

OF
SCHISM;
THE TRUE NATURE OF IT,
DISCOVERED AND CONSIDERED,
WITH REFERENCE
TO THE PRESENT DIFFERENCES IN RELIGION.

BY
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OF
SCHISM.

CHAP. I.

Aggravations of the evil of schism, from the authority of the ancients. Their incompetency to determine in this case, instanced in the sayings of Austin and Jerome. The saying of Aristides. Judgment of the ancients subjected to disquisition. Some men's advantage in charging others with schism. The actors' part privileged. The Romanists' interest herein. The charge of schism not to be despised. The iniquity of accusers justifies not the accused. Several persons charged with schism on several accounts. The design of this discourse in reference to them. Justification of differences unpleasant. Attempts for peace and reconciliation considered. Several persuasions hercabouts, and endeavours of men to that end. Their issues.

IT is the manner of men of all persuasions, who undertake to treat of schism, to make their entrance with invectives against the evils thereof, with aggravations of its heinousness. All men, whether intending the charge of others, or their own acquitment, esteem themselves concerned so to do. Sentences out of the fathers, and determinations of schoolmen, making it the greatest sin imaginable, are usually produced to this purpose. A course this is which men's apprehensions have rendered useful, and the state of things in former days easy. Indeed whole volumes of the ancients, written when they were actors in this cause, charging others with the guilt of it, and consequently with the vehemency of men contending for that wherein their own interest lay, might (if it were to our purpose) be transcribed to this end. But as they had the happiness to deal with men evidently guilty of many miscarriages, and for the most part absurd and foolish, so many of them having fallen upon such a notion of the catholic church and schism, as hath given occasion to many woful mistakes, and much darkness in the following ages, I cannot so easily give up the nature of this

evil to their determination and judgment. About the aggravations of its sinfulness I shall not contend.

The evidence which remains of an indulgence in the best of them, τῇ ἀμετρίᾳ τῆς ἀνῆσολκῆς in this business especially, deters from that procedure. From what other principle were those words of Augustine; ‘Obscurius dixerunt prophetæ de Christo quam de ecclesia: puto propterea quia videbant in spiritu contra ecclesiam homines facturos esse particulas: et de Christo non tantam litem habituros, de ecclesia magnas contentiones excitaturos.’ Conc. 2. ad Psal. xxx. Neither the affirmation itself, nor the reason assigned, can have any better root. Is any thing more clearly and fully prophesied on than Christ? or was it possible that good men should forget with what contests the whole church of God all the world over had been exercised from its infancy about the person of Christ? Shall the tumultuating of a few in a corner of Africa, blot out the remembrance of the late diffusion of Arianism over the world? But Jerome hath given a rule for the interpretation of what they delivered in their polemical engagements; telling us plainly in his Apology for himself to Pammachius, that he had not so much regarded what was exactly to be spoken in the controversy he had in hand, as what was fit to lay load upon Jovinian. And if we may believe him, this was the manner of all men in those days. If they were engaged, they did not what the truth only, but what the defence of their cause also required. Though I believe him not as to all he mentions, yet doubtless we may say to many of them, as the apostle in another case, Ὅλως ἡττημα ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστιν. Though Aristides obtained the name of Just, for his uprightness in the management of his own private affairs, yet being engaged in the administration of those of the commonwealth, he did many things professedly unjust; giving this reason, he did them Πρὸς τὴν ὑπόθεσιν τῆς πατρίδος συχνῆς ἀδικίας δεομένης.

Besides, the age wherein we live having, by virtue of that precept of our Saviour, ‘Call no man master,’ in a good measure freed itself from the bondage of subjection to the dictates of men (and the innumerable evils with endless entanglements thence ensuing), because they lived so many hundreds of years before us; that course of procedure,

though retaining its facility, hath lost its usefulness, and is confessedly impertinent. What the Scripture expressly saith of this sin, and what from that it saith may regularly and rationally be deduced (whereunto we stand and fall), shall be afterward declared. And what is spoken suitably thereunto by any of old, or of late, shall be cheerfully also received. But it may not be expected that I should build upon their authority, whose principles I shall be necessitated to examine. And I am therefore contented to lie low, as to any expectation of success in my present undertaking, because I have the prejudice of many ages, the interest of most Christians, and the mutual consent of parties at variance (which commonly is taken for an unquestionable evidence of truth) to contend withal. But my endeavours being to go, '*non qua itur, sed qua eundum est,*' I am not solicitous about the event.

In dealing about this business among Christians, the advantage hath been extremely hitherto on their part, who found it their interest to begin the charge. For whereas perhaps themselves were, and are of all men most guilty of the crime; yet, by their clamorous accusation, putting others upon the defence of themselves, they have in a manner clearly escaped from the trial of their own guilt, and cast the issue of the question purely on them whom they have accused. The actors or complainants' part was so privileged by some laws and customs, that he who had desperately wounded another, chose rather to enter against him the frivolous plea, that he received not his whole sword into his body, than to stand to his best defence, on the complaint of the wounded man. An accusation managed with the craft of men guilty, and a confidence becoming men wronged and innocent, is not every one's work to slight and wave. And he is in ordinary judgments immediately acquitted, who avers that his charge is but recrimination. What advantage the Romanists have had on this account, how they have expatiated in the aggravation of the sin of schism, whilst they have kept others on the defence, and would fain make the only thing in question to be, whether they are guilty of it or no, is known to all. And therefore, ever since they have been convinced of their disability to debate the things in difference between them and us, unto

any advantage from the Scripture, they have almost wholly insisted on this one business, wherein they would have it wisely thought, that our concernment only comes to the trial, knowing that in these things their defence is weak, who have nothing else. Nor do they need any other advantage; for if any party of men can estate themselves at large in all the privileges granted, and promises made to the church in general, they need not be solicitous about dealing with them that oppose them; having at once rendered them no better than Jews and Mahometans,^a heathens or publicans, by appropriating the privileges mentioned unto themselves. And whereas the parties litigant, by all rules of law and equity, ought to stand under an equal regard, until the severals of their differences have been heard and stated; one party is hereby utterly condemned before it is heard; and it is all one unto them, whether they are in the right or wrong. But we may possibly in the issue state it upon another foot of account.

In the mean time it cannot be denied, but that their vigorous adhering to the advantage which they have made to themselves (a thing to be expected from men wise in their generation), hath exposed some of them, whom they have wrongfully accused, to a contrary evil; whilst in a sense of their own innocency, they have insensibly slipped (as is the manner of men) into slight and contemptible thoughts of the thing itself whereof they are accused. Where the thing in question is but a name or term of reproach, invented amongst men, this is incomparably the best way of defence. But this contains a crime; and no man is to set light by it. To live in schism, is to live in sin; which, unrepented of, will ruin a man's eternal condition: every one charged with it must either desert his station, which gives foundation to his charge, or acquit himself of the crime, in that station. This latter is that, which in reference to myself and others, I do propose: assenting in the gross to all the aggravations of this sin, that with any pretence from Scripture or reason are heaped on it.

And I would beg of men fearing God, that they would

^a Solis nosse Deos et Cœli numina vobis—
———— aut solis nescire datum.

not think, that the iniquity of their accusers doth in the least extenuate the crime whereof they are accused. Schism is schism still, though they may be unjustly charged with it; and he that will defend and satisfy himself by prejudices against them with whom he hath to do, though he may be no schismatic, yet if he were so, it is certain he would justify himself in his state and condition. Seeing men on false grounds and self-interest may yet sometimes manage a good cause, which perhaps they have embraced upon better principles, a conscientious tenderness and fear of being mistaken, will drive this business to another issue. ‘Blessed is he who feareth always.’

It is well known how things stand with us in this world; as we are Protestants we are accused by the Papists to be schismatics. And all other pleas and disputes neglected, this is that which at present (as is evident from their many late treatises on this subject, full of their wonted confidence, contempt, reviling, and scurrility) is chiefly insisted on by them.

Farther, among Protestants, as being reformatists, or as they call us Calvinists, we are condemned for schismatics by the Lutherans; and for sacramentarian sectaries, for no other crime in the world, but because we submit not to all they teach; for in no instituted church relation would they ever admit us to stand with them; which is as considerable an instance of the power of prejudice, as this age can give. We are condemned for separation, by them who refuse to admit us into union. But what hath not an irrational attempt of enthroning opinions put men upon?

The differences nearer home about episcopal government, with the matter of fact, in the rejecting of it, and somewhat of the external way of the worship of God formerly used amongst us, hath given occasion to a new charge of the guilt of the same crime on some; as it is not to be supposed, that wise and able men, suffering to a great extremity, will oversee or omit any thing, from whence they may hope to prevail themselves against those, by whose means they think they suffer. It cannot be helped, the engagement being past, but this account must be carried on one step farther. Amongst them who in these late days have engaged, as they profess, into reformation (and not to believe that to have been their in-

tention is fit only for them, who are concerned, that it should be thought to be otherwise, whose prejudice may furnish them with a contrary persuasion), not walking all in the same light as to some few particulars, whilst each party, as the manner is, gathered together what they thought conduced to the furtherance and improvement of the way wherein they differed one from another, some unhappily to the heightening of the differences, took up this charge of schism against their brethren; which yet, in a small process of time, being almost sunk of itself, will ask the less pains utterly to remove and take off. In the mean time, it is amongst other things (which is to be confessed) an evidence that we are not yet arrived at that inward frame of spirit, which was aimed at Phil. iii. 15, 16. whatever we have attained as to the outward administration of ordinances.

This being the state of things, the concernment of some of us lying in all the particulars mentioned, of all Protestants in some, it may be worth while to consider, whether there be not general principles of irrefragable evidence, whereon both all and some may be acquitted from their several concernments in this charge, and the whole guilt of this crime put into the ephah, and carried to build it a house in the land of Shinar, to establish it upon its own base.

I confess I would rather, much rather, spend all my time and days in making up and healing the breaches and schisms that are amongst Christians, than one hour in justifying our divisions, even therein, wherein on the one side they are capable of a fair defence. But who is sufficient for such an attempt? The closing of differences amongst Christians is like opening the book in the Revelation: there is none able or worthy to do it in heaven or in earth, but the Lamb: when he will put forth the greatness of his power for it, it shall be accomplished, and not before. In the mean time a reconciliation amongst all Protestants is our duty, and practicable; and had perhaps ere this been in some forwardness of accomplishment, had men rightly understood, wherein such a reconciliation according to the mind of God doth consist. When men have laboured as much in the improvement of the principle of forbearance, as they have done to subdue other men to their opinions, religion will have another appearance in the world.

I have considered and endeavoured to search into the bottom of the two general ways fixed on respectively by sundry persons, for the compassing of peace and union among Christians, but in one nation, with the issue and success of them in several places; namely, that of enforcing uniformity by a secular power on the one side, as was the case in this nation not many years ago (and is yet liked by the most, being a suitable judgment for the most), and that of toleration on the other, which is our present condition. Concerning them both I dare say, that though men of a good zeal, and small experience, or otherwise on any account full of their own apprehensions, may promise to themselves much of peace, union, and love, from the one or the other (as they may be severally favoured by men of different interests in this world, in respect of their conducingness to their ends), yet that a little observation of events, if they are not able to consider the causes of things, with the light and posture of the minds of men in this generation, will unburden them of the trouble of their expectations. It is something else that must give peace unto Christians than what is a product of the prudential considerations of men.

This I shall only add as to the former of these, of enforcing uniformity; as it hath lost its reputation of giving temporal tranquillity to states, kingdoms, and commonwealths (which with some is only valuable, whatever became of the souls of men, forced to the profession of that which they did not believe) the readiest means in the world to root out all religion from the hearts of men, the letters of which plea are in most nations in Europe washed out with rivers of blood (and the residue wait their season for the same issue), so it continues in the possession of this advantage against the other, that it sees, and openly complains of the evil, and dangerous consequences of it; when against its own, where it prevails, it suffers no complaints to lie. As it is ludicrously said of physicians, the effects of their skill lie in the sun, but their mistakes are covered in the church-yard: so is it with this persuasion; what it doth well, whilst it prevails, is evident: the anxiety of conscience in some, hypocrisy, formality, no better than atheism in others, wherewith it is attended, are buried out of sight.

But as I have some while since ceased to be moved by

the clamours of men, concerning bloody persecution on the one hand, and cursed, intolerable toleration on the other, by finding all the world over, that events and executions follow not the conscientious embracing of the one or other of these decried principles and persuasions, but are suited to the providence of God, stating the civil interests of the nations; so I am persuaded, that a general alteration of the state of the churches of Christ in this world, must determine that controversy: which, when the light of it appears, we shall easily see the vanity of those reasonings wherewith men are entangled, and are perfectly suited to the present condition of religion. But hereof I have spoken elsewhere.

Farther, let any man consider the proposals and attempts that have been made for ecclesiastical peace in the world, both of old, and in these latter days; let him consult the rescripts of princes, the edicts of nations, advices of politicians, that would have the world in quietness on any terms, consultations, conferences, debates, assemblies, councils of the clergy, who are commonly zealots in their several ways, and are by many thought to be willing rather to hurl the whole world into confusion than to abate any thing of the rigour of their opinions, and he will quickly assume the liberty of affirming concerning them all, that as wise men might easily see flaws in all of them, and an unsuitableness to the end proposed, and as good men might see so much of carnal interest, self, and hypocrisy in them, as might discourage them from any great expectations; so, upon many other accounts, a better issue was not to be looked for from them, than hath been actually obtained; which hath for the most part been this, that those that could dissemble most deeply, have been thought to have the greatest advantage. In disputations, indeed, the truth for the most part hath been a gainer; but in attempts for reconciliation, those who have come with the least candour, most fraud, hypocrisy, secular baits for the subverting of others, have in appearance for a season seemed to obtain success. And in this spirit of craft and contention are things yet carried on in the world.

Yea, I suppose the parties at variance are so well acquainted at length with each other's principles, arguments, interests, prejudices, and real distance of their causes, that none of them expect any reconciliation, but merely by

one party's keeping its station, and the other coming over wholly thereunto. And therefore a Romanist, in his preface to a late pamphlet about schism to the two universities, tells us plainly, that, 'If we will have any peace, we must without limitation submit to, and receive those *κυρίαρχας δόξας*, those commanding oracles which God by his holy spouse propoundeth to our obedience.' The sense of which expressions we are full well acquainted with. And in pursuit of that principle he tells us again, p. 238. 'That suppose the church should in necessary points teach error, yet even in that case every child of the church must exteriorly carry himself quiet, and not make commotions' (that is, declare against her) 'for that were to seek a cure worse than the disease.' Now if it seem reasonable to these gentlemen, that we should renounce our sense and reason, with all that understanding which we have, or at least are fully convinced that we have, of the mind of God in the Scripture, and submit blindly to the commands and guidance of their church, that we may have peace and union with them, because of their huge interest and advantage, which lies in our so doing, we profess ourselves to be invincibly concluded under the power of a contrary persuasion, and consequently an impossibility of reconciliation.

As to attempts then for reconciliation between parties at variance about the things of God, and the removal of schism by that means, they are come to this issue among them, by whom they have been usually managed, namely, politicians and divines; that the former perceiving the tenaciousness in all things of the latter, their promptness and readiness to dispute, and to continue in so doing with confidence of success (a frame of spirit that indeed will never praise God, nor be useful to bring forth truth in the world), do judge them at length not to have that prudence, which is requisite to advise in matters diffused into such variety of concerns as these are, or not able to break through their unspeakable prejudices and interests to the due improvement of that wisdom they seem to have; and the latter observing the facile condescension of the former in all things that may have a consistency with that peace and secular advantage they aim at, do conclude, that, notwithstanding all their pretences, they have indeed, in such consultations, little or no

regard to the truth ; whereupon, having a mutual diffidence in each other, they grow weary of all endeavours to be carried on jointly in this kind ; the one betaking themselves wholly to keep things in as good state in the world as they can, let what will become of religion ; the other to labour for success against their adversaries, let what will become of the world, or the peace thereof. And this is like to be the state of things, until another spirit be poured out on the professors of Christianity, than that wherewith at present they seem mostly to be acted.

The only course then remaining to be fixed on, whilst our divisions continue, is to inquire wherein the guilt of them doth consist, and who is justly charged therewith ; in especial what is, and who is guilty of the sin of schism. And this shall we do, if God permit.

It may, I confess, seem superfluous to add any thing more on this subject, which hath been so fully already handled by others. But, as I said, the present concernment of some fearing God, lying beyond what they have undertaken, and their endeavours for the most part having tended rather to convince their adversaries of the insufficiency of their charge and accusation, than rightly and clearly to state the thing or matter contended about, something may be farther added as to the satisfaction of the consciences of men unjustly accused of this crime, which is my aim, and which I shall now fall upon.

CHAP. II.

The nature of schism to be determined from Scripture only. This principle by some opposed. Necessity of abiding in it. Parity of reason allowed. Of the name of schism. Its constant use in Scripture. In things civil and religious. The whole doctrine of schism in the epistles to the Corinthians. The case of that church proposed to consideration. Schism entirely in one church. Not in the separation of any from a church; nor in subtraction of obedience from governors. Of the second schism in the church of Corinth. Of Clemens's epistle. The state of the church of Corinth in those days: 'Εκκλησία παρικοῦσα Κόρινθον. Παρικός who: παρικία what. Παροχος, 'paracia.' To whom the epistle of Clemens was precisely written. Corinth not a metropolitical church. Allowance of what by parity of reason may be deduced from what is of schism affirmed. Things required to make a man guilty of schism. Arbitrary definitions of schism rejected. That of Austin considered: as that also of Basil. The common use and acceptation of it in these days. Separation from any church in its own nature not schism. Aggravations of the evil of schism ungrounded. The evil of it from its proper nature and consequences evinced. Inferences from the whole of this discourse. The church of Rome, if a church, the most schismatical church in the world. The church of Rome no church of Christ: a complete image of the empire. Final acquitment of Protestants from schism on the principle evinced. Peculiarly of them of the late reformation in England. False notions of schism the ground of sin and disorder.

THE thing whereof we treat being a disorder in the instituted worship of God, and that which is of pure revelation, I suppose it a modest request to desire, that we may abide solely to that discovery and description, which is made of it in Scripture; that, that alone shall be esteemed schism, which is there so called, or which hath the entire nature of that which is there so called; other things may be other crimes; schism they are not, if in the Scripture they have neither the name nor nature of it attributed to them.

He that shall consider the irreconcilable differences that are among Christians all the world over about this matter, as also what hath passed concerning it in former ages, and shall weigh what prejudices the several parties at variance are entangled with, in reference hereunto, will be ready to think, that this naked appeal to the only common principle amongst us all, is so just, necessary, and reasonable, that it will be readily on all hands condescended unto. But as this

is openly opposed by the Papists, as a most destructive way of procedure, so I fear, that when the tendency of it is discovered, it will meet with reluctance from others. But let the reader know, that as I have determined *πρωτιμᾶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν*, so to take the measure of it from the Scripture only, ‘*Consuetudo sine veritate est vetustas erroris* ;’ Cyp. Ep. ad Pomp. and the sole measure of evangelical truth, is his word, of whom it was said, *ὁ λόγος ὁ σὸς ἀλήθειά ἐστι*. ‘*Id verius quod prius, id prius quod ab initio, id ab initio quod ab apostolis*,’ says Tertul. It is to me a sufficient answer to that fond question, Where was your religion before Luther? Where was your religion in the days of Christ and his apostles? My thoughts to this particular are the same with Chrysostom’s on the general account of truth, “*Ερχεται Ἕλλην καὶ λέγει, ὅτι βούλομαι γενέσθαι Χριστιάνος ἀλλὰ οὐκ οἶδα τίνι προσθῶμαι, μάχη παρ’ ὑμῖν πολλή καὶ στάσις, πολλὸς θόρυβος, ποῖον ἔλομαι δόγμα; τὶ αἰρήσομαι; ἕκαστος λέγει ὅτι ἐγὼ ἀληθεύω, τίνι πειθῶ; μηδὲν ὕλως εἰδὼς ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς κακεῖν τὸ αὐτὸ προβάλλονται πάνν γε τοῦτο ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰ μὲν γὰρ λογισμοῖς ἐλέγομεν πείθεσθαι εἰκότως ἐθορήβου εἰ δὲ ταῖς γραφαῖς λέγομεν πιστεύειν αὐταὶ δὲ ἀπλὰ καὶ ἀληθεῖς; εὐκολον σοι τὸ κρινόμενον, εἴ τις ἐκείναις συμφωνεῖ οὗτος χριστιάνος· εἴ τις μάχεται οὗτος πόρρω τοῦ κανόνος τούτου*. Homil. 3. in Acta.

But yet lest this should seem too strait, as being at first view exclusive of the learned debates and disputes which we have had about this matter, I shall, after the consideration of the precise Scripture notion of the name and thing wherein the conscience of a believer is alone concerned, propose and argue also what by a parity of reason may thence be deduced, as to the ecclesiastical common use of them, and our concernment in the one and the other.

The word which is metaphorical, as to the business we have in hand, is used in the Scripture, both in its primitive native sense, in reference to things natural, as also in the tralatitious use of it about things politic and spiritual, or moral. In its first sense we have the noun, Matt. ix. 16. *Καὶ χεῖρον σχίσμυ γίνεται*, ‘and the rent’ (in the cloth) ‘is made worse:’ and the verb, Matt. xxvii. 51. *Καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη*, ‘the vail of the temple was rent;’ *καὶ αἱ πέτραι ἐσχίσθησαν*, ‘and the rocks were rent:’ both denoting an interruption of continuity by an external power in things merely passive.

And this is the first sense of the word ; a scissure or division of parts before continued, by force, or violent dissolution. The use of the word in a political sense is also frequent : John vii. 43. *Σχίσμα οὖν ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ*, ‘ there was a division among the multitude ;’ some being of one mind, some of another. John ix. 16. *Καὶ σχίσμα ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς*, ‘ there was a division amongst them : and chap. x. 19. likewise. So Acts xiv. 4. *Ἐσχίσθη δὲ τὸ πλῆθος τῆς πόλεως*, ‘ the multitude of the city was divided :’ and chap. xxiii. 7. ‘ There arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees.’ *Καὶ ἐσχίσθη τὸ πλῆθος*, ‘ the multitude was divided,’ some following one, some another of their leaders in that dissension : the same thing is expressed by a word answering unto it in Latin.

‘ Scinditur incertum studia in contraria vulgus.’ And in this sense relating to civil things it is often used.^a

This being the next posture of that word, from whence it immediately slips into its ecclesiastical use, expressing a thing moral or spiritual ; there may some light be given into its importance, when so appropriated, from its constant use in this state and condition, to denote differences of mind and judgment with troubles ensuing thereon, amongst men met in some one assembly about the compassing of a common end and design.

In the sense contended about it is used only by Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, and therein frequently : chap. i. 10. I exhort you, *μὴ ᾗ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα*, ‘ that there be no schisms amongst you :’ chap. xi. 18. when you meet in the church, *ἀκούω σχίσματα ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν*, ‘ I hear there be schisms amongst you :’ chap. xii. 25. the word is used in reference to the natural body, but with an application to the ecclesiastical. Other words there are of the same importance, which shall also be considered, as Rom. xvi. 17, 18. Of schism in any other place, or in reference to any other persons, but only to this church of Corinth, we hear nothing.

Here then being the principal foundation, if it hath any, of that great fabric about schism, which in latter ages hath been set up, it must be duly considered ; that if it be possible, we may discover by what secret engines or artifices the discourses about it, which fill the world, have been hence

^a Οἱ τὴν ῥώμην οἰκουντες διέμερίσθησαν εἰς τὰ μέρη, καὶ οὐκέτι ἀμεινόνησαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους. καὶ ἐγένετο μέγα σχίσμα. Chronic. Antioch. Joh. Male, p. 98. A. MS. Bib. Bod.

deduced, being for the most part, universally unlike the thing here mentioned : or find out, that they are built on certain prejudices and presumptions, nothing relating thereto. The church of Corinth was founded by Paul, Acts xviii. 8—10. with him there were Aquila and Priscilla; ver. 2. 18. After his departure, Apollos came thither, and effectually watered what he had planted, 1 Cor. iii. 6. It is probable that either Peter had been there also, or at least that sundry persons converted by him were come thither, for he still mentions Cephas and Apollos with himself; chap. i. 12. iii. 22. This church, thus watered and planted, came together for the worship of God, ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ, chap. xi. 20. and for the administration of discipline in particular, chap. v. 4. After awhile, through the craft of Satan, various evils in doctrine, conversation, and church-order crept in amongst them : for doctrine, besides their mistake about eating things ‘offered to idols,’ chap. viii. 4. some of them denied the ‘resurrection of the dead;’ chap. xv. 12. In conversation they had not only the eruption of a scandalous particular sin amongst them, chap. v. 1. but grievous sinful miscarriages, when they ‘came together’ about holy administrations; chap. xi. 21. These the apostle distinctly reproves in them : their church-order, as to that love, peace, and union of heart and mind, wherein they ought to have walked, was wofully disturbed with divisions and sidings about their teachers; chap. i. 12. And not content to make this difference the matter of their debates and disputes from house to house, even when they met for public worship, or that which they all met in, and for, they were divided on that account; chap. xi. 18. This was their schism the apostle dehorts them from, charges them with, and shews them the evil thereof. They had differences amongst themselves about unnecessary things; on these they engaged in disputes and sidings, even in their solemn assemblies; when they came all together for the same worship about which they differed not. Probably much vain jangling, alienation of affections, exasperation of spirits, with a neglect of due offices of love ensued hereupon. All this appears from the entrance the apostle gives to his discourse on this subject, 1 Cor. i. 10. Πα-
ρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς, ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες, ‘I beseech you that ye all speak the same thing.’ They were of various minds

and opinions about their church affairs, which was attended with the confusion of disputings: let it not be so, saith the apostle; καὶ μὴ ᾗ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα, ‘and let there be no schisms among you;’ which consist in such differences and janglings: he adds, ἥτε δὲ κατηρητισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῷ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ; ‘but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and the same judgment.’ They were joined together in the same church-order and fellowship, but he would have them so also in oneness of mind and judgment, which if they were not, though they continued together in their church-order, yet schisms would be amongst them. This was the state of that church, this the frame and carriage of the members of it, this the fault and evil whereon the apostle charges them with schism, and the guilt thereof. The grounds, whereon he manageth his reproof, are their common interest in Christ, chap. i. 13. the nothingness of the instruments of preaching the gospel, about whom they contended, chap. i. 14. iii. 4, 5. their church-order instituted by God, chap. xii. 13. of which afterward.

This being, as I said, the principal seat of all that is taught in the Scripture about schism, we are here, or hardly at all to learn what it is, and wherein it doth consist. The arbitrary definitions of men, with their superstructions and inferences upon them, we are not concerned in. At least I hope I shall have leave from hence to state the true nature of the thing, before it be judged necessary to take into consideration what by parity of reason may be deduced from it. In things purely moral, and of natural equity, the most general notion of them is to be the rule, whereby all particulars claiming an interest in their nature are to be measured and regulated; in things of institution, the particular instituted is first and principally to be regarded: how far the general reason of it may be extended is of after consideration; and as is the case in respect of duty, so it is in respect of the evils that are contrary thereto. True and false are indicated and tried by the same rule. Here then our foot is to be fixed; what compass may be taken to fetch in things of a like kin, will in its proper place follow. Observe then,

1. That the thing mentioned is entirely in one church, amongst the members of one particular society. No men-

tion is there in the least of one church divided against another, or separated from another, or others; whether all true, or some true, some false, or but pretended. Whatever the crime be, it lies wholly within the verge of one church, that met together for the worship of God and administration of the ordinances of the gospel; and unless men will condescend so to state it upon the evidence tendered, I shall not hope to prevail much in the process of this discourse.

2. Here is no mention of any particular man's, or any number of men's separation from the holy assemblies of the whole church, or of subduction of themselves from its power, nor doth the apostle lay any such thing to their charge, but plainly declares, that they continued all in the joint celebration of that worship, and performance together of those duties, which were required of them in their assemblies; only they had groundless, causeless differences amongst themselves, as I shall shew afterward. All the divisions of one church from another, or others, the separation of any one or more persons from any church or churches, are things of another nature, made good or evil by their circumstances, and not that at all which the Scripture knows and calls by the name of schism; and therefore was there no such thing or name as schism, in such a sense, known in the Judaical church, though in the former it abounded. All the different sects to the last, still communicated in the same carnal ordinances; and those who utterly deserted them, were apostates, not schismatics; so were the body of the Samaritans, they worshipped they knew not what, nor was salvation among them; John iv. 22.

3. Here is no mention of any subtraction of obedience from bishops or rulers in what degree soever, no exhortation to regular submission unto them, much less from the pope or church of Rome; nor doth the apostle thunder out against them, You are departed from the unity of the catholic church, have rent Christ's seamless coat, set up '*altare contra altare*,' have forsaken the visible head of the church, the fountain of all unity; you refuse due subjection to the prince of the apostles; nor, you are schismatics from the national church of Achaia, or have cast off the rule of your governors; with the like language of after days; but when you come toge-

ther, you have divisions amongst you : ‘ behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth !’

A condition not unlike to this befalling this very church of Corinth, sundry years after the strifes now mentioned were allayed by the epistle of the apostle, doth again exhibit us the case and evil treated on. Some few unquiet persons among them drew the whole society (upon the matter) into division and an opposition to their elders. They, who were the causes, *μιαρᾶς καὶ ἀνοσίῳν στάσεως*, as Clement tells them in the name of the church at Rome, were *ὀλίγα πρόσωπα* a few men, acted by pride and madness : yet such power had those persons in the congregation, that they prevailed with the multitude to depose the elders and cast them out of office : so the same Clement tells them, *ὁρῶμεν ὅτι ἐνίους ὑμεῖς μεταγάγετε καλῶς πολιτευομένους ἐκ τῆς ἀμέμπτως αὐτοῖς τετιμημένης λειτουργίας*. What he intends by his *μεταγάγετε*, &c. he declares in the words foregoing, where he calls the elders, that were departed this life, happy and blessed, as not being subject or liable to expulsion out of their offices ; *οὐ γὰρ εὐλαβοῦνται μὴ τις αὐτοὺς μεταστήσῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰδρυμένου αὐτοῖς τόπου*. Whether these men, who caused the differences and sedition against those elders that were deposed, were themselves by the church substituted into their room and place, I know not. This difference in that church, the church of Rome in that epistle of Clement calls everywhere schism, as it also expresses the same thing, or the evil frame of their minds and their actings by many other words ; *ζῆλος, ἔρις, στάσις, διωγμὸς, ἀκαταστάσια, ἀλαζωνία, τύφος, πόλεμος*, are laid to their charge. That there was any separation from the church, that the deposed elders, or any for their sakes withdrew themselves from the communion of it, or ceased to assemble with it for the celebration of the ordinances of the gospel, there is not any mention : only the difference in the church, is the schism whereof they are accused. Nor are they accused of schism for the deposition of the elders, but for their differences amongst themselves, which was the ground of their so doing.

It is alleged, indeed, that it is not the single church of Corinth, that is here intended, but all the churches of Achaia, whereof that was the metropolis : which though as

to the nature of schism, it be not at all prejudicial to what hath been asserted, supposing such a church to be; yet because it sets up in opposition to some principles of truth, that must afterward be improved, I shall briefly review the arguments whereby it is attempted to be made good.

