

THE TRUE CATHOLIC,
AND
CATHOLIC CHURCH DESCRIBED;

AND THE VANITY OF THE PAPISTS, AND ALL OTHER SCHISMATICS,
THAT CONFINE THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TO THEIR SECT,
DISCOVERED AND SHAMED.

THE PREFACE.

READER,

THE tumultuary contentions and distractions about the *catholic church*, which have been raised by many heretical and schismatical firebrands, have moved me to publish these popular sermons, in order to the satisfaction and settlement of such minds as have been ensnared to a misunderstanding of this article of the Creed. It grieved me to hear so many Christians, that were all baptized into the catholic church, and there received the badge of Christianity and catholicism, to be doubtfully inquiring which is the true catholic church, and many dividers confining it to their sects: and lastly, the Seekers, (instructed by the Papists) with seeming seriousness questioning whether there be any church and ministry at all? But never any sect did cause my admiration so much as the Papist! That ever so many princes and learned men should so odiously vilify the catholic church, and that under pretence of magnifying it, and appealing to it. They are not contented in their doctrine of transubstantiation, to deny sense and reason, ('*Et contra rationem nemo sobrius*') and in many writings to speak diminutively and dishonourably of the Holy Scriptures, (too like to infidels: '*Et contra Scripturas nemo Christianus*;)') but they also cut off themselves (as sectaries) from the universal church, as far as an uncharitable, odious condemning of the far greatest part of the church can do it, and call the church (even that greatest part) by the name of heretics and schismatics; ('*Et contra ecclesiam nemo pacificus.*') And as confidently and contentiously do they labour to cut off the

main body of believers, and to appropriate the catholic church to themselves, and to make their corrupted sect to be the whole, as if the catholic church had been limited to the *Roman* in the Scripture, or the Creed; or as if they had the consent of Christ himself for the divorcing of his spouse. And the men that call charity the form, and soul, and life of the new creature, do seem to be insensible of the brand of their unhappiness; and that there is no greater uncharitableness to be found on this side hell, than the malicious reproaching, condemning, and unchurching of the far greatest part of the church of Christ; except that of infidels, who condemn the whole. When you hear them glorifying of their charity, come hither and rub your eyes, and see what Popish charity is.

For the right understanding of this following discourse, I shall only desire the reader to observe, 1. That it is not a particular church, but the universal, that I am here inquiring after. 2. That I do not intend hereby to equalize the several parts of the catholic church, as to purity of doctrine, discipline, or worship. 3. That yet I would have all Christians join themselves in actual particular communion with the purest churches, if they can obtain it, without greater hurt to themselves or others. than the benefits will countervail. And that I do not intend that we must hold local communion with every congregation, which must be owned as a part of the catholic church. It is possible they may require a participation in some sin of all those that they will admit to their communion: and in such cases, (when they exclude us) we can hold but such a general distant communion, which they cannot prohibit. 4. That when I condemn the schism and uncharitableness of the Papists, or any others, I yet condemn not, but commend our exercise of charity to them, as far as I can discern it.

Lastly, be advertised, that whereas in another book, that comes out with this, (called "Catholic Unity,") I have again taken up many of the particulars wherein the godly are united; I think it need not offend the reader, as an unnecessary repetition, that being but the application of the truth which is here asserted. There I labour to convince the ungodly, that concord can be obtained by no other means, and no other terms, than those which I have here shewed the godly are all agreed in.

Reader, If indeed thou love the church of Christ, join

with me in thy heartiest daily prayers, and in thy faithful diligent endeavours, for the destroying of divisions, and the repairing of decayed charity, and restoring of catholic principles and affections to all the members of the church.

RICHARD BAXTER.

December 12, 1659.

THE TRUE CATHOLIC, AND CATHOLIC CHURCH DESCRIBED.

1 CORINTHIANS xii. 12.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

It is a pitiful case with the poor afflicted church of Christ, that almost all the members cry out against division, and yet cause and increase it, while they speak against it. And that all cry up unity, and yet very few do any thing that is very considerable to promote it; but multitudes are destroying unity, while they commend it: and those few that would heal and close the wounds, are not able by the clearest reasons, and most importunate requests, to hold the hands of others from opposing it; and to get leave of the rest to do that work, which they will not do themselves while they extol it. You would think this were rather the description of a bedlam, than of a Christian! to set all on fire, and furiously to rail at all that would quench it, and at the same time to rail as much at incendiaries, and cry out for concord, and against division, and call other men all that is naught, for doing that which they do themselves, and will not be persuaded from! But to the injurious dishonour of Christianity itself it is thus with millions of professed Christians! thus is the church used: the sin and shame is made so public, that no charity can much excuse it, and no shift can cover it from the reproachful observation of those that are without. Alas, our flames do rise so high, that Turks, and Jews, and Heathens stand looking on them, and ask, 'What is the matter that these Christians thus irreconcilably worry one another?' Do we need any proof, when we feel the smart?

When we see the blood? When we hear the noise of revilers at home, and see the scornful laughers of those abroad? When almost all Christendom is up in arms? When the churches are so many by-names, and broken into so many odious fractions; and so many volumes fly abroad, containing the reproaches and condemnations of each other? And (which is enough to break an honest heart to think or speak of) that all this hath continued so long a time! And they be not so wise as the passionate, or the drunken, that in time will come to themselves again; and that it hath continued notwithstanding the greatest means that are used for the cure: Mediation prevaieth not: pacificatory endeavours have done almost nothing: nay, sin gets advantage in point of reputation, and dividing is counted a work of zeal, and ministers themselves are the principal leaders of it; yea, and ministers of eminent parts and piety; and piety itself is pretended for this, which is the poison of piety; and pacification is become a suspected or derided work; and the peace-makers are presently suspected of some heresy; and perhaps called dividers for seeking reconciliation. It made my heart ache with grief, the other day, to read over the narrative of the endeavours of one man (Mr. John Dury), to heal the Protestant churches themselves, and to think that so much ado should be necessary to make even the leaders of the Christian flocks to be willing to cease so odious a sin, and come out of so long and doleful a misery; yea, and that all should do so little good, and get from men but a few good words, while they sit still and suffer the flames to consume the deplorable remnant: yea, such havock hath division made, and cut the church into so many pieces, that it is become one of the commonest questions among us, which of these pieces it is that is the Church; one saith, 'We are the catholic church;' and another saith, 'No, but it is we!' and a third contendeth that it is 'only they:' and thus men seem to be at a loss; and when they believe the holy catholic church, they know not what it is, which they say, they believe. Though I dare not presume to hope of much success in any attempts against this distraction, after the frustration of the far greater endeavours of multitudes that have attempted it with far greater advantage, yet I have resolved by the help of Christ to bear witness against the sin of the dividers, and leave my testi-

moyn on record to posterity, that if it may not excite some others to the work, yet at least it may let them know, that all were not void of desires for peace in this contentious age.

