

for myself, but I consent that thou should work them on me. As thou art the Agent and Advocate of Jesus, my Lord, O plead his cause effectually in my soul against the suggestions of Satan and my unbelief, and finish his healing, saving work, and let not the flesh or world prevail. Be in me the resident witness of my Lord, the author of my prayers, the spirit of adoption, the seal of God, and the earnest of mine inheritance. Let not my nights be so long, and my days so short, nor sin eclipse those beams which have often illuminated my soul. Without thee books are senseless scrawls, studies are dreams, learning is a glow-worm, and wit is but wantonness, impertinency, and folly. Transcribe those sacred precepts on my heart, which, by thy dictates and inspirations, are recorded in thy holy word. I refuse not thy help for tears and groans; but O, shed abroad that love upon my heart, which may keep it in a continual life of love: and teach me the work which I must do in heaven. Refresh my soul with the delights of holiness, and the joys which arise from the believing hopes of the everlasting joys. Exercise my heart and tongue in the holy praise of my Lord. Strengthen me in sufferings, and conquer the terrors of death and hell. Make me the more heavenly, by how much the faster I am hastening to heaven; and let my last thoughts, words, and works, on earth be likest to those which shall be my first in the state of glorious immortality, where the kingdom is delivered up to the Father, and God will for ever be all, and in all: of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

CHAP. XIII.

Consectaries.—I. *What Party of Christians should we join with, or be of, seeing they are divided into so many Sects.*^o

I SHALL briefly despatch the answer of this question in these following propositions:

Sect. 1. Godliness and Christianity is our only religion; and if any party have any other, we must renounce it.^p

Sect. 2. The church of Christ being his body, is but one, and

^o Vid. Pet. Damian. Dom. vobisc. c. 6. de Unit. Eccles.

^p Psalm i.; Matt. xvii. 19; Acts xi. 26.

hath many parts, but should have no parties, but unity and concord without division.^q

Sect. 3. Therefore no Christian must be of a party or sect, as such, that is, as dividing itself from the rest, causing schism or contention in the body, or making a rent unnecessarily in any particular church, which is a part.^r

Sect. 4. But when parties and sects do trouble the church, we must still hold to our mere Christianity, and desire to be called by no other name than Christian, with the epithets of sincerity; and if men will put the name of a party or sect upon us for holding to Christianity only, against all corrupting sects, we must hold on our way, and bear their obloquy.^s

Sect. 5. What Christianity is, may be known, 1. Most summarily in the baptismal covenant, in which we are by solemnization made Christians, in which, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil, we give up ourselves devotedly to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. 2. By the ancient summary rules of faith, hope, and charity, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Decalogue. 3. Integrally in the sacred Scriptures, which are the records of the doctrine of Christ, and the Holy Spirit.^t

Sect. 6. But there are many circumstances of religious worship, which Scripture doth not particularly determine of, but only give general rules for the determination of them, as what chapter shall be read, what text preached on, what translation used, what metre or tune of psalms, what time, what place, what seat or pulpit, or cup or other utensils, what vesture, gesture, &c.: whether we shall use notes for memory in preaching; what method we shall preach in; whether we shall pray in the same words often, or in various; with a book, or without, with many others. In all which the people must have an obediential respect to the conduct of the lawful pastors of the churches.^u

Sect. 7. Differing opinions, or practices, about things indifferent, no, nor about the mere integrals of religion, which are not essentials, do not make men of different religions or churches (universally considered).^x

^q 1 Cor. xii; Eph. iv. 3, 4, 14.

^r 1 Cor. i. 10; Acts xx. 30; Rom. xvi. 17.

^s 1 Cor. iii. 3—5; Acts xxiv. 14, and xxviii. 22.

^t Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 16; Heb. vi. 1—3.

^u 1 Cor. xiv. 26, 30.

^x Rom. xiv. and xv., Gal. ii. 13—15; Phil. iii. 16, 17.

Sect. 8. Nothing will warrant us to separate from a church as no church, but the want of something essential to a church.

Sect. 9. The essential or constitutive parts of the church catholic, or universal, are Christ the Head, and all Christians as the members.^y

Sect. 10. All sincere and sanctified Christians are the members of the church mystical, invisible, or regenerate: and all professors of sincere Christianity, that is, all baptised persons, not apostatised nor excommunicate, are the members of the church visible, which is integrated of the particular churches.

Sect. 11. It is essential to particular political churches, that they be constituted of true bishops or pastors, and of flocks of baptised or professed Christians, united in these relations for holy communion in the worshipping of God, and the promoting of the salvation of the several members.^z

Sect. 12. It is essential to a true bishop or pastor of the church to be in office, (that is, in authority and obligation,) appointed by Christ in subordination to him in the three parts of his offices, prophetic, priestly, and kingly; that is, to teach the people, to stand between them and God in worship, and to guide, or govern them, by the paternal exercise of the keys of his church.^a

Sect. 13. He that doth not nullify, or unchurch a church, may lawfully remove from one church to another, and make choice of the best and purest, or that which is most suited to his own edification, if he be a freeman.

