntary relations, is not to be denied to ministers in theirs; but a free consent, and approbation of them, that they are related to, belong to all other superior, voluntary relations: therefore to us.

A schoolmaster, is to approve the capacity of his scholars; and a physician is to judge of the fitness of a person to be his patient, and his fitness for this or that medicine in particular. Not only a master would take it ill, if he may not have the approbation of his own servants, but have as many, and as bad thrust on him, as shall please; but a husband would think it hard, if he might not have the approbation, and choice of his own wife, but that any might force him to take them that they please. And are the pastors of Christ's church, the only slaves on earth? How improbable a thing is this!

Arg. 8. That relation which must be rationally, regularly, and faithfully managed, must be rationally, regularly, and freely entered, for otherwise we cannot so manage it; but the relation of a Minister to each member of his charge must be thus managed: therefore,

Arg. 9. It is plainly expressed in the minister's commission, that he is to approve of the profession of disciples; therefore it belongeth to his office, "Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them—teaching them to observe all things." (Matt. xxviii. 19.) Which plainly manifesteth, that it is they that must judge, when a man is made a disciple, and when not, or else how can they either baptize them as such, or teach them the precepts of Christ as such? So when he giveth to his servants the keys of the kingdom, (Matt. xviii. &c.,) it sheweth that they are to judge who is to be admitted, and who not, as is aforesaid; or else he would never have set them at the door, and made them the porters, and key-bearers of his church, to let men in.

Arg. 10. No man in the administration of holy ordinances, is ordinarily to renounce his own reason and conscience,

and to act against them ; but thus it would be if we have not the approving of the profession, or qualification of those that we must administer them to : therefore—He that is to execute here, is to judge : for, (1.) Else you will force ministers to go against their reason and conscience in all administrations. (2.) You will deny them so much as ‘judicium discretionis,’ which you allow to every Christian, much more ‘judicium directionis,’ which belongeth to their office. Every man must judge and understand what he doth, and why he doth it. You will not force the people to participate of sacraments, against their consciences, why then should ministers be forced to give them against their consciences ? Administering is their work ; and therefore they must know why they do it, and on what grounds : else you will make them but like hangmen, or worse, if they must do execution against their judgments, because it is another’s judgment. And whose judgment is it that we must follow, when we go against our own ?

Arg. 11. If it belong to Christ, to pass an open approbation of the qualification of such as are to be admitted into his church, or to his special ordinances or church-privileges, then doth it belong to the ministers of Christ, as his instruments ; but it doth belong to Christ. (1.) For all that enter either into an infant, or adult church-state, do join themselves into a near relation to Christ : and will Christ have men married to him, and made his children, and members, and servants, without his approbation of them, or against his particular will ? (2.) All that thus come into the church, or are restored, and claim church-privileges, do expect and claim the benefits of Christ, and the greatest benefits in the world. And shall any man have Christ’s great and precious benefits against his will, and without his approbation ? It may be, you will say, that he hath already expressed his consent in the free promise of the Gospel, to all believers. I answer, he hath so to believers : but he hath done it only to believers, and he hath not said in the Gospel that you are a believer.

Object. ‘ But it is sufficient, that my own conscience bear me witness.’

I answer, It is so ; as to all matters of conscience that are to be transacted only between God and you, as about your justification, and glorification, &c.^f And yet in this

^f It is before proved, that men are not here their own judges.

case, ministerial absolution is a great means to help the peace of your consciences. But where the minister hath to do with you by administrations, and the church hath to do with you in the way of communion, there they must know what they do and why, and must have some expression of what you say your conscience testifieth to you.

And the consequence of the major is plain, ‘that if it belongs thus to Christ to approve, then it belongs to his ministers,’ (1.) Because he appointeth not personally on earth, nor useth, or approveth any other way, to signify his own approbation of you in particular, for a church-state, and privileges. (2.) Because he hath expressly intrusted his ministers with this power, as to speak to men in Christ’s stead, (2 Cor. v. 19,) so to espouse them in Christ their husband, that we may present them a chaste virgin to Christ; (2 Cor. xi. 2;) yea, and hereupon they are to give up themselves to the Lord first, and to us by the will of God. (2 Cor. viii. 5.) Christ’s ministers are his agents, or ambassadors, as to solicit men in his name to be reconciled to him, so to approve them in his name, and tell them that he is reconciled to them. And therefore they are to deliver himself, his body, and blood, in his name to them in the Lord’s-supper; and to bind, and loose in his name; and whatsoever they loose on earth, according to his promise, shall be loosed in heaven: so much of his work doth Christ by his officers.

And even men’s first faith is a believing the preacher, and Christ by them. (Acts viii. 12.) They believed Philip preaching, &c.

Arg. 12. To whomsoever the labour belongeth, to them the power of doing it belongeth: but it is to ministers that the labour of trying and judging of such professions, and qualifications, belongeth; therefore it is to ministers, that the power belongeth.

The major is undoubted; for else we must be bound by God, to do that which we have no power or authority to do, and others must have power to do it, and not be bound to it, which are both senseless. The minor I prove,

(1.) From the frequent commands of Scripture, that lay this burden on the ministers, but not magistrates or people, in the way that is now in question. All the directions, and canons which Paul giveth to Timothy, Titus, to the elders of Ephesus, (Acts xx,) and other pastors, together with the ex-

hortations to performance, and terrible charges given them to be faithful, do shew that it is they that must do the work.

(2.) From common consent: all would have the honour and power; but who besides the pastors would have the work, and care, and severe obligations to perform it? Will magistrates, or all the people undertake it, to try, and judge of the professions of every man that enters upon adult church-membership, or privileges, or such as are to be restored? They that will undertake this work must attend it, and give themselves wholly to it, and confer with the persons, and do so much work as our people would be hardly brought to do, if they were able. It is unexperienced rashness and perverseness, that makes them so jealous of the minister's power in such cases, and some of them to reproach us for it. Ah blind, unthankful souls! Do you know what the ministry and this power is? It is a power to be the servants of all: a power to spend and to be spent, even for the unthankful. It is a power to do the most toilsome and displeasing work to flesh and blood; one of them in the world, such as flesh calls a very drudgery. I profess unfeignedly, that if God had left it to my choice, and I should consult with flesh and blood, I had rather preach twice or thrice a week for nothing, and do no more, than to have this power and duty of guiding and governing this one parish, though I had for it many hundred pounds a year. Nothing doth bring so much trouble upon us, as that power which unthankful persons scorn at. I had rather, if I might consult with flesh and blood, be advanced to the power of holding or driving plough for you, if not of sweeping your streets: though yet because of God's interest, and the ends of the work, I count it the happiest life in the world. And do you grudge us such a power as this? Would you grudge me the power of thrashing your corn; or will you grudge a physician the power of judging of your disease, and the remedy to save your life; or a schoolmaster the power of examining, and teaching your children? Do the work, and take the power, if you are able, and can go through with it, and spare not.

Arg. 13. It is only ministers of Christ, that are able and capable to receive the power and to do the work: and therefore it is they only that have authority thereto.

Nothing but the antecedent needs proof. And that I prove by three several enablements, which ministers have, and

others want. (1.) Ministers only have ability of mind for the work of this trial and approbation. Here I speak of them ordinarily, and I have these grounds for it. [1.] God hath commanded that the most knowing, able, faithful, holy men, shall be destined to this work, (1 Tim. iii; Titus i. &c.,) and therefore it is supposed that usually they are such, or else it is the shame of the magistrate that should see to it. [2.] It is they only that set themselves apart to the work and study from their youth, for the accomplishments that are requisite (unless here and there one of other sorts); and men are most likely to be understanding in that, which they have all their days set themselves to study. [3.] We see by experience that they are the most able, unless it be (alas how few!) here and there a godly, studious gentleman, or other person; who are most of them to blame, that they become not ministers, I think.

(2.) It is only the ministers, who being separated to the Gospel and work of God, do lay by all other business, and give themselves wholly to these things. Gentlemen, (much less all the people of the church,) cannot lay by their callings to attend this business of trying and judging of men's professions as ministers must do, if they will be faithful. Should private members have so much church-governing work as some cut out for them, and should they bear such a burden, as some would lay upon them, under the name of power and privileges, it would undo them soul or body, or both; they would find time little enough for it in some places, if they all cast off their outward callings.

(3.) The pastors only are capable, because of unity: for should the people have this work, as some would have it, the multitude would hinder execution, and they would turn all to wrangling. [1.] Such bodies move slowly. [2.] Multitude with that diversity of parts and minds that is among them, would set them by the ears; and the church would be always in a flame. If every man that is to make profession of his faith, on this or the like occasion, must be tried and judged by all; some would approve, and others would disapprove and reject, in most or very many cases. Whereas the pastors being single, or not many, and more experienced, and able, and vacant for a full inquiry, have less reason to be partial, injurious, or disagreed.

Arg. 14. The practice of the Apostles, Evangelists, and

the Pastors of Christ's Church in all ages, doth put us quite out of doubt, that it is not only belonging to the ministerial office, to judge and approve of such professions, but that it is a very great part of that office.

John Baptist received, and judged of the profession of his penitents, before they did baptize them. The twelve apostles, (Matt. x. 13, 14,) were to judge of the worthiness, or unworthiness, of those that they were to abide with. (Mark vi. 11.) Who were the judges or approvers of the profession of the three thousand converts, (Acts ii. 41,) but the apostles that baptized them, or judged them to be baptized? Who else approved of all the believers that were added, (Acts v. 14,) even multitudes both of men and women? They that continued in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, (Acts ii. 42,) and under their government, no doubt entered at first under their conduct. Philip was the judge of the eunuch's profession. (Acts viii. 37, 38.) Ananias was scrupulous of admitting Paul, but as God himself approved of him to Ananias. (Acts ix. 13—15.) So Ananias also must ministerially approve him, (verse 17.) Who judged of Lydia's profession, and the jailor's, (Acts xvi,) but the apostles, or other ministers of Christ? What need we instance any more, when we all know, that no convert entered at age into the church but under the hand of some minister of Christ, that did baptize him, or appoint him to be baptized?

Object. 'But this is not our case, for we were baptized in infancy, and are in the church already.'

Answ. You entered not into the number of adult and more perfect members in your infancy; nor did you make any personal profession in your infancy: that is yet to be done. Your parents' profession will serve you no longer than your infant state. These being not in the Gospel church before, were at once baptized, and entered thereby into the number of the adult members. So would we do if we converted those that were the seed of heathens or infidels. But though this be not your case in respect of baptism, and an infant church-state, yet this is your own case in regard of personal profession, and adult church-state.

If the ministers of Christ in Scripture-times, admitted none into an adult church-state, and to the privileges of such, but upon a personal profession, approved by the said minis-

ters, then neither must we do so now. But the antecedent is past doubt: therefore—

The reasons of the consequence is, because the Scripture is our rule, and the reasons of the cases are the same. If you say with the Anabaptists, that I may as well argue from the apostles' example, for the baptizing of the aged: I answer, so I will, when the case is the same: when they are converted from infidelity, or are not born and baptized into the Gospel-church before. The apostles did not baptize at age, any person that was born of believing parents in the Gospel-church, after baptism was instituted. As to them that say, that 'Mary was a Christian, and yet Christ was not baptized till full age;' I answer, (1.) That Mary was not a baptized person: (2.) That baptism into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was not instituted in Christ's infancy; how should he be baptized in infancy, when there was no such ordinance of God in the world, as Gospel-baptism, or John's baptism? If you think baptism, and profession, or church-membership so inseparable, that we must not require such a profession, but in order to baptism: 1. You speak without proof: 2. You speak even contrary to the experience of the Jewish church, where in the wilderness, circumcision was separated from profession, and church-membership, both of infants, and adults; the latter being without the former. 3. If we may be baptized in infancy, without a personal profession, then they are separable; but the antecedent is proved in due place. No man denieth, that I know of, but that personal profession approved by the ministers, is necessary in several cases, after baptism. But all the examples of the baptized adult in the New Testament, will fully prove, that all men should enter into the state and number of adult church-members, upon a personal profession approved by the ministers of Christ; for so did all in the Scripture times, on reasons common to them and us; and no man can put by the obligation of the example, by any pretence of an imparity of reason, but what will be as strong to evacuate almost all Scripture example, and much of the commands. But as to the baptizing persons at age, we will do the same, when the persons are such as the apostles baptized; and that they baptized none others was never yet proved; but more said for the affirmative.

Ever since the apostles' days, it hath been the constant

practice of the church, that the profession and claim of the adult, should be tried by the ministers of Christ. (1.) In case of infant baptism, the minister was to receive and approve the parents' profession. (2.) In case of the baptism of the aged, they always entered under the trial, approbation or hand of the minister. (3.) In case of the confirming of those at age, that were baptized in infancy, it was always done under the hand and judgment of the minister. (4.) In case of absolution of those that fell after either infant, or adult baptism, it was always upon a profession approved by the minister. To prove these things is vain, it being the subject of so many canons, and so commonly known, both by record and practice.

Mr. Herbert Thorndike in his forecited Discourse of the Right of the Church, is full upon it. P. 32, he saith, "As the power of judging who is, and who is not thus qualified, presupposes a profession; so that an instruction, obliging the obedience of them, which seek remission of sins, by the Gospel, and therefore confidently assuring it to them, which conform themselves. In a word, because admitting to, and excluding from the church, is, or ought to be, a just and lawful presumption of admitting to, or excluding from heaven, N. B. it is morally and legally the same act, that entitleth to heaven, and to the church; that maketh an heir of life everlasting, and a Christian; because he that obeyeth the church, in submitting to the Gospel, is as certainly a member of the invisible, as of the visible church." You see here in his judgment, both what kind of profession it must be, and who is the judge of it (of which he is more large). And surely, they that see confirmation, and penance, or absolution, grown up to the reputation of proper sacraments, and understandeth how they came to it, will never question whether the Universal Church hath still taken the pastors for the lawful judges and approvers of that confession and profession, which in such cases was requisite.

And that it was a profession, both of saving faith, and repentance, that was expected by the church; which the pastors were to judge of, I mentioned some plain testimonies of antiquity, Apol. p. 95, to which I shall add some more.

Justin Martyr, Apol. 2. expressing how baptism was then administered to the adult, saith, "As many as being per-

suaded, do believe these things to be true which we teach, and to promise to live according to them, they first learn, by prayer and fasting, to beg pardon of God, for their former sins, ourselves also joining our prayer and fasting; then they are brought to the water, and born again, in the same way as we ourselves were born again." And of the Lord's-supper he saith, "This food we call the Eucharist, to which no man is admitted, but he that believeth the truth of our doctrine, being washed in the laver of regeneration, for the remission of sin, and that so liveth as Christ hath taught."

Nazianzen, *Orat.* 40. vol. 1. p. 641. "The force and faculty of baptism, is nothing else, but a covenant entered with God, for a second (or new) life, and a more pure course of living. And therefore that we should all exceedingly fear, and with all diligence keep our souls, lest we be found to have violated this covenant." Basil's words, and many more to the like purpose there recited, I forbear.

And that a man baptized, is not so much as to be taken for a Christian, if by word or deed he nullify that profession, much more when he never made a personal profession, when he is at age, the ancients commonly agree. Some I cited before: Tertullian again saith, *Apol.* cap. 44, speaking of the jailor, "Nemo illic Christianus, nisi plane tantum Christianus, aut se et aliud, jam non Christianus."

Athenagoras, in *Legat. pro Christ.* p. 3. "Nullus Christianus malus est nisi hanc professionem simulaverit."

Damascene *Orthodox.* fid. lib. 4. cap. 11. p. 303. "Qui enim secundum traditionem Catholicæ Ecclesiæ credit, sed communicat operibus Diabolo, infidelis est."

Salvian. de *Gubern.* lib. 4. in the beginning: "Nam cum hoc sit hominis Christiani fides, fideliter Christi mandata servare: fit absque dubio ut nec fidem habeat, qui infidelis est, nec Christum credat qui Christi mandata conculcat. Ac per hoc totum in id resolvitur, ut qui Christiani nominis opus non agit, Christianus non esse videatur. Nomen enim sine actu, atque officio suo nihil est."

Cyprian, de *dupl. Mart.* "Frustra miscetur cœtui Sanctorum, in Templo manufacto, si submotus est ab universo Corpore Mystico Christi."

August. de *Baptis. cont. Donatist.* lib. 4. cap. 2. "Ad

Ecclesiam non pertinet omnes qui sunt intus, sed qui sunt in ea piè viventes. Et cap. 4. In corpore unicæ columbæ, nec hæretici, nec improbi nominantur."

See the like passages of the ancient schoolmen, cited by Davenant in Col. i. 18. p. 118.

And thus I have shewed you the necessity of a profession, and of what sort of profession, and that the pastors of the church are by office appointed by Christ, to try, approve, and receive it.

PROP. 8. Though it belong to the Pastor's office to judge of the Profession of such Expectants, yet are they bound up by the Laws of Christ what Profession to accept, and what to refuse: and if by breaking these Laws they shall dangerously, or grossly wrong the Church, it belongeth to the Magistrate to correct them, and to the People to admonish them, and to disown their sin.

IN sum, as is aforesaid, It is a credible profession of true Christianity, which they must accept. And as that which seemeth not to be understanding, serious, voluntary and deliberate, is not credible; nor that which is nullified by verbal, or actual contradiction; nor that which is made by one that hath forfeited the credit of his word; so on the other side, a credible man's profession is his title-condition, in the judgment of the church, or that evidence of the condition that we must take up with. And if a man produce the positive evidence of his title, we must be able to disprove, and invalidate it, before we reject him: so that it is a profession of true Christianity, which we cannot prove to be false, at least by a violent presumption, (as the lawyers speak,) which we must accept.

By this it appears, 1. That a grossly ignorant person, that knoweth not the essentials of Christianity, is not to be taken for a professed Christian. For trial of such, the Ordinance of Parliament, of October 20, 1645, doth give us satisfaction (recited in the Form of Church Government, of March 29, 1648): 2. Nor one that denieth any of the said essentials heretically: 3. Nor one that speaketh ludicrously, and jestingly: 4. Nor one that speaks in a passion, not deliberately: 5. Nor one that is manifestly forced and unwilling: 6. Nor one that saith and unsaith: 7. Nor one whose life doth prove his profession to be incredible: 8. Nor one that

hath perfidiously been a breaker of covenant with God already, till his reformed life shall recover the credit of his word. So that with a credible person, his bare profession is evidence before the church of his right; and we must prove him a liar, or false in his profession, before we can reject him. But a man that hath been wicked, after open covenanting with God or profession of Christianity, hath forfeited his credit, and therefore must shew us a new life, as well as a verbal profession, before he is to be restored to his privileges. In the first case, with a credible person, we must prove his profession false, before we reject him: but in the second case, with an incredible person, he must evidence his profession to be true, by probable evidences, that shall make it credible. If I thought that the very light and law of nature, joined with the known general rules of Scripture, did not put this past controversy, with most judicious Christians, I should stand to prove all this by parts.

But on the other side, it is hence manifest, 1. That the pastors of the church, must refuse no man that hath the least degree of grace, or makes a credible profession of the least: 2. And that we must not require as a matter of necessity, such ripe, or clear and judicious expressions from the ignorant, bashful, or such, as for want of use and good breeding, are unable to express their minds, as we may from others. If a man or woman be unable in good sense to express their faith, in the very essentials, or to reveal the grace of God within them, yet if upon our interrogations, and helping them, they can do it in any intelligible manner, so that we do but perceive that it is a sound profession in the essentials, which they mean, though they cannot handsomely utter it, we may not reject any such as these: 3. Note also, that defects in knowledge must be indeed exceeding gross, where the person is willing to be taught, and ruled by Christ, and use his means, and thus seems to love God and holiness, before they will warrant us to reject them. Should the judgments of such persons seem unacquainted with some fundamentals, about the Trinity, and the like mysteries, I should search them better; and I should plainly tell them presently of the truth, and if they received information, I should not reject a willing soul. The very apostles of Christ had the sacrament administered to them by Himself, when they did not understand and believe, the death and resurrection of

Christ. I know that this will not warrant us to give such persons the Eucharist now; because that those great truths were not then of such great necessity, as after Christ's death and resurrection they did become; as being not so fully revealed, nor the actual belief of them so peremptorily imposed. But yet it shews us this much, that even in persons admitted to the Lord's-supper, if there be but a belief in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the points of absolute necessity, though in rude and imperfect conception, and a love to Christ, and a willingness to learn of him, and obey him, a great deal of lamentable ignorance may be borne with, in those that have wanted either means of knowledge, and clear discoveries of the truth, or natural ripeness of understanding to receive it. You see then that pastors are not arbitrary, not merely left to their own wills.

PROP. 9. *It is most evident, that Ministers, People and Magistrates, have each a Power of Judging; but differently, as they have different Works.*

1. WHEN the question is, 'To whom the sacraments, and other ordinances, and church-relations and privileges are to be ministerially delivered as from Christ, and to whom not?' Here the ministers of Christ are the judges. And so are they, when the question is, 'Whom must we teach, direct, and persuade, and in Christ's name command the people to avoid or to hold communion with? for those two are our own work in the execution. And if either magistrate, people, or any other must be judge, where ministers must execute and work; then 1. We have not that common 'judicium discretionis' to guide our own actions, which is allowed, and necessary to every Christian: 2. Then the rulers of the church, are not only degraded, and made no rulers, but are put into that slavery, and subjection to them, that are commanded to obey them, which no pastor must desire the people, or any one of them to be in; for we must not deny them a judgment of discretion, about their own actions: 3. And by this course, ministers that are the eyes of the body, must not only be guided by other parts, but they must execute against their own knowledge, and conscience, when other men misjudge: 4. And if so, either God commandeth us to sin, whenever people, or magistrates bid us (which none dare say), or else it is no sin, when it doth but get their vote, and so we may

warrantably do what the magistrate bids us (as Hobbes thinks), or what the people bids us (as others as unreasonably think). As if it would be a sufficient excuse for me, to say, 'Lord I did what the magistrate, or the major vote of the people bid me, though it was that which thou forbiddest;' 5. If the people have no such power over one another, then they have none over their rulers or guides: but they have none such over one another. Indeed, in order to unity, a major vote may (not effectually oblige) but occasion an obligation: but as to government, let them shew us if they can from Scripture, where the major vote of a church hath the government of the lesser part; or that the lesser may go against their own judgment, and conscience, merely because the greater part requireth it. This governing vote, is as strange a thing to the Scripture as a pope is: 6. Pastors, or general, unfixed ministers, may receive persons into the universal church sometimes, without receiving them into any particular church: and what have any people there to do with the trial, or approbation of their profession or qualifications? One can lay no more claim to it than another: and surely all the world must not have the trial of them: 7. What people did Philip advise with before he baptized the eunuch? or who but Philip alone was the judge of his profession? What vote approved of the three thousand converts, (Acts ii,) or of Paul, (Acts ix,) or of Lydia, or the jailor, (Acts xvi,) or any other that ever were admitted by the ministers of Christ in Scripture times? And what magistrates were the approvers for three hundred years after Christ? no, nor after: 8. If in this part of our office we must obey men, against God (whether magistrate or people), then in other parts: and so if the vote of the church, or magistrate, forbid me to pray or preach against pride, covetousness or drunkenness, I must obey them; that is, I must obey men before God, and please men, and be no longer the Minister of Christ: 9. What can be more plainly contrary to Scripture, than for the people by a major vote, to rule those whom God commandeth them to obey, as their rulers? (Heb. xiii. 7; xvii. 24; 1 Tim. v. 17; 1 Thess. v. 12; Acts xx. &c.)

Object. 'Pastors have but a ministerial ruling power.'

Answ. Who doubts of that? But is a ministerial rule no rule? No man on earth hath more than a ministerial power; for all are under God, and the Redeemer. All judges, jus-

tices, and other officers in the commonwealth, have but a ministerial rule as officers: but is that no rule; or shall the people therefore rule these rulers? We are Christ's ministers for the people: we are their's finally, but have our power from Christ only efficiently. If the people are the rulers, who are the ruled? It is a strange society, when the ruling and ruled part is the same; where all the body is a head and an eye: 10. If people or magistrates will oblige the ministers by their power, whom they shall baptize, confirm, or absolve, and what profession they shall accept; then must the people and magistrates undertake to answer it before God, and to bear all the blame and punishment, if we miscarry in obedience to them. And truly, if they dare undertake this, we should gladly accept of the condition, with a thousand thanks, if we could but be sure that God would give us leave, and thus acquit us, and accept of our service on these terms. O then how easy a thing were it to obey, rather than to rule! So much for the power of the ministers in this, and other such like work.

2. When the question is, 'Whether such a professor be fit for our own communion or not, and whether it be our duty to avoid him or not,' then the people have a judgment of discretion; not a governing judgment, as the pastors have, but a judgment that must be the immediate guide of their actions. Yet this is to be thus exercised: they are to look to God's word as the rule, and to trust that with a divine faith: they are also to look at the judgment and directions of the pastors, that are their authorised guides; and to trust them as the officers of Christ. For the Word is their regulating guide; and the pastors are their authorised directing guides; and their own understandings, are their immediate discerning guides. So that they must not be wise in their own conceits, nor lean to their own understanding, without the use of Scripture, and ministry; but use their understandings for the improvement of these. So, that if they know not that the pastors of the church do mislead them, contrary to the word of God, they cannot deny them obedience, for the command to obey them is unquestionable. Or if they have not a grounded strong presumption, or probability of it, they may not suspend their obedience; but must leave the pastors to the work of their office, and trust them in it, and avoid those whom they reject, and hold com-

munion with those whom they accept, and introduce, confirm, or restore. But in case they know that a pastor leadeth them into sin, they are not to follow him; and if they have just ground for a strong suspicion of it, they must suspend, and consult with other pastors, and get full information; for Christian people are not to be ruled as beasts, but as the children of God; and must understand what they are required to do, and why, as being free subjects, (though subjects) in the kingdom of Christ, and to be governed accordingly.

3. When the question is, 'Whether ministers are to be punished for abusing their power, receiving or rejecting men to the injury of the church, and contrary to the word of God;' here the magistrate is the judge. For as forcing, or punishing corporally is his work, so he must be the judge, where he is the executioner, or else he should be forced to go against his own judgment, and to be a mere servile executioner, which were to him an insufferable injury.

But here, 1. The magistrate must not give the minister a law to govern the church by, unless the determination of circumstantial appendants; but must see that we govern it according to the word of God, our only and sufficient rule. 2. And he must not be over-busy, nor unnecessarily intermeddle in the work of another's office, nor be too confident of his own understanding in the matters of the pastor's work, as if he knew better than they. 3. But he must correct or cast out those ministers that will not obey the word of God; punishing us for breaking the old rule, and not making new rules for us, is their work, so be it, he can procure a better supply. 4. In this case, if the magistrate's judgment be right, he doth his duty, and ministers must obey him; if he err, he may be guilty of persecution, in hindering good, under pretence of punishing evil. If his error tend not to the destruction, or great and certain hurt of the church; the ministers whom he casteth out, are bound to obey him, and give place to others, and bestow their labours in some other country, or in some other kind at home: but if his error lead him to destructive persecution, we must passively submit, but not actively or negatively obey him, but must preach as long as we are able, and do our duty, till by prison, or death he stop us in the exercise.

PROP. 10. *To this Ministerial Approbation of the Profession, and Qualification of the Expectant, there is to be adjoined a Ministerial Investiture, or Delivery of the Benefit expected.*

THIS is the proper work of the ministers of Christ. He that is himself in the heavenly glory, hath left his Spirit within to draw men to him, and his ministers without, to deliver up the counter-covenant on his part, in his name, and to espouse them to Christ, and to accept them in his name and stead. And this investiture is one of the principal parts of the nature and use of sacraments, which all have not fully considered. The Papists tell us of seven sacraments, Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, the Eucharist, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction. Calvin sticks not to yield them three. The name of *Sacrament* being not in Scripture, but of mere Ecclesiastic use, and being a word that will stretch, I distinguish between three sorts of sacraments. (1.) For any Divine institution which notably signifieth spiritual grace; and so, though I think Extreme Unction none, as being now no duty, yet, I doubt not, but there is more than seven. (2.) For any solemn investiture of a person by ministerial delivery, in a state of church-privileges, or some special Gospel-mercy. And so I grant that there are five sacraments; Baptism, Confirmation, Absolution, the Lord's-supper, and Ordination. As a man that delivereth possession of a house, doth deliver the key to him that enters; and as we are invested in the possession of land, by the delivery of a twig or turf; and as ministers were wont to be invested, or have induction into the churches by giving them the books, and the bell-ropes; and as women were wont to be married with a ring, and as a prince doth knight a man by a sword; so Christ, by his ministers, doth first by Baptism invest us in our church-state, and infant-privileges; and by Confirmation, confirm us in our church-state, and invest us with a right to the privileges of the adult; and by Absolution re-invest us in the privileges that we had forfeited; and by the Lord's-supper deliver to us Christ and his benefits, for our ordinary nourishment, and growth in grace; and by Ordination he investeth the person ordained with ministerial power. (3.) But taking the word *Sacrament* in that strictest sense, as our divines define a sacrament, as it is an outward

sign of Christ's institution, for the obsignation of the full covenant of grace, betwixt him and the covenanter, and a delivery, representation, and investiture of the grace, or benefits of that covenant; thus we have only two sacraments, Baptism, and the Lord's-supper. But truly, I would not quarrel with them for the mere name, as to the five which I mentioned.

PROP. 11. *The solemn Ministerial Investiture of Professors, into the Right of the Church-privileges of the Adult, is either*
 1. *Of the Unbaptized, who are now first entered.* 2. *Or of the Baptized in Infancy, that never proved ungodly, nor violated that first Covenant.* 3. *Or of those Baptized, whether in Infancy or Age, that have since proved wicked, and broke that Covenant.* *The first of these Investitures is, to be by Baptism; the second by Confirmation; and the third by Absolution. So that the solemn Investiture that I am pleading for, is by Confirmation to one sort, that never proved ungodly since their Baptism, and by Absolution to the other sort that broke their Covenant.*

THE baptism of the adult, we have not now to do with. Of those that are baptized in infancy, some do betimes receive the secret seeds of grace, which by the blessing of a holy education, (and some among the profane) is stirring within them, according to their capacity, and working them to God by actual desires, and working them from all known sin, and entertaining further grace, and turning them into actual acquaintance with Christ, as soon as they arrive at full natural capacity; so that they never were actual ungodly persons. To these their investiture in the state of adult-members upon their personal, approved profession, is a confirmation of the mutual covenant that it findeth them under, and of them in that covenant.

But there are others (I doubt the most), that since their infant-baptism, have proved actual wicked and ungodly persons; if not openly flagitious and scandalous, yet at least unacquainted with any special sanctifying work, till after they attain to the full years of discretion. These break their covenant made with God in baptism^g, in which they were devoted to him, and engaged to live to him, forsaking

^g De Exhomologes. vide Albaspin. in Tertul. de Pœnit. c. 10. p. 297. et Observ. passim.

the flesh, the world, and the devil. And therefore these must come in as penitents, even as if they had proved wicked after an adult-baptism, they must do; and therefore it is first an absolution which they must receive; not only a particular Absolution from an act of heinous sin, which afterwards may be renewed upon particular penitence, but a General Absolution from a state of sin. Yet this doth consequently participate of the nature of the former, and hath a confirmation in it, or with it; not a confirmation in the wicked state that such have lived in, but a renewal, and solemn confirming of the covenant, between God and them, which in baptism was made. So that to such it is as an Absolution, and Confirmation conjunct.

