

SERMON XIV.

Mr Peter Vink

Protestants separated for Christ's Names sake.

Luke 6. 22. *Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and cast out your Name as evil for the Son of man's sake.*

ONe of the main designs of the Doctrine of the Gospel, is to unite men one to another, and to tie them together with the strongest bonds and ligaments imaginable. To this purpose it does not only forbid the doing of any wrong unto others, but it prescribes Rules for the curbing of our passions when provoked by them. Nay, it peremptorily enjoins, under the severest penalties, that we should forgive the offences done against us, and love the persons of them that do them. And that we might think it our greatest concern thus to do, it combines and gathers all, *who have any hope toward God*, into one Body, which is called *the Church*, who are jointly to profess *one Faith*, and to perform *one Worship*, and to serve *one Lord*: the Ligaments whereby this Body is united and tied together, being the *Sacraments*, for this end also appointed by *Christ*.

Ephes. 4. 4, 5.

Who being the *Lord of all*, is yet pleased more especially to relate to this *Body*, as its *Head*, for Direction and Government, and to influence it by his Spirit for life and motion. Now it being full as monstrous for one Head to have two Bodies, as for one Body to have two Heads. So far forth as any have hoped for Salvation by Christ, they have also pretended to belong to that *One Body*, of which he is the Head and Saviour.

Jerem. 7. 4.

In these pretensions the *Church of Rome* comes not behind any, but with as much passion, and as little reason as they of old, whom the Prophet speaks of, they cry out too, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord* are these. Nay, so unreasonable are they in arrogating to themselves the privilege of this *Body*, that they challenge (as the *Donatists* before them) to be the *whole*, and not a *part* of it; confounding, for to save this their purpose, things so discrepant as the *Catholick* and *Romish Church*, (that is, the universal and a particular

cular Church) and at last the Church and the Pope too are with them but one and the same, all others being but Cyphers, and meer Insignificants to him.

And this I account none of the least reasons to suspect that they have *no part nor share* in what they so much pretend unto : for 'tis too too apparent that they have not that *mind and spirit* that was in Christ. (Now 'tis not *continuity* but *animation* that makes the several *parts* to become *one Body*.) And as the same soul that acts in the head, acts in every individual member belonging to it : so the same Spirit which was in Christ, is also in all, that as living members belong unto him. But, alas, where is that meekness and gentleness, that love and charity which our blessed Saviour so much expressed himself, so earnestly recommended unto his Disciples ; nay, which he made the Test of their really being *his* ? Though the *Church of Rome* yet retains the calling of Christ Lord, Lord, it is evident in this they do not his will. They still cry, *Hosanna* to him, and yet really *Crucifie* him, at least in his Members. They are not the followers of the humble *JESUS*, but of the proud Pharisees, from whom our Saviour foretels that his Disciples should suffer ; but such sufferings as were as little to be declined, as they were hardly to be avoided, being the high-way, though a rough one, to bliss and happiness : *Blessed are ye when men shall bate you.*

Joh. 13. 35.

In which words are remarkable,

1. *Suffering foretold* ; in which the *Sufferers* also are described, which is the *subject* in the Verse, *viz.* such as men shall *bate*, and *separate*, and *reproach*, &c.
2. Their *state or condition* declared, or encouragement proposed unto such, (which makes the *Prædicate*) *Blessed are ye*, &c.

In the former there are three things considerable.

1. *What it is* that Christ's Disciples and followers shall *suffer* ; they shall be *bated*, *separated*, *reproached*, and have their *Names* cast out.
2. For *what cause* they shall *suffer* thus ; for the *Son of Man's* sake.
3. From *whom* it is that they *suffer*, from *men*, when men shall *bate you*, &c.

I shall begin with the latter, as being *first* in the words of the Text, and intend to pass it over with some little reflection at present upon it. *Men* here are not considered *as in honour*, by reason of the *Image of God*, and their conformity unto God ; for so they continued not : but men is *terminus diminuens*, a term synonymous with *World*, which our Saviour speaks of elsewhere ; denoting such as are put in contra-distinction unto them that are chosen out of the World. It reflects their *fall* and degeneracy upon them. Nay, they whom Christ's Disciples suffer

From whom
Christ's Disci-
ples suffer.
Homines, i. e.
impii inimici
doctrinæ ancæ,
L. Brug.
Joh. 15. 18, 19.
Joh. 17. 14.

suffer most by, are commonly such as make profession of fearing and serving God too; unto whom light indeed is come, but they love darkness, and so they become bruised with a *double fall*: thus by their choice and practice, being super-added to that of their nature; and whatsoever they pretend to the contrary, (as St. Jude speaks of them) they are *twice dead*. There is no enmity like that of Brothers: our Saviour himself suffered from none so much as from his Friend and Disciple Judas, and his followers since have endured most in all Ages from such as profess (as well as they do) to be retainers unto him.

But I shall pass this at present without any other Observation, as also the *second part*, or the *state and condition of the sufferers* spoken of in my Text; only you may here of them, though briefly, in the Application.

What it is
which the Disci-
ples of Christ
suffer.

The two former branches (in my propounded method) of this first part being such as I intend to graft my ensuing Discourse upon, give me leave, though *ex postliminio*, to come to a nearer search into them; and at the first view, in the former of them, four remarkable particulars foretold, which the *Disciples of Christ* were to suffer: viz.

Hatred.

1. *Hatred*.
2. *Separation* of them, as not worthy of Humane Society, but most unworthy to partake of *Church-Communion*.
3. *Reproach*, upon whom they might vomit up all their Gall without the charge and sin of *bitterness*.
4. The *casting out of their Names*, as such they would scorn to be reckoned amongst in *their service of God*.

1. *Hatred*. This is the *root*, the bitter root of the following bitter fruits: there would be no separating, no reproaching them, no casting out of their names, were it not for the hatred they bear unto them. Now *Hatred* is a displicency at, and aversion from things or persons as evil; and nothing doth make men seem more *hating* and *hateful* to one another, as when they act by a *contrary principle*: for so far at least as they have such a principle in them, they judge not, they affect not any thing alike, but what one calls good, the other calls evil; and what this counts evil, the former esteems as good.

And this must needs be acknowledged to be true in the case of the Text. Christ's Disciples and the Pharisees, his Church and their Persecutors, are acted by a contrary principle; in the one is the seed of the Woman, in the other the seed of the Serpent; and where these meet, though in the same (*Rebecca's*) Womb, they will strive and struggle against one another.

Gen. 3. 15.

Our Saviour assigns this as the true reason why the World hated him, and should hate his Disciples after him, *Job. 17. 14.* because neither he, nor they were of the World.

Now

Now this Hatred, though its seat be inward, and it be many times hidden; yet its effects are outward and obvious, none of all the passions being more active than love and hatred are; and therefore our Saviour no sooner had spoken of the Pharisees hating of his Disciples, but he presently adds, they will *separate you, and reprove you.*

Because I intend not so much to insist upon them, I shall speak but a word of the *Reproaches* which Christ's followers must bear from the *men* in my Text. *Hatred* being in their *heart*, 'tis no wonder that reviling is in their *lips*; for *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*; and something they must say to justify the persecutions and mischiefs they heap upon others: for there are none (who have not put off all humanity) but would willingly have Reason and Equity on their side.

Thus they taxed our *Saviour* himself that he was a *Wine-bibber*, a *Friend of Publicans and Sinners*; nay, they would not Crucify him till they had charged him with blasphemy. Thus they calumniated the Apostles for being *filled with new Wine*, for *turning the World upside down*, and for destroying the Law, &c.

Neither was it better in the immediately succeeding Ages: What did not the *Pagan-World* reproach and upbraid the Primitive Christians with? What secret and abominable wickedness did they not charge upon their private meeting together to serve God? No Epidemical Disease, or Publick Calamity befel the Empire, or any Nation in it, but it was attributed presently to some (forged) wickedness of the Christians. And it had been well if they had suffered from Pagans only: but, alas, they suffered no less from Brethren, (if I may call them Brethren) so that a Heathen could observe, That *no Beasts were so cruel one to another as Christians were.*

Hunnius
Marcellinus

But in this last Age of the World we have the dregs of all, and the Papists act over again upon the Protestants all the Outrages which were ever heaped upon any in the forementioned instances: their calumnies against their Doctrine, their revilings of their Worship, their reproaches of their Persons, not only living, but even dead too, I could fill Volumes withal: *What shall be given unto thee, or what shall be done unto thee, O thou false tongue?* Psal. 120. 3.