The title of the epistle in the first place is pretended to this purpose: it is ἡ ἐκκλησία θεοῦ παροικοῦσα Ῥωμὴν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ παροικούσῃ Κόρινθον. 'wherein' (as it is said) 'on each part the' παροικία or whole province, as of Rome, so of Corinth, the region and territory that belonged to those metropolises, is intended.' But, as I have formerly elsewhere said, we are beholden to the frame and fabric of church affairs in after ages for such interpretations as these; the simplicity of the first knew them not; they who talked of the church of God, that did παροικεῖν at Rome, little then thought of province or region. Ἐκκλησία παροικοῦσα Ῥωμὴν, is as much as ἐκκλησία ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, Acts viii. 1. Πάροικος is a man that dwells at such a place, properly one that dwells in another's house, or soil, or that hath removed from one place, and settled in another; whence it is often used in the same sense with μέτοικος, he is such an inhabitant, as hath yet some such consideration attending him, as makes him a kind of a foreigner to the place where he is; so Eph. ii. 19. πάροικοι and συμπολῖται are opposed. Hence is παροικία, which, as Budæus says, differs from κατοικία, in that it denotes a temporary habitation; this a stable and abiding. Παροικέω is so to 'inhabit,' to dwell in a place, where yet something makes a man a kind of a stranger. So it is said of Abraham, πίστει παρῴκησεν εἰς τὴν γῆν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ὡς ἀλλοτρίαν. Heb. xi. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 11. joined with παρεπίδημος (hence this word by the learned publisher of this epistle is rendered 'peregrinatur, diversatur'); and more clearly Luke xxiv. 18. σὺ μόνος παροικεῖς ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ, which we have rendered, 'are you only a stranger in Jerusalem.' Whether παροικία and 'paræcia' is from hence or no, by some is doubted; παροχος is 'convivater,' and παροχή 'præbitio,' Gloss. vetus: so that 'parochiæ' may be called so from them, who met together to break bread, and to eat. Allow 'parochia' to be barbarous, and our only word to be 'paræcia' from παροικία, then it is as much as the Voisinage, men living near together for any end

whatever. So says Budæus *πάροικοι* are *πρόσοικοι*; thence churches were called *παροικίας*, consisting of a number of them, who were *πάροικοι* or *πρόσοικοι*. The saints of God expressing the place which they inhabited, and the manner, as strangers, said of the churches whereof they were *Ἐκκλησία παροικοῦσα Ῥωμὴν* and *ἐκκλησία παροικοῦσα Κόρινθον*: this is now made to denote a region, a territory, the adjacent region to a metropolis; and such-like things, as the poor primitive pilgrims little thought of. This will scarcely, as I suppose, evince the assertion we are dealing about; there may be a church of God dwelling at Rome or Corinth, without any adjacent region annexed to it, I think. Besides, those who first used the word in the sense now supposed, did not understand a province by *παροικία*, which was with them (as originally) the charge of him that was a bishop, and no more. *Επαρχία* was with them a province that belonged to a metropolitan; such as the bishop of Corinth is supposed to be. I do not remember where a metropolitan's province is called his *παροικία*, there being many of these in every one of them. But at present I will not herein concern myself.

But it is said, that this epistle of Clement was written to them, to whom Paul's epistles were written; which appears, as from the common title, so also from hence, that Clement advises them, to whom he writes, to take and consider that epistle, which Paul had formerly wrote to them; now Paul's epistle was written to all the churches of Asia, as it is said expressly in the second, 'To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints, which are in all Asia;' chap. i. 1. And for the former, that also is directed *πᾶσι ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ*, and the same form is used at the close of this, *καὶ μετὰ πάντων πανταχῇ κεκλημένων ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, wherein all places in Achaia (and everywhere therein) not absolutely are intended; for if they should, then this epistle would be a catholic epistle, and would conclude the things mentioned in it, of the letter received by the apostle, &c. to relate to the catholic church.

Ans. It is confessed, that the epistles of Paul, and Clement, have one common title; so that *τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ παροικοῦσῃ Κόρινθον*, which is Clement's expression, is the same with *τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ*, which is Paul's in both his

epistles, which adds little strength to the former argument from the word *παροικοῦσα* ; οὐση ἐν Κορίνθῳ, as I suppose, confining it thither. It is true, Paul's second epistle, after its inscription τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τῇ οὐσῇ ἐν Κορίνθῳ adds σὺν τοῖς ἁγίοις πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ. He mentions not any where any more churches in Achaia than that of Corinth, and that at Cenchrea ; nor doth he speak of any churches here in this salutation, but only of the saints. And he plainly makes Asia and Corinth to be all one, 2 Cor. ix. 2. so that to me it appears, that there were none as yet, any more churches brought into order in Achaia, but that mentioned ; with that other at Cenchrea, which, I suppose, comes under the same name with that at Corinth ; nor am I persuaded, that it was a completed congregation in those days. Saints in Achaia that lived not at Corinth, there were perhaps many ; but being scattered up and down, they were not formed into societies, but belonged to the church of Corinth, and assembled therewith, as they could, for the participation of ordinances : so that there is not the least evidence, that this epistle of Paul was directed to any other church, but that of Corinth. For the first, it can scarce be questioned ; Paul writing an epistle for the instruction of the saints of God, and disciples of Christ in all ages, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, salutes in its beginning and ending all them, that on that general account are concerned in it. In this sense all his epistles were catholic, even those he wrote to single persons. The occasion of writing this epistle was indeed from a particular church, and the chief subject matter of it was concerning the affairs of that church. Hence it is in the first place particularly directed to them ; and our present inquiry is not after all that by any means were, or might be, concerned in that which was then written, as to their present or future direction, but after them who administered the occasion to what was so written, and whose particular condition was spoken to : this, I say, was the single church of Corinth. That πάντες οἱ ἐπικαλούμενοι τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, 'all in every place,' should be all only in Achaia, or that Clement's μετὰ πάντων πανταχῇ τῶν κεκλημένων ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, should be 'with them that are called in Achaia,' I can yet see no ground to conjecture. Paul writes an epistle to the church of Ephesus, and concludes it, ἡ χάρις μετὰ πάντων

τῶν ἀγαπῶντων τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν ἐν ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ : the extent of which prayer is supposed to reach farther than Ephesus, and the region adjacent. It doth not then as yet appear that Paul wrote his epistles particularly to any other, but the particular church at Corinth. If concerning the latter, because of that expression 'with all the saints which are in all Achaia,' it be granted there were more churches than that of Corinth, with its neighbour Cenchrea (which whether it were a stated distinct church or no, I know not), yet it will not at all follow, as was said before, that Clement, attending the particular occasion only, about which he and the church of Rome were consulted, did so direct his epistle, seeing he makes no mention in the least, that so he did. But yet, by the way, there is one thing more that I would be willingly resolved about in this discourse, and that is this; seeing that it is evident that the apostle by his πάντες ἐν παντί τόπῳ; and Clemens, by his πάντων πανταχῇ κεκλημένων, intend an enlargement beyond the first and immediate direction to the church of Corinth, if by the church of Corinth, as it is pleaded, he intend to express that whole region of Achaia, what either the apostle, or Clemens do obtain by that enlargement, if restrained to that same place.

It is indeed said, that at this time there were many other episcopal sees in Achaia; which until it is attempted to be put upon some kind of proof, may be passed by: it is granted that Paul speaks of that which was done at Corinth, to be done in Achaia, Rom. xv. 26. as what is done in London is without doubt done in England: but that which lies in expectation of some light or evidence to be given unto it is, that there was a metropolitical see at Corinth, at this time, whereunto many episcopal sees in Achaia were in subordination, being all the παροικία of Corinth, all which are called the church of Corinth, by virtue of their subjection thereunto: when this is proved, I shall confess some principles I afterward insist on will be impaired thereby.

This then is added by the same author, 'That the ecclesiastical estate was then conformed to the civil: wherever there was a metropolis in a civil-political sense, there was seated also a metropolitical church: now that Corinth was a metropolis, the proconsul of Achaia keeping his residence there, in the first sense is confessed.' And besides what

follows from thence, by virtue of the principle now laid down, Chrysostom calls it a metropolis, relating to the time wherein Paul wrote his epistle to the church there in the latter sense also.

The plea about metropolitical churches, I suppose will be thought very impertinent to what I have now in hand, so it shall not at present be insisted on. That the state of churches in after ages was moulded and framed after the pattern of the civil government of the Roman empire is granted; and that conformity (without offence to any be it spoken) we take to be a fruit of the working of the mystery of iniquity. But that there was any such order instituted in the churches of Christ by the apostles, or any intrusted by authority from their Lord and ruler, is utterly denied; nor is any thing, but very uncertain conjectures from the sayings of men of after ages, produced to attest any such order or constitution. When the order, spirituality, beauty, and glory of the church of Christ shall return, and men obtain a light whereby they are able to discern a beauty and excellency in the inward, more noble, spiritual part, indeed life and soul of the worship of God, these disputes will have an issue. Chrysostom says, indeed, that Corinth was the metropolis of Achaia, but in what sense he says not; the political is granted, the ecclesiastical not proved; nor are we inquiring what was the state of the churches of Christ in the days of Chrysostom, but of Paul. But to return.

If any one now shall say, Will you conclude, because this evil mentioned by the apostle is schism, therefore nothing else is so?

I answer, That having before asserted this to be the chief and only seat of the doctrine of schism, I am inclinable so to do: and this I am resolved of, that unless any man can prove that something else is termed schism by some divine writer, or blamed on that head of account by the Holy Ghost elsewhere, and is not expressly reprov'd as another crime, I will be at liberty from admitting it so to be.

But yet for what may hence by a parity of reason be deduced, I shall close with, and debate at large, as I have professed.

The schism then here described by the apostle, and blamed by him, consists in causeless differences, and con-

tentions amongst the members of a particular church, contrary to that of love, prudence, and forbearance, which are required of them to be exercised amongst themselves and towards one another; which is also termed *στάσις*, Acts xv. 21. and *διχοστασία*, Rom. xvi. 17. And he is a schismatic that is guilty of this sin of schism, that is, who raiseth, or entertaineth, or persisteth in such differences; nor are these terms used by the divine writers in any other sense.

That any men may fall under this guilt, it is required,

1. That they be members of, or belong to, some one church, which is so by the institution and appointment of Jesus Christ. And we shall see that there is more required hereunto than the bare being a believer or a Christian.

2. That they either raise or entertain, and persist in causeless differences with others of that church more or less, to the interruption of that exercise of love in all the fruits of it, which ought to be amongst them; and the disturbance of the due performance of the duties required of the church, in the worship of God. As Clement in the forementioned epistle, *φιλόνικοι ἔστε ἄδελφοι καὶ ζήλωται περὶ μὴ ἀνηκόντων εἰς σωτηρίαν*.

3. That these differences be occasioned by, and do belong to, some things in a remoter or nearer distance appertaining to the worship of God; their differences on a civil account are elsewhere mentioned and reprov'd, 1 Epist. chap. vi. for therein also there was from the then state of things an *ἡττημα*, ver. 7.

This is that crime which the apostle rebukes, blames, condemns, under the name of schism, and tells them that were guilty of it, that they shewed themselves to be carnal, or to have indulged to the flesh and the corrupt principle of self, and their own wills, which should have been subdued to the obedience of the gospel. Men's definitions of things are for the most part arbitrary and loose; fitted and suited to their several apprehensions of principles and conclusions; so that nothing clear or fixed is generally to be expected from them: from the Romanists' description of schism, who violently, without the least colour or pretence, thrust in the pope and his headship, into all that they affirm in church matters, least of all. I can allow men that they may extend their definitions of things unto what they apprehend of an

alike nature to that, which gives rise to the whole disquisition, and is the first thing defined. But at this I must profess myself to be somewhat entangled, that I could never yet meet with a definition of schism, that did comprise, that was not exclusive of that which alone in the Scripture is affirmed so to be.

Austin's definition contains the sum of what hath since been insisted on : saith he, '*Schisma ni fallor est eadem opinantem, et eodem ritu utentem solo congregationis delectari dissidio.*' Con. Faust. lib. 20. cap. 3. By '*dissidium congregationis*' he intends separation from the church into a peculiar congregation; a definition directly suited to the cause he had in hand, and was pleading against the Donatists. Basil, in Epist. ad Amphilocho. Con. 44. distinguisheth between *ἀιρεσις*, *σχίσμα*, and *παρασυναγωγή*: and as he makes schism to be a division arising from some church controversies suitable to what those days experienced, and in the substance true, so he tells us that *παρασυναγωγή* is when either presbyters, or bishops, or laicks hold unlawful meetings, assemblies, or conventicles, which was not long since with us the only schism.

Since those days schism in general hath passed for a causeless separation from the communion and worship of any true church of Christ (the Catholic church, saith the Papist), with a relinquishment of its society, as to a joint celebration of the ordinances of the gospel; how far this may pass for schism, and what may be granted in this description of it, the process of our discourse will declare. In the mean time I am most certain, that a separation from some churches, true or pretended so to be, is commanded in the Scriptures; so that the withdrawing from, or relinquishment of, any church or society whatever, upon the plea of its corruption, be it true or false, with a mind and resolution to serve God in the due observation of church institutions, according to that light which men have received, is nowhere called schism, nor condemned as a thing of that nature, but is a matter that must be tried out, whether it be good or evil, by virtue of such general rules and directions, as are given us in the Scriptures for our orderly and blameless walking with God in all his ways.

As for them who suppose all church power to be invested

in some certain church officers originally (I mean that which they call of jurisdiction), who on that account are ‘*eminenter*,’ the church, the union of the whole consisting in a subjection to those officers according to rules, orders, and canons of their appointment, whereby they are necessitated to state the business of schism on the rejection of their power and authority, I shall speak to them afterward at large. For the present, I must take leave to say, that I look upon the whole of such a fabric, as a product of prudence and necessity.

I cannot but fear lest some men’s surmisings may prompt them to say, that the evil of schism is thus stated, in a compliance with that, and them, which before we blamed: and seems to serve to raise slight and contemptible thoughts of it, so that men need not be shaken though justly charged with it. But besides that sufficient testimony, which I have to the contrary, that will abundantly shelter me from this accusation, by an assurance that I have not the least aim *δουλεύειν ὑποθήσει*, I shall farther add my apprehension of the greatness of the evil of this sin, if I may first be borne with a little in declaring what usual aggravations of it I do either not understand, or else cannot assent unto.

Those who say it is a renting of the seamless coat of Christ (in which metaphorical expression men have wonderfully pleased themselves), seem to have mistaken their aim; and instead of an aggravation of its evil, by that figure of speech, to have extenuated it: a rent of the body well compacted, is not heightened to any one’s apprehension, in its being called the renting of a seamless coat: but men may be indulged the use of the most improper and groundless expressions, so they place no power of argument in them, whilst they find them moving their own, and suppose them to have an alike efficacy upon the affections of others. I can scarce think that any ever supposed that the coat of Christ was a type of his church; his church being clothed with him, not he with it. And therefore, with commendation of his success who first invented that allusion, I leave it in the possession of them who want better arguments to evince the evil of this sin.

It is most usually said to be a sin against charity, as heresy is against faith. Heresy is a sin against faith, if I

may so speak, both as it is taken for the doctrine of faith, which is to be believed, and the assent of the mind whereby we do believe. He that is a heretic (I speak of him in the usual acceptation of the word, and the sense of them who make this comparison, in neither of which I am satisfied), rejects the doctrine of faith, and denies all assent unto it. Indeed he doth the former by doing the latter. But is schism so a sin against charity? doth it supplant and root out love out of the heart? is it an affection of the mind attended with an inconsistency therewith? I much question it.

The apostle tells us, 'that love is the bond of perfection,' Col. iii. 14. because in the several and various ways whereby it exerts itself, it maintains and preserves, notwithstanding all hinderances and oppositions, that perfect and beautiful order, which Christ hath appointed amongst his saints, wherein men by schism are kept off, and withheld from the performance of any of those offices and duties of love, which are useful or necessary for the preservation of the bond of perfection; then is it, or may in some sense be said to be, a sin against love.

Those who have seemed to aim nearest the apprehension of the nature of it in these days, have described it to be an open breach of love, or charity. That that expression is warily to be understood, is evident in the light of this single consideration. It is possible for a man to be all, and do all, that those were, and did, whom the apostle judges for schismatics, under the power of some violent temptation, and yet have his heart full of love to the saints of the communion disturbed by him. It is thus far then in its own nature a breach of love, in that in such men love cannot exert itself in its utmost tendency in wisdom and forbearance for the preservation of the perfect order instituted by Christ in his church. However I shall freely say, that the schoolmen's notion of it, who insist on this as its nature, that it is a sin against charity, as heresy is against faith, is fond and becoming them; and so will others also, that shall be pleased to consider, what they intend by charity.

Some say it is a rebellion against the church, that is, the rulers and officers of the church. I doubt not but that there must be either a neglect in the church in the performance of its duty, or of the authority of it in so doing, wherever there

is any schism, though the discovery of this also have innumerable entanglements attending it. But that to refuse the authority of the church is to rebel against the rulers or guides of it, will receive farther light than what it hath done, when once a pregnant instance is produced, not where the church signifies the officers of it, but where it doth not signify the body of the congregation in contradistinction from them, or comprising them therein.

Add unto these, those who dispute whether schismatics do belong to the church or no, and conclude in the negative; seeing according to the discovery already made, it is impossible a man should be a schismatic unless he be a church member. Other crimes a man may be guilty of on other accounts; of schism, only in a church. What is the formal reason of any man's relation to a church, in what sense soever that word is used, must be afterward at large discussed.

But now this foundation being laid, that schism is a causeless difference or division amongst the members of any particular church, that meet together, or ought so to do, for the worship of God, and celebration of the same numerical ordinances to the disturbance of the order appointed by Jesus Christ, and contrary to that exercise of love in wisdom and mutual forbearance, which is required of them, it will be easy to see, wherein the iniquity of it doth consist, and upon what considerations its aggravations do arise.

It is evidently a despising of the authority of Jesus Christ, the great sovereign Lord and head of the church. How often hath he commanded us to forbear one another, to forgive one another, to have peace among ourselves, that we may be known to be his disciples, to bear with them that are in any thing contrary minded to ourselves? To give light to this consideration, let that which at any time is the cause of such hateful divisions, rendered as considerable as the prejudices, and most importune affections of men can represent it to be, be brought to the rule of love and forbearance, in the latitude of it, as prescribed to us by Christ, and it will evidently bear no proportion thereunto. So that such differences, though arising on real miscarriages

and faults of some, because they might otherwise be handled and healed, and ought to be so, cannot be persisted in without the contempt of the immediate authority of Jesus Christ. If it were considered, that he standeth in 'the congregation of God;' Psal. lxxxii. 1. that he dwells in the 'church in glory as in Sinai in the holy place,' Psal. lxxviii. 17, 18. 'walking in the midst of the candlesticks,' Rev. i. 13. with his eyes upon us as a 'flame of fire,' ver. 14. his presence and authority would perhaps be more prevalent with some, than they seem to be.

Again, His wisdom, whereby he hath ordered all things in his church, on set purpose, that schism and divisions may be prevented, is no less despised. Christ who is the wisdom of the Father, 1 Cor. i. 24. the stone on which are seven eyes, Zech. iii. 9. upon whose shoulders the government is laid, Isa. ix. 6, 7: hath in his infinite wisdom so ordered all the officers, orders, gifts, administrations of and in his church, as that this evil might take no place. To manifest this, is the design of the Holy Ghost, Rom. xii. 3—9. 1 Cor. xii. Eph. iv. 8—14. The consideration in particular of this wisdom of Christ, suiting the officers of his church, in respect of the places they hold, of the authority wherewith from him they are invested, the way whereby they are entered into their function, distributing the gifts of his Spirit in marvellous variety, unto several kinds of usefulness; and such distance, and dissimilitude in the particular members, as in a due correspondency and proportion give comeliness and beauty to the whole, disposing of the order of his worship, and sundry ordinances in especial, to be expressive of the highest love and union, pointing all of them against such causeless divisions, might be of use, were that my present intendment.

The grace and goodness of Christ, whence he hath promised to give us one heart, and one way, to leave us peace, such as the world cannot give, with innumerable other promises of the like importance, are disregarded thereby. So also is his prayer for us: with what affection and zeal did he pour out his soul to his Father for our union in love! That seems to be the thing his heart was chiefly fixed on, when he was leaving this world; John xvii. what weight he lay

thereon, how thereby we may be known to be his disciples, and the world be convinced that he was sent of God, is there also manifested.

How far the exercise of love and charity is obstructed by it, hath been declared. The consideration of the nature, excellency, property, effects, usefulness of this grace in all the saints in all their ways, its especial designation by our Lord and Master, to be the bond of union and perfection, in the way and order instituted for the comely celebration of the ordinances of the gospel, will add weight to this aggravation.

Its constant growing to farther evil, in some to apostacy itself; its usual and certain ending in strife, variance, debate, evil surmisings, wrath, confusion, disturbances public and private, are also to be laid all at its door. What farther of this nature and kind may be added (as much may be added) to evince the heinousness of this sin of schism, I shall willingly subscribe unto; so that I shall not trouble the reader in abounding in what on all hands is confessed.

It is incumbent upon him who would have me to go farther in the description of this evil than as formerly stated, to evince from Scripture, another notion of the name or thing than that given, which when he hath done, he shall not find me refractory. In the mean time I shall both consider what may be objected against that which hath been delivered, and also discuss the present state of our divisions on the usual principles, and common acception of schism; if first I may have leave to make some few inferences, or deductions from what hath already been spoken, and, as I hope, evinced.

On supposition that the church of Rome is a church of Christ, it will appear to be the most schismatical church in the world. I say on supposition that it is a church, and that there is such a thing as a schismatical church (as perhaps a church may from its intestine differences, be so not unfitly denominated), that is, the state and condition thereof. The pope is the head of their church, several nations of Europe are members of it. Have we not seen that head taking his flesh in his teeth, tearing his body and his limbs to pieces? Have some of them thought on any thing else, but, 'Arise, Peter, kill and eat,' all their days? Have we not

seen this goodly head, in disputes about Peter's patrimony, and his own jurisdiction, wage war, fight, and shed blood, the blood of his own members? Must we believe armies raised, and battles fought, towns fired, all in pure love, and perfect church order? not to mention their old 'altare contra altare,' anti-popes, anti-councils; look all over their church, on their potentates, bishops, friars, there is no end of their variances. What do the chiefest, choicest pillars, eldest sons, and I know not what of their church at this day? do they not kill, destroy, and ruin each other, as they are able? Let them not say these are the divisions of the nations that are in their church, not of the church; for all these nations on their hypothesis are members of that one church. And that church, which hath no means to prevent its members from designed, resolved on, and continued murdering one of another, nor can remove them from its society, shall never have me in its communion, as being bloodily schismatical. Nor is there any necessity, that men should forego their respective civil interests, by being members of one church. Prejudicate apprehensions of the nature of a church, and its authority, lie at the bottom of that difficulty. Christ hath ordained no church, that inwraps such interests, as on the account whereof, the members of it may murder one another. Whatever then they pretend of unity, and however they make it a note of the true church (as it is a property of it), that which is like it amongst them, is made up of these two ingredients, Subjection to the pope, either for fear of their lives, or advantage to their livelihood; and a conspiracy for the destruction and suppression of them that oppose their interests; wherein they agree like those who maintained Jerusalem in its last siege by Titus; they all consented to oppose the Romans, and yet fought out all other things among themselves. That they are not so openly clamorous about the differences at present, as in former ages, is merely from the pressure of Protestants round about them. However, let them at this day silence the Jesuits and Dominicans, especially the Baijaus and the Jansenians on the one part, and the Molinists on the other; take off the Gallican church from its schismatical refusal of the council of Trent; cause the king of Spain to quit his claim to Sicily, that they need not excommunicate him

every year; compel the commonwealth of Venice to receive the Jesuits; stop the mouths of the Sorbonists about the authority of a general council above the pope, and of all those, whom opposing the papal omnipotency they call politicians; quiet the contest of the Franciscans and Dominicans about the blessed Virgin; burn Bellarmine's books, who almost on every controversy of Christian religion gives an account of their intestine divisions, branding some of their opinions as heretical, as that of Medina about bishops and presbyters, some as idolatrical, as that of Thomas about the worship of the cross with 'latria,' &c. and they may give a better colour to their pretences, than any as yet it wears.

But what need I insist upon this supposition; when I am not more certain, that there is any instituted church in the world, owned by Christ as such, than I am, that the church of Rome is none, properly so called. Nor shall I be thought singular in this persuasion, if it be duly considered what this amounts unto. Some learned men of latter days in this nation, pleading in the justification of the church of England, as to her departure from Rome, did grant that the church of Rome doth not err in fundamentals, or maintained no errors remedilessly pernicious and destructive of salvation. How far they entangled themselves by this concession I argue not. The foundation of it lies in this clear truth, that no church whatever, universal or particular, can possibly err in fundamentals, for by so doing it would cease to be a church. My denying then the synagogue of Rome to be a church, according to their principles, amounts to no more than this; the Papists maintain in their public confessions, fundamental errors; in which assertion it is known I am not alone.

But this is not the principle, at least not the sole nor main principle, whereon I ground my judgment in this case; but this, that there was never any such thing in any tolerable likeness or similitude, as that which is called the church of Rome, allowing the most skilful of its rabbies to give in the characters and delineations of it, instituted in reference to the worship of God by Jesus Christ. The truth is, the whole of it is but an imitation and exemplar of the old imperial government; one is set up in chief and made ἀντεπύ-

Sevros in spirituals, as the emperors were in civil things; from him all power flows to others; and as there was a communication of power by the emperors in the civil state to præfects, proconsuls, vicars, presidents, governors of the lesser and greater nations, with those under them, in various civil subordinations, according to the dignity of the places where they did bear rule and preside, and in the military to generals, legates, tribunes, and the inferior officers; so is there by the pope, to patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, in their several subordinations, which are as his civil state; and to generals of religious orders, provincials, and their dependants, which are as his military. And it is by some (not in all things agreeing with them) confessed, that the government, pleaded for by them in the church, was brought in and established, in correspondency and accommodation to the civil government of the empire; which is undeniably evident and certain: now this being not thoroughly done till the empire had received an incurable wound, it seems to me to be the making of an image to the beast, giving life to it, and causing it to speak. So that the present Roman church is nothing else but an image or similitude of the Roman empire, set up in its declining among and over the same persons in succession, by the craft of Satan, through principles of deceit, subtlety, and spiritual wickedness, as the other was by force and violence, for the same ends of power, dominion, fleshliness, and persecution with the former.

The exactness of this correspondency in all things, both in respect of those who claim to be the stated body of his ecclesiastical commonwealth, and those who are merely dependent on his will, bound unto him professedly by a military sacrament, exempted from the ordinary rules and government of his fixed rulers in their several subordinations, under officers of their own immediately commissioned by him, with his management of both those parties to balance and keep them mutually in quiet and in order for his service (especially confiding in his men of war, like the emperors of old), may elsewhere be farther manifested.

I suppose it will not be needful to add any thing to evince the vanity of the pretensions of the Romanists or others against all or any of us, on the account of schism,

upon a grant of the principles laid down, it lies so clear in them without need of farther deduction; and I speak with some confidence, that I am not in expectation of any hasty confutation of them, I mean, that which is so indeed. The earnestness of their clamours, importuning us to take notice of them by the way, before I enter upon a direct debate of the cause, as it stands stated in reference to them, I shall only tell them, that seeking to repose our consciences in the mind of God revealed in the Scriptures, we are not at all concerned in the noise they make in the world. For what have we done? Wherein doth our guilt consist? Wherein lies the peculiar concernment of these ἀλλοτριεπισκοποι? Let them go to the churches, with whom we walk, of whom we are, and ask of them concerning our ways, our love, and the duties of it; Do we live in strife, and variance? Do we not bear with each other? Do we not worship God without disputes and divisions? Have we differences and contentions in our assemblies? Do we break any bond of union, wherein we are bound, by the express institutions of Jesus Christ? If we have, let the righteous reprove us, we will own our guilt, confess we have been carnal, and endeavour reformation. If not, what have the Romanists, Italians, to do to judge us? Knew we not your design, your interest, your lives, your doctrines, your worship, we might possibly think, that you might intermeddle out of love and mistaken zeal, but ‘ad populum Phaleras:’ you would be making shrines, and thence is this stir and uproar. ‘But we are schismatics in that we have departed from the catholic church; and for our own conventicles, they are no churches, but sties of beasts.’ But this is most false. We abide in the catholic church under all the bonds wherein by the will of Christ we stand related unto it; which if we prove not with as much evidence as the nature of such things will bear, though you are not at all concerned in it, yet we will give you leave to triumph over us. And if our own congregations be not churches, whatsoever we are, we are not schismatics; for schism is an evil amongst the members of a church, if St. Paul may be believed. ‘But we have forsaken the church of Rome.’ But gentlemen, shew first how we were ever of it. No man hath lost that which he never had; nor hath left the place

or station wherein he never was. Tell me when or how we were members of your church? We know not your language, you are barbarians to us. It is impossible we should assemble with you. 'But your forefathers left that church, and you persist in their evil.' Prove that our forefathers were ever of your church in any communion instituted by Christ, and you say somewhat. To desert a man's station and relation, which he had on any other account, good or bad, is not schism, as shall farther be manifested.

Upon the same principle, a plea for freedom from the charge of any church, real or pretended, as national, may be founded and confirmed; either we are of the national church of England (to give that instance) or we are not; if we are not, and are exempted by our protestation, as before, whatever we are, we are not schismatics; if we are fatally bound unto it, and must be members of it, whether we will or no, being made so we know not how, and continuing so we know not why, shew us then what duty or office of love is incumbent on us, that we do not perform? Do we not join in external acts of worship in peace with the whole church? Call the whole church together, and try what we will do. Do we not join in every congregation in the nation? This is not charged on us; nor will any say, that we have right so to do, without a relation to some particular church in the nation; I know where the sore lies. A national officer, or officers, with others acting under them in several subordinations, with various distributions of power, are the church intended. A non-submission to their rules and constitutions, is the schism we are guilty of.

Quem das finem rex magne laborum!

But this pretence shall afterward be sifted to the utmost. In the mean time let any one inform me, what duty I ought to perform towards a national church, on supposition there is any such thing, by virtue of an institution of Jesus Christ, that is possible for me to perform, and I shall *σὺν ἑμῷ* address myself unto it.