PROP. 12. *This solemn Investiture on personal Profession, being thus proved the Ordinance of God, for the solemn renewing of the Covenant of Grace, between God and the Adult Covenantant, it must needs follow, that it is a corroborating Ordinance, and that corroborating Grace is to be expected in it from God, by all that come to it in sincerity of heart; and so it hath the name of Confirmation upon that account also.*

THE Papists quarrel with us, and curse us in the Council of Trent, for denying their ends of confirmation, and making it another thing. But they falsely describe our opinion: we do not take it to be a mere catechising, or receiving the catechised to the Lord's-supper, or to a higher form; but we take it to be the approbation of the personal profession of them that claim a title to the church-state, and privilege of the adult, and an investing them solemnly therein, upon the solemn renewal (and personal adult entrance) into covenant with God. Now in this renewed covenant, as they give up themselves to Christ afresh, and personally engage themselves to him, and renounce his enemies, owning their infant-baptism, when this was done by others in their names; so God is ready on his part to bless his own ordinance, with the collation of that corroborating grace, which the nature of the renewed covenant doth import. Otherwise God should appoint us means in vain, and fail them in the use of his own ordinances, that use them as he hath appointed; which is not to be imagined. Though the unsound hypocritical receivers may miss of this blessing; and though as the degree of corroborating grace, God is free to give it out as

he pleaseth. So that the Papists shall have no cause to say, that we needlessly, or erroneously deny either the name of Confirmation, or the true use and ends of it, or the notional title of a Sacrament to it in a larger, yet not the largest sense. We affect not to fly further from them than we needs must; much less to fly from the ancient practice of the Universal Church. But we must crave their pardon, if we introduce not their Anointing, though ancient, seeing when it was used of old but as an indifferent ceremony, they have turned it now into a proper, necessary sacramental sign: and if we give not the confirmed a box on the ear, as they do for a holy sign, or abuse it not as they in many respects, and turn it not into a mere deceiving formality, in this also we must needs crave their pardon. So much of the name, and ends of Confirmation.

PROP. 13. Ministerial Imposition of Hands in Confirmation, and the fore-described sort of Absolution, is a lawful, and convenient Ceremony, and ordinarily to be used, as it hath been of old by the Universal Church. But yet it is not of such Necessity, but that we must dispense in this Ceremony with scrupulous Consciences, that cannot be satisfied to submit to it.

Thus must we take heed of both extremes; either of rejecting a ceremony, that hath so much to be said for it as this hath; or of making it more necessary than it is, to the wrong of tender consciences that are not yet ripe enough, to be well informed of it, and to answer the objections that they have heard against it; nor yet to receive your answers.

^h I. For the first part of the proposition, I think it may

^h Grotius Epist. 154. pp. 377, 378. Mihi legendo compertum est manuum impositionem ceremoniam fuisse Judaicam, usurpatam, non Legge ulla Divina, sed moribus, ubicunque precandi pro aliquo causa quædam emererat. Tunc enim Judæi orabant ut sic Dei efficacia esset super illum, sicut manus, efficaciam symbolum, ei imponebantur. Hunc quemque morem ut Synagogæ pleraque secutus est Christus, sive pueris benedicendum fuit, sive ægrotis adhibenda sanatio addita, ut semper honori Patri haberetur, prece, Eodem more non ex ullo præcepto est quod Apostoli manus imposuere iis, quibus ignoto ante hac jure dona conspicua Sancti Spiritus precando conferebant: quod Presbyteri eundem ritum adhibuere non tantum in allegendis Presbyteris, puta Timotheo. (1 Tim. iv. 15.) Sed et ipsis Apostolis, ubi novi aliquid opus aggrederentur. (Acts xiii. 2.) Ita ut si quotiens manus imponitur toties Sacramentum est, jam nulla futura sit ad precandum pro aliquo occasio, quæ non eo nomine veniat; quod nec vocis origo, nec veterum in eâ usus repudiat. Et ex una hac non imperata sed usitata Judæis Christianisque ceremonia, existitere illa, quæ dicuntur Sacramenta Confirmationis, Ordinationis, Pœnitentiæ, Extremæ Unctionis, imo et Matrimonii.

suffice, (1.) That Imposition of hands was used in Scripture-times, and so used, as may invite us to imitation, but not deter us from it at all. (2.) And that it hath been since of ordinary use in the Universal Church, in this very case, so that no other original of it can be found, but apostolical; yea, we have exceeding probable evidence, that the use of it was never interrupted, from the days of the apostles, down to the Reformation. (3.) Nor is it laid aside in many of the Reformed Churches. So that you will find, that as it is easy to prove it *lawful*, so it is more likely to be a Divine institution, necessary ‘*necessitate præcepti*,’ than to be *unlawful*. I shall purposely say the less of it, because Mr. Hanmer hath said so much already as to the judgment of the ancients; and my intent is to pretermitt that part, or say less to it, which he hath performed. But that it is lawful and fit, if not of some necessity, I shall prove by the aforementioned evidence.

1. Imposition of hands, is allowed in Scripture, to be used generally by Spiritual superiors, to signify their will and desire, that the blessing may fall on the inferior, or the gift, or power be conferred on him, for which they have a call to mediate: so that it is not confined to any particular blessing, power, or ordinance; and therefore if there had been no example of the use of it, in this particular case (of Confirmation, or Absolution) yet hence it is proved to be lawful and meet, because it hath this general use and allowance. The lifting up of hands in prayer was used to signify from whom, and whence they did expect the blessing; even from our Father which is in heaven: and the laying of hands on the head of the person, in or after prayer, was used as an applicatory sign, to signify the ‘*terminus ad quem*’ of the blessing desired, or the person, on whom they would have it bestowed. And as you will not cast away the use of lifting up of hands, though it be for such mercies, as you read no Scripture instance, that hands were lift up for; because the general warrant is sufficient; so you have as little reason, to scruple or cast away the laying on of hands, though in such cases as you read not that the sign was used for in Scripture; because the unlimited general use, is sufficient warrant, in such particular cases. God shewed that the very outward sign of lifting up of the hands, was not to be despised, when Amalek had the better, when Moses’

hands fell down, though but through weakness, so that Aaron and Hur were fain to underset them. (Exod. xvii.) And I think we have no reason to condemn the laying on of hands, which in grounds and nature, is so near a-kin to the other. And as spreading forth the hands, doth not cease to be good and meet, for all that God hath said he will "not hear them" that spread forth hands that are full of blood; (Isa. i. 15;) so the laying on of hands doth not cease to be good and meet, though in some cases the blessing do not follow it. Still we must every where "lift up holy hands" in prayer, "without wrath and doubting." (1 Tim. ii. 8.) Though the sign be not of absolute necessity in every prayer, yet it is very meet, and too much neglected among us: and so I may say of the other. When Solomon prayed in the Temple he "spread forth his hands towards heaven;" (1 Kings viii. 22;) and so he supposed all would do, that look to be heard by the God of heaven, when (verse 38) he prayeth for the people thus: "What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart (that was their prayer-book) and spread forth his hands towards this house, then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and do," &c. (See verse 54; 2 Chron. vi. 12, 13. We must "lift up our hearts with our hands to God in the heavens." Lam. iii. 41.) We must prepare our hearts, and stretch out our hands towards him." (Job xi. 13.) Praying "to a strange God," (Psal. xlv. 20.) Even in praises the people were to lift up their hands towards heaven, (Neh. viii. 6,) yea, and in blessing, lifting up the hands was used to signify whence the blessing came. (Luke xxiv. 50.) Now this being so commonly applied, the other that is so near a-kin to it, may without scruple be used in any case that falls under the fore-described general case. Indeed every man must lift up hands, because every man must pray; and it is an engagement, that those hands that are lifted up to God, be not used in wicked works; but laying on of hands is ordinarily the act of a superior, to the ends above-said.

Thus Jacob, (Gen. lxxviii. 14, 15,) laid his hands on the sons of Joseph in blessing them. Moses laid his hands on Joshua, when he ordained him his successor. (Numb. xxvii. 18, 23; Deut. xxxiv. 9.) Yea, even in the execution of evil

they laid on hands, as an applicatory sign, as in sacrificing; as if they should say, 'Not on me, but on this substitute let the evil of punishment be.' (See Lev. xvi. 21, 22; Exod. xxix. 10. 15; Lev. iv. 15; viii. 14. 22; Numb. viii. 12.) Yea, in putting a blasphemer and curser to death, they first laid their hands on his head, as an applicatory sign, in whom the fault was, and to whom the punishment did belong. (Lev. xxiv. 14.) In the ordination, or consecration of the Levites, the people were to lay their hands on them; (Numb. viii. 10;) not to give them authority, but to consecrate, and give them up to God. By laying on of the hands, as an applicatory sign, did Christ and his disciples heal diseases, &c.; (Mark v. 23;) where note, that the ruler of the synagogue Jairus, took this as an ordinary sign of conferring blessings from a superior, and therefore he mentioneth it with the blessing desired. (Mark vi. 5; viii. 23. 25; Luke xiii. 13; iv. 40.) So you may see also the apostles did; yea, and other believers, as the promise runs, Mark xvi. 18; Acts xxviii. 8. Also by laying on of hands, as an applicatory sign, they invested the seven deacons in their office. (Acts vi. 6.) And the prophets, and teachers in the church of Antioch, separated Barnabas and Paul, to the work that God appointed them; (Acts xiii. 2. 3;) by fasting, and prayer, and imposition of hands. And Timothy received his ministerial gift, by the laying on of Paul's hands, and the hands of the Presbytery. (1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.) If this last text be understood of the ministerial ordination and gift, which I rather think is meant of the apostolical imposition of hands, after baptism, for giving of the Holy Ghost. So that this sign was used upon several occasions, and is not at all forbidden in this, directly, or indirectly, and therefore it is undoubtedly lawful; seeing that without doubt the less is blessed of the greater; (Heb. vii. 7;) and the duty and power of the pastor to bless the person in this case is unquestionable, and this imposition of hands is an allowed sign in blessing, as lifting up the hands is in prayer: here is Scripture enough to prove it lawful, and very meet.

2. But let us inquire whether the Scripture lay not some kind of obligation on us, to use this ceremony in confirmation. To which end let these several things be well considered¹.

(1.) We find in Scripture a blessing of church-members,

¹ Leg. Albaspin. Observat. 31. lib. 2. p. 166—168.

with laying on of hands. (2.) We find in Scripture, that the Holy Ghost is in a special manner promised to believers, over and above that measure of the Spirit, which caused them to believe. (3.) We find that prayer with laying on of hands, was the outward means to be used by Christ's ministers, for the procuring of this blessing. (4.) We find that this was a fixed ordinance to the church, and not a temporary thing. Lay all this together, and you will see as much as my proposition doth affirm. Let us try the proof of it.

I. Though the proof of the first be not necessary to the main point, yet it somewhat strengtheneth the cause. Mark x. 16; Christ took the children up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them; so Matt. xix. 15. This is not I confess a Confirmation upon personal profession, which I am now pleading for; but this is a benediction by laying on of hands: and the subjects of it were such children as were members at least of the Jewish church, being before circumcised.

II. But to come nearer the matter; let us inquire what this gift of the Holy Ghost was, that is promised to believers. Whatsoever the Pelagians say, the Scripture assure thus, that Faith and Repentance, which go before Baptism in the adult, are the gifts of the Holy Ghost; and yet for all that the Holy Ghost is to be given afterward; and though very often this after-gift is manifested by tongues, prophecy, and miracles, yet that is not all that is meant in the promise of the Holy Ghost. God hath not tied himself by that promise to any one sort of those extraordinary gifts, nor constantly to give any of them; but he hath promised in general to give believers the Spirit; and therefore there is some other standing Gift, for which the Spirit is promised to all such. And indeed, the Spirit promised is one, though the gifts are many; and the many sorts of gifts make not many Spirits. If any man therefore shall ask, whether by the promised Spirit be meant sanctification, or miracles, or prophecy, &c., I answer with Paul, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, as there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord, and diversities of operations, but the same God." (1 Cor. xii. 4—6.) It is therefore no wiser a question to ask, whether by the Spirit be meant this gift, or that, when it is only the Spirit in general that is promised, than to ask, whether by the Lord be meant this or

that administration ; and whether by God be meant this or that operation. "To one is given the word of wisdom by the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit, to another faith, by the same Spirit," &c. (verse 8—10.) Now I confess, if any man can prove that this promise of the Spirit to the faithful, is meant only of the Extraordinary gift of Miracles, then he would weaken the argument that I am about. But I prove the contrary, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. It is the gift of the Spirit, by which we are one body, which is called Christ's, by which we are all baptized into this one body ; and such members as have a lively fellow-feeling on each other's state ; (verse 26, 27 ;) yea, such as giveth to the elect, the excellent, durable grace of charity. (verse 31. and chap. xiii.)

Gal. iv. 6. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." Note here, that it is not only the gift of Miracles, but the Spirit of Adoption that is here mentioned ; and that it is given to believers, because they are sons. And all the first part of Rom. viii. to verse 29, doth shew, that it is the Spirit of Adoption, supplication, and that by which we mortify the flesh, that is given to believers.

2 Cor. i. 21, 22. "Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." It is not the common gifts of the Spirit only that are here spoken of, nor is it the first gift of faith, but it is confirmation, or inward establishment in Christ, and that Spirit, which is the Father's seal upon us, and the earnest of the inheritance. I believe not that it is outward anointing, or sealing with the sign of the cross, that is here mentioned, as many Papists dream ; but inward unction, seal, earnest, and confirmation by the Spirit, are here expressed. So, 2 Cor. v. 5. ; Zech. xii. 10. It is the Spirit of grace and supplication that is promised to the church. See the pattern in Christ our head, on whom after baptism the Spirit descended, and to whom it is promised. (Matt. xii. 18.)

Ephes. i. 13, 14. "In whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." Here it is evident, that it is such a gift of the Spirit, which is an earnest of heaven that is given to men, after they believe.

John vii. 39. "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given them, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Yet the apostles had saving faith then. And that it is not meant only of the apostles' extraordinary gifts of miracles, the foregoing words shew: "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow living waters: but this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive."

By all this it is evident, that there was an eminent gift of the Holy Ghost promised to them that had already the grace of faith, repentance, and love to Christ, wrought in them by the Holy Ghost; and that though this eminent gift, did very much consist in gifts of languages, prophecy, and mighty works for the confirmation of Christ's doctrine, which was then to be planted in the world; yet was it not only in those gifts, but as some had only those common, though extraordinary gifts for the good of the church; so some had an eminent addition of special gifts, to seal them up to the day of redemption, and be the earnest of the inheritance, to the saving of the soul. If you ask, 'Wherein these special eminent gifts of the Holy Ghost do consist,' I answer, 1. In a clearer knowledge of Christ, and the mysteries of the Gospel; not an ineffectual, but a powerful, affecting, practical knowledge. 2. In a fuller measure of love, agreeable to this knowledge. 3. In joy and peace, and sweet consolation. 4. In establishment, and corroboration, and firmer resolution for Christ, and everlasting life.

For the understanding of which we must know, that as the doctrine is the means of conveying the Spirit, so the Spirit given is answerable to the doctrine, and administration that men are under. It is a very great question, whether Adam in innocency had the Spirit or not? But as the administration, according to the mere light, and law of nature, is eminently in Scripture attributed to the Father, so Adam certainly may be well said to have had the Spirit of the Father, to enable him with gifts that were answerable to the law that he was under, and the state that he was in: But we cannot fitly say, that he had that which the Scripture calleth the Spirit of the Son, as not being under the administration of the Son. But after the promise, till the coming of Christ, as the administration was mixed of law and promise, nature and grace, as the dawning of the day before sun-rising doth partake of darkness and of light; so the Spirit that was

then given, was answerable to the administration and doctrine. And therefore, as there was somewhat of the Gospel in those times, though yet God hath not thought it meet to call it (at least usually) by that name, but rather by the name of the Promises, and Prophecies of Christ; so there was somewhat of the Spirit of Christ, though it be not usually so called; but when it appeared in some eminent servants of Christ, as the prophets were, in whom the Spirit of Christ is said to have been. (1 Peter i. 11.) Now as it was part of that work ascribed to the Father, to send and give the Son, and to give men to the Son; so commonly those gifts are ascribed to him which are contained in these expressions, and are the accomplishment of this work; and that not only in the Old Testament, but in the New: and therefore it is called the giving and the drawing of the Father, by which we are brought to believe in the Son; though yet the grace of faith is a special saving grace, and not common to the wicked, as the Papist's dream, because they find an ineffectual assent to be common.

But now, as Christ at his coming doth bring to the world a clearer light, and fuller revelation of himself, and the mysteries of redemption, and bring life and immortality to light in the Gospel; and as the rising sun dispelleth the remnants of legal darkness, and his doctrine is fully called, the Gospel, the Testament of Jesus Christ, so answerably he doth by, and with this doctrine, give out such a measure of the Spirit, to the church, as is eminently called, the Spirit of Jesus-Christ: which carrieth us higher than the first grace of faith and repentance, to those fuller degrees which were not ordinary; no not to the godly in the time of the law. And as this Spirit of Christ did extrinsically shine in the glory of tongues and wondrous works, while those were necessary to the church, and Christ's service; so both then, and ever after it doth work, but in various degrees, for the sanctifying of believers, and conforming their hearts and lives to Christ; in his humiliation, patience, self-denial, meekness, contempt of the world, obedience, &c. till at last we be conformed to him in his glory.

III. I have cleared the second point, 'That there is no eminent gift of the Holy Ghost to be expected after our first believing, even such as ceased not with miracles:' I now come to the third point, which is, 'That ministerial prayer, with

laying on of hands, was the Scripture-way for the giving of this eminent gift of the Spirit.'

For the understanding of this, observe these things:—

1. How Sacraments, and investing Signs, confer grace.—2. How the Spirit is given in Baptism.—3. How far God hath, as it were, tied himself to Ordinances for conferring grace.—4. What proof the Scripture yields us of the proposition.—5. What aptitude there is in Ministerial Confirmation, for the attainment of these ends.

1. We find in Scripture, that sacraments are not appointed (nor to be used according to the intent of the institutor) for the conferring of that grace which men have not in any degree already: But they are, (1.) Partly a solemn investiture in that which before we had a fundamental right to; as the enlisting of a soldier, or the solemnization of marriage after a firm contract; the crowning a king; the delivering possession by a key, a twig, a turf; the knighting a man by a sword, &c. This is as to relative benefits, and right to physical benefits. (2.) And withal they are by actual excitation of grace, to increase the inherent grace received, and so to give us more. All this is evident in baptism itself, where we are to receive both remission of sins, with right to everlasting life, and also an increase of grace in the adult: and yet no man at age, is to come to baptism, to require it, that is not a penitent believer already; and consequently that hath not the beginning of special saving grace, and somewhat of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, and title to forgiveness, and everlasting life. For he is under the promise, that "whosoever believeth, shall not perish, but have everlasting life." And a Papist will grant, that the 'votum baptismi' may serve to his salvation, if he die without it. And the case of infants is the same, as to these mercies which are necessary to their state of life. Their parents must be believers, before they dedicate them to God, and consequently the child hath the covenant right before it is sealed. And it is ridiculous in the Papists to damn all infants, for want of baptism, and not the aged; and to make the 'votum' to serve for the parent, and yet not for his child, when yet the parent's faith must serve to prove his title to baptism itself. But to leave these corrupters, and innovators; we see now what is to be expected by Confirmation: not that men that have no signs of corroborating grace, should come thither first to receive it; but that such as ap-

pear initially resolved, confirmed, and corroborated, may be (though not by a full and proper sacrament, yet) ministerially; 1st. Invested into the state of the confirmed, and their privileges, which is a higher form in the school of Christ: 2d. And may receive yet further confirmation, and corroboration by God's approbation and ordinance.

2. ' But hath not baptism done all this already, seeing we are baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost?' This is our second point to be resolved. I answer, It is a great error, to think that adult persons that have nothing of the Holy Ghost, may demand baptism, and that baptism doth not give the Holy Ghost: but yet it is one thing to give the Holy Ghost in relation, and fundamental right, and another thing to give the graces of the Spirit; and it is one thing to seal and increase the initial, special grace of the Spirit, and another thing to invest in a stablishing degree: and so it is evident, that baptism, as such, is appointed but for the two first: that is, (1.) As we must have some faith and repentance, before a person at age may come to baptism, and so must have fundamental right by promise, to Christ, pardon, and life; so this is sealed in baptism, and we are solemnly invested in it, and our grace excited for increase: but is it not requisite that a man have a further degree of grace before he come. (2.) In baptism, it is our very relation to God, as our Father and God, to Christ as our Saviour, and to the Holy Ghost as our Sanctifier, that is sealed to us, and we are invested with; which is the foundation of all that afterward from the Spirit is given us. As in marriage, the persons in relation, are given to each other for marriage ends; so in baptism, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God in three persons, are solemnly given to us in relation to themselves, for Christian baptismal ends. But as after marriage, the man takes home his wife, and delivereth her a possession of his house first, and after admits her to bed and board, according to his covenant; so Christ doth after baptism, take home the Christian into his church, and admit him to the several privileges of it, in the season, and manner as he seeth meet, so that as all the good that we do after baptism, is but the fulfilling of our baptismal covenant, and yet we did not the good, when we covenanted to do it: so all the after mercies, that God giveth us by promise (at least) on his part, are but the fulfilling, or fruits

of his baptismal covenant; and that he did not give them in our baptism. So that confirmation is no full, and proper Gospel sacrament as baptism is, but a particular subsequent investiture, in some of the fruits of baptism itself, in the season of them.

3. ' But have we any certainty that this ordinance shall prove effectually confirming to us? If not, it will be but an idle, empty ceremony?' This is our third question: to which I answer, (1.) Ordinances are duties, which we must use, and in which we must wait on God for his blessing if we will have it: and therefore in the way of duty we must be found. (2.) What if you have not a certainty that your prayers shall be granted, will you not therefore pray? or if you are not certain that a sermon shall profit you, will you not hear it? or that reading shall profit you, will you not read? or that the Lord's-supper shall increase your grace, will you not use it? (3.) But I may say more: if you come prepared, you may be sure of a blessing in some degree: as it is not every one that prayeth, and heareth, and receiveth the Lord's-supper, that shall certainly have the blessing, but the prepared soul that is the subject of the promise, which is annexed to that ordinance; so it is not every one that is externally confirmed by prayer, and imposition of hands, that shall be sure of the blessing, but the soul that is prepared as aforedescribed. (4.) But yet the several degrees of blessing, God hath kept in his own hand, and not affixed them by promise to any person, in any ordinance: He may bless the word, prayer, the Lord's-supper, &c. to one true Christian more than to another, and yet perform his promise to them all: and so he may this outward Confirmation.

4. ' But what proof is there in Scripture of such an ordinance, or practice?' That is our fourth question: to which I answer, (1.) For the main point in question, it is already proved, beyond all controversy, *viz.* the necessity of a personal profession, and covenant, before men be admitted to the church-privileges of the adult, and that it belongeth to the office of Christ's ministers to judge of, and approve this profession, &c. It is none of this we have now to prove, but only the manner of admission hereupon, whether it be to be done by prayer, with benediction, and imposition of hands. And it is not the lawfulness of this, for that is proved before: but whether this manner and solemnity be a thing which

ordinarily we should observe? And that it is so, this seems to me to prove, as beyond controversy it belongeth to spiritual superiors, even the ministers of Christ, to pray for the people, and bless them, so this must be in a special manner exercised upon great and special occasion: but the admission of the adult upon their personal covenanting and profession, is a great and special occasion. This is as good an argument as any we have for stated family-prayer, that I remember; and it is clearly good for both.

(1.) I should but trouble you to prove the general part of the major, that it belongeth to the pastors to pray for, and bless the people ministerially. And the application to this reason is proved thus: "All things are sanctified by the word and prayer:" therefore this. If the great and special works, and changes of our lives, be not thus to be sanctified, much less the smaller; and so the whole command would be void. We agree, that at marriage, at our investiture in the ministerial office, &c. there must be ministerial prayer, and benediction, usually to sanctify it to the faithful: but here there is as great, if not greater reason for it, the change and blessing being in some sort greater¹.

And as this is plain for ministerial prayer and benediction, so it seems that the weight and nature of the work doth determine us to the sign of imposition of hands, seeing God hath not tied it to any one or two particular cases, but made it a sign of general use, in spiritual benediction, and collations of authority, from a superior, or great and special occasions.

(2.) But we have yet a more clear proof from Scripture example, Acts viii. 15—17. Peter and John were sent to Samaria, when they heard that they believed, and "when they were come down, they prayed for them, that they might

¹ As some doubt, whether conversion, or building up, be the greater work, and give it to the latter, that they may conclude the latter only to be the work of pastors, and the former, but of gifted private men, so the doubt in this case is, on the same ground, whether baptizing, and confirming be not as great as ordaining; and some give it to the latter, lest Presbyters be thought to have power to ordain. But I answer both, as Aquila in Scotell. in sent. 4 Des. 7, 8. et 2. p. 816. In the case of Confirmation. 'Quando bene sit comparatio harum gratiarum: hæc potest fieri dupliciter. Uno modo sine præcisione; et sic omnino major est gratia confirmationis, quam baptismalis; sicut bene et perfecte vivere, est melius quam vivere: si autem fiat comparatio harum gratiarum cum præcisione, sic major est gratia baptismalis quam confirmationis, quia majoris virtutis est mortuum vivificare, quam vivificatum fortificare.' So I say between initiating a Christian, and initiating a minister.

receive the Holy Ghost ; for as yet he was fallen on none of them ; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus : then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." So Acts xix. 5, 6, "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus : And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." And Acts ix. 17, Ananias laid his hands on Saul (before converted by a voice from heaven, though not baptized) that he might receive his sight and the Holy Ghost at once.

And this was the gift that Simon Magus would have bought with money, And it seemeth to me most probable, that this was the gift that Timothy received by laying on of Paul's hands (which being for the service of the church, 1 Cor. xii. 7, he was to stir up, and exercise in his ministry, 2 Tim. i. 6.) And that the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, (1 Tim. iv. 14,) was at another time. That the Holy Ghost was then given by prayer, with imposition of hands, is thus evident.

IV. But the last point remaineth, 'Whether this were not temporary, and now ceased :?' where I shall take in the fifth particular, before named, about the aptitude of the means now. And when I have proved it once appointed, it lieth on the contrary-minded, to prove it changed or ceased ; that is the task of them that affirm it ceased. If I shew them an obligation once laid, they must prove it taken off. Their only argument is, that the persons and occasion were only extraordinary, and are ceased, and therefore so is the sign or means. To which I answer, 1. By the denying the Antecedent ; both as to persons and occasion : they were not only extraordinary. 2. By the denying the Consequence, as it is inferred from the persons : for extraordinary persons were our patterns for ordinary, durable works.

But I prove the negative : 1. The use and ends of the ancient imposition of hands do still continue : therefore we are to judge that the sign and means is not to cease. For the proof of the antecedent, remember that I have before proved, that it was not only (though very eminently) the gift of tongues and miracles, that was then meant by the Holy Ghost that was given, but also corroborating grace. And the necessity and actual collation, and use of this doth still continue.

2. There is still a discernible aptitude in the means to these necessary ends. The baptized believer may yet want the joy of the Holy Ghost, and boldness of access to God, and the shedding abroad of fuller love in the heart; (Rom. v. 5;) and that consolation which is much of the work of the promised Spirit, which therefore is called the Comforter; and that corroboration and stability which he needeth. Now to have a messenger of Christ that hath received a binding and loosing power, in the name of Christ to encourage us in our profession, and to put up solemn prayers for us, and as it were take us by the hand, and place us in the higher form, at least, to place us at our first personal profession, among adult believers, and make particular application of the promise to us, and bless us in the name of Christ, by virtue of their ministerial office; this must needs tend much to confirm, and comfort, and encourage the weak. Though still further ministerial confirmation by praying, and exhortation will be necessary to the end. (Acts xiv. 22; xv. 31, 32.)

3. The Scripture signifieth to us, that Imposition of hands was of standing use in the church, and therefore not to cease with miracles. In Heb. vi. 2, we find it named among the parts of the foundation, "laying on of hands." Now all the doubt is, what imposition of hands is there mentioned. 1. For them that think the apostle meaneth Jewish imposition, when he mentioneth the Christian foundation points, I think their opinion saveth me the labour of confuting it. 2. Either then it is imposition of hands, in case of ordination, of confirmation, or of absolution, or of working miraculous cures. The last alone it cannot be, because we find it among foundation points, and find it a continued thing; and because there is no evidence, to lead us to such a restrained exposition. And if it be in the case of absolution, or ordination, that imposition is to continue, it will by consequence be proved, that it no more ceaseth here than there. And usually, they that question the use of it in one case, question it in the rest. 3. For my part, I think that it is no one of these cases alone, that the Scripture here speaketh of, but of the power and use of it in general, for the ministers of Christ to be his instruments, in conferring evangelical gifts and power, by imposition of hands. We must not limit and restrain the sense of Scripture, without evident

cause. It is as if the apostle had said, ‘ You are long ago taught the necessity of repenting, and forsaking the works of death, and of believing in the true God, and of being dedicated, and engaged to Father, Son and Holy Ghost in the baptismal covenant, in which you yourselves have been consecrated unto God, and received the remission of sin; and you have seen the power that is given to the ministers of Christ, that by their prayers and imposition of hands, miracles have been wrought to confirm their doctrine, and grace is given to confirm the soul, and absolution and peace is given to the penitent, and ministerial power delivered to others, &c.’ But however you understand this imposition of hands, without apparent violence, you must confess either imposition in the case that we are speaking of, or that which will warrant it, and stands on the same ground, to be here meant.

So, 1 Tim. v. 22, “ Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins.” Some think that here is meant imposition of hands in ordination, and some that it is meant only of confirmation, and some of absolution; but however, it will help us in the following argument.

4. Scripture fully proveth that laying on of hands, is a thing to be continued to other uses, where the reason of continuance is the same: therefore we are not to judge it ceased as to this use. This text last named shews that it is a standing, or continued thing; and if for absolution, then for confirmation; and if for ordination, then for both the other. So, 1 Tim. iv. 14, sheweth, that the Presbytery did lay hands on Timothy in ordination: and if it cease not to this, it ceaseth not to other continuing uses.

Thus much from Scripture, for imposition of hands, is more than nothing; though it may not be so full as you expected: but on the contrary, nothing is brought to prove it unlawful, that is worth the mentioning.

The last thing that I have to do, is to argue from the practice of the church, as the exposition of these texts of Scripture. If the Universal Church of Christ have used confirmation by prayer, and laying on of hands, as a practice received from the apostles, and no other beginning of it can be found; then have we no reason to think the ceremony to be ceased, or to interpret the forementioned Scripture, contrary

to this practice of the Universal Church. But the antecedent is true, as I now come briefly to prove, supposing what Mr. Hanmer hath said. It is commonly known, that the most ancient canons of the church do speak of this as the unquestioned practice and duty of the church: so that to recite canons were loss of time in so known a case. And if any say, that anointing and crossing were ancient; I answer, 1. That 'they were as ancient in the Popish use, as the matter of a sacrament, or as necessary signs,' is not true, nor proved, but disproved by our writers, against the Popish confirmation frequently. 2. Nor can it be proved that they were as ancient as indifferent things. 3. We prove the contrary, because they were never used in Scripture-times, there being no mention of them. 4. So that we bring antiquity but to prove the continuance of Scripture practice, and so to clear the sense of it; but the Papists plead the Fathers, for that which Scripture is a stranger to^k.

If Ignatius ad Heronem Diaconum be genuine, there is this testimony, "*Nihil sine Episcopis operare. Sacerdotes enim sunt: tu autem Diaconus Sacerdotum: Illi baptizant, sacrificant, manus imponunt, tu autem ipsis ministra.*" I recite it out of Usher's Latin copy, as supposed the most pure.