Sect. 14. But in case of such choice, or personal removal, the interest of the whole church, or of religion in common, must be first taken into consideration, by him that would rightly judge of the lawfulness of the fact.^b

Sect. 15. If a church which, in all other respects, is purest and best, will impose any sin upon all that will have local communion with it, though we must not separate from that church as no church, yet must we not commit that sin, but patiently suffer them to exclude us from their communion.^c

^y Eph. i. 22; iv. 12, 15, and v. 23; Col. i. 18, and ii. 19; 1 Cor. v. and xii. 27; Matt. xxviii. 19.

^z Acts xiv. 23; Phil. i. 1; Eph. iv. 11, 12; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

^a Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, and xviii. 15, 18; 1 Thess. v. 12; Heb. xiii. 17; James v. 14; Acts ii. 42; viii. 1, and xx. 36.

^b Rom. ix. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26.

^c Rom. iii. 8.

Sect. 16. True heresy, (that is, an error contradictory to an essential article of the christian faith,) if it be seriously and really held, so that the contrary truth is not held seriously and really, doth nullify the Christianity of him that holdeth it, and the church-state of that congregation which so professeth it. But so doth not that fundamental error which is held but in words through ignorance, thinking it may consist with the contrary truth, while that truth is not denied, but held, *majore fide*; so that we have reason to believe, that if they did discern the contradiction, they would rather forsake the error than the truth.^d

But of this more elsewhere.

CHAP. XIV.

Consectary II.—Of the true Interest of Christ, and his Church, and the Souls of Men: of the Means to promote it, and its Enemies and Impediments in the World.

So great and common is the enmity against Christianity in the world, yea, against the life and reality of it in all the hypocrites of the visible church, that the guilty will not bear the detection of their guilt; and therefore the reader must excuse me for passing over the one-half of that which should be said upon this subject, because they that need it cannot suffer it.^e

Sect. 1. Every true Christian preferreth the interest of Christ and of religion, before all worldly interest of his own, or any others.^f

For he that setteth himself or any thing above his God, hath indeed no God; for if he be not *Maximus, Sapientissimus, Optimus*, Greatest, Wisest, and Best, he is not God; and if

^d Tit. iii. 10; 2 John x. and xii. 16; Heb. v. 11, 12; 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2, &c.; Luke xviii. 34; Gal. v. 2, and i. 7—9, and iii. 1, 2. In isto factiosissimo sæculo, vix quisquam eximie doctas hæreseos suspicione carebat.—*Erasm. in Vita Hieronym.* Et profecto ita est, ut id habendum sit antiquissimum et Deo proximum, quod sit optimum.—*Cic. de Leg.* lib. 2. p. 244.

^e I entreat the reader to peruse the Lord Bacon's 'Considerations,' and Mr. Hales' 'Of Schism,' and Mr. Stillingfleet's 'Irenicon,' especially p. 117, and Mr. Jer. Borough's 'Irenicon,' which will all much promote his understanding in this point; and Grotius 'De Imper. Sum. Pot.'

^f Luke xiv. 26, 29, 33.

he be not really taken as such, he is not taken for their God ; and he that hath no God hath no religion ; and he that hath no religion is no Christian ; and if he call himself a Christian, he is an hypocrite.

Sect. 2. Though we must prefer the interest of Christ and the church above the interest of our souls, yet must we never set them in competition or opposition ; but in a due conjunction, though not in an equality. [§]

I add this, to warn men of some common, dangerous errors, in this point ; some think that if they do but feel themselves more moved with another minister's preaching, or more edified with another way of discipline, they may presently withdraw themselves to that minister or discipline, without regard to the unity and good of the church where they are, or whatever public evil follow it : whereas, he that seemeth to deny even to his soul some present edification for the public good, shall find that even this will turn to his greater edification.

And some, on the contrary extreme, have got a conceit, that till they can find that they can be content to be damned for Christ, if God would so have it, they are not sincere : which is a case that no Christian should put to his own heart, being such as God never put to any man : all the trial that God putteth us to is but whether we can deny this transitory life, and the vanities of the world, and the pleasures of the flesh, for the love of God, and the hopes of glory ; and he that doth thus much, shall undoubtedly be saved. But to think you must ask your hearts such a question, as whether you can be content to be damned for Christ, is but to abuse God and yourselves. Indeed, both reason and religion command us to esteem God infinitely above ourselves, and the church's welfare above our own ; because that which is best must be best esteemed and loved. But yet, though we must ever acknowledge this inequality, yet that we must never disjoin them, nor set them in a positive opposition or competition, nor really do any thing which tendeth to our damnation, upon any pretence of the church's good, is past all question. He that hath made the love of ourselves and felicity inseparable from man, hath made us no duty inconsistent with this inclination ; that is, with our humanity itself ; for God hath conjoined these necessary ends, and we must not separate them.

[§] Rom. ix. 3, and xv. 7 ; 1 Cor. x. 31 ; Eph. i. 12, 14.

Sect. 3. The interest of the church is but the interest of the souls that constitute the church; and to prefer it above our own, is but to prefer many above one.^h

Sect. 4. He that doth most for the public good, and the souls of many, doth thereby most effectually promote his own consolation and salvation.