But because they proceed further, so must I: They do not only shoot out their sharp arrows, but discharge their murdering-pieces at us; nay, their malice is not confined to, or satisfied with the ruine of the body, but as if it were too mean a sacrifice to their fury, they do what in themselves, (and according to their own principle they effect it) to destroy the *soul* too; for they *shall separate you, and cast out your Names.*

Which brings me to speak to the *other fruits* the Text mentions of the *hatred* born to *Christ's Disciples* and followers, and which this Discourse mainly intends; They *shall separate you from their company.* These latter words are added by the *Translators* to compleat (as they thought)

3. Separation.

thought) the sense ; but it being as clear without them , I shall no farther take notice of them.

Lucas Brug. in
locum. Some make the *Separation* here spoken of, to be meant only of a *Political or Civil Separation*, and their Gloss is, *In carcerem aut exilium truserint*, they shall banish you, or cast you into prison ; as if the imprisoning or banishing of them, or at least declining to trade or converse with them, were all that was intended here.

This must be acknowledged an evil and a mischief, which they that obey the Commandments of God, and hold the Faith of Jesus, have met with, and which was foreseen by St. John, Rev. 13. 16. that they who would not receive the mark or name of the Beast, should not buy nor sell.

Beza in locum
Joh. 16. 2. But the word here used ἀποκρίσιν, they shall separate, hath a further import, and implies a *Separation from their Synagogues*, and Publick Worship, and is the same with ἀποσυναγωγῆς ποιήσωσιν, they shall cast you out of their Synagogues, mentioned by St. John : which I the rather incline to think to be the meaning of this place, because also in the *antient Canons* the same word ἀποκρίσω is so often repeated to this purpose, i. e. when they would by their Censure suspend any from Church-Communion ; and then they who were thus censured, were afterwards called *abstenti*, denoting their being held off from Church-Fellowship, and the Censure its self came at length to be called, *The lesser Excommunication*.

4. Casting out
of their Names. But our Evangelist seems to explain this best by what he adds, *They shall cast out your Names* ; as 'tis said of the *blind man* who so constantly profest Christ, that they cast him out, Joh. 9. 34. And 'tis to be observed, that ἐκβάλωσιν, or they shall cast out, here in the Prediction, is ἐξέβαλον there, or they did cast him out in the fulfilling of it, the same word being made use of by either Evangelist.

As for casting out their Names, it refers to a known custom amongst the Jews, of keeping an exact account of all the Names of those who descended from them ; not only their Tribes and Families, but every individual person was enrolled, as by evident places in Scripture could be readily made to appear. Now to have their Names cast out, or cut off from this Catalogue, was to be accounted no longer for Jews, or amongst the then People or Church of God, but to be reputed thenceforth as *uncircumcised*, or as one of the *Gentiles*, that is, out off the Pale of the Church, and out of the Bond of the Covenant with God. We might illustrate this from a custom which they had amongst the Romans too ; when any were for their misdemeanours to be Disfranchized, the Cenfor expunged, blotted out, or cut off their Names out of the City-Rolls, and they might not after that enjoy their City-Priviledges, neither were they thenceforth to be accounted as Citizens.

The sum that this amounts unto, is, That they who would embrace, and hold fast the Faith delivered by our Saviour, should be so far from meeting with that love and respect which they ought to be entertained withal, that they should on the contrary be *Separated and Excommunicated*,

communicated, put out and accursed, and that by them who shall take upon them to be the Governours of the Church.

That this was fulfilled in the first breaking forth of the Gospel, and in the very dawning of that day, we have evident testimony in Scripture to prove it by; but having in part formerly mentioned it, I shall now only refer you to it.

This was certainly a very great Engine, by which men were not only kept off from attending unto the means of their Conversion, and caused to shut their eyes against the light that did shine so powerfully round about them: but in case it had broken in at any time unawares upon them, it was a most cogent Argument to keep them from owning and cherishing of it: for as St. John observes, though *many believed on him*, Joh. 12. 42. yet *because of the Pharisees*, (who swayed most in their Sanhedrim) they *did not confess him*, lest they should be put out of their Church; and for this very reason, if Nicodemus will come to Jesus, it shall be only by night.

Now it is a known Rule, that *Scriptura Prophetica sæpius impletur*, one and the same Prophecy may respect divers Ages, and be fulfilled in divers times; the same Prediction being frequently mentioned in Scripture with an ἵνα, *namque*, that it *might be fulfilled* upon divers occasions: but I must not now divert to instances.

'Tis evident that this Prediction intimated here in my Text, is no more to be restrained to the Apostles themselves, or the Church at that time, or immediately after, than any other foretelling of suffering persecution in this World is to be, or than any promise of assistance and deliverance whatsoever.

It hath been realized indeed with a witness in our, and in our forefathers days. The Church of Rome, who pretend to be the only Church of God, and Spouse of Christ, hath *separated us from them*, and hath *cast out our Names*; so that this day these words are fulfilled, *They shall separate you, they shall cast out your Names*.

But by reason that as it is not the *punishment*, but the *cause* which makes a Martyr; so it is not the suffering barely of these things which speaks any to be the true Disciples of Christ. Let us therefore enquire into the causes assigned by our Saviour in my Text for which his Disciples shall be thus dealt with. And here we meet,

First, with a pretended cause, *They shall cast out your Names as evil*, 1. The pretended cause. they shall fasten (as much as in them lay) all manner of calumnies upon you; and report of you, not as indeed you are, but as they who hate you would have you thought to be: they will pretend that their separating of you, and not conversing, especially in the Worship of God with you, is not what they would willingly have done, but what they were necessitated unto by you, who (as they alledge) have broached *new Doctrines*, and withal receded from *ancient Customs*, &c.

That this is true in either instance, is too apparent; the Pharisees charged.

charged the Apostles, and the Church of Rome do charge the Protestants, with whatsoever they think likely to make them odious.

Some of them doubtless do this out of a kind of integrity of their hearts, separating, excommunicating, nay killing of them, as a deserved punishment for the evil they conceive in them, or to have been committed by them: this proceeds out of that blindness and ignorance which is so common unto all in the things of God; but especially as it is further contracted or encreased by them, or inflicted by God upon them, for their not embracing *truth in the love of it, or holding it in unrighteousness*: These may be thought indeed to have believed lyes, and that they were perswaded that they did God good service in thus despitefully using those that did worship him in spirit and in truth, as is intimated in a parallel place, *Job. 16. 2.*

But as to others, the supposed evil in the matter that Christ's followers are charged with, is but a pretended cause of their being so evilly dealt withal; not only as we shall see hereafter, in that they did not deserve it, but because also that they who so severely inflict these Censures, are (at least many of them) not so zealous against *any opinion, or practice whatsoever* as 'tis evil, that is, as it is against the manifest truth, or revealed will of God, or as it is dishonourable to God, or destructive to the souls of men: for if they did set themselves against any thing as evil indeed, they would set themselves to oppose all evil; and in that proportion too in which it is evil, *a quatenus ad omne, &c.* He does not truly hate one sin, who does not hate all sins: as he hath no aversion from one Toad or Viper, as a Toad or Viper, who can take another up into his hands or bosom. Hatred is (as the Philosopher says) *πρὸς τὴν γένεσιν*, against all of a kind, or against none of that kind. So that I cannot think that the Pharisees who were so notoriously guilty of Rapine and Extortion, and could swallow Widows houses, should strain at the imagined fallity of the Apostles Doctrine, or the surmised corruption in the Gospel-Worship; there being especially such fair footsteps for either in those very Writings which they acknowledged the Rule of both. Neither can I believe that the Church of Rome, who can license, without any regret or scruple, Stews and Whore-houses, and can dispense with Rebellion and Incest, and what not? that these should be the men who are truly zealous for the Truths and Worship of God, as such, or that they should set themselves so much against the Doctrine which the Protestants profess, or against the way of worshipping of God which they use, because they are false or impious, for then they would be against all impiety, especially amongst themselves. But the true cause of the aversion of the generality of them from our opinions and practices, is, because they agree not with their *Interests and Lusts*, and are not consistent with their Profit and Grandeur: or, if you will, our Saviour here assigns the real cause, *viz. It is for the Son of man's sake.*

This is that which is at the bottom of all, 'tis for *Christ's sake*, for ^{2. The real cause} their respect unto him and his Institutions, his Truths and Ordinances, ^{for which they} that his Disciples suffer. Would they not so much consider what he ^{suffer.} hath enjoined and commanded, but follow their pretended Guides with blind obedience, they should be as when *the strong man armed kept the house*, all in peace.