To which purpose I intend, 1. To speak of the unity and concord of the catholic church. 2. Of the unity and concord of Christians in their particular churches, and in their individual state. And the first discourse I shall ground upon this text, which from the similitude of a natural body doth assert, 1. The multiplicity of the members: and 2. The unity of the body or church of Christ, notwithstanding the multiplicity of the members. The members are here said to be many for number, and it is intimated (which after is more fully expressed) that they are divers for office, and use, and gifts. The church here spoken of is the universal church, as it is both in its visible and mystical state: It is not only a particular church that is here meant; nor is it the catholic church only as mystical, or only as visible, but as it containeth professors and believers, the body and soul, which make up the man, having both ordinances and spirit in their possession. That it is the catholic church is apparent: 1. In that it is denominated in the text from Christ himself, "So also is Christ." And the universal church is more fitly denominated from Christ as the Head, than a particular church. It is not easy to find any text of Scripture that calleth Christ the Head of a particular congregation (as we use not to call the king the head of this, or that corporation, but of the commonwealth), though he may be so called, as a head hath respect to the several members: but he is oft called the Head of the catholic church. (Ephes. i. 22; iv. 15; Col. i. 18; ii. 19; Ephes. v. 23.) The head of such a body is a commoner phrase than the head of the hand or foot. 2. Because it is expressly called "the body of Christ," which title is not given to any particular church, it being but part of the body, verse 27. 3. It is such a church that is here spoken of, to which was given apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, healings, helps, governments, tongues, &c. verse 28, 8, 9, 10. But all particular churches had not all these; and it is doubtful whether Corinth had all that is here mentioned. 4. It is that church which all are baptized into, Jews and Gentiles, bond and free: but that is only into the universal church. The Spirit doth not baptize, or enter men first or directly into a

particular church; no, nor the baptism of water neither always, nor primarily. The scope of the chapter, and of the like discourse of the same apostle, (Ephes. iv,) do shew that it is the catholic church that is here spoken of.

The sense of the text then lyeth in this doctrine.

Doct. The universal church being the body of Christ is but one, and all true Christians are the members of which it doth consist.

Here are two propositions; first, that the catholic church is but one. Secondly, that all Christians are members of it, even all that by the one spirit are baptized into it. These are both so plain in the text, that were not men perverse or very blind, it were superfluous to say any more to prove them. And for the former propositions, that the catholic church is but one, we are all agreed in it. And therefore I will not needlessly trouble you with answering such objections as trouble not the church, which are fetched from the difference of the Jewish church, and the Gentile church, (or strictly catholic) or between the called (the true members) and the elect uncalled; or between the church militant and triumphant.

And as for the second proposition, that the catholic church consisteth of all Christians, as its members, it is plain in this text, and many more. It is all that (heartily say "Jesus is the Lord," (verse 3,) and all that "are baptized by one Spirit into the body," (verse 13,) and all that Paul wrote to, and such as they: and yet some of them were guilty of division, or schism itself, and many errors and crimes, which Paul at large reprehendeth them for. The Galatians weremembers of this church; (Gal. iii. 26—29;) for all their legal conceits and errors, and for all that they dealt with Paul as an enemy for telling them the truth. This church consisteth of all that have the "one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, &c." and of all that "have so learned Christ, as to put off the old man, and to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Ephes. iv. 4—6. 20—24.) This church consisteth of all that "Christ is a Saviour of," and that are "subject" unto Christ, and for "whom he gave himself, that he might sanctify and cleanse them by the washing of water by the word." (Ephes. v. 23—26.) It containeth all such

as the Romans then were to whom Paul wrote, (Rom. xii. 4, 5,) however differing among themselves to the censuring of each other. It containeth in it all "such as shall be saved." (Acts ii. 47.) These things are beyond all just dispute.

When I say, that all Christians are members of the catholic church, I must further tell you that men are called Christians, either because they are truly and heartily the disciples of Christ; or else because they seem so to be by their profession. The first are such Christians as are justified and sanctified, and these constitute the mystical body of Christ, or the church as invisible: professors of this inward true Christianity doth constitute the church as visible to men. Professors of some pieces only of Christianity, leaving out or denying any essential part of it, are not professors of Christianity truly, and therefore are no members of the visible church: and therefore we justly exclude the Mahometans.

And whereas it is a great question, Whether heretics are members of the catholic church? The answer is easy: contend not about a word. If by a heretic you mean a man that denieth or leaves out any essential part of Christianity, he is no member of the church: but if you extend the word so far as to apply it to those that deny not, or leave not out any essential part of Christianity, then such heretics are members of the church. It is but the perverseness of men's spirits, exasperated by disputation, that makes the Papists so much oppose our distinction of the fundamentals of religion from the rest: when at other times they confess the thing in other words themselves. By the fundamentals we mean the essentials of the Christian faith, or religion: And do they think indeed that Christianity hath not its essential parts? Sure they dare not deny it, till they say, 'it hath no essence, and so is nothing, which an infidel will not say?' Or do they think that every revealed truth, which we are bound to believe, is essential to our Christianity? Sure they dare not say so, till they either think that no Christian is bound to believe any more than he doth believe, or that he is a Christian that wants an essential part of Christianity, or that Christianity is as many several things, as there be persons that have several degrees of faith or knowledge in all the world. For shame therefore, lay by this senseless cavil, and quarrel not with the light by partial zeal, lest you prove

your cause thereby to be darkness. But if you perceive a difficulty (as who doth not, though it be not so great as some would make it) in discerning the essential parts from the integrals, do not therefore deny the unquestionable distinction, but join with us for a more full discovery of the difference.