Sect. 5. The interest of God is the ultimate end of religion, church, and particular souls.ⁱ

Sect. 6. God's interest is not any addition to his perfection or blessedness; but the pleasing of his will, in the glory of his power, wisdom, and goodness, shining forth in Jesus Christ, and in his church.^k

Sect. 7. Therefore, to promote God's interest, is by promoting the church's interest.

Sect. 8. The interest of the church consisteth, 1. *Intensivè*, in its holiness. 2. *Conjunctivè* and *harmonicè*, in its unity, concord, and order. 3. *Extensivè*, in its increase, and the multiplication of believers.

Sect. 9. I. The holiness of the church consisteth, 1. In its resignation and submission to God, its Owner. 2. In its subjection and obedience to God, its Ruler. 3. In its gratitude and love to God, its Benefactor and ultimate End.^l

Sect. 10. These acts consist, 1. In a right estimation and belief of the mind. 2. In a right volition, choice, and resolution of the will. 3. In the right ordering of the life.^m

Sect. 11. The means of the church's holiness are these: 1. Holy doctrine; because, as all holiness entereth by the understanding, so truth is the instrumental cause of all.

Sect. 12. II. The holy, serious, reverent, skilful, and diligent preaching of this doctrine, by due explication, proof, and application, suitably to the various auditors.

Sect. 13. III. The holy lives and private converse of the pastors of the church.ⁿ

Sect. 14. IV. Holy discipline faithfully administered; encouraging all that are godly, and comforting the penitent, and

^h Eph. iv. 11—16; Col. i. 24; 1 Tim. iv. 16, and iv. 7, 8.

ⁱ Rom. xi. 36; Prov. xvi. 4; 1 Cor. x. 31.

^k Eph. iii. 10, 21, and v. 27, 29; 1 Thess. i. 10, 11; John xxi. 15—17; Matt. xxv.

^l Eph. v. 25, 26; Tit. ii. 19; 1 Peter ii. 9, 10, and i. 3, 6, 8, 14—16, 22.

^m Acts xxvi. 18; Eph. i. 18; Matt. xxviii. 19; Heb. v. 9.

ⁿ Matt. xxviii. 20; Gal. i. 7; 2 Tim. i. 13; Acts xx. 20, &c.; 1 Tim. iv. 2; 1 Tim. v. 17.

humbling the proud, and disgracing open sin, and casting out the proved impenitent, gross sinners; that they infect not the rest, embolden not the wicked, and dishonour not the church in the eyes of the unbelievers.^o

Sect. 15. V. The election and ordination of able and holy pastors, fit for this work.

Sect. 16. VI. The conjunct endeavours of the wisest and most experienced members of the flock, not usurping any ecclesiastical office; but by their wisdom, and authority, and example, in their private capacities, seconding the labours of the pastors, and not leaving all to be done by them alone.

Sect. 17. VII. Especially the holy instructing and governing of families, by catechising inferiors, and exhorting them to the due care of their souls, and helping them to understand and remember the public teaching of the pastors, and praying and praising God with them, and reading the Scripture and holy books, especially on the Lord's day; and labouring to reform their lives.

Sect. 18. VIII. The blameless lives, and holy conference, converse, and example, of the members of the church among themselves. Holiness begetteth holiness, and increaseth it, as fire kindleth fire.^p

Sect. 19. IX. The unity, concord, and love of Christians to one another.

Sect. 20. X. And, lastly, holy princes and magistrates, to encourage piety, and to protect the church, and to be a terror to evil doers. These are the means of holiness.

Sect. 21. The contraries of all these may easily be discerned to be the destroyers of holiness, and pernicious to the church.

1. Unholy doctrine: 2. Ignorant, unskilful, negligent, cold, or envious preaching: 3. The unholy lives of them that preach it: 4. Discipline neglected, or perverted, to the encouraging of the

^o Acts xx. 1; Tim. i. 6, 18, 19; iii. 2, and iv. 12; 1 Cor. v.; Matt. xviii. 15; 2 Thess. iii.; Rom. xvi. 16, 17; 1 Tim. v. 20; Acts xx.; 2 Tim. ii. 15, 21, and 2 Tim. iii. 2, 3; John viii.; Acts xviii. 26; Rom. xvi. 3; 1 Tim. vi. 18; Tit. iii. 8.

^p 1 Tim. iii. 5; Eph. vi. 4; Deut. vi. 6—8, and xi. 18, 19; Acts x. 2, 24; 1 Pet. iii. 2; Phil. ii. 15; 2 Pet. iii. 14; Tit. ii. 5; 1 Tim. vi. 1; Rom. ii. 24; John xvii. 21; 1 Cor. i. 10; Isa. xxxii. 1; lii. 5, and xlix. 23; Hos. viii. 4, 5; Psalm ii.; Dan. ix. 6, 8; Rom. xiii. 3, 5, 6; 2 Pet. ii.; Gal. i. 7, 8; 1 Tim. iii. 6; v. 22; iv. 15, 16, and vi. 4, 5; 1 Cor. v.; 1 Tim. iii. 7; Mark ix. 38, 39; Phil. i. 15; James iii. 1, 15, 17; 1 Sam. ii.; Acts xx. 30, 31; Rom. xvi. 16, 17; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; 2 Chron. xxvi. 14, 15; Ezek. xxii. 27; Hos. ix. 15, and vii. 3; Zeph. iii. 3; 1 Cor. ii. 6, 8.