Tertullian, lib. de Prescript. cap. 36, appealing to the practice of the Apostle John, in the African churches, mentioneth, as his faith that he taught; one God the Creator, and Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the resurrection of the body; and that he joined the law and prophets, with the evangelical and apostolic writings, and thence drunk this faith. And of his practice he saith, "*Aquâ signat, Sancto Spiritu vestit, Eucharistia pascit;*" as three distinct ordinances, Lib. de Baptismo cap. 8, Having mentioned baptism, and the unction joined to that, and not then to confirmation, he addeth, "*Dehinc manus imponitur, per benedictionem advocans, et invitans Spiritum Sanctum.*"

Idem de Resur. Carn. cap. 8. "*Sed et caro abluitur, ut anima immaculetur: Caro unguitur, ut anima consecratur:*

^k Greg. M. in Epist. ad Quirin. (Leg. inter Usserii Hybernic. Epist. 2. p. 6.) Et quidem ab antiqua Patrum institutione didicimus, ut qui apud hæresin in Trinitatis Nomine Baptizantur, cum ad Sanctam Ecclesiam redeunt, aut unctione Chris-matis, aut Impositione manuum, aut sola professione fidei, ad sinum matris Ecclesiæ revocentur.

Caro signatur, ut et anima muniatur. Caro manus Impositione adumbratur, ut et anima Spiritu illuminetur.”

Cyprian ad Stephan. Epist. 72. Et ad Jubaian, is too much for it. I will not trouble you in citing any writers, since General Councils were in use, because their testimony is enough. He that would see such, may read Baronius ad An. 35. at large. So much for the proof of the fitness of imposition of hands in confirmation.

I come now to the second part of my proposition, viz. ‘That this ceremony is not of such necessity, as that such as scruple it, should be denied liberty of forbearing the reception of it, if they submit to the ministerial trial and approbation of their profession, and admission, and reception to church-privileges.’

¹ For proof of this, consider, 1. That we do not find that God any where instituted this sign, as a matter of necessity still without interruption, to be used; but only that by holy men it was applied as a convenient sign, or gesture to the works, in which they used it. Even as lifting up of hands in prayer was ordinarily used as a fit gesture, not wilfully to be neglected without cause, and yet not of flat necessity; or as kneeling in prayer, is ordinarily meet, but not always necessary. We find no more Scripture for the one than for the other: which indeed sheweth on one side, how causeless it is to question the lawfulness of it, any more than of lifting up the hands, or kneeling; and yet how little reason there is on the other side, to make it a matter of flat necessity.

2. As we find that kneeling in prayer, and lifting up the hands, were often omitted, so we find that sometimes the Holy Ghost is given before baptism, or imposition of hands. (Acts x.) And we find not that the apostles used it to all,

¹ The ancient church also used it so variously, as that it is plain, they fixed it to no one case alone. Of the divers cases, in which they imposed hands (on the catechumens, and four times on the penitents, and divers other,) you may see in Albaspinæus Observationes, Obs. 31, 32. et passim. Grotius Epist. 154. p. 379. ‘Manus-impositas baptizatis, nisi ab iis, qui jus haberent conferendi cælestia illo dona, primis temporibus non apparet. Serius id introductum est in Episcoporum honorem, quo magis in Apostolicum jus successisse crederentur. Nec causa aberat, quam ceremoniæ illi, velut naturalem diximus, precandi, scilicet, Denm, ut ei qui baptizatus jam fidem erat professus, ea largiri vellet, quæ ad præstandum in fide, maxime in periculis gravibus, sunt necessaria.’

though I confess, the negative arguing is infirm, yet it seems not probable, that this was always done.

3. It is somewhat suspicious to find in Justin Martyr's description of the Christian Churches' practices, no mention of this, nor any sacrament, but baptism, and the Lord's-supper; nor any of the Roman ceremonies. And Irenæus, and some others are silent in it.

4. God maketh no ceremonies under the Gospel so necessary, except the two sacraments; nor layeth so great a stress on them, as under the law; and therefore we are not to interpret the Gospel as laying men's salvation, or the peace of the church on any ceremonies; unless we find it clearly expressed.

5. For all that I have said from Scripture for imposition of hands in confirmation, though the lawfulness of it is proved past doubt, yet the proof of the duty of using it, is liable to so many objections, as that I must needs conclude, that the Gospel tenderness, and the sense of our mutual infirmities, and our care of tender consciences, and of the church's peace, should restrain all the sons of piety and peace, from making it a matter of flat necessity, and forcing them that scruple it, to submit to it.

And now having said thus much of imposition of hands, and confirmation, as grounded on the apostles' example; I must again and again remember you, that this is in a manner but 'ex abundanti,' and that the cause I am pleading, doth not at all need it; but that I did before most clearly manifest the truth of my position upon other grounds, upon which I shall proceed; and having shewed the necessity of ministerial judging of men's profession, and the personal covenanting of the adult, and the lawfulness of imposing hands therein, I go on as to the manner.

PROP. 14. *Though in receiving Adult Persons out of Infidelity by Baptism into the Church, a sudden Profession without any stay to see their Reformation, may serve turn; yet in the receiving those that were Baptized heretofore, into the Number of Adult-members, or to the Privileges of such, their lives must be inquired after, which must be such as do not confute their Profession.*

WE find in Scripture, that the converted were suddenly baptized, and they stayed not for any reformation of life to

go before. Indeed, the ancient churches afterwards kept their catechumens long in expectation; but that was not to see their lives first reformed, but that they might have time to teach them the doctrine of Christ, which they must know before they could be converts indeed. The apostles did suddenly baptize converted Jews and proselytes, because they had so much preparatory knowledge, as that a shorter teaching might acquaint them with the Christian doctrine. But the heathens must be long in learning so much as the Jews knew before conversion¹.

Yet if the catechumens did fall into gross sin, in time of their expectation and learning, they were so much the longer delayed, because it signified, that their first professed desires of entering into the church, upon Christ's terms, were not right.

But the baptized stand upon other terms: For 1. They are already in covenant with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and have renounced the flesh, the world, and the devil, and promised obedience to God, and to live according to their covenant. And this the church hath still required of them, as I shewed out of Justin Martyr, and others before^m, Dionysius, (or whoever else) in lib. de Hierarch. Eccles. saith, '*Ipse autem se omnino ea quæ tradentur, sequuturum esse pollicetur;*' and '*Ex eo præterea quærit, num ita instituat vivere, cum promisit asseverationibus;*' &c. upon which saith Albaspinæus, '*Quia scilicet, fidem Christianam, Christianumque vivendi genus, et mores, sese complexos persequuturosque jurabant, antequam baptizarentur.* (in Tertul. de Pœnit. p. 289.) et postea. Non accedebant ad Baptismum nisi de rebus fidei plane instructi, id est, de Dei magnitudine, et potestate, rebusque quæ in Evangeliiis continentur, uno excepto, Eucharistiæ mysterio; neque baptizabantur, nisi postquam ea omnia se credere jurassent, quorum fides a fide pœnitentiæ incipiebat, &c. Et in sequ. Jurabant in Baptismo solennibus verbis, se nunquamⁿ peccaturos; deinde renunciabant diabolo et pompis ejus. Denique cen-

¹ Lege quæ habet Grotius, Discus. Apol. Rivet, p. 235. cum antecedentibus ex Antiq. et de suis.

^m Read the whole order of Baptism in Dionysius, *ibid.* c. 4.

ⁿ That is, not to turn to an ungodly life, but to endeavour and perform sincere obedience. Albaspin. in Tertul. de Pœnitent. cap. 7. Sexcentis locis, non dicam hoc capite; unam ait tantum a lavacro veniam superesse, neque ullum primis illis temporibus inter privatum aut publicanum graviorum criminum discrimen invenient. Vide cætera.

surâ si peccarent post Baptismum coercebantur.' So that men that are engaged in covenant with God, must keep covenant, or manifest themselves penitent, for the violation of it, before they are admitted to further privileges. There is a long time, in which they grow up from an infant state to an adult; and how they live in that time, must be inquired after.

2. Otherwise the apostates would have equal acceptance and privileges with the faithful.

3. And so penitence and absolution would be excluded and confounded with mere confirmation.

4. Moreover the baptized are obliged to be responsible for their lives, being under the government of Christ's ministers, and among his saints.

5. For the sake of their own souls, and of the church and ordinances, we must endeavour to preserve them from corruption, which lying professions would introduce; and therefore we must not overlook, or neglect such evidence as is within our reach.

6. Else ministers that are by office to judge of their profession, would be unfaithful judges, and forfeit their trust, if they shall wilfully neglect any evidence within their cognizance, by which they may be enabled to judge.

But yet it is not the certainty of inward, saving grace, that we must find out by men's lives; for no man can have such certainty of another; but only that their lives be not such, as null and invalidate, and confute their profession, and they live not in the perfidious violation of their baptismal covenant.

PROP. 15. It is not of flat necessity that the Profession of the Expectant be made in the open Congregation, or before many, in order to his Confirmation and Admittance.

PROVED, 1. It is not of necessity, that converted infidels be admitted by baptism into the state of adult members, upon a public profession in a congregation; therefore it is not of necessity, that others be so admitted in confirmation. The antecedent is proved by the instance of the eunuch, (Acts viii,) whom Philip baptized in their way, and the jailor and his household, (Acts xvi,) baptized in the night at home. The consequence is proved by the parity of reason and case.

2. If a man may by confirmation be admitted into the number of adult Christians, in the Church Universal, without

being admitted into a particular church, then his profession and admission need not, in that case, to be before the congregation: but the antecedent is true; as I prove thus. A man may, by adult baptism, be admitted first into the Universal Church only; as was the eunuch, the jailor, Lydia, Sergius Paulus, and every first convert in any city, where the apostles came; therefore a man may, by confirmation, be admitted into the number of the adult, in the Catholic Church only: for the reason is the same, and the former admitteth them into the same number.

The consequence of the major is plain. For no one congregation more than another, can claim the cognizance of the admission of a member into the Universal Church, or confirming them in it.

3. Scripture hath no where made such public admission to be of constant necessity; therefore it is not so.

4. Else none could be admitted, or confirmed when persecution hindereth church assemblies.

5. The church is to believe and trust the pastors, to whom it doth by office belong to try and admit them.

6. General, unfixed ministers may thus try, approve, and confirm, who are not pastors of any particular church, such as Apostles, Evangelists, and others were; therefore they are not always to do it before a particular church; nor indeed did they always do so.

PROP. 16. When a Person is admitted among the Adult Members of a particular Church; as well as the Universal, his Profession and Admission must be either before the Church, or satisfactorily made known to the Church at least, who must approve of it by a Judgment of Discretion, in order to their Communion with him; and this among us is the ordinary Case; because it is the Duty of all that have opportunity, to join themselves to some particular Church; and it is in such Churches, that Communion in public Worship and Order must be had, either stately, or transiently and temporarily.

1. THE solemnity itself of our transition into the number of adult members, and their communion, is of very great advantage, as I shall manifest more anon.

2. We that are commonly against the private admission of infants (at least except in some urgent case) have less reason to be for the private transition and admission of men

among the adult, and that into a particular governed church°.

3. The whole society among whom such a person is entered, do owe him much duty and brotherly assistance. They must love him with a special love; they must live, though not in a levelling, yet in a charitable community with him, not shutting up the bowels of compassion from him, when they see him in want, but relieving him, as if they suffered with him; they are not only to love him, and relieve him as a man; but as one of Christ's little ones, or friends; yea, as his brethren, yea, as loving and relieving Christ in them, Matt. xxv. 35, to the end. They must receive and relieve a disciple in the name of a disciple. Besides this, they must have church-union and communion with him, as one body; and must pray for him, rejoice with him in God's praises, and the Lord's-supper, and watch over him, and admonish and reprove him in sin, for his recovery; and avoid him if he walk disorderly, and be impenitent in scandalous sin, &c.

Now, 1. No man can perform all this duty, to a man that he knoweth not to be thus related to him. If he know not that he owes him this duty, any more than to any one else in the world, how shall he pay it to him? To say, that we are bound to take all men that converse with us to be such, is to say, that Christians must renounce their wits, and turn the church into bedlam.

2. And as this proves, that the church-members must be made known to one another, so it proves that they must have a judgment of discretion in receiving them; though the pastors have the judgment of governing direction. For God hath not left the pastors at liberty, to take in whom they please; but hath described what profession they shall accept, or what persons they shall admit, and whom they shall reject. If therefore the pastors go against the word of

° Read Dr. Hammond's Pract. Catech. l. 5. sect. 4. pp. 298, 299. Of the Communion of Saints.

Albaspinaeus in Tertul. de Pœnitent. cap. 8, 9. p. 291. Cum pro foribus templi starent pœnitentes, prætereuntibus sacerdotibus, cæterisque fidelibus omnibus, omnino dolentis animi signis pœnitentiam suam testabantur, lacrymis non parcebant, precibus institebant, volvebantur, et si quæ alia habet pœnitentia, quæ misericordiam movere possint; non omittebant, ut pacem recupearent. Primum ante sacerdotes procumbebant, martyribus deinde adgeniculabantur, cæteris denique fratribus et viduis, ut ait Pacianus, enixè supplicabant, ut à Deo et ab Ecclesiâ veniam pro se impetrarent.

God, then this following is the people's duty: (1.) If they know not the error, or the case be doubtful, they are to rest in obedience to their pastors (for that is undoubtedly their duty), the work being the pastor's and not theirs. (2.) But if the case be plainly contrary to Scripture, as if he would admit an impenitent drunkard, fornicator, &c., they must disown his sin, that it lie not upon them, and refuse private familiarity with that person; but not withdraw from public ordinances, because of his presence; for when they have done their duty, and rid themselves of the guilt by a dissent, the person is to them as morally absent, though locally and physically present; and the ordinance is not defiled to them by his corporal presence; but the guilt will lie on the rulers of the church; otherwise all churches should be broken in pieces, if the people must separate, when every one that they are confident is unworthy is introduced; and the governed will become the governors. (3.) But if it be not a few that the pastors thus introduce against the certain word of God, but so many and such as will corrupt the substance of the church, and make it an incapable matter for the form, and so to become another thing, and destroy the very ends of church-association, so that it is no longer a communion of saints; then the people fearing God, are bound to stop this before it have quite corrupted the church, by admonishing the pastors, and advising with neighbour-churches to admonish them; and if that prevail not, by rejecting them: and if they cannot do so, by reason of a major vote of incapable persons, they ought to withdraw themselves, and worship God in such a church as is truly capable of the name and ends. And this is a lawful and necessary separation; of which as it is a duty, God is the cause; and as it is a forsaking of the rest, the culpable cause is only in themselves. I can easily prove all this, but that I think it needless tediousness^P.

(4.) And indeed, it would be very hard measure, if at the corrupt administration of a carnal, or careless, or erroneous pastor, all the church must be under an obligation to give their estates by way of relief to every one, that he will put the name of a Christian and church-member upon unwor-

^P Albaspin. ubi sup. Animadvertendum est, pœnitentes non solum hæc et similia egisse, ut cum Deo in gratiam redirent, verum etiam ut sacerdotes, et cæteros fratres æquiores haberent, in quorum arbitrio et judicio nonnunquam erat, eos in Ecclesia revocare.

I cite this to shew what cognizance the people were to have of such affairs.

thily : then may he force them to maintain all the beggars and rogues about them, though they were infidels and impious men. I speak not of the common relief of the needy ; for that I know they owe to an infidel ; but of the special community, which charity must make among the disciples of Christ. It is against all reason, that an erring or careless pastor, shall thus command all the people's estates, by introducing such without their consent, whom they are bound thus to maintain.

(5.) Yea indeed, the Spirit of God is, in the saints, a spirit of discerning ; so that it is not possible that all the church should in their affections obey such a corrupt administrator, by loving all the notorious, ungodly men, as saints, with the special love of brethren, whom he will carelessly, or erroneously put in the place of saints. I cannot possibly love that man as a saint, or disciple of Christ, that I am certain is his enemy, and none such.

I conclude therefore, that though the people be not church-governors by a vote (that is a great error), yet they have a judgment of discerning, according to which, they must obey, or reject their pastor's administrations. And he that denieth this, and would have them yield an absolute obedience, without trying, choosing and refusing, would not only make the pastors to be of the Papal strain, but would give them a Jesuitical obedience, above what the moderate Papists give the Pope. And therefore seeing that 'ad finem' there is a necessity that the people consent, or else they cannot obey, nor hold communion with the person, therefore there is also the same necessity 'ad finem' that they have satisfaction offered them, and have either the cognizance of the profession, and admission of the person, or that they be satisfied in the fidelity of their pastors in administration, and that he seek their consent ; or, which is best, that some chosen persons do represent them, and be present at such professions with the pastors ; and the pastors, and their own delegates together, do acquaint the congregation of all that are admitted, and of their satisfactory profession, that they may hold communion with them. This I speak of those (which are very many) that are fit for Church-communion, and yet through bashfulness, or want of utterance, are unable to make a public profession before all. (The choicest Christians that I have known, have been such.) But those

that are able, should rather in public make their own profession.

Object. ‘But what if one part of the congregation approve of the person and profession, and the other disallow it?’

Ans. 1. They are to be governed by the pastors. 2. And consult with the pastors of neighbour-churches, in cases of great weight and danger. 3. And the lesser part of the church, in doubtful cases, and tolerable differences, is to yield to the greater part: not as if a major vote had the government of the rest, much less of their governors; but in order to unity the fewer must submit.

Quest. ‘But what if the people would have the pastor baptize, confirm, or introduce an open heretic, or wicked person in his impenitency?’

Ans. The pastor must obey God, and refuse to obey them.

Quest. ‘And what if the people think a man unfit, whom the pastor would approve and introduce?’

Ans. 1. He may admit him into the Universal Church, notwithstanding their unjust refusal: 2. He hath power to admit him into that particular church, against their unjust dissent, as he is the ruler of the church, and the administrator of the ordinances: 3. He hath authority to persuade and command them from Christ, to hold communion with the person, and to do their duty to him; which if they do not, they commit a double sin; one of injustice and uncharitableness, in a causeless rejecting of a member of Christ; and another of disobedience, against the fifth commandment: 4. But yet the pastors cannot force the people to obey their advice and command, nor effectually procure it perhaps: 5. And therefore their forementioned power is not always to be exercised. For it is in vain to use a means, that will rather hinder the end than attain to it; and so is at that time, no means. Sometimes the pastor may see just cause to exercise all this power, and execute his part of church-communion with the person, in administering the ordinances to him, and leave the people answerable to God, for refusing their part; but this is not an usual case: usually, if he see the people resolve against communion with that person, how fit soever, he is publicly to clear himself by disallowing them in their sin, and reproofing them for it, and leaving the blame on them; and then in prudence to forbear the introducing of

the person ; because no duty is at all times a duty to be performed ; and especially when the hurt that will follow upon it, in the divisions of the church, is like to be far greater than the good, if it be done : 6. But if the church should be so corrupted, as that the major vote doth set against faith and godliness as such, and so will not admit a sound member to be added to them, the pastor, with the minor part, may after due admonition and patience, as justly reject the guilty and obstinate, as if they were but one man, and not a major part.

What is said of this case of admission, holds also of rejection by excommunication, and of other antecedent acts of discipline.

(4.) Lastly, If excommunication must usually be done in public, before the whole church, that they may know whom to avoid, and know the reason of it ; then admission must usually be done in public, the person or the pastor opening the case to the people, that they may know whom to have communion with ; and know the reason of it : but the antecedent is confessed by almost all. And it is proved plainly by Paul's practice and direction, 1 Cor. v, throughout : and it was the custom of the Christian churches in Tertulian's days, Apolog. cap. 39. ' There also (in the Christian meeting for worship) are exercised exhortations, castigations, and the Divine censure : for judgment is passed with great deliberation, or weight, as with men that are assured of the presence, or sight of God : and it is the highest representation of the judgment to come, if any one so offend, as that he be discharged, or banished from communion of prayer, and of the assembly, and of all holy commerce, or fellowship.'

Abundance more out of Cyprian, and others, might be easily produced, to prove that this which I have spoken, was the ancient history of the people in these church-affairs, yea in the choice of their pastors ; yea, and in rejecting unworthy pastors, Cyprian saith, they had a chief interest : not by ruling power, but by a prudent exercise of obedience, choosing the good, and refusing the evil. Self-preservation is natural to every body, where it is not by evil means, and to the hurt of the public state. It is hard if a natural body may not lawfully refuse, or cast up poison, if a governor should give it them. God bindeth none to the perdition of their souls ; nor any holy society to destroy itself, or suffer

itself to be destroyed, or corrupted by others, without the use of all just means to resist the bane. But of this I shall desire the reader, that would know the judgment and practice of the ancient church, to peruse Dr. Blondel's "*de Jure plebis in Regimine Ecclesiast.*" adjoined to that excellent piece of Grotius "*de Imperio summarum Potestatum circa Sacra*"⁹.

This much may satisfy you, that it should not be usually a secret, but a solemn transition from an infant-state of membership, into an adult-state; and that by a public profession or notification of it, the particular church should have satisfaction herein.

PROP. 17. *It is convenient, though not of necessity, that every Church do keep a Register of all that are admitted thus into the Number of the Adult-Members.*

As we were wont to keep a register of the infants baptized, so have we as much reason of the adult, approved and confirmed, or restored. Corporations of old, were wont to keep a book of the names of their burgesses or citizens; in respect to which, God is said to have a Book of Life, wherein he writes men's names out of which he blots them, speaking after the manner of men. The church hath great reason for this practice, the business being of so great weight; that we forget not who are of our communion, which without register, in great congregations, must needs be done. If any be so vain, as to demand a Scripture-proof of this; let him first bring me a Scripture-proof, that he may read with spectacles, or write a sermon from the preacher's mouth, or use notes in the pulpit, or print, &c., and then I will give him proof of this: in the meantime if this do not satisfy him, he shall have liberty to disuse it.

PROP. 18. *Those that were never thus ministerially and explicitly approved, confirmed or absolved (after an ungodly life,) but have been permitted without it to join ordinarily with the Church in Prayer and Praises, and have been admitted to the Communion of the Church, in the Lord's-supper, are approved and confirmed, eminently though not formally; though in so*

⁹ To recite more after all those of Blondel, is but to do a needless work. There is enough to satisfy all that are moderate for popular interest.

doing, both the Pastors and themselves did sin against God, by the Violation of his holy Order. So that such may be a true Church, though much corrupted or disordered.

THIS I add for two reasons: 1. To confute them that say our churches are no true churches, for want of an explicit profession: 2. And to acquaint you who it is among us, that are, or are not to be called to confirmation.

1. It is not the degree of clearness and openness in our profession, or in the ministerial approbation or admission, that is essential to a church-member. An obscure profession may be truly a profession. Some obscure profession, hath been ordinarily made by our people in this land heretofore, by their ordinary hearing the word, and standing up at the recital of the creed; and joining with the church in prayer and praise, and confessing the Scriptures to be the word of God, and acknowledging the ministry: and a further profession they made, by actual receiving the Lord's-supper, which is a silent profession of their faith in Christ. And though they were not solemnly approved and confirmed, (except that one of many, had a ceremonious confirmation from the bishop in their childhood,) yet were they actually admitted to daily communion with the church, and the special part of communion in the Lord's-supper. And though this profession and admission was lamentably defective, (of which more anon,) yet it is such as may prove our ordinary assemblies to have been true churches.

2. And I do not think it fit, that any that have been already admitted to church-communion in the Lord's-supper, should be now called out to confirmation, by imposition of hands; though where there is just cause to question their knowledge, faith, or lives, they may by the pastor be called to give an account of them: and put upon a clearer profession than they have yet made: but surely when they have been admitted, to the Lord's-supper, by any regular ministry and church, they are to be taken for adult-members, till they are justly cast out, or do cast out themselves. For the more perfect doth include the less perfect in it. If a man be ordained a presbyter, that was never ordained deacon, he is not to be called back again and made a deacon. If you make a man free of your trade, before he was ever bound apprentice, you cannot call him back again, and

bind him apprentice after this. If the University give a man the degree of Doctor of Divinity, or Master of Arts, that never took degree of Bachelor of Divinity, or of Arts, they cannot afterwards call him back to take his Bachelor's degree. If you have irregularly admitted the untried, unapproved, unconfirmed to the Lord's-supper, you have 'eminenter' though not 'formaliter' confirmed and approved him though irregularly. Of this more anon.

PROP. 19. *So exceeding great and many are the Mischiefs that have befallen us, by the neglect of a solemn, meet Transition from an Infant, into the Adult Church-state, and which undoubtedly will continue, till this be remedied, that all Magistrates, Ministers, and People, that dissemble not, in professing themselves to be Christians, should with speed and diligence attempt the Cure.*

LET us here take a view of the case of our nation, and congregation, and then consider the effects and consequents.

All the people of our parishes, except Anabaptists, do bring their children to be baptized; which, if it were faithfully done, were a happy means of an early engagement unto Christ, and a happy entrance upon further mercy. Multitudes of those know not what baptism is, nor to what use and end it is appointed, nor what benefit their children may receive by it. I speak upon too sure and large experience; nor do they know what Christianity is, nor who Jesus Christ is, nor what it is they are to do in baptism; but there they make a promise customarily, as they are bid, in words not understood, that they will acquaint their children at age with the covenant there made, which they never understood themselves, and that they will educate them in godliness, when they hate godliness at the heart. And when they come home, they perform their promise accordingly: they teach them nothing of the doctrine of Christianity, and the life to come, but they give them up to the flesh and the world, there in words they did renounce; and they teach them by their daily examples to curse, and swear, and rail, and to be proud and covetous, and voluptuous, serving their bellies instead of God; and hatefully reproaching a godly life, instead of teaching it their children. These children are customarily brought to the assemblies, where they hear the plainest teaching, without understanding, or regarding

it, and grow hardened under daily reproofs and exhortations ; living as their parents taught them, some in gross ignorance and worldliness, without any signs of godliness, further than to come to church ; some in drunkenness, some in whoredom, abundance in a malignant hatred of a holy life, making them that use it the common scorn, and taking them for the most hateful persons in the parish, or country where they live. For custom-sake, and to quiet their conscience in their sin, they will come to the Lord's-table, if they be admitted by the pastor, and may have it in their mode and way : and if a minister shall desire them to come to him first, that he may understand their knowledge and profession, they scorn it ; and ask him by what authority he would examine them, and what proof he hath that men must be examined, before they be admitted to the Lord's-supper ? And some self-conceited, half-witted writers have taught them this lesson, and made ministerial trial and approbation odious to them. But because they were once baptized, and have since come to hear and join with us in the assembly, therefore they think that they have right to all ordinances, and are true Christians and adult-members of the church ; and also exempt from the government of the pastors, that require them to submit to the means of their own good. In the bishops' days, some few of them were confirmed : in the country where I lived, about one in ten or twenty, and what that was, and how it was done I can tell you, by what I once made trial of. When I was a schoolboy, about fifteen years of age, the bishop coming into the county, many went to him to be confirmed : we that were boys, ran out to see the bishop among the rest, not knowing any thing of the meaning of the business : when we came thither, we met about thirty or forty in all, of our own stature and temper, that had come for to be *bishopped*, as then it was called : the bishop examined us not at all in one article of the faith ; but in a church-yard, in haste we were set in a rank, and he passed hastily over us, laying his hands on our head, and saying a few words, which neither I nor any that I spoke with, understood ; so hastily were they uttered, and a very short prayer recited, and there was an end. But whether we were Christians or infidels, or knew so much as that there was a God, the bishop little knew, nor inquired. And yet he was es-

teemed one of the best bishops in England. And though the canons require, that the curate or minister send a certificate that children have learned the catechism ; yet there was no such thing done, but we ran of our own accord to see the bishop only ; and almost all the rest of the county, had not this much : this was the old, careless practice of this excellent duty of confirmation. Some few, perhaps half a parish in the best places, will send their children to church, to be catechised yet ; but even those few that learn the words, for the most part understand not what they say, and are as ignorant of the matters, as if they never learned the words. This is the common way, by which our parishes come to be churches, and our people to be Christians ; supposing some to be mixed among them, that are more faithfully devoted to God in baptism, and better educated, in the fear of God.

