

his commodity and lust; where he is a teacher he will be a king, and sendeth his truth as the instrument of his government, and not as a slave or pander to the flesh: he that will "do God's will shall know it^b." But the carnal mind that cannot be subject to God's law, is unfit to receive it, because it is spiritually discerned^c.

CHAPTER VIII.

Directions for the Union and Communion of Saints, and the avoiding Unpeaceableness and Schism.

THE peace and concord of believers is a thing that almost all those plead for, who call themselves believers; and yet a thing that almost all men hinder and resist while they commend it^a. The discord and divisions of believers, are as commonly spoken against, and by the same men, as commonly fomented. The few that are sincere (both rulers and private men) desire concord and hate divisions in love to holiness which is promoted by it, and in love to the church, and good of souls, and the honour of religion, and the glory of God; and the few of those few that are experienced, wise, judicious persons, do choose the means that are fittest to attain these ends, and do prudently and constantly prosecute them accordingly; but these being in the world as a spoonful of fresh water cast into the sea, or a spoonful of water cast into the flames of a house on fire, no wonder if the briny sea be not sweetened by them, nor the consuming, raging fire quenched by them. The other rulers of the world and of the churches, are for concord and against division, because this tendeth to the quieting of the people under them, and the making of men submissive and obedient to their wills, and so to confirm their dignities, dominions and interests^b. And all men that are not holy, being predominantly selfish, they would all be themselves the centre of that union, and bond of that concord which they desire: and they

^b John vii. 17.

^c Rom. viii. 7. 1 Cor. ii/14.

^a Of this subject I have written already, 1. My "Universal Concord." 2. My "Catholic Unity." 3. Of the "True Catholic Church." 4. My "Christian Concord."

^b Read over Sir Francis Bacon's third Essay; and Hales of Schism.

would have it accomplished upon such terms and by such means as are most agreeable to their principles and ends ; in which there are almost as many minds as men : so that among all the commenders of unity and concord, there are none that take the way to attain it, but those that would centre it all in God, and seek it upon his terms, and in his way. The rest are all tearing unity and peace in pieces, while they commend it, and they fight against it while they seek it; every man seeking it for himself, and upon his own terms, and in his own way; which are so various and inconsistent, that east and west may sooner meet than they.

Yet must the sons of God be still the sons of peace, and continue their prayers and endeavours for unity, how small soever be the hopes of their success : “ If it be possible, as much as in us lieth, we must live peaceably with all men.” So far must they be from being guilty of any schisms or unlawful divisions of the church, that they must make it a great part of their care and work to preserve the unity and peace of Christians. In this therefore I shall next direct them.

Direct. 1. ‘ Understand first wherein the unity of Christians and churches doth consist :’ or else you will neither know how to preserve it, nor when you violate it^c. Christians are said to be united to Christ, when they are entered into covenant with him, and are become his disciples, his subjects, and the members of his (political) body. They are united to one another when they are united to Christ their common head, and when they have that spirit, that faith, that love which is communicated to every living member of the body. This union is not the making of many to be one Christian ; but of many Christians to be one church : which is considerable either as to its internal life, or its external order and profession. In the former respect the bonds of our union are, 1. The heart-covenant (or faith). 2. And the Spirit ; the consent of Christ and of ourselves concurring, doth make the match or marriage between us ; and the Spirit communicated from him to us is as the nerves or ligaments of the body, or rather as the spirits which pass through all. The union of the church considered visibly in its outward policy, is either that of the whole church, or

^c In veste Christi varietas sit; scissura non sit. They be two things, unity and uniformity. Lord Bacon, Essay iii.

of the particular churches within themselves, or of divers particular churches accidentally united. 1. The union of the whole is essential, integral, or accidental. The essential union is that relation of a head and members, which is between Christ and all the visible members of his church: the foundation of it is the mutual covenant between Christ and them, considered on their part as made externally, whether sincerely or not: this is usually done in baptism, and is the chiefest act of their profession of the faith. Thus the baptismal covenant doth constitute us members of the visible church. The integral and accidental union I pass by now. 2. Besides this union of the universal church with Christ the universal head, there is in all particular organized churches, a subordinate union, (1.) Between the pastor and the flock. (2.) Between the people one towards another; which consisteth in these their special relations to each other. 3. And there is an accidental union of many particular churches: as when they are united under one civil government; or consociated by their pastors in one synod or council. These are the several sorts of church union.

Direct. 11. 'Understand also wherein the communion of Christians and churches doth consist: that you may know what it is that you must hold to.' In the universal church your internal communion with Christ consisteth in his communication of his Spirit and grace, his Word and mercies unto you; and in your returns of love, and thanks and obedience unto him; and in your seeking to him, depending on him, and receivings from him: your internal communion with the church or saints, consisteth in mutual love, and other consequent affections, and in praying for, and doing good to one another as yourselves, according to your abilities and opportunities. Your external communion with Christ and with most of the church in heaven and earth, is not mutually visible and local; for it is but a small number comparatively that we ever see; but it consisteth in Christ's visible communication of his Word, his officers, and his ordinances and mercies unto you, and in your visible learning and reception of them, and obedience to him, and expressions of your love and gratitude towards him. Your external communion with the universal church, consisteth in the prayers of the church for you, and your prayers for the

church; in your holding the same faith, and professing to love and worship the same God, and Saviour, and Sanctifier, in the same holy ordinances, in order to the same eternal end.

Your external communion in the same particular congregations, consisteth in your assembling together to hear the preaching of God's Word, and to receive the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, and pray and praise God, and to help each other in knowledge and holiness, and walk together in the fear of the Lord.

Your communion with other neighbour churches, lieth in praying for and counselling each other, and keeping such correspondencies as shall be found necessary to maintain that love, and peace, and holiness which all are bound to seek, according to your abilities and opportunities.

Note here, that communion is one thing, and subjection is another. It is not your subjection to other churches that is required to your communion with them. The churches that Paul wrote to at Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, &c., had communion together according to their capacities in that distance; but they were not subject one to another, any otherwise than as all are commanded to be subject to each other in humility^d. The church of Rome now accuseth all the Christians in the world of separating from their communion, unless they will take them for their rulers, and obey them as the mistress church: but Paul speaketh not one syllable to any of the churches of any such thing, as their obedience to the church of Rome. To your own pastors you owe subjection stably as well as communion; and to other pastors of the churches of Christ (fixed or unfixed), you owe a temporary subjection so far as you are called to make use of them (as sick persons do to another physician, when the physician of the hospital is out of the way): but one church is not the ruler of another, or any one of all the rest, by any appointment of the king of the church.

Direct. 111. 'By the help of what is already said, you are next distinctly to understand how far you are bound to union or communion with any other, church or person, and what distance, separation, or division is a sin, and what is

^d 1 Pet. v. 5.

not :’ that so you may neither causelessly trouble yourselves with scruples, nor trouble the church by sinful schism.

I. There must be an union among all churches and Christians in these following particulars. 1. They have all but one God. 2. And one Head and Saviour, Jesus Christ. 3. And one Sanctifier, the Holy Ghost. 4. And one ultimate end and hope, even the fruition of God in heaven. 5. And one Gospel to teach them the knowledge of Christ, and contain the promise of their salvation. 6. And one kind of faith that is wrought hereby. 7. And one and the same covenant (of which baptism is the seal) in which they are engaged to God. 8. And the same instrumental founders of our faith, under Jesus Christ, even the prophets and apostles. 9. And all members of the same universal body. 10. And all have the same new nature and holy disposition, and the same holy affections, in loving God and holiness, and hating sin. 11. They all own, as to the essential parts, the same law of God, as the rule of their faith and life, even the sacred canonical Scriptures. 12. Every member hath a love to the whole, and to each other, especially to the more excellent and useful members ; and an inclination to holy communion with each other. 13. They have all a propensity to the same holy means and employment, as prayer, learning the Word of God, and doing good to others. All these things the true living members of the church have in sincerity, and the rest have in profession.

II. There will be still a diversity among the churches and particular Christians in these following points, without any dissolution of the fore-described unity. 1. They will not be of the same age or standing in Christ ; but some babes, some young men, and some fathers. 2. They will not have the same degrees of strength, of knowledge, and of holiness : some will have need to be fed with milk, and be unskilful in the word of righteousness. 3. They will differ in the kind and measure of their gifts : some will excel in one kind, and some in another, and some in none at all. 4. They will differ in their natural temper, which will make some to be more hot and some more mild, some more quick and some more dull, some of more regulated wits and some more scattered and confused. 5. They will differ in

spiritual health and soundness ; one will be more orthodox and another more erroneous ; one will have a better appetite to the wholesome word than others that are inclining to novelties and vain janglings ; one will walk more blamelessly than another ; some are full of joy and peace, and others full of grief and trouble. 6. They differ much in usefulness and service to the body ; some are pillars to support the rest, and some are burdensome and troublers of the church. 7. It is the will of Christ that they differ in office and employment ; some being pastors and teachers to the rest. 8. There may be much difference in the manner of their worshipping God ; some observing days and difference of meats and drinks, and forms and other ceremonies, which others observe not : and several churches may have several modes. 9. These differences may possibly by the temptation of satan, arise to vehement contentions, and not only to the censuring and despising of each other, but to the rejecting of each other from the communion of the several churches, and forbidding one another to preach the Gospel, and the banishing or imprisoning one another, as Constantine himself did banish Athanasius, and as Chrysostom and many another have felt. 10. Hence it followeth, that as in the visible church some are the members of Christ, and some are indeed the children of the devil, some shall be saved and some be damned, even with the sorest damnation, (the greatest difference in the world to come being betwixt the visible members of the church,) so among the godly and sincere themselves, they are not all alike amiable or happy, but they shall differ in glory as they do in grace. All these differences there have been, are, and will be in the church, notwithstanding its unity in other things.

III. The word 'schism' cometh from 'σχίζω,' 'disseco, lacero,' and signifieth any sinful division among Christians. Some Papists (as Johnson) will have nothing called schism, but a dividing one's self from the Catholic church : others maintain that there is nothing in Scripture called schism, but making divisions in particular churches*. The truth

* The true placing the bounds of unity importeth exceedingly. Which will be done if the points fundamental, and of substance in religion were truly discerned and distinguished from points not merely of faith, but of opinion, order, or good intention. This is a thing that may seem to many a matter trivial, and done already ; but if it

is, (obvious in the thing itself) that there are several sorts of schism or division. 1. There is a causing divisions in a particular church, when yet no party divideth from that church, much less from the universal. Thus Paul blameth the divisions that were among the Corinthians, while one said 'I am of Paul,' and another, 'I am of Apollos,' &c. 1 Cor. iii. 3. And 1 Cor. xi. 18. "I hear that there be divisions among you:" not that they separated from each other's communion, but held a disorderly communion. Such divisions he vehemently dissuadeth them from, 1 Cor. i. 10. And thus he persuadeth the Romans, (xvi. 17.) to "mark them which cause divisions and offences among them, contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, and avoid them;" which it seems therefore were not such as had avoided the church first. He that causeth differences of judgment and practice, and contendings in the church, doth cause divisions, though none separate from the church.

2. And if this be a fault, it must be a greater fault to cause divisions from, as well as in, a particular church, which a man may do that separateth not from it himself: as if he persuade others to separate, or if he sow those tares of error which cause it, or if he causelessly excommunicate or cast them out.

3. And then it must be as great a sin to make a causeless separation from the church that you are in yourself, which is another sort of schism. If you may not divide in the church, nor divide others from the church, then you may not causelessly divide the common from it yourselves.

4. And it is yet a greater schism, when you divide not only from that one church, but from many; because they concur in opinion with that one, (which is the common way of dividers).

5. And it is yet a greater schism, when whole churches separate from each other, and renounce due communion with each other without just cause: as the Greeks, Latins, and Protestants in their present distance, must some of them (whoever it is) be found guilty.

6. And yet it is a greater schism than this, when churches do not only separate from each other causelessly,

were done less partially, it would be embraced more generally. Lord Bacon, *Essay* iii.

but also unchurch each other, and endeavour to cut off each other from the church universal, by denying each other to be true churches of Christ. It is a more grievous schism to withdraw from a true church as no church, than as a corrupt church; that is, to cut off a church from Christ, and the church Catholic, than to abstain from communion with it as a scandalous or offending church.

7. It is yet '*cæteris paribus*' a higher degree of schism to divide yourselves (a person or a church) from the universal church without just cause, though you separate from it but '*secundum quid*,' in some accidental respect where unity is needful (for where unity is not required, there disunion is no sin): yet such a person that is separate but '*secundum quid*,' from something accidental, or integral, but not essential to the Catholic church, is still a Catholic Christian, though he sin.

8. But as for the highest degree of all, viz. to separate from the universal church '*simpliciter*,' or in some essential respect, this is done by nothing but by heresy or apostasy. However the Papists make men believe that schismatics that are neither heretics nor apostates, do separate themselves wholly or simply from the Catholic church, this is a mere figment of their brains. For he that separateth not from the church in any thing essential to it, doth not truly and simply separate from the church, but '*secundum quid*,' from something separable from the church. But whatever is essential to the church, is necessary to salvation; and he that separateth from it upon the account of his denying any thing necessary to salvation, is an heretic or an apostate: that is, if he do it, as denying some one (or more) essential point of faith or religion, while he pretendeth to hold all the rest, he is an heretic: if he deny the whole Christian faith, he is a flat apostate; and these are more than to be schismatics.

The word '*heresy*' also is variously taken by ecclesiastical writers. Austin will have heresy to be an inveterate schism: Jerome maketh it to be some perverse opinion; some call every schism which gathereth a separated party from the rest, by the name of heresy; some call it a heresy if there be a perilous error though without any schism; some call it a heresy only when schism is made, and a party se-

parated upon the account of some perilous error. Some say this error must be damnable, that is, in the essentials of religion; and some say, it is enough if it be but dangerous. Among all these, the commonest sense of a 'heretic' is, one that obstinately erreth in some essential point, and divideth from the communion of other Christians upon that account. And so Parsons and many Protestants take heresy for the species, and schism for the genus. All schism is not heresy; but all heresy, say they, is schism. Remember that all this is but a controversy 'de nomine,' and therefore of small moment.

By this that I have said you may perceive who they be that are guilty of church divisions: As, 1. The sparks of it are kindled, when proud and self-conceited persons are brain-sick in the fond estimation of their own opinions, and heart-sick by a feverish zeal for propagating them. Ignorant souls think that every change of their opinions is made by such an accession of heavenly light, that if they should not bestir them to make all of the same mind, they should be betrayers of the truth, and do the world unspeakable wrong. When they measure and censure men as they receive or reject their peculiar discoveries or conceits, schism is in the egg.