In a matter so obvious I will not enlarge to discourse concerning this description of our *blest Saviour* here used, *Son of man*; 'tis known to be one of the Names or Titles which he was pleased to denote or describe himself by; who, though he was *God blessed for ever*, vouchsafed to take upon him our nature, and to become man for us: thus condescending to us both in the *name and thing*, that we might know that it was he in whom that Prophecy was fulfilled, *Unto us a Child is born*, *unto us a Son is given*, &c. And by this means he did in the highest manner recommend himself, and Truths, his Will and Worship unto us. It is for his sake, i. e. for their love and faithfulness, their respect and obedience unto him, that they who believe truly in him in all Ages do suffer. Would but the Apostles have forbore to preach in his Name; would they have observed the antient, but antiquated Rites of the *Jewish Church*, they might long enough have kept in amongst them, and should not have been persecuted by them: So would the Protestants not regard the mind and will of God, nor the Doctrine and Institutions of Christ, but let the *Church of Rome* add or take away at its pleasure, they should not have been, nor now need they be, cast out by them.

This is that which I shall more strictly confine my self unto, though all along I have intended to lay a Foundation with such Materials as might suit the intended Structure.

The *Church of Rome* charge the Protestants with *Schism*, as rending and dividing themselves from the true Church, which, as they tell us, they themselves only are.

I shall pass by all the other reproaches they lade us with, though very heinous and innumerable; it being a common matter with them (as with the Pagan Persecutors of old) to put the sincere Professors of the Truths of God into Beasts Skins, allowing them to have scarce a humane shape, that any who would might the more eagerly bait and worry them to death.

But as for their imputation of *Schism* unto us, we may well aver, that of all men they have least reason to charge us with it upon divers accounts, but especially because they themselves have put us from them: they have separated us, and cast out our Names, and to this day these words in my Text are verified concerning us. And is it not hard to be accused for going from them, who put us away, and cast us from them by force? But they serve us as they did the *Waldenses*, whom they plundered, robb'd, and stripped of all they had, and then by way of derision and contempt called them *Pauperes Lugdunenses*, The poor men of Lyons,

about which City those famous Professors of the Truth were formerly most numerous.

I suppose that the matter of fact cannot be doubted of, and that none will question whether the *Protestants* have been, or are thus dealt withal by the *Church of Rome*; for I might bring a whole Cloud of Witnesses to prove it. All the *Martyrs* who have suffered any ways under them, are, in their ordinary course of proceedings, cast out, and *Excommunicated* by that Church, before they are delivered over to the Civil Magistrate to be condemned and executed; and such as they cannot get into their hands, or where by the favour of Laws, or tenderness of Princes, the *Inquisition* cannot obtain, the *Council of Trent* anathematize and curses howsoever. And the Bull *de Cæna Domini* goes farther, for in that the Pope not only Excommunicates all who in the way which they call Heresie, worship the God of their Fathers, but he accurses all them too, who do any ways favour them, though it be but by giving civil respect, or a necessary alms unto them; so extensive is their Charity. Little reason have we then to expect that which they so much boast of, Good Works from them.

To pass by their exquisite torments, and more than barbarous cruelties exercised upon the bodies of Christians, (whilst they willingly suffer Jews in many places to dwell quietly amongst them) so directly contrary to the so much gloried in Primitive Church, who could not endure those Bishops who perswaded the Emperour to put Hereticks to death: and to be sure vastly differing from the mind and spirit of the meek JESUS, who would not at the instance of his Disciples destroy the truly both Heretical and Schismatical Samaritans by fire, though otherwise too he was inhumanly treated by them.

1 Cor. 5. 5, 13.

Emanuel Sa
Aphorismis in
turbo Inter-
dictum.

There may seem something to be pleaded for their Church-Censures, as if they were but the cutting off gangrenated and dead Members for the better preserving of the rest of the body. And as if they did this too in obedience to that Apostolical Precept of delivering such unto Satan, and so putting away evil from amongst them. But what is this to their interdicting of whole Kingdoms, in which there cannot be supposed fewer thousands (and they full out as innocent as any in Nineveh) not knowing their right hand from their left. By which Interdicts (according to their own Authors) all Divine Offices and Service of what kind soever was forbidden throughout the whole interdicted Territory. None might preach or pray, or administer the Sacraments amongst them, whilst the Interdict lasted; the whole Region being by it put out (as they termed it) of the Communion of the Church, and all that died therein, during that space, how long soever, believed by them damn'd for ever. This (not to mention its effects in other places) lasted in England, as Matthew Paris records, in King John's time, six years and an half, in which space it is thought there died in this Land above six hundred thousand men, women and children: And must all these necessarily eternally perish,

perith, because that the King and Pope were at variance with one another? with which matter the poor Commons had little to do, neither could they intermeddle without rebelling against their Sovereign.

And what does the casting out of the *incestuous* person, or the holding of an *obstinate* sinner as an *Heathen or Publican*, make for the secluding so many millions of *Protestants* from their Church, and putting of them by that means (at least as they surmise) into a state of inevitable perdition?

Especially when as the *Protestants* with one consent do believe all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets, which St. Paul thought a sufficient *Apology* for himself, when he *could not receive the Traditions of the Elders*: they believe no less, all that the Apostles and Evangelists have declared; they willingly embrace the three antient Creeds, accounted by the Primitive Church sufficient Tests of approved Christianity: they desire to live in all good Conscience towards God and men; and to give to every one their due in the place into which God hath put them.

Acts 24. 14.

Neither can we reasonably be charged with obstinacy, being very desirous to be informed better in any thing in which through mistake as men we might have erred. We pray to God daily that he would enlighten us, and give us to see the *marvellous things in his Word*. We desire to be thankful unto men, who God is pleased at any time to make instrumental for our further information in any of his Truths, or our Duties. Now 'tis *Obstinacy* only which is the *dead flesh of Heresie or Schism*, and makes that *Gangrene* incurable, and the part affected with it to be sawn off, and contentedly parted withal.

But yet for all this we are not *Scepticks* neither; we know whom and what we believe; and we resolve, by the Grace of God, to continue in it: and if they call our *Constancy*, *Obstinacy*, may they call it so still, rather than that we should depart from it. We should be loath to pin our Faith upon any mans sleeve, be he Pope, or who he will. If St. Paul himself, or an *Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto us, than that which we have received, he is, and must be accursed*; a sufficient caveat, one would think, against swallowing at all adventures whatsoever may be recommended to us upon the bare Topick of Authority, and not enquiring into the merit of the cause, the nature of the thing propounded, whether right or wrong, true or false. Henceforth an *Ipse Dixit*, such an one said so, or such a *Pope* defin'd it thus, will be but a pitiful excuse at the Day of Judgment for any false way. I must forbear touching more upon this firing at present, being willing to join *Issue about our being parted from the Church of Rome*, from the cause assigned in my Text, *viz. The Son of Man's sake*.

Gal. 1. 8.

Which words I shall consider with a more particular relation to the several matters in Controversie betwixt us and them; and it may be reasonably hoped, that if we have *Christ's Cause and Honour* on our side

in

in those very things for which they *separate* us, and *cast out our Names*, we may be reckoned still amongst his *Disciples*; and the *Church of Rome* as well as the *Jewish Church*, may justly be reputed amongst the Persecutors here foretold of.

And this we may deduce from the following Scheme.

1. It is for the Truths of Christ; the Doctrine own'd, preach'd, and recommended by him, that they thus deal with us.
2. It is for the Purity of his Worship, because we would serve God according to his own Will, and not according to their Will-worship, that they thus abhor us.
3. It is for his Authorities sake, because we dare not take the Government from off his Shoulders; nor pay that respect to any frail man, which is only due unto him who is God blessed for evermore: or if you will, it is because we dare not worship the Beast, that they serve us thus.

To sum up all in one; it is for the Vindication of Christ in all his Offices, that we endure these Indignities at their hands.

