The Dying man's Testament
to the Church of Scotland;
OR,
A Treatise concerning Scandal.

Divided into Four Parts.

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

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

BY
That singularly faithful and wise Servant of Jesus Christ, Mr. James Durham, late Minister of the Gospel in Glasgow,

Who being dead (by this) yet speaketh:

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

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

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

Marth. 18. 7 Wo unto the world because of Offences: for it must needs be that Offences come: but woe to that man by whom the Offence cometh.
1 Cor. 1. 12 Give none Offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.
Psal. 119. 165. Great peace have all they which love thy Law: and nothing shall offend them.

LONDON,
Printed for the Company of Stationers, 1659.
He rise of the subsequent Treatise, the blessed Author, in the very first words thereof, declareth to be the occasion he had from Revel. 2. on the Epistle to the Church of Pergamnos, to meditate on the nature and sorts of Scandal. And before I say anything of this present work, I shall hence take occasion, to shew my thoughts of his Commentary on the Book of Revelation. In my humble opinion, that which was spoken of the vertuous woman, Prov. 30. v. 29. may well be applied to the pains this Author hath taken on that Book: Many Writers have done worthily, but thou excellest them all. The reason of my so high estimation thereof, is taken from a threefold excellencie I find therein. The first is, a brief, clear and accurate opening of the most difficult Text in the whole Bible, applying with great sagacity and admirable dexterity, dark Prophecies to their historical events: and yet, with judicious sobriety, not restraining, as it were, to single stars of several persons, that which rather relateth to conglobate constellations of agents or patients: together with a modest, yet a diligent search of those things which are not yet accomplished. Whoever would compendiously have an experiment hereof, let him read the first Lecture on Chap. 6. (which parcel, with some others, were sent to me by the Author, some moneths before the printing) And as herein, I did find great satisfaction, by reason of the clearnesse and notable coherence of the Interpretation, and convincing grounds and arguments proving the solidity thereof, So may thou, Christian Reader, be sweetly refreshed and strongly confirmed thereby. The second
The Preface

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

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

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

In the first part thereof thou wilt find, Christian Reader, the nature of Scandal dexterously opened, with the several sorts of it, and the variety of ways whereby
it is both given and taken, with considerable grounds to make Christians loth and wary, both as to the giving of offence and taking. And withall, many intricate cases are cleared, as namely, what is to be done when the matter is lawfull, and the offence doubtful: Also what ought to be our carriage, when there is a real difference between parties upon the account of a civil interest: Also what behaviour is requisite, when the command of Superiours and the eschewing of offence are in opposition: Also that very important case, is accurately debated and wisely determined, what is to be done when offence is like to follow on either side. And finally, what course both private Christians and Pastors ought to hold when scandals and offences abound. The answer to which alone, holdeth forth a very excellent directory for christian walking toward others.

The second part treateth of Scandal as it is publick, and falleth under Ecclesiasticall censure, wherein there are many excellent overtures for the wise and right exercise of Church-discipline. Among many, this is considerable, That the saving grace of repentance, is not to be enquired into, as the alone ground upon which Church-officers are to rest for removing an offence: but that a sober, serious acknowledgment of the offence, with the expression of an unfeigned-like purpose to walk inoffensively is sufficient. This is very accurately debated, and solidly and soundly determined. There is also, Chap. 12. a clear discouling of that tickle Question, What ought to be done by privat persons when Church-officers spare such as are scandalous, to wit, upon supposition that there is a real defect (in the truth whereof often there is a mistake) yet private profeffors are to continue in the discharge of the duties of their stations, and not to separate from the Communion of the Church, but to count themselves exonered in holding fast their own integrity, mourning for offences, representing the same to Church-officers, and, if need be, to superiour Judicators. All this is strongly, convincingly, and very satisfyingly proven by Scripture.
The third part is concerning Doctrinal Scandals, or Scandalous Errors, a Theme very necessary for these reeling times. If I should offer to pick out thence points very remarkable, I would far pass the just bounds of a Preface. Wherefore, I shall only thereof say this, That both Christian Magistrates, Ministers and People, will find their duty laid before them, no lesse solidly than accurately, what to do in the case of spreading errour. And, O that the Most High would strike in with His sovereign Authority upon the hearts and consciences of all sorts, especially Magistrates, in whose hands this Tra- State shall come!

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

Next, I have the greater reason to consider diligently this piece of the work; and having considered it, to recommend it the more earnestly to all Christ's People, and especially to my reverend and dear Brethren of the Ministry, because it was sent to me sealed from the Author, in the beginning of his last sicknesse, as a Depositus committed to me to make it ready for publishing; which I
performed carefully and faithfully, without the alteration of one material word: and having lately perused the Copie the Printer makes use of, I hereby testify it is the same for matter, order, sentences and words, the Author sent to me and I transmitted to him a little before the Lord removed him.

And now, upon the matter, I think verily that this healing Treatise is so full of that wisdom, which is from above, first pure, and then peaceable, that it will speak plainly the Author fitted of God to bring forth a seasonable word. At the first reading thereof, my spirit was greatly refreshed, and my heart enlarged to bless the Lord, conceiving that the Prince of peace, in compassion over our putrified sores, had provided this mollifying ointment and cleansing plaster, in order to a cure of the same. And I doubt nothing but every true-hearted lover of Sions peace, who longs to see the Lord exalted, in binding-up our hither-till incurable wounds, will magnifie the Lord with me and exalt his Name together. Herein thou wilt find excellently discovered, the rise of divisions, what hand the holy Soveraignty of God hath therein, and how the corruptions of men, even of the Godly, both raise and wonderfully heighten divisions; and how great influence occasional means may have in the same; together with the sad and dreadfull effects thereof; and the necessity of endeavouring unity therein. Thou wilt also find the cure and remedy singularly opened, not only general grounds and preparatory endeavours for uniting, but also what things are to be forborn, and what is to be done in order to uniting, and that as well in closing doctrinal differences, not fundamental, nor nigh the foundation, as for union in points not doctrinal, arising from diversity in external administrations, and especially practical differences in Church-government, and about the Constitutions and Acts of Synods, when the Authority thereof is declined and denied: Yea, remedies are proposed, of divisions arising from the misapplication of power, in cenfuring or spa-
ring Church-officers, real or supposed. And finally, against the fears of misgovernment for the time to come, overtures are prudently given-in: and all closed with laying out briefly, and yet very effectually, grounds and motives of the desired union. That which I conceive is most eminent in this choice Treatise, lyeth in these two things: first, That this our Cancer is most tenderly handled, in a very abstract way, never so much as stating or particularly touching any difference among us, and yet, upon the matter, the whole discourse cometh home to the very point most pertinently. Herein appears the finger of God to them that will have eyes to see it. The next is this, That the holy Scriptures are diligently searched, both in order to the disease and remedy: and the ancient Church-history and purer Antiquity, is most plentifully and sweetly made use of. The judicious and impartial Reader will, I think, say Miserit utile dulci, and that here are words fitly spoken, like apples of gold in pictures of silver. One thing I shall intreat, that the Reader judge not finally of any parcel or section thereof, till he read and ponder the whole. Stumble not at his asserting, That authoritative wayes at first are not the best to cure rents. A rent would be handled as a broken bone or a dislocation, where anointing and ligatures are so necessary, as without these, healing cannot in haste be attained. If the question be made, How a man in that case should carry himself? Ought he to stretch himself to the full and put forth his whole strength? Or is that then impossible? And if through passion in a fit it be practised, is it not obstructive to the recovery of strength and healing? Let the Reader remember this when he cometh to that part of the discourse, and he will, upon that consideration, make the better use of the whole remedy as it is proposed. I shall not detain much longer the Reader from the Treatise it self, having added these few considerations, for advancing heart-uniting in the Lord, which of all other, I conceive, ought to be most weighty in the judgment and on the affections of all
all the lovers of our Lord Jesus Christ. First, from Eph. 2. v. 14, 15, 16, 17. the great Peace-maker, in offering-up Himself a sacrifice for the sins of the Ele&; intended, with the reconciling of them to God, to unite them in one body among themselves: yea, even those who were at furthest distance and greatest enmity, Jew and Gentile, and consequently other His Ele& in their several differences and divisions throughout their generations. He took on Him the debt of their sins and their enmities, and lifted up with Himself these on His Cross, representatively, virtually and meritoriously, to expiate them in His flesh: and by His Spirit efficiently to slay and abolish them in due time, by making them one new man in Himself. Mark, I pray, from that Scripture cited, that this complex business is the great design of our blessed and great Peace-maker. Also, secondly, in the Sacrifice-feast of His Supper, this is still represented and exhibited, till He come again: So that this standing Ordinance, destined and appointed of God to carry-on and seal-up uniting with God, and one with another, till He come again; at His coming will stand up and testify against all who comply not with Christ, but, following their own inclination, & rather against His design. And, thirdly, in His solemn prayer, Joh. 17. which is a specimen of His future intercession, He mainly preseth after the salvation and sanctification of those that are given Him, ver. 21. That they also may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. Do not these words significantly and shyningly hold out, what the Mediator is still about, and that uniting in God is His design still? And fourthly, upon this same very ground, the great Apostle, speaking to Jews and Gentiles who had imbraced the Gospel, and in them to all dissentients who love the Gospel-truths and Ordinances, faith, Rom. 15.7: Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Meritoriously and virtually the Ele& are received to the glory of God, and to the end they may
may be actually received, Receive one another, faith the Apostle, as it were suspending the one upon the other. And now upon these grounds, Christ our Lord his grand design being so conspicuous, His Supper-ordinance standing as a Land-mark in the way, having this engraven upon it, Union Communion, the glorious Mediator his intercession running in that same channel, and the blessed Apostle making this the upshot of his doctrine; what lover of our Lord, well advised and recollecting himself, dare stiffly stand out from complying with Him, to satisfie their own inclination and habituated custom and carriage. My fear is, that every one of us will look to some others rather than themselves, as obstructing the desired uniting in the Lord. But upon mature after-thoughts, it will be found the mind of Christ, that we narrowly search our selves, every one of us, how we have provoked the Holy One to smite us so in His displeasure, and accurately to try what yet remains in us obstructive to this union: and withall to flie to our slighted duty, as in a City they run to the quenching of a publick burning, laying this evil to heart more than sword or pestilence. All the writings and actings against Presbyterial-government, which is the wall of the house of God, have never wronged or hurt it so much, as our ill-raised, and worse-continued contests. Our nakedness-discovering writings, what have they done but added oyl to the flame? For Christ's sake, my reverend and dear Brethren, hearken to this word in season, from the Oracles of God, and treasures of pure Antiquity, pointing-out the way of a godly and edifying peace. It will be no grief of heart, but sweet peace and consolation, when we are to appear before the Judge of the quick and dead. Now the God of patience and consolation, grant you to be like minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus; So heartily prayeth

St. Andrews, April. 28, 1659.

Your Brother and fellow-servant, Robert Blair.
Here are, I suppose, few or none amongst us, or about us, so great strangers to the observation of Providential Occurrences in Scotland, as to be altogether without the knowledge of what hath come to pass here in these days, how the holy, just and sovereign Lord, who sometime lifted us up, hath now cast us down; who crowned us with glory and honour, hath stript us of our glory and made the crown to fall from our head; though we have not said, Woe unto us, for we have sinned, who sometime made us a praise in the earth, hath now made us a hissing, a by-word and reproach to all that are round about us; how He, who once by our unity and one-shoulder-service did make us beautiful as Tirza, comely as Jerusalem, and terrible as an Army with Banners, hath now, alas, (which is one of the most imbittering ingredients in our cup) instead of giving us one heart and one way, in His anger, divided, sub-divided, weakened, disjoynted and broken us; so that Judah vexeth Ephraim, and Ephraim envyeth Judah, and every man's hand almost is against his brother; and through our lamentable and most unseasonable intestine jars and divisions we bite and devour one another, and are like to be consumed one of another; O tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph! that when God hath cast us all down together, we endeavour to keep down and tread upon one another, that when He hath been justly angry with our mother, her children are sinfully angry one with another, and when He hath cast us all into the furnace, we are even there struggling and wrestling one with another to the increasing of the flame;
And when brotherly love and lothness to give or take offence, is in a special manner called for, love did never wax more cold, nor offences more abound. Now, when our Church thus in a manner distracted and drunk with the wine of astonishment, is in so sad a posture, and but few of the sons she hath brought forth to guide her or take her by the hand, they all almost fainting and lying at the head of every street as it were so many wild bulls in a net, full of the fury of the Lord and of the rebuke of our God; Then stepeth forth (the Spirit of the Lord coming upon him) one of her sons, the Author of this excellent Treatise concerning Scandal (having made some serious essays before to take his mother by the hand, though but with small acceptance with many of his Brethren, for which, it may be, the jealous God was in part provoked to remove him) whereby, as by his latter Will and Testament, especially to the Ministers of the Church of Scotland, he doth again renew his formerly fruitless and unsuccessful attempt: In which Treatise as there breatheth a far more sweet and savoury Spirit, than in most, if not all of the Papers published upon occasion of our late lamentable differences, (which I hope will by none be looked upon as any reflection) so there is throughout a most strong and fragrant smell of more than ordinary piety, that it may be averred of him, as once it was of Cyril of Jerusalem, in his last and best days, he was magne sanitatis vir, a man of eminent sanctity: It plainly also speaketh forth special acquaintance with the Scriptures (for, in all his discourses (as it's said of Basil) he doth exquisitely mingle divine testimonies of Scripture, that they are like precious stones, not sewed to, but bred in purple cloathes) and intimacy with the mind of God, as to what may be duty under the various dispensations of his providence, so that it may be said of him, he was a man that had understanding of the times, and knew what Israel ought to do; for he doth with admirable perspicacity take up, and with no lesse dexterity direct unto, what ought to be done in this, and that, and the other case, as a most skilful Anatomist dissecting the whole complex body of duties in reference to ordinary and extraordinary cases.
and emergents, never missing, as it were, one line or joint, and like a left-handed Benjamite, that in the greatest intricacies, and gravest difficulties can flank fences at an hairs breadth and not misle. It favoureth likewise all along of a most sharp, strong and pregnant wit, in supposing cases, proposing pertinent overtures and expedients, in disposing of arguments, framing distinctions, anticipating objections, in cautious guarding against mistakes and inconveniences &c. So that it is verified of him what was once said of Origen. Origenis ingenium sufficiens ad omnia perdisceda, he had such pregnancy of wit that he could reach anything; and of Joseph Scaliger, he was potentissimi ingenii vir, a man of a stupendious wit. It discovereth with all so very great insight in Church-history and Writings of the ancient Fathers, where with it is every where most beautifully illuminate, that it may well be said of him, as once of sweet Buchelzer, that one would have thought universal antiquitatem in ejus pecusculo latuisse recordatam, that all antiquity lay hid in his breast; and of famous Mr. Holland, Regius Professor of Divinity in Oxford, Adeo familiaris erat cum Patribus ac filipse pater, He was so familiarly acquainted with the Fathers as if himself had been one of them. As for his style and manner of expressing himself, it favoureth very much of the primitive and Gospel-simplicity, so that what is spoken to the commendation of Basil by a learned man, may fitly be applied to the Author, The Reader will find in him a simple and natural form of speech, flowing from his holy breast, much drained of all humane passions: And that which is said of Ambrose, he studied non aures titillare, sed corda pungere, not to tickle and please ears, but to prick hearts: As likewise that which is said of another great man, His words were, non inflantia sed inflammantia, not inflating but inflaming: He strewed himself here many ways to have been indeed a great man; but I (having been his Colleague in the Ministry and of his very intimate acquaintance for some years) knew him to be such more particularly and several other ways, So that while I reflect
reflect upon, and call to remembrance what I have seen in, and heard from him, I am constrained to say, as once Urbanus Regius (a man much more able indeed to discern) said of Luther, upon occasion of a conference with him, Semper fuit mihi magnus, at jam mihi maximus est; vidi enim praefens & audivi que nullo calamo tradi possunt absentibus. He was always to me a great man, but now very great; for I saw and heard things when I was present with him, which can hardly by any pen be communicated to those that were absent. In a word, as to the whole Treatise, it may, I think, without any hyperbole be said, that it is universally most profitable and seasonably beautiful; For, in the first part of it concerning Scandal in the general (excellently compendied and commended as all the rest are, by the stately-styling, profound and precious Prefaces, like-minded in all these things with the blessed Author, whose sage mind in them, and not the less because of this co-incidency, would be more laid weight upon, lest we be put out of time to lament also the loss of such a Healer and Piller in this sorely sick and shaken Church). In the first part, I say, the ancient, primitive, long-dead, buried, and almost-forgotten tenderness in the matter of Offence (a specially-adorning requisit to a Christian and Gospel-becoming conversation) is again revived and portrayed as risen from the dead with a most amiable and comely countenance and taking aspect, so that it forceth the serious beholders to say, Peace be upon as many as walk according to this Rule. In the second part concerning Scandals as they are the object of Church-censures, there is a very compleat and compact directory according to the Scripture-pattern for Church-officers how to manage the great Ordinance of Discipline in its exercise. Which, if it were diligently and conscientiously followed in the several steps of it, (as it was most convincingly so by the Author himself) would undoubtedly make that work both much more easy and much more successfull than it useth ordinarily to be. In the third part concerning Scandalous Errors, wonderfully suited to this time of so great infection, sickness and mortality, by the
the raging plague and both of error, exceedingly gathered in a head, ripened and made to break and run out, to the infecting, in a manner, of the very air wherein the Churches of these Nations breath, by the heat and warmth afforded to it from a lamentable liberty and vast Toleration; In this third part, I say, there is, as it were, a Physicians Shop, full of choice preservatives against, and sovereign remedies of, poisonous errors and heresies. In the fourth part, concerning Scandalous Divisions, be doth, as another Irenæus, with much meekness of wisdom and singular moderation of spirit, without any the least reflection or irritation, most tenderly, singly, unbyassedly and impartially, and most affectionately, as a man burnt with the offence that waiteth on divisions amongst godly Ministers especially, strongly endeavour an innocent and wholesome union and compoſure, so that (as an eminent, aged and experienced servant of Jesus Christ, whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all these Churches, when he first saw this Piece in writ, said) it will be unwelcome to none but such as are led with a better spirit; to which may well be added, that as it's reported of Nazianzen, he was of such authority in the Greek Churches, that whoſsoever durft oppose his testimony, was suspected to be an Heretick: So may it be said of the piously and prudently-peaceable, and healing-Spirited Author, that he deserveth to be of such authority, at least in the Scottish Church, that whoſsoever shall adventure to oppose (as it's hoped none will) his wife, harm-leffe, holy and healing Overtures, may be suspected to be no great friend to the union and peace of this afflicted and rent Church. I will not, Christian Reader, detain thee any longer from perusing this notable Treatise, but ſhall only offer to thy grave and serious consideration these two things, which I suppose will not a little commend the same unto thee, especially as to the last part of it; one is, That the Author, when he was (but a very little before his last sickneſſe, and after his finishing the three first parts) most unexpectedly surprized with a motion suggested to him anent the expediency of handling somewhat of the Scandal of Divisions, it did so exceedingly affright him, and had such astonishing influence up-
on him through the apprehended difficulty and ticklishness of the subject (so tender was he) that (as himself did to some afterward profess) he sunk down in his seat, and yet being convinced of the necessity of saying somewhat to it, the Lord having withall helped him in the other parts, he durst not forbear; whereupon this choice discourse (for it was not divided in Chapters till afterward) did follow, much whereof I know and am persuaded did occur and was given unto him inter dictandum. The other thing is, That sometimes before his death to some friends, he did humbly and gravely call it his Testament to the Church of Scotland; which Testament and Latter-will of a dead, but yet speaking-faithful servant of God, will, I hope, in due time be confirmed by all godly, judicious, sober, peaceable and unprejudicate men, as containing in it a most excellent and enriching Legacy, worthy to be put into the Churches Treasury. Now, that it may go forth with a rich blessing from the God of truth and peace, to all the honest-hearted lovers of the truth in peace, for the advancement of truth and a holy peace, is the desire of him, who desireth to be

Thine to serve thee in the

Gospel of Peace,

J. C.
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The Rise of this following

TREATISE.

Having had occasion to consider the Book of the Revelation, and being on the Epistle to the Church of Pergamos in the second Chapter, ground was given to speak somewhat of Scandal by reason of several doctrines clearly arising from that place: upon this occasion I did first essay the writing of something of the doctrine of Scandal in general, intending only to have spent a sheet or two thereupon, as elsewhere on some other subjects: When this was brought to a close, I found the place to give ground to speak of publick Church-offences, as they are the object of Church-discipline and Censures; And being convinced, that that subject was not impertinent to be spoken of, I yeelded to spend some thoughts upon it also, which did draw to a greater length than at first was intended, or was suitable for a digression: This being finished, as it is, and any more thoughts of this subject laid by, it occurred again to me to think of doctrinal Scandals, or of scandalous Errors; And considering that the Scandals mentioned in that place, are of such nature, and that such are very frequent in this time, I yeelded also to put together what thoughts the Lord would furnish concerning the same; whereupon followed the third part of this Treatise. When this was even at the closing, there was a fourth part of the same subject that did occur.
to me to be thought on, which before that had never been minded, and that was concerning scandalous Church-divisions: To this my mind and inclination was exceeding averse at first, as knowing it not only to be difficult in it self to be medled in, but also exceedingly above me, who am altogether unsuitable to hazard on such a subject: Yet, considering the rise of the motion, and how the Lord had helped through the other parts, I did resolve to condescend to follow it, at least so far, till it might appear what was His mind to me therein, and accordingly did follow it till it came to the period (whatever it be) that now it is at.

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

The Grounds of this Treatise.

Amongst other things that troubled the Church in the primitive times, Scandal, or, offence, was a chief one; and the many directions that are given concerning it, and the reproofs that are of it, shew that it is a main piece of a Christians conversation to walk rightly in reference thereto, and a great evidence of loosenesse where it is not heeded. On ver. 6. we shew that this was a foul fault of the Nicolaitans to be careless of offending, or of giving of offence, and not to regard Scandal; and here the Lord holdeth it forth to be so, by comparing it with Balaam's
Balaam's practice, ver. 14. which is aggregated from this, that he taught Balac to lay a stumbling-block before Israel. From which these doctrines may be gathered, 1. That there is such a fault incident to men in their carriage, even to lay stumbling-blocks before others, and to offend them. 2. That men ought to walk so as not to offend others, or so, as to lay no stumbling-block before them; so that it is not enough not to stumble themselves, (if this could be separated from the other,) but also they ought to be careful not to stumble others. 3. The Lord doth take special notice how men do walk in reference to others in this, and is highly provoked where He seeth any guilty of it. 4. The devil hath ever endeavoured to have offences abounding in the Church, and to make some lay such stumbling-blocks before others. 5. It is most hurtful to the Church, and destructive to souls where offences abound, and men walk not tenderly in reference to these; so that the Lord expresseth it with a twofold wo, Matt. 18, as being a wo beyond sword or pestilence. 6. We may gather, that corrupt doctrine never wanteth offences joined with it, and that ordinarily those who spread that, are untender in this. 7. That offences often accompany the rise and beginning of any work of Christ's amongst a people; these tares of offences are ordinarily then sown. 8. That some offences are of a publick nature, and that Church-officers should take notice of such, and that it is offensive to Christ when they are over-seen and not taken heed unto. 9. Church-officers, even such as otherways are approved in their carriage and ministry, may fall in this fault, as by comparing the Epistles to Pergamos and Thyatira, is clear. 10. When Officers fall in this fault, it is yet no reprovable thing in members that are pure in respect of their own personal carriage to continue in communion with such a Church, the Ordinances otherways being pure.
PART I.
The sum of it.

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

CHAP. I.
Several Distinctions of Scandal.

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

First Distinction.
Part I. A Treatise concerning Scandal.

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

2. Scandal is either given only, or taken only, or both. Given only, is, when one doth lay something before another which is apt of itself to cause him fall or sin; although the other do not fall by occasion of it, yet if it be inductive to sin of its own nature, it is an offence or stumbling-block, as Christ saith to Peter, Matth. 16. Thou art an offence to me; though there was nothing could stick to Him, yet that was in its nature such, which Peter had given Him in advice. 2. It is taken only, when no occasion is given, but when a man doth what is not only lawfull, but necessary, and yet others from their own corruption do carp thereat, and stumble thereon: Thus did the Pharisees offend at Christ, Matth. 15. 12. who did never give offence to any; and this is common to wicked men, that stumble where no stumbling-block is, and, as it is said, they know not whereat they stumble, Prov. 4. 19. This also is called passive offence, as the other is called active. 3. It is both given and taken, when there is something active on the one side, that is apt to draw another to sin, and something that is yielded unto on the other side, and the bait is accepted: This was it in that stumbling-block which Balaam laid before Israel; and thus ordinarily it is amongst men, who, having corruption, are soon inflamed in
lefe or more with every incitement. Thus, Gal. 2. Peter gave Barnabas offence, and he took it, when he was also carried away to dissemble. It is this active Scandal that properly is to be enquired in, and is meant here, which is, in short, any deed or word that in it self is apt to make another to sin, or to weaken them in their spiritual course, either in regard of life, or comfort, and that whether the person be actually stumbled or not, or whether the person actually intend offence or not. In all this we are to understand, that one act may be offensive in many considerations, as one deed may be against many commands, and be many ways sinfull.

Third Distinction.

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

Fourth Distinction.

4. We may distinguish offences according to the matter thereof. And, 1. some are in matters that are simply sinfull in themselves, and have this also following on them: Thus all errors and publick sinfull practices are offensive. 2. Some matters are not simply and in themselves sinfull, yet have the appearance of evil, 1 Thess. 5. 17. and thus dangerous and doubtfull expressions in doctrine, that have been, or
use to be, abused; and practices also that are not becoming that honesty and good report which a Christian ought to study, as it is Phil. 4. 8, 9. are offensive. In the first respect, David would not take the name of Idols in his mouth, Psal. 16. because others did too much reverence them: Of the last sort was Peter's dissimulation and withdrawing, Gal. 2. because, that appeared to strengthen the opinion of the continuing of the difference betwixt Jew and Gentile, &c. for that cause, Paul would not circumcise Titus, Gal. 2. 3. and did condemn eating in the Idol-temples. 3. Some offences are in matters otherwise lawful and indifferent, though not necessary, as the eating of, or abstaining from meats, or what was offered to Idols in the primitive times, which was indifferent to be done in the house of an Heathen, and so was sometimes lawful, but was not indifferent to be done in the Idol-temple, because that had the appearance of evil, as if he had had some respect to the Idol; nor was it to be done, if any weak Brother had been at table in the house, because it grieved him, 1 Cor. 8, and 10. It is these last two, (and more especially the third) that are concerned in the doctrine of offences properly, and do rather arise from circumstances in the thing, as time, place, person, manner, &c. than from the deed considered in itself.

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

Sixth Distinction.

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

Seventh Distinction.

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

Eighth Distinction.

8. Some offences contrare the graces of Gods People, and these make them sad; some foster corruptions, and these are too pleasant: thus, soft reproofs, corrupt advices, flatteries, &c. minister matter to many to fall on.
9. Some offences may be called personal, when a person committeth them in his private carriage, that is, when his way of eating, drinking, living, &c. offendeth others, although he hath no medling with them, but live retiredly: Some again are more direct offences (as the first are indirect and consequential) that is, which flow from men in their publick actions, or in their mutual converse with others, which have more direct influence to offend.

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

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

liastic, when, beside what may further their cause 
(suppose it to be just) they do not carry respectively 
to the adversary, and tenderly and convincingly, so as 
it may appear they seek the good of their soul, and 
their edification, even when they differ from them. 
Thirdly, we may look on offence as it offendeth 

wicked or profane men, possibly Heathens, Jews, or 

Gentiles; they are offended when hardened in their 

impiety by the grossness and uncharitableness of 

those who are professedly tender: thus it is a fault, 

1 Cor. 10. 32. to give offence either to Jews or Gen-
tiles, as to the Church of God. Fourthly, Amongst 
those that are tender, some are more weak, some are 

more strong: the first are often offended where there 
is no ground in the matter, as Rom. 14. 1 Cor. 8. &c. 

and it venteth readily by rash judging and cenfuring 
of others that are stronger than themselves, for go-
ing beyond their light, or because of their seeming to 
be despised by them, &c. which sheweth wherein the 

offence of the strong also lyeth; therefore these two 

are put together, Rom. 14. 3. Let not him that eateth, 

(that is, him that is strong) despise him that eateth not: 

And let not him that eateth not (that is, the weak ) 
judge him that eateth.

12. Offences may be considered as they directly 
incline or tempt to sin, either in doctrine or practice; 
or, as they more indirectly scare and divert from, or 
make more faint and weak in the pursuing of holiness either in truth or practice: Thus a blot in some 

professor maketh Religion to be some way abhorred; 
this especially falleth out when Ministers and Pro-

fessors that are eminent, become offensive: For that 
is as a dead fly in the box of the Apothecaries oint-

ment, that maketh all to stink: Thus, Mal. 1. the 
Priests made the people stumble at the Law; as also 
did the sons of Eli, 1 Sam. 2. and this is charged on 
David, that by his fall he made the Heathen blas-
pheme;
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pheme: and thus contention and division amongst Ministers and Disciples is insinuated to stand in the way of the worlds believing in, or acknowledging of Christ, as it is, Job 17.21.

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

14. Again, some offences are offensive, and are Fourteenth given from the first doing of the action; thus where there is any appearance of evil, the offence is given in this manner. Again, offence may be at first only taken and not given, and yet afterward become given, and make the person guilty, although in the first act he had not been guilty. This is, first, when suppose a man eating without respect to difference of meats as he might do indifferently, if he were told by one that such meat were offered to an Idol, and therefore in his judgment it were not lawfull to eat it, although before that, it were not offence given, but taken, (he not knowing that any were present that would offend) yet if he should continue after that to do the same thing, it should be offence given upon his side. Secondly, If a man should know one to have taken
taken offence at him, or his carriage, in a thing indifferent (although he had given no just occasion thereof) and if, after his knowledge thereof, he should not endeavour to remove the same according to his place, In that case the offence becometh given also, because he removeth not that stumbling-block out of his brother’s way.

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

In the last place, we may consider that distinction of Scandals in private and publick: both which may be two ways understood; either, 1. in respect of the witnesses; or, 2. in respect of the nature of them. 1. It is a private scandal in the first respect, which both offend few, because of its not being known to many, and so a publick offence in this respect is a scandal known to many. Thus the same offence may be a private offence to one at one time, and in one place; and a publick offence to another, or the same person, in respect of these circumstances. In the last respect, a private
vat offence is that possibly which doth stumble many, yet is not of that nature, as publickly, legally, or judicially it might be made out to be scandalous, for the convincing of a person offending, or of others, although it may have a great impression upon the hearts of those who know it. Thus the general tract of ones way and carriage (who yet may be civil, legal, and fair in all particulars) may be exceeding offensive, as holding forth to the consciences of those that are most charitable to him, much vanity, pride, earthly-mindedness, untenderliness, want of love and respect, and the like; which faith within the heart of the beholders, that there are many things wrong, when yet no particular can be instanced wherein the person cannot have fair legal answers; Of this sort are unreasonable starting of questions, or doubtfull disputations, Rom. 14. wherein possibly the person may assert truth, yet by moving such things, at such times, and in such expressions, he doth confound and shake the weak: Those offences especially arise from a supposed unreighness in the end, excess in the manner of a thing, disproportionableness betwixt a man's way and his station, and such like, whereof a man may have much conviction in himself, from observing of such an ones way; yet it is not a publick offence in the sense spoken of here, because there is no demonstrating of those. Thus Absalom's insinuating, self-seeking way gave evidence of pride; and such as Paul speaketh of, Philip. 1, and 2. that some preached out of envy, and others fought their own things, &c. are of this nature, which by his discerning he was convinced of, yet did not found any sentence on them.

Again, oppositely to these, Offences may be called publick, when there is a possible way of bearing them out before others, or instructing them in particulars to be contrary to the rule, as drunkenness, swearing, &c. These may be called ecclesiastick or judicial
judicial offences, as being the object of Church-censure, all the other may be called conscience, or charity-wounding offences, because they are the object of a person's conscience and charity, and do wound them, and are judged by them, and may be the ground of a Christian private admonition, but not of publick reproof; or rather may be called unconsiderious, and uncharitable offences, as being opposite to conscience and charity.

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

CHAP. II.

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

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

Part 1.

1. A dead fly, which may make much that is profitable, become unsavoury. 2. Scandal then must be something accompanying some external deed or word (for internal give not offence) which being considered at such a time, in such a place, or in such a person, &c. may be inductive to sin, or impeditive of the spiritual life or comfort of others. When this doth flow from a sinfull act, it is not so difficultly discernable, readily all actions that are materially evil, are clear; but the difficulty is when the matter is lawfull or indifferent in itself; or when it is in the manner and other circumstances of a lawfull or necessary duty, then to discern when they become scandalous in such respects; and accordingly to be swayed to do or abstain in the matter, and to do in this or some other manner, as may eschew the same. This properly and strictly is that which is called offence, and is that wherein most wisdom is to be exercised in ordering and regulating us in the use of christian liberty; and concerning this are the great debates in Scripture, that men may know, that not only the Command is to be looked unto in the matter of the act, so that nothing be done against it in that respect, nor only that our own clearnesse be considered, that we do nothing doubtingly, but that others be considered also that they by our deed be not in their spiritual estate wronged or hurt, that is, to do or abstain for conscience-fake, not our own, but of him that sitteth with us, 1 Cor. 10. 24. and 28. for, if charity and love be the end of the Law, and men ought not only to seek their own things, but the things one of another, and love their neighbour as themselves, then ought they to seek their neighbours edification as their own, and to eschew the prejudging of them. Hence Scandal is opposite to that charity and love, and also to that respect which we ought to carry to our brother, Rom. 14. v. 10, and v. 15. yea, it is a scandal and offence as it is opposite to, and inconsistent with, love to his spiritual well-being.
It is hardly possible to shew how many ways one may offend another, there being so many, yea, so very many ways whereby men both wrong themselves and others; yet, by considering the effects that offence given, hath, or may have upon others (although the effect follow not) and by considering that upon which active offence worketh, and which usually is offended at in another, we may draw them to some heads accordingly; As, I. men may be drawn to some sinfull action upon such an occasion: thus an action materially lawfull and good in it self, becometh a scandal, when by our deed another is fostered in some sin, or encouraged to commit it, as supposing himself to be strengthened therein by our practice; Or when it may occasion others to go beyond our intent, or to do what we do in another manner which may make it sinfull: So, zeal inconsiderately vented, may strengthen folks in passion; and thus eating in Idols temples (which in it self was nothing) was scandalous when done publickly, because it strengthened Idolaters to think somewhat of their Idols, and made others who were weak, to continue...
some respect to them, because they supposed such men, by such a practice to do so; or made some judge them to have respect to Idols, and so to be lesse in their esteem; or, caused others to eat with respect to the Idol, when they themselves did it without it. Thus doubtfull expressions in points of Truth, and uncircumspectnesse in not abstaining from all appearace of evil, or what doth appear to be evil to such a person, and at such a time, &c. may be offensive; as suppose one in their apparrel, diet, or otherwayes, should by some be conceived to go beyond their station, and what is fit at such a time, or be an occasion to some others indeed to exceed, when, without such misconstruing beholders, there might be nothing offensive in the deed it self; and thus the deed of one person may be offensive (supposing him to be esteemed proud, covetous, unclean, &c.) which would not be so in another: So also, a thing will be offensive to one, and not to another. Wherefore, in reference to Offence, men would have an eye on themselves, and what generally they are reputed to be, and so would abstain from the least appearance of what is supposed to be predominant in them, as also they would have respect to others that are present, or may be hearers or beholders, considering what are their thoughts of them, or of such deeds, &c. and accordingly would carry, although it were to abstain from such a place, apparrel, diet, &c. which in reason, abstractly from offence, might be pleaded for, as becoming. Thus one walking abroad on the Sabbath, may be sanctifying it, yet by his example some other may be provoked to vage and gad and cast off all duties of the day, and to neglect what is called for in secret, or in the family; in that respect, it becometh offensive to go abroad, although it be lawfull in it self to meditate abroad in the fields, as well as in the house.

2. When a lawfull act doth breed or occasion misconstruccion or rash judging in another, then it becometh
cometh offensive to him; As, 1. when it maketh him think the thing unlawfull, which is lawfull, that is, (Rom. 14. 16.) to make our good to be evil spoken of:

Or, 2. when it occasioneth our selves by that deed to be condemned as untender and unconscientious in the performing of such an act, that is, to make one judge his brother rashly, Rom. 14. 10. 1 Cor. 10. 30. Or, 3. when it occasioneth our profession, or the Gospel to be mistaken and mis-judged, or godlineffe to be accounted fancie, hypocrisie, &c. Thus by the injudicious use of liberty, the Gospel was evil spoken of by some, as if it had given way to looseffe, for so those that were zealous for the Law did esteem of it.

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

4. We may try Scandal by our hazarding to disquiet the peace of our brother’s conscience: that is, when by our lawfull deed we engage or virtually persuade him to follow our example, supposing him to doubt of the lawfulness of that practice, or to condemn the same. Thus, 1 Cor. 8. 10. one is emboldened to eat of things offered to Idols, with respect to them, because he beholdeth another that is more strong than he to do the same. And so by his eating, he giveth ground to his conscience afterward to challenge him, for which cause he that gave the example, is said to wound his weak conscience. The like also is,
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Rom. 14. 22, 23. in the case of doubting: for, supposing one to doubt whether such a thing be lawful or not, meetly by our example to go before him, is to put him in that strait either to condemn our deed, or doubtfully to follow; for, the more example of no man can warrant any other to follow, or satisfy a conscience in the lawfulness of such and such a deed. This also may be when a weak man, having possibly done something in another manner, (and that lawfully) than afterward he beholdeth one that is strong to do, (which also may be lawful in itself) he is brought to look over his own practice, and to condemn the same as sinfull, meetly because that other did it in another manner. For, though indifference in the manner of practices in lawful things, is sometimes edifying, yet in such cases when they have not sufficient information joyned with them, they drive men on the extremities forefaid, and so become offensive, especially then when such things are actually doubted of, or disputated in their lawfulness.

5. Things become offensive when they prove obstrusive to the edification of others, and, as the word is, Rom. 14. 21. do make them weak, or infirmeth them, not only by fainting and weighting them, as is said before, but by confounding them in the Truth or practices of Religion, whereby they are either shaken in their former assurances, and so weakened, or made doubtfull whether such things be Duties and Truths, or not; or, by such and such things, are diverted from the more necessary practices of Religion. This is the scope of Rom. 14. ver. 1, &c. and of other Scriptures elsewhere, wherby the Apostle Paul doth guard against doubtfull disputations, which do not profit them that are occupied therein, Heb. 13. 9. And thus, not only writing and reasoning for what is not Truth, but writing and speaking of Truth in a new manner, with new expressions and multiplying moulds of these, or doing it unreasonably, passionately, contentiously &c. doth
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doth prove offensive. Thus what is not actually edifying, is offensive; and upon this account, Paul becometh all things to all, that he may gain some, as in his circumcising of Timothy that he might have access to edifie the Jews, and such like; And thus often not condescending in indifferent things to please others, doth much incapacitate them to be edified by us, or doth give them prejudice at the way of the Gospel, whereby their edification is obstructed and they offended.

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

C H A P. IV.
Concerning that upon which Offence worketh, or, the several ways by which it is taken.

The considering of the second thing, to wit, that upon which Offence worketh, and by which it is taken, will clear this more: For sometimes, 1. it affecteth the weakness of understanding and light; So, it raiseth doubts, misconstructions, &c. 2. Sometimes through that it affecteth the conscience; whence cometh judging and condemning.
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ning of others, and their deeds, and the awakening of challenges, &c. 3. Sometimes it stirreth the affections, either by awakening carnal joy, or carnal grief. 4. It affecteth corruption, when men, from prejudice, are fretted or grieved upon such an occasion; Thus often deeds become offensive, when they confirm mens jealousy, stir their pride, emulation &c.

5. A deed may have influence on some folks infirmity or impotency; So, some that are more given to passion, suspicion, or such like, will be offended sooner than others, and some things will be offensive to them that are not so in themselves.

6. Men as they are gracious may be offended; for though grace, as such, is not capable sinfully to take offence, yet gracious persons may offend, or some actions may have an aptitude to offend a gracious zealous person rather than another. Thus Peter's dissimulation might be said to be offensive to Paul, Gal. 2. though more properly it was a scandal to Barnabas, yet it grieved and stirred Paul, though in a sanctified manner he did vent that which possibly some other gracious person might either have been irritated with, or, out of respect to Peter, led away, as Barnabas was; when an ungracious person would not have laid any weight on Peter's deed, as to any of these, that is, either to follow it, or be grieved with it.

From what is said, it may be someway clear how an indifferent or lawfull act may become offensive, to wit, as it doth, or is apt to work any of these effects upon others, whether they be weak or strong, gracious or prophane, and whether conscience or corruption doth rise at the offence that is taken: for, as giving of offence, doth imply uncharitablenesse and pride to be in the giver, so that he neither loveth nor regardeth his brother as he ought to do, neither doth in this as he would have others do unto himself; So offence taken, doth imply corruption and infirmity, (at the best) to be in him that taketh it; and therefore in this
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This matter of offence, respect would be had to the infirmity and corruption of others, as well as to their graciousness and affection. The not observing of which, maketh us take liberty in giving offence to many, because we do either esteem them to be wicked and prophan, or not affectionate to us, or, at the best, weak; and therefore not much to be regarded whether they be satisfied or not with our practices, which doth evidently shew, that there is despising and uncharitableness in the heart, when there is this regardleness in our practice, as may be gathered from Rom. 14. ver. 2, 10, and 15.

CHAP. V.

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

To come now to consider those things which ought to make men tender in this, we will find, first, that there is not any duty in the matter thereof more commanded than this of giving no offence, nor any sin more condemned than unkindness in this, as we may find from the Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, &c. wherein whole chapters are spent on this subject: Yea, Alb. 15. The Apostles and Elders thought the regulating of indifferent things for preventing of scandal, worthy to be enacted in the first Synod and Council. Secondly, There is no sin that hath more woes pronounced against it, the Lord Himself denounceth and doubleth a wo against it, Math. 18. 7. and the Apostle confirmeth it, Rom. 14. 20, &c. Thirdly, The hatefulnesse of it may appear in the rise thereof, it being, 1. an evident sign of dis-respect to God, and want of the impression of His dread, 2. of inward pride and self-conceitednesse, 3. of uncharitablenesse and regardlesnesse of others, and letting them at nought, which may be gathered from Rom. 14.
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14. 1 Cor. 8, and 10. and can there be any thing more to be shunned than these? And upon this we will find, that men are tender and conscientious in the matter of offence, and the use of their Christian liberty, as they are tender or untender in the material duties of Religion towards God, and towards others. Fourthly, There can be no worse effects than follow upon this, It bringeth a wo to the world, and is in Christ's account a most grievous plague when abounding; for, it hath destruction with it to many souls, Rom. 14. 20. It bringeth reproach upon the profession of Christianity, cooleth love among brethren, begetteth and fostereth contention and strife, marreth the progress of the Gospel, and, in a word, maketh iniquity to abound, and often, in particular, ushereth in error into the Church, which may be gathered from the places cited, and from Matt. 24. 10, 11, 12. And we suppose when it is tried, it will be found, that untenderneffe in the matter of scandal, hath been as prejudicial to the Church of Christ in respect of her outward beauty and peace, and the inward thriving of her members, as either error or prophanity, which have been but the product of this. Fifthly, Untenderneffe in this, openeth a door to all untenderneffe in the person that giveth offence, because by it the conscience becometh lesse sensible of challenges, and so he hath the greater boldneffe to do things that are materially evil; by this also he becometh habitually regardless of others. And although where respect to others is predominant, it be no good principle; yet often hath it great influence in restraining men from loosenesse, and in its own place ought to have weight. And doth not experience teach, that once liberty being taken in this, even things materially sinfull do often follow? Sixthly, Tenderness in this adorneth the Gospel exceedingly, convinceth those we live among, entertaineth charity, and warmeth love, even as carelessnesse in this doth open mens mouthes, and make
make both profession and professors a reproach. Seventhly, Untenderneffe as to offences, striketh at the root of Christian communion: there can be no freedom in admonitions, little in conferences, and, it may be, no great fervour in prayers with, and for others, where these abound; And is it possible that Religion can be well where these are? And may it not from these appear why Christ hath said, Wo to that man by whom offences come?

CHAP. VI.

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

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

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

2. Assert. Yet in other things there ought to be great
great respect had to offence, and men ought to be lived accordingly in their practice, as the former reasons clear; As, first, If the matter be of light concernment in itself, as how mens gestures are in their walking, (suppose in walking softly, or quickly, with cloak or without) men ought to do, or abstain as may prevent the construction of pride, lightnesse, &c. or give occasion to others in any of these; of such sort are salutations in the very manner of them: of this sort was women's praying with their head uncovered amongst the Corinthians, it being then taken for an evil sign; yet, if it be necessary, there is nothing little, as Moses will not leave an hoof; Exod. 10. nor Mordecai bow his knee to Haman, because that it looked like sauning on an accursed enemy: Of this sort also are offences in the fashions of cloathes, as some mens wearing of ribbands, and such like, which being of small concernment, ought certainly to be regulated by offence. Secondly, If it be indifferent, that is, in the matter thereof, such as may be done, or forborn; as eating or not eating such a meat for such a time, (for although no action is indifferent when it is done, because the circumstances of end, motive and manner, do determine them either to be good or bad, as they are agreeable or disagreeable to the Law when they are done, yet some actions in themselves are such) in these actions a Christian ought to do or abstain accordingly, as his doing or not doing may edifie or give offence; yea, in such things he may be for ever restrained, according to that word of Paul's, 1 Cor. 8. 13. I had rather not eat flesh while the world standeth, than by my meat make my brother to offend. This is to become all things to all men for their gaining, 1 Cor. 9. when our practice in such things is conformed to others edification rather than our own inclination or light; And thus many things, which we are persuaded are lawfull, and that we desire to do, are to be forborn out of conscience, conscience, I say, not our own,
own, but of some others that have not such clearness, as 1 Cor. 10. 28, 29. Thirdly, In positive duties of worship and things that are necessary by affirmative precepts, Scandal ought to have weight to time them so as not to give offence by them. For, although a Scandal cannot make duty to be no duty for ever, yet it may for a time suspend one from the exercise of a lawful duty, although not always: Thus to give alms, is a commanded duty, yet if there be hazard that an indigent person may abuse it, or others may take offence by that example either ostensibly in a selfish way to give, or to account so of him that doth give, or such like, in that case giving of alms is for that time to be forborn, except the persons strait make it necessary, or some other circumstance, and a privat way afterward is to be taken: So, preaching to a Minister, and hearing to a professour, are commanded duties, Yet supposing that a particular man's preaching at such a time, would stumble more than edifie, it is to be forborn. So in giving of admonitions, or in correcting of children, we are not to do these when we, or others, are in passion, although they be duties, but to take a fit time, lest more hurt follow than advantage: That being a rule anent affirmative precepts, that they bind continually (or semper) but not alway to the actual performing of them, (or ad semper) Thus a servant, or wife, or any other person are bound to pray always, yet to do it then when the master, husband, or family calleth—for some other thing necessary, would be an offence. Fourthly, In necessary things, offence ought to have weight according to the circumstantial case, to sway one in the manner and circumstances of that necessary duty; Thus, supposing it necessary to pray, a man is to choose the place and posture of praying accordingly; Thus it is offensive in some cases to pray so as we may be observed, because that looketh hypocritical like, and is condemned, Matt. 6. Sometimes again
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again, it is offensive not to be known to pray, as was in Daniel's case, Dan. 6. because his not evidencing of it by opening of his windows, had looked like his receding from his former piety, &c. And in this respect, what is offensive at one time, may be edifying at another, and what is edifying now, may become offensive afterward upon another occasion, as by Paul's circumcising of Timothy, and refusing to circumcise Titus, doth appear. Sometimes (suppose it when Nehemiah is standing before the King) to kneel down to pray, would have been offensive; at other times for a man to pray and not to kneel in his chamber, (as in Daniel's case) may be offensive also. And in this sort of offence, custom guideth much in the indifferent circumstances; and alteration in these, is often offensive. Fifthly, In our particulars, in temporall things we ought rather to cede in what is our own, than to offend others, and mar their spiritual good. Thus Christ condescended to quit His privilege, Matth. 17. 27. rather than to offend, and thus Paul shunned the taking of wages in Corinth, although he had right thereto, and did even then take from other Churches: The reason is, because the spiritual edification of our brother is of more value than our temporal right; much more is this to have influence in limiting and hedging us up from lawfull pleasures and contentments, or what our inclination and affection leadeth to, even though it be lawfull, if so be the following thereof may be an offence to any. It is for this also that Paul, 1 Cor. 6. condemneth their contentious going to Law before Infidels, because of the scandal thereof, and why (faith he) do ye not rather suffer wrong? Our Lord also, as was just now hinted, went before us in this, Matth. 17. 27. when He payed Tribute, and in that ceded His own right, lest He should offend; and it's like they were not of the most tender men.

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

CHAP. VII.

Shewing what the Scandal of the Pharisees or ma-
licious is, and clearing several other important
Questions.

If it be said, What then is it which is called the
Scandal of the Pharisees or the malicious, which
ought not to be respected? We answer, 1. In con-
structing any maliciously to take offence, there is great
need of spiritualness, lest we account men malicious
because of some particular difference from us, or some
other persons; even as from David's imprecations
against his malicious enemies, we would not draw an
example for regulating of our prayers, in reference to
our enemies. 2. There is need also here to take heed what spirit we be of in our accounting men to be such, as the Lord said to the Disciples, Luke 9. when they pretended Elias example: for, to make a man malicious in taking offence in this respect, so as not to be regarded. 1. It must be a necessary duty that he offendeth at, even the best, as the Pharisees did at Christ's preaching of the Gospel. 2. It must not be out of ignorance or weakness that this offence is taken. 3. It must not arise from any personal or particular account, but from a man's being instrumentall in furthering and advancing the Gospel, and so must be very sib to the sin against the holy Ghost, and therefore ought not to be pretended in our ordinary carriage.

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

If it be asked further, what one is to do in such a case when the matter is lawfull, and it be withall doubtfull whether it can be offensive or scandalous to any? Answer. 1. Beside the consideration of the thing, we would also consider circumstances of time, person, occasion, &c. 2. We would try what an action, so circumstantiated, hath formerly been thought of in the case of others in former times; Yea, 3. what use to be our own thoughts of such actions in other persons, if we have not counted them offensive in them? for often men more impartially judge, especially of what is offensive, in the persons of others than
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4. The conscience would be reflected on what it faith; for often there is a murmuring in the conscience, which sheweth its suspicion, that such a thing is offensive and hurtful, before it be acted, which is yet often born down by the impetuousness of mens inclination. 5. Others that may be more impartial, would be tryed; yea, the thoughts of these that we supposed to be the least tender of us are not to be neglected, for often they are most impartial in judging what is offensive. These things may have the more weight to sway one in their determination, because the trial runneth not to know what is duty, or lawfull in it self, but whether or not such a lawfull practice may be done or forborn without wronging the spiritual estate of any. 6. If it continue yet doubtfull whether it be offensive or not, the same rule is to be followed, as if it were doubted whether it were lawfull or not? to wit, It is to be abstained from, because as he that doubteth of the lawfulness of a thing, cannot do it in faith, because he knoweth not but it may be sinnfull; So neither can he that doubteth whether a lawfull thing be expedient or not, do it with persuasion, because he knoweth not but it may be scandalous to some, and so cannot but be sinnfull to him. Lastly, pains would be taken rightly to inform others, and to rectifie them that they may not take offence at things lawfull in themselves.

If it be said, that sufficient pains have been taken to inform them already, and that therefore their taking offence is inexcusable. Answ. Men would beware of making this an excuse, for many have great ignorance and are not soon capable of instruction, others have prejudice which is hardly rooted-out; Therefore I conceive it will not be easie to be able to assert an exoneration in this case. 2. If the thing continue to be indifferent (which is the matter concerning which the question is) there can be no terme
set to it: It is the Apostle’s word, 1 Cor. 8. 13. If meat make my brother to offend, I will not eat flesh while the world standeth. If the case alter and the matter become necessary by some circumstances, as Daniel’s opening of his window did, then that which formerly was indifferent, becometh necessary, and it would be offensive to omit it.

It may be further asked, What is to be done where there is a real difference betwixt parties, suppose for a civil interest? for, a man, by seeking his own, may irritate another, and, Is there a necessity of abstaining in that case? Ans. 1. There is no question but in some cases a man is to cede in his particular right, rather than to give offence by a legal pursuit, as when it may occasion the Gospel to be evil spoken of, and harden corrupt men in their hatred of the same. On this ground, 1 Cor. 6. the Apostle condemneth their going to Law before infidel Judges, and doth expressly say, ver. 7. Why do ye not rather take the wrong, and suffer your selves to be defrauded? And though the case now be not every way the same, yet we suppose Christians ought to lay weight on this, left in their pursuits they give occasion to make the professors of the Gospel to be accounted contentious, covetous, &c. And therefore it would seem, that when they contend for civil things, it would be for something of moment at least to the person, which also is clearly, or may be made appear to be clearly theirs, and that after friendly ways are esayled for attaining satisfaction.

2. We say, it ought to sway Christians in their manner of pursuing differences, so as there be not heat, passion carnalness, over-reaching and going beyond one another, nor the appearance of these to be seen in their carriage, but still following a civil difference, with respect to the spiritual good of the adversary, and that in such a manner as may be convincingly evidencing thereof both to him and others.

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

It may be further moved, what is to be done when there seems to be an opposition betwixt the command of a Superior, and the eschewing of offence, so that we must either disobey him or give offence in obeying, as suppose a Magistrate should command to preach upon some pretended holy day: the thing is lawful upon the matter, but the doing of it is offensive, either by grieving many, or strengthening others in the esteeming somewhat of that day? *Ans.* In that case, the Scandal is still active and given, and therefore no command or authority can warrant one in such a deed: for, as these two worthy Divines (Ames in his Cases of Conscience, *lib. 5.* *cap. 11.* and Gillespie in his Dispute of Ceremonies, *chap. 7.* *sect. 5.*) observe, no man can command either our charity or our consciences, or make up the hazard of a given offence; and therefore none can command us warrantably to hurt the spiritual good of our neighbour, that being contrary to the command of love that God hath laid on. And we may add, that an indifferent action, being involved with offence, cannot but be in its practising sinfull as it is complexly considered, and therefore cannot be the object of a Magistrates command more than an action that is sinfull in itself. On this ground, many of the Saints in the last persecution, did choose rather to suffer Martyrdom, than to be constructed to have ceded, or delivered the Bible, and therefore they would not redeem their life by giving of any piece of paper at the command of the Officers, lest thereby they should have been by others interpreted to have given up their Bible. It is to be remembered
membered that we spake not of displeasing, being by a
Superiours command that may be done, but of Scandalizing, either by strengthening somewhat that is
wrong, or seeming to do so, by wounding the con-
sciences of others, provoking them to judge us, or
some such way: And if it were not so, the three chil-
dren, Dan. 3. might have escaped the furnace; for, to
fall down at the Kings command, was not simply sin-
full (and had they done that, no more had been called
so) but to fall down at such a time, in such place, &c.
had at least the appearance of evil, and therefore
there was no room left for obedience. And, no que-
ston, Joabs resisting, and in part neglecting of Davids
command for numbering of the People, was more ap-
provable than his obedience, yet was the thing lawfull
in it self; but considering it as circumstantial, it tended
to foster Davids pride, and to be subservient in that
which brought on wrath, Therefore was not to be
obeyed to the confirming of him in his sin. The same
also may be said, when doing something that is offens-
ive may seem a way to prevent a croffe; for, active
offence being ever sinfull in respect of the complex
case, it is not to be allowed whatever peril follow, as
we may see in Daniels case who would not stumble
others by shutting of his window, although it ha-
zarded his own life, and the welfare of the hearers:
And in this case Paul faith, that it were better for him
to die than that any should make his glorying void, or
make him an occasion for others to stumble upon,
1 Cor. 9. 15. &c.

It may be said, that sometimes the case is so stated,
that whatever be done there will be offence, as if Paul
take wages, he is called a self-seeker, that is, one that
maketh gain of preaching the Gospell, if he forbear,
it is said he loveth not the Corinthians, and therefore he to follow on
taketh not from them; again, some weak Jews are either side.
ready to stumble, and not receive the Gospell if he cir-
cumcise not Timothy; others again, are ready to take
D 2 advan-
advantage and to plead the necessity of the ceremonial Law if he circumcise Titus: It may be asked, what is to be done in such cases? In reference to which we answer, 1. That we would ever look what is most expedient as to edification, it is like it did displease Peter and the Jews more that he did not circumcise Titus, and the false Apostles that he did not take wages, than if he had done it, yet he did what was most edifying, and of it self aptest to further their spirituall good; and a spirituall discernner will readily find what is most edifying in it self, or in that case, which is to be followed, although it may be most displeasing. 2. Respect would be had to these that are most unbyassled; prejudice possessed the Jews and these corrupt Teachers, and therefore whatever Paul did they stumbled at it; but it is like he had respect to others, and did what might most wipe away the calumnies that were cast upon him and the Gospel by these false Apostles. 3. In such a case, a man would look to what is most denied like, and it is ever safest to sway to that hand, as suppose a man were in hazard upon one side to be thought negligent, if he be not painfull, and even someway rigorous in his dealings with men, as on the other side, covetous, if he be but painfull. It is safest to hazard upon diligence without rigidity, although it should occasion him to be accounted negligent: Because there is least selfinesse on that side, and that hath least to commend it unto mens corruptions. Thus Paul rather hazardeth upon what might follow upon his refusing to take wages than to take them, because taking is of it self more apt to give offence than refusing, and doth not look so single-like, and there is not so easie access to vindicat that against clamorous mouths. 4. When the offence leemeth to follow both from omitting and committing, Paul chooseth often to commend forbearance, as in the cases of forbearing to eat meats, and to take wages, at least, in Corinth, seing he was other-
otherwise supplied. So, when there is hazard of being accounted proud on the one side, if men take so and so on them, or live in such and such a rank, on the other side, they may be accounted silly, and of no spirit, if they be short of that; it is yet safest to eschew what may look like ostentation, because the temptation of self-seeking lyeth nearest that. 5. The present state of the time, and the temper of those we live among, would be observed; as sometimes folks are ready to count an indifferent thing necessary, then it is to be abstained from; Therefore Paul would not circumcise Titus: Sometimes again, the omitting of an indifferent thing may seem to import the condemning of some necessary duty, and therefore Daniel will not forbear his ordinary circumstances in prayer: thus it is to be observed, to what side (to speak so) the tide of offence doth run, and that is to be shunned.

6. The nature of the persons is to be observed, which we have to do with in the mentioned case. Some are weak. So condescending edifieth them, and grieving of them might stumble them at the Gospel; others are perverse, and condescending to them, strengtheneth them in their opposition, and so proveth a stumbling to them. Upon this ground, circumcising of Timothy to the weak at one time is edifying, and forbearing thereof had been a stumbling-block: at another time, and to other persons circumcising had been an offence, as in the case of Titus instanced; and Paul's refusing to circumcise him, was not that he regarded not their stumbling, but that he knew the circumcising of him would puffe them up and strengthen them, and so stumble them indeed, therefore he would not do it.

If it be asked, what if the case stand so stated, that doing will offend the weak and tender, no doing will displease and irritate the perverse? as suppose in the case of eating things sacrificed to Idols; or contrarily doing offendeth the grosse, and no doing the tender, what is to be done in such a case? Anfw. As there is never...
a necessity of sinning, so there is never a necessity that one should fall in an active offence, the offence therefore upon the one side must be taken, and that is not to be regarded in comparison of the other. As suppose in some cases the weak be really offended, and the perverse are but irritated, in that case their irritation is not to be stood upon: for often they are really edified when they are dissatisfied, as in the instance proposed; eating of things sacrificed to Idols, was really offensive to the Godly, as being ready to draw them to sin, but though it might possibly displease others that the Believers did not eat with them, yet was there nothing in that deed of it self apt to humble them, and induce them to sin; Again, sometimes the Godly are displeased, and the perverse and profane are really humbled, as when Paul refused to circumcise Titus, it is like his not doing thereof did really displease many godly Jews that were zealous in the Law, yet his doing of that had really been a stumbling to many corrupt Teachers who did teach the necessity of circumcision, and would have been confirmed by that practice. Therefore Paul will rather displease the godly Jews than humble the profane Teachers by a deed which had also been a real stumbling unto the Jews. This then is the first rule, to wit, that we would look well upon what side the active offence lieth, and upon what side the displeasure only, and to choose the eschewing of offence, who ever be displeased. 2. When the thing is in it self indifferent to be done, or not to be done, it is safest to forbear whoever be displeased, as we see in the instances given, Paul inclineth still to forbearance, he forbore to eat flesh, and to circumcise Titus, and to take wages, &c. when the case is so stated, because whoever be displeased, that is not of it self so inductive to sin, as doing is, Which either doth strengthen others to do doubtfully upon our example, or to judge us for doing what they account sinfull, or some such like. Indeed,
Indeed, in some cases where there is no hazard of Offending by doing, we may do what is indifferent to prevent the irritating of any, that so there may be the greater access to edifie them: And therefore, Acts. 16.