2. The fire is blown up, when men are desirous to have a party follow them and cry them up, and thereupon are busy in persuading others to be of their mind, and do speak perverse things to draw away disciples after them. And when they would be counted the masters of a party.

3. The flames break forth, when by this means the same church, or divers churches do fall into several parties burning in zeal against each other, abating charity, censuring and condemning one another, backbiting and reviling each other, through envy and strife; when they look strangely at one another, as being on several sides, as if they were not children of the same Father, nor members of the same body; or as if Christ were divided, one being of Paul, and another of Apollos, and another of Cephas, and every one of a faction, letting out their thoughts in jealousies and evil surmises of each other; perverting the words and actions of each to an ugly sense, and snatching occasions to represent one another as fools or odious to the hearers, as if you should plainly

say, 'I pray you hate or despise these people whom I hate and despise.' This is the core of the plague-sore. It is schism in the bud.

4. When people in the same church do gather into private meetings, not under the guidance of their pastors, to edify one another in holy exercises in love and peace, but in opposition to their lawful pastors, or to one another, to propagate their singular opinions, and increase their parties, and speak against those that are not on their side; schism is then ready to bring forth and multiply, and the swarm is ready to come forth and be gone.

5. When these people actually depart, and renounce or forsake the communion of the church, and cast off their faithful pastors, and draw into a separated body by themselves, and choose them pastors and call themselves a church, and all without any just, sufficient cause: when thus churches are gathered out of churches, before the old ones are dissolved, or they have any warrant to depart; when thus pastor is set up against pastor, church against church, and altar against altar; this is schism ripe and fruitful. The swarm is gone, and hived in another place.

6. If now the neighbour churches by their pastors in their synods, shall in compassion seek to reclaim these stragglers, and they justify their unjust separation, and condemn the counsel of the churches and ministers of Christ; this is a confirmed, obstinate schism.

7. If they shall also judge that church to be no church from which they separated, and so cut off a part of the body of Christ by an unrighteous censure, and condemn the innocent, and usurp authority over their guides; this is disobedience and uncharitableness with schism.

8. If they shall also condemn and unchurch all the other churches that are not of their mind and way, and renounce communion with them all, and so condemn unjustly a great part of the body of Christ on earth, this is to add fury and rebellion to an uncharitable schism. And if to cover their sin, they shall unjustly charge these churches which they reject, with heresy or wickedness, they do but multiply their crimes by such extenuations.

9. If the opinion that all this ado is made for, be a damn-

ing error, against some essential point of the true religion, then it is heresy as well as schism.

10. If this separation from the church be made in defence of an ungodly life, against the discipline of the church : if a wicked sort of men shall withdraw from the church to avoid the disgrace of confession or excommunication ; and shall first cast off the church, lest the church should proceed to cast out them ; and so they separate that they may have none to govern and trouble them but themselves ; this is a profane, rebellious schism. This is the common course of schism when it groweth towards the height.

11. Besides all these, there is yet a more pernicious way of schism, which the church or court of Rome is guilty of : they make new articles of faith, and new points of religion, and a new worship—of God, shall I say, or of bread as if it were a God ? And all these they put into a law, and impose them on all the other churches ; yea, they put them into an oath, and require men to swear that without any doubting they believe them to be true : they pretend to have authority for all this, as Rome is the mistress of all other churches. They set up a new universal head, as an essential part of the Catholic church, and so found or feign a new kind of Catholic church : and he that will not obey them in all this, they renounce communion with him, and to hide this horrid, notorious schism, they call all schismatics that are not thus subjected to them.

12. And to advance their schism to the height, as far as arrogance can aspire, they not only refuse communion with those from whom they separate, but condemn them as no pastors, no churches, no Christians, that are not subject to them in this their usurpation : and they, that are but about the third or fourth part (at most) of the Christian world, do condemn the body of Christ to hell (even all the rest) because they are not subjects of the pope.

Besides all this criminal, odious schism, of imposers or separators, there is a degree of schism or unjust division, which may be the infirmity of a good and peaceable person. As if a humble, tender Christian should mistakingly think it unlawful to do some action that is imposed upon all that will hold communion with that particular church (such as

Paul speaketh of Rom. xiv. if they had been imposed): and if he, suspecting his own understanding, do use all means to know the truth, and yet still continueth in his mistake; if this Christian do forbear all reviling of his superiors, and censuring those that differ from him, and drawing others to his opinion, but yet dare not join with the church in that which he taketh to be a sin, this is a sinful sort of withdrawing, because it is upon mistake; but yet it is but a pardonable infirmity, consistent with integrity, and the favour of God.

IV. In these cases following separation is our duty and not a sin. 1. The church's separation from the unbelieving world is a necessary duty; for what is a church, but a society dedicated or sanctified to God, by separation from the rest of the world? "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The church is a holy people, and therefore a separated people^g.

2. If a church apostatize and forsake the faith, or if they turn notoriously heretical, denying openly any one essential article of the faith, and this not only by an undiscerned consequence, but directly in express terms or sense, it is our duty to deny to hold communion with such apostates or heretics: for it is their separating from Christ that is the sinful separation, and maketh it necessary to us to separate from them. But this is no excuse to any church or person that shall falsely accuse any other church or person of heresy (because of some forced or disowned consequences of his doctrine), and then separate from them when they have thus injured them by their calumnies or censures.

3. We are not bound to own that as a church which maketh not a visible profession of faith and holiness: that is, if the pastors and a sufficient number of the flock make not this profession. For as the pastor and flock are the constituent parts of the church, politically considered, so profession of faith and holiness is the essential qualification of the members. If either pastors or people want this profession, it is no political church; but if the people profess true

^g 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

^h Leg. Gratum de Imp. pp. 230, 231.

religion, and have no pastors, it is a community of believers, or a church unorganized, and as such to be acknowledged.

4. If any shall unlawfully constitute a new political church-form, by making new constitutive officers to be its visible head, which Christ never appointed, we are not to hold communion with the church in its devised form or polity: though we may hold communion with the members of it considered as Christians and members of the universal church. Mark well, that I do not say that every new devised officer disobligeeth us from such communion, but such as I describe; which I shall more fully open.

Quest. May not men place new officers in the church; and new forms of government which God never instituted? Or is there any form and officers of Divine institution?

Ans. Though I answered this before, I shall here briefly answer it again. 1. There are some sorts of officers that are essential to the polity, or church-form, and some that are only needful to the wellbeing of it, and some that are only accidental. 2. There is a church-form of God's own institution, and there is a superadded human polity, or form. There are two sorts of churches, or church-forms of God's own institution. The first is the universal church considered politically as headed by Jesus Christ: this is so of Divine appointment, as that it is an article of our creed. Here if any man devise and superinduce another head of the universal church, which God never appointed, though he pretend to hold his sovereignty from Christ and under him, it is treason against the sovereignty of Christ, as setting up an universal government or sovereign in his church without his authority and consent. Thus the pope is the usurping head of a rebellion against Christ, and in that sense by Protestants called antichrist. And he is guilty of the rebellion that subscribeth to, or owneth his usurpation, or sweareth to him as his governor, though he promise to obey him but 'in licitis et honestis;' because it is not lawful or honest to consent to an usurper's government. If an usurper should traiterously, without the king's consent, proclaim himself vice-king of Ireland or Scotland, and falsely say that he hath the king's authority, when the king disclaimeth him, he that should voluntarily swear obedience to him in things lawful and honest, doth voluntarily own

his usurpation and treason. And it is not the lawfulness and honesty of the matter which will warrant us to own the usurpation of the commander^g. And secondly there is another subordinate church-form of Christ's institution; that is, particular churches consisting of pastors and people conjoined for personal communion in God's worship. These are to the universal church, as particular corporations are to a kingdom, even such parts of it as have a distinct subordinate polity of their own: it is no city or corporation, if they have not their mayors, bailiffs, or other chief officers, subject to the king, as governors of the people under him. And it is no particular church, in a political sense, but only a community, if they have not their pastors to be under Christ, their spiritual conductors in the matters of salvation; as there is no school which is not constituted of teacher and scholars. That particular organized political churches are of Christ's institution (by his Spirit in the apostles) is undeniable. "They ordained them elders in every church^h." "Ordain elders in every city as I commanded theeⁱ." "He sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church^k." "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God^l." Thus far it is no question but church-forms and government is of Divine appointment: and man can no more alter this, or set up such other without God's consent, than a subject can alter or make corporations without the king's consent. 2. But besides these two sorts of Divine institution, there are other allowable associations which some call churches. God hath required these particular churches to hold such communion as they are capable of, for promoting the common ends of Christianity: and prudence is left to determine of the times, and places, and manner of their pastors assemblies, councils, and correspondencies according to God's general rules. If any will call these councils, or the associations engaged for special correspondencies, by the name of churches, I will not trouble any with a strife about the name. In this case so far as men have power to make that association or combination which they call a

^g Leg. Grotium de Imp. pp. 223. 226.

^h Acts xiv. 23.

ⁱ Tit. i. 5.

^k Acts xx. 17.

^l Acts xx. 28. So 1 Thes. v. 12, 13. Heb. xiii. 7. 17, 24. &c. 1 Cor. vii. 23.

church, so also if they make officers suited to its ends, not encroaching upon the churches or officers of Christ's own institution, I am none of those that will contend against them; nor will this allow us to deny communion with them.

3. And in those churches which Christ himself hath instituted, there are officers that make but for the integrity, and not for the political essence of the church: as deacons, and all pastors or presbyters more than one. For it is not essential to it to have any deacons, or many pastors. As to this sort of officers, Christ hath appointed them, and it is not in man's power to alter his institution, nor to set up any such like in co-ordination with these: but yet if they should do so, as long as the true essentials of the church remain, I am not to deny communion with that church, so I own not this corruption.

4. But there are also as circumstantial employments about God's worship, so officers to do those employments, which men may lawfully institute: as clerks, church-wardens, doorkeepers, ringers, &c. It is not the adding of these that is any sin. By this time you may see plainly both how far churches, officers, and church-government is 'jure divino,' and how far man may or may not add or alter, and what I meant in my proposition, viz. That if men introduce a new universal head to the church Catholic, or a new head to particular churches, instead of that of Christ's institution, this is 'in sensu politico,' to make new species of churches, and destroy those that Christ hath instituted; (for the 'pars gubernans,' and 'pars gubernata' are the essential constituents of a church). And with such a church, as such, in specie, I must have no communion (which is our case with the Papal church); though with the material parts of that church, as members of Christ, I may hold communion still.

5. If particular members are guilty of obstinate impenitency in true heresy, or ungodliness, or any scandalous crime, the church may and must remove such from her communion; for it is the communion of saints. And the offender is the cause of this separation.

6. If a whole church be guilty of some notorious, scandalous sin, and refuse with obstinacy to repent and reform, when admonished by neighbour churches, or if that church do thus defend such a sin in any of her members, so as

openly to own it; other churches may refuse communion with her, till she repent and be reformed. Or if they see cause to hold communion with her in other respects, yet in this they must have none ^m.

7. If any church will admit none to her personal communion, but those that will take some false oath, or subscribe any untruth, or tell a lie, though that church do think it to be true, (as the Trent oath which their priests all swear,) it is not lawful to do any such unlawful thing to obtain communion with that church: and he that refuseth in this case to commit this sin, is no way guilty of the separation, but is commendable for being true to God ⁿ. And though the case may be sad to be deprived of the liberty of public worship, and the benefits of public communion with that church, yet sin is worse, and obedience is better than sacrifice ^o. God will not be served with sin, nor accept the sacrifice of a disobedient fool ^p. Nor must we lie to glorify him, nor do evil that good may come by it: just is the damnation of such servers of God ^q. All public worship is rather to be omitted, than any one sin committed to enjoy it: (though neither should be done where it is possible to do better.) It is not so unwise to think to feed a man with poisons, as to think to serve God acceptably by sin.

8. If any one church would ambitiously usurp a governing power over others (as Rome doth over the world), it is no unwarrantable separation to refuse the government of that usurping church. We may hold communion with them as Christians, and yet refuse to be their subjects. And therefore it is a proud and ignorant complaint of the church of Rome, that the Protestants separate from them as to communion, because they will not take them for their governor.

9. If any by violence will banish or cast out the true bishops or pastors of the church, and set up usurpers in their stead (as in the Arian's persecution it was commonly done), it is no culpable separation, but laudable, and a duty,

^m But not denying her to be a church, unless she cast off some essential part; but so disowning her as in 2 Thess. iii.

ⁿ Where any church, retaining the parity of doctrine, doth require the owning of and conforming to any unlawful or suspected practice, men may lawfully deny conformity to, and communion with that church in such things, without incurring the guilt of schism. Mr. Stillingfleet. Iren. p. 117.

^o 1 Sam. xv. 22. Prov. xv. 8.

^p Eccles. v. 1, 2.

^q Rom. i. 7, 8.

for the people to own their relation to their true pastors, and deny communion with the usurpers; as the people of the Eastern churches did commonly refuse communion with the intruding bishops, even to the death, telling the civil rulers, that they had bishops of their own, to whom they would adhere.

10. If a true church will obstinately deny her members the use of any one ordinance of God, as preaching, or reading Scripture, or prayer, or praise, or discipline, while it retaineth all the rest, though we may not separate from this church as no church (which yet in the case of total rejection of prayer or praise, is very questionable at least), yet if we have opportunity, we must remove our local communion to a more edifying church, that useth all the public ordinances of God: unless the public good forbid, or some great impediment, or contrary duty be our excuse.

11. If a true church will not cast out any impenitent, notorious, scandalous sinner, though I am not to separate from the church, yet I am bound to avoid private familiarity with such a person, that he may be ashamed, and that I partake not of his sin^t.

12. As the church hath diversity of members, some more holy, and some less, and some of whose sincerity we have small hope, some that are more honourable, and some less, some that walk blamelessly, and some that work iniquity; so ministers and private members, are bound to difference between them accordingly, and to honour and love some far above others, whom yet we may not excommunicate; and this is no sinful separation^t.

13. If the church that I live and communicate with, do hold any tolerable error, I may differ therein from the church, without a culpable separation. Union with the church may be continued with all the diversities before mentioned, Direct. iii.

14. In case of persecution in one church or city, when the servants of Christ do fly to another (having no special reason to forbid it), this is no sinful separation^t.

15. If the public service of the church require a

^t 2 John x. 11. 2 Tim. iii. 5. Rom. xvi. 17. 1 Cor. v. 11.

^t Matt. xiii. 41. 30. Jer. xv. 19. 1 Cor. xii. 25, 24.

^t Matt. x. 23.

minister or private Christian to remove to another church, if it be done deliberately and upon good advice, it is no sinful separation.