1. The Protestants are separated for Christ's Truths sake.

The difference between *us* and the *Church of Rome* is most important in *Matters of Faith*; it is indeed such, and so great, that we willingly acknowledge, as they *separate us* for not being of *their mind*; so we are most willing not only to be parted, but to *part* from them, for their not being of *God's mind*: for *what fellowship can light have with darkness?* or *what Communion hath Christ with Belial?* 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15.

'Tis true on our part, that we would not for every *mis-persuasion* in the things of Religion, part with any ones Communion: as every man hath a soul of his own, so he cannot but through common frailty, different measures and means of knowledge, have conceits and opinions different from others about almost any subject. And though every truth is worth the embracing, yet betwixt Truths themselves there is as great a difference as there is between Farthings and Guineys; which, though they be both Coins, yet are of a very disproportioned value.

1 Tim. 3. 15.

Titus 3. 10.

There are by the confession of all some *Fundamental Truths*, and by consequence there must be some *Fundamental Errours*. It is a *Metaphorical Epithite*, taken from Buildings, for as Buildings cannot stand if the Foundation be removed or taken away; so the Church, which is called the House of God, cannot stand neither if it be removed from those saving Truths, upon which, as upon a Rock, Christ hath founded it. And therefore the Apostle, who so earnestly blames the judging and condemning one another in lesser matters, yet would have us to reject such an Heretick, (after the first and second admonition) who holds any thing contrary unto these.

Now we cannot be justly charged by the *Church of Rome* with any *positive* Errour that can so much as strike at the Foundation: nay, she believes what we believe concerning God; *one in Essence, three in Persons*: She acknowledges with us the *Person, Natures, Suffering, Resurrection* and

and *Ascension of Christ*, and all the other *Articles of the Creed*. She charges us only with *Negatives*, because we cannot admit all such *Doctrines* as she injuriously obtrudes upon us as matter of Faith: this is indeed the *Apple of Contention* betwixt us; and because we dare not *Bishop Hall's* allow and approve of every *Dictate of the Pope*, or *Definition* of the now *Peace-maker*. *Roman Church* as an *Oracle of God*, we stand accursed by them.

To point at some few *instances* in stead of many.

Do we believe that the *Scriptures are a Rule for Life and Manners*? *1. Concerning the Scripture.* so do they: but what they give with the one hand, they take away with the other, in that they make *Traditions*, and the *Determinations of their Church*, necessary to be received with the same reverence that *Scripture* is to be received withal: so that *Scripture*, which in word they dare not deny to be the *Rule*, in deed they make it nothing less, defaming it what they can, as *short*, *imperfect*, and *obscure*; nay, forbidding the *reading*, or *having of it in a vulgar Tongue*, where they may. Whereas we may well aver, that no *Art or Science* whatsoever was so fully and plainly taught by any Book in the whole World, as our *Christian-calling*, and the *true art of living and dying in the Faith of Christ*, and in the *favour of God*, is taught us in his *Word*; the *duvintæ*, or things in it that are hard to be understood, being matters of less import to the welfare of our souls. As for those Truths whereby Life and Immortality is brought to light, there need not so much *Glosses* and *Commentaries* to understand them by, as to bring an humble and teachable mind unto them.

We believe that our Saviour *Christ* is the *Mediator betwixt God and man*: they say that they believe the same too; and because *Scripture* is *the Mediatorship of Christ.* so exprefs concerning it, they dare not deny but that he is the only *Mediator*: for the *Apostle* says as well that there is but one *Mediator*, as *1 Tim. 2. 5:* he says that there is but one *God*, and *Jesus*, these two indissolvably together. And yet for all this the *Church of Rome* can give away *Christ's* *Mediators* place with a nice distinction at one blow, assigning new *Advocates* unto us, as often as they please to canonize any. And lest it should be too much for our blessed Saviour to be our *Mediator* by his *Redemption*, (which for good manners in the known distinction they leave unto him) they have set up another *Propitiatory Sacrifice* besides that at his *Passion*, which their *Priests* do offer every day for the living and for the dead: Nay, they will not let his *Blood* purifie us from our sins, but *Revel. 1. 5.* have found out a *Purgatory*, in which our souls must be purged by their own sufferings after death.

We say with the *Apostle*, that we are *saved by Grace*, *Ephes. 2. 8.* *3. Concerning Grace.* which the *Papists* will not deny in down-right terms, but they will add something to it, which shall make this *Grace* to be no *Grace* before that they have done; either interposing the *prevision* of our good works without *Grace* in the purpose of *God* before the World began, or some *good disposition* in us, exciting *God* to bestow his *Grace* upon us: which
Grace

Grace being well improved by us, meriteth no less than Glory at his hands for us. Whosoever lists to search this to the quick, will find, that there was never a prouder Opinion held by any of the children of men than this is; henceflow not their *satisfactory works* only, by which they pay sufficiently unto God whatsoever is owing unto his Justice by them; but they hold also works of *Supererogation*, whereby they deserve more than they need for themselves, or know well what to do with, and therefore they put it into the Treasury of the Church, for the avail of those who by *Money and Misses* can take it out. The *Pharisee* was modest who said in the height of his boasting, *Lord, I thank thee*: if any of them would speak this opinion out, he would say, *Lord, thou mayst thank me.*

Luke 18. 11.

These truths are
fundamental.

I will pass by multitudes of instances of the like nature, and will content my self only with these, as being such as I judged most material; and such, as respect the very *Foundation*; and therefore their Errours concerning them must of necessity be of very bad consequence. For,

Math. 16. 18.

1. *Scripture is the Foundation of the Doctrine of Salvation*, and the Church is said in this respect to be built upon the *Foundation* of the Prophets and Apostles, *Ephes. 2. 20.* that is, the Church is built upon the *Doctrine* which was delivered by the Apostles and Prophets; a good Parallel to understand that so much controverted saying of our Saviour by, *Upon this Rock I will build my Church*, to be meant of Christ's building his Church upon the *Doctrine*, and not upon the Person or Successors of *St. Peter*.

2. *Our Saviour Christ is the Foundation of our Salvation its self*, in that he purchased it by his death, and prepares and preserves it by his life; in which respect the Apostle tells us, that none can lay any other *Foundation* than that which is laid, which is *Jesus Christ*, *1 Corinth. 3. 11.*

3. *Grace is the Foundation of the Application of this Salvation*, in that all the benefits which *Christ* hath purchased for us, and all the works which answerably thereunto he works by his Spirit within us, are all *founded upon Grace*, upon which only they depend, the hearts of believers being hence said to be *established by Grace*, *Heb. 13. 9.*

Now if they undermine or take away these *Foundation-Truths* from us, let them take all: 'tis howsoever observable that the *Protestants* Opinions in these cases must needs be *safe*: for surely neither the *Word of God*, nor the *Son of God*, nor the *Grace of God*, can be reasonably challenged with any *insufficiency*, that they should need the Additions and Inventions of men to make them successful, in that especially which they are chosen, and appointed unto by God. If God thought his Word to be sufficient to enlighten us, his Son to redeem and intercede for us, his Grace sufficient to sanctifie and keep us unto Salvation, we are content with his choice and allotment, and do not envy others who pretend to have

have more : but it is to be feared that they who grasp at more , do lose all. And we would rather have our Names cast out by them, for not adding to the Word of God, than that for our additions unto it, *God should add unto us the plagues that are written in it.*

Rev. 22. 19.

Neither may we be so much taken with the *Truths* which in these and other particulars the *Church of Rome* do retain, as that for their sake we should swallow the *Errours* which they mix with those *Verities*; and that rather than to be *separated from their Communion*, we might subscribe or assent to all the other *Articles* that are proposed by them; that were *to do evil that good might come of it*. Besides, this retaining of some *Truths*, do stand them in good stead to put off many *Errours* the better by. Few could vend defective Wares, if they did not shew some that were true made together with them. We know that false or counterfeit Money will hardly go off alone; neither is Poyson ordinarily taken singly, or by its self, but mixed with wholsom Food; and by that means it deceives the sooner, and spreads the farther.

Were there then nothing but this, that we must believe all that is determined, or that shall be determined by the *Church of Rome*, (for they have lately made, and may still make new *Articles of Faith*) or else we must be accursed by them; we are rather to undergo all their *Separations* and *Excommunications*, than to assent to untruths, or seem to believe lyes. Whosoever they be that propose any thing to be believed by us, we may justly expect that they should prove one of these two things unto us. Either

Two things necessary to be proved before we can believe ought that is proposed.