In a few words, every man that doth heartily believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by a faith that worketh by love, is a true Christian. Or every one that taketh God for his only God, that is his Creator, Lord, Ruler, and felicity, or end, and Jesus Christ for his only Redeemer, that is, God and man; that hath fulfilled all righteousness, and given up himself to death on the cross in sacrifice for our sins, and hath purchased and promised us pardon, and grace, and everlasting life; and hath risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, where he is Lord of the church, and intercessor with the Father, whose laws we must obey, and who will come again at last to raise and judge the world, the righteous to everlasting life, and the rest to everlasting punishment: and that taketh the Holy Ghost for his Sanctifier, and believeth the Scriptures given by his inspiration, and sealed by his work, to be the certain word of God. This man is a true Christian, and a member of the catholic church; which will be manifested when he adjoineth a holy, sober and righteous life, using all known means and duties, especially baptism at first, the Lord's-supper afterward, prayer, confession, praise, meditation, and hearing the word of God, with a desire to know more, that his obedience may be full: living under Christ's ministers, and in communion of saints, denying himself, mortifying the flesh and world, living in charity and justice to man; he that doth this is a true Christian, and shall be saved, and therefore a member of the catholic church as invisible; and he that professeth all this, doth profess himself a true Christian, and if he null not that profession, is a member of the catholic church as visible. These things are plain, and in better days were thought sufficient.

He that hath all that is contained but in the ancient Creed, the Lord's-prayer and Ten Commandments, with baptism and the Lord's-supper, in his head, and heart, and life, is certainly a member of the catholic church. In a word, it is no harder to know who is a member of this church, than it is to know who is a Christian. Tell me but what Christianity is, and I will soon tell you how a Church member may be known.

But because it will tend both to the further clearing of this, and the text itself, I shall next shew you in what respects the members of the church are divers, and then in what respects they are all one, or in what they are united.

And as the text tells you, that the members are many numerically, so they are divers in their respects.

1. They are not of the same age or standing in Christ. Some are babes, and some are young men, and some are fathers, (1 John ii. 12—14.) Some are novices, or late converts, and raw Christians, (1 Tim. iii. 6,) and some are of longer standing, that have “borne the burden and heat of the day.” (Matt. xx. 12.)

2. The members are not all of the same degree of strength. Some are of small understanding, that reach little further than the principles of holy doctrine, and have need to be fed with milk, being unskilful in the word of righteousness: Yea, they have need to be taught the very principles again, not as being without a saving knowledge of them (for they are all taught of God, and these laws and principles are written in their hearts); but that they may have a clearer, more distinct and practical knowledge of them, who have but a darker, general, less effectual apprehension. (Heb. v. 11—13; vi. 1.) And some being at full age, are fit for “stronger meat,” that is harder of digestion. (Heb. v. 14.) Who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Some have faith and other graces but as a “grain of mustard-seed,” and some are thriven to a greater strength. (Matt. xviii. 20; xii. 31.) Some grow in grace, and are able to resist a temptation, and do or suffer what they are called to, (2 Pet. iii. 18,) being “strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man, according to the glorious power of grace,” (Ephes. iii. 17; Col. i. 11,) being “strong in faith, giving glory to God.” (Rom. iv. 20.) Having accordingly “strong consolation,” (Heb. vi. 18.) And some are “weak in the faith,” apt to be offended, and their consciences to be wounded, and themselves in greater danger by temptations, whom the stronger must receive, and take heed of offending, and must support them, and bear their infirmities.” (Rom. xiv. 1, 2. 21; xv. 1; 1 Cor. viii. 7. 10—12; ix. 22; 1 Thess. v. 14; Acts xx. 35.)

3. Moreover the members have not all the same stature

or degree of gifts; nor in all things the same sort of gifts; some excel in knowledge, and some in utterance; some in one sort of knowledge, and some in another; and some are weak in all. But of this the chapter speaks so fully, that I need say no more but refer you thither.

4. The members are not altogether of the same complexion. Though all God's children be like the Father, being holy as he is holy, yet they may be known from one another. Some are naturally more mild, and some more passionate: some of colder and calmer temper, and some so hot, that they seem more zealous in all that they say or do: some of more orderly, exact apprehensions, and some of more confused: some of quick understanding, and some dull. (Heb. v. 11.)

5. The members are not all of the same degree of spiritual health. Some have much quicker and sharper appetites to the bread of life than others have: some are fain to strive with their backward hearts before they can go to secret duties, or hold on in them, and before they can get down the food of their souls: and some go with cheerfulness, and find much sweetness in all that they receive: some are of sounder understandings, and others tainted with many errors and corrupt opinions: as appears in Paul's writings to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, and others. Some relish only the food that is wholesome, and some have a mind of novelties, and vain janglings, and contentions, needless disputes, like stomachs that desire coals and ashes, or hurtful things. Some in their conversations maintain their integrity, and walk blamelessly, and without offence. (Luke i. 6; Phil. 2. 15.) And some are overcome by temptations, and give offence to others and grievously wound themselves; as David, Lot, Noah, Peter, &c. And being overcome with creature-respects many good men walk not uprightly in some things, nor according to the truth of the Gospel, and others that are good also are led away in a party by the example of their miscarriages, and the high estimation of their parts and persons, (Gal. ii. 11—14.) Some are firm and stedfast in the truth, and some hold it with shaking, and are of looking behind them, and sometimes are declining and going backward, and have need to be called upon to return to their first love, and to strengthen the things that remain: yea, some

grow to forsake many excellent truths; and neglect many weighty duties, yea, to oppose these truths and duties, and speak against them, as thinking them to be none. Hence it follows that some live in a holy peace and joy, as health is mostly accompanied with ease; when others live in continual lamentations and complaints; and some in too much stupidity and carelessness; and some with dangerous mixtures of an ungrounded, misguided, deluding peace.