16. If a lawful prince or magistrate command us to remove our habitation, or command a minister from one church to another, when it is not notoriously to the detriment of the common interest of religion, it is no sinful separation to obey the magistrate.

17. If a poor Christian that hath a due and tender care of his salvation, do find that under one minister his soul declineth and groweth dead, and under another that is more sound, and clear, and lively, he is much edified to a holy and heavenly frame and life, and if hereupon, preferring his salvation before all things, he remove to that church and minister where he is most edified, without unchurching the other by his censures, this is no sinful separation, but a preferring the one thing needful before all.

18. If one part of the church have leisure, opportunity, cause, and earnest desires to meet oftener for the edifying of their souls, and redeeming their time, than the poorer, labouring, or careless and less zealous part will meet, in any fit place, under the oversight and conduct of their pastors, and not in opposition to the more public, full assemblies, as they did, Acts xii. 12. to pray for Peter at the house of Mary, "where many were gathered together praying;" and Acts x. 1., &c. this is no sinful separation.

19. If a man's own outward affairs require him to remove his habitation from one city or country to another, and there be no great matter to prohibit it, he may lawfully remove his local communion from the church that he before lived with, to that which resideth in the place he goeth to. For with distant churches and Christians I can have none but mental communion, or by distant means, (as writing, messengers, &c.); it is only with present Christians that I can have local, personal communion.

20. It is possible in some cases that a man may live long without local, personal communion with any Christians or church at all, and yet not be guilty of sinful separation. As the king's ambassador or agent in a land of infidels, or some traveller, merchants, factors, or such as go to convert the

infidels, or those that are banished or imprisoned. In all these twenty cases, some kind of separation may be lawful.

21. One more I may add, which is, when the temples are so small, and the congregations so great, that there is no room to hear and join in the public worship; or when the church is so excessively great, as to be incapable of the proper ends of the society; in this case to divide or withdraw, is no sinful separation. When one hive will not hold the bees, the swarm must seek themselves another, without the injury of the rest.

By all this you may perceive, that sinful separation is first in a censorious, uncharitable mind, condemning churches, ministers, and worship causelessly, as unfit for them to have communion with. And secondly, it is in the personal separation which is made in pursuance of this censure: but not in any local removal that is made on other lawful grounds.

Direct. iv. 'Understand and consider well the reasons why Christ so frequently and earnestly presseth concord on his church, and why he so vehemently forbiddeth divisions. Observe how much the Scripture speaketh to this purpose, and upon what weighty reasons.' Here are four things distinctly to be represented to your serious consideration. 1. How many, plain, and urgent are the texts that speak for unity, and condemn division. 2. The great benefits of concord. 3. And the mischiefs of discord and divisions in the church. 4. And the aggravations of the sin.

I. A true Christian that hateth fornication, drunkenness, lying, perjury, because they are forbidden in the Word of God, will hate divisions also when he well observeth how frequently and vehemently they are forbidden, and concord highly commended and commanded. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." Here you see, that the unity of the saints must be a special means to con-

▪ John xvii. 21—23.

vince the infidel world of the truth of Christianity, and to prove God's special love to his church, and also to accomplish their own perfection. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions (or schisms) among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared to me of you, my brethren,——that there are contentions among you——." "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, (zeal,) and strife, and divisions, (or parties, or factions,) are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" "If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves." "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions (or parties), and offences (or scandals), contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." Abundance more such texts may be recited.

II. The great benefits of the concord of Christians are these following. 1. It is necessary to the very life of the church and its several members, that they be all one body. As their union with Christ the head and principle of their life is principally necessary, so unity among themselves is secondarily necessary, for the conveyance and reception of that life which floweth to all from Christ. For though the head be the fountain of life, yet the nerves and other parts must convey that life unto the members; and if any member be cut off or separated from the body, it is separated also from the head, and perisheth. Mark well those words of the apostle, Ephes. iv. 3—16. "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

* 1 Cor. i. 10, 11.

† Phil. ii. 1—4.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 3, 4.

§ Rom. xvi. 17, 18.

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.—And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that — speaking the truth in love, we 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 every joint of supply, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love.” See here how the church’s unity is necessary to its life and increase, and to the due nutrition of all the parts.

2. The unity of the church and the concord of believers, are necessary to its strength and safety; for Christ also strengtheneth as well as quickeneth them by suitable means. Woe to him that is alone: but in the army of the Lord of hosts we may safely march on, when stragglers are caught up or killed by the weakest enemy. A threefold cord is not easily broken. Enemies both spiritual and corporal are deterred from assaulting the church or any of its members, while they see us walk in our military unity and order. In this posture every man is a blessing and defence unto his neighbour. As every soldier hath the benefit of all the conduct, wisdom, and valour of the whole army, while he keepeth in his place; so every weak Christian hath the use and benefit of all the learning, the wisdom, and gifts of the church, while he keepeth his station, and walketh orderly in the church. The hand, the eye, the ear, the foot, and every member of the body, is as ready to help or serve the whole, and every other particular member as itself; but if it be cut off, it is neither helpful, nor to be helped. O what a mercy is it for every Christian, that is unable to help himself, to have the help of all the church of God! Their directions, their exhortations, their love, their prayers, their liberality and compassion, according to their several abilities and opportunities! As infants and sick persons have the help of all the rest of the family that are in health.

3. Unity and concord, as they proceed from love, so they greatly cherish and increase love: even as the laying of the wood or coals together is necessary to the making of the fire, which separating of them will put out^b. Holy concord cherisheth holy converse and communion; and holy communion powerfully kindled holy love. When the servants of Christ do see in each other the lustre of his graces, and hear from each other the heavenly language which floweth from a divine and heavenly mind, this potently kindleth their affections to each other, and maketh them close with those as the sons of God, in whom they find so much of God; yea, it causeth them to love God himself in others, with a reverent, admiring, and transcendent love, when others at the best, can love them but as men. Concord is the womb and soil of love, although it be first its progeny. In quietness and peace the voice of peace is most regarded.

4. Unity and concord is the church's beauty: it maketh us amiable even to the eye of nature, and venerable and terrible even to the eye of malice. A concord in sin is no more honour, than it is for conquered men to go together in multitudes to prison or captivity; or for beasts to go by droves unto the slaughter. But to see the churches of Christ with one heart and soul acknowledging their Maker and Redeemer, and singing his praise as with one voice, and living together in love and concord, as those that have one principle, one rule, one nature, one work, one interest, and hope, and end, this is the truly beauteous symmetry, and delectable harmony. Psal. cxxxiii. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went

^b Peace containeth infinite blessings; it strengtheneth faith: it kindleth charity. The outward peace of the church distilleth into peace of conscience: and it turneth the writing and reading of controversies, into treatises of mortification and devotion. Against procuring unity by sanguinary persecutions, see Lord Bacon, *Essay 3*. Surely there is no better way to stop the rising of new sects and schisms, than to reform abuses, to compound the smaller differences, to proceed mildly, and not with sanguinary persecutions, and rather to take off the principal authors by winning and advancing them, than to enrage them by violence and bitterness. Lord Bacon in his *Essay 58*. 'Ira hominis non implet justitiam Dei.' And it was a notable observation of a wise father, that those which held and persuaded pressure of consciences, were commonly interested therein themselves for their own ends. *Id. Essay 3. p. 19.*

down to the skirts of his garment. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." The translators well put this as the contents of this Psalm, "The benefit of the communion of saints."

5. The concord of believers doth greatly conduce to the successes of the ministry, and propagation of the Gospel, and the conviction of unbelievers, and the conversion and salvation of ungodly souls.' When Christ prayeth for the unity of his disciples, he redoubleth this argument from the effect or end, "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me:" and "that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them^c." Would this make the world believe that Christ was sent of God? Yes, undoubtedly if all Christians were reduced to a holy concord, it would do more to win the heathen world, than all other means can do without it. It is the divisions and the wickedness of professed Christians, that maketh Christianity so contemned by the Mahometans, and other infidels of the world: and it is the holy concord of Christians that would convince and draw them home to Christ. Love, and peace, and concord are such virtues, as all the world is forced to applaud, notwithstanding nature's enmity to good. When the first Christian church "were all with one accord in one place, and continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house partook of food with gladness and singleness of heart, and when the multitude of believers were of one heart and of one soul^d; then did God send upon them the Holy Ghost, and then were three thousand converted at a sermon; and with "great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all^e."

Our concord in religion hath all these advantages for the converting of unbelievers and ungodly men. 1. It is a sign that there is a constraining evidence of truth in that Gospel which doth convince so many; a concurrent satisfaction and yielding to the truth, is a powerful testimony for it. 2. They see then that religion is not a matter of worldly policy and design, when so many men of contrary interests do embrace it. 3. And they see it is not the fruit of melancholy

^a John xvii. 21. 23.

^b Acts ii. 1. 46. iv. 32.

^c Acts ii. 41. iv. 33.

constitutions, when so many men of various temperatures entertain it. 4. They may see that the Gospel hath power to conquer that self-love and self-interest which is the most potent thing in vitiated nature: otherwise it could never make so many unite in God as their common interest and end. 5. They may see that the Gospel and Spirit of Christ, are stronger than the devil and all the allurements of the flesh and world, when they can make so many agree in the renouncing of all earthly vanities, for the hopes of everlasting life. 6. They will see that the design and doctrine of Christianity are good and excellent, beseeeming God, and desirable to man; when they see that they produce so good effects, as the love, and unity, and concord of mankind. 7. And it is an exceeding great and powerful help to the conversion of the world in this respect, because it is a thing so conspicuous in their sight, and so intelligible to them, and so approved by them. They are little wrought on by the doctrine of Christ alone, because it is visible or audible but to few, and understood by fewer, and containeth many things which nature doth distaste: but the holy concord of believers is a thing that they are more able to discern and judge of, and do more generally approve. The holy concord of Christians, must be the conversion of the unbelieving world, if God have so great a mercy for the world: which is a consideration that should not only deter us from divisions, but make us zealously study and labour with all our interest and might, for the healing of the lamentable divisions among Christians, if we have the hearts of Christians, and any sense of the interest of Christ.

6. The concord of Christians doth greatly conduce to the ease and peace of particular believers. The very exercise of love to one another doth sweeten all our lives and duties: we sail towards heaven in a pleasant calm, with wind and tide, when we live in love and peace together; how easy doth it make the work of godliness! How light a burden doth religion seem, when we are all as of one heart and soul!

7. Lastly, consider whether this be not the likest state to heaven, and therefore have not in it the most of Christian excellency and perfection? In heaven there is no discord, but a perfect consort of glorified spirits, harmoniously

loving and praising their Creator. And if heaven be desirable, holy concord on earth is next desirable.

III. On the contrary, consider well of the mischiefs of divisions. 1. It is the killing of the church (as much as lieth in the dividers) or the wounding it at least. Christ's body is one, and it is sensible; and therefore dividing it tendeth directly to the destroying it, and at least will cause its smart and pain. To reform the church by dividing it, is no wiser than to cut out the liver, or spleen, or gall, to cleanse them from the filth that doth obstruct them, and hinder them in their office: you may indeed thus cleanse them, but it will be a mortal cure. As he that should divide the kingdom into two kingdoms dissolveth the old kingdom, or part of it at least, to erect two new ones; so he that would divide the Catholic church into two, must thereby destroy it, if he could succeed; or destroy that part which divideth itself from the rest. Can a member live that is cut off from the body, or a branch that is separated from the tree?

Quest. 'O but,' say the Romanists, 'why then do you cut off yourselves from us: the division is made by you, and we are the church, and you are dead till you return to us? How will you know which part is the church, when a division is once made?' *Ans.* Are you the church? Are you the only Christians in the world? The church is, 'all Christians united in Christ their head.' You traitorously set up a new usurping head; and proclaim yourselves to be the whole church, and condemn all that are not subjects to your new head; we keep our station, and disclaim his usurpation, and deny subjection to you, and tell you that as you are the subjects of the pope, you are none of the church of Christ at all: from this treasonable conspiracy we withdraw ourselves; but as you are the subjects of Christ we never divided from you, nor denied you our communion^f. Let reason judge now who are the dividers. And is it not easy to know which is the church in the division? It is all those that are still united unto Christ; if you or we be divided from Christ, and from Christians that are his body, we are

^f *Concil. Tolet. iv. c. 16. 28. q. 1. Ca. Judæi qui—allow separation from a Jewish husband, if after admonition he will not be a Christian: and so do Acosta and his Concil. Limens. lib. vi c. 21. and other Jesuits, and allow the marrying of another: and sure the conjugal bond is faster than that of a pastor and his flock: may not a man then change his pastor when his soul is in apparent hazard?*

then none of the church : but if we are not divided from Christ, we are of the church still ; if part of a tree, (though the far greater part) be cut off or separated from the rest, it is that part (how small soever) that still groweth with the root that is the living tree. The Indian fig-tree, and some other trees, have branches that take root when they touch the ground : if now you ask me whether the branches springing from the second root, are members of the first tree, I answer, 1. The rest that have no new root are more undoubtedly members of it. 2. If any branches are separated from the first tree, and grow upon the new root alone, the case is out of doubt. 3. But if yet they are by continuation joined to both, that root which they receive their nutriment most from, is it which they most belong to. Suppose a tyrant counterfeit a commission from the king to be vice-king in Ireland, and proclaim all them to be traitors that receive him not ; the king disclaimeth him, the wisest subjects renounce him, and the rest obey him but so as to profess they do it, because they believe him to be commissioned by the king. Let the question be now, who are the dividers in Ireland ? and who are the king's truest subjects ? and what head it is that denominateth the kingdom ? and who are the traitors ? This is your case.

2. Divisions are the deformities of the church. Cut off a nose, or pluck out an eye, or dismember either a man or a picture, and see whether you have not deformed it. Ask any compassionate Christian, ask any insulting enemy, whether our divisions be not our deformity and shame ; the lamentation of friends and the scorn of enemies ?

3. The divisions of the church are not our own dishonour alone, but the injurious dishonour of Christ, and religion, and the Gospel. The world thinketh that Christ is an impotent king, that cannot keep his kingdom at unity in itself, when he hath himself told us, that " every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand ^s. They think the Gospel tendeth to division, and is a doctrine of dissension, when they see divisions and dissensions procured by it ; they impute all the faults of the subjects to the king, and think that Christ was confused in his legislation, and knew

^s Matt. xii. 25.

not what to teach or command, because men are confounded in their opinions or practices, and know not what to think or do. If men misunderstand the law of Christ, and one saith, This is the sense, and another saith, That is the sense, they are ready to think that Christ spake nonsense, or understood not himself, because the ignorant understand him not : who is there that converseth with the ungodly of the world, that heareth not by their reproach and scorns how much God and religion are dishonoured by the divisions of religious people.