2. Paul will circumcise Timothy, lest he make himself ungracious to the Jews in those parts; yet, had there been any there to take advantage from that to confirm their error, he had not done it, as in the other instance of Titus doth appear; for so it had not been an offence, but somewhat which was displeasing to those Jews. Yet, 3. supposing it to be so, that neither have ground, but both may be displeased, then the tender are to be respected, and the preventing their offence is to be preferred. 1. Because they are displeased out of conscience, and that is wounded; others are but irritated in respect of some lust, and so it is displeasure simply to them, but it's offence to the other, because on a ground of conscience they are displeased. 2. The Lord is most tender in the grieving, or not grieving of the godly (as is clear, Matt. 18.) Therefore ought we to be so also. Hence the Prophet professeth, 2 Kin. 3. 14. that had it not been respect to Jehosaphat, he had not stood much on the displeasing of others; or, suppose some prophane person should be displeased, because a man doth not drink so much, (although it be not inconsistent with moderation) and suppose some tender person should think his drinking thereof inconsistent with sobriety, I say, in that case he should respect the last, because this offence doth flow from a ground of conscience. Lastly, it would be looked to in such a case, what may be most in the upshot or event for edification, supposing there should be involvements on all hands; for some things being compared may be better discerned, than when they are abstractly considered in themselves; Now, edification and offence do never lie upon one side: therefore if it be found that such a thing comparatively be edifying, it is to be done, and what seemeth to oppose it, is not to be accounted offence.
IT may be profitable to enquire what is called for from a Christian living in the time when offences abound, and when there is too great a readiness both to give and take offence? *Answ.* It is hardly possible to condescend on all particulars here; yet because the thing is useful, and the Scripture is full in reference to this matter, in the fourteenth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and in both the Epistles to the Corinthians, and elsewhere, We may hazard to propose these general directions.

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

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

3. Folks would beware of despising or judging one another, but would by all means endeavour the entertaining and confirming of love, which is in this respect the bond of perfection. The Apostle giveth this direction, Rom. 14. 3. Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth. He that eateth is the strong professor, who is through in the knowledge of what is right and what is wrong; It is the fault of such readily to condemn and despise the weaker who cannot go along with them. Again, he that eateth not, is the weak, who, wanting clearness in what the other is clear of, is ready to judge the other as an undertaker person, because he doth what he cannot do,
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do. These evils are rife where offences abound, and are the oyl which nourisheth them: for, if there were not pride and despising in some, and untenderneffe and rash judging and jealousies in others that are weak, the plague that followeth offences would not be so great in the world. But these two are most directly opposit to the rule of charity that ought to be amongst Christians, both in guiding us in doing of our own acts, and in constructing and judging of the actions of others. And, in a word, love, that is the fulfilling of the Law, is the fulfilling of this precept also. See Job. 2. 10. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. Offences could neither be given nor taken if love to our brethren were fresh.

4. We would beware of moving or fostering needleffe and perplexed disputings, these have ever proved exceeding hurtfull to the Church, and proportionally wronged edification, as error and prophanity have done. It is the Apostle's first direction, Rom. 14. 1. Him that is weak receive, but not to doubtfull disputations; for such breed strife, and often waken carnalneffe in the contenders rather than pure zeal. And in this case, it is better for some to possesse clearneffe in their own judgment, and to condescend in their practice to others, than by venting their judgment unseasonably, to confound others, that is the meaning of the word, Rom. 14. 22. Hast thou faith? that is, clearneffe in such a particular, have it to thy self, that is, make your own privat use of it without troubling others with the same. And we will see, that this spirit of contention, and the abounding of offences, have ever been together in the Church. For certainly such contentions cannot but obstruct the growth of the weak, and grieve the strong, and stumble all. We conceive therefore, that at such a time it were more safe to abstain the wakening of new debates, raising of old, or using of new expressions, than
than to hazard upon the offence which may follow upon mens mistaking of them, or taking advantage by them, which will be more hurtful than any advantage they can bring. We conceive also that it were fitter to overlook some mistakes in some Writings at such a time, than unnecessarily to table a debate on every thing that seemeth dissatisfying in the writings and expressions of others, which is become too common, and by this, professed enemies are let alone and have peace, and all the debates in the Church, are almost amongst men that agree in fundamentals, because of some lesser differences.

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

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

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

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

8. When offences abound, it is often most safe to be least appearing, except a man's call be the more clear, and convincing: For, as in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin, So in much medling there wanteth not offence. This is also clear in experience, because offences come more ordinarily, and are more observed when something is done, than when something is forborne. Yet this is not to be extended to the omission of any necessary duty, but is to have great weight in indifferent things, that are not necessary, especially
especially such as for the time are most ordinarily the stone of stumbling. Hence we find, that though in some questions the Apostle is full to dispute down adversaries, as in the case of Justification; Yet there are some other things that he seeketh rather to have restrained than moved, such as he calleth doubtfull, Rom. 14. 1. endless, 1 Tim. 1. 4. that gender strife, and are not edifying, but foolish and unlearned questions, 2 Tim. 2. 14, 16, 23. men are to flee, and to shun these, even when occasion is given. For, though every question hath a truth upon one side, and the searching into necessary truths be edifying, yet as to such, considering the contention that waiteth on them, and the difficulties that are about them, the Church gaineth more by silence in them, than by too fervent pursuing of them.

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

10. There would be mutual faithfulness, and a condescending upon their side who are offended, freely and soberly to admonish those by whom they are offended; and upon the other side, a condescending to satisfy and remove any offence taken by those who
who have given it, or at whom it is taken. This is our Lord's rule, *Matt*h. 18. 15. &c. There is no-
thing more needfull, when offences abound, than these, and yet often there is little or no access to
them, or practice of them when they are most need-
full. And this maketh offences to abound the more.

And what thing is more unsuitable than for one to take or keep offence at another, and yet never to
endeavour his recovery who hath offended, and by so doing to hazard both their souls? Or, when one
hath given offence, and is admonished, to refuse to come out himself, or to keep another out of this
snare?

11. This endeavouring to have offence removed, ought to be followed convincingly, and that in the
several steps laid down, *Matt*h. 18. and if privat rea-

toning and admonition prevail not, it is to proceed
further till it come to the Church. But because the
Scandal then becometh publick, we shall speak of it
in the next branch. Only now it is to be adverted
concerning these offences in reference to which we
are to admonish our brother, and thus to follow them
in case of slighting, 1. They are not only wrongs
done to the person immediately or directly, but it may
be his being stumbled at his seeming a mans miscar-
riages towards others, So the injury may be to one,
but the offence to another. 2. This duty is to be
gone about, not only without all heat, prejudice, or
contention, but with the spirit of love, as a duty pro-
ceeding there from for his good, even from that same
spirit by which we pray for him, they being both
equally necessary duties. And, 3. That this Order
of Christ's is not to be interverted by any, nor the
publick gone to, till the private may be effectually
effayed.

12. There is a necessity in every thing (especially
at such a time) to be single in our end, having the


glory of God mainly in our eye. And that not on-

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

13. Much care would be had to keep up the authority of all Christ's Ordinances; they are the lights and means whereby men are to be directed, lest they stumble, and to be strengthened and comforted in their spiritual consolations; and hardly offences arise, but the Devil seeketh to discredit these, because then men are in the dark, and so cannot but fall when blocks are in their way. Hence often are the Ordinances of life the very pretended rise of offences, as concerning a Ministry, Baptism, the Lords Supper, Sabbath Day, Singing of Psalms, Constitution of a Church, Discipline, &c. because by making these to be stumbled at, or stones of stumbling, men can have access to no other means, either for direction or consolation. On this ground Paul endeavoureth so much to vindicate himself from what was imputed to him, 2 Cor. 12. 19. And for this end so many directions are given for keeping up the credit of the ordinances in the most difficult dark cases, as Song 1.8. Eph. 4.12,13. Heb. 13. 7, 8 & c. & 17. especially Mat. 18. 17, 18, &c. And on the contrary, for eschewing corrupt
corrupt teachers, and those who cause divisions and
offences contrary to the doctrine learned, &c. \textit{Rom.} 16.
17. Then it is a time to try the spirits, and to fear
snakes, and to hate every garment that is spotted with
the flesh; and we find in Scripture, and experience
that ever these two go together, to wit, thunning of
those who bring false doctrine, and the adhering to
those who are faithfull on the other side.

14. At such a time especially, Christians in their
walk toward one another, ought to be of a sympa-
thizing and condescending temper. This is to bear
the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves,
but our neighbour for his good to edification, even as
Christ pleased not himself, &c. as the Apostle hath
it to the same scope. \textit{Rom.} 15. 1, 2, 3. Tenaciousnesse
and self-willednesse do often breed offences, and con-
tinually stand in the way of removing of them, and
although there is nothing more ordinary in a time of
offences than that, to wit, for men to stand to their
own judgement and opinion as if it were a piece of
liberty and conscience, not to condescend in a thing
that we judge lawfull, yet is there nothing more un-
suitable for Christians in such a time: for, as \textit{Solomon
faith, Only by pride cometh contention}, \textit{Prov.} 13. 10. So
this self-pleasing humour is the great foramer of of-
fences in the Church. This condescending was \textit{Paul's
practice} in this case, \textit{1 Corinth.} 9. ver. 19, 20, &c. who
became all things to all men, for their edification, be-
ing in the use of indifferent things so dependent upon
the edification of others, and so denied to his own
pleasing and inclination; yea, even to his own light,
as if he had had none himself. And although this be
incumbent to all Christians, yet these who are more
eminent and strong, are especially called to this for-
bearance and condescending, as it is \textit{Rom.} 15. 1. \textit{We
then that are strong ought to bear, &c.} \textit{Gal.} 6.1,2. It is
a great mistake in Religion, to think, that in indiffer-
rent circumstantiall things, the weak should follow
the
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the strong, and upon that ground to undervalue the offending of them: It is quite contrary to Scripture, the strong are to carry to the weak as men do to brittle and weak vessels, using tenderness to them lest they be crushed. What is said in all the directions, doth therefore specially concern the more strong Believers, that in these they may go before others.

CHAP. IX.

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

15. The last direction is, That then Ministers in a speciall manner, are called to betit themselves for draining this torrent of Offences, even as they are to set themselves against the abounding of sins. And indeed we know no mean fitter and more comprehensive for this end, than that Ministers cordially interpose for the removing thereof. For, this is a speciall end for which they are given to the Church, as was formerly said, and this is a special part of their charge, to watch over souls in reference to this. Hence we see, that the Apostle Paul doth not insist more in his publick doctrine, or in his private carriage, upon any thing, than upon this, to wit, That the Church may be made and kept free of Offences, as what hath been observed from him out of the Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, &c. doth evince. Nor doth he with any kind of persons deal so much to restrain strifes, contentions, janglings about words, and such things which do gender offences, as in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, charging them, that not only in reference to their own carriage, but, as Ministers of the Gospel, they would endeavour this in their charges; and there can be no reason of this, but because the matter is of such concernment to the Church, and because they by their stations have a
main influence either on the restraint or growth of scandals and offences. Yea, doth not the blessed Prince of Pastors Himself, often take notice of offences in His sermons? sometimes reproving them, sometimes shewing the ill of them, and often purposely insisting in instructions for this very end, that His Disciples should not be offended, as Job 16.1. and in His practice, condescending to prevent the offence, even of carnal men, Matt. 17.27. and doth much insist on that doctrine, giving directions for preventing and removing thereof, Matt. 18. and particularly He giveth direction for the promoting of mortification, by cutting off the right hand, and plucking out the right eye, &c. which being given by the Lord, if well studied and practised, might be a compend of all other directions, it is so well chosen for that purpose, as all His directions were. All which sheweth, that when offences abound, much doth hy upon Ministers at such a time, and that both in reference to their own personal carriage, and also in their ministerial stations; and in sum, in their whole walk, both amongst themselves, and towards others of all sorts, which we may hint at in some particular instances: As, 1. that their conversations be then grave, sober, holy, denied, &c. and eminent in all that is called for from private Christians, at such a time. For, as their carriages are more observed than others, so do spots upon them more discernably appear, and when appearing, are more readie to humble and harden others. It is for this, that a Minister is to shew himself a pattern and as a copie or example to the Believer, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, &c. as it is, 1 Tim. 4.12. Upon this ground also are they at such a time to flee youthful lusts of contentions, strife, and such like, even when these seem to follow them; and on the contrary, to pursue righteousness, faith, charity, peace, &c. even when these seem to flee from them, as it is, 2 Tim. 2.22. Both which places relate especially
especially to perrillous times, as the scope in the preceding words doth hold forth. And if this be not in Ministers, what can be expected amongst the people? and without this, can their carriage or publick Ministry have weight to this end? 2. Ministers would be watchfull, not only over sins, but even over offences, yea, even over passible offences, left any by themselves, or any other be offended, which was our Lords way and the practice of the Apostles, as in the places cited. For, to be offended, is an infirmity and sickneffe, even when the offence is mearely taken; and for a Minister not to be affected with that, doth hold forth a most unministeriall cruel disposition; that is spoken of by the Apostle as a great part of the care of the Church, 2 Corinthians. 11. 28, 29. *Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?* The hearing of a persons stumbling, ought to sound and will sound the heart of a sympathizing Minister, as if it were a fire in his bosome. And were this one thing in vigour, to wit, native sympathie with those that are offended, it would usher-in all other directions: This would make Ministers pray much to have it prevented, as our Lord doth, John. 17. and Paul doth, Romans. 15. 5. This would make Ministers sparing to give offence, or to laugh at the offences of others, or to despise and slight those that are offended, much lesse to spread rumours, entertain contentions, or so to aggrege miscarriages in others, as thereby the fvoid of offences may rather be increased than dried up by them. And it is found, that seldom offences have been in the Church, but Ministers have had a prime hand therein, as if it had been a part of their duty to promove the fame: which sayeth, that especially they had need to be watchfull at such a time. 3. Ministers would endeavour much unity amongst themselves, and unity amongst Professours. There is no keeping off of offences without this; for strife and contention are the sewell by which this plague of

Scandal
Scandal is kindled and entertained, when offences are abounding in Corinth: it is the first direction that Paul giveth. 1 Epist. 1 chap. ver. 10. I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same things, that there be no divisions among you, &c.

And when he hath been large in two Epistles, he doth almost close with this, 2 Epist. chap. 13. 11. Finally, brethren, farewell: Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of peace shall be with you. And he not only exhorteth to it, But, Rom. 15. 5. he prayeth for it upon the back of all his doctrine and directions concerning offences; Yea, it was the way that our blessed Lord Jesus took, to commend union, and to pray for it to His Disciples; left thereby the world should be stumbled and kept back from the acknowledging of Him, and the beauty of the Church should be obscured, so as the members thereof should not be known to be His Disciples, as may be at length seen in the Gospel, and particularly, Job. 17. 4. Ministers would study the diverting of people from these things which ordinarily breed offences, as striving about words, and jangling in controversies not material, the judging and condemning of others, and such like; and they would study to be occupied themselves, and to have others exercised in these things that come nearer the power of Godliness and the life of Religion. We see when the rest of the Disciples offend at Zebedee's children for their suit, the Lord checks that, and proposeth to them the necessity of humility and mortification, and such like, that he might put the unprofitable question, (who should be greatest?) out of their head, as it is in Math. chap. 18. 1, &c. and chap. 20. ver. 20, and 25, &c.

And this is frequent in Paul's Epistles to Timothy and Titus, whereas upon the one side, he dehorteth from strife, contention, vain jangling, following of fables, and such like. So he doth, upon the other side, exhort to the exercise of godliness, and to the pressing of good works,
works, as good and profitable to men in opposition to these, as may be gathered from 1 Tim. chap. 1. ver. 4, 5. and chap. 4. ver. 7, 8. 2 Tim. chap. 2. ver. 14, 15, &c. Titus 3. ver. 8, 9. Yea, the Apostle will have Ministers so serious in this, as to charge and obtest their hearers (as he did his, 1 Corin th. 1. 10. and Phil. 2. 1.) to eschew these things, and not to strive about words, 1 Tim. 1. 3, 4. 2 Tim. 2. 14, &c. Especially Ministers would beware of mentioning such things unnecessarily, as are the bone of contention, or which may foster mistakes of, or grudges against, others, or make themselves to appear to be carnal, and to walk like men. But rather they would endeavour to hush them to silence, as they would have blocks removed out of the peoples way, otherwise they cannot but lose of their ministerial authority, and discompose the frame of the people, which by all means should be eschewed by them.

The considering of three Scriptures will give a view of Paul's carriage in reference to this, And O how commendable is it! The first is, 1 Corinthians. 9. 19, 20. 21, 22, &c. Though I be free from all men, yet have I made my self servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews, I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, that I might gain them that are under the Law; to them that are without Law, as without Law, (being not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without Law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Where, his condescending to others, his insinuating by all means to win the affection of people, his greediness to edifie and save souls, and his endeavouring by his own example to engage others to that same condescending way, are abundantly holden forth as an useful and excellent copie to be followed especially by Ministers, who should...
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There is a great word that he hath ver. 3. Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed: (for untendereness in offences maketh the Ministry obnoxious to contempt;) But in all things approving our selves as the Ministers of God; that pointeth out a ministeriall walk which studieth more the Matters honour, the credit of the Ordinances, and the good of souls, both his own and others, than the pleasing of others, and the making themselves acceptable only as men, or as familiar companions to those they converse with. Then followeth, In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindnesse, by the holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness, on the right hand, and on the left; By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. Wherein, as in so many steps, he setteth forth his ministerial walk, for the preventing of offence, being a most excellent description of a patient, diligent, faithfull, denied, impartiall, single, powerfull preacher, driving and pressing the great design of Reconciliation, as his main scope, as from the close of the former Chapter, and the beginning of this, is clear. And this is pointed out as his work at such a time, amongst such a people for such an end, as the preventing of offence.

The third Scripture is, 2 Corinth. chap. 11. ver. 28, 29. which was formerly cited, and is worthy to be engraven on a Ministers heart. Beside that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the Churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?
not? Never man was more serious in quenching fire in his house than Paul was in removing of offences, and in recovering such as were offended. He was not only careful not to give offence himself, nor only to keep others from giving offence, nor yet only for removing of such as were taken at himself; nay, not only to satisfy those that were strong that had offended, but the very stumbling, although without cause, of the most weak, ignorant, silly persons, affected him more, than if it had peirced himself. It is not like that he could have continued careless of men's constructions of him, of their being grieved and made weak, or of their being offended any other way, (as, alas, it is like too many do now!) It was no matter of laughing to him to hear of the sadness of any, that did proceed even from mistakes; and there was no rest in his mind till such an infirmity was cured. These three places and others, being soberly considered in their matter and scope, will give the serious conscientious Minister insight in a great part of his duty, and (it may be) in no little part of his sin and challenge at such a time. The Notes also of the Reverend Master Dickson upon the same subject, (worthy to be taken notice of) do more fully confirm this. Happy were the Ministers that were of such a frame and of such a practice; And happy were the Church under their inspection. O that it may once thus be!
PART II.

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

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

CHAPTER I.

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

Concerning the first Question, we lay down these grounds, 1. Every thing offensive is not publick, or immediately to be brought before a Church-judicatory. Of this sort are, 1. Sins of
infirmity, which possibly may be offensive for the time. Yet the persons way being considered, they are to be thought to proceed from his infirmity, they being incident to such who are in some serious manner watchfull over their way; and therefore are not the object of Discipline, which is to curb and restrain the more grosse humours of Professors: Otherways the exercise of Discipline, in reference to infirmities, would utterly prove an intanglement both to Officers and Members, and so occasion more stumbling, contrary to Christ's scope. 2. Offences that are in disputable practices, or that flow from miscarriage in things indifferent, are not properly the object of Church-censure, because there is not solid access of through convincing the party. Hence we see, that in these disputes concerning indifferent things, or of practices following thereupon, the Apostles reprove mens untendernesse in them, but do never make them the ground of Censure as such, except they be aggre-ged by some other circumstance. Of this sort also are offences that may proceed from mens carriage in legal pursuits and civil contracts which may offend; yet cannot they be legally convinced to have broken a rule, when the strain of their way is legal, although it may be sinfull before God, and be to be reproved by private admonition where men have accessse.

3. Some offences are grosse, and, it may be, known to some to be true; yet possibly there is no convincing way of demonstrating the truth thereof to others: in that case, it's more safe and edifying to forbear publick mentioning of that scandal, than to pro-secute the same, seing it may more irritate the person, and weaken the Church-authority, than edifie.

4. Some scandals are grosse, and may be made-out by two or three witnesesses; yet are not immediately to be brought to publick, except upon the supposition of following obstinacy, and not satisfying of those two or three, which especially is to be consi-dered,

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

When a scandal is to be brought to publick.

2. Scandals may be of that nature, that it is fit
to take publick notice of them, and to follow them
with Church-censures till they be removed. This is
clear in the Lord's reproving the neglect of publick
Censure in those Churches; for, His finding fault that
they had such, and suffered such (as in the next Ep-
istle) can be construeted no otherways, but that they
did not by Church-censure cut them off from their
fellowship, which is elsewhere abundantly clear.
And it is true in these cases. 1. When a scandal is of
its own nature grosse and infectious, like a little
leaven ready to leaven the whole lump. 2. When
it is clear and in the matter of fact cannot be denied:
the first is requisite to a publick scandal for convincing
of the conscience of the evil it self; the second for
making application of the consequents of such an
evil to such a person. 3. An offence becometh pub-
lick, though it be not of its own nature so at first; if it
be afterward aggregated by such circumstances as ob-
stinacy and contempt of private admonition, frequent
relapsing therein, and such like, as Christ's rule,
Matt. 18, and the general nature of offence doth con-
confirn: Scandals that are so circumstanciated, and they only, are to be taken notice of by Church-judicators as the proper object of Church-discipline. Hence we may see a great difference betwixt offence as it is the object of private discretion, and as it is the object of Church-discipline. I call them grosse evils and of an infectious nature, which are against a clear Law of God, and of that influence in a man’s christian walk, as any sober man, acquainted with the Word of God, and reflecting upon conscience, cannot but acknowledge to be sinfull, obstructive to the work of grace where they are, and tending to the marring the beauty of a Church, and the edification and salvation of her members if they should spread, such as Sabbath-breaking, swearing, and what doth directly contradict a moral command, these things are obviously confurable. And upon this occasion, I cannot but much wonder at, and regrate the unwarrantable expressions, at least, in the matter of fact, of a Learned man, Mr. Baxter against Blake, pag. 130. his words are, In some Countries, where some oaths are grown customary and of no great evil repute, it is possible for a godly man to be long guilty of them, as it is known that many well reputed of for godliness are in Scotland, &c. where he doth misrepresent the Church of Scotland in a twofold mistake (to say no more,) 1. as if some swearing were so customary in Scotland as to abound even amongst the Godly. 2. As if it were not taken notice of, or of no evil repute or scandalous: It is like this may be his information, but certainly Christian charity would have pleaded, that such information should not have been received against a Brother, without some convincing ground; much lesse to have been vented as a thing known against a Christian Church, which, however the be otherwise afflicted and rent, and so obnoxious to much contempt and reproach, yet hath a witnesse both in Heaven and Earth of zeal against that sin, and in
nocencie in that respect, as to these that are Godly, even but seemingly, There being nothing more abhorred by a godly heart, and accounted a greater evidence of profanity amongst us, than customary irreverent medling with the holy Name of God, and swearing of any kind: and although we be many ways guilty before God, even in this respect; yet we suppose she may hold up her face therein, beside, and with any Church on earth.

Where offences are publick, yet difference is to made.

3. We say, That even among these Scandals that are in this sense publicly to be taken notice of, there is many ways difference to be made in the prosecuting of them, and that in diverse respects. 1. So ne Scandals are of such grosse nature and publickneffe in the fact, that they cannot be passed without some publick rebuke, at least, even though the person should seem satisfingly to resent his deed, because in this respect is to be had to the edification of others, and not of the person only. 2. Some Scandals again are such, as by authoritative admonition may be helped: and in this sense, if a person hear the Church-guides and take their admonition, there is no further progress to be made. Again, 3. Sometimes persons are to be followed with the highest censure of Excommunication, when open rebukes cannot do the business, as we see in the case before us, and other practices of Pauls. And we suppose, that such a scandal as hath this Sentence following upon it, would be in the grossest of its nature, and clearness of its proof, convincingly made out both to the person himself, and to others. Because, 1. otherwise it may make this great Ordinance contemptible, if upon like, or disputable grounds, it be drawn forth. 2. Neither can it have weight with the person to gain its end upon him natively, as a Church-ordinance ought to have, the first step whereof is, convincingly to argue him to the sense of his fault, as the word is, Matth. 18. 15. 3. Neither can it be expected to have such weight
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weight with others who ordinarily carry towards them that are under it, as they are convinced of the weightiness or lightness of the ground of that Sentence. 4. The nature of this Ordinance cleareth this also; for (as Divines say) it is added to confirm God's threatenings, as Sacraments do seal the promises; then it importeth, that there must be a clear threatenings ere this can be appended; and there can be no such threatening applied, but where both the sin in its nature, and the fact in its notority are convincing; and indeed all the precedents of this Sentence in Scripture are of this nature, to wit, they are both rare, and also upon most convincingly grosse evils. I cannot express it better than it is done by that Reverend Divine, Mr. Thomas Hooker of New England in his History, part 3. pag. 39. Such evils, (the words are his) which are either heinous and abominable, as fornication, murder, adultery, incest, treason, &c. or, if not so grosse, yet carry the face of evil in their forehead, upon the first serious and well grounded consideration of reason; and have been pertinaciously and obstinately persisted in after the improvement of all means upon them for conviction and reformation: These only deserve Excommunication by the rules of Christ, 1 Cor. 5. Matth. 18. 17. thus far he. Advert, that what we speak here of a publick scandal, is spoken in respect of the nature thereof; what is to be accounted such, in respect of its manifestnesse and notoritie, followeth afterward to be spoken of.
Concerning what order is to be kepted in the following of publick Scandals.

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

1. All publick processing of scandalous persons, or judicially taking notice of scandals, would be done with respect to the ends for which Discipline is appointed, and so as may attain the same. This, I suppose, cannot be denied: for the means must be suited to its end. Now, the ends of publick Censuring, are,

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

Hence, 2. we say, that the same offences, upon the matter, are not equally nor at all times, nor in all persons, and, it may be, in all places in the same manner, to be pursued and followed; and the reason is clear, because according to circumstances, that manner which is edifying at one time, and in one case, may be destructive in another, and so is not to be followed, because that power which God hath given is, for edification and never for destruction, 2 Corinthians 13. 10. And accordingly, we see Paul in some cases cenfuring corrupt men, as Hymeneus and Philetus, 1 Timothy 1. 20. Sometimes again, he threateneth and yet spareth, although
though the scandal in it self deserved Censure, as when he saith, Gal. 5. I wish they were cut off that trouble you, and yet doth it not, because he found not the Churches edification so to require. So also, 2 Corinth. 10. 4. and 6. Having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled: which yet he thought not meet for the time to do, lest it should have irritated to more disobedience, and have bred some greater rent or schism, or have made the authority of the Ordinances leffe weighty, and so have marred his end, which was in all things (and so in this forbearing) their edification, as he expresseth it, chap. 12. 19. Brethren, we do all things (and so this also) for your edifying.

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

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

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

3. From this also it will appear, that Church-officers ought with such tenderness, love and sympathie to walk in publick Censures, as not only they may have a testimony in their own Consciences, but also that those who have offended, and others that observe their way, may also be convinced of the same; for, if this be not, what can their Censure gain? and if it be needfull for a Minister in preaching, to study that, it is in some respect more necessary here: because ordinarily, men out of their corruption, are more ready to mistake mens intentions in this; and we conceive, that in this a Church-judicatories procedure, ought discernably to differ from a civil Court,
in that they are not only out of Justice cenfuring the party, with a respect to the common body, for whose good in some cases the most penitent member must be cut off, and cannot be reprived, but as endeavouring the Churches freedom from offences, that the offending member may be thereby with all tenderness restored and cured; and in experience we see, that often Church-censures have weight, as they are constructed to proceed from love. And we conceive, that the following of these and such like directions, may have much influence for attaining of this. 1. That nothing be rashly and hastily brought to publick, but that which is a convincing Scandal in it self, clear in the matter of fact, and also after privat dealing with the person, and triall of his carriage afterward: if the scandal be not very grosse and publick, Hastie bringing to publick, irritateth: and if a private admonition of Minifter and Elders might gain a Brother, what needeth further? And by so doing, a person is convinced, that that Minifter, or Elder, desireth his amendment, and on that condition to cover his offence. 2. There would be no rigid insisting in what is personall, in reference to any of the Judicatory, as suppose, they should sometimes get Sharling answers, or unbecoming words, or be met with by irreverent carriage: in that case, there would be condescending, and what is offensive beside, would be insisted on, and these personall things forborn. It is true, the authority of the Ordinances would ever be kept up, yet that is not always done by a rigid prosecuting of personal reflections; but on the contrary, it often looketh like Christ's Ordinance, when meekness is most prevalent, and so in the end, it cometh to have greater weight; for, many cannot discern betwixt Officers seeking their own authority, and the authority of the Ordinances; and when the rise of the offence is from a miscarriage to some person immediately, it looketh to them to be carnall and vindictive.
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ative like, and so hath the appearance of evil, and is to be eschewed. This we may observe also in Paul's carriage, and in the practices of most zealous men, who never wronged the Ordinances by denying of their own respect in such cases. And Church-officers would especially advert to this, because often in our hottest fits, it is rather respect to our own authority, than zeal for Christ that acteth us, which appeareth by this, that a practical contempt of the Ordinances in our own hands, will stir more than many other grosse evils, or doctrinall blasphemies, or contemptuous practices which immediately reflect on others, although these may be more dishonourable to Christ.

3. For attaining this end, the rigidity and strictness of law would not be stuck to, as the persons not appearing at such a day, if afterward they condescend; their hastiness in expressing themselves rashly at one time, or carrying themselves irreverently, which afterward they may passe from; these and such like, I say, are not to be stuck to, left Church-officers seem, under pretext of Church-discipline, to take advantage of them; and it is an evidence of the contrary, when they are condescended unto in this. Advert, this is to be observed in practices that seem to flow from infirmity; but, suppose the person were some subtle, deceitfull, dissembling one, using his pretexts of repentance for furthering his design, this condescension may be hurtfull to the Church of God, in letting such an occasion slip, and therefore is not to be admitted.

4. It contributeth to this end also, that publick appearances and publick rebukes be not frequent, not in cases but such as are in the nature and evidence thereof convincing, and that also after private admonitions have been fruitlessly given. We suppose that mid step in Christ's direction, Matth. 18. doth warrant this, Take to thee two or three before thou tell the Church. Hastie bringing to publick reproof, is constructed by many to be a seeking of their shame,
but when it is rare, and done in the order foresaid, and also with some reasons why a publick rebuke in such a case is just and expedient, being other means have failed, and the condition of others calleth for that now, &c. it doth much allay that prejudice; for every man hath reason and a conscience, though many often want the exercise thereof. We find also publick rebukes rare in Scripture: And although sometimes, a publick appearing may be thought most edifying to the Congregation; Yet, 1. If they were very frequent, they would lose their weight. 2. One publick rebuke in this manner and order, will edifie more than many otherwise: for, it is not the multitude of them that edifieth, but the convincingness of the manner of proceeding. And therefore we conceive it is never fit to multiply publick rebukes, even supposing that scandals were multiplied, but that some should be pitched-on that might most convincingly edifie, and that private dealing with others for conviction be made the more weighty, which also is the judgement of the great Augustine. 3. Peoples offending for the omitting of publick rebukes, is, when the scandal thereof doth flow from this, that they conceive it to proceed from carlefnesse, negligence, partiality, or some such thing in the Officers, whereas, if by custome it shall be known to a people, that Officers are diligent observers of these things, and are not defective in dealing with scandalous persons for convincing of them, and do take this way as the most loving and tender mean of their gaining, such manner of proceeding will be more convincing and edifying, than if the thing were instantly brought to publick; for, people generally approve of tendernesse and condescending in Church-officers, as looking like love to the gaining of souls, and so lay much weight on their Censuring, even of others, when they see them, as it were, constrained thereto. And on the contrary, there is nothing more offensive to them than
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than when this tenderness is desiderated. It is to be guarded here, that this be not made a cloak to negligence and unfaithfulness; for, diligence and freedom is to be no lesse used with the parties, yea more, than if they were brought to publick. Only, this forbearance is to be made use of as a mean for making that diligence and freedom the more successfull: otherwise, whether it be forborn or followed, it continueth still to be hurtfull. Also, when one of these abounding scandals, or scandalous persons is rebuked, then especially the Minister would so gravely and zealously agree that evil, that in some respect all that are under it may be reproved, and his indignation at it may be so discernable, that that one reproof may be in place of many, and yet the forbearance will give access for some to come off the same.

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

diverted with the serving of Tables, but appointed Deacons to be chosen for that end, that they might give themselves principally, and, in comparison of other duties, fully (or as they say themselves; ver. 4. continually) to prayer, that is, to the private exercise thereof; and the Ministry of the Word, that is, the preaching thereof in publick. By which we may see,

1. what a Ministers great task is, wherein he should be taken up, to wit, secret prayer, (under which are comprehended, reading, meditation, and other duties meet for his own particular case, and preparation for the duties of his calling, as may be gathered from 1 Tim. 4. 13, 14, 15.) and the publick preaching of the Gospel. 2. We see also, that though Ministers are virtually both Elders and Deacons, (as the Apostles were) yet ought they to regulat their exercising of both these, with respect to the former two. And, 3. that Elders and Deacons ought in governing, and overseeing the poor, to have special respect to keep Ministers from being burthened or toyled with these, that they may have freedom to follow the Ministry of the Word, as the main thing: Yea, even to have much access to privacy and solitariness, which is both most necessary for, and a well becoming duty to a Minister; This is a special end of the appointment of these Officers, and in reference to which they are helps, 1 Cor. 12. 28. both to the people and to the Ministers. A third thing to be adverted to, is, that contentious and irritating processes be so followed, as by these there be no prejudice laid before persons, to make them stumble at the Word, or to render it the more unprofitable. It is true, sometimes such things are necessary for the good of the body, and for the vindicating of Christs Ordinances, yet as much as may be they would be shuned, and Ministers especially ought to carry so in the manner, as to keep room for the Word in the affections of the parties. And we conceive, that multiplying and length-
ning of processses (except where there is grave and weighty cause) and the way of trial of members, penitents, or such as are to be admitted to Sacraments, which is pleaded for by some, if it were put in practice, could not but much intangle Ministers, yea, become a more weighty and intolerable burthen to them, than the preaching of the Word: yea, could not but be obstrusive thereto, contrary to the nature of Discipline, as said is.

CHAP. III.

Shewing that Christ's order and method, Matth. 18. is to be kepted, and what it doth imply.

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

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2. It is clear from that place, that the offences to be complained of, are not injuries or wrongs to us under that notion as such, but what is offensive in its nature and under that consideration, whether any wrong be intended to us in it or not. It is not suitable to a Church-court to have only persons complaining of wrongs done to themselves, as if they be cursed, defamed, &c. and yet not to take notice of what is offensive, as wronging the honour of God, reflecting upon the profession of the Gospel, and really laying a stumbling-block before themselves and others. This is to neglect scandals, and to take notice of flanders, which, as we said, differ from these. Hence, such persons ordinarily follow their complaints with much bitterness, and never seek to convince the party privately. We conceive therefore, that such direct complaints, so circumstantiated, ought not to be admitted, at least, upon that consideration; lest the Ordinance of Christ be made subservient to men's particular passions and interests. It is therefore more fit when such offences arise, that they be taken notice of abstractedly from such complaints, and that in the order that other scandals are to come in, whereof now we are speaking. 3. It is clear from that order, Matth. 18. that when the person offending, doth accept of the admonition, there is no mention further to be made thereof; yea, it would not be so much as reported privately, if it be not otherways known. 4. If that private admonition prevail not, then is the person to take two or three with him before it come to the Church, and this is not to be done superficially, and for exonerating meekly, but convincingly, and for the persons edification. Therefore we suppose, that this is not to be restricted to one time, either in private, or before these two or three: for, once speaking may be but little useful; and seeing the Church is to continue in dealing with the person before they give him over and proceed, and before they can account that he heareth
heareth not them, So ought it to be in the preceeding
two steps, seing the words are the same. Again, I
say, this would be done convincingly, they would
argue (as the word is) with the offending brother,
and not rest satisfied with some passing word or ad-
monition. Further, these two or three would be
chosen, so as may be most fit for that purpose, and
may have most weight with him, (we think some
Elder, one at least, or two, were not unfit) and this
would be done purposely, gravely and seriously, as
the words, Take with thee, &c. import. All this is
to preceed the bringing of a scandal to publick, which
is to sift here if this prevail. Whence, 5. also we
may see, that every scandal which is known to two
or three, is not to be accounted a publick scandal, and
at the first instant to be brought to the Church, be-
cause it is supposed, that these two or three may have
knowledge of the same scandal, and yet may it war-
rantably never come to publick, if the person hear
them. It looketh unlike this way to bring scandals
to publick, wherein scarce two witnesses can be had.
Indeed, after the fault noised and flagrant, and the
presumption is great, and the party suspect like, such
things are publickly to be taken notice of, though the
proofs be not so pregnant. 6. If this do not the bu-
ness, but the person continueth obstinate, although
to the conviction of those two or three assessors, the
fact be grosse, and the party guilty, then it is to be
brought to publick, either immediately by the person
that was stumbled, or by an Elder, (for which cause,
we said, it was not unmeet that one of these should
be among the former witnesses) When it cometh
to the Church, we conceive, that with the parties, it
were meet to call some one, or more of those who were
witnesses of the private admonition, that the Judica-
tory may be informed by them of the case, seing
probably they may be more impartial than the
other. And it will be conduceable for attaining clear-
clearnesse in the thing, to know what hath preceeded, and where it left; and this would make private admonitions and witnesses therein, to have the more weight with men; for, knowing that their carriage at such a time would be made manifest to others, it would have influence to make them at first more rationall and sober, if they knew that what they said then, would afterward be repeated to them before two or three; and what they spoke before those, were to be again impartially reported to the Eldership. And we conceive, it is for this cause amongst others, that Christ calleth them witnesses, and such witnesses, as may establifh the matter, which must be rather in their testifying to the Church, than in private accompanying the offended party. For, when a person bringeth such an offence to a publick Judicatory, he must make out these two, 1. That such a person hath actually given offence, 2. That he hath effectually admonished him, and he hath not heard him, nor satisfied him. Now, though the first be made out by other witnesses, yet the last cannot be made out but by such as were called by him; and therefore with respect to that, they are called witnesses by our Lord, as is said.

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

If the offences be of that nature, that a publick rebuke be necessary, in respect of the circumstances and aggravations thereof, it is not to be neglected: Yet,
Yet, it is not necessary that every offence that cometh to the Eldership, yea, even these that are known to many, should at all times be brought to a publick rebuke. For, if the Sessional or Elderships admonition have weight with the party, what needeth more in reference to him? And if there be no hazard that others be infected by that deed, or provoked by that example, there is no necessity always in reference to them, especially, where it is known that such offences are not passed. For, that is one end of publick rebukes, 

\[\text{1 Tim. 5. 20. That others may fear.} \]

Yea, much more we conceive that many offences may be brought the length of publick rebukes, which yet are not to be drawn out unto Excommunication, even though compleat satisfaction seem not to be given. Because,

1. that Sentence is not to proceed, but upon weighty convincing causes, as is said; 2. Because, if the cause be convincing, the person offending may be expected sometimes upon after thoughts to admit of conviction, though distemper or prejudice may for a time keep it off, as experience doth prove.

But where the case is such as hazardeth infection to others, and the persons such as are contemptuous and ready to spread their leaven, as was both in the case of the doctrine and deeds of these Nicolaitans, the Sentence is to proceed, and that more summarily: I say, more summarily in comparison of what is past, yet not altogether summarily; for, Paul alloweth an Heretick to be once and again admonished, 

\[\text{Tit. 3. 10. And in this Chapter, the Lord giveth Jezebel time to repent:} \]

and here, those corrupt persons are exhorted to repent before He come to fight against them with the sword of His mouth, 

\[\text{ver. 16. which (as we take it) looketh to the same Sentence.} \]

We will not be peremptory to deny what may be done when the crime is atrocious, the evidence palpable, the scandal great, the contemptuousnesse of the party, by their former and present carriage, rendering all hopes of reco-
rerecovering so desperate, that there is not so much as access to get a hearing, and a following of convictions, and the hazard of the scandal not admitting of delay: I say, in such a case, we will not deny what maybe done for the Churches edification more summarily; yet we are sure, ordinarily the way laid down is to be followed.

CHAP. IV.

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

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

There can be no weightiness without this; because the weight and authority that is to be studied here, is that which may be convincing to consciences, rather than compulsive to the outward man: and upon this ground, it is not the most honourable and rich that give Church-judicatories most authority. But those who are most shining and convincing in their carriage, particularly in reference to this trust: For, though outward place may gain more outward respect, yet this cannot but have more weight upon the conscience, which is especially to be affected by this Church-authority. 2. We would beware of founding this authority upon carnal grounds, or to lay the weight of it there, such as the power and authority of men; yea, or upon our own place, parts, or weight: and upon that account (as it were) to boast, rather than to persuade or convince. This sometimes may have weight as to some outward conformity, but doth ever lose more of its native weightiness: Therefore Ministers and Elders in the prosecuting of this, would lay the weight here, that it is Christ's Ordinance, and that they act in His Name.

3. They would even in that procedure aim especially to deal with consciences to convince them, rather than to wrangle with corruptions, or to throw the outward man. 4. The Masters honour would ever be respected, yea, reverently and frequently mentioned, that all of them may be put and kept in mind that it is His Ordinance, and appointed for such an end: and the more room He get in the meeting, the more weight will their procedure have. 5. Ministers, and Elders particularly, would pray for the blessing to Discipline, as well as to the Word; and for the persons offending, even those that appear to be most stubborn, this cometh their ministerial authority well to acknowledge Him, and is the way to have His presence in the midst of them, without which they can expect no weight; and the more He
be seen that is the Master, the more authority will they have who are the Servants. 6. It helps this also to have the matter and proofs convincing. Therefore particulars that look self-like, or siding with interests, or such as are involved in civil debates and contents, are to be shunned, or at least, not to be insisted upon: for, readily a convincing weighty matter, will have some impression of itself upon consciences. Hence, we will find in Scripture that generally (if not always) publick processes are tabled upon scandals that flow from commissions, and that of such nature, as is said. It is true, where an omission is owned, as suppose one should refuse to pray, or where palpably defended, and is not of infirmity, as idleness was in Thessalonica, 1 Epist. chap. 3. such are by their circumstances rather indeed commissions, and so to be accounted after admonition, and upon just ground are convincing. 7. There would be weight, gravity, impartiality, self-deniedness, and affection kything in every circumstance, that they may look like the servants of Jesus Christ, who are seeking the good of His people; and so foolish sporting and laughing, idle and trivial questions, passionate words, heat, or particular and personal reflections, and the like, are most derogatory to the authority of a Church-judicatory, and do mar the weight of any Sentence upon a conscience, as is evident in daily experience, where sometimes Censures in their giving and receiving, are, upon the matter, an irreverent taking of the name of the Lord in vain. 8. There would be in all this, an holy boldness, and an undaunted fearlessness in respect of men. When it cometh to any difficulty, minding the authority of Him whom we represent; yet so, as in this boldness, conscience of duty and zeal may both in our own consciences, and to the conviction of others, be the ground, end and motive thereof, and not any carnal flash of passion or pride, or fit of natural courage.
rage, which may make Church-officers look like men, but not like their masters; for, as His Kingdom is not of this world in these respects, so ought His Officers to administrate the same otherways than a worldly authority useth to be; our weapons are not carnall, but spiritual, and mighty through God, and therefore as such should be used.

The last general direction concerning this, is, that when Scandals are thus to be taken notice of, this proceeding ought to be with expedition: my meaning is not, that we should precipitate contrary to the former directions; But, 1. That after notice of an offence, with all conveniency, the first steps of this procedure would be eslayed. 2. That there would not be long intervals betwixt these steps, although they may be frequently repeated. 3. That persons would not be kept long under process, especially they would not have their appearances multiplied, except when it may be for good use. The reasons of all these, are,

1. Because when offences are fresh, then often the parties offending, and offended, as also others, are most affected therewith; whereas, if a long time intervene, that edge weareth away, and whatever the close be, it proveth not so edifying to any. 2. Men weary, and so fall from that zealous, serious manner of carriage in it that becometh, for our spirits are soon out of benfall, and that derogateth from the weight of the thing. 3. It proveth irritating and burthenous to the parties offending, rather than convincing, and so the end is missed. 4. It hath also influence upon the confusing and burthening of Officers when processses are multiplied and lengthened, and it cometh some way to look like mens civil Courts, and that in such things as they use to be grievous unto these who are necessitate to wait on them.

To close this, we conceive it were fit for the authority of Church-judicatories, the weight of admonition, and the edification of persons, that there were
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were some specially set apart for government, although they were fewer: And, O that this might be attained! for, ordinary conversing of Elders in common and ordinary Callings, doth not a little obscure the weight of that Ordinance to many, except the conversation of the Elder in such things be singularly convincing: And until this be attained, there is the greater need for Church-officers to be as little in common business and discourses with those over whom they are set, as conveniently may be, that there may be the more access to converse with them as become Officers; and when necessity calleth to it, there is need of gravity and circumstances, that it may not their weight in the duties of their office at any other time. And also, Church-officers in their meetings amongst themselves, would be always grave and serious, as being about an Ordinance of Jesus Christ.

C H A P. V.

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

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

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

A second sort of offences are such, as are of themselves grosse and publick; yet not atrocious, or aggregated with contempt, such as fornication, some acts...
of drunkennesse, and such like. The party, I say, not being obstinate, but seriously acknowledging his fault, and promising to abstain and amend, in that case there is no ground to proceed to the highest Censure, though there may be a publick rebuke; yea, though their acknowledgment be not altogether satisfying; yet, if after the publick rebuke, the person abstain these evils, and renew not the offence, the process is to close, and to proceed no further: Because, 1. In that case it cannot well be said, that he hath refused to hear the Church when that abstinence followeth. 2. The end of a publick rebuke is not always to be an evidence of the persons full recovery, But, 1. to be a mean to recover him. 2. It is in itself a publick acknowledgment of the fault, and a virtual engagement to abstain. And, 3. it hath a warning force and certification with it for the party offending, if he continue in his offence: Now, if he continue not, it cannot be said that he hath incurred the certification, or made the rebuke altogether ineffectual: And therefore in such cases, a publick rebuke being accepted, it putteth a close unto such processes: for, such publick rebukes are not an exercising of the keys for letting in any to the Church, that was not a member formerly; and therefore there is not such exactness required here, as in the first admission of heathens, yea, or in restoring of Excommunicate persons, who have been bound and shut out, but it is the warning of a member to prevent his being cast out. Seing therefore this rebuke loufeth nothing, there can be no necessity alleged here of searching into his acknowledgements or profession; and we make no question, that offending persons being rebuked before all, and abstaining from such offences afterward, were still to be accounted Church members, capable of all privileges, notwithstanding of the former offence. For, although he was offensive before that rebuke, yet was he not actually bound
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bound or excluded from any Church priviledge by that offence (because offence giveth ground to exclude, if contempt follow, but doth not actually exclude of it self) neither doth the rebuke bind and exclude any if no further Censure follow and be added thereunto, but is intended to prevent both. And therefore, I say, that a person meerly rebuked for such an offence, and not continuing in, or renewing the same, hath right to all Church-priviledges; seing he is by no Ordinance of Christ excluded; and that way of publick rebuking, is appointed to prevent the falling of others, by that occasion.

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

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

2. It is contempt, supposing a person to appear, and yet either to justify his offence, as if it were no wrong,
wrong; or to deny an evident fact, or to refuse any way to remove an offence given. &c. Yet in such cases there is both forbearance and gentleness for a time to be essayed, and the offence is to be made inexcusable both to the conscience of the party, and to the consciences of others.

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

A fourth thing that may be judged contempt, and not hearing of the Church, is, when a person appearing, doth with some seeming reverence acknowledge the fault, suppose drunkenness, slander, fornication, &c. and yet doth notwithstanding continue in, or frequently reiterate the same offence, for these cannot be judged sins of infirmity, especially when they are so frequent, and that after admonition; for, the Churches admonition doth not only tend to draw forth an acknowledgment of the offence past, but to prevent the like for time to come; and where that is not, it cannot be said that Christ's Ordinance hath had weight. And in such a case, the accounting of verball acknowledgements enough, where there is a continuance in some seen evils, were to make the Ordinance of Christ obnoxious to reproach, and to frustrate it of its end, which is to remove and prevent offences, (for in that case they abound more) and it would strengthen men that could dissemble, to continue in their profanitie, seing by that they might ever escape the Sentence of Excommunication, and
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so profane persons might abound in Christ's Church to the dishonour of his Name, and the reproach of the Gospel, and yet there be no access to His Officers by His Ordinances to purge them out. And seeing this would be ridiculous in any humane Court, to account such a man as a receiver of admonitions, it were absurd to affect it here.

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

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

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

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

If it be asked, how this dissembling, mocking profession may be discovered? Answ. 1. By somewhat palpable in the very present gesture, words, expressions, &c. which evidence the same, and leave no room for charity; as when men (as it were) with a word, say Hail to Christ, and at the next, spit in His face, it is easy to say, that their Hail was not serious. 2. By comparing it with a person's former carriage in such a case wherein so much hath been professed, and yet he afterward hath been found to be mocking even in the time of his profession, his former carriage calleth men, at least, not to be soon satisfied, if no difference be. 3. By some words or expressions in other Societies and Companies, which being vented during the time of this publick profession, and that contrary thereto, cannot but evidence it to be a mocking. And, 4. When the fruit appeareth
peareth to be contrary thereto in a habituall way, as hath been said. Indeed if there be not convincing evidence of this mocking, but it be doubtfull; or, if a person that at one occasion is irreverent, should afterward appear more sober, we conceive in that case, determination is to be suspended, till after carriage give more ground of clearness, either to the one hand or the other.

**CHAP. VII.**

Shewing what is not necessary to satisfaction.

To the second thing, to wit, what is not necessary, or to be enquired for, by Church-officers to be an ecclesiastick satisfaction for removing of an offence. We answer, That the saving grace of repentance, or godly sincerity therein in the person, is not to be enquired into, as the alone ground upon which they may rest satisfied. For, 1. That would put a Church-judicatory so far as they could to determine of the state and graciousness of every offending person before they were satisfied, which were absurd, that not being the object of Church-discipline, and it's nowhere to be found that men are called judicially to determine of the state of another. 2. It would lay this ground, That none should be after any offence recovered and admitted to privileges, except they were thought really to be gracious; which would infer, that none should be admitted to the Church, but such; yea, that none should be continued in the Church, but such; because readily there are none, but in lesser or more give offence, so far as may be the ground of a private admonition, which doth once table them; and if nothing can be satisfying but what giveth ground to account them gracious, it would come to that, that men are to be excommunicated because they are not thought to be gracious.
and cannot give evidence of that. 3. So every person that were received after an offence, would have a Sentence of a Church-judicatory standing to prove them to be converted, which certainly would prove offensive, and a stumbling to many who are too apt to ground presumption on a lesser occasion. 4. It would put Church-officers upon the rack, and prove a tortour to them: For, 1. There is no evidence given in the word whereby one may know the gracious estate of one another infallibly; And shall that be only satisfying to us, which by no means we can know? 2. God hath not given men dominion over consciences to search or cenlure them in their ends, motives, &c. but as appeareth in their outward actions, and there being nothing that can evidence soundness in the outward action itself, because Hypocrites may come that length, it cannot be that that must be their task, to decide where there is no possibility to attain to a satisfying decision. If it be said, that they are to proceed as in charity they judge the person to be sincere, Then we oppose, procedure in Church-judicatories must be according to such rules as a person that judgeth wrong may be convinced that he judgeth wrong, if a wronged party should complain; But if the man's own thoughts and charity of such a man were the rule, whereby he is to judge, then suppose some Judicatories unwarrantably to admit, or to debar some, there were no way to convince them that they had judged wrong, because none could judge their singleness. Again, if it be said, that that may be gathered from evidences, Then we desire to know what evidence is to charity a sufficient ground to make a man to be accounted gracious, and without which he is not to be accounted such? If there be no such evidence, then the decision lieth upon the persons judgement and inclination, which falleth in the former inconvenience: If there be such evidences,
1. It will be hard to condescend upon them. 2. They are either such evidences as may be judicially demonstrated to be in such a person, or not to be in him; if they may be demonstrated to be in him, then it is not charity that decideth, but a law, which we will acknowledge when it is discovered, if they cannot be judicially demonstrated to be in such a person, or not to be in him; then the redressing of any corrupt decision is still made impossible, and there is no more but the conjectures of such mens charity in such a case; then, how can these absurdities be answered? As, 1. What if such Church-officers should be partial? in that case their charity will either be too narrow, or too broad, and can that be the rule of procedure in Christ's House? and yet Church-officers are men subject to such infirmities. 2. What if the person should think himself wronged by their accounting him not to be gracious, would that be sufficient to convince him, because they thought so? and yet it cannot be laid, that according to Christ's order Church-officers should Sentence an offending party, and not be able to convince him; and he cannot demonstrate it to them so as to convince them, and so it is forever undeterminable, which is most absurd. What if he appeal to a supreme Judicatory? how could they defend their Sentence? Or, what if the superior Judicatory judged him to be sincere? how could one of these Judicatories convince the other, if charity only were the rule? And yet it cannot be thought, that by Discipline and Censures, which are appointed by Jesus Christ for entertaining of union, that such inevitable grounds of division should be laid? Again, could it be but irritating to a person judicially to be declared unregenerate, and would it not afterward both make such Sentences, and those that pronounce them to have the leffe weight? 3. Suppose in the same Judicatory some persons charity should be larger nor others, what is to be done in that case? There

There is no possibility for one of them to convince the other; yea, can it but stir up new offences? for, the one of them is ready to judge the other, either unacquainted with spirituall conditions, or untender; for, the judging upon the sincerity of grace, requireth the exercise of a christiann and spirituall discerning; and therefore accordingly as it is exercised differently, so are men ready to account of others to be at best Christians of different siezes: and we suppose that in nothing a man's grace hath more occasion to vent than in his uptaking and judging of the gracious estate of another, because this supposes acquaintance and sympathy with, and experience of sincere grace, more than is either in preaching, prayer, or such exercises. And this certainly would be no little stumbling to Church-officers, to be so frequently put to give triall of their own graciousnesse, whereas if we walk by seeld rules, there is no such occasion to stumble.

4. Do not we see that one mans charity doth differ from another, and so diverse men in the fame extrinsic action of judging in a Church-court, should have diverse rules to judge-by in the same act, possibly leading them to judge contrarily, which were absurd. 5. Doth not oftentimes the same one mans charity differ from what it was at another time, and he will be more and leffe in extending it according to the frame of his own spirit, the dullnesse or confusion of his mind, or possibly accordingly as he hath some relation or obligation to, or prejudice at the person, which may steal-in on his judgment, and (as it is said) blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the understanding of the just, and he really think himself single in judging? And can such a fleeting unconstant rule be that which Christ hath appointed in His Church to order the removing of offences? 6. Do we not know, that often mens charity, in such cases, is swayed much by the judgment of some one or other who is esteemed of? and so this
this way which pretendeth to give most liberty, doth indeed bind up most: For, men either in that case satisifie themselves, that such a man is sincere, or not, because such another faith so, and so he goeth on implicitly, not doing what he doth in faith; or, he hath his own suspicions that others do not determine rightly of such a person's sincerity, and then he is at this strait, either to contrary his own light, and go on with the other, or to judge otherways, and by so doing to give out his own spiritual discernment to be beyond that others, and therefore to judge him for mistaking in it. And contradiction in this, is not as in other cases, where only men's moral light and understanding do vary; but here, as we said, it is in a thing that is most purely spiritual, and peculiar to the People of God onely, whereof natural men and hypocrites are not capable.

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

CHAP.
CHAP. VIII.

Holding forth what may be satisfying.

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

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

If it be asked, how this seriousnesse may be discerned. It may be again enquired, How useth a man to be thought serious in his pursuit after any thing? I grant, this is not only to be gathered from his words, or carriage possibly at one time, But, will not seriousnesse, even in a particular, kyth in a mans manner of urging it? 2. It kyth in a mans using of fit means for attaining of it, which are suitable to that end. 3. By his carriage, abstaining from such things as
as may any way make his profession to be suspect-like. And, 4. not doing this for a day, or upon a particular occasion, but for a time continuing constant and instant therein, with such affectionatenesse and earnestnesse in the circumstances that are necessary, that whatever be the motive that swayeth such a man, yet that he appeareth to be morally serious and through in the thing, cannot be denied. So in this case, often there may be a conviction that persons are serious, and are affected so, that we may expect they will endeavour really the preventing of such an offence, and yet we may not be able to judge them so convincingly sincere, because to that there is more required, to wit, a new decision whether that seriousnesse, be morall only, or gracious, according to the principles, ends, motives, &c. which cannot be so evidenced externally, as seriousnesse in the generall may be.

If any say, that charity ought to judge such a man sincere, seing it can have no more? And 1. What may be a persons privat thoughts upon these grounds we are not to determine; we only say, that this acknowledgement cometh not to be judged by a Church-judicatory upon that account. And, Secondly, These who desire more for the constituting of Church members, require beside this, evidences of the work of grace upon the heart, and expressions and narratives to that purpose. And indeed if the accounting of a person to be gracious and sincere, were the alone account, upon which a person were to be admitted or restored to an actual right to the Ordinances, such a serious profession would not be sufficient for the convincing of Church-officers of a persons graciousnesse even probably; for that which is to be accounted a probable signe of saving grace, must be that which though it doth not always hold and be convincing, yet for the most part doth so; for if it doth more ordinarily fail than hold, it cannot be called probable: but
but experience in all times will confirm this, that more frequently such a profession faileth, and afterward the person is found not to be gracious; therefore it cannot be a probable signe, nor are we to account it such: we suppose, that if all the Churches of Christ that have been gathered, and all the penitents that have been received, were compared together, it will be found, that there have been many more hypocrites than sincere Believers, yet in these cases this serious profession was called for. And, though it might be pleaded, that charity may construe the best of a person, where the case is doubtful, yet (to speak abstractly of a signe) to account that a probable signe of sincerity, and such which ought to sway charity to account a person gracious, when yet it is clear in reason, that such a sign is ordinarily but an indicium or evidence of moral sincerity, but not of saving grace, were against reason; for, even in bodily diseases, that cannot be counted a probable signe of health, to ground a judgement of such a person's liveliness, with which many more do die than recover. Nor can it be called uncharitableness, because the profession is not so accounted; for, it is charity here to account the person serious, and to think as he faith, and not be dissembling therein, although it be not impossible for a dissembler to come all that length in outward evidences and profession. But to believe that he is indeed so, as he faith, or thinketh, is not a thing which charity is bound positively to conclude, but, at the most, by judging nothing to the contrary to forbear any judging of the partie till time evidence more afterward. And, I suppose, there are few who have experience, but know that there are many cases wherein they are fully satisfied to judge the person serious, and yet dar not determine of their sincerity and graciousnesse, yea, even as to the probability thereof, although they dar not deny but it is possible; yet durst they not found a Sentence of absolution upon
upon that as such, to their own satisfaction, although upon the former account they can: which evidently sheweth that these two considerations may be separated.

Hence, the first doth follow, that whatever be a private persons account of such a profession, yet it is not considered by the Judicatory as the evidence of sincerity in their being satisfied with it: Because, 1. It can be no evidence thereof, as is said; and we would be necessitated then to say, (If sincerity were the account upon which a Church-judicatory were to be satisfied) that either they behoved to have that evidence proven, and made evident to them, or they behoved to proceed, without any certain, yea, or probable evidence: for, certainly, that which giveth a Judicatory warrant to proceed to declare a person to have right to any priviledge, must both be a thing that is relevant in itself, and evident in the proof thereof, in reference to that party; But, none of these can be said: Therefore the judging such a thing to be sincere, is not the account on which they proceed. This cannot be said to be a certain proof of sincerity, yea, none will deny but it is difficult, if not impossible, for one to have infallible proof of an others sincerity: Then it must be said, that it is but a probable proof that can be given of sincerity. To which we reply,

1. That this profession formerly described, cannot be called such, as hath been shown. So it would follow, that a Church-judicatory doth account a man sincere, and doth admit him to such priviledges as they ought to admit only such unto, and yet it was not made so much as probable to them that he was such. 2. Although it did probably evidence him to be such, yet that were not enough, if that were the alone account upon which they were to proceed, because no judiciall procedour in determining a mans right, will go upon probabilities, because the Law decideth not upon a probable, but upon a real right:
and indeed, if in this case sincerity were the ground of proceedur, no man could judge but doubtingly and upon conjecture, and so could he not have peace afterward, because it was still uncertain to him whether he had determined warrantably or not: yea, if it should be said, (which yet will not be sufficient) that it may give a man peace, if in his charity he account the person sincere, although indeed he be not so: this will not quiet the mind, because I put no question but experience will teach any that are tender, that there are many cases, that if they were put to it, they durst not, even according to their own charity and opinion, determine of a persons sincerity, so as to take upon them a decision in that, either by determining of the person to be sincere or not, and so of his admission or seclusion to, or from Church-ordinances and privileges.

2. The account upon which we admit, and the proof thereof also, must be proportionable and opposite to the account and proof upon which we debar: for, binding and loosing are both of the same nature, acts of the same power, in reference to the same end, and the one of them answereth to the other. Now, when we bind a man for a Scandal, 1. It is not accepted as a ground of binding, untill it be proven and made evident, and not probably only. Therefore nothing can be the account upon which we can loose but that which may be evidently proven also; for, it looketh not suitable-like to bind a man upon clear evidence, and to exclude him from a right, and to admit him again, only upon probabilities and presumptions, much lesse where the proof doth not amount so high. Again, 2. When a person is shut out, he is not shut out upon the account that he is unrenewed, or upon the account that such an act was not sincere, or that he appeared to be such, But he is shut out, because it was scandalous to others, and unbecoming the Gospel, even though the persons sincerity

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

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

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

2. It may be supposed, that a gracious man, of whose graciousnesse there is no question in the charity of any, doth fall in some Scandal, what is to be accounted satisfying in him, must be satisfying in others. Now, it is not any conviction of the graciousnesse of his state that can be satisfying in this case, nor yet is that the account upon which we can proceed, because that is never questioned even when he is under the offence. If it be said, it must be the sincerity and graciousnesse of his particular act of repentance. Answ. 1. It is difficult to give judgement of the state of the person, but more difficult to give judgement of the graciousnesse of a particular act. 2. Suppose such a person had a particular acknowledgement so circumstanciated as is formerly described in this moral sincerity, would not that be sufficiently satisfying? And if it be satisfying in one, in reference to a particular offence, why not in another? Because, 1. There is one rule given by Jesus Christ to all. 2. The removing of one offence relateth to the offence given, and not to the state of the person who gave it. Therefore if that satisfaction be sufficient to remove that particular offence in one, it must also be so in reference
gence to another, because the question here, is not what may be sufficient to evidence a person to be gracious, but what may be sufficient in a person to remove such a particular offence? If it be said, that it is accepted of that gracious person as satisfying, because he is accounted to be gracious, it may still be urged, The question is not, whether the person be gracious, but whether that act of repentance of his be so, or not? for, it cannot be denied, but a gracious person may have acts of hypocrisy, and in particular acts be carnal: either then such a person must be excluded though he be gracious, and in this respect seriously doth profess repentance, which were hard to do; or, he must be upon that profession admitted, and so that must be sufficient for Church-satisfaction, as is said.