ungodly, and afflicting of the most holy and upright of the flocks: 5. The election or ordination of insufficient, negligent, or ungodly pastors: 6. The negligence of the wisest of the flock, or the restraint of them by the spirit of jealousy and envy, from doing their private parts in assistance of the pastors. 7. The neglect of holy instructing, and governing of families; and the lewd example of the governors of them: 8. The scandalous or barren lives of Christians: 9. The divisions and discord of Christians themselves: 10. And bad magistrates, who give an ill example, or afflict the godly, or encourage vice, or, at least, suppress it not.

Sect. 22. To these may be added, 1. The degenerating of religious strictness, from what God requireth, into another thing, by human corruptions, gradually introduced; as is seen among too many friars, as well as in the pharisees of old. 2. A degenerating of holy institutions of Christ, into another thing, by the like gradual corruptions, as is seen in the Roman sacrifice of the mass. 3. The degenerating of church offices by the like corruptions, as is seen in the papacy, and its manifold supporters. 4. The diversion of the pastors of the church to secular employments. 5. The diminishing the number of the pastors of the church, as proportioned to the number of souls: as if one school-master alone should have ten thousand scholars; or ten thousand soldiers but one or two officers. 6. The pretending of the soul and power of religion, to destroy the body, or external part: or making use of the body, or external part, to destroy the soul and power; and setting things in opposition which are conjunct. 7. The preferring either the imposition or opposition of things indifferent, before things necessary. 8. An apish imitation of Christ by Satan and his instruments, by counterfeiting inspirations, revelations, visions, prophecies, miracles, apparitions, sanctity, zeal, and new institutions in the church. 9. An overdoing, or being righteous over-much, by doing more than God would have us (over-doing being one of the devil's ways of undoing). When Satan pretendeth to be a saint, he will be more strict than Christ, as the pharisees were in their company, Sabbath-rest and ceremonies: and he will be zealous with a fiery, consuming zeal. 10. Accidentally, prosperity itself consumeth piety in the church; if it occasion the perdition of the world, the church is not out of danger of it.^a

^a Matt. xv. 2, 3, 9, 11, 13; Col. ii. 20—22; Mark ii. 26; Luke vi. 2, and xiii. 14, 15; John v. 18; xi. 49, and xviii. 13; Acts iv. 6, and xxiii. 2;

Sect. 23. II. The unity, and concord, and harmony of the church consisteth, 1. In their universal adoption, or one relation to God, as their reconciled Father in Christ: 2. In the one relation they have all to Christ their Head: 3. In the unity of the Spirit, which dwelleth and worketh in them all: 4. In their one relation to the body or church of Christ, as its members: 5. In the unity of that faith which stateth them in these relations: 6. In the unity of the baptismal covenant, which initiateth them: 7. In the unity of the Gospel (in the essentials), which is the common rule of their faith and life, and the ground of their hope and comfort: 8. In the bond of mutual, brotherly love: 9. In the concord of a holy life: 10. In the unity of the end which they all intend, and shall at last attain, the pleasing of God, and the heavenly glory.^r

Sect. 24. The means of this unity and concord are, 1. All, as aforesaid, which promote their holiness. From holiness is the centring of all hearts in God: and it destroyeth that dividing selfishness, which maketh men have as many ends as they are persons. 2. The learning and ability of the pastors, to hold the flocks together by the force of truth, and to stop the mouths of cavilling dividers and seducers: when no gainsayers are able to stand before the evidence of that truth which they demonstrate. 3. The holy lives of pastors, which keep up the love of truth and them in the people's hearts. 4. By the paternal government of the pastors, ruling them, not by force, but willingly, and in fatherly love, and a loving, familiar converse with them. 5. By the just execution of discipline on the impenitent, that the godly may see that wickedness is disowned. 6. By the concord of the pastors among themselves; and the prudent use of synods or councils to that end. 7. By the humble and submissive respect of the people to their pastors. 8. By keeping up the interest and authority of the most ancient and experienced of the flock, over the young and inexperienced, who are the common causes of division. 9. By the pastors' avoiding

2 Tim. ii. 4—6, 12, and 1 Tim. iv. 15; Matt. ix. 37, 38; 1 Cor. iii. 9; Acts xiv. 23; Tit. i. 3; 1 Cor. xiv. 26; xv. 16, xxxi. 33—35; Matt. xv. 9, 13; Rom. xiv. and xv.; Acts xv. 28; 1 John iv. 1; 2 Thess. ii. 2; 1 Kings xxii. 22, 23; 2 Cor. xi. 14, 15; Matt. xxiv. 24; xv. 2; xi. 13, and xii. 2; Luke xiii. 14, 15; John iv. 16; Luke ix. 54; Acts xi. 36, and xxii. 22; Rom. x. 2; Prov. i. 32; James v. 5, 6.