4. And thus also our divisions do lamentably hinder the progress of the Gospel, and the conversion and salvation of the ungodly world : they think they have small encouragement to be of your religion, while your divisions seem to tell them, that you know not what religion to be of yourselves. Whatever satan or wicked men would say against religion to discourage the ungodly from it, the same will exasperated persons in these divisions say against each other's way : and when every one of you condemneth another, how should the consciences of the ungodly persuade them to accept salvation in any of those ways, which you thus condemn ? Doubtless the divisions of the Christian world, have done more to hinder the conversion of infidels, and keep the heathen and Mahometan world in their damnable ignorance and delusions, than all our power is able to undo : and have produced such desolations of the church of Christ, and such a plentiful harvest and kingdom for the devil, as every tender, Christian heart is bound to lament with tears of bitterness. If it must be that such offences shall come, yet woe to those by whom they come.

5. Divisions lay open the churches of Christ, not only to the scorn, but to the malice, will and fury of their enemies. A kingdom or house divided cannot stand : where hath the church been destroyed, or religion rooted out, in any nation of the earth, but divisions had a principal hand in the effect ? O what desolations have they made among the flocks of Christ ! As Seneca and others opened their own veins and bled to death, when Nero or such other tyrants, did send them their commands to die ; even so have many churches done by their divisions, to the gratifying of satan, the enemy of souls.

6. Divisions among Christians do greatly hinder the edification of the members of the church; while they are possessed with envyings and distaste of one another, they lose all the benefit of each other's gifts, and of that holy communion which they should have with one another. And they are possessed with that zeal and wisdom, which James calleth earthly, sensual and devilish, which corrupteth all their affections, and turneth their food to the nourishment of their disease, and maketh their very worshipping of God to become the increase of their sin. Where divisions and contentions are, the members that should grow up in humility, meekness, self-denial, holiness and love, do grow in pride, and perverse disputings, and passionate strivings, and envious wranglings: the Spirit of God departeth from them, and an evil spirit of malice and vexation taketh place; though in their passion, they know not what spirit they are of: whereas if they be of one mind, and live in peace, the God of love and peace will be with them. What lamentable instances of this calamity have we in many of the sectaries of this present time; especially in the people called Quakers, that while they pretend to the greatest austerities, do grow up to such a measure of sour pride, and uncharitable contempt of others, and especially of all superiors, and hellish railing against the holiest ministers and people, as we have scarce known, or ever read of.

7. These divisions fill the church with sin: even with sins of a most odious nature. They introduce a swarm of errors, while it becomes the mode for every one to have a doctrine of his own, and to have something to say in religion which may make him notable. "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them^s." They cherish pride, and malice, and belying others (the three great sins of the devil) as naturally as dead flesh breedeth worms; they destroy impartial, Christian love, as naturally as bleeding doth consume our vital heat and moisture. What wickedness is it that they will not cherish? In a word, the Scripture telleth us that "where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work." (And is not this a lamentable way of reformation of some imaginary or lesser evils?)

^s Act^s xx. 30.

8. These divisions are the grief of honest spectators, and cause the sorrows of those that are guilty of them. They make all their duties uneasy to them, and turn their religion into a bitter, unpleasant, wrangling toil: like oxen in the yoke that strive against each other, when they should draw in order and equality. What a grievous life is it to husband and wife, or any in the family, if they live in discord? So is it to the members of the church. When once men take the kingdom of God to consist of meats, or drinks, or ceremonies, which consisteth in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and turn to strive about unedifying questions, they turn from all the sweetness of religion.

9. Sects and divisions lead directly to apostasy from the faith. Nothing is more in the design of satan, than to confound men so with variety of religions, that they may think there is no certainty in any; that so both the ignorant spectators may think all religion is but fancy and deceit, and the contenders themselves wheel about from sect to sect, till they come to the point where they first set out, and to be at last deliberately of no religion, who at first were of none for want of deliberation. And it is no small success that satan hath had by this temptation.

10. The divisions of Christians do oft proceed to shake states and kingdoms, having a lamentable influence upon the civil peace; and this stirreth up princes' jealousies against them, and to the use of those severities, which the suffering party takes for persecution; yea, and Turks; and all princes that are enemies to reformation and holiness, do justify themselves in their most cruel persecutions, when they see the divisions of Christians, and the troubles of states that have followed thereupon. If Christians, and Protestants in special, did live in that unity, peace and order as their Lord and ruler requireth them to do, the consciences of persecutors would even worry and torment them, and make their lives a hell on earth, for their cruelty against so excellent a sort of men; but now when they see them all in confusions, and see the troubles that follow hereupon, and hear them reviling one another, they think they may destroy them as the troublers of the earth, and their consciences scarce accuse them for it.

IV. It is necessary also for your true understanding the

malignity of this sin, that you take notice of the aggravations of it, especially as to us. 1. It is a sin against so many, and clear, and vehement words of the Holy Ghost, (which I have partly before recited) that it is therefore utterly without excuse: whoredoms, and treasons, and perjury are not oftener forbidden in the Gospel than this.

2. It is contrary to the very design of Christ in our redemption; which was to reconcile us all to God, and unite and centre us all in him: "To gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad^ε." "To gather together in one all things in Christ^δ." "To make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace^ι." And shall we join with satan the divider and destroyer, against Christ the reconciler, in the very design of his redemption?

3. It is contrary to the design of the Spirit of grace, and contrary to the very nature of Christianity itself. "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit^κ." "As there is one body and one spirit, so it is our charge to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace^ι." The new nature of Christians doth consist in love, and desireth the communion of saints as such; and therefore the command of this special love is called the New Commandment, John xvii. 21. xiii. 34. xv. 12. 17. And they are said to be taught of God to love one another, 1 Thess. iv. 9. As self-preservation is the chief principle in the natural body, which causeth it to abhor the wounding, or amputation of its members, and to avoid division as destruction, except when a gangrened member must be cut off, for the saving of the body; so it is also with the mystical body of Christ. He is senseless and graceless that abhorreth not church-wounds.

4. These divisions are sins against the nearest bonds of our high relations to each other: "We are brethren, and should there be any strife among us^μ?" "We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus^ν." We are the fellow-members of the body of Christ; and should we tear his body, and separate his members, and cut his flesh, and break his bones^ο? "For as the body is one, and hath many

^ε John xi. 52.

^κ 1 Cor. xii. 13.

^ν Gal. iii. 26.

^δ Eph. i. 10.

^ι Eph. iv. 3, 4.

^ο Eph. v. 23, 30.

^ι Eph. ii. 15.

^μ Gen. xiii. 8.

members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ^p.” “As we have many members in one body—— so we being many, are one body in Christ; and every one members one of another^q.” He that woundeth or dismembereth your own bodies, shall scarce be taken for your friend; and are you Christ’s friends, when you dismember or wound his body^r? Is it lovely to see the children or servants in your family together by the ears? Are civil wars for the safety of a kingdom? Or doth that tend to the honour of the children of God, which is the shame of common men? Or is that the safety of his kingdom, which is the ruin of all others? “We are all fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God^s.” We are God’s building^t. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God: and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are^u.” Will he destroy the defilers, and will he love the dividers and destroyers? If it be so great a sin to go to law unnecessarily with brethren, or to wrong them^x, what is it to disown them, and cast them off? And if they that salute and love only their brethren, and not also their enemies, are not the children of God^y; what are they that separate from, and condemn even their brethren?

5. Church-dividers either would divide Christ himself between them, or else would rob him of a great part of his inheritance: and neither of these is a little sin. If you make several bodies, you would have several heads: and is Christ divided? saith the apostle, 1 Cor. i. 13. Will you make him a sect-master? He will be your common head as Christians; but he will be no head of your sects and parties; (I will not name them). Or would you tear out of the hands of Christ, any part of his possessions? Will he cut them off, because you cut them off? Will he separate them from himself, because you separate from them, or separate

^p 1 Cor. xii. 12.

^q Rom. xii. 4, 5.

^r Quicquid ad multitudinem vergit, antipathiam continet; et quanto magis multitudo augetur, tanto et antipathia; quicquid verò ad unitatem tendit, sympathiam habet; et quanto magis ad unitatem accedit, tanto puriori sympathia augetur. Paul Scaliger, Epist. Cath. lib. iii. p. 176.

^s Eph. ii. 19.

^t 1 Cor. iii. 9.

^u 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

^x 1 Cor. 6. 8.

^y Matt. v. 47.

them from you? Will he give them a bill of divorce, whenever you are pleased to lay any odious accusation against them? Who shall condemn them, when it is he that justifieth them? Who shall separate them from the love of God? Can your censure or separation do it, when neither life, nor death, nor any creature can do it*? Hath he not told you, that "he will give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand*." Will he lose his jewels, because you cast them away as dirt? He suffered more for souls than you, and better knoweth the worth of souls! And do you think he will forget so dear a purchase? or take it well that you rob him of that which he hath bought so dearly? Will you give the members and inheritance of Christ to the devil, and say, 'They are satan's, and none of Christ's.' "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant."

6. Church-dividers are guilty of self-ignorance, and pride, and great unthankfulness against that God that beareth with so much in them, who so censoriously cast off their brethren. Wert thou ever humbled for thy sin? Dost thou know who thou art, and what thou carriest about thee, and how much thou offendest God thyself? If thou do, surely thou wilt judge tenderly of thy brethren, as knowing what a tender hand thou needest, and what mercy thou hast found from God. Can he cruelly judge his brethren to hell upon his petty differences, who is sensible how the gracious hand of his Redeemer, did so lately snatch him from the brink of hell? Can he be forward to condemn his brethren, that hath been so lately and mercifully saved himself?

7. Church dividers are the most successful servants of the devil, being enemies to Christ in his family and livery. They gratify satan, and all the enemies of the church, and do the very work that he would have them do, more effectually than open enemies could do it. As mutineers in an army may do more to destroy it, than the power of the enemy.

8. It is a sin that contradicteth all God's ordinances and means of grace; which are purposely to procure and maintain the unity of his church. The Word and baptism are

* Rom. viii. 33. &c.

* John x. 28.

to gather them into one body, and the Lord's-supper to signify and maintain their concord, as being one bread, and one body^b. And all the communion of the church is to express and to maintain this concord. The use of the ministry is much to this end, to be the bonds and joints of the unity of believers^c. All these are contemned and frustrated by dividers.

9. Church-division is a sin (especially to us) against as great and lamentable experiences as almost any sin can be. About sixteen hundred years the church hath smarted by it. In many countries where the Gospel prospered, and churches flourished, division hath turned all into desolation, and delivered them up to the curse of Mahometanism and infidelity. The contentions between Constantinople and Rome, the Eastern and the Western churches, have shaken the Christian interest upon earth, and delivered up much of the Christian world to tyranny and blindness, and given advantage to the Papacy to captivate and corrupt much of the rest, by pretending itself to be the centre of unity. O what glorious churches, where the learned writers of those ages once lived, are now extinct, and the places turned to the worship of the devil and a deceiver; through the ambition and contentions of the bishops, that should have been the bonds of their unity and peace! But doth England need to look back into history, or look abroad in foreign lands, for instances of the sad effects of discord? Is there any one, good or bad in this age, that hath spent his days in such a sleep, as not to know what divisions have done, when they have made such ruins in church and state, and kindled such consuming fires, and raised so many sects and parties, and filled so many hearts with uncharitable rancour, and so many mouths with slanders and revilings, and turned so many prayers into sin, by poisoning them with pride and factious oppositions, and hath let out streams of blood and fury over all the land? He that maketh light of the divisions of Christians in these kingdoms, or loveth not those that speak against them, doth shew himself to be so impenitent in them, as to be one of those terrible effects of them, that should be a pillar of salt to warn after ages totake heed.

10. Yea, this is a heinous aggravation of this sin, that

^b 1 Cor. x. 17.

^c Ephes. iv. 13, 14. 16.

commonly it is justified, and not repented of by those that do commit it. When a drunkard or a whoremonger will confess his sin, a church-divider will stand to it and defend it: and woe to them that call evil good, and good evil. Impenitency is a terrible aggravation of sin.

11. And it is yet the more heinous, in that it is commonly fathered upon God. If a drunkard or whoremonger should say, 'God commandeth me to do it, and I serve God by it,' would you not think this a horrid aggravation? When did you ever know a sect or party, how contrary soever among themselves, but they all pretended God's authority, and entitled him to their sin, and called it his service, and censured others as ungodly, or less godly, that would not do as bad as they? St. James is put to confute them that thought this wisdom was from above, and so did glory in their sin, and lie against the truth, when their wisdom was from beneath, and no better than earthly, sensual, and devilish. For the "wisdom from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, &c.^d"

12. Church-divisions are unlike to our heavenly state, and in some regard worse than the kingdom of the devil, for he would not destroy it by dividing it against itself*. O what a blessed harmony of united holy souls, will there be in the heavenly Jerusalem, where we hope to dwell for ever! There will be no discords, envyings, sidings or contendings, one being of this party, and another of that; but in the unity of perfect love, that world of spirits, with joyful praise will magnify their Creator. And is a snarling envy or jarring discord the likely way to such an end? Is the church of Christ a Babel of confusion? Should they be divided, party against party here, that must be one in perfect love for ever? Shall they here be condemning each other, as none of the children of the Most High, who there must live in sweetest concord? If there be shame in heaven, you will be ashamed to meet those in the delights of glory, and see them entertained by the Lord of love, whom you reviled and cast out of the church or your communion, causelessly, on earth.

Remember now that schism, and making parties and di-

^d James iii. 17.

^e Matt. xii. 26.

visions in the church, is not so small a sin as many take it for: it is the accounting it a duty, and a part of holiness, which is the greatest cause that it prospereth in the world; and it will never be reformed till men have right apprehensions of the evil of it. Why is it that sober people are so far and free from the sins of swearing, drunkenness, fornication, and lasciviousness, but because these sins are under so odious a character, as helpeth them easily to perceive the evil of them. And till church-divisions be rightly apprehended, as whoredom, and swearing, and drunkenness are, they will never be well cured. Imprint therefore on your minds the true character of them, which I have here laid down, and look abroad upon the effects, and then you will fear this confounding sin, as much as a consuming plague.