Now let us see what are the real, visible, undeniable fruits of this defective sinful course. Because men build upon this fundamental falsehood, that infant baptism, upon the parents' profession, doth give them right to the church-state and privileges of the adult, without any personal profession and covenanting with God, when they come to the use of reason, which the church must have cognizance of ; and so they that entered somewhat more regularly into an infant church-state, do become adult members secretly, unobservedly, and no body well knows how. Hereupon it followeth,

1. That our churches are lamentably corrupted and diseased, though they are true churches, and have life in them, while they are made so like the unbelieving and ungodly world ; and the garden of Christ is made too like the common wilderness : for heathens, and impious persons, and all sorts of the unclean (almost) are the members of them, where parishes, or parish-meetings are made convertible with churches. I would make the case neither worse nor better than it is. Till within these few years, I knew but very imperfectly how it is, and I thought the case had been better with some and worse with others than I have found it upon trial. And had I not set upon the duty of personal instruction, I should never have known the state of the people : but now we have dealt with them almost all in private personally, I shall truly tell you the state of this parish, by which you may conjecture at the rest of the nation. I know not a con-

gregation in England that hath in it proportionably so many that fear God: and yet our whole parish consisteth of all these sorts following: (1.) Among eight hundred families, there are about five hundred persons such as the vulgar call precise, that are rated to be serious professors of religion, or perhaps are somewhat more. These live in unity, and seem to me to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and are of as peaceable, harmless, humble spirits, and as unanimous without inclination to sects, or ostentation of their parts, as any people I know. (2.) Besides these, there are some of competent knowledge and exterior performances, and lives so blameless, that we can gather from them no certain proof, or violent presumption that they are ungodly, or that their profession is not sincere. So many of these joining with the rest, as make about six hundred, do own their church-membership, and consent to live under so much of church order and government, as unquestionably belongeth to Presbyters to exercise, and to be my pastoral charge. (3.) There are some that are tractable and of willing minds, that by their expressions seem to be ignorant of the very essentials of Christianity; which yet I find to have obscure conceptions of the truth, when I have condescendingly better searched them, and helped them by my inquiries. These also (as weak in the faith) we receive. (4.) Some there are that are of competent understandings, and of lives so blameless, that we durst not reject them; but they hold off themselves, because they are taught to question, if not to disown our administrations; for all that, we give liberty to all that in tolerable things do differ^a. (5.) Some there are that are secret heathens, believing with Aristotle, that the world was from eternity; making a scorn of Christ, and Moses, and heaven, and hell, and Scripture, and ministers, and all religion; thinking that there is no devil, no immortality of the soul, or everlasting life: but this they reveal only in secret, to those that they find capable by viciousness, unsettledness, or any malignity, or discontent against the godly, or the orders of the church: and yet for the hiding of their minds,

^a Of this fourth sort I hope are many that truly fear God, that some on one pretence and some on another, forbear to join with us in the communion of the church, in the Lord's-supper: but yet hear, and live in love and peace with us. And some do join with us (on the grounds as godly strangers may be admitted) sometimes in the Lord's-supper; that yet expressly own not a membership in the particular church.

they will hear, and urge us to baptize their children, and openly make the most orthodox confessions, and secretly deride it when they have done, as I can prove. And this is the only differing party among us in judgment and design, that is in danger of leavening many, that God forsaketh. (6.) Many more there are that have tolerable knowledge, and live in some notorious, scandalous sins: some in gross covetousness, and these will not be convinced: some in common drunkenness, and those will confess their faults, and promise amendment a hundred times over, and be drunk within a few days again; and thus have spent the most part of their lives: some in as constant tippling, drinking as great a quantity, but bearing it better away: some in ordinary swearing, cursing, ribaldry, whoredoms sometimes. Many in neglect of all family-duties, and the Lord's-day: and some in hateful, bitter scorns at prayer, holy conference, church-order, and holy living, and the people that use it; sometimes rising up in tumults against the officers that endeavour to punish a drunkard, or sabbath-breaker, and rescuing them, and seeking the ruin of the officers^r. (7.) Some there are that are of more tractable dispositions, but really know not what a Christian is; that hear us from day to day, yea and some few of them learn the words of the catechism, and yet know not almost any more than the veriest heathen in America. They all confess, that we must mend our lives, and serve God; but they know not that God is eternal, or that Christ is God, or that he is man, but say, he is a Spirit; some say neither God nor man; some say God and not man; some say man and not God; abundance say, he was man on earth, but now he is not: abundance know not what he came to do in the world; nor that there is any satisfaction made for sin, but what we must make ourselves; and they tell me, they trust to nothing for pardon and salvation, but God's mercy, and their good serving him (which is only saying every night

^r As I would not have mentioned the faults of any of my parishioners, but on this necessity of opening the state of the nation 'de facto,' so they have no reason to take it ill of me. For, 1. I accuse none by name, much less the generality. 2. The innocent do themselves know, and bewail the sins that I mention. 3. I am so far from making them worse than other parishes, that I unfeignedly profess, that I do not know any other in England of so much godliness, and tractableness; which testimony is true, and more to their honour, than the mentioning of the remnants of ignorance and ungodliness is to their dishonour. If it be thus, here, how much worse is it in most parts of the land!

and morning in bed, or as they undress them, the Lord's-prayer, and the Creed for a prayer, and coming to church). They say openly, they do not know of any surety that we have, or any that hath borne the punishment of our sin, or suffered for us: and when I repeat the history of the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Christ to them, they stand wondering, and say, they never heard it before: what the Holy Ghost is, they know not; nor what sanctification, faith, or justification is; nor what baptism is; nor the Lord's-supper; nor to what use, but in general, for our salvation. What a church is, they know not; nor what is the office of pastor or people, save only to preach and hear, and give and receive the sacraments. If I ask them what Christianity is, the best answer is, that it is serving God as well as we can, or as God will give us leave. So that there is scarce an article of the Creed, or very few, that they tolerably understand. Nay one of above fourscore years of age (now dead) thought Christ was the sun, that shineth in the firmament; and the Holy Ghost was the moon. (8.) Many there be, that join this heathenish ignorance and wicked obstinacy together; hating to be instructed; scorning to come near me, to be taught, and to be told of their sin, when they come. They will rail at us bitterly behind our backs, if we will not let them have their own will and way about the sacraments, and all church-affairs; but they will not submit to that teaching, that should bring them to know what Christ or Christianity is. (9.) Some there be that are of tolerable knowledge, and no drunkards, nor whoremongers that the world knoweth of, but of more plausible lives, and have some forms of prayer in their families: but yet live in idle or tippling company, or spend their lives in vanity, and hate more a diligent serving of God, and heavenly life, than the open drunkards do^s: These make it their work to possess people with a hatred of strict professors, and of our churches and administrations, and to that end get all the books that are written for admitting all to the Lord's-table, that they can light of; and contrary to the authors' meanings, they make them engines to harden others in their impiety, and hatred of reformation. The like use they make of the writings of many dissenting divines, about church government; or any from whence they

^s I have but very few of these; but I know neighbour parishes that have too many, to the grief of their godly ministers.

may fetch matter of reproach against the pastors and ordinances among us. (10.) Another sort there are, that are deeply possessed with a conceit, that God having determined before we are born, whether we shall be saved or not, it is in vain to strive ; for if we be predestinated, we shall be saved whatever we do ; and if we be not, we shall not, whatever we do ; and that we can do nothing of ourselves, nor have a good thought, but by the grace of God, and if God will give it us, we shall have it ; and the devil cannot prevail against him ; but if he will not give it us, it is in vain to seek it ; for it is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy ; and therefore they give up themselves to security and ungodliness, because they can do nothing of themselves. And thus by misunderstanding some texts of Scripture, and abusing some truths of God, they are hardened in ungodliness, thinking that all is wrong of God ; and they will not so much as promise reformation, nor promise to use the means, because they say, they cannot tell whether God will put it into their hearts, and it is all as he will^t. (11.) Besides these, there is one or two honest, ignorant professors that are turned Anabaptists, and join with the church of them in the next parish. (12.) And some Papists are among us ; and whether only those that stay from the assemblies, I cannot say^u.

Of these twelve sorts of people, this parish is composed ; which I therefore mention, that the state of our parishes may be truly known ; while others are compared with this : for every one hath not had the opportunities which I have had, to know all their people, or the most.

And now if all these are fit to go for Christians, then must we make a new kind of Christianity ; and a new Gospel, and a new Christ. And if all these are fit to be church-members, then we must make a new kind of churches.

And why then may not those be Christians and church-

^t This tenth sort, are some of them infected by the infidels (who are all for Hobbes's Necessity) but most of them have got it, I know not how : but so many are possessed by these conceits, that I little thought, that near so many of the ungodly vulgar, had so abused the doctrine of predestination and grace ; as if they had been hired to disgrace it.

^u Our Papists are but few ; but if the rest of them be such as ours, their church hath small reason to boast of its holiness.

Besides, if all these were fit to be members, yet we must know their own consent, which mere living in the parish, or coming to church doth not signify.

members, that never heard of the name of Christ, as well as many of these?

2. By this untried entrance of all sorts into our churches, we bring a dishonour on the very Christian name, and so on the Lord Jesus himself, and on his Gospel and holy ways. Christianity is not a matter of mere opinion: Christ came not into the world only to persuade men to have high thoughts of him, but to save his people from their sins, and to destroy the works of the devil. And when the church of Christ shall be turned into a den of thieves, or a sty of swine, what a great dishonour is it to the Lord? As if we would persuade the world that his servants are not holier than others, and differ but in an opinion from the world. Christ needeth not disciples, and therefore will not take in all that refuse to come upon his terms; but hath fixed his terms; and will have only those that will yield to them. Though I abhor the rigor of the contrary extreme, that would make the church narrower than it is, and pin it up in so small a number, as would tempt men to doubt of Christianity itself; and teacheth men to exclude their brethren merely because they are themselves uncharitable judges, when they are not able to disprove their profession; yet must I also detest this horrible dishonouring of the Lord, as if his body were no better than the army of the devil.

3. And by this means the heathens, Jews, Mahometans and all infidels are exceedingly hindered from believing in Christ; when they can say as the Turks, when men question their fidelity; *What! dost thou think I am a Christian?* He that knows any thing of religious affairs, knoweth that commonly the first thing that draweth men to any party, is the liking of the persons and their practices; from whence they grow to inquire with inclination into their doctrines. The ancient Christians that lived before the days of Constantine, did bring Christianity into reputation by their holiness, and God was then more eminently seen among them. But when the countenance of the emperor, and worldly advantages had drawn in all men to the church, and the bishops did set the door too wide open, Christianity looked like another thing, and that inundation of wickedness overspread the church, which Salvian and so many more complain of. Our most likely way to win the Jews, and all infidels to the church, is

by shewing them the true nature of Christianity in the church-members.

4. Hereby also we confound the ancient order of Catechumens, or Expectants with the true members of the church, and lay the church and the porch, yea, and the church-yard, if not the commons, all together. By which also our preaching and administrations are confounded : so that whereas the ancient churches had their common sermons (and some prayers) which were fitted to the unconverted or expectants, and had also both doctrine, prayers, praises, and other worship, proper to the church, especially on the Lord's-days, we must now speak to all, and join with all ; and the church, and the enemies of the church, must sing the same praises, as if they were one body. And God is not the God of confusion but of order in the churches. He that put two sorts of preaching and doctrine into the apostles' commission ; (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20 ;) one for making disciples, and another for the edifying and guidance of disciples, did never intend that these should be confounded.

5. And then by this means, the souls of millions of poor people are deprived of the great benefits of the ordinances and administrations suitable to their state. The begetting word goeth before the feeding, strengthening word, even before the milk for babes. The laying of the foundation must go before our building thereon. Every one will thrive best in his own element and place. A fish will not prosper on dry land, nor a man under water. The womb is the only place for the embryo and unborn child, though not for those that have seen the sun. If you will break the shell before the chicken be hatched, that you may hasten its production, or honour it with a premature association with the rest that see the sun, your foolish charity will be the death of it. And so deal abundance of mistaken zealots with the souls of men ; who cry out against the wisest and most conscientious ministers, as if they were unchristianing the people, and undoing the world, because they would feed them with food convenient for them, and will not be such hasty midwives, as to cast the mother into her throes, if not rip her up, that she may have the child at her breasts, which should be many days or months in the womb. Moreover they thus cause our people, to lose all that benefit of preparations, and so-

lemn engagement to Christ: of which more anon, among the benefits.

6. By this means also, the souls of our poor people are deluded, and they are made to believe that they are Christians when they are not, and in a state of salvation, when it is no such thing. As Mr. Thorndicke saith, as aforecited, "No man is to be admitted to the assemblies, or visible societies of Christians, till there be just presumption that he is of the heavenly Jerusalem that is above:— And admitting to, and excluding from the church is, or ought to be a just and lawful presumption, of admitting to, or excluding from heaven: it is morally and legally the same act that entitleth to heaven, and to the church, that maketh an heir of life everlasting and a Christian^y:—" And if so, then what greater mischief can we do the soul of an ungodly man, than so to delude him, by our admitting him into the church; and make him believe he is in a state of salvation, when it is no such thing! False faith, and false hopes, are the things that fill hell, and are the common undoing of the world; and all that ever we can do, is too little to cure it. When I bend all my studies and labours, but to make a wicked man know that he is wicked, I cannot procure it. I can make him believe that he is a sinner, but not that he is an unconverted, ungodly sinner, and in a state of condemnation. O the power of blinding self-love, that will not suffer them to see themselves miserable, when they see themselves sinful, and all because they would not have it so, when yet it is most visible to others! And shall we all join to strengthen this potent enemy? and lay this snare, and thrust men headlong to hell, that are running down hill so fast already; and all under pretence of charity and compassion!

7. We shall put them by this means into a way, not only of losing the fruit of ordinances, but of misapplying all to the increasing of their deceit; when we preach peace to the believer, the wicked will misapply it, and say, it belongs to them: when we speak against the unbelievers and ungodly, they will think that this is not their part, but bless themselves because they are Christians. In our praises they are tempted with the Pharisee to thank God, and perhaps for mercies which they never had, as justification,

^y Mr. Thorndicke, see Dr. Hammond's Practic. Catech. lib. 2. sec. 2. p. 103. and l. 6. sec. 52. pp. 311, 313, 314. 319—323, &c.

adoption, sanctification, &c. The sacraments by misapplication will confirm them in presumption; and thus as they enter by deceit, among adult believers, so will they turn all the ordinances of God, and the privileges of the church to feed that deceit, more effectually than among the expectants it would have been.

8. But the greatest mischief that troubleth me to think of, is this; that by this hastening and admitting all the unprepared into the number of adult Christians, and members of the church; we do either put a necessity upon ourselves to throw away church-discipline, or else to be most probably the damnation of our people's souls, and make them desperate, and almost past all hope, or remedy. I must confess, that what I am saying now, I was not sensible of, till lately that experience made me sensible. While I meddled not with public reproofs or censures, I disputed of these things, without that experience, which I now find is one of the greatest helps to resolve such doubts; which makes me bold to tell the church, that the practice of so much discipline, as we are agreed in, is a likelier way, to bring us all to agreement in the rest, than all our disputings will do without it; and that I resolve hereafter, to take that man for an incompetent judge, and unmeet disputer about church-discipline, that never exercised it, or lived where it was exercised; and I shall hereafter suspect their judgments, and be almost as loath to follow such, as to follow a swimmer that never was before in the water, or a pilot that was never before at sea, or a soldier that never saw wars before, but could have only learned their skill by the book. Our case stands thus: If we take all our parishes according to the old church-constitution, to be particular churches, and all the parishioners to be members; then either we must exercise the discipline which Christ hath commanded, or not. If not, then we disobey our Lord and Master, and own such a church as is utterly incapable of church-ends, and consequently of the essence, seeing that it is a relative being. For it is supposed that it is not for any unusual accident, that we cannot exercise this discipline, but from the very church-constitution, or incapacity of the matter. And then, (1.) We shall be traitors to Christ, under the name of pastors, if we will wilfully cast out his ministerial, kingly government. (2.) We shall betray the church to licentiousness. And, (3.)

We shall set up a new church-way, which is contrary to that which hath been practised in all ages, from the apostles' days, till impiety had overspread the Christian world. He that dare take on him to be an overseer and ruler of the church, and not to oversee and rule it, and dare settle on such a church-state, as is incapable of discipline, is so perfidious to Christ, and ventureth so boldly, to make the church another thing, that I am resolved not to be his follower.

But if we shall exercise the discipline of Christ upon all in our ordinary parishes, what work shall we make? I will tell you what work, from so much experience, as that no reasonings can any more persuade me to believe the contrary, than that wormwood is not bitter, or snow not cold.

(1.) We shall have such a multitude to excommunicate, or reject, that it will make the sentence grow almost contemptible by the commonness. (2.) We shall so extremely enrage the spirits of the people, that we shall go in continual danger of our lives; among so many that are publicly reprobated, and cast out, it is two to one, but some desperate villains will be studying revenge^z. But all this is nothing; but that which sticks upon my heart is this: (3.) We shall be the cruelest enemies to the souls of our poor people in the world; and put them the very next step to hell. For as soon as ever we have rejected them, and cast them under public shame, they hate us to the heart, and either will never hear us more, or hear us with so much hatred and malice, or bitterness of spirit, that they are never likely to profit by us. If you say that, doubtless discipline will have better fruits, if it be an ordinance of God: I answer, 1. It is no time now in the end of the world, to question whether that be an ordinance of God, which Scripture speaks of so fully, and so plainly; and which the Catholic Church hath so long practised, and that with such severity as it hath done. 2. I know that discipline is of excellent use, and is likely to have excellent effects; but upon whom? upon such as are fit to come under discipline, and with such I have seen the usefulness of it; but with the rest it makes them next to mad. They that before would patiently hear me, in the plainest, sharpest sermons that I could preach, and would quietly bear any private admonition, when once they are

^z This is no dishonour to the discipline; for we find it hath great effect on such as are capable of it.

publicly admonished and cast out, are filled with the gall of malice and indignation, and never more likely to profit by a sermon. Nay, they set themselves with malice to reproach and oppose, and stir up others; and fall in to any party, that will receive them that are enemies to the ministry; so that I look upon some of them, when once they are cast out, almost as if they were already in hell: for they are desperately hardened against any further means of their recovery: 3. Yea, I am persuaded, that if we exercise Christ's discipline according to the Scripture rule, upon all the parishes in England, it would endanger a rebellion; and the rage of the people would make them ready, to take any opportunity to rise up against the Sovereign Power that doth maintain and protect us; and if we were not protected, we should soon have enough of it.

Object. Perhaps you will say, 'That public admonitions, and church censures are not to be easily exercised, nor upon any but notorious, scandalous sinners, and that in case of obstinate impenitency.'

Ans. I am as much against a rash, unnecessary censure, or use of the severity of discipline, as another: I know that a fly must not be killed with a beetle. Let it be exercised but according to the Parliament's ordinance, called 'The Form of Church Government, to be used in the Church of England and Ireland, Aug. 29, 1648.' Or let it be exercised but with one half, or the sixth part of the severity of the ancient canons of the church, and you shall certainly see the effects that I tell you of. Do you think to use it but with few, when impenitent, scandalous sinners are so many? But perhaps you think to use it only 'in terrorem,' or now and then one, and let others alone that are in the same case. But, 1. That is the same disobedience to God, as to use it upon none at all. He that hath commanded us to 'reject a heretic, to have no company with the disorderly livers, to turn away from scandalous, ungodly men, and not to eat with drunkards, railers,' &c., hath not bid us do thus by some, but by all. 2. God condemneth partiality. 3. Your partiality will presently be so noted by men, that it will turn to your reproach, and make both you and your discipline odious, when they can say, 'He casteth out one, and forbeareth others in the same case.'

Object. 'But were there not more offenders than the in-

cestuous man at Corinth? And yet Paul casteth out but him.'

Ans. 1. How can you tell how many Paul cast out? 2. Doth he not give the church a flat command to cast out and avoid the rest. (1 Cor. v. 11, 12.) When will you make us believe, that Paul at that time commanded them to do that which he would not have them do? 3. Corinth had many offenders, whom Paul in that epistle reprehendeth; but can you prove that any of them were obstinately impenitent, after admonition? I know you cannot.

But perhaps you will think, that you should by the preparatory, private admonition so bow them, and work upon them, that few of them should be so obstinate as to fall under censure.

I answer, You speak this because you never tried, and know not the world. I must presume to tell you, (though to tell you the reasons be unmeet), that there are but few men in England must expect more advantage for interest in their people, than I have in mine; and yet all is nothing, when I come to exercise discipline, and cross their selfish, sensual inclinations. Those that will tell me, they are beholden to me for their lives, yet will not hear me when I persuade them to any humbling confession. Those that cannot hide their sin, will confess it, and commit it over and over; will you accept of their private confession for satisfaction, that will publicly slander their neighbours, and be drunk openly every week or month, or swear every day. But many of them will not so much as confess before a few ministers or officers of the church, that they have sinned, but will stand impenitently in it to the last. Let us entreat them with all the submissiveness and earnestness that I can, when one hath beat or slandered another, or in the like cases, if I would kneel to them, I cannot get many of them once (hypocritically) to say, I am sorry, or I did amiss; and those that do say so, in a cold, hypocritical, heartless manner, will join with it such bitter words against the accuser or reprover, and shew such hatred to those that admonish them, that declareth their impenitency^a. If you have such

^a I desire those that are over rigid and uncharitable in censuring others, not to extend these complaints to more than I extend them; nor to take it as an occasion for the unchurcing of whole parishes, or any one particular person, without sufficient evidence. For I must profess that I meet with hundreds in my parish, that I can

extraordinary abilities, to melt and mollify hardened sinners, more than we have, you are the more inexcusably unfaithful to God and man, that will not use them. And all are not so happy as to have your conquering parts. For my part, I can say in uprightness of heart, that I do what I can, (abating those neglects which are the consequents of my frailty) and if I knew how to do more, I would, with study, preaching, conference, labour or estate; and yet with many I am not able to prevail, so much as to make them capable of discipline. So that I see plainly by unquestionable experience, that either we must have churches without the discipline of Christ, and be rulers without ruling it; or else we must utterly undo our people, body and soul for ever, and plunge them into a desperate state, and make all our following labours in vain to multitudes of them: or else we must take another course, than to admit our parishes to adult church-membership, as was formerly done, without preparation, and fitness for such a state.

And yet in their blindness, gentlemen, ministers, and all that plead for common church-membership, pretend to be charitable to the people's souls, when they are exercising this grievous cruelty. It is just as if in mercy to the schoolboys, you should set them that cannot read English, in the highest form, where they must make orations in Latin and Greek, or else be whipped: would they thank you for such advancement? It is as if you should put an ignorant, unexercised, cowardly soldier, or one that is but learning to use his arms, into the front of the battle, for his honour: or as if you should prefer a pupil to be a tutor, or put a freshman in the doctor's chair, or admit a new baptized novice to be a pastor of the church, where the blood of the people shall be required at his hands; or as if to honour him, you should admit any common mariner to the pilot's place, or any apothecary to play the physician to other men's ruin, and his own shame. If you set such children on horseback, while you pretend their good, you will break their necks. No man is safe out of his own rank and place. If the husbandman know that every sort of plants and grain, must have their proper soil and

comfortably hold communion with, that some men of stricter principles, or more censorious dispositions would reject; yea, and I take abundance for truly godly men, that are not noted for any eminency of religion, perhaps their parts, or callings, or opportunities, being such as to keep them much from the knowledge of others.

season, and the gardener knoweth that several herbs and flowers, must be variously manured, or else they will not prosper; why should we be less wise in the work of God? As country schools are seminaries to the academies, so the catechumens or expectants is the seminary to the church, and the state of infant church-membership, the seminary to the state of the adult, into which they must be seasonably and solemnly transplanted, when they are ripe and ready, and not before. Truly our merciful hastlings do but yoke untamed bullocks, that are fitter to strive and tire themselves than to plough; and do but saddle such wild, unbroken colts, as are more likely to break their own and their rider's necks, than to go the journey which they are designed for. In the state of expectants, these men may profit by preparing ordinances, and the season may come, when they may fitly be transplanted: but if we put them 'inter fideles,' that are infidels, among actual believers, and adult church-members that are not such, nor prepared for the station, we bring them under a discipline which will exasperate them, and turn them to be malignant enemies, and undo them for ever. The disposition of the matter, must go before the reception of the form; for indisposed matter will not receive it. As the operation followeth the being, and the disposition, so we must employ every person and thing, in such operations only, as their being and qualification is capable of, and suited to. A due placing of all according to their qualifications, is the chief part of our government. Misplace but one wheel in your watch, and try how it will go. If any person or thing be not good in his own place, he will be much worse out of it, in the place of his superior. Fire is better in the chimney than in your bed, or upon your table: a good clerk may make but a sorry counsellor; and a good subject may make but an ill magistrate: and many a man becomes the seat of a justice, that would not become the prince's throne. If you would not undo men's souls by a discipline which they cannot bear; let them stay in the seminary of expectants, till they are ripe for it.

Object. 'But how do the churches of France, Holland, Geneva, and Scotland, that have exercised discipline upon all?'

Ans. 1. Must I be sent to another nation to know that which I have made trial of, and attained the certain know-

ledge of, at home? I was never in France, nor at Geneva, and therefore I know not what number of obstinate, impenitent, scandalous persons are there; nor how many that know not who Jesus Christ is, nor what a Christian or a church is; but I have been in England, and I partly know what store of these are there, and what usage they will bear, and what not. 2. Either other churches have such materials as our parishes or not. If not, their cause is none of ours: if they have, then either they exercise Christ's discipline on them faithfully and impartially, or not: if not, then they are not to be imitated by us in their negligence, unfaithfulness, or partiality. If they do, and yet do not undo the people, they have not such a people as ours, or else they have other means to further their ends. 3. The truth is, as in France, they are but a people gathered from among the Papists, whose church doth drink up most of the scum; so the other churches: 1. Are too lamentably careless, partial, or defective, in executing their own discipline^b: and if I should come to think it lawful, to forbear the execution of it upon nineteen, I should soon think it lawful to forbear the twentieth; and then what should we think of Scripture, and the canons of the Universal Church? 2. By this neglect it is, that reformed churches have contracted the greatest dishonour that is upon them, while they are sound in doctrine, and have learned pastors, able to confound the Romish adversaries; but, alas! too many unmeet church-members. 3. They have (and Scotland had till lately) the magistrate's sword to drive men on, and force them to submit to discipline, which is not our case, nor was the case of the Primitive Church. It is not there the church's censure that doth the work, but the magistrate's sword, no more than it was with our bishops in England. 4. And yet what work a little exercise of discipline made, may appear in the case of Calvin, at Geneva, when for suspending the sacrament, when the people were in enmity, he was banished Geneva, and their dogs called by the name of Calvin; and when the suspending of one Bertelerius could put them all into such a flame.

^b Melancthon Epist. (Impres. Lugdun. 1647.) ad Dominum Schlenpnerum, saith, 1. Quia in tanta multitudine vix pauci sunt Christiani, et apti qui sacramento fruantur, cavendum est ne vulgus invitetur ad prophanandum Corpus Domini.

Lege Calvin. Institut. lib. 4, cap. 12, sect. 1, §2; Zanch. de Ecclesia, vol. 3, fol. 123, 124, 134, 135, and others cited in the Preface of my "Reformed Pastor."

Object. 'But, fiat Justitia, et ruat cœlum; let us trust God with his own ordinances: we must do our duty, whatever come of it?'

Answ. This doth but beg the question: God's ordinances are not for destruction, but edification; at least as to the multitude of the ungodly, they tend to their conversion, and not to their perdition. Is that likely to be God's ordinance, which certain experience telleth us, will put such multitudes of men into a hopeless case, or next to hopeless? Ministers are appointed to *make disciples*, and gather men to Christ, and further their conversion, and not plunge them into a remediless state, and to hurry them all unprepared into church-communion, that they may be thrust out again, and brought to hate the church. It is another's work to advance them to the pinnacle of the Temple, that he may cast them down headlong. And I never yet knew the man, or saw his face, that practised what this objection pleads for; and exercised discipline, faithfully on a whole parish. Nor do I believe that any man can do it that would; unless the magistrate do it for him. For he cannot do it without the people's consent: and if he sentence such to be avoided by the people, they will despise his sentence, and hold communion with them the more, and do as our drunkards do, when one of their companions is put in the stocks, bring him ale and good cheer, and eat, and drink, and make merry with him, if the magistrate restrain them not.

Object. 'But Excommunication must not be used, till all other remedies will do no good, and when all will do no good, what good will it do such to be kept under other means?'

Answ. To do good for the bringing a man out of that sin, for which he is admonished, is one thing; and to do good, for his information and conversion in the main, is another thing: it is the use of discipline, to cure men of the particular sins that they are reprov'd for, rather than to convert them from a state of wickedness in general. 2. Nor is excommunication to be deferred, as long as there is any hope by other means; but only till we have used other means in vain, for such a season as is meet; that the ends of discipline be not frustrated: for else there should never man be excommunicated: for there is some hope that

preaching against his sin may do him good at last; though he come drunk to the Lord's-table twenty years together, you cannot say that his conversion is impossible: and yet we must not hereupon defer the casting out of such a member. But in his expectant state, or among the Catechumens, we may bear with him lawfully in his wickedness, without excluding him from among our hearers; and if he hear us seven and seven years in vain, there is yet some hope of his conversion, while he waiteth in his own place and way.

And yet I yield this much to the objectors freely, That when fit persons are taken into the church, (yea, or unfit, by negligence,) we must wait with all patience that is consistent with the ends of government, and cutting off must be the last remedy; and that when it is necessary, it must be used, though we see that it is ten to one it will plunge the person (occasionally) into a worse condition. For the public ends of discipline, the credit of Christianity, the preservation of the church, and abundance more, are to be preferred before the good of that man's soul: and as '*Pœna debetur Reipublicæ,*' and we cut not off malefactors for their own good, so much as the commonwealth's, which by their hurt must be promoted, so as it is to the church. But this must be done but upon a few, for example; and therefore but few that will need this severity, are supposed to be in our communion. And I cannot believe that way to be of God, that would bring such multitudes into this miserable state.

Object. 'Your very keeping them from the communion of the church, and not approving or confirming them, would as much exasperate them.'

Answ. It is no such matter. Much it may, but not near so much, as I certainly know by experience: those not admitted, hear with hope; but to the rejected I speak as almost hopeless, except such as were fit to live under discipline, on whom it may have its due effect.

9. And by this admitting all men, without trial and confirmation, to come unobservedly into the state of adult Christians, we breed and feed continual heart-burnings against the ministers of Christ; while we are necessitated to do our work upon such unprepared souls. And how much the hatred and contempt of ministers doth conduce to

the destruction of the people, Satan is not ignorant, who is the diligent promoter of it.

10. By this means also we frustrate our own studies, and ministerial labours, to abundance of our people; partly by deluding them actually, in the reception of them among Christians, that really are no Christians, and partly by this provocation of their hatred.

11. By this means also we breed and feed abundance of controversies in the church; for when once we displace any parts of the frame, we shall find almost all in pieces, and one error draweth on so many, that controversies grow numerous, and will never be reconciled by mere words and writings, till we actually set the church in joint again.

12. By this course also, we lay open the ordinances of God, to a continual profanation, while many that know not who Christ is, nor what Christianity is, are admitted as Christians, to our Christian communion; and so themselves are involved in more sin, and God's own worship turned into provocation; so that we may fear lest God should frown upon our assemblies, and withdraw the tokens of his presence, and deny his blessing to those profaned ordinances. Though the innocent may still have their share in the blessing, yet may the pastors and the guilty majority, deeply suffer by this great abuse of holy things.

13. By this means also it is that so many scruples are cast in our way, about administrations, and reception of ordinances; and the comfort of ministers and people in them, is much abated.

14. And I doubt it is an hindrance to the conversion of many sects about us, and of many ungodly ones among us, who if they saw the primitive holiness of churches might be drawn in.

15. And it much corrupteth the communion of saints, and turneth it to another thing; when this holy communion is so much of our duty and our comfort, and such a representation of heaven itself.

16. And if it be not a practical denial of some of the articles of our faith, it is well. We say there, That we believe the Catholic Church to be holy; and that it is a communion of saints, that is by the parts of it, to be exercised. And shall we deny this in our works, which in words we profess?

17. By this means also we dishonour the work of Reformation.

mation, when we hinder the fruits of it, that should be visible to the world; and make men believe that it lieth but in a change of bare opinions. They that see no great difference between the Reformed and the Romanists in their lives, will think it is no great matter, which side they are joined to. It is noted by some Protestant writers, that when Luther opposed Popery in Germany, abundance of the common, licentious people, that were weary of Popish confessions, and penances, did join with those that were truly conscientious, and dishonoured the Reformation by their lives, though they increased the number, and did the service as Erasmus's Gospeller, that used to carry a bottle of wine, and Erasmus's New Testament, with great brass bosses, and when he disputed with a Papist, knocked him about the pate with the Bible, and so confuted him.

18. And by this means we give the Papists more room than they should have, to reproach our churches, and glory comparatively of the holiness of theirs. Though I know that their glory is exceeding unreasonable, and that our impurities are no more to theirs than a few boils to a leprosy; yet we do ill to give them so much occasion, as we do, who are ready to make the worst of all.

19. By this means also we leave all sects to quarrel with us, and dispute against us, even whether we be true churches of Christ or not; because our adult profession and covenant is no more express, and discernible than it is. And though we have enough to prove ourselves a church, yet do we leave them under their temptations, and ourselves under the obloquy. And indeed we perversely maintain our dishonour, while we think it a condition to be rested in, if we can but prove ourselves true churches; when our learned divines do give as much to the Romanists themselves, though not as Papal, yet as Christian. A leper is a true man, and yet his cure is a thing to be desired.

20. Lastly, By this means also, we tempt many well-meaning people among us, to a dangerous separation from us, and to fly from our churches, as if they would fall on their heads; and we too much harden those that are already separated, and all because we will not yield to the healing of our own diseases, or will do little or nothing to procure it. I know these men have no just ground for their hard conclusions, and censures of us; but we have little reason to give them

this occasion, and cast a stumbling-block in the way of so many precious souls.

To what is here briefly thrust together, if the reader will add the twelve reasons, in my "Christian Concord," pp. 11—14, and what is said in my "Book of Right to Sacraments," where these matters, or those that sustain them, are handled more at large; I suppose he may easily be convinced, that the former church-governors, in England, have been lamentably negligent, and our churches by their means are much disordered; and that the present ministers should be more forward, and diligent, and unanimous for the cure; and that the magistrate, if he love the church of Christ, and the souls of men, should speedily afford his help, and all too little to remedy these great and many evils, which we have let in, by suffering such a loose, unobserved transition from the state of infant church-members, or from apostacy, into the number of adult-members, without approved profession and confirmation.