To close these considerations with things of more immediate concernment. Of the divisions that have fallen out amongst us in things of religion, since the last revolutions of this nation, there is no one thing hath been so effectual a

promotion (such is the power of tradition and prejudice, which even bear all before them in human affairs) as the mutual charging one another with the guilt of schism. That the notion of schism, whereon this charge is built by the most, if not all, was invented by some of the ancients, to promote their plea and advantage with them with whom they had to do, without due regard to the simplicity of the gospel, at least in a suitableness to the present state of the church in those days, is too evident. For on very small foundations have mighty fabrics, and *μορμολυκία* in religion been raised. As an ability to judge of the present posture and condition of affairs, with counsel to give direction for their order and management, towards any end proposed, not an ability to contrive for events, and to knit on one thing upon another, according to a probability of success for continuance, which is almost constantly disturbed by unexpected providential interviences, leaving the contrivers at a perplexing loss, will be found to be the sum of human wisdom; so it will be our wisdom in the things of God, not to judge according to what by any means is made present to us, and its principles on that account rendered ready to exert themselves, but ever to recoil to the original, and first institution. When a man first falls into some current, he finds it strong and almost impassable; trace it to its fountain, and it is but a dribbling gutter. Paul tells the members of the church of Corinth, that there were divisions amongst them, breaches of that love and order, that ought to be observed in religious assemblies. Hence there is a sin of schism raised, which when considered as now stated, doth no more relate to that treated on by the apostle, than ‘Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?’ doth to the pope’s supremacy; or Christ’s saying to Peter of John, ‘If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?’ did to the report that went afterward abroad, ‘that that disciple should not die.’ When God shall have reduced his churches to their primitive purity and institution, when they are risen, and have shaken themselves out of the dust, and things of religion return to their native simplicity, it is scarce possible to imagine what vizards will fall off, and what a contrary appearance many things will have, to what they now walk up and down in.

I wish that those who are indeed really concerned in this business, namely, the members of particular churches, who have voluntarily given up themselves to walk in them according to the appointment of Christ, would seriously consider what evil lies at the door, if they give place to causeless differences and divisions amongst themselves. Had this sin of schism been rightly stated, as it ought, and the guilt of it charged in its proper place, perhaps some would have been more careful in their deportment in their relations. At present, the dispute in the world relating hereunto, is about subjection to the pope, and the church of Rome, as it is called: and this managed on the principles of edicts and of councils, with the practices of princes and nations, in the days long ago past, with the like considerations, wherein the concernment of Christians is doubtless very small. Or of obedience and conformity to metropolitan and diocesan bishops in their constitutions, and ways of worship, jointly or severally prescribed by them. In more ancient times, that which was agitated under the same name, was about persons or churches renouncing the communion and society of saints with all other churches in the world, consenting with them in the same confession of faith, for the substance of it. And these differences respectively are handled, in reference to what the state of things was, and is grown unto in the days wherein they are managed. When Paul wrote his epistle there was no occasion given to any such controversies, nor foundation laid making them possible. That the disciples of Christ ought everywhere to abound in love and forbearance towards one another, especially to carry all things in union and peace in those societies wherein they were joined for the worship of God, were his endeavours, and exhortations: of these things he is utterly silent: let them who aim to recover themselves into the like state and condition consider his commands, exhortations, and reproofs. Things are now generally otherwise stated, which furnisheth men with objections against what hath been spoken, to whose removal, and farther clearing of the whole matter, I shall now address myself.

CHAP. III.

Objections against the former discourse proposed to consideration. Separation from any church in the Scripture not called schism. Grounds of such separation. Apostacy, irregular walking, sensuality. Of separation on the account of reformation. Of commands for separation. No example of churches departing from the communion of another. Of the common notion of schism, and the use made of it. Schism a breach of union. The union instituted by Christ.

THAT which lies obvious to every man against what hath been delivered, and which is comprehensive of what particular objections, to which it seems liable and obnoxious, is, that according to this description of schism, separation of any man or men from a true church, or of one church from others, is not schism; seeing that is an evil only amongst the members of one church, whilst they continue so to be: which is so contrary to the judgment of the generality of Christians in this business, that it ought to be rejected as fond and absurd.

Of what hath been the judgment of most men in former ages, what it is in this, what strength there is in an argument deduced from the consent pretended, I am not as yet arrived to the consideration. Nor have I yet manifested, what I grant of the general notion of schism, as it may be drawn by way of analogy or proportion of reason, from what is delivered in the Scriptures concerning it.

I am upon the precise signification of the word and description of the thing, as used and given by the Holy Ghost: in this sense I deny that there is any relinquishment, departure, or separation from any church or churches, mentioned or intimated in the Scripture, which is, or is called schism, or agreeth with the description by them given us of that term. Let them that are contrary minded attempt the proof of what they affirm. As far as a negative proposition is capable of evidence from any thing but the weakness of the opposition made unto it, that laid down will receive it by the ensuing considerations.

All blameable departure from any church or churches, or relinquishment of them mentioned in the gospel, may be reduced to one of these three heads or causes: 1. Apostacy. 2. Irregularity of walking. 3. Professed sensuality.

1. Apostacy or falling away from the faith of the gospel, and thereupon forsaking the congregations or assemblies for the worship of God in Jesus Christ is mentioned, Heb. x. 25. *μὴ ἐγκαταλείποντες τὴν ἐπισυναγωγὴν ἑαυτῶν*, 'not wholly deserting the assembling ourselves, as is the manner of some.' A separation from, and relinquishment of, the communion of that church, or those churches, with whom men have assembled for the worship of God, is the guilt here charged on some by the apostle. Upon what account they so separated themselves is declared, ver. 26. 'they sinned wilfully, after they had received the knowledge of the truth;' thereby slipping out their necks from the yoke of Christ, ver. 28. and 'drawing back to perdition;' ver. 39. that is, they departed off to Judaism. I much question, whether any one would think fit to call these men schismatics; or whether we should so judge, or so speak of any, that in these days should forsake our churches, and turn Mahometans; such departure makes men apostates, not schismatics. Of this sort many are mentioned in the Scriptures. Nor are they not at all accounted schismatics, because the lesser crime is swallowed up and drowned in the greater, but because their sin is wholly of another nature.

Of some, who withdraw themselves from church communion, at least for a season, by their disorderly and irregular walking, we have also mention. The apostle calls them, *ἄτακτοι*, 1 Thess. v. 14. 'unruly,' or 'disorderly persons,' not abiding in obedience to the order prescribed by Christ in and unto his churches; and says, they walked *ἀτάκτως*; 2 Thess. iii. 6. out of all church order; whom he would have warned and avoided: so also *ἀτόπους*, chap. iii. 2. persons that abide quietly in no place or station, but wandered up and down; whom whatever their profession be, he denies to have faith. That there were many of this sort in the primitive times, who through a vain and slight spirit neglected and fell off from church assemblies, when yet they would not openly renounce the faith of Christ, is known. Of such disorderly persons we have many in our days wherein we live, whom we charge not with schism, but vanity, folly, disobedience to the precepts of Christ in general.

Men also separated themselves from the churches of Christ upon the account of sensuality, that they might freely

indulge to their lusts and live in all manner of pleasure all their days; Jude 19. These are they that separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.' Who are these? They that 'turn the grace of God into lasciviousness and that deny the Lord God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ,' ver. 4. 'that defile the flesh after the manner of Sodom and Gomorrah,' ver. 7, 8. that spoke 'evil of things they knew not, and in things they knew naturally as brute beasts they corrupted themselves,' ver. 10. sinning openly like beasts against the light of nature; so ver. 12, 13. 16. 'These,' saith the apostle, 'are they that separate themselves,' men given over to work all uncleanness with delight and greediness in the face of the sun, abusing themselves and justifying their abominations with a pretence of the grace of God.

That there is any blameable separation from, or relinquishment of, any church or churches of Christ, mentioned in the Scripture; but what may be referred to one of those heads, I am yet to learn. Now whether the men of these abominations are to be accounted schismatics, or their crime in separating themselves to be esteemed schism, it is not hard to judge: if on any of these accounts, any persons have withdrawn themselves from the communion of any church of Christ, if they have on any motives of fear, or love, apostatized from the faith of the gospel, if they do it by walking disorderly and loosely in their conversations, if they give themselves up to sensuality and uncleanness, and so to be no more able to bear the society of them whom God hath called to holiness and purity of life, and worship, they shall assuredly bear their own burden.

But none of these instances are comprehensive of the case inquired after; so that for a close of them, I say, for a man to withdraw or withhold himself from the communion external and visible of any church or churches, on the pretension and plea, be it true or otherwise, that the worship, doctrine, discipline, instituted by Christ is corrupted among them, with which corruption he dares not defile himself, it is nowhere in the Scripture called schism, nor is that case particularly exemplified, or expressly supposed, whereby a judgment may be made of the fact at large; but we are left upon the whole matter to the guidance of such general principles and rules as are given us for that end and purpose.

What may regularly, on the other hand, be deduced from the commands given to ‘turn away from them who have only a form of godliness,’ 2 Tim. iii. 5. to ‘withdraw from them that walk disorderly, 2 Thes. iii. 6. not to bear nor endure in communion, men of corrupt principles, and wicked lives, Rev. ii. 14. but positively to separate from an apostate church, Rev. xviii. 4. that in all things we may worship Christ according to his mind and appointment, what is the force of these commands ἀποτρέψασθαι, μὴ συναμίγνυσθαι, παραπεῖασθαι, ἐκκλίνειν, μὴ κοινωνεῖν, μὴ λέγειν χαίρειν, φεύγειν, and the like, is without the compass of what I am now treating about.

Of one particular church departing from that communion with another, or others, be it what it will, which it ought to hold, unless in the departing of some] of them, in some things, from the common faith, which is supposed not to relate to schism, in the Scripture we have no example. Diotrophes assuming an authority over that church wherein he was placed, 3 John 9, 10. and for a season hindering the brethren from the performance of the duty incumbent upon them, toward the great apostle and others, makes the nearest approach to such a division: but yet in such a distance, that it is not at all to our purpose in hand. When I come to consider that communion that churches have, or ought to have among themselves, this will be more fully discussed. Neither is this my sense alone, that there is no instance of any such separation as that, which is the matter of our debate, to be found in the Scripture. It is confessed by others differing from me, in and about church affairs. To ‘leave all ordinary communion in any church with dislike, where opposition or offence offers itself, is to separate from such a church in the Scripture sense; such separation was not in being in the apostles time,’ say they, Pap. Accom. p. 55. But how they came to know exactly the sense of the Scripture in and about things not mentioned in them, I know not. As I said before, were I unwilling, I do not as yet understand how I may be compelled to carry on the notion of schism any farther: nor is there need of adding any thing to demonstrate how little the conscience of a godly man, walking peaceably in any particular church-society, is concerned in all the clamorous disputes of this age about it; being built on false hypo-

thesis, presumptions, and notions, no other way considerable, but as received by tradition from our fathers.

But I shall for the sake of some carry on this discourse to a fuller issue ; there is another common notion of schism, which pleads to an original from that spoken expressly of it, by a parity of reason, which tolerable in itself, hath been and is injuriously applied, and used, according as it hath fallen into the hands of men who needed it as an engine to fix or improve them in the station wherein they are, or were ; and wherewith they are pleased. Indeed, being invented for several purposes, there is nothing more frequent than for men, who are scarce able to keep off the force of it from their own heads, whilst managed against them by them above ; at the same time vigorously to apply it for the oppression of all under them. What is on all hands consented unto, as its general nature, I shall freely grant that I might have liberty and advantage thence to debate the restriction and application of it to the several purposes of men prevailing themselves thereon.

Let then the general demand be granted, that schism is *διάρρησις τῆς ἐνότητος*, ‘the breach of union;’ which I shall attend with one reasonable postulatum, namely, that this union be a union of the appointment of Jesus Christ : the consideration then of what, or what sort of union in reference to the worship of God, according to the gospel, is instituted and appointed by Jesus Christ, is the proper foundation of what I have farther to offer in this business. Let the breach of this, if you please, be accounted schism ; for being an evil, I shall not contend by what name or title it be distinguished. It is not pleaded that any kind of relinquishment or desertion of any church or churches is presently schism, but only such a separation as breaks the bond of union instituted by Christ.

Now this union being instituted in the church, according to the various acceptations of that word, so is it distinguished. Therefore, for a discovery of the nature of that which is particularly to be spoken to, and also its contrary, I must shew,

1. The several considerations of the church, wherein, and with which, union is to be preserved.
2. What that union is, and wherein it doth consist, which

according to the mind of Christ we are to keep and observe with the church, under the several notions of it respectively.

3. And how that union is broken, and what is that sin whereby it is done.

In handling this triple proposal, I desire that it may not be expected that I should much insist on any thing that falls in my way, though never so useful to my end and purpose, which hath been already proved and confirmed by others beyond all possibility of control; and such will many, if not most of the principles that I proceed upon appear to be.

CHAP. IV.

Several acceptations in the Scripture of the name church. Of the church catholic properly so called. Of the church visible. Perpetuity of particular churches. A mistake rectified. The nature of the church catholic evinced. Bellarmine's description of the church catholic. Union of the church catholic, wherein it consists. Union by way of consequence. Unity of faith. Of love. The communion of the catholic church in and with itself. The breach of the union of the church catholic, wherein it consisteth. Not morally possible. Protestants not guilty of it. The papal world out of interest in the church catholic. As partly profane. Miracles no evidence of holiness. Partly ignorant. Self-justitaries. Idolatrous. Worshippers of the beast.

To begin with the first thing proposed. The church of Christ living in this world, as to our present concernment, is taken in Scripture three ways.

1. For the mystical body of Christ, his elect, redeemed, justified, and sanctified ones throughout the world, commonly called the church-catholic militant.

2. For the universality of men throughout the world, called by the preaching of the word, visibly professing and yielding obedience to the gospel; called by some the church-catholic visible.

3. For a particular church of some place, wherein the instituted worship of God in Christ is celebrated according to his mind.

From the rise and nature of the things themselves, doth this distinction of the signification of the word church arise; for whereas the church is a society of men called out of the

world, it is evident there is mention of a twofold call in Scripture, one effectual, according to the purpose of God, Rom. viii. 28. the other only external. The church must be distinguished according to its answer and obedience to these calls, which gives us the two first states and considerations of it. And this is confessed by the ordinary gloss, ad Rom. 8. '*Vocatio exterior fit per prædicatores, et est communis bonorum, et malorum, interior vero tantum est electorum.*' And whereas there are laws and external rules for joint communion, given to them that are called, which is confessed, the necessity of churches in the last acceptation, wherein obedience can alone be yielded to those laws, is hereby established.

In the first sense the church hath as such the properties of perpetuity, invisibility, infallibility, as to all necessary means of salvation attending of it; not as notes whereby it may be known, either in the whole, or any considerable part of it, but as certain adjuncts of its nature and existence. Neither are they any signs of less or more certainty, whereby the whole may be discerned or known as such; though there are of the individuals whereof it doth consist.

In the second, the church hath perpetuity, visibility, and infallibility as qualified above, in a secondary sense; namely, not as such, not as visible and confessing, but as comprising the individuals whereof the catholic church doth consist. For all that truly believe, profess; though all that profess, do not truly believe.

Whether Christ hath had always a church in the last sense and acceptation of the word, in the world, is a most needless inquiry: nor are we concerned in it, any farther than in other matters of fact, that are recorded in story: though I am apt to believe, that although very many in all ages kept up their station in, and relation to, the church in the two former acceptations, yet there was in some of them scarce any visible society of worshippers, so far answering the institution of Christ, as to render them fit to be owned and joined withal, as a visible particular church of Christ. But yet, though the notions of men were generally corrupt, the practice of all professors throughout the world, whereof so little is recorded, and least of them that did best, is not

rashly to be determined of. Nor can our judgment be censured in this, by them who think that when Christ lay in the grave there was no believer left but his mother, and that the church was preserved in that one person: so was Bernard minded, *Tractat. de Pass.* ‘Dom. (ego sum vitis) sola per illud triste sabbathum stetit in fide, et salvata fuit ecclesia in ipsa sola.’ Of the same mind is Marsilius in *Sent. quæst. 20. art. 3.* as are also others of that sort of men. See Bannes in *2. 2. Thom. quæst. 1. art. 10.* I no way doubt of the perpetual existence of innumerable believers in every age, and such as made the profession that is absolutely necessary to salvation one way or other: though I question a regular association of men, for the celebration of instituted worship, according to the mind of Christ. The seven thousand in Israel, in the days of Elijah, were members of the church of God, and yet did not constitute a church-state among the ten tribes. But these things must be farther spoken to.

I cannot but by the way remind a learned person, with whom I have formerly occasionally had some debate in print about episcopacy, and the state of the first churches, of a mistake of his, which he might have prevented with a little inquiry into the judgment of them, whom he undertook to confute at a venture. I have said, that there was not any ordinary church officer instituted in the first times, relating to more churches in his office, or to any other church, than a single particular congregation; he replies, that ‘this is the very same, which his memory suggested to him out of the *Saints’ Belief*, printed twelve or fourteen years since, where, instead of that article of the apostolic symbol, the holy catholic church, this very hypothesis was substituted.’ If he really believed that in professing I owned no instituted church with officers of one denomination in Scripture, beyond a single congregation, I renounced the catholic church, or was any way necessitated so to do, I suppose he may by what hath now been expressed, be rectified in his apprehension. If he was willing only to make use of the advantage, wherewith he supposed himself accommodated by that expression, to press the persuasion owned in the minds of ignorant men, who could not but startle at the noise of deny-

ing the catholic church, it may pass at the same rate that most of the repartees in such discourses are to be allowed at. But to proceed.

In the first sense the word is used Matt. xvi. 28. 'Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' This is the church of the elect, redeemed, justified, sanctified ones, that are so built on Christ; and these only, and all these are interested in the promise made to the church; there is no promise made to the church as such, in any sense, but is peculiarly made therein, to every one that is truly and properly a part and member of that church. Who, and who only are interested in that promise, Christ himself declares, John vi. 40. x. 28, 29. xvii. 20. 24. They that will apply this to the church in any other sense, must know that it is incumbent on them to establish the promise made to it unto every one that is a true member of the church in that sense, which whatever be the sense of the promise I suppose they will find difficult work of. Eph. v. 25—27. 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' He speaks only of those, whom Christ loved antecedently to his dying for them, whereof his love to them was the cause; who they are is manifest, John x. 15. xvii. 17. And those on whom by his death he accomplished the effects mentioned, by washing, cleansing, and sanctifying, bringing them into the condition promised to the 'bride the Lamb's wife,' Rev. xix. 8. which is the 'new Jerusalem,' xxi. 2. of elected and saved ones; ver. 27. Col. i. 18. contains an expression of the same light and evidence; 'Christ is the head of the body the church;' not only a governing head, to give it rules and laws; but as it were a natural head unto the body, which is influenced by him with a new spiritual life, which Bellarmine professeth against, as any requisite condition to the members of the catholic church, which he pleaded for. In that same sense, ver. 24. saith the apostle, 'I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:' which assertion is exactly parallel to that of 2 Tim. ii. 10. 'Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they

may obtain salvation ;' so that the elect and the church are the same persons under several considerations : and therefore even a particular church, on the account of its participation of the nature of the catholic, is called elect; 1 Pet. v. 13. and so the church, Matt. xvi. 18. is expounded by our Saviour himself, chap. xxii. 24. But to prove at large by a multiplication of arguments and testimonies, that the catholic church, or mystical body of Christ, consists of the whole number of the elect, as redeemed, justified, sanctified, called, believing, and yielding obedience to Christ throughout the world (I speak of it as militant in any age), and of them only, were as needlessly '*actum agere*,' as a man can well devise. It is done already, and that to the purpose uncontrollably, '*terque quaterque*.' And the substance of the doctrine is delivered by Aquinas himself, p. 3. q. 8. a. 3. In brief, the sum of the inquiry upon this head, is concerning the matter of that church, concerning which such glorious things are spoken in Scripture ; namely, that it is the spouse, the wife, the bride, the sister, the only one of Christ, his dove undefiled, his temple, elect, redeemed, his Zion, his body, his new Jerusalem ; concerning which inquiry, the reader knows where he may abundantly find satisfaction.

That the asserting the catholic church in this sense is no new apprehension, is known to them who have at all looked backward to what was past before us. '*Omnibus consideratis*,' saith Austin, '*puto me non temere dicere, alios ita esse in domo Dei, ut ipsi etiam sint eadem domus Dei, quæ dicitur ædificari supra petram, quæ unica columba appellatur, quæ sponsa pulchra sine macula, et ruga, et hortus conclusus, fons signatus, puteus aquæ vivæ, paradiscus cum fructu pomorum, alios autem ita constat esse in domo, ut non pertineant ad compagem domus.*—Sed sicut esse palea dicitur in frumentis ;' de Bapt. lib. 1. cap. 51. who is herein followed by not a few of the Papists. Hence saith Biel. '*Accipitur etiam ecclesia pro tota multitudine prædestinatorum* ;' in Canon. Miss. Lec. 22. In what sense this church is visible, was before declared. Men elected, redeemed, justified as such are not visible, for that which makes them so is not : but this hinders not but they may be so upon the other consideration ; sometimes to more, sometimes to fewer, yea, they are so always to some. Those that are may be seen ;

and when we say they are visible, we do not intend that they are actually seen by any that we know, but that they may be so.

Bellarmino gives us a description of this catholic church (as the name hath of late been used at the pleasure of men, and wrested to serve every design that was needful to be carried on) to the interest which he was to contend for, but in itself perfectly ridiculous. He tells us out of Austin, that the church is a living body, wherein is a body and a soul, thence, saith he, the soul is the internal graces of the Spirit, faith, hope, and love: the body is the external profession of faith; some are of the soul and body perfectly united to Christ by faith, and the profession of it; some are of the soul that are not of the body, as the catechumeni, which are not as yet admitted to be members of the visible church, but yet are true believers. Some, saith he, are of the body that are not of the soul, who having no true grace, yet out of hope or temporal fear do make profession of the faith, and these are like the hair, nails, and ill humours in a human body. Now, saith Bellarmine, our definition of a church compriseth only the last sort, whilst they are under the head the pope; which is all one, as if he had defined a man to be a dead creature, composed of hair, nails, and ill humours, under a hat. But of the church in this sense so far.

It remaineth, then, that we inquire what is the union which the church in this sense hath, from the wisdom of its head, Jesus Christ. That it is one, that it hath a union with its head, and in itself, is not questioned. It is one sheepfold, one body, one spouse of Christ, his only one as unto him; and that it might have oneness in itself, with all the fruits of it, our Saviour prays, John xvii. 19—23. The whole of it is described, Eph. iv. 15, 16. ‘May grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying itself in love.’ And of the same importance is that of the same apostle, Col. ii. 19. ‘Not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.’

Now in the union of the church in every sense, there is considerable both the 'formalis ratio' of it, whence it is, what it is, and the way and means whereby it exerts itself, and is useful and active in communion. The first, in the church, as now stated, consists in its joint holding the head, and growing up into him by virtue of the communication of supplies unto it therefrom, for that end and purpose. That which is the formal reason and cause of the union of the members with the head, is the formal reason and cause of the union of the members themselves. The original union of the members is in and with the head; and by the same have they union with themselves as one body. Now the inhabitation of the same Spirit in him and them, is that which makes Christ personal, and his church, to be one Christ mystical, 1 Cor. xii. 12. Peter tells us, that we are by the promises 'made partakers of the divine nature, 2 Epist. i. 4. We are *θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως*, we have communion with it: that *θεία φύσις* is no more but *καινὴ κτίσις*, I cannot easily consent. Now it is in the person of the Spirit whereof we are by the promise made partakers: he is the Spirit of promise, Eph. i. 13. promised by God to Christ, Acts ii. 33. *ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἔλαβε παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς*, and by him to us, John xiv. 16. being of old the great promise of the covenant, Isa. lix. 21. Ezek. xi. 17. xxvi. 36. Now in the participation of the divine nature consists the union of the saints with Christ, John vi. 55. our Saviour tells us, that it arises from eating his flesh and drinking his blood: 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.' This he expounds ver. 63. 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth not.' By the quickening Spirit, inhabitation in Christ, and Christ in it, is intended. And the same he manifests in his prayer that his church may be one in the Father and the Son, as the Father is in him, and he in the Father, John xvii. 21. for the Spirit being the love of the Father and of the Son is 'vinculum Trinitatis:' and so here of our union in some resemblance.

The unity of members in the body natural with one head is often chosen to set forth the union of the church, 1 Cor. xii. 12. xi. 3. Eph. v. 23. Col. i. 19. Now every man can tell, that, union of the head and members, whereby they become all one body, that and not another, is oneness

of soul; whereby the whole is animated, which makes the body, be it less or greater, to be one body. That which answers hereunto, in the mystical body of Christ, is the animation of the whole by his Spirit, as the apostle fully, 1 Cor. xv. 45. The union between husband and wife is also chosen by the Holy Ghost to illustrate the union between Christ and his church. 'For this cause shall a man forsake his father and his mother and cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh; this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and his church;' Eph. v. 31, 32. The union between man and wife we have, Gen ii. 24. 'They be no more twain but one flesh;' of Christ and his church that they are one spirit. 'For he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit;' 1 Cor. vi. 17. See also another similitude of the same importance, John xv. 5. Rom. xi. 16, 17. This, I say, is the fountain radical union of the church catholic in itself, with its head and formal reason of it.

Hence flows a double consequential union that it hath also. 1. Of faith. All men united to Christ by the inhabitation of the same Spirit in him and them, are by it from and according to the word, 'taught of God,' Isa. liv. 13. John vi. 45. so taught, every one of them, as to come to Christ, ver. 46. that is, by believing, by faith. They are so taught of God, as that they shall certainly have that measure of knowledge and faith, which is needful to bring them to Christ, and to God by him. And this they have by the unction or Spirit, which they have received, 1 John ii. 21, 27. accompanying the word by virtue of God's covenant with them; Isa. lix. 29. And hereby are all the members of the church catholic, however divided in their visible profession, by any differences among themselves, or differenced by the several measures of gifts and graces they have received, brought to the perfection aimed at, to the unity of the faith, and to the 'acknowledgment of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;' Eph. iv. 13.

Nor was this hidden from some of the Papists themselves. '*Ecclesia sancta corpus est Christi uno Spiritu vivificata, unita fide una, et sanctificata,*' saith Hugo de Victore, de Sacram. lib. 2. as he had said before in the former cap. '*Sicut scriptum est qui non habet Spiritum Christi,*

hic non est ejus : qui non habet Spiritum Christi, non est membrum Christi ; in corpore uno Spiritus unus, nihil in corpore mortuum, nihil extra corpus vivum.' See to the same purpose, *Enchirid. Concil Colon in Symbol.*

With peculiar reference to the members themselves, there is another necessary consequence of the union mentioned ; and that is the mutual love of all those united in the head as before towards one another, and of every one towards the whole, as so united in the head Christ Jesus ; there is an 'increase made of the body to the edifying itself in love ;' Eph. iv. 16. And so it becomes the bond of perfectness to this body of Christ. I cannot say, that the members or parts of this church have their union in themselves by love ; because they have that with and in Christ, whereby they are one in themselves, John xvii. 21. 23. they are one in God, even in Christ, where their life is hid ; Col. iii. 3. But it is the next and immediate principle of that communion, which they severally have one with another, and the whole body, in and with itself. I say then, that the communion which the catholic church, the mystical body of Christ, hath with and in itself, springing from the union which it hath in and with Christ, and in itself thereby, consists in love, exerting itself in inexpressible variety, according to the present state of the whole, its relation to Christ, to saints and angels, with the conditions and occasions of the members of it respectively ; 1 Cor. xii. 26, 27.

What hath been spoken concerning the union and communion of this church, will not I suppose, meet with any contradiction. Granting that there is such a church, as that we speak of, '*cœtus prædestinatorum credentium*,' the Papists themselves will grant that Christ alone is its head, and that its union ariseth from its subjection to him, and dependance on him. Their modesty makes them contented with constituting the pope in the room of Christ, as he is as it were a political head for government ; they have not as yet directly put in their claim to his office as a mystical head, influencing the body with life and motion ; though by their figment of the sacraments communicating grace, '*ex opere operato*,' and investing the original power of dispensing them in the pope only, they have contended fair for it. But if any one can inform me of any other union,

or communion of the church, described as above, than these laid down, I shall willingly attend unto his instructions. In the mean time, to carry on the present discourse unto that which is aimed at, it is manifest, that the breach of this union must consist in these two things:

1. The casting out, expelling, and loosening that spirit, which abiding in us, gives us this union.

2. The loss of that love, which thence flows into the body of Christ, and believers, as parts and members thereof.

This being the state of the church under the first consideration of it, certainly it would be an extravagancy scarcely to be paralleled, for any one to affirm a breach of this union, as such, to be schism, under that notion of it which we are inquiring after. But because there is very little security to be enjoyed in an expectation of the sobriety of men in things wherein they are, or suppose they may be concerned, that they may know beforehand what is farther incumbent on them, if in reference to us, they would prevail themselves of any such notion, I here inform them that our persuasion is, that this union was never utterly broken by any man taken into it, or ever shall be to the end of the world, and I suppose they esteem it vain to dispute about the adjuncts of that which is denied to be.

But yet this persuasion being not common to us, with them with whom we have to do in this matter, I shall not farther make use of it, as to our present defence. That any other union of the catholic church, as such, can possibly be fancied or imagined by any (as to the substance of what hath been pleaded), leaving him a plea for the ordinary soundness of his intellectuals, is denied.

Let us see now then what is our concernment in this discourse; unless men can prove that we have not the Spirit of God, that we do not savingly believe in Jesus Christ, that we do not sincerely love all the saints, his whole body, and every member of it, they cannot disprove our interest in the catholic church. It is true, indeed, men that have so great a confidence of their own abilities, and such a contempt of the world, as to undertake to dispute men out of conclusions from their natural senses, about their proper objects, in what they see, feel, and handle, and will not be satisfied, that they have not proved there is no motion, whilst a man

walks for a conviction under their eye ; may probably venture to disprove us, in our spiritual sense and experience also, and to give us arguments, to persuade us that we have not that communion with Christ, which we know we have every day. Although I have a very mean persuasion of my own abilities, yet I must needs say, I cannot think that any man in the world can convince me, that I do not love Jesus Christ in sincerity, because I do not love the pope, as he is so. Spiritual experience is a security against a more cunning sophister, than any Jesuit in the world, with whom the saints of God have to deal all their lives ; Eph. vi. 12. And doubtless through the rich grace of our God, help will arise to us, that we shall never make a covenant with these men for peace, upon conditions far worse than those that Nabash would have exacted on the men of Jabesh Gilead, which were but the loss of one eye with an abiding reproach ; they requiring of us, the deprivation of whatsoever we have to see by, whether as men or Christians, and that with a reproach never to be blotted out.

But as we daily put our consciences upon trial as to this thing, 1 Cor. xiii. 5. and are put unto it by Satan ; so are we ready at all times to give an account to our adversaries of the hope that is in us. Let them sift us to the utmost, it will be to our advantage. Only let them not bring frivolous objections, and such as they know are of no weight with us ; speaking (as is their constant manner), about the pope and their church, things utterly foreign to what we are presently about, miserably begging the thing in question. Let them weigh, if they are able, the true nature of union with Christ, of faith in him, of love to the saints ; consider them in their proper causes, adjuncts, and effects with a spiritual eye, laying aside their prejudices and intolerable impositions ; if we are found wanting as to the truth and sincerity of these things, if we cannot give some account of our translation from death to life, of our implantation into Christ, and our participation of the Spirit, we must bear our own burden ; if otherwise, we stand fast on the most noble and best account of church-union whatever ; and whilst this shield is safe, we are less anxious about the issue of the ensuing contest. Whatever may be the apprehensions of other men, I am not in this thing solicitous (I speak not of

myself, but assuming for the present the person of one concerning whom these things may be spoken), whilst the efficacy of the gospel accomplisheth in my heart all those divine and mighty effects, which are ascribed unto it as peculiarly it works towards them that believe; whilst I know this one thing, that whereas I was blind, now I see; whereas I was a servant of sin, I am now free to righteousness, and at liberty from bondage unto death; and instead of the fruits of the flesh, I find all the fruits of the Spirit brought forth in me to the praise of God's glorious grace; whilst I have an experience of that powerful work of conversion, and being born again, which I am able to manage against all the accusations of Satan, having peace with God upon justification by faith, with the love of God shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost investing me in the privileges of adoption; I shall not certainly be moved with the disputes of men, that would persuade me, I do not belong to the catholic church, because I do not follow this, or that, or any part of men in the world.