The two great causes that keep divisions from being hated as they ought, are, 1. A charitable respect to the good that is in church-dividers, carrying us to overlook the evil of the sin; judging of it by the persons that commit it, and thinking that nothing should seem odious that is theirs, because many of them are in other respects of blameless, pious conversations. And indeed every Christian must so prudently reprehend the mistakes and faults of pious men, as not to asperse the piety which is conjunct; and therefore not to make their persons odious, but to give the person all his just commendations for his piety, while we oppose and aggravate his sin: because Christ himself so distinguisheth between the good and the evil, and the person and the sin, and loveth his own for their good, while he hateth their evil; and so must we: and because it is the grand design of satan, by the faults of the godly to make their persons hated first, and their piety next, and so to banish religion from the world; and every friend of Christ must shew himself an enemy to this design of satan. But yet the sin must be disowned and opposed, while the person is loved according to his worth. Christ will give no thanks for such love to his children, as cherisheth their church-destroying sins. There is no greater enemy to sin than Christ, though there be no greater friend to souls. Godliness was never intended to be a fortress for iniquity; or a battery for the devil to mount his cannons on against the church; nor for a blind to cover the powder-mines of hell.

Satan never opposeth truth, and godliness, and unity so dangerously, as when he can make religious men his instruments. Remember therefore that all men are vanity, and God's interest and honour must not be sacrificed to theirs, nor the Most Holy be abused, in reverence to the holiest of sinful men.

The other great hindrance of our due apprehensions of the sinfulness of divisions, is our too deep sense of our sufferings by superiors, and our looking so much at the evil of persecutions, as not to look at the danger of the contrary extreme. Thus under the Papacy, the people of Germany at Luther's reformation were so deeply sensible of the Papal cruelties, that they thought by how many ways soever men fled from such bloody persecutors, they were very excusable. And while men were all taken up in decrying the Roman idolatry, corruptions, and cruelties, they never feared the danger of their own divisions till they smarted by them. And this was once the case with many good people here in England, who so much hated the wickedness of the profane and the haters of godliness, that they had no apprehensions of the evil of divisions among themselves. And because many profane ones were wont to call sober, godly people, schismatics and factious, therefore the very names began with many to grow into credit, as if they had been of good signification, and there had been really no such sin as schism and faction to be feared; till God permitted this sin to break in upon us with such fury, as had almost turned us into a Babel, and a desolation. And I am persuaded God did purposely permit it, to teach his people more sensibly to know the evil of that sin by the effects, which they would not know by other means; and to let them see when they had reviled and ruined each other, that there is that in themselves which they should be more afraid of, than of any enemy without.

Direct. v. 'Own not any cause which is an enemy to love: and pretend neither truth, nor holiness, nor unity, nor any thing against it.' The spirit of love is that one vital spirit which doth animate all the saints. The increase of love is the powerful balsam that healeth all the church's wounds. Though loveless, lifeless physicians think that all these wounds must be healed by the sword. And indeed

the weapon-salve is now become the proper cure. It is the sword that must be medicated, that the wounds made by it may be healed. The decays of love are the church's dissolution; which first causeth fissures and separations, and in process crumbleth us all to dust; and therefore the pastors of the church are the fittest instruments for the cure, who are the messengers of love, and whose government is paternal, and hurteth not the body, but is only a government of love, and exercised by all the means of love. All Christians in the world confess that Love is the very life and perfection of all grace, and the end of all our other duties, and that which maketh us like to God, and that if love dwelleth in us, God dwelleth in us; and that it will be the everlasting grace, and the work of heaven, and the happiness of souls; and that it is the excellent way, and the character of saints, and the new commandment. And all this being so, it is most certain that no way is the way of God, which is not the way of love; and therefore what specious pretences soever they may have, and one may cry up truth, and another holiness, and another order, and another unity itself, to justify their envyings, hatred, cruelties, it is most certain that all such pretences are satanical deceits; and if they bite and devour one another, they are not like the sheep of Christ, but shall be devoured one of another^f. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law^g." When Papists that shew their love to men's souls by racking their bodies, and frying them in the fire, can make men apprehensive of the excellency of that kind of love, they may use it to the healing of the church. In the meantime as their religion is, such is their concord, while all those are called members of their union, and professors of their religion, who must be burnt to ashes if they say the contrary. They that give God an image and carcase of religion, are thus content with the image and carcase of a church for the exercise of it. And if there were nothing else but this to detect the sinfulness of the sect of Quakers, and many more, it is enough to satisfy any sober man, that it cannot be the way of God. God is not the author of that spirit and way which tends to wrath, emulation, hatred, railing, and the extinction of Christian love, to all save their

^f Gal. v. 15.^g Rom. xiii. 10.

own sect and party. Remember as you love your souls, that you shun all ways that are destructive to universal Christian love.

Direct. vi. ' Make nothing necessary to the unity of the church, or the communion of Christians, which God hath not made necessary, or directed you to make so ^b.' By this one folly, the Papists are become the most notorious schismatics on earth; even by making new articles of faith, and new parts of worship, and imposing them on all Christians, to be sworn, subscribed, professed, or practised, so as that no man shall be accounted a Catholic, or have communion with them, (or with the universal church, if they could hinder it,) that will not follow them in all their novelties. They that would subscribe to all the Scriptures, and to all the ancient creeds of the church, and would do any thing that Christ and his apostles have enjoined, and go every step of that way to heaven that Peter and Paul went, as far as they are able, yet if they will go no further, and believe no more (yea, if they will not go against some of this,) must be condemned, cast out, and called schismatics by these notorious schismatics. If he hold to Christ, the universal Head of the church, and will not be subject or sworn to the pope, the usurping head, he shall be taken as cut off from Christ. And there is no certainty among these men what measure of faith, and worship, and obedience to them, shall be judged necessary to constitute a church-member: for as that which served in the apostles' days, and the following ages, will not serve now, nor the subscribing to all the other pretended councils until then, will not serve without subscribing to the creed or council of Trent; so nobody can tell, what new faith, or worship, or test of Christianity, the next council (if the world see any more) may require: and how many thousand that are Trent Catholics now, may be judged heretics and schismatics then, if they will not shut their eyes, and follow them any whither, and change their religion as oft as the papal interest requireth a change. Of this Chillingworth, Hales, and Dr. H. More have spoken plainly ^l.

^b See Mr. Stillingfleet, *Iren.* p. p. 119, 120. *Bilson for Christian Subjection.* p. 525.

^l Dr. H. More saith, *Myst. Redempt.* p. 495. l. 10. c. 2. There is scarce any church in Christendom at this day, that doth not obtrude, not only falsehood, but such

If the pope had imposed but one lie to be subscribed, or one sin to be done, and said, "All nations and persons that do not this, are no Christians, or shall have no communion with the church," the man that refuseth that imposed lie or sin, doth but obey God, and save his soul; and the usurper that imposeth them, will be found the heinous schismatic before God, and the cause of all those divisions of the church. And so if any private sectary shall feign an opinion or practice of his own to be necessary to salvation or church communion, and shall refuse communion with those that are not of his mind and way, it is he, and not they, that is the cause of the uncharitable separation.

Direct. VII. 'Pray against the usurpations or intrusions of impious, carnal, ambitious, covetous pastors into the churches of Christ^k.' For one wicked man in the place of a pastor, may do more to the increase of a schism or faction, than many private men can do. And carnal men have carnal minds and carnal interests, which are both irreconcilable to the spiritual, holy mind and interest; for the "carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to his law, nor can be. And they that are in the flesh cannot please God." And you may easily conceive what work will be made in the ship, when an enemy of the owner hath subtilly possessed himself of the pilot's place! He will charge all that are faithful as mutineers, because they resist him when he would carry all away. And if an enemy of Christ shall get to be governor of one of his regiments or garrisons, all that are not traitors shall be called traitors, and cashiered that they hinder not the treason which he intendeth. And "as then he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is

falsehoods that will appear to any free spirit pure contradictions and impossibilities; and that with the same gravity, authority, and importunity, that they do the holy oracles of God. Now the consequent of this must needs be sad: for what knowing and conscientious man, but will be driven off, if he cannot assert the truth, without open asserting a gross lie? *Id.* p. 526. And as for opinions, though some may be better than other some, yet none should exclude from the fullest enjoyment of either private or public rights; supposing there be no venom of the persecutive spirit mingled with them: but every one that professeth the faith of Christ, and believeth the Scriptures in the historical sense, &c. See Hales of Schism, p. 8.

^k In ecclesiis plus certaminum gignunt verba hominum quam Dei; magisque pugnatur fere de Apolline, Petro, et Paulo, quam de Christo: retine divina: relinque humana. Bacheloc.

now : but what saith the Scripture? cast out the bondwoman and her son¹," &c. It is not the sacred office of the ministry, nor the profession of the same religion, that will cure the enmity of a carnal heart, against both holiness and the holy seed. The whole business of the world from age to age is but the management of that war, proclaimed at sin's first entrance into the world, between the seed of the woman and the serpent; and none of the serpent's seed are more cruel or more successful, than those of them that creep into the armies of Christ; and especially that get the conduct of his regiments^m. Neither brotherhood nor unity of professed religion, would hold the hands of malignant Cain from murdering his brother Abel. The same religion, and father, and family reconciled not scoffing Ishmael to Isaac, or profane Esau to his brother Jacob. The family of Christ, and an apostle's office, did not keep Judas from being a traitor to his Lord. If carnal men invade the ministry, they take the way of ease, and honour, and worldly wealth, and strive for dominion, and who shall be the greatest, and care not how great their power and jurisdiction are, nor how little their profitable work is; and their endeavour is to fit all matters of worship and discipline to their ambitious, covetous ends; and the spiritual worshipper shall be the object of their hate: and is it any wonder if the churches of Christ be torn by schism, and betrayed to profaneness, where there are such unhappy guidesⁿ?

¹ Gal. iv. 29, 30.

^m Poetæ nunquam perturbantur respublicas: oratores non raro. Bucholtzer.

ⁿ Acosta, lib. vi. c. 23. p. 579. Nothing so much hurteth this church as a rabble of hirelings and self-seekers: for what can natural men, that scarce have the Spirit, do in the cause of God? A few in number that are excellent in virtue, will more promote the work of God.—But they that come hither being humble, and lovers of souls, taking Christ for their pattern, and bearing in their bodies his cross and death, shall most certainly find heavenly treasures and inestimable delights. But when will this be? When men cease to be men, and to savour the things of men; and to seek and gape after the things of men. With men this is utterly impossible, but with God all things are possible: because this is hard in the eyes of this people, shall it therefore be hard in my eyes, saith the Lord? Zech. viii. 6. p. 580. I may say to some ministers that cry out of the schismatical disobedience of the people, as Acosta doth to those that cried out of the Indians' dainess and wickedness: It is long of the teachers. Deal with them in all possible love and tenderness; away with covetousness, lordliness, and cruelty; give them the example of an upright life; open to them the way of truth, and teach them according to their capacity; and diligently hold on in this way, whoever thou art that art a minister of the Gospel, and

Direct. VIII. 'In a special manner, take heed of pride: suspect it and subdue it in yourselves, and do what you can to bring it into disgrace with others°. "Only by pride cometh contention^p." I never yet saw one schism made, in which pride conjunct with ignorance was not the cause: nor ever did I know one person forward in a schism (to my remembrance), but pride was discernibly his disease. I do not here intend (as the Papists) to charge all with schism or pride, that renounce not their understandings, and choose not to give up themselves to a bestial subjection to usurpers or their pastors: he that thinks it enough that his teacher hath reason and be a man, instead of himself, and so thinketh it enough that his teacher be a Christian and religious, must be also content that his teacher alone be saved: (but then he must not be the teacher of such a damning way). But by pride I mean a plain overvaluing of his own understanding, and conceits, and reasonings, quite above all the evidences of their worth, and an undervaluing and contempt of the judgments and reasonings of far wiser men, that had evidence enough to have evinced his folly and error to a sober and impartial man. Undoubtedly it is the pride of priests and people, that hath so lamentably in all ages torn the church. He that readeth the histories of schisms and church-confusions, and marketh the effects which this age hath shewed, will no more doubt whether pride were the cause, than whether it was the wind that blew down trees

(saith he) as ever I hope to enjoy thee, O Lord Jesu Christ, I am persuaded the harvest will be plentiful and joyful. Lib. iv. p. 433. et passim. But (saith he) we quickly cease our labours, and must presently have hasty and plenteous fruit. But the kingdom of God is not such: verily, it is not such; but as Christ hath told us, like seed cast into the earth, which groweth up by degrees we know not how. pp. 433, 434. Jerome's case is many another's: *Concivit odia perditorum: oderunt eum hæretici, quia eos impugnare non desinit: oderunt clerici, quia vitam eorum insectatur et crimina. Sed plane eum boui omnes admirantur et diligunt.* Posthumianus in Sulp. Severi Dialog. 1. And Dial. 2. Martinus in medio cætu et conversatione popularum, inter clericos dissidentes, inter episcopos sævientes, cum fero quotidiano scandalis hinc atque inde premeretur, inexpugnabili tamen adversus omnia virtute fundatus stetit.—*Nec tamen huic crimini miscebo populares, soli illum clerici, soli nesciunt sacerdotes, nec immerito: nosse illum invidi noluerunt: quia si virtutes illius nosset, suorum vitia cognovissent.*

• How the Jesuits have hereby distracted the church, read Mariana, et Archiepisc. Pragensis Consur. de Bull. Jesuit. et Dan. Hospital. ad Reges, &c. Aug. Ardinghelli Paradoxa Jesuitica. Galindus, Giraldus, &c. Arcana Jesuit.

^p Prov. xlii. 10.

and houses, when he seeth them one way overturned by multitudes, where the tempest came with greatest force. Therefore a bishop must be "no novice lest being lifted up with pride (ὅνα μὴ ὑψηλοῦς) he fall into the condemnation of the devil." And if such stars fall from heaven, no wonder if they bring many down headlong with them. Humble souls dwell most at home, and think themselves unworthy of the communion of their brethren, and are most quarrelsome against their own corruptions. "They do nothing in strife and vainglory, but in lowliness of mind, each one esteemeth other better than themselves;" and "judge not lest they be judged." And is it likely such should be dividers of the church? But proud men must either be great and domineer, and as Diotrephes 'love to have the preeminence, and cast the brethren out of the church, and prate against their most faithful pastors with malicious words; or else must be noted for their supposed excellencies, and set up themselves, and speak perverse things, to draw away disciples after them, and think the brethren unworthy of their communion, and esteem all others below themselves; and as the church of Rome, confound communion and subjection, and think none fit for their communion that obey them not, or comply not with their opinion and will. There is no hope of concord where pride hath power to prevail.

Direct. 1x. 'Take heed of singularity, and narrowness of mind, and unacquaintedness with the former and present state of the church and world.' Men that are bred up in a corner, and never read nor heard of the common condition of the church or world, are easily misled into schism, through ignorance of those matters of fact that would preserve them. Abundance of this sort of honest people that I have known, have known so little beyond the town or country where they lived, that they have thought they were very Catholic in their communion, because they had one or two congregations, and divided not among themselves. But for the avoiding of schism, 1. Look (with pity) on the unbelieving world, and consider that Christians of all sorts, are but a sixth part of the whole earth. And then 2. Consider of this sixth part how small a part the reformed churches are.

q 1 Tim. iii. 6.