^r Eph. iv. 1—4, &c.; Rom. viii. 17; Eph. i. 22; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13; Eph. iv. 15, 16; Rom. viii. 9, and x. 8, 15, 17; Gal. i. 6—8; Phil. i. 17, 27; 1 Thess. iv. 9; 1 Pet. i. 22; Eph. iii. 17, and iv. 16; Heb. x. 24; 1 Cor. i. 10; 1 John iii. 22; 1 Thess. ii. 4.

all temptations to worldliness and pride, that they tear not the church, by striving who shall be the greatest, or have the pre-eminence. 10. By godly magistrates keeping their power in their own hand, and using it to rebuke intolerable, false teachers, and to encourage the peaceable, and restrain the railing and violence of pastors and parties against each other; and by impartial keeping the church's peace.^s

Sect. 25. Hence the causes of church divisions are discernible. 1. The increase of ungodliness and sin, which is as fire in the thatch, and possesseth all men with dividing principles, practices, and ends. 2. The disability of pastors overtopped in parts by every sectary. 3. The ungodliness of the pastors, which looseth the hearts of the people from them. 4. The strangeness, violence, or hurtfulness of the pastors. 5. The encouragement and toleration of all the most flagitious and impenitent, in undisciplined churches, which frighteneth men out of the church as from a ruinous house, and tempteth them to an unwarrantable separation, because the pastors will not make a necessary and regular separation. 6. The discord of the bishops among themselves. 7. The people's ignorance of the pastoral power and their own duty. 8. An unruly, fierce, censorious spirit in many of the young and inexperienced of the flock. 9. The pastors striving who shall be the greatest, and seeking great things in the world, or popular applause and admiration. 10. The magistrates either permitting the endeavours of dividing teachers in palpable cases, or suffering self-seeking pastors or people to disturb the church.^t

Sect. 26. But next to common ungodliness, the great causes of the most ruining church divisions are, 1. Wars and dissensions among princes and states, and civil factions in kingdoms, whereby the clergy are drawn or forced to engage themselves on one side or other; and then the prevailing side stigmatizeth those as scandalous who were not for them, and think themselves engaged by their interest to extirpate them. 2. Mistaking the

^s Phil. ii. 4, 21; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; Tit. iii. 5; Eph. iv. 3—5, 14—16; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; Tit. i. 9, 11; Luke xxi. 1, 5; 1 Tim. iii. 4—6; 1 Pet. v. 2, 3; Acts xx. 20, &c.; 2 Cor. i. 24; 1 Tim. v.; 1 Tit. iii. 10; 1 Cor. v.; John xvii. 21, 23; Acts xv.; Heb. xiii. 7, 17; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; 1 Pet. v. 5; Luke xxii. 24, 26, 27; 1 Pet. v. 2, 3; 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7, 11.

^t 1 Kings xv. 13, 29; 2 Kings x. 17, 28; Rom. xiii. 3—6; 2 Chron. xxviii. 23; Ezek. xviii. 30; Numb. xxxii. 23; 1 Tim. iii. 6; Eph. iv. 14; 3 John 9, 10; 1 Kings xxii. 24, 25; 1 Cor. i. 11, and iii. 3, 4; 1 Cor. v. 5, 12, &c.; Tit. i. 10; 1 Thess. v. 12, 14; 3 John 9. Non qui jussus aliquid facit, miser est; sed qui invitus.—*Senec. Ep. 62.* Nullum violentum est perpetuum.

just terms of union and communion, and setting up a false centre as that which all men must unite in. Thus have the Roman party divided themselves from the Greeks and protestants, and made the greatest schism in the church that ever was made in it. 1. By setting up a false, usurping, constitutive head, the Roman bishop; and pretending that none are members of the church who are not his subjects; and so condemning the far greatest part of the catholic church. 2. By imposing an oath, and divers gross corruptions in doctrine, discipline, and worship, upon all that will be in their communion, and condemning those that receive them not, and so departing from the Scripture sufficiency. These two usurpations are the grand dividers.^u

Sect. 27. All heretics, also, who speak perverse things against Christianity, to draw away disciples after them; or schismatics, who unwarrantably separate from those churches in which they ought to abide, that they may gather new congregations after their own mind, are the immediate adversaries of church union and concord.^x

Sect. 28. So are the importune and virulent disputations of contentious wits, about unnecessary things, or matters of faction and self-interest.

Sect. 29. Especially when the magistrate lendeth his sword to one party of the contenders, to suppress or be revenged on the rest, and to dispute with arguments of steel.

Sect. 30. The well-ordered councils of bishops or pastors of several churches assembled together, have been justly esteemed a convenient means of maintaining the concord and peace of Christians, and a fit remedy for the cure of heresies, corruptions, and divisions.^y And when the cause requireth it, those councils should consist of as many as can conveniently meet, even from the most distant churches, which can send their bishops, without incurring greater hurt or discommodity than their presence will

^u Jam. iv. 1, 2; Phil. ii. 4, 21; 1 Kings xii. 31, 32, and xxii. 27; Rev. xiii. 16, 17; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 28; Eph. iv. 7, 8, 13, 16; 3 John 9; Matt. xv. 2, 3; 1 Tim. iii. 3.