PROP. 20. So many and great are the Benefits, that would follow the general practice of this duty, of Trying, Approving, and Confirming (or Absolving) all those that enter into the number of Adult Christians, that it should mightily provoke all Christian Magistrates, Ministers and People, to join in a speedy and vigorous execution of it.

1. ONE excellent fruit of this practice, will be the great increase of knowledge, and godliness, and the destruction of ignorance, and notorious impiety. This is an effect, most apparent in the causes. When men are made to understand, that by the law of God, seconded by the common consent of the church, and the most learned, godly pastors, and, if it may be, by the law of the land; no man is to be accounted, or numbered with adult Christians, but those that make a sober, serious, understanding profession of Christianity, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil; and not contradicting, and nullifying this profession, by a wicked life; this will engage parents to teach their children, and children themselves to learn what Christianity is, when they cannot have the name, or the honour, and the privileges of Christians, without some credible appearance of the thing. For doubtless while Christianity is in credit, the same motives that now prevail with the multitude to seem Christians, and

to desire the baptism of their children, will continue then, to make them desire to be numbered with Christians, when they are at age; and so will provoke them to do that, without which they know they cannot be esteemed Christians. And as it is now a common thing to be baptized in infancy, so will it be then a common thing, for our young people to learn the principles of Christianity, yea, and to reform their lives, (I hope with the most) when they understand, that else they must be taken to be no Christians. And if it were but the making of the understanding, profession, and outside of Christianity, to be more common among us, it would be a precious fruit of our endeavours. But much more, when true Christianity itself, in the life and power of it, would also be more common. As no doubt but it would; for the knowledge of the letter, is the way to the receiving of the Spirit; and among the multitudes that have the outside of true religion, there will be far more, that have the life and soul of it, than among those that have not so much as the outside. Any man in reason may foresee, that if we be openly agreed, and it be publicly enacted, or declared, That none be taken into the number of adult Christians, nor admitted to their privileges, till they have made an approved profession of Christianity, and so be received by Jesus Christ himself, acting by his ministers, it will set all that care for the name, or hopes or privileges of Christians, to learn, and be, and do, that which they know will be so required of them. Whereas, as things go now in most places, they may bring their children to baptism, without understanding what baptism is; and those children may slide into the state of the adult Christians, and possess the name, and place, and outward communion, and other honours and privileges of such, without knowing whether Christ were a man or a woman, or who he is, or what business he came about into the world. And when no outward necessity is laid upon them by the church, to know more, or to seem better, no wonder if so many heathens do sit among Christians, and if the multitude look not much after knowledge or godliness.

2. And moreover, it will be a very great help to their consciences, in order to the convincing them of their sin and misery, and of the insufficiency of that condition which multitudes do now rest in; and so to awaken them to look after a safer state, and to be what they must seem to be, if

they will be taken to be Christians. It is a great help to the deceiving of the multitude of the ungodly, to be currently esteemed Christians, when they are not: and self-love is such a blinding thing, that a little help will go far with it, in the promoting of such deceits. Naturally men are very easily brought to think well of themselves, and hardly brought to confess their misery. Every man almost will easily confess himself a sinner, and a very great sinner, so you will but allow him to be a Christian, and a pardoned sinner. For this is a common confession, and brings no very terrible conclusion and message to the soul. But when a man must confess himself no true Christian, but unsanctified, unpardoned, and a slave of Satan, this is as much as to confess himself in a state of damnation, in which if he die he is lost for ever, and men are hardly drawn to believe so terrible a conclusion; when yet it is so necessary where it is true, that we can scarcely imagine how a man can be saved without it. He that knoweth not himself to be out of his way, will hardly be persuaded to turn back; and he that knows not himself to be unpardoned, will hardly value or seek a pardon; and he that thinks he is sanctified, and a true Christian already, will not seek to be made what he takes himself already to be. And how much reputation doth to help or hinder men, even in self-judging, is easily perceived. Now here is a threefold reputation, of very great moment, to concur, either for men's deception or conversion. (1.) The reputation of Prince and Parliament, and so of Law-givers and Rulers of the Nation, who by their laws do manifest, whom they esteem good Christians, and this the people very much look at. (2.) The reputation of all the pastors of the church, which is to be manifested in their agreements, confessions, or declarations and practices. (3.) The common consent of Christian people, which is to be manifested by their actions, according to the laws of Christ, and the direction of their guides. If magistrates, ministers, and people do concur, to repute all the infidels, and utterly ignorant, wicked men among us to be Christians; how many thousand souls may this deceive, and undo for ever! Whereas if magistrates, ministers and people that fear God, would all agree according to the laws of Christ, to esteem none adult Christians, but those that by a credible profession of Christianity, do seem to be such, it would abundantly help to convince them

of their misery, and the need of Christ, and grace, and the absolute necessity of a change. We see even among good men, in the case of a particular sin, how much common reputation doth help or hinder the work upon their consciences; among the Reformed Churches beyond the sea, what conscience is troubled for these actions, or omissions on the Lord's-day, which in England would much trouble men of the same temper in other things. Among several sects it troubleth them not, freely to revile the servants of Christ that are against them, because they find it rather go for commendable, than much condemnable, by those whom they most esteem. Among the Papists, the believing in a Vice-Christ, and the worshipping of his image and cross with divine worship, and also the consecrated Host, and the condemning all the churches of Christ that do it not, do go for virtues, and Christian practices, though they are most heinous, odious sins; and what is it but common reputation of princes and priests, and multitudes of people, that could make so many, yea, and such persons as some of them are, to continue in such sins, as if they were a part, yea, an essential part of holiness, and one generation to succeed another in them? Were these sins but commonly reputed to be as odious as indeed they are, what a change would it make on millions of souls! So that it is strange to see the power of reputation.

3. Moreover, this course would be an excellent help to the labours of the ministers of Christ, for men's salvation. They would better understand and apply our sermons; whereas now, they lose the benefit by misapplying them. Now we must labour all our lives, and with most, in vain, to make unbelievers and ungodly persons understand what they are, and no means will serve to convince many people, that they are not truly Christians, that know not what it is to be a Christian, or that hate it and fight against it. When they all go together under the name of Christians, whatever comforts they hear offered to believers, they take them to themselves, or mistake them as offered to them; and all the threatenings that are uttered against unbelievers, they put by and think it is not they that are spoken against. But if once we could but get men to stand in their own places, and to know themselves, how easily then would our message work! Methinks the devil should not be able to keep one

man of an hundred in his power, if they knew themselves to be in his power ; nor one of an hundred, in a state of ungodliness and condemnation, if they knew that they are in such a state. At least, I am sure men will not so numerously, nor easily run into hell, when they know they are going into it, as when they are confident that they are good Christians, and in the way to heaven.

4. If this fore-described confirmation be practised, it will more powerfully oblige our people to Christ, than a secret sliding into the number of adult Christians will do. And doubtless solemn engagements and obligations, have some force upon conscience, to hold men to Christ, and restrain them from sin ; or else baptism itself would be much frustrated, and the Jews should not have been so often called by Moses, Joshua, Asa, and other princes, to renew their covenant with God. But with us, men feel no such bonds upon them ; and many question whether they are bound at all, by their parents' promises for them in baptism.

5. The profiting of our people will be much greater in their own place, when those that are not yet fit for adult-membership and privileges, are kept in the place of catechumens or expectants. Every thing doth thrive and prosper best in its own place : if you tear them not out of the church's womb, till they are ready for the birth, they will prosper there, that else may perish. Your corn will best prosper in the cold earth, where it seems to be dead and buried, till the springing-time shall come. And you should not violently unhose the ears, till nature put them forth. The first digestion must be wrought, before the second, and nature must have time allowed it, and the stomach must not too hastily let go the food, if you would have good sanguification and nutrition follow. Men think they do a great kindness to grossly ignorant, or impious men, to take them into the church, before they are capable of such a station, and the work, or privileges thereto belonging ; but, alas ! they do but hurry them to perdition, by thrusting them out of the state, where they might have thriven in preparation to a church-state, into a state which will set them abundance of work, which they are utterly unfit for, and under the pretence of benefits and privileges, will occasion abundance of aggravations of their sins. A boy in his A, B, C, will learn better in his own place, among his fellows, than in a higher

form, where he hath work set him, which he is incapable of doing.

6. By this means also church-discipline will attain its ends; it will awe and preserve the church, and terrify, and reduce offenders, and help them to repentance, and preserve the order of the church and Gospel, when it is exercised upon such as are capable of it; that know the nature of it, and either are habitually disposed to profit by it, or at least understand, what it was that they were engaged to, and understandingly consent to live under such a discipline; and when it is exercised upon few, and we have not such multitudes to sweep out of the church.

7. By this means, both church-associations, and ordinances may attain their ends; and people will be capable of doing the duty of Christians to one another, when others are capable of receiving it. Church-members are bound to "exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin," (Heb. iii. 13,) and to "teach and admonish one another." (Col. iii. 16.) But before "swine, we must not cast such pearls, nor give that which is holy to dogs." (Matt. vii. 6.) Therefore it necessarily followeth, that dogs and swine should be kept out of the church, and cast out if they be crept in. Nothing hath more destroyed that charitable community, which should be among the members of the church, and that loving and relieving Christ in church-members, than the crowding of such into the place, as indeed are Satan's members, and appear not capable of that special love, nor are capable of returning it to others.

8. This will make easy the minister's work, and free him from abundance of hatred, trouble, and disadvantage, when like a workman's tools in his shop, that all are in their place, and so at hand when he should use them, so his hearers are in order, and each one looks but for his portion, and none are snatching at our fingers, for the children's bread, that belongs not to them, and men be not drawn to hate and rail at ministers, for not fulfilling their desires.

9. By this means also, the ordinances will be more purely administered, agreeably to their nature, and the institution; and so God will bless them more to his church, and own his people, with the fuller discoveries of his presence, and take pleasure in the assemblies and services of his saints.

10. By this means also, the communion of the saints, and the holy ordinances of God, will be abundantly more sweet to his servants, when we have it in the appointed way, and it is not imbittered to us, by the pollutions of infidels, and notorious ungodly men. Though yet I know, that in a negligent, polluted church, God's servants may have their share of comfort, in his ordinances, when they have done their own duty for reformation, without success.

11. By this means the church, and the Christian religion will be more honourable in the eyes of the world, who judge by the members' and professors' lives, before they can judge of the thing as in itself; and as Christ will be thus honoured, and the mouths of adversaries of all sorts stopped, so it will do much to further their conversion, when they have such a help to see the beauty of the church and Christian faith. Many more such benefits I could name, but that you may gather some of them, from what was said of the contrary inconveniences: only I add,

12. Lastly, it is a way that is admirably suited both to reformation, and reconciliation; to unity, as well as purity; which removeth many of the impediments, that else would trouble us in the way. For as all wicked men will agree against it, as they will against any holy practice; so all parties considerable among us, do in their doctrine and professions own it; and it will suit the principles, or the ends of all that fear God, either wholly or very far. I shall here distinctly shew you, 1. That the Episcopalians: 2. Presbyterians: 3. Independents: 4. Anabaptists: 5. Yea, and I may put in, the Papists themselves, have no reason to be against this practice; but all of them have great reason to promote it, supposing them to be what they are.

1. That this is so far agreeable with the doctrine of the Church of England, that our Episcopal party have reason to be for it, appeareth: (1.) By the Rubric, for Confirmation, in the Common-Prayer Book^d, which saith as followeth, 'The curate of every parish, or some other at his appointment, shall diligently upon Sundays and Holydays, half an hour before Evening-prayer, openly in the church, instruct and examine so many children of his parish, sent unto him, as the time will serve, and as he shall think convenient, in

^d The rest of the Rubric see^t after.

some part of this catechism. And all fathers, mothers, masters, and dames, shall cause their children, servants, and apprentices (which have not learned their catechism), to come to the church at the time appointed, and obediently to hear, and be ordered by the curate, until such time as they have learned, all that is appointed here for them to learn. And whensoever the bishop shall give knowledge, for children to be brought before him, to any convenient place for their confirmation, then shall the curate of every parish, either bring, or send in writing, the names of all those children of his parish, which can say the Articles of the faith, the Lord's prayer, and the Ten commandments, and also how many of them can answer to the other questions, contained in this catechism. And there shall none be admitted to the holy communion, till such time as he can say the catechism, and be confirmed.'

So that you see we must not admit any but the confirmed to the sacrament. And I suppose in common reason, they will extend this to the aged, as well as unto children, seeing ignorance in them is more intolerable : and indeed the words themselves exclude the unconfirmed, and that cannot say the catechism, from the sacrament, of what age soever. (2.) And I may take it for granted, that it is not the bare saying the catechism, that they expect, but also a profession that they own their baptismal covenant to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost^e. And also that it be a profession somewhat understood; and not barely to say the words which they understand not, as a parrot doth. And this I prove to be their meaning, yea, and also that they live a Christian life, from the prayer in confirmation, adjoined, which is this; 'Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins; strengthen them, we beseech thee O Lord with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel, and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness.' So that here you see that the Church of England supposeth all those that are to be confirmed, to have already the Holy Ghost, and the spirit of

^e The first part of the Rubric anon cited, also proves this.

wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, and true godliness, which they beg of God, as to an increase only for the confirmed. And surely they do not think that every notorious, ungodly man, hath the 'spirit of true godliness' if he can but say the catechism; or that every ignorant person or infidel hath the spirit of knowledge, wisdom, &c. as soon as he can speak the words which he understands not. And in the following prayer they say, 'we have laid our hands on them, to certify them (by this sign) of thy favour and gracious goodness towards them.' And surely they will not think to certify men that know not what Christianity is, or that live not Christian lives, for this favour of God towards them, merely because they say the words which they do not understand. So that if they will but let men understand what they do, and make good what is here expressed, we are agreed with them that stand for common-prayer, that such as are unconfirmed be not admitted to the holy communion. And as for the person confirming, I shall speak to that anon.

† 2. I will next speak of the Papists, because in their words I shall have opportunity to recite some more of our own, even those of the Canons. Convocat. London, An. 1603. c. 60. I will pass by Frans. de S. Clara, and such reconcilers, lest you should say, that is not the common judgment of the Papists: and at this time it may suffice to instance in one, that most petulant, insolent Jesuit, Hen. Fitz Simon, in his *Britanomach.* lib. 3, cap. 4, pp. 289—291. Where he reciteth the words of our Canon, that 'seeing it was a solemn, ancient, laudable custom in the church of God, observed even from the days of the apostles, that all bishops laying hands on those that were baptized in infancy, and are instructed in the catechism of the Christian religion, should pray over them, and bless them, which we commonly call confirmation,—we will and ordain, that every bishop, or his suffragan, do in their proper person, diligently observe this rite and custom, in their ordinary visitations.' To which saith the Jesuit, 'What do I hear?—All this is very or-

† De hoc dissidium nullum futurum Sperem, &c. De tempore Confirmationis, Video bonis viris utriusque partis non displicere, si ejus usus ad ætatem paulo adultiorem differatur,—ut parentibus, susceptoribus, et Ecclesiarum præfectis occasio detur, pueros de fide quam in Baptismo professi sunt, diligentius instituendi et admonendi. (Georg. Cassander, in Consult. de Confirmatione.)

thodox, very Catholic, if uttered in good sadness——' And citing the Rubric before-mentioned, he mentioneth the Conference at Hampton Court, pp. 10, 11. 32, 33. ' That the doctrine of Confirmation was part of the Apostles' Catechism, rashly rejected by some churches, but in Calvin's judgment to be taken up again, and is ungrateful to the Puritans only, because they may not themselves administer it.' And p. 64, he would persuade us, that most certainly the bishops borrowed this passage from the Rhemist's Test. Annot. in Heb. vi. 2. against the Puritans. More he adds from Resp. Oxon. ad Libel. supplic. Covell, &c., and concludes, ' All this the Formalists (as he constantly calls that party) do freely grant us, than which the Catholics themselves, as to the sound of the words, seem scarcely able to think, or speak any thing more honourable of confirmation.' And that you may see how far he accepts also of Calvin's concession, he doth with ostentation cite the words of Calvin, in Acts ii ; and Instit. lib. 4, cap. 19, sect. 28. that ' It is incredible that the Apostles should use imposition of hands, but by Christ's command ; and that it was not an empty sign, and that it is to be accounted for a sacrament.' So that these two parties cannot be against us, in the matter of confirmation, though I know that the Papists are against us for laying by their ceremonies and abuse of it.

3. And as for the Presbyterians they cannot be against it: for, (1.) The most eminent divines of that judgment, have written for it, of whom I could cite abundance. But Calvin, Hyperius, and others, cited by Mr. Hanmer already, sufficiently declare their desires, after the restoring of confirmation: and Chemnitius, a Lutheran, is large for it, and others of that way. (2.) And it is so clearly useful and necessary to the reforming of distempers in the church, and the quiet of the ministry, and the safe and successful exercise of discipline, that I know they will heartily consent to it.

4. And for the Congregational party, (1.) Some of them have declared their judgments for it, in the approving or promoting Mr. Hanmer's book. (2.) And I have spoke with some of the most eminent of that mind, that are for it. (3.) And the solemn covenant or profession, which they require of all that enter among them, as church-members, doth shew that they are for it in the substance, though how far

they like, or dislike the sign of imposition of hands I know not. It is the want of this, that they are so much offended with in our parish-church, and therefore doubtless they will consent.

5. And for Anabaptists, though we cannot expect their full consent, because they admit not infants into the visible church; and therefore baptize those whom we confirm or restore, yet doubtless, they will like this as next to that which they suppose to be the right; and because we come as near to them as is fit and lawful for us to do, it is the likeliest way to abate their censures, and procure with them so much peace, as in reason may be expected, with men that differ from us in the point of infant-baptism^g. Three sorts of them, I suppose we may meet with: 1. Some that grant that infants are Christ's disciples, Christian, and visible church-members, but yet think that baptism is not for their admission, but only for the adult. I confess I know of none so moderate, nor am I sure there are any such, but by hearsay, or conjecture; but if there be, our differences with these men would be most in the external sign. If they do but as much by infants, as the express words of the Gospel do commend, and Christ did chide his disciples for opposing, that is, if they yield that they shall be offered unto Christ, and that the minister of Christ do in his name, 'Receive them, lay his hands on them, and bless them, because of such is the kingdom of God;' and then baptize them, when at age they make a personal profession; and if we on the other side offer them to Christ, and the minister in his name accept them by baptism, and at age confirm them, upon their personal covenanting or profession, the difference here would be most, that they change the outward sign, and they use imposition of hands when we use baptism; and we use baptism when they use imposition. And with such it were easy for moderate men to hold brotherly love and peace. 2. Some we shall meet with, that deny infants to be visible church-members, and yet think the infants of believers, to have some promises more than the rest of the world, or at least that they are 'Candidati Christianissimi,' Expectants of a church-state, and are as soon as they un-

^g Some few also there are, that are Antipædobaptists (against baptizing infants) and yet not Anabaptists (as not judging it a nullity, not to be iterated); and these, one would think we might live at peace with.

derstand any thing, to be bred up as catechumens in the Church-seminaries, and to be baptized, as soon as they are actual believers. And as far as I understand them, some of them will consent that they be offered and dedicated to God in infancy, and solemnly received, by ministerial imposition of hands, into the state of expectants. If these men be of peaceable, moderate spirits, and agree with us in other matters of religion, in the substance at least, they must needs acknowledge, that in the fore-described practice of confirmation, we come so near them, that they cannot deny us brotherly love and peace. For I hope they will not think, that they may lawfully deny these, yea, or their communion, to all that be not punctually of their opinion, against the church-membership and baptism of infants. 3. And as for all the rest of the Anabaptists, that hold also the doctrine of Pelagianism, or Socinianism, or Libertinism, or Familism, or Quakers, or Heathenism, they are not in a capacity for us, to treat with about accommodation, or Christian peace.

But yet as to all the intemperate, dividing, unpeaceable Anabaptists, that will but reproach us for our drawing so near them, at least we shall have this advantage against their reasonings, that we shall be far better able to manifest the vanity of them, than otherwise we could do. For whereas their common argument against infant baptism is, that it defileth the church, by letting in all the children in the nation, which must be cast out again, or the most will be openly vile; and that it defraudeth the adult of the benefits of solemn engagement to Christ; all this will be taken off by confirmation, and will lie no more on us, than on themselves, seeing by this means, we can as faithfully hold the church-door against the adults, that are unfit to enter into the number, as they can.

And here I shall entreat the moderate, godly persons among us, that are of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, or Erastian judgment, yea, and the first and second sort of Anabaptists, to consider how nearly we are all agreed, or how near to an agreement, when we are not aware of it, or live at such a distance, as if we were not aware of it; and whether it be not our duty to close upon this practice, at least much nearer than we are? It is a sad and fearful case, when men professing godliness, and all pretending to a love of unity, peace, and holiness, shall hate or oppose

each other, and separate from each other, upon a pretence that we differ in things that we are not agreed in; and when such shall persuade the common enemies, and the ignorant people, that we differ where we do not: as if the enemy had not already matter enough of reproach against us, nor the ignorant matter enough of temptation and offence, but we must falsely give them more, by seeming to differ when there is no such thing! And if this be caused, by any men's hating their own principles, when they see them in another's hand, or yet by hating the practice of their own principles, I leave it to the consideration of sober men, whether such are more like to the ministers of Christ, or Satan.

Give me leave here a little, by way of Application, to review what I said concerning our accord.

1. How much many brethren of the Episcopal judgment, do censure other men's attempts, for reforming their congregations, is too open to be hid. But how much little cause they have to be offended with any moderate attempts, let their own forecited principles be judge. I know that it is the administration of government of the churches, that seems by the noise of opposition among us, to be the greatest point of differences; but as far as I can discern, it is not so. The constitution of our churches is the great difference: it is a shame to speak it; we differ most where we are agreed. I have so much experience of the minds of godly ministers, and private men in England, that I dare boldly say, would we but all agree in practice, in the constituting our churches of due materials, where, for ought I know, we are almost all agreed in principles, there were no probability, that all the rest of our disagreements, would keep us at a quarter of the distance as we are. Truly the common, honest, godly people, stick not much on the difference in formalities, and extrinsic modes of government. If they hear a minister pray heartily, preach soundly, judiciously and powerfully, live holily, righteously, and charitably, and beat down sin, and set himself to promote true piety, they are, commonly where I am acquainted, if not indifferent what forms of government he is for, yet at least, can easily bear with him, though he differ from them. Let us have the work of God well done, and we shall care the less who it is that doth it. The greatest offence, that commonly is taken

against Episcopacy is, 1. The former viciousness, negligence and persecution, that men of that way were guilty of; and, 2. Because men know that a diocesan bishop hath so much work upon his hands, that he will certainly leave the far greatest part undone. So that the question is not so much 'who shall do the work,' as 'whether it shall be done or not.'

But now if this principle were practised, in which we are agreed, about confirmation, or at least, a public profession, that so our churches might be constituted of fit materials, and not be pestered with so many infidels, or persons so ignorant as that they know not Christ; or persons so notoriously vicious, as they are openly brutish and profane, and make a very scorn of honesty and godliness, this would do much to heal all the rest of our divisions. The Country knows, that the reason why the multitude of ignorant, ungodly people are for Episcopacy, is principally because they think that government will do as it did, and rather curb the Precisians, as they call them, than them, and will not trouble them with a differencing discipline or administrations, nor urge them so hard to labour for knowledge, and live a godly life. Take away this conceit from them, by the faithful practice of your own principles, and they will hate you as much as others. What great satisfaction would you give to all that fear God among us, if you would practise but that which the Rubric of the Common-Prayer Book requireth of you, in this one point? For it requireth not only a learning of the catechism, but also a public owning of their baptismal covenant in the face of the congregation, and a solemn promise to live a holy, obedient life, and this at full age; and after this they must be confirmed, before they be admitted to the sacrament of the Eucharist. That it may appear how fully we are agreed in this point, I shall transcribe some more of the Rubric of Confirmation, which is as followeth:

The reasons given why none shall be confirmed, till they can answer such questions of the catechism, as they shall be opposed in, are these, '1. Because that when children come to the years of discretion, and have learned what their godfathers and godmothers promised for them in baptism, they may then themselves with their own mouth, and with their own consent, openly before the church ratify and con-

firm the same; and also promise, that by the grace of God they will evermore endeavour themselves, faithfully to observe and keep such things as they by their own mouth and confession have assented unto. 2. Forasmuch as confirmation is ministered to them that be baptized, that by imposition of hands, and prayer, they may receive strength and defence, against all temptations to sin, and the assaults of the world and the devil, it is most meet to be admitted, when children come to that age, that partly by the frailty of their own flesh, partly by the assaults of the world and the devil, they begin to be in danger, to fall into sundry kinds of sin. 3. For that it is agreeable with the usage of the church in times past; whereby it was ordained, that confirmation should be ministered to them that were of perfect age; that they being instructed in Christ's religion, should openly profess their own faith, and promise to be obedient to the will of God.'

This, with what was before cited shews, that in this main point we are agreed with the brethren of the Episcopal judgment, and therefore may expect their concurrence: and to that end, we desire them to promote the practice of their own principles: and let us not leave the work of God undone, while we strive who shall do it, or rather who shall not do it. If the canons allow the bishop's suffragan to do it, you may bear with others of the same order to do it, rather than leave it undone.

2. And for the Presbyterians, I entreat them to consider, (1.) How much the faithful practice of this duty, will put by all the offence and mistaken reasons of the Erastians, who ask them so earnestly, 'How they can prove that people must be examined by the minister, in order to the Lord's-supper, any more than in order to a day of thanksgiving?' I know it is an easy matter, to prove that a pastor may call his people to private, personal instruction, at any fit season; and therefore before a sacrament when he sees just cause; and they are bound to obey him, ordinarily, by virtue of the general precept, "Obey them that rule over you," &c. (Heb. xiii. 17.) But if you make this the reason and use of your examination, to admit men out of a state either of catechumens, or infant members, into the number of adult members, and never trouble them afterward with examinations, unless upon some special occasion, or in your ordinary course

of personal instruction, this would put by the opposition of gainsayers; and I think, satisfy all of them that have any sober considerations and love to the prosperity of the church.

(2.) And consider also how much this way would facilitate your course of discipline; you would be much more clearly satisfied, who are your church-members, and of your special charge, and on whom you are specially bound to exercise discipline, and to whom you owe your special care and labour; and your people will be better satisfied than now they are, both of the quality, and regular reception of members, and who they be, to whom they owe the special duty of members, and whom they are more especially bound to communicate their worldly goods in their necessity. How much uncertainty, confusion, dissatisfaction and neglect of duty remaineth in those congregations, where this work is quite omitted, is obvious to common observation.

(3.) And if any should have a jealousy of this design, as seeming to set up the Congregational way of covenanting; I entreat such to remember, 1. What an enemy to the unity of the church, and how unbeseeming a charitable Christian, a spirit of causeless jealousy is. 2. That it should be the more grateful to you, because it is acceptable to your brethren. If you are lovers of unity and peace, you will be far from avoiding a practice, because those hold it with whom you would be united, that is, because it tends to unity; but rather you will be glad of such a healing means. 3. Consider that it is no more the Congregational men's principle, than the Episcopal Presbyterians, and the Erastians. It is our common principle, let us therefore make it our practice; an easy, a reasonable way of agreement. The not practising of this, hath cast us into confusion; and the practice of it, must be it that must restore our church order, and heal most of our divisions. I know it is agreeable to your judgments. I move you not to forsake your principles, but to practise them. Do but enrol those only for your adult church-members, that are confirmed, or approved, upon a personal credible profession of true Christianity, and consent to live under your ministerial discipline; and it will do more than you can easily now apprehend for an union with your brethren, and for the closing of the sad and long continued divisions of the churches.

3. And to the Congregational brethren, I may boldly say, it is a practice so suitable to your own practice already, (although I think it is a more regular performance of it that I propound, than most have used) that in reason we may expect your approbation and concurrence. Perhaps you will fear that some of your brethren may slubber over the work, and make but a ceremony of it : but so may some of your own mind, if they be personally remiss and negligent, as well as others. And perhaps others will fear lest *you* should use it over-rigorously, and make it a pretence for excluding many that are not to be excluded. But this will be according to the prudence and charity of particular pastors ; and is nothing to those principles, in which we are all agreed : only I beseech you in the fear of God, take heed of giving just occasion of this offence. Be not righteous overmuch : remember how tender Christ is of his little ones ; and how he is displeased with those that keep them from him ; and will not break the bruised reed. If he carry the lambs in his arms, and gently drive those that are with young, it be- seems not us to turn them out of the fold, or to disown them. We are commanded to “ receive him that is weak in the faith, though not to doubtful disputations.” (Rom. xv. 1.) It is a conjunction of impiety, injustice and uncharitableness, to thrust back those that Christ would have admitted. It is *impiety*, to rob Christ of his church-members, and diminish his visible flock, and wrong those whom he values as his jewels, and is tender of as the apple of his eye. It is great *injustice*, to defraud men of their due, in so great a matter as his church-privileges and helps to heaven. It is greater injustice, than to turn them out of their houses and lands ; for the benefits are greater. It is *uncharitableness*, to deal so cruelly with us, in matters of such consequence. And it is the greater, 1. Because it is none of our own, but our Master’s treasure which we deny them. 2. And because we are conscious, if we are Christians indeed, of so much sin and unworthiness ourselves, as should provoke us to deal the more tenderly and compassionately with others. I would not have you blind under pretence of charity, nor to let in known swine, for fear of keeping out the sheep. But remember, that when the case is but so doubtful and difficult, that you cannot know certainly the tares from the wheat, or cannot make a separation without a danger of pull-

ing up the wheat with the tares, it is better to let both alone till harvest. We will not be wilfully guilty of men's lying, or hypocritical professions; but if they be guilty of them, we may yet believe that God hath much service for hypocrites in his church. And the number shall be some honour to him; and some encouragement to some that are yet without, to draw nearer us. Though it be the intention of Christ in instituting his ordinances, and the intention of the church, that men be truly penitent believers before they are baptized, at age, or admitted into the number of adult church-members, and to the Lord's-table; and so never made the Eucharist an ordinance which is primarily and directly intended for conversion of the unregenerate, and which known ungodly men may seek, and be admitted to, in order to their conversion: Bellarmine himself confessing that such come into the church '*præter intentionem Ecclesiæ.*' Yet Christ that knew abundance of unsound professors would thrust themselves into the church, hath provided those ordinances there, which conduce much to their regeneration: and even the Lord's-supper, though instituted primarily for another use, may be a means of this, to those that yet unworthily drew near it. However, if we be commanded to invite, yea, and compel men to come into the church, that the house of Christ may be filled, we must not be too scrupulous in admitting them, nor too busy in keeping them back. If any where, it is here that Christ is likely to say, '*Odi servum nimis diligentem.*' If men make a credible profession, I dare not refuse them: nor dare I by my uncharitable incredulity, take that for incredible, which I cannot prove to be so. His profession is the evidence of his title with the church. If I will deny him when he seeks admittance, I must disprove that profession, and shew it to be invalid. Truly much-experience hath taught me, that many that were never commonly noted for godliness, and that through bashfulness, or want of expressions, or the hindrance of carnal friends, and worldly affairs, have lived as strangers to those that are eminent for the fear of God, have yet at last, disclosed themselves to me, to have been humble, serious Christians many years, as far as I was able to judge. Especially take heed how you slight or reject people for want of parts, or gifts, or utterance. I have known excellent Christians, that through bashfulness are not able to give an account of

their knowledge of the very fundamentals of religion, to a person whom they much reverence, and are in awe of. And I meet with many ignorant people, that in answer to many of my questions, do seem to be ignorant of Christ himself, who yet shew the contrary, when by other words, I have caused them better to understand me. If people be but desirous, and willing, and diligent, it must be very gross ignorance indeed, that must warrant us to refuse them. Many thousands are guilty of wrongly intruding into the church, when the ministers and church were not guilty of wrongly admitting them, but had been culpable if they had refused them.