* Matt. vi. 1.

r Phil. ii. 2, 3.

† 3 John ix. 10.

And if you be willing to leave Christ any church at all, perhaps you will be loath to separate yet into a narrower party, which is no more to all the world, than one of your cottages is to the whole kingdom. And is this all the kingdom on earth that you will ascribe to Christ? Is the king of the church, the king only of your little party? Though his flock be but a little flock, make it not next to none: as if he came into the world on so low a design as the gathering of your sect only. The less his flock is, the more sinful it is to rob him of it, and make it less than it is. It is a little flock, if it contained all the Christians, Protestants, Greeks, Armenians, Abassines, and Papists on the earth. Be singular and separate from the unbelieving world, and spare not: and be singular in holiness from profane and nominal hypocritical Christians. But affect not to be singular in opinion or practice, or separated in communion, from the universal church, or generality of sound believers: or if you forsake some common error, yet hold still the common love and communion with all the faithful, according to your opportunities. 3. And it will be very useful when you are tempted to separate from any church for the defectiveness of its manner of worship, to inquire how God is worshipped in all the churches on earth, and then consider, whether if you lived among them you would forsake communion with them all, for such defects, (while you are not forced to justify or approve them^u). 4. And it is very useful to read church history, and to understand what heresies have been in times past, and what havoc schisms have caused among Christians: for if this much had been known by well meaning persons in our days, we should not have seen those same opinions applauded as new light, which were long ago exploded as old heresies: nor should we have seen many honest people, taking that same course to reform the church now, and advance the Gospel, which in so many ages and nations hath heretofore destroyed the church, and cast out the Gospel. A narrow soul, that taketh all Christ's interest in the world, to lie in a few of their separated meetings, and shutteth up all the church in a nutshell, must needs be

^u That God above that knoweth the heart, doth discern that frail men in some of their contradictions intend the same thing, and accepteth both. Lord Bacon, *Essay* iii. p. 15.

guilty of the foulest schisms. It is a Catholic spirit and Catholic principles, loving a Christian as a Christian, abhorring the very names of sects and parties as the church's wounds, that must make a Catholic indeed.

Direct. x. 'Understand well the true difference between the visible church, and the world, lest you should think that you are bound to separate as much from a corrupted church, as from the world.' It is not true faith, but the profession of true faith, that maketh a man fit to be acknowledged a member of the visible church. If this profession be unsound, and accompanied with a vicious life, it is the sin and misery of such an hypocrite; but it doth not presently put him as far unrelated to you, as if he were an infidel without the church. If you ask, what advantage have such unsound church members? I answer with the apostle, "Much every way, chiefly because unto them are committed the oracles of God^x." "To them pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises^y." Till the church find cause to cast them out, they have the external privileges of its communion. It hath made abundance to incur the guilt of sinful separation, to misunderstand those texts of Scripture that call Christians to separate from heathens, infidels, and idolaters: as 2 Cor. vi. 17. "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord, &c." The text speaketh only of separating from the world who are infidels and idolaters, and no members of the church, and ignorant people ordinarily expound it, as if it were meant of separating from the church because of the ungodly that are members of it: but that God that knew why he called his people to separate from the world, doth never call them to separate from the church universal, nor from any particular church by a mental separation so as to unchurch them. We read of many loathsome corruptions in the churches of Corinth, Galatia, Laodicea, &c., but yet no command to separate from them. So many abuse Rev. xviii. 4. "Come out of her my people:" as if God commanded them to come out of a true church because of its corruptions or imperfections, because he calleth them out of Babylon. It is true, you must partake with no church in their sins, but you may

^x Rom. iii. 1, 2.

^y Rom. ix. 4.

partake with any church in their holy profession and worship, so far as you can do it without partaking with them in their sins.

Direct. XI. 'Understand what it is that maketh you partakers of the sins of a church, or any member of it, lest you think you are bound to separate from them in good as well as in evil.' Many fly from the public assemblies, lest they partake of the sins of those that are there present. Certainly nothing but consent (direct or indirect) can make their faults to become yours; and therefore nothing which signifieth not some such consent, should be on that account avoided. 1. If you by word, or subscription, or furtherance, own any man's sin, you directly consent to it. 2. If you neglect any duty which lieth upon you for the cure of his sin, you indirectly consent; for you consent that he shall rather continue in his sin, than you will do your part to help him out of it. Consider therefore how far you are bound to reprove any sin, or to use any other means for the reformation of it, whether it be in the pastor or the people; and if you neglect any such means, your way is to reform your own neglect, and do your duty, and not to separate from the church, before you have done your duty to reform it. But if you have done all that is your part, then the sin is none of yours, though you remain there present.

It is a turbulent fancy and disquieting error of some people, to think that their presence in the assembly, and continuance with the church doth make them guilty of the personal faults of those they join with: if so, who would ever join with any assembly in the world? *Quest.* 'But what if they be gross and scandalous sinners that are members of the church?' *Ans.* If you be wanting in your duty to reform it, it is your sin; but if bare presence made their sins to be ours, it would also make all the sins of the assembly ours; but no word of God doth intimate any such thing. Paul never told the churches of Galatia and Corinth so, that had so many defiled members. *Quest.* 'But what if they are sins committed in the open assembly, even by the minister himself in his praying, preaching, and other administrations? and what if all this be imposed on him by a law, and so I am certain beforehand that I must join with that which is unwarrantable in God's worship?' *Ans.* The next

Direction containeth those distinctions that are necessary to the answer of this.

Direct. XII. 'Distinguish carefully, 1. Between a minister's personal faults, and his ministerial faults. 2. Between his tolerable weaknesses, and his intolerable insufficiencies. 3. And between the work of the minister and of the congregation.' And then you will see your doubt resolved in these following propositions.

1. A minister's personal faults (as swearing, lying, drunkenness, &c.) may damn himself, and must be matter of lamentation to the church, and they must do their best to reform them, or to get a better pastor by any lawful means*. But in case they cannot, his sin is none of theirs, nor doth it make his administration null or ineffectual; nor will it allow you to separate from the worship which he administhereth: Though many of the priests were wicked men, the godly Jews were not thereby disobliged from God's public worship, or sacrifices which were to be offered by their hands. Otherwise how sad a case were the church in, that must answer for the sins which they never committed, nor could reform. But no Scripture chargeth this upon them.

2. It is not all ministerial faults that will allow you to separate from or disown a minister; but only those that prove him or his ministration utterly intolerable*. Such are, 1. An utter insufficiency in knowledge or utterance for the necessary parts of the ministerial work: as if he be not able to teach the necessary points of the Christian religion, nor to administer the sacraments and other parts of public

* Saith Cleanthes (In Diog. Laert.) The Peripatetics are like letters that sound well, but bear not themselves.

* Yet I excuse not impiety or insufficiency in ministers. It was one of Solon's laws, Qui nequitia ac flagitiis insignis est, tribunali, publicisque suggestis arcendus est. Aud Gildas saith to the ungodly pastors of Britain, Apparet ergo eum qui vos sacerdotes sciens ex corde dicit, non esse eximium Christianum.— Quomodo vos aliquid solvetis, ut sit solutum et in cœlis, a celo ob scelera adepti, et immanium peccatorum funibus compediti? Quaque ratione aliquid intra ligabitis, quod supra mundum etiam ligetur, propter vosmet ipsos, qui ita ligati iniquitatibus in hoc mundo tenemini, ut in cœlis neququam ascendatis, sed in infausta tartari ergastula, non conversi in hac vita ad dominum, decidatis? Fol. ult. p. 99. Josseline's Edit. O inimici Dei, et non sacerdotes! O licitatores malorum, et non pontifices! traditores, et non sanctorum apostolorum successores; impugnatores, et non Christi ministri. p. 571. Basil. In Josseline's Edit. p. 95. 'veterani' is inserted after 'licitatores,' and 'impugnatores' is wanting. (T. C.)

worship. 2. If he set himself to oppose the very ends of his ministry, and preach down godliness, or any part of it that is of necessity to salvation: for then he doth the devil's work, in seeking the damnation of souls, and so maketh himself the devil's minister, and is not the minister of Christ: for the end is essential to the relation. Herein I include a preacher of heresy that doth preach up any damning error, and preach down any necessary saving truth: that is, that preacheth such error as subverteth either faith or godliness, and doth more harm in the church than good. 3. If he so deprave God's public worship as to destroy the substance of it, and make it unacceptable, and offer up a public false worship to God, which he disowneth in the very matter of it. As if he put up blasphemy for praise and prayer, or commit idolatry, or set up new sacraments, and guide the people thus in public worship. As the Papist priests do that adore bread with Divine worship, and pray to the dead, and offer real sacrifices for them, &c.: such worship is not to be joined in. 4. Or if they impose any actual sin upon the people: as in their responds to speak any falsehood, or to adore the bread, or the like: these faults discharge us from being present with such pastors at such worship. But besides these there are many ministerial faults which warrant not our separation. As, 1. The internal vices of the pastor's mind though manifested in their ministration: as some tolerable errors of judgment, or envy and pettish opposition to others. "Some indeed preach Christ of envy and strife, and some of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds; but the other of love, &c.^b" Here is an odious vice in the public ministry, even an endeavour to increase the sufferings of the apostle: yet it was lawful to hear such preachers; though not to prefer them before better. Most sects among Christians are possessed with a tang of envy and uncharitableness against dissenters, which useth to break forth in their preaching and praying: and yet it is lawful to join with such. 2. It is not unlawful to join with a minister that hath many defects and infirmities in his ministration or manner of worship: as if he preach with some ignorance, disorder, unfit expressions or gestures, unmeet repetitions;

^b Phil. i. 15.

or if he do the like in prayer, or in the sacraments, putting something last that should be first, and leaving out something that should be said, or praying coldly or formally. These and such like are faults which we should do our best to reform; and we should not prefer such a ministry before a better; but it is lawful and a duty to join with such, when we have no better. For all men are imperfect, and therefore the manner of worship as performed by them will be imperfect. Imperfect men cannot be perfect in their ministrations: we must join with a defective and imperfect mode of worship, or join with none on earth: and we must perform such or none ourselves. Which of you dare say that in your private prayers, you have no disorder, vain repetitions, flatness, or defects? 3. It is not unlawful to join with a minister that hath some material error or untruth in his preaching or praying, so be it we be not called to approve it, or make it ours, and so it be not pernicious and destructive to the ends of his ministry. For all men have some error, and they that have them may be expected sometimes to vent them. And it is not our presence that is any signification of our consent to their mistakes. If we run away from all that vent any untruth or mistake in public or private worship, we shall scarce know what church or person we may hold communion with: the reason of this followeth.

3. The sense of the church, and all its members, is to be judged of by their public professions, and not by such words of a minister which are his own, and never had their consent. I am by profession a Christian, and the Scripture is the professed rule of my religion; and when I go to the assemblies, I profess to worship God according to that rule: I profess myself a hearer of a minister of the Gospel, that is to preach the Word of God, and that hath promised in his ordination, 'out of the holy Scriptures to instruct the people committed to his charge, and to teach nothing (as required of necessity to eternal salvation) but that which he shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture.' This he professed when he was ordained, and I profess by my presence, only to hear such a preacher of the Gospel, and worship God with him in those ordinances of worship, which God hath appointed. If now this man shall

drop in any mistake in preaching, or modify his prayers or administrations amiss, and do his part weakly and disorderly, the hearers are no way guilty of it by their presence. For if I must run away from God's public worship because of men's misperformance, 1. I should join with none on earth : for a small sin may no more be wilfully done or owned than a greater. 2. And then another man's weakness may disoblige me and discharge me from my duty. To order and word his prayers and preaching aright, is part of the minister's own work, and not the people's ; and if he do it well, it is no commendation to me that am present, but to himself ; and therefore if he do it amiss, it is no fault of mine or dispraise to me, but to himself. If the Common-council of London, or the court of Aldermen agree to petition the king for the renewing of their charter, and commit the expressing of their request to their recorder, in their presence ; if he petition for something else instead of that which he was entrusted with, and so betray them in the substance of his business, they are openly to contradict him and disown his treachery or mistake ; but if he deliver the same petition which he undertook with stammering, disorder, defectiveness, and perhaps some mixture of untruths in his additional reasons and discourse, this is his failing in the personal performance of his duty, and no way imputable to them that sent him, though (in modesty) they are silent and speak not to disown it : for how can it be their fault that a man is wanting in his personal sufficiency and duty : (unless it be that they choose not a better.) And whether he speak 'ex tempore' or more deliberately, in a written form or without, in words that other men taught him, or wrote for him, or in words of his own devising, it altereth not their case.

Object. ' But if a man fail through weakness in his own performance, I know not of that beforehand ; but if his faulty manner of praying be prescribed and imposed on him by a law, then I know it beforehand, and therefore am guilty of it.'

Answer. To avoid confusion, fix upon that which you think is the thing sinful. 1. Either it is because the prayers are defective and faulty. 2. Or because they are imposed. 3. Or because you know the fault beforehand. But none

of all these can prove your joining with them sinful. 1. Not because they are faulty: for you may join with as faulty prayers you confess, if not imposed^c. 2. Not because imposed, (1.) Because that is an extenuation, and not an aggravation: for it proveth the minister less voluntary of the two than those are that do it without any command, through the error of their own judgments, (as most erroneous persons will). (2.) Because (though lawful things oft become unlawful when superiors forbid them, yet) no reason can be given why a lawful thing should become unlawful, because a lawful superior doth command it. Else superiors might take away all our Christian liberty, and make all things unlawful to us by commanding them. You would take it for a wild conceit in your children or servants, if they say, when you bid them learn a catechism, or use a form of prayer, 'It was lawful to us till you commanded us to do it; but because you bid us do it, it is unlawful.' If it be a duty to obey governors in all lawful things, then it is not a sin to obey them. 3. And it is not your knowing beforehand that maketh it unlawful: for, 1. I know in general beforehand, that all imperfect men will do imperfectly; and though I know not the particular, that maketh it never the more lawful, if foreknowledge itself did make it unlawful. 2. If you know that e. g. an Antinomian or some mistaken preacher would constantly drop some words for his error in prayer or preaching, that will not make it unlawful in your own judgment for you to join, if it be not a flat heresy. 3. It is another man's error or fault that you foreknow and not your own; and therefore foreknowledge maketh it not your own. 4. God himself doth as an universal cause of nature concur with men in those acts which he foreknoweth they will sinfully do; and yet God is not to be judged either an author or approver of the sin because of such concurrence and foreknowledge: therefore our foreknowledge maketh us no approvers, or guilty of the failings of any in their sacred ministrations, unless there be some other guilt. If you say that it is no one of these that maketh it unlawful, but all together, you must give us a distinct argument to prove that the concurrence of these three will prove that unlawful,

^c Pii hominis est facere quod potest, etiamsi non faciat hoc quod est eligibilis. Bucholtzer.

which cannot be proved so by any of them alone, for your affirmation must not serve the turn : and when we know your argument, I doubt not but it may be answered. One thing I still confess may make any defective worship to be unlawful to you ; and that is, when you prefer it before better, and may (without a greater inconvenience) enjoy an abler ministry, and purer administration, but will not.