^x Acts xx. 30, 31; Rom. xvi. 17; 1 Tim. i. 19; Eph. iv. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17, 23—25; Rom. xiv.; 1 Tim. vi. 3—5, and i. 3—7; Luke xxii. 24; 1 Kings xxii. 27; Gal. v. 15.

^y Acts xv. Surely there is no better way to stop the rising of new sects and schisms, than to reform abuses, to compound the smaller differences, to proceed mildly, and not with sanguinary persecutions; and rather to take off the principal authors by winning and advancing them, than to enrage them by violence and bitterness.—*Lord Verulam's Essay* 52.

countervail in doing good; and, therefore, the councils, called general, in the dominions of the christian Roman emperors, were commendable, and very profitable to the church, when rightly used. But, whereas, the pope doth argue that he is the constitutive head of the whole catholic church throughout the world, because his predecessors did often preside in those councils, it is most evident to any one who will make a faithful search into the history of them, that those councils were so far from representing all the churches in the world, that they were constituted only of the churches or subjects of the Roman empire, and those that, having formerly been parts of the empire, continued that way of communion when they fell into the hands of conquerors, their conquerors being commonly pagans, infidels, or Arian heretics. I except only now and then two or three, or an inconsiderable number of neighbour bishops. There were none of the representatives of the churches in all the other parts of the world, as I have proved in my 'Disputation' with Mr. Johnson: and desire the reader, who thinketh that his 'Reply' doth need any confutation, but to peruse Ortelius, or any true map of the Roman empire; and Myræus, or any *Notitia Episcopatum*, and withal the names of the bishops in each council; and then let him ask his conscience whether those councils were true or equal representatives of all the christian world, or only of the subjects or churches of one empire, with a few inconsiderable, accidental auxiliaries: and if he smile not at Mr. Johnson's instances of the bishops of Thrace, and other such countries, as if they had been out of the verge of the Roman empire, at least he shall excuse me from confuting such replies.

And since then Christ hath enlarged his church to many more nations, and remote parts of the world, and we are not hopeless that the Gospel may yet be preached to the remotest parts of the earth, and an equal, just representative may become more impossible than it now is. Yet now such proper universal councils are so far from being the constitutive, visible head of the church, or, the pope as there presiding, or any necessary means of its unity and peace, that, *rebus sic stantibus*, they are morally impossible. For, 1. Their distance is so great from Abassia, Egypt, Armenia, Syria, Mexico, New England, and other parts, to those of Muscovy, Sweden, Norway, &c., that it will be unlawful and impossible to undertake such journies, and

deprive the church of the labours of the pastors so long on this account. 2. It cannot be expected that many live to perform the journey and return. 3. The princes, in whose countries they live, or through whose dominions they must pass, are many of them infidels and will not suffer it, and many still in wars, and most of them full of state jealousies. 4. When they come together, the number of just representatives which may be proportioned to the several parts of the church, and may be more than a mockery or faction, will be so great that they will not be capable of just debates, such as the great matters of religion do require: or, if they be, it will be so long as will frustrate the work, and waste their age, before they can return, when usually the cause which required their congregation will bear no such delays. 5. They cannot all speak to the understanding of the council in one and the same language, for all the commonness of Greek and Latin, God hath neither promised that all bishops shall be able to converse in one tongue, nor actually performed it. 6. Such a council never was in any christian emperor's time; for they neither could nor did summon all the just representatives of the churches in other princes' dominions, but only those in their own.

Sect. 31. The predominancy of selfishness and self-interest in all hypocrites, who are but Christians in name, and not by true regeneration, and the great numbers of such hypocrites in the visible church, is the summary of all the great causes of divisions, and the prognostics of their continuance.^z

Sect. 32. Unity and harmony will be imperfect, whilst true holiness is so rare and imperfect; and to expect the contrary, and so to drive on an ill-grounded, unholy unity, is a great cause of the division and distraction of the churches.^a

Sect. 33. When differing opinions cause discord betwixt several churches, the means of christian concord is, not an agreement in every opinion, but to send to each other a profession of the true christian faith, subscribed, with a renunciation of all that is contrary thereto; and to require christian love and communion on these terms, with a mutual patience and pardon of each other's infirmities.^b

Sect. 34. No Christian must pretend holiness against unity

^z Isa. ix. 17; Phil. ii. 21; Acts viii. 18, 20; 1 Tim. vi. 10; 1 John ii. 15; Gal. v. 11, and vi. 12—14.

^a Luke xxii. 24; Acts xv. 39; Gal. ii. 12—15.

^b Phil. iii. 15, 16; Rom. xiv. and xv.; 1 Peter iii. 15.

and peace, nor unity and peace against holiness; but take them as inseparable in point of duty: and every tender conscience should be as tender of church division and real schism, as of drunkenness, whoredom, or such other enormous sins. (James iii. 14—17.)^c

Sect. 35. III. The extensive interest of the church, consisting in the multiplication of Christians, is, 1. Principally in the multiplication of the regenerate members of the church mystical: 2. And, subordinately, in the multiplication of professed Christians in the church visible.