1. That the *Article proposed by them to be believed is part of the Faith once delivered unto the Saints* : Or

2. That *there may be now a new Faith.*

The former of these, as to the points in controversy, they will never be able to prove; and that makes them speak so slightly of Scripture, because they know it is not for their turn : besides, if that we must contend for the Faith that was then delivered, we must contend against the Traditions, and all the super-added Definitions of their Church, so far at least as they are contrary unto it, and reduce all again to the old Test of the *Law and the Testimony*; which we would gladly do, but that they dare not abide by, but call out to the Fathers and Councils, though in vain, for help.

1. That it was once delivered to the Saints.

As for the latter, viz. *The making of a new Faith*. Whosoever makes a new Faith, must make a new Hope for us too; and from them that propound another way unto us, we may expect another Heaven for us; for God's Heaven must be attained in God's way. Yet this new Faith was attempted to be made and propounded by some of them; witness the *Evangelium eternum* which the Fryars made, and the Pope favoured. In which new Gospel they affirmed that the *Gospel of Christ* was not the *Gospel of the Kingdom*, and that the *Old and New Testament*

2. Or that we may have a new Faith.

had lost their force, or should soon lose it: the time they set is now expired above four hundred years since.

But this device not succeeding, they have since been more reserved and cunning: Not down-right and all at once, but indirectly and by degrees endeavouring to bring us to this their purpose; on the one hand decrying Scripture and revealed Truths as much as they can, and on the other hand magnifying as much those things, whose truth and goodness (if they have any) are only derived from *their Churches Recommendation*. One passage of *Cardinal Hosius* must not be forgot, who affirmed, That were it not for the *Churches Authority* interposed in the case, *Scripture* were no better than *Æsops Fables*. *O my soul, come not thou into their secret: and unto their assembly mine honour be not thou united.*

Gen. 49. 6.

2. We are separated for Christ's instituted worships sake.
Joh. 4. 24.

The difference between the Protestant and now Roman Church is as considerable about Religious Worship. They *separate us*, and *cast out our Names*, because we desire to keep to the purity and simplicity of Worship, so often commanded by God, and so highly recommended by Christ; and they on the other side do add in matters of Divine Worship according to the inventions of their own hearts, and the humours of every fanciful Pope.

Zeph. 3. 5.

2 King. 16. 18.

Now this we are the more careful about, because that they who worship any thing besides the true God, or who worship him any other way than according to his own appointment, are in the second Commandment declared by God to be *Haters of him*, i. e. in a more eminent manner than any other sinners whosoever. We find also Will-worship to be such a Leaven, as that (where it is join'd with otherwise right and well-directed Devotion) it leavens the whole lump, and makes the whole but one continued provocation in God's account. Those that *swear by the Lord and by Malcham*, are esteemed as if they had not sworn by God at all, but by *Malcham* only. As wicked as *Abaz* is recorded to be, he is not charged for not retaining the Altar of the Lord, but for bringing another *Altar from Damascus*, and placing of it by God's Altar at the Temple of *Jerusalem*.

Matth. 15. 9.

Jerem. 3. 14.

One would think that *washing of hands*, and the *wearing of broad Phylacteries*, were matters so indifferent, as that they could not be displeasing unto God; especially when *commanded by the Church*, and recommended too by *Tradition*: yet our Saviour assures us (though they thought to please God the better by them) it made all the rest of the Pharisees Worship but vain and unacceptable.

Ezek. 23. 30.

Worship is indeed the *Marriage-Duty* which the Church of God is to pay unto none but unto him, who is married unto her; and God hath declared himself to be a *Jealous God*, and that he will not permit any Creature to partake that Marriage-rite together with him. Hence it is that Idolatry is so often called Adultery, and a going a whoring from God; and in this, amongst other things, to be sure they agree: that
as

as amongst men for every fault, though heinous ones too, there cannot be a separation between man and wife, but for Adultery there may; so God is pleased not to give a Bill of Divorce to any Church or People for any sin so much as for Idolatry. When once they become over-spread with that sin, then it is that God says unto them, *Lo-ammi, Ye are not my people*, Hos. 1. 9.

If we must then either be bidden by the *Church of Rome* to depart from her for not worshipping what she pleases, and as she lists, or that God should depart from us, (by the with-drawing of his Word and Spirit from us) and bid us to depart from him, because we did not worship him according to his prescribed Will, (but preferred man's will before his will) it is easie to determine which we should most dread, and labour to avoid. Nay, let them again and again bid us to depart from them here, that God may not bid us to depart from him hereafter. Their *Censure of Excommunication* is lighter than the small dust in the balance, if compared with his *Sentence of Condemnation*.

I know that this *Harlot*, with the adulterous woman in the *Proverbs*, Chap. 30. 20. *wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness*. Yet I shall take it for granted, that if she gives and requires Religious or Divine Worship to be given to any Creature, she is guilty of Idolatry, or else there is no such thing as Idolatry in the world: this being confessedly the worst kind of false Worship, and that for which God gave the Heathens over unto such *strong delusions, and vile affections*, Rom. 1. 25, 26.

Aquin. 2. secundæ quest. 94. Artic. 3.

I shall not insist upon the particulars of Divine Worship; which is either *internal*, the worship of the heart; or *external*, the worship of the body. *Faith and Hope* are the homage which the heart pays unto God. It believes in him, as true and faithful; and hopes in him, as good and gracious in the highest degree. *Adoration and Service* are the tribute which the body owes unto God. Now I could easily evince that the Church of *Rome* gives any, or all of these to Creatures: for whilst they pray to Saints, (whether real or imaginary ones) they must hope and believe in them; for *how can they call upon them in whom they have not believed?* And whilst they prostrate themselves before their very Images, whilst they build *Altars and Churches*, and keep *Festivals, or observe days* unto them, they give them whatsoever the outward man is able to perform to God himself. Rom. 10. 14.

Yet all this Worship they think that calling of it by another name (*δουλεία*) they can justify.

Not to insist upon that which hath been so often proved by others, that the words *δουλεία* and *λατρεία* are promiscuously used, and that if there be any difference *δουλεία* imports the more servile offices of the two. Alas! the common people break the *Cobweb-thread of such nice distinctions*, which they are not able to skill of; and, as some amongst themselves have feared, fall into down-right Idolatry.

Not daring to
give Divine
worship,

1. To the Cross.
Aquinas p. 3.
quest. 25. Art. 4.
Bonavent.
3. Sent. dist. 9.
9. 4.

But *aliquid* its self, or that worship which they acknowledge to be Divine, and of the highest kind which can be given to God himself: yet,

1. They give it to the Cross, as *Aquinas* and *Bonaventure* (who are Sainted amongst them) and a many others, do affirm. And *Aquinas* proves that the Cross may be adored with Divine Adoration, because they put the hope of their Salvation in it: and to that purpose he cites an Hymn of that Church, wherein it calls the Cross, Its only hope.

Not to speak of Crosses as they are painted or carved, unto which also they give the same honour: though it is more than probable that as they are usually made, they do not so much as resemble the Cross upon which Christ suffered.

But granting that the true Cross upon which Christ suffered may be worshipped, (which yet we abhor to grant) may they not be mistaken in the Wood of that Cross? It is certain there is more Wood worshipped for the Wood of the Cross, than *Simon of Cyrene* (or their Giant-like *Saint Christopher*) could ever bear. And in such a case when they worship a piece of ordinary Wood, (and perhaps without its due figure to inhanse it) themselves must grant that they are Idolaters. But supposing that they be not mistaken, it is a wonder that they should have such a Veneration for the Cross, and Spears, and Nails by which Christ suffered, whilst that all Christians have the other Instruments of his suffering (as *Judas* and *Pilate* are) deservedly in so great an Execration.

2. To the Host.

2. They adore the Host, that is, the consecrated bread in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and that with a Divine Worship, the very same which they would give to God, or Christ himself. And the Council of Trent do accurse all that think this ought not to be done, and that the Sacrament ought not thus to be worshipped. It is strange what they say, that a Priest should make his Maker; but it is stranger yet, that as soon as he is made by him, he should fall down immediately and worship the workmanship of his own hands: which made *Averroes* say, that he never saw so foolish a Sect of Religion as the Christians were, who with their teeth devoured the God they had adored. So that to excuse themselves from being Idolaters, the best plea they do use proves them worse than *Canibals*: for these devour but men like themselves: the Papists, if we believe this their excuse, do devour the flesh of the Son of God.