Object. ' But he that sitteth by in silence, in the posture as the rest of the congregation, seemeth to consent to all that is said and done : and we must avoid all appearance of evil.'

Answer. The appearance of evil which is evil indeed, must be always avoided ; but that appearance of evil which is indeed good, must not be avoided. We must not forsake our duty lest we seem to sin : that were but to prefer hypocrisy before sincerity, and to avoid appearances more than realities. The omission of a duty is a real sin ; and that must not be done to avoid a seeming sin. And whom doth it appear so to ? If it appear evil to the blind or prejudiced, it is their eyes that must be cured ; but if it appear so to the wise, then it is like it is evil indeed : for a wise man should not judge that to be evil that is not. But I confess that in a case that is altogether indifferent, even the mistakes of the ignorant may oblige us to forbear : but the worship of God must not be so forborne. It is an irrational fancy to think that you must be uncivil, by contradicting, or covering your heads, or doing something offensive to the congregation, when any thing is said or done which you disallow. Your presence signifieth your consent to all that you profess, even to worship God according to his Word, and not to all the human imperfections that are there expressed.

Direct. XIII. ' Distinguish carefully between your personal private duties, and the duty of the pastor or church with which you must concur. And do not think, that if the church or pastor do not their duty, that you are bound to do it for them.' To cast out an obstinate impenitent sinner by sentence from the communion of the church, is the pastor's or church's duty, and not yours, unless in concurrence or subserviency to the church. Therefore if it be not done, inquire whether you did your duty towards it ; if you did, the sin is none of yours : for it is not in your power

to cast out all that are unworthy from the church. But private familiarity is in your power to refuse; and with such no not to eat.

Direct. xiv. 'Take the measure of your accidental duties more from the good or hurt of the church, or of many, than from the immediate good or hurt that cometh to yourself.' You are not to take that for the station of your duty, which you feel to be most to the commodity of your souls; but that in which you may do God most service. If the service of God for the good of many, require you to stay with a weaker minister, and defective administrations, you will find in the end that this was not only the place of your duty, but also of your benefit: for your life is in God's hands, and all your comforts; and that is the best way to your peace and happiness, in which you are most pleasing unto God, and have his promise of most acceptance and grace. I know the least advantage to the soul, must be preferred before all earthly riches; but not before the public good. Yea, that way will prove most advantageous to us, in which we exercise most obedience.

Direct. xv. 'Take heed of suffering prejudice and fancy to go for reason, and raise in your minds unjustifiable distastes of any way or mode of worship.' It is wonderful to see what fancy and prejudice can do! Get once a hard opinion of a thing, and your judgments will make light of all that is said for it, and will see nothing that should reconcile you to it. Partiality will carry you away from equity and truth. Abundance of things appear now false and evil, to men that once imagine them to be so, which would seem harmless, if not laudable, if they were tried by a mind that is clear from prejudice.

Direct. xvi. 'Judge not of doctrines and worship by persons, but rather of persons by their doctrine and worship (together with their lives).' The world is all prone to be carried by respect to persons. I confess where any thing is to be taken upon trust, we must rather trust the intelligent, experienced, honest, and credible, than the ignorant and incredible; but where the Word of God must be our rule, it is perverse to judge of things by the persons that hold them or oppose them: sometimes a bad man may be in the right, and a good man in the wrong. Try the way of the worst

men before you reject it (in disputable things). And try the opinions and way of the wisest before you venture to receive them.

Direct. xvii. 'Enslave not yourselves to any party of men, so as to be over-desirous to please them, nor over-fearful of their censure.' Have a respect to all the rest of the world as well as them. Most men that once engage themselves in a party, do think their honour and interest is involved with them, and that they stand or fall with the favour of their party, and therefore make them (before they are aware) the masters of their consciences.

Direct. xviii. 'Regard more the judgment of aged, ripe, experienced men, that have seen the fruits of the various courses of professors of religion, than of the young, unripe, unexperienced, hot-headed sort.' Zeal is of great use to execute the resolutions of a well informed man: and the zeal of others is very useful to warm the hearts of such as do converse with them. But when it comes to matter of judgment once, to decide a case of difficulty, aged experience hath far the advantage; and in no cases more, than in those where peace and concord are concerned, where rash, hot-headed youth is very prone to precipitant courses, which must be afterwards repented of.

Direct. xix 'When fervent, self-conceited people would carry down all by censoriousness and passion, it is time for the pastors and the aged and riper sort of Christians openly to rebuke them, and appear against them, and stand their ground, and not to comply with the misguided sort to escape their censures.' Nothing hath more caused schisms in the church (except the pride and ambition of the clergy) than that the riper and more judicious sort of people together with the ministers themselves, have been so loath to lie under the bitter censures of the unexperienced, younger, hotter sort; and to avoid such censures and keep in with them, they have followed those whom they should have led, and have been drawn quite beyond their own understandings. God hath made Wisdom to be the guide of the church, and Zeal to follow and diligently execute the commands of wisdom. Let ignorant, well meaning people censure you as bitterly as they please, yet keep your ground, and be not so proud or weak as to prefer their good esteem before their be-

nefit, and before the pleasing of God. Sin not against your knowledge to escape the censure of the ignorant. If you do, God will make those men your scourges whom you so much overvalued: and they shall prove to their spiritual fathers as cockered children (like Absalom) do to their natural fathers, and perhaps be the breaking of your hearts. But if the pastors and the riper, experienced Christians will stand their ground, and stick together, and rebuke the exorbitancies of the censorious younger ones, they will maintain the credit of the Gospel, and keep the truth, and the church's peace, and the hotspurs will in time either repent and be sober, or be ashamed and disabled to do much hurt.

Direct. xx. 'Take heed how you let loose your zeal against the pastors of the church, lest you bring their persons and next their office into contempt, and so break the bonds of the church's unity and peace.' There is no more hope of maintaining the church's unity and concord without the ministry, than of keeping the strength or unity of the members without the nerves. If these nerves be weak or labour of a convulsion or other disease, it is curing and strengthening them, and not the cutting them asunder that must prove to the welfare and safety of the body. Meddle with the faults of the ministry only so far as tendeth to a cure, of them or of the church, but not to bring them into disgrace, and weaken their interest in the people, and disable them from doing good. Abhor that proud, rebellious spirit, that is prone to set up itself against the officers of Christ, and under pretence of greater wisdom and holiness, to bring their guides into contempt; and is picking quarrels with them behind their back, to make them a scorn or odious to the hearers. Indeed a minister of satan that doth more harm in the church than good, must be so detected as may best disable him from doing harm. But he that doth more good than hurt, must so be dissuaded from the hurt as not to be disabled from the good. "My brethren be not many masters (or teachers), knowing that ye shall receive the greater condemnation^d."

Direct. xxi. 'Look more with an eye of charity on what is good in others and their worship of God, than with an eye of malice to carp at what appeareth evil.' Some men

^d Jam. iii. 1.

have such distempered eyes, that they can see almost nothing but faultiness in any thing of another party which they look at; envy and faction make them carp at every word and every gesture: and they make no conscience of aggravating every failing, and making idolatry of every mistake in worship, and making heresy or blasphemy of every mistake in judgment, and making apostacy of every fall; nay perhaps the truth itself shall have no better a representation. As Dr. H. More well noteth, It would do much more good in the world, if all parties were forwarder to find out and commend what is good in the doctrine and worship of all that differ from them. This would win them to hearken to reforming advice, and would keep up the credit of the common truths and duties of religion in the world, when this envious snarling at all that others do, doth tend to bring the world to atheism, and banish all reverence of religion, together with Christian charity from the earth.

Direct. xxii. 'Keep not strange to those from whom you differ, but be acquainted with them, and placidly hear what they have to say for themselves: or else converse with them in Christian love in all those duties in which you are agreed, and this (if you never talk of your differences) will do much to reconcile you in all the rest*.' It is the common way of division, uncharitableness, yea, and cruelty at last, to receive hard reports of those that differ from us, behind their backs, and to believe and aggravate all, and proceed to detraction and contention at a distance, and in the dark, and never be familiarly acquainted with them at all. There is something in the apprehension of places, and persons, and things by the eyesight, which no reports are able to match: and so there is that satisfaction about men by familiar acquaintance, which we cannot attain by hearsay from any, how judicious soever. All factions commonly converse together, and seek no familiar converse with others, but believe them to be any thing that is naught, and then report them to be so, before they ever knew the persons of whom they speak. I am persuaded this is one of the

* Prince Frederic of Monpelgard being instructed into a distaste of the reformed Protestants, when he had been at Geneva and Helvetia, was wont to say, 'Genevæ et in Helvetia vidi multa de quibus nihil, pauca eorum de quibus sæpe audivi: ut Tossanus ad Pœclium referente Sculteto in Curric. p. 26.'

greatest feeders of enmity, uncharitableness, contentions and slanders in the world. I speak it upon great observation and experience, I have seldom heard any man bitterly oppose the servants of Christ, but either the grossly wicked, or those that never had much acquaintance with them: and I see commonly, how bitter soever men were before, when once they converse together, and grow acquainted, they are more reconciled. The reason is, partly because they find less evil and more good in one another than before they did believe to be in them; and partly because uncharitableness and malice, being an ugly monster, is bolder at a distance, but ashamed of itself before your face: and therefore the pens of the champions of malice, are usually more bitter than their tongues when they speak to you face to face. Of all the furious adversaries that have raged against me in the latter part of my life, I remember not one enemy that I have or ever had, that was ever familiar or acquainted with me: and I have myself heard ill reports of many, which by personal acquaintance I have found to be all false. Keep together, and either silence your differences, or gently debate them; yea, rather chide it out, than withdraw asunder. Familiarity feedeth love and unity.

Direct. xxiii. 'Whenever you look at any corruption in the church, look also at the contrary extreme, and see and avoid the danger of one as well as of the other.' Be sure every error and church corruption hath its extreme: and if you do not see it, and the danger of it, you are the more like to run into it. Look well on both sides if you would be safe.

Direct. xxiv. 'Worship God yourselves in the purest manner, and under the most edifying ministry that lawfully you can attain; but be not too forward to condemn others that reach not to your measure, or attain not so much happiness: and deny not personal communion sometimes with churches that are more blemished, and less fit for communion.' And when you cannot join locally with them, let them have the communion of your hearts, in faith and charity, and prayer for each other. I fear not here openly to tell the world, that if I were turned loose to my own liberty, I would ordinarily worship God in that manner that I thought most pure, and agreeable to his will and Word; but I would some-

times go to the churches of other Christians, that were fit for Christian communion, if there were such about me: sometimes to the Independents, sometimes to the moderate Anabaptists, sometimes to such as had a liturgy as faulty as that of the Greek or the Ethiopian churches; to shew by my practice, what communion my heart hath with them all.

Direct. xxv. 'Take heed that you interest not religion or the church in civil differences *.' This error hath divided and ruined many famous churches, and most injuriously made the holy truth and worship of God to be a reproach and infamy among selfish, partial, carnal men. When princes and states fall out among themselves, they will needs draw the ministers to their sides, and then one side will certainly condemn them, and call them all that self-interest and malice can invent: and commonly when the controversy is only in point of law or politics, it is religion that bears the blame of all: and the differences of lawyers and statesmen must be charged upon divines, that the devil may be able to make them useless, as to the good of all that party that is against them, and may make religion itself be called rebellion. And O that God would maintain the peace of kingdoms! and kings and subjects were all lovers of peace, the rather because the differences in states do cause so commonly divisions in the church. It would make a man wonder, (and a lover of history to lament,) to observe in the differences between the pope and Henry the fourth, and other emperors, how the historians are divided, one half commending him that the other half condemneth: and how the bishops and churches were one half for the pope, and the other for the emperor; and one half still accounted rebels or schismatics by the other, though they were all of one religion. It is more to ruin the church, than kingdoms, that satan laboureth so much to kindle wars, and breed civil differences in the world: and therefore let him that loveth the church's peace, be an obedient subject, and an enemy of sedition, and a lover and defender of the civil peace and government in the place that God hath set him in: for this is pleasing unto God.

* Since the writing of this, I have published a book called "The Cure of Church Divisions," and a "Defence of it:" which handle these things more fully.

I know there are some, that with too bloody and calamitous success, have in most ages given other kind of directions for the extirpation of error, heresy, and schism, than I have here given^f: but God hath still caused the most wise, and holy, and charitable, and experienced Christians to bear their testimony against them. And he hath ever caused their way of cruelty to turn to their own shame: and though (like treasons and robberies) it seem for the time present to serve their turn, it is bitterness in the end, and leaveth a stinking memorial of their names and actions to posterity. And the treatises of reconcilers, (such as our Halls, Ushers, Bergius, Burroughs, and many other,) by the delectable savour of unity and charity, are sweet and acceptable to prudent and peaceable persons, though usually unsuccessful with the violent that needed them.

Besides the forecited witness of Sir Francis Bacon, &c., I will here add one of the most ancient, and one or two of this age, whom the contrary minded do mention with the greatest honour. Justin Martyr Dial. cum Tryph. doth at large give his judgment, that a Judaizing Christian, who thinketh it best to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, be suffered in his opinion and practice, and admitted to the communion and privileges of the church, and loved as one that may be saved in that way, so be it he do not make it his business to persuade others to his way, and teach it as necessary to salvation or communion; for such he doth condemn.