3. That which ought to satisfy a Brother in private, or after his taking of two or three witnesses with him, and which may be accounted a hearing of a private admonition; that sort of repentance ought to be satisfying to the Church-officers: Because, tell the Church, succeedeth to the contempt of private admonition, and therefore they are to obtain by their interposing of authoritative rebukes, what the other did not obtain, and so they are to rest satisfied when that is obtained, as the gradation, Matth. 18, is clear, bearing of the Church, being, in respect of the effects, that same which bearing of the private admonitions is, to wit, the obtaining of satisfaction. But the former is true, to wit, a Brother ought to rest satisfied with such a sober serious profession and acknowledgement as giveth him ground to judge him really affected for his offending, and under a purpose to abstain and amend for the time to come: and who will say, that a Brother in such a case can rationally complain of an other, as not having had his admonition? So, neither can the Church proceed further, when her admonition hath that weight, seeing there had been no
Treatise concerning Scandal.

Part 1.

1. ho accesse for her judicially to have admonished, if so much had formerly been obtained: and if it may be said, that such a private admonition so successful, did gain the offending Brother, Is not that same to be said of the Churches admonition having that success? and when he is gained, are not they to rest satisfied? and yet we suppose, that none will say, that by gaining in that place, real conversion is intended, and that a private Brother should insist to the uttermost, till he be satisfied in that.

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

5. That which may be accepted as a satisfaction from an Heretick, as the satisfying fruit of a publick admonition, cannot be refused as satisfaction in other cases; for, if circumspectness and rigidity be to be used in any case, it is in this: But a serious acknowledgement of an error, and an abandoning of it indeed, is to be accepted for Church-satisfaction from an Heretick, and as the fruit of an publick admonition,
on, and he in that respect is supposed to be gained:  
\hspace{1em} \textit{Ergo, &c. That this is to be accepted from him, may be gathered from Tit. 3. 10. A man that is an heretick, reject after the first and second admonition. Where these things are clear, 1. That an Heretick that continueth so, and heareth not the Church, is to be rejected. 2. That an Heretick renouncing his errors after admonition, and not continuing such, is not to be rejected, and so is not to be accounted an Heretick or under that scandal of heresie, and therefore his disclaiming of it, is to be accounted satisfying as to the Church-officers; otherways, it would follow, that although he renounced his heresie in that serious and morally sincere manner, yet were he still to be dealt with as such by the Church, except they were satisfied in the sincerity of his grace, which is contrary to Paul’s direction, and the end of that publick admonition; which is not given him because of his unrenewed state, but because of his heresie. Now, that being taken away and satisfied by his submission, the admonition must be acknowledged to be satisfied, and so he is neither to be dealt with as an Heretick, nor as obstinate, but as one who hath heard the Churches admonition.  

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

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

8. If we consider the proper object, nature and end of the key of Discipline, as it is abstractly considered, as contra-distinct from the key of Doctrine, we will find that no more by it can be expected. For, 1. its proper object is somewhat, that is scandalous, and so it reacheth only to restrain, regulate, and judge the outward man, or somewhat in the outward conversation firstly, though the fruit of that hath a further look mediately. The key of Doctrine again, or the Word reacheth in, and becometh a judge of the thoughts and intents of the heart; and to make Discipline judge the inner-man, in this respect, were to confound these two keys which the Lord hath made distinct: and therefore, if Discipline have any influence upon the inner-man savingly, it is but mediately by condemning his outward practices, and him as such, or making of directions, reproofs, &c. in the Word, more weighty. 2. The key of Discipline doth only
only shut from outward privileges, and doth not shut from any spiritual interest in Christ, but as it concurreth to confirm some threatening in the Word, which debarreth many from saving promises and the things contained in them, which Discipline may admit to outward privileges. 3. There is a difference in respect of abolution also, to wit, the Word when it absolveth, it doth absolve from the curse of God, and giveth access to the promises, and a title to the things promised; Discipline again, doth but absolve from outward Cenfures and restraints, and doth but give right to Church-privileges. 4. There are different conditions and qualifications upon which these two keys bind and loose: for, the Word openeth to none but upon condition of sincere faith and repentance, and absolveth none but real Believers, pronouncing all unbelievers to be under the curse; Again, Discipline (as such) cannot shut out men from externall privileges, because they are not regenerate, and sincerely gracious; and so in that respect, it must have a different condition of shutting men out, or it must consider them upon another account, in excluding them from Church-privileges, than the Word doth in excluding them from saving promises, to wit, it considereth them as scandalous, and unbecoming the Gospel whatever their state be, and so it may cenfure Believers, as the key of Doctrine may shut out the most subtle hypocrite which the other cannot reach. Therefore also must it be a different account upon which Discipline doth admit, or restore men to outward privileges, and absolve men from outward Cenfures, than that upon which the Word doth admit to saving privileges. And seeing this last is sincere faith and repentance, the other must have somewhat different from this, upon the account whereof it doth give right, which can be no other thing than the moral sincerity mentioned. 5. Upon these differences followes another (which doth con-
firm all the former) to wit, a diversity that is in the manner of binding and loosing by these two keys; for, when a Minister useth the key of Doctrine, he doth exclude from heaven and saving privileges but conditionally, and he can warrantably exclude no particular professor absolutely; So no Minister can absolve absolutely, by the key of Doctrine, but conditionally, to wit, if the person believeth that he speaketh unto; for, it runneth on these terms, If thou believest, thou shalt be saved. But, again, in the exercise of the key of Discipline it is not so, no Church-judicatory doth debar a man from privileges conditionally, if he believe not, but absolutely he is debarred because of some present scandal; and although the person were or should become a real Believer, yet he continueth bound from outward privileges by the key of Discipline, until that scandal be removed: So when they receive any into Church-communion, they do not absolve them from their former Censure, and give them right to Church-privileges upon condition they believe, but absolutely that Censure is removed, and they are admitted unto these privileges.

If it be asked, What is the reason of this difference betwixt these two keys? Ans. It is, first, because the ground upon which we loose and bind with the key of Discipline, is something obvious to men's view, wherein they may warrantably judge and proceed, and therefore that is done absolutely: But in the key of Doctrine it is not so; for, men cannot tell who really believe, and who not, and it cannot by judicial proofs be made-out, Therefore they cannot bind or loose but conditionally. Secondly, God hath committed the outward man to be the object of Discipline, but the inner man and conscience is reserved to the Word and Doctrine, and men have not gotten authority over consciences and hearts; Therefore what concerneth the outward man, and outward
ward privileges, may be determined absolutely. But what concerneth the conscience and inner man only conditionally, because He hath reserved the absolute decision of that to himself, Therefore there is a sixth difference also. The word may and doth bind indefinitely, that is, persons so and so qualified, without making application in binding or loosing to individual persons, and doth not so bind or loose but conditionally, as is laid; But Discipline striketh at individual persons, and as such, doth not otherways affect: for, suppose an indefinite Sentence of Excommunication, against persons so qualified, to be pronounced, it doth debar none from Church-privileges, as it is such; and for what influence it hath further, it is as it cometh under the key of Doctrine, which doth bind or loose such, but not as it is under the key of Discipline, and that for the reasons mentioned.

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

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

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

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

When it is found meet thus publickly to rebuke, the circumstances and manner are to be adverted to, 1. Although the designing of a particular place be not in itself necessary, nor in every case expedient, yet for the solemnity of the reproof, it is not unsuit-able, it being such as is rather accommodated for the edification of the whole Congregation, than otherwise pointed at as a place of penance or punishment, or yet as a mark of reproach, and such like, which wrongeth the nature of Christ’s Ordinance; And circumstances would be so ordered as the appearance of that may be eschewed. 2. It would be gone about with much gravity and reverence in respect
spect of all that are concerned. The Minister especially is to carry weightily and authoritatively, having words fitted for the edifying of the Congregation, the humbling of the person, the convincing of both, and for the credit and weight of Christ's Ordinance before all; The party rebuked would minde whose Ordinance it is, and be suitably affected as the receiving of a particular rebuke from Jesus Christ doth call-for; The on-lookers also would be grave, having respect to Christ's Ordinance, tenderness to the person offending, but indignation at the offence; and this would be testified by their carriage, so as thereby the authority and solemnity of all may have the deeper stamp upon the person. And for attaining of this, something would be gravely spoken to the hearers, as their use thereof, according to the case; and it may be, that some address to God in prayer together, in reference thereto, before or after the rebuke, would not be unusefull for that end.

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

Yet there are two cases especially wherein we think this is expedient and necessary unto edification.

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

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

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

If it be asked again, how is he to be accounted of after this rebuke? We answer, Even as by some competent continuance of time, he doth discover the seriousness or unseriousness of his profession, So that if he relapse, he is the more inexcusable, and to be proceeded with in due manner: but if he take up himself, and carry to the view of others seriously, he is not to be accounted as scandalous, because it cannot be said, that he hath refused to hear the Church in that publick admonition: and a publick rebuke doth not of itself bind any and shut them out as scandalous, (yea, it giveth not ground for it, if obstinacy followeth not) but if it be hearkened unto, and received, it doth prevent that, it being a right edifying.
fying part of Christianity to admit of, and to improve a rebuke. Yet we think it incumbent to Church-judicatories, after some competent time, to enquire in the after carriage of such, and so accordingly to determine, whether they have satisfyingly accepted of the admonition, or not. And that therefore the person so rebuked, ought to have such a Sentence before he can plead full admission to all privileges, if at the time his profession was not satisfying. This is usefull for the persons behave, when he knoweth he is still to be looked upon in a speciall manner, as a sickly member of the body. And it is also agreeable to reason; for, if when a private person giveth an admonition he be to judge of the fruit of it, whether it be satisfying; and if the Church-judicatory, when they admonish judicially, be to weigh, whether the effects be satisfying or not: So by the like reason, when an admonition is publicly given, ought they to enquire what hath followed, and if that be satisfying or not.

If it be asked, if in no case an offender may be brought immediately to publick, but by the former steps, and upon supposition that these be fruitlesse? Ans. It may be in these two or three cases, 1. When the offence, being of a grosse nature, is publick and open, so that many are in hazard to be infected, in that case a private rebuke would not be sufficient: Because, respect is to be had to the good of others. And so in some cases, even though as to the persons own conviction and carriage, a Church-judicatory may be satisfied; yet there is a necessity for the reason foresaid of a publick rebuke. Yet every offence that is known to more than one, is not to be accounted an offence of this nature: Because from that word of Christ's, Take with thee two or three witnesses, &c. it is evident, that even after those are made acquaintance with the scandal, it is not publick, except obstinacie follow. Yea, it would appear, that such a scandal might
might be known to others, when yet one private person might only admonish; and if the admonition were accepted, might sift. And in case the fact be denied, then he is thereafter to bring two or three conjunct witnesses, who may convince the party offending of the truth of the fact, as well as of the nature thereof, by their joint testifying, that the party offended had reason to seek satisfaction in such a thing: Otherways, if that were only a privat offence which is known to one, supposing the party offending to deny the fact, there were no access to an offended brother to pursue the same, and by witnesses to make it out, if his private admonition should be rejected. And this may be one reason also why those two or three are called Witnesses, whose part is to confirm the matter of fact, as the Law cited there to that purpose doth evidence. Nor is it at all necessarily thus publick when it is made known to a Church-officer or a Church-judicatory, because in that case, even they may find it more edifying to admonish privately than publickly; And it is their part rather to hinder the spreading of a scandal, than to make the same needlessly more publick. An offence then that is to be accounted publick, that is, which is so in respect of its notority or publickness, and such as is not the object of private admonition, but whereas a Church-judicatory is immediately to take notice, may be considered in respect of its first instant, or in respect of some following circumstance: for, what is required in the nature of the sin it self, hath been spoken to already. It is publick in the first respect, 1. When it is done before so many as probably cannot be satisfied with private admonition, so that thereby there is a hazard to many to be scandalized. 2. It is publick, when it seemeth to be done with contempt and an high hand, as if a person were owning the same; Thus a scandal that hath fewer witnesses, may be accounted publick, when another, it
may be, actually known to as many, is not to be accounted such, because in this case there is no access to private admonition, the person being like a swine, ready to turn on the admonisher. Thus suppose Absalom’s incest had not been actually known to many, yet the very circumstances of his doing it openly, and purposely that it might be known, made it of a publick nature: Thus sometimes it is more necessary to take notice of an offence committed in a publick place, though, it may be, few know the same, than of a thing done more privately, because as to them it might have been publick to many; and it sheweth an humour and corruption that is beyond privat admonition, when a thing is so circumstanced. 3. Sometimes offences will have an horror, and an indignation wakened against them, even in respect of such circumstances, as to be drunk, lascivious, and such like, are offences; but to be so in a Market-place, or in publick streets, even supposing it to be in a day when few do actually see it, doth waken an indignation in the hearts of sober men, as being an affront to Religion and Order, and inconsistent with Christianity and Civility, much more than if it had been in a private place, or privately; for, that is before the Sun to do so, as Zimries act was, which provoked Phineas’s zeal. 4. An offence is publick, when it is generally accounted to be a certain truth, and not a suspicion only; as being a thing in its evidence known to so many (beside what is reported to others) that it cannot be supposed that an ingenuous mind can have access to deny or shift the same, without some indignation in the hearts of those that know it. 5. Sometimes an offence is to be accounted publick when, though it may be, many are not witnesses thereof, yet when many are in hazard to be infected thereby; as suppose those witnesses to be such as cannot rest quiet in a private satisfaction, but they have either spread it, or are in hazard to spread it, and, it
may be, long afterward they make it a ground of reproach: In this case it becometh a scandal not only to the first witnesses, but also to those to whom it is reported; So that although it was not at first publick, yet it becometh so by the rumour thereof. This infectiousness may also proceed from the time wherein it is committed, the person who committed it, the nature of the fact that is committed, (which may more readily insnare others than facts of some other nature) from those also before whom it was committed; Therefore in such cases it is necessary that publick notice be taken thereof.

Therefore, in the second place, we said that some offences not very publick in respect of the fact, yet may, by some concurring circumstances, be such as the bringing of them in publick, may be necessary for the edifying of the Church at such a time, then that way is to be taken; As suppose, 1. that such a sin is in some places scarce counted a sin; Or, 2. if it be secretly and frequently in use among others; Or, 3. if the person found guilty be generally suspected of loose and untender walking in such things, although particulars be not publick; Or, 4. if they be under false pretexts of tenderness, ready to seduce others to something sinfull, or in the like cases. In which, though the fact be not so publick, yet the scandal, or hazard, and the benefit of a rebuke are publick; and therefore that way is to be followed, Because they are necessary for the edifying of the Church, which is the end wherefore publick rebukes are appointed. The same may be said of atrocious horrible crimes, which being but known to few, yet are not to be, nor cannot be past with a meer private admonition, such as witchcraft, incest, &c. which are defiling sins, the bringing whereof in publick doth honour God the avenger and discoverer of such works of darkness; suppose also, that the evidencing of somewhat, may serve to remove some former
prejudice, as if it had been thought that an innocent person had been father of such a childe, or actor of such a murther; if God bring it about, that those who truely are guilty be discovered, it is not to be kepted close, because it is the removing of a former stumbling-block, and may keep others from sinning in mis-judgeing an innocent, and it also glorifieth God whose wise way is to be observed in such dispensations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Affcr. 2. Where an offended Brother followeth Christ's way in pursuing of an offence, he is not to be accounted an accuser formally, as the term of accusation useth properly to be taken: Because, 1. To accuse, often is a thing that may be omitted, but this kind of pursuit is laid on as a necessary duty. 2. To accuse, respects some particular wrong and injury usu-ally, and the following thereof, importeth a prejudice and hurt to the party accused, But this which respects offence without any particular injury, proceedeth from love, tendeth to the advantage and recovery of the party, and so properly cannot be called accusation. - Yea, 3. When a person hath followed the second step, and made out his private admonition by two or three witnessses, when he cometh to the Church with them, neither of them can be accounted accusers more
more than when he did privately speak to the person, or after that to those witnesses, because all is duty, and a piece of that Christian mutual communication, that brethren and members of the same body, owe one to another, and to the body in common; yet is he who so entereth a complaint, obliged to make it evident to the Judicatory; and if he hath rightly performed the second step, and made it appear before two or three, there is no hazard or difficulty in this; but if he hath failed in that, he ought not to have proceeded to this.

After. 3. We say, that to have a formal accuser, seemeth not so well to agree to the nature of ecclesiastick processes, and looketh liker a civil Court. For,

1. If the offence be publick, there is no accuser needful, as is said. 2. If it be privat, no accuser is to be heard, but in the ordinary method, because Christ's Ordinance is not to be subservient to mens passions, or to be the mean of their seeking revenge for injuries: And therefore in some cases, though an accuser would undertake the pursuing of some process against a person, where neither the Scandal is flagrant, nor the party accused, after private admonition and conviction, obstinate, in that case the accusation might be rejected; because so the accuser looketh not like a Brother, that is stumbled, seeking the gaining of the other, and his own satisfaction upon that account, but rather like a person that is irritable, vindictive or malicious, to whose humour Church-officers ought not to give way; neither doth such an accusation become Christ's Court. Yet, if the thing be indeed scandalous, Church-officers are to enquire therein, and not to slight any mean of evidence which may be had, lest profane persons mouths be opened; but that rival and contentious way of following of processes by particular accusers, against particular persons, as useth to be in other Courts, we conceive no way becoming the gravity and convincing way that ought to be in this.
this; And we suppose in experience is not often found to be edifying, but rather doth ingender hatred, prejudice, contention, and such like, which is altogether contrary to Christ's scope.

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

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

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

C H A P. XI.

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

Here is one case yet to be enquired in, viz. how to account of a particular person his complaining or pursuing an offence which carrieth with it a particular enjury unto himself? As suppose, that such a person did calumniate him, calling him false, covetous, hypocrite, thief, or such like, or did imprecate curses unto him? Answ. 1. If the way laid down were followed, and a publick complaint made the last step, it may be, there would be few of these complaints. Of this we have spoken already. 2. Al-
though such injuries have with them a spiritual hurt also, and to indeed are real stumbling-blocks to the spiritual state of the party enjured. Yet, 1. it is hard for men enjured, singly to abstract the scandal given them from the enjury done them, and so to follow the offence with respect to their own and the others edification, as to entertain no thoughts of revenge in the pursuing thereof: for certainly, often it is the reparation of a wrong, and to vindicate folks own name and credit, rather than edification, which in such cases is aimed at: Therefore we find ever the most irreligious, carnall and proud persons, hotest in such a pursuit, and with greatest difficulty to be satisfied; and the satisfaction intended by them, is not any Christian gaining often, but some publick shame, or such like: And therefore if that follow, although the person fall over again in many other scandals that are worse, or others shall sin more grossly; yet that stirreth them not, neither are their complaints in such cases heard of. 2. We find, that such a case hath often great difficulties with it, and readily much heat and carnalnesse; yea, in things that are personall between parties, it is more difficult for them to abstain from carnalnesse, or the appearance thereof, and also for Church-judicatories to walk so as not to be thought partial to one of the sides, and so by intending the removall of one offence, more may be given. Therefore we would suppose such a procedor to be suitable to Christ's order and ordinance, 1. That as much as may be, these personal things may be waved by private persons themselves who are so offended. Certainly men lose not by condescending in their particulars, and it may afterward tend more to the convincing of the party and others, and to the vindicating of themselves that they forbear (at least, till the fervour be abated, both in them and in the offending party) than by kindling of their own passions by the passions of others, to hazard upon more sin and offence,

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

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

Sometimes there ariseth a new difficulty in such cases, as suppose one complained of for calumniating another, should offer to make good his word, or what he hath said; In such a case it is difficult for a Church-Judicatory to carry rightly, if probation be refused, the slanderous mouth is not stopped, And to admit it, it seemeth neither pertinent nor profitable to any Church-end. This sometimes is one of the evils.
evils of making Church-judicatories the stage of mens passions: Yet in such a case we say, 1. That whether the thing be true or not, the casting of it up at such a time, and with such circumstances, was offensive; and therefore no following probation can exempt the offender from being accounted scandalous, because the end of bringing forth that, was really the hurt of his brother, and neither private nor public edification. 2. Some manner of offered probation is indirect, (as also some sort of slander) as suppose one would complain of another as guilty of theft, or some other sin, and give for the ground thereof some instances of corruption or deceit in their trade of merchandizing, or taking some advantage by law or other ways, to the hurt of another. These are causes and matters wherein properly Church-officers are neither fit nor called to decide; and the event thereof doth depend upon some civil contest, therefore are not meet to be admitted as the ground of a complaint or probation in a Church-judicatory. Again, some manner of probation is more direct, as suppose one would prove by witnesses direct theft upon another, Yet considering that Church-judicatories are not to be sub-servient to mens passions, as hath been said, and also, that their end ought ever to be edification, and there being no probable ground to expect it in such a process, we conceive it were fit altogether to wave such contests. For, though there be a shaming of offenders allowed in Church-discipline, yet it looketh harsh-like to make it the mean of bringing civil shame and infamy upon any; Because such a blot, as to be accounted or declared infamous, even as to civil things, is a civil punishment; and therefore is not to be the effect of a Church-judicatory, properly. Although we will not deny but by accident, these may be sometimes necessarily joyned.
It may be asked, What if an offending party appearing, professeth repentance for their fault, &c. as hath been desired, and should yet refuse to give obedience to such things and in such manner as is thought fit to be done by the Church-officers for the removing of the offence? Answer. It is not like that any who are serious in their profession of repentance, will stand on such a thing; and where that is, it is too probable-like an evidence of their dissembling, if some convincing reason cannot be given by them for swaying to that refusal. 2. Their disobedience is either in material things, or such as are but circumstantial. Again, it is either done with contempt, or with professed continued respect and a desire to satisfy. As for instance, some may refuse to receive a public rebuke where edification requireth it, or to acknowledge their offence to an offended party, or they may be willing to appear, and willing to acknowledge their offence, but differ as to the time, place, manner, &c. For the first, Though a Church-judicatory may wait for a time, yet can they not in some cases dispense with them; because otherways, they are not heard, nor is the end obtained; and therefore may proceed, especially if that disobedience look contemptuous-like: For the second sort of disobedience, to wit, in the manner or circumstances of giving satisfaction, although in this also, those that are serious to have offences removed, will not readily stick, yet if it be, there is difference between this and the former, if there be no discernable evidences of contempt in it; and in this, no question, Church-judicatures have a greater latitude to do as may edifie; wherein they are especially to take notice of these things, 1. That by too much rigidity in circumstances, they seem not unnecessarily to wrong them, or to lay too much weight of satisfaction upon such formalities. 2. That by too easie passing from such, they do not strengthen any to follow that example for
the time to come. And, 3. that even in circumstances there be an equality in reference to these same scandals in all persons. And if there be hazard in reference to any of these by condescending to alter or forbear a circumstance in a publick rebuke, we conceive it is safer to abstain from that forbearance, and not to yield it; and yet not simply upon that account to pursue a process, but to continue dealing with the person, while either he be convinced and brought, for the good of order and edification of the Church, to yield, or there be more clearness to do otherwise.

CHAP. XII.

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

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

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

1. It cannot be denied, but such a case may be, and often
often de facto is, that Church-officers are defective in the exercising of Discipline upon scandalous persons, what from negligence, what from unfaithfulness, what from fainting, or some other sinful infirmity at the best, as may be gathered from the second and third Chapters of the Revelation.

2. Though this be true, yet possibly it is not always their fault when it is charged on them: as suppose, 1. That no private person, or, possibly even the complainer, hath admonished such persons as are counted scandalous, nor have given in sufficient proofs of their scandal to any Church-judicatory; or, it may be, many are counted scandalous who cannot legally and judicially be found to be such; for it is more easy to assert a scandal, than to prove, even often when it is true: and it being rather a ground of irritation than edification, when a process is entred, and not convincingly made-out, Therefore often in duty some processes are abstained. Sometimes also Church-officers may be faithfully dealing with persons to recover them from scandals, and yet not find it fit for edification to proceed to high Censures; In such cases, Church-officers cannot reasonably be blamed, and those who complain would pose their own consciences, if they have exonerated themselves and done their duty, and have put it to the Officers doors, before they account it their fault: And it is most unbecoming for persons to charge others and to be defective in their own duty, which necessarily interfereth the other. And if it were as difficult and weighty a task to calumniate and groundlessly to charge Church-officers with this, as it is, faithfully to follow private admonition, there would not be so much of the one, and so little of the other. And if it be rightly looked to, it will not be easy to charge them with grosse defects (and if they be not grosse, the matter is not so to be flumbled at, they being in the exercise of Discipline as in other things) for, that
must be upon one of these accounts, either, 1. Because such scandalous persons, after refusing of private admonitions, were complained of to them, and that evidence of the fact was offered, and Church-officers refused to put the same to trial: Or, it must be because when they did try, they did determine such a thing to be no scandal: or not to be proven, or that (supposing it to be proven) they did not confirme it; or, at least, when scandals were open and obvious, and palpable, they did not take notice of them.

Now, is it probable that such a Church-judicatory will frequently be found that will fail grossly either of these ways? And if they do, then there is access to convince them, by an appeal to a superiour Court, which in that case is a duty. If it be said, that their failing and neglect, is, in some covered manner, so carried-on as there is no access to such legal complaints. 

Answ. 1. We suppose if the things be that grosse, and the fact so clear and frequent, as that there be just ground to complain, then there will be also access to such a proof. 2. If it be so carried and not owned, then it may be their sin before God; but it is not to be accounted a proper Church-offence in the sense before-mentioned, seing they could not be convinced judicially even before the most impartial Judge. And as in such a case we cannot account a private brother ecclesiastically scandalous, although the general strain of his way may be dissatisfactioning to us, So ought we not to account this; for, there is a great difference, betwixt that which may be offensive to a persons private discretion, and put him possibly in a christian way to desire satisfaction, and that which is to be noised as a publick Church-scandal.

After. 3. Upon supposition that the defect be true, yet private professors are to continue in the discharge of the duties of their stations, and not to separate from the Communion of the Church, but to count them-
themselves exonerated in holding fast their own integrity. It's true, it cannot but be heavy to those that are tender, and, if it become scandalously excessive, may give occasion to them to depart and go where that Ordinance of Discipline is more vigorous; and concerning that, there is no question, it being done in due manner; Yet, I say, that that can be no ground for withdrawing from the Ordinances of Christ, as if they or their consciences were polluted by the presence of such others. For, 1. That there were such defects in the Church of the Jews, cannot be denied, and particularly doth appear in the instance of Elie's sons, who made the Ordinances of the Lord contemptible with their miscarriages; yet that either it was allowable to the people to withdraw, or faulty to joyn in the Ordinances, can no way be made out. If it be said, there was but one Church then, Therefore none could separate from the Ordinances in it? Ans'w. 1. This doth confirm what is said, to wit, that the joyning of scandalous persons in Ordinances, doth not pollut them to others; for if so, the Lord had not laid such a necessity upon those that were tender, that they behoved to partake of polluted Ordinances, or to have none; and if it did not pollute them then, some reason would be given that doth evidence it now to do so. 2. If there be an unity of the Church now, as well as then, then the consequence must be good; because, so where ever folks communicate, those many that communicate any where, are one bread, and one body, as the Apostle speaketh, Cor. 10.17. compared with chap. 12, 13. And so by communicating any where, we declare our selves to be of the same visible Church and politic body, with those who communicat else where, even as by Baptism we are baptized into one Church, and into communion with all the members of the body any where. And therefore, if this be considered, it will not be enough to eschew pollution (if the ob-
jection be true and well grounded) to separate from one Society, or one particular Congregation, except there be a separation from the whole visible Church; for so also Jews might have separated from particular Synagogues, or have chose times for their offerings and sacrifices distinct from others. Famous Cotton of New England, in his Holiness of Churchmembers, pag. 21, grants that there were many scandalous persons in the Church of the Jews. 2. He faith, that that was by the Priests defect, for they ought not to have been retained. And, 3. though he say that that will not warrand the lawfulness of admitting scandalous persons to the Church, yet he affereth, that it may argue the continuance of their Church-estate notwithstanding of such a toleration; and if so, then it approverth continuing therein, and condemneth separation therefrom; and consequently a Church may be a Church, having the Ordinances in purity, and to be communicate in, notwithstanding the former fault. 3. What hath been marked out of Learned Writers, for paralleling the constitution of the Church under the Gospel, with that under the Law in essentiall things, doth overthrow this objection; for now separation is as impossible as formerly.

2. This defect is to be observed in severall of the Primitive Churches, as we may particularly see in the second and third Chapters of the Revelation, yet it is never found that any upon that account did withdraw, or were reproved for not doing so, even when the Officers were reproved for defect: Yea, on the contrary, these who kepted themselves pure from these Scandals, though continuing in that communion, are commended and approven, and exhorted to continue as formerly. Now, if continuing in communion in such a case be of itself sinfull, and personall integrity be not sufficient to professours where the defect is sinfull to the Officers, even though in other personall
nall things and duties of their stations they were approvable. How can it be thought that the faithfull and true WITNESSE should so sharply reprove the one, and so fully approve the other at the same time?

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

4. If continuance in communion with such persons be sinnfull, Then it must either be because communion with such as are profane indeed, whether we know or think them to be so or not, is sinnfull; or, it must be because we know them, or think them to be such; But neither of these can be said: Not the first, because
because so to keep communion with an hypocrite, or a Believer in a carnall frame, were sinfull, although we thought them to be sincere, which cannot be pleaded; nor can it be said, it is because we know them to be so. Because, 1. If we knew a man to be so, and another knew not, in that case, the Ordinances were polluted to one, and not to another, at the same time, though possibly both were exercising the same faith, and having examined themselves, were in the same frame, which were absurd. Yea, 2. If it depended on our knowledge of it, Then our very supposing it to be so, although it were not so, would pollute the Ordinance; and what confusion would be there, may be afterward hinted. Nor can it be said, it is because we think so, because, supposing some to think otherwise, it would be still an ordinance to them, and a duty to continue in it, and not to us, which is the former absurdity; and this doth not flow from the binding nature of an erroneous conscience (which may be alleged in other cases) but from the difference of persons light, charity, or other apprehensions of things, whereby one is induced to esteem that scandalous, which another doth not.

5. If communion with profane persons that are such to our knowledge be sinfull, and polluteh Ordinances, Then these things may be enquired, which will infer diverse absurdities, 1. Ought persons to try all those that they keep communion with, whether they be profane or not? For, if any profane person be in that communion which they might have known if they had tried, then their ignorance cannot excuse. 2. It may be enquired, what degree of triall and search doth sufficiently exoner, because possibly a further triall might have discovered some to be profane? 3. It may be enquired, what evidences may demonstrate persons to be scandalous, and make them to be so accounted of? If only something seen by
by themselves, or if something reported by others; and that whether it be judicially made out or only asserted? and how manies report is to be taken for proof; or if any that be so reported of, be so to be accounted? 4. What sort of scandals are to be enquired into to make a person such as polluteth the Ordinances? If it be any kind of scandal, or but scandals of such a nature? If one scandal be sufficient, or if there must be many? and how many are to be laid weight upon in this? and some satisfying grounds how, and where to fix the difference, are to be laid down? 5. It may be asked, if one scandalous person alone doth pollute the Ordinances? or if there must be more? and if so, How many? 6. Suppose such a scandal were known to us alone, charity, and Christ's command do say, it is not to be published; conscience faith in that case, the Ordinance is polluted, time straitly either to communicate doubtingly, or with offence to abstain and hide the cause, or contrary to charity to signify the same. These and many such like things are requisite to satisfie one, upon this supposition, that communion in such a case is sinnfull, Therefore it is not to be admitted.

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

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from him and from us, as it requireth praying?

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

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

1. He hath corruption. 2. He hath as full knowledge of it as of any other man, yea, that which may make him think it more than what he knoweth of any other man. 3. That corruption is as near him as the corruption of any. 4. The Law doth more particularly strike against corruption in him as to himself, than that which is in any other. Yea, 5. this corruption doth certainly, in so far pollute the Ordinance to him, and make him guilty. Now the same grounds that say he may communicate with a good conscience, notwithstanding of his own corruptions, will also say, he may communicate notwithstanding of that which is in another, much more: because the sins that follow his corruption are his own sins, which cannot be said of the sins of others.

And if repentance for his own sin, resting upon Christ, protesting against the body of death (which yet are but the acts of the same person, in so far as renewed, differing from himself as unremitted) If, I say, such acts may quiet his conscience, and give him confidence to partake, notwithstanding of his own corruption, and that even then when he as unrenewed may be accounted guilty, may they not much more give him confidence in reference to the sins of another, which are not so much as his deeds.

9. In that directory which Christ giveth, Mat. 18. this is implied, because he doth warrant an offended brother to bring obstinate offenders to the Church, as the last step of their duty, and as their full exonerating, Tell the Church, faith he; and no more is required by him after that, but conforming of his carriage to the Churches Sentence in case of obstinacy. And none can think, upon supposition that the Church did not their duty, that then they were from that forth, not to joyn in that Church, but to separate from them, as from heathens and publicans: because so a particular person might Excommunicate a Church, whom yet Christ will not have to withdraw from.
communion with a private member, till obstinacie 
and the Churches censuring interveen; Yea, by so 
doing, a private person might account another a hea-
then and publican without any publick Censure, 
which is contrary to Christs scope, which subjoyneth 
this withdrawing of communion from him to the 
Churches Censure. This will bind the more if we 
consider that Christs words have an allusion (as is 
commonly acknowledged) to the Jewish Sanedrim, 
which being but one, could not admit of any separa-
tion from its communion, though there had been de-
fect in this: What may be done in abstaining of per-
sonall communion in unnecessary things, is ever to be 
acknowledged; yet if separation in such a supposed 
case, were called-for as a duty, that direction would 
not be a sufficient direction for an offended brother, 
because it leaveth him without direction in the last 
step: Yet Christs progresso so particularly from one 
step to another, faith, that it is otherwayes in-
tended.

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

For confirming of this Affertion then, we may take 
more particular consideration of one place, which 
seemeth more especially to relate to this purpose, 
That is, 1 Corinth. 11. from the 17. ver. foreward:
Where it doth appear, first, That there were divisions 
amongst that people, even in respect of communica-
ting together at the Lords Table, so that some of them 
would not communicate with others: for that there 
were divisions is clear. Now, these divisions are ex-
pressed to be in the Church when they came together 
to eat the Lords Supper, ver. 18, and 19. and some 
did communicate at one time, and some at another, 
without carrying one for another, as is expressed, v. 33. 
Secondly,
Secondly, we may also gather what might be the reason of this divided communicating, or, at least, what some might allege why they would not communicate jointly with others: For, it is like, they fell in this irregularity deliberately, as thinking they did well when they communicated apart, and not with others. So much is insinuated in the Apostles expostulation, ver. 22. What, shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. Now these reasons might be alleged, to justify their divided communicating, 1. That the Ordinances were not reverently administered, nor with that gravity and discerning of the Lords Body, as was fit. 2. That many unworthy persons were admitted to communion, even such as were drunken, ver. 21, &c. and therefore it might be alleged by them, that joynt communicating with such was to be abstained.

Thirdly, it is evident also, That notwithstanding of these grounds, the Apostle doth condemn their practice, and presseth them to joynt communicating, as appeareth from ver. 22. and 33. From which, this clear argument doth arise, If the members of the Church of Corinth, who did separate from the Ordinances, because of the sinfulness of these that did joyntly partake with them, were condemned by Paul, and required to communicate joyntly, and if it be made clear by him how they might do so and not be guilty, Then separation in such a case cannot be a duty but a sin: But the former are true. Therefore, &c. I know nothing can be objected against this argument, but either to say, That the Apostles scope is in that eating together, to regulate their love feasts, and to condemn their practice in these; or, that he commends joynt communicating simply, but not in such a case, because it is not clear whether any of them did scruple upon that ground or not: for, the removing of these, we say to the first, That the main scope of the place is to regulate them in going about the Sacra-
Sacrament of the Lords Supper: And therefore it is that the Apostle doth so clearly and plainly insist in clearing the institution thereof, thereby to bring them back to the way that was laid down and delivered to him by the Lord. And for any other sort of eating or drinking, the Apostle doth send them to their houses, ver. 22, and more expressly he repeateth that direction, that if any man hunger and desire to eat his ordinary meat, let him do it at home, ver. 34. So that no direction for the time to come can be interpreted to belong to common eating in the Church, or in the publick meetings thereof, but such as is sacramentall only.

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

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

Secondly, We say, that it is not unlike there was such hesitations in some of them; and that (whatever was among them) it is clear, that the Apostle doth expressly speak to this case, and endeavour to remove that objection out of the way, to wit, that men should not scarce at the Sacrament, because of the profanity of others: and that therefore they might without
out scruple as to that, communicate joyntly, and tarry one for another, which is his scope, ver. 33. This will appear by considering severall reasons whereby he presleth this scope, for that, ver. 33. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together, tarry one for another, is the scope laid down as a conclusion from the former grounds which he hath given. Now, when he hath corrected their first fault, to wit, their irreverent manner of going about the Ordinance, by bringing them to Christ's institution, ver. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. He cometh, in the last place, to meet with this objection, What if others be present who palpably cannot discern the Lords Body, and so cannot communicate worthily? Can it be safe to communicate with such? Or, is it not better to find out some other way of communicating apart, and not together with such? The Apostle giveth severall answers to this, and reasons, whereby he cleareth, that their division was not warrantable upon that ground, from ver. 28. And so concludes, ver. 33. that notwithstanding thereof, they might tarry one for another.

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

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

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

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

CHAP. XIII.

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

If it be asked then, What is that which private persons ought to do in such a case? Ans. They are certainly to contain themselves within their station, yet so, as some things are called-for at such a time more than at another time; As, first, There is need of much circumspectness in our own personal walk and watchfulness, in observing of opportunities wherein we may edifie others, as Heb. 3. 13. Secondly, There is need of more frequency, and of a more weighty circumspect manner in giving private admonitions and exhortations, &c. Thirdly, There would be much exercise of prayer, and even fasting therewith (though in a secret inoffensive manner) both for the restraining of offences, which dishonour God, and for zeal to Officers to perform their duty;
if in this respect, rivers of tears were running down our cheeks, because of the abounding of offences, there might be much more solid peace (we are persuaded) in keeping communion with others, than without that to separate with much, at least seeming pride and uncharitable cruelty in giving of offence to them, and thereby confirming them in their profanity. Fourthly, It is private persons duty to represent such offences with their evidences, to Church-officers, or Church-judicatories, thereby to put them to the removing of such offences. Fifthly, They may freely, though humbly and reverently, expostulate with Church-officers, when they are defective, and endeavour to convince them of that offence: The force of that precept, *If thy brother offend thee, go and tell him,* &c. warranteth so much; and this the *Colossians are to say to Archippus,* that he be not defective in his Ministry which he had received, &c. *Col. 4. 17.* This decently and convincingly done, is useful. Sixthly, If all that prevail not, private persons may communicate it to other Church-officers; and no redresse following, it is their duty to follow it before the competent superior Judicatures: for, Christ's direction, *Tell the Church,* importeth and warranteth the same.

If it be asked, What further is to be done, if that fail? *Ans."We know no other publick redresse; Christ hath left it there, and so may we also. Neither can it be instucted from Scripture, that Christ hath appointed separation to be the next step of a private persons duty for removing of offences, much lesse to go before these. Indeed the Scripture calleth for with-drawing from personall communion with grosse, scandalous persons, as a thing necessary; as also from communion in the corrupt designes and courses of any, though they may have a form of godliness, as 2 *Tim. 3. 4, 5,* &c. which doth belong to, and is comprehended under the first particular
cular direction. And if these be faithfully observed by private Christians, we are hopeful that either there would be less ground of complaint for the defect of Church-officers, or more accessible to remove such as continue unfaithful, and more peace to the consciences of particular private Christians, and less offence and more edification to all, than any other way whatsoever.

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

If the second be said, viz. That there is some other thing to fix on for quieting of consciences in such a case, as to their exoneration beyond that publick decision; We desire to know what that is which is called-for, and by what rule we are to proceed in it? If it be said, that in such a case the duty is to separate from that Church, where the plurality of Officers do admit such as are accounted to be scandalous; Then we ask, I. What is next to be done? it must either be to continue as no member of a Church, which is both impossible and absurd. It is impossible that there can be any particular visible baptized member, and not belong to the visible body, at least, being considered, as the Church maketh one integral visible body. It's absurd, because it would say, That either Christ had no visible Church, or, that He hath an
an ordinary way of edifying by external Ordinances without His visible Church, or, that a person might be regardlesse of, and without His Church and Ordinances, and be approven of Him, and expect the benefit; yea, upon this supposition, the unfaithfulnesse of Church-officers in not castling-out of scandalous men, would infer the actual unchurching of those that were not scandalous, and so the sin of the one should be the punishment of the other, which is absurd.

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

Further, we ask, What if other persons and we cannot agree upon joint members; for, if it be left to mens particular discerning, that rule is uncertain and various, being involved in many difficulties, as was formerly hinted: in that case, either there must be no separated Church, or diverse separated Churches, according to the latitude of diverse persons charity. This being certain, that one will think a person scandalous, which another doth not esteem so; and one will approve that, which another will condemn.
Again, we ask, What if such persons that with-
draw and seek to enter a more holy society, should be
refused? Then, how could they evidence their own
holiness, and convince these refusers that they were
graciously qualified, and so to be admitted if that
were stuck upon, for whatever profession were made,
it behoved still to be tried by no other rule, but by
folks particular discerning and charity?

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

This truth is fully made out by those three worthy
and pious Divines of New England, Cotton, Hooker,
and Norton: The last whereof, by many reasons
evinceth this in his answer to Appolionius his last que-
question, pag. 162, 163. and doth from the Church of
Corinth in particular confirm this: "There (faith
"he) was impurity or corruption in worship, for
"women taught in the Church; There was corrupt
"Doctrine, many denied the Resurrection; in man-
"ners, she was most corrupt, there being so many "fornications, sects, palpable love of the world, &c. "Yet (faith he) the Apostle did not command those "that were worthily prepared to abstain from the "Supper, but, rectifying abuses, he did command "every one to try himself, and so to eat, &c. And many other things, hath he excellently to this purpose, and laieth this for a ground, that "per alies indigné "accidentes non polluitur communio, licet minutur consou- "latio, that is, the communion in worship is not pol-
"luted, though the consolation be diminished by "such joint worshipper.

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

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

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

**CHAP. X IV.**

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

But yet two things are to be satisfied. 1. It may be said, But are not the Ordinances of Christ somehow polluted by the unworthiness of such scandalous partakers? and if so, can polluted Ordinances be partaken of, without sin? *Ans. We may consider polluting of Ordinances in a threefold sense.*

1. An Ordinance may be said to be polluted, when the essentials and substantials thereof are corrupted, so as indeed it ceaseth to be an Ordinance of Jesus Christ: Thus the Masse in Popery, is a fearful abomination, and a corruption of the Sacrament: in this respect, the Ordinance (if it may be called an Ordinance after that, for indeed it is not an Ordinance of Christ) is polluted, and this may be many ways fallen into, and communion in this, is indeed sinful and cannot but be so.

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

3. An Ordinance may be said to be polluted, upon this extrinsec consideration, to wit, when by some circumstance in it, or miscarriage of those that are about it, it is made common-like, and so wanteth that lustre and honourableness that it ought to have; by such a fault the Ordinance is made obnoxious to contempt, and is despised by others, contrary to the Lords allowance. Thus the Priests of old made the offerings of the Lord vile and contemptible, which was not by corrupting them in essentials, nor making them cease to be Ordinances, but by their miscarriages and corrupt irreverent way of going about them, they did lay that stumbling-block before others, to make them account these Ordinances contemptible. This may be diverse ways fallen into, As, 1. when the Officer, or Minister, hath a profane carnall carriage, So he maketh the Ordinance of the Ministry, and every other Ordinance vile in this sense: Thus, if an Elder or any others should take on them to admonish while they are in drunkenness or passion, or such like, they do pollute that admonition, yet still these Ordinances are Ordin-
Ordinances, and that admonition an admonition.
2. It is fallen into, when an Officer doth indiscreetly and indifferently administer Ordinances to precious and vile, as if they were common things. Thus a reproof may be polluted when a manifest known contemner is reproved, because, so a pearl is casten before swine, which is derogatory to the excellency thereof. Thus a Minister may profane or pollute the most excellent promises or consolations of the Word, when he doth without discretion apply the same indifferently; or, without making difference between the tender and the untender and profane; yea, even between the hypocrites and the truely godly. This is not to divide the Word of God aright, and is indeed that which the Lord mainly accounteth to be Not separating of the precious from the vile, when peace is spoken to them to whom he never spoke it. This is also committed, when grossly scandalous persons are permitted, without the exercise of Discipline upon them, to live in the Church, or are admitted to Sacraments, because so God's institution is wronged, and the lustre thereof is lessened, and men are induced to think less thereof. 3. This may be also by the irreverent manner of going about them, when it is without that due reverence and gravity that ought to be in His worship. Thus one may make the Word and Sacrament to be in a great part ridiculous; and so suppose, that at the Sacrament of the Supper, in the same Congregation, some should be communicating at one place, some at another, some should be palpably talking of other things, some miscarrying by drunkenness, &c. as its clear was in the Church of Corinth. All those may be said to pollute the Ordinances, as they derogate from their weight and authority, and miscarry in the administration of them, and are ready to breed irreverence and contempt in others where the Lords Body in the Supper, or the end of His institution in other Ordinances,
nances, is not discerned and observed: yet all these do not pollute the Ordinance in itself, or make it to be no Ordinance, nor do pollute it to any that doth reverently partake of the same, and doth not stumble upon the block that is laid before him: Because an hearer that were suitably qualified, might comfortably receive and feed upon a sweet promise, even when it might be extended in its application beyond the Lord's allowance; yet doth not that alter the nature thereof to him: So may worthy Communicants that have examined themselves, and do discern the Lord's Body, partake of that Sacrament with His approbation, and to their own comfort; Because they might discern Him, and by that come to get the right impression of the Ordinances, although many blocks were lying in their way: for, it is not others casting of snares before them, but their stumbling at them, that doth pollute the Ordinance to them. Hence we see, that though all these were in the Church of Corinth, so that there was neither reverence in the manner, nor discretion in respect of the Receivers (for, some came drunken, and some came and waited not on others, some came hungry, and others full) yet was it still the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and unpolluted to those, who by examining of themselves, and discerning of His Body (which others failed in) did reverently and duly partake of the same.

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

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

**CHAP. XV.**

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

2. It may be yet further moved, Can there be no more allowed in any supposable case? **Ans.** It is most unsuitable, in a matter of practice; when folks are not contending for curiosity, but for direction, to suppose cases hardly or rarely possible in a constitute Church, which is worthy of that name, or, upon that ground, to found a contest in dispute, or schism
schism in practice, in cases palpably different; at least, union should be kept till such a case come about. And is it likely, where the order formerly laid down is observed, that there can be habitual admission of notoriously or grievously scandalous persons, though, it may be, there be lesser failings of several sorts: Yet, supposing that any, out of infirmity or affection, not having such knowledge, or otherwise, should stick to joyn in the Ordinances at some times, or in some places, upon such an account, who yet do not love separation, or the erecting of a different Church, We say further.

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

2. Although separation be never allowable, and secession be not alway at an instant practicable; yet we suppose, in some cases, simple abstinence, if it be not offensive in the manner and circumstances, if it be not made customary, and if the ground be so convincing, and the case so grosse that it will affect any ingenuous hearer, and so evident that there is no accesse to any acquainted in such places, to deny the same, or that there be a present undecided process concerning such things before a competent Judge; in some such cases, I say, as might be supposed, we conceive abstinence were not rigidly to be misconstruced, it being for the time the burden of such persons, that
that they cannot joyn; and, it may be, having some
publick complaint of such a thing to make-out, and
in dependence elsewhere: Although we will not
strengthen any to follow this way, nor can it be pre-
tended to, where the case is not singularly horrid; yet
supposing it to be such, we conceive it is the safest one
way for the persons peace, and the preventing of of-
fence together; yet, much christian prudence is to be
exercised in the conveying of the same, if it were by
removing for a time, or otherways, that there appear
to be no publick contempt; but we conceive this case
is so rarely incident, and possibly that there needeth
be little said of it, much lesse should there be any
needlese debate or rent entertained upon the considere-
tation or notion thereof. And certainly, the case be-
fore us of the admitting of the Nicolaitans and Je-
zebel, considering their doctrine and deeds, is more
horrid than readily can be supposed; and yet it would
seem, that though this defect should still have contin-
ued, the Lord doth require no other thing of private
professours, but their continuing-in, or holding fast
of, their former personal purity, which is all the bur-
den that He doth lay upon them.

To shut up all, we may see what evils are to be
avoided in the prosecution of publick Scandals, and
what a commendable thing it were to have this in
the right manner vigorous; if private Christians were
zealous, loving and prudent in their private admoni-
tions; if Officers were diligent, single, grave, and
weighty in what concerneth them; if offending per-
sons were humble and submissive, and all reverent
and respective of the Ordinances, and studious of
private and publick edification, How beautiful and
profitable a thing would it be? Certainly this man-
ner of procedure, would be more beautifying to the
Ordinances of Christ, more convincing to all on-
lookers, more sweet and easie both to Officers and
People, and more edifying and gaining to all, and, by
God's
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God's blessing were the way to make the mistaken yoke of Discipline to be accounted ease and light. And if all those ends be desirable, and the contrary evils be to be eschewed, then unquestionably the right manner of managing this great Ordinance of Discipline, is carefully to be studied and followed both by Officers and people.

PART III.

Concerning Doctrinal Scandals, or Scandalous Erroors.

CHAP. I.

Holding out the expediency of handling this matter.

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

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

We may in prosecution of this, 1. consider some generall Doctrines. 2. Some generall Questions. 3. More
3. More particularly speak to the several duties according to particular cases and remedies that are called for. 4. Shew the necessity of orderly Judicial procedour here, in reference to such Scandals, as well as in reference to Scandals in practice formerly mentioned.

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

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

3. Consider the many threatenings and woes that are in Scripture against them, Matth. 23. the many warnings that are given to Ministers to watch against them, Act. 20. the plain directions that are to censure them, Tit. 3. 10. the particular examples of censuring them recorded in Scripture, (as after will appear) Christ commending it where it is, His reproving
vning of it where it is not, as in these second and third Chapters of the Revelation is manifest: these and such like, do evidently make out how exceedingly scandalous the venting of corrupt Doctrine is, which Rev. 2. 6. the Lord faith, He hates, and therefore it cannot but be loathsome and abominable.

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

5. Consider the nature of Error more particularly. 1. It is contrary to the truth of God, and therefore is a lie, as scandalous practices are contrary to the holinesse of God: now Gods truth and veracity is no lesse an essential attribute than His holiness.

2. This is not only to lie, but it is to attribute that unto the most High, by fathering these lies upon Him; and saying, thus faith the Lord, when He hath said no such thing but the contrary. 3. It teacheth others to lie, as it is, Matth. 5. 19. and that more forcibly and impudently than any practice can do. 4. It hath its original from the devil, who was a liar from the beginning, and the father thereof, Job. 8. 44. And spreaders of corrupt Doctrine, have special influence on the upholding and spreading of his kingdom.

5. It is a fruit of the flesh, even as murder, adultery, witchcraft; and seing it is so ranked by the Apostle, Gal. 5. 19, 20. can it be but scandalous?

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

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

CHAP. II.

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

Beside this, there are three things considerable, which from this and other Epistles we have occasion to observe and enquire a little into, before we propound any particular question. The first, is, concerning the spreading and increase of Error, and that of the most unreasonable and absurd Errors, even in the Primitive times. The second is, anent the Lords detesting of it, so that the very suffering of the spreaders of it, is hateful to Him in His Angels and Churches, that otherwise are approvable for their own particular carriages, as in Pergamos; and their not enduring thereof is commendable, even when their own inward condition is not altogether approvable, as may be seen in Ephesus. The third is, how that sometimes there may be fainting
fainting, as to zealous restraining of Error, even in men that are not the worst.

For the first, Can it but be thought strange that delusion should come to this height so soon: and it may make all to tremble at the impetuousness thereof. 1. It is a most foul absurd error, this of the Nicolaitans, even against natures light. 2. Itspreadeth and increaseth in several persons and Churches: and Church-story doth show that it abounded, and no lesse is insinuated in these Epistles. 3. That it spreadeth not only among heathens, but in the Church, and among Christ's Servants, who are seduced therewith; which sheweth, that even some of note were carried away with it. 4. This is in the Churches most pure times, some of the Apostles (at least John) being yet alive when this was vented. 5. It is carried-on by despicable instruments in comparison of others, a woman calling her self a prophetess, some fellows calling themselves Apostles and new lights, that men would think, should rather have been counted distracted, than to have been so reverenced. 6. This is done against the testimony of their own faithful Ministers, and in such Churches where God had witnesses keeping themselves from that evil, yea, where many Professors were in that respect pure, yet others are following that error, receiving and reverencing these seducers more than any faithfull Pastors. 7. This is done where there neither wanted light nor authority to convince them; for, no question, both were, as may be gathered from the trial of these in Ephesus; yea, John writeth from the Lords own mouth to confute them; and though there could be no exception against the application of his Doctrine, yet it was adhered to for many years after that. 8. John or some other Apostle was the instrument to convert them from Paganism to Christianity, yet, now can he not recover them from a foul error in Christianity when they are bewitched therewith; and though
no question his authority and arguments had lost weight with them now than before they were Christians; yet what can be thought of more force for their conviction and reclaiming, than these considerations? The like was often Paul's case, who at first had an easy work with people, when they were heathens, in comparison of what he had with the same when they became Christians, and tainted with false doctrine, or listeners to corrupt teachers, as in the Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians is clear. Which doth shew, 1. The unreasonable and power of a deluding Spirit, that nothing can convince, when once people come to like that way they go on, deceiving and being deceived, and, as Peter saith, 2 Pet. 3. 16. pervert the Scripture to their own destruction; 2. And as may be gathered, they do so by corrupting, first, that which doth appear to be more obscure, and then, they mould other Scriptures so as may consist with their fancies, that they have conceived to have ground in the former, and so they, first, form notions out of obscure places, and thereafter conform the more plain Scriptures to these, whereas the just contrary is most safe; and when the ignorant and unstable shall account themselves the only learned in the mysteries of God, what wonder is it that they be thus given up? and when they think the plain truths, and duties wherein there is no shadow of a ground of stumbling, are below them? and thus they may attain so much dexterity to wrest the Scriptures, even the plainest (as is implied there) as may be judicially subservient to their own destruction, and to prevent their being convinced, which might put them to shame; and occasion their abandoning of that. 2. We may see, that it is no easier thing to recover a misled people into error; that peradventure, 2 Tim. 2. 25. is not accidently put in, but to show that it is a hundred to one if such get repentance, whereby the Lord would scare all from that evil, and the
The more grosse their error is, often men are the more unreasonable in the defence thereof, and obstinate in adhering thereunto, because there is most of a judicial stroak seen there, in giving up men to such foolries, it is not credible that otherwise they could fall in them, and so being smitten of God, is it possible that any reason can prevail with them, while that plague lieth on? Was there any error like to that of worshipping stocks and stones? it being even against sense and reason, that men should burn a part thereof, and make some common work of another portion, and of a third make a deity and fall down and worship it, as the Prophet doth expostulate, Isa. 44. 19. which upon consideration might be found to be absurd: this is premised as the reason of such blockishness, ver. 18. For he hath shut their eyes that they cannot see, and their hearts that they cannot understand. 3. The unreasonablebleness of this Spirit in men, would not be thought strange in any of the former respects, even although no person could stop their mouth, but they should seem to themselves to triumph in the bringing-in of unheard-of senses of Scripture; the more they abound in that, it is the more judicial to them, even as the more they carry after them, and the more they be forborn by others, it worketh the more to their destruction: men would keep a distance from these infections, none can tell what they may turn unto if once entred in a giddy unstable soul, carried with the spait of a spirit of errour, and being given-up of God thereto for itching after it, and not receiving the love of the truth, may come to the most horrible things, and that without shame or remorse, ere there be any end; and on-lookers would acknowledge God's justice in such stroaks, and learn to reverence and fear him the more.

The second cannot but be clear from this: for, if errour be such an evil that thwarteth, 1. both with God's holiness and truth; And, 2. that hazardeth so many
many souls, (for never a plague hath so destroyed the face of the visible Church, nor carried so many souls to hell as errour hath done) Then the suffering of it cannot but be hatefull to Him who loveth His Church. 3. There is no way by which the devil reproacheth Ordinances and the Word more than this, by turning them to the quite contrary end, as if he would out-shoot the Lord in His own bow, (which is abominable to mention) and invert His own means, and turn His own weapons on Him; and suffering of this, is a conniving at his design. 4. There is no way by which the devil may so win in on Christ's Servants to seduce them as by this, as in the Epistle to Thyatira is clear. And can there danger come so nigh to Christ, and He not be displeased with what strengtheneth their snares? 5. This doth equal, yea, in some respect, prefer the devil to Him, so far as in us lieth, and so cannot but provoke His jealousie; for, so the devil hath liberty to vent his lies with Truth equally; and there being many lies, though there be but one Truth, he hath by this more doors opened to him than the Gospel hath. 6. This doth make even the Truth, Ordinances, and Religion itself to be thought light of; when all these have toleration, it is, on the matter, a proclaiming an indifferency to be in these things, than which nothing can more reflect on the jealous God, who in His Word putteth such a difference, and showeth such detestation at indifferency. 7. This bringeth hudge confusions on the Church. For, 1. If these errors and corrupt teachers prevail, they carry souls after them, and destroy them; and ought that to be thought light of? 2. If they prevail not, yet they crosle, afflict and offend them, and so prove a snare and burden to them of whom the Lord is tender. 8. Toleration doth either account little of errour, as being no hurtful thing, and so there can be no esteem of truth; or, it doth account little of the destruction of souls: both which
which must be abominable. 9. Error doth not only break God's Law, but doth teach others to do so; and suffering thereof, must be a maintaining of Teachers to teach Transgression and Rebellion against the Lord.

The third thing observable, is, That though zeal in a Minister, especially against error, be exceedingly commendable; yet oftentimes is there fainting, even among Ministers who are not of the worst: and the Angel is here reproved for sparing of these Nicolaitans, at least in being faint and defective in pursuing them in a ministerial way, as Antipas is recommended for his faithfulness, and the Angel of Ephesus for his not fainting in prosecuting of this trial; the Lord hath put these two together, the faithfull and wise Steward; and when they are carried equally on, O how commendable are they! yet in the reckoning, the one is but mentioned, Well done thou good and faithful servant, not to give a dispensation in reference to the other, but to shew the necessity and excellency of this, that thereby Ministers may be put to it, lest under pretext of prudence, they incroach upon that freedom and faithfulness which is called-for from them, whether in undertaking, or in prosecuting of this charge, in which there will not want many difficulties, that will be ready to occasion fainting, if they be not boldly in the Lord's strength set against, as we may instance in these respects. 1. In respect of the time: there are some evil times, wherein it is hard to know what to say, for which the prudent may be said to keep silence, and often that pretext may be the occasion of fostering too much fainting, when the Lord calleth-for faithfulness. 2. It may arise from a man's sensibleness of his own infirmities and unequalnness for that charge, as seems to be in Jeremiah, Jer. 1. when a man's own self, or thoughts of himself, without respect to his call, is made the rule whereby he proceedeth. 3. It may arise from the message which
which he is called to carry: sharp messages are heavy and burdensome, that maketh Jona to Shift for a time to undertake that denunciation against Niniveh, especially considering that these Messengers ordinarily are not acceptable to hearers; and that there are withal usually not a few who few pillows under arm-holes; and are ready to destroy, in that respect, what others build. 4. It may arise from hearers, and that of diverse tempers; some are ready, like swine, to turn back on the Carriers, as if they did hate them, as Micajah was met with by Abab, 2 King. 22. who yet had four hundred flattering liars in request. Some, again, are of an itching humour, and do not abide convincing doctrine and faithfulness, such are ready to breed a separation from them that do faithfully reprove, at least much to cool their affections to them, which (as it is, 2 Tim. 4.) is no little piece of trial to a Minister: Many also that are affectionate, are yet hasty, and cannot abide plain dealing; and it is no less difficulty to win to be faithfull to these, than to others who are openly prophane. 5. There is a fainting that ariseth from distrust of God, as not being confident of the performance of His promise, and of their being countenanced in His work; and so seeing it impossible in themselves and in their own eyes, they give it over as if it were so simply. 6. There is a fainting that ariseth from supposed events, either as thinking there will be no fruit of such a thing, or, that some inconvenience will follow it. It is like that Moses was not free of the first, when he faith, Israel doth not, or, will not bear me; and what will Pharaoh do? And the last is common, when once flesh and blood are admitted to consult of duty from the supposed inconveniencies that will follow, then readily it decideth, that it is not duty at all. It may be somewhat of that was here, that the Angel feared the disquieting of the Church, or some schism that might follow on it; and the Lord's threatening to take another way of
fighting against them, with the sword of His mouth; doth insinuate this: for, a carnal shift, to prevent some inconveniences, often draweth on that which men feared, the more speedily. Other grounds of it also may be given, which yet are not approvable before God.

CHAP. III.