6. Hence also it follows, that the members are not all of the same usefulness and serviceableness to the church and cause of Christ. Some are as pillars to support the rest, (Gal. ii. 9; 1 Thess. v. 14,) and some are a trouble to others, and can scarce go any further than they are guided and supported by others. Some lay out themselves in the helping of others: and some are as the sick, that cannot help themselves, but trouble the house with their complaints and necessities, which call for great and continual attendance. Some are fit to be teachers of others, and to be pastors of the flock, and guide the Lord's people in the way of life, and give the children their meat in season, rightly dividing the word of truth. And some are still learning, and never come to much knowledge of the truth, and do no great service to God in their generations: yea, too many weary their teachers and brethren by their frowardness and unfruitfulness: and too many do abundance of wrong to the church, and Gospel, and the world by their offensive miscarriages: yea, too many prove as thorns in our sides, and by some error in their understandings, cherished and used by the too great remnant of pride, self-conceitedness, passion and carnality, are grievous afflictors of the church of Christ, and causes of dissention; one saying I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, and another I am of Christ, as if Christ were divided, or else appropriated to them, and Paul or Apollos had been their saviours. (1 Cor. iii. 1—5.) Some live so as that the church hath much benefit by their lives, and much loss by their death: and some are such troublers of it, by their weakness and corrupt distempers, that their death is some ease to the places where they lived. And yet all these may be truly godly, and living members of the catholic church.

7. Moreover, the members are not all the same in regard of office. Some are appointed to be pastors, teachers, elders,

overseers, to be stewards of God's mysteries, and to feed the flock, taking heed to them all, as being over them in the Lord, as their rulers in spiritual things. (Ephes. iv. 11; Acts xiv. 23; Tit. i. 5; 1 Cor. iv. 1; Acts xx. 17. 28; 1 Thess. v. 12; Heb. xiii. 7. 17.) And some are the flock, commanded to learn of them, to have them in "honour, and highly esteem them for their work sake, and to obey them." (1 Thess. v. 12; Heb. xiii. 17; 1 Tim. v. 17.) In this chapter saith Paul, "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?" (1 Cor. xii. 17. 29.) As there are diversity of gifts, so also of offices: for God hath designed men to use the gifts they have in such order and manner as may edify the church. All the body is not the bonds, or nerves, and ligaments, by which the parts are joined together. (Eph. iv. 16.) All are not "pastors and teachers, given for perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, and edifying of the body of Christ." (Ephes. iv. 11—13.)

8. Consequently the members have not all the same employment: magistrates must rule by force, and ministers must guide or rule by the light and force of the word of God: all must not administer sacraments: all must not be the overseers of the flock. Masters and parents have their own work, and servants and children have theirs. Nay, difference of understanding may cause a great deal of difference among ministers and people in the manner of God's worship, when yet all worship him acceptably and in sincerity. Some may be too much ceremonious in meats, and drinks, and observation of days. (Rom. xiv. and xv.) In gestures, vestures, and other circumstances, sinfully laying much more in these than God would have them: and others may be as rigorous against them: and others more temperate between both. Some may pray and praise God in forms composed by themselves or others, or read them in a book: and some may abhor all this as unlawful; and some may be so wise as to know that it is a matter that God hath left in itself indifferent, and is to be determined according to the suitability of times and persons. And thus many modal circumstantial differences there may be in the true worshipping of God, by the members of this one universal church.

9. And from what is said already, it follows, that all the

members of the church are not all equally to be honoured and loved. Even among the elders, there are some that are worthy of double honour, and some of more than they. (1 Tim. v. 17.) Some are of high and excellent gifts and graces; and as more of God doth shine forth in them, so a greater love and honour is due to them. Some are so eminently self-denying, and of public spirits, and wholly carried to the service of God, and the good of the church, that few others are "like-minded, naturally caring for the people's state, but all do too much seek their own, and too little the things that are Jesus Christ's." (Phil. ii. 20, 21.) The body hath some parts that are less honourable, and less comely: (1 Cor. xii. 22—24 :) though these also have their honour and comeliness: those that most honour God shall be most honoured; (1 Sam. ii. 30; Job xii. 26;) and they that will be the "servants of all, shall be the greatest." Luke xxii. 26; Matt. xxiii. 11.)

10. To conclude, from all this imparity it will follow, that the members will not have an equal degree of glory, as not having an equal preparation and capacity. All are not in Abraham's bosom, as Lazarus was. "To sit on Christ's right hand and left in his kingdom will not be the lot of all, but of those to whom the Father will give it." (Matt. xx. 23.) All are not to sit on thrones, in full equality with the apostles. (Luke xx. 30.) There are of the first for time of coming in, that shall be last of dignity, and of the last that shall be first. (Matt. xix. 30; xx. 16.) All shall not be rulers of five cities, but only they that have double five talents. (Matt. xxv.) And thus I have shewed you the disparity of the members, wherein they differ.

Secondly. I am now to shew you the unity of them, and of the body which they constitute. The members of the catholic church are united in all these following respects:

1. They have all but one God, the fountain of their being and felicity, and are all related to him as children to one Father, reconciled to them, and adopting them in Jesus Christ. (John i. 12.) "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii. 26.) "There is one God and Father of all," &c. (Gal. iv. 5, 6; Eph. iv. 6.)

2. The members of the church have all one Head, the Redeemer, Saviour, Mediator, Jesus Christ. (Ephes. iv. 5.) As the commonwealth is denominated from the unity of the

sovereign power that heads it; so the church is hence principally denominated one from Christ, who is the Head, the Sovereign, and the Centre of it. And therefore it is called frequently his body, and he the Head of it. (Ephes. iv. 15; i. 22; Col. i. 18; ii. 19; Ephes. v. 23; Col. iii. 15; Rom. xii. 4, 5; 1 Cor. x. 17; Ephes. ii. 16.) He is the foundation, and the church is the building that is erected upon him, "and other foundation can no man lay." (1 Cor. iii. 11, 12.) "From this head the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working of the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love." (Ephes. iv. 16.) All therefore are members of the catholic church that are members of Christ. He is "the chief corner-stone that is laid in Zion, elect and precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded; to whom coming as to a living stone, we also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house." (1 Pet. ii. 4—6.) As this "One died for all," (2 Cor. v. 14,) because all were dead, so by the righteousness of this One, the free gift cometh on all to justification of life, and by the obedience of this One shall many be made righteous." (Rom. v. 18, 19.) "And by one Jesus Christ we shall reign in life." (Rom. v. 17.) "In him the church of Jews and Gentiles are made one." (Ephes. ii. 14, 15.) "To this one Husband we are all espoused." (2 Cor. xi. 2.) So that we "are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii. 28.) And "to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we in him." (1 Cor. viii. 6.)