King James by the pen of Is. Casaubon telleth Cardinal du Perron, that 'His Majesty thinketh, that for concord there is no nearer way, than diligently to separate things necessary from the unnecessary, and to bestow all our labour that we may agree in the things necessary, and that in things unnecessary there may be place given for Christian liberty. The King calleth these things simply necessary, which either the Word of God expressly commandeth to be believed or done, or which the ancient church did gather from the Word of God by necessary consequence.—'

Grotius Annot. in Matt. xiii. 41. is so full and large

^f Beda Hist. Eccles. lib. i. c. 26. Didicerat enim (Rex Edilberth) et à doctoribus, auctoribusque suæ salutis, servitium Christi voluntarium, non coactitium debere esse.

upon it, that I must entreat the reader to peruse his own words; where by arguments and authority he vehemently rebuketh the spirit of fury, cruelty, and uncharitableness, which under pretence of government, discipline, and zeal denieth that liberty and forbearance, even to heretics and offenders, (much more when to the faithful ministers of Christ) which human frailty hath made necessary, and Christ hath commanded his servants to grant. Concluding, ‘*Ubi solitudinem fecerant, pacem appellabant.* (as Tertul.) *Et his omnibus obtendi solet studium Divini nominis; sed plerumque obtendi tantum. Nam Deus dedignatur coacta servitia; nec placere illi potest quod vi humana exprimitur. Reipsa solent qui id faciunt non nomini divino, sed suis honoribus, suis commodis et tranquillitati consulere; quod scit ille qui mentes introspicit. Atque ita fit, ut lolium evellatur cum tritico, innocentes cum nocentibus: immo ut triticum sæpe sumatur pro lolio: non enim tam bene agitur cum rebus humanis, ut semper meliora pluribus aut validioribus placeant; sed ut in grege taurus, ita inter homines, qui viribus est editior, imbecilliorum cædit: et iidem sæpe quæ pati se quærebantur, mox in alios audent.*’—*Lege cætera.*

Again, I entreat those that would escape the sin of schism, to read seriously the foresaid Treatises of peacemakers; especially “*Bishop Hall’s Peacemaker;*” “*Bishop Usher’s Sermon on Ephes. iv. 3.;*” and “*Mr. Jeremy Burroughs’ Irenicum:*” to which I may add “*Mr. Stillingfleet’s Irenicum,*” for the hot contenders about church-government; though I believe all the substance of church order to be of Divine institution: and “*Jac. Acontii Stratag. Satanae.*”

And it must be carefully noted, that one way by which satan tempteth men into church-divisions, is by an over vehement zeal against dividers; and so he would draw the rulers of the world, under pretence of a zeal for unity and peace, to raise persecutions against all that are guilty of any excess of scrupulosity about church-communion, or of any principles or practices which a little swerve from true Catholicism: and so by the cruelty of their penalties, silencing ministers, and vexing the people, they much increase the divisions which they would heal: for when satan cannot do his work barefaced and directly, he useth to be the most

forward in seeming to do good, and to take part with Christ, and truth, and godliness; and then his way is to over-do: he will be over-orthodox, and over-godly, and over-peaceable, that he hug the church and truth to death, by his too hard embracements. As in families and neighbourhoods, some cross words must be passed over if we would have peace: and he that for every provoking, unpeaceable word of another, will raise a storm, shall be himself the most unpeaceable. So is it in the church; he that cannot bear with the weaknesses of the younger sort of Christians, who are too much inclined by their zeal against sin, to dividing ways, but will presently let fly at them as schismatics, and make them odious, and excommunicate or punish them according to his wrath, shall increase the zeal and the number of dividers, and prove himself the greatest divider.

And by this violence and destroying zeal of orthodox rulers, against the real faults and infirmities of some separating, well-meaning men, a far greater number of heterodox rulers, are encouraged to persecute the most learned, sober, and peaceable ministers, and the most godly and faithful of their subjects, who dare not conform to all their unrighteous edicts, and ecclesiastical laws, in things forbidden by the law of Christ: and all this is done upon pretence of promoting unity and peace, and suppressing heresy and schism. And so persecution becometh the devil's engine to keep out the Gospel and godliness from the infidel world, and to keep them under in the Christian world.

'Sed tamen sive illud (Origenis de Redemptione futura diabolorum) Error est, ut ego sentio; sive Hæresis ut putatur, non solum reprimi non potuit multis animadversionibus sacerdotum, sed nequaquam tam late se potuisset effundere, nisi contentione crevisset:' inquit Posthumianus in Sulp. Severi Dialog. i.

'Sed non fuit animus ibi consistere, ubi recens fraternæ cladis fervebat invidia. Nam etsi fortasse videantur parere episcopis debuisse, non ob hanc tamen causam multitudinem tantam sub Christi confessione viventem, præsertim ab episcopis oportuisset affigi.' Id. ibid. Speaking of the bishops provoking the secular power to afflict the monks of Alexandria for defending Origen.

When the Emperor Constantius would by violence force

the orthodox to hold communion with the Arians, he did but make the breach the wider. Read Lucifer Calaritanus *de non conveniendo cum hæreticis*, (in *Biblioth. Patr. Tom. ix. p. 1045. &c.*) The Emperor saith, that the 'orthodox were enemies to peace, and unity, and brotherly love, and that he was resolved to have unity and peace in his dominions: therefore he imprisoned the orthodox and banished them.' 'Propterea odis nos, quia concilium vestrum malignantium execremur; propterea in exilio sumus; propterea in carcere necamur; propterea nobis solis prohibetur conspectus; idcirco reclusi in tenebras custodimur ingenti custodia: hujus rei causa nullus ad nos visendos admittitur hominum; quia videlicet noluerimus vobiscum impiis sacrilegis ullam scelerum vestrorum habere societatem.' *Ibid. 1050.* Which stirred up this bishop in particular to go too far from free communion even with the penitent Arians, and heap up more Scriptures against that communion which the Emperor commanded, than any had done before. 'Nobis dicebas, Pacem volo fieri; et in corde tuo manens adversarius religionis nostræ, cogitabat per te facere nos idololatras, &c.' p. 1051. 'Consilia vestra contra suam prolata ecclesiam reprobatur Deus: nec enim potest odire populum suum, hæreditatem suam, et amare vos filios pestilentiæ, vos persecutores servorum suorum: dixisti, Facite pacem cum episcopis sectæ meæ Arrianis, et estote in unum; et dicit Dei Spiritus, vias impiorum noli exequi, neque æmuleris viam iniquorum, &c.— Dulce quibusdam videtur, quo tibi regi in amicitias jungantur suscipiendo hæresin tuam: sed amarius felle sensuri cum tecum in perpetuum cœperint in perpetua gehenna sentire, qui tecum esse deligerunt, tunc dicturi, Væ nobis, qui Constantium Imperatorem Deo præposuerimus.' Abundance more he writeth to prove that the Emperor being a heretic, they must have no communion with him or his bishops. And when the Emperor complained hereupon, that they wronged and dishonoured him whom they should honour, the said Lucifer wrote his next book, 'de non parcendo in Deum delinquentibus;' which beginneth, 'Superatum te, Imperator, à Dei servis ex omni cum conspexisses parte, dixisti passum te ac pati à nobis contra monita sacrarum Scripturarum contumeliam: dicis nos insolentes extitisse, circa te quem honorari decuerit,

Si quisquam Dei cultorum pepercit apostatis, sint vera quæ dicis de nobis; and so he heapeth up as many texts for rough dealing with offending kings; I give this one instance to shew the fruits of violence, as pretended for peace and unity.

Of the persecutions of the faithful in most ages, even by professed Christians themselves, and God's disowning that spirit of cruelty by his special providences, all church history maketh mention: and how the names of such persecuting hypocrites have stunk in the nostrils of all sober men when their tragedy was fully acted and understood. Especially the poor churches called Waldenses, Picards, and Albigenses, have felt the most grievous effects of this tyranny, and yet have the testimony of the best and wisest men, to have been the purest and nearest to the apostolic simplicity in the world; and the memory of their enemies and persecutors is an abhorrence to the sons of charity and peace. Read Lasitius and Comenius of their discipline, and Bishop Usher de Eccles. succes. et statu. I will recite one notable passage mentioned by Thuanus and Comenius, the one Hist. lib. xxxvi. the other de bono Unit. et Ord. Discipl. p. 59. Maximilian that good and moderate emperor, being one day in the coach with Joh. Crato only (his chief physician and a learned Protestant) lamenting the divisions of Christians, asked Crato, which sort he thought came nearest to the apostolic simplicity: he answered, 'He thought that honour belonged to the brethren called Picards.' The emperor said, 'He thought so too:' which Crato acquainting them with, encouraged them to dedicate to him a book of part of their devotions; for the year before, God had thus marvellously saved him from having a hand in their blood. Joachimus á Nova Domo, Chancellor of Bohemia, went to Vienna, and gave the emperor no rest, till he had procured him to subscribe a mandate for the reviving of a former persecuting mandate against them; having got his commission, and passing just out at the gates of Vienna, as he was upon the bridge over the Danube, the bridge brake under him, and he and all his retinue fell into that great and terrible water; and all were drowned except six horsemen, and one young nobleman, who seeing his lord in the waves, caught hold of his gold chain, and held him till some fishermen

came in boats, but found him dead, and his box with the commission sunk past recovery: this nobleman who survived, was sensible of God's judgment, and turned to the brethren in religion, and the mandate was no further prosecuted. (Such another story Bishop Usher was wont to tell, how Ireland was saved from persecution in Queen Mary's days.)

But it is the most heinous cruelty, when, as in Daniel's case, there are laws of impiety or iniquity, made of purpose to entrap the innocent, by them that confess, 'We shall find no fault against this Daniel, except it be concerning the law of his God:' and then men must be taken in these spider's webs, and accused as schismatical, or what the contrivers please. And especially when it is real holiness which is hated, and order, unity, concord, peace or obedience to our pastors, is made the pretence, for the malicious oppression of it. Gildas and Salvian have told church governors of this at large: and many of the persecuted Protestants have more largely told the Roman clergy of it.

It is a smart complaint of him that wrote the *Epist. de malis Doctoribus*, ascribed to Pope Sixtus III. '*Hujus doctrinæ causa (pro sanctitate scilicet) paucos amicos conquirunt, et plures inimicos; necesse est enim eos qui peccatorum vitia condemnant, tantos habere contrarios, quantum exercere vitia delectat: Inde est etiam quod iniquis et impiis factionibus opprimuntur: quod criminibus falsis appetuntur, quod hæresis etiam perfunduntur infamia: quod hic omnis inimicorum suorum sermo ab ipsorum sumit obtreptatione materiam. Sed quid mirum ut flagitiosis hæresis videatur doctrina justitiæ? Quibus tamen hæresis? Ipsorum secretum patet tantum inimicis; cum si fides dicitur inesset, amici illud potius scire potuissent, &c.'*

The cause is, saith Prosper de vit. contempl. lib. i. cap. 20. et ex eo Hilitgarius Camarac. lib. v. cap. 19. '*Sed nos præsentibus delectati, dum in hac vita commoda nostra et honores inquirimus, non ut meliores sed ut ditiores, non ut sanctiores, sed ut honoratiores simus, cæteris festinamus. Nec gregem domini qui nobis pascendus, tuendusque commissus est, sed nostras voluntates, dominationem, divitias, et cætera blandimenta carnaliter cogitamus. Pastores dici volumus, nec tamen esse contendimus. Officii non vitam*

laborem, appetimus dignitatem; immundorum spirituum feras á grege dilacerando non pellimus; et quod eis remanserat, ipsi consumimus: quando peccantes divites vel potentes non solum non arguimus, sed etiam veneramur; ne nobis aut munera solita offensi non dirigant, aut obsequia desiderata subducant: ac sic muneribus eorum et obsequiis capti, immo per hæc illis addicti, loqui eis de peccato suo aut de futuro judicio formidamus: ad hoc tantum potentes effecti, ut nobis in subjectos dominationem tyrannicam vindicemus; non ut afflictos contra violentiam potentum qui in eos ferarum more sæviunt, defendamus. Inde est quod tam á Potentibus hujus mundi, quam á nobis, quod pejus est, nonnulli graviter fatigati depereunt, quos se de manu nostra Dominus requisiturum terribiliter comminatur—

Sulp. Severus also toucheth the sore when he saith, Hist. lib. ii. 'Certatim gloriosa in certamina ruebatur, multoque avidius tum martyria gloriosis mortibus quærebantur, quam nunc episcopatus pravis ambitionibus appetuntur.'

But when he saith *ibid.* after Constantine's delivery of the church, 'Neque ulterius persecutionem fore credimus, nisi eam quam sub fine jam sæculi antichristus exercebit,' either he was very grossly mistaken, or else those are the instruments of antichrist that are not thought so.

It is a most notable instance to our purpose which Severus ends his history with, of the mischievous zeal of orthodox Ithacius and Idacius against Priscillian and his Gnostics; and worthy of the study of the prelates of the church: 'Idacius sine modo et ultra quam oportuit Istantium sociosque ejus lacesens, facem nascenti incendio subdidit: ut exasperavit malos potius quam compresserit.' In sum, they got the magistrate to interpose and banish the Gnostics, who quickly learned by bribing court officers to turn the emperor against the orthodox for themselves; till the zeal of Idacius and Ithacius grew so hot as to accuse even the best men, yea, St. Martin himself of favoring the Gnostics: and at last got another tyrannical emperor to put Priscillian and many other Gnostics to death, though they withdrew from the accusation, as tending to their own confusion. And Severus saith, 'Certe Ithacium nihil pensi, nihil sancti habuisse definitio: fuit enim audax, loquax, impudens, sumptuosus, veneri et gulæ plurimum impertinens.'

Hic stultitiæ eo usque processerat, ut omnes etiam sanctos viros, quibus aut studium inerat lectionis, aut propositum erat certare jejuniis, tanquam Priscilliani socios et discipulos, in crimen arcesseret. Ausus etiam miser est, Martino episcopo, viro plane apostolis conferendo, palam objectare hæresis infamiam:— quia non desinebat increpare Ithacium, ut ab accusatione desisteret.’ And when the leaders were put to death, the heresy increased more, and honoured Priscillian as a martyr, and reproached the orthodox as wicked persecutors: and the end was, that the church was filled by it with divisions and manifold mischiefs, and all the most godly made the common scorn. ‘Inter hæc plebs Dei et optimus quisque, probro atque ludibrio habebatur.’ They are the last words of Severus’s History; and changing the names are calculated for another meridian, and for later years.

CHAPTER IX.

How to behave ourselves in the Public Assemblies, and the Worship there performed, and after them.

I HAVE purposely given such particular Directions in Part ii, on this subject, and written so many books about it*, and said so much also in the Cases of Conscience, that I shall here only cast in a few common Directions, lest the reader think I make a balk.

Direct. 1. ‘Let your preparations in secret and in your family on the beginning of the Lord’s days, be such as conduce to fit you for the public worship.’ Run not to church as ungodly people do, with a carnal heart, that never sought God before you went, nor considered what you go about; as if all your religion were to make up the number of the auditors; and you thought God must not be worshipped and obeyed at home, but only in the church. God may in mercy meet with an unprepared heart, and open his eyes and heart, and save him; but he hath made no promise of it to any such. He that goeth to worship that God at church, whom he forgetteth and despiseth in his heart and house,

* See my “Treatise of the Lord’s Day,” and my “Cure of Church Divisions.”