- Concil. Trident. Sess. 13.
Cap. 5.

- Concil. Trident. Sess. 7.

It is not my intention to speak unto that monstrous and truly senseless opinion of *Transubstantiation*: but supposing of it to be true, yet the Church of Rome, holding the intention of the Minister to be necessary towards the efficacy of every Sacrament; (and by consequence that unless the Priest whilst he speaks those five transubstantiating words, *Hoc enim est corpus meum*, do intend by them to change the Bread into the Body

of

of Christ, &c. that then there is no change wrought by them :) what a miserable danger of Idolatry must all the people be in, in the mean while? They certainly cannot tell the mind of the Priest; and if he be not intent, as too often they are not, upon that business, all that worship that *Host* must be most gross Idolaters, were all the opinions of their Leaders granted them to be true.

3. The last *instance* that I will give of their Idolatry, shall be in their worshipping of the *Virgin Mary*: they call this worship which they give unto her *ὑπερσέβεια*, and they make it a middle sort betwixt the other two formerly mentioned: but they might call it, if that they pleased, *ὑπερλατρεία*; for they say unto her, and attribute unto her more than unto Christ himself. Nay, they *Petition her to command her Son by her Motherly Authority*; little considering that she her self called him *God her Saviour*, though according to the flesh he was her Son. 3. To the Virgin Mary. Luke 1.47.

Now though this, and much more which might be said, do very plainly prove that their worship hath got the *Plague-spot of Idolatry* upon it, and therefore that it is by no means to be meddled withal; yet they are so devoted unto it, as that they have commanded all such passages to be left out in the Editions of the Fathers, which speak for Adoration as due, or to be given only unto God. Nay, the very *second Commandment* hath not escaped them, but they have put it out of the number of the Commandments, that they of their Communion might not be self-condemned when they reflect upon it.

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I know that some amongst them do sew other fig-leaves together to hide this their nakedness, but in vain: for how can there be a *subaltern, or subordinate Religious Worship*, unless there be a *subordinate Deity* too? There are, and ought to be degrees of Civil Respects, which are given diversly unto men, according to the various degrees of Worth or Authority in the Objects, unto whom they are paid: but the Honour or Worship of God, and whatsoever is due unto him as *God*, can no more be shared by the Creature, than his *infinite Essence and Majesty* from which it flows. Neither will it serve their turn that they say they do not worship his Image with the same mind and affection wherewith they worship himself; no more than if an *Adulteress* should plead that though she prostitutes her body unto others, yet she does it not with the same degree of affection wherewith she embraces her Husband only. *Gregory de Valens* makes the hardest shift of them all to excuse this sin, by saying, that there is a *lawful* as well as an unlawful Idolatry. And acknowledging that they do use the former: we shall take his Confession that they are Idolaters: but neither he, nor any other can ever prove such a contradiction (*in adjectio*) as a lawful Idolatry. Well may they hold Concupiscence to be no sin, who hold any Idolatry to be lawful.

Libro 2. de Idol. Cap. 7.

We can meet with no such *Distinctions*, nor ground for them neither in all the Word of God: but this we find there, that there is no agree-

2 Co. 6. 16, 17
ment

ment betwixt the Temple of God and Idols : and that where Idolatry is, we are bidden to depart, and to be separate, whether we might be retained or no. Whatsoever then we do or suffer in this cause, it is for the *Son of Man's sake* ; who himself taught us to answer all Objections, and to repel all temptations unto this sin, by alledging, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*, Matth. 4. 10. and by his beloved Disciple hath bidden us to *keep our selves from Idols*, 1 *Joh. 5. ult.*

3. It is for Christ's Sovereignty's sake that we are separated.

It is for Christ's *Authority and Sovereignty's sake* that we are separated, and have our Names cast out by the Church of Rome. Would we but magnifie their usurped power, we might swear, curse and blaspheme, commit Whordom and Incest, and what not ? and yet be accounted true Sons of their Church. Had St. Paul but cryed up their great *Diana*, the *Ephesians* had not been offended with him ; had he been otherwise as vicious as he was virtuous, or as prophane as he was holy.

We are willing for to obey them that *have the rule over us in the Lord* : but still so as that we may keep and maintain our fealty intire unto him who is over all. We are ready to submit to Governours *under him* in Church and State : but we must remember that we and they too are *under him*. The Legislative and Sovereign Power is incommunicably in Christ, and cannot be parted withal by him. Who should give Laws to bind our inward man, but he that can *search and try it*, and can take cognizance of the performance or breach of his Law by it, and can punish or reward as he finds cause ?

Neither does the *Infallibility* which the *Church of Rome* assumes, less derogate from the honour which is due unto Christ, it being a *Jewel of his Crown*. I shall not enquire where the now *Roman Church* do make the subject of this Infallibility, (for they are not agreed upon it amongst themselves) whether it recides in the Pope, or in a General Council ; or if the Pope be infallible, whether he be so in matters of Faith, or in matters of Right only. We deny either, to one or to all of them.

Fallibility cannot be removed out of the mind, no more than Mortality from the body of any. They go *aquis passibus*, and are both fixed to that state which all men are born in, and they cannot put either of them off, no more than Humanity it self. Nay, could there be an *Universal*, or truly *Oecumenical Council*, which there never was since the Apostles times ; yet every Member of that Council being but fallible, the Council it self could not be infallible. Not to mention any particulars, which might be instanced in, which though determined by Councils and Popes, yet are antiquated, and rejected by the Papists themselves.

'Tis obvious that *one Pope* hath frequently contradicted another, and one Council hath thwarted the other ; and surely they were not on both sides in the right. How much safer is it to obey *God's beloved Son*, who being the expresse Image of the Father, is *Truth it self*, and whom we are bidden for to hear ? it being the Character of a true Sheep of Christ's

Christ's Fold that he will hear his voice, and not the voice of Joh. 10. 3, 5. strangers.

In obedience then *unto Christ* it is that we dare not thus become *servants unto men*. Though we may *go and come*, we may not believe and dis-believe as they please: Nay, we cannot do it if that we would: For the *Will* hath no such power over the *Understanding*, as to make it think or believe what it lists to be true or false. The *Will* can set the *Understanding* upon acting on what Object it pleases, but it cannot make the *Understanding* concerning any Object think what it pleaseth, its power over it being only *quoad exercitium*, and not *quoad specificationem*.

Now this makes the Government of the *Romish Church* to be the most insupportable tyranny that the World hath ever known. Other Tyrants have been content with their Domination over their Vassals Bodies and Estates: nothing will satisfy these but to domineer over the *Souls of men* too; and we meet with the *souls of men reckoned amongst their Merchandize*, Rev. 18. 13. And well may they so be: for the greatest Traffick amongst them is for mens Souls.

And whereas God declares that he gives us *his Commandments for our good always*, though he hath an indisputable and uncontrollable right over us, yet he commands us nothing barely that he might exercise his Domination and absolute power that belongs unto him: but all his Institutions and appointments are such, as in their own nature would be advantageous to us, were they not enjoined by him; there being nothing that accomplishes and perfects man more than Holiness and the Image of God; which his Injunctions (in every instance) do tend only to promote.

But alas! what are men the better for multitudes of Observations enjoined amongst the *Romanists*? They themselves cannot say that there is any goodness in them, but only what they derive from the *Authority that enjoins them*: And if that Authority should forbid them, or command other things contrary unto, or at least divers from them, they would then be reputed of *another* nature by such who contend so eagerly for them: though we have reason to believe that they *call good, evil, and evil, good*; yet that they can *make* evil to be good, or good to be evil, is incredible unto us.

Yet these pitiful little things, which they can make for good or bad at their pleasure, they are more earnest in, than for all the great things in the Law. Transgressions against the Law of God written in our very hearts and natures, and transcribed thence into our *Bibles*, meet with little or no censure amongst them: but to doubt of any of their *Churches Definitions*, or to disobey any of her Commands, (in those things which never came into God's heart to enjoin) is amongst them a most unpardonable sin. So that as men have been observed to love their Books (being the Issue of their Brain and Studies) more than their Children,

Children, the fruit of their Bodies : these men dote upon their own inventions and imaginations, more than upon any thing, though by God himself recommended unto them.