But you will say, this you will allow to them also with whom you have to do, that they may be members of the catholic church: I leave other men to stand or fall to their own master; only as to the papal multitude, on the account of several inconsistencies between them, and the members of this church, I shall place some swords in the way, which will reduce their number to an invisible scantling; I might content myself by affirming at once, that upon what hath been spoken, I must exclude from the catholic church all, and every one, whom Bellarmine intends to include in it as such; namely, those who belong to the church as hairs and ill humours to the body of a man. But I add in particular,

1. All wicked and profane persons, of whom the Scripture speaks expressly that they shall not enter into the kingdom of God, are indisputably cut off: whatever they pretend in show at any time in the outward duties of devotion, they have neither faith in Christ, nor love to the saints: and so have part and fellowship neither in the union nor communion of the catholic church.

How great a proportion of that synagogue, whereof we are speaking, will be taken off by this sword; of their

popes, princes, prelates, clergy, votaries, and people, and that not by a rule of private surmises, but upon the visible issue of their being servants to sin, haters of God and good men, is obvious to all. Persons of really so much as reformed lives amongst them are like the berries after the shaking of an olive-tree; 1 Cor. vi. 7—10. Rev. xxii. 15.

I find some persons of late, appropriating holiness and regeneration^a to the Roman party, on this account, that among them only miracles are wrought; which is, say they, the only proof of true holiness. But these men err as their predecessors, 'not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.' Amongst all the evidences that are given in Scripture of regeneration, I suppose they will scarcely find this to be one; and they who have no other assurance that they are themselves born of God, but that some of their church work miracles, had need maintain also that no man can be assured thereof in this life. They will find that a broken reed^b if they lean upon it. Will it evince all the members of their church to be regenerate, or only some? If they say all, I ask then what becomes of Bellarmine's church, which is made up of them who are not regenerate? If some only, I desire to know on what account the miracles of one man may be an evidence to some in his society that they are regenerate and not to others? or whether the foundation of that distinction must not lie in themselves? But the truth is, the miracles now pretended are an evidence of a contrary condition to what these men are willing to own; 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.

2. All ignorant persons, into whose hearts God hath not shined, 'to give them the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ,' are to be added to the former account. There is a measure of knowledge of absolute and indispensable necessity to salvation, whereof how short the most of them are, is evident. Among the open abominations of the papal combination, for which they ought to be an abhorrence to mankind, their professed design of keeping the people in ignorance is not the least; Hos. iv. 6. That it was devotion to themselves, and not to God, which they

^a Ille cœtus Christianorum qui solus in orbe claret regeneratis est ecclesia; solus cœtus Christianorum papæ subditorum claret regeneratis; ergo. prob. apud illos solos sunt qui miracula faciunt. ergo. Val. Mag.

^b Deut. xiii. 1, 2. Matt. vii. 22, 23. Exod. iii. 7.

aimed to advance thereby, is by experience sufficiently evinced: but that, whose reverence is to be preserved by its being hid, is in itself contemptible. What other thoughts wise men could have of Christian religion in their management of it, I know not. Woe to you Romish clergy, 'for you have taken away the key of knowledge; ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in you hindered.' 'The people hath perished' under your hands 'for want of knowledge;' Zech. xi. 15—17. The figment of an implicit faith, as managed by these men, to charm the spirits and consciences of poor perishing creatures with security in this life, will be found as pernicious to them in the issue, as their purgatory, invented on the same account, will be useless.

3. Add to these all hypocritical self-justiciaries, who seek for a righteousness as it were by the works of the law, which they never attained to, Rom. ix. 31, 32. though they take pains about it; chap. x. 15. Eph. ii. 8—11. By this sword will fall the fattest cattle of their herd. How the hand of the Lord on this account sweeps away their devotionists, and therein takes down the pride of their glory, the day will discover; yet, besides these, there are two other things that will cut them down as the grass falls before the scythe of the mower.

1. The first of these is idolatry: 'Be not deceived, no idolaters shall inherit the kingdom of God;' 1 Cor. vi. 9. 'Without are idolaters;' Rev. xxii. 15. This added to their lives hath made Christian religion, where known only as by them professed, to be an abomination to Jews and Gentiles. Some will one day besides himself answer for Averroe's determining of the case as to his soul: 'Quonian Christiani adorant quod comedunt, anima mea sit cum philosophis.' Whether they are idolaters or no, whether they yield the worship due to the Creator to the creature, hath been sifted to the utmost, and the charge of its evil, which the jealous God doth of all things most abhor, so fastened on them beyond all possibility of escape, that one of the wisest of them hath at length fixed on that most desperate and profligate refuge, that some kind of idolatry is lawful, because Peter mentions 'abominable idolatries,' 1 Pet. iv. 5. who is therein so far from distinguishing of several sorts and

kinds of it to any such purpose, as that he aggravates all sort and kinds of it with the epithet of nefarious, or abominable.

A man may say, What is there almost that they have not committed lewdness in this kind withal? on every hill, and under every green tree is the filth of their abomination found: saints and angels in heaven; images of some that never were; of others that had been better they never had been; bread and wine, cross and nails, altars, wood, and iron, and the pope on earth are by them adored. The truth is, if we have any assurance left us of any thing in the world, that we either see or hear, feel or taste, and so consequently that we are alive, and not other men, the poor Indians who worship a piece of red cloth, are not more gross idolaters than they are.

2. All that worship the beast set up by the dragon, all that receive his mark in their hands, or forehead, are said not to have their 'names written in the book of life of the Lamb,' Rev. xiii. 8. which what aspect it bears towards the visible Roman church, time will manifest.

All these sorts of persons we except against, as those that have no interest in the union of the catholic church. All profane, ignorant, self-justiciaries, all idolaters, worshippers, or adorers of the papal power, if any remain among them, not one way or other visibly separated from them, who fall not under some one or more of these exceptions; as we grant they may be members of the catholic church, so we deny that they are of that which is called the Roman. And I must needs inform others by the way, that whilst the course of their conversation, ignorance of the mystery of the gospel, hatred of good men, contempt of the Spirit of God, his gifts and graces, do testify to the consciences of them that fear the Lord, that they belong not to the church catholic, it renders their rebuking of others, for separating from any instituted church national (as is pretended), or more restrained, very weak and contemptible. All discourses about motes, have a worm at the root, whilst there is a beam lies in the eye. Do men suppose, that a man who hath tasted how gracious the Lord is, and hath by grace obtained communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, walking at peace with God, and in a sense of his

love all his days, filled with the Holy Ghost, and by him with joy unspeakable and glorious in believing, is not strengthened against the rebukes and disputes of men, whom he sees and knows by their fruits, to be destitute of the Spirit of God, uninterested in the fellowship of the gospel, and communion thereof?

CHAP. V.

Of the catholic church visible. Of the nature thereof. In what sense the universality of professors is called a church. Amiraldus's judgment in this business. The union of the church in this sense wherein it consists. Not the same with the union of the church catholic; nor that of a particular instituted church. Not in relation to any one officer, or more, in subordination to one another. Such a subordination not proveable. Τὰ ἀρχαῖα of the Nicene synod. Of general councils. Union of the church visible not in a general council. The true unity of the universality of professors asserted. Things necessary to this union. Story of a martyr at Bagdat. The apostacy of churches from the unity of the faith. Testimony of Hegesippus vindicated. Papal apostacy. Protestants not guilty of the breach of this unity. The catholic church in the sense insisted on, granted by the ancients. Not a political body.

THE second general notion of the church, as it is usually taken, signifies the universality of men professing the doctrine of the gospel, and obedience to God in Christ, according to it, throughout the world. This is that, which is commonly called the visible catholic church, which now, together with the union which it hath in itself, and how that unity is broken, falls under consideration.

That all professors of the gospel throughout the world, called to the knowledge of Christ by the word, do make up, and constitute his visible kingdom, by their professed subjection to him, and so may be called his church, I grant. That they are precisely so called in Scripture is not unquestionable. What relation it stands in to all particular churches, whether as a genus to its species, or as a totum to its parts, hath lately by many been discussed. I must crave leave to deny that it is capable of filling up, or of being included in, any of these denominations and relations. The universal church we are speaking of, is not a thing that

hath, as such, a specificative form, from which it should be called a universal church; as a particular hath for its ground of being so called. It is but a collection of all that are duly called Christians in respect of their profession; nor are the several particular churches of Christ in the world, so parts and members of any catholic church, as that it should be constituted, or made up by them and of them, for the order and purpose of an instituted church, that is, the celebration of the worship of God, and institutions of Jesus Christ according to the gospel; which to assert, were to overthrow a remarkable difference between the economy of the Old Testament and the New. Nor do I think that particular congregations do stand unto it in the relation of species unto a genus, in which the whole nature of it should be preserved and comprised, which would deprive every one of membership in this universal church, which is not joined actually to some particular church or congregation, than which nothing can be more devoid of truth. To debate the thing in particular, is not my present intention, nor is needful to the purpose in hand.

The sum is, the universal church is not so called upon the same account that a particular church is so called. The formal reason constituting a particular church to be a particular church, is, that those of whom it doth consist, do join together according to the mind of Christ in the exercise of the same numerical ordinances for his worship: and in this sense the universal church cannot be said to be a church, as though it had such a particular form of its own; which that it hath, or should have, is not only false but impossible. But it is so called, because all Christians throughout the world (excepting some individual persons providentially excluded) do, upon the enjoyment of the same preaching of the word, the same sacraments administered in specie, profess one common faith and hope; but to the joint performance of any exercise of religion, that they should hear one sermon together, or partake of one sacrament, or have one officer for their rule and government, is ridiculous to imagine; nor do any profess to think so, as to any of the particulars mentioned, but those only, who have profit by the fable. As to the description of this church, I shall acquiesce in that lately given of it by a very learned

man. Saith he, 'Ecclesia universalis, est communio, seu societas omnium cœtum' (I had rather he had said, and he had done it more agreeable to principles by himself laid down, 'omnium fidem Christianam profitentium sive illi ad ecclesias aliquas particulares pertineant, sive non pertineant') 'qui religionem Christianam profitentur, consistens in eo, quod tametsi neque exercitia pietatis uno numero frequentent, neque sacramenta eadem numero participant, neque uno eodemque omnino ordine regantur, et gubernentur, unum tamen corpus in eo constituunt, quod eundem Christum servatorem habere se profitentur, uno in evangelio propositum, iisdem promissionibus comprehensum, quas ob-signant, et confirmant sacramenta, ex eadem institutione pendencia.' Amyrald. Thes. de Eccles. nom. et. defin. The. 29.

There being then in the world a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, kindreds, people, and languages, professing the doctrine of the gospel, not tied to mountains or hills, John iv. but worshipping *ἐν παντί τόπῳ*; 1 Cor. i. 2. 1 Tim. ii. 8. let us consider what union there is amongst them as such, wrapping them all in the bond thereof, by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ; and wherein the breach of that union doth consist, and how any man is or may be guilty thereof.

I suppose this will be granted: that only elect believers belong to the church in this sense considered, is a chimera feigned in the brains of the Romanists, and fastened on the reformed divines. I wholly assent to Austin's dispute on this head against the Donatists: and the whole entanglement that hath been about this matter, hath arisen from obstinacy in the Papists in not receiving the catholic church in the sense mentioned before; which to do, they know would be injurious to their interest.

This church being visible and professing, and being now considered under that constituting difference, that the union of it cannot be the same with that of the catholic church before mentioned, it is clear from hence, that multitudes of men belong unto it, who have not the relation mentioned before to Christ and his body; which is required in all comprehended in that union; seeing 'many are called, but few are chosen.' Nor can it consist in a joint assembly, either

ordinary or extraordinary, for the celebration of the ordinances of the gospel, or any one of them, as was the case of the church of the Jews, which met at set times in one place for the performance of that worship which was then required, nor could otherwise be accomplished. For as it is not at all possible, that any such thing should ever be done, considering what is, and shall be, the estate of Christ's visible kingdom to the end of the world; so it is not (that I know of) pleaded, that Christ hath made any such appointment: yea, it is on all hands confessed, at least cannot reasonably be denied, that there is a supersedeas granted to all supposals of any such duty, incumbent on the whole visible church, by the institution of particular churches, wherein all the ordinances of Christ are duly to be administered.

I shall only add, that if there be not an institution for the joining in the same numerical ordinances, the union of this church is not really a church-union: I mean, of an instituted church, which consists therein, but something of another nature. Neither can that have the formal reason of an instituted church as such, which as such can join in no one act of the worship of God instituted to be performed in such societies: so that he that shall take into his thoughts the condition of all the Christians in the world; their present state, what it hath been for fifteen hundred years, and what it is like to be *ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος*, will easily understand, what church-state they stand in, and relate unto.

3. It cannot possibly have its union by a relation to any one officer given to the whole, such a one as the Papists pretend the pope to be. For though it be possible that one officer may have relation to all the churches in the world, as the apostles severally had (when Paul said the care of all the churches lay on him), who by virtue of their apostolical commission were to be received, and submitted to in all the churches in the world, being antecedent in office to them; yet this neither did, nor could make all the churches one church; no more than if one man were an officer or magistrate in every corporation in England, this would make all these corporations to be one corporation. I do not suppose the pope to be an officer to the whole church visible as such,

which I deny to have a union or order capable of any such thing ; but suppose him an officer to every particular church, no union of the whole would thence ensue. That which is one church must join at least in some one church act, numerically one. So that though it should be granted that the pope were a general officer unto all and every church in the world, yet this would not prove, that they all made one church, and had their church-union in subjection to him, who was so an officer to them all ; because to the constitution of such a union as hath been shewed, there is that required, which in reference to the universal society of Christians, is utterly and absolutely impossible. But the non-institution of any such officer ordinarily to bear rule in and over all the churches of God, hath been so abundantly proved by the divines of the reformed churches, and he who alone puts in his claim to that prerogative so clearly manifested to be quite another thing, that I will not needlessly go over that work again ; something however shall afterward be remarked, as to his pretensions, from the principles whereon I proceed in the whole business.

There is indeed by some pleaded a subordination of officers in this church, tending towards a union on that account ; as that ordinary ministers should be subjected to diocesan bishops, they to archbishops or metropolitans, they again to patriarchs ; where some would bound the process, though a parity of reason would call for a pope. Nor will the arguments pleaded for such a subordination rest, until they come to be centred in some such thing.

But, (1.) Before this plea be admitted, it must be proved, that all these officers are appointed by Jesus Christ, or it will not concern us, who are inquiring solely after his will, and the settling of conscience therein. To do this with such an evidence, that the consciences of all those who are bound to yield obedience to Jesus Christ may appear to be therein concerned, will be a difficult task, as I suppose. And to settle this once for all, I am not dealing with the men of that lazy persuasion, that church affairs are to be ordered by the prudence of our civil superiors and governors, and so seeking to justify a non-submission to any of their constitutions, in the things of this nature, or to evi-

dence that the so doing is not schism; nor do I concern myself in the order and appointment of ancient times, by men assembled in synods and councils, wherein whatever was the force of their determinations in their own seasons, we are not at all concerned, knowing of nothing that is obligatory to us, not pleading from sovereign authority, or our own consent, but it is after things of pure institution that I am inquiring. With them who say there is no such thing in these matters, we must proceed to other principles than any yet laid down.

Also it must be proved, that all these officers are given, and do belong to the catholic church as such, and not to the particular churches of several measures and dimensions to which they relate; which is not as yet, that I know of, so much as pretended by them that plead for this order. They tell us indeed of various arbitrary distributions of the world, or rather of the Roman empire into patriarchates, with the dependent jurisdictions mentioned; and that all within the precincts of those patriarchates must fall within the lines of the subordination, subjection, and communication before described; but as there is no subordination between the officers of one denomination in the inferior parts, no more is there any between the superior themselves, but they are independent of each other. Now it is easily discernible that these patriarchates, how many or how few soever they are, are particular churches, not any one of them the catholic, nor altogether comprising all that are comprehended in the precincts of it (which none will say that ever they did), and therefore this may speak something as to a combination of those churches, nothing as to the union of the catholic as such, which they are not.

Supposing this assertion to the purpose in hand, which it is not at all, it would prove only a combination of all the officers of several churches, consisting in the subordination and dependence mentioned, not of the whole church itself, though all the members of it should be at once imagined or fancied (as what shall hinder men from fancying what they please?) to be comprised within the limits of those distributions, unless it be also proved that Christ hath instituted several sorts of particular churches, parochial, diocesan, metropolitan, patriarchal (I use the words in the present

vulgar acceptation, their signification having been somewhat otherwise formerly; ‘parœcia’ being the care of a private bishop, ‘provincia’ of a metropolitan, and ‘diocesis’ of a patriarch), in the order mentioned, and hath pointed out which of his churches shall be of those several kinds throughout the world; which that it will not be done to the disturbance of my principles, whilst I live, I have some present good security.

And because I take the men of this persuasion to be charitable men, that will not think much of taking a little pains for the reducing any person whatever from the error of his way, I would entreat them that they would inform me what patriarchate, according to the institution of Christ, I (who by the providence of God live here at Oxon) do ‘de jure’ belong unto; that so I may know how to preserve the union of that church, and to behave myself therein; and this I shall promise them, that if I were singly, or in conjunction with any others, so considerable, that those great officers should contend about whose subjects we should be (as was done heretofore about the Bulgarians), that it should not at all startle me about the truth and excellency of Christian religion, as it did those poor creatures, who being newly converted to the faith, knew nothing of it but what they received from men of such principles.

But that this constitution is human, and the distributions of Christians in subjection unto church-officers, into such and such divisions of nations and countries prudential and arbitrary, I suppose will not be denied. The *τὰ ἀρχαῖα* of the Nicene synod intends no more; nor is any thing of institution, nor so much as of apostolical tradition pleaded therein. The following ages were of the same persuasion. Hence in the council of Chalcedon, the archiepiscopacy of Constantinople was advanced into a patriarchate, and many provinces cast in subjection thereunto, wherein the primates of Ephesus and Thrace were cut short of what they might plead *τὰ ἀρχαῖα* for. And sundry other alterations were likewise made in the same kind; Socrat. lib. 5. cap. 8. The ground and reason of which procedure, the fathers assembled sufficiently manifest in the reason assigned for the advancement of the bishops of Constantinople, which was for the city’s sake *διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὴν νέαν Πόλιν*, Can. 3. Con. Con-

stan. And what was the judgment of the council of Chalcedon upon this matter may be seen in the composition and determination of the strife between Maximus bishop of Antioch, and Juvenalis of Jerusalem, Ac. 7. Con. Cal. with translation of provinces from the jurisdiction of one to another. And he that shall suppose that such assemblies as these were instituted by the will and appointment of Christ in the gospel, with church-authority for such dispositions and determinations, so as to make them of concernment to the unity of the church, will, if I mistake not, be hardly bestead in giving the ground of that his supposal.

4. I would know of them who desire to be under this law, whether the power with which Jesus Christ hath furnished the officers of his church come forth from the supreme mentioned patriarchs and archbishops, and is by them communicated to the inferiors, or ‘vice versa;’ or whether all have their power in an equal immediation from Christ; if the latter be granted, there will be a greater independency established than most men are aware of (though the Papalins understood it in the council of Trent), and a wound given to successive episcopal ordination, not easily to be healed. That power is communicated from the inferiors to the superiors will not be pleaded. And seeing the first must be insisted on, I beseech them not to be too hasty with men not so sharp-sighted as themselves, if finding the names they speak of barbarous and foreign as to the Scriptures, and the things themselves not at all delineated therein, ἐπέχουσι.

5. The truth is, the whole subordination of this kind, which ‘de facto’ hath been in the world, was so clearly a human invention, or a prudential constitution, as hath been shewed (which being done by men professing authority in the church, gave it, as it was called, ‘vim ecclesiasticam’), that nothing else in the issue is pleaded for it. And now though I shall, if called thereunto, manifest both the unreasonableness and unsuitableness to the design of Christ for his worship under the gospel, comparative novelty and mischievous issue of that constitution; yet, at the present, being no farther concerned, but only to evince that the union of the general visible church doth not therein consist, I shall not need to add any thing to what hath been spoken.

The Nicene council, which first made towards the con-

firmation of something, like somewhat of what was afterward introduced in some places, pleaded only, as I said before, the *τὰ ἀρχαῖα*, old usage for it, which it would not have done, could it have given a better original thereunto. And whatever the antiquities then pretended might be, we know that *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς οὐκ ἦν οὕτως*. And I do not fear to say, what others have done before me, concerning the canons of that first and best general council, as it is called, they are all hay and stubble; nor yet doth the laying this custom on *τὰ ἀρχαῖα*, in my apprehension, evince their judgment of any long prescription. Peter, speaking of a thing that was done a few years before, says, that it was done *ἀφ' ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων*, Acts xv. 7. somewhat a greater antiquity, than that by him intended, I can freely grant to the custom by the fathers pretended.

But a general council is pleaded with the best colour and pretence for a bond of union to this general and visible church. In consideration hereof, I shall not divert to the handling of the rise, right use, authority, necessity of such councils, about all which, somewhat in due time towards satisfaction may be offered to those who are not in bondage to names and traditions. Nor shall I remark what hath been the management of the things of God in all ages in those assemblies, many of which have been the stains and ulcers of Christian religion. Nor yet shall I say, with what little disadvantage to the religion of Jesus Christ, I suppose a loss of all the canons of all councils that ever were in the world, since the apostle's days, with their acts and contests (considering what use is made of them) might be undergone. Nor yet shall I digress to the usefulness of the assemblies of several churches in their representatives, to consider and determine about things of common concernment to them, with their tendency to the preservation of that communion, which ought to be amongst them; but as to the present instance only offer,

1. That such general councils, being things purely extraordinary and occasional (as is confessed), cannot be an ordinary standing bond of union to the catholic church; and if any one shall reply, that though in themselves, and in their own continuance they cannot be so, yet in their authority, laws, and canons they may: I must say, that be-

sides the very many reasons I have to call into question the power of law-making for the whole society of Christians in the world, in all the general councils that have been, or possibly can be on the earth; the dispute about the title of those assemblies, which pretend to this honour, which are to be admitted, which excluded, are so endless; the rules of judging them so dark, lubricous, and uncertain, framed to the interest of contenders on all hands; the laws of them, which 'de facto' have gone under that title and name, so innumerable, burdensome, uncertain, and frivolous; in a great part so grossly contradictory to one another; that I cannot suppose that any man, upon second thoughts, can abide in such an assertion. If any shall, I must be bold to declare my affection to the doctrine of the gospel maintained in some of those assemblies, for some hundreds of years, and then to desire him to prove, that any general council, since the apostles fell asleep, hath been so convened, and managed, as to be enabled to claim that authority to itself, which is, or would be due to such an assembly, instituted according to the mind of Christ.

That it hath been of advantage to the truth of the gospel, that godly learned men, bishops of churches, have convened, and witnessed a good confession in reference to the doctrine thereof, and declared their abhorrence of the errors that are contrary thereunto, is confessed. That any man, or men, is, are, or ever were, intrusted by Christ with authority so to convene them, as that thereupon, and by virtue thereof, they should be invested with a new authority, power, and jurisdiction, at such a convention, and thence should take upon them to make laws and canons, that should be ecclesiastically binding to any persons, or churches, as theirs, is not as yet to me attended with any convincing evidence of truth. And seeing at length it must be spoken, I shall do it with submission to the thoughts of good men, that are any way acquainted with these things, and in sincerity therein commend my conscience to God; that I do not know any thing that is extant, bearing clearer witness to the sad degeneracy of Christian religion in the profession thereof, nor more evidently discovering the efficacy of another spirit than what was poured out by Christ at his ascension, nor containing

more hay and stubble, that is to be burned and consumed, than the stories of the acts and laws of the councils and synods, that have been in the world.

2. But to take them as they are, as to that alone wherein the first councils had any evidence of the presence of the Holy Ghost with them, namely, in the declaring the doctrine of the gospel; it falls in with that which I shall give in for the bond of union unto the church in the sense pleaded about.

3. Such an assembly arising cumulative out of particular churches, as it is evident that it doth, it cannot first and properly belong to the church general, as such; but it is only a means of communion between those particular churches as such, of whose representative (I mean virtually, for formally the persons convening for many years ceased to be so) it doth consist.

4. There is nothing more ridiculous than to imagine a general council, that should represent the whole catholic church, or so much as all the particular churches that are in the world; and let him that is otherwise minded, that there hath been such a one, or that it is possible there should be such a one, prove by instance, that such there hath been since the apostles' times; or by reason, that such may be in the present age, or be justly expected in those that are to succeed, and we will, as we are able, crown him for his discovery.

5. Indeed I know not how any council, that hath been in the world these thirteen hundred years and somewhat upwards, could be said to represent the church in any sense, or any churches whatever. Their convention, as is known, hath been always by imperial or papal authority; the persons convened such, and only they who, as was pretended and pleaded, had right of suffrage, with all necessary authority in such conventions, from the order, degree, and office, which personally they hold in their several churches. Indeed a pope or bishop sent his legate, or proxy, to represent, or rather personate him, and his authority. But that any of them were sent, or delegated by the church wherein they did preside, is not so evident.

I desire then, that some man more skilled in laws and common usages than myself, would inform me, on what ac-

count such a convention could come to be a church-representative, or the persons of it to be representatives of any churches; general grounds of reason and equity, I am persuaded, cannot be pleaded for it. The lords in parliament in this nation, who being summoned by regal authority, sat there in their own personal right, were never esteemed to represent the body of the people. Supposing indeed all church-power in any particular church, of whatever extract or composition, to be solely vested in one single person; a collection of those persons, if instituted, would bring together the authority of the whole. But yet this would not make that assembly to be a church-representative, if you will allow the name of the church to any but that single person. But for men, who have but a partial power and authority in the church, and perhaps separated from it, none at all, without any delegation from the churches to convene, and in their own authority to take upon them to represent those churches, is absolute presumption.

These several pretensions being excluded, let us see wherein the unity of this church, namely, of the great society of men professing the gospel, and obedience to Christ, according to it, throughout the world, doth consist; this is summed up by the apostle, Eph. iv. 5. ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism.’ It is the unity of the doctrine of faith, which men profess, in subjection to one Lord Jesus Christ, being initiated into that profession by baptism; I say, the saving doctrine of the gospel of salvation by Jesus Christ, and obedience through him to God as professed by them, is the bond of that union, whereby they are made one body, are distinguished from all other societies, have one head Christ Jesus, which as to profession they hold, and whilst they do so, are of this body, in one professed hope of their calling.

1. Now that this union be preserved, it is required that all those grand and necessary truths of the gospel, without the knowledge whereof no man can be saved by Jesus Christ, be so far believed, as to be outwardly and visibly professed in that variety of ways, wherein they are, or may be called out thereunto. There is a ‘proportion of faith;’ Rom. xii. 6. a ‘unity of faith, and of knowledge of the Son of God;’ Eph. iv. 13. a measure of saving truths, the explicit know-

ledge whereof in men, enjoying the use of reason within, and the means of grace without, is of indispensable necessity to salvation, without which it is impossible that any soul in an ordinary way should have communion with God in Christ, having not light sufficient for converse with him, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace. These are commonly called fundamentals, or first principles, which are justly argued by many to be clear, perspicuous, few, lying in an evident tendency to obedience. Now look what truths are savingly to be believed, to render a man a member of the church catholic invisible; that is, whatever is required in any one, unto such a receiving of Jesus Christ, as that thereby he may have power given to him to become the Son of God; the profession of those truths is required, to instate a man in the unity of the church visible.

2. That no other internal principle of the mind, that hath an utter inconsistency with the real belief of the truths necessary to be professed, be manifested by professors. Paul tells us of some, who, though they would be called Christians, yet they so walked as that they manifested themselves to be ‘enemies of the cross of Christ;’ Phil. iii. 18. Certainly those who, on one account, are open and manifest enemies of the cross of Christ, are not on any, members of his church: there is ‘one Lord,’ and ‘one faith’ required, as well as ‘one baptism;’ and a protestation contrary to evidence of fact, is in all law, null. Let a man profess ten thousand times, that he believes all the saving truths of the gospel, and by the course of a wicked and profane conversation evidence to all, that he believes no one of them, shall his protestation be admitted? shall he be accounted a servant in and of my family, who will call me master, and come into my house only to do me and mine a mischief, not doing any thing I require of him, but openly and professedly the contrary? Paul says of such, Tit. v. 15, 16. ‘They profess that they know God, yet in works they deny him, being abominable, disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate;’ which though peculiarly spoken of the Jews, yet contains a general rule, that men’s profession of the knowledge of God, contradicted by a course of wickedness, is not to be admitted, as a thing giving any privilege whatever.

3. That no thing, opinion, error, or false doctrine, evert-

ing or overthrowing any of the necessary saving truths professed as above, be added in and with that profession, or deliberately be professed also. This principle the apostle lays down and proves, Gal. v. 3, 4. notwithstanding the profession of the gospel, he tells the Galatians, that if they were bewitched to profess also the necessity of circumcision, and keeping of the law for justification, that Christ or the profession of him would not profit them. On this account the ancients excluded many heretics from the name of Christians; so Justin of the Marcionites and others, *ὧν οὐδεὶς κοινωνοῦμεν οἱ γνωρίζοντες ἁθέους καὶ ἁσεβεῖς, καὶ ἀδίκους, καὶ ἀνόμους αὐτοὺς ὑπάρχοντας, καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ τὸν Ἰησοῦν σέβειν ὀνόματι μόνον ὁμολογεῖν καὶ Χριστιανοὺς ἑαυτοὺς λέγουσιν, ὃν τρόπον οἱ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσι τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐπιγράφουσι τοῖς χειροποιήταις.*

We are at length then arrived to this issue; the belief and profession of all the necessary saving truths of the gospel, without the manifestation of an internal principle of the mind, inconsistent with the belief of them, or adding of other things in profession, that are destructive to the truths so professed, is the bond of the unity of the visible professing church of Christ. Where this is found in any man, or number of men, though otherwise accompanied with many failings, sins, and errors, the unity of the faith is by him or them so far preserved, as that they are thereby rendered members of the visible church of Christ, and are by him so esteemed.

Let us suppose a man by a bare reading of the Scriptures, brought to him by some providence of God (as finding the Bible in the highway), and evidencing their authority by their own light, instructed in the knowledge of the truths of the gospel, who shall thereupon make profession of them amongst them with whom he lives, although he be thousands of miles distant from any particular church wherein the ordinances of Christ are administered; nor perhaps knows there is any such church in the world, much less hath ever heard of the pope of Rome (which is utterly impossible he should, supposing him instructed only by reading of the Scriptures); I ask whether this man, making open profession of Christ according to the gospel, shall be esteemed a member of the visible church in the sense insisted on or no?