3. The whole catholic church (strictly taken, as comprehending only the living members) have only one Holy Ghost dwelling in them, illuminating, sanctifying and guiding them, and are animated as it were by this one Spirit. "By this one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) And "whoever hath not this Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his." (Rom. viii. 9.) "By this one Spirit we have all access to the Father." (Ephes. ii. 18.) And through this Spirit we are "one habitation of God." (Ephes. ii. 22.) And therefore "he that is joined to the Lord is called one Spirit." (1 Cor. vi. 17.) And it is said of Christ, so may it be of the Spirit in a sort, "He that sanctifieth, and they that are

sanctified are all one." (Heb. ii. 11.) This is the scope of the chapter that my text is in.

4. The church is *one* as to their principal, ultimate end. The same God is their end who is their beginning. The same eternal glory with him, is purchased and prepared for them, and intended by them through their Christian course. The wicked have a lower end, even flesh and self: but all the members of Christ are united in the true intention of this end. They are all the "heirs of life, and partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and have all lain up their treasure in heaven." (Matt. vi. 20, 21; Col. i. 12; Gal. iv. 7; Rom. viii. 17; 1 Pet. iii. 7; Tit. iii. 7; Gal. iii. 29; Heb. i. 14; Ephes. iii. 6.) "All that are risen with Christ, do seek the things that are above," (Col. iii. 1,) "and have their conversation with him in heaven." (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

5. All the members of the catholic Gospel-church have one Gospel to teach them the knowledge of Christ. (Gal. i. 10, 11.) And one word of promise to be the charter of their inheritance, (1 Tim. iv. 8; Heb. ix. 15; Gal. iii. 22, 29,) and one holy doctrine to be the instrument of their regeneration, and the "seed of God abiding in them." (1 Pet. i. 23, 25; Luke viii. 11.) It is but one that God hath appointed for them; and it is one in the substance that is the instrument of their change.

6. It is one kind of faith, that by this one holy doctrine is wrought upon their souls. Though the degrees be various, yet all believe the same essential points of faith, with a belief of the same nature. There is "one faith;" (Ephes. iv. 5;) and in all these essentials the church is of "one mind," (John xvii. 21; Acts iv. 32; 1 Pet. iii. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 2—4,) though in lesser things there be exceeding great diversity.

7. There is one new disposition, or holy nature wrought by the Spirit of God in every member of the catholic church. This is called their holiness, and the new creature, and the divine nature, and the image of God. (1 Pet. i. 16; 2 Pet. i. 4; John iii. 6.) "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." (Col. iii. 10; 2 Cor. v. 17.)

8. The affections which are predominant in all the members of the church, have one and the same object. Sin is the chiefest thing that all of them hate, and the displeasure of God the chief thing they fear, and God in Christ is the prime object of their love; and they have all the same ob-

ject of their desires and hopes, even the favour of God, and everlasting life: and they all chiefly rejoice in the same hopes and felicity; as were easy to manifest and prove in the particulars, as to all the essentials of Christianity that are the objects of the will. (Phil. i. 27; ii. 3; Ephes. iv. 4; Matt. xxii. 37, 38; Rom. viii. 28; 1 Cor. ii. 9.) And thus they are all of one heart and soul, as uniting in the same objects.

9. They have also one rule or law to live by, which is the law of faith, of grace, of liberty, of Christ. (Rom. iii. 27; viii. 2; James i. 25; Gal. vi. 2.) And as one law is appointed for them all, so one law in the points of absolute necessity is received by them all; for "it is written in their hearts," and put into "their inward parts." (Jer. xxxi. 32; Heb. viii. 10. 16.) Though in the other points of the law of Christ there be much diversity in their reception and obedience. All of them are sincerely obedient to what they know, and all of them know that which God hath made of necessity to life.

10. Every member of the church is devoted to God in one and the same covenant. As the covenant on Christ's part is one to them all; so is it one on their part. They all renounce the world, the flesh and the devil, and give up themselves to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And this being used by God's appointment, to be solemnly done in baptism, therefore baptism is called the principle or foundation. (Heb. vi. 1.) And there is said to be one baptism, (Ephes. iv. 5,) and baptism is said to save us; "Not the putting away the filth of the flesh, (that is, not the outward washing,) but the answer of a good conscience to God," (1 Pet. iii. 21,) that is, the sincere, internal covenant of the heart, and delivering up ourselves to Christ. So also the fathers, when they (usually) speak of the necessity of baptism, they mean principally our becoming Christians, and entering into the holy covenant, which was done by baptism. Though if any be so weak as to think that this outward baptism is to be delayed, (as Constantine and many of the fathers did,) if in the meantime he make and profess his covenant with Christ, he is to be taken as a Christian and church-member: but as a soldier without colours, or a king not crowned; he is a Christian not orderly admitted, which is his sin.

11. Every member of the catholic church hath the same

instrumental founders of his faith under Christ, that is, the prophets and apostles, infallibly inspired by the Holy Ghost. "We are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." (Ephes. ii. 20, 21.) These were the eye-witnesses of the resurrection of Christ, and the ear-witnesses of his holy doctrine, who have delivered it to us as confirmed by the miracles of the Holy Ghost by Christ, and by themselves. And though possibly some ignorant Christian may not well understand his relation to these founders of his faith, yet from them he had it, and is thus related to them: and commonly this is understood and acknowledged by them.

12. Every member of the church is related to all the body, as a member of it: and are "no more strangers and sojourners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God." (Ephes. ii. 19.) But this the very term itself doth sufficiently import to you.