And as it ordinarily happens, the misery of the people is attended by the *iniquity of their Leaders* : for is this to become *all things unto all men*, to make their Flock become whatsoever they please unto them ? Is this to exercise their power (according to their Commission) for *Edification* ? Does it not *impeach the Wisdom of God*, and the Faithfulness of Christ, to make more things necessary to be believed and practised than were commanded us in the Word, or told unto us by the Son of God ? Is it not *against the Rule of Charity*, (that Bond of Perfection) to lay such heavy yokes upon others, as they would not have, were they Dissenters, imposed upon themselves ? Does it not occasion *Dissimulation and Hypocrisie* in men (and there is sin enough every where) to require of those in Communion with them, to affirm or deny, to practise or forbear in the things of God, every thing according to the humour of their present Rulers, and especially upon such severe penalties ? Formerly whosoever confess'd *with their mouth the Lord Jesus, and believed in their hearts that God had raised him from the dead, might be saved* : And though this was somewhat enlarged in the *Creed*, (commonly called the *Apostles Creed*) what is that to so many Volumes of Decrees and Councils (the late ones especially of their own contriving) which the Church of *Rome* enforces a submission unto ?

St. Paul, who had the care of all the Churches upon him, especially he had the Gospel of the *Uncircumcision* committed unto him, (so that it is a wonder the Popes have not claimed to be his Successors, it is more for their purpose than to be St. Peter's, whose line was amongst them of the Circumcision) this blessed Paul having undoubted Apostolick Authority, would not prescribe to the Church of *Rome*, whether all should observe a day or no, or whether they should all eat flesh or no, though no pretensions of *Uniformity* would be wanting on the one side or on the other. Nay, he was so far from opposing any unnecessary burden, that he commands his *Galatians* to stand fast in their liberty. Were there more of his spirit in the world, we might have less shew, but more substance in Religion.

It is a sorry comfort that is left us, that notwithstanding the Churches Commands, we may think the things commanded us as indifferent in themselves as we will, provided we do but observe them on the account of their Churches Injunction. For whilst we are pinched, and perplexed with fears of the unlawfulness of their Additions, we are apt the more to suspect that Church to be but a Step-mother unto us, who will cast us out of her care and family for such things; which she, thinking to be indifferent, might without prejudice relax her Commands concerning them : but we, thinking that our Father hath determined or commanded otherwise, cannot yield her our Obedience in them. Is not this,

this, as much as lies in that Church, to destroy them for whom Christ died? and to be sure it is far from endeavouring (which yet is her duty) by all means to save some.

It is our *unspeakable comfort* in the mean while, that he whom we serve, and who is our *Prince and Saviour*, hath a *Goodness towards us*, answerable to his *Power over us*: the one without the other would but speak us as miserable as now we may be happy. Christ in all his Commands did not consider only the *τὸ θεοποιητικόν*, but the *τὸ ἀνθρώπων*, he did not enjoin us all, which as God he might have done; but he commanded us such things only which we, as men, could bear, and might be benefited by.

As for the power which the Pope assumes unto himself, to *dispense with the Laws of God*; it is far above whatsoever our blessed Redeemer assumed, who profess'd that *he came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it*. But thus the Pope fulfils what was prophesied concerning him, that *he should oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God*. Mat. 5. 17.

Yet this opinion of the *Popes or Churches Authority*, (though somewhat diversified) is such a *darling* opinion amongst them, that could we believe and practise all that their Church propounds, or commands at present, unless we will become *ἀνθρώπων δούλοι*, such voluntary Slaves as to let our ears be bored, and henceforth never to question their dictates, nor disobey their future Commands, it would not avail us towards any Communion with them: for (saith Bellarmine) whosoever *will not be fed by Peter*, that is, *learn of him and his Successors (the Popes) as Judges and Determiners what he is to take for matter of Faith, and what is the sense of the Scripture, is none of Christ's Sheep*. And the very *Form* of their Church (which makes it Antichristian as much as any thing) consists in this manner of Government. This is the *Center of Unity*: from the Pope as ordinary Pastor of the Universal Church, as from the Head, all life and motion is conveyed unto every individual Member.

2 Thes. 2. 4.

De verbo Dei,
lib. 3. cap. 5.
sect. 4.

But suppose this *Authority* or Power to be more diffused, and to be subjected not in the *Pope alone*, but with his *Consistory, or Council*; yet we cannot think that they will ever yield ought unto us, had we truth or right never so much on our side: for whilst they hold their Church to be infallible, and that she cannot decree amiss in any matters of faith, or practice, we can never rationally hope for any redress. For so long as they maintain their Churches Infallibility, they will not alter nor rescind any one thing, (were it to save the whole World) for if they do, their Churches Infallibility is gone for ever; and it is by that Craft that they have their wealth.

This then being the case between us, and the Church of Rome, that she hath separated us, and cast out our Names, not for any opinion or practice that she can charge us with contrary to the Word of God, or the Duty of Christians; but rather for keeping the Commandments of

Mat. 5.11, 12. *God, and the Faith of Jesus.* We may rejoice and be exceeding glad, (as we are bidden) that we are thus reviled and persecuted for the Son of Man's sake: for not only our reward shall be great in Heaven, but here on Earth too. For as our Saviour found the blind man after he had been cast out for confessing of him, and imparted unto him a more full knowledge concerning himself; so Christ hath found the Protestant Churches, and afforded them his presence and care, communicating his Light and Love unto them; and nothing is more to be bewailed than that they have not been answerable unto such mercy towards them. We may truly say that God hath turned their curse into a blessing unto us: That *Brutum fulmen* (their Thunderbolt of Excommunication) hath not hurt one hair of our heads, much less hath it entred into our souls. For as *Thomas de Curselis* in the Council of Basl did well observe, though Dr. Hammond (of Schism.) Christ says, whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven; he doth not say, Whatsoever thou shalt affirm to be bound, shall be so. And as the Excommunication of the Jewish Sanhedrim, denounced against Christ's Disciples, brought them so much nearer unto their Lord and Master, and aliened the Jews themselves, removing them so much farther from the Kingdom of Heaven: so do all unjust Censures unite us to the Apostles, &c. by this conformity with, and participation of their sufferings.

How out of the Church there is no Salvation. As for what the Church of Rome doth so frequently triumph in, and thinks to scare us with, viz. That out of the Church there is no Salvation: It is to be considered,

1. This to be true indeed of the Catholick Church. Taking it not as they do, for all them, and only them that are under the Pastorship of the Pope, but for all the real and living Members of Christ: for they only are truly his Body, that are enlivened by his Spirit. Thus the Apostle joins them together, *Ephes. 4. 4. There is one Body, and one Spirit*; and elsewhere he says, that unless the Spirit of Christ be in you, you are none of his. As every member of the Body, and only the members of that Body are acted by the same Soul; so is it in the mystical Body of Christ too. And it is the concern of all to obtain the Spirit of Christ, and to live the life of Christ, without which they cannot obtain Salvation by Christ, who is the Saviour only of his Body.

2. We acknowledge that it is every ones duty to join himself unto, and not causlessly to depart from a visible Church that professeth the Faith, and keepeth the Institutions of Christ: Every one ought to enquire where it is that this great Shepherd feedeth, and maketh his Flock to rest; and every needlessly departing from such a Church, does endanger Salvation, in that it makes a man truly guilty of Schism, which is a great sin against Charity, so highly recommended unto us: as also in that such an one withdraws himself from those Societies and Meetings unto which Christ hath promised his presence, and God bestows his blessing.

3. But

3. But where this cannot be obtain'd, or is not sinfully neglected or refused, one may be *saved without being joined to any visible Church whatsoever*. If a Pagan, or a Jew, that is imprisoned in a Country where the Christian Religion is not profess'd, (being by reading or conference through the goodness of God brought to the knowledge of the truth, and to profess it, living answerably unto it) though he should die before that he could come to enjoy Church-Communion, we have no reason to doubt of his Salvation; our Saviour having told us, *That whosoever believeth in him hath eternal life.*

Joh. 6. 40.