That this may not seem to be such a fiction of a case as may involve in it any impossible supposition, which being

granted, will hold a door open for other absurdities ; I shall exemplify it in its most material ‘*postulata*’ by a story of unquestionable truth.

Elmacinus, who wrote the story of the Saracens, being secretary to one of the caliphs of Bagdad, informs us, that in the year 309 of their Hegira, about the year 921 of our account, Muctadinus the caliph of Bagdad by the counsel of his wise men, commanded one Huseinus the son of Mansor to be crucified for certain poems, whereof some verses are recited by the historian, and are thus rendered by Erpenius :

‘*Laus ei qui manifestavit humilitatem suam, celavit inter nos divinitatem suam permeantem donec cœpit in creatura sua apperere sub specie edentis et bibentis ;*

‘*Jamque aspexit eum creatura ejus, sicuti supercilium obliquum respiciat spercilium.*’

From which remnant of his work it is easily to perceive, that the crime whereof he was accused, and for which he was condemned and crucified, was the confession of Jesus Christ the Son of God. As he went to the cross he added, says the same author, these that follow :

‘*Compotur mens nihil plane habet in se iniquitatis, bibendum mihi dedit simile ejus quod bibit fecit hospitem in hospite.*’

And so died constantly (as it appears) in the profession of the Lord Jesus.

Bagdad was a city built not long before by the Saracens, wherein it is probable there were not at that time any Christians abiding : add now to this story what our Saviour speaks, Luke xii. 8. ‘I say unto you, whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God ;’ and considering the unlimitedness of the expression as to any outward consideration, and tell me whether this man, or any other in the like condition, be not to be reckoned as a subject of Christ’s visible kingdom, a member of his church in the world.

Let us now recall to mind what we have in design. Granting for our process’ sake, that schism is the breach of any unity instituted and appointed by Christ, in what sense soever it is spoken of, our inquiry is, whether we are guilty in any kind of such a breach, or the breach of such a unity.

This then now insisted on being the union of the church of Christ, as visibly professing the word, according to his own mind, when I have laid down some general foundations of what is to ensue, I shall consider whether we are guilty of the breach of this union, and argue the several pretensions of men against us, especially of the Romanists, on this account.

1. I confess that this union of the general visible church was once comprehensive of all the churches in the world; the faith once delivered to the saints being received amongst them. From this unity it is taken also for granted, that a separation is made, and it continues not as it was at the first institution of the churches of Christ, though some small breaches were made upon it immediately after their first planting. The Papists say, as to the European churches (wherein their and our concernment principally lies), this breach was made in the days of our forefathers; by their departure from the common faith in those ages, though begun by a few some ages before. We are otherwise minded, and affirm, that this succession was made by them, and their predecessors in apostacy, in several generations by several degrees; which we manifest by comparing the present profession and worship with that in each kind which we know was at first embraced, because we find it instituted. At once then, we say this schism lies at their doors, who not only have deviated from the common faith themselves, but do also actually cause and attempt to destroy temporally and eternally all that will not join with them therein. For as the mystery of iniquity began to work in the apostles' days, so we have a testimony beyond exception in the complaint of those that lived in them, that not long after the operation of it became more effectual, and the infection of it to be more diffused in the church. This is that of Hegesippus in Eusebius Eccles. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 26. who affirms that the church remained a virgin (whilst the apostles lived) pure and uncorrupted; but when that sacred society had ended its pilgrimage, and the generation that heard and received the word from them were fallen asleep, many false doctrines were preached and divulged therein.

I know who hath endeavoured to elude the sense of this complaint, as though it concerned not any thing in the

church, but the despisers and persecutors of it, the Gnostics. But yet I know also, that no man would so do but such a one as hath a just confidence of his own ability to make passable at least any thing that he shall venture to say or utter. For why should that be referred by Hegesippus to the ages after the apostles and their hearers were dead, with an exception against its being so in their days; when, if the person thus expounding this testimony may be credited, the Gnostics were never more busy nor prevalent than in that time which alone is excepted from the evil here spoken of. Nor can I understand how the opposition and persecution of the church should be insinuated to be the deflowering and violating of its chastity, which is commonly a great purifying of it; so that speaking of that broaching and preaching of errors, which was not in the apostles' times, nor in the time of their hearers, the chiefest time of the rage and madness of the Gnostics; such as spotted the pure and uncorrupted virginity of the church, which nothing can attain unto that is foreign unto it, and that which gave original unto sedition in the church: I am of the mind, and so I conceive was Eusebius that recited those words, that the good man intended corruptions in the church, not out of it, nor oppositions to it.

The process made in after ages, in a deviation from the unity of the faith, till it arrived to that height wherein it is now stated in the Papal apostacy, hath been the work of others to declare; therein then I stated the rise and progress of the present schism (if it may be so called) of the visible church.

2. As to our concernment in this business, they that will make good a charge against us, that we are departed from the unity of the church catholic, it is incumbent on them to evidence that we either do not believe and make profession of all the truths of the gospel indispensably necessary to be known, that a man may have a communion with God in Christ and be saved. Or,

2. That doing so, in the course of our lives we manifest and declare a principle that is utterly inconsistent with the belief of those truths which outwardly we profess. Or,

3. That we add unto them, in opinion or worship, that, or those things, which are in very deed destructive of them,

or do any way render them insufficient to be saving unto us. If neither of these three can be proved against a man, he may justly claim the privilege of being a member of the visible church of Christ in the world, though he never in all his life be a member of a particular church; which yet, if he have fitting opportunity and advantage for it, is his duty to be.

And thus much be spoken as to the state and condition of the visible catholic church, and in this sense we grant it to be, and the unity thereof. In the late practice of men, that expression of the catholic church hath been an ‘*individuum vagum*,’ few knowing what to make of it, a ‘*cothurnus*,’ that every one accommodated at pleasure to his own principles and pretensions. I have no otherwise described it than did Irenæus of old: said he, ‘*Judicabit omnes eos, qui sunt extra veritatem, id est, extra ecclesiam*;’ lib. 4. cap. 62. and on the same account, is a particular church sometimes called by some, the catholic: ‘*Quandoque ego Remigius episcopus de hac luce transiero, tu mihi hæres esto, sancta et venerabilis ecclesia catholica urbis remorum*;’ Flodoardus, lib. 1.

In the sense insisted on was it so frequently described by the ancients.

So again Irenæus: ‘*Etsi in mundo loquelæ dissimiles sunt, sed tamen virtus traditionis una et eadem est, et neque hæ, quæ in Germania sunt fundatæ, ecclesiæ aliter credunt, aut aliter tradunt, neque hæ, quæ in Hibernis sunt, neque hæ quæ in Celtis, neque hæ, quæ in Oriente, neque hæ quæ in Ægypto, neque hæ quæ in Lybia, neque hæ quæ in medio mundi constitutæ: Sed sicut sol creatura Dei in universo mundo unus et idem est, sic et lumen et prædicatio veritatis ubique lucet*;’ lib. 1. cap 3. To the same purpose Justin Martyr, Οὐδὲ ἐν γὰρ ὅλῳς ἐστὶ τὸ γενὸς ἀνθρώπων εἴτε βαρβάρων, εἴτε Ἑλλήνων, εἴτε ἀπλῶς, ὅτινίουν ὀνόματι προσαγορευομένων ἢ ἀμαξοβίων, ἢ ἀοίκων καλουμένων, ἢ ἐν σκηναῖς κτηνοτρόφων οἰκόντων ἐν οἷς μὴ διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ σταυρωθέντος Ἰησοῦ εὐχαὶ καὶ εὐχαριστίαι τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ποιητῇ τῶν ὅλων γίνονται. Dialog. cum Tryphone.

The generality of all sorts of men worshipping God in Jesus Christ, is the church we speak of; whose extent in his days Tertullian thus related: ‘*In quem alium crediderunt gentes universæ, nisi in ipsum, qui jam venit? Cui*

enim alii, gentes crediderunt, Parthi, Medi, et Elamitæ, et qui habitant Mesopotamiam, Armeniam, Phrygiam, et immorantes Egyptum et regionem Africæ, quæ est trans Cyrenem Romani, at incolæ tunc, et in Hierusalem Judæi et gentes cæteræ, ut jam Getulorum varietates et Maurorum nulli fines Hispanarum omnes termini, et Galliarum diversæ nationes et Brittanorum inaccessa loca Romanis, Christo vero subdita et Sarmatarum et Dacorum et Germanorum et Scytharum et abditarum multarum gentium et provinciarum et insularum multarum nobis ignotarum, et quæ enumerare non possumus, in quibus omnibus locis Christi nomen, qui jam venit, regnat ad Judæos.'

Some have said, and do yet say, that the church in this sense is a visible, organical, political body. That it is visible is confessed, both its matter and form bespeak visibility, as an inseparable adjunct of its subsisting. That it is a body also in the general sense wherein that word is used, or a society of men embodied by the profession of the same faith, is also granted. Organical, in this business, is an ambiguous term; the use of it is plainly metaphorical, taken from the members, instruments, and organs of a natural body; because Paul hath said, that in 'one body there are many members,' as eyes, feet, hands, yet the body is but one; so is the church. It hath been usually said, that the church is an organical body: what church Paul speaks of in that place is not evident; but what he alludes unto, is. The difference he speaks of, in the individual persons of the church, is not in respect of office, power, and authority, but gifts or graces, and usefulness on that account; such an organical body we confess the church catholic visible to be; in it are persons endued with variety of gifts and graces for the benefit and ornament of the whole.

An organical political body is a thing of another nature; a politic body or commonwealth, is a society of a certain portion of mankind united under some form of rule, or government, whose supreme and subordinate administration is committed to several persons, according to the tenor of such laws and customs as that society hath, or doth consent unto. This also is said to be organical on a metaphorical account, because the officers and members that are in it, and over it,

hold proportion to the more noble parts of the body. Kings are said to be heads, counsellors *ὀφθαλμοὶ βασιλέων*: to the constitution of such a commonwealth distinctly, as such, it is required that the whole hath the same laws; but not that only. Two nations most distinct and different, on the account of other ends and interests, may yet have the same individual laws and customs for the distribution of justice, and preservation of peace among themselves. An entire form of regimen and government peculiar thereunto is required for the constitution of a distinct political body. In this sense we deny the church whereof we speak to be an organical, political body, as not having indeed any of the requisites thereunto. Not one law of order; the same individual moral law, or law for moral duties it hath; but a law given to the whole as such, for order, polity, rule, it hath not. All the members of it are obliged to the same law of order and polity in their several societies; but the whole, as such, hath no such law: it hath no such head or governor as such; nor will it suffice to say, that Christ is its head; for if, as a visible political body, it hath a political head, that head also must be visible. The commonwealth of the Jews was a political body; of this God was the head and king: hence their historian saith their government was *Θεοκρατία*; and when they would choose a king, God said they rejected him who was their political head; to whom a shekel was paid yearly as tribute, called the ‘shekel of the sanctuary.’ Now they rejected him, not by asking a king simply, but a king after the manner of the nations; yet, that it might be a visible political body, it required a visible supreme magistrate to the whole; which when there was none, all polity was dissolved amongst them; Judges xxi. Christ is the head of every particular church, its lawgiver, and ruler: but yet to make a church a visible, organical, political body, it is required that it hath visible governors and rulers, and of the whole. Nor can it be said that it is a political body that hath a supreme government and order in it, as it is made up and constituted of particular churches; and that in the representatives convened doth the supreme visible power of it consist; for such a convention in the judgment of all ought to be extraordinary only; in ours is utterly impossible, and ‘de facto’ was not among the churches for

three hundred years, yea, never : besides, the visible catholic church is not made up of particular churches as such ; for if so, then no man can be member of it but by virtue of his being a member of some visible church, which is false : profession of the truth, as before stated, is the formal reason and cause of any person's relation to the church visible, which he hath thereby, whether he belong to any particular church or no.

Let it be evidenced, that the universal church whereof we speak hath any law or rule of order and government, as such, given unto it ; or that it is in possibility as such, to put any such law or rule into execution ; that it hath any homogeneous ruler or rulers that have the care of the administration of the rule and government of the whole, as such, committed to him or them by Jesus Christ ; that as it hath the same common spiritual and known orders and interest, and the same specifical ecclesiastical rule given to all its members, so it hath the same political interest, order, and conversation, as such ; or that it hath any one cause constitutive of a political body, whereby it is such, or hath at all the form of an instituted church, or is capable of any such form ; and they that do so shall be farther attended to.

CHAP. VI.

Romanists' charge of schism on the account of separation from the church catholic proposed to consideration. The importance of this plea on both sides. The sum of their charge. The church of Rome not the church catholic: not a church in any sense. Of antichrist in the temple. The catholic church how intrusted with interpretation of Scripture. Of interpretation of Scripture by tradition. The interest of the Roman church herein discharged. All necessary truths believed by Protestants. No contrary principle by them manifested. Profane persons no members of the church catholic. Of the late Roman proselytes. Of the Donatists. Their business reported, and case stated. The present state of things unsuited to those of old. Apostacy from the unity of the church catholic charged on the Romanists. Their claim to be that church sanguinary, false. Their plea to this purpose considered. The blasphemous management of their plea by some of late. The whole dissolved. Their inferences on their plea practically prodigious. Their apostacy proved by instances. Their grand argument in this cause proposed: answered. Consequences of denying the Roman church, to be a church of Christ, weighed.

LET us see now what as to conscience can be charged on us, Protestants I mean, who are all concerned herein, as to the breach of this union. The Papists are the persons that undertake to manage this charge against us. To lay 'aside the whole plea 'subesse Romano pontifici,' and all those fears, wherewith they juggled, when the whole world sat in darkness, which they do now use at the entrance of their charge. The sum of what they insist upon firstly, is, The catholic church is intrusted with the interpretation of the Scripture, and declaration of the truths therein contained, which being by it so declared, the not receiving of them implicitly, or explicitly, that is the disbelieving of them as so proposed and declared, cuts off any man from being a member of the church; Christ himself having said, that he that hears not the church, is to be as a heathen man or publican; which church they are, that is certain. It is all one then what we believe, or do not believe, seeing that we believe not all that the catholic church proposeth to be believed, and what we do believe, we believe not on that account.

Ans. Their insisting on this plea so much as they do, is sufficient to evince their despair of making good by in-

stance our failure in respect of the way and principles by which the unity of the visible church may be lost or broken. Fail they in this, they are gone; and if they carry this plea, we are all at their disposal. The sum of it is, the catholic church is intrusted with sole power of delivering what is truth, and what is necessary to be believed. This catholic church is the church of Rome; that is, the pope, or what else may in any juncture of time serve their interest. But as it is known,

1. We deny their church, as it is styled, to be the catholic church, or as such, any part of it, as particular churches are called or esteemed. So that of all men in the world, they are least concerned in this assertion. Nay, I shall go farther; suppose all the members of the Roman church to be sound in the faith, as to all necessary truths, and no way to prejudice the advantages and privileges which accrue to them by the profession thereof, whereby the several individuals of it would be true members of the catholic church; yet I should not only deny it to be the catholic church, but also, abiding in its present order and constitution, being that which by themselves it is supposed to be, to be any particular church of Christ at all; as wanting many things necessary to constitute them so, and having many things destructive utterly to the very essence and being of that order that Christ hath appointed in his churches.

The best plea that I know for their church-state, is, that antichrist sits in the temple of God. Now although we might justly omit the examination of this pretence, until those, who are concerned in it, will professedly own it, as their plea; yet as it lies in our way, in the thoughts of some, I say to it, that I am not so certain that *καθίσαι εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ*, signifies to 'sit in the temple of God;' seeing a learned man long ago thought it rather to be a 'setting up against the temple of God;' Aug. de Civitate Dei, lib. 10. cap. 59. But grant the sense of the expression to be, as it is usually received, it imports no more, but that the man of sin shall set up his power against God, in the midst of them, who by their outward visible profession have right to be called his temple, which entitles him, and his copart-

ners in apostacy, to the name of the church, as much as changing of money, and selling of cattle, were ordinances of God under the old temple, when by some men's practising of them in it, it was made a den of thieves.

2. Though as to the plea of them, and their interest, with whom we have to do, we have nothing requiring our judgments in the case ; yet 'ex abundanti,' we add, that we deny that by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ the catholic church visible is in any sense intrusted with such an interpretation of Scripture, as that her declaration of truth should be the measure of what should be believed ; or that, as such, it is intrusted with any power of that nature at all, or is enabled to propose a rule of faith to be received, as so proposed, to the most contemptible individual in the world ; or that it is possible that any voice of it should be heard or understood, but only this, I believe the necessary saving truths contained in the Scripture ; or that it can be consulted withal, or is, as such, intrusted with any power, authority, or jurisdiction ; nor shall we ever consent, that the office and authority of the Scriptures be actually taken from it, on any pretence. As to that of our Saviour, of telling the church, it is so evidently spoken of a particular church, that may immediately be consulted in case of difference between brethren ; and does so no way relate to the business in hand, that I shall not trouble the reader with a debate of it. But do we not receive the Scripture itself upon the authority of the church ? I say if we did so, yet this concerns not Rome, which we account no church at all. That we have received the Scripture from the church of Rome at first, that is, so much as the book itself, is an intolerable figment. But it is worse, to say that we receive and own their authority, from the authority of any church, or all the churches in the world. It is the expression of our learned Whitaker, '*Qui Scripturam non credit esse divinam, nisi propter ecclesiæ vocem, Christianus non est.*' To deny that the Scripture hath immediate force and efficacy to evince its own authority, is plainly to deny them ; on that account being brought unto us, by the providence of God (wherein I comprise all subservient helps of human testimony), we receive them, and on no other.

But is not the Scripture to be interpreted according to the tradition of the catholic church? and are not those interpretations so made to be received?

I say, among all the figments that these latter ages have invented; I shall add, amongst the true stories of Lucian, there is not one more remote from truth than this assertion; that any one text of Scripture may be interpreted according to the universal tradition of the catholic church, and be made appear so to be, any farther than that in general the catholic church hath not believed any such sense to be in any portion of Scripture, which to receive, were destructive of salvation. And therefore the Romanists tell us, that the present church (that is theirs) is the keeper and interpreter of these traditions; or rather, that its power, authority, and infallibility, being the same that it hath been in former ages, what it determines, is to be received to be the tradition of the catholic church; for the trial whereof, whether it be so or no, there is no rule but its own determination; which if they can persuade us to acquiesce in, I shall grant that they have acquired such an absolute dominion over us, and our faith, that it is fit that we should be soul and body at their disposal.

It being then the work of the Scripture to propose the saving truths of Christ (the belief and profession whereof are necessary to make a man a member of the church) so as to make them of indispensable necessity to be received; if they can from them convince us that we do not believe and profess all and every one of the truths or articles of faith so necessary as expressed, we shall fall down under the authority of such conviction; if not, we profess our consciences to be no more concerned in the authority of their church, than we judge their church to be, in the privileges of the church catholic. But,

2. It may be we are chargeable with manifesting some principles of profaneness, wherewith the belief of the truth we profess hath an absolute inconsistency: for those who are liable and obnoxious to this charge, I say, let them plead for themselves; for let them profess what they will, and cry out ten thousand times, that they are Christians, I shall never acknowledge them for others than visible enemies of the cross, kingdom, and church of Christ. Traitors

and rebels are not 'de facto' subjects of that king or ruler in reference to whom they are so. Of some, who said they were Jews, Christ said they 'lied, and were not, but the synagogue of Satan;' Rev. ii. 9. Though such as these say they are Christians, I will be bold to say, they lie, they are not, but slaves of Satan. Though they live within the pale, as they call it, of the church (the catholic church being an enclosure as to profession, not place), yet they are not within it, nor of it, any more than a Jew, or Mahometan within the same precinct: suppose they have been baptized, yet if their belly be their God, and their lives dedicated to Satan, all the advantage they have thereby, is, that they are apostates and renegadoes.

That we have added any thing of our own, making profession of any thing in religion absolutely destructive to the fundamentals we profess, I know not that we are accused, seeing our crime is asserted to consist in detracting, not adding. Now unless we are convinced of failing on one of these three accounts, we shall not at all question but that we abide in the unity of the visible catholic church.

It is the common cry of the Romanists that we are schismatics. Why so? because we have separated ourselves from the communion of the catholic church. What this catholic is, and how little they are concerned in it, hath been declared. How much they have prevailed themselves with ignorant souls by this plea, we know. Nor was any other success to be expected in respect of many whom they have won over to themselves, who being persons ignorant of the righteousness of God, and the power of the faith they have professed; not having had experience of communion with the Lord Jesus, under the conduct of them; have been, upon every provocation and temptation, a ready prey to deceivers.

Take a little view of their late proselytes, and it will quickly appear what little cause they have to boast in them. With some by the craft and folly of some relations they are admitted to treat, when they are drawing to their dissolution. These for the most part having been persons of dissolute and profligate lives; never having tasted the power of any religion; whatever they have professed in their weakness and disturbed dying thoughts, may be apt to receive any impression that with confidence and violence is imposed upon

them. Besides, it is a far easier proposal to be reconciled to the church of Rome, and so by purgatory to get to heaven, than to be told of regeneration, repentance, faith, and the covenant of grace, things of difficulty to such poor creatures. Others that have been cast down from their hopes and expectations, or out from their enjoyments, by the late revolution in these nations, have by their discontent, or necessity, made themselves an easy prey to their zeal. What hath been the residue of their proselytes? What one who hath ever manifested himself to share in the power of our religion, or was not prepared by principles of superstition almost as deep as their own, have they prevailed on? But I shall not farther insist on these things. To return;

Our communion with the visible catholic church is in the unity of the faith only. The breach of this union, and therein a relinquishment of the communion of the church, lies in a relinquishment of, or some opposition to, some or all of the saving necessary truths of the gospel. Now this is not schism, but heresy or apostacy; or it is done by an open profligateness of life: so that indeed this charge is nothing at all to the purpose in hand: though through grace, in a confidence of our own innocency, we are willing to debate the guilt of the crime under any name or title whatever.

Unto what hath been spoken, I shall only add the removal of some common objections, with a recharge on them, with whom principally we have as yet had to do, and come to the last thing proposed. The case of some of old, who were charged with schism for separating from the catholic church on an account wholly and clearly distinct from that of a departure from the faith, is an instance of the judgment of antiquity, lying in an opposition to the notion of departure from the church now delivered. Doth not Augustine, do not the rest of his orthodox contemporaries, charge the Donatists with schism, because they departed from the catholic church? And doth not the charge rise up with equal efficacy against you as them? At least doth it not give you the nature of schism in another sense than is by you granted.

The reader knows sufficiently, if he hath at all taken notice of these things, where to find this cloud scattered, without the least annoyance or detriment to the Protestant cause, or of any concerned in that name, however by lesser differences

diversified among themselves. I shall not repeat what by others hath been at large insisted on. In brief, put the whole church of God into that condition of liberty and soundness of doctrine, which it was in when the great uproar was made by the Donatists, and we shall be concerned to give in our judgments concerning them.

To press an example of former days, as binding unto duty, or convincing of evil, in respect of any now, without stating the whole 'substratum' of the business, and complete cause, as it was in the days and seasons wherein the example was given, we judge it not equal. Yet although none can with ingenuity press me with the crime they were guilty of, unless they can prove themselves to be instated in the very same condition, as they were against whom that crime was committed, which I am fully assured none in the world can; the communion of the catholic church then pleaded for being, in the judgment of all, an effect of men's free liberty and choice, now pressed as an issue of the tyranny of some few; yet I shall freely deliver my thoughts concerning the Donatists, which will be comprehensive also of those other, that suffer with them in former and after ages under the same imputation.

1. Then, I am persuaded, that in the matter of fact, the Donatists were some of them deceived, and others of them did deceive, in charging Cæcilianus to be ordained by 'traditores;' which they made the main ground of their separation, however they took in other things (as is usual) into their defence afterward. Whether any of themselves were ordained by such persons, as they are recharged, I know not.

2. On supposition that he was so, and they that ordained him were known to him to have been so; yet he being not guilty of the crime, renouncing communion with them therein, and themselves repenting of their sin, as did Peter, whose sin exceeded theirs, this was no just cause of casting him out of communion, he walking and acting in all other things suitable to principles by themselves acknowledged.

3. That on supposition they had just cause hereupon to renounce the communion of Cæcilianus, which according to the principles of those days, retained by themselves, was most false; yet they had no ground of separating from the church of Carthage, where were many elders not ob-

noxious to that charge. Indeed to raise a jealousy of a fault in any man, which is denied by him, which we are not able to prove, which, if it were proved, were of little or no importance, and on pretence thereof to separate from all who will not believe what we surmise, is a wild and unchristian course of proceeding.

4. Yet grant farther, that men of tender consciences, regulated by the principle then generally received, might be startled at the communion of that church, wherein Cæcilianus did preside; yet nothing but the height of madness, pride, and corrupt fleshly interest, could make men declare hostility against all the churches of Christ in the world, who would communicate with, or did not condemn that church; which was to regulate all the churches in the world by their own fancy and imagination.

5. Though men out of such pride and folly might judge all the residue of Christians to be faulty and guilty in this particular, of not condemning and separating from the church of Carthage; yet to proceed to cast them out from the very name of Christians, and so disannul their privileges and ordinances, that they had been made partakers of, as manifestly they did, by rebaptizing all that entered into their communion, was such unparalleled pharisaism and tyranny, as was wholly to be condemned, and intolerable.

6. The divisions, outrages, and enthusiastical furies and riots that befell them, or they fell into, in their way, were in my judgment tokens of the hand of God against them: so that, upon the whole matter, their undertaking and enterprise was utterly undue and unlawful.

I shall farther add, as to the management of the cause by their adversaries, that there is in their writings, especially those of Austin, for the most part a sweet and gracious spirit breathing, full of zeal for the glory of God, peace, love, union among Christians; and as to the issue of the cause under debate, it is evident that they did sufficiently foil their adversaries on principles then generally confessed, and acknowledged on all hands, though some of them seem to have been considering, learned, and dexterous men.

How little we are at this day, in any contests that are managed amongst us about the things of God, concerned

in those differences of theirs, these few considerations will evince, yet notwithstanding all this, I must take liberty to profess, that although the fathers justly charged the Donatists with disclaiming of all the churches of Christ, as a thing wicked and unjust, yet many of the principles whereon they did it were such, as I cannot assent unto. Yea, I shall say, that though Austin was sufficiently clear in the nature of the invisible church catholic, yet his frequent confounding it with a mistaken notion of the visible general church, hath given no small occasion of stumbling, and sundry unhappy entanglements to divers in after ages. His own book '*De Unitate Ecclesiæ*,' which contains the sum and substance of what he had written elsewhere, or disputed against the Donatists, would afford me instances enough to make good my assertion, were it now under consideration or proof.

Being then thus come off from this part of our charge and accusation of schism, for the relinquishment of the catholic visible church, which as we have not done, so to do is not schism, but a sin of another nature and importance; according to the method proposed, a recharge on the Romanists, in reference to their present condition and its unsuitableness to the unity of the church, evinced, must briefly ensue.

Their claim is known to be no less, than that they are this catholic church, out of whose communion there is no salvation (as the Donatists was of old): that also the union of this church consists in its subjection to its head the pope, and worshipping of God according to his appointment, in and with his several qualifications and attendences. Now this claim of theirs, to our apprehension and consciences, is,

1. Cruel and sanguinary; condemning millions to hell, that invoke and call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, believing all things that are written in the Old and New Testaments, for no other cause in the world, but because they are not convinced that it is their duty to give up reason, faith, soul, and all to him, and his disposal, whom they have not only unconquerable presumptions against as an evil and wicked person, but are also resolved, and fully persuaded in their consciences, that he is an enemy to their dear Lord Jesus Christ, out of love to whom, they cannot bear him. Especially will this appear to be so, if we consider their far-

ther improvement of this principle to the killing, hanging, torturing to death, burning of all that they are able, who are in the condition before mentioned. This upon the matter is the great principle of their religion. All persons that will not be subject (at least in spiritual things) to the pope, are to be hanged or burned in this world, or by other means destroyed, and damned for ever hereafter. This is the substance of the gospel they preach, the centre wherein all the lines of their writings do meet; and to this must the holy, pure word of God be wrested to give countenance. Blessed be the God of our salvation, who as he never gave merciless men power over the souls and eternal condition of his saints, so he hath began to work a deliverance of the outward condition of his people from their rage and cruelty; which in his good time he will perfect in their irrecoverable ruin. In the mean time, I say, the guilt of the blood of millions of innocent persons, yea, saints of God, lies at their doors. And although things are so stated in this age, that in some nations they have left none to kill; in others are restrained, that they can kill no more; yet retaining the same principles with their forefathers, and justifying them in their paths of blood, I look upon them all as guilty of murder, and so not to have eternal life abiding in them; being as Cain of that wicked one, who slew his brother. I speak not of individuals, but of those in general that constitute their governing church.

2. Most false, and such as nothing but either judiciary hardness from God, sending men strong delusions that they might believe a lie, or the dominion of cursed lusts, pride, ambition, covetousness, desire of rule, can lie at the bottom of. For,

1. It is false, that the union of the catholic church, in the notion now under consideration, consists in subjection to any officer or officers; or that it hath any peculiar form, constituting one church in relation to them, or in joint participation of the same individual ordinances whatever, by all the members of it; or that any such oneness is at all possible; or any unity whatever, but that of the faith which by it is believed, and of the truth professed.

2. It is most ridiculous, that they are this catholic church, or that their communion is comprehensive of it in its latitude. He must be blind, uncharitable, a judge of

what he cannot see or know, who can once entertain a thought of any such thing. Let us run a little over the foundations of this assertion.