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

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

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

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

Assert. 2. Although we dare not altogether say it's impossible, yet we think that it is more rare for a Believer to fall in grosse errors, and for any conside-rable time to continue therein, so as to be accounted an Heretick, than in other scandalous practices. For, 1. The Scripture doth more rarely mention this, than other sins of Believers, which are more frequently recorded. 2. There are very special promises for preserving of the Elect from being seduced by false Chris-tians and false teachers: and though it do not hold universally in all particulars, except in as far as reaches their everlasting state; yet it may be extended in some good measure, even to seduction itself; and we suppose may be more clear from these considerations, 1. Becoming erroneous in such a manner, doth not proceed from some sudden surprising fit of temptation, as grosse practices oftentimes may do; but it implieth a deliberateneffe therein, which is not so readily incident to a Believer, and it cannot so well be called a sin of infirmity; and therefore the Scripture doth ever set out such teachers of false doctrine as most abomi-nable, to wit, as not serving the Lord Christ, but their own bellies, Rom. 16. 18. as being enemies to the grosse of Christ, Phil. 3. 19. as being ministers of Satan, 2 Cor. 11. 15. Other men (as it were) that are unrenewed, are common subjects and servants to the devil; but corrupt teachers they are apostles to him, and prime officers in his kingdom: These titles, and such like, cannot well be applicable to Saints in respect of their infirmities; and therefore, we think, that (at least) it is more rare-ly incident to them, to be carriers on and promoters
of corrupt doctrine. 2. It appeareth from this, that an Heretick is said to be self-condemned, Tit. 3. 10. because ere one can be so denominated, there must be a rejecting of admonitions, which stands not so very well with the nature of a Saint. 3. This consideration will also make it evident, that the Scripture speaketh of repentance of, and recovery from corrupt doctrine, as a very rare and uncertain thing, Gal. 4. 10. the Apostle fears he did bestow labour in vain in this business; and 2 Tim. 2. 25. the Apostle doth put a peradventure upon this, If peradventure God will give them (to wit, those that oppose themselves) repentance unto the acknowledging of the Truth. There is not such a peradventure put to any kind of sin: which sheweth that it must be more difficult to be recovered from it, than from other sins; and that therefore Believers, ordinarily at least, must be in a special manner preserved from it. 4. Which doth confirm the former, This delusion is a main spiritual plague; and is often the punishment not of former sins of infirmity, but of not receiving the love of the Truth, and of hypocrisy and proud presumption; and although the Lord is not to be limited and bound up from chastening His own with this rod, yet we may say from experience in the Word, and from the nature of the plague, and other grounds, It is neither the ordinary spot nor rod of His Children; and if at any time it be, it doth speak out readily much spiritual pride, self seeking, lightness, security, wantonness of spirit, ignorance and conceitedness joyned with it, want of exercise, or some one thing or other of that kind. And, as we hinted, when they are overtaken, we will not readily find in Scripture that such are heads to promote and carry on the design of error.  Assert. 3. When a Believer falleth in such an evil, the Lord usually chasteneth him, either with more grosse out-breakings, or with some sharp way of restoring, or with removal under a cloud, without much seen evi

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

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

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

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

M 4 eminently
eminently gave out themselves to be Christ's Servants; yea, it is clear, that neither did this error have such success amongst heathens, as amongst Christians, nor did the teachers thereof so intend the leaving of them, as they did vehemently endeavour the corrupting of the Church; we see it also in other Churches.

Was there any Church more shining with gifts than that of Corinth? and yet there did false Apostles breed great distractions and opposition to the Apostle Paul, and that as taking occasion from the giftedness and eminence of that Church beyond others, to drive on that design. Again, was there any Church that did more tenderly receive the Gospel, than these of Galatia? as we may see from chap. 4.14.15. They received him as an Angel of God, and as Christ Jesus, they would have plucked out their own eyes for him; and yet there is no Church so soon shaken and infected by corrupt teachers, and so bewitched with them and their temptations, as we may gather from chap. 1.6. chap. 3.1, 2. and throughout the Epistle:

It is like the devil took occasion of their warmness instantly to set upon them before their settling, more than on other places or Churches, where such hopeful beginnings did not appear; And thus we see in experience daily, that where profanity aboundeth, there are fewer onsets to tempt to errour, and lest success, than where the Gospel hath had more welcome and fruit; as it were, the devil bendeth this temptation against the last, with more vehemence and subtility, than he doth against the former: for which we may give these Reasons. 1. His hatred is most at them, and he would faineft have them overturned. 2. Because he hath other baits that are more suitable to profane men: and so long as they are his, he doth not so much seek to engage them by this, for that is no gain to him. 3. Because especially, these who have a form of Religion, if withall weak in knowledge, are most capable, in some respect, of a temptation.
to error; for, profane men, care not (like Gallio) what be truth, and what be error; but a poor soul that hath some conscience, is ready to debate, and desireth the truth to be cleared, and when not so strong as to rid it felt, it is readily drawn away like these silly women Paul speaketh of. 2 Tim. 3. 6 7. who were ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 4. Because grosse tentations to profanity (wherewith others are carried away) are not so taking with them, therefore the devil essayeth them with error, under colour of some truth, or new discovery of some more strict and holy way, which often prevaileth when the other would not. 5. Because it is most advantagious to error, and make it digest with others, to have one of name or parts, or piety for it, this being ordinary among most men, to look more to thee who maintain such a thing, and what such a man thinketh of it, than to the thing itself. Therefore doth the devil drive this as a main design whereby he may prevail over many; this was ever a great mean made use of to induce to error, that many who were accounted godly, did embrace the same, as may appear from the histories of the Novatians, Donatists, and others, who called themselves the pure and holy Church of Martyrs, and took other such like titles in opposition to the Orthodox Church, whom they accounted carnall; and by this mean they did brangle many. 6 He doth this also, that he may divert the exercises of these that look honest like from self-searching repentance, &c., that if he cannot get them engaged to error, he may bring them, at least, to dispute truth, whereby he essayeth to extinguish the former conviction, or to give it a wrong mould before it be settled; or to keep them, as it were, taken up about the shell, while he intendeth to rob them of the kirmell, and so one way or other, if he gain not all, he doth yet disquiet them, and weary them by wakening of questions and
and debates, which are without their reach, and possibly also beyond their station.

CHAP. IV.

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

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

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

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

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

2. We say, that the Lord is no lesse just, holy and pure in punishing men with such plagues, than when He maketh use of some other rods or judgments, neither is there any thing in this to be attributed to Him, that is unbecoming His absolute purity and holiness. For, 1. He doth not punish any with this plague, but such as have by their former abuse of light and other miscarriages justly deserved the same. 2. He doth not infuse any maliciousnesse in the heart, nor increase what was, but justly permits what
what is to break out, and overrules the same for His just ends. 3. He doth not strain them to any such course, but doth make use of their own willingness thereunto, and of their free choosing to follow such a way for the glory of His justice. 4. He doth not con

nive at, nor dispense with the sinfull practice of any instrument, but doth really abhor, and will also severely punish the same. So, that as the same act hath a twofold consideration, to wit, as it is sin

full, and as it is penall, So it is diversly to be ascribed, to wit, in the first respect, to man only; and in the last, to Gods overruling providence, who can bring good out of evil, seeing there is nothing so evil, but He can bring some good out of it, and make it subservient to Him, otherwise He that is Omnipotent and only wise, would never suffer it to be.

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

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fing of the same. Hence it is said, 2 Thess. 2.2, that there is not only a word and letter to shake the minds of people at such a time, but there is also a Spirit or gift in an eminent degree, and therefore it is called, ver. 10. All deceitableness; and, no question, these that called themselves Apostles, 2 Cor. 11.13. and made Paul's gifts to be accounted weak in respect of theirs, had more than ordinary gifts; and in this respect, sometime the Lord faith, a false Prophet might foretell something that was to come to pass; and so truly have an extraordinary gift, when yet the Lords design is by such, to try the peoples adherence to him, Deut. 13.1,2,3. Thus often promovers of errour may be gifted with ability to reason, make querecs, shift arguments and places of Scripture, preach well, pray well with a great deal of eloquence, and liberty of plausible expressions, yea, they may possibly not want, as it were, signs and wonders (as in the place formerly cited) and yet the Lords end be to try, as is said: of this sort are such as are spoken of, 2 Pet. 3.15. Who wrest or pervert Scripture to their own destruction; it is a strange word, they are unlearned and unstable, (and, it may be, are crying down learning in others) yet, faith he, they have a dexterity to wrest the Scriptures, to coin new interpretations, possibly never heard of before, to the admiration of others. And what is the consequent thereof? It is their own destruction. It had been advantage to many such themselves and others also, that they had never had such a gift. 3. The Lord also may someway arm the devil, as His executioner to carry on this design, by furnishing him with such instruments, giving him time, opportunities and occasions to tempt, and suffering him in many things to prevail: thus, 2 Thes. 2. Satan is said to have a power, and to exercise the same, by bringing forth of lying wonders; and, no question, the devil when he getteth way, may do much, when it is said that he put it in the heart of Judas
to betray his master, who yet was furnished with parts, and admitted into Christ's company by Himself; all which was subservient to carry on the devils and the Pharisees design, of betraying the Lord; which, notwithstanding, tended to the greater ruine of his own kingdom.

4. In such a case also, the Lord doth justly deprive men, whom He mindeth to plague with that delusion, of these means, which might be usefull to discern and resist the same. As, 1. he may take away all outward restraints, which usually keep corrupt teachers from open and professed spreading of their errors; and in His providence, give them full way to multiply, and avowedly to pursue their design. This is to pluck up the hedge, Isa. 5. and to suffer the winds to blow, Rev. 7. which are ever great inlets to this judgement of delusion, when, to say so, there is a flood spewed out, and there is no earth to help the woman, and to dry up that flood. 2. He may take away prime lights and guides, which are usefull to keep people right; or, if they continue, he may suffer jealousy, division and other things to interveen so, that thereby their weight and authority is lefsten'd to such persons: in which respect, Abab becometh jealous of Micajah, whereby the devil hath occasion to make the lies of the false Prophets the more to be commended to him. 3. The Lord may withdraw the light that persons have (and, it may be, some common gifts of the Spirit) and by depriving them of that, they become the more obnoxious to tentation, although it may be they think themselves wiser, and more understanding than they were: thus the Apostle calleth the Galatians foolish and bewitched, Gal. 3. 1, 2. as having fallen from that light which at first they had. 4. He may remove common convictions of the Spirit, and challenges of a natural conscience, so that they may go on in their delusion without a challenge; yea, (as it is said, Job. 16. 2.) think that they
they do God good service in so doing: this is, to have the conscience seared with an hot iron, 1 Tim. 4. 2. that waiteth upon seducing Spirits; and thus we see, that the most vain and reasonless confidence doth often wait upon the foulest errors, as, Isa. 44. 9. unto 20. This is called, Gal. 5. 8. a persuasion in respect of its confidence, which yet cometh not of God. And the Lord may not only justly deprive of such common gifts, but even of ordinary reason and judgment, whereby men become, at least, in the prosecution of their errors, absurd and unreasonable, without all capability of seeing the weight of a reason, or receiving a conviction, or observing their own folly, and to carry without all respect to credit, honesty, good manners, and such things as are even respected among civil men; yea, sometimes without respect to their own estates, or their own persons, as we may see in the prophets of Baal, 1 King. 18. and many others in Antichrists kingdom; these are called by the Apostle, 2 Thess. 3. 2. unreasonable, or absurd beastly men, as if they wanted reason; this is also a companion of delusion, and a piece of Gods judgement, as is clear from that of Isa. 44. The Lord thinking good, for the abuse of light, to deprive men of reason, as he did Nebuchadnezzar, whereby the vilest and absurdest tentations have access to men, (that otherways may be reasonable) to carry them on with greediness, and without all reluctance or contradiction.

5. When men are in the Lords justice thus deprived, and being set upon with the tentation, which he hath letting loose upon them, the Lord may in His providence tryst many things that may be abused, for the carrying on of this judgement. As, 1. he may tryst such a person with such a tentation, to live in such a place, to have such acquaintance, &c. 2. He may tryst such a tentation to fall in such a time, as there is no external aw-band to restrain; yea, in his wisdom,
wisdom, order it so, as that then there may be many occasions of stumbling among the Professors of the truth, what by scandals in practice, what by division and other distempers, as the way of truth may be ill spoken of by many; and the Ordinances in that respect made vile, as is said in the case of Elie's sons, 1 Sam. 2. Sometimes he may try the such temptations with some ignorant, unskillful inditterous hands, who may rather harden than help any in the removing of their doubts: These and many such like things may the wise and just Lord order in His providence, which may be as snares and stumbling-blocks to proud secure hypocrits, who by their corruption may fall thereon; yea, sometime the very Ordinances and the exercising of them, to wit, the Word, Sacraments and Discipline, may, through men's corruption, be stumbled at more than if they were not; in this sense, when the Lord reproveth the unfaithfull Prophets and Priests, Jer. 6, 14. and the peoples not hearkening to his faithfull Prophets, ver. 17. although they kepted the form of Religion, ver. 20. he doth threaten to lay stumbling-blocks before them, upon which they should fall, ver. 21. All which and many more ways, (as sometimes following of errout hath applause attending it, as, 2 Tim. 4, 1. Sometimes it hath gain waiting upon it, as, 2 Pet. 2, 3: 1 Tim. 6, 10. and Gal. 6, 12. Philip. 3, 19.) being tryd in the Lords' just providence, have often much influence, through men's corruption, to make delusion the more successfull.

6. Beside these, the Lord hath a judicial upgiving of proud, corrupt men, unto the hands of such temptations: so that when, as it were, the devil setteeth on by such a blast of wind, and seeketh to winnow such and such persons, the Lord doth, as a just judge, sentence them to be committed thereto, as to the executioner of His justice; in this sense, he is said to give them up: and in this respect, such defection, as it is a
punishment, is judicially permitted and ordered by Him, who willingly and purposely Sentenceth such persons to be so given up, because of former sins, whereas others whom He doth not so Sentence, are not so carried away with that same tentation.

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

C H A P. V.

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

IT may be asked here, 1. How errorre may be known to be a judgement or judiciall? And,

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

gifts and painfulness, when He hath to do with them; So, upon the contrary, when He hath a work of judgment on the wheels, and the devil a design of carrying-on delusion, the instruments are fitted proportionably, to wit, there is a zeal carrying them here and there. So that by all means, as it were, they compass sea and land to make Proselytes; there is dexterity, quickness and nimbleness in starting of doubts, wresting of Scripture, &c. as is said; and there is a sort of patience in enduring, boldness and confidence in attempting, and some success, as in the case of the false Prophets against Micaiah, 1 King. 22. and against Jeremiah, Jer. 29. When, I say, corrupt instruments are fitted by these and such like means, it is probable, that the Lord intendeth something by them which they themselves do not minde.

6. It is judicial-like, when it tryeth on the back of a peoples having the truth, and being unfruitfull under it, because, so it speaketh out the very end of its appearing, especially, if there be in people an itching-new-fangledness after novelties, and if there have been needLens and affected stirrings and questionings about leffer truths. If then greater delusion come, it doth look judicial-like, as being a stroke for their former unsettledness; this is to give men up to heap up teachers to themselves, that have itching ears, 2 Tim. 4. 3. and this is, to give men teachers according to their own hearts, that there may be like people like priests, which is often threatened by the Lord.

And thus of old, when the people began to miscarry in the wildernesse, in reference to the second Command, He gave them up to worship the hoast of heaven, and to miscarry in the first, as is mentioned, Acts 7. 41. 7. It appeareth to be judicial indeed when it doth hurt, either by corrupting of truth, or maring of unity, or wakening of divisions, &c. which are consequents of the first four trumpets, that bring spiritual plagues, Rev. 8. These and such-like chara.

N 2

Acrs.
A Treatise concerning Scandal. Part 3.

What causes do most ordinarily procure this plague of delusion.

And, 1. we say, that such a plague is not the consequent of common out-breakings and sins of infirmity; Nor, 2. of ingratitude for, and abuse of, common mercies; Nor, 3. ordinarily is it the punishment of grosse sins of the flesh, to speak so, for, this is rather a fruit of that: but it doth follow upon, 1. the abuse of spiritual mercies, such as the light of the truth of the Gospel, slighted convictions, smothered challenges, broken promises made for further Reformation, and such like, as may be gathered from 2 Thes. 2. 9, 10. 2. It followeth upon spiritual sins, such as spiritual pride, security, hypocrisy, and formality, keeping up of the form without the power, having truth but not the love thereof, as in the place formerly cited, and elsewhere. 3. There are some sort of distempers, which especially procure this, beside others. As, 1. an itching humour, that beginneth to loathe the simplicity of truth. 2. A hasty partial humour that cannot abide sound Doctrine, if it be not someway curiously drest, especially if it reprove their miscarriages: both which are spoken of, 2 Tim. 4. 3. 3. There is a proud self-conceitedness, whereof the Apostle speaketh, 2 Tim. 3, 4, when persons are selfie, proud, boasters, &c. such are a ready prey to such tentations. 4. Little respect to faithful Ministers that preach truth, may procure this plague, to get Pastors according to their own heart, and judgments that are not good, as the Lord threatneth, Ezek. 20. and is threatened by the Lord, Job. 5. ver. 43. I have come in my Fathers Name, and ye have not received me; if another shall come in his own name, him will ye receive. 5. It may be procured by lightnesse and unstableness, when folks goe vainly beyond their reach to seek or meet a temptation, the Lord justly may smite them with their own sin; and thus reading of corrupt books, hearing of corrupt preachers, con-
Part 3. "A Treatise concerning Scandal: versing with corrupt men, and such like, which the Lord hath commanded to eschew, doth not only prove, in God's righteous judgment, a snare or mids of folks infringing, but also the procuring deserving cause of being given up to that delusion, which they make themselves obnoxious to, by going without His call, although, at first, possibly there was no positive affection to that way, but, it may be, the contrary; even as suppose one hazarding, contrary to the Command, to go nigh the door of the adulterous woman's house, should for that cause be given up to fall in her snare and to enter, although at first he did not intend it, as these places do insinuate, Prov. 5. 8. and 6. 26, 27, 28, where he saith, to this purpose, that a man cannot take fire in his bosome and not be burnt. &c. And it is said, Prov. 22. 14. such as are abhorred of the Lord, shall fall in that pit. 6. There is a jangling questioning strain; this often brings on this ill, when all truths are not received, but folks begin to cast at the lesser truths; this procureth delusion in a greater height, as is said, because every truth is precious, and when men become untender in the smallest truths, (if any may be called so) it is just with God to deprive them of all, even as smaller sins in practice, being connived at, do bring on more grosse outbursts: and thus the visible Church, by her declining from the truth, in the Primitive times, and becoming more to be taken up with Ceremonies and other unnecessary debates, did draw on upon themselves Antichrist's delusion at length: of this sort are ignorance in the fundamentall truths, that doth proceed from negligence, little love to, and delight in, the Word and Ordinances, little bemoaning of the falls and miscarriages of others, when we hear them to be overtaken with such snares; and many such like things might be named, but we will not insist further.

We come then to the second thing proposed, and that is to consider how corrupt Teachers do carry on
their design; and what means the devil useth by them to prevail with poor souls; for to cast at the truths of God, and to drink up the most absurd delusions: and although we cannot reach Satan's depths; he having much subtlety, and many wiles, to carry on his design; as it is, 2 Cor. 11. 3. and it is called, Eph. 4. 4. a cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, Yet seeing we ought not to be ignorant of his devices, 2 Cor. 2. 11. We shall gather somethings from Scripture, that may be useful to arm us against the same: and to take up his way the better, we may consider, 1. The instruments which he chooseth. 2. The method that he keepeth in temptings by them. 3. The means which he useth, or common places from which he draweth his arguments. 4. The manner how these are carried on.

CHAP. VI.

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

1. Satan doth not act in this design immediately; nor doth he act indifferently by any instrument, but he hath his special ministers, as it were, set apart for that end, as the Apostle speaketh 2 Cor. 11. 15. He hath many subjects indeed, but beside these, he hath some special ministers for this design, as our blessed Lord Jesus hath Ministers specially set apart in His Kingdom. Concerning which we may observe, 1. That he employeth some more eminently to traffique, as it were, in this very employment, who, by compassing sea and land, and travelling to and fro, may further his design, such were those who were called false Apostles, 2 Cor. 11. 13. Rev. 2. 3. and in the history of the Acts we will find such coming from one place to another, as from Jerusalem to Antioch, Act. 15. and elsewhere, purposely to spread their errors, as the Apostles did travel for preaching the truth. 2. He hath particular instruments, preaching
ing in particular places, that are, as it were, his minis-
ters of such and such bounds, as in the place cited.
3. Befide these, he hath flickling underhand-dealers, 
who, not appearing openly, yet creep into houses; and 
ordinarily he hath some women, who are specially 
employed in this, as he hath Jezebel the Prophetesse 
in the Church of Thyatira, Rev. 2. and such he had 
in the primitive heresies, particularly one of the Mont-
tanists, because such are often vehement in what they 
are engaged in, and have access to pervert and fe-
duce, which others cannot easily have; his assisting 
of them withall to speak sometimes to the admirati-
on of others, seemeth more wonderful like: 4. Whom 
ever he maketh use of, they are someway fitted ( to 
say so) for the designs they are employed in, although 
their manner of carrying on these designs may be 
diverse, as experience sheweth.

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

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

If it be enquired how he prosecuteth this? We may observe these particular wayes; As, 1. Although he question not a Ministry in the general, yet he wakeneth Questions, concerning the calling of such and such men, if they be duly called Ministers or not; thus Paul's Apostleship is questioned, because he had not conversed with the Lord; and for this cause he is put, in the Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians, so largely to vindicate his Calling and Apostleship, and to produce, as it were, not only his Commission, but the Seal thereof also, particularly,

2 Cor. 3. 2, 3. and the occasion thereof is expressed,

2 Cor. 13. 2. since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me.

2. He endeavoureth the discrediting of their gifts, as if the matter spoken by them were common, their expressions mean, and their carriage base and contemptible, as we may see in the instance of that same great Apostle Paul, 2 Cor. 10. 1. and 11. 6, he is called rude in speech.

3. This is especially by comparing them with the fair shew of corrupt teachers in their flourishing, spiritual, ravishing-like discourses, which are by many counted mysteries, and are called
called depths, Rev. 2. 24. The Lord indeed calleth them depths of Satan, but it is not to be thought that they themselves meant so, who yet are said to give them the name of depths; sometimes unconceivable non-sence, will be admired, and plain truths and duty despised. 4. They cry-up their revelations and spiritual attainments in an immediate manner beyond what is in the Ministers of Christ: Therefore, 2 Cor. 11.12. Paul is put to compare himself with them, and particularly in revelations and singular manifestations of God to him. 5. They endeavour to make the Ministers of Christ to be esteemed covetous, self-seekers, earthly-minded, and such like, because of their taking wages to preach the Gospel, as if they were making a prey of the people, which is often objected to the Apostle, and answered by him in these Epistles to the Corinthians. 6. When evidences fail, then they raise suspicions of Ministers craftiness and underhand dealing, as if in every thing they were seeking their gain, as that Apostle answereth it, 2 Cor. 12. 16,17. 7. Whatever the Ministers carriage be, they lie in wait to traduce it, if he be more meek and familiar in his conversing, they say he is a carnal man, a friend and lover of sinners and corrupt men, as was said of our blessed Lord; if he be more austere in checking their faults, or retired in shunning their company, he is called intolerable and devilishly proud, as was imputed to John; if he take wages or gifts, he is accounted greedy and covetous; if he refuse and abstain, it is expounded to be want of love and respect to them, as was also said of Paul when he continued firm in his former resolution, 2 Cor. 11.10,11. 8. They are usually counted proud, exalters of themselves above, and despisers of, the people, and to take too much on them to the prejudice of the Flock, whose liberty and privileges corrupt teachers ordinarily pretend to vindicate against Ministers tyrannous encroachments (as they say) This was pretended by Korah, Dathan, and
and Abiram against Aaron, and was revived and followed in the primitive times by these corrupters, spoken of, Jude 11. 9. They endeavour to have the people suspecting the Ministers love to them, as 2 Cor. 11, 11. yea, that all his freedom to them, and his speaking against their faults and errors is bitterness, railing, and the like, which the Apostle toucheth, Gal. 4, 16.

Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? 10. It is ordinary to charge Ministers with lightness and changeableness, and that therefore much weight is not to be laid on them, for, they think one thing this year, (say they,) and alter the next, when yet, it may be, edification hath moved them in such a change; this hath been imputed to Paul, 2 Cor. 1, 17. purposedly to make his word to have little weight, and it is no marvel that that same way be followed in reference to others. For this end also, where there is any personal fault in a Minister, it is not past over but exceedingly aggreaged; yea, though it hath been in his youth, before his conversion or entry into the Ministry, it is not forgotten, if it may serve to defame the holy Calling: For preventing of this, it is required of Ministers, that they be of good report, even among those that are without; and it is like the false apostles spared not to upbraid Paul with his former conversation and persecution. 11. Differences of judgement and divisions among Ministers, are much made use of for that end, even sometimes when they are but apparent: Thus Paul is said to preach another doctrine, by the false teachers, than those at Jerusalem did, whereupon he is often put to show the harmony that was betwixt them, as particularly in the Epistle to the Galatians; And Josephus marketh, that Abab's false teachers did oppose Elias his Prophecy (wherein it is said that dogs should lick Abab's blood at Jezebel) to Micahah, who said he should die at Ramoth-gilead; Also, that others did harden Zedekia, by this that Ezekiel said, that he should not see Babylon, and that
that Jeremiah said he should be carried thereto; which they took to be contrary, and did thereby seek to defame the Prophets, and to weaken the esteem of their Prophecies; and though there was no real difference there, yet they sheweth how, and to what end, they lie in wait to aggreage the differences of God's Servants, though but apparent, which should make Ministers carefully avoid those things. Again, secondly, Though, at first, principal truths are not altogether and plainly denied, Yet by degrees he doth engage many, 1. To reject some lesse fundamentall truths concerning Government, communion with others in the Ordinances, and such like. 2. He draweth them to separate in practice from the fellowship of others, under the pretext of more purity and spiritualnesse; this seems to be express by Jude, v.19. These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit, although it is insinuated that they did pretend to it: And indeed this way was followed in the first heresies, which began at small things, as those of the Novatians, Donatists, &c. who at first only separated to eschew the impurity of promiscuous communion. 3. He cometh then to quarrel expressions that are used by the Orthodox, and to commend, as it were, a new kind of language; for which cause, the Apostle commendeth the holding fast the form of sound words, 2 Tim.1.13. And these corrupt teachers are said to speak great swelling words of vanity, and to have expressions much more weighty like, than what formerly hath been used, Jude 16. Thus the Arians will not admit the word ὄνομα, or consubstantial, and a Council must be called to lay by that; and so they come to question, in the next place, the Truth itself, alleging men are too confident to determine such things, It's not clear, much may be said against it, and such like; whereby, under pretext of doubting, they endeavour to awake scruples in others, that they may be disposed the more to admit of their resolutions.
tions. 4. Absurdities are laid down as consequences that follow upon Truths; and thus the doctrine of Providence, Election and Reprobation, &c. are loaded with horrible consequences and absurdities, pretended to follow on them, and so the doctrine of God's absolute Sovereignty, and Justification by free grace, were loaded in the primitive times, as if thereby Paul had taught that men might do evil that good might come of it; That the Law was wholly made void; That men might sin securely, because grace did so much the more abound, as in the second, third, and sixth Chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, is clear.

5. He endeavoureth to diminish men's hatred and zeal against errors and the most absurd opinions, that he may either obtain some actual toleration to them, or, at least, keep off such hard constructions of them; for, if that be gained at first, although error get not a direct approbation, yet a great point is gained, if he can get some to tolerate, and others to hear: This is condemned in the Church of Thyatira, that the Officers suffered Jezebel to teach, and that the people, who are there called Christ's servants, did countenance and hear her; And it seems something of this was in Corinth, which maketh the Apostle say, that evil communication corrupteth good manners, and that therefore men should not become cold in reference to error, although they be not tainted with it, 1 Cor. 15. 33. And upon this ground the most grosse Heretics of old and of late, as Socinians, Arminians, those of the Family of Love, and others of that kind, have maintained a liberty in prophesying a problematickness in the main truths of the Gospel, and a toleration in matters of doctrine, &c. as principles subservient to their design. 6. He proceedeth then to have the persons of such as are tainted with error, much beloved and esteemed of by others, that there may be the more familiar access to converse with them, and the readier disposition to receive their lea-
ven from them: this he doth sometimes by making mens gifts in their quicknesse and nimblnesse to be commended, sometimes by the seeming gravity, austerity and holinesse of their carriage, for which cause they are said to be wolves in sheeps cloathing, Mat. 7. and he is said to transform himself into an angel of light, and his ministers into the ministers of Christ, 2 Cor. 11. 14. Sometimes by flattery, and seeming sympathy and affection, for which the lying Prophet is called the tail; and if it were by no other mean, he doth it by their reproaching of honest and faithfull Ministers, and, it may be, hitting upon some real ills among them, which is often but too too pleasing to the carnall humour of the generality of people, as in the instances formerly given is clear. Lastly, when this is obtained, then there is easie acceffe to make the most grosse Doctrines and delusions to be drunken in, which at first would have been abhorred: by these degrees Antichrists delusion came to its height, and by such steps, some, that at first only separated from the Novatians and Donatists, came at last to that height of delusion, as to become Circumcellians (a strange wild kind of delusion) Anthropomorphits, and such like.

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

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

3. They follow their designs under a pretext of advancing holiness and spirituality, to a higher degree, and of having a more humble way of living, and of being a further length in high attainments, than other men can win at, or are capable of: thus some are outwardly despisers of all pride, and of giving respect to men, and that as the Apostle faith, Col. 2. 18. by a sort of voluntary humility, and intruding upon things which they have nor seen, casting, in the mean time, at common and plain truths.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12. They endeavour by all means to carry the favour of the civil Magistrates, and to have Ministers especially such as are zealous against them; made hateful and suspected unto them, and the gaining of this hath a double advantage with it to their cause, as it strengtheneth it, and weakeneth the truth: this we see the false Prophets did of old, 1 King. 22. Jer. 26. Amos 7.10. and so endeavoured the Scribes and Pharisees to engage the Romans against Christ, and against His Apostles; So also did the Arrians and other Hereticks, and so hath Antichrists emissaries ever endeavoured to stir up civil Magistrates against faithfull Ministers, as most hateful persons: This they carry on by such like means. 1. They pretend to give the Magistrates more submission, and charge faithfull Ministers with slighting of their authority, for they know this to be a thing well pleasing to Magistrates: Thus the faithfulness of honest Ministers is accounted disobedience and hatred, and the lying flattery of such is given out for respect and obedience, so was it in the case of Micajah. 2. They cry out upon faithfull Ministers, as factious and turners of the world upside-down; towers of sedition, as;
Acts 24. 5. troublers of the peace, who do keep the people in a continuall stir, and crosse their designs, and mar the absoluteness of Magistracy; So, Elijah is counted an enemy to Abab, and a trouble of Israel. 3. They vent many groundleffe calumnies against them, as if they were guilty of many grosse evils; Thus Athanajus and many others were charged by the Arians, as murderers and adulterers, and some pretended proofs made thereof: Yea, it was alleaged to Constantine, that Athanajus had medled with civil matters (which was derogatory to his authority) by inhibiting all Corns to be exported from Egypt.

4. They bring the Magistrates in tops with them, by appellations from Church-judicatories to them, and seeming to plead an absoluteness to Magistrates in things Ecclesiastick; Thus Hereticks in all times have sheltered themselves under this pretext, till Magistrates declared against them, and then they cast them off also, as of late in the practices of the Socinians and Arminians hath been made out. 5. They represent them to Magistrates as unsufferable, in respect of their plain threatnings, and that such are not to be endured so to affront Authority, and to weaken these that profess so much to respect the same; thus Amos is represented, chap. 7. 10. by Amaziah Priest of Bethel, and often Jeremiah is so by the false Prophets in his time. 6. They propose faithfull Ministers as unwarrantably arrogating, a kind of infallibility to themselves, and thereby derogating from all others; so is that word, 1 King. 22. What way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to you? and by a certain audacious confidence, seek, as it were, to put out faithfull Ministers as despicable men, not worthy to be credited, as in the case cited; and Jer. 28. and elsewhere, and often by such means their insinuations and flatteries do exceedingly prevail for promoting their designs. Augustine chargeth the Donatists with this, that in their application to Julian, they used this phrase, quoniam...
The manner how this design is carried on by such corrupt teachers, which is not always the same in all, and may in part be collected from what is said; yet we may name these particulars.

1. It is covertly and subtilly done, therefore they creep in with insinuations, looking farther than they are.

2. It is done hypocritically, 1 Tim. 4. They speak lies in hypocrisy, and do pretend both to be Religious and Friends to Religion and Truth, while they do so.

3. It is done sometimes vehemently, as if were knocking with force at hearts, so it shaketh the hearer by the bigness of words, peremptoriness of threatenings, confidence of assertions, and vehemency in the manner, so that it hath (as the Scripture saith) a strength and power with it, and therefore is compared to a spait or flood, Rev. 12. and is called strong delusion, 2 Thess. 2. 4. This is done with all diligence, compassing sea and land, leaving no mean unexpiated. And, 5. with a kind of seeming simplicity, zeal and singleness, and with many professions therefore, as may be gathered from the instances formerly given; and from Gal. 4. 17. where it is said, they zealously affect you, but not well, and from Rom. 10. 2. 6. This is done with great boldness, which appeareth, 1. In pretending to eschew no suffering, or to fear no hazard that may follow on their opinion, if it were to give their body to be brunt, and, it may be, doing much in this. 2. It may be stuck to by them at their sickness, even in their death beds, as it is not unlike it was with Jezebel and some of her followers, Rev. 2. 21, 22. for, neither is the devil silenced, nor corruptions removed by sickness or death. 3. It appeareth in confident undertaking to dispute with any; yea, oftentimes seeking occasion of that: Thus the Libertines arise and dispute with Stephen, Acts 6. and it is like, the false teachers of Corinth.

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

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

2. A people’s present temper, or rather disfemper, may have much influence on this, and exceedingly dispose them for, and cast them open to, the temptation. As, first, lightness of mind, unsettledness in the truth; these the Scripture calleth unstable souls, 2 Pet. 3:14. 2. There is an itching new-fangle humour, desirous of some new thing, and loathing simple Doctrine, as it is, 2 Tim. 4:3. 3. There is too great facility in believing the spirits, without trying of them, which its like hath been in Galatia, whereby they were soon drawn away to another Gospel, and to credit some insinuators foolishly, as, chap. 1. 6. and 3. 1. 4. A secure carnall frame, wanting exercise of conscience, is dangerous. So are also proud presumptuous persons, (that have an high esteem of themselves, and such as are self-willed, who are mentioned, 2 Pet. 2:10,) in great hazard of this: The temptation will also sometimes take advantage of the
some persons who are jumbled in mind, and under some weight and heaviness, and come in under pretext of remedying the same; many such distempers there are, whereof some may be gathered from what is said of the sinfull causes that procure this, because that which doth meritoriously deserve to be so punished, proveth often also a disposing mids for receiving of the tentation; But we forbear.

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

C H A P. V I I .

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

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

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

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

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

Assert. 1. An absolute and unlimited forbearance What is not 
and toleration of all errors, and of the promoters the proper 
thereof, is not the due remedy that is called-for in remedy or 
such a time, in reference to such evils. This, I sup-
pose is clear, if there were no more in Scripture than 
what is comprehended in these Epistles, Rev. 2. and 
3. For, 1. the Angel of Ephesus is commended, 
chap. 2. 2. that he could not bear or endure them that 
were evil, to wit, the false Apostles: This enduring 
then cannot be the duty, being Christ commendeth 
the contrary. 2. He doth reprove Pergamos, ver. 14. 
because they had such amongst them that held the doc-
trine of Balaam, that is, because they suffered them. 
And, 3. this is clearly expresed in the Epistle to 
Thyatira, ver. 20. I have a few things against thee, 
because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel to teach 
and seduce My servants. There can be nothing more 
clear than this; and it is the more observable, that 
this not-forbearing is commended in Ephesus, where
things in their own particular condition are not altogether right; and the other Churches are reproved for neglect of this, even when their own particular conditions are right. Which sheweth, That the Lord loveth zeal against such scandals, and abhorseth forbearance of them. What was formerly said in the Doctrine, What is clear in the practice of Scripture, both in examples and commands that are given therein in reference to this, and what may be further said in the positive part of this direction, will clear this.

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

**Extremes to be eschewed.**

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

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

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

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

Lastly, I said, Sometimes Synods or Councils are called, as in that place, Act. 15. which in other cases we find not, 1. Because then that error was new, and it's like wanted not its own respect from many of the Church, Therefore a Council of Officers joined together to decide it, which is not necessary again, after that decision is past; but Ministers are doctrinally and by discipline to maintain the same, as we see Paul doth maintain, in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, the conclusion of the former Synod. 2. This Synod is convened not for want of light (for, any of the Apostles, as such, were infallibly inspired to decide in the same, and had in their preachings decided it) but it is to make it have the more weight with others, and therein to be a precedent to us. 3. That was a spreading error, which did not affect one place only, but many Churches; and it's like that many Believers were in hazard to be shaken therewith; Therefore the most weighty remedy
remedy is called-for. 4. There was need now, not only of light to decide the doctrinal things, but there was also need of directions for helping folks how to carry in reference to such times, so as to eschew the snare of error on the one hand, and of giving offence upon the other, as we may see by the decrees of that Synod: Therefore in such cases, not only would men severally endeavour the duty of their stations, but they would joyntly concur and meet judicially, or extrajudicially, as occasion calleth, to deliberate and consult in these things of so great and common concernment: for, being the Church is one city, and one lump, a little fire may hazard all, and a little leaven corrupt all, and unwatchfulness at one part, or post, may let in enemies to destroy all. It is needful therefore, that in some cases there be mutual concurrence, although it be not necessary at all times to have a judicial meeting, nor at any time is a present duty to be suspended by any person, if no such meeting can be had. What is said, doth demonstrat that there is a difference to be made in reference to errors, persons and cases.

CHAP. VII.

When some errors are to be forborne.

If it should be enquired, how this difference is to be made? or, how it may be known when without guilt there may be some forbearance, and when not? Ans. This is indeed difficult, and we will not undertake in particulars either to be satisfying or peremptory; yet we suppose the considering of these generall Distinctions will be helpfull, and the application of them necessary, in this case. 1. We would distinguish betwixt some errors and scandals and others, and that both in respect of their grossness and evidence: for, some errors are, as Peter calleth, Some necess- sary and use- ful distin- cions.
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calleth them, 2 Pet. 2:1,2. pernicious and damnable, as striking against the special Truths of the Word of God, or inferring grosse practices with them, as this of the Nicolaitans did, and hazarding the souls of the maintainers of them, not as other sins of infirmity, but in respect of the principles which they imply; and of this sort are many both errors and practices. Again, Other things may be errors, that are contrary to Truth, but not destructive unto, nor altogether inconsistent with, the foundation, but such a thing, as possibly many true Saints may be taken with, and yet have access to God and may enter Heaven, although they should die in that opinion; of which sort are many things that are debated amongst orthodox Divines; and indeed there is nothing but it hath a truth or a falfhood in it, yet are not all of equal necessity and weight. Of the first sort was that error, which the false apostles endeavoured to bring-in, that is, the adding of the practice of the ceremonial Law to Christ in justification, and the mixing-in of works moral and ceremonial therein, as from the Epistle to the Romans and Galatians may be gathered. Of the second kind, was the debate for meats and other things, mentioned, Rom.14. and in the Epistles to the Corinthians. Of the first, we say, there ought to be no tolerance. Therefore the Lord doth here reprove it; and in the Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians, Paul doth plainly and powerfully refute them and reprove them, even when it was exceeding ill taken, and they were ready to count him an enemy, because he told them the truth, Gal. 4. Yet will he not forbear, because a little leaven of that sort will leaven the whole lump, and hazard the making of his labour among them to be in vain.

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

2. There are some truths and practices evident, which by the light of the Word may be solidly demonstrated to an impartial and unbyassed searcher; and some contrary errours and scandals, that are at the first obvious (and, it may be, even to a natural conscience) to be such, so that although men would use tergiversations, and say as Hymeneus and Philectus did, 2 Tim. 2. 17. that there were no resurrection to come,
come, because the Scripture speaketh of a spiritual resurrection, which in the Believer is passed already. And although many deluded persons, who will not admit of distinctions according to reason, in such a case, may be drawn away with them, and adhere still to them; yet are the things demonstrable to these that are even but of ordinary reach, by sound grounds from the Scripture, and that convincingly: Other things, again, may be truths, and there may be to some persons a possibility of reaching them by many consequences from Scripture, yet are they not so clear to many; whereupon it is, that men, yea, even learned and godly men, do differ in their apprehensions of several truths, the Lord so thinking good to bridle mens humours and to let us see the necessity of humility and sobriety, and this may be in the meanest-like things; these the Apostle, Rom. 14. 1. calleth doubtfull disputations, as being things wherein too many, at least there is not such evidence attainable as to stay the minds of ordinary people, or to refute the contrary assertions of any adversary, of which are Genealogies, and other things that Paul mentioneth to Timothy, 1 Tim. 1.4. and calleth them endless, because there is no settled ground to rest on, but one question doth generate another; and so the principle that must be laid down for clearing such a thing to one, is also disputable to another as the thing itself is, and men know but in part, even those that are eminent; so that an universal harmony in these cannot well be expected: In reference to this, we say, That greater peremptoriness is required in the first sort than in the second, wherein, by reason of the practice of the Apostles in Scripture, yea, and of necessity there is a forbearance requisite. Yet we would beware of partiality in accounting truths, either evident or disputable, as men (according as they are judged) are too apt to do; it is better therefore to try these by the common account that the Godly and Learned have had
had in all times of such truths, if there hath been still difference, and yet moderation in these differences; nor would this be tried onely by an age or time (wherein a point may be more agitate than at another time) but more generally, especially when the arguments on either side want that evidence that the reasons brought for other truths have, and are so fullly set down in Scripture, That amongst godly and learned men in all ages there hath been a generall consent.

Again, 3. We would distinguish betwixt errors and the consequents of them, or practices following thereupon; there may be somethings truly errors that may and should be forborn in themselves, yet their consequents ought not to be forborn, and this also may be at one time, and in one Church more necessary to be adverted to, than in another, because consequents of schism, faction, division, &c. may sometimes follow on the meanest errors. And being these are always enemies to edification, even when they arise from the least ground, they are never absolutly to be forborn; for to say, I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos, and for one to think such a man a better Preacher than an other, seemeth to be no great matter; yet when it beginneth to rent them, and to make factions in Corinth, it is not to be forborn, but to be reproved: And in the former difference of meats, the Apostle condemnneth always the offence and Schism that followed on it, although he did not peremptorily decide any thing as to mens practices, or custom, for the opinion it self: thus one might think the first day of the week not to be Jure Divino, and this might possibly be forborn. But if he were pressing the change of it, and refusing to observe it, or venting it to offend others, that were intoleraible; thus the differences and errors concerning Church-government by Bishops, and in the Congregational way, may, we conceive, in themselves be forborn in persons where they are not vented to the shaking
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Making and drawing away of others; but if pressed in practice, to the renting of a Church, and preferred or equalled to the true Government that is established by the Word, in that case they are not to be forbore, because then truth is to be vindicated, and obstructions to edification in the renting or distracting of a Church to be removed, and at on time more than at another, as such an offence doth waken a Schism, and disturb order and Union in one Church or at one time more than another: hence we see, Acts 15. Somethings are put in that decree in reference to that time, only for preventing of Schism and Scandal, while the doctrine of the abolition of the ceremoniall Law was not so clear; And somethings were for-born amongst the Gentiles, which were not so amongst the Jews for a time, as circumcision and all the ceremonies of the Law, which yet for a time the Jews observed; and experience and reason make the thing clear, according to that of Paul, To the Jews I became as a Jew, and I became all things to all men, &c. which is not to show his counterfeiting, or his dallying in any necessary thing, but the squaring of his practice in lawfull things according to the several cases of these he had to do with, which will be applicable both to persons and Churches.

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

Also
Also distinction is to be made in the manner of forbearance; it is one thing to forbear simply and altogether one that is infected with error and spreadeth it, it is another thing to forbear, in some respect, to wit, of censure only, or it may be in respect of degree, something may be more gently censured, and yet not altogether forborn; and one may Ministerially reprove a fault and person by the key of Doctrine, in applying of it, when yet he may forbear the exercise of Discipline and Censure, as in the forecited place, Paul is reproving false teachers in Corinth, yet sparing the rod for a time; and so, wishing that some were cut off in Galatia, yet not doing it; and this is not so much respect to the persons of these teachers, as to the Church and to the multitude of their followers, whom hasty Censures might rather have stumled than edified, which is the great end of that and of all other Ordinances: Therefore seeketh he first to recover them, and again, to bring them back to the acknowledgment of his authority, and thereupon to exercise the weapons that he had in readiness for the avenging all disobedience, when their obedience is made manifest. 2 Cor. 10. 6. which he would not do before that, lest they (being addicted to these teachers) had sided with them against his authority, and so it had been both more hurtfull to them and to the Church than edifying, by which alone he is swayed.

These and other such considerations being had, Ministers by Christian prudence, are to gather when to be silent, and when to speak, when to Censure, and when to forbear; but by all means, are ever to be watchfull, lest the grounds that plead for forbearance sometimes for the Churches edification upon the one side, be not stretched out so broad, as to foster our lukewarm temper, coldness, and fainting cowardliness in the things of God; and there is much need to try from what that moderation doth flow, and whether even then the heart be hot with holy indignation against
against these; Even as on the other side, true zeal would be guided towards the scope of edification, left that duty of exercising Discipline, which is acceptable to God, and useful to the Church, be rejected of him, because proceeding from our own spirits, and prove more hurtful than edifying in the effects thereof; Some few instances whereof have given some occasion of speaking evil of this Ordinance of Jesus Christ, to these who at all times ly in wait, to catch at what may be wrested to the reproach thereof. But to conclude this, without insisting on particulars, there must be a single, impartial and prudential walking, so as may attain edification, and as men may be answerable to Jesus Christ in their trust, having an eye to these things that most contribute to edification.

Some things not at all to be forborn.

But, 1. if what is vented be blasphemous, and destroyeth the foundations of faith, that comes not within this debate, as in Paul’s dealing with Hymeneus and Alexander, 1 Tim. 1. 20. is clear; for zeal for the Majesty of God, and love to the salvation of souls (which is the substance of the two great commandments of the Law) will admit of no forbearing in such a case.

2. If it corrupteth or deface the Church, and maketh her a reproach to the profane, it is not to be forborn.

3. If the things become not the Ordinances of Christ, but reflect on them, and consequently on Him whose Ordinances they are, they are not to be connived at.

4. If such things hazard the publick beauty, order and government of the Church, without which there is no keeping up the face of a visible Church, these are not to be over-looked.

5. If they mar the union and love that ought to be in the Church (which is to be preserved, and every thing that may mar it, removed) they ought not to be tolerated.

6. If they turn to be offensive and scandalous, either by making the ways of the Lord to be ill spoken of, 2 Pet. 2. 2. or by grieving the godly.

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

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

CHAP. IX.

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

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

2. In reference to himself.

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

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

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

2. When the Minister is composed to take up Gods hand,
hand in the matter, then is he not only to look to Him for direction and guiding in his duty, and without fretting to reverence His dispensation, but he is to reflect upon himself, and to consider his bygone carriage, especially in his Ministry, if he may not be chargeable before God with some sinfull influence upon his peoples distempers and miscarriages. And particularly, he is to look to these four, 1. If he be in good terms with God, in reference to his own particular state and condition, and if there was that due tenderness and watchfulness at the time of the outbreaking of such an ill: I grant, it may be that things were right, as in the case of Job, Job 3. 26. yet it becometh him to try; for, such a thing may be tried with security and negligence, that thereby he may be awakned to see his former defects. 2. A Minister would then reflect on his clearness to that calling, and particularly to such a charge; and though to both he may be called by God, yet it is his part to try, that he may meet the reproaches with the greater confidence, as we see Paul doth in the Epistles often mentioned; for, in such a case a Minister will be put to it, and who knoweth but possibly expectation of ease, quiet accommodation or credit in such a place, and trastablness in such a people, and such like, might have had weight with a good man to sway him to one place more than another? and by such a dispensation the Lord doth chasten that, to learn Ministers at their entry to be swayed alone with the Churches edification. But, 3. to come nearer, a Minister would try if he hath any sinfull meritorious influence (to speak so) in procuring that stroak to the people, to be given up to these delusions; for, it is certain, a Minister may be smitten in some stroak of this kind upon his people, as is clear from that threatening to the Angel of Ephesus, Rev. 2. even as a Magistrate may be smitten by a stroak that is immediately upon his people, as we see in Davids case, who thus pro-
cured the Pestilence, *2 Sam. 24.* because, first, the people themselves are not guiltless, so that there is no injustice.

And. 2. Because there is a great similitude betwixt Minister and people, so that a rod upon one, doth indeed prove a rod to both: he would therefore try if possibly he hath been somewhat proud or vain of his authority, or respect amongst them, of their knowledge, orderly carriage, or dependance on the Ordinances, especially if he have any way affected such a thing, and hath withall neglected the trying of their spiritual estate, and bettering of it; or if he hath been neglecive to pray for them, and for their stability in the truth; if he hath been defective to warn or to keep up the authority of the Ordinances, and of a Ministry among them; if he hath been too familiar and trivial in his carriage with them, and such like; also, if he hath been affected with zeal for God's honour, when other Congregations have been infected, if he hath sympathiz'd with such Ministers, and born burthen with others in such cases; or, if on the contrary, he hath been careless, or, it may be, puffed up because himself was free: these and such like sins would be searched, because their is a Justice, and, if I may say, a congruity in Justice, in punishing such sins with such a rod; for its often when the husband men are sleeping that the enemy doth sow such tares.

4. He would try if he hath had any sinfull influence on such evils, as if he hath not been full and diligent in grounding them in the fundamentall truths, and clearing to them the Doctrines of the Gospel, as well as preaching duties, cases, and such like, or if he hath needlessly fostered curiosity in starting any questions, or in giving people way to follow them, if he hath made a sport of some errours publickly or privately, if he hath laughen at, or lightly spoken of, the errours and miscarriages of others, before them, if he hath not been faithfull to admonish and reprove the first gadings, or if he hath fed the people with empty notions and wind,
wind, and builded hay and stubble upon the foundation, and hath not seriously discovered to them their guiltinness, and hath not put them to the exercise of Repentance of their corrupt inclinations, thereby to presse humility, fear, watchfulness, diligence, &c. that so their hand might be filled with a more solid work, and Christ by them imployed to preserve them, even from this tentation. These, I say, and such like, would be tried, because where they are, the Minister wants not accession to their sin, as if in some respect he had combined with these seducers.

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

4. The Minister would now use ordinary means for fitting of himself to discover such errors as his people are guilty of, that he may be able solidly to convince them that are stumbled, and to establish others that stand; and pains would be taken in this, as well as for preaching, or in the studying of common heads at the passing of tryals, which is but a proof of the man's gifts in a more remote reference to such a case, which now is specially to be put in exercise; Therefore he would, first, endeavour to be through in the whole body of Divinity and grounds of Christian Religion; for, there is such a connexion among truths, that when one is wronged, many are wronged, and one error may overturn many foundations: And if a Minister have not some general impression of the whole, he cannot with confidence search in, or undertake the refutation of, any one particular error: Neither ought a Minister, who possibly for a time hath forborne studies of that kind, think it unbecoming him again to return to them, being it is duty, and there is no shame to be learning what may fit one for his duty; And who knoweth but among other ends, this may be intended, that Ministers may be put to more constant study and search in the fundamental truths of the Gospel? 2. He would then, like a wise Physician, endeavour to know the malady that hath infected and distempered his people, what are the errors they maintain, what are the arguments that have weight with them, what are the tentations they have had, or who are the tempters or instruments that have seduced them, and such like; What also is their natural humour, haughty or meek, proud or humble; What hath been their former
former way of walking, what are their parts and abilities, with whom they converse, who hath weight with them, or are esteemed by them, that by these and such like means he may be in better capacity to know how to apply the remedie, and to deal with them himself, or to make use of others for that end. 3. He would endeavour the furnishing of himself, especially in reference to these errours beyond others which they are tainted with, and for this cause would provide fit Books, converse with others that are able to help him, and gather his own observations from Scripture and other grounds, that through Gods blessing upon his labours he may be able to speak of these things confidently as to himself, and convincingly as to others. It is to be observed, that the former order laid down, doth not require a succession in time, in reference to the several steps (for, in some cases a Minister will be instantly put to what is beyond all these, and to deal by some other means) but it sheweth the order of nature, and what way is to be followed according as there is access and opportunity.

Further, It is necessary for Ministers, at such a time especially, to endeavour union among themselves and amongst the people of their flocks; for, often times division and delusion are trysted together, whereby the deluders are exceedingly strengthened, Truth, and the Ministers thereof, made exceedingly contemptible and put in an incapacity to edifie, or have weight, till that be removed. Therefore we see, that in the Churches of Corinth, Galatia and Philippi, where Seducers were driving their designs, and division had taken great footing, the Apostle hath a special regard to the recovering of their union at such a time: We may read it also in the Life of Basilius the great Antagonist of the Arians, who, being by some division with Eusebius, then Bishop of Cesaria, necessitated to withdraw for the Churches peace, Where-
upon *Valence the Arian Emperour, and other Arians, thought that a fit opportunity to vent their error in 
*Cesaria, which they could not successfully do, while union continued there. To disappoint this design, 
*Gregory Nazianzen advised his return and uniting 
*with *Eusebius, as the only mean to prevent the growth 
of that heresie amongst the people, which being ac-
cordingly done, and both of them forgetting their 
*particular discontentes for the publick good, the 
*Church was so established, and the error so oppo-
*sed, that the forenamed enterprisers were constrained to 
give over their design upon that union.

In the third place, We come to consider a Mini-
fiers duty in reference to the flock in generall (and 
certainly by proportion it may be gathered what se-
riousnesse, gravity and diligence ought to be amongst 
*Ruling-elders in their concurring with him in such a 
*case, who are allo to joyn with him according to 
to their places in the former search and triall of their 
carriage, and in fitting of themselves for being use-
full in such a time) tor, it cannot be denied, but some-
what peculiar is called-for from the Minister, in re-
ference to his Ministry in common amongst the 
*people, more than is called-for at another time. As, 
*r. he is to be in respe& of all Christian qualificati-
sions in his carriage and all ministeriall duties in his 
*charge, singularly serious and eminently exemplary, 
because it is now a main and prime thing to have a 
testimony of sincerity, faithfulness and love to the 
*peoples edification in their own consciences; and 
*this cannot be obtained at such a time without the 
former. For, in experience we see that declining to 
error, and falling from esteem of the Minister, go 
together: and where this is preserved, either the fall 
is prevented, or there is the greater access to recover 
the person that is fallen. Ministers therefore would 
especially study that, as a main mean of the peoples 
edification. And for that cause, would observe, r. If 
any
any thing hath escaped them in their way, which might have given offence, and would by all means endeavour to remove it. 2. If any thing hath been unjustly imputed to them, they would condescend to clear it. 3. They would take notice of what particulars they use to be charged with, though it may be, unjustly, or what usually Ministers are charged with by the corrupt men of the world, as pride, covetousness, self-seeking, hypocrisy and the like; and at such a time, Ministers would not only eschew these evils, but also the very appearance of them, which is a part of Paul's becoming all things to all, that he might gain and save some, 1 Cor. 9. And, in a word, a Minister would so carry in that time, as every look, word, action, gesture, yea, as every thing else or more in his Ministry, in his family, diet, cloaths, and such like, may abide the trial of the most narrow and watchfull observers, yea, of one that is a more high and narrow observer than they.

2. There are some things wherein particularly he would insist and seek to have born in upon the people. As, 1. To have them sensible of the evil of error, and of the hazard that cometh by it, also of the devils subtlety and craft in carrying on of such a business. 2. To have them instructed and cleared in the truths of the Gospel, especially in such things as are controverted, that the errors and consequents following thereon, may be made as obviously clear and hateful as may be. 3. This would be done so as they be not diverted from practice in the main duties of godliness by any speculation; but, searching, up-stirring and materiall Doctrines, with powerful and convincing applications of all kinds, would be in a speciall manner pressed then, as we see in these directions to Timothy and Titus is clear: where, upon the one side, the taking head to fables and vain janglings is dehorted from, and convincing, exhort-
ing, reproving with all authority, press'ing of good works, and exercising to godliness, are, on the other side exhorted unto. 4. People would be press'ed by all means, to eschew snares and the company of seducers, which was both our Lords practice, and the practice of His Apostles. There is no duty more frequently press'ed than that: It is true, this is sometimes mistaken by people, yet it is the duty of Min'sters to press' it; yea, they are charged to charge others in reference to this, as in the 1. to Tim. 4. II. and 6. 13. being compared with the directions that are given in these Epistles. 5. It may be it were not unmeet in such a time, that something were done in writ, for clearing of these things which are especially contro'verted, and that some in particular might be designed for this part of the work: for, often seducers spread their errors by writ, as we may in see in Jer. 29.25. And sometimes there will be access to instruct and edifie by writ, when it cannot be done by word, yea, so, some persons may have objections moved and answered to them, before they be confirmed in such and such opinions, which possibly they would have thought shame to move till they had settled in them; and so have been in a greater prejudice against the truth, and in a greater incapacity to be gained from them; and we see, that the Apostles used this way unto Churches and People, to confute materiall errors in writ, and so also to confirm the truth against all cavils of adversaries, even as they did it by word of mouth and preaching.

3. In all this, the Minister would take good heed to his manner of proceeding, that it be grave, weighty, serious, loving, and in every thing such as may con'veince the people, 1. Of his own seriousnesse, and being much affected with such a business, Therefore light and mocking expressions would be shunned, but the Minister would be affectionate and serious, like one travelling in birth, while Christ be formed
formed in them again, as Paul speaketh, Gal. 4. 19.

2. To convince them of the evil of the thing, and for that cause would so carry, as he may make error also hateful and loathsome to the people, as any scandalous practice whatsoever; for which cause Ministers would rather endeavour to stir the peoples zeal against such evils, by grave, convincing, affectionate expressions, regrates or expostulations, than to move their laughter with trivial mocks or taunts, in reference to such principles or persons; for, (as holy Master Greenham used to say) that doth but make sin ridiculous, when it ought to be made hateful.

3. He would endeavour to convince them of his singlenes in seeking of their good, and of love to them, and pity to these that are misled; for which cause any thing that may make him be supposed to resent personal reproaches or indignities, or aim at upholding of his own credit, or to vent bittrenesse against the persons of others, would be carefully abstained from: for, these things derogate much from the weight of what a Minister can do; and we see the great Apostle Paul, doth not stick to condescend in such cases to vindicate himself from such mistakes, and to use great expressions of love, yea, sometimes to attest God as to the sincerity of his professions, and such like, which are frequent in the Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians, which may be an example to Ministers in such cases. 4. Their whole carriage would be affectionate, even to the persons of opposers; for, nothing prejudgeth more, than for a Minister to be thought carnall and passionate, whereas tender dealing and usage to persons and to their outward estates, doth prove as coals of fire to soften them, as in experience is found; however its becoming of a Minister; yet it is to be done without marring zeal and indignation against their errors, and without prejudice to his seeking to censure them for these, or his restraining them from venting of the same.
It is here to be adverted, 1. That what was spoken of the manner of a Ministers carriage in reference to practical scandals, and of his duty in a time when offences abound, is also to be remembred here and in what followeth. 2. That what is spoken of Ministers duty, will by proportion agree to Ruling-Elders according to their stations; for, they should no lesse endeavour the preventing and suppressing of corrupt doctrine than of other scandalous practises, and they especially are to endeavour to have the means used by the Minister, made weighty amongst the people; and for that end, are to endeavour to have himself weighty also.

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

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

thing as it is, especially if it be the reviving of some old absurdity under some new coat and pretext; Thus the Lord doth discover the abomination of the Nicolaitans doctrine, by comparing it unto, and evidencing it to be, upon the matter, indeed one and the same with the practices of Balaam and Jezebel, Rev. 2. 14, 15, and 20. This way is also followed by Peter, 2 Epift. 2. and by Jude, who compared corrupt teachers to Balaam, Korah, Dathan, &c. thereby to take the visor off old newly revived errors, that they may appear as they are; for, often error is commended to people under some new representation, and many will love it so represented, who yet will abhor former errors, which are still the same, though under another name, which are two tricks of the devils subtility, 1. To make old errors pass under the opinion and construction of some new light. And, 2. for that end to disguise it in some circumstances, and to change its name: And indeed, it is no little piece of spiritual dexterity to remove that mask. Secondly, There is a discovery to be made of the persons who hanker after such opinions, that it may be found who are infected thereby: This would be done to reclaim the persons, and to cure that distemper, before it break out, or come to a height; for, it is more easy often to cure one at the beginning than afterward: also, when it becometh publick, it hath with it some kind of engagement on the person, and he is more hardly recovered, lest he should seem thereby to appear weak, erroneous, unstable, or such like. Beside, it is more gaining-like when the Minister privately findeth them out, and endeavoureth to recover them secretly, before any publick notice be taken thereof, and often hath more success with it, than after debates, as seemeth to be held forth in that place, Gal. 2. 2. where Paul saith, that he communicated with them of reputation, the Gospel, first, privately, lest by any means he should have run in vain.
Therefore we conceive, persons suspect of error, would not hastily be brought to publick, but in some respect, the publickness of their offence, would be, as it were, dissembled, or not positively so publickly taken notice of, that thereby there may be the fairer access for them to retreat. 3. If there be any retreat, the person would be waited upon, although at first it be not fully satisfying, and all due care and diligence would be used to have his former error buried, as if it had never been, without any publick hearing, except some extraordinary circumstance persuade to another way. For, (besides the reasons given) error becometh not readily a publick scandal, except there be tenaciousness therein, or some actual stumbling-block laid before others thereby, which often the persons reclaiming, will remove more than their censuring. Therefore, upon supposition of a persons recovery, there is no great fear of hazard in abstaining from bringing such a thing to publick, except he hath been instrumentall to seduce others, or in some such case which doth make his carriage open before band, as is said. 4. This secret discovery before things break out, is needfull to prevent the defection of others, because, if the persons be not reclaimed, they may be found out to be dangerous, and may so be noted, for the preventing of their being a snare to others, which they might have been more easily, had they not been marked to be such, which is the reason of that exhortation, Rom. 16. 17. Mark them that cause divisions, and avoid them. When a person is discovered and found to be tainted, then all means are to be used for his conviction by conference, reasoning and other such means as may gain the end, this is a speciall qualification of a Minister, Tit. 1. 9. that he may be able by sound Doctrine to convince gainstayers. And (as it is, 2 Tim. 2. 25.) in meekness to instruct these that oppose themselves: Which step may be considered under diverse respects.