I speak all this to the Congregational brethren rather than the rest, because they are most suspected to be over-strict in their admissions ; and because I would entreat them to avoid all just occasions of offence, and disunion in their practice, when we are all so happily agreed in our principles, in this great point, of the necessity of an approved profession.

4. And for the Erastians, as in the point of discipline, they commonly contend with us upon a mere mistake, thinking we claim a proper 'Imperium,' or Magisterial power, when as we claim but the power of an Ambassador, with such a kind of power as a physician hath over his patients, or as Plato, or Zeno had in their schools, (besides the ministerial power in worshipping) so their principal quarrel with us, will be removed by the practice of confirmation. You talk much of the sacraments being converting ordinances, and against examining men in order to the Lord's-supper, and keeping men away. But are you not agreed with us, That a personal understanding, serious profession of Christianity, even of faith and repentance, which containeth a renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil, is necessary to those that will, either by baptism or confirmation, be admitted into the number of adult members of the church? And do you not grant that the adults, whether before baptism or confirmation, are to be tried and approved by the pastors, before they baptize or confirm them? Grant us but this, and that the ancient discipline should be exercised in the church, which the Scriptures and all the church-cansons do record, and we shall be agreed with you in a moment. For baptism we are no stricter than the Common-prayer-book, that required that the party, by himself or others, did 'Pro-

mise and vow, 1. To forsake the devil and all his works, the poms and vanities of the wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. 2. To believe all the Articles of the Christian faith. 3. To keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of his life.' That so, it may be truly said of the baptized, that 'He is made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor (or heir) of the kingdom of heaven:' and of the confirmed, we expect but that which is here said to be given, and assured in baptism, viz. 'A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; that being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace:' yea, we expect but what is required of persons to be baptized; viz. 'Repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament.' All these are the words of the catechism in the Common-prayer book. Yea, we expect but that open profession before the congregation, which the forecited rubric of Confirmation requireth; no, nor always so much as that. So that I may well suppose, that no godly, moderate man of the Erastian way, can dissent from us in this point of confirmation: and a consent in this, will be next to a consent in all, between us and them.

5. And for the Anabaptists themselves, though we expect not their consent, yet we may well expect their moderation, and non-opposition, and that as we thus draw as near them as possibly we can, so they would lay by all bitterness and reproach, and divisive carriage, and come as near us as they can. And as now with the more moderate of them, our difference appeareth less than many of them imagined, so it may appear, that the distance in affection and communion shall be no greater than there is cause. The odium of division and unpeaceableness, hath so long lain upon their party, that methinks they should be willing to have it taken off. And there is no way to take it off, but their visible amendment; by becoming lovers and promoters of union, communion, and peace among the churches of Christ. Men will never take your opinion to be of God, while general experience shall shew them, that it will not stand with that love, union and communion of the saints, but engageth almost all that receive it, in divisions, opposition and reproach of the servants of Christ and his churches. Though you think

your own opinion right, let it not so far dispossess you of charity and reason, as to unchurch all the churches of Christ, that think otherwise, or to cast off communion with the godly that are not of your opinion; as long as we come so near you, as to take none into the number of adult church-members, but those that are confirmed, or approved by Christ's ministers, upon their personal, credible profession of faith and holiness.

Lay all this together, and we may well conclude, that this practice of ministerial approbation and confirmation, or restoration of all that are admitted into the number of adult Christians, or visible church-members, and to their privileges, is so necessary, and so admirably fitted, both for Reformation and Reconciliation of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Independent, Erastian and moderate Anabaptists, and to stop the mouths of the intemperate, and of the Papists, that all magistrates, ministers and people, that love the church's purity and people, and long to see it cleansed and healed, should gladly embrace it, and vigorously promote it.

I have two things yet more to do upon this subject, 1. To answer some Objections; and 2. To give some Directions to all sorts, for the effectual putting it in execution. The Objections are these.

Object. 1. 'You will tempt the Anabaptists to say, that this is but a shift of our own devising, instead of baptism, lest we should yield to them, when we are convinced of the necessity of a personal covenanting with the adult.'

Ans. There is no ordinance or truth of God, that will not be spoken against by mistaken men, and yet we must not therefore cast them away. Nor is it the way to vindicate a truth or ordinance from reproach, to disclaim it, and so to reproach it actually ourselves. Nor is it the way to get advantage of an adversary, to fly from him too far into the contrary extreme, but rather to come as near him as the truth will give us leave. And to the Anabaptists' objection, we shall give them our reasons against their way, in a more fit place, and have already done it. We are most certain that the servants of God of old, both with circumcision and without it, (Deut. xxix,) did enter their children into covenant with God, as well as themselves. And if it be the express word of God, that both infants and aged should be entered

and engaged to him in covenant, we will obey his word, and do both, though the Anabaptists will do but the one. He must have a hard face, that will deny that it was once the duty of parents, to offer their children to God, and enter them into covenant with him; and when they have proved that this duty or power is recalled, (which I never yet saw done, no not in Mr. Tombes's last voluminous review,) then we will forbear it; but till then it is not men's talk and confident words that must make a tender conscience yield, to omit so great and plain a duty, or give up so great a mercy as this is. I am sure that infants were then no more able to believe themselves, nor enter themselves into covenant with God than now; and I am sure parents by God's appointment, did it for them, offering and engaging them to God, and that God hereupon is called their God, and they his people, and that usually the sign of the covenant was annexed. And I am sure that parents have as much natural interest in their children now as then: and I never yet saw where God had acquitted us of this duty, or withdrawn this mercy from us, and our seed.

Object. 2. 'The proof which you bring for this confirmation is so obscure, that it is not likely to be generally received.'

Answ. 1. It was generally received in almost all the churches on earth, till lately: and as far as I plead for it, it is yet, doctrinally at least, owned and maintained, even by those churches that practically have disused it. Of all the Christians on earth, I suppose there is a thousand, if not ten thousand for it, (doctrinally or dogmatically) for one that is against it, if we judge by the laws, confessions and writings of their guides. Though the Greeks I know do not own the Popish confirmation, nor have it so formally as they should, and the Papists have corrupted it by their abuse; yet the thing in substance is owned dogmatically by almost all the Christian world: and they must be very singular persons that disown it. 2. And I think the proof that hath been given you is clearer, than you have for the morality of the Lord's-day, for constant family prayer, for infant baptism, and many a holy duty, which yet we have sufficient proof for. What would you have plainer? Is there the least doubt of it, whether a personal profession and covenanting with God, be necessary to him that will be taken into the number of

adult Christians, and possess their privileges and communion? or whether this profession must be approved by the pastor of the church, and known to them that must hold communion with him? Prove, if you can, that ever one man was admitted among adult Christians to enjoy communion with them, without such a personal profession. You cannot prove it. If infant-covenanting were enough for the adult, then infidels are believers.

Object. 3. 'But this will make ministers to be lords of the church; when no man can be taken into the church, or possess the privileges of a Christian, till he be approved by them. This will put a tyrannical power into their hands.'

Ans. 1. Such a tyrannical power as every physician hath, who may choose or refuse his patients; or every school-master hath, that may choose or refuse his scholars, if he engage not himself to the contrary, as Plato, Zeno, and every philosopher did in his school.

2. It is such a tyranny as Christ hath unquestionably set up; and to accuse him of setting up tyranny, is an unkind part of them that look to be saved by him.

3. It is a power that hath constantly been exercised by the officers of Christ, and did not men find out the tyranny of it till now? What prince did govern the church doors, and judge who should be admitted, from the days of Christ till Constantine's days, when the church was at the purest; yea, or ever after so many hundred years? Did not all the apostles, and every preacher of the Gospel baptize those that they converted, and judge of them whether they were baptizable? And did not the bishops confirm the baptized, without consulting another power? Half that were admitted into the church by baptism, for some hundred years after Christ, were the adult; and of these the pastor required a personal covenant and profession. The other half were their infants; and for them they required the parents' profession, and entering them into covenant: but still the pastors were the judges, who were the administers.

4. If you think it too much power for us, I beseech you think it too much work for us: and dream not that we have a work, and not power to do it, or discern what we do. Set others to do it, that you can better trust.

5. Who would you have trusted with this power? Some-

body must have it. I have proved to you fully, that every man must not be the sole judge of his own fitness for baptism or church-privileges; and that the people or magistrates are not the sole or chief judges: and who should it be but they to whom it is committed by Christ in their call to the office of the ministry?

6. Ministers, as I before shewed, have no tyrannical or arbitrary power; for Christ hath tied them by a law, who to admit, and whom to reject; and if they disobey this law, the magistrate may correct them: so that in the exercise of this tyrannical power, every minister is under the lash of the magistrate's violence, if he grossly offend, whereas none of the people are under any violence, or force from us to obey us; but if all of them disobey us and rebel, it is their own loss, and we have no remedy. This is the tyranny.

7. Lastly, if you think it (as it is) so great a power, for us to judge of men's profession and fitness for church-privileges, let it awaken you the more, to get the wisest, ablest men you can for the ministry, that are fit for so great a trust. If the best that are to be got, are not in the office, beshrew our governors, and the choosers. And if you do not cast us all out, if you can put fitter men into the place, that are more meet for the trust, beshrew you for your negligence: we give you no thanks for it. But if you have no fitter for this work and trust, will you cast it upon *unfitter*, or on none? It is a great trust for a physician to be trusted with your lives, and a schoolmaster and tutor with your children: But what of that? will you therefore trust the good women, or common neighbours about you with them; yea, or the magistrate himself? Or will you have no tutors or physicians? Or rather will you not be the more careful to keep out empirics and unworthy persons, and get the ablest and most faithful that you can? O unthankful men! that grudge us the power of labouring and spending ourselves for their salvation, and judging, where we must act!

Object. 4. 'Is it not the use of the Lord's-supper to confirm us; and do not men there renew their covenant and profession? What need is there then of any more?'

Ans. 1. You would think much, if at the Lord's-supper we should openly call each man to a personal explicit profession of his faith, and covenanting with God: and indeed

it would be a tedious, as well as unseasonable work. It is but a general or joint profession of all together, that is there renewed; and notwithstanding that, there may for ought we know, be many a one there that is an infidel, and knoweth not what Christianity is. 2. The Lord's-supper is the food of the soul, confirming by way of nutrition and augmentation; and therefore you must shew that you are alive, before you may partake of it. It is a feasting upon Christ, and with him in his family, and at his table: it is a work of communion with Christ and with his saints: it is one of the highest privileges of the church: and therefore you must produce your title, before you can lay claim to it. If a man must be admitted to the Lord's-supper, without any precedent, personal profession or covenanting with God, upon supposition, that by the act of receiving he doth all this; then men that know not whether there be a Christ, or what he is, may be admitted: for multitudes of such there are, that in infancy were baptized: and I know not by seeing him receive, whether he know or believe any thing of Christianity. If a man converted at age from heathenism, may not be admitted to the Lord's-table without a personal profession in baptism, then neither may such as are baptized in infancy, be admitted without a personal profession, in confirmation, or such as is without any other baptism. Our parents' profession will not serve our turn, instead of our own, when we come to age. And therefore this objection is vain, unless infidels may be admitted to communion, and all be common. But I need not speak much of this, because I shall have few such objectors to deal with: even the Papists themselves are many of them against promiscuous communion, though the Jesuits of late, have fitted almost all their work, to their man-pleasing design: (See Joh. Thauleri flores. cap. 23, 24. p. 257, &c.; an old Puritan, among the Papists:) and they make confession also prerequisite.

Object. 5. 'According to your arguing, confirmation is not necessary to those that were baptized at full age; and therefore it is not necessary to any, if not to all.'

Ans. I have given some reasons why it should be used with all that have opportunity after baptism; but I have proved it more necessary to those that were baptized in infancy: and if it were necessary to no other, it would not follow, that it is not necessary at all, because not to all.

Object. 6. 'Is it not better take up with an implicit profession and covenanting, than make so great a trouble to ourselves, and disturbance among the people, as this will make?'

Answ. 1. Methinks, not only the face of the Roman church, but of our own, might by this time have afforded us satisfying experience, what implicit faith, and implicit professions are, and to what they tend. Peruse the forementioned evils of this course, and look upon the state of our people, where you may see them in existence, and then judge whether this objection be answered.

2. An implicit profession, is the lowest and least, that in any case of extremity or necessity can be thought tolerable, and accepted by God, and consistent with the life and being of a church. And shall we deliberately choose to offer God the worst, the least, the lowest that is possible to find acceptance? Nay, he will have the best, as he deserves the best or he will not accept it, when we have it to give: shall we think that in a case of freedom, the same will be accepted, which necessity only can excuse? Or shall we be content that our churches have as many diseases as will consist with life and being?

3. An implicit profession makes or proves men but implicitly Christians. Such dumb uncertain signs, do leave us in so great uncertainty of the thing signified that it seems but a very mocking of God (that will not be mocked) when we have opportunity for an open intelligible profession, and will not use it, or require it.

4. It is against nature, for a man that hath a tongue in his head, to refuse to utter his mind any otherwise than by dumb shows, and yet expect to be understood and accepted. What is the tongue made for but to express the mind? Indeed if a man be dumb, and can neither speak nor write, it is more tolerable to take an uncertain sign from such a man, than from another that hath the use of tongue or pen.

5. It is a very implicit denying of Christ, which many call an implicit profession. If a man that hath a tongue in his mouth, shall refuse to profess the Christian faith, and quarrel with the minister that calls him to it, and say, We shall have no other profession from him than to come to church, and put the bread and wine into his mouth, and not to deny Christ expressly, I leave it to any reasonable man,

whether there be not so much of an implicit denying Christ in this refusing to confess him, when they are called to it by their pastors, whom God hath commanded them to obey, and that in a case and season, when all the church hath required it, or taught it to be due.

6. It is contrary to the honour of Christ, and the very nature of Christianity, for men to take up with implicit, uncertain professions, when we have opportunity of more open, free professions. He is not a master to be ashamed of: and he will have no servants that will not confess him before men, even in the hazard of life; much more in days of the freedom of the Gospel. As "with the heart men must believe to righteousness, so with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. x. 10.) What reason have we to whisper or draw back in a cause of such a nature and weight as this?

7. Shall we thus teach our people to esteem Christianity, as an unobservable thing, by no more observing it? The solemnity of men's transition into the adult state of actual believers, doth make it more observable in the eyes of men; and they will see that there is more in it, than commonly is now esteemed. I find by experience that our people hate no preaching more, than *differencing* preaching, which leaves or shuts them out from the number of the sanctified, and sets them as on the left hand, in the face of the congregation, and judgeth them before the time; but fain they would have ministers confound and jumble all together; and then you may make them as great sinners as you will, so you will make them no worse than the justified, that are forgiven, and shall be saved: and so in practice, they love no differencing ways. But shall we so far gratify the devil and the flesh? No; we must labour to make the difference between Christ's servants and the world, as conspicuous as we can, that the consciences of poor sinners may rather be awakened, than cheated by us; and therefore we should choose the most solemn transition, and record the names of the confirmed, and let the people be brought to a public observation, of the necessity of faith and holiness, while the covenant and profession of it is made so necessary.

8. That is the best means, that is fittest to attain the end; the end of a covenant is to oblige, and the end of a profession to declare the mind: and I pray you which is fittest for these ends; an express profession and covenant,

or a dumb uncertain sign, by coming to church, paying tithes, &c.?

9. Such dumb professions are less tolerable now, because we have many in our assemblies that we know to be no Christians. I know of many that will hear, that believe no life to come, and secretly make a scorn of Christ and Scripture, and many more that know not what Christianity is, as is aforesaid. Now shall we take up with such signs of Christianity, as we see and know are commonly used by infidels, when we may have better?

10. It is essential to a profession to be in some measure, explicit; for 'proficieri' is but 'palam vel publice fateri'; it is no profession if it be not, or pretend not to be, an expression of the mind; and therefore to be implicit and not express, is so far to be against the very nature of the profession; in that measure as your profession is implicit, as it is called, and not express, in that measure it is no profession at all.

Object. 7. 'But when you have the most express covenant or profession, you are not sure that it is true, and that the man is a believer at the heart.'

Ans. 1. I am sure that it is truly a profession, that is, a pretended sign of the mind, though I am not sure that it is true profession, that is, a true infallible sign of the mind: I can know the metaphysical, though not the moral truth of it. And then I can be sure that I do my duty, and take up according to the directions of Christ. It is his work to judge the heart immediately, as being his prerogative to know it: but it is my work to judge of the credibility of the profession. 2. And what if I have no infallible certainty? Must I therefore throw up all, and make the pastoral church-government to be void, and cast open the vineyard of Christ to the wilderness, and not so much as require a credibility, because we cannot have an infallibility? This may not be.

Object. 8. 'But this will encourage the Anabaptists and Congregationalists, in their express covenantings, by our coming so near them?'

Ans. 1. I may better say, you will make men Anabaptists, and drive them too far by your looseness, and wilfully shunning plain duty. How can weak professors be drawn to think well of that party, which they see do shun so needful a work of God? 2. Love and peace will teach all Chris-

tians to say, that it is the best for unity and healing of our breaches, to come as near dissenting brethren as we may, and not to fly the further from them. At least we may not run from truth and duty, that we may be unlike our dissenting brethren. 3. And I take it to be my duty to tell this aloud to the Christian world, that after long contest with the Anabaptists, and opposition of their ways, I am grown, as I confidently think, to this discovery of the mind of God in suffering them among us; that he had this great truth and duty, to which he saw it necessary to awaken us; the church having been so lamentably defiled, discipline made an impossible thing, and men's salvation grievously hindered, by the common *secret, unobserved* transition of all people into the name, number and privileges of adult Christians; therefore did God permit these men to step too far on the other side, that the noise might be the greater, and his call the more observable; so that they are his messengers, calling aloud to England, and all other Christian churches in Europe, to keep the door, and repair the hedge, and no more to take an infant-baptism, and profession of our parents, as a sufficient evidence of the title of the adult, to the name, peace, or privileges of Christians; but to give them infant privileges upon the parents' profession; but to require of them a sober, serious profession and covenanting by themselves, in owning their baptismal covenant, before we number them with adult Christians. And that God hath suffered the Anabaptists to make such a stir among us, will prove a mercy to us in the end, if we have the wit and grace to learn this, upon this troublesome occasion; and then the Reformation will do us more good, than ever the Anabaptists did us harm. But if we will not learn, nor obey God's call, we must yet look to be molested by them more, or else to do and suffer worse.

Object. 9. 'But if you will not take a non-renouncing of Christ, and infant baptism as sufficient, without a personal covenant and profession, you may on the same grounds call men every week to such a profession, because that the former profession shews not what they afterwards are, but what then they are.'

Ans. 1. The case is quite another: In your instance, it is but the continuance of the same profession and condition

that is requisite; and I am bound to take it as continued, while I have no evidence to question it, and see the performance of it, as far as belongeth to my cognizance. But in my case, the conditions, and the professions are not the same; a new condition of right, is necessary to the adult, which they had not at all in their infant baptism. Then they entered upon their parents' faith or profession; but at age they must necessarily have a faith, or profession of their own, or else they actually cease to be Christians.

2. And yet, let me add, that frequent professions of faith, and renewing covenant with God, hath ever been used in the church; both before Christ's incarnation and since, and indeed, the Lord's-supper doth import it; and for my part, I think it a very convenient, edifying course, to have the Articles of our faith every day repeated, as the belief of that church, and the people to stand up at it, to signify their consent: so be it, you will not take up with this silent profession alone, and exclude a more explicit one, when it is requisite. But this fitly signifieth our standing to the first.

Object. 10. 'But this will cast you upon the same difficulties which you object to the Anabaptists; you will not know at what age to take men for adult Christians.'

Ans. 1. We shall not accept them for their age, but for their profession; and we can easily tell when they offer themselves to trial and profession, and desire the communion of the church; as the ancient churches could tell when their catechumens were to be baptized.

2. And for the time when we must judge their infant church-state to cease, if they own not the covenant personally, we cannot set a certain year, nor is it necessary; but when their infancy ceaseth, then their infant-state ceaseth; that is, when they come to the full or competent use of reason. But then observe, (1.) That if they be called at such a time to profess their faith, and own their covenant, and refuse it, then we must judge them refusers of Christianity, unless the reasons of the refusal allows another judgment. (2.) Or, if they wilfully neglect, for a considerable space, to own their baptismal covenant, and to seek a standing among the adult Christians, it is a strong presumption that they are backsliders. (3.) If they only suspend their personal

profession at age, we must only suspend our judgment, till we have some light to discern the cause; and cannot be sure that they are deserters or apostates. (4.) But we are sure that they are not to be numbered by the church among adult Christians, till they have produced the evidence of their title, which is no other than *a credible, personal profession*. So that it is easy to know when any such person is to be admitted, and publicly owned as an actual believer, though it be not so easy to discern of all, before that time, whether they are to be reckoned as deserters or not. He that wilfully neglecteth to come among the adult Christians, long after he hath the full use of reason, which is not with all at the same age, is to be much suspected, at least; and commonly about sixteen, or seventeen, or eighteen years of age, is the time when we have reason to expect that they should seek the communion and privileges of the adult; for about that age, they have a competent use of reason.

Object. 11. 'But if you admit them into the church in infancy, say the Anabaptists, you will be obliged to excommunicate them all, that prove ungodly when they come to age, and not to let them silently pass out of the church again.'

Ans. Excommunication is either an excluding them from all relation of members to the Catholic church, or from the actual communion of the church, or from both. The former we can do but declaratively. In the latter we also adjoin the charge of God, for the execution of the sentence. But those that were never personal professors of faith, nor admitted into the communion of adult Christians, are not fit to be cast out of it; and this is the common use of excommunication, to remove those, as unfit, from the communion of the adult, that once were in it, and forfeit that communion; which cannot belong to them that never were in it. And for our declaring them deserters, or apostates, we may do it upon just occasion, but we are not bound to do it publicly by all that are guilty; this being not the excommunication, that is so enjoined in the Scriptures. Where do you find that the church, in Scripture-times or after, was wont to excommunicate apostates? And yet apostates were formerly of the church. It is those that hang on, and pretend still to be of the church, and intrude into the actual

communion of it, that we must cast out, when they deserve it.

Object. 12. ‘ But if they cease to be Christians, you must baptize them again, if you will receive them.’

Ans. No such matter: the Anabaptists themselves will not rebaptize an apostate, when he returneth to the church. He is to be received by confession and absolution, and not by baptism. If a Christian turn Turk, and afterward return, he is not to be rebaptized.

Object. 13. ‘ But by this means you will unchristian the people, and they will be exasperated, and turn heathens, or hearken to any seducers that will mislead them.’

Ans. 1. No: we will unchristian no man; but do that honour to Christianity, and that right to the church and the souls of men, as to make a difference between Christians and infidels, and that somewhat wider than the bare names. He that is a Christian shall be more encouraged by this course, and he that is not, cannot be unchristianed by us. If men will not unchristian themselves, they need not fear lest the just trying and approving of their Christianity should unchristian them. 2. How little honour it is to Christ and the church, to have the number made up, by such as we would disallow, I have shewed you before, and also what a mischief that is to themselves, which some would give them as a benefit. 3. If magistrates and ministers do their duty, yea, or but ministers alone, they will better be kept from heathenism, or other evils in the state of expectants and catechumens, than in the state of church-members, where discipline will make them mad.

Object. 14. ‘ But at least your design looks as if you would keep the children of all such unchristianed; and what work would that make?’

Ans. I meddle not with that question, but leave every man to his own judgment. And if I did myself keep off such children, I think it would prove but very few. For, 1. I would refuse none of the parents that had ‘ aliquid Christi,’ that made but a credible profession of Christianity. 2. I am persuaded that this practice would bring almost all the people to a tolerable profession, when they know it is expected, and what lieth on it. 3. Upon experience now I find, that both the parents are seldom so bad as to be in-

capable of offering their child to God, in the judgment of the church. Nay, commonly here, the more one of the persons is in scandalous sin, the more the other hates it; and they are seldom both grossly ignorant. And those that were delayed on these terms, would receive no wrong by it. God's way is the best. The children of unbelievers must not be inchurched in ways of our devising, nor respected before the honour of Christ, and the common good of the church of God. But of this I say again, I interpose not my judgment, but leave each man to his own.

Object. 15. 'But though confirmation be a duty, yet none but bishops have power to do it; and therefore it is not a lawful thing for presbyters to attempt it.'

Ans. 1. What mean you by bishops^h? It is a word that hath, by men's application, got so many significations, that we may well expect that you give us the definition of a bishop, before you make him the matter of your dispute. And yet I have read so many books that dispute for Episcopacy, and so few that tell us what they mean by it, that I must needs say, that most of them lose their labour, with such as I. If by a bishop you mean such as our English bishops were, or any fixed pastor of many particular churches, I deny that such were ever instituted by Christ, much less have they the sole power of such administrations.

2. Do you mean that it is by God's law, or the laws of men, that diocesan bishops only may confirmⁱ? If by God's laws, prove it, and we shall quickly yield. But that is very unlikely you should do. If you say that only the apostles had this power, I answer, (1.) That then fixed diocesan bishops had none of it; for the apostles were none such. (2.) Then Timothy, Titus, Epaphroditus, &c., whom they pretend to have been bishops, had it not. (3.) Ananias was no apostle, that laid hands on Paul, that he might receive the Holy Ghost. Of this more anon. But if you say, that this power is given to the bishops merely by the laws of

^h Leg. Grotii, Epist. 162, ad Bignon. p. 397. Clem. Roman. against a lower Episcopacy than ours.

ⁱ Petav. himself saith, Dissert. Eceles. lib. 1, cap. 3, p. 35, Ignorare non potuit Hieronimus quibusdam in locis absente Episcopo Presbyteros idem illud Sacramentum Confirmationis, dedisse: Quod de Ægypto testatur commentarius, &c. And p. 36, he saith, Constat solum solos Episcopos ordinario jure tam baptismum, quam pœnitentium reconciliatione administrasse. So that they may then as well forbid presbyters to baptize.

men; than either by the laws of magistrates or of bishops. For the former we know of none in force with us, to that purpose; and if it were, it is a work out of their line, which Christ hath done before them, and not left to them, to describe the offices of the church. And for bishops' canons, we know no power that any bishops ever had, to make standing laws for the Universal Church; nor of any such laws that are obligatory to us: and the opponents themselves do violate the Canons of General Councils without scruple (as the 20th of 1 Con. Nic., and abundance more), and how can they oblige us more than them?

3. Presbyters have the keys of the kingdom; therefore they may take in, and confirm thereby.

4. Presbyters may by baptism take in members into the Universal Church, and judge of their fitness in order thereto; therefore much more may they confirm them, and judge of their fitness in order thereto.

5. It is granted, that presbyters may absolve, which was ordinarily by imposition of hands, yea, saith Bishop Usher, the deacons were sometimes allowed it: therefore presbyters may confirm; or if you yielded but absolution, you would yield much of what we contend for, seeing so many violate their baptismal covenant, that absolution for restoring of them will be as necessary as confirmation.

6. Jerom, that makes presbyters and bishops by God's law to be the same, doth yet according to the custom of the church say, that 'What doth the bishop, except ordination, which the presbyter doth not?' Therefore he supposed that presbyters might confirm.

7. The same Jerom expressly saith, that "Imposition of hands was reserved to the bishop, for the honour of priesthood, rather than by divine ordination^k:" therefore it is but a human institution.

^k Hier. cont. Lucifer. Ad honorem potius sacerdotii, quam ad legis necessitatem. Alioqui si ad Episcopi tantum imprecationem Sp. Sanctus defluit, lugendi sunt, qui in vinculis, aut castellis, aut in remotioribus locis, per Presbyteros et Diaconis Baptizati, ante dormierunt, quam ab Episcopis inviserentur.

Clem. Alexand. Pedagog. 3. Cui imponet Presbyter manus.

Ambros. in Eph. 4. Apud. Ægyptum Presbyteri consignant, si præsens non sit Episcopus.

Grotius Epist. cordes. 154. p. 382. Si recte expendantur quæ ipse Aurelius, de rebus nec vetitis, nec prohibitis disserit, non mirum si in iis alibi atque alio tempore alii fuerint mores; non erat causæ satis, cur tantis animis, tam odiosis illationibus ista

8. The Episcopal divines, and other writers of their side, do commonly maintain the validity of presbyters' ordination, viz. that in case of necessity it is lawful, and where there is no flat necessity, it is not a nullity where it is irregular. I cited "Christian Concord," pp. 53, 54, &c. Many bishops and their defenders, that thus justify the Protestant churches, that have no bishops; as Dr. Field, Bishop Downe, Bishop Jewel, Saravia, Bishop Alley, Bishop Pilkington, Bishop Bridges, Bishop Bilson, Grotius, Lord Digby, Mr. Chisenhal, Bishop Davenant, Bishop Prideaux, Nowel, Bishop Andrews, Mr. Chillingworth: to whom I add (to make up twenty), Bishop Bramhal, of Schism; and Dr. Steward, in his Answer to Fountaine's Letter; Dr. Ferne, and Bishop Usher, in his Judgment, lately published. Abundance more might be easily added; but Mr. Mason's book in Vindication of the Ordination of the Foreign reformed Churches, may serve instead of more.

9. We have no bishop to do it, and therefore it must be done by presbyters: or we have none that we know of; and 'non esse, et non apparere,' are to us all one.

10. Presbyters may impose hands in ordination, and ever did here in England: therefore much more in absolution and confirmation.

11. King Charles, by the advice of his doctors in the Isle of Wight, reserved only ordination, and not confirmation and absolution to the bishops.

12. Presbyters are governors of the churches, which are their pastoral charge; and are called Rectors: (See Bishop Usher's Reduction of Episcopacy, &c. proving it:) Therefore they may do this, which is an act of government or guidance of the particular church.

13. Presbyters must teach and oversee the people as their charge, and deliver them the sacrament: therefore they must judge to whom they must do it.

14. A diocesan bishop is incapable of doing it faithfully. Could one man try, approve and confirm faithfully, all the

questio tractaretur. Nam etiamsi aut baptizatus nunquam ungeretur, aut ungeretur tantum baptismi tempore, baptizante etiam presbytero. Adde etiam si nulla sequeretur manuum impositio, donis illis quæ per manuum impositionem conferebant Apostoli pridem cessantibus, non ideo periret honor præsentia Episcopalis quæ tunc etiam in Ecclesia fuit cum Episcopi et Presbyteri nomen indiscriminatum usurparetur, et cum præsentia illa, non Electione, quæ Alexandria primum fieri cepit, Marco mortuo, sed participati consensus gradu deferetur.

souls in two or three hundred churches? It is known that here they did not; and it is plain they cannot. If they lay hands on them without trial, upon the presbyter's words, then (1.) This yieldeth all, save the ceremony which we require. (2.) And it is a venturing their practices on the judgment and fidelity of other men; who may send them infidels to be confirmed for ought they know. But if they try themselves, they are never able to do it for so many, in season; some will be old men, before the bishop will have leisure to confirm them; and many a hundred die without it. Nor do they know the people as their pastors do.

15. The doctrine and practice of the Church of England, under the bishops, is for the power of presbyters herein as far as we desire: for (1.) The presbyters of curates, had by their rubric, the trial and approbation of those, that were sent to the bishop for confirmation. (2.) The bishops accordingly took them on *their words*, with a certificate, and used not to try them themselves, but only to impose hands with prayer and blessing. (3.) And this by the canon, their suffragan also might do; which yieldeth that a presbyter may do it.