13. Every member of the church hath an habitual love to each particular member of the same church. Though mistakes and infirmities may occasion fallings out, even as with Paul and Barnabas, to a parting; and there may be dislikes and bitterness against one another upon misunderstandings, and not discerning God's graces in each other; yet still, as Christians, they are heartily loved by each other; and did they know more of the truth of each other's Christianity, they would love each other more. Every member is united by love to the rest; for this is a lesson that is taught us inwardly of God: "And by this we know that we are translated from death to life." (1 Pet. i. 22; 1 John iii. 11. 14. 23; iv. 12. 20, 21. 8; 1 Thess. iv. 9; John xiii. 34, 35.)

14. Every member of the church hath a special love to the whole, and desire after the church's welfare and prosperity. Yea, their love to the body exceedeth their love to the particular members, (Psal. cxxii. 2,) and therefore they desire and pray for its safety and increase.

15. Every member of the church hath a special love to the more noble sort of members. As every man is more careful of the heart, the stomach, the lungs, the liver, than of his finger; so are Christians, as Christians, in greatest love to those that have most of Christ in them, and on whom

the church's welfare doth most depend, of them are they most solicitous, so far as they understand it. This is true both of men's graces, gifts and offices. He that loveth grace, loveth those most that have most grace. And he that loveth the church, honoureth those in a special manner whom he discerneth best gifted for the benefit of the church, and to employ his gifts most faithfully thereto. And though I will not say but it is possible for some Christians to be converted by a private man, and die before they know a church-officer, and for some weak ones in a temptation to deny and disclaim, or quarrel with their officers; yet so far as any true Christian is acquainted with the necessity or usefulness of the ministry to the church's good, and God's honour, (as ordinarily all know it in some measure; and they that know it not are in some fit of a frensy,) so far they cannot choose but love and honour them. And thus far all Christians join for the ministry: as God's intention was for all their good in giving pastors, teachers and gifts of special service for the church. (Ephes. iv. 11—14.)

16. All members have an inward inclination to hold communion with fellow members, so far as they discern them to be members indeed. As fire would to fire, and water would to water, and earth to earth, and every thing to its like; so Christians would have actual communion with Christians, as delighting in each other, and loving Christ in each other, and finding benefit by each other's communion. Though I know that this inclination may be much kept from execution, and communion much hindered, by mistakes about the nature, and manner, and requisites of it, and by infirmities and passions of our own. Brethren may fall out, but there is naturally in them a brotherly love, and when the mistake or passion is over, they will get together again. (Acts ix. 32, 33; ii. 42, 44; Heb. x. 25; Psal. xvi. 3.)

17. There is in every true member of the church an inward inclination and propensity to all the instituted means of grace, and a suitableness of spirit to them, which fitteth them to relish them, and highly to value them: and ordinarily this disposition is brought forth into act. The word of God is engrafted or innaturalized to them. (James i. 21.) It is to them as milk to the new-born babe. (1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.) The Lord's-supper is sweet to him, as representing Christ sacrificed, and offering him Christ the food of the soul, and

affording him special communion with the saints. "For the cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ; and the bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ; for we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread. (1 Cor. x. 16, 17.) The same holy disposition have they to prayer, confession, the praises of God, and all other parts of his service. Though it is too true, that as diseases may put our mouths out of relish to our meat; so temptations may bring some Christians to mistakes about some ordinances, especially as to the manner, and so may make them guilty of too long forbearance of them.

18. So also every member of the church hath in the main the same holy employment and conversation, that is, the service of God, so far as they know his will, is the business of their lives. (Rom. xii. 1.) "We are his workmanship, created to good works in Christ Jesus." (Ephes. ii. 10, 11.)

19. And every member hath an inward enmity to that which is destructive to itself, or to the body, so far as he knoweth it, that is, 1. To sin in general. 2. To all known sin in particular. And, 3. Specially to divisions, distractions, and diminution of the church. These things their inward disposition is against; and when they are led to them; it is by temptation producing mistakes and passions against the bent of their hearts and lives. They abhor that which is destructive to the body, as such.

20. Lastly. They shall all at the end of their course obtain the same crown of glory, and see and enjoy the same blessed God and glorified Redeemer, and be members of the same celestial Jerusalem, and be employed everlastingly in the same holy love, and joy, and praise, and glorify and please the Lord in all, and centre, and be united perfectly in him. (John xvii. 21, 23, 24.) "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen." (Rom. xi. 36.)

And thus I have shewed you in twenty particulars the unity of the saints; though it is not from every one of these that they are called one church, yet all these are inseparable as to possession from the true members, and as to profession from the seeming members that are adult.

Use 1. The truth being thus plain and certain as it is, that the catholic church is one, and consisteth of true

Christians, as its real living members, and of all professors of true Christianity, as its visible members, we have here too great occasion of sad lamentation, for the common ignorance of the contenders of the world about this matter, and the great inconsiderateness and abuse of this unquestionable verity. To four sorts of people I shall direct my expostulations. 1. To the Seekers, or whoever else deny the very being of the catholic church. 2. To the blind contending parties of these times, and the offended ignorant people, that are much perplexed among so many pretenders, to know which is the church. 3. To the several sects that would appropriate the church to themselves only. 4. To the Papists, that ask us for a proof of the continued visibility of our church, and where it was before Luther. To these in order: and,

First, For the Seekers; because it is not their persons that I have to speak against, but the errors which they are said to hold, and because they purposely hide their opinions; and because I meet with them of so many minds, I shall therefore deal only with the opinions commonly supposed to be theirs, not determining whether indeed they are theirs, or no: for I care not who maintains them, so I do but effectually confute them. And here are four degrees of this error supposed to be held by the Seekers. 1. Some of them are said to deny the universal mystical church itself. 2. Some are said to deny only the universal visible church, as such: 3. Some yielding both these, deny the universal church as political only. 4. Some only deny the truth of particular churches, as political, that is, the truth of the ministry. Of these in order:

1. Let that man that questioneth the being of the catholic mystical church, and yet pretends to believe in Christ, read but these three or four arguments, and blush.

Argum. 1. If there be no such universal church, then there are no Christians: for what is the church but all the Christians of the world? And I pray inquire better, whether there be any Christians in the world or not? Read the church history, and the books of the infidels, and see whether there have been Christians in the world since the apostles. He that believeth not that there are Christians in the world, when he dwells among them, and daily converseth with them, deserveth to be otherwise disputed with

than by argument. He hath only cause to doubt whether there be any Christian magistrate in this part of the world, that such as he are suffered to rave against Christianity.