Sect. 36. It is not another, but the very same Christianity which in sincerity constituteth a mystical member, and in profession a visible member of the church (which is not two churches, but one); so that all are hypocrites who are not sincere.^d

Sect. 37. The instituted door or entrance into the church visible, is by baptism.^e

Sect. 38. The pastors of the church, by the power of the keys, are judges who are to be admitted by baptism, and to baptise them:^f and the people are to take the baptised for church members, and in point of public communion, to see as with their pastors' eyes (ordinarily); though, as to private converse, they are judges themselves.

Sect. 39. Those that are baptised in infancy should at age have a solemn transition into the rank of adult members, upon a solemn, serious owning and renewing of their baptismal covenant.^g

Sect. 40. God doth not require a false profession of Christianity, but a true; but yet he appointeth his ministers to take a profession not proved false, as credibly true, because we are no heart-searchers; and every one should be best acquainted with himself; and God will have every man the chooser or refuser of his own felicity, that the comfort or sorrow may be most his own: and a human belief of them that have not forfeited their credit, especially about their own hearts, is necessary to human converse.^h

Sect. 41. And God taketh occasion of hypocrites' intrusion:

^c Rom. xvi. 17; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; 1 Cor. i. 10; ii. and iii. throughout.

^d Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16; Eph. vi. 24; 1 Cor. xvi. 22; Rom. viii. 9.

^e Matt. xxviii. 19.

^f Acts ii. 41, 42, and viii. 37, 38.

^g See my 'Treat. of Confirmation.'

^h Acts viii. 37; xiii. 21, 22, and ii. 41; Luke xiv. 16, 18, 21, 23.

1. To do good to the church by the excellent gifts of many hypocrites. 2. To do good to themselves, by the means or helps of grace which they meet with in the church.ⁱ

Sect. 42. But the proper, appointed place which all that are not (at age) persuaded to the profession of true Christianity, should continue in, is the state of *catechumens*, or *audientes*; mere learners, in order to be made Christians.^k

Sect. 43. The visible church is much larger than the mystical, though but one church, that is, the church hath more professing than regenerate members, and will have to the end of the world, and, none must expect that they be commensurate.^l

Sect. 44. As a corn-field; 1. Corn; 2. Straw and chaff, and, 3. Weeds and stricken ears; and is denominated from the corn, which is the chief (preserved) part; but the straw must not be cast out, because it is necessary for the corn; but the weed must be pulled up, except when doing it may hurt the wheat: even so the church hath, 1. Sincere Christians, from whom it is denominated; 2. Close hypocrites, whose gifts are for the good of the sincere, and must not be cast out by the pastors; 3. Heretics and notorious wicked men, who are impenitent after due admonition; and these must be cast out, except when it may hazard the church.^m

Sect. 45. The means of increasing the church must ultimately be intended always to the increase of the church mystical, for holiness and salvation.ⁿ

Sect. 46. These means are, 1. All the fore-mentioned means of holiness, for holiness is the church's glory; the image of God, which will make it illustrious and beautiful in the eyes of men, when they are sober and impartial, and will do most to win them home to Christ. 2. Especially the great abilities, holiness, patience, and unwearied diligence of the ministers of Christ, is a needful means. 3. The advancement of arts and sciences doth much to prepare the way. 4. The agreement and love of Christians among themselves. 5. Love to the infidels and ungodly, and doing all the good we can even to their bodies. 6. A spiritual, pure, rational, and decent worshipping of God. 7. And the concord of christian princes among them-

ⁱ Phil. i. 15—18; Matt. x. 1, and vii. 22, 23.

^k Mark xvi. 16; Acts v. 13.

^l Rom. ix. 6; Matt. xiii. 41, 42, 47, and xx. 22.

^m Matt. xiii. 28, 36, and iii. 12; Psalm ii. 4; Jer. xiii. 28.

ⁿ 2 Tim. ii. 10; John xi. 52; 1 Tim. ii. 4.

selves, for the countenancing and promoting the labours of such preachers as are fitted for this work.^o

Sect. 47. The hinderances, then, of the church's increase, and of the conversion of the heathen and infidel world, are, 1. Above all, the wickedness of professed Christians, whose falsehood, and debauchery, and unholiness, persuade the poor infidels that Christianity is worse than their own religion, because they see that the men are worse that live among them. And 2. The badness of the pastors, especially in the Greek and Latin churches, and the destruction of church discipline, and impurity of the churches hereupon, together with the ignorance and unskilfulness of most for so great a work, is a great impediment. 3. The defectiveness in arts and sciences. 4. The many divisions and unbrotherly contentions of Christians among themselves, either for religion or for worldly things. 5. Not devoting ourselves, and all that we have, to the winning of infidels, by love, and doing them good. 6. A carnal, irrational, or indecent manner of worshipping God; for they will contemn that God, whose worship seemeth to them ridiculous and contemptible. 7. The discords, wars, or selfishness, of christian princes, who unite not their strength to encourage and promote this noble work, but rather hinder it, by weakening the hands of the labourers at home. 8. Especially when the very preachers themselves are guilty of covetous, or ambitious designs, and, under pretence of preaching Christ, are seeking riches, or setting up themselves, or those that they depend on. These have kept under the church of Christ, and hindered the conversion of the world till now.^p

^o Acts ii. 44, 46; iv. 32, 34; ix. 31; xii. 24; ix. 15, and xx. 20, &c.; 2 Tim. ii. 21; John iv. 22—24, and xvii. 24, 25; 2 Tim. ii. 25.