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

CHAP. X.

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

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

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

Assert. 1. We say that there are some times and cases wherein publick debates are not altogether to be shunned; I will not say, that every person is to accept of such a challenge, left thereby truth be wronged; (neither is it always the ablest man that manageth such a business best) but in general the thing is necessary
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cessary in these and such like cases: As, 1. When errors seem to be new among the people. 2. When the promoters of them become insolent, as if they durst come to the light with their deeds. 3. When by forbearance and silence, people are in hazard to think something of these insolent boasters, and of their opinions. In which cases, I say, and the like, there is some necessity of this, for the Churches edification, as may appear from Tit. 1:9, 10, 11. There are many, faith the Apostle, who are unruly and vain talkers (such as vainly boast of their own ability, to maintain their opinions) whose mouths must be stopped, lest they get advantage to seduce others; and this is given as the reason why Ministers should be qualified with abilities to convince gainamoers, because sometimes the insolencie and vanity of some such, doth necessitate to this; and on this ground we will find our blessed Lord Himself, and Stephen and Paul, frequently disputing even in Assemblies and Synagogues. This will not infer a necessity for every Minister to dispute at all times, even in such a case, but sometimes it may be referred, and put to others; for if truth be maintained, and errour be confuted, it may stop the gainers mouth, although every one do it not.

Assert. 2. Yet there are some cases, when such entering of debates is not necessary nor expedient. As, 1. Supposing these things not to be new, but to have been sufficiently confuted formerly, and it may be in other places not far off, nor long before that; for, if there should be a continuing still to debate, there would be no truth acknowledged to be settled, nor accession to other and further duties. 2. When some persons are known vainly and purposely to seek to put all in confusion, by multiplying such debates, and irreverently to prosecute the same, as if they made it their trade or vocation to do so: The answering of such men according to their folly, would be an accession to their guilt of taking the blessed Name of God...
in vain, and for satisfaction to mens humours, and not for the great end of edification. 3. When men become unreasonable, and in their disputings, shew irrational contradiction and blasphemy; in such a case, it is to be born or broken off with indignation, and with zeal to the glory of God, as we see Paul and Barnabas do, Acts 13. 45, 46. 4. Some erroneous persons are so grosse and absurd, that they are not to be disputed with, but rather to be reproved and abhorred: and therefore we see in these Epistles, Rev. 2. 3. there is no disputing against the Nicolaitans, as Paul useth in other cases, because, where such absurdities are owned, there is no access to soften a conviction from reason, when men by such opinions appear to be unreasonable. 5. When men deny principles, as the authority or sufficiency of the Scripture, or when they lay new principles, as a light within, revelations, enthusiasms, or such like; or, when they grossly and absurdly wrest and pervert the Scripture, as Peter speaketh of some, denying most clear senses, and forging senses which are most ridiculous: In such cases, there is no access to dispute, not only because it cannot be done without admitting of them to blaspheme, but also because there is no mean by which they may be convinced, being the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is rendered uselesse unto them: As for instance, Hymeneus and Alexander, said, there was no resurrection to come, because it was past already; they wanted not dexterity to abuse the Scripture, which faith, that there is a resurrection from sin, and by the new birth Believers are raised from the dead. Now, the applying of what is spoken of the general and second resurrection to this particular and first resurrection, is so grosse, that Paul doth not dispute with but Sentence such blasphemers and abusers of the Scripture; for, it is clear, that they did not deny the Scripture, or a resurrection simply, but did grossly and irrationally misapply
the same: of this sort, are such as will admit of no distinctions, nor consequences, nor different acceptions of words and phrases, and such like: for, according to these grounds, the Scripture is made to disagree from itself, to give no certain sound in any thing, and to infer many absurdities, which is blasphemous to think.

What is to be accounted as the sufficient conviction of a gainsayer. 3. It is not to be thought that that only is conviction, which putteth the adverse party to silence, or that when convincing of gainsayers is commanded, that that only is intended: for, men of corrupt unruly spirits (as the Apostle faith) wax worse and worse, and do resist the truth, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, 2 Tim. 3:8, and are therefore called reprobate concerning the faith; yea, sometimes the more they be pinched and bound, the more they cry out, and will not yeeld to convincing truth, as we see, Act. 6:9,10,11, and Act 13:45,46, and certainly there were none of Paul's opposers able to dispute with him, yet we will never almost find his adversaries silent, though he put them to silence, and did actually convince them; notwithstanding they are still muttering and contradicting, so that oftentimes he breaketh off, shaking the dust off his feet against them, when arguments did not the business. Oftentimes also, this continuing of contradiction with some dexterity to pervert Scripture to their own destruction, is to them penal and judicial, as was formerly observed, and doth follow upon their hazarding and daring to oppose the manifest truth. And who would have thought, but that these Magicians that resisted Moses, should have been convinced by so many miracles, not to have essayed further to oppose him? which yet notwithstanding they continue to do; and if it was so then, and with Paul and the other Apostles afterward, can it be expected to be otherwise now? seeing the spirit of Jannes and Jambres, and the gainsaying of Core is marked by the Scripture to wait on such.
If it be asked then, What can be understood by conviction? and if a person may be accounted convinced, who yet may be keeping the last word, and confidently bragging of the victory? Ans. That conviction is not to be bounded with acknowledgment or silence in the party convinced; we suppose is already cleared; yea, those that are convinced, may, as it were, cry the others out of the company by multitude of words and confidence of expressions, as those Jews did cry down Paul and Barnabas, Act. 13. 46. Therefore we see in that precept, Tit. 3. 10, 11. that the Heretick which is to be rejected, is both said to refuse admonition, and also to be condemned of himself; yet it cannot be said that he was put to silence by these admonitions, or did forbear to vent his errors: this therefore must be accounted certain, and is confirmed by 2 Tim. 2. 25. where the recovery of opposers, even after sufficient instruction, with meekness, hath a peradventure in it, as a thing most rarely to be found. We must therefore place conviction in some other thing than that: and so in answer to the question, What is to be accounted conviction? We say, 1. It is when a person is so far convinced, and the truth with his error so far cleared to be truth and error respectively, that his continuing obstinate, cannot be supposed to be of infirmity, which often will evidence itself in foolish, weightless and unreasonable shifts and answers, or when there cannot be weight in such an answer, to satisfy a man's own reason or conscience, if he were sober and at himself: upon this account, the Heretick is said to be condemned of himself, Tit. 3. 11. not because actually his conscience doth condemn him for dissimulation; for even then it is supposed he may be in a delusion, which keepeth off such challenges; and their consciences are said to be feared with an hot iron, 1 Tim. 4. 2. which importeth, they were not capable of positive convictions within themselves; but it must be un-
derstood thus, that they are the cause of their own blindnesse, as wilfully and maliciously refusing and rejecting light when it is offered to them, and to the cause of their own damnation doth not flow from the neglect of others, in not holding forth to them sufficient light, but from their own obstinacy, prejudice and maliciousnesse. 2. They may be said to be convinced when the thing is made clear to sober serious men, even as some stupid ignorant persons are inexcusable in their ignorance, when they live under such means as others of ordinary capacity thrive by; although such plain preachings, discoursed or doctrines be no way understood by them, yet may it justly be said, that that light was sufficient to instruct them, or that Gospel to convince them, being others have been profited by the same. 3. They may be said to be convinced, even when they speak again, when there is no answer to purpose in their speaking, but absurd denying, or asserter of things without any reason, or when there is a granting of absurd consequences, or an asserter of an absurdity, that possibly is greater nor another which they would eschew; or, bitter railing against mens persons, seeking to defame them for strengthening of their cause, as the false teachers did Paul among the Corinthians and Galatians, and as the Libertins did to Stephen by venting calumnies on him, and provoking others against him, Act. 6. or, when in their answers or debates, they break out in blasphemy against God, against His Scriptures, against His Ordinances; such, in such cases, are to be accounted sufficiently convinced, and their obstinacy is to be accounted malicious; and this we may gather, as from others places, so from that, Act. 13. 45, 46. when they come to wilfull contradictions and blaspheming, Paul and Barnabas will reason no more. And, Acts 28. 24. 25. some Jews are accounted to be sufficiently convinced, and their contradiction to proceed from judicial blinding, when they reject that word
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Word which did sufficiently convince others. Also, we see, *Aet. 17. 32.* when men begin to mock at the fundamental things of Religion, or to shift clear places of Scripture, by putting strange and absurd expostitions upon them, as was formerly marked of Hymeneus and Alexander; such persons are not to be disputed with any more, but to be accounted abundantly convinced, notwithstanding of the most confident contradiction: and what was said of some cases, wherein publick debate was not to be admitted, the same may be applied in this case, as being evidences of sufficient conviction and self-condemnation of such persons.

**Assert. 4.** When any such debate is found necessary, there is much spiritual zeal and prudence required in the managing thereof: in which, beside what is generally required in the manner of every thing, these things are to be observed, 1. That it be not tumultuary and confused, because so the Name of God is irreverently dealt with, and made obnoxious to reproach: Therefore order and reverence, and what is needfull and fit for such an end, is to be provided for; otherwise, such confused meetings are to be left when entered into, as dishonourable to the Name of God, and unbecoming the gravity that Ministers should follow, as we see, *Aet. 13, 45, 46.* and *Aet. 19, 30, 32.* for, in such a case there is no access to edification. 2. Men would denyed undertake such a thing when called to it, as being convinced how difficult the task is, how feckleffe they themselves are, and how subtile the principall adversary which they have to do with is. Therefore there would not be an undertaking upon the account of gifts, parts, or learning, nor would it be managed only or mainly by subtile arguments, nor would advantage be much sought for, that way, but simple truth would be plainly, gravely, and zealously proposed with respect to the affecting the conscience of the party, and of the hearers.

**Q.** 3

And
And as it is in preaching, not the subtilest and learnedest discourses do alwayes prove most taking, so in debates that concern conscience, materiall plainnesse demonstrating the truth with power unto the conscience, hath often the clearest evidence with it. There is a notable instance recorded by Ruffinus, Eccles. hist. lib. 10, chap. 3. which was thus, at the Counciill of Nice, great Schollers were conveneed from all places, upon report of that famous meeting, to which also did come some chief Philosophers, of whom one most eminent did dispute frequently with the greatest Schollers, who were never able to bind him, because such ( faith he ) was his nimblenesse, that like an eel he slipped them, by one shift or other, when arguments did seem most constringent. But God, that he might shew that His Kingdom did not consist in word, but in power; one of the Confessors, being a man of a most simple nature, and knowing nothing but Christ Jesus and Him crucified, when he saw the Philosopher insulting and boasting of his quicknesse, desired liberty to speak with him a little, others did shun it, knowing the mans simplicitie, and fearing lest he should become a reproach to subtile men: notwithstanding, he persifted, and began thus, Philosopher, in the Name of Jesus Christ hear these things that are true. There is one God who made Heaven and Earth, and formed man out of the dust, and gave him a Spirit, who made all things which are seen and unseen, who sent His Son, born of a Virgin, to deliver us miserable sinners from everlasting death, by His sufferinge of death; and hath given us life eternall by His Resurrection, whom we expect to come as Judge of what ever we do: Philosopher, believest thou these things? Then he, as if he had not known how to contradict, astonished with the power of what was said, and put to silence, only could answer, that it appeared so, that there was no other thing but truth in what he had said. Then said the aged Con-#fessor,
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If thou believest so, rise and follow me to the Church, and receive the seal of this faith: Then the Philosopher turning to those that were with him, and other hearers, said, Hear, O Learned men, while the matter was managed with me with words, I opposed words to words: but when for words virtue proceeded out of the mouth of him that spake, words (said he) could not resist power, nor man God. And therefore, if any of you have felt what I have, let him believe in Christ, and follow this old man, in whom God hath spoken. Thus far Ruffinus: a story not unworthy to be observed. 3. It would be known what principles may be laid down, or what rules may be binding, otherways there may be an asserting of any thing, or denying of every thing. 4. There would be still a ministerial gravity and authority preserved, left that Ordinance become despicable, and so Ministers would both improve their reason, light, authority, and ministerial commission from Christ upon the conscience of those they have to do with, as we see Paul doth in his debates, even where his authority was much questioned.

CHAP. XI.

Admonition is necessary, and how to be performed.

The third step is Admonition, that is, when convictions have no success, then ought Ministers to proceed to judicial and authoritative admonitions, as the word is in the direction, Tit. 3.10. A man that is an Heretick, reject, after the first and second admonition. This admonition hath no new reason to inform the judgment, which is already presupposed to be done, but it addeth these two, 1. It hath a concurring weight to affect the conscience which hath withstood or smothered the light; and so it is, with God's blessing, useful to make former despised light more seriously and impartially to be weighed.
weighed and considered, when in His Name the admonition is particularly upon that account directed to them. 2. It is a warning, giving advertisement of some sadder thing coming, if they shall continue to reject the Truth, and so it is a warning of them for that particular fault, before the stroke be laid on, that either, by God's blessing, it may humble and soften them, and so put them to endeavour the preventing of the coming stroke; or, if they continue stubborn, it may make them more inexcusable; and thus there is the clearer access to proceed to rejection. This admonition may be considered in these three steps, 1. It may be in private, after the Minister's conferring with the persons and his finding them guilty, he may not only instruct them, but afterward, if they continue, admonish them, and that as a Minister, in the Name and Authority of Jesus Christ, which is more than the admonition of a privat person. 2. There is a step of this admonition to be past judicially by a Church-judicatory when the person is brought before them, whereby they judicially interpose their authority to admonish such a person of the evil of his way, and of the necessity of the present duty of repentance for the same, like that which sinfully and most abominably was misapplied by the Priests and Pharisees, Act. 4. 5. yet, that in the general there is such an admonition, is apparent. The 3. step is publicly before the people, wherein (after the former hath failed in reaching the desired end) the party infected is solemnly and publicly admonished before the Congregation. In which step, 1. The parties good is to be respected, that now it may be tried if the admonition both of officers and people (who are supposed to joyn in this publick admonition) may have weight. 2. It is useful for the people to guard them against such an evil, and such a person. 3. If it succeed not, it leaveth the person more inexcusable, and convinces all of the justice and necessity of proceeding
ceeding further, and so tendeth to make the Sentence to be the more respected by all. This, we conceive, is the admonition intended, Tit. 3. 10. and answereth to that publick rebuke, spoken of, 1 Tim. 5. 20.

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

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

Concerning which these things are clear,

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

2. The example and precedent is clear. 1 Tim. 1. 20.

3. Where this is followed, it is commanded, as in Ephesos, Rev. 2. and where it is forborn, and corrupt teachers suffered to be in the Church, it is very sharply reproved, as in the Epistles to Pergamos and Thyateira. 4. The general grounds of Scandal and of Discipline against the same, and the reasons which enforce the exercise thereof in any case, have weight here. For, 1. It is scandalous exceedingly. 2. It is hurtful to the Church. 3. Discipline, and particularly that Sentence, is appointed for remedying the hurts of the Church, and the removing of offences from the same; which grounds have been formerly cleared. Therefore it palpably followeth, that this Sentence is to proceed against such: But for further clearing of this, there are some Questions to be answered here. As,

1. It may be questioned, What if the person be godly, or accounted so? 

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

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

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

Two limitations to be adverted in the rejecting of Hereticks.

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

It is true, that sometimes lesser errors, in respect of their effects, and other aggravating circumstances, may
may become intolerable and to be proceeded against by this Sentence, as was said of lesser Scandals in practice. Yet, we conceive, that properly it is some greater error than what may be accounted to be of infirmity (such as many godly, sober, unprejudged men may have) that is to be the ground of such a Sentence. Therefore we refer the decision of this to be gathered from the Distinctions formerly laid down.

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

**CHAP. XII.**

*What is to be accounted a satisfying and successful admonition.*

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

Again, we call that a partial satisfaction or success, when though there is not a fully satisfying length obtained; on.
tained; yet can it not be said to be altogether fruitless. As suppose, 1. a person should not be brought wholly to disclaim his errors, yet should profess a conviction of the ill of venting them, and troubling the Church with them, and afterward should engage to abstain from offending in that kind. 2. Suppose one should be convinced of the more grosse errors, and be content to disclaim these, yet should stick at some others, professing scruple in them.

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

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

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

3. Where that satisfaction is but of the last kind, that is, mocking and dissembled, We say, that though it may put a Church-judicatory to try the evidences of this disimulation, and during that time possibly to stop a little their proceeding; yet ought it not to mar the drawing forth of the Sentence, lest there be an accession to the hurt which is intended to the Church by that dissembler: And here we are to apply both the reasons against, and characters of, dissimulation, which were spoken to on practicall offences.
4. If there be no seeming satisfaction at all, then after admonitions given, the person despising the same is to be rejected, as one that is infectious and unfit to have communion in the Church, or the benefit of any Church-privileged and Ordinance: And, in a word, to be, for his scandal, and obstinacy against Christ's Ordinances, declared to be Excommunicate, and casten out of His visible Kingdom, as an out-law to the same; Which is to be done with such gravity, weightiness, sympathy and authority, as it may look like the Ordinance of Christ, and have an impression of His dread and Majesty upon all that are witnesses thereof.

If it be asked, Whether any further duty be required from a Minister towards such a person after the Sentence is past? Answ. He is not then properly under pastoral charge, since he is no member of Christ's visible Church, at least, in that respect, as members fall under common and ordinary actual inspection. Yet we conceive, 1. That the Minister is to continue to deal with God for him (at least in private) if so be he may be recovered out of this snare, because he is under the last cure, which will either prove life or death; God's blessing therefore to it, is to be sought; and it becometh well the natural care of a kindly Minister, that is thirsting for the blessing, to deal with God for it. 2. Although there be not actual access to anything; yet ought there to be a lying at the wait to observe any opportunity which may be for his good, and when it offereth, it would be carefully improved. And therefore, 3. for that end, whatever indignation be shown against a man's ways or errors, to make these loathsome to others, yet still there would be evidence of tender respect to the persons, and, if need be, means used to supply them, especially if they come to any strait, although in all this they would keep such a distance as may keep up the weight of the Sentence, both to them and others: But
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But, by this way, their suspicious mistakes of Ministers, carnalness against their persons, are best removed, and access is thereby made to be edifying unto them. Some examples whereof are recorded in the life of Musculus, as to his tenderness to most desperately deluded persons, when they were in affliction, and discountenanced exceedingly by Magistrates, which God blessed in the end for their recovery; this is suitable, severity in Magistrates, and tenderness in Ministers. And amongst other ills and snares that that cruel indulgence (which is indeed cruel to the poor souls, to whom it becometh a snare) hath following it, this is one. That the Magistrate is accounted merciful, and the zealous Minister cruel, whereby they are put in an incapacity to be edified by the one, and in a capacity, as it were, to mis-carry as they will, by the indulgence of the other.

CHAPTER XIII.

What is required of Magistrates for restraining of leading spirits.

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

Assertion. 1. Although God hath not made Magistrates, as such, Church officers, nor intrusted them with the Ecclesiastick Government of His Church; yet
yet doth he allow them, and call them to improve their civil power for the good of His Church in Ecclesiastick things in some respect, as well as in civil things. And therefore if a Magistrate see not to the providing of Ministers for a people, and of maintenance to them, and such like, that are necessary for the being of a Church, as well as he provideth Officers, and furnisheth them that are needfull in the State, he is faulty and unfaithfull to his trust. For, the Lords design in setting of Societies, and appointing of Magistrates, is to be expounded as subservient to that great end of mens glorifying of God, and enjoying him. And certainly, Magistrates are to have that as their own end, even in the actions of their station, and to endeavour to promote that amongst these over whom for their good they rule. This is clear in all the Governments and Commonwealths that the Lord did immediately model Himself, Magistrates had this for a special part of their task, to keep His Ordinances pure, and to restrain the corrupters of them: This is expressed in the Morall Law, where Masters are no lesse to oversee their servants, that they work not on the Sabbath, from respect to the Lord, than to direct their work all the week from respect to themselves; and by the rules of interpreting of these commands, what belongeth to a Master to be done by him as a Master, in reference to these over whom he hath power according to his station, that doth belong to all Magistrates in reference to these under their charge, according to their stations. Also, where one instance is named, all of that kind are comprehended. And therefore as this Ordinance of sanctifying the Sabbath, is to be overseen by Superiours, so also are all others: yea, it is acknowledged also, that what is expressed in one command, in respect of the extent thereof, is to be understood in all. And therefore this obligation lyeth on Superiours, to make inferiours observant of Gods Ordinances in reference.
to all the commands; this is not doubted of the duties in the second Table: yet there is no expression in it inferring the same, so express as is in the first; and this is a common assertion, *Magistrates have both Tables of the Law committed to their keeping.* This is fully made out by many godly and learned men, and we need not to insist upon it; for, readily, no Magistrate doth question his own power, but that he may do what is fit, all the matter is to consider what that is.

2. *Affert.* It is not a Magistrate's duty in the case of overspreading delusion, merely to look to outward order and civil peace and enjury, and to give liberty to any or many sorts of dangerous errors and delusions to spread; or, to give toleration unto the maintainers thereof, in their spreading the same. For, 1. such errors, are *ill deeds*, and such spreaders, are *ill doers*, bringing great prejudice to people, *Gal. 5. 20.* 2. Epift. of *John 1.* 2. Magistrates ought to be a terror to evil doers indefinitely; and, I suppose, if the sword be born in vain in reference to them, the conscience will not have ground of quietness in the day of judgement, upon a distinction of evil doers, when the Lord hath made none such in their commission. 3. They ought to be zealous of His honour who is their Superior, that His name be not blasphemed: and can such be tolerate without this construction, upon the matter, that men have liberty to blaspheme the Name of God, to abuse His truth, reproach His Ordinances, and to take His Name in vain as they will? Would any supream Magistrate take it well, to have some inferiour officer, or Magistrate of a Town or Province, to give such liberty to these under his jurisdiction in reference to him? And is there any such distance between the supream and inferiour Magistrate, as there is between the Majesty of God, and the most supream power on earth? And what if He judge between Him and them out of their own
own mouth, and, according to the measure that they met out to others, met out to them? 4. Are they not to seek the peoples good? And is there any such good, as their spirituall good? Or, are there any such enemies to that as seducers? We conceive therefore, it will not be found agreeable to the intent of their office and scope which they ought to aim at therein, that Magistrates should give this liberty or connivance to men, to vent and propagate such errours as may destroy souls, and actually overturn the face of a visible Church, so that if something overspread universally, (as Popery, and some other grosse errours and delusions have done in some places of the world) there should be no visible Church within such dominions; And indeed, upon these principles, men cannot impute it to their own care, that it is otherways. Also, such loosenesse may overturn Ordinances, and set up abominations in the room thereof, remove all Ministry, Sacraments, Discipline and Preaching, and all upon pretext of conscience: such delusions have been in the world; and if by Magistrates connivance, they should overspread a Nation, so as there could be no remedy applied, would it be satisfying or comfortable to him (supposing him to have a conscience) to see his people under him in such a posture? What if under pretext of conscience, Magistracie should be denied to be an Ordinance of God, and he put therefrom, upon that account, that the people thought it unlawfull to obey him? Would not readily his conscience say, That seeing he restrained not others from casting at these Ordinances, in which the honour of God, and good of souls were so much concerned, that it was just with God to permit them to cast at that Ordinance also, wherein he is so mainly concerned? And indeed, this hath not been unfrequently seen, that these who have begun to cast at Church-ordinances, have come at length (as if they had been thereto disposed by the former) to cast at
Civil Ordinances (to speak so) also; and what wonder is it, seeing there is no more clear warrant from God for the one than for the other?

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

4. Consider if in the Book of the Revelation, the suffering of antichrift to delude soules, be not mentioned as reproveable; and if the destroying of that beast, and putting him from corrupting the earth, be not spoken of as a main piece of the commendation of such as shall be instrumentall therein. Now in the Scripture-language, all deluders and seducers are antichrists, being led with the same spirit, and driving the same design against the Kingdom of Jesus Christ; Can there be therefore any reason to make such difference, where the Lord hath made it?

5. Consider if it can be accounted single zeal, that persuadeth to permit the Name of God to be dishonoured, when any reflection upon our own, doth so much move us; for, it doth infer, that either there is an indifferency as to truth and error. So that in the one, the Lord is not more dishonoured than in the other, which will be found exceeding contrary to His own expressing of Himself in Scripture, and will not, I suppose, be pleaded in the day of judgement, when He will avenge Himself on such seducers; or, it must infer, that men are not to take notice of what dishonoureth Him, even though many things be within their reach to impede it. And indeed, if a conscience seriously pondering the thing, will not be provoked out of zeal to God, whose glory suffereth, out of respect to the salvation of many soules, that are hazarded and destroyed by such means, and to prevent the many offences that wait necessarily upon such ills, and the many inconveniencies, divisions, jealousies, rents, &c. that follow in Families, Congregations, Cities and Nations, and the great prejudice that the Commonwealth suffereth, by the distracting of her members amongst themselves, the incapacitating of many for publick trust, the fostering of diverse interests and
contrary principles in one body, to the marring of honest publick designs: If by these, I say, the zeal and conscience of these who are concerned, be not provoked, by what will, or can, they be?

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

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

Our third Affertion then is, That Magistrates in their places ought to prevent the infection of their people under them by corrupt doctrine, and the recovery of them when they are insnared: and that therefore they ought to *restrain* and marre corrupt teachers from spreading of their errors to seduce others. This Affertion, we suppose, is clear from the former two: for, if Magistrates be allowed to improve their power for the good of the Church, and
if it be not their duty to give common protection to Error, and the venters thereof, with Truth: Then this will follow, that they ought to use their power to restrain the same, and, by the exercise thereof, to procure the good of their people, in preserving of them from such a great evil.

C H A P. X I V.

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

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

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

2. It is to be adverted, that we speak not here of the Magistrates duty in punishing of corrupt teachers with civil or capital punishments, (though we doubt not but in some cases their power doth reach to that) much less are the highest punishments to be understood here; whatever be truth in these, we do not now
now search into it, because the Scope is according to the Assertion, to consider what is called for, for the preventing of the spreading of corrupt doctrine, and the preserving or recovering of a people therefrom.

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

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

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

3. Their duty may be looked upon in reference to others, wherein they may and ought to extend themselves for preventing the spreading of the infection amongst those that are clean, by such like means, As, 1. by their example, to show themselves zealous against that ill, and to abhor the questioning and disputing of the truth; thus the example of a Magistrate is often of much weight, yet can it not be accounted any coaction. 2. They ought to endeavour to have faithfull and honest Ministers, who by their diligence and oversight may exceedingly conduce to the confirming of these that stand, and to the preventing of more hurt. 3. They may and ought to countenance and
and strengthen such as are faithful, whether among Ministers or people, which often hath no little influence upon the disappointing of seducers: thus it is said, 2 Chron. 30. 22. that for promoting of Reformation, Hezekiah spoke comfortably to all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the Lord: which is added, to shew, that by this encouraging of honest and faithful Ministers beyond others, he did design the thriving of the work in their hands, both by heartening them to be zealous in it, and also by making them to have the more weight with others: this is also marked of Constantine and other good Emperours, that zealous and faithful Ministers were particularly taken notice of, and honoured by them, beyond others.

4. They may and ought to employ and make use of some fit instruments for the preventing of seduction, and may provide such as may be set apart for studying such controversies, and confuting of such errors, that the truth may be the more clear. 5. They may and ought to endeavour according to their place, the comproure and allayment of all the lesser and more petty differences and heart-burnings that may be found amongst these that are, in the main, one for truth; for often (as was said) a vehement spirit of error and delusion is tryed with heart-burnings, divisions and offences in the Church, and amongst the Officers thereof: there were petty contests in Corinth, biting and devouring one of another in Galatia, tryed with the harmony that was amongst the followers of the seducers: and at the Councell of Nice there was not only difference with Arians and other grosse heretics, but also there were petty differences and contests amongst the Bishops and Confessors who stood for truth; and these differences are most advantageous to the spreading of error, and the removing thereof is a great bulwark against the same. It is marked of Constantine at that Councell of Nice, that amongst other means which he used to suppress the Arian
Arian heresie, he did most carefully endeavour the removing and burning of such differences and divisions, and by serious Oration pressed the oblivion of all such, that they might the more unitedly and with the lesse diversion be in capacity to oppose the common enemy. For certainly, when Ministers are armed one against another upon some lesse concerning, and more unprofitable debates, (as, alas! too much of them is in the Christian reformed-Church at this time) there cannot but be the lesse strength, zeal, and vigilancy against professed enemies in the most substantiall things. 6. They may, and ought to interpose their Authority, for inhibiting the receiving and hearing, or conversing with known and manifest seducers: for, this is but to discharge, and thereby to preserve the people from running to their own hazard, even as men ought to be commanded to keep at distance with a place or person suspected to be infectious because of the Pestilence; neither could such a restraint be accounted any diminution of their just liberty, yea this were but a putting to of their sanction to the clear direction which the Lord layeth upon His people, and therefore there could be no hazard to miscarry in it, especially where the application to such and such persons, might be as clearly discernable from the Word as the duty is. 7. They might and ought to give their countenance unto, and joyn their Authority with, such ecclesiasticall statutes, overtures, or means, as Church-judicatures or Officers might be about to make use of for this end in their places; and this can be no more prejudice to liberty, to countenance with their authority the Ordinance of Discipline, than to confirm by their Authority the Ordinance of preaching the Gospel. 8. They may and ought to preserve the Ordinances from being interrupted, and the administrators thereof from being reproached, and might justly censure these things when committed. 9. In recovering a people, in a reeling
reeling and staggering time, a Magistrate may engage them to formerly received truth, and interpose his authority for this end; as is recorded of Josiah, 2 Chron. 34. 31, 32, 33. Also, 10. He may and ought to remove all false worship, and endure no corrupt preaching, or writing, or meetings for that end, or administering of corrupted Sacraments, or any Ordinance other than what is allowed; for, Josiah did cause the people stand to the Covenant that was made, and having removed all Idolatrous worship, he made Israel to serve the Lord, that is, he made them abandon corrupt worship, and wait on pure Ordinances, as keeping of the Sabbaths, offering of sacrifices, &c. and that according to the manner prescribed by the Lord. Neither was it a wronging of their liberty, to do so: Because, 1. it was the preservation of their liberty, to keep them from the abominable bondage of these evils. 2. It was their duty to abstain from these, and to follow the Ordinances purely, and the Magistrate may well put people to that. 3. It is one thing by force to keep folks from dishonouring God in a corrupt Religion, (as Josiah did) another to force them to a Religion; the one belongeth to the ordering of the outward man, the other to the inward. 4. He might order them to keep the Ordinances, and in going about them to keep the rule, because that is but a constraining of them to the means whereby Religion worketh, and a making them, as it were, to give God a hearing, leaving their yeelding and consenting to him, when they have heard him, to their own wills, which cannot be forced; yet it is reason that when God cometh by His Ordinances to treat with a people, that a Magistrate should so far respect His glory and their good, as to interpose His Authority to make them hear. 5. Also, there is a difference between the constraining of a circumcised or baptized people, to worship God in the purity of Ordinances, as they have been engaged thereto, which was
was Josia's practice, and the constraining of a people to engage and be baptized, which were not formerly engaged; because, actual members of a Church have not even that liberty as others have, to abandon Ordinances: and this putteth them to no new engagement in Religion, but presseth them to continue under former engagements, and accordingly to perform: Hence we see, that both in the Old and New Testament, Church-members have been put to many things, and restrained from many things, which had not been pertinent in the case of others. See, 2 Chron. 15. 13.

In the fourth place, there are many things also in their power, in reference to these that are seducers or deluders, or actually deluded, which might be and ought to be improved for the Churches' good; (not to speak now of any thing that may infer civil or capital punishment, upon men for their opinions, or any way look like the enforcing of Religion upon consciences) As, 1. Magistrates might and ought to put Ministers and Church-officers and others to their duty (in case they be negligent) in trying, discovering, convincing, &c. such as by their corrupt doctrine may hazard others. 2. They may and ought to disapproving such in their own persons, and, by their authority, inhibit them to vent any such thing; yea under certifications: yet this cannot be called a forcing of their conscience to any Religion, but is only the restraining of them from hurting of the consciences of others. 3. When such certifications are contraveened, he may and ought to censure the contraveeners, and so he may by his authority put them in an incapacity of having access to infect others; yet this is not the censuring of a man's opinion, for he might possesse his opinion without cenure, but it is the censuring of his disobedience, and the prejudice done by him to others: Nor is it the restraining of him from personal liberty, because of it, but because
cause he doth not, nor will not use his personal liberty without prejudice to the whole body, which is to be preferred to him: even as a man, infected with the pestilence, ought justly to be restrained, though against his will; yet cannot that be accounted a restraint of just liberty; for, it is no just liberty to have liberty to hurt others. 4. They may and ought to destroy such books as they use to spread for the infecting of others, and inhibit and stop printing of them, or actual selling, spreading or transporting of them, as they may stop carrying of suspected or forbidden goods. 5. They may and ought to restrain idle and vagabound travelling of such suspected persons, without representing of their necessary business to some, appointed for that effect, in which case their doing hurt by such a voyage, might be prevented, and they have a passe. Also, they might constrain them to follow some lawfull occupation, and to be diligent therein; both these are well consistent with ordering of a State, And yet it is such 

*huso-bodies* (as the Apostle speaketh) and vagabonds, that go without their station, that often prove most hurtfull to the Church, and instrumentall to the devil, as being Apostles to him in such a business. 6. They may and ought to restrain and Censure all blasphemous and irreverent expressions and speeches against the Majesty of God and His Ordinances, and all calumnies and bitterness against faithful Ministers or Professours that adhere to truth: for, these are moral sins; and blasphemy, calumny, and such like, are no more to be passed over without Censure in such, than in others who are not professedly tainted with error: and the pretext of following light and conscience, cannot make these sins tolerable, more than the *Nicolaian* pretending the same for their committing adultery and other filthiness: And this is not to punish mens opinions, or force their consciences, but to punish their vices, even such as have been hateful unto, and
and punished by, many naturall and heathen men: 
7. They may and ought by their authority to cause
them hear conferences orderly and reverently, give
answers discreetly, wait on their trial, and such like,
before Ecclesiasticke Assemblies. 8. They may and
ought to make such incapable of publick places of
trust, and remove them from such: Because, 1. they
cannot be supposed to employ their power singly.
2. Because such trust agreeeth not to men and subjects
as such, but are voluntarily conferred as tokens of
respect put upon men eminently qualified, and as may
be for the good of the Commonwealth: And there-
fore it cannot be justly accounted a marring of their
liberty as men or subjects. Upon this ground was
Maachah the mother of Asa removed from being
Queen, or having any government, 1 King, 15. 13.
2 Chron. 15. 16. yet it cannot be said she was wrong-
ed when she was so dealt with.

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

If it be said, That it seemeth sufficient for the Ma-
gistrate to maintain civil peace, and to restrain civil
disturbances: We may look to these considerations
in answer to this, 1: This is no more than what
Julian did restrain, as the place cited before, cleareth;
and certainly, he who ruleth for Christ, will not
think his example a good pattern. 2. This is that
which heathens do out of meer respect to themselves:
and shall Christian Magistrates have no respect to
Christ but to themselves? or, do no more for Christi-
anity, than heathens who owned it not? 3. Is it
possible to separate growth in delusions and variety
of absurd errors, and civil faction and discord? or,
in experience have they ever been separated? We see
they
they made men carnall in Corinth, they made them bite and devour one another in Galatia, as, chap. 5. of that Epistle to them; yea, provoked to debates, envying, wraths, strifes, back-bitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults, 2 Cor. 13. 20. and can such things be with the entertaining of civil peace? For, doth not the interruption of civil peace, flow from hatred, bitterness, alienation of mind, envy, contradictions, and such like? And do not these necessarily wait on debates, and diversities of opinions? For, it is not to be supposed, that such differences, proceeding from want of light, can be in men that are altogether mortified, and without corruption: Therefore may it be expected, that that corruption will flame out upon such occasions; and that order is observable which the Apostle hath, 2 Cor. 13. 2. as now cited, where he beginneth with debates, and proceedeth by diverse steps, till it close with tumults: and these who are acquainted with the Histories of older and latter times, will acknowledge this to be a truth.

4. There is almost but very little in the foregoing particulars mentioned, but what is necessary for the preserving and restoring of civil peace, or the preventing or cenfuring of the disturbance thereof, being there can be no solid ground whereupon to maintain peace, except the springs of debates and tumults be stopped, and such distempers from which they spring, be either cured and purged away, or restrained.

5. It may be considered in experience, if ever such a way hath done good to the Church, (whose divisions and offences have often thereby come to an height,) or to these that were seduced, being thereby not only the temptation was armed against them, but they, at least, permitted to harden themselves therein, as in a thing not so gross to wise States-men, as some conceitie Ministers would make it to appear: Or, in the last place, it may be considered, if ever it hath done good to the State, wherein it was permitted, or to the Magistrates who
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who did permit the same; or, if thereby secret jealouslys, heart-burnings, divisions and factions have not been fostered and brought up to such height as hath proven dangerous to the body, and hath hazarded the eating out of the belly, where it was bred, or the stinging of the bosome that did give it heat.

CHAP. XV.

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

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

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

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

3. People would try in what terms themselves are with God, and if things inwardly be in good case, if there be any guiltiness procuring, or disposing for the same plague, such as little love to the truth, little study of the knowledge of the truth, little zeal against error, or sympathy with infected Churches that are at a distance, laughing, it may be, at such things without any other use making thereof, little prayer for others, or exhorting or admonishing of them, (which is a mean for preventing of united fastness) little industry, according to men's places, to have others instructed, or to have faithfull, able, and godly Ministers for that end; but, it may be, on the contrary, much spiritual pride, self-conceitedness, tenaciousness, and addictedness to our own wills and opinions, prejudice at able and faithful Teachers, and readiness to hear everything, and every person. These, and such like, may be tried, and when found, ought to be mourned for, as causes of humiliation to them for their accession to such a plague.

4. They would endeavour the strengthening and confirming of themselves in the knowledge of necessary Truths, and would exercise themselves in the practice of controverted Godliness, and, by all means, would etchew jangling debates in unnecessary things, knowing that that is a piece of the enemies subtility, once to engage, if it were but in the meanest thing; for thereby he doth not only divert from more necessary things, and weareth away liveliness, but doth dispose for greater things, as was formerly marked in his method of dealing: For, as in corrupt practices, men are not at first brought to an height of prophanity, but by degrees; so is it in corrupt doctrines: and therefore there is wariness called-for here in debating or questioning the meanest Truth, if any Truth be mean.
5. If any thing be really doubted of, means would be used in a sober prudent way for attaining information, either by providing and reading of some fit Book, wherein often reasons are more deliberate and full, and may be more deliberately studied and digested than in a transient discourse; but in this, special respect would be had to a right choice, and for that cause the judgments of such as are found and able to discern, would be followed in this; or, where God giveth occasion, it may be done in sober and christian conference with others of ability and integrity, especially with Ministers, who ought neither to decline, nor rashly misconstrue the same, but affectionately and tenderly to welcom any such sober persons, lest they be provoked to consult with others, who may prove Physicians of no value. In this, people would not express their doubts in all companies at random, nor to, or before, such as may possibly more easily take up the doubt, and with more difficulty be brought off; when therefore such a doubt is to be moved, the party and the time would be deliberately chosen, that men may be serious therein, and no doubt, would be moved for debate, but either such as the mover can himself loose, or in such company where he may expect to have it loosed.

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

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

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

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

9. They would then be much and serious in the exercise of christian fellowship, observing or considering one another, provoking one another, and, as the word is, *Heb. 10. 24.* and 3. 12, 13. taking heed, left there be amongst them an evil heart of unbelief, and left any of them be hardened: but, exhort (faith he) one another daily, as the remedy of that. There is no time whereof christian fellowship is more called-for, and wherein it may be more profitable, than at such a time, if it be rightly ordered and managed:
say, rightly ordered and managed; for, often the pretext of christian fellowship is abused to the hatching and propagating of the most absurd opinions, when people turn light and frothy, taking up their time with vain janglings and diverting from the main scope, to wit, edification. These things are indeed to be shunned, but christian fellowship is not to be disclaimed, but wisely to be ordered in respect of the persons with whom, and occasions upon which it is used, and, in respect of the matter and duties insisted on, which is to be the confirming of themselves in some truth, faithfull freedom in admonishing one another of what is wrong, serious endeavour to keep repentance, humility, self-denial, and the like graces, fresh; These and such like things are good and profitable to men, when gravely, singly, faithfully, tenderly and inoffensively followed.

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

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

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

2. They may consider, if our blessed Lord Jesus, or the Apostles, had any fear of losing their respect, or of inability to maintain their point against any Seducers; yet do they press this themselves, and command
mand and charge other Ministers after them, to press this also upon their hearers.

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

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

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

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

CHAP. XVI.

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

If it be asked, What duty further is called-for from private persons towards a person cut off? Answ. I suppose these things are called-for,

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

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

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

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

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

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

dignation at their way, even when they express tenderness to their persons. 2. It would be done in a different manner from what useth to be with others, not under such a Sentence, that so they may bear out their respect to the Sentence, even when they shew respect to them. Therefore, there would not be such frequency in medling with such persons, nor would it be with familiarity or many words, and long discourses to other purposes, nor with laughing, and with such cheerfulness, intimacy or complacency, as is used with others. But, in a word, the business would be done, and other things abstained from.

3. When what is necessary is past, except it be on necessity, folks would not eat or drink with them at the time of doing their business, or after the closing of the same; because that doth not necessarily belong to them as men, and by so doing, the due distance would not be kept; and this is the great practice, so to carry to them as the weight of the Sentence be not lessened, nor they prejudged of what other ways is necessary to their being, but that so every opportunity may be taken, whereby their edification may be advanced.

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

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

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

Some Considerations to provoke Ministers and others to the faithful discharge of their duty in all the forementioned particulars.
cial manner fore-prophesied of, to have a great reviv-
ing and strength in the latter dayes; it is said, \textit{1 Tim. 4. 1.} That the Spirit speaketh \textit{expressly}, That in the last times, some shall depart from the faith: And why is that \textit{expressly} added, but to give warning the more clearly, that men may be at their duty? Again, \textit{2 Tim. 3. 1.} This know, that in the last dayes, peril-

lous times shall come. It is the observation of a ho-

ly and learned man, that in this place, it is the last dayes; in the former, the last times, as if this did re-

late to a time nearer the end of the world: and so the first looketh to the Popish superstitions and abom-

inations, (and indeed, the nature of the Doctrines there reproved, doth seem to favour this) and this last place doth relate to the grosse delusions, that un-
der the pretext of the form of godlinesse, were to suc-

ceed to these; And therefore men, according to their places, ought in these times to be so much the more watchfull and zealous, seeing the Trumpet hath given so distinct a sound.

3. The dreadfull effects which such ills necessarily bring with them, may be considered; it is not ruine to bodies or estates, but to souls; it is not simply to 

sin, and to permit that, but its 

rebellion; and which is more, It is to 

teach rebellion, and to carry on the same with a high hand against God; and what will 

stir zeal for God, or what will waken love to, and 

sympathie with, the souls of others, if this do not?

4. It would be considered, how often zeal, dili-
gence and faithfulness of men in their severall places (as hath been laid down) have proved exceeding helpful for preventing and restraining the growth of such evils, so that thereby such a floud hath been dried up, as it is \textit{Rev. 12.} which otherwayes might have drowned the Woman and her seed; and, \textit{Matth. 13.} it is marked, that such tares are sown and spring up, not while men are watchfull and diligent, but while they sleep and are defective in their duty.
ver. 25. for, diligence in the use of means, hath the blessing promised which others cannot expect; and if wrath be come to such an height, as the Lord will not be intreated in that matter, yet the person that is diligent may look for his own soul for a prey, and to be kept on his feet in the midst of temptations.

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

6. It is dreadful also to consider how difficulty men are recovered from these delusions. It's a rare thing to find in Scripture, or in History, any observable recovery of a person that hath slipped in this kind. Sometimes indeed persons, that through fear have been brought to deny Christ, or to countenance Idolatry in a particular act, are marked with much tenderness and satisfaction to acknowledge their failing, and to abandon it; for, often such a failing is the fruit of some surprizal, and is of infirmity; but the recovery of a person, who hath with a kind of deliberation drunken in error and rejected convictions, is a most rare thing, and hath a peradventure added thereto, 2 Tim. 2.23. (as was formerly marked) which will not readily be found in any other case; yea, often
ten such persons do wax worse and worse, and one delusion draweth-on another till it come to the greatest height of absurdity.

PART III.
Concerning Scandalous Divisions.

CHAP. I.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

s4 Treatise concerning Scandal. Again, schism may be where no heresie in doctrine is, but is a breaking of the union of the Church, and that communion which ought to be amongst the Members thereof, and is either in Government or Worship. As, first, in Government, when the common Government, where to all ought to be subject, is rent, and a Government distinct, set up. This may be, either when the Government is altered; as, suppose some should set up Episcopacy in opposition to Presbytery, yet keeping still the fundamental truths; Or it may be, where the same Government is acknowledged, but there be difference concerning the persons to whom the power doth belong; so, sometimes men have acknowledged Popery, yet followed diverse Popes; So often, Sectaries have not disclaimed Councils and Bishops, but have set up their own, and refused subjection to these to whom it belonged. The first kind implieth a doctrinall error concerning Government; The second may consist with the same principles of Government, but differeth in the application of them, and becometh a schism, when men act accordingly in acknowledging diverse supream Independent Governments: Because so, when there ought to be but one Church, it becometh, as it were, two: and this is exclaimed against, and regrated by the Fathers, under the expression of erecting altare contra altare, that is, altar against altar, whereas the Lord allowed but one; even in reference to His own worship. 2. Schism may be in worship, that is, when, it may be, both the same Doctrine and Government is acknowledged, yet there is not communion kepted in Church-ordinances, as in Prayer, Word and Sacraments; but a separate way of going about these is followed. It seemeth, that this was in part the schism of the Corinthians (whatever was the rise thereof) that they had a divided way of communicating, and of going about other duties, and other Ordinances, as many be gathered.
This kind of schism hath been frequent in the Church, and hath flowed not so much from dissatisfaction with the Doctrine and Government thereof, as with the constitution of the Members, or failings of the Governours. Thus it was in the case of the Novatians, Donatists, Meletians, Cathari and others, of whom it is recorded, that their fault did not consist in setting up any strange Doctrine, or in rejecting of the truth (at least at the first) but in breaking the band of communion, as Augustine hath it often; for, faith he, schismaticos facit non diversa fides sed communione disrupta societas, contra Faustum, lib. 20. Again, he faith of the Donatists, Ad Bonifac. Epist. 50: Nec de ipsa fide vertit a quo, sed de sola communione infeliciter litigant, & contra unitatem Christi rebelles immici-tios, perversitate sui erroris, exercent. And this sort of schism doth often draw with it the former, there being no way to maintain this without the other. Of this schism there are many kinds, according to its several rises and degrees; and also, according as it extendeth to the breaking of communion in whole, from Ordinances, or in part only from some, or in some Ordinances, as appeareth to have been in the Church of Corinth, where there hath not been a totall schism, though it hath been in that 'Ordinance of the Supper especially; and it is like also, that that schism hath been occasioned, because of the corruption of some members, with whom others have feared to communicate; and therefore have not tarried for them: for, the Apostle doth particularly condemn this, and exhort them to tarry one for another; and to attain this, he doth clear them of what was necessary for right partaking, to wit, the examining of themselves, ver. 28. and doth declare unto them, that who so did eat unworthily, and did not prepare himself, did eat and drink damnation; but to himself, and not to others: wherefore, faith he, ye need not be so anxiously solicitous...
citous how they be prepared, or of what sort they be that are with you, but examine your selves, and tarry one for another, that there be not a schism amongst you. And this he speaketh, even when he hath been reproving drunkenness among the Communicants, yet will he not admit that as an excuse, why private persons should Communicate separately, which was their practice. This was spoken of in the first part.

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

1. That such apprehended corruptions do either make such a society to be no Church, or communion with that Church in other Ordinances, to be unlawful because of such corruptions, or of such corrupt members. 

2. That there may be a distinct erected Church beside a Church, which yet may not be of communion with that other Church. 

3. These or such consequences, that either the Church of Christ in the earth is not one, (which truth of the unity of the Catholic visible Church, is the main ground of all Church-union and communion) Or, that that one Church may be of such heterogeneous or diff-milary parts, as the one of them ought not to have communion with the other; Or, at least this, that a person ought to seek his own satisfaction and consolation, though to the prejudice and renting of the Church, and to the general offence and stumbling of all others; The fairest schism and separation, must imply one of these: for, it cannot be conceived, that otherways men would act so directly, according to these principles, if they did not take them for granted.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. Sometimes Divisions are more staded and deeply rooted, when some way mens desigus are crosse, though not in the main, yet in the manner of carrying them on. Sometimes again, they are more occasional,
A Treatise concerning Scandal.

Part 4.

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

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

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

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

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

CHAP. II.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Heart burnings at the credit of others.

4. It usually ariseth from secret grudges at being slighted, or heart-burnings at anothers credit and reputation beyond them, and sometimes indeed, not because of the fact done, but because such persons were the doers thereof, and one way or other springeth from
from the root of pride, envy, or emulation, which hath many branches whereby it venteth its malignant distempering disposition in sundry shapes. It is indeed sad that such things should be amongst the Disciples of Christ yet often we see, that this, *Who should be the greatest*, was a bone of contention among them, especially when some had evidenced their too great proneness and inclination to prefer themselves to others; This also had influence upon that mutiny which Aaron and Miriam did stir up against Moses, Numb. 12. and it is the Lords word by the wise mouth of Solomon, *Only by pride cometh contention*.

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

6. They are occasioned by a carnal and factious-like pleading for, and vindicating even of Truth. Often it is not the matter whereabout godly and learned men debate, that maketh division, (for, there may be difference where there is no division) but it is a carnal manner of prosecuting either side of the A factious vindicating of truth.
difference, even that side whereon the truth doth lye, that doth engender the division; and often, we see men differing about greater points than others do, and yet carrying so as it cannot be called Division. It's marked, 1 Cor. 3. that some were for Paul, some for Apollos, some were for none but Christ; and yet this is counted a side of the faction as well as any of the other; not because being for Christ is wrong, but because that factiously they walked under that pretext: Which we may take up in these respects, 1. When a man too peremptorily presseth his light upon others, or upon a Church, in a matter that is not fundamental, or necessary, which is condemned, Rom. 14. 22. when men in these debates keep not their faith, or light, to themselves, but do trouble and distract others therewith. 2. It is, when men too vehemently press such a thing, as if the contrary thereof, or those who maintain the same, were intolerable; and so in a fiery violent way seek to beat down that which is indeed an error, though of infirmity. It is marked by some that write Church-history, and Augustine is of that same mind, That Stephanus, Bishop of Rome, did more hurt to the Church by his too vehement opposing of Cyprian's error (which was, That those that were baptized by Heretics, or Schismatics, ought again to be baptized) because he did thereby hazard the dividing and renting of the Church, by refusing communion with such as were against him, than Cyprian did in his maintaining of his error; Because, though it was still his opinion, he did meekly and condescendingly carry in it, with respect to the unity of the Church. 3. This is also, when things are followed with Sentences and Censures on the opposit opinion, and the abbetters thereof, as if it were a matter of Faith. It's known what influence those Sentences of Victor, Bishop of Rome, had upon renting of the Church, and stating that divisive distinction betwixt the East and West Church, and that
that for a matter of nothing; to wit, What day of
the moneth precisely Easter was to be kepted; and he
was for that sharply reproved, even by Iraenus, who
was of that same judgment with him: And many
such instances are in History. 4. It is, when in the
prosecution of such things, men leave the matter, and
fall on personal reflections, and become bitter in
these respects, as to cast-up pride and arrogancy, hy-
pocrisy, ignorance, heresie, or erroneousnisse, or some
other personal fault, if any be known or imputed to
them, or one way or other to slight them and make
them despicable:

Leaving the
matter and
falling upon
reflections.

So Aaron and Miriam murmur
against Moses, Numb. 12. that he had married an
Ethiopian woman, that he seemed to slight them, as if
God had only spoken by him, and not by them also;
Epiphaneus also did upbraid Chrysostom with hypo-
crifice; Jerome hugely revileth Vigilantius, whose te-
nents seem to be as near truth as his are; so it was
between Demetrius and Theophilus, when in the mat-
ter of fact, each giveth to other the lie. 5. It is,
when the manner of carrying on a thing, is factious,
as endeavouring, to make sides and parties under
hand, and indirect dealing to engage others in their
differences, and to stir up men by such means against
others: It is like it was so in Corinth, even amongst
the people who adhered not to false teachers; It is
marked also in that vehement bitter contention that
was between Jerome and Rufinus, that he did endeav-
our by all means, to waken hatred against Jeromes
person, and to defame his writings more than in any
convinving way to make out his point; and yet all
this arose from Jerome his alleging the other to be a
favourer of Origens heresie, because he had translated
some books of Origens, which was indeed condemned
by others as being dangerous; yet seeing Rufinus
did disclaim these errors, and deny that he approved
them, there was no such ground to press him with it;
and this became the occasion of that irreconcilable
hated,
hatred, which was never removed; in which also it is marked, that Jerome doth object to the other, obscurity, and harshness of style, adding with all many other slighting expressions.

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

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

9. Sometimes this doth come from dissatisfaction in some particulars of Government, as when some have been displeased that such and such men, formerly cast out, should have been again admitted to communion;
munion; or, that a person, cast out of communion
in one place, hath been admitted in another; This is
frequent, as after instances may clear.

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

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

12. New manner of expressions, or new moulds of
the Doctrine of the Gospel, different from what hath
been formerly delivered, have given occasion to this;
that is, when there is either a new form of speaking,
and an affectation of novelty in words, different
from the form of sound words which Ministers ought
to hold fast; or, when things are so proposed, as if all former moulds had been defective, and all other
Divines in their Preaching and Writings were no-	hing to such. It seemeth that this newfangledness of
speech had no lesse influence in dividing the Church
of Corinth, and begetting factions therein, than the
diversity that was in the matter, wherein they are not
so generally found guilty, as being carried away with
error, as, of being itched with a humane kind of
elocuence in the manner of Preaching. This same
also may be in Writings, and indeed when some cry
up one manner or mould, and some others the con-
trary, it may breed siding and division, even as well
as diversity of Doctrine may do. And it is not for
nought that the Lord hath commanded simplicity in
the manner, and the holding fast of the form of sound
words, even as he hath commanded soundness in the
matter; and oftentimes there doth arise no lesse tasti-
ness or itching amongst people, nor lesse emula-
tion amongst Ministers, from the one than from the
other.

C H A P. III.

The height of evil that division bringeth.

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

3. It breedeth jealousy and suspicion of one another's actions and intentions, yea, it may be, of the sincerity of their state: it breedeth envy at one another's prosperity and respect, and maketh them less weighed with any cross or adversity that the other falleth into. Paul is suspected, not only by the false teachers, but even by the professors, to be an enemy to them; some have counted others hypocrites, as is before marked.

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

5. It hath come to that height, as not to spare to publish even personal reflections; yea sometimes, it hath come to that, that men have condemned deeds in others, after such begun differences, which formerly they did highly commend in them; (thus their estimation & construction of their actions, doth ebb and flow according to their estimation of their persons) It is marked of Demetrius of Alexandria, that whiles he and Origen did continue in fellowship, he was a great commender of that deed of Origen's, to wit, his gelding of himself while he was young; yet after difference arose betwixt them, upon very
mean grounds, (Origen not being come to his grosse
ness) he did most vehemently object that to him in
his Writings. 6. Often it hath come that length, that
they have imprecated evil to one another, as in the
instance of Chrysostom and Epiphanus; sometimes they
have informed and most vehemently instigated civil
Powers against one another, that they might procure
their deposition, banishment, and such like, as
Rufinus did against Jerome, the Clergie at Antioch
against Flavianus, and some at Constantinople, particularly
Severianus, did stir up the Emperour against Chrysostom.

7. Also, it hath been followed in Councels and Syn-
ods by the Sentences of Deposition and Excommu-
nication, as was frequent in the case of that debate
about Easter, and in that debate betwixt Stephanus
and Cyprian; Tertullian also was Sentenced upon a
prejudice, without just ground; so was Chrysostome
deposed even by Bishops that were not heterodox; and
many others. 8. It hath extended to divide Churches
although it began amongst Ministers, and hath come
to that height, that they have withdrawn from the
communion of one another, and have chosen dif-

erent Bishops and Ministers without communion one
with another, or without dependence one upon ano-
ther, and yet neither of them have been Hereticks,
nor professed Schismaticks, but because of some dis-
satisfaction, it may be, with the person, or ordination
of such a Minister; or upon some mistake of a par-
c
ticular act of a Councell, even when both did ac-
knowledge the same, as particularly is marked to
have been betwixt Eustachius of Antioch, and Eusebius
of Pamphilia; and again at Antioch in the case of Mi-

cleteus and Paulinus; and again betwixt Flavianus and
others; which is marked to be in the fourth Century.

9. It hath extended to great heat and furie, even
amongst the followers of each other; whereby much
jealousie, heat and dissention hath been occasioned.

Furie of

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their fol-

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6. In both those there hath been such a fervour, and
as it were fury, that there hath been no uptaking nor removing of the same: And although we find difference to have arisen from little, even amongst good men, yet often we will find that most difficulty it hath been removed, but for many generations it hath continued, when the first authors have been away, and that with very great heat, as almost in all the instances given, so that, that sweet and moderate Divine Melancthon, did usually call the difference of Divines rabies Theologorum, and at his death did bless himself, that amongst other sins and miseries he was to be freed from this rabies or furie of Divines, which was evermore sadder to him than any opposition of open adversaries. 11. Usually, it hath diverted most serious Divines, both from the pressing of piety, and reproving of vice; as also from maintaining of truth against open adversaries, and the pursuing of their errors. Augustine doth complain of this to Jerome, and doth for this end, as it were, crave a cessation; and it cannot be otherways, for such debates do not profit these that are occupied therein. 

**Diversion of them from their main work.**

and when mens edge is hot, and sharp against others in such particular differences, it cannot but cool and blunt them in more weighty things, and is no little part of the devils subtlety to make way for error and profanitie, thus to entangle Ministers. Which occasion he hath ever taken to sow tares, which that great Father and Divine Basilis doth condole to this purpose, That while there was concord in every occupation, only in the Church and amongst Ministers there was dissention, and that so hot, that no commiseration of the Flock, which was set upon, and drawn away by perverse men, was prevalent with them, to abstain from such differences. 12. Hence, it hath followed, that though there hath been no considerable difference upon the matter at the first, yet notwithstanding it hath grown and come to a height, and that in respect both of 

**Both schism and heresie following.**

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

CHAP. III.

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

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

1. That the Lord hath a Soveraign hand therein,
cannot be denied, and that in these two respects, not
to insist in all, 1. As it is a triall whereby both
mens soundnesse and unsoundnesse have occasion to
be manifested; This is asserted, 1 Cor. 11. as a rea-
son of the necessity of schisms and divisions, as may
be gathered by comparing, ver. 18, with 19. But this
we insist not on. 2. The Lord hath a judicall hand in it, that is, as He ordereth divisions for the just
chastisement and punishment of some, even as was pun-
ishing.
from whence, that which floweth from...the nature of it, and in respect of the consequences that follow thereon. It is indeed a

...unto the world, and an evidence of the Lords displeasure; when thus in His anger, divisions come amongst Ministers or People, as it is, Lam. 4.16. Which we will find true in these respects. 1. It looketh angry like against Ministers; for, thereby they become despicable, the Lords countenance and presence seemeth to be withdrawn, and much carnalnesse of frame, and many other evils steal in; which do both eat up much of that inward liveliness which otherwise they might have, and also discompose that tranquillity and composednesse of mind, which love and unity entertain, and doth propose Ministers unto people, as men destitute of that badge, whereby they may be known to be the Lords Disciples, to wit, love to one another. 2. It is often a great snare to many carnal Professors; for, thereby some are hardened in profanity, and become Atheists, as if all that is spoken by Ministers concerning Religion, were not to be believed; Therefore the Lord prayeth for unity, and against differences amongst His Disciples, for this cause, That the world might believe that Christ was sent by God, and that these are loved of him, Joh. 17. 21, 23. which importeth, that this plague of Atheism followeth in the world upon such divisions. Again, others are stumbled so, as they cast at the Truth preached by them, and thereby become a prey to be carried about with every wind of doctrine; for preventing of which, Ministers, and union among Ministers are required, Eph. 4. 1, 2, 3. with 11, 12, 13, 14. 3. It become a burden, grief and offence to the weak, such division...
on being a main stumbling-block to the little ones that believe, *Matt. 18. 1, and 6.* 4. It proveth a great confirmation and ground of hardening to the adversaries of the truth, who are thereby exceedingly hardened, and brought to applaud themselves in their own way, as if such divided instruments could not be of the one body, the Church, which is guided by one Spirit; And this was cast up by heathens in the primitive times, as we may find by the apologies of many of the Fathers; and the same way hath been followed by Antichrist and his followers unto this day; they insult in nothing more than the divisions of the Orthodox, and are more proud of nothing than their pretended unity, which they make a mark of the true Church. And when all these are considered, we suppose, it may be evident that such divisions are, when they are, a great plague unto the Church, and may justly be called a wo unto the world.