16. The pope himself doth yield that presbyters may do it. And Gregory's Epist. to that end, is put into their canon-law, Dist. 95. 1. part. 'Baptizatos etiam Chrismate eos tangere conceditur;' and Gregory's Epist. to Januar. Calaritan. is annexed. By which it appeareth that they took his former prohibition so ill, that he was fain to reverse it. And though (c. 11.) he be forbidden 'Infantes signare,' in the presence of the bishop, without his command, yet so he was forbidden also to administer the Eucharist; yea, and the rural presbyters might not give the cup or bread in the presence of the city presbyters, (c. 12. ex Concil. Neocæsar. 1. c. 13.) But certainly this proveth neither the one nor the other, out of their power.

17. The Papists commonly confess, that presbyters may 'ex dispensatione,' confirm by imposition of hands; so Bellarmine himself. And the schoolmen ordinarily make it an act of the presbyter's power.

18. If it be proper to bishops, that is, either because of their order or jurisdiction. Not of order; for they are of the same order with presbyters, as is frequently confessed by bishops and Papists themselves, and differ but in degree.

Not of jurisdiction ; for it is no more an act of jurisdiction to confirm, than to baptize or give the Eucharist.

19. Protestant divines are commonly agreed, that confirmation is not proper to bishops, but may be used by presbyters. For, (1.) France, Belgia, Helvetia, Denmark, Saxony, Sweden, the Palatinate, the countries of the Duke of Brandenburg, the Duke of Brunswick, the Landgrave of Hassia, with the rest of the Protestant princes of Germany, and also Hungary, Transilvania, the Protestants in Poland, &c., besides Scotland, and so many in England, are all without bishops, having put them down. And though three or four of these countries have superintendants, yet they make not confirmation proper to them. (2.) The English bishops, ordinarily maintain against the Papists, that presbyters may confirm ; and therefore we have their concurrence, as in Dr. Field, Bishop Downname, Mason, and many others is apparent.

20. If all this will not satisfy you, for peace sake, we will forbear imposition of hands, which you suppose to be the bishop's prerogative : and we will be content to do no more, than presbyters always did in baptizing the adult ; even to judge and approve of the capacity of those whom they baptized ; and so will we only judge of the profession and capacity of those that we take charge of, and own as adult Christians, and must administer the Lord's-supper to : and this common reason cannot deny us.

Object. 16. 'But if presbyters may do it, yet so cannot you : for you are no presbyters, as wanting Episcopal ordination : or else schismatical, as having cast them off to whom you were sworn.'

Answ. 1. In my "Second Sheet for the Ministry," and my "Christian Concord," I have answered this already. And for fuller answer, I refer you to "The London Ministers' Vindication," to "Mr. Mason's Vindication of the Ordination of the Protestant Churches," &c. If Bishop Bancroft himself, as Dr. Bernard mentions, in Bishop Usher's judgment, and the rest of the prelates, were against the reordination of the Scots ministers, methinks few should be so much more intemperate, than that intemperate prelate, as to judge their ordination null. And if the Papists in the canon-law, do judge that in some cases an excommunicate man's ordination is valid, methinks Protestants should not be worse to the church than they : especially those that are for the ne-

cessity of an uninterrupted succession of justly ordained pastors; who must (I dare boldly say) derive their succession from more unmeet, and more incapable hands, than English pastors.

2. No more is necessary to the authority and just ordination of a pastor, but that he enter according to the laws of God; which laws require us to submit to the trial of our rulers and brethren, magistrates (in some cases) and pastors; and to come in according to the best means, for election and approbation, that are then to be had and used; but they bind us not to come in by ways impossible, nor to see that our predecessors through all generations have been lawfully ordained.

3. I have shewed already, and God willing, shall more fully do it, in a Disputation on that subject, that our English Episcopacy was not that which God established, but intolerably inconsistent with it: and therefore neither are men the less ministers for being without their ordinations, nor are they schismatics for consenting to their deposition.

4. As for breaking oaths of canonical obedience to them, I think but few among us did take any such oath, and therefore broke none.

5. Many among us were ordained by bishops, and some that were ordained took not that oath; and others that did, yet obeyed them while they stood; and what could they do more?

6. The younger of ministers had no hand in taking down the bishops, and therefore are not schismatical thereby: and that their ordination is no nullity, Bishop Usher and the other twenty prelatial witnesses forecited will testify.

Object. 17. 'But on the contrary side it will be said, that you would set up the Popish sacrament of confirmation again.'

Ans. The Papists have made another thing of it: they use it to infants, and so will not we: they make a proper sacrament of it: they make the visible signs to be anointing and crossing, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and they make imposition of hands no part of it, but cast it off, though in words they own it. They adjoin a box on the ear, to signify the opposition that Christ's soldiers must expect¹. They make it to imprint I know not what in-

¹ Vid. Chamier, l. 4. de Sacra, cap. 10, 11.

delible character, and to give grace ‘*ex opere operato* :’ They make it to be an entering of us into Christ’s militia, abusing baptism, as being but an entering us into his family, and not his warfare : all this is nothing to that which I am pleading for, and which the Protestant writers do wish for.

Object. 18. ‘At least you will revive the prelatical confirmation again, which the old nonconformists were against.’

Ans. We will revive nothing of it, but what was good : the corruption we shall omit. They did it but on a few, contrary to their own laws, but we would have it used to all. They confirmed children that understood not what they said : but we shall expect an understanding profession of faith. They did it in a hurry, as an idle ceremony : we would have it done deliberately and with great reverence. The bishop only did it with them, that knew not whom he did confirm, but ventured on other men’s words, or without : but we will have the pastor do it, that knoweth the persons, and hath time to try them, having one parish, and not two hundred to oversee.

Object. 18. ‘But, at least, the Papists and prelates will be hardened or encouraged by your coming so near them.’

Ans. I will not cast off the work of God, because that any will make it an occasion of sin. And I take it to be the more my duty and not the less, because it tends to peace with all. I take it not to be any part of my religion, to study how to cross my brethren, or forbear a practice, yea, so necessary a duty, because they like it. I detest that principle and spirit. I rather fear, lest their own self-conceitedness, interest, prejudice and discontent, will make them dislike it.

Object. 19. ‘What have we to do with the sign, when the thing that occasioned the use of it is ceased ? Imposition of hands was at first only for the gift of miracles.’

Ans. 1. It was much for the gift of miracles, but not only. And if the giving of one sort of the gifts of the Holy Ghost be ceased ; yet the other, more excellent and necessary gifts continue ; and therefore no reason the sign should cease, because it was not appropriated to the gift of miracles. But 2. If any man scruple either the sign of imposing hands, or the name of confirmation, we desire him his liberty ; these are not the things that we contend for. Let him but yield us that which I have shewed to be most certain, and most useful to the church : that is, ‘a solemn transition out of an

infant church-state into an adult, under approbation of the pastors, and the just cognizance of the church,' and let him call it what he will, I shall not much contend with him about the name, or sign of imposition.

Object. 20. 'Abundance of ministers are raw, imprudent young men, and not fit to manage so great a trust: and so it will mar all; while some are so strict, that they will refuse all that seem not godly to their censorious minds; and some will be loose man-pleasers, and let in all, and turn it but to an unprofitable formality.'

Ans. 1. While men are men, they will act as men. If we shall have no church-ordinances and administrations, till you are secured from human abuse of them, you must shut up your church-doors, and give up all; and shut up your Bibles, till Papists and infidels can find no matter of cavilling at the translation. 2. As I said before, this indeed should provoke the magistrate to set a faithful guard on the church-doors, that seeing the pastors have so great a trust, and the danger of abusing it is so great, the worthiest should be chosen that can be had. And if it be not so, you reproach yourselves, that are choosers and pastors, and have the rule. Why choose you not better, if you know where to find them? 3. This objection, is as much against our judging of those that are to be baptized, which yet the ministers that did baptize, have ever done; and were you not baptized already, we must admit you, and judge who is to be admitted, as the ancient preachers of the Gospel did. 4. The Episcopal brethren had no more wit, than to be against confirmation, because one man may use it too strictly, and another too loosely. The Congregational men are not against church-covenants or professions, because one pastor or church may be too strict, and another too loose in judging of men's piety. The Presbyterians are not against trying men before admission to the Lord's-supper, nor against discipline, because one eldership may be too strict, and another too loose. The Anabaptists are not against rebaptizing men at age, because one minister may refuse the fit, and another may take in all that come. Why then should a possibility of ministers' miscarriage cause you to be more against this, than all the rest? 5. If ministers be associated, they will be accountable for such miscarriages; and the advice and admonition of their brethren may do much to prevent or reform such abuses: and the faithful

people of their charge, will somewhat observe them, and “bid Archippus take heed to the ministry that he hath received in the Lord, that he fulfil it.” (Col. iv. 17.) 6. As long as you are not forced into our charge, but have your liberty to choose your pastor, as now it is, you have the less reason for this complaint. If the laws of Zeno, or Plato be thought too strict in their schools, as long as the scholars may choose to come there, and all are volunteers, they may the better bear it. 7. As I said before, the trust must be put in some or other to judge: and where can it be fitter than in them, who by study are prepared, and by office appointed by Christ hereunto? 8. If you will give a presbytery, or one eminent minister in every market-town, or visitors of your own appointment, a special care to oversee the rest in doing this, and such like works, I shall be no gainsayer, so the work be but done: the more inspection and circumspection the better. 9. If one minister refuse the fit, there be many more that will not. 10. Your commissioners may have power moderately to correct the ministers’ abuses in their work.

But because I perceive that rulers are unreasonably jealous, lest the pastors of the church will do too much, rather than lest they do too little, and are more solicitous to use the bridle of restraint, than the spur of instigation; I entreat them to consider these things:—

1. That most certainly there is no part of all our ministry, that stirs up near so much ill-will, passion, malice, yea and persecutions against us, as this part, about taking in and casting out, and exercising the keys of the kingdom; in which you are so jealous of us.

2. And alas! ministers are flesh and blood, as well as others; and all of them too tender of their interest, of profit, of reputation, and ease; which are all contradicted notably by this work. Do you think ministers will be so hot on it, to have their neighbours hate them and revile them, and to live as owls in the places where they live, and to put themselves on a great deal of trouble? Surely it is a very self-displeasing thing to the very nature of man, unless he be a monster, to displease his neighbours, and be hated and baited by them. And it will provoke them not only to forbear all acts of kindness or bounty, but to deny them their due maintenance, as far as ever they can: and many if not most ministers, have no great mind to be so used; nay, had rather lose,

than go to law for all their dues ; the trouble, and cost, and odium of it is so great. So that our Parliaments have been too much afraid, lest ministers should cease to be men, or to be sinners, and to be man-pleasers, and to indulge their flesh ; and lest we should run into the fire, and lie down among the thorns, and choose a life of trouble and sufferings.

3. And methinks, experience should satisfy men of this. Do you not see how backward ministers are to church-reformation, and discipline in the exercise, when they have been most forward for the power ? How little is yet done in it, for all our liberty, after all our prayers, and petitions, and writing for it ? Do you find in most parishes that ministers are prone to overdo ? certainly you do not.

4. Do you not know that all the work of God is so much against nature, and hath such abundance of enemies and difficulties in the way, that few men are likely to be guilty of overdoing ? Why are you not as careful to hinder men from overdoing in sanctifying the Lord's-day, in teaching and praying with their families, &c. but because you see that few need your curb. I am confident, should Parliaments do their best to drive on ministers to such works as these, and make laws upon laws, to spur them to the practice, they would not be able to bring one half of us, nor the tenth man, to reach so far, as Christ hath bound us ; no nor one man of us, in all respects.

And yet I again say, that if any rash men are over rigid and abuse their trust, (which is likeliest to be those whose maintenance no whit cometh from the people ; for in the rest there is more danger of the contrary,) we desire not that we should be exempted from the magistrate's, minister's, or people's due means for their amendment. But let the spur be most used, seeing there is most need ; and let us see some severe laws, to drive us on to those duties, that flesh and blood, and all the world are so much against.

I come now to the last part of my task, which is to give some brief Directions for the most effectual practice of this excellent, needful work. And I shall *first*, speak of the duty of ministers in order to it ; and *secondly*, of the people's duty ; and *lastly*, of the magistrate's. The duty of the pastors I judge to consist in these particulars :—

Direct. 1. Let the pastors in each county meet together, and agree as one man, in faithfulness and self-denial, to do their duty; that the most conscientious may not be liable to the reproach of singularity, because the rest betray them, and the church, and cause of Christ, by withdrawing, and leaving the work undone; too long hath the church already suffered by the neglect, even of godly ministers, that in such a time of leave and help, we still hold off, and dare not venture on a little displeasure of the people, when our ancestors ventured on the flames; I grieve to think what a shame it will be to our names, and to the reformed churches, and what a confusion it may bring upon our faces, before our Righteous Judge. And it is a grief to me, if I were sure of magistrates' assistance, that all our enemies shall say, and that the histories of this age shall tell posterity, that the ministers of England, after fasting, prayers, wars, and vows pretended for reformation, would yet do little or nothing toward it, but preach; even in times of liberty and encouragement, till the magistrate did it: and that it must be the work of the magistrate, after our unworthy, lazy, or treacherous desertion of it. Had we no more help than we have, we might do much, were we willing and unanimous.

Direct. 2. Let us take heed of extending these agreements to any unnecessary circumstances, so as to lay the stress of the business on them, or to make that necessary, which is unnecessary: but let us agree on the general certain points, and leave particular men to their liberty, in modes and circumstances, not judging each other, if we differ herein: or if one be more or less strict than another in the execution.

Direct. 3. Let us all be very careful, that in point of trial and judging men's profession, we avoid extremes: on one side let us not be righteous overmuch, by keeping out any that make the most broken, intelligible profession of faith and repentance, and a godly life, that may be taken for credible: and remember that we are not searchers of the heart, and that charity judgeth not evil of any that are capable of a better judgment. And certainly a humble soul that is conscious of its own infirmities and unworthiness, will be very tender of condemning another, without very satisfying evidence. Of this I refer you to my first dispute, of "Right to Sacraments."

On the other side, let us take heed of turning this duty

into a mere formality, and making nothing of it, but mocking the church and God. Let us not take up with a profession of any other kind of faith, but the true Christian saving faith; nor with any profession of this faith, which we are able to prove to be incredible.

Direct. 4. None of the aged that have already been admitted to the communion of the church in the Lord's-supper, may be brought under confirmation by imposition of hands, as we have before shewed. But all that were yet never admitted to this special part of communion, nor have made any solemn approved profession, should you be called to it, be they young or old, when they demand church communion.

If you ask me what will be done with the rest, seeing they were admitted irregularly, without any profession of the faith? I answer, 1. Acquaint them plainly with the nature of Christianity, and what a church is, and what is the office of a pastor, and what the duty of the flock to God, to him, and themselves, and one to another. 2. Then tell them, that you resolve to proceed according to these rules in the government of your flock; and to exercise this discipline. Tell them plainly (that they be not deceived) both what are the benefits of a church-state and discipline, and what are the difficulties that unprepared men are likely to grudge at; and how hardly they will take it to be followed, and not suffered to rest in sin, and openly reprov'd and cast out with shame, if they will not be penitent and reform. And then tell them, that if there be any that have slipped into a church-state, in show, and knew not what Christianity was, or what they did, and find themselves as yet unfit for it, if they do forbear the privileges of the church, till they are better prepared, and acquainted with them, and can use them to their profit, you shall in the meantime be ready to teach them publicly and privately, till they are prepared: and those that are fit to continue, and use such privileges, advise not to forbear them. But let them know, that you can neither take all the parish, as such, for members of the Universal Church, or of your charge; and therefore must have some better evidence, especially after such a confusion, that negligence hath brought into the church: and you cannot take any man to be of your charge against his will, and therefore you must know their minds. 3. Give them notice, that all that own their church-membership, and will have communion with that church,

under your ministry and pastoral oversight, are desired by you to signify their desires, by giving in their names to the clerk of the parish, or some other fit person; or if they refuse that, by coming to you. 4. When you have their names, keep them some time, while you get information of the persons' lives. And then give notice to all (if it may, to avoid imputation of partiality; or at least, of all that you have reason to suspect of gross ignorance or impiety) by streets, villages, or houses, to come to speak with you, on some appointed days; where you may discern the fitness of some; and such as you find to be grossly ignorant or scandalous, advise them to stay till they are prepared, offering them your help; because else you must do that in a way of discipline, that they are unfit to bear. 5. All that disown their own standing and church-membership, or present right to privileges, and withdraw into the order of catechumens, as being ignorant in what they did before, you may safely teach them as catechumens, and are not bound to enrage them by church-discipline, which they consent not to, and are not capable of. 6. All those that you find tolerable, that have owned their church-membership, and not withdrawn themselves, you ought to keep their names, in a church-book for memory, and to call them solemnly (at some days of Humiliation, or other fit season) to own their relation publicly; their names being read, that all may know with whom they are to hold communion. And if there be need, you may justly require them there openly to renew their profession and covenant with God. 7. Your flock being then reformed and known, you need not call them again, to examination before particular sacraments, or other parts of church-communion. 8. When any members are after added, they should, if unconfirmed, and such as never did communicate, be received solemnly by prayer and benediction; and if they be such as have been admitted to communion, let them be only approved upon renewing their profession. For the one sort are confirmed in their relation to both catholic and particular church; but the other, only enter then into the particular church, being solemnly received into the catholic church before, and perhaps into some other particular church, or into that from which they departed.

Direct. 5. If any come in that have violated his baptismal covenant, by a wicked life, he is before you, receive him,

to give some open testimony of his repentance, if his sin were open, that so he may be ministerially absolved, and the church receive him, not merely as an adult believer, but as a convert, with prayers and rejoicing. And the fuller confession he makes of his ungodly life, and of the way and love of God in his recovery, and the fuller warning he giveth others of the sins that he was guilty of, and the fuller he communicateth to them the satisfying reasons that caused him to turn, the better it is, and more suitable to the state of a penitent; as also the fuller he professeth his resolution to stick close to Christ, by the help of his grace, for the time to come.

Direct. 6. For the execution of this; because all the people cannot be still ready, nor attend, because it is fit they have some cognizance of these things; let some of the most sober, judicious persons be chosen by the church, not into office, but as their delegates, or trustees, to meet with the pastors monthly in some convenient place, where all persons may first address themselves that seek the privileges of the church, and where matters of discipline may be first transacted, before we bring them to the assembly, yet not forbidding any other of the church to be there present that will. And either in that meeting may members after be admitted, and their names made public at the next communion; or else some meetings publicly appointed, four times a year or more, for admitting such in public, as shall be found fittest, which may be at a Fast before a Sacrament: and let any of the church, at that preparative meeting, have leave to put in what exceptions they have against the person for his profession or conversation.

Direct. 7. Let the pastors and churches that live within the reach of any communion, be as many as is possible, associate and meet for the maintaining of communion of churches, by their officers and delegates. And those that differ in such tolerable matters, as may not hinder their Christian or church-communion, and yet are not satisfied to join in Synods with the rest, let them agree upon such terms of communion and Christian correspondence as their principles will admit. And let no stranger be admitted to our church-communion, that bringeth not a certificate (called of old *Communicatory Letters*), or some sufficient testimony from one of these sorts, either from the churches nearly associated,

or those that we agree to take for brethren. And those that bring such certificates must be admitted by us, without any further trial or confirmation; unless there be some notable cause of suspicion. But for those who live in heretical or impious societies, or such as refuse all church order and communion with neighbour-churches, or are justly disowned by the associated churches, we should not admit them to our communion, without a particular trial, or a better certificate than those churches can give them. And thus should all the churches be concatenated, and their communion settled.

Direct. 8. Above all, let every minister see that he wisely and diligently carry himself to the rest of his parish; avoiding indeed, the excommunicate as heathens: but for all that are willing to learn in an expectant state, let us deal lovingly, gently and tenderly with them, denying them nothing that lawfully we can yield them, in matters of burial, marrying, praying, preaching, or the like. And be sure to carry on the necessary duty of catechising, and personal conference and instruction with them, family by family, by which you may the better know them, and prepare them for church-communion, and have opportunity to quiet them, and answer their objections; and they may see that you cast them not off as heathens, but only prepare them for the state and privileges, which they are yet unfit for.

Especially, let us by all possible condescension, meekness, and loving carriage, blameless lives, and charitable contribution to the utmost of our abilities, endeavour to win them, and take off that offence, or at least abate it, or hinder the success of the reproaches of those, that will undoubtedly be offended, by our reformation and discipline. And let us have a vigilant eye upon any seducers, especially infidels, and Papists, that may creep in among them, to take advantage of their discontents; that we may prudently and effectually counterwork them. This much faithfully done by ministers, might be an admirable mercy to the church.

Secondly, The people's duty in order to this reformation before mentioned is—1. Of the godly, and such as are fit for church-communion.—2. Of the grossly ignorant and ungodly that are unfit.

1. The duty of the first sort lieth in these particulars. (1.) They must highly value the benefit of pastoral oversight and church-communion, and therefore be ready to promote

any work of reformation that is necessary, to their more fruitful and comfortable enjoyment of them. (2.) They must so behave themselves as may honour and further the work, and take heed of that by which it may be hindered; lest they weaken our hands and be a stumblingblock to others. For what can a minister do himself, if the church assist him not; much less if they hinder him? Especially, [1.] They must take heed of scandalous sins, which may be a shame to their profession, and open the mouths of the enemies of the church. [2.] They must take heed of sects and divisions, and quarrellings among themselves, which will break them in pieces, or hinder their edification, and make them a stumblingblock to the weak, and a laughingstock to the wicked. [3.] They must take heed of surliness, and pride, and domineering carriage towards those that are yet without: and must be as eminent in meekness, humility, patience, forbearance, and self-denial, as they are in the profession of religion. For a proud, domineering spirit, or strangeness and unnecessary distance, doth lose the ungodly, whom you should be a means to win. [4.] They must study to do all the good they can to those without; be as little as may be in executing penalties on them, and as much as may be possible in speaking kindly and familiarly to them; relieving them in wants, and visiting them in sickness, and think it not much to purchase their love, in order to their salvation, with the loss of your right, or with the price of much of your worldly goods. For all men love those, or at least, will less dislike them, that do no hurt to any, but do good to all, or as many as they can. To be the servants of all, is the highest Christian dignity, and the way to win them. [5.] Take heed of falling out, or contending with any of them, or of giving them any harsh, provoking words, to their faces, or behind their backs. But put up any wrong that is merely your own, and is in your power to forgive, for the sake of peace, and your own neighbours' good. [6.] Be not men of common spirits, or common speech, or a common conversation; but as we must make a difference between you and others in our communion and church-administrations, so let the rest see that it is not without cause. For if you be but like other men, we shall seem to be partial in making a difference between you and other men. Let your light therefore shine before men to the glory of your Heavenly Father. Let them see that you de-

spise the world, and live above it, and can easily part with it; that you can forgive and bear a wrong; that your heart is in heaven, and your treasure there; and that you are the heirs of another world: let all men hear and see by you, that you have a higher design in your eye, than the ungodly, and that you are driving on another trade, than the men that have their portion in this life. Heaven is your real glory; and to be heavenly is your true reputative glory, not only in the eyes of the wise, but of the common earthworms of the world. [7.] Set yourselves in the most diligent and faithful improvement of all your parts and interests to help on the work of God on men's souls. Though you preach not, you have work enough in your own places to do, to further the preacher's work. Speak to poor people prudently, seasonably, and seriously about the state of their souls, and everlasting life: and consult with the ministers, how to deal with them. Tell them in what state you find the people, and take their advice in further dealing with them. O, if our neighbours would but help us in private, and do their parts, and not cast all the burden on the minister, there would much more be done than is! Nay, alas, to our grief and hindrance, some of our professing people are so hot, and self-conceited, and proud, that unless we will outrun our own understandings and be ruled by them, that shut out abundance that the word of God allows us not to shut out, and be righteous overmuch, and shut up the church of Christ, as in a nut-shell; they presently murmur and rebel, and separate, and must betake themselves to a stricter congregation. And others of them, must have us cast off discipline, and cut up the hedge, and admit all to the communion and privileges of the church, and all under a blind pretence of charity; and some learned gentlemen, by words and writings, do enrage our ignorant and ungodly neighbours against us, and make them believe, that we do them some grievous wrong, because we will not indeed deceive them and undo them, and set up new church-orders (or disorders) now in the end of the world, so contrary to all the ancient canons and orders of the church. I honour and dearly love the names of many of these studious, pious gentlemen: but seriously, I must tell them, that they want humility, and in their good meanings do the church a world of wrong. And though they may be more learned even in Theology, than we, yet it is a great matter to have, or to want experience.

They have not been so much in church administrations as we, nor had so much to do with ignorant souls. And verily I must say again, that the bare theory maketh but a bungler in this work : I must much suspect the judgment of that man in matters of church-government, or dealing with poor souls, that wants experience. Let these gentlemen, but turn ministers, (be it known to their faces, there's none of them too good for it, nor too great,) and let them but try our life a little while, and I shall set more by their judgments, than now I do. I read many a physicians' writings, before I was fit to attempt a cure. It is a raw, deceitful kind of knowledge in these practical affairs, that is not furthered by experience.

2. As for the duty of the ignorant, ungodly people, I shall say little of it, because I suppose they are not likely to read or regard what I say. Only in general, it is their first duty, to become truly godly persons, and so to live in communion with the church. But upon supposition that they will not yet be such, their next choice should be to live in quiet submission to their teachers, and patiently stay among the catechumens, and expectants, till they are fit for a higher place and privileges. And with the reasonableness of this motion, and how it conduceth to their good, we should labour to acquaint them, and make them sensible of it, that they may be patient in their station.

Thirdly, Our last work is to tell you, what is the magistrates' part, for the promoting of this work. And I shall urge them here to no great matters, because they shall not say, that we would either drive them in the dark upon questionable things, or put them upon that, which any reason can call persecution, or make them think, that we can do nothing but by their sword. And therefore whether they should force people to be church-members, or Christians, or to come under discipline, are questions that at this time I shall not meddle with ; but

^m *Direct.* 1. It is a great part of the magistrate's duty to

^m In Tertullian's days, saith Albaspinæus in Tert. de prescrip. c. 41, p. 306. The Catechumens being somewhat instructed at home, 'cum cæteris tandem in Ecclesia primis concionibus, quæ in gratiani Catechumenorum habebantur, intererant ; quibus peractis rursus omnes idem ipsi Catechumeni ex templo discedere jubebantur, ne scilicet Divina mysteria rudium conscientia polluerentur.' So that it seems they had then in the morning a sermon fitted for the Catechumens, and all the after part of the worship was more Eucharistical, fitted to the communion of saints.

cause the people that are yet unfit for church-communion, to keep in their visible station, and to behave themselves as expectants, and submit to that instruction of their teachers, which is necessary to prepare them for the privileges of the church ; and to this end the magistrate should, by laws and proclamations, own this ministerial reformation. Alas ! how little knew they, what they did that have so long been jealous of us, lest we should do too much, and under pretence of discipline inflame, or abuse them by severity ! When as it is a work that casteth on us so much rage and hatred, of rich and poor, and calls for such abundance of faith and zeal, and diligence and self-denial, when we have so little, and are commonly like other men, addicted too much to man-pleasing, and to save ourselves, that if we had all the help that magistrates can give us, it is ten to one but we should leave the most of this work undone. Preaching is a very cheap and easy work, in comparison of church-government. They have taken great pains to stop poor, lazy, short-winded men from running up the steepest hill, and carrying the heaviest burden, and passing through the greatest sufferings, that in those prosperous times we can expect. And indeed I know it to be true, that for all the countenance of authority, he that will faithfully execute the pastoral oversight and discipline, shall live a persecuted life, which by mere preaching he might avoid.

Therefore the chief governors of the nation ought to make laws, and cause them to be executed, for the constraining of the grossly ignorant and ungodly, to hear the word preached publicly, and to submit to be privately catechised, and instructed by the ministers, and to command them patiently to wait, as learners in this condition, till they are fit to be approved members of the church. These carnal people look more at the sword and will of the magistrate, in matters of religion, than others do ; because they understand no other argument, and can savour nothing but the things of the flesh. Did but the rulers of the nation hear how they daily inquire what religion shall be owned and

In the ancient churches the Catechumens were not suffered to sit with the church-members, but had a separated place by themselves ; and Tertullian accuseth the heretics for breaking this order, *ut vid. Albaspin. in Tertul. de Præscription. c. 41, p. 306.* He blames them also, that they suffered them to join with the church in prayers, and other holy worship ; *ut Albaspin. ibid.*

settled by them, they would surely think it their duty, to lend them a little more of their help. We desire you not to drive them to Christianity, nor to sacraments, or church-communion; only drive them to hear, and learn, and be instructed, that the light of truth may do the rest. Surely none can reasonably suspect, that this is against the liberty of their consciences, unless the slavery of Satan be their liberty, and it be their liberty to be free from Christ, and righteousness, and heaven. It is hard to believe that governor to be a Christian, that will not do this much to help his subjects to be Christians.

Direct. 2. And as the magistrate should constrain such people to submit to be instructed, so should he constrain the ministers to instruct them, both by public preaching, and by private conference and catechising, if they be able: and if through the greatness of the place, one minister is not able to perform it, there should be so many maintained proportionably, to the number and necessities of souls, as may be able. The reason why ministers themselves should be compelled by penalties are, (1.) Because some are so dull, that they need the spur. (2.) Because our performances will be the less resisted by the people, when they know we are forced by the magistrate. (3.) Because the magistrate's judgment puts much authority and honour on the work, in the people's eyes; compel us therefore, as well as them.

Direct. 3. The magistrate should also impose a penalty upon all that undertake to be pastors of a church, and administer the Lord's-supper, and yet will not make any necessary trial of the knowledge, faith, and lives of those, to whom they do administer it, nor exercise any church discipline on the scandalous; but utterly neglect that oversight and church-government, which is as much a part of the pastoral work, as public preaching is. They that will undertake to be pastors, and meddle with sacraments, must be compelled to do the work of pastors, and to dispense the sacraments in a tolerable order. Though yet we are not for compulsion in any doubtful points, of lesser moment, where a difference among the godly may be tolerated; but that pastors should act as no pastors, and rectors of the churches be as no rectors, and should cherish all ignorance, infidelity, and impiety, and profane God's ordinances, and subvert the communion of saints, and lay the garden of Christ open to

the common wilderness, and thereby make all seem singular to the people, that will not do as wickedly as these; this is not to be tolerated; but the commissioners for ejecting scandalous ministers with the advice of the assistants, should have power to correct them, and in case of obstinate unreformedness, to eject them: not to silence them from preaching to the catechumens or any; but to prohibit them from the actions proper to church rulers or pastors, till they will perform them more agreeably to the Scripture rule.

And this compulsion also of the ministers, we desire especially for the people's sake, who we are content should be excused themselves from any such penal laws, to restrain them from sacraments; but when they know that ministers are under such penalties, they will bear it at their hands, and take it the better, when we deal with them, as the word of God requireth. I hear it with my ears, to the grief of my heart, how some of my neighbours' ministers are spoken against, with bitterness by their people, because they give not the Lord's-supper to all, even to the most ignorant and ungodly, that refuse to be instructed, or so much as to take themselves for any members of the minister's charge: and that which they say is, that 'though bishops and common prayer be taken down, yet the giving of the sacraments to all the parish, is not taken down.' And they that now submit so quietly to the diffusing of so many other things, because ministers are punishable if they use them, would also do the like in this case. And yet if you are jealous, that ministers will go as far on the other hand in refusing the people that are not to be refused, (though with one of an hundred, there is little fear of that) we are contented that you look to us also in this: To which end these two things will be sufficient. (1.) Let the magistrates join with the pastors and delegates of the church in their meetings, where church-affairs are transacted, that he may see what we do. If there be no justice of peace in the parish, let every church have a church-magistrate purposely chosen by the chief-magistrate; or some agent on his behalf deputed thereunto. (2.) And let the magistrate's agent acquaint the commissioners how things are transacted, in cases of complaint, and let them, by the advice of the assistant ministers, correct us as we deserve, if you should imagine this to be necessary.