^p Isa. ix. 17; 1 Thess. v. 22; Rom. ii. 21, 24; 1 Tim. vi.; 1 Tit. ii. 5; 1 Pet. iii. 16, 17; iv. 15, and ii. 12. Read Joseph Acosta of this at large, and Tho. D. S. Jesu de convers. gent. 1 Cor. xiv. 2, &c.; vii. 10, 11, and xiv. 16, 22, 23. Read Bishop Bilson 'Of Christian Subjection, (p. 526.)' Vos æris tinnitibus et tiliarum sonis ————— persuasum habetis Deos; delectari et affici, irasque aliquando conceptas eorum satisfactione molliri. Nos inconveniens ducimus, quinimo incredibile judicamus, eos qui gradibus mille genus omne virtutum perfectionis transierint summitate, in voluptatibus habere atque in deliciis esse res eas, quas homo sapiens rideat, et quæ non aliis videantur continere aliquid gratiæ, quam infantibus parvulis et trivialiter et populariter institutis. Hæc cum ita se habeant, cumque sit opinionum tauta nostrarum vestrarumque diversitas, ubi aut nos impii, aut vos pii; cum ex partium sensibus pietatis debeat atque impietatis ratio ponderari? Non enim qui simulachrum sibi aliquod conficit, quod pro Deo veneretur is habendus est rebus esse deditus divinis. Opinio religionem

Sect. 48. The attempts of the Jesuits in Congo, Japan, and China, was a very noble work, and so was the Portuguese kings' encouragements; but two things spoiled their success, which protestants are not liable to: 1. That when they took down the heathen images, they set them up others in the stead; and made them think that the main difference was, but whose image they should worship: and withal, by their agnus deis, and such like trinkets, made religion seem childish and contemptible. 2. But, especially, that they made them see, that while they seemed to promote religion, and to save their souls, they came to promote their commonwealth, or the pope's dominion, and to bring their kings under a foreign power.^q

Sect. 49. The honest attempts of Mr. Elliot, in New England, is much more agreeable to the apostles' way, and maketh more serious, spiritual Christians; but the quality of place and people, and the greatness of wants, doth hinder the multiplication of converts, and higher attempts were very desirable.

Sect. 50. The translating of fit books into the language of the infidels, and dispersing them, may, in time, prove the sowing of a holy, fruitful seed.^r

Sect. 51. Prosperity useth greatly to increase the church extensively, in the number of visible members; and adversity and persecution to increase it intensively, by increasing holiness in the tried and refined; therefore, God useth to send vicissitudes of prosperity and adversity, like summer and winter, to the churches, that each may do its proper work.

Sect. 52. Every true Christian should daily lament the common infidelity and impiety of the world, that the interest of true Christianity is confined in so narrow a room on earth; and to pray with his first and most earnest desires, that more labourers may be sent forth, and that God's name may be hallowed, his

facit; et recta de Diis mens: ut nihil eos existimes contra decus præsumptæ sublimitatis appetere.—*Arnob. adv. Gentes*, l. 7. in *Bib. Pat. Auct.* tom. 1. p. 60. Suppose these words spoken by us to the papists. Acosta is very large and honest in this reproof and lamentation of the sins of the clergy.

^q Read Pet. Maffæus' 'Hist. Ind.' and 'Epist. Jesuit.' and 'Hist. Japon.' and 'Chin.' The king of Tengerate told Sir Francis Drake, "We agree with you in religion against the Portuguese, that we must not worship stocks and stones." Fuller's 'Holy State' in the 'Life of Sir Francis Drake,' out of a MS. of one of his company. What a scandal is such worship against the christian cause.

^r Acts ix. 31. As for the grand controversy of "per se aut per alium," read Grotius 'De Imper.' (pp. 290, 291.) "Nam illud quod quis per alium facit, per se facere videtur;" ad eas duntaxat pertinet actiones, quarum causa efficiens proxima à jure indefinita est.

kingdom come, and his will be done on earth, that it may be liker heaven, which now is grown so like to hell; but yet, to comfort himself in considering, as is before said, that as this earth is to all the nobler world, but as one mole-hill to all England; so if God had forsaken all, it had been but as the cutting off a cancer from a man, or as the casting away of the paring of his nails, in comparison of all the rest.^s

Therefore should we long for the coming of our Lord, and the better world, which we have in hope. How long, Lord, holy and true, how long? Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly: Amen. For we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (2 Pet. iii. 11—13.)

“Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened to me; how, then, shall Pharaoh hear me?” (Exod. vi. 12.)

“Not to many people of a strange speech, and of a hard language, whose words thou canst not understand: surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee. But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee, for they will not hearken unto me; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.” (Ezek. iii.)

October 16, 1666.

^s Dr. Jer. Taylor, of ‘Repent. Pref.’ “I am sure we cannot give account of souls, of which we have no notice.” Leg. Athanas. Patri. Constantin. de necessaria Episcop. residentia.