First, Peter was the prince of the apostles. It is denied; arguments lie clear against it. The gospel, the acts of the apostles, all confute it. The express testimony of Paul lies against it; our Saviour denies it, that it was so, gives order that it should not be so. The name and thing is foreign to the times of the apostles. It was a ministry, not a principality, they had committed to them; therein they were all equal. It is from that spirit, whence they inquired after a kingdom and dominion before they had received the Spirit of the gospel, as it was dispensed after Christ's ascension, that such assertions are now insisted on. But let that be supposed, what is next? He had a universal monarchical jurisdiction committed to him over all Christians. For Christ said, 'Tu es Petrus, tibi dabo claves, et pasce oves meas.' But these terms are barbarous to the Scripture; monarchy is not the English of 'vos autem non sic.' Jurisdiction is a name of a right, for the exercise of civil power. Christ hath left no such thing as jurisdiction, in the sense wherein it is now used, to Peter or his church. Men do but make sport and expose themselves to the contempt of considering persons, who talk of the institutions of our Lord, in the language of the last ages; or expressions suitable to what was in practice in them. He that shall compare the fraternal church admonition and censures of the primitive institution, with the courts, powers, and jurisdictions, set up in pretence and colour of them in after ages, will admire at the likeness and correspondency of the one with the other. The administration of ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the papacy, and under the prelacy here in England, had no more relation to any institution of Christ (unless it be, that it effectually excluded the exercise of his institutions), than other civil courts of justice among Christians have. Peter had the power and authority of an apostle in and over the churches of Christ, to teach, to instruct them, to ordain elders in them by their consent wherever he came; so had the rest of the apostles. But as to this monarchy of Peter's over the rest of the apostles, let them shew what authority he ever exercised over them, while he and they lived to-

gether : we read that he was once reproved by one of them, not that he ever reproved the meanest of them. If Christ made the grant of pre-eminency to him, when he said, 'Tu es Petrus,' why did the apostles inquire afterward, who among them should be greatest? And why did not our Saviour on that dispute plainly satisfy them, that Peter was to be chief? But chose rather to so determine the question, as to evince them of the vanity of any such inquiry? And yet the determination of it is that that lies at the bottom of the papal monarchy. And why doth Paul say, that he was in nothing inferior to any of the apostles, when (if these gentlemen say true), he was in many things inferior to Peter? What special place hath the name of Peter in the foundation of the new Jerusalem? Rev. xxi. 14. What exaltation hath his throne among the twelve, whereon the apostles judge the world, and house of Israel, Matt. xix. 28. What eminency of commission for teaching all nations, or forgiving sins? What had his keys more than those of the rest of the apostles, John xx. 3. What was peculiar in that triple command of feeding the sheep of Christ, but his triple denial, that preceded? Is an injunction for the performance of duty, a grant of new authority? But that we may make some progress, suppose this also; Why, this power, privilege, and jurisdiction of Peter was to be transferred to his successors, when the power of all the other apostles, as such, died with them. But what pretence, or colour of it, is there for this assertion? What one tittle or *ῥῆμα* is there in the whole book of God, giving the least countenance to this imagination? what distinction between Peter and the rest of the apostles on this account, is once made, or in any kind insinuated? Certainly this was a thing of great importance to the churches, to have been acquainted with it. When Paul so sadly tells the church, that after his departure grievous wolves would spoil the flock, and many among themselves would arise, speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them; why did he not give them the least direction to make their address to him, that should succeed Peter in his power and office, for relief and redress? Strange, that it should be of necessity to salvation to be subject to him, in whom this power of Peter was to be continued; that he was to be one, in whom

the saints were to be consummated; that in relation to him the unity of the catholic church, to be preserved under pain of damnation, should consist, and yet not a word spoken of him in the whole word of God!

But they say, 'Peter had not only an apostolical power with the rest of the apostles, but also an ordinary power that was to be continued in the church.' But the Scripture being confessedly silent of any such thing, let us hear what proof is tendered for the establishment of this uncouth assertion. Herein then thus they proceed: It will be confessed that Jesus Christ ordained his church wisely, according to his infinite wisdom, which he exercised about his body. Now to this wisdom of his, for the prevention of innumerable evils, it is agreeable, that he should appoint some one person with that power of declaring truth, and of jurisdiction to enforce the receiving of it, which we plead for. For this was in Peter, as is proved from the texts of Scripture before mentioned, therefore it is continued in them that succeed him. And here lies the great stress of their cause; that to prevent evils and inconveniences, it became the wisdom of Jesus Christ to appoint a person, with all that authority, power, and infallibility, to continue in his church to the end of the world. And this plea they manage variously with much sophistry, rhetoric, and testimonies of antiquity. But suppose all this should be granted; yet I am full well assured, that they can never bring it home to their concernment by any argument, but only the actual claim of the pope wherein he stands singly now in the world; which that it is satisfactory to make it good 'de fide,' that he is so, will not easily be granted. The truth is, of all the attempts they make against the Lord Jesus Christ, this is one of the greatest, wherein they will assert, that it became his wisdom to do that which by no means they can prove that he hath done; which is plainly to tell us what in their judgment he ought to have done, though he hath not; and that therefore it is incumbent on them to supply what he hath been defective in. Had he taken the care he should of them and their master, that he and they might have ruled and revelled over, and in the house of God, he would have appointed things as now they are, which they affirm to have become his wisdom. He was a king that

once cried, ‘*Si Deo in creatione adfuissem, mundum melius ordinassem.*’ But every friar or monk can say of Jesus Christ, had they been present at his framing the world to come (whereof we speak), they would have told him what had become his wisdom to do. Our blessed Lord hath left sufficient provision against all future emergencies and inconveniences, in his word and Spirit given and promised to his saints. And the one remedy which these men have found out, with the contempt and blasphemy of him and them, hath proved worse than all the other evils and diseases, for whose prevention he made provision; which he hath done also for that remedy of theirs, but that some are hardened through the righteous judgment of God and deceitfulness of sin.

The management of this plea by some of late is very considerable; say they, ‘*Quia non de verbis solum Scripturæ, sed etiam de sensu plurima controversia est, si ecclesiæ interpretatio non est certa intelligendi norma, ecquis erit istiusmodi controversiæ iudex? sensum enim suum pro sua virili quisque defendet; quod si in exploranda verbi Dei intelligentia nullus est certus iudex, audemus dicere nullam rempublicam fuisse stultius constitutam. Sin autem apostoli tradiderunt ecclesiis verbum Dei sine intelligentia verbi Dei, quomodo prædicarunt evangelium omni creaturæ? quomodo docuerunt omnes gentes servare quæcunque illis fuerunt a Christo commendata. Non est puerorum aut psittacorum prædicatio, qui sine mente dant, accipiuntque sonum.*’ Walemburg, Con. 4. Num. 26.

It is well, that at length these men speak out plainly. If the pope be not a visible supreme judge in and over the church, Christ hath in the constitution of his church dealt more foolishly than ever any did in the constitution of a commonwealth. If he have not an infallible power of determining the sense of the Scriptures, the Scripture is but an empty, insignificant word, like the speech of parrots or popinjays. Though Christ hath by his apostles given the Scripture to make the man of God wise unto salvation, and promised his Spirit unto them that believe, by whose assistance the Scripture gives out its own sense to them, yet all is folly if the pope be not supreme and infallible. The

Lord rebuke them, who thus boldly blaspheme his word and wisdom. But let us proceed.

This Peter, thus invested in power that was to be translated to others, went to Rome, and preached the gospel there. It is most certain, nor will themselves deny it, that if this be not so, and believed, their whole fabric will fall to the ground. But can this be necessary for all sorts of Christians, and every individual of men among them, to believe, when there is not the least insinuation of any such thing in the Scripture; certainly, though it be only a matter of fact, yet being of such huge importance and consequence, and such a doctrine of absolute and indispensable necessity to be believed, as is pretended, depending upon it, if it were true, and true in reference to such an end and purpose as is pleaded, it would not have been passed over in silence there, where so many things of inconceivable less concernment to the church of God (though all in their respective degrees tending to edification) are recorded. As to what is recorded in story; the order and series of things, with the discovery afforded us of Peter's course and place of abode in Scripture, do prevail with me to think steadfastly, that he was never there; against the self-contradicting testimonies of some few, who took up vulgar reports then, when the mystery of iniquity had so far operated at least, that it was judged meet that the chief of the apostles should have lived in the chief city of the world.

But that we may proceed, grant this also, that Peter was at Rome, which they shall never be able to prove; and that he did preach the gospel there; yet so he did, by their own confession, at other places, making his residence at Antioch for some years; what will this avail towards the settling of the matter under consideration? There Christ appointed him to fix his chair, and make that church the place of his residence; *λῆροι*!

Of his meeting Simon Magus at Rome, who in all probability was never there (for Semo Sangus was not Simon Magus, nor Sanctus, nor Deus Magnus), of the conquest made of him and his devils, of his being instructed of Christ not to go from Rome, but tarry there and suffer, something may be said from old legends. But of his chair,

and fixing of it at Rome, of his confinement, as it were, to that place, in direct opposition to the tenor of his apostolical commission, who first told the story I know not; but this I know, they will one day be ashamed of their chair, thrones, and sees, and jurisdictions, wherein they now so please themselves.

But what is next to this? The bishop of Rome succeeds Peter in all that power, jurisdiction, infallibility, with whatsoever else was fancied before in him, as the ordinary lord of the church, and therefore the Roman church is the catholic; ‘quod erat demonstrandum.’ Now though this inference will no way follow upon these principles, though they should all be supposed to be true, whereof not one is so much as probable; and though this last assertion be vain and ridiculous, nothing at all being pleaded to ground this succession; no institution of Christ; no act of any council of the church; no will nor testament of Peter; but only it is so fallen out, as the world was composed of a casual concurrence of atoms; yet seeing they will have it so, I desire a little farther information in one thing that yet remains; and that is this, the charter, patents, and grant of all this power, and right of succession unto Peter, in all the advantages, privileges, and jurisdiction, before mentioned, being wholly in their own keeping, whereof I never saw letter or title, nor ever conversed with any one, no not of themselves, that did; I would be gladly informed, whether this grant be made to him absolutely, without any manner of condition whatever; so that whoever comes to be pope of Rome, and possessed of Peter’s chair there, by what means soever he is possessed of it, whether he believe the gospel or no, or any of the saving truths therein contained, and so their church must be the catholic church, though it follow him in all abominations; or whether it be made on any condition to him, especially that of cleaving to the doctrine of Christ revealed in the gospel? If they say the first, that it is an absolute grant, that is made to him without any condition expressed or necessarily to be understood, I am at an issue, and have nothing to add, but my desire that the grant may be produced; for whilst we are at this variance, it is against all law and equity, that the parties litigant should be admitted to plead bare allegations, without proof. If

the latter, though we should grant all the former monstrous suppositions, yet we are perfectly secure against all their pretensions, knowing nothing more clearly and evidently, than that he and they have broken all conditions that can possibly be imagined, by corrupting and perverting almost the whole doctrine of the gospel.

And whereas it may be supposed, that the great condition of such a grant would consist in his diligent attendance to the Scriptures, the word of God, herein doth the filth of their abominations appear above all other things. The guilt that is in that society or combination of men, in locking up the Scriptures in an unknown tongue, forbidding the people to read it, burning some men to death for the studying of it, and no more, disputing against its power to make good its own authority, charging it with obscurity, imperfection, insufficiency, frightening men from the perusal of it, with the danger of being seduced and made heretics by so doing, setting up their own traditions in an equality with it, if not exalting them above it, studying by all means to decry it as useless and contemptible, at least comparatively with themselves, will not be purged from them for ever.

But you will say, this is a simple question. For the pope of Rome hath a promise that he shall still be such a one as is fit to be trusted with the power mentioned; and not one that shall defend Mahomet to be the prophet of God sent into the world, or the like abominations; at least, that be he what he will, placed in the chair, he shall not err, nor mistake in what he delivereth for truth. Now seeing themselves, as was said, are the sole keepers of this promise and grant also, which they have not as yet shewed to the world; I am necessitated to ask once more, whether it be made to him merely upon condition of mounting into his chair, or also upon this condition, that he use the means appointed by God to come to the knowledge of the truth? If they say the former, I must needs say, that it is so remote from my apprehension, that God, who will be worshipped in spirit and in truth only, should now under the gospel promise to any persons, that be they never so wicked and abominable, never so openly and evidently sworn enemies of him and his anointed, whether they use any means or not by him appointed, that they shall always in all things speak the truth,

which they hate, in love, which they have not, with that authority which all his saints must bow unto; especially not having intimated any one word of any such promise in the Scripture, that I know not whatever I heard of in my life that I cannot as soon believe. If they say the latter, we close then as we did our former inquiry.

Upon the credit and strength of these sandy foundations and principles, which neither severally nor jointly will bear the weight of a feather, in a long-continued course of apostacy, have men conquered all policy, religion, and honesty, and built up that stupendous fabric, coupled together with subtle and scarce discernible joints and ligaments, which they call the catholic church.

1. In despite of policy they have not only enslaved kings, kingdoms, commonwealths, nations, and people to be their vassals, and at their disposal; but also contrary to all rules of government, beyond the thoughts and conjectures of all or any that ever wrote of, or instituted, a government in the world, they have in most nations of Europe set up a government, authority, and jurisdiction, within another government and authority settled on other accounts, the one independent on the other, and have brought these things to some kind of consistency; which that it might be accomplished never entered into the heart of any wise man once to imagine, nor had ever been by them effected, without such advantages, as none in the world ever had in such a continuance but themselves: unless the Druids of old in some nations obtained some such thing.*

2. In despite of religion itself, they have made a new creed, invented new ways of worship, given a whole sum and system of their own, altogether alien from the word of God, without an open disclaiming of that word, which in innumerable places bears testimony to its own perfection and fulness.

3. Contrary to common honesty, the first principles of

* Si quis aut privatus, aut populus eorum decreto non stetit, sacrificiis interdicitur. Hæc pœna apud eos est gravissima; quibus ita est interdictum, ii numero impiorum, et sceleratorum habentur, ab iis omnes decedunt, aditum eorum sermonemque defugiunt, ne quid ex contagione incommodi accipiant; neque iis petentibus jus redditur, neque honos ullus communicatur: his autem omnibus Druidibus præest unus; qui summam inter eos habet auctoritatem: hoc mortuo, si quis ex reliquis excellit dignitate, succedit: at si sunt plures, suffragio Druidum allegitur: nonnunquam etiam de principatu armis contendunt. Cæs. lib. 6. de Bell. Gal.

reason, with violence to the evident dictates of the law of nature, they will in confidence of these principles have the word and sentence of a pope, though a beast, a witch, a conjuror, as by their own confession many of them have been, to be implicitly submitted to in and about things which he neither knoweth, nor loveth, nor careth for; being yet such in themselves as immediately and directly concern the everlasting condition of the souls of men. And this is our second return to their pretence of being the catholic church: to which I add,

3. That their plea is so far from truth, that they are, and they only, the catholic church, that indeed they belong not to it, because they keep not the ‘unity of the faith,’ which is required to constitute any person whatever a member of that church, but fail in all the conditions of it. For,

1. To proceed by way of instance, they do not profess nor believe a justification distinct from sanctification, and acceptance thereof; the doctrine whereof is of absolute and indispensable necessity to the preservation of the unity of the faith; and so fail in the first condition of professing all necessary truths. I know what they say of justification, what they have determined concerning it in the council of Trent, what they dispute about it in their books of controversies. But I deny that which they contend for to be a justification; so that they do not deny only justification by faith, but positively, over and above, the infusion of grace, and the acceptance of the obedience thence arising; that there is any justification at all consisting in the free and full absolution of a sinner, on the account of Christ.

2. They discover principles corrupt and depraved, utterly inconsistent with those truths, and the receiving of them, which in general by owning the Scriptures they do profess. Herein to pass by the principles of atheism, wickedness, and profaneness, that effectually work and manifest themselves in the generality of their priests and people; that of self-righteousness, that is in the best of their devotionists, is utterly inconsistent with the whole doctrine of the gospel, and all saving truths concerning the mediation of Jesus Christ therein contained.

3. That in their doctrine of the pope’s supremacy, of merits, satisfaction, the mass, the worshipping of images,

they add such things to their profession as enervate the efficacy of all the saving truths they do profess, and so fail in the third condition. This hath so abundantly been manifested by others, that I shall not need to add any thing to give the charge of it upon them any farther evidence or demonstration.

Thus it is unhappily fallen out with these men, that what of all men they most pretend unto, that of all men they have the least interest in. Athenæus tells us of one Thrasilaus an Athenian, who being phrenetically distempered, whatever ships came into the Pyræum he looked on them and thought them his own, and rejoiced as the master of so great wealth, when he was not the owner of so much as a boat: such a distemper of pride and folly hath in the like manner seized on these persons with whom we have to do; that wherever in Scripture they meet with the name church, presently, as though they were intended by it, they rejoice in the privileges of it, when their concernment lies not at all therein.

To close this whole discourse I shall bring the grand argument of the Romanists (with whom I shall now in this treatise have little more to do), wherewith they make such a noise in the world, to an issue. Of the many forms and shapes whereinto by them it is cast, this seems to be the most perspicuously expressive of their intention.

Voluntarily to forsake the communion of the church of Christ is schism, and they that do so are guilty of it;

You have voluntarily forsaken the communion of the church of Christ:

Therefore, you are guilty of the sin of schism.

I have purposely omitted the interposing of the term catholic, that the reason of the argument might run to its length; for upon the taking in of that term we have nothing to do, but only to deny the minor proposition; seeing the Roman church, be it what it will, is not the church catholic; but as it is without that limitation called the church of Christ indefinitely, it leaves place for a farther and fuller answer.

To this by way of inference they add, that schism, as it declared by St. Austin and St. Thomas of Aquin, being so great and damnable a sin; and whereas it is plain, that out of the church, which, as Peter says, is as Noah's ark,

1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. there is no salvation, it is clear you will be damned. This is the sum of their plea.

Now as for the fore-mentioned argument, some of our divines answer to the minor proposition, and that both as to the terms of voluntary forsaking, and that also of the communion of the church. For the first, they say they did not voluntarily forsake the communion of the church that then was, but being necessitated by the command of God to reform themselves in sundry things, they were driven out by bell, book, and candle, cursed out, killed out, driven out by all manner of violence, ecclesiastical and civil; which is a strange way of men's becoming schismatic.

2. That they forsook not the communion of the church, but the corruptions of it, or the communion of it in its corruption, not in other things, wherein it was lawful to continue communion with it.

To give strength to this answer, they farther add, that though they grant the church of Rome to have been at the time of the first separation a true church of Christ, yet they deny it to be the catholic church, or only visible church then in the world; the churches in the East claiming that title by as good a right as she. So they. Others principally answer to the major proposition, and tell you, that separation is either causeless, or upon just ground and cause; that it is a causeless separation only from the church of Christ that is schism; that there can be no cause of schism, for if there be a cause of schism materially, it ceaseth to be schism formally: and so to strengthen their answer 'in hypothesis,' they fall upon the idolatries, heresies, tyranny, and apostacy of the church of Rome, as just causes of separation from her; nor will their plea be shaken to eternity: so that being true and popular, understood by the meanest, though it contain not the whole truth, I shall not in the least impair it.

For them, who have found out new ways of justifying our separation from Rome, on principles of limiting the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome to a peculiar patriarchate, and granting a power to kings or nations, to erect patriarchs or metropolitans within their own territories, and the like; the Protestant cause is not concerned in their plea; the whole of it on both hands being foreign to the

Scripture, relating mostly to human constitutions, wherein they may have liberty to exercise their wits and abilities.

Not receding from what hath by others solidly been pleaded, on the answers above mentioned; in answer to the principles I have hitherto evinced, I shall proceed to give my account of the argument proposed.

That we mistake not, I only premise, that I take schism in this argument in the notion and sense of the Scripture precisely, wherein alone it will reach the conscience, and bear the weight of inferring damnation from it.

1. Then I wholly deny the major proposition, as utterly false, in what sense soever that expression, 'true church of Christ' is taken. Take it for the catholic church of Christ, I deny that any one, who is once a true member of it, can utterly forsake its communion; no living member of that body of Christ can perish; and on supposition it could do so, it would be madness to call that crime schism: nor is this a mere denial of the assertion, but such as is attended with an invincible truth for its maintenance.

Take it for the general visible church of Christ; the voluntary forsaking of its communion, which consists in the profession of the same faith, is not schism, but apostacy, and the thing itself is to be removed from the question in hand: and as for apostates from the faith of the gospel, we question not their damnation; it sleepeth not: whoever called a Christian that turned Jew or Mahometan a schismatic?

Take it for a particular church of Christ, I deny,

(1.) That separation from a particular church, as such, as merely separation, is schism, or ought to be so esteemed; though perhaps such separation may proceed from schism, and be also attended with other evils.

(2.) That however, separation upon just cause and ground from any church, is no schism: this is granted by all persons living. Schism is causeless, say all men however concerned. And herein is a truth uncontrollable, separation upon just cause is a duty; and therefore cannot be schism, which is always a sin. Now there are five hundred things in the church of Rome, whereof every one, grafted as they are there into the stock and principle of imposition on the practice and confession of men, is a sufficient cause

of separation from any particular church in the world; yea, from all of them, one after another, should they all consent unto the same thing, and impose it in the same manner, if there be any truth in that maxim; 'It is better to obey God than man.'

2. I wholly deny the minor proposition also, if spoken in reference to the church of Rome; though I willingly acknowledge our separation to be voluntary from them; no more being done than I would do over again this day, God assisting me, were I called unto it. But separation in the sense contended about, must be from some state and condition of Christ's institution, from communion with a church which we held by his appointment; otherwise it will not be pleaded that it is a schism, at least not in a gospel sense. Now though our forefathers, in the faith we profess, lived in subjection to the pope of Rome, or his subordinate engines, yet they were not so subject to them, in any way or state instituted by Christ; so that the relinquishment of that state can possibly be no such separation, as to be termed schism. For I wholly deny that the papacy, exercising its power in its supreme and subordinate officers, which with them is their church, is a church at all of Christ's appointment, or any such thing. And when they prove it is so, I will be of it. So that when our forefathers withdrew their neck from his tyrannical yoke, and forsook the practice of his abominations in the worship of God, they forsook no church of Christ's institution, they relinquished no communion of Christ's appointment. A man may possibly forsake Babylon, and yet not forsake Zion.

For the aggravations of the sin of schism from some ancient writers, Austin and Optatus, men interested in the contests about it, Leo and Innocent, gaining by the notion of it then growing in the world, Thomas Aquinas and such vassals of the papacy, we are not concerned in them; what the Lord speaks of it, that we judge concerning it. It is true of the catholic church always, that out of it is no salvation, it being the society of them that shall be saved; and of the visible church in general, in some sense and cases; seeing with the heart 'man believeth to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation;' but of a particular church in no sense, unless that of contempt of a

known duty; and to imagine Peter to speak of any such thing is a fancy.

The consequence of this divesting the Roman synagogue of the privileges of a true church in any sense, arising in the thoughts of some to a denial of that ministry, which we have at this day in England, must by the way a little be considered. For my part (be it spoken without offence), if any man hath nothing to plead for his ministry, but merely that successive ordination which he hath received through the church of Rome, I cannot see a stable bottom of owning him so to be; I do not say, if he will plead nothing else, but if he hath nothing else to plead. He may have that which indeed constitutes him a minister, though he will not own that so it doth. Nor doth it come here into inquiry, whether there were not a true ministry in some all along under the papacy, distinct from it, as were the thousands in Israel in the days of Elijah; when in the ten tribes, as to the public worship, there was no true ministry at all. Nor is it said that any have their ministry from Rome, as though the office, which is an ordinance of Christ, was instituted by antichrist: but the question is, whether this be a sufficient and good basis and foundation of any man's interest in the office of the ministry, that he hath received ordination in a succession, through the administration of, not the woman flying into the wilderness under the persecution of antichrist, not of the two witnesses prophesying all along under the Roman apostacy, not from them to whom we succeed in doctrine, as the Waldenses, but the beast itself, the persecuting church of Rome, the pope and his adherents, who were certainly administrators of the ordination pleaded for: so that in doctrine we should succeed the persecuted woman, and in office the persecuting beast. I shall not plead this at large, professedly disclaiming all thoughts of rejecting those ministers, as papal and antichristian, who yet adhere to this ordination; being many of them eminently gifted of God to dispense the word, and submitted unto by his people in the administration of the ordinances, and are right worthy ministers of the gospel of Christ. But,

I shall only remark something on the plea that is insisted on by them, who would (if I mistake not) keep up in

this particular, what God would have pulled down. They ask us, why not ordination from the church of Rome as well as the Scripture? In which inquiry I am sorry that some do still continue. We are so far from having the Scriptures from the church of Rome, by any authority of it as such, that it is one cause of daily praising God, that by his providence he kept them from being either corrupted or destroyed by them. It is true, the Bible was kept among the people that lived in those parts of the world where the pope prevailed: so was the Old Testament by the Jews; the whole by the eastern Christians: by none so corrupted as by those of the papal territory. God forbid we should say we had the Scriptures from the church of Rome, as such; if we had, why do we not keep them as she delivered them to us, in the vulgar translation, with the apocryphal additions? The ordination pleaded for, is from the authority of the church of Rome, as such: the Scriptures were by the providence of God preserved under the papacy for the use of his people; and had they been found by chance, as it were, like the law of old, they had been the same to us that now they are. So that of these things there is not the same reason.

It is also pleaded, that the granting true ordination to the church of Rome doth not prove that to be a true church. This I profess I understand not; they who ordained had no power so to do, but as they were officers of that church; as such they did it; and if others had ordained, who were not officers of that church, all would confess that action to be null. But they who will not be contented that Christ hath appointed the office of the ministry to be continued in his churches, that he continues to dispense the gifts of his Spirit for the execution of that office when men are called thereunto, that he prepares the hearts of his people to desire and submit unto them in the Lord, that as to the manner of entrance upon the work, they may have it according to the mind of Christ to the utmost in all circumstances; so soon as his churches are shaken out of the dust of Babylon with his glory shining on them, and the tabernacle of God is thereby once more placed with men, shall have leave for me to derive their interest in the ministry through that dark

passage, wherein I cannot see one step before me: if they are otherwise qualified and accepted as above, I shall ever pay them that honour which is due to elders labouring in the word and doctrine.

CHAP. VII.

Of a particular church; its nature. Frequently mentioned in Scripture.

Particular congregations acknowledged the only churches of the first institution. What ensued on the multiplication of churches. Some things premised to clear the unity of the church in this sense. Every believer ordinarily obliged to join himself to some particular church. Many things in instituted worship answering a natural principle. Perpetuity of the church in this sense. True churches at first planted in England. How they ceased so to be. How churches may be again re-erected. Of the union of a particular church in itself. Foundation of that union twofold. The union itself. Of the communion of particular churches one with another. Our concernment in this union.

I NOW descend to the last consideration of a church, in the most usual acceptation of that name in the New Testament, that is, of a particular instituted church. A church in this sense I take to be a society of men, called by the word to the obedience of the faith in Christ, and joint performance of the worship of God in the same individual ordinances, according to the order by Christ prescribed. This general description of it exhibits its nature so far as is necessary to clear the subject of our present disquisition. A more accurate definition would only administer farther occasion of contesting about things, not necessary to be determined as to the inquiry in hand. Such as this was the church at Jerusalem that was persecuted, Acts viii. 1. the church whereof Saul made havoc, ver. 3. the church that was vexed by Herod, Acts xii. 1. Such was the church at Antioch, which ‘assembled together in one place,’ Acts xiii. 14. wherein were sundry prophets, Acts xiii. 1. as that at Jerusalem consisted of elders and brethren, Acts xv. 22. the apostles or some of them being there then present, which added no other consideration to that church than that we are now speaking of. Such were those many churches wherein elders were ordained by Paul’s appointment, Acts xiv. 23.

as also the church of Cæsarea, Acts xviii. 22. and at Ephesus, Acts xx. 14. 28. as was that of Corinth, 1 Cor. i. 2. vi. 4. 11, 12. xiv. 4, 5. 12. 19. 2 Cor. i. 1. and those mentioned, Rev. i. 2, 3. all which Paul calls the churches of the Gentiles, Rom. xvi. 4. in contradistinction to those of the Jews; and calls them indefinitely the churches of God, ver. 16. or the churches of Christ, 1 Cor. vii. 17. 2 Cor. viii. 18, 19. 23. 2 Thess. i. 4. and in sundry other places. Hence we have mention of many churches in one country, as in Judea, Acts ix. 1. in Asia, 1 Cor. xvi. 19. in Macedonia, 2 Cor. viii. 1. in Galatia, Gal. i. 2. the seven churches of Asia, Rev. i. 11. and unto τὰς πόλεις, Acts xvi. 4. αἱ ἐκκλησίαι answers, ver. 5. in the same country.

I suppose that in this description of a particular church I have not only the consent of them of all sorts with whom I have now to do, as to what remains of this discourse, but also their acknowledgment that these were the only kinds of churches of the first institution. The reverend authors of the *Jus Divinum Ministerii Anglicani*, p. 2. c. 6. tell us, that ‘in the beginning of Christianity the number of believers even in the greatest cities were so few, as that they might all meet ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ, in one and the same place. And these are called the church of the city, and the angel of such a city was congregational, not diocesan;’ which discourse exhibits that state of a particular church which is now pleaded for, and which shall afterward be evinced, allowing no other, no not in the greatest cities. In a rejoinder to that treatise, so far as the case of episcopacy is herein concerned, by a person well known by his labours in that cause, this is acknowledged to be so. ‘Believers,’ saith he, ‘in great cities were not at first divided into parishes, whilst the number of Christians was so small that they might well assemble in the same place,’ *Ham. Vind.* p. 16. Of the believers of one city meeting in one place, being one church, we have the like grant, p. 18. ‘In this particular church,’ he says, ‘there was one bishop, which had the rule of it, and of the believers in the villages adjacent to that city; which as it sometimes was not so, Rom. xvi. 1, 2. so for the most part it seems to have been the case; and distinct churches upon the growth of the number of believers were to be erected in several places of the vicinage.

And this is the state of a particular instituted church which we plead for. Whether in process of time, believers multiplying, those who had been of one church met in several assemblies, by a settled distribution of them, to celebrate the same ordinances specifically, and so made many churches; or met in several places in parties, still continuing one body, and were governed in common by the elders, whom they increased and multiplied in proportion to the increase of believers; or whether, that one or more officers, elders, or bishops, of that first single congregation, taking on him or them the care of those inhabiting the city wherein the church was first planted, designed and sent some fitted for that purpose, upon their desire and choice, or otherwise, to the several lesser companies of the region adjacent, which in process of time became dependent on, and subject to, the officer and officers of that first church from whence they came forth, I dispute not. I am satisfied that the first plantation of churches was as hath been pleaded: and I know what was done afterward on the one hand or the other must be examined, as to our concernment, by what ought to have been done. But of those things afterward.

Now according to the course of procedure hitherto insisted on, a declaration of the unity of the church in this sense, what it is, wherein it doth consist, with what it is to be guilty of the breach of that unity, must ensue; and this shall be done after I have premised some few things previously necessary thereunto.

I say then,

1. A man may be a member of the catholic church of Christ, be united to him by the inhabitation of his Spirit, and participation of life from him, who upon the account of some providential hindrance, is never joined to any particular congregation, for the participation of ordinances, all his days.

2. In like manner may he be a member of the church considered as professing visibly; seeing that he may do all that is of him required thereunto, without any such conjunction to a visible particular church, But yet,

3. I willingly grant, that every believer is obliged, as in a part of his duty, to join himself to some one of those churches of Christ; that therein he may abide in doctrine,

and fellowship, and ‘breaking of bread and prayer,’ according to the order of the gospel, if he have advantage and opportunity so to do. For,

1. There are some duties incumbent on us, which cannot possibly be performed, but on a supposition of this duty previously required, and submitted unto, Matt. xviii. 15—17.

2. There are some ordinances of Christ, appointed for the good and benefit of those that believe, which they can never be made partakers of if not related to some such society; as public admonition, excommunication, participation of the sacrament of the Lord’s supper.

3. The care that Jesus Christ hath taken that all things be well ordered in these churches, giving no direction for the performance of any duty of worship merely and purely of sovereign institution, but only in them, and by them, who are so joined, sufficiently evinced his mind, and our duty herein, Rev. ii. 7. 11. 29. iii. 6, 7. 12. 1 Cor. xi.

4. The gathering, planting, and settling of such churches by the apostles, with the care they took in bringing them to perfection, leaving none whom they converted out of that order, where it was possible for them to be reduced unto it, is of the same importance, Acts xiv. 23. Tit. i. 5.

5. Christ’s institution of officers for them, Eph. iv. 11. 1 Cor. xi. 28. calling such a church his body, ver. 29. exactly assigning to every one his duty in such societies, in respect of the place he held in them, with his care for their preservation from confusion, and for order, evinces from whom they are, and what is our duty in reference unto them.