But more particularly as to *the Church of Rome*: for so we call them that professing to hold the Christian Faith, are united in subjection and obedience unto that See, and do acknowledge the Pope their Universal Pastor. When we call them a *Church*, we mean no more than that they are a society or company of men, who *make profession* that they are *Christians*. Thus the *Laodiceans* are called a *Church*, Rev. 3. 14. though they *were wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*; and we do not read of a sound part amongst them. Thus God himself calls the *Ten Tribes his People*, after their defection, by reason of *Circumcision* which they yet retained, and their being the Off-spring of *Jacob*. In this sense soundness of Faith is no more essential to a Church, than health is to a man. And as a *man* that hath the *Plague* or *Leprosie* is still a *man*, though to be shunn'd: so they may be thus a *Church*, though by all means to be forsaken. But as they themselves take a *Church* for a company of true believers joined together in Communion, so they are no Church, their Faith being far from *the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

what we think concerning the Church of Rome

Hos. 4. 6.

As for the *Succession* they so much stand upon, and a *Lawful Ministry* only to be found amongst them. No Church in the Christian World hath ever had so many Interruptions, sufficient to destroy, according to their own principles, the lawfulness of their Ministry. How many *Schisms* hath there been in that Church? one of which alone lasted about fifty years: in which space there was not one person in all their Communion but was *Excommunicated by one Pope or other*, (the right Pope being ever he that had most force or fraud) not to mention the *Simony* and *Heresie* which some of them were so notoriously guilty of; and any of these are sufficient to break the Chain of Succession amongst them. For I hope that they will not allow an Excommunicated person to have a power of Ordination.

Their Succession broken.

But besides this, they who are *ordained* by any amongst them, not being ordained to the work of a Minister, to preach or feed the Flock of Christ, or to serve him in the holy things of his own Institution, but to *sacrifice the Body of Christ for the living and for the dead*; how can they be *Gospel-Ministers*? This certainly is not a *Gospel-Ministration*, (nor hath so much as a shew of it) but 'tis a repetition rather of the *Jews cruelty*.

But to prevent further Objections and mistakes, we grant,

Two things
granted to them.
Rom 1.8.

1. That the Church of Rome was a very famous Church, whose Faith was spoken of throughout the whole World. Thus the seven Churches of Asia, at least some of them, were eminent and praise-worthy: but they can challenge no privilege from what they have been, lest the Jews themselves come in with their pretensions too, (who were once the only Church and people of God.) There is no greater stench than that which comes from a humane Body, when the Soul is once withdrawn: Nor is there any thing more abominable in God's account, than that Church or Society (call it what you will) from whom the Spirit of truth (who formerly did inform and enliven it) is departed.

2. We grant that the Church of Rome had precedence before all other Churches: but I would not be mistaken; it hath had precedence before them, but for very many Centuries no superiority over them; and this precedence which they had, was only because Rome was the Imperial City, and Seat of the Empire. And 'tis most like that for this cause the Epistle to the Romans was put before all the other Epistles: the place in which that Church was gathered, and the persons probably of which it did consist, being more eminent and conspicuous than others. But when Constantinople came to be the Seat of the Emperour, and made, and called New-Rome, it contested for that very precedency; and to this purpose it is remarkable that the Patriarchates and Dioceses into which the Church-Government was then divided, did answer to the partitions and divisions under the Civil Governours in that Empire: which did make indeed the Ladder for the Bishop of Rome to clime unto this height by.

what they farther pretend unto.

As for their Pretensions to the Popes Universal Pastorship, and Superiority over all Churches, they had need to produce an Authentick Patent for it; what they have already shewn, making nothing for their purpose. But I shall wave any farther discourse upon that subject, because it is out of my sphere at present; as also although we should grant the Church of Rome all her Pretensions, &c. yet upon supposition,

First, That she is corrupted in her Doctrine and Worship. And

which howsoever will not serve her turn.

Secondly, That she excludes and anathematizes all that do not joyn in those corruptions with her; (both which particulars have been proved.) We may satisfie our selves in being parted from them, and answer all that they can say with these two Conclusions.

For two reasons.

1. God never did require of us to join with any person or Church in their sins; much less that we should sin in order to the obtaining of Salvation at his hands. God's Rule is, That we should not do evil that good may come of it. And were the Communion with their Church never so useful, yet if it cannot be had without sinning, it must not be had at all. If the terms or conditions of Communion with them have any thing of sin in them, they had as good tell us that we should fly in the Air, or count the sands on the Sea-shore, and in case we did not, that then they would not receive us into their Communion; or that being in, they would

would cast us out. For such things as are *morally impossible*, (as an *assent* to any error, or a *consent* to any false worship must needs be) are as unreasonably required of us, as any thing that is *naturally impossible* could ever be. And if on this account there be a Rent from them, the fault is in them that require such things at our hands; as, being contrary to the mind and will of God, cannot be done by us. We being innocent, nay commendable in the forbearing of them, (as *the innocent person is in the case of a divorce*) must needs be free.

2. *It is sometimes necessary to forsake a visible Church.* Nay more, it may be necessary to *believe and act directly contrary to the Authority of the present Church.* Thus the *Jews* were bound to believe our Saviour for to be the *Messias*, and to hear and obey him in all things, though they were forbidden so to do by the *High Priests and Rulers*, who, we know, determined concerning *Christ* that he was a Seducer and a Blasphemer. Yet what would not the *Church of Rome* give to have so clear and full a Testimony for her definitive Power in all Controversies, as that *Jewish Church* had derived unto it from *God himself*? *Deut. 17. 8. 9.*

But God never parted with his Sovereignty which he hath over all men: and where his mind and will is evident, that must be a Law paramount unto us, though it should be never so much gainsaid by any other. All other Superiours are subordinate unto him, who is the only Lord in chief; nay, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.* And as those Souldiers *Rev. 19. 16.* do but their duty, who out of a sense of their sworn Allegiance to their Prince, will not join with their Commander in the betraying of a Fort or Town: so if we dare not betray the Truths of God, nor the Souls of men unto the will of any whomsoever, we doubt not but that God does approve of our fidelity unto him, and will say unto us at the last, *Well done, good and faithful servants.*

And thus I have gone through some of those many things which we have to plead for our *separated* condition from the *Church of Rome*, whom we have so long, so undeservedly suffered under. But though they have nothing for us but Execrations and Curses, Fire and Faggot, yet let us return our bitterest Lamentations over them, and heartiest Prayers for them. It is a Lamentation, and shall be for a Lamentation, that so many millions of pretious souls are walking in *paths which lead to the chambers of death.* Oh that we could pluck them as *Brands out of everlasting burnings.* One means only I would caution against, *viz.* Our becoming theirs in hope to make them ours. I might observe how God hath blasted all such endeavours, and that they have more strengthened their hands, and weakned ours, than all the Weapons or Arguments that ever were used by them: and above all, God hath expressly commanded us *to come out of her, and not to partake of her sins.* But if *Rev. 18. 4.* by our careful and faithful instructing, our meek, charitable, and holy living, we can gain any of them, we shall *bide a multitude of sins,* and *James 5. ult.* our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

Application.

In the mean time if we should suffer still by them for well-doing, the Text affords us Considerations enough to sweeten such a suffering condition unto us.

Three Consolatory Inferences.

1. In that it is but from men: *When men shall hate you.* Now we know there is a *Nil ultra*, an utmost that men can do. 'Tis but to the Body, and it is but in this World.

2. It is for *the Son of Man's sake that we thus suffer*; and if he had required greater matters of us, would we not have done them? I am sure that he hath deserved them at our hands: besides, these *do turn for a Testimony* unto us of the Truth of his Doctrine, whose words we find so exactly fulfilled amongst us unto this day. Not to speak of the *Consolation which shall abound by Christ in all them in whom the sufferings of Christ do abound.*

2 Cor. I. 5.

3. Christ hath pronounced such sufferers blessed: *Blessed are ye.*

1. 'Tis Christ's *Judgment on our case and condition.* And he, we may truly say then, sees not as man sees. What blessedness in the opinion of men can there be to be *bated, separated, reproached?* &c. But

2. It is not a bare opinion (though his could not be erroneous) that we are blessed, but it is Christ's effective sentence: his *dicere* is *facere*. Christ doth *make them blessed* whom he pronounces to be so; and he can make a blessed Persecution. *If he bless, who can curse?* or if they do, he can turn their Cursings into Blessings. Well may we then conclude with the Prayer of the Psalmist, *Lord, let them curse, but bless thou.*

Psal. 109. 28.

SERM.