We need not insist upon characters of a judicial-like division, being hardly there is division in a Church, but it is judicial in some part; Yet these things may be considered to this purpose. 1. When the division is amongst the more eminent and godly men, as amongst the Disciples. 2. If the matter be light comparatively for which the difference is kepted up, as Augustine calleth that with some Donatists, parva dissentio, as to the matter or occasion, which was yet great in its effects, *Epist. 203.* 3. If it be for dominion, or preeminence, or such things as may look carnall like before men, like that, *Matth. 18. 1, &c.* Or, 4. if the manner of following it be carnall, or irrational-like without that respective tenderness of edification and offence, which rationally might be expected from such men. 5. When there are many palpable convincing reasons, and that in respect of the particular time and case, which might draw men from such divisions. Or, 6. when sometimes healing is effayed, and beyond probable reasons.
reasons and expectation, it doth break off and turn worse, when it appeared to be near a close. 7. When it spreadeth, and cometh to occupy and take up Professors, it may be, beyond many more concerning things. This especially is discernable, when the division ariseth suddenly upon the back of a great calm, and after such sins as may procure the interrupting thereof, and when it cometh, in an unexpected way, from such persons, and upon such an occasion, as, it may be, none could have looked-for, or thought of; when it is under afflictions, and other cases and reproaches, as the Jews divisions were, even when besieged by the Romans, and when under them, as Josephus writeth. These and such like may evidence somewhat to be judiciall therein. Because, 1. It doth so further what is penall the more in all the former respects, and it cannot but have such effects. 2. Because there being no other probable reason how ordinarily such a thing may come to passe, the Lords hand is to be acknowledged therein so much the more, when even His Servants are drunken but not with wine, and He hath powred upon them the spirit of deep sleep, and covered even the Prophets and Seers therewith, as the word is, Isa. 29. 9, 10. and when they are as so many wild bulls caught in a net, full of the fury of the Lord, and of the rebuke of their God, as it is, Isa. 51. ver. 20. Whereby it cometh to passe, that neither one sort or other can particularly understand the duty called-for in reference to their healing, more than if all visions, and directions concerning the same were sealed up, as, Isa. 29. ver. 10, 11, and Isa. 59. 10. And none of all Zions sons are in capacity to take her by the hand, Isa. 51. 18. 3. Besides these two, the Lord sometimes hath a wise design for promoting of His work, even by occasion of such divisions, as thereby to make the Gospell to be spread further than otherways it had been; for, by discontents and differences, sometimes men have been put
to go elsewhere and preach the Gospel; and in that instance of Paul and Barnabas their separating, this is brought about; the Gospel is preached by both in their several journeys, which had not been so extended had they been together; but this, and others of this kind being only proper to the Lords sovereign wisdom, we will not insist on them,

In the second place, If we consider mens own accession who are engaged in such divisions, that is manifold. 1. Men by former guiltiness may procure the same, as by abuse of former unity, carnalness in it, not improving of it for edification, pride and conceitedness of it as if it could not be interrupted, not being thankfull to God for it, nor praying for continuance of it. These and such like, may draw on such a dreadful stroke as division; wherefore not only is there a no to the world because of offences, but also to him by whom they come, Matth. 18. even when notwithstanding, the necessity of them is asserted.

2. Some present sinfulfull distemper in Ministers frame, or disposition, may have influence upon this, as it were disposing them the sooner to take fire upon any occasion. As, 1. distance with God, and coldness of love to Him, without which, love cannot be kept ed up with others in Him. 2. Pride, conceitiness, desire of preheminencie, respect and applause, which was amongst the Apostles. 3. Which followeth upon this, envy at the respect which is given to others, or the weight that they have in the managing of matters, and carnall emulation at their persons and actions. 4. There is a secret discontentedness at mens being slighted by others, or apprehending themselves to be so. 5. There is a credulousness and readinesse to receive wrong impressions, a jealousie or suspicion of others in their designs, ends, or particular respects to them; All which proceeding from want of charity, that thinketh not evil, &c. they cannot but some way dispose for division. 6. There is
an itching newfangle humour, not after new Do-
trines, but after new expressions, formes, or changes
in other things. 7. There is sometimes a prejudice at
severity and strictnesse, as if it were pride, ambiti-
on, or something that is intolerable; which is mark-
ed to be the cause of the Clergie of Constantinople, their
diffention with Chrysostome, their Bishop: Of this
kind, to wit, sinfull and disposing causes, are igno-
rance, imprudence, tenaciousnesse, or self-willednes,
and such like; whereby a Minister is the easiester en-
gaged, and the more difficultly brought off.

3. There are some acts whereby men have accessi-
on to the raising and heightening of division, and
Inconsiderat expressions or actings.

7. Joo

A Tratatife concerning SCANDAL. Part 4.

Severity in on, &c. 2. When some presse severity in Discri-
line and Censures, somewhat too hotely, others,
Sleightying of with no leffe discontent, repelling the same. 3. When
the persons, men sleightingly express their mind of the persons,
writing, or writings or actings of others; and they again are
attings of o-engaged by the like reflections, to vindicate the same.
Hunting af-
ter credit.

4. When men study not the instruction of themselves
or others affectionedly, but hunt after a kind of cre-
dit to themselves, though with the reproach of
thers. 5. Little condescending to remove mistakes
and prejudices, abstinence from society, and fellow-
ship with such as they differ from in some particular;
hafty preaching, and publishing differences of small
moment, as Epiphaneus, and some others, formerly
cited, did, no condescending in particular facts that
might be condescended on, and such like. 6. Espe-
cially such act; as state a schism, and break commu-
nation in Government, Worship, and other Ordi-
nances,
nances, are exceedingly instrumentall in this. As, 1. to have distinct Bishops or Ministers, Governors or Officers, and so to have opposite Judicatures, and opposite Ordinations, which is often found to be the result and great cherishment of divisions in the primitive times. Whereupon followed, 2. division in administration of Sacraments, when such and such could not acknowledge men so ordained to be Ministers, and so could not communicate with them, if they were ordained in opposition to them, or such as were ordained by them: And this hath a connexion with such an act, because the acknowledging of such to be lawfully ordained, would question their own Ordination. Whence, 3. follow divided Congregations and meetings, according to the opposition amongst Ministers, some meeting in one place, and some in another, and so withdrawing communion one from another, although both do continue in the same Faith and Government; As may be seen in severall of these divisions mentioned at Antioch, Constantinople, &c. Upon which again followed, 4. opposite preaching amongst Ministers, each condemning others as Schismaticks, and not to be kepted communion with; one calling that a duty which the other called a sin, and matter of humiliation, and contrariwise: As also, mutuall railing and reviling amongst the followers of such sides, which often hath come to tumults; whereby it appeareth how great influence such things have upon division. Yea, 5. it hath come to divide families; Often Augustine regrateth in his Epistles, that their division made the man and wife whom one bed did contain, in an incapacity to be contained in the same Church, where the same faith was preached, and so he urgeth it also in reference to parents, and children, and to masters and servants. There are many more things might be named, as cenfuring of men upon such difference; for, then often some adhere to them, which maketh
a rent, as in these instances of Eustachius and Chrysostome is clear, urging the condemning of some writings and tenets not fundamental; Thus the pressing of the condemning of Origens writings (which are not supposed by some to have been so grosse as now these which are called his, are) did give much occasion of contention and division amongst men, who otherways did acknowledge all the fundamental truths comprehended in the generall Councils, and it is alike also, did not agree with him in his grossest errors, yet would not judicially condemn him, and others such like.

CHAP. V.

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

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

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then foment that fire, especially such as from some other fear, take occasion to exaggerate such a difference, because the fostering of that difference is the preventing of what they fear: As for instance, Chrysostome had threatened the cenfuring of many of his Presbyters for their faults, whereupon they took the occasion of the differences betwixt him and Epiphanius, Severinus, and others, to irritate and stir up them against him, and to side with them in these differences; whereby the division against him, and such as followed him, was maintained till it came to the height thereof, yet were neither the differences betwixt him and these other men, nor the persons of these other men his opposites respected by them, further than served to their end of bearing him down, and so of preventing the threatened and feared cenfure. 3. Sometimes Magistrates have had no little influence upon this, either by pretending to side with one party in these differences against the other, when yet it was not these differences but some other prejudice, as from free speaking or the like, which did engage them. It is marked in that same case of Chrysostome, that the Emperour and Empresse did concur to bear down his followers, and those that sided with him, because of some particular discontent at his free preaching, for which cause they were zealous executers of the Synods Sentence; As these again that were opposite to Chrysostome of the Clergie, did take no little advantage of that discontent, which they knew the Empresse had at him. Or on the other side, they are sometimes accessory by weakening Government, and giving men access to do what they will: when Basilus hath regrated the great differences of the Church in Julian, and Valens their times, and setting himself to find out the cause thereof, he setteth on this word in the Book of the Judges, In those dayes there was no King in Israel, every man did what seemed good in his owne eyes: which he
he doth not speak simply, as if there had been no Government; but that by such as was, no course was taken, as the calling of Synods, or such like means, to restrain such things, but rather they were entertained. 4. Sometimes also, the peoples engaging and siding in such differences, hath no little influence to heighten and lengthen the same; hence we find that in some debates, wherein Church-men have been alone engaged, there hath been some stop; but when it hath encreased, to the stating of parties amongst the people, it hath ever been more difficult; because so Ministers were the more encouraged and engaged to be tenacious; yea sometimes fear of displeasing the people that adhered to them, hath not wanted its weight. Also, so it turned more easily to schism and faction in practice, when one part of the people would only call such a man of their Judgement; another part of the people, such another man of theirs; whereupon followed great dissensions and factiousness in Elections, and opposite ordinations, by Bishops of several judgements: Whereupon followed, 1. a rent in that particular Church; one part withdrawing with their Bishop and Minister, and the other part with theirs, and neither keeping communion with, but seeking to overturn one another. And, 2. a rent among neighbouring Bishops and Ministers, according as they were pleased to admit either side to their communion, and acknowledge or condemn either of the opposite ordinations. And, 3. Often also, there followed opposite and eager applications to the supreme Magistrates and Emperour, to have their own respective Elections ratified, and that which was opposite, by his Authority, crushed; which often hath been followed with much bitterness, and sometimes not without calumnies against good men; and also not without prejudice to the Churches' liberty, and advantage to corrupt men or Magistrates, that were not tender of truth; who thereby
thereby had occasion to interest themselves, and advance their own ends the more; and it is marked of Anastasius the Emperour, who was a Monothelite, that he took occasion upon hot differences in the Church amongst Divines, (who did in both sides differ from him, though one of them was but found) without respect to right or wrong, equally to endeavour the suppressing of both by sending them into exile; and when M. agistrates were more equal to and tender of the Church, as Theodotius, Gratianus, &c. yet they were exceedingly troubled with such addresses, and put to hear such complaints even amongst and against men fully Orthodox and sound, only differing in some particulars which had brought on opposite ordinations, as in the cases of Miletius and Paulinus, Eustachius and Flavianus, with their respective competitors: all which concuring with that heat and fervour wherewith Churchmen do usually of themselves follow their differences, did not a little contribute to the heightening and lengthening of divisions and rents, upon the smallest occasions. 5. Occurring miscarriages of persons differing, have often had influence to increase and continue a breach, that is, when some persons on either side become more grosse in other points of Doctrine, or in practice; or follow their designs by means that seem grosse and unwarrantable to the other; or when some of one side express unjust calumnies on the other: this doth exceeding alienate affections, confirm jealousies and suspicions, and readily doth engender new Questions and controversies; because some are led to oppose and condemn, and others to defend such practices; therefore there must be opposite principles suitable thereunto, and so they multiply from one step to another: whereby it cometh to passe, that often where there is but one difference at first, after a time many do arise, which doth make the removall of divisions to be always the longer the more difficult:

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

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

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

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

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

3. There is a strength in the tentation, in this, that not only the matter is thought just, but it is thought necessary and of great concernment, if it be, 1. a Question of the most circumstantial truth, (if we may speak so) it looketh out as necessary, and a thing that cannot be quit yea, even those who are engaged to maintain that side where the error lies, will cry up the controversy as in a high point of Christianity. Amongst the Fathers, these that maintained the Millenarie opinion, and Christ's personal reign, thought it a point of high concernment; Justine Martyr in his Dialogue with Trifo, faith, he is no Christian, Orthodox in all things, who doth think otherwise; and in later Popish Writers, how is the necessity of oyl, christme, and such like pleaded for? which sheweth what impression the appearing weightiness of such things will have on them, as if it were a main foundation of Religion. And, 2. if it be a matter of fact or Government, it is thought of such concernment for the good of the Church that they cannot quit it, without being accessary to the corruption and hurt, or to the marring of the authority thereof: Hence so often are the faults and consequents of the adverse part aggregated; canons and constitutions alleged to be broken, as we may see (amongst other instances) in that debate betwixt Rome and Constantinople for precedence before Anti-christ was revealed, one alleging an æt of Nice, the other, an æt of the Council of Chalcedon, and Rome, pretending the interest of Saint Peter, and the good of the universal Church. And, 3. if it be a difference about persons, as who is to be acknowledged Bishop or Minister, or if such be lawfully ordained, deposed, &c. then such as they oppose, are conceived to be notoriously hainous; and such as they are for, are believed to be incomparably singular
lar and eminent, and therefore it is no wonder that they press vehemently their point, as thinking that much of the good or evil of the Church doth depend upon the admission, or rejection of such men respectively, and this floweth inadvertingly from the former differences; because, when they are confident that themselves are right in a main point, they necessarily must think these wrong and untender who are opposit in such a thing, and the hotter the opposition grow, they think still each other the more grossly obstinate: By this also they are disposed to hear and receive reports and malicious informations concerning their opponents; whereby they come verily to believe, that they are even in all other things, and in their very ends and designs, most gross. And, I suppose, that beside the instances formerly given in all these respects, the differences that arose first betwixt Luther and Carolo-Stdadius, and afterward betwixt him and such as followed him on the one side, and Zuingles, Calvin and others upon the other side, do fully demonstrate this; How little were these beginnings at first, and yet how were even the smallest differences aggregated, and the persons differing mistaken, even before these differences came to the height which they are at? And we may observe also, that this mistake of mens persons and actions, and bitterness that followeth thereupon, is most ordinarily discernable to be upon that side, where there is least to be said in conscience and equity for the defence thereof.

4. Add to these a conviction of singleness, that persons may seem to themselves to have in all the former steps, wherein there may be no positive, corrupt end proposed, nor any palpable dissimulation in their professions, entertained or approved by them: but as they have some confidence of the equity of their side; so may there be an apprehended testimony of their own singleness in the following thereof: and there is a great strength in the tentation to continue division, that
that lyeth here; for, when men apprehend their own singleness and strightness, and, it may be, have access to God, and have liberty to pray, even in reference to such things, it is not easy for a man to drop himself in that way; and yet it cannot be thought, but amongst the instances of such divisions that are given, that men on both sides had a single end and mind, did pray and had access in prayer; yea, no question, many of them might go to heaven with such differences on both sides; for, we will find them continue zealous in such, even to death. Neither ought this to be thought strange; for, the best but know in part, and are subject to mistakes, and their zeal and singleness is squared according to their knowledge: It was such zeal, that is not according to knowledge (though in the most fundamental things) that made Paul and others, with a kind of singleness, persecute the Church; therefore proportionally, there may be a zeal and singleness in lesser things when there is ignorance of them.

5. After engagement the temptation is strengthened by this, left, by after-ceeding, their former practice in being so eager, be condemned, and they lose the weight of their Ministry in other things, and their respective followers, which possibly may be more tenacious and zealous than themselves, should be irritated and provoked; which things look to them as greater prejudices, even to the work of the Gospel, than their continuing divided. It is written of Luther in his life, That being in conference with Melancthon and others in his last voyage, he did acknowledge to them, that he had been too vehement and peremptory in the Doctrine of the Sacrament; and when they urged him then to publish something concerning the same, he replied, That he feared by that to diminish the authority and weight of what he had else appeared into for God, and therefore did forbear it; which all, allowing Melancthon after his death, to do in that as he thought fit;
6. Sometimes also, the tentation is strengthened by apprehended consequents of hurt and prejudice to these that side with them in such a thing from others, in case there should be ceding in such and such particulars for union, or that by so doing, they might make themselves and their cause odious to others, who possibly may be thought to have more respective thoughts of them; because of their differing in such things from others. It is written of Luther, that he gave this as a main reason why he kept up the Sacramentary difference, and would not unit with Calvin and others in that Head, because, said he, that opinion which the Sacramentaries (as they were called) hold, is generally more hatefull than that of Consubstantiation, and will make the Princes and others more obnoxious to malice and hatred.

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

8. In such differences also, men are ready to think Hope of the that the other should and will cede to them, and will ceding of not others.
not hazard division upon so little a thing. Hence, many have been drawn on to division from small beginnings, which they would not have yeelded to, had they known the consequents thereof, or had they not expected that the other should have yeelded; wherein being disappointed, the engagement thereto becometh more strong, and the division more irreconciliable. This is marked of Victor, of whom it is said, that he had not been so peremptory, had he not supposed, that in such a thing the other should have yeelded.

**C H A P. VI.**

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

Having now some way discovered the nature and causes of the evil of division, it may be easily conjectured what will be the effects thereof, which ever have been most deplorable, as to the torturing of these that are engaged, to the scandalizing of the weak, to the hardening and breaking of the neck of many profane light persons, to the spoiling of the Church in its purity, Government, order and beauty of her Ordinances, and which is more, to the wearing out of the life and power of Religion; yea, which is above all, there is nothing that doth more tend to the reproach of the blessed Name of our Lord Jesus, that maketh Christianity more hateful, that rendereth the Gospel more unfruitful, and more marreth the progress and interest of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus; and, in a word, doth more shut out all good, and let in by an open door every thing that is evil into the Church, than this wofull evil of division doth, according to the word, *Jam. 3. 16. Where envy and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work.* And we are persuaded, that who hath read the
the Scriptures, and the many and great motives whereby union is pressed, and have considered the Fathers what great weight they lay upon unity, and with what horror they mention division, even as maximum malum, or the greatest evil that can befall the Church; Or, have observed in Church-history, the many sad consequents and effects that have followed upon this, and the lamentable face of the Church under the same: when friends thought shame, and were made faint; enemies were encouraged and delighted, and on-lookers were either provoked to mock at, or pity the same; Or, who have had some taste in experience of the bitter fruits thereof, will, and if they be not altogether stupid, cannot but be convinced of the many horrible evils, that are in this one evil of division. Sure there is no evil doth more suddenly and inevitably overturn the Church than this; which maketh her fight against her self, and eat her own flesh, and tear her own bowels: for, that a Kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, is the infallible maxime of Him that was greater and wiser than Solomon. And when things are compared, it will be found, there is no more compendious way to blast the fruit of Ordinances, when they cannot be removed or corrupted, and by so doing, to destroy and carry souls headlong, than this, That a Church in her Ministers and Members should be engaged thus, to bite and devour one another, and to counteract to the acting one of another; This we suppose will not be denied.

It will also readily be granted, That it is the duty of all Christians, especially of Ministers of the Gospel, to endeavour the preserving of unity, and the preventing of division, and the recovering of unity, and removing of division, by healing of the breach when it is made. Never did men run to quench fire in a City, left all should be destroyed, with more diligence, than men ought to bestir themselves to quench this
this in the Church; never did mariners use more speed to stop a leak in a ship, lest all should be drowned, than Ministers especially, and all Christian men, should hast to stop this beginning of the breaking in of these waters of strife, lest thereby the whole Church be overwhelmed; And if the many evils which follow thereupon, the many commands whereby union is pressed; yea, the many entreaties and obteftations whereby the holy Ghost doth so frequently urge this upon all, as a thing most acceptable to Him, and profitable to us; If, I say, these and many other such considerations, have not weight to convince of the necessity of this duty, to prevent, or heal a breach, We cannot tell what can prevail with men, that profess reverence to the great and dreadful Name of God, conscience of duty, and respect to the edification of the Church, and to their own peace at the appearance of the Lord in the great Day, wherein the peace-makers shall be blessed; for, they shall be called the children of God.

CHAP. VII.

General Grounds leading to Unity.

But now, it may be of more difficulty, to speak particularly, to what indeed is duty, at such a time when a Church lyeth under rents and divisions. For, though the general be granted, yet often, it is difficult to take up the particular cure, and yet more difficult singly to follow the same: It being still more easy to prescribe rules to others, than to follow them ourselves, especially in such a case, when spirits are in the heat and servour of contention, whereby they are some way drunken with affefion to their own side, and prejudice at the others, and distracted, as it were, with a sort of madness in pursuing their adversaries, as that great and meek Divine
Melanthon did express it, so that it is hard to get affections, that are in such a temper, captivated to the obedience of light. And though we will not take on us to be particular and satisfying in this, wishing and hoping that it may be more effectually done by some other; yet, having come this length, we shall, in an abstracted manner, consider some things in reference thereunto, and endeavour to hold forth what we conceive to be duty, especially to the Ministers of the Gospel, that have interest in such a Church; As also what may be required of others, that may possibly think themselves less concerned therein: Wherein we shall keep this order, 1. we shall lay down some general Grounds, which we suppose as granted. 2. We shall premit some preparatory endeavours agreeable to the same. 3. We shall speak negatively to what ought not to be done, or ought to be forborn. 4. Positively to the healing means called-for in reference to several sorts of division, with some questions incident thereupon. And lastly, We shall consider the grounds that do press the serious and condescending application of these, or other healing means in such a case.

The first generall ground, which we take for granted, is this, That by way of precept there is an absolute necessity of uniting laid upon the Church, so that it falleth not under debate, Whether a Church should continue divided or united in the These? more than it falleth under debate, Whether there should be preaching, praying, keeping of the Sabbath, or any other commanded duty; seeing that union is both commanded as a duty, and commended, as eminently tending to the edification of the Church, and therefore is so frequently joyned with edification? Nor is it to be asked by a Church, what is to be done for the Churches good, in a divided way, thereby supposing a dispensation, as it were, to be given to division, and a forbearing of the use of means for the attaining
taining thereof; or rather supposing a stating or fixing of division, and yet notwithstanding thereof, thinking to carry on edification? It is true, where union cannot be attained amongst orthodox Ministers, that agree in all main things, (for, of such only we speak) Ministers are to make the best use of the opportunities they have, and during that to seek the edification of the Church; yet, that men should by agreement state a division in the Church, or dispense therewith, and prefer the continuing of division, as fitter for edification than union, we suppose is altogether unwarrantable. 1. Because, that is not the Lord's Ordinance, and therefore cannot be gone about in faith, nor in it can the blessing be expected, which the Lord doth command to those that are in unity, Psal. 133. 2. Because Christ's Church is but one Body, and this were deliberately to alter the nature thereof: and although those who deny this Truth may admit of division; yea, they cannot have union, that is proper Church-union, which is union in Government, Sacraments, and other Ordinances, because union, or communion in these, doth result from this principle; yet it is impossible for those that maintain that principle of the unity of the Catholick visible Church, to own a divided way of administering Government or other Ordinances, but it will infer either that one party hath no interest in the Church, or that one Church may be many; and so, that the unity thereof in its visible state is to no purpose: This then we take for granted. And though possibly it be not in all cases attainable, because the fault may be upon one side, who possibly will not act unitedly with others, yet is this still to be endeavoured, and every opportunity to be taken hold of for promoting of the same.

Union a thing attainable among Orthodox Divines. The second ground which we suppose, is this, That as union is ever a duty, So, we conceive, if men interested will do their duty, there can be no division amongst

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

Thirdly, we premit, That in endeavouring union and healing, men would not straiten it to an universal union in every thing, in judgement and practice, but would resolve to have it with many things defective that need forbearance in persons that are united, which me may take up in these particulars. 1. There may be difference of judgement in many things, I mean in such things that are consistent with the foundation, and edification; and such a forbearance
rance would be resolved upon, and to do otherwise, were to think that either men had no reason at all, or that their understandings were perfect, or at least of equal reach. 2. There may be dissatisfaction with many persons, whether Officers or Members; and to expect a Church free of unworthy Officers, or Members, and to defer Church-union thereupon, is to expect the barn-floor shall be without chaff, and to frustrate the many commands whereby this duty is pressed; for, so this command should be obligatory to no Church, but that that is triumphant; yet certainly our Lord Jesus gave this command to His Disciples when Judas was amongst them; and Paul gave it and practised it, when some preached out of envy, Philip. i. and when almost all fought their own things, and not the things of Christ: And certainly, if people ought to carry even to corrupt Ministers who yet destroy not the foundation, as Ministers, in the duties that becomes them to Ministers in communion with them, while they continue such, Then certainly Ministers ought to keep that communion with Ministers, that become their relations, being they are still Ministers in that respect, as well as in the other. And if this corruption will not warrant separation in other Ordinances, as was said in the close of the second part, Then neither will it warrant division in the ordinance of government. 3. It may also be consistent with many particular failings, and defects in the exercise of government, as possibly the sparing of some corrupt Officers and Members; yea, the Censuring of some unjustly, or the admission of some that are unfit for the Ministry, and such like: These indeed are faults, but they are not such as make a Church to be no Church; and though these have sometimes been pretended to be the causes of schisms and divisions in the Church in practice, yet were they never defended to be just grounds of schisms and divisions, but were ever condemned by all Councils and
and Fathers, and cannot be in reason sustained. For, 1. there should be then no union expected here, except we supposed, that men that have corruption, could not fall in these faults. 2. It is not unlike, but some of these were in the primitive Churches; somewhat is insinuated thereof, Rev. 2. in those Church-officers, their tolerating of Jezebel and the Nicolaitans to seduce the people, and to commit fornication; yet neither is separation or division called for, or allowed either amongst Ministers or people. Sure there were such corrupt acts of all kinds amongst the Jews Church-officers; yet is it clear, that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea did continue to govern jointly, notwithstanding thereof, who yet cannot be counted accessory to any of their deeds; Because (which is a third reason) men in such cases have access, even when they are present, to disclaimance such corrupt acts, by not consenting thereto, and testifying against the same, (yea, they may by so doing, stand in the way of many wicked acts, which by dividing they cannot do) which is sufficient for their exoneracion both before God and men: As we may see in the instances of Joseph and Nicodemus mentioned, who continue united in the government, kept the meetings even when Sentences passe against those who will acknowledge Christ, and orders for persecuting Him and them; and yet they are declared free, because they dissented from, and testified against the same; yea, their freedom and exoneracion by virtue of their dissent being present, is more solemnly recorded to their honour in the Gospel, than if they had divided; And yet the unity of the Church now hath the same ground, and no fewer motives to press it than it had then. 4. It may stand with some defects in Worship, manner of Government, and rules that are necessary for good government in a Church. It is like, that many things of that kind, were defective in the Church of Corinth, where the Sacra-
Sacrament was so disorderly administrated (as hath been marked) confusion in many things of worship, and some things still to be set in order; yet doth the Apostle no where press union more than in these Epistles, as formerly hath been marked; neither can it be thought that perfection in all these is ever to be expected, or that union, until such time is to be delayed. And if there be defects of that kind, it is union and not division that is to be looked upon as the commended mean for redressing of the same.

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

1. What cannot warrant a breach where there is union, that cannot warrantably be the ground to keep up a division; Now there are many miscarriages or defects, which are really grosse, and yet will not warrant a schism, as all that write thereon do clear, and is obvious to all. The reason of the consequence is, Because making up of a breach is no lesse a duty, than preventing thereof; And further, if it began upon such a ground, Then the continuing thereof upon the same ground, is but the continuing in the same sin; and it cannot be thought that any party by dividing upon an unjust ground, can afterward be justifed upon the same ground; It remaineth therefore, that if the ground was not sufficient at first to warrant a separation or division, it cannot be sufficient afterward to continue the same.

Rule 2. Such defects as do not make communion in a Church, and in its Ordinances sinfull, will not warrant a separation or division from the same; for, this followeth on the former. It is acknowledged by all, that there is no separation from a true Church in such Ordinances, as men may without sin communicte into, although others may be guilty therein; as, suppose men to have access to Government without such
such bonds and engagements, and such like, as may mar their freedom in following the light of the Word, in deciding whatever shall come before them, even though others should step over the same.

**Rule 3.** Men may keep communion with a Church, when their calling leadeth them thereto upon the one side, and they have access to the discharge of the same upon the other; this also followeth upon the former: for, if some acts of a man's station lead him to an united way of acting, (as the duties of a fixed Minister do) then he is obliged to follow the duties of his calling, whilst there is no physical or moral impediment barring him in the same, and others being defective in their duty, will not absolve him from his, which he oweth by virtue of his station.

**Rule 4.** While the generall rules tending to edification in the main are acknowledged, union is to be kept, even though there be much failing in the application; because, so there are fit weapons to make use of, and who knoweth but single and zealous improving of them, may help the application thereof; and if there be a failing therein, it is the persons deed, that by his vote so misapplyeth, and doth not involve any other in that guilt, beside that by joint and united acting much of that misapplication may through God's blessing be prevented.

**Rule 5.** Then there may and ought to be uniting when the evils that follow division or schism, are greater and more hurtful to the Church, than the evils that may be supposed to follow on union. I speak not of ills of sin, (for, the least of these are never to be chosen) but of evils and inconveniencies that may indeed be hurtful to the Church in themselves, and sinfull in respect of some persons, yet are not so to all: Now, in such evils the lesser is to be chosen, because uniting and acting jointly in a Church-way, doth belong to the policy and government of the Church, wherein Christian prudence is to have a main hand.
hand, So that when things cannot be done as men would simply, they are to do as they may comparatively, that is, to choose and make use of what may be most edifying, and least hurtfull to the Churches edification (which is the great end that ought to sway in Government) amongst all these means that seem probable and possible; So that the conscience may have testimonie in this, that the way that had fewest inconveniencies, and manyest advantages to edification, was chosen; and though some inconveniencies fall out afterward, yet the conscience may be quiet on this ground: Because, sometimes the Lord in His providence will order so in the matters of Government, that there is no side can be chosen without inconveniencies; As suppose, there is not full satisfaction in any way that occureth in planting such a Congregation, in removing of such an offence, healing such a rent, and the like; but whatever side be looked to, many hinderances to edification appear, yet something must be chosen, and may be with peace to the conscience; because we are to regulate our own act suitably to the providences, and cases we meet with, and to the tempers of these we have to do with; but we are neither to regulate nor answer for providences, and the distempers of others. Indeed in such a case, the mind may be disquieted because of fear; and the consolation of the duty may be diminished, because of such circumstances; and affections may be grieved and jumbled, because there is not full satisfaction; yet may the conscience have quietnesse and peace in its duty notwithstanding; and men are specially to discern and to put difference between peace of conscience and the former discomposures: otherways there will be many cases wherein it is impossible for a zealous Minister to have peace, whatever side he choose, yea, whether he do or forbear.

If it be asked then, What way men may discern the side that is to be followed in such a case, when incon-

inconveniencies threaten on all hands? Ansiv. By these and such like ways. 1. It is to be looked, what side hath the most dangerous and destructive inconveniencies. 2. What inconveniencies are most certain and inevitable, and the greatest and most inevitable inconveniencies are to be shunned, and men would not choose a certain hurt to eschew that which is uncertain. 3. It would be looked, what side duty lieth upon, or to what the command doth press; and although inconveniencies seem to follow that, yet it is to be followed as most safe. Now, as to all these, union hath the advantage of division: Because, 1. it is a commanded mean tending to edification, which division is not. 2. Division hath no lesse nor fewer inconveniencies following it, nor lesse destructive to the Church, than union in the case supposed; yea, schism is one of the greatest hurts that can come to an orthodox Church; it being next to heresie in Doctrine; and therefore no particular evil can be laid in the ballance with it. 3. The ills of division are most inevitable, for the ills that follow union, through Gods blessing may be prevented, it is not impossible, but in the way of division it is, because itself is out of Gods way.

Rule 6. When men may unit without personall guilt, or accession to the defects or guilt of others, there may and ought to be union, even though there be failings and defects of several kinds in a Church. The reasons before given will clear this, because men are to reckon not for other mens carriages, but their own, and no such Church-state is to be expected as is free of defects. Beside, can it warrand a man to abstain from his duty because others do not theirs; whereas there is no sinfull impediment lying in the way of his accession thereto. If it be asked, What may be accounted such impediments, as a tender conscience may be justly scarred by from uniting? It may be answered in these and such like, 1. If a
person be put to condemn any thing he thinketh lawful in his own former practice, or the practice of others, or in some point of Doctrine though never so extrin fick, if it be to him a point of truth. 2. If he be put to approve the deed, and practice of some others which he accounteth sinfull, or to affirm somewhat as truth which he doth account an errour. 3. When some engagement is required for the future, which doth restrain from any duty called-for, or that may afterward be called-for. These and such like involve persons in the sin of what is past, and also maketh them accessary to the inconveniencies which may come; because they are bound up with their own consent, from endeavouring the preventing thereof in the way of duty, at least it is so to them, and so defileth their conscience. Therefore such entanglements are by all means to be forborn; but where no such thing is in condemning or acknowledging any thing that is past, nor any such restraining bond inconsistent with duty for the time to come, there may be access to union, even where there are many publick defects, which is the thing laid down to be cleared.

In the fourth place we premie, That for attaining of union there would be, and there ought to be, large mutuell condescending, that is, that both sides ought to streach themselves, not only to forbear what is sinfull; nor only to condescend to what may be thought simply necessary, and may be extorted as duty in any case; Nor yet ought condescending to be upon one side levelled according to the length that another goeth, but condescending would be levelled mutually according as expediencie calletth for, with respect to the edification of the Church; for which end even many infirmities of others are to be forborn, and things otherways unreasonable in respect of these men we have to do with, yet respect to the Churches peace, ought to make men cede in these; for,
for, if there ought to be condescending for private peace, much more ought it to be for Church-peace and publick edification: and though we cannot nor will not now be particular in this, yet concerning it, we may lay down these considerations,

1. In what may involve a man in sin, or in the approbation thereof in others, there is no condescending; there must be no condescending even to the utmost border of duty, men ought to go for this end; so that nothing ought to be a stop or march in condescending, but this, I cannot do this and sin against God; otherways, one ought to be all things to others. This consideration will be more clear, by comparing it with the former Rules, and what afterward may be said.

2. This condescending would be mutual upon both sides, that is, one party would not expect full submission from the other, for that is not union, but domination; Hence the Apostle in his pressing of union in such cases, doth ordinarily pray, and obtest both sides. And being affection is the main ground of union, it is fit, there should be condescending for mutual testifying of respect each to other. This is also confirmed by an Epistle of Calvin to Mr. Knox (afterward cited) wherein he presseth that condescending be mutual for removing of a division that was in his Congregation at Frankford.

3. Even that party that seemeth to be rightest in the matter, or to have authority on its side, or to have countenance from others, ought yet to condescend, yea in some things to be most condescending, because such are in some sort parents and strong; they ought therefore the more tenderly to bear and cover the infirmities of the weak: and because they are more sober and at themselves, they therefore ought to carry the more seriously toward others, whom they suppose to be in a distemper, and not to be equally grosse in handling the tender things of the Church,
Even that which is right and hath authority.

They who did the wrong, ordinarily most averse from condescension.

whereof union is a main one: And considering that authority is given for edification, it is not unsuitable for it to condescend for attaining its end; for which cause we find often Paul, laying by his authority in such cases, and intreating and wooing, as it were, even the meanest dissenters, in this matter of union, as we see him, Phil. 4. beseeching Euodias and Syntyche (who were it is like but very private persons) to be of one mind. And in ancient times we will find, 1. Sometimes the innocent party ceding and condescending, as in the case betwixt Basilus and Eusebius at Cesarea: Basilus, though having the best side, and of greatest account, yet did first cede by withdrawing for the peace of the Church; and afterward, for the good thereof, to wit, the preventing of its being tainted by the Arian heresie, he did return, and condescend to be subject to him who was in competition with him, which tended exceedingly to the good of that Church, to the removing of that Schism, and the great praise and commendation of his zeal and singleness. 2. We find that oftentimes the most tender and sincere, and these who were upon the right side, have been most condescending, and oftentimes these who did the wrong (such as it was) were most averse from condescension, as in all the Schisms that have arisen upon frivolous grounds will appear. 3. These who condescended most in such things, have ever been thought the greatest friends to the Church, even sometimes when they have been deepest in the rife of the Schism, and when their side was not so justifiable as the other, yet by condescending they have commended themselves more to the Churches friends than their opposites. It is marked in that Schism at Antioch, betwixt Miletus and Paulinus, who were both Orthodox, yet had they divided governments, and Congregations in the Church, because of different Ordinations which had kept them rent for some time; and although Miletus his Ordina-
Ordination and entry was not so justifiable according to the Canons, as the others was; yet the parties tenacious upon either side being strong, there was accessible to settle it by no authoritative decision: wherefore it came to a treaty by means of those that were appointed Arbiters, that so union and communion in the Ordinances might be made up in that Church; at which conference Miletius overture, that they might joyn together as Bishops to take care of one Flock while they lived, and after the death of either, he who survived should be only Bishop of the united Flock, unto whom one only should succeed to have charge of all, for preventing of division for the time to come; to which overture, Paulinus would not acquiese, but stood to the formality of order without valuing the Churches peace, or proposing any just ground of exception against Miletius person or Doctrine; he, to wit, Paulinus was counted unworthy to govern such a Church, and removed therefrom, and the other as more worthy because of that his condescending, was therefore alone invested in the government thereof. 4. We will find them sometimes yeeld in all particulars that do not involve any consent unto, or approbation of what is wrong. It is marked by Augustine in his Writings against the Donatists, that sometimes Councels that have condemned men, have for peace without any satisfaction, again restored them upon after thoughts; and he marketh it as a great condescension of the Bishops of Spain, that they did so in the case of Oretus when he was found innocent by the French: they did not (faith he) pertinaciously with animosity defend their former Sentences, lest they should fall in the sacrilege of a Schism, which doth exceed all wickedness; and with that humility, peace was kept, because (faith he) they had rather be against their own Sentences, than the unity of the Church. And he doth upbraid that princiiple of the Donatists in the case of one Primianus, who was refused to be restored
by an after Councell of theirs, because a former pretended Synod of their own had deposed him, alleging, and abusing that word of the Apostles for that end, Gal. 2. If I again build what I have destroyed, then am I found a transgressour; and he doth more commend the practice of Pretextatust and Felicianus, who being condemned (it is like unjustly) by three hundred and eighteen Bishops, yet did, (faith he) for concords sake, return and joyn with these who did condemn them; and by them were without all losse or diminution of their honour, received into fellowship. And wat ever may be in the justice or injustice of any of these former deeds, upon the matter, yet doth he only make use of them, to shew what condescension ought to be in such cases for peace, both upon the part of Judicatories and particular persons, how ever the matter doth appear unto them; for he condemneth not the rejecting of Primianus because he was unjustly Sentenced, but because there was not due respect had to the Churches peace; nor doth he commend the Spanish Bishops for recalling an unjust Sentence, which ought to be done for Justice sake; but that (though it is no question they did think it just) they did condescend to remove it for preventing of a Schism, when they saw their deed dissatisfying to others. And it is so in the other case also, it is these mens submission to these that condemned them, as it evidences respect to concord, and not as considering any equity of the Sentence which is commended by him; this is in what he writeth contra Epistolam Parmeniani, lib. 1. cap. 2. 3. 4. &c.

From what is said, we may lay down these negative conclusions, concerning the upmaking of a breach amongst Godly and Orthodox men, where a Church hath harmony in the fundamentall points, Faith, Worship and Government, and where the thriving of the Gospel is mutually designed.
1. Division ought not to be endeavoured to be removed in such a case, in such a way as doth undo or destroy either side, because that is not the good of destroying the whole; for every part and side in such a case, is a part of the body, although it may be not so very considerable, and it is no wisdom to cut off a member of the body, and that way to cure a distemper therein, when possibly the purging away of corrupt humours from the body, or more gentle applications might recover the same.

2. We say, that way of uniting is not to be admitted, but shunned, which may incapacitate any Minister or member of the body that is fit for edifying of the same, from having access thereto; for so the Church is prejudged, and men are rendered unable for edifying thereof. And this is not only when Sentences are past, or restraints laid on; But it may be in such like cases. As, 1. when by the terms of union some person is grieved and weighted, by annexing of some unnecessary thing which may be forborne, because by this, men go about duty with heaviness, which is unprofitable to the Church. Union is to be essayed with due respect each to other without any note of disrespect.

2. It may be, when something that reflects upon any side, or person, unnecessarily is interwoven; because such things still keep up suspicion, and make the union the more heartless, and doth both make such persons more faint, and also in the lesser capacity to have weight with others for their edification, and doth leave a ground of dissatisfaction with such an agreement, that is ready afterward to break forth; Therefore union would be essayed with all due respect from each to other, and without any note of disrespect.

3. We may gather, that no simply authoritative mean is the fit and only way of healing a rent-Church: That is indeed the way of governing an united Church, but not the way of uniting a rent-Church, especially a Church rent in particulars of healing of a practice rent Church.
practice and government; because the remedy must be extensive to both sides, and in such cases, at least, as to these particulars, Authority usually is declined; and though it be unjustly declined possibly, yet when it is declined, it is unable to effectuate this end; and the remedy is to be applied, not as to what agreeth to a Church that is whole, but what agreeth to a Church in such a distemper; even as a sick body is to be nourished not always with the strongest and wholesomest meats which agree with such as are in health, but it is to be nourished with things suitable to its distemper, and are fit to cure it; yea, sometimes, with such things as may please the taste, when more healthfull things are not admitted. Also when both judgments are to be informed, and affections are to be gained, there must be prudentiall and affectionat ways used for gaining these ends. Hence we see, that not only in Church-history, but in the Scriptures especially, the duty of union is more pressed by persuasions, intreaties, reasons to move to it, ills that follow the want thereof, and such like, than by an authoritative way, such as is used in the condemning of Hereticks, and other scandalous persons. And indeed union hath such conjunction with the will and affections, that it must be persuadest and cannot be so commanded. And amongst such persons as are supposed to be in this difference, privat and particular condescension is most becoming that respect which each ought to other.

1. Because Church-union amongst Church-men is no civil bargain to use prigging therein, but what is possible is duty out of obedience to God, who commandeth peace in other things (and so, much more in this) as far as is possible, or as in men lyes. And, 2. because respect is to be had to the Churches good, whole
who\'s advantage we should seek, even though others were defective; and often such condescending gaineth more for the advantage of the Church, and commendation of the party condescending, than if there had been more sticking, as we may see in that praiseworthy instance of Baslius his carriage, who stuck on nothing, but absolutely did lay by what was contended-for, without respect to his own right or injury, for the Churches good. And oftentimes it\'s one party their waiting for the others condescension, or taking occasion from their tenaciousness to stick, that doth keep the distance at a height.

6. Oftentimes in such debates as are amongst orthodox Divines and Ministers, it seemeth they might be removed if one party should condescend according to the qualifications and cautions formerly laid down; yea, it seemeth it were safer for the Churches good in such a case, that either party should practically condescend to the way of the other, than that division should be kept up upon such grounds. For, 1. It is not supposed here, that there is any matter of faith in question, amongst such, often there was full harmony in the Confessions of Faith, as in the instances cited. 2. There is no question for Government simply, nor for Councils and Canons, these also were acknowledged; none did disclaim the general Councils, nor their acts. 3. The question often is not amongst them, Whether others should be brought to their opinion or not, I mean as to the stick of the division; But often it is either, 1. upon some mistaken expression of another, or error in some lesser point of Truth; And, in such a case, it is that great Augustines word, Disputable errors, or uncertain faults, are not in their pursuit to be preferred to certain peace. Or, 2. it is for some particular act of Government, or other miscarriages by misapplying of rules, or not walking according to them, or something of that kind, as was in contrary Ordinations of orthodox men,
men, and such like: In which cases, we say, (and it will be found from History) That it had been ever better for the Church, that either side had practically condescended to suffer the other to rule and govern, and personally to have kept themselves free from accession to their guilt, whether of crookedness negligence, or the like, than to have raised or entertained divisions upon such accounts. For, often orthodox, and otherways blameless men, have been made, by such divisions, factious and carnal in their carriage, and much unusefull; who otherways had they been free of that tentation, might have proved sober, and profitable; and, when the tentation was over, were found to be such.

7. We may observe, that though in the primitive times there were diverse schisms and divisions, concerning Synods and Government, yet we will find that these contests and divisions did flow from the matter and particular acts and actings thereof, and that there was hardly ever division tabled upon the formality of the constitution of a Council or Synod; nor yet, that much difference was put betwixt declining of their authority, and of the Acts or Censures past by them. Concerning which we may observe these generals,

I. If the matter was right and satisfying, that was concluded by many Bishops and Church-men, there was an acquiescing in the authority thereof. 2. If the matter were displeasing and hurtful, of whatever form it was, and of whatever number, its authority was not much respected, because it consisted only in division of old. adding weight to these things, as we may see in the Arian Councils, which were often very numerous, and others also that were erroneous, and otherways corrupt, although there was no formal declinatour of them, or protestation against them as null; though there were sometimes some dissentients in them, yet was not their authority any way confirmed by the for-

forbearing of such Protestations or Declinatours.  
3. Sometimes we will find worthy men appearing before and answering unto most corruptly constituted Synods, as was in those same times, and although they were sentenced and deposed by them, yet did they never esteem these Sentences to have the more authority, as we may see in the case of Athanasius, Chrysostom, and many others.  
4. Sometimes they did protest against Synods as null, when they saw violence and iniquity prevail in them, as was done in the Council of Antioch, in the case of Eustachius; and was done in the second Council of Ephesus by Flavianus and Anatolius. Sometimes also upon seen hazard, and designs of professed corrupt enemies, Protestations were drawn in writ antecedently; as in that Protestation which the Reformers in Germany gave out against the Council of Trent, after its indiction; because there was no probable access for Truth to have liberty in speaking, and equity in judgment; And as Selden hath it set down, they alleged Cyril for the first practicer of this, in the time that the Arians prevailed. This we may see is their practice when they have to do with professed enemies; not sticking on formalities, but on what was material. And again, amongst themselves, the Orthodox used not to stick upon the trying and scanning of the formality of any of these Councils (for certainly in such corruptions as were so universal, Synods corrupt for the plurality of them, might have been had with all the formalities and solemnities that could be required in the external constitution of any lawful Synod) but when they had occasion to meet, they went to the doing of what was for the present good of the Church, condemning the matter of such corrupt Synods; which they did account sufficient in such cases: And for difference amongst themselves, when they were of a right temper, they did also endeavour to redresse such particulars as needed, and
Debates concerning government more difficultly removed.

to restore persons unjustly sentenced, and the like; Whereby it appeareth that the matter both in things of general and particular concernment, did ever bear most sway.

8. Although such debates concerning Government seem most easie to be removed, yet often and almost ever, they have been most difficultly healed, and have been followed with greatest bitterness and contentention in the Church; for, different Judgements simply, and also different Ceremonies, and different practices in other things, may conflict without direct opposition or counteracting, and may either be the more easily born or removed: but when it comes to Government, whose Sentence shall stand, whose Ordination shall be acknowledged, who shall have place to decide such and such things, and the like, it is far otherways. Hence it came to passe that men could keep union and communion with others that differed from them in far greater points of Truth; but to persons that did not acknowledge their Authority, or did acknowledge those that did controvert with them thereanent, they could by no means so condescend: Because, 1. in Government, mens own particular interest is more concerned than in points of Truth, and that inadvertently stealeth in upon men. 2. Because, in Government the question is not only for what is past, but there is a fear of what may come: Hence men that have some testimony in themselves that they are not ambitious of Government, yet having taken up a prejudice against others, they are suspicious that if such had power, they would miscarry, not only in reference to them, but in reference to publick concernment; And therefore in removing such a division that is in point of Government, the great difficulty is not so much to heal and remove what is past, as to prevent the fear of what may come, if such continue to govern. And this maketh, that the result of such division is, That either
either they themselves, or such as they have confidence in particularly, may have the weight of government upon them, which may indeed be aimed at with some sincerity; because being someway alienated with prejudice, they do not think it fit for the good of the work, at least during that time, that any others should have such trust; and this made the heat of debates in the time of division, to break out mainly in the ordination of Bishops, and planting of Churches; because by that means their interest in the government was kept up, whereby there was after-accepte to the management of every other thing according as this succeeded.

CHAP. VIII.

Some preparatory endeavours for uniting.

Although we have been somewhat large in these generals, because of the falling in of several things, yet we conceive it may be useful to the point, and we may have the speedier progresse afterward in loosing this great question, What an orthodox Church divided in itself in some circumstantial truths (to speak so) or contrary practices and actings, when still agreeing in the fundamentals of Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, and having mutual esteem of the integrity one of another: What, I say, such are called to do for the healing of that breach? In reference to which, these things, or this method would be followed.

1. All, especially Ministers, would walk under the impression of the dreadfulnesse and terribleness of such a plague; It is like, if God were looked to as angry at a Church, and at Ministers in such a time, men would be in the greater fitness to speak concerning a healing. Some time therefore would be bestowed.
flowed on this, to let that consideration sink down in the soul, that the Lords hand may be taken up therein; the many sad consequents thereof would be represented to the mind, and the heart would be seriously affected and humbled therewith, as if sword, pestilence or fire were threatened; yea, as if the Lord were spitting in Ministers faces, rubbing shame upon them, and threatening the making of them despicable, the blasting of the Ordinances in their hands, the loosing the girdle of their loins, and authority amongst the people, the plucking up of the hedges to let in Boars and Wolves to spoil the Vines, and destroy the flock; and, in a word, to remove His candlestick, so that Ministers or other persons in such a case, have not only men that are their opposits to look to as angry at them, but they have the Lord to look to as their party, whose anger hath thus divided them; and the not observing of this, maketh men the more confident under such a judgement; Whereas, seing it is a plague, men, even such as suppose themselves innocent, as to the immediate rise thereof, ought to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, with respect to this as to other plagues.

2. Men would also look upon it as a snare; O how many tentations have such divisions accompanying them, especially to Ministers; and also how many afflictions, crosses and reproaches, upon the back of these! Might it not make a Minister tremble to think upon the matter of divisions, that now beside all his former difficulties and straits, there is a snare and trial in every thing; in every Sermon that he preacheth it is thus, left his own affection steal in for the zeal of God, to make him hotter and more vehement against those that oppose him in such things that are controverted, than he useth to be in things more nearly concerning to the glory of God, and left by discovering his carnalnesse, he make his Ministry despicable before others, when he heareth he is in hazard
hazard to be irritated by a contradiction; and though there be no contradiction, he is in hazard to lay the least weight upon what might be for his edification, because it is spoken by one who in such and such things differeth from him. When he is in any judicial, there is a temptation waiting on, by the least motion of such things, to discompose all, and make such meetings scandalous and burdensome; by this all conversing almost becometh heartless and comfortless, the most intimate brother is either suspicious, or suspected; all construction of mens ingenuity and sincerity in any thing, are, for the most part, grounded upon mens interests, as if men after that had no conscience of sinning, there is a failing of sympathy amongst brethren, &c. And may not these and many such like, make Ministers circumspect in such a case, that they may be slow to speak to what may foment division, and wary in hazarding upon snares. Alas, it is unlike this, when men use more confidence and liberty in constructing, speaking and acting, and with least tenderness in times of division than at other times; and were men once impressed with the fear of sinning upon the occasions of divisions, they would be much more disposed for speaking of union.

3. Ministers and others would soberly retire to take a view of their own spiritual condition, and see if they have kept their own vineyard: and particularly, before the Lord, put themselves to these.

1. How union with him hath been prized, and if there hath been studying to be, and abide, in Christ, and to keep themselves in the love of God. 2. If there be any ground of quarrell in the present strain or bygone practice, that might have influence to provoke the Lord to smite them in the general. Or, 3. and especially, If by their negligence and unfaithfulness, imprudence, heat, passion, tenaciousness, addictedness to other men, and too much loathfulness to displease them, prejudice at, and uncharitably
unto others, or the like, they have been any way accessory to the bringing in of this evil; for which cause they would take a view both of the sins that procure it, and the evils which do dispose for it, and increase it, (which were formerly mentioned) and would be impartial and through in this; for, it is preposterous for men to meddle in removing publick differences, while they know not how it standeth with themselves.

4. When that is done, there would be repentance suitable to what is found, and extraordinary humiliation and secret prayer to God, not only for themselves and for their own particular condition, but for the publick, and particularly for healing of that breach, and that thereby God would spare His people, and not suffer His inheritance to be a reproach. It is no little furtherance to union, to have men in a spiritual, abstracted, and mortified frame; for, we are sure, if it remove not difference, it will in a great part moderate the division, and restrain the carnalness that usually accompanies it, and dispose men to be more impartial to hear what may lead further.

5. Men would not sift in this, but as they have interest, and are led by their places, they would endeavour soberly, warily and seriously, by speaking, writing, obtestring and otherways, to commend union to these that differ; yea, even they that differ, would commend it to these that differ from them. We see the Apostles do this frequently in the New Testament, and that not only in the general to Churches, but some persons are particularly by name obtested, as, Philip. 4. 2. And in the primitive times, Bishops and Churches who were not engaged, did seriously write, and sometimes did send some of their number to Churches and eminent persons that were divided, and often their interposing did prove effectual. And when that difference between Augustine and Jerome

Repentance suitable.

Union would by all war- riantable means be commended unto, and pressed upon those that differ, and by those that differ one upon another.
Jerome did come to some height, he (to wit, Augustine) pressed himself so on the other, for the begetting of a better understanding, and the abating of that difference, that he did prevail with him, and by their mutual apologies, and better understanding one of another, they came notwithstanding of their difference to have much respect one of another. For this end Politarius came from Asia to Rome, to stay the division about Easter, which prevailed so far, that it lasted for a time. Also men, especially of the same judgement, would deal with others with whom in that they agree, to be condescending, and seriously obtest them; and when they exceed, would objure them for the Churches good. This is often of great weight, and often also, men that appear most in a difference, will be hotter and carry things further than lefse engaged men of the same judgement will allow, and such ought not to be silent in such a case. Thus Irenæus (though of Victor's judgement in the matter of Easter) yet did boldly expostulate with him for his vehemency in pressing of the same, to the hurt of the Churches peace, charging him to forbear and to follow union notwithstanding; which act of his, is still highly commended, and (as Eusebius observeth) counted answerable to his name.

6. Serious and single thoughts of union would be Constancy laid down, and that would be purposely driven as the great duty; so that endeavours would not principally tend to strengthen a side, or exoner themselves, or get advantage to others, &c. but to make one of both; and therefore when one mean or occasion faileth, another would be essayed; neither would men weary or faint herein, although it prove often a most fainting business.

7. Men would endeavour all this with tenderness With tenderness and respect to mens persons, actions and qualifications; for, oftentimes the rise of a division, is in the respect alienation of affections between some persons; which

afterward disposeth to construct hardly both of their opinions and actions: and indeed often the stick is here, that mens affections are not satisfied one with another, and that maketh them that they do not trust each other: Hence we see, that in the Scripture, the commending of love, and of honouring and preferring of others in honour to our selves, is ordinarily subjoined to the exhortations to union, or reproofs of division, as, Philip. 2. Eph. 4. Matth. 18, &c. And we see in the primitive times, when no mean could cure schisms, one party shewing respect to another, or to some eminent head of the opposit party, (it may be even after their death) did jek the fame, and engage these that formerly shunned communion, to joyn with them. It is particularly observed, That when at Constantinople some had continued separated from the Bishops government, and the Church thereof, after Chrysostom's deposition, for the space of thirty five years, and were called Jobanits; ye: Proclus, who by some interval succeeded in that See, by recording Chrysostom's name amongst eminent persons, and making honourable mention of him, and bringing his body from the place where it was buried in his exile, and burying it honourably at Constantinople in the great Church of the holy Apostles, did so appease and engage those that had disclaimed all the intervening Bishops, that instantly they did acknowledge him and joyn with the Church. The like also is mentioned to have been the end of that Schism at Antioch, because of Eustachius his removal from them, when Callaudion the Bishop did return his body honourably to be buried, and went out with his party to receive the same solemnly some miles from the Town; those also, who out of respect to him (to wit Eustachius) had continued separated from the succeeding Bishops for above an hundred years, now seeing the adverse party put respect on him, they also did from that time forth joyn with them. Both these are
are recorded in the fifth Century; and if respect to dead men be prevalent to engage affections, certainly mutual respect and evidences of confidence among men living, would be much more weighty. This giving of respect would be manifested in these and the like. 1. Respective mentioning in word or writ of the persons, and what concerns those that differ, especially such as are most eminent and leading amongst them. 2. There would be good constructions put upon their end and intentions, and sincerity, even in such actions as are displeasing. 3. Mens opinions and actions would not be loaded with gross absurdities and high aggravations, especially in public; because that tendeth but to make them odious, and standeth in the way of a future good understanding, when one hath proposed another as so absurd and hateful a person. 4. All personal reflections would be abstained, as also sneering answers, disdainfull-like words and salutations, and such like, would be shunned; But on the contrary, there would be love, familiarity, tenderness; and if there have been any reflection or bitterness to occasion mistake, yea, if it have been unjustly apprehended, there would be condescending to remove the same. I have heard of a worthy person, who being led away in an hour of tentation, was by many of his former friends afterwards discountenanced, whereby he was, as it were, engaged in a kind of discontent to defend his deed, and resent the disrespect of such persons, which almost grew to a rent: but having occasion to encounter one who was most opposite to his present way, who yet notwithstanding of all, did lovingly and familiarly, as ever, embrace him, without mentioning any such thing; it is said, That his heart melted instantly with the conviction of his former opposition, and so any further procedure towards a rent was prevented, when he saw there was yet again access to the affections of the most eminent of those he did differ from.
There would be expressions of mutual confidence in one another, which would appear not only in personal respects, but with respect to the Ministry of such as they differ from, endeavouring to strengthen and confirm that, which was the thing that endeared Basilius to Eusebius, that even while he differed, he endeavoured to have his Ministry weighty amongst the people. 6. Respect would be shewn to men of that judgment and side (it being such a difference as is supposed) they would be helped and furthered, and counted notwithstanding thereof, (if otherways qualified) fit for trust and charge; for, this is not only engaging of a particular person, but of all the party, and doth hold forth a confidence in them notwithstanding of that; whereas the contrary is obliging and irritating of all, because it proposeth all of such an opinion or practice to be unworthy of charge or trust, which no man can well digest; and it some way necessiteth them in a divided way to endeavour some other way of entering, and to increase their diffidence of them who so partially (in their esteem at least) manages matters, and prefers the strengthening of a side, to the edification of the Church; as any different party cannot but expound it, seeing they seem to themselves to have some persuasion of their own integrity in the main work. 7. There would even be mutual visits and fellowship, civil and Christian, as hath been; yea, rather it would be increased; for if men have some confidence that others love their persons, respect them as Ministers, and esteem of them as Christians, they will be easily induced to trust the other as such also. 8. If reflections and bitterness be vented by some (as even good men are too ready to indulge to themselves a liberty in debate to exceed in this) yet there would be no such meeting given. Luther is censured for exceeding in this, even by such as loved him; and it is a most excellent advertisement that Calvin giveth to
Bullenger and others, thus provoked by him, Epist. 57. That either they would not answer such a Paper at all, or, in answering it, to remember, That they had a most eminent servant of Christ to answer, and so not to be provoked by his vehemency, seeing he also had corruptions; and thus expresseth his own resolution, Etiam si me Diabolum vocaret, me tamen hoc illi honoris habiturum, ut insignem Dei servum agnoscam. &c. It is upon this ground, that Augustine and others, most zealously affected with the schism of the Donatists, yet because they kepted in other things found in the Faith, they mention such of them as were sober, very honourably, and carried to them very brotherly; and particularly he used to visit their Bishops, if he had been going elsewhere for Ordination or other affairs; and some of them also used to visit him, whom he entertained most kindly, ever speaking to improve both for begetting a better understanding, as may be gathered from instances cited out of his Epistles in what is before and after this. Sometimes also when he wrote to some of them, he desired them to write so to him, as he might acquaint his people with both their Writings, and with his own, if they returned no Answer, that thereby he might constrain them to reasonableness, yet faith, it shall be past Discussion militum, that it might appear he intended not to make them odious. He doth also observe, that a main thing that made the Donatists averse from yeelding to union, was a suspicion which they had, that the Catholicks would still persecute them if they had occasion, speaking of a Conference, Epist. 163. he faith, Dicturn erat (meaning by the Donatists) quod aebue nostri eos persecuturi essent; which he with many words rejecteth, shewing from Eph. 4. that they had learned to keep union with forbearance: elsewhere also, as Epist. 147. he excuseth the too great vehemence of the expressions of some that were on his own side in that difference. All which sheweth the great necessi-
ty that there is to recover affections in the press of union, and how far men ought to condescend in reference thereto, both in order to what is past, and for the preventing of what may be feared.

8. Then Ministers would not only in their own practice, but in their doctrine, and otherways, stir up others to the practice and life of Religion. We ever find the Apostle useth this way upon the back of his exhortations to union, to press the working out of their salvation with fear and trembling, &c. And in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, when he dehorts Ministers from foolish and jangling questions, strifes and contentions, this remedy is either premittmed or subjoyned, that they would press the Believers to be zealous of good works, and careful to maintain these, Tit. 3. 8, 9. That they would follow after love, righteousness, faith, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart, 2 Tim. 2. 22, 23. For, when either Ministers or Professors are exercised and taken-up with these things, there is little access to other things: then also they discern the necessity of union the more, and are the more disposed for it themselves, and others are the more easily induced to unite with them. Beside, it is never in such things that godly and orthodox men do differ, but it is in diverting from these; and therefore often much heat in particular differences, carrieth with it, a decay and lukewarmneffe in more practicall things; As on the contrary, zeal in these materiall things, doth ordinarily alloy and mitigate heat and servour in the other.

9. It is fit that there were solemn addresses to God for directing and guiding in the way to this end; for, He is the God of peace, and ought to be acknowledged in removing this great evil of division: Hence the Apostle subjoyneth prayers for peace, unto his exhortations thereto; and we are commanded to pray for Jerusalem's peace, even Church-peace no lesse than Civil peace. It may be that the neglect of this is
the cause that sound, godly and peaceable men, who
love the welfare of Zion, do yet continue divided,
and cannot fall upon means of healing, that thereby
the necessity of the Lords interposing may be ditcern-
ed, and that there may be purposed addresses for
this same thing, and that men may not undervalue
the thing, nor their adversaries in it, so as not to ac-
count it a rod, seing it is God they have to do with,
nor be content to lye under it without aiming and
dealing to have it removed by Him, as we would deal
for the removal of any temporall plague, or expect
a blessing upon this Gospel.