And certainly he that thinks there are no Christians in the world, is none himself, nor would be thought one.

Argum. 2. If there be no church, there is no Christ: no body, no head: no kingdom, no king: no wife, no husband: no redeemed ones, no Redeemer or Mediator. Though the person of Christ should be the same, yet the office and relation must cease, if the church cease. This is beyond all dispute. And if this be your meaning, that there is no Christ, no Mediator, no Head, or Teacher, or King of the church, speak out, and call yourselves infidels as you are.

Argum. 3. If there be no church or Christians, then there is no salvation: for salvation is promised to none but Christians, or members of Christ. He is the "Saviour of his body." (Ephes. v. 23.) And he that thinks there is none on earth that shall be saved, it seems expecteth no salvation himself: and how much the world is beholden to him for his doctrine, and how ready they will be to receive it, if they be in their wits, is easy to be conjectured.

Argum. 4. If there be no church, there is no pardon of sin, or adoption, nor any fruit of the promise. For the church only are the heirs of promise, pardoned, adopted. (I would heap up plain Scriptures for these things, if I thought it to any purpose.) And he that thinks the promises are ceased, and the pardon of sin and adoption ceased, doth sure think the Gospel and Christianity are ceased, or never were.

2. As to the second opinion, let them that deny the church as visible, consider of the same arguments again, with the necessary addition, and be ashamed.

Argum. 1. If there be no visible church, there are no visible Christians; for Christians are the church: And if there are no visible Christians, then no man can say, that there are any Christians at all: For how do you know it if they are not visible?

Argum. 2. And consequently no man can tell that there is a Christ, the head and king of the church: for who can judge of that which is invident? And if you know not that there is a church, you cannot know that there is a Christ.

Argum. 3. And thus you must be uncertain of any to be saved, because they are not visible.

Argum. 4. And you must be uncertain of the continuance of the force of the promise, and of pardon, and sanctification.

Argum. 5. Experience and sense itself confutes you. Open your eyes and ears: do you not see Christians in holy exercises? Do you not hear them make profession of their faith? It is a fine world, when we must be fain to dispute whether there be such a people whom we every day converse and talk with! You may better question, whether there be any Turks or Jews in the world! And as well question, whether there be any men in the world! And how should such be disputed with!

3. For the third opinion, which yields an universal visible church, but not a political, it is a gross contradiction.

Argum. Where there is a sovereign, and subjects, and ruler, and such as are under his rule, there is a political body or society. For the 'pars imperans,' and 'pars subdita,' do constitute every commonwealth: and the relations of these two parties, the ruling part, and the ruled part, is the form of the republic. This is undeniable. But here are these two parts: for Christ is the ruling part, and the church or Christians are the ruled part: and therefore you must either deny that there is a Christ to be King, or that there are Christians his subjects; or else you must confess a political church.

But some of this opinion say, 'We confess there is a visible body headed by Christ, who is to us invisible, though visible in the heavens; but this makes not the church to be visibly political, unless 'secundum quod;' but here is no visible universal head.'

Ans. 1. We perceive now whereabouts you are, and from whom, and for whom you fetch your arguments. You must have a Pope, it seems, or else no visible political church: We deny that either Pope or General Council are the visible heads of the church. We maintain that the church is no otherwise visible in its policy, than in these respects. 1. As the body is visible, and their obedience, As 2. The laws are visible by which they are governed. 3. As the inferior officers or ministers are visible. And 4.

As Christ the Head is visible in heaven, there is no other visibility of polity to be here expected.

4. The next opinion denieth only, that there are any true particular political churches. Against this I argue thus :

Argum. 1. If there be no particular churches, there is no universal church : for there can be no whole, if there be no parts : and political particular churches are those principal constitutive parts of the universal, which the Scripture mentioneth. But I have proved that there is an universal church, which is the whole : therefore there are particular political churches, which are parts.

Argum. 2. If there be particular Christian societies with overseers, then there are particular political churches : for a church hath but two essential parts ; the guiding or ruling part, which is the elders or overseers, and the guided and ruled part, which are the people. Now here are both these : therefore there are particular political churches. That here are Christian assemblies methinks I should not need to prove, to men that see them day to day, and plead against them. The only question, therefore, remaining is, Whether the elders or teachers be true officers or elders, or not ? And in the upshot this is all the question, and you can stick on no other (nor well on this) without declaring yourselves to be infidels : and this is a question that belongs not to this place, but I purposely refer you to what I have already published hereupon.

II. My next address is, to them that are so solicitous to know which is the true church among all the parties in the world that pretend to it. Silly souls ! they are hearkening to that party, and to that party, and turn it may be to one, and to another, to find the true universal church ; I speak not in contempt, but in compassion : but I must say, you deal much more like bedlams than Christians, or reasonable men. You run up and down from room to room to find the house, and ask, is the parlour it ? or is the hall it ? or is the kitchen, or the coal-house it ? Why, every one is a part of it ; and all the rooms make up the house. You are in the wood, and cannot find it for trees : But you ask, which of these sort of trees is the wood ? Is it the oak, or the ash, or the elm, or poplar ? or is it the hawthorn, or the bramble ? Why, it is all together. You are studying which of the members is the man : Is the hand the man ?

or is it the foot? or is it the eye? or the heart? or which is it? Why, it is the whole body and soul, in which all parts and faculties are comprised. You wisely ask, Which part is the whole? Why, no part is the whole. Which is the catholic church? Is it the Protestants, the Calvinists, or the Lutherans, the Papists, the Greeks, the Æthiopians, or which is it? Why, it is never any one of them, but all together that are truly Christians. Good Lord! what a pitiful state is the poor church in, when we must look abroad and see such abundance running up and down the world, and asking which is the world? Whether this country be the world, or that country be the world? They are as it were running up and down England to look for England, and ask, whether this town be England, or whether it be the other? They are as men running up and down London to inquire for London, and ask, whether this house be London, or that street be London? or some other? Thus are they in the midst of the church of Christ inquiring after the church, and asking, Whether it be this party of Christians, or whether it be the other? Why, you doating wretches, it is all Christians in the world of what sort soever, that are truly so, that constitute the catholic church.