Direct. 4. The magistrate should promote, encourage, countenance, yea, command the pastors to associations and brotherly correspondences, for the more cautious, and vigorous, and effectual management of these works; and for the concatenation and communion of churches, and the right understanding of each other's affairs; that he that hath communion in one church, may by communicatory letters, have communion in any of the rest; and he that is cast or kept out of one may not be received by the rest, till it be proved that he is excluded unjustly. And those that join not so fully as the rest, may yet be provoked to own one another as far as we can; so that we may maintain brotherly love, with all that differ from us by tolerable differences; and may own them as churches, though we cannot own their different opinions or ways; may have such communion with them, as we may, and upon their letters may admit their members to our communion. This the magistrate should at least openly provoke, and encourage the churches and pastors to; seeing no man can doubt whether it be for the edification of the church.

Direct. 5. For the better promoting of this necessary work, I conceive it would be a very ready and unquestionable way, for the magistrate to appoint an able, godly, moderate minister to be a visiter in each county, or rather in each half or quarter of a county, to see the churches thus reformed, and provoke the several pastors to their duty, and assist them in it, where there is need; but not to have any Episcopal power to punish, or cast out any minister, or excommunicate them, suspend them, or the like; but let every visiter have an agent of the magistrate joined with him, armed with authority to convene the ministers, and examine witnesses, and do what more the chief-magistrate shall see meet, so that still these two visitors go together, but have not the same authority or work; but let the ministers only inquire, direct, exhort, and give account and advice to the civil visiter; and let the civil visiter have all the coercive power; and let both of them transmit such causes as are extempt from their determination, to the commissioners for ejecting scandalous ministers, who by the advice of the assistant ministers, may determine them. These visitors did very much to the first and great Reformation of Scotland, when Popery had overrun all; nor did they scruple the using of them, for all that they were against prelacy.

Direct. 6. It is one of the chief and unquestionable parts of the magistrate's duty, in order to the reformation and peace of the churches, and the saving of men's souls, to see that dangerous seducers be restrained, from infecting and carrying away the ignorant, ungodly, discontented people, that are kept under ministerial teaching, as expectants. I do not move to have men driven into our churches; nor do I move to have an unnecessary restraint laid upon men's tongues or pens, in case of tolerable differences, among the servants of Christ. In this case I only desire now, that the Dissenting godly brethren, would agree together, to meddle with their differences no more than needs, and to manage their disagreements with such cautions, and in such manner, and season, and measure, as may least hinder their success in the common work, viz. the promoting of the common fundamental verities, and the converting and saving of the ignorant and ungodly, and getting down the reigning sins of the world. And then they will find, (1.) That if there be any truth in the private opinions, which they would propagate, it will far easier be received, when the minds of their brethren are sedate and peaceable, than when they are alarmed to the conflict, by unseasonable preaching for the said opinions. (2.) And that the errors, of this lower nature among brethren, which some fear a toleration of, will sooner die of themselves for want of fuel in such peaceable deportment, than when the bellows of opposition, contradiction, reproach, and violence are blowing them up, and putting life continually into them. For most dividers are proud and selfish, and must needs be noted, for somewhat extraordinary; and you take the principal way to animate them, when you make so much ado with them: whereas a few years' neglect, and not observing them, as if there were no such men in the world, (unless when they impose a necessity on us,) would more happily extinguish them. I speak but what I have seen and tried. This therefore is not the matter of my present request, that magistrates would use rigour and violence with godly men, about tolerable differences; which the power of greater light and love in the contrary-minded, is the principal means to reconcile.

But the thing requested now of magistrates is, That they would keep out the wolves, while we are feeding the sheep, or help us in it. That they suffer not damnable deceivers,

or any that plainly go about to subvert men's souls, or the state of the church, to fall in with our ignorant, ungodly people, in the time of their learning and expectancy. And as I shall be ready against any libertine; infidel, or Papist in the world, to prove this to be in the magistrate's power, and his flat duty, of which I hope no sober Christian doubteth, so I shall here lay before the magistrate, the reasons that shall evince the need of his help, in the present case.

Reason 1. The people that we now speak of, are so utterly ignorant, that it is easy to deceive them. It is no dishonour to truth, that a fool or a child may be deluded; but such are not to be left to the malice and craft of juggling enemies.

Reason 2. So wicked are the hearts of those, that we now speak of, or many of them, that they are prepared for deceit, and willing of it materially, though not formally, as such. It is easy drawing men from that which they hate, or their hearts are bent against, and to that which they love, and their hearts are set upon: such gunpowder will soon take fire.

Reason 3. Our people by the aforementioned work of Reformation, will undoubtedly be cast into *discontents*; they will be sorely displeased with their teachers; which is a small matter, were it not that it hindereth their own salvation. They have so long been used to have their own will, and to be admitted even in heathenish ignorance and impiety to the communion of the saints, and all the outward privileges, without any considerable exercise of discipline over them, that now it will be a strange provoking thing to them, when their custom be altered. So that in the discontent and hatred of their minds, if infidels or Papists, or any such malignant adversaries shall come among them, their own malignity and discontent will drive them by multitudes into their nets; and they will turn to the first that comes with any plausible though pernicious doctrine. With half an eye we may easily see this; and therefore, if the magistrate will not help us to quiet and secure the people, and keep off deceivers, while we are catechising and instructing, and preparing the grossly ignorant and ungodly, it will be to the hazard of many thousand souls, and a temptation to many fainthearted ministers again to cast open the hedge, and lay the church's communion common, for fear of the ill

consequence, that will follow to the people by displeasing them.

And yet I may well conclude, that though still the church will have need of some of the magistrate's help in this same way, yet nothing so much hereafter, as at first. (1.) It is custom that most holdeth the people now, and enrageth them against the breakers of it. And when once the custom is broken and turned, they will be much more quiet. (2.) We now find the churches in the rubbish, and have the harshest work at first to do, which will soon be over, and the churches and minds of men more settled. (3.) A few years' practice of confirmation, in the fore-described way, I hope, will introduce such abundance of knowledge, and so increase the face of godliness, that we shall have little need of the magistrate's help, in this kind as now we have. But now at first our necessity is very great.

Reason 4. Moreover, our doctrine and practice is most contrary to men's sins, and carnal interest, and therefore though it be true, yet it is provoking, and seemeth to be against them; as bloodletting, fasting, and bitter medicines to a child, or a foolish patient. And therefore no wonder, if tolerated seducers can draw them from it, by sense or nonsense, in such a case. A little reason seems to take men off from that, which seem against them, or which they hate.

Reason 5. On the contrary, the doctrine and practice of deceivers is suited to their nature, and purposely suggared for them by art. For instance: if Papists fall in with them in the depth of their discontent, and first rail at us as no ministers, but liars and heretics; and then revile us for receiving maintenance (which is their way, though their clergy receive so exceedingly much more) and then tell them of all their ancestors, and then set them upon an easy outside piety, which 'ex opere operato,' will certainly confer grace, and shall take up at the strictest with an auricular confession, instead of necessary humiliation and true church-discipline; and shall make those venial and improper sins, which we make damnable; and shall send many but to purgatory, that according to Scripture, we send to hell: in a word, when they shall comply with carnal hearts and interests but as much, as Montalte, the Jansenian, sheweth us, that the Jesuits do; what wonder if our ignorant, discontented people, do greedily swallow such baits as these,

and turn to such a kind of religiousness! and this makes the Jesuits glad of our Reformation, and stand by us as the crows by the sheep, that they may have our leavings, or all that we cut off: for it is number that they regard; and, if they will but believe in the Pope, they shall be welcome to them; yea, be Catholics and be saved, though they believe not in Christ and the Holy Ghost, nor know what Christianity is. He that thinks I wrong them; (1.) Let him look on millions, and millions in their churches. (2.) Let him but read Fr. a Sancta Clara, Problem. 15 and 16ⁿ.

Reason 6. The adversaries also are very industrious, and have many advantages of us from without. In most churches they will meet, though with godly, yet with young, inexperienced disputers; because our ministry is but reviving, and the young ones must have time to grow. And the Jesuits, Friars, and other missionaries, have a pope and cardinals, and bishops, and princes, and lands, and revenues, and wealth, and seminaries, and trained soldiers in abundance, at their backs beyond sea, to furnish them with continual supply. And how eager and busy they are, the Christian world hath had long experience; so that if such be let loose on ignorant souls, what wonder if they prevail!

Reason 7. And for the event, if the magistrates shall refuse us this reasonable and unquestionably lawful aid, it may be the means of the damnation of many thousand souls. I suppose I speak to Christians, that believe that sin is the poison of the soul, and believe that faith in Christ is necessary, and that there is a heaven and a hell; and if so, they must needs understand what it is to suffer men to draw their subjects from Christ, from Scripture, from the means of Grace, and a holy life; and to draw them into sin. That this is but to give men leave to do their worst, to undo and damn as many as they can; and to take them at the greatest advantage in their ignorance and discontent to trip up their heels, and entice them into hell; how dreadful a thing is this to a magistrate, once to think of, that hath but any belief of Scripture, and pity on the souls of men! And therefore, as long as we do not now call upon them, so much as to force Papists or infidels, either to be of our religion, or to profess that they are so, or join in communion with us, but only desire, that they may keep their venom to themselves,

ⁿ In his "Deus, Natura, Gratia;" where abundance more are cited of his side.

and may not be suffered to take the advantage of our people's ignorance and discontent, undoubtedly the rulers that are friends to Christ and the souls of men, will never find in their hearts, to deny this assistance.

Reason 8. And if they should deny it, in reason they must needs see, that they will fully give up the churches of Christ, that are under their government, to distraction and confusion. They know well enough what would come of it, if every man have the liberty to persuade their armies into mutinies and rebellion; or to persuade the subjects against themselves that rule them; or to entice men's children, or servants to lewdness, or their wives to unchastity. And will they, under pretence of mercy or liberty, permit men to do that against Christ, and the church, and the souls of many that are bad enough already, which they would not, they durst not permit against men's bodies, or against themselves, or against the peace of the commonwealth.

And what a dishonour will it be to Christ and the church, and reformation, and religion; and what a joy to all the enemies of these, to see that our reformation shall breed such confusion, and bring upon us such inconveniences; and all because the magistrate shall refuse his help!

Reason 9. And perhaps, the magistrates will quickly find, that the distractions of the church will breed, and feed such distractions in the commonwealth, as may make them wish they had quenched the fire, while it was yet quenchable. Our unity is not only *our* strength, but *their* strength, especially if they promote it: our divisions weaken us as well as them. What will the magistrate do, if he help us not in this case? Ministers cannot in conscience always forbear their duty, but will set about it. Either the rulers will suffer us to do it, or not. If they suffer us and assist us, it will be our peace, and theirs, and our people's good. If they suffer us, and assist us not, as is now desired, we shall exasperate so many of their subjects by our reformation, and shutting them from church-communion, that will shake the peace of the commonwealth, and the odium will fly on the governors, for setting up a ministry that so provoketh them, and so the people will be still in discontents, and prepared for rebellion, or any violent change. And the fire that began in the church, if it be let alone, may reach the court. But if to mend this, they will put down or hinder ministers, their

persecution will bring down God's judgments on them, and turn the hearts of honest men against them. They have seen what deformation and persecution have done, before their eyes.

Reason 10. Lastly, it will bring a most heavy guilt on the magistrate's soul, which he will never be able to stand under, before the King of all the world. To be guilty of the neglect of an office so divine, received from God, that it might be used for him; and to be guilty of the frustrating of much of our ministerial work; and of grieving the hearts of so many that fear God, and frustrating such hopes as we lately had, to say nothing of the prayers, tears, hazards, blood, and ruin of so many thousands, and the promises, oaths, and covenants to God; to be guilty of the sins of so many thousands, and of their everlasting condemnation; to be guilty of the distractions, and betraying of the church and cause, and people of the Lord, and to be guilty of the insultings of so many enemies; all this and much more, that would certainly follow the denial of this moderate necessary help, would be a burden intolerable.

Direct. 7. ' But because both the magistrates and many others are afraid, lest by going too far in such assistance, they may be guilty of persecution, by restraining men from preaching, or private persuasion, or by keeping the ignorant and wicked from church-communion, or by compelling them to come to hear, and to be personally instructed, I humbly propound these following things, for such a regulation of their granted liberty, as may free them from all danger of persecuting, without depriving us of their principal help.

1. If you compel not the ignorant and ungodly to hear, and be personally instructed by the minister of the parish where they live, yet at least compel them thus to submit to some minister; and let that minister certify under his hand, that he takes care of him as a catechumen, or expectant, by public and private instruction.

2. Let not every man that will, be tolerated either to teach, persuade, or hold assemblies; but let your toleration be regulated, as well as your approbation is. To which end (1.) Let such persons as are thought meet for such a work, be appointed as commissioners, to approve or judge of such as shall be tolerated through the land, as the commissioners now approve of such, as shall have the public maintenance. For there is no reason, that the tolerated should not go under

trial, as well as the allowed. And indeed without some such course to keep the door of toleration, as well as the door of public, allowed teachers, you cannot put any reasonable laws of toleration into execution ; but any will come in, whatever your laws say. (2.) Let these commissioners for trying the tolerated have rules given them by the lawgivers, whom to license or tolerate, and whom not. (3.) Let all that will gather assemblies, or administer sacraments, or preach, have an instrument of toleration, under the hands and seal of these commissioners, and let them be hindered, that have no such instrument. Otherwise if you stay till they are convicted of blasphemy, they may do more mischief first, (for who will persecute them) than ever the magistrate can comfortably be accountable to God for suffering.

3. When a man hath a sealed toleration, to preach, or hold assemblies, let him yet be as liable to any just accusation, before the commissioners for ejection, as the approved, public ministers are : that so if he be proved to be wicked and scandalous, or to preach any thing excepted from toleration, by the legislators, the said commissioners may be authorised to deprive them of their toleration, as they do others of their public station and maintenance. And this is a most reasonable and necessary thing.

(1.) For else the public ministers will be more hardly dealt with than they. It is supposed that there is so much difference in the soundness of their doctrine, that one deserveth the public encouragement, as well as the other deserveth a toleration : or else the lawgivers would make no difference. And that being supposed, if they shall not be questionable, as well as we, nor their right forfeitable as well as ours, they are more cherished proportionably than others.

(2.) And if you do not this, it is as good do nothing, but openly license heathens, and Papists, and all blasphemers : for they will make a fair confession, till they have got their sealed toleration, and then preach contrary to that profession°. Two sorts we know this to be true by : 1. Papists, that are for equivocation, and mental reservation, in their

° I humbly propound it to the consideration of the sovereign rulers, whether it be not fit, that the testimonies of these two sorts of men, in any weighty case, against another be invalidate. And is it not a pitiful case that the lives of the godly people whom they hate, shall be at the mercy of any two of these wretches, that make no more of an oath, than of another word.

professions and oaths: or for the popes to dispense with them. 2. Heathens and infidels, that believe not that there is any sin, or devil, or hell, or heaven; and therefore care not what they swear. And indeed these are the two sects that now are up: and all other are likely to fall into these. Alas! by sad experience I speak it: those that will openly, and to my face make an orthodox confession, do secretly harden many poor souls, by making a scorn of Scripture, as a fable, and of the immortality of the soul, and of Christ and the Holy Ghost, and heaven, and hell, and say all these are nothing but the inventions of men; and that the knave-priests do persuade men that there are devils and hell, as a bugbear, to make them do what they would have them, and all religion is but deceit. Such heathens are the predominant sect in many places, and higher in England, than once I thought to have seen them. And if all such perfidious infidels and Jesuits shall have leave to blaspheme God, Christ and Scripture, because they once made an orthodox profession, then let hell be turned loose upon our people, and the devil that was bound up from deceiving the nations, have a toleration from the magistrate to do his worst.

Thus I have shewed that magistrates, if they will, may help the church without any danger of persecuting the truth, if they take not Popery, damnable heresy and heathenism for truth. 1. If the approvers keep the door of toleration, as well as of public maintenance and ministry. 2. If a church-justice, or civil agent, do keep the church's peace. 3. If the civil visiter do purposely take cognizance of the state of parishes, and see the laws put in execution. 4. If the commissioners for ejections, have power of judging all seducers, and blasphemers, as well as the public ministers. And if these only have the coercive power; but some able, chosen, godly ministers be joined with them for advice and exhortation: as magistrates and ministers sat together before the days of William the Conqueror.

“ If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” (John xiii. 17.) “ And the servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten much.” (Luke xii. 47.)

Finitur February 13, 1648.

POSTSCRIPT.

READER,

As great and needful a duty as this is, that I have here proposed, and commonly agreed on by all the parties before mentioned; I am yet far from expecting, that all men should acknowledge it and obey it; or that no person of contrary apprehensions or intentions, should rise up against it as an enemy, with all the strength that the measure of his wit and passions can prepare. We cannot speak for God himself, for Christ, for Scripture, for men's own salvation, but we meet with contradiction and resistance, even from them that we would save. And were it not for this, what blessed work would the Gospel make! and why might we not hope, that all our people should be saved? No wonder then, if whenever we attempt reformation or reconciliation, we meet with learned, reverend brethren that come against us, armed with plausible cavils and contempts, and cast away the medicine as dangerous, or ungrateful, and strenuously vindicate the disease that should be healed^p. And were it not that the church hath many, very many such, what should have kept us unhealed so long? and who could have continued our deformities and divisions, and frustrated such means as have been used for our cure? Satan is not so poor a politician, as to be without his agents in our ecclesiastic armies, and councils, and pulpits, to speak for his cause and to do his work, and resist and frustrate that which would displease him; and all this under pretence of enmity to Satan, and friendship to Christ, and a better doing of his work. As the names of the chief of Christ's servants, were not cast out as holy, but as evil, (Luke vi. 22,) so their doctrine was not cast out as truth, nor as saving, but as deceit. And his means will not be openly resisted, (at least by those that are building with us) as reforming or reconciling, but as groundless or unproved, or troublesome or unseasonable, or as suspected of some ill-design or event. Some will say, It is mere prelacy, or a prelatical design; and some that it is Independency,

^p Nunquam enim, ait Lutherus, periclitatur Ecclesia nisi inter Reverendissimos.

or an independent design; and some that it is but Presbyterian examination. Whereas they might know, that it is proper to none of them, which is common to them all. If it be Prelacy, how comes it to be found with Independents? If it be Independency, how comes it to be approved by Prelates and Presbyterians? Is it not rather like Christianity itself, and the truths and duties which we commonly own; and therefore not to be appropriated to any?

By all that I have heard and read of late, concerning this subject, I understand that the principal objections that are likely to be used against the doctrine of this treatise are these following:—

Object. ‘We were all baptized in our infancy, and therefore are church-members, and have right to the privileges of the adult, when we are adult, without any new title or condition: our first right continueth, though we never make profession of the Christian faith, nor personally renewed the covenant with God that we made in baptism. And therefore, though in some cases such an approved profession be a duty, yet is not any more necessary to our church-state, and right to the communion of the adult, than that we were born church-members, and so baptized. Nothing but heresy, schism, or apostacy can cut us off. And therefore all that were baptized, and are not thus ‘cut off’, are still church-members, and have right to all the ordinances in the church.’

Ans. I have said enough to this already to satisfy the considerate, impartial reader; proving the necessity of personal faith before God, and of some profession of it ‘ecclesia judice,’ before the church, to the being of the said title of the adult, as its condition; and that all Scripture examples do make for the confirmation of this truth. Moreover let me add, to answer the new, or foreseen assaults,

1. If there be no word of promise in the Scripture, that giveth the privilege of adult-communion to any, upon their infant title-condition only, nor any example in the Gospel, or the ancient church, that any possessed or used that privilege upon that title-condition only, then are we not to imagine that the infant title-condition alone, is sufficient to the said privilege: but the antecedent is true; as hath in part been manifested, and will be more, when the Dissenter shall bring forth his pretended evidences, by which his title should be proved.

2. The title-condition of infants is not sufficient to make any morally capable of the ends of the adult communion; therefore it is not sufficient to make them capable of a proper, plenary right to such communion. For the right and relation are for these ends; if a natural incapacity may consist with a plenary title, so cannot a moral. No man can really possess and exercise the communion of the adult intrinsically without faith, or extrinsically without profession of faith; therefore no man without faith, or profession of faith, can have a plenary right to that communion. For a man to have a plenary right to please God, and celebrate with the church the memorial of our redemption, and participate of the Redeemer, and his benefits, that believeth not in him, is a palpable absurdity.

3. If the mere title-condition of infants will serve 'in foro ecclesiæ,' for the adult, then it will serve also 'in foro Dei:' for the church looks but to the outward appearance, or visibility of that, whose reality and sincerity God expecteth. And it is God's covenant that giveth us our right; and therefore if the church find us to have true right, it must find us receiving it from God's covenant; and therefore find us the heirs of the promise. The reason why the church takes our birth-privileges for a sufficient title-condition, is because God is supposed so to take it. But that this will not serve the adult 'in foro Dei' is manifest; because God will not own such infidels, as neither have faith, nor a profession of it.

4. If the title-condition of infidels may serve them when adult, then is there no personal difference in acts, or qualities; no not so much as in profession, required on our parts, to distinguish Christians from infidels and atheists: (required I mean as necessary conditions :) but the consequent is absurd; therefore so is the antecedent. If no differencing character between actual believers and infidels or atheists, be made thus necessary, then the church and the infidel world, are laid together; and the body of Christ, and consequently Christ himself, is dishonoured and blasphemed, as common and unclean. But if any personal difference be necessary, it must be the personal profession of Christianity, or nothing less than this can be it. For our birth-privilege cannot be it. Atheists and infidels are born of Christian parents. Much of the Turkish army of janizaries have their birth-privileges to shew, as well as we. It is a probable argument;

‘ Such an infant is born of Christian parents ; therefore he will be an actual believer.’ But it is not a probable argument, ‘ Such a man at age, that professeth not Christianity, had Christian parents ; therefore he is a believer :’ much less, ‘ therefore he had a right to the benefits of the covenant, whether he be an actual believer or not.’ If Christians have no visible note, by which they must be known from infidels, then either the church is not visible, or infidels may be the visible church, without so much as disowning their infidelity.

5. If the title-condition of infants may suffice the adult for church-right and communion, then heretics and apostates have such right : but the consequent is denied by them that I now dispute with. They confess that heresy and some schism, and apostacy, do cut off from the church, and so from this right. But it is plain that such heretics and apostates have that which was their infant-condition : as they were the seed of believers in infancy, so they are since apostacy : they cease not to be the seed of believers, by their renouncing Christ. If this therefore would prove a right in silent infidels, it will prove a right in professed apostates.

Object. ‘ The apostates cast away their right ; and therefore have it not.’

Answ. 1. Either it dependeth on their own wills when they come to age, or not. If it do not, then they cannot cast it away. They may refuse to use their right, but they cannot cast it away, or nullify it ; for they cannot make themselves not to be the children of Christian parents. The foundation stands whether they will or no : and therefore so must the relation. But if the relation or right do now depend upon their own wills, then our cause is granted ; for from their wills then, must the condition or evidence be fetched. 2. Yea, such persons, ordinarily as we have now in question, are actual apostates, and are so to be taken by the church ; and therefore not to be taken as church-members, having right to sacraments. He that being engaged to God the Father, S^{on}, and Holy Ghost, in his infancy, doth make no profession of actual faith at full age, is ordinarily to be taken for an apostate ; but such are the persons in question. I say ordinarily, because I except them that have been cast upon natural impossibilities or impotency, or wanted a call and opportunity : that is, all persons that prove idiots, or deaf and dumb, or otherwise destitute of natural capacity ; such

come not to the use of reason and freewill, and therefore are not bound to actual belief. Such also as have their tongues cut out, are separated from human society, or otherwise disabled from profession. But for the common case of mankind: (1.) It is plain that they have their tongues given them by nature to express their minds. And (2.) That Christ commandeth confession with the tongue, and professing him before men. (3.) That much of his worship lieth in holy profession, and all of it containeth answerable confession. (4.) That we have constant calls from God, even to profess our Christianity: the godly and the wicked that live among us call us to it: we have daily invitations to profess our Christianity one way or other. And among all these occasions of profession, he that professeth not, is to be taken for an infidel and apostate. For the business is so exceeding great and weighty, and the object so glorious, and the duty so incumbent, and the very life of Christianity so inconsistent with a non-profession, that we have just reason to conclude, that he that professeth not himself a Christian, ordinarily is to be taken for none by the church.

Object. 'But though at the first admitting of a foreigner into a commonwealth, you require an oath of fidelity, or profession of subjection, yet when we are born subjects, we must be supposed to continue such, till we rebel, and so declare the contrary; and our fidelity is not to be questioned.'

Ans. 1. The case doth exceedingly differ from ours in hand. Princes vary their commands as their affairs require. If you are born in the midst of a peaceable republic, you may perhaps have no oath of fidelity imposed, because the peace of the commonwealth requireth it not: for while there is no enemy near you, to solicit you to rebellion or treason, or with whom you may conjoin, it is supposed, that you have either no mind, or no power to it. And it is only the common peace that is concerned in the cause. But our case is otherwise: for we live among devils and wicked men, and are known to have hearts ourselves, that are naturally treacherous, and at enmity to God. So that we are still among enemies, that would seduce us, and with whom we are inclined to take part. And besides that, our profession is not only necessary to the common safety, but to our personal performances, and daily communion with the saints, and worship of God. 2. If it be in a garrison that is near the

enemy, or in a country that is inclined to rebellion, or where rebellion is on foot, and the enemy hath a party, there princes use to cause all their subjects to take an oath of fidelity; and ordinarily also in peaceable kingdoms this is practised. At such an age all persons are to take an oath of allegiance, or fidelity, or to make profession of their subjection, in many places; and in other places they do it, before they enter upon any office. And if you will come nearer the case, and suppose that men were born in a school, or an army, as well as a republic, I think you would yield, that when they come to age, it is necessary that they have more than their birth-privilege to shew, to prove them scholars or soldiers. We are Christ's disciples and soldiers, as well as his subjects; and one is as essential to our Christianity as the other. We may be initiated into his school and army in our infancy, and so stand related to him; but surely we are apostates, if when we come to age, we have nothing to shew but our infant-condition; and to more we must be called.

3. The case also differeth in this; princes do make known to all in their laws, that no man that is an enemy, yea, or that is not 'pro tempore' a subject, shall dwell on their soil, among their subjects; they suffer not subjects and enemies to live promiscuously together in their dominions; and therefore it is supposed that a man's very abode and residence in their land, is a profession of subjection; much more when they live in obedience to the laws, and hold their estates by them. But Christ dealeth not thus: he suffereth believers and infidels to live together, and his flock to be but little in the world; so that it cannot be the least presumption, that a man is a Christian, because he liveth among Christians.

4. At least let us not teach Christ, what he should have done, when we find he hath done otherwise; we find that he requireth personal faith and profession of all at age, that are naturally capable; and therefore we must perform it, and not give reasons why we should not do it. No good subject that is called to profess his fidelity will refuse, and say, you have no reason to question me, and put such a trial or obligation upon me.

So that I may conclude, that an adult person not professing Christianity is not a visible Christian, notwithstanding his birth-privileges; and therefore not a visible church-member; and therefore an apostate, seeing he was once en-

gaged in covenant to Christ, (though not an apostate from actual faith), and therefore such as hath no proper right to church-communion and privileges.

Object. 'If his infant-title be cut off, it is either by ignorance, wickedness, heresy, schism, or apostacy: but ignorance and wickedness do not cut him off; and heresy, schism, or apostacy, he is not guilty of; therefore, &c.'

Answ. 1. His infant-title will cease of itself without any other cutting off, if it be not continued by his personal actual believing, when he comes to capable age. His birth-privileges alone, or his parents' dedicating him to God in baptism, will serve no longer of itself. It is therefore for want of personal faith, 'coram Deo,' and of the profession of faith, 'coram ecclesia,' that his right doth cease.

2. Ignorance, where it proveth infidelity, must needs prove a cessation of the infant-title, when they come to a capable age, and ignorance is privative. He that knoweth not that there is a God, a Christ, or what he hath done for us, or what a Christian is, can have no faith in God, or Christ; and therefore is an atheist, and an infidel privatively, if at a capable age, among means at least. It is not only he that denieth Christ, that is an infidel, but he that never heard of him, negatively at least; and he that having heard of him, understood not what he heard, and therefore believeth not in him, because he knoweth not. And it is not only he that denieth God, that is an atheist, but he that knoweth not that there is a God. And therefore if ignorance cut not off, then infidelity and atheism cut not off. And if neither of these cut off, then no particular heresy can; nor any such apostacy, as men are capable of, that had but an infant church-state: gross ignorance at a capable age, proveth gross ungodliness and apostacy. For if men's hearts had been towards God, they would have sought to know him, and if they know him not, their hearts are atheistical, and without him.

3. Wickedness is either such as may consist with habitual adhering to God in Christ; or such as shews a separation or renunciation; the one being ungodliness partial, and 'quoad actum particularem,' (as Peter's denial) and the other being ungodliness 'quoad statum.' He that saith the former cutteth not off from the church, will scarcely say, that it doth not meritoriously suspend the offender from the

communion of the church, till he appear penitent. And he that saith the latter cuts not off, from the church meritoriously, must say that nothing doth it; for this is apostacy, and comprehendeth the greatest heresy. Such heretics hold that the pleasure of sin for a season, is to be chosen before a life of holiness, with the hopes of everlasting life; and the flesh to be pleased before the Lord: and I think this is heresy. But whether these be cut off from the church or not, either they bring the person under the guilt of excommunication, or else there is no excommunication to be used. And if they be excommunicated, we shall not much contend with you about their rights. As long as you grant that they have no such right as that they may have the use of church-communion, we are satisfied. And yet I must say, that it is a blind conclusion, that the excommunicate are church-members, without distinguishing of excommunication. If a man shall openly declare that he believeth not in Jesus Christ that died at Jerusalem, nor that there is any life to come; but yet he believeth in a Christ within him, and a heaven and hell within men (as the Ranters, Familists, &c. did); and yet this man, that he may pervert the souls of others, will hold communion with the church, and declare, that he takes the Scripture in his sense, I doubt not but this man, though a professed infidel and apostate, is yet to be excommunicated, while he pretendeth to communion; and if this excommunicate man be not of the Catholic Church, then no man is out of it, and you may next question whether the devil be not a member, that believeth much more than he.

But when I say that infidelity, impiety, heresy, do cut off or cast out, I mean it but meritoriously. Either these crimes are private and unknown, or proveable. If not proveable, then they merit this, and more ‘*coram Deo*,’ but not ‘*ecclesia judice*,’ that is, though there be guilt or demerit, yet we are no capable judges of it. But if the crime be proveable, then it is either such, as needs a judgment or not. If it need a judgment, the person is only ‘*de jure*’ cast out before the sentence, (which is ‘*terminus diminuens*,’ and is not actual casting out,) and he is actually cast out by the sentence, and the execution: so that his sin cast him out meritoriously, the law obligatorily, the pastors of the church sententially, and the whole church, pastors and people, executively in avoiding him. But if there need no