CHAP. IX.

What things are to be forborn in order to uniting.

Having laid down these generall helps, we are
now to consider what is yet to be forborn and
abstained from in reference to union: For, as
ordinarily divisions rise and are somented, from and
by doing and driving of some things, which others
cannot concur in, or come up to; So when such
things are abstained from, there is the nearer access
to union; at least, it stoppeth the impetuoufulness of di-
vision, and maketh it to look liker a difference, which
( considering humane infirmity ) is neither so intolera-
rable in it self, nor hurtful to the Church. Beside
therefore what hath been said for abstaining of per-
sonal reflections, or what may irritate persons, or
parties, or what may entertain jealousie or diffidence
amongst them, whereof something hath been touched
upon, We shall add these things further,

1. All things that contribute to weaken the repute
of others, or to beget an hard impression of them in
ourselves or in others, in the general, would be for-
born; such as telling of reproachfull reports, even
though they be true, much more if they be but re-
ported,
ported, yea, or the hearing of such with any delight, endeavouring to waken up discontent in others against opposites, by such informations, solicitations and the like. These are condemned in private mens carriages, and are the causes of continuing such differences (for where no tale-bearer is, strife ceaseth, Prov. 26.) much more amongst Ministers who ought not to walk as men. Also good heed would be taken to such as may have influence on advices, counsels and resolutions to that purpose, left underhand-whisperers, who really may mind some further alteration in the Church, and may really be imbittered at honest men for their honesty, should yet insinuate themselves with eminent men on both sides, and so carry on the division, and disappoint the union; As for instance, Some, not altogether purged from Arianism, and imbittered at honest Bishops, as Athanasius, Osias, and others, did steal in upon the one side of a debate, and held on the controversy against faithfull men; So Epiphanius was intangled by Theophilus of Alexandria to oppose Chrysostom upon pretext of another difference; Sometimes again, on the other side, such as inclined to the Novatians, wanted not influence to strengthen the opposit party, and to keep them at a greater distance from the other, as being grosse in receiving Traditores (as they called them) unto their society. Sometimes men unjustly censured, or fearing censure from faithfull Bishops, did spread calumnies against them, and made them odious, under pretext of their pride, arrogance, unsoundnesse and such like, even unto other orthodox men; Sometimes again, time-serving men, by flattering Magistrates did execute their revenge against faithfull Bishops, by keeping up Divisions against them, driving on Sentences of Deposition, and such like, under pretext of other faults; whereby the Churches peace hath been often marred and her divisions continued, as is clear in those schisms and divisions at Constantinople, first, in
reference to Chrysostom, and afterward in reference to Ignatius, who, by a faction in the Church, was deposed, really to Please the Emperour, whose incestuous marriage he would not approve as they did: therefore I say in the removing of differences, and resolving of duties in reference to union, there is great need of circumspection in trying and choosing whose counsels are to be laid weight upon; for, all men love not peace, neither seek singly the good of the Church, and want not their own prejudices and grudgings at particular eminent persons, who (where men are not very denied and mortified) will easily steal in to mar a publick good, under pretext of particular respect to the person, whom, by so doing, they stir up. It's marked by Sleydan as the cause of that unreasonable and unnatural division that brake-out and grew in Germany, almost to the undoing of Religion therein, betwixt the Elector of Saxony, and Maurice afterward Elector, that some Counsellors not well-minded to Religion, but favourers of the wicked way of Henry, to whom Maurice succeeded, who for that cause had hatred at the Elector and those who were eminent for Reformation, and now having taken on a profession, and instinuated themselves in the counsels and affectation of Maurice, and finding some begun matter of dissention in other particulars, did so kindle and foster it, till they brought the division to that height, that one part of the Protestants were engaged with Antichrist and his followers to destroy the other; and yet so closely carried, that the difference was never stated upon the real account, which indeed such did intend. Also men not so nearly concerned in the Churches divisions, as suppose they be of another Church, or men not so immediately concerned in the debates thereof, and the effects that follow thereupon; As in that Council of Carthage, they enact that tenderness be used to the Donatists, and means be used to reclaim them; and for that end did acknowledge their Ministers
...ters, though ordained in a schism, to be Ministers, although the Church of Rome did write otherways to them, and did act otherways themselves: These would be looked unto. Sometimes also there are a sort of persons who long not for union; for, as there is an itching after new doctrine in some, so is there for divisions and changes amongst others, who may be found in doctrine, who in this are to be adverted to.

2. Men would eschew in such a case judicially to engage in such differences, either by passing decisions in these things pro or contra in Judicatories, or by censoring, or noting with any reproach such as differ from them. For, 1. that maketh the division the more difficultly removable in itself. And, 2. it engageth both sides the more, and proveth a let to retiring when men would, and heighteneth the difference exceedingly. In that difference that was between Cyprian and Stephanus, and other Bishops of Rome, concerning the rebaptizing of such as had been baptized by Hereticks and Schismaticks, It is marked that Stephanus did presse the condemnation of it, did cenfure and refuse communion with such as joyned with Cyprian in his opinion: On the contrary, Cyprian did indeed call Synods and decide, but neither pressed any man to his opinion or practice, nor Censured any that differed in such a matter; And because his carriage is so much commended by the Ancients, especially by Augustine, against the Donatists, not because he counted Cyprian right on the matter; for, he disclaimed that, and owned the contrary opinion; but because he carried in his opinion so tenderly to the Churches union and peace. We shall observe two or three passages of his, and of Augustines concerning him. 1. In his Epistle ad Jubiannum, Hae rescriptusmus, inquit, nemini prescribentes aut prejudicantes quo minus unusquisque Episcoporum, quod putat faciat. Et ne quisquam pellendus a ceterorum con-

consortio videretur (dicit) nos quantum in nobis est prop-
ter hereticos cum collegis & Coepiscopis nostros non con-
tendimus, cum quibus divinam concordiam & pacem tene-
mus. Et Paulo post, Serventur (inquit) a nobis patien-
ter & leniter charitas animi, collegii honor, vinculum fi-
dei, concordia sacerdotii. Which words and many
others are cited by Augustine de Baptismo, lib. 6. cap. 17.

And in another place, when he hath cited this same
last Sentence and other words, giving the reason
which the Apostle hath, 1 Cor. 11. If any man will be
contentious, we have no such custom, nor the Churches
of God: after which a little, Augustine subjoyneth this
approbation of his carriage; Majus quippe in eo ro-
brur virtutis eminuit, cum ista quaestio nondum discurra
nus-
taret, quod alter sentiens quam multi college, tantam mo-
derationem obtinuit, ut Ecclesiæ Dei sanctam societatem,
nulla schismatis labe truncaret, quam si omnìa non solum
veraciter, sed etiam pariter sine ista virtute sentiret; De
Baptismo, lib. 5. cap. 17. This he faith, even though
Cypriam opinion was confirmed by diverse Councils
of Carthage. Which sheweth what influence such
abstinence hath on the Churches peace, which is the
more observable, that he used this forbearance when
he had the generality of the Church of Africk, and
the authority of their Councils for him; and also
was provoked by the vehemency of his opposites, and
their Censuring such as were of his opinion; yet he
forbare, not because he doubted of the soundness of
his judgement, but because he respected the Churches
peace, and even then did he write sweetly in many
Epistles, and a particular treatise, pressing the unity
of the Church; for which he is eminently esteemed
of as an excellent pattern in such a case by all sober
and judicious men.

3. In such cases when union is desired, men would
abstain the propagating of their opinions in any pur-
poused and publick way. This is not to restrain a
mans sober, christian and necessary vindicating of
him-
Abstaining from propagating their opinions factionally.

himself in a due way. But, 1. All unnecessary traffick that is principally for strengthening of a party. 2. Publishing in print, things to that purpose, when there is no conveniency for the Churches good. 3. Making motions in Judicatories that awakens siding. 4. Insisting thereon in publick preaching. And, lastly, (When there is some necessity to speak or write on such things) all reflections and irritations, would be abstained; yea, it is fit that sometimes every word spoken, or written upon one side, should be past over by the other, without reply, for peace sake. Because, 1. the broader such differences spread, they take the deeper root, and increase siding more amongst the people. 2. Because, they irritate more and keep off men from thinking of peace. 3. Because the memory of these things is ready to ruffle mens minds, Therefore most eminent men have wished, that all Papers pro or contra in such differences might be buried; for, one difference beggeth another, and one paper draweth forth another, none being willing that his adversary should have the last word; and oftentimes papers propagate a controversy to a succeeding generation, to whom it had been good that many things had never been in writ. Also often, such writings prove edifying to few, and they but make Church-division the subject of more discourse, and Ministers to be the more contemptible; and do in themselves often involve many contradictions against one another, which readily are not possible to be cleared in matters of fact; and reflections one upon another; which derogateth exceedingly from the honour of the Minifttery. It is marked of Constantine, that when at the Council of Nice, there were many opposit papers of differences amongst Bishops presented, he took them, and having gravely admonished the Bishops for their contending amongst themselves, would not have one of them read, but said, he would cover such infirmities
as they were bringing to light, by their contradictions, with his purple. This way also hath been followed for stopping of divisions in diverse reformed Churches.

4. All contrary acting would be abstained, as in Elections, Ordinations, or the like, because these fix, as with a nail, the difference, as may be gathered from history. It were better many a time for the Churches good, that any one side had suffered the Bishop, ordained by the other, solely to possess the place, or that none had been ordained at all, than that opposite Ordinations had been; because, that so the Church was divided even in communion, and such particulars have been ever difficultly composed, and ever exceedingly instrumentall to continue a breach, and it led men in Congregations to be factious, and to seek to gain men and affections to their party.

5. All separated and divided meetings would be eschewed, whether the separation be totall in respect of all Ordinances and communion in generall, as sometimes divisions have come amongst orthodox men to such a height; Or, whether it be partiall, suppose in Government, Sacraments, &c. or any of these; because so not only way is made to a totall separation, but thereby there is a divided shape put upon the one Church, and occasion is given for one party to condemn another, and so to beget more strife; and especially, because it habituateth men to think themselves not of one body, and, as it were, ereareth a Church or Altar against another (as the Fathers were wont to speak) and so becometh a drawn line of division, and doth really make the difficulty of uniting the more difficult; because ere union be made up, that partition must be pulled down. It is fit therefore that either all such occasions of Fasts, &c. wherein all cannot joyn, should be forborn; or that they be so ordered, as there may bee union in them.

6. Such
6. Such acts and principles as purport to tint upon either side, making others incapable of Church- or the like, or which declareth them to be so, would be prevented; and if established, would be orderly removed; because such things make a partition between two, and heighten such a difference beyond the nature thereof: Also they evidence much prejudice and alienation of mind, and they seem to constrain men to an union, which is never right if it be not voluntary. Hence we see that the great friends of peace have ever endeavoured to prevent or remove such; as in the instances of Polycarp, Ireneus and Cyprian, is clear, who did not only endeavour to remove Censures, but even cenurableleness from persons so differing. This also is very obliging to the opposite party. In that Epistle of Augustine (which is much to this purpose) mention is made of one Cenethlius, a Catholick Bishop, who (faith he) was much esteemed of by the Donatists, *Quod constitutionem datam contra eos, compreserit, & effectum habere non siverit.*

CHAP. X.

What is to be done in order to Uniting.

Now we may be the shorter in speaking to what is to be done in reference to particular differences, seeing much may be gathered from these generals permitted, and it is not our purpose to be particular; Yet we say,

1. That it is the duty of such to be seeking union one with another, and for that cause to be making offer of, and desiring meetings and conferences, and to be urging harmony one upon another. In that Council of Carthage, whereof Aurelius was Moderator, they did appoint Conferences to be sought for with the Donatists, although they had been long in a schism; and for that end did appoint Commissioners.
missioners, and did give instructions to go from place to place, and to each other a settlement, whereof these were a part. That their former schism and separation should be prejudicial to none; That Ministers and Bishops should continue in their charges if otherwise they were worthy, notwithstanding of their former separation: which is observed not to have wanted fruit in many places, as the acts and events are recorded by Balshamou. And this is according to the general rule of following peace, even when it seemeth to fly from men; And questions that may engender strife are to be avoided and fled from, when they seem to follow after men, because, as Paul saith, 2 Tim. 2. 22. &c: The servant of the Lord must not strive, &c. On this ground we find, that many of Augustine's Epistles, direct to Donatists and others, are to this purpose, craving friendly communings; and when he hath had occasion to be in cities where Donatist-Bishops were, he used to visit them, and enter conference friendly with them; and if any hope was, he wrote to others to entertain the same, as particularly may be gathered from Epist. 147. where he honourably mentioneth Promelianus in the desire of a conference; and because he knew the too great vehemency of one Evodius, though of his own side, had offended him, he did excuse it, saying amongst other things, Id hominis atati ignoscendum est, &c. The like he also hath, Epist. 163. when he mentioneth Fortunius, whom he had conferred with, with this testimony to these he writeth to, Quantum enim arbitror difficilime potestis invenire in Episcopos vestris tam utilem animum, & voluntatem, quam in isto fene perspeximus; And therefore presseth them to entertain the begun conference, though he might not stay.

2. In carrying on such meetings, respect would be had to union in the ordering of every circumstance; as in the persons chosen, that they may be men inclined to peace; respected by the other party concerned in
the Churches differences, and free of the suspicions formerly hinted, and such like, left by an intended union there follow a greater rent and division, as oftentimes hath been seen in conferences amongst dissentient men. Here also a speciall respect would be had to the expressing of mutuall benevolence in words and carriages, left some hard impression seize on men at the entry. Choice also would be made of the subject first to be spoken of; as what may be thought most subject to mistake, heat or contention, would be left to the last place; and what may be conceived more plausible-like to both, would be begun at, that it may be rather known wherein men agree, than wherein they differ, at the entry at least. Possibly also union in fundamentall things, being accorded unto, it may make way for moderating affections in other things lesse fundamentall. This method was ever urged by Bucer, Beza and other Reformers, who keeped conferences at first with the Lutheran party; because, beginning at some point of Doctrine, or particular in practice, wherein the difference is highest, doth often at the entry rifle mens humours, and break off conferences abruptly with the more heat, as experience in these debates at that time did make too too manifest.

3. Such meetings for conference would be seriously and condescendingly improved for the end designed: As, 1. protractings of time, or janglings about circumstances would be eschewed; as also tenaciousness, and contentiousness about formalities of proceeding, and particular insisting upon contradictions in matters of fact, because such things become not the gravity and seriousnesse of men aiming at such an end. But the main businessse would be soberly and seriously gone about, and that timeously; for, men should not meet to take advantage one of another by such formalities, but to procure the good of the Church. 2. Criminations, or objecting of personal
nall faults one to another, or difference in particulars, Personal would either be altogether forborn, or left to the last criminati-
place, and the main matter would be first handled, on and particulars accordingly squared. 3. Their would be condescending to follow some circumstances, even though they seem not so reasonable, left by the wilfull adhering of one party to a circumstance, the end be disappointed; yea, sometimes more material things, at left till there be a better understanding begotten, are to be ceded in, when it may be without sin, if so be it may contribute for the carrying on of such a design, and we will almost ever find these that are most tender of the Churches good to be most condescending in all these; As amongst other instances, we will find in that conference between the Catholicks and Donatists, at which Augustine was present, and which is set down by him; where in amongst other things, these are clear, 1. That not only the Catholicks fought the meeting, but also pressed the speaking unto the main business, which the other did sometimes deny, saying, It was not lawfull for the children of Martyrs to meet with the children of apostate or wicked men; and sometimes by formalities, jangling questions, they protracted time to eschew the main thing. 2. It is clear, that also the Catholicks condescended to many of their suits, and yelded to account them Bishops, and did not contradict, but cede at the entry, that Churches should be rendered to these from whom they were taken, if so be that might have enclined them to union, and that even by benefits they might be mollified, and stood on no circumstantiall thing with them. Such meetings have often been disappointed with such vain janglings, especially when numbers have been confusedly admitted, and when each party hath charged another with former miscarriages, As Augustine observeth, Epist. 163. and therefore hath that word to them, Neque nos illis debere objicere suorum scelera, neque
neque illos nobis. And, because the Donatists upbraided the Catholicks (as the orthodox are called in all these debates) that they were guilty of persecuting them, because they had proceeded to some Sentences, and procured commission from Civil powers against them to put them from their charges, (These times they called tempora Macariana, because of such a person that was eminent in the executing thereof.) And again, the Catholicks used to object to them, beside their schism, Headiness, irregular violences, and the like, because of the practices of the Circumcellions, who, having fallen off with the Donatists, went also in many absurdities beyond them; therefore when he is pressing a conference, Epist. 203. Tollamus (faith he) inania obiecta, nec tu objicias tempora Macariana, nec ego sevitiam Circumcellionum. And in Epist. 107. faith, that in his conference with Fortunius, placuit omnibus in talibus disputationibus violenta facta malorum hominum nobis ab invicem objeci non debere. And there is no little furtherance or prejudice to a conference accordingly as this advice is followed or not, being often such bygone particulars will heat more, than that which is of greater concernment in the main cause.

4. To make the instances more particular, the matter concerning which debate arises and falls to be the subject of the conference, may be distinguished, and so more clearly spoken unto: Which is, 1. either a difference in some doctrinall thing. Or, 2. some particular practice, or some personall miscarriage. Or, 3. something in Worship. Or, 4. something in Government, or such like.
CHAP. XI.

What is to be done in closing doctrinal differences.

1. For doctrinal differences of judgment, there are three ways to close them; (it is to be adverted, that the difference is not supposed to be in any fundamental thing.) First, By sober and serious conference, one party may bring another to the way of closing the same judgment with them; or, both parties may quit something of extremities, and join in a middle opinion. This is the most solid union, when men come to think and speak the same thing, and sometime hath been attained. Yet concerning this, we say, 1. That all union is not to depend on this, as hath been said. 2. It hath been very rarely attained, especially when difference hath spread and rooted it self by debating and contradiction, seing even good men have both infirmity and corruption. 3. We say, that publick dispute, either by word or writ, hath never proven very useful, even amongst good men, to attain this end. But ordinarily such debates have heightened the controversy, and engaged men more; so that if anything prevail towards this, it is friendly, familiar conferences opening truth, rather than formal stated disputations; because in such, men are (as it were) upon their guard, and fully do exercise their wit; in the other, there is more access to inform the judgment, by a loving, grave, serious manner of speaking of the truth, and that privately to others, especially to such as are of reputation for parts and ability, and that it be not done in vain, as Paul hath it, Gal. 2.2. And it's observable that he speaketh this in reference to his way, when he intended the evidencing of his agreement with the chief Apostles in the matter of doctrine. Also we find meekness and instructing put together, when there is any expectation to re-

A a 2
cover one from a difference, 2 Tim. 2. 15. and convincing or disputing is more especially applicable to those of whom there is little hope, out of respect to the edification of others. Hence we find the Apostles disputing with false teachers in some points of truth, but rather intreating and exhorting Believers to have peace amongst themselves, notwithstanding of lesser differences.

The second way of composure, is, when such agreement in judgment cannot be obtained, To endeavour a harmony and keep unity notwithstanding of that difference, by a mutual forbearance in things controverted: which we will find to be of two sorts. The first is, to say so, total, that is, when neither side doth so much as doctrinally in word, writ, or Sentences of Judicatories, presse any thing that may confirm or propagate their own opinion, or condemn the contrary, But do altogether abstract from the same out of respect to the Churches peace, and for the preventing of scandal; and do in things wherein they agree according to the Apostle's direction, Phil. 3. 16. Walk by the same rule, and minde the same things mutually, as if there were no such differences, and waiting in these till the Lord shall reveal the same unto them. This way is safe, where the doctrine upon which the difference is, is such, as the forbearing the decision thereof, doth neither mar any duty that the Church in general is called to, nor endanger the salvation of souls through the want of clearness therein, nor, in a word, infer such inconveniences to the hurt of the Church, as such unseasonable awakening and keeping up of differences and divisions may have with it; Because the scope of bringing forth every truth, or confirming the same by any authoritative sanction, &c. is the edification of the Church; and therefore when the bringing forth thereof doth destroy more than edifie, it is to be forbore. Neither can it be ground enough to plead for such decisions in preach-
preaching, that the thing they preach—for is truth, and the thing they condemn is error. Because, 1. it is not the lawfulness of the thing simply that is in question, but the necessity and expediency thereof in such a case: Now, many things are lawfull that are not expedient, 1 Cor. 10. 23. 2. In these differences that were in the primitive times concerning meats, days, genealogies, &c. there was a truth or an error upon one of the sides, as there is a right and a wrong in every contradiction of such a kind, yet the Apostle thinketh fitter, for the Churches peace, that such be altogether refrained, rather than any way (at least in publick) insisted upon or decided. 3. Because no Minister can bring forth every truth at all times, he must then make choice; And I suppose some Ministers may die, and all do so, who have not preached every truth, even which they knew, unto the people. Beside, there are (no question) many truths hid to the most learned. Neither can this be thought inconsistent with a Minister's fidelity, who is to reveal the whole counsel of God; because, that counsel is to be understood of things necessary to men's salvation, and is not to be extended to all things whatsoever; for, we find the great Apostle expounding this in that same Sermon, Act. 20. ver. 20. I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you; which evidenceth that the whole counsel of God, or the things which he chewed unto them, is the whole, and all that was profitable for them, and that for no by-respect or fear whatsoever he shunned to reveal that unto them. Also, it is clear, that there are many truths which are not decided by any judicial act; and amongst other things, sparingness to decide truths that are not fundamental judicially hath been ever thought no little mean of the Churches peace, as the contrary hath been of division.

The third way (which is the second sort of the former) of composure, is mixed, When there is some

A 4 medling
The third way of composing such differences, medling with such questions, yet with such forbearance, that though there be a seen difference, yet there is no schism or division, but that is seriously and tenderly prevented; as upon the one side, some may expresse their mind in preaching and writing on a particular question one way, others may do it differently; yet both with that meeknesse and respect to those they differ from, that it doth beget no rent, nor give just ground of offence, nor mar union in any other thing; Or, it may possibly come to be decided in a Synod, yet with such forbearance upon both sides, that it may prove no prejudice to union; those who have authority for them, not pressing it to the prejudice of the opinion, names, consciences of the other, or to their detriment in any respect; but allowing to them a liberty to speak their minds, and walk according to their own light in such particulars: And on the contrary, the other resting satisfied in the unity of the Church, without condemning them, or pressing them to condemn themselves; because so indeed their liberty is no lesse than others who have the decision of a Synod for them: And thus men may keep communion and union in a Church, even where by the Judicatories thereof, some lesser not fundamental error, which doth also infer unwarrantable practices, is authoritatively concluded. We have a famous instance of this in the Church of Africa in the days of Cyprian, which by the Ancients hath ever been so much esteemed of. There was a difference in that Church concerning the Rebaptizing of Hereticks and Schismaticks after their conversion, or, of such as had once fallen in to them; Cyprian and the greatest part thought their first Baptism null, or, by their fall, made void; others thought it not so, who were the lesser part, yet right as to this particular; There was meetings on both sides for defence of their opinions. Also in a Council of near three hundred Bishops, it is judicially and authoritatively concluded;
ded; yet that Synod carried so, as they did not only not cenfure any that differed, nor preffe them to conform in practice to their judgment; but did also entertained most intimat respect to them, and familiarity with them, as may be gathered from what was formerly hinted. And upon the other side, we do not find any in that Church making a schism upon the account of that judicial erroneous decision (though at least by three several Synods it was ratified) but contending themselves to have their consciences free by retaining their own judgement, and following their own practice, till time gave more light and more occasion to clear that truth. And we will never find in the Writings of any time, more affection amongst brethren, and more respect to peace, than was in that Church at that time amongst those that differed; And there is not any practice more commended in all the Church-history and Writings of the Fathers, than this practice; as partly may be gathered from what was formerly touched out of Augustine. And if we will consider the case rationally, we will find that it is not impossible to have union in a Church where there is in such a difference an authoritative decision, even supposing that side, on which the error lies, to be approved. For, 1. There is no necessity for such as have authority for them, to preffe others in their judgment or practice in such things; neither can it be thought that such a decision can of it self satisfie all scruples, neither yet that men doubtingly may follow; Nor, lastly, that such controversies can bear the weight of troubling the Church, by cenfuring such as otherwise may be faithfull, being sometimes even unfaithfull men have been spared with respect to the Churches good, as hath been said. And, secondly, upon the other side, such a constitution of a Church, doth not involve all that keep communion therein, in the guilt thereof, if personally they be free; as in the instance of the Jewish Church is clear: where, no question,
question many corrupt acts have been established, yet did it neither make communion in Worship or Government to be unlawful, where the matter and manner of carriage was lawful. Beside, this would infer, that no Judicatory could keep union, where there were contrary votes, or a Sentence past without unanimity: because that is certainly wrong to them who think otherwises, and if so, there could be no Judicatory expected either in Church or State; for, it cannot be expected, that they shall be still unanimous, or, that the greater part shall cede to the lesser, and rescind their own act. Also, suppose there should be such a division upon one difference, can it be expected that those who unite upon the divided sides respectively, shall again have no more difference amongst themselves? and if they have, shall there not be a new division? and where shall this end? And feing men must resolve to keep unity where there are faults of such a nature, or to have none at all, it is as good to keep it at first, as to be necessitated thereto afterward. The Orthodox urge this argument against the Donatists, who would not keep union with them, because of pretended corruptions in the proceedings of Judicatories and Ordinations; yet were constrained to bear with such amongst themselves, and particularly to receive, and unite with the Maximinianists, whose communion they had once rejected, though a branch of their own faction, because they saw no end of divisions if they did not resolve to dispense with such things amongst themselves. And Augustine often afferteth, that they were never able to answer this argument when it was propounded to them, to wit, Why they did not give them that same latitude, in keeping communion with them, which they had given to the Maximinianists, who were guilty of such things as they imputed to them? We conceive then, that even in such a case there may be union for prosecuting the main work of the Gospel, notwithstanding
standing of such a circumstantial difference, if men otherwayes set themselves to it; and the generall grounds, formerly laid down, do confirm this.

CHAP. XII.

What to do for union in points not doctrinall, but about matters of fact or personall faults.

If the difference be not doctrinall in point of judgment, at least only, but being in matter of fact, as personall faults and corruptions; whereby the one is ready to object to the other some bypast failings, and miscarriages: whereupon by inconsiderat upbraidings, pressing of Censures, or condemnation of what hath been done, the Churches peace is in hazard to be broken, and men like to be rent and divided in their communion. And oftentimes such things prove exceeding fashious, where men wilfully, or imprudently pursue such things without respect to the Churches peace. This often waited upon a time of darkness, or persecution, when men, being in the dark, and in a distemper, were led away by tentation, and overthrown with many faults, and sometimes amongst others, made to jumble with, and trample one upon another (as it were) not knowing what they were doing; and when this time was over, some were ready to carp at what was past in the dark, and to quarrell at others for such juffling, when they were so through-other. This indeed was ordinary, but most unbecoming grave men, to make that a ground of contending, which inadvertently was done by others in the dark (as the great Basilius saith) In no tempore, & densis tenebris. Such contests are of four sorts.

First, Sometimes in generall, there is a dissatisfaction with the constitution of the Church, in respect
Distastiation from constitution of Officers and Members.

pect of the grossness of the Officers and Members thereof. This cannot be removed upon the one side only, because tares cannot but be in the Church, and that discernably, as Cyprian faith; it is removed then by meekness and tenderness upon the one side towards such as have withdrawn, and by their yielding to return who have withdrawn, which when it came to passe, hath been matter of gladness to all the Church. Amongst Cyprians Epistles (Epist. 50. edit. Pameli) mention is made of Urbanus, Maximus, and others of the Church of Rome, who being confessors and imprisoned in the time of persecution, and after their delivery finding many grosse Members to be in the Church, and meeting with the doctrine of Novatus that commended separation to the godly for their more comfortable communion together, that they came to be tickled therewith, and for a time to separate from the communion of Cornelius, and others of the Clergy, pretending there could be no communion in such an evil constituted Church; but afterward, finding the great hurt that came thereby to the Church, they overcame their own affections and inclinations, and out of respect to the good of the Church, did unit, which was exceedingly welcomed by all, as their Epistle to Cyprian, and his to them, do manifest. And as their fall sheweth, that it is not impossible, but that zealous Ministers, who have kept out against defection, may be overtaken with such a fault; So it giveth a sweet copie of Christian deniedness and tenderness by others to be followed in the like case. Their words to Cyprian are worthy the observing. Nos habito consilio utilitatis Ecclesiae, & pacis magis consulentes, omnibus rebus praeermissis, & Judicio Dei servatis, cum Cornelio Episcopo nostro, pariter & cum universo Clero pacem fecisse, cum gudio etiam universa Ecclesiae, prona etiam omnium charitate.

A second sort of such contests are, When faults are alleged which either are not true, or cannot be proven,
proven, although possibly they may be both grose and true, for both of these did the Novatians and Donatists trouble the Church, insisting long in charging many crimes upon men particularly upon Cestianus, and Osias, which they could never be able to make out, although they alleged that such faults were cloaked by the Catholics, and that they were not to be communicated with. In this case the Orthodox took three ways to remove such a difference. 1. By pleading forbearance of awakening such contests, and exhorting rather to keep union, than to hazard to break it upon such grounds, and so (as Augustine faith) ut quedam incerta crimina pro certa pace Deo dimitterentur, Cont. Epist. Parm. lib. 1. cap. 3. 2. If that could not be acquiesced in, they admitted the thing to proof, over, and over again, that by lawfull triall it might be decided, as we will find in the former instances, the same case of Cestianus was often tried, even after he was absoved. It is true the Donatists did not acquiesce, but did separate, (for which cause they were ever accounted most grose Schismatics) yet is it of it self, a way wherein men may satisfactorily acquiesce. A third way sometimes used, was, That when divisions were like to be occasioned by dissatisfacion with a particular person against whom things could not be judicially made out so as to found a Sentence, nor yet possibly was there so full satisfaction with him in every thing, as by owning of him to hazard a rent, where a people were stumbled by him, they did without judicall processing, or Censuring, interpose with the Bishop to cede, and wrote to the people to choose another. So in that Council of Carthage, canon.91. letters are written to Maximianus (called Episcopus Bagiennis) and the people, that he might cede the Bishoprick, and they might choose another; yet there is no mention of any made-out accusation, or Sentence, but that for the good of the Church, Synodo placuit, &c.
There is mention made elsewhere in history of a Bishop of that place, of that name, who had been a Donatist, and did return to the communion of the Church; but, if this be he, or what was the cause of this appointment, is neither certain, nor of great concernment in this.

A third sort of contests of this kind are, When crimes are grosse and clear, and men are either justly censurable, or Censured; some (possibly honestly minded) may be engaged to do for them, by their insinuating upon them, and giving misinformations and prejudices, and to be brought to endeavour the preventing or removing of Sentences against, or from, such as justly deserve the same. In this case we find a threefold way of composure. 1. An endeavour used to clear to others the justice of such a Sentence when it hath been traduced. Thus when Basilides, and Martialis, were justly deposed by a Synod of Spain, they did, by false pretexts, engage the Clergie of Rome to owne them, and write for their recovery, which did exceedingly offend the Bishops of Spain; whereupon they wrote to Cyprian and these in Africk for advice, who, being met in the Synod, approved their deposition, and advised them not to readmit them, because none such who had any blemish and were not holy, ought to minister in the holy things, and that rather they should bear with Stephanus his mistake, who out of ignorance and misinformation was led to side with such. Thus Cyprian hath it in his Epistles to the Church of Spain, Epist. 68. So that schism was stopped, and the Churches continued to acknowledge the lawfully ordained Bishops that succeeded these. And the readmission of such, had neither been in it self lawfull, nor yet had compassed the end of obtaining peace in these Churches where the people was stumbled by their carriages. A second way was, When the men were orthodox and profitable, though failing in some grosse particular, yet when they were owned...
owned by others in the Church, Synods did not stand, for concord, to remove such Sentences, as was former-
ly instanced in the case of Opus: Augustine also in a
certain Epistle, 164. doth approve the not-cen-
suring of one Optatus, left thereby a schism should
be occasioned, because of manies adhering to him.
We will find also a third way, That when men have
been Sentenced, and some have continued to owne
them, and others to oppose them, such have been
brought to submit themselves, and so the division
hath been removed; It was so in that hot contest that
continued long between the Bishops of Rome, and the
Church of Africk, in the case of Apiratus Bishop of
Sica, &c. who being deposed by the Synod of Car-
thage, was pressed to be admitted by the Bishops of
Rome, whom by no means these of Africk would ad-
mit; at last, these that were Sentenced, came to ac-
knowledge the Sentence; whereby the division was
stopped.

A fourth sort of contests or divisions for matters of
fact, is, When both sides have had their failings in a
time of darkness and tentation, some one way, and
some another, and after some breathing they fall, by
mutual upbraiding, to hazard the Churches peace;
one casting up this fault to him, and he again up-
braiding him with another. The way taken to
prevent this, is most satisfying, when both, acknow-
ledging their own guilt to other, did forgive one an-
other, and joyn cordially for the good of the work.
In the debates with the Donatists there is much men-
tion made, not without great commendation of the
practice of a Synod, which is called Concilium Cir-
tense, wherein the members did mutually confesse
their faults, and (faith he, to wit, Augustine, in the
conference formerly cited) Sibi invicem ignoscenct
ne schifma fieret. And by the scope of the Catholicks
in urging that example, and by the vehemency used
by the Donatists in denying the same, it would seem,
that they looked upon this as a most excellent and satisfying way of removing differences amongst godly men, when every one acknowledgeth their own fault, and doth not upbraid but forgive one another, endeavouring to have the remembrance of bypassed mis-carriages rather forgiven and buried in oblivion, than mentioned. Because good men being but men, usually there are failings on both sides, and the denying of it, provoketh others to insist the more thereon, as the acknowledging thereof doth stop the upbraiding of them with the same; and usually it is to be seen, that the best men had rather mention their own faults in their acknowledgements, than hear the same done by any other. 

*Beza, Epist. 23.* also hath such an advice as this to a Church that had fallen into division, *Utinam utraque pars acquisescere malit quam si curiosè nimium & philosophicus quis sit in majori culpa, inquisitor.*

**CHAP. XIII.**

What to do toward uniting in divisions arising from diversity of circumstances in external administrations, and especially arising from Church-government.

A Third matter that occasioneth divisions, is, a diversity in Worship, Ceremonies, or things that relate to externall administration of Ordinances, when some follow one way in Preaching, administrating of Sacraments, Catechising, &c. and others, another. This ordinarily breedeth janglings, and oftentimes troubled the Church, as we see in the businesse about Easter and Ceremonies. It is not our purpose to insist in this, because ordinarily such debates pretend some lawfulnesse, or unlawfulnesse in the thing contended for, and are to be counted among.
amongst the jangling debates that the men of God are to eschew. And also, because these things are often fully and clearly discussed, We shall only say concerning them. 1. That, as there is a necessity of suffering some difference in Doctrine, So is there also a necessity to bear with some differences in circumstances in the externall manner of Worship, &c. and men would not soon offend at every difference, nor be displeased if it proceed not from affectation of singularity, unfaithfulness, or some other corrupt rise. And we will find great condescendancy in the greatest men, both of old and late, in things that are not sinfull in themselves, for keeping of union in the Church: And thus far, the Apostles practice of becoming all things to all, will warrand. Zanchius in an Epistle to this purpose, giveth both many examples of, and reasons for this. 2. We say, that men especially in a time of divisions, would by all means endeavour to keep the trodden and approven way that hath been used, and is in use in a Church in such administrations; because the lesse men be sticking in the manner of these things, and the more simplicity they use, and the lesse they differ from what is most ordinary and approven, the lesse will the hazard of division be in these things, which doth arise from the multiplying of them; the changing of the old, or bringing in of a new manner, the condemning of the way and manner used by others, as having some great absurdity in it, and the pressing of their way, even in circumstances, upon others; These and such things are to be eschewed: and to indeed there is no way to peace in these things but to forbear; for it is more easie to forbear some new thing, than to make others alter what is old, except there be some reason in the matter to move to this.

The great, and usually the most bitter contentions of a Church, as was said before, are in things that belong to Government; which are of many kinds,
kinds, and have their own proportionable cures when blessed of God. We shall instance in these five kinds of contests in this matter. The first, is concerning the form of Government. The second, is concerning the formality of Church-judicatories. The third, concerning the matter enacted or decreed by them. The fourth, concerning particular miscarriages and abuses of power in Government. And the fifth, concerning the persons who ought to govern, or to whom the Government is due, and whose determinations are ultimately to be obeyed.

For the first, Debates about the nature and form of Government, may be considered doctrinally, and so it is a difference of judgement; Some think one form of Government lawfull, and others not that, but another. If this difference be fairly carried, it needeth make no division in the Church, as was in the foregoing part hinted. 2. It may be considered practically, that is, when men not only think so differently in their judgement, but accordingly they act, driving opposit designs, as if they were two parties, seeking to get one Church subdued to them, and neither of them doth acknowledge the other. This cannot be without division; for, the ground of all union and communion in the visible Church in all the Ordinances of Christ, is, the unity of the visible Church; as even in old time Augustine did presse: So Ecclesiastick union, must be made up and entertained in a Church, by an unity in the Government thereof; for though there may be a forbearance and a kind of peace where the unity of the visible Church is denied, or where there are divided Governments that are not subaltern; yet there can be no Church-union, nor communion in Ordinances, of Word, Sacraments and Government, which results from the former, and doth necessarily presuppose the same. We dare not, nor cannot offer any directions for making up an union here, save that men would unite in one form
form of Government that can extend to the whole body, and that in such a Government as is allowed by Christ, otherways it can be no union; because so it were not a duty, as union is.

If it were asked, What kind of Government that may be most probably, wherein men ought to unite? Answer. We mind not to digress to a doctrinal debate; yet these characters may be given of it. 1. It must be a Government that can extend unto, and reach all the body; for, one main end of Government is union, Eph. 4. 3, 10, 11, &c. and the removing of offences which make divisions, Matt. 18. And this union is not to be in this or that particular part of the body, but in the whole, 1 Cor. 12, that there be no schism in the body: therefore it must extend to all, or be in a capacity to do so. 2. It would be in a proportionable fitness to remove these causes that breed divisions, (for, there cannot be union in a Government that is not fitted for that) and therefore must be able to purge corrupt teachers, and the leaven of corrupt doctrine out of the whole Church, or any part thereof. Hence, both in the Scripture, and primitive times, and all alongs, there hath been still a joynt authoritative concurrence for removing these causes of this evil in whatsoever place they did appear. 3. It must be such a Government as hath an unity amongst the whole Governors for this end, and so it must answer to the unity of the body: Hence, in the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul commendeth the redeeming of that evil to them all in a joynt manner, as being one lump, without respect to their subdivision in particular Churches; and if this Authority did not imply unity amongst the Governors wherever they lived, and a capacity to act unitedly upon occasion, there could be no access to authoritatively to remove such evils from the Church, nor such weight in the mean applied. 4. It must be a Government wherein there is a coordinatenesse amongst the
the Governours; because so not only the union of the Church is made up, but her communion is represented; and to place the Government in one, as Papis do in the Pope, doth not make an union in the Government, which implieth a mutuall and kindly co-ordinatnesse and associating one with another; but whatever they pretend of union in it, it is really but tyranny, and such as the most arbitrary ruler may have, when by violence he seemeth to keep down all divisions under him, neither so can that body be said to be united in him. And we see in the primitive times, even after Bishops and Patriarchs were brought in into the Church, that still the supreme Government, whereby union was entertained, did reside in a mutual co-ordination, and combination, even of such Bishops, Metropolitans, Patriarchs, &c. acting in an united and joynt way: whereby manifestly it appeareth, that such a Government as is to be united into, must be extensive unto the body, at least be in capacity so to be extended, and it must be in a co-ordination and consociation of many Church officers together; and that such subordinations as make this coordination and equality, must be swallowed up, ere there can be an united Government for the preservation of the union of the Church, because the supreme Government and decision must be in many; and many of different degrees and places, cannot be so one as those who are of the same order, to speak so.

Yet we think, that where such an union cannot be had in Government, men that have liberty, without entanglement to their own consciences, to follow their duty, ought to do it with all tender respect to the edification and union of the Church wherein they live, and to make the best of their particular case that may be for that end. But seing the wisdom and goodnesse of God hath made it our lote in this Land, to live under a Government, to which the abovementioned characters do well agree; it is hopeful, if as
we ought we consciently adhere to the principles thereof, we may, yea, shall unite in the Lord.

Secondly, Supposing, that men agree in that same supreme government, to wit, Councils and Synods, there may be some debate concerning the formal constitution thereof, what is to be accounted a rightly constitute Synod, and such as ought to be acknowledged so? It cannot be denied, but that there is a right and a wrong in this, and that there are rules to be kept, and that also de facto they may be broken, even where there is no failing in the matter. It is true also, that we will sometimes find worthie men quarrelling the constitution of Synods, and declining them, as was formerly hinted, refusing to appear before them, till some persons were removed from them, as Chrysostom and forty two Bishops with him, did in reference to that particular Synod at Chalcedon: and sometimes their Acts were declared void, because the meetings were not numerous, as Balsamon doth instance in the case of one Johannes Amathuntus, whose deposition was declared null, because all the Bishops of Cyprus were not convened to his tryall, which might have been; and because, in strict reckoning, there was one fewer at his deposition than was allowed by the Canons. Yet concerning this we say, 1. That it will be found very difficult to pitch on such defects in the constitution of a Synod, as will make the same null without respect to the matter thereof, being there may be many defects that will not infer this. 2. It will be hard to gather from Church-history, or Writings of the Ancients, or Canons of Councils, what hath been a peremptory rule to them to walk by in such a case. Their practices in this are so various, that it appeareth, the matter hath ever been more headed by them, than the formality of the constitution. And therefore, 3. We matter more will find their practice to be according to this; When the matter was found and profitable, it was accepted and the Synod was reverenced, although it hath had

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Leffe formality, and hath been of a fewer number; So the Council of Sardica, Laodicea, and some particular Provincial Synods, have ever been of great authority because of their matter, when more numerous Synods, with more formalities, have never been so accounted of, nor reckoned amongst the General Councils, although their number hath been far greater than many of these other. 4. When they come to determine any thing after the close of corrupt Synods, they do not usually lift the constitution thereof, but examine and condemn the matter thereof, and do repeal their Sentences, and account them null from the beginning; not because of questioning their Authority that did it, but because of their doing the same unjustly, as in the cases of Athanasius, Eustachius, Chrysostom, and Ignatius, that followed him in the same see: All whose depoisions were accounted null, because of the unjust violence that was used in them. 5. We say then, that hardly it will be observed, that this consideration of a particular Synods constitution hath been the rise or ground of division amongst godly and orthodox men agreeing in the same Truth, Form of Government, and Rules for constituting of Assemblies or Synods. But we will ever find where Declinators or Protestations are mentioned. 1. That the party declined hath been palpably corrupt in fundamental doctrines. Or, 2. palpably driving on that general design, and violence against particular persons, as subserving the same. And, 3. it hath been also, after many evidences of such corruptions and violences, as in the former instances that are given of Declinators is clear; where we find, that Synods have been acknowledged, and yet upon the discovery of their corrupt designs and violence, have been declined and protested against as null, as that second Council at Ephesus was. Whereby it appeareth, that if their proceedings had been acceptable, their constitution and authority had not been called in question.
If it be asked upon supposition, That a difference concerning the constitution of a particular Synod, and a division upon that account fall to be amongst godly and orthodox Divines, agreeing in the same Truths, form of Government, general Rules, for constituting of Synods, &c. What should be done for union in such a case?

A n s w. It would seem there should be no great need to give directions here, the difference being so narrow; certainly many of the Ancients, and also of our Reformers, and eminent Divines, who have groaned and do groan under many sad pressures, corruptions, and divisions in the Church, would have thought, and think it a great mercy to have had, and to have the difference brought to such a point, and betwixt such parties; Yet, seeing it is too too possible to be stood upon, we do conceive it is no such thing as may make union, amongst parties so differing, impossible. We say therefore,

1. That such would consider the little usefulness and weightiness, as to the main of edification that is in the thing controverted whatever way it be decided: For, 1. the declaring of such a Synod valid, or null, as to its constitution, doth not corrupt any point of Truth, nor bring-in any new Form of Government, nor alter any Rule concerning the Form agreed in; because the question is not in the, what is the form and rule according to which a Synod ought to be constituted? that is agreed upon: But the question is, Whether such a particular Synod be agreeable to such a Rule? and respect to the Rule makes the one that they cannot approve it, and the other that they cannot condemn it: And is it of great concernment to the main of the Churches edification? to say it is so, or not, considering it abstractly, or supposing it should never be determined at all? 2. We say, That it is not of much concernment even to Government, to say that such a particular Synod is right or wrong.
constituted: for, though a Church cannot want Government, and that cannot be casten; yet a Church cannot lose much by questioning the constitution of one Synod, suppose rightly constituted, abstracting it from the consideration of its matter contained therein; and if its matter be warrantable, it hath weight in itself without such consideration of a constitution, if it be not warrantable, such a consideration of a lawfully constituted Synod cannot make it warrantable. Again, upon the other side, The counting of a particular Synod to be rightly constituted when it is not, cannot be of great hurt to the Church where the Rule is acknowledged. For, 1. It doth not alter the nature of the matter; nor, 2. doth it alter the manner of constituting Assemblies, because one particular failing in misapplying the Rule cannot incapacitate a Church for all time to come to keep the same, especially if it be guarded that no precedent be drawn from that pattern, to bind any new sense upon the rule. 3. We say, that it would seem if any debate be such as decision may be forborne therein, this may be accounted of that nature, to wit, Whether such a particular Synod be rightly constituted, or not? because, if more corruption and inconvenience, that may be feared, follow, there are more material things to debate, and to differ upon; if more follow not, but that there may be access to an united Government whereby these suspicions may be put out of question, then it seemeth unsafe to mar that, and the fruit which may follow by the disputing of what is past.

But more nearly to take notice of such a difference, we may consider it two ways. 1. As it implieth a difference in judgement. 2. As it inferreth a difference in practice. First, then, As it inferreth the difference of judgement, of judgement, there ought certainly to be a forbearance, because such things are often involved with many difficulties and contradictions in matter of fact, that
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that it is not possible, by debating fully, to convince either party to assent to the other, especially where heat and prejudice hath some way fixed and preoccupied the judgement; and certainly, forbearance here cannot be inconsistent with the duty of Ministers, although there were not such a motive to perswade it. By forbearance we understand, 1. That none peremptorily press the other either to acknowledge the validity or nullity of such a constitution. 2. There would be a forbearance of publick debating of it, or of any thing that may occasion the same, as pressing of the Acts thereof, if no other ground support the same, but the Authority of such a Synod. And we conceive in the by, this occasion may be prevented by a mutual condescending, or joynt authoritative enacting, that such and such things, as possibly may be usefull afterward, be of force to all, if not by the former constitution, yet by the present appointment, and so both may agree in the matter. 3. A condemning of others for approving or disapproving the former constitution, would be forborn; and being the question is so little and inconsiderable in it self, it would not be odiously aggreaged or insisted upon.

Secondly, Considering it as it relateth to practice, something is to be forborn, and something is to be done. 1. For forbearance. What might involve either party in the matter of fact contrary to their judgment, would be abstained; and this forbearance in practice would be as broad as forbearance in judgment, that, as Cyprian faith, (in another case) differing brethren may both have their judgment and practice in such things at their own free arbitrements, as to such restraints. Neither can this forbearance mar the peace of any, because if such things be indifferent, and although lawfull yet not necessary, the preserving of the Churches peace, and the preventing of what offence would follow, is ground enough to abstain from such things, out of respect to the consciences of others.

Or it relates to practice, and something is to be tolerated and something done.
others. If the thing be necessary, then indeed it is not to be forborn, neither is that pleaded for here; yet the doing of it upon the account of such an authority, is not necessary; but the matter of the thing or some uncontroverted ground may be had for warranting the same. 2. That which is to be done, we conceive, is this. That there be endeavours to have some united, uncontroverted authority established, by whose authority things necessary may be done, without infringing the authority of what was past in respect of those who acknowledge the same, and also without leaving the weight of the authority upon the former to those who question the same: And we conceive this being done, neither is there any conscience straitened, nor any thing necessary for the Churches good omitted; yea, by this means there is access unitedly to seek the Churches edification, without any prejudice by the former contention; because by laying this new foundation posterior to the former, the Church is put beyond that stumbling-block, and carried over, or by the same; And therefore there is no reason to fear falling upon such a difficulty, but rather with the greater speed to make progress when men may win by it and leave it behind them. This was the way that the Ancients took in the primitive times, even when Synods in this respect might have been said to have been corrupted, when God gave opportunity they let themselves to rectifie the matter, and to do upon it what was fit for the good of the Church, without mentioning the nullity of the form thereof, or insisting thereupon. And indeed, the doing otherways seems to lay too much weight upon the authority or constitution of a Church-judicatory, as if when the same is every way regular, it could add something, or ought to have weight, where the matter is not in itself approvable; which hath been eschewed by Orthodox Divines both of old and late, who ever there-
therefore looked most unto the matter determined or decided.

If it be asked, What usually was done in such cases where the Authority seemed to be declined? From what is said, the Answer may be gathered, to done when wit. That both sides satisfied themselves with the rectifying of the matter wherein there was any grievance. And therefore, 1. it will hardly be found, when such a Declinatour was expressed in one Synod that any mention is made thereof in the next ensuing Synod that did rectifie the matter, but instantly they fall upon that: 2. We will find, that where no express Declinatour was, yet did not that any way strengthen such an Authority, nor mar the condemning thereof more than in other Synods where it was, and therefore neither is so much weight to be laid upon it, whether it be or not; for, its standing doth not weaken Authority where it is, and its removing or not being at all, doth not adde Authority where it is not, because Authority must stand and fall according to its own intrinsic grounds and warrant. And we conceive that it is not suitable to the Authority of Christ's Ordinances, and the nature of His Courts, that either the removing or standing of such a legall formality, should be rigidly pressed, and it maketh proceedings in Christ's Courts to be involved in too many subtleties that are used in humane Laws. And also supposing, that a corrupt constitution may be without such a formall Protestation, it seems to give too much advantage thereto, as if there were lesse access afterward to condemn the same; And upon the other side, supposing that a lawfully constituted Synod should be declined, as the Synod of Dort was lately by the Arminian Remonstrants, the pressing too vehemently of the removing thereof, doth suppose some way the constitution to be lesse valid if such a thing should stand. This is only to be understood in the case presupposed, to wit, Where the question is not
Great difference between the declining of Synodical Authority simply, and the constitution of a particular Synod.

not about the authority of Synods simply, but of this or that constitution of a particular Synod: the first indeed, that is, the questioning of Synodical Authority, hath been thought intolerable in all times, because it strikes at the root of Church-government and Order, without which the Church cannot subsist; But the second, which acknowledgeth the same Government in general, and Rules of Constitution, and professeth respect to that same Authority, is indeed not so intolerable, because it doth suppose still the Church to have power, and the exercise thereof to be necessary. Hence we will find, that in the primitive times they did utterly condemn appellations from Synods simply, that is, the betaking them to another Judge, as more proper than, or superior unto, such Synods; and there are severall Canons in the Councils of Africk that threaten Excommunication to such as decline their Authority and appeal to Rome, or any foreign power as a superior Judge: Yet we will find, that the Councils do allow Appeals from a lesser number to a greater, or from particular Councils to a general. Yea, from their own particular Synods to a more general hearing of others in the Province; yea, they allow even adjacent Provinces to be appealed to in case corruptions should be in one particular Province: This was enacted in the Council of Sardica, and Bishops are requested by severall Canons not to think this derogatory from their authority, because this did consist well with respect to Church-authority and Government in itself, but tended only to prevent or remedy exorbitances and abuse therein; which of it itself, if it be not abused, is not ill.
What is to be done in order to union about divisions concerning doctrinall determinations.

The question may be concerning the matter enacted by some Synod, even when there is no exception against the constitution thereof, that is, when the matter approved by it, is unsound, or when a truth is condemned, at least it is judged to be so. We are not here speaking of such matter as is fundamentall, but such as is consistent with soundness of judgement in the main, and piety in these who may be upon either side. Such as were these debates concerning the rebaptizing of Hereticks, and Schismaticks; or for the admitting them unto the Church by confirmation only, and questions of that nature, which may fall to be amongst orthodox men. I suppose it were good, that judicial decisions of such things, were not multiplied; yet upon supposition that they are past, somewhat would be said. Such determinations are of two sorts.

First, Some are meerly doctrinall, and of this kind are such questions as are concerning the object of Predestination, order of Gods Decrees, and such like, and others, it may be, which are of lesser concernment than these. These being meerly doctrinal and inferring no diversity in practice, or Worship, there is the easier access to union notwithstanding of such, respect being had to the mutuall forbearance mentioned, so that none be constrained to acknowledge what is enacted by vertue of such a decision, because such a determination in matter of Doctrine is but ministerial, and declarative: And therefore as one man may forbear another to speak his own mind in some things that differ from his, and, it may be, from truth also, and not instantly divide from him, or
or much contend with him; So. ought he to bear with a Synod and not to divide from them upon that account, he having access to to declare his own mind and the reasons thereof, and otherways to carry himself, as may keep him free of that apprehended guiltiness; and so a Synod ought to bear with some particular men that differ. But by adding the second kind, there will be ground to speak more.

The second kind is of such determinations as have not only a doctrinal decision, but also some practical consequences following thereupon: which we may again distinguish these ways. 1. They are either such consequences and practices as infer a division and opposition, or a diversity only; some consequences infer a division or separation, As suppose a Church-Synod should enact, that no persons should keep communion with such as they judge not to be godly, nor join in Ordinances, nor so much as sit down with them; Or that no persons, thinking otherways, might lawfully be ordained Ministers, or admitted to that office, as sometimes appeareth, hath been determined in very numerous Synods of the Donatists. Indeed the standing of such Sentences in force, and having execution accordingly following them, are such, as there can be no union had upon such terms. Again, some practices imply no division in Worship, or Government, but only something which possibly is in itself unwarrantable, as that Act of rebaptizing was, which was determined and enacted by several Councils in Africa: which kind of determination may be considered either as peremptory, and exclusive, that is, allowing none to do otherways, or to be admitted to Ministry and Ordinances which should not engage to do so; Or moderated, so as though it held forth such a determination concerning the fact, yet doth not peremptorily press others beyond their own light. Of the first sort were the peremptory Acts of the West-church concerning Easter holy.
holy days and other ceremonies; Of the last, were these Acts of the Council of Africa concerning the rebaptizing of Schismatics wherein none were pressed beyond their own judgement.

Again, such consequents and practices that follow Church-determinations, may either be presently necessary to be practiced and daily practicable, as suppose a Church should make constitutions for administration of Baptism and the Lords Supper, by mixing in with the essentials thereof, such and such corrupt ceremonies and additions; Or, they may be such practices as are only supposible and possible; but it may be exceeding improbable-like, at least for the future, that there shall be occasion to put them in actual exercise; though, it may be, there was some present exigent giving occasion to such a determination, which possibly may never recur. As suppose, a Church should determine, that a converted Jew, or Turk, should not be baptized in the manner that others are baptized, but some other way; it may be there was some Jew or Turk to be baptized when that determination passed; but that particular Act being by, there is no probability that ever there may be access to put the same in practice again, although it be not simply impossible. Now there is great odds betwixt these two; and in effect this last case, doth look liker a doctrinall determination when the occasion thereof is past, than any way to be practicall.

Further, we may distinguish these also in such practices, that are positively enacted to be practiced, by an authoritative Act, ordaining in such possible cases, that it be so done, that is, when such a case occurreth, men should be directed to follow the same, and Ministers should accordingly act; Or they are such cases, as do not ordain any practice to be done, but do declare such a thing to be lawfull; As suppose they should declare, a Minister might lawfully baptize a Jew so as is formerly said, without any peremp-
Some determinations are for Ministers practice, others are answers to the questions of Rulers.

In reference to all which, in the general, we say, That peremptoriness and self-willedness being excluded (which are expressly prohibited to be in a Minister) it is not impossible to attain union among faithfull, sober, and orthodox men, who will acknowledge that mutuall condescending and forbearance is necessary; which by going through the particular steps will appear: wherein we may relate to the former general grounds laid down, and be the shorter...
shorter in instances and reasons, because this draweth out in length beyond our purpose; and also, because Verbum sapienti satis est: and these especially that are concerned in this, need not by us either to be instru-
ed, or persuaded to their duty, many of whom the Lord hath eminently made use of to teach, convince, and persuade others. We shall only, as in all the rest, offer some things to their view, which may occasion the remembering of what they know, and the awaken-
ing of the zeal and affection that they have, to act accordingly.

To come then to the first sort of determinations, which are doctrinally; it may appear from what is said, that there can be no just ground of division upon that account; for, in such things a Church may forbear particular persons: and again, particular per-
sons may forbear a Church. It is not to be thought, that all orthodox Divines are of the same mind in all things that are decreed in the Synod of Dort, particular-
ly in reference to the object of predestination; yet the Synod hath not made any division by Censuring of such, neither those who differ from that determination have broken off communion with the Church, but have kepted communion: and union in the Church hath not been thereby interrupted; yet these who app-
prehend themselves to be right, cannot but think the other is in an error: and if this forbearance be not allowed, there can never be union in the Church, ex-
cept we should think that they behoved all to be in the same mind about such things, and that there should never be a decision in a Church, but when there is ab-
solute harmony; for, supposing the plurality to decide right, yet these, whose judgement were condemned, were obliged according to their light to divide, being they are in their own judgments right. It is true, I sup-
pose that it is not simply unlawful, or hurtful to truth for a Church-judicatory, out of respect to peace in the Church, to condescend abstractly to wave a ministe-
rial
riall decision without wronging of the matter; As suppose these in Africa, for peace had waved their judiciall decision of the necessity of rebaptizing in such a case; or those who determined the contrary, might have waved theirs, yet neither of them had hurt their own opinion. Or suppose, that in the decisions that were concerning Easter, upon both sides of the controversy, either had past from their decisions, and left the matter in practice to mens arbitrement without any decision, I suppose this had not been a wrong to truth (supposing it to have been on either side) And indeed considering what is written in the History, some thing like this may be gathered. For, first, It is clear, that there were determinations on both sides, and particularly, That the West Church, and these that joyned with them, did determine the Lords Day necessarily to be keeped for distinguishing them from the Jews. 2. It is also clear, That Polycrates, with many Bishops in Asia, did judicially condemn that deed, appointing the fourteenth day of the month to be keeped, So that necessarily both decisions could not stand. And, 3. this is clear also, That the way that was taken to settle that difference so stated, was, That judiciall decisions should be waved, and men left to their own arbitrement to observe what day they thought good, whether in the East or West Church, whereupon followed an union; and Polycarpus did communicate with Anicetus at Rome upon these tearms, Ut neuter eorum sententiam suam urgeret aut defenderet (as the Centuriators have it out of Irenæus) that is, that neither of them should urge or defend their own opinion: and upon this there followed peace notwithstanding of that difference. It brake up again more strongly in the time of Victor, and although Irenæus was of his judgment, yet did he vehemently presse him not to trouble the Church by pursuing such a determination, and did exceeding weightily expostulat with him for it; He wrote also to the other party, that both of them might forbear the
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the pressing of such decisions, and that the thing might be left to mens arbitrement, without prejudice to the Churches union, as formerly it had been used: this is clear from Church-history, and that word of Sosomen, lib. 7. cap. 19. is weighty. Frivolum enim, et quidem merito, judicarunt, consuetudinis gratia, a se mutuo segregare eos qui in praecipuis religionis capitibus consentirent, that is, They judged it, and upon good ground, most frivolous for men to be separated or divided one from another, because of a custome, who did agree together in the main points of Religion. And though this matter be of itself no controversy decided in the Word, (at least as it was stated) yet considering their thoughts of it, and the grounds which they allege for it, it was not so to them: and that peremptorines of Victor, who afterward would not be reclaimed from that second determination, is condemned by all, as being the ground of that following schism. And indeed in such cases, where two parts of a Church are divided, having independent authorities as to one another, and there being contrary determinations in the same question, it seemeth convenient and necessary for peace, that either both should wave their decisions, or that both should permit the decisions of each other to stand and be in force, to such only as should acquiesce therein, and willingly acknowledge the same.

Again, where there is nothing like a party or equality, but the division is in the same one Church betwixt a greater and smaller number, and the greater will not be induced to remove their determination; It is no shoul way sinful to the lesser to joyn with them notwithstanding thereof, they having their own freedom and liberty cautioned, as was formerly said; Yea, this seemeth not unexpedient that they should do for the good of the Church. 1. Because it is not so readily to be expected, that men who have such an advantage will cede to these who have it not. 2. It may have inconveniences, if a smaller dissenting number should
necessitate a Church to wave former determined truths, though possibly not fundamental, because of their dissatisfaction therewith, who esteem them not to be truths, and strengthen others in a schism, as if they could not keep union and communion with a Church where any thing contrary their mind were determined. Also, 3. it seemeth most agreeable to reason, that in sinleffe cedings, the lefter number should cede to the greater. And, 4. because by so doing, this accidental confirmation of an opinion, by having the plurality of a Church or Synod for it, is left open to the other side, when they may be the plurality. Hence we see generally, that the minor part cedeth to the greater (if the not preffing of the removal of such a decision be a ceding) yea, even when the plurality were wrong, as in that case of Africk, these who differed, did not preffe the rescinding of that determination, having their own liberty: Nor did these that had the plurality then for them, impose any bond to keep the other from rescinding their determinations, if they should come to be in such a capacity, but both kept peace for the time; and afterwards, in the days of Augustine, we will find Counsels of the Church of Africk, determining the just contrary concerning that case of Baptizing, and yet still entertaining peace and communion amongst themselves, although the authoritative decision stood always upon the side of the plurality.

C H A P. X V.