6. The judging and condemning them by the Holy Ghost, as disorderly blameable persons who are to be avoided, who walk not according to the rules and order appointed in these churches, his care that those churches be not scandalized or offended, with innumerable other considerations, evince their institution to be from heaven, not of men, or any prudential considerations of them whatever.

That there is an instituted worship of God to be continued under the New Testament until the second coming of Christ, I suppose needs not much proof. With those with whom it doth so I am not now treating, and must not make it my business to give it evidence, by the innumerable testimonies which might be alleged to that purpose. That for the whole

of his worship, matter, or manner, or any part of it, God hath changed his way of proceeding, and will not allow the will and prudence of man to be the measure and rule of his honour and glory therein, contrary to what he did or would allow under the law, is so prejudicial to the perfection of the gospel, infinite wisdom, and all-sufficiency of Christ, and so destructive to the whole obligation of the second commandment, having no ground in the Scripture, but being built merely on the conceit of men, suited to one carnal interest or other, I shall unwillingly debate it. That as to this particular under consideration, there were particular churches instituted by the authority of Jesus Christ, owned and approved by him; that officers for them were of his appointment, and furnished with gifts from him for the execution of their employment; that rules, cautions, and instructions for the due settlement of those churches were given by him; that these churches were made the only seat of that worship, which in particular he expressed his will to have continued until he came, is of so much light in Scripture, that he must wink hard that will not see it.

That either he did not originally appoint these things, or he did not give out the gifts of his Spirit, in reference to the right ordering of them, and exalting of his glory in them; or that having done so then, yet that his institutions have an end, being only for a season, and that it may be known when the efficacy of any of his institutions ceaseth; or that he doth not now dispense the gifts and graces of his Spirit, to render them useful, is a difficult task for any man to undertake to evince.

There is indeed, in the institutions of Christ, much that answers a natural principle in men, who are on many accounts formed and fitted for society. A confederation and consultation to carry on any design, wherein the concernment of the individuals doth lie, within such bounds, and in such order, as lies in a ready way to the end aimed at, is exceeding suitable to the principles whêreby we are acted and guided as men. But he that would hence conclude, that there is no more but this, and the acting of these principles, in this church constitution whereof we speak, and that therefore men may be cast into any prudential form, or appoint other ways and forms of it than those mentioned in

the Scripture, as appointed and owned, takes on himself the demonstrating that all things necessarily required to the constitution of such a church-society are commanded by the law of nature, and therefore allowed of and approved only by Christ, and so to be wholly moral, and to have nothing of instituted worship in them; and also he must know, that when, on that supposition, he hath given a probable reason why never any persons in the world fixed on such societies in all essential things as those, seeing they are natural, that he leaves less to the prudence of men, and to the ordering and disposing of things concerning them, than those who make them of pure institution, all whose circumstances cannot be derived from themselves; as those of things purely moral may. But this is not of my present consideration.

2. Nor shall I consider, whether perpetuity be a property of the church of Christ in this sense; that is, not whether a church that was once so may cease to be so, which it is known I plead for in the instance of the church of Rome, not to mention others; but whether by virtue of any promise of Christ, there shall always be somewhere in the world a visible church, visibly celebrating his ordinances. Luke i. 33. 'He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end;' is pleaded to this purpose. But that any more but the spiritual reign of Christ in his catholic church is there intended, is not proved. Matt. xvi. 18. 'Upon this rock will I build my church,' is also urged; but to intend any but true believers, and that as such, in that promise, is wholly to enervate it, and to take away its force and efficacy: chap. xviii. 18. 20. declares the presence of Christ with his church wherever it be, not that a church in the regard treated of shall be. To the same purpose are other expressions in the Scripture. As I will not deny this in general, so I am unsatisfied as to any particular instance for the making of it good.

It is said, that true churches were at first planted in England. How then, or by what means, did they cease so to be? how, or by what act, did God unchurch them? They did it themselves meritoriously by apostacy and idolatry, God legally by his institution of a law of rejection of such churches. If any shall ask, How then is it possible, that

any such churches should be raised anew? I say, that the catholic church mystical, and that visibly professing, being preserved entire, he that thinketh there needs a miracle for those who are members of them to join in such a society as those now spoken of, according to the institution of Christ, is a person delighting in needless scruples.

Christ hath promised, that where 'two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them;' Matt. xviii. 20. It is now supposed, with some hope to have it granted, that the Scripture being the power of God to salvation, Rom. i. 16. hath a sufficient efficacy and energy in itself, as to its own kind, for the conversion of souls; yea, let us, till opposition be made to it, take it for granted, that by that force and efficacy it doth mainly and principally evince its own divinity, or divine original. Those who are contented for the honour of that word which God delighteth to magnify to grant this supposition, will not, I hope, think it impossible, that though all church-state should cease in any place, and yet the Scripture by the providence of God be there in the hand of individuals preserved, two or three should be called, converted, and regenerated by it. For my part, I think he that questions it, must do it on some corrupt principle of a secondary dependent authority in the word of God as to us; with which sort of men I do not now deal. I ask whether these converted persons may not possibly come together, or assemble themselves in the name of Jesus? may they not upon his command, and in expectation of the accomplishment of his promise, so come together, with resolution to do his will, and to exhort one another thereto; Zech. iii. 10. Mal. iii. 10. Truly I believe they may, in what part of the world soever their lot is fallen. Here lie all the difficulties, whether being come together in the name of Christ they may do what he hath commanded them, or no? whether they may exhort and stir up one another to do the will of Christ? Most certain it is, that Christ will give them his presence, and therewithal his authority, for the performance of any duty that he requireth at their hands. Were not men angry, troubled, and disappointed, there would be little difficulty in this business. But of this elsewhere.

3. Upon this supposition, that particular churches are institutions of Jesus Christ, which is granted by all with

whom I have to do, I proceed to make inquiry into their union and communion, that so we may know wherein the bonds of them do consist.

1. There is a double foundation, fountain, or cause of the union of such a church: the one external, procuring, commanding; the other internal, inciting, directing, assisting. The first is the institution of Jesus Christ, before mentioned, requiring peace and order, union, consent, and agreement, in and among all the members of such a church; all to be regulated, ordered, and bounded, by the rules, laws, precepts, which from him they have received, for their walking in those societies.

The latter is that love without dissimulation, which always is, or which always ought to be, between all the members of such a church; exerting itself in their respective duties one towards another, in that holy combination, whereunto they are called and entered for the worship of God: whether they are those which lie in the level of the equality of their common interest of being church-members, or those which are required of them in the several differences, whereby on any account whatever they are distinguished one from another amongst themselves; for 'love is the bond of perfectness;' Col. iii. 14.

Hence then it appears, what is the union of such a church, and what is the communion to be observed therein, by the appointment of Jesus Christ. The joint consent of all the members of it, in obedience to the command of Christ, from a principle of love, to walk together in the universal celebration of all the ordinances of the worship of God, instituted and appointed to be celebrated in such a church; and to perform all the duties and offices of love, which in reference to one another, in their respective stations and places, are by God required of them; and doing so accordingly, is the union inquired after. See Phil. ii. 1—3. iv. 1—3. 1 Cor. i. 10. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Rom. xv. 5.

Whereas there are in these churches, some rulers, some ruled; some eyes, some hands in this body; some parts visibly comely, some uncomely; upon the account of that variety of gifts and graces which is distributed to them: in the performance of duties, regard is to be had to all the particular rules that are given with respect to men in their seve-

ral places and distributions. Herein doth the union of a particular church consist; herein have the members of it communion among themselves, and with the whole.

4. I shall farther grant, and add hereunto; over and above the union that is between the members of several particular churches, by virtue of their interest in the church catholic, which draws after it a necessity of the occasional exercise of duties of love one towards another, and that communion they have, as members of the general church visible, in the profession of the faith once delivered unto the saints; there is a communion also to be observed between these churches, as such, which is sometimes, or may be exerted in their assemblies by their delegates, for declaring their sense, and determining things of joint concernment unto them. Whether there ought to be an ordinary combination of the officers of these churches, invested with power for the disposal of things and persons that concern one or more of them, in several subordinations, by the institution of Christ; as it is not my judgment that so there is, so it belongs not unto my present undertaking at all to debate.

That which alone remains to be done, is to consider what is our concernment as to the breach of this union, which we profess to be appointed by Jesus Christ; and that both as we are Protestants, as also farther differenced, according to the intimations given at the entrance of this discourse. What hath already been delivered about the nature of schism, and the Scripture notion of it, might well suffice, as to our vindication in this business from any charge that we are or seem obnoxious unto. But because I have no reason to suppose, that some men will be so favourable unto us, as to take pains for the improvement of principles, though in themselves clearly evinced on our behalf; the application of them to some present cases, with the removal of objections that lie against my intendment, must be farther added.

Some things there are, which upon what hath been spoken, I shall assume and suppose as granted in thesis, until I see them otherwise disproved than as yet I have done. Of these the first is, That the departing or secession of any man or men, from any particular church, as to that communion which is peculiar to such a church, which he

or they have had therewith, is no where called schism, nor is so in the nature of the thing itself (as the general signification of the word is restrained by its Scripture use); but is a thing to be judged, and receive a title according to the causes and circumstances of it.

2. One church's refusing to hold that communion with another which ought to be between them, is not schism properly so called.

3. The departure of any man or men from the society or communion of any church whatever, so it be done without strife, variance, judging, and condemning of others, because according to the light of their consciences they cannot in all things in them worship God according to his mind, cannot be rendered evil but from circumstances taken from the persons so doing, or the way and manner whereby and wherein they do it.

Unto these I add, that if any one can shew and evince that we have departed from, and left the communion of, any particular church of Christ, with which we ought to walk according to the order above mentioned, or have disturbed and broken the order and union of Christ's institution, wherein we are or were inwrapped, we put ourselves on the mercy of our judges.

The consideration of what is the charge on any of us, on this account, was the first thing aimed at in this discourse; and as it was necessary from the rules of the method wherein I have proceeded, comes now in the last place to be put to the issue and trial, which it shall in the next chapter.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the church of England. The charge of schism in the name thereof proposed and considered. Several considerations of the church of England. In what sense we were members of it. Of anabaptism. The subjection due to bishops. Their power examined. Its original in this nation. Of the ministerial power of bishops. Its present continuance. Of the church of England, what it is. Its description. Form peculiar and constitutive. Answer to the charge of schism, on separation from it, in its episcopal constitution. How and by what means it was taken away. Things necessary to the constitution of such a church proposed, and offered to proof. The second way of constituting a national church, considered. Principles agreed on and consented unto between the parties at variance on this account. Judgment of Amiraldus in this case. Inferences from the common principles before consented unto. The case of schism in reference to a national church in the last sense, debated. Of particular churches, and separation from them. On what accounts justifiable. No necessity of joining to this or that. Separation from some so called, required. Of the church of Corinth. The duty of its members. Austin's judgment of the practice of Elijah. The last objection waved. Inferences upon the whole.

THAT which first presents itself, is a plea against us, in the name of the church of England, and those intrusted with the reglement thereof, as it was settled and established some years since; the sum whereof, if I mistake not, amounts to thus much.

You were sometimes members and children of the church of England, and lived in the communion thereof, professing obedience thereunto, according to its rules and canons; you were in an orderly subjection to the archbishops, bishops, and those acting under them in the hierarchy, who were officers of that church; in that church you were baptized, and joined in the outward worship celebrated therein; but you have now voluntarily, and of your own accord, forsaken and renounced the communion of this church; cast off your subjection to the bishops and rulers; rejected the form of worship appointed in that church, that great bond of its communion; and set up separated churches of your own, according to your pleasures; and so are properly schismatics.

This I say, if I mistake not, is the sum of the charge against us, on the account of our late attempt for reformation, and reducing of the church of Christ to its primi-

tive institution, which we profess our aim in singleness of heart to have been, and leave the judgment of it unto God.

To acquit ourselves of this imputation, I shall declare,

1. How far we own ourselves to have been, or to be, members or children (as they speak) of the church of England, as it is called or esteemed.

2. What was the subjection wherein we or any of us stood, or might be supposed to have stood, to the prelates or bishops of that church. And then I shall,

3. Put the whole to the issue and inquiry, whether we have broken any bond or order, which by the institution and appointment of Jesus Christ we ought to have preserved entire, and unviolated: not doubting but that on the whole matter in difference, we shall find the charge managed against us to be resolved wholly into the prudence and interest of some men, wherein our consciences are not concerned.

As to the first proposal; the several considerations that the church of England may fall under, will make way for the determination of our relation thereunto.

1. There being in this country of England much people of God, many of his elect called and sanctified by and through the Spirit and blood of Christ, with the washing of water and the word, so made true living members of the mystical body, or catholic church of Christ, holding him as a spiritual head, receiving influences of life and grace from him continually, they may be called, though improperly, the church of England; that is, that part of Christ's catholic church militant which lives in England. In this sense it is the desire of our souls to be found and to abide members of the church of England, to keep with it, whilst we live in this world, the 'unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' Jerusalem which is above, is the mother of us all; and one is our Father, which is in heaven; one is our Head, Sovereign, Lord, and Ruler, the dearly beloved of our souls, the Lord Jesus Christ. If we have grieved, offended, troubled the least member of this church, so that he may justly take offence at any of our ways, we profess our readiness to lie at his or their feet for reconciliation, according to the mind of Christ. If we bear not love to all the members of the church of England in this sense, without dissi-

mulation (yea, even to them amongst them, who through mistakes and darkness, have on several accounts designed our harm and ruin); if we rejoice not with them, and suffer not with them, however they may be differenced in and by their opinions, or walkings; if we desire not their good, as the good of our own souls, and are not ready to hold any communion with them, wherein their and our light will give and afford unto us peace mutually; if we judge, condemn, despise any of them, as to their persons, spiritual state, and condition, because they walk not with us, let us be esteemed the vilest schismatics that ever lived on the face of the earth. But as to our membership in the church of England on this account, we stand or fall to our own master.

2. The rulers, governors, teachers, and body of the people of this nation of England, having by laws, professions, and public protestations, cast off the tyranny, authority, and doctrine of the church of Rome, with its head the pope; and jointly assented unto, and publicly professed the doctrine of the gospel, as expressed in their public confession, variously attested and confirmed, declaring their profession by that public confession, preaching, laws, and writings suitable thereunto, may also be called on good account, the church of England. In this sense, we profess ourselves members of the church of England, and professing and adhering to that doctrine of faith in the unity of it, which was here established and declared, as was before spoken. As to the attempt of some, who accuse us for everting of fundamentals, by our doctrine of election by the free grace of God, of effectual redemption of the elect only, conversion by the irresistible efficacy of grace, and the associate doctrines, which are commonly known, we suppose the more sober part of our adversaries will give them little thanks for their pains therein: if for no other reason, yet at least, because they know the cause they have to manage against us is weakened thereby. Indeed it seems strange to us, that we should be charged with schism from the church of England, for endeavouring to reform ourselves, as to something relating to the worship of God, by men everting, and denying so considerable a portion of the doctrine of that church, which we sacredly retain entire, as the most urgent of our present adversaries do. In this sense, I say, we still confess our-

selves members of the church of England ; nor have we made any separation from it, but do daily labour to improve, and carry on the light of the gospel which shines therein, and on the account whereof it is renowned in the world.

3. Though I know not how proper that expression of children of the church may be under the New Testament, nor can by any means consent unto it, to be the urging of any obedience to any church or churches whatsoever on that account ; no such use being made of that consideration by the Holy Ghost, nor any parallel unto it insisted on by him ; yet in a general sense, so far as our receiving our regeneration and new birth, through the grace of God by the preaching of the word, and the saving truths thereof here professed, with the seal of it in our baptism, may be signified by that expression, we own ourselves to have been, and to be children of the church of England, because we have received all this by the administration of the gospel here in England, as dispensed in several assemblies therein : and are contented, that this concession be improved to the utmost.

Here indeed are we left by them who renounce the baptism they have received in their infancy, and repeat it again amongst themselves. Yet I suppose, that he who upon that single account will undertake to prove them schismatical, may find himself entangled. Nor is the case with them exactly as it was with the Donatists. They do the same thing with them, but not on the same principles. The Donatists rebaptized those who came to their societies, because they professed themselves to believe, that all administration of ordinances not in their assemblies was null : and that they were to be looked on as no such thing. Our anabaptists do the same thing, but on this plea, that though baptism be, yet infant baptism is not an institution of Christ, and so is null from the nature of the thing itself, not the way of its administration : but this falls not within the verge of my defence.

In these several considerations we were, and do continue members in the church of God in England ; and as to our failing herein, who is it that convinces us of sin ?

The second thing inquired after, is, what subjection we stood, or were supposed to have stood in, to the bishops ? Our subjection being regulated by their power, the consideration of this, discovers the true state of that.

They had, and exercised in this nation, a twofold power; and consequently the subjection required of us was twofold.

1. A power delegated from the supreme magistrate of the nation, conferred on them, and invested in them, by the laws, customs, and usages of this commonwealth, and exercised by them on that account. This not only made them barons of the realm, and members of parliament, and gave them many dignities and privileges, but also was the sole fountain and spring of that jurisdiction, which they exercised by ways and means, such as themselves will not plead to have been purely ecclesiastical, and of the institution of Jesus Christ. In this respect we did not cast off our subjection to them; it being our duty to 'submit ourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake.' Only whenever they commanded things unlawful in themselves, or unto us, we always retreated to the old safe rule, 'whether it be meet to obey you or God, judge ye.' On this foundation, I say, was all the jurisdiction which they exercised among and over the people of this nation built. They had not leave to exercise that, which they were invested in, on another account, but received formally their authority thereby. The tenour whereby their predecessors held this power before the reformation, the change of the tenour by the laws of this land, the investiture of the whole original right thereof in another person than formerly, by the same means, the legal concession and delegation to them made, the enlarging or contracting of their jurisdiction by the same laws, the civil process of their courts in the exercise of their authority, sufficiently evince from whence they had it. Nor was any thing herein any more of the institution of Jesus Christ, than the courts are in Westminster Hall. Sir Edward Coke, who knew the laws of his country, and was skilled in them to a miracle, will satisfy any in the rise and tenour of episcopal jurisdiction: '*De jure regis eccles.*' What there is of primitive institution, giving colour and occasion to this kind of jurisdiction, and the exercise of it, shall farther (God assisting) be declared, when I treat of the state of the first churches, and the ways of their degeneracy; let them, or any for them, in the mean time evince the jurisdiction they exercised, in respect whereunto our subjection in the first

kind was required, to derive its original from the pure institution of Christ in the gospel, or to be any such thing as it was, in an imagined separation from the human laws whereby it was animated; and more will be asserted than I have had the happiness as yet to see. Now I say, that the subjection to them due, on this account, we did not cast off; but their whole authority, power, and jurisdiction was removed, taken away, and annulled by the people of the land assembled in parliament.

But this, they reply, is the state of the business in hand; the parliament, as much as in them lay, did so indeed as is confessed, and by so doing made the schism, which you by adhering to them, and joining with them in your several places, have made yourselves also guilty of.

But do these men know what they say, or will it ever trouble the conscience of a man in his right wits, to be charged with schism on this account? the parliament made alteration of nothing but what they found established by the laws of this nation, pleading that they had power committed to them to alter, abrogate, and annul laws, for the good of the people of the land. If their making alterations in the civil laws and constitutions, in the political administrations of the nation be schism, we have very little security, but that we may be made new schismatics every third year, whilst the constitution of a triennial parliament doth continue. In the removal then of all episcopal jurisdiction founded in the laws and usages of this nation, we are not at all concerned. For the laws enforcing it, do not press it as a thing necessary on any other account, but as that which themselves gave rise and life unto. But should this be granted, that the office was appointed by Christ, and the jurisdiction impleaded annexed by him thereunto; yet this, whilst we abide at diocesans, with the several divisions apportioned to them in the nation, will not suffice to constitute a national church, unless some union of those diocesans, or of the churches whereunto they related, into one society and church, by the same appointment, be proved, which to my present apprehension, will be no easy work for any one to undertake.

2. Bishops had here a power as ministers of the gospel, to preach, administer the sacraments, to join in the ordina-

tion of ministers, and the like duties of church officers. To this we say, let the individuals of them acquit themselves, by the qualifications mentioned in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, with a sedulous exercise of their duty in a due manner, according to the mind of Christ to be such indeed, and we will still pay them all the respects, reverence, duty, and obedience, which as such, by virtue of any law or institution of Christ, they can claim. Let them come forth with weapons that are not carnal, evidencing their ministry to the consciences of believers, acting in a spirit and power received from Christ, and who are they that will harm them?

I had once formerly said thus much. ‘Let the bishops attend the particular flocks over which they are appointed, preaching the word, administering the holy ordinances of the gospel in and to their own flock, there will not be contending about them.’ It was thought meet to return by one concerned, ‘I shall willingly grant herein my suffrage, let them discharge them (and I beseech all, who have any way hindered them, at length to let and quietly permit them) on condition he will do this as carefully as I. I shall not contend with him concerning the nature of their task, be it as he saith the attending to the particular churches over which they are appointed (the bishop of Oxford over that flock or portion, to which he was, and is appointed, and so all others in like manner), be it their preaching and their administering the holy ordinances of the gospel in and to their own flock, and whatever else of duty and ‘*ratione officii*’ belongs to a rightly constituted bishop; and let all that have disturbed this course so duly settled in this church, and in all churches of Christ since the apostles’ planting them, discern their error, and return to that peace and unity of the church, from whence they have causelessly and inexcusably departed.’

Though I was not then speaking of the bishops of England, yet I am contented with the application to them; there being amongst them men of piety and learning, whom I exceedingly honour and reverence: amongst all the bishops, he of Oxford is, I suppose, peculiarly instanced in, because it may be thought, that living in this place, I may belong to his jurisdiction. But in the condition wherein I now am by the providence of God, I can plead an exemption on the

same foot of account, as he can his jurisdiction. So that I am not much concerned in his exercise of it, as to my own person. If he have a particular flock at Oxon, which he will attend according to what before I required, he shall have no let or hinderance from me; but being he is, as I hear he is, a reverend and learned person, I shall be glad of his neighbourhood and acquaintance. But to suppose that the diocese of Oxon, as legally constituted and bounded, is his particular flock or church, that such a church is instituted by Christ, or hath been in being ever since the apostles' times, that in his presidency in this church he is to set up courts, and exercise a jurisdiction in them, and therewith a power over all the inhabitants of this diocese or shire (excepting the exempt peculiar jurisdiction), although gathered into particular congregations, and united by a participation of the same ordinances; and all this by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ, is to suppose what will not be granted. I confess, as before, there was once such an order in this place, and that it is now removed by laws, on which foundation alone it stood before: and this is that wherein I am not concerned. Whether we have causelessly and inexcusably departed from the unity of the church, is the matter now in inquiry. I am sure, unless the unity can be fixed, our departure will not be proved. A law unity I confess, an evangelical I am yet in the disquisition of. But I confess it will be to the prejudice of the cause in hand, if it shall be thought that the determination of it depends on the controversy about episcopacy: for if so, it might be righteously expected that the arguments produced in the behalf and defence thereof, should be particularly discussed. But the truth is, I shall easily acknowledge all my labour to no purpose, if I have to deal only with men, who suppose that if it be granted, that bishops, as commonly esteemed in this nation, are of the appointment of Christ, it will thence follow, that we have a national church of Christ's appointment: between which indeed there is no relation or connexion. Should I grant, as I said, diocesan bishops, with churches answerable to their supportment, parted into several congregations, with their inferior officers, yet this would be remote enough from giving subsistence and union to a national church.

What then it is which is called the church of England, in respect whereto we are charged with schism, is nextly to be considered.

Now there are two ways whereby we may come to the discovery of what is intended by the church of England; or there are two ways whereby such a thing doth arise.

1. 'Descendendo,' which is the way of the prelates.
2. 'Ascendendo,' which is the way of the Presbyterians.

For the first, to constitute a national church by descent, it must be supposed that all church power is vested in national officers, viz. archbishops, and from them derived to several diocesans by a distribution of power limited in its exercise to a certain portion of the nation, and by them communicated by several engines to parochial priests in their several places. A man with half an eye may see that here are many things to be proved.

Thus their first church is national, which is distributed into several greater portions termed provinces; those again into others, now called diocesses; and those again subdivided into parochial or particular congregations. Now the union of this church consisteth in the due observance of the same worship specifically by all the members of it, and subjection according to rules of their own appointment (which were called commonly canons), by way of distinction unto the rulers before mentioned in their several capacities. And this is that which is the peculiar form of this church. That of the church catholic absolutely so called is its unity with Christ, and in itself by the one Spirit whereby it is animated. That of the church catholic visibly professing the unity of the faith, which they do profess, as being by them professed. That of a particular church as such, its observance and performance of the same ordinance of worship numerically, in the confession of the same faith, and subjection to the same rules of love for edification of the whole. Of this national, as it is called, the unity consists in the subjection of one sort of officers unto another, within a precinct limited originally wholly on an account foreign to any church-state whatever. So that it is not called the church of England from its participation of the nature of the catholic church, on the account of its most noble members; nor yet from its participation of the nature of the visible church in the world, on the account of its

profession of the truth; in both which respects we profess our unity with it; nor yet from its participation of the nature of a particular church, which it did not in itself, nor as such, but in some of its particular congregations; but from a peculiar form of its own, as above described, which is to be proved to be of the institution of Jesus Christ.

In this description given of their church-state, with whom we have now to do, I have purposely avoided the mention of things odious and exposed to common obloquy, which yet were the very ties and ligaments of their order, because the thing, as it is in itself, being nakedly represented, we may not be prejudiced in judging of the strength and utmost of the charge that lies against any of us, on the account of a departure from it.

The communion of this church, they say, we have forsaken, and broken its unity, and therefore are schismatics.

I answer in a word, laying aside so much of the jurisdiction of it mentioned before, and the several ways of its administration, for which there is no colour or pretence that it should relate to any gospel institution; pass by also the consideration of all those things which the men, enjoying authority in, or exercising the pretended power of this church, did use all their authority and power to enjoin and establish, which we judge evil; let them prove that such a national church as would remain with these things pared off, that is in its best estate imaginable, was ever instituted by Christ, or the apostles in his name, in all the things of absolute necessity to its being and existence, and I will confess myself to be what they please to say of me.

That there was such an order in things relating to the worship of God established by the law of the land, in and over the people thereof; that the worship pleaded for was confirmed by the same law; that the rulers mentioned had power, being by the magistrates assembled to make rules and canons to become binding to the good people of the commonwealth, when confirmed by the supreme authority of the nation, and not else; that penalties were appointed to the disturbers of this order by the same law, I grant. But that any thing of all this, as such, that is, as a part of this whole, or the whole itself, was instituted by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ, that is denied. Let not any one

think, that because we deny the constitution pleaded about to have had the stamp of the authority of Jesus Christ, that therefore we pulled it down and destroyed it by violence. It was set up before we were born, by them who had power to make laws to bind the people of this nation, and we found men in an orderly legal possession of that power, which exerting itself several ways, maintained and preserved that constitution, which we had no call to eradicate. Only whereas they took upon them to act in the name of Christ also, and to interpose their orders and authority in the things of the worship of God, we entreated them that we might pass our pilgrimage quietly in our native country (as Israel would have gone through the land of Edom, without the disturbance of its inhabitants), and worship God according to the light which he had graciously imparted to us, but they would not hearken. But herein also was it our duty to keep the word of Christ's patience. Their removal, and the dissolution of this national church, arose, and was carried on, as hath been declared, by other hands, on other accounts.

Now it is not to any purpose, to plead the authority of the church, for many of the institutions mentioned; for neither hath any church power, or can have, to institute and appoint the things whereby it is made to be so; as these things are the very form of the church that we plead about; nor hath any church any authority but what is answerable to its nature: if itself be of a civil prudential constitution, its authority also is civil, and no more. Denying their church in that form of it, which makes it such to be of the institution of Christ, it cannot be expected that we should grant that it is, as such, invested with any authority from Christ, so that the dissolution of the unity of this church, as it had its rise on such an account, proceeded from an alteration of the human constitution whereon it was built; and how that was done, was before declared. Then let them prove,

1. That ordinary officers are before the church, and that in 'ecclesia instituta,' as well as 'instituenda,' which must be the foundation of their work. (We confess extraordinary officers were before the church, nor, considering the way of men's coming to be joined in such societies, was it possible it should be otherwise; but as for ordinary officers, they were

an exurgency from a church, and serve to the completion of it; Acts xiv. 23, 24. Tit. i. 5.)

2. That Christ hath appointed any national officers, with a plentitude of ordinary power, to be imparted, communicated, and distributed to other recipient subjects, in several degrees within one nation, and not elsewhere. I mean such an officer or officers, who in the first instance of their power, should on their own single account relate unto a whole nation.

3. That he hath instituted any national church, as the proper correlatum of such an officer; concerning which also I desire to be informed, whether a catalogue of those he hath so instituted, be to be obtained, or their number be left indefinite? whether they have limits and bounds prescribed to them by him, or are left to be commensurate to the civil dominion of any potentate, and so to enjoy or suffer the providential enlargements or straits, that such dominions are continually subject unto? whether we had seven churches here in England during the heptarchy of the Saxons, and one in Wales, or but one in the whole? If seven, how they came to be one? if but one, why those of England, Scotland, and Ireland, were not one also; especially since they have been under one civil magistrate? or whether the difference of the civil laws of these nations be not the only cause, that these are three churches? and if so, whether from thence any man may not discern whereon the unity of the church of England doth depend?

Briefly, when they have proved metropolitan, diocesan bishops in a firstness of power by the institution of Christ, a national church by the same institution in the sense pleaded for; a firstness of power in the national officers of that national church to impose a form of worship upon all being within that nation by the same institution, which should contain the bond of the union of that church; also, that every man who is born, and in his infancy baptized in that nation, is a member of that national church by the same institution, and shall have distinguished clearly in and about their administrations, and have told us what they counted to be of ecclesiastical power, and what they grant to be a mere emanation of the civil government of the nation, we will then treat with them about the business of

schism. Until then, if they tell us that we have forsaken the church of England in the sense pleaded for by them; I must answer, that which is wanting cannot be numbered. It is no crime to depart from nothing; we have not left to be that which we never were, which may suffice both us and them as to our several respective concernments of conscience and power. It hath been from the darkness of men, and ignorance of the Scriptures, that some have taken advantage to set up a product of the prudence of nations in the name of Jesus Christ, and on that account to require the acceptance of it. When the tabernacle of God is again well fixed amongst men, these shadows will fly away: in the mean time, we owe all these disputes, with innumerable other evils, to the apostacy of the Roman combination, from which we are far as yet from being clearly delivered.

I have one thing more to add upon the whole matter, and I shall proceed to what is lastly to be considered.

The church of England, as it is called (that is, the people thereof), separated herself from the church of Rome. To free herself from the imputation of schism in so doing, as she (that is, the learned men of the nation) pleaded the errors and corruptions of that church, under this especial consideration of their being imposed by tyrants; so also, by professing her design to be nothing but to reduce religion and the worship of God to its original purity, from which it was fallen. And we all jointly justify both her and all other reformed churches in this plea.