What shall be done in order to union about such decisions, as have practical consequents following thereon.

To come to the second case, to wit, anent such decisions as have some practical consequents following thereupon; For the more short answering, we shall lay down these Assertions.

Assert. 1. In such practices as are opposite, and infer division in the cases mentioned, there can be no union or communion expected, as we see in all the cases where such have been practised, as of the Novatians, Donatists, and such like; there may be more or less heat and bitterness between men that differ so: but there cannot be union, because, such determinations and practices do draw a line, and build a wall of separation between the one and the other, and so makes one side to be accounted as not of the same body.

Assert. 2. Where the consequents only infer some difference, or are not peremptorily pressed, they do not infer necessarily a division, as we see in the cases of Africk, and others mentioned; and Sozomen in the chapter cited, giveth many instances of diversities of this kind in Churches, without any breach of communion, and faith it is necessary, because, Neque easdem traditiones per omnia similes, in omnibus Ecclesiis, quamvis in omnibus consentiant, reperi re possis, that is, We will hardly find the same traditions alike in all things in all the Churches, even though they agree in all things that are material. And, upon the matter, such determinations are but indeed as if they were doctrinall to such as acknowledge them not, and men are accordingly to walk in them.

Assert. 3. In such practices as are daily practicable, in respect of the occasions thereof, union is more difficult (though not impossible) than in such cases, where the occasion of practice is not probable, because there being no present occasion to practice the same, it looketh most unwise like, to bring in, or keep in, a more certain and greater evil in the Church, for eschewing of what folks may never be put to; and suppose the case to be past, that may probably never recurre, it is more for the Churches good by abstaining the approbation of such an act, and by not being involved in the apprehended guilt thereof, to make up again the communion of the Church, for the preventing...
tting of a greater hurt, because that continueth to be a duty, and is necessary to edification; and the thing being past, ought not to be the occasion of a present and following division, as was formerly said.

If it be said, How can there be union in such a case upon the principle supposed, till (as may be said by one side) those who have decided and acted corruptly, should repent, and (as may be said by the other) till those who have divided unjustly from the Church, and wronged the authority thereof, should acknowledge their offence, without which there cannot be union? For answer to which we say, 1. What if neither party shall ever be brought to repent or acknowledge an offence? Shall the Church in such a case never attain to union? Repentance implyeth a conviction, and this implyeth information and clearness in the judgment that such a thing is wrong. Now, it being often seen that it is impossible to get men of one judgment concerning such a thing, Must therefore union be impossible till men be of one judgment? This hath been formerly disproved. 2. What if this had been the mind of the Churches and Servants of God from the beginning of the world? there had never been publick-ecclesiastic, nor privat-christian peace; for they were never all of one judgment: and to assert or write what is supposed to be an error, is proportionably a sin and an offence, as to determine it judicially; and it would infer the necessity of repentance, even in such cases, for the attaining of peace and making up of differences; And shall we thus at once condemn the generation of Gods People, who have, without proposing, or, at least, pressing of such a thing, entertained peace and union amongst themselves? 3. This would enervate all the former grounds that plead for union with forbearance, and such like, which, I suppose, will not be warrantably done.

4. This way is indeed either to make union the more impossible, or if union be attained in any measure,
both the less hearty amongst themselves, and the less profitable unto others, as hath been formely cleared.

5. We are not to respect in this, mens particular carriage or desert (which possibly would not be thought of great concernment by others, not engaged in that debate) but the Churches good is to be looked to, and what it doth require, as we may gather from what hath been formerly said. And if Church-censures (such as the enjoyning of publick repentance, or acknowledgegment of an offence, are) be to be abstained from, even in reference to open corrupt teachers sometimes for respect to the union of the Church, and for the preventing the humbling of those that are weak, and prone to divide or miscarry (if such should be censured) as we see in Paul's abstaining to censure the false teachers, Gal. 5. and 2 Cor. 10. (spoke to in the former part) much more are Censures of any sort to be abstained from upon that ground, in the case proposed, as it is considered in its matter and persons differing. Hence we may find what condescendence hath been formerly used in such cases, when union hath been closed, or proposed to be closed, (in matters possibly of greater moment than are supposed) Sine detrimento honoris, aut charitatis, that is, without prejudice to reputation, or charity. 6. We therefore say in opposition to that objection, That union is to be studied, by endeavouring to joyn in what is for the good of the Church, and by burying the resentment of each others wrongs, rather than (as Bezaleth in that fore-cited Epistle to Grindal concerning division) There should be too curious, and, as it were, contention-affecting enquiry made, who is most in the wrong, and thereby a bringing the matter to that passe, that the whole body cannot be saved, but by cutting off of some members. 7. We adde, If repentance be necessary, will any think that division is the way or mean to attain the same, which doth imbitter and confirm men in their opinion and opposition respectively, as formerly hath been said?
It will be now no great difficulty to answer in the last two cases, to wit, When the decision is a simple declaration of the lawfulness of a thing, without any positive appointment that such a thing should be put in practice, &c. For, if upon the former grounds union may be attained, and division removed in the former cases, it may be much more in this; most of all, where the matter determined, concerneth such practices as actually are to be performed but in some extraordinary case by Civil Powers. Because in such cases men may more easily condescend to forbearance, than in matters of greater necessity and concernment; and there can be but little prejudice alleged to follow unto the Church (to be put in the balance with the Churches peace) either by condescending that such a determination should be waved, or stand with the qualifications foresaid; It's true that tenaciousness in the least particular, and peremptory refusing to condescend therein, will breed a rent and schism, and make union as impossible, as if it were the greatest matter that were the ground of distance; yet it would seem, that in the case presupposed, (especially these last three being put together) that judicious, sober, and godly men should be very easily induced to condescend to each other, with the qualifications foresaid, for the Churches peace.

For, 1. The matter, although it hath a right and wrong in it, yet it is among the least of the truths that may be accounted to relate to the foundation. 2. It's in a matter most improbably practicable, and which may possibly never occur. 3. It's a determination, or an exercise of Church-power that hath least influence upon Church-matters, seeing it positively ordaineth nothing. 4. It's in a thing most extrinsick, which might have been put in practice, and usually is put in practice without the Churches intermedling therein, either pro or contra. It seemeth therefore unsuitable that such a determination in reference to such practi-

ces, should be greatly contended-for, when neither the standing of such a decision can procure, nor the removing thereof mar, the practices concerning which the decision is. 5. Supposing the qualifications foresaid, the standing of such a decision doth not strengthen the affirmative opinion, because it doth not infer any bond or obligation upon others who do not of their own accord acquiesce in the same; nor doth it give ground for alleging such a decision to any but to such as of themselves are swayed with the matter thereof: And therefore being it hath no force to bind more than would be bound with the matter if it were not; nor can infer that it is the judicial decision and judgment of such a Church, more than this, to wit, That it is the judgment of the plurality for the time, yet so as it is not acknowledged by others, and who are not to be constrained to any alteration in their judgment, or in their practice, by that determination, more than if it had never been (which is a necessary qualification of the forbearance mentioned) and supposing the said decision to be waved, these particulars would be true. Again, upon the other side, The removing of that decision doth not strengthen the negative (for that cannot be intended by such a composition that either side should be strengthened) nor doth the standing thereof weaken the same; because, according to the qualifications foresaid, not only there can be no Censure following upon it, but even as to the Determination itself, though it be not formally removed, to be no decision simply, it is no decision to them, nor can be alleged to them against their opinion, more than if it were not: And thus it becometh of equall extent with those who approve the matter, and so it doth bind only such as account themselves bound; and if men account themselves bound, the removing of such a decision, will not loose them; and if they account not themselves bound otherways, the standing thereof in such a case, will not bind them; and
and therefore, upon the matter, we suppose, it is hardly imaginable that there can be a lesser ground of division, (the qualifications necessary for union in the cases of greater concernment being granted in this) sure we are there was never division continued upon a lesser account, to whatsoever side we look; for, in effect, it is for the time to come as if that decision had never been, as to its efficacie and weight in producing any effect. And we are sure that the great Divines that have so eagerly pursued, and so much coveted union, would have thought themselves happy if they might have had it by condescending and yeelding either to the one side or the other. And though the moderate Divine Bucer, was thought to thirst after peace in the Church so vehemently, that some zealous men said, that out of love thereto he was like almost baurire fæces, that is, to drink down the dregs with it; yet I am confident, that had the state of the controversy come so near, and in such matter, and amongst such men, as is formerly presupposed, he would not have been so charged by the most rigid, although for the peace of the Church he had drunken-over all the dreggs that might be in both the cups, the mentioned qualifications being observed; For, I suppose, that the removing or standing of such a decision in the former respects, will neither be found inconsistent with any Confession of Faith, even the most full that ever was in any Orthodox Church; nor with the Fundamentals of Religion that are laid down in any Catechisms or Writings of any sound Divines; nor with the Constitutions and Acts that have been thought necessary to be enrolled amongst the Acts of any Council or Synod; nor, for ought we know, will be found to have been the matter of debate, even in the most contentious times amongst Orthodox Divines: It would seem then, that if there be a latitude allowed without hazard for one to condescend to another for the good of the Church in any thing, it must be in the case presupposed.
CHAP. XVI.

The remedies of divisions, arising from misapplication of power in ordination of Ministers, and admitting to, or debarring from, communion.

The fourth matter of controversy in reference to Government, is usually some misapplication of that power, or what is apprehended to be so in some particular acts. As, 1. Ordaining such as were not thought to be worthy. 2. Depositing others (as was thought) unjustly. 3. Admitting unto, or debarring from communion without ground respectively, and such like cases. Upon the first ground arose the great schism of the Donatists, because of the Ordination of Cecilianus, esteemed by them to be a Traditor. Of such sort also were the schisms frequently at Antioch, Constantinople, Alexandria, and other places, because some were ordained to the dissatisfaction of others. And sometimes the dissatisfaction was well grounded; because the persons ordained, were not worthy: Sometimes it was groundless; But often it tended to double Ordination, and Separation in the close. These things had need to be prevented, so as there be no just ground of dissatisfaction given by the Ordination of an unworthy man in such a time, nor any opposite Ordination to fix a schism; because these things are more difficultly removed, as hath been said: Yet supposing them to be, these generals may be proposed for healing of the same. 1. We will not find an Ordination easily counted to be null, even though done in a schism, as all the instances do clear; yea, the Orthodox flood not to account the Bishops and Presbyters ordained amongst the Donatists, to be such, because they had the essentials of Ordination, and were ordained by Church-officers. 2. We suppose it needful for peace, that there be no rigid sticking to have some
some particular Ordinations rectified, to the prejudice of the Church in general; especially, where the unfitness or unworthiness of the person is not easily demonstrable. 3. It seemeth right and just, that no Ordination of such a kind should establish one that is unworthy in the Ministry; for, that is not to be dispensed with; although it be not a valid ground to keep up a division, where the removall of such a person cannot be attained: and the most unquestionable Ordination for the form, cannot make one a worthy Minister, who otherwayes is not a worthy person. In the conferences with the Donatists, the Catholicks offered to quarrell the Ordination of none amongst them that otherwayes was worthy, nor to maintain any amongst themselves who were not worthy. 4. Yet union would not be suspended till this be done, but it is to be made up, that it may be done, as in the instance formerly given. Because, 1. this trial is the work of an united Kirk, and will require joint strength and concurrence for the same. 2. Because union is a present duty, although there were defect in such a trial, and a defect in that, will not warrant a division. 3. It is not only a duty commanded, but it is a mids necessary for promoting the triall and cen- suring of unworthy Ministers, for times of division are ever times of liberty, and thereby Authority is weakened, men are discouraged to follow it, and are other- wayes diverted, &c. 4. Because division can never be looked upon as the mean to effectuate that tryall, but it strengthens the person who is to be tryed, and leffenth the number of zealous pursuers of such a design, and incapacitates men for this duty, who other- wayes might be instrumental therein. 5. Beside, if the guilt be not so very palpable, as it may be demon- strated to be in persons, at such a time, it is safer to preserve certain peace in the Church, than to hunt for an uncertain crime, as hath been often said.

Fifthly, Where a persons being in a place, is the ground
ground of contention, and things look not satisfying-like in his way, even though grossness be not demonstrable, we think it not unbecoming the authority of Church-judicatories, which is given for edification, to appoint the removal of such a person from such a place, (as was formerly hinted) for, it looketh sad like, that a Minister's being in such a particular place, should be more obstructive to edification and to the Churches peace, than if he were not a Minister at all. And it becometh well that singleness that a Minister ought to have in seeking the edification of the Church, to yeeld to such an advice and appointment, or, of himself willingly to overture the same. For Ministers are not to plead interest in a Congregation simply, as a man doth his particular right; because every thing of this kind ought to be done with respect to the edification of the body, the promoting whereof, ought to regulate both entries and removals. It's true, there would be wariness here, lest dangerous precedents be given; yet considering, that a Minister who may somewhat peremptorily plead interest, and that jure in the Ministry, that yet cannot with that same strength of reason plead it in such and such a particular Congregation; and considering, that it is a publick good that is respected, and not the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of some in a particular Congregation, we conceive the former assertion cannot be simply denied.

Where caution Ordinations are, it is more difficult; Yet it would be considered that all these things we speak of now, are but particular: and therefore although full satisfaction should not be obtained in them, yet ought they not to be stumbled upon to the prejudice of union in generall, in which the good of the Church is more eminently concerned, as hath been said; Yet where peace is intended, we suppose this difficulty may be win over, one of these ways, which have been formerly in use in such cases. As, 1. Sometimes
times one person did willingly cede to another for the good of the Church; So did Basilius in a case formerly mentioned, for which his condescendancy he is ever highly commended. Neither can this be thought to be a casting by of the care of such a people, but rather the contrary, it is more their good that they should be united under one orthodox Minister, though the more weak man, than to continue a division with two that are more able. 2. Sometimes where two were, it was thought good to unite them in their meetings and that the longest liver should alone be acknowledged, if no other occasion offered, and neither were unworthy of the place, as in a case at Antioch formerly mentioned. 3. Sometimes both have been laid aside, where neither have been worthy, or factions have been strong for either party, and so rooted prejudice of the adherers to the one side against the other. This overture is offered by Augustine to the Donatists, for composing that difference of opposit Ordinations, which was frequent amongst them, each city almost having two Bishops; And this way hath been followed in composing many schisms, even of late. 4. Sometimes the party offended and wronged by an opposit Ordination, hath kept division down in some respect, by ceding, or withdrawing, or hiding their offence, till some probable or regular way hath occurred; rather choosing never to possess such a place than to do it by wronging of the Church, in keeping up an irregular schism, when there was no access orderly to redresse it. Thus Eusebius being offended that Lucifer had ordained Paulinus a Bishop in Antioch to a party disclaiming him, who were called Eustachians, he moderated his carriage and withdrew, waiting to have had a lawful decision, and resolving to be submissive to that. Where men mind the good of the work, it is not like but some such way will compose these things; and if these fail, we will find also adjacent Bishops travelling to compose the same; Yea, sometimes men of authority coming from very
very far; And also some by civil Authority appointed to treat therein, as in the closing of that schism at Antioch; for, schisms, arising from such discontents, are not ordinarily by meer Authority removed, because there is often something both of affection and conscience in the business: there is need therefore of mutuall friendly conferring for giving and receiving of satisfaction therein.

CHAP. XVII.

Remedies of divisions arising from the misapplication of power, in censuring, or sparing Ministers, recall or suppos'd.

Another part of the exercise of this power (which often in its misapplication, or its being pretend-ed to be so, is the ground of Church-divisions) is The matter of censuring and depositing of Ministers, and that two ways.

The one is, When some good men are deposed, or such as are supposed to be so, whereby persons that apprehend the injustice of the fact, do disclaim such a power, and adhere to such a person notwithstanding. Thus did the schism at Constantinople arise for the unjust deposition of Chrysostom, and his adherents were called Iboannite, as if they had been of another Religion: Such also was that of the Eustachians at Antioch; which being driven against honest men, and there being no condescending, at least, what was once condescended unto, being again recalled, there was no stopping of such divisions, till in the manner, formerly hinted, and that being after both their deaths. In such cases extremities are to be shunned, for, its extremity that maketh rents, that is, too little condescending on the one side, and too much tenaciousness on the other.

One extremity to be eschewed, is, When Church-judicatories are too tenacious of a past Sentence, or the
the formality of some legall advantage which seemeth to justifie the Sentence, as in that case of Chrysostom, almost all the weight was laid on this at first; That he refused to appear before them, or acknowledge their Authority as they were constituted: and although both the people and others did adhere to him, yet there was no condescending, which occasioned a great schism, and was exceedingly condemned by the generality of faithfull men in those dayes. Another extremity is, upon the other side, when for satisfaction of a Judicatory too little is ceded; or upon supposition, even of an unjust Sentence, a schism is stated, to the hurt of the Church. In this case we may observe these things, 1. That sometimes the Judicatory hath condescended to re-admit a person, otherwayes of esteem, although possibly some particular slip hath been, that in strict justice might have deserved the Sentence: this was in the case of Osian formerly cited. It is true, there is no mention of the cause wherefore the Synod of Spain did depose him, nor is it clear whether it be that famous Osian, whom the Arians deposited and whipped till he approved Athanasius his deposition; yet this is clear, that he being a man esteemed of in the Church, though possibly out of infirmity having fallen in that fault, he was for concord restored, sine detrimento honoris, without prejudice to his credit. 2. Where men have been deposed upon the breach of some legality, or contempt, if otherwayes they have been men of gifts, and approven integrity in the main, though possibly thought proud and rigid by others, as in that case of Chrysostom; they were again received into the Church, and the Sentences with consent laid by, as appeareth in the readmitting of Chrysostom after his first deposition (of the justice of whose Sentence of deposition, because there was no convincing evidence to satisfie the people, Severinus in preaching did say, That his pride was reason sufficient) which for a time removed the division, and brought a cheerful calm.
calmness, till shortly after his old enemies interrupted it, and did enter a new proceed with him, because he had re-entered his Bishoprick being once deposed by a Synod, and not having their authority; (which was grounded even upon the constitutions of Arian Councils) this being the second time driven-on against the intreaties and obtestsions of many worthy Bishops and good people who adhered to him, did again renew and fix that schism. 3. When the men were otherways corrupt, or discovered to be grosse and prophane, although many other orthodox men did interpose for them, yet by all means it was resifted; because they still supposed such worthy men that sided with such to be mis-informed. And it's observable, that the most peaceable Synods who did most for union, as those in Africk, and that of Spain, who had received Osius, because of the Churches of France their interposing, by that to prevent a schism, yet were they most peremptory, as it were, in this, and refused to receive Barfides and Martialis, as that of Carthage did refuse Apianus, notwithstanding that Rome interposed for them, giving this reason, That there was a necessity of having the Churches provided with faithfull and holy Ministers. 4. Sometimes, and oftentimes men sentenced, though possibly with too much rigidity, if not with injustice, have yet submitted with respect to the Churches peace, either totally, and upon that ground have again been admitted; or partially, by abstaining to act any thing contrary to such a Sentence, but for reverence thereunto waiting for some legal redresse, as in history is frequent; and it is fit it should be so in such cases where the hurt is particular, and proceedeth not from a common design of undoing all faithfull Ministers; because the making of a schism, doth more hurt than the contending for their particular Ministry doth edifie in such a case; and therefore sometimes though some men have been pressed to undervalue an unjust
Sentence, and to continue to officiate notwithstanding. Yet out of respect to Church-authority and order, have refused till they should be admitted orderly unto the same. Indeed when the Arians drove on the deposition of their most eminent opposers, it was otherwise, because (as is marked in the Council of Sardica) in bearing down of them, they endeavoured to bear down the truth which they maintained: But, where the controversy is not such, but the men orthodox and found on both sides, though possibly there may be some particular faults or mistakes; in such a case, it is safer for either side to cede in part, or wholly, than to keep up a division: and we conceive, when one side cedeth not, if the other should cede wholly, it would be most to the advantage of their cause, and to the commendation and strengthening of their authority in the Churches of Christ.

Debates about conniving at guilty men

The other occasion of debate in such Church-matters, is upon the defect, that is, when some are really, or are thought to be, connivers at guiltie men, or at least defective in putting of them to triall: others again, may be thought too forward and precipitant in that, whereupon ariseth difference; and if one cede not to another, it becometh the occasion of division, as may be seen in instances formerly given: Concerning which, we say,

1. That men would remember, this is but one particular of many, that tend to the Churches good, (though indeed a main particular) and so ought not to be the rise of a division, nor of continuing thereof, to the marring of the Churches peace in other things, but men ought singly to do their duty, and therein to acquiesce, without partaking of the faults of others, whether it be by being defective, or by exceeding in that mater; and seeing there may be no corrupt design in either who may be upon these extreames, it would not be so highly aggreated on either side.

2. We say, that as often difference in this, may breed
breed divisions; so again, divisions do occasion mens differing more in this: and it cannot be expected where division is, that men who are men and subject to be byass'd, can be so single in receiving testimonies of the innocency of these that differ from them, or of the guiltiness of these that agree with them, as if there were no division at all: And again, it is impossible, that where there is a difference in some other thing, that men can think others differing from them so single and unbyass'd, as they suppose themselves to be, but are still ready to construct their differing from them in this to be occasioned from some former prejudice; for, as was said, division breedeth jealousy, suspicion, and distrust among men, and men are naturally inclined to suspect that others drive the design of strengthening themselves by the sentencing of such a person, whereby they are secretly induced, even unawares, to disappoint such a supposed unstraitend, which maketh them on both sides suspect every thing, dispute every thing, and readily reject every thing that cometh from the other.

3. We say therefore, that union would not be suspended upon satisfaction in this, but rather union would be pressed, that satisfaction in this may be attained; because satisfaction in this cannot be expected till there be mutual confidence of one another's integrity: and till there be some walking together; and some further evidence of the sincerity of each other in the main businesse, this mutual confidence cannot be expected: and again, this cannot be obtained without an union, and so consequently union would be laid as a foundation for attaining of satisfaction even in this.

4. It would be considered, that oftentimes such apprehensions of extremities, which are imputed to honest and zealous men, are most groundlesse; but there being something in them as men, it is conceived on the other hand, because of secretly entertained jealousy...
to be much more. There was nothing more casten
up to the Orthodox by the Novatians and Donatists,
than that they were defective in this, in admitting
to, and retaining in the Ministry, men that were cor-
rupt. Yet after many trials they were never able to
prove what they alleged upon some eminent persons
when it came to triall, even when such things were
generally accounted true amongst them. This would
be adverted, that every general rumour be not accoun-
ted a truth, especially in the times of division, for so,
only of the most eminent on both sides should be inno-
cent. Again, on the other side, it occasioned much
heat against Chrysostom, that he had censured many of
his Bishops, and threatened many of his Clergie; this
did exceedingly provoke envy against him, and made
such men to vent many calumnies on him, which were
too much regarded, even by some orthodox and good
men, who differed from him upon another account
(as Epiphanius did upon the occasion of Origens writ-
ings) yet in no history it is recorded, that he aimed at
the censuring of any unjustly, though he did censure
with a natural vehemency, as he did every other
thing; but the history faith, men spake much of the
number of those that were sentenced by him, and of
the vehemency of his manner in reproving and cen-
suring of their faults, which they accounted to be
pride, not considering the faults for which he did cen-
sure them; But men having conceived prejudice at
him, were the readier to admit of their accusations
against him, as if they had been unjustly dealt with
by him, and upon that same ground of prejudice at
him, were the more inclinable to restore them whom
he sentenced.

5. It is to be considered also, That zeal against
such as are justly censurable, is most consistent with
a spirit of union in the Church, as appeareth by the
former instances of men most tender of union, and
yet most zealous in this: yea, these two go together; becau
e

because zeal for the Churches edification, constraineth to union, and doth also press the removing of corrupt unfaithfull Ministers, which, next to division in a Church, is the greatest plague of a Church. Therefore these things would be adverted, 1. That the purging of the Church of such, and the work of union, would be joyntly respected. Otherways if union be slighted, it will hazard the falling in too nearly with the schisms of the Novatians and Donatists, which have been so hurtfull to the Church. 2. Union when it is in competition with the deposing of some unfaithfull men, and both cannot be obtained together, it ought to be preferred, as we see the Apostle doth, 2 Cor. 10. 6. who will not cenfuse in such a case, let he state a schism; for, the continuing of such in a Church, is indeed a hurt, seing they are uselesse, and in a great part hurtfull, yet so, honest Ministers may have access to do good beside them: but when schisms enter, the hurt thereof is more comprehensive, and they do render unusefull the Minifter both of good and bad. 3. It would be considered also, that the division being in the case supposed, where men are orthodox and pious on both sides, it is not so exceedingly to be feared, that either men, palpably corrupt in doctrine, or conversation, should be enttrained upon the one side or that men useful in the Church, and blamelesse in their conversations, should be crushed upon the other. 4. It would follow also, that union should be no prejudice to the ridding of the Church of corrupt Ministers, but that it should be studied where there is need, because it is a fruit of the same spirit (to be zealous against corrupt men) from which meeknesse and moderation toward these who are not such, do proceed; and therefore if there be any such object of zeal, as an unfaithfull Minister, (as it is not like that ever the Church was, or shall be free of such) then ought men to besit themselves faithfully in the removing of such. It is marked and commended in the Angel of Ephesus, Rev.

Rev. 2. v. 2, 3. That he was eminent in patience and enduring, and yet so zealous in this, that he could endure no unsent Minister, but tried such as called themselves Apostles, &c. which contemporeature or mixture is exceedingly commended: And in reference to the scope which we are upon, zeal in this, is not only a duty as at other times, but a special mean having influence on the procuring of union; because so, one of the great stumbling stones that hath been in the Church to make the Ministry contemptible is removed, and a practicall evidence of men's zeal is given, which tendeth to lay a ground of confidence of them in the hearts of others; so, also men are kept from falling under the tentation of luke-warmness, and forgetting of every duty, but the supporting of the side, at least, that which usually is imputed in such a case, is removed; and also by this, men would find the necessity of bearing with many things in others, who may in the main be supposed to be honest: And however, it is the way to be approved before God, and to have a testimonie in the consciences of others. All which conduce exceedingly to union; whereas universal cessation from this, as if there were no such matter to work upon, and obstructing formally, yea, or materially or virtually any thing thereof, doth exceedingly tend to the fixing of division, and cooling of the affections of many that look on, without which, that is, warmed affections, there is little access to hearty union.

6. We say, that this duty of purging would not be so in its vehemency pressed, either under a division, or while union is not confirmed, as when a Church is in a good condition; because, that were to give strong physic to an unsettled weak body, that might rather stir the humours to the prejudice of the whole, than remove them: Therefore we conceive, that sobriety and prudence would be used here, in moderating of the exercise of this duty, till the union be confirmed, and
and, as it were, by preparations the body be disposed for the same: Therefore if faults be not grosse, evidences clear, and a persons unfruitfulness or hurtfulness demonstrable, (in which cases no difference amongst such parties as are to be united, is to be feared) it is safer for the Church to abstain the same, than to hazard the opening or ruffling of a wound scarcely cured, by the unreasonable pressing of such a duty. The Apostle doth in several cases spare censures of unfaithfull men, out of respect to the Churches good, as hath been formerly hinted; and as the judicious divine Mr. Gillesby (who yet cannot be branded with luke-warmness in this duty) in his Aaron's rod, maketh out, and doth give instances of several cases, wherein this forbearance is called-for. In sum, we suppose that having to do in such a case with such persons, it is more safe for men to do their own duty, keeping the peace of the Church, and to leave others to do according to the manifestnesse of things as they shall answer before God, as to their seeking the good of His Church; and if this prevail not with such men for ordering them in their duty, will any think that the keeping up, or threatening of division, will prevail?

Lastly, It would be considered, if such ends as any side would propose, either in keeping in, or purging out of men who are thought fit or unfit respectively, can be attained without union, so as with it. Therefore being that is a thing which belongeth to Government, and men are to be swayed in such Acts by what conduceth most to edification, when they cannot attain the length they would (as we suppose men shall never do, in this matter of purging) they then are to walk by this rule of choosing what comparatively is most edifying, as was formerly said. Sometimes also difference hath been about the excommunicating of persons, or readmitting again to communion: But what concerneth this may be somewhat understood from the former grounds, wherein extremities would be shunned,

The last thing in Government, which was proposed, as that whereabout differences and divisions do arise, is, in reference to Government for the time to come, and resolves in this, Who shall have chief hand in the decision of matters that after may fall out, supposing the union to be made up. This results from the present diffidence and prejudice which each hath in reference to other, and from that impression that men have, that there will be a driving of sides, according to power, even under a concluded union: And indeed somewhat may be feared and expected, at least for a time, considering men's distance in such a case; for, if diffidence and suspicion be come to that height under divisions, that one will not trust another in some petty particular fact that is past; or lay by jealousy where no proof is, notwithstanding of all solemn attestations; it's no marvel that in matters of greater consequence which are to come, they do not easily give them credit. This is often the greatest business to be composed in a difference: hence it is, that sometimes bygones, which have been the rise of the division, may be removed, when as yet this cannot be composed, because there is no way conceivable how both parties may have the chief hand in Government, and neither being willing to cede to the other, either from a secret ground of
of fleighting one another, or from that root of suspicion whereby they conceive all lost that the other is able to carry over them, whereby from fear of hazarding the Churches good condition, they run here in a certain prejudice, and, in some sense, fall in that inconvenience, which a Writer observeth on the contending of two Bishops, expressed in this as the ground of their division, *Unus ut praesent alter ne subesse*, *sed neuter ut prodeisset*; which is often-times, on the matter, too true in all such contests, this last being a consequent of the former two.

This difference may be considered two ways, 1. As it pretendeth a dissatisfaction with the persons who are to govern; some, upon the one side, thinking it unfit to joyn with prophane men; some, upon the other, disdaining to joyn with Schismaticks. In this strait were the Fathers of the Council of Carthage in their dealing with the Donatists; some of them asserting, on the one side, That there was no uniting with such as the generality of the Catholicks were; and Augustine often citeth the word of Primianus, given in to them as an Answer to the desire of a Conference, *Indignum est ut in unum convenient filii Martyrum, & progenies traditorum*; that is, *It is a most unseemly thing that the sons of Martyrs, and the brood of Traditors should assemble together in one place*. On the other hand, they were pressed from Rome and parts adjacent, not to unite with these Schismaticks the Donatists, as may be seen in that Council; yet did they find it their duty to seek union with them notwithstanding, and to admit, that such of them as were put before from their Churches, should be reposseffed by him that was appointed Cognitor, and deputed by the Emperor in that Conference, *Ut eo modo eos ad conferendum etiam beneficiis invitaret*; that is, *That so he might invite them to conference at least by such benefits*. This principle, we suppose, ought not, nor will not stick in the hearts of such men, and in such a case, as is presupposed, and it
it leadeth to a These, That there is no communion in Government to be kept, where, upon any of the former accounts, men are displeased with such persons as are joyned therein with them: and though affection, and sometimes inclination, being stirred with prejudice and discontent, will be ready to make some such practices to be plausible, which do infer this; yet, I suppose, the Thesis itself will not be maintained, more than such a ground will warrant Separation in any other Ordinance; and the grounds formerly laid down in several parts of this discourse, will not admit of such a principle, which, if admitted, would exclude union for ever, We shall therefore passe this.

The second and main difficulty then, is, In the ordering of things so for the time to come, as the ends of union and government may thereby be obtained, and that nothing that may be justly feared by one side or other, may be altogether slighted. In reference to this, it will not be expected that we should be particular or satisfying, yet not to leave it altogether imperfect. We shall, first, propose some general considerations, to mollifie the sharpness of division upon this account. 2. Offer some general helps, which in such cases may be thought on. 3. Lay down some advertisements upon supposition that full satisfaction be not obtained.

We propose these considerations to be thought on concerning this, 1. In such a thing it is impossible that men on both, or either side, can expect full satisfaction to their mind, or even simply to their light; because men have not the carving out of what is good to the Church simply before them, but comparatively and in reference to such and such a circumstantial case; and therefore must resolve, that respect must be had to the satisfaction of others as of themselves; for, it is not the satisfaction of one side that maketh up union, but of both: and therefore it must be resolved to be such a satisfaction to both, as neither is fully
fully and simply satisfied therein; and for that cause it's not to be expected that in such a case all inconveniences which are possible, can be satisfyingly prevented, or questions concerning the same answered. I doubt if in any case there will be full satisfaction as to these.

2. Let it be considered, if the abstaining of uniting will prevent these inconveniences upon either side, and if it doth not rather bring on greater, and more upon the Church; and if inconveniences sway, which are lesser and more uncertain in the one case, those which are greater and more inevitable, ought to sway more in the other; for, it's already presupposed, that joyning doth not make one guilty in these inconveniences, more than abstaining doth.

Yea, 3. Let it be considered, if by continued division, men be not necessarily guilty of the inconveniences that follow it; because (to say so) they follow it per se, or naturally and necessarily, whereas the other follows upon union but by accident at the most: Other considerations, formerly mentioned, are also to have weight, and ought to be remembered here.

We come now to consider the helps which may in part be useful to prevent these fears. In reference to which we would, 1. consider, that the matter feared, is not the bringing-in of unsound doctrine in the general, nor the altering of practical rules to the strengthening of prophanity, But it is the misapplication of good rules already made, especially in reference to these. 1. The admitting of unfit Officers in the Church. 2. The depoing of such as deserve the same. 3. The decision of some particular differences that may occasionally occur in the carrying-on of Church-affairs, wherein men may apprehend and fear partiality, as they shall occur: which grounds of fear upon either side, we may gather from what hath been formerly hinted.

Concerning the matter of deposition, we have spoken
ken already and shall say no more. Concerning the other two points, we may consider them either as they are concerning things past, before the union be made-up during the division; or, as they relate to what may occasionally fall out afterward.

Concerning what is past in such debated particulars we have spoken already, and, it seems, one of these three ways must be taken in reference therunto.

1. Either by waving of these things (if they be such as may be waved) so that without insisting in them, they may be buried; or, by one parties ceding; or, by a mutual composure, they may be instantly settled.

2. If that cannot be, the union is not to be suspended thereon, but some mutually may be appointed to labour in the same afterward, that with consent it may be brought to a point, which is not to be thought desperate, although it be not ended for the time. This way of mutuall conferring is naturall, as being an approven mean for compoising of differences of any sort, in any place, at any time.

3. If that please not, or attain not the end, the matter may be amicably referred to some acceptable to both, who may be trusted with the ultimat decision in such particulars: neither is this unbecoming Church-authority to tocondescend, nor Ministers in such matters to be submissive. For, 1. it is no matter of doctrine wherein they are to decide, or wherein either party is to acquiesce, but it is in some particular practicall thing. 2. The Submission is not in a difference betwixt a thing sinfull and a thing lawfull, but betwixt two things that are lawfull, which of them comparatively is the most expedient to the Church in such a case; wherein I conceive, it were not implicit walking, though men should acquiesce in the judgment of some others in such things, more than in their own.

3. It would seem, that that advice of the Apostles's, 1 Cor. 6. (Is there not a wise man amongst you? &c.) is proposed in the general, to prevent all such strife and contention
Part 4. *A Treatise concerning Scandal*.

contention, as doth bring scandal with it; and therefore ought not to be excluded in this case, seing there is a gift of prudence and wisdom given unto the Church for the governing of her self, and is more eminently given to one than to another, even as the gift of knowledge is for doctrine; and therefore we conceive that in such cases, such may warrantably be trusted with such particulars, seing it might be expected that they would endeavour to make the best thereof for the good of the Church. In that conference with the Donatists, we find that the Donatists are desired to name one for themselves, who might joyn with the Cognitor appointed to judge of such particulars and matters of fact, as were in debate betwixt the Catholicks and them; and their refusing thereof was looked upon as an evidence of their not desiring an end of the controversy: Neither is it to be thought, that Augustine and nigh 300. Bishops with him who yeelded thereto, did undervalue the matter in debate between them, though they were content to have differences in fact so decided. We find also, that for the removing almost of all the forementioned schisms, there were particular men, either deputed by Synods, or commissionated by adjacent Churches, or called by themselves, for the composing amicably of such practical differences as were the occasion of their rents: And, it may be, that were this more used for composing of Church-differences, the height that oftentimes they come to in particulars, might be prevented.

We here think not fit, that such things should be decided by Church-judicatories by a meer authoritative decision: not out of any dis-respect to Church-Judicatories; but because, as was formerly hinted in the generall grounds, Church-judicatories are fitter for preventing such divisions than for removing of them: And further, a Church-judicatory being in all publick divisions a party, such decision would look
look liker submission (which men are not so easily induced unto) than union. Befide, such a way is more ready to breed heart-burnings in such things as have been the matter of contest formerly, and so is palpably in hazard to brangle an union scarce begun: Also, men will more easily bear any decision wherein themselves have a consent, though it were mediatly by committing it to some others, than where there is only a necessity of obeying; and especially where such prejudice is conceived to be in the Judge, as in the case supposed. This may be clearer from what may be said afterward.

Better for a time to forbear many things, than to brangle union.

For regulating things which may occasionally fall out, for the time to come, we may propose these general helps to be considered. 1. That there be an abstinence from what may readily seem to prove the occasion of any difference, at least for a time: and it is better to forbear many things, than to brangle union, or grieve a party with whom we have united; Yet generally it appeareth, that it is driving and not forbearing, that breedeth division, and also grieveth men after union, and tempts them to rue the same. Neither is this a bar to any from a necessary duty, it only regulateth men in the doing of necessary duties, so as they may eschew the guilt of renting the Church, or grieving of others; or, at most, it relateth but to the tyming, manner, or some other circumstance of a necessary duty: As suppose in the matter of planting a Church, a division should in all appearance be like to arise, It is more fit that it should be for a time suspended, and other endeavors for facilitating the same used, yea, ere a breach be, that even other persons be fought out; for, though it be duty to plant the Church, and that with none but such as are worthy, yet it is not alway a necessary duty to plant such a particular Church, at such a time, and in such a manner, and with such a worthy person; Yea, it were better for the Church, and more peace to the persons mind;
mind, that such a particular place should take for several years, than that the peace of the Church, or composedness of her Judicatories, should be marred thereby, and so in other matters wherein forbearance is called for.

2. In such a case, doubtful practices would be abstained; and whatever side men choose in any occurring particular, it would be such, and in such a manner done, as may be convincingly approvable unto any of whatsoever side; for, it is often uncertain things, or disputable at the most, that breed differences amongst judicious sober men: men therefore would someway confine themselves within unquestionable things for a time, and not only have respect to their own consciences in such things, and to what is right in itself, but also to others, who want not their own suspicions and jealousies, and who by their deed may either be soon tempted, or grieved; both which they ought to shun.

3. We conceive, that it is useful in such a time to have many brotherly consultations, and conferences, concerning such things as may be moved, that things come not in abruptly; for, so sometimes men may be surprised with somewhat they have not heard of, and become jealous where there is no ground: Also, it is an evidence of respect so to communicate thoughts, and men may thus know what is fit to be moved, and what not; whereas otherways, men may be soon engaged in opposition to a motion, and not so easily brought off. This communication would not so much be by appointment of others, as voluntary, and out of respect between particular persons: Also, it would be respectively done to the person with submission to his reason, that is, if he seem reasonably dissatisfied therewith, and do not relish the same, the motion would be forbore, at least for a time, and the other waited upon therein, till he come up to it, or at least connive at it; this would breed confidence and
and make the designs joint. And this way that is to
be followed in the first moving of things, would also
be continued in the promoting thereof.

4. Matters of difficulty would rather be committed
to deputed persons than instantly decided, especially
in superior Judicatories. The reasons are, 1. Be-
cause ordinarily superior Judicatories cannot wait
the time that fretted spirits will require to bring busi-
nesses of difficulty to any cordial close. 2. It seemeth
respectively like when they are so taken notice of, and
sleighting like when things are hastened. 3. Neither
so are all after-murmurings and risings of heart pre-
vented, when things are not heard to the full. 4. Be-
cause time may do many things, and that may be easie
er long which is difficult now. 5. In such deputa-
tions there is more accesse to have respect to the ap-
pointing of such persons, as may most probably ef-
fectuate the thing for the Churches good; and, no
question, a Church-judicatory is to take the way
which may do the thing best, as well as a particular
person, and they are to abstain from debatable things
and hasty conclusions, even as particular persons are:
and oftentimes experience teacheth, that such Com-
missions expedite many things, which more frequent
Assemblies could not so well do. Hence we will find,
that it was ordinary in the primitive time upon such
grounds, to give Commission to some few to do things,
and particularly, that often-mentioned Council of Car-
thage did think good to dissolve, and to depute so ma-
ny for deciding that, in matters of discipline, which
they could not by themselves so well be able to com-

Not unfit, some persons
were des-
sign'd for a
time to com-
pose occasio-
nal diffe-
rences.

5. We conceive also, that it were not unfit in such
cases (for a time at least) to have some designed by
mutual consent, who might compose such occasional
differences as possibly might arise; or, who at least
might have so much power as to restrain and keep
down the same from being a new ground of division.
to the Church, or matter of great grief to any party. This is not to constitute a new Judicatory, but according to the light of nature to provide a mean for keeping up of order, and preventing of confusion, when, in respect of the present distemper of spirit, there is no possibility for attaining that end by the constituted Judicatory: Nature in such a case teaches all men to seek for order in every society, and it being supposed that there cannot be a joyning in ordinary Judicatories without this, and that it might be attained with this, it's hard to think, that that is denied to the Church which agreeth to all other societies; or, that it can be said, that it is better to want union in Church-judicatory, than to have it so qualified. Sure some Churches would, and do think much to attain this length, as appeareth by the many voluntary associations which worthy men have been led unto, for the keeping of order, and attaining of some union, who are yet good friends to Church-government; and the reason that warranteth them in their deed, to wit, the necessity of union and order in the Church, and the impossibility that there is of any further mean for attaining the same, will warrant this practice in the case supposed; for, the question is not simply, What is the best constituted Government of a Church in a good condition? but it is, Whether a Government with such a qualification, be better than no Government, or a divided Government, it being supposed that no other in the circumstantial case can be attained?

It would be considered also, That such a voluntary reference to such persons, doth not include any authority, as to ordain Ministers, or depose, &c. but it is to be in matters of fact, as in the fitness or unfitness of such a Plantation, of such a Process, and the like; which was mentioned in reference to differences past; for, what was said there, is also binding here.

Neither can this be thought any limitation or weakening

weakning of Church-authority and power: For, 1. It doth make that authority and power stronger than formerly it was without this, in the case so circumstantiate; and the question still is to be considered not in thes, but in hypothesi. 2. Because this is for the recovery and strengthening of an authority that for the time is not in exercise, at least in such an extent, and it is to give the same a being, as it were, and to bring it to its former luster; as if a weak man should be led, or get a staff in his hand till he recover; or, as if a disjoyned leg should be fenced about otherways than one that is whole, and so be the sooner in capacity to walk without these. 3. This is but a temporary accessor help, and is not pleaded-for as an essentiaal of Government, but only as a lawfull expedient when it cannot be wanted. 4. It may be considered that possibly no use may be thereof, and if so, it can be no encroachment; and if there be need thereof, so as things cannot cordially be composed otherways, Is is not expedient then, for the preventing of a further inconvenience? 5. I suppose it is not inconsistent with Civil Authority, when union is made-up betwixt two Nations, or in the same Nations, especially where Authority hath been brangled, that some by joynt consent be chosen for deciding of such things as may occasion a new breach: and there are many instances of this in history; for, the being of Authority is cumulative to the means that men are naturally furnished with, for the preserving of union and order, and therefore it cannot exclude such prudential considerations.

Neither can it be thought inconsistent with the nature of Church-authority and Government: For, 1. If it be agreeable to the principles of nature and found reason, it cannot be inconsistent with Church-government, which hath its own policy grounded upon these: And although the form of Government be not to be gathered from these, nor the ends which they should
should aim at who govern, yet the manner how such a Government is to attain these ends, is in positive things to be regulated by them: hence sometimes men are to use intreaties and persuasions, sometimes threatenings and authoritative means, according as the end may be attained. 2. Although Church-government in the general be determined, and men be not free to associate or not, yet there is much, as to the exercise thereof in associating, and the particular manner mutually agreed upon, which still may regulate circumstances, though they cannot alter the nature of the thing. 3. It is not necessary that Church-authority should be always exercised in every thing; for, it is not to be exercised but when it is to the Churches edification, and there is no such Church-authority as edifies not; and therefore, if in such cases the interposing of Church-authority in the ultimate decision of matters be not edifying, it is no encroachment upon it to say it should not be exercised in that case; and so at the most, that which dependeth upon this reference, is, only prudentially to discern and judge, if in such and such a case, it be fit for the Churches edification, that Church-authority should decide in such a particular matter, wherein not the authority or power, but the prudence, zeal, and faithfulness of such persons are to be respected for the obtaining of a forbearance. 4. We will find the great Apostle oftentimes condescending to lay by his authority, and to intreat and beseech, especially in the matter of union; and sometimes to advise, when he thought his intreaties might more kindly prevail; or, when he thought his authority might be questioned, or his authoritative acting hazard a schism: which grounds, being moral, may warrant a Church in such a case unto the end of the world to follow his example. 5. Seeing union is maintained when it is weak by the same means by which it is begun, (for union is not compleated when some agreement is closed,) and seeing, as we said, an author-
authoritative way is not fittest for conceiving and bringing forth the same; so neither will it be for giving of it suck and milk till it be able to abide stronger meat. 6. Seeing Church-authority is parental, and that of the tenderest sort, it is not unbecoming that it condescend even to the weakness and childish dis tempers of some members, supposing there be such standing in need thereof; and if such condescending may joyn them in and keep them in, in their own place, and prevent even their fnares and miscarriages more effectually than authoritative means will do, which are for the time suspected by them; ought not such means to be followed? And if they should continue in their infirmity to stumble at the peremptory using of authoritative means and the denial of this; will it be thought a sufficient ground to exoner men from having accession unto their fall? or will it look like that tenderness and condescendancy which mothers and nurses ought to have to children, even in their childish and unreasonable moods? 7. This also mis-states the question, because its here to be considered (as was said) not what is the nature of Church-authority simply, but comparatively, what is fittest for procuring the edification of the Church, and for a time to be a mean for recovering her to a full authoritative manner of acting, which is now supposed to be brangled. Beside, if the recovery of Church-authority be a duty requiring means to be used suitable to that end; then the use of this mean must be a duty: because, in the case supposed, it is the most probable mean for attaining to that. If it be said, that it is a more ease way to acquiesce in the authoritative determination, and it were more fit for men to submit to that. Answ. That supposeth no present dis tempers to be, and answereth not to the case stated, which is upon the supposition that men do not that; Is not this more fit for present edification, and more probable for attaining to a full authoritative way
way of acting, than the continuing of a division without condescending in this? In the last place, also it may be considered, That the exercising of Church-authority in particular cases, *hic et nunc,* is an affirmative precept, and therefore doth not bind *ad semper,* according to the common rule of affirmative precepts; it cannot therefore be unsuitable to it, or the precepts by which it is commanded, to add such qualifications as are mentioned in the case presupposed.

**CHAP. XIX.**

**Some advertisements concerning the overtures proposed.**

To come now to some advertisements according as we did propose; we must shortly put them together, lest we be too prolix in every thing.

1. Then it would be adverted, That there is no peremptoriness urged in any of the former helps or remedies, but if other means may be found more effectuall, all these are to cede. Only this is intended, that if no more probable and effectuall means be found out, or applied, that it is better on such like grounds to unite than to continue a division.

2. It is to be adverted, That there may be, and ought to be such a condescending, in the concluding of, and fixing on the means, (especially for the time to come) as by the expressing of time, manner, and other particular circumstances of things, the fears of both may be someway guarded against, and each by shewing respect to other, may endeavour the removing of their mutuall jealousies; for, being jealousies are mutuall, it will be too much for one side to think that the other should wholly credit them, if there be no condescending by them.
3. Although there should be fears that things should again break out, and that therefore it is to no purpose to undertake a way of union, not every way satisfying; yet it would be essayed, and if the Lord prevent that fear, such an objection is loosed; if some interruption come again to hazard an outbreaking, these who are accessory thereto, will be the more guilty, and others who are innocent therein, may have more peace, than if it had not been essayed.

4. If union cannot be compleated in every thing, then their would be endeavours to fix it so far as is attainable, and to prevent the increasing of division, that if there may not be a positive union, at least, a positive division and opposition may be shunned.

5. It would be endeavoured, that notwithstanding such divisions, men may mutually concur in that wherein there is no division for the edification of the Church: for, division in one particular ought not, nor will not warrantably hinder mutual acting in other things where there is none: As for instance, if it be an interruption in carrying on the work of God joyntly in Government, because of some difference concerning that; yet if there be access to promote the edification of the body by an united way of preaching, that is to be followed and improved, as we see it is done in some places where Government is not allowed.

6. Whatever the case be, we suppose it is duty to make the best thereof, when men cannot win the length they would.
CHAP. XX.

What is incumbent to Magistrates and People for remedying this evil.

It refeth now that we should speak something, to what is incumbent to Magistrates and People, for remedying of such an evil in the Church; but being kepted so long on the former, we cannot enter on this; We shall only lay down these few generals,

1. That neither of them ought to be offended or stumbled at such divisions, or thereby be brought to have lesse esteem either of the Gospel, the Ordinance of Government, or Worship, or the Ministry and Ministers of Jesus Christ; much lesse would there be insulting over, or advantage taken against, these upon this occasion, as is recorded to the infamy of severall persons; but on the contrary, all would be affected therewith, as with a most dangerous snare, and fearfull plague: And to this purpose Augustine doth seriously press his Boniface, Governour of Africk, that he should not stumble at the divisions of the Church, and particularly Epift. 50.

2. All would search if they have had any sinfull influence upon the procuring of such a stroke; for, if it be a plague and wo to them, they would look back to the rile thereof; who knows but the sins of Magistrates or People in their fretting at the Ordinance of Government, despising of the Ministry, not receiving of the Word nor walking answerably there- to, and such like, may have procured this division from the Lord, as a judicial stroke on them to harden them in their former sin, and thereby to strengthen their tentation to despise all the Ordinances more to their own ruin, as may be gathered from what hath been formerly spoken?

3. All would be careful to abstain from what may further
further or heighten the breach, and by all means endeavour not to be engaged in such sildings; for, that often encourageth others, and increaseth and fixeth a rent; and in experience it is seen, that these schisms were ever most dangerous, and most difficultly removed, wherein people came to party, and side with opposit sides in the division: and seeing the Spirit in the Scripture, doth forbid people as well as Ministers to divide, this must be their duty, not to joyn in such a division. Also, it unfits them to get good from Ministers, or to do good for removing of a rent amongst them. And we are sure, If doubtfull disputations, vain jangling, and such like questions, that tend not to edification, be to be eschewed by people, then we conceive that such as are in the cases presupposed, may be so esteemed of.

4. They are by all respective means seriously to press the abstaining from, and composing of such differences, by their serious representations of the ills thereof, and exhortations, according to their places to have the same remedied. And were this more amongst people, upon occasions in due manner, to testify their sober resentment of such evils in the general, and desire of union, and condescendancy for attaining the same, so far as is fit, it would much more become the sobriety of tender Christians, and be much more effectual for this end, than to be heightening and aggreging the miscarriage of any one party to another, or carrying reports or informations true or false, which may kindle humours to a flame that are hot and smoaking already. It would affect a heart to hear the regraits and expostulations that Constantine, Gratian, and others, have anent the divisions of Church-men in their times and their exhortations to remedy the same.

5. All sorts would endeavour to be in good tears with God, in respect of their own particular conditions: and when all faileth, they would still be instantly dealing with God by prayer for healing of the same
Treatife concerning Scandal.

fame, as accounting it a great plague, even to them, while this continueth.

CHAP. XXI.

The grounds and motives of the desired union.

The last thing proposed to be spoken to, was, the grounds whereby union on such like terms, in such cases, might be pressed: but seeing somethings to this purpose have been already here and there inserted, upon several occasions; and seeing these who are mainly concerned in this, are supposed to be most tenderly zealous of the Churches good, and so not to stand much in need of many motives to persuade to this which doth so nearly concern the same; and fearing to heap up too many words in a matter so clear, we shall forbear to insist, and only propose some considerations to the conscience of the tender Reader, especially in reference to some particular circumstances, which sometimes may occur in the case of division. And let God Himself, who is the God of peace, of love, and of order, put them home to consciences with a strong hand.

First, The conscientious Reader may consider, when all is well weighed that is formerly proposed, with what may besides occur to himself, if the study of union be not a most necessary thing, and if without the essaying of these and such like means, according to his interest and calling, he can have peace, as being sufficiently exonered in his duty, in reference to this great end; and if there can be solid quietness to continue division upon the grounds mentioned, and to slight the pursuing after union, if attainable, upon these or such like terms as are proposed, especially in these and such other cases.

1. When a Church is under externall crosses and afflictions, and by Gods dispensation is cast into the fur-
furnace; to be therein strugling and wrestling one with another; and, as if it were in the time of the Churches greatest peace and calm, to be contending for matters of such concernment. O how unsuitable is it! Though indeed condescending be called-for at any time, yet certainly, much more and in an especial manner at such a time. The judicious, and great Divine Calvin, doth, upon this account, exceedingly aggrege the divisions amongst some English in Frank ford, who being banished in the dayes of Queen Mary for the same Religion, did even there contend for matters of little moment. This (faith he, Epift. 200.) was exceeding intempestiv, or untimous, and exceeding offensive to the Church of Christ, and unbecoming their case: And although he utterly disapproved these ceremonies, as unbecoming the Church of Christ; Yet doth he (Epift. 206.) preshe moderation on both sides, using these words, Sicut autem eos qui à vobis dissentiebant hortatus sum, ut qua possent moderationem inflecterent; ita mibi displacuit, nihil viciissima parte vestra recedivel remitti, that is, As I did exhort these who were not of one mind with you, to stretch themselves with all possible moderation; So it did displease me, that there was upon the other hand by you, nothing ceded or remitted.

The second case is, When a Church by division, is laid open to grosse hereticks, who wait the occasion of such a division, that they may make (as it were) an infall upon her. Division should be shunned at any time, but in such a case, union should be at any rate, of warrantable condescending, purchased. In that difference between Eusebius and Basilius, at first it was sufficient to eschew division; for which end at Naxianens desire, Basilius removed; but when the Arians were like to take advantage thereof, he did again return, and by his condescending made up a perfect union, thereby to stop the door against the in-breaking of errour upon that people: Which fact is ever highly commended, even in respect of the seaso-

3. A third case wherein union would especially be studied. Is, When there is little help from without, to the sustaining of the Government and order of the Church; but men in that respect, have and take liberty to act as they will; because then union is the only wall, and if that fall, there is nothing to guard. Hence it is, that necessity, especially in such a case, hath made men think upon associations and mutual bonds, for the establishing and confirming of union.

4. It is, when some of the Ordinances, especially the Ordinance of Government, is questioned, or when they are despised, and somehow made contemptible before men: in such cases, for respect to the Ordinances of Christ, men ought to condescend to the utmost, and to endeavour the recovery of the Ordinances of Christ to their former beauty, which is impossible to be attained without this; because division maketh all to appear contemptible.

5. It is, when there seemeth to be some special nick, or choak, or crisis (to speak so) that is, When, if there be not present uniting and gripping, in all probability, the division and breach will grow greater and wider, and be more difficulty removable. In such a case men ought to stretch themselves with all the moderation that is possible (as Calvin's expression is) if they may now, at least, through God's good hand upon them, come to some agreement, and taking grip (to say so) while it is possible. And if each of these alone, strongly press the study of union, even beyond what is ordinary; O how very strongly will all of them, put together, press it! And how actively should men, zealous for God and His precious Ordinances, and tender of the edification of souls, bestir themselves to follow after peace in such a vehemently urging case?

The second thing that would be seriously considered and thought upon, is, What is the possibility, and feasible-

feasableness, and access to attainment, of such a desirable end. It is true, tenaciousness in some, may make union in the least things impossible, especially such as may by his grace, gifts, esteem, or the dependence of others upon him because of these, have some special stroke and influence upon the thing: But the Reader would consider,

1. If someway the stick be not at himself, and if there be not something possible to him, in reference to union, which yet he hath not condescended to; for, although he hath not power over the wills of others, yet hath he over his own.

2. Let him consider, If the ills that follow division be not great and certain: and if so, if the flopping at any step of the condescending called-for, will bear out the conscience against the cries of so many reproaches that are casten upon Ordinances by some; against the many challenges that will arise upon the miscarriages of others, that are occasioned by such divisions; and against the impression that the weighting and sadning of many honest hearts, will have with it one day? And if he dare step in to judgment, without fear of being found faulty in any measure in respect of the forementioned inconveniences; if his condescending, as is called-for, might have prevented them.

3. He would consider, if at the appearing of Jesus Christ, when all such affections shall be laid by, and disputings will not have place, nor recriminations be admitted; if, I say, in such a case he may not have more peace in condescending upon either side, as is proposed, for the good of the Church, than by refusing the same to keep up the division.

4. It would be seriously pondered, whether union by such condescendancy, or division without it, may be most profitable and edifying to the Church; and if any of these things be of such consequence, as to stand in the way of the Churches further edification.

5. The Reader may consider, if ever in the practice of
of the primitive times, or in the writings of orthodox and sober Divines, old or late, any so circumstancial division will be found warrantable, or if, out of the heat of debate, they would probably have stuck at any condescension that is here required upon either hand.

6. It may be considered, If all the present reformed Churches being appealed unto in such a case, were singly and impartially to give judgement thereon, whether it could upon any ground be thought, that they would judge such condescending unlawful upon either side, if by it and no otherways union were to be attained?

7. It would be considered, That if all that ever have written on this subject of old or late were consulted, that (for ought I know) it will be found that the condescension that they allow for attaining, and preserving of union in the Church, will be of a larger extent, than any thing in this case required; And, I suppose, hardly will it be found, that from such writings there will be a sticking allowed upon any such thing as is proposed. And will it be safe, at once to condemn so many?

8. The Reader may reflect on himself, and try what are his thoughts of former divisions, and if he doth not approve most ordinarily these that were most peaceable, and always these that in such a circumstanced case did study condescendancy; and if he doth not within himself judge, that it had been more for the Churches good, that such divisions had been removed upon such like terms, than that they should have been continued; and if there be not in his bosome a kind of indignation at the rigid drivers of such a division, whereby he may know and discern what is fit to be done in the present case, if he were as impartial in it, as in the other.

9. He may consider, If union be not made up upon such or the like terms; and if upon other terms
it be impossible. What will follow, or what usully doth follow in such cases? Doth not bitterness grow to a height amongst orthodox men, as if each of them were enemies to the truth of Christ, and enemies to one another's persons? names also are often imposed upon each by the other, as if they were not both of the same body; or, as if it were good service to God, and advantage to the Truth, by such designations to render one another odious, contemptible and uselesse: As these that refused to joyn with the Church of Rome in Easter, were called Quarto-decimani; whereupon followeth abstinence in communion with one another, turning aside unto errour and novelty amongst some; indulgence if not connivance at, and compliance with grosse and corrupt men amongst others; coldness in zeal to God, and love one to another; and upsetting in the power and practice of godliness amongst all, and many such like wofull effects. And shall, alas, shall the weight of all these sad and Religion-ruining consequents, be stated upon the refusing of such condescendency as is here called-for? God forbid.

10. It would be seriously considered, what may be the thoughts of the generation that shall succeed? Shall such a division be propagated to them, and they made heirs thereto? Shall not they either continue miserable under such a condition, and that for ever, with such heightening circumstances as cannot but follow? (and will any ingenuous and posterity-compasionating Reader think of this, and not be affected therewith?) Or they must endeavour the recovery of union with much more difficulty than it may now be; and if so, certainly that generation will be in hazard to curse these that went before them, who did bring them forth under the necessity of continuing under the sin, share, and torturing-plague of divisions; or, at least, of being in so greatly-puzzling and perplexing straits, ere they could expedite themselves out of the same.
11. If yet the Reader be not convinced positively to join and further union in such a case, let him yet consider if he hath sufficient clearnesse to oppose and cry down the same as sinfull, and if he hath liberty and freedom to cry down all that ever have approved or do approve the removing of a division upon such terms as these proposed? and if he dare with confidence from his own particular dissatisfaction, mar the same amongst others? and if possibly he might not have more freedom negatively to lye by, and neither directly nor indirectly to be the occasion of such an offence; and if the Church might not have more profit, and he more peace in so doing? and if he be satisfied, he may consider whether it were not better to endeavour such a composure, though to the dissatisfaction of some (who possibly may afterward lay by their discontent) than out of preposterous respect to them, to hazard the ruine of all? which is, as it were, to bring a leaking ship to land in a storm, though some of the company, upon some mistake, oppose the same.

12. Let him consider, if ever condescending in such things hath been observed to bring any hurt to the Church; whereas selfwillednesse (whereof a Minister especially should be free) hath alwayes been dangerous. It's true, 

"aurusia in points fundamentall, such as that which Anastasius pressed, hath been most zealously opposed as hurtfull, because thereby the foundation was strucken at, and error in fundamental things got equal footing with truth; But can ever this be said in such things as are supposed in the case laid down?"

"Lastly, The Reader may consider, if in soberness, and in an abstracted manner extræstum disputations, he were giving his advice to a Church so divided, and immediatly thereafter to step in to judgment, he would not readily incline to commend union on these or such other terms, as necessary for the good of the Church"
Church, credit of the Ordinances, and the removing of stumbling-blocks from before the people, especially in the cases formerly mentioned; and if he might not have more peace to step to judgment after such an advice, than if rigidly he should inhibit such condescension. And we shall leave the judicious, conscientious, and tender Reader, to answer these and many such things to himself, and accordingly to do: and if any, out of prejudice, (as we hope none will, and heartily with none may) shall not conscientiously ponder the same, we leave him to consider that he must reckon to God therefore, and shall only obtest him that he will have more respect to the Churches peace, than to his own inclination; and that he will at least by some other lawful, possible and probable mean essay the removing, or at least the prevention of the growth of such divisions; and that he would withall construe well of the essays of others, till we come all before the common Judge, who, we are persuaded, loveth the Truth in peace, and hath joyned these together, which therefore ought by no man to be put asunder.

FINIS.