In her design to reduce religion to its primitive purity, she always professed, that she did not take her direction from the Scripture only, but also from the councils and examples of the four or five first centuries, to which she laboured to conform her reformation. Let the question now be, whether there be not corruptions in this church of England, supposing such a national state to be instituted. What, I beseech you, shall bind my conscience to acquiesce in what is pleaded from the four or five first centuries, consisting of men that could and did err, more than that did her's, which was pleaded from the nine or ten centuries following? Have not I liberty to call for reformation according to the Scripture only? or at least to profess that my conscience cannot be bound to any other? The sum is, the business of schism

from the church of England, is a thing built purely and simply on political considerations so interwoven with them, so influenced from them, as not to be separated. The famous advice of Mæcenæ to Augustus, mentioned in Dio Cassius, is the best authority I know against it.

Before we part with this consideration, I must needs prevent one mistake, which perhaps in the mind of some may arise upon the preceding discourse: for whereas sundry ordinances of the worship of God are rightly to be administered only in a church, and ministers do evidently relate thereunto, the denying of a national church-state seems to deny that we had either ministers or ordinances here in England. The truth is, it seems so to do, but it doth not; unless you will say, that unless there be a national church-state, there is no other; which is too absurd for any one to imagine. It follows, indeed, that there were no national church officers, that there were no ordinances numerically the same to be administered in and to the nation at once; but that there was not another church-state in England, and on the account thereof, ordinances truly administered by lawful ministers, it doth not follow. And now if by this discourse I only call this business to a review, by them who are concerned to assert this national church, I am satisfied. That the church of England is a true church of Christ, they have hitherto maintained against the Romanists, on the account of the doctrine taught in it, and the successive ordination of its officers, through the church of Rome itself, from the primitive times. About the constitution and nature of a national church, they have had with them no contention: therein the parties at variance were agreed. The same grounds and principles, improved with a defence of the external worship and ceremonies established on the authority of the church, they managed against the nonconformists and separatists at home. But their chief strength against them, lay in arguments more forcible, which need not be repeated. The constitution of the church now impeached, deserves as I said the review: hitherto it hath been unfurnished of any considerable defensive.

2. There is another way of constituting a national church, which is insisted on by some of our brethren of the presby-

terian way. This is, that such a thing should arise from the particular congregations that are in the nation, united by sundry associations and subordinations of assemblies in and by the representatives of those churches. So that though there cannot be an assembly of all the members of those churches in one place, for the performance of any worship of God; nor is there any ordinance appointed by Christ to be so celebrated in any assembly of them (which we suppose necessary to the constitution of a particular church), yet there may be an assembly of the representatives of them all by several elevations for some end and purpose.

In this sense, say some, a church may be called national, when all the particular congregations of one nation, living under one civil government, agreeing in doctrine and worship, are governed by their greater and lesser assemblies, (*Jus Divinum Minist. Anglic. p. 12.*) but I would be loath to exclude every man from being a member of the church in England, that is, from a share in the profession of the faith, which is owned and professed by the people of God in England; who is not a member of a particular congregation. Nor does subjection to one civil government, and agreement on the same doctrine and worship specifically, either jointly or severally constitute one church, as is known even in the judgment of these brethren. It is the last expression of lesser and greater assemblies that must do it; but as to any such institution of Christ, as a standing ordinance, sufficient to give unity, yea, or denomination to a church, this is the *τὸ κρινόμενον*. And yet this alone is to be insisted on. For, as was shewed before, the other things mentioned contribute nothing to the form nor union of such a church.

It is pleaded, that there are prophecies and promises of a national church, that should be under the New Testament, as *Psal. xxxii. 10—12. Isa. ii. 2. x. 18, 19. 24, 25.* That it is foretold and promised that many whole nations shall be converted to the faith of the gospel, and thereby become the people of God, who before were no people, is granted; but that their way of worship shall be by national churches governed by lesser and greater assemblies, doth not appear. And when the Jews shall be converted, they shall be a national church as England is: but their way of worship shall

be regulated according to the institution of Christ in the gospel. And therefore the publishers of the life of Dr. Gouge have expressed his judgment found in a paper in his study, that the Jews on their calling shall be gathered together into churches, and not be scattered, as now they are. A nation may be said to be converted, from the professed subjection to the gospel of so many in it, as may give demonstration to the whole: but the way of worship for those so converted, is peculiarly instituted. It is said, moreover, that the several congregations in one city, are called a church, as in Jerusalem; Acts vi. 1. xii. 1. 3. xv. 14. 22. So also may all the churches in a nation be called a national church. But this is τὸ ἐν ἀρχῇ; nor is that allowed to be made a medium in another case, which at the same time is 'sub judice' in its own. The like also may be said of the church of Ephesus; Acts xx. 17. Rev. ii. 1. Nor is it about a mere denomination that we contend, but the union and form of such a church: and if more churches than one were together called a church, it is from their participation of the nature of the general visible church, not of that which is particular, and the seat of ordinances. So where Paul is said to persecute the church of God, Gal. i. 13. it is spoken of the professors of the faith of Christ in general, and not to be restrained to the churches of Judea, of whom he speaks, ver. 22, 23. seeing his rage actually reached to Damascus, a city of another nation, Acts xxii. 5, 6. and his design was πρὸς τὸ γένος. That by the church, mentioned 1 Cor. xii. 28. x. 32. Eph. iii. 21. is intended the whole visible church of Christ, as made up into one body or church, by a collection of all particular churches in the world by lesser and greater assemblies (a thing that never was in the world, nor ever will be), is denied, and not yet by any that I know proved: not that I am offended at the name of the church of England, though I think all professors, as such, are rather to be called so, than all the congregations. That all professors of the truth of the gospel, throughout the world, are the visible church of Christ, in the sense before explained, is granted. So may, on the same account, all the professors of that truth in England, be called the church of England. But it is the institution of lesser and greater assemblies, comprising the representatives of all the churches in the world,

that must give being and union to the visible church in the sense pleaded for throughout the world, or in this nation, and that bounded to this relation by virtue of the same institution that is to be proved.

But of what there is, or seems to be, of divine institution in this order and fabric, what of human prudent creation, what in the matter or manner of it I cannot assent unto, I shall not at present enter into the consideration; but shall only, as to my purpose in hand, take up some principles which lie in common between the men of this persuasion and myself, with some others otherwise minded. Now of these are the ensuing assertions.

1. No man can possibly be a member of a national church in this sense, but by virtue of his being a member of some particular church in the nation; which concurs to the making up of the national church. As a man doth not legally belong to any county in the nation, unless he belong to some hundred or parish in that county; this is evident from the nature of the thing itself. Nor is it pleaded, that we are one national church, because the people of the nation are generally baptized, and do profess the true faith, but because the particular congregations in it are ruled, and so consequently the whole, by lesser and greater assemblies. I suppose it will not be on second thoughts insisted on, that particular congregations, agreeing solemnly in doctrine and worship under one civil government, do constitute a national church; for if so, its form and unity, as such, must be given it merely by the civil government.

2. No man can recede from this church, or depart from it, but by departing from some particular church therein. At the same door that a man comes in, he must go out. If I cease to be a member of a national church, it is by the ceasing or abolishing of that, which gave me original right thereunto, which was my relation to the particular church, whereof I am.

3. To make men members of any particular church or churches, their own consent is required. All men must admit of this, who allow it free for a man to choose where he will fix his habitation.

4. That as yet, at least since possibly we could be personally concerned who are now alive, no such church in this

nation hath been formed. It is impossible that a man should be guilty of offending against that which is not: we have not separated from a national church in the presbyterian sense, as never having seen any such thing; unless they will say, we have separated from what should be.

5. As to the state of such a church as this, I shall only add to what hath been spoken before, the judgment of a very learned and famous man in this case, whom I the rather name, because professedly engaged on the Presbyterians' side. It is Moses Amyraldus, the present professor of divinity at Saumur, whose words are these that follow. '*Scio nonnunquam appellari particularem ecclesiam communionem, ac veluti confederationem plurium ejusmodi societatum, quas vel ejusdem linguæ usus, vel eadem rei-pub. forma*' (the true spring of a national church) '*una cum ejusdem disciplinæ regimine consociavit: sic appellatur ecclesia Gallicana, Anglicana, Germanica particularis, ut distinguatur ab universali illa Christianorum societate; quæ omnes Christiani nominis nationes complectitur: at uti supradiximus, ecclesiæ nomen non proprie convenire societati omnium Christianorum, eo modo quo convenit particularibus Christianorum cœtibus; sic consequens est, ut dicamus, ecclesiæ nomen non competere in eam multarum ecclesiarum particularium consociationem eodem plane modo. Vocetur ergo certe ecclesiarum quæ sunt in Gallia communio inter ipsas, et ecclesia si ecclesia, est multarum ecclesiarum confœderatio non si nomen ecclesiæ ex usu Scripturæ sacræ accipiatur. Paulus enim varias ecclesias particulares, quæ erant in Achaia, ecclesias Achaïæ nuncupat, non ecclesiam Achaïæ vel ecclesiam Achaicam.*' Amyral. Disput. de Ecclesiæ Nom. et Defin. Thes. 28.

These being, if I mistake not, things of mutual acknowledgment (for I have not laid down any principles peculiar to myself, and those with whom I consent in the way of the worship of God, which yet we can justly plead in our own defence), this whole business will be brought to a speedy issue.

Only I desire the reader to observe, that I am not pleading the right, liberty, and duty of gathering churches in such a state of professors, as that of late, and still amongst us, which is built on other principles and hypo-

theses, than any as yet I have had occasion to mention ; but am only in general considering the true notion of schism, and the charge managed against us on that single account, which relates not to gathering of churches, as simply considered. I say, then,

1. Either we have been members by our own voluntary consent, according to the mind of Christ, of some particular congregations in such a national church, and that as 'de facto' part of such a church, or we have not. If we have not been so (as it is most certain we have not), then we have not as yet broken any bond, or violated any unity, or disturbed any peace or order of the appointment of Jesus Christ ; so that whatever of trouble or division hath followed on our way and walking, is to be charged on them who have turned every stone, to hinder us our liberty. And I humbly beg of them, who acting on principles of reformation according to the (commonly called) presbyterian platform, do accuse us for separation from the church of England, that they would seriously consider what they intend thereby. Is it that we are departed from the faith of the people of God in England ? they will not sustain any such crimination. Is it that we have forsaken the church of England as under its episcopal constitution ? have they not done the same ? have they not rejected their national officers, with all the bonds, ties, and ligaments of the union of that pretended church ? have they not renounced the way of worship established by the law of the land ? do they not disavow all obedience to them who were their legal superiors in that constitution ? do they retain either matter or form, or any thing, but that naked name of that church ? and will they condemn others in what they practise themselves ? As for a church of England, in their new sense (which yet in some respects is not new, but old), for what is beyond a voluntary consociation of particular churches, we have not as yet had experience of it.

That we shall be accused of schism, for not esteeming ourselves made members of a particular church against our wills, by buying or hiring a habitation within such a precinct of ground, we expect not ; especially considering what is delivered by the chief leaders of them, with whom now we are treating, whose words are as followeth : ' We grant,

that living in parishes is not sufficient to make a man a member of a particular church. A Turk, or pagan, or idolater, may live within the precincts of a parish, and yet be no member of a church. A man must, therefore, in order of nature, be a member of the church visible, and then living in a parish, and making profession of Christianity, may claim admission into the society of Christians within those bounds, and enjoy the privileges and ordinances which are there dispensed;’ *Ans. of Commit.* p. 105. This is also pursued by the authors of *Jus Divinum Ministerii Anglicani*, p. 9, 10. where, after the repetition of the words first mentioned, they add, that ‘all that dwell in a parish and constantly hear the word, are not yet to be admitted to the sacraments;’ which excludes them from being ‘fideles,’ or church-members, and makes them at best as the catechumeni of old, who were never esteemed members of the church.

If we have been so members by our own voluntary consent, and do not continue so to be, then this congregation wherein we are so members, was reformed according to the mind of Christ (for I speak now to them that own reformation, as to their light) or it was not. If it were reformed, and that a man were a member of it so reformed by his own voluntary consent, I confess it may be difficult how a man can leave such a congregation without their consent, in whose power it is to give it him, without giving offence to the church of God. Only I say, let all by-respects be laid aside on the one hand, and on the other, all regard to repute and advantage, let love have its perfect work, and no church, knowing the end of its being and constitution to be the edification of believers, will be difficult and tenacious as to the granting a dismission to any member whatever that shall humbly desire it, on the account of applying himself to some other congregation, wherein he supposes and is persuaded that he may be more effectually built up in his most holy faith.

I confess this to be a case of the greatest difficulty that presents itself to my thoughts in this business. Suppose a man to be a member of a particular church, and that church to be a true church of Christ, and granted so by this person, and yet upon the account of some defect, which is in, or at least he is convinced and persuaded to be in, that church,

whose reformation he cannot obtain, he cannot abide in that church to his spiritual advantage and edification; suppose the church on the other side, cannot be induced to consent to his secession and relinquishment of its ordinary external communion, and that person is hereby entangled; what course is to be taken? I profess, for my part, I never knew this case fall out wherein both parties were not blameable. The person seeking to depart, in making that to be an indispensable cause of departure from a church, which is far short of it; and the church in not condescending to the man's desire, though proceeding from infirmity or temptation. In general, the rule of forbearance and condescension in love, which should salve the difference, is to give place to the rule of obeying God in all things according to our light: and the determining in this case, depending on circumstances in great variety, both with reference to the church offending and the person offended. He that can give one certain rule in and upon the whole, shall have much praise for his invention. However, I am sure this cannot be rationally objected by them, who esteeming all parishes, as such, to be churches, do yet allow men on such occasions to change their habitations, and consequently their church relations. 'Men may be relieved by change of dwelling;' Subcom. of Div. p. 52. And when a man's leaving the ordinary external communion of any particular church for his own edification, to join with another whose administration he is persuaded in some things more, or fewer, are carried on more according to the mind of Christ, is as such proved to be schism, I shall acknowledge it.

As then the not giving a man's self up unto any way, and submitting to any establishment pretended, or pleaded to be of Christ, which he hath not light for, and which he was not by any act of his own formerly engaged in, cannot with any colour or pretence of reason be reckoned unto him for schism, though he may, if he persist in his refusal, prejudice his own edification; so no more can a man's peaceable relinquishment of the ordinary communion of one church in all its relations, to join with another, be so esteemed. For instance of the first case; suppose by the law of this nation the several parochial churches of the land, according to arbitrary distributions

made of them, should be joined in classical associations, and those again in the like arbitrary disposal into provincial, and so onward (which cannot be done without such interferences as will exonerate conscience from the weight of pure institution); or suppose this not to be done by the law of the land, but by the voluntary consent of the officers of the parochial churches, and others joining with them; the saints of God in this nation, who have not formerly been given up unto, or disposed of, in this order, by their own voluntary consent, nor are concerned in it any farther, than by their habitation within some of these different precincts, that by public authority, or consent of some amongst them, are combined as above; nor do believe such associations to be the institutions of Christ, whatever they prove to be in the issue; I say, they are by their dissent and refusal to subject themselves to this order, not in the least liable to the charge of schism; whatever they are, who neglecting the great duty of love and forbearance, would by any means whatever impose upon them a necessity of so doing. For besides what they have to plead, as to the non-institution of any such ordinary associations, and investiture of them with power and authority in and over the churches, they are not guilty of the disturbance of any order, wherein they were stated according to the mind of Christ; nor of the neglect of any duty of love that was incumbent on them.

For the latter; suppose a man stated in a particular church, wherewith he hath walked for a season, he discovers that some perhaps of the principles of its constitution are not according to the mind of Christ, something is wanting or redundant, and imposed in practice on the members of it, which renders the communion of it, by reason of his doubts and scruples, or it may be clear convictions, not so useful to him as he might rationally expect it would be, were all things done according to the mind of Christ; that also he hath declared his judgment as he is able, and dissatisfaction: if no reformation do ensue, this person, I say, is doubtless at liberty to dispose of himself, as to particular church-communion, to his own best advantage.

But now suppose this congregation whereof a man is supposed to be a member, is not reformed, will not nor cannot reform itself (I desire that it may be minded with whom

I have to do, viz. those who own a necessity of reformation, as to the administration of ordinances, in respect to what hath been hitherto observed in most parochial assemblies). Those I have formerly dealt withal are not to be imposed on with this principle of reformation; they acknowledge none to be needful; but they are not concerned in our present inquiry. Their charge lies all in the behalf of the church of England, not of particular assemblies or parishes, which it is not possible that according to their principle, they should own for churches, or account any separation from any of them to be blameworthy, but only as it respecteth the constitutions of the church national in them to be observed. If any claim arise on that hand, as to parochial assemblies, I should take liberty to examine the foundation of the plea, and doubt not, but that I may easily frustrate their attempts. But this is not my present business; I deal, as I said, with them who own reformation; and I now suppose the congregation, whereof a man is supposed to be a member on any account whatever, not to be reformed.

In this case, I ask, whether it be schism or no, for any number of men to reform themselves, by reducing the practice of worship to its original institution, though they be the minor part lying within the parochial precinct; or for any of them to join themselves with others for that end and purpose not living within those precincts? I shall boldly say, this schism is commanded by the Holy Ghost, 1 Tim. vi. 5. 2 Tim. iii. 5. Hos. iv. 15. Is this yoke laid upon me by Christ, that to go along with the multitude where I live, that hate to be reformed, I must forsake my duty, and despise the privileges that he hath purchased for me with his own precious blood? Is this a unity of Christ's institution, that I must for ever associate myself with wicked and profane men in the worship of God, to the unspeakable detriment and disadvantage of my own soul?

I suppose nothing can be more unreasonable than once to imagine any such thing.

However, not to drive this business any farther, but to put it to its proper issue. When it is proved, that this is the will and appointment of Jesus Christ, that every believer, who liveth within such a precinct allotted by civil constitutions, wherein the people or inhabitants do, or may usually

meet for the celebration of the worship of God, or which they have light for, or on any account whatever do make profession of, how profane soever that part of them be from whom the whole is denominated, how corrupt soever in their worship, how dead soever as to the power of godliness, must abide with them and join with them in their administrations and worship, and that indispensably; this business may come again under debate. In the mean time, I suppose the people of God are not in any such subjection. I speak not this as laying down this for a principle, that it is the duty of every man to separate from that church, wherein evil and wicked men are tolerated (though that opinion must have many other attendances before it can contract the least affinity with that of the same sound, which was condemned in the Donatists), but this only, I say, that where any church is overborne by a multitude of men wicked and profane, so that it cannot reform itself, or will not according to the mind of Christ, a believer is so far at liberty, that he may desert the communion of that society without the least guilt of schism. But this state of things is now little pleaded for.

It is usually objected about the church of Corinth, that there was in it many disorders and enormous miscarriages, divisions, and breaches of love: miscarriages through drink at their meetings; gross sins in the incestuous person tolerated; false doctrine broached; the resurrection denied; and yet Paul advises no man to separate from it, but all to perform their duty in it.

But how little our present plea and defensative is concerned in this instance, supposed to lie against it, very few considerations will evince.

1. The church of Corinth was undoubtedly a true church, lately instituted according to the mind of Christ, and was not fallen from that privilege by any miscarriage, nor had suffered any thing destructive to its being; which wholly differences between the case proposed in respect of many particulars, and the instance produced. We confess the abuses and evils mentioned had crept into the church, and do thence grant, that many abuses may do so into any of the best of the churches of God. Nor did it ever enter into the heart of any man to think, that so soon as any disorders fall out, or abuses creep into it, it is instantly the duty of any

to fly out of it, like Paul's mariners out of the ship, when the storm grew hazardous. It being the duty of all the members of such a church, untainted with the evils and corruptions of it, upon many accounts to attempt and labour the remedy of those disorders, and rejection of these abuses to the uttermost; which was that, which Paul advised the Corinthians all and some unto, in obedience whereunto they were recovered. But yet this I say, had the church of Corinth continued in the condition before prescribed, that notorious, scandalous sins had went unpunished, unreprieved, drunkenness continued, and practised in the assemblies, men abiding by the denial of the resurrection, so overturning the whole gospel, and the church refusing to do her duty, and exercise her authority to cast all those disorderly persons upon their obstinacy out of her communion; it had been the duty of every saint of God in that church, to have withdrawn from it, to come out from among them, and not to have been partaker of their sins, unless they were willing to partake of their plague also; which on such an apostacy would certainly ensue.

I confess Austin, in his single book against the Donatists, *Post Collationem*, cap. 20. affirms, that Elijah and Elisha communicated with the Israelites in their worship, when they were so corrupted, as in their days, and separated not from their sacraments (as he calls them), but only withdrew sometimes for fear of persecution; a mistake unworthy so great and wise a person as he was. The public worship of those ten tribes in the days of those prophets was idolatrous, erected by Jeroboam, confirmed by a law, by Omri, and continued by Ahab. That the prophets joined with them in it, is not to be imagined. But earnestness of desire for the attaining of any end, sometimes leaves no room for the examination of the mediums, offering their service to that purpose.

Let us now see the sum of the whole matter, and what it is that we plead for our discharge as to this crime of schism, allowing the term to pass in its large and usual acceptation, receding for the sake of the truth's farther ventilation, from the precise propriety of the word annexed to it in the Scripture: the sum is, we have broken no bond of unity, no order instituted or appointed by Jesus Christ, have causelessly

deserted no station, that ever we were in, according to his mind, which alone can give countenance to an accusation of this nature. That on pure grounds of conscience we have withdrawn, or do withhold ourselves from partaking in some ways, engaged into upon mere grounds of prudence we acknowledge.

And thus from what hath been said, it appears in what a fair capacity, notwithstanding any principle or practice owned by us, we are to live peaceably, and to exercise all fruits of love towards those who are otherwise minded.

There is not the least necessity on us, may we be permitted to serve God according to our light, for the acquitting ourselves from the charge, which hath made such a noise in the world, to charge other men with their failings, great or small, in or about the ways and worship of God. This only is incumbent on us, that we manifest that we have broken no bond, no obligation, or tie to communion, which lay upon us by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ our Lord and Master: what is prudentially to be done in such a nation as this, in such a time as this, as to the worship of God, we will treat with men at farther leisure, and when we are lawfully called thereto.

It may be some will yet say (because it hath been often said), there is difference between reforming of churches already gathered and raised, and raising of churches out of mere materials. The first may be allowed, but the latter tends to all manner of confusion.

I have at present, not much to say to this objection, because, as I conceive, it concerns not the business we have in hand: nor would I have mentioned it at all, but that it is insisted on by some on every turn, whether suited for the particular cause for which it is produced, or no. In brief, then,

1. I know no other reformation of any church, or any thing in a church, but the reducing of it to its primitive institution, and the order allotted to it by Jesus Christ. If any plead for any other reformation of churches, they are in my judgment to blame.

And when any society, or combination of men (whatever hitherto it hath been esteemed), is not capable of such a reduction and renovation, I suppose I shall not provoke any

wise and sober person, if I profess, I cannot look on such a society as a church of Christ, and thereupon advise those therein who have a due right to the privileges purchased for them by Christ, as to gospel administrations, to take some other peaceable course to make themselves partakers of them.

2. Were I fully to handle the things pointed to in this objection, I must manage principles, which in this discourse I have not been occasioned to draw forth at all, or to improve. Many things of great weight and importance must come under debate and consideration, before a clear account can be given of the case stated in this objection. As,

1. The true nature of an instituted church under the gospel, as to the matter, form, and all other necessary constitutive causes, is to be investigated and found out.

2. The nature and form of such a church is to be exemplified from the Scripture, and the stories of the first churches, before sensibly infested with the poison of that apostacy which ensued.

3. The extent of the apostacy under antichrist, as to the ruining of instituted churches, making them to be Babylon, and their worship fornication, is duly and carefully to be examined.

Hic labor, hoc opus.

Here lies our disorder and division; hence is our darkness and pollution of our garments, which is not an easy thing to free ourselves of; though we may arise, yet we shall not speedily shake ourselves out of the dust.

4. By what way and means God begat anew, and kept alive his elect, in their several generations, when antichristian darkness covered the earth, and thick darkness the nations, supposing an intercision of instituted ordinances, so far as to make a nullity in them, as to what was of simple and pure institution; what way might be used for the fixing the tabernacle of God again with men, and the setting up of church worship according to his mind and will. And here the famous cause of the united brethren of Bohemia would come under consideration; who concluding the whole papacy to be purely antichristian, could not allow of the ordination of their ministers by any in communion with it; and yet being persuaded of a necessity of continuing of that ordinance in a way of succession, sent some to the Greek and

Armenian churches, who observing their ways returned with little satisfaction; so that at last committing themselves and their cause to God, they chose them elders from among themselves, and set them apart by fasting and prayer; which was the foundation of all those churches, which for piety, zeal, and suffering for Christ, hath given place to none in Europe.

What was the way of the first reformation in this nation, and what principles the godly learned men of those days proceeded on, how far what they did may be satisfactory to our consciences, at the present, as to our concurrence in them, who from thence have the truth of the gospel derived down to us; whether ordinary officers be before or after the church, and so whether a church-state is preserved in the preservation of officers, by a power foreign to that church, whereof they are so; or the office be preserved, and consequently the officers, inclusively in the preservation, and constitution of a church: these, I say, with sundry other things of the like importance, with inferences from them, are to be considered to the bottom, before a full resolution can be given to the inquiry couched in this objection, which, as I said, to do, is not my present business.

This task then is at its issue and close; some considerations of the manifold miscarriages that have ensued for want of a due and right apprehension of the thing we have now been exercised in the consideration of, shall shut it up.

1. It is not impossible, that some may, from what hath been spoken, begin to apprehend that they have been too hasty in judging other men. Indeed none are more ready to charge highly, than those who when they have so done, are most unable to make good their charge; ‘*si accusasse sufficiat, quis erit innocens?*’ what real schisms in a moral sense have ensued among brethren, by their causeless mutual imputation of schism in things of institution, is known. And when men are in one fault, and are charged with another, wherein they are not, it is a ready way to confirm them in that wherein they are. There is more darkness and difficulty in the whole matter of instituted worship, than some men are aware of; not that it was so from the beginning, whilst Christianity continued in its naked simplicity; but it is come occasionally upon us by the customs, darkness,

and invincible prejudices, that have taken hold on the minds of men by a secret diffusion of the poison of that grand apostacy. It were well, then, that men would not be so confident, nor easily persuaded, that they presently know how all things ought to be, because they know how they would have some things to be, which suit their temper and interest. Men may easily perhaps see, or think they see, what they do not like, and cry out schism and separation, but if they would a little consider what ought to be in this whole matter, according to the mind of God, and what evidences they have of the grounds and principles, whereon they condemn others, it might make them yet swift to hear, but slow to speak, and take off from the number of teachers among us; some are ready to think, that all that join not with them are schismatics; and they are so, because they go not with them, and other reason they have none; being unable to give any solid foundation of what they profess; what the cause of unity among the people of God hath suffered from this sort of men, is not easily to be expressed.

2. In all differences about religion to drive them to their rise and spring, and to consider them as stated originally, will ease us of much trouble and labour. Perhaps many of them will not appear so formidable, as they are represented. He that sees a great river, is not instantly to conclude that all the water in it comes from its first rise and spring, the addition of many brooks, showers, and landfloods, have perhaps swelled it to the condition wherein it is; every difference in religion is not to be thought to be as big at its rise, as it appears to be when it hath passed through many generations, and hath received additions and aggravations from the disputings and contendings of men, on the one hand and the other engaged. What a flood of abominations doth this business of schism seem to be, as rolling down to us through the writings of Cyprian, Austin, and Optatus of old; the schoolmen, decrees of popish councils, with the contrivances of some among ourselves, concerned to keep up the swelled notion of it! Go to its rise, and you will find it to be, though bad enough, yet quite another thing, than what by the prejudices accruing by the addition of so many generations, it is now generally represented to

The great maxim, 'to the law and to the testimony,' truly improved, would quickly cure all our distempers: in the mean time, let us bless God, that though our outward man may possibly be disposed of, according to the apprehension that others have of what we do, or are, our consciences are concerned only in what he hath appointed. How some men may prevail against us, before whom we must stand or fall according to their corrupt notion of schism, we know not; the rule of our consciences, in this, as in all other things, is eternal and unchangeable. Whilst I have an uncontrollable faithful witness, that I transgress no limits prescribed to me in the word, that I do not willingly break, or dissolve any unity of the institution of Jesus Christ, my mind, as to this thing, is filled with perfect peace. Blessed be God, that hath reserved the sole sovereignty of our consciences in his hand, and not in the least parcelled it out to any of the sons of men, whose tender mercies being oftentimes cruelty itself, they would perhaps destroy the soul also, when they do so to the body, seeing they stay there, as our Saviour witnesseth, because they can proceed no farther. Here then I profess to rest, in this doth my conscience acquiesce; whilst I have any comfortable persuasion, on grounds infallible, that I hold the head, and that I am by faith a member of the mystical body of Christ, whilst I make profession of all the necessary saving truths of the gospel, whilst I disturb not the peace of that particular church, whereof by my own consent I am a member, nor do raise up, nor continue in any causeless differences with them, or any of them, with whom I walk in the fellowship and order of the gospel, whilst I labour to exercise faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ, and love towards all the saints, I do keep the unity which is of the appointment of Christ; and let men say, from principles utterly foreign to the gospel, what they please or can to the contrary, I am no schismatic.

3. Perhaps the discovery which hath been made, how little we are many of us concerned in that, which, having mutually charged it on one another, hath been the greatest ball of strife, and most effectual engine of difference, and distance between us, may be a means to reconcile in love

them that truly fear God, though engaged in several ways as to some particulars. I confess I have not any great hope of much success on this account; for let principles and ways be made as evident, as if he that wrote them carried the sun in his hand; yet, whilst men are forestalled by prejudices, and have their affections and spirits engaged suitably thereunto, no great alteration in their minds and ways, on the clearest conviction whatever, is to be expected. All our hearts are in the hand of God; and our expectations of what he hath promised are to be proportioned to what he can effect, not to what of outward means we see to be used.

4. To conclude; what vain janglings men are endlessly engaged in, who will lay their own false hypotheses and preconceptions, as a ground of farther procedure, is also in part evident, by what hath been delivered. Hence, for instance, is that doubty dispute in the world, whether a schismatic doth belong to the church, or no? which for the most part is determined in the negative; when it is impossible a man should be so, but by virtue of his being a church member. A church is that '*alienum solum*,' wherein that evil dwelleth. The most of the inquiries that are made, and disputed on, whether this or that sort of men belong to the church or no? are of the same value and import. He belongs to the church catholic, who is united to Christ by the Spirit, and none other. And he belongs to the church general visible, who makes profession of the faith of the gospel, and destroys it not by any thing of a just inconsistency with the belief of it. And he belongs to a particular church, who having been in a due order joined thereunto, hath neither voluntarily deserted it, nor been judicially ejected out of it. Thus one may be a member of the church catholic, who is no member of the general visible church, nor of a particular church, as an elect infant, sanctified from the womb, dying before baptism; and one may be a member of the church general visible, who is no member of the church catholic, nor of a particular church, as a man making profession of the true faith, yet not united to Christ by the Spirit, nor joined to any particular visible church; or he may be also of the catholic church, and not

of a particular ; as also of a particular church, and not of the catholic. And a man may be, every true believer walking orderly, ordinarily is, a member of the church of Christ in every sense insisted on ; of the catholic church, by a union with Christ the head ; of the visible general church, by his profession of the faith ; and of a particular congregation, by his voluntary associating himself therewith, according to the will and appointment of our Lord Jesus Christ.