Indeed if your question were only, Which is the purest, or soundest, or safest part of the church, then there were some sense in it, and I could quickly give you advice for your resolution; but that is reserved for a following part of the discourse. If you only ask, whether the parlour or the coal-house be the better part or room of the house? or whether the oak or the bramble be the better part of the wood? I should soon give you an answer. So if you ask, Whether the Protestants, or Papists, or Greeks, be the sounder part of the church? I should soon answer you. The same family may have in it both infants and men at age, sound men and sick men; some that have but small distempers, and some that have the plague or leprosy: and yet all are men, and members of the family: and so hath the church of God such members.

Object. But will you make all sects and heretics in the world to be members of the catholic church?

Answer. No: there are none members of the church but Christians. If you call any Christians heretics, those are members of the church: but those heretics that are no

Christians, are no church-members. If they deny any essential point of Christianity, they are not Christians, but analogically, equivocally, or 'secundum quid.' I tell you, all that are true believers, justified and sanctified, are true living members of the church: and all that profess true faith and holiness, are true members, and no others, at age and use of reason. Your inquiry, therefore, should be, Which are true Christians? And what is true Christianity? And what heresies deny the essentials of Christianity? And then you may soon know who are of the church.

Object. 'Abundance of the errors now common in the world, do subvert the foundation, or destroy the essentials of Christianity.'

Answ. It is not every consequential destroying of the essentials that will prove a man no Christian. For almost every error in the matters of faith and morality doth consequentially subvert the foundation, because of the concatenation of truths together, and their dependance on each other. And so every man on earth should perish if this were inconsistent with Christianity: for all men err in matters revealed and propounded by God in Scripture to their knowledge and belief. He that holdeth fast the essentials of religion by a practical belief, shall be saved by it, though he hold any opinions which consequently subvert the truth, and doth not understand that they do subvert it: for this is the best men's case. But if he so hold the error, as seeing that it overthrows an essential point, and so holdeth not that point which it is against, this man is not a Christian. Every drop of water is contrary to fire, and yet a great fire is not put out by a single drop. Every degree of sickness, or natural decay, hath a contrariety to health and life: and yet every man is not dead that is sick; nor any man, I think: nor is it every sickness that procureth death. The promise is, "He that believeth shall be saved:" and, therefore, as long as he believeth all the essential verities, it is no contrary opinion that can unchristen him, or unchurch him.

Object. But how shall we know a visible Christian by this, when we know not whether he hold the truth, or not;'

Answ. By men's profession the visibility of their faith is easily discerned. If they say they believe that Christ rose from the dead, I am to take them as believers of it, not-

withstanding they should hold some error, that hath a remote opposition to it. But if they directly deny it, I have no reason to think they believe it; and if they will hold two directly contradictory propositions, they are madmen, and to be believed in neither. The Lutherans maintain, That Christ hath a true human nature; and yet some of them say, That it is everywhere. Though this be contrary to the former by consequence; yet I am bound to judge that they take Christ to be true man still, because indeed they do so, not seeing the contradiction.

But if a man by his contradiction in other terms, do manifest that he doth not believe the truth which he professeth to believe, but speaks the words while he denies the sense; this is to deny the matter itself: for it is the sense that is the doctrine: and so he denies himself to be a Christian. For example: If he say, that Christ is risen, and by Christ tell you he meaneth his own spirit; and by rising he meaneth his rising from sin, as the Familists do, and no more: this is to deny the resurrection of Christ.

Object. 'But will you dishonour Christ and his church by taking in all sects and erroneous persons, that held the essentials: What a linseywoolsey garment will this be? What a large and mingled church will you make?'

Ans. The largeness is no dishonour to it: but by over-narrowing it many sects do dishonour it. The corruptions and infirmities are indeed a dishonour to it: but that reflects not at all on Christ, yea, it maketh for his honour, both that he is so exceeding compassionate as to extend his love and mercy so far, and to bear with such distempers, and pardon such miscarriages of his servants: And should your eye be evil because he is good? O how ill doth it beseem that man that needeth exceeding mercy himself, even to save him from damnation, to be opening his mouth against the mercy of Christ to others! Yea, to repine at, and even reproach the mercy that he liveth by, and must save him, if ever he be saved. Why man, hast not thou as much need of tender indulgence and mercy thyself, to keep thee in the church, and in the favour of God, and bring thee to heaven, as Anabaptists, Separatists, Arminians, Lutherans, and many such sects have, to continue them in the number of catholic Christians? If thou have not their errors, thou hast others,

and perhaps as bad, which thou little thinkest of: and if thou have not their errors, hast thou not sins that are as provoking to God as they? Really, speak thy heart man, be thou Papist or Protestant, or what thou wilt, wouldst thou have God less merciful than he is? Or wouldst thou wish him to be so little merciful as to damn all that be not of thy opinion, or to unchristen and unchurch all these that thou speakest against? Or wouldst thou have him to condemn and cast away all men that have as great faults as the errors of these Christians are? And consequently to condemn thyself? Moreover it is Christ's honour to be the healer of such great distempers, and the cure at last shall magnify his skill. In the meantime the church, though black, is yet comely in the eyes of Christ, and of all that see by the light of his Spirit. And our tenderhearted Saviour disdaineth not to be the physician of such an hospital as hath many sorts of diseases in it, and many of them very great. And when pharisees make it his reproach that he thus converseth with publicans and sinners, he takes it as his glory to be the compassionate physician of those that are sick.

I beseech you therefore, poor, peevish, quarrelsome souls, give others leave to live in the same house with you: Do not disown your brethren, and say, they are bastards, because they somewhat differ from you in complexion, in age, in strength, in health, in stature, or any of the points wherein I told you a little before that the members of the church do usually differ in. Shew not yourselves so ignorant or froward as to make a wonder of it, that God should be the Father both of infants, and men at age, of weak and strong, and that the sick and sound should both be in his family. Doth such cruelty beseem the breast of a Christian, as to wish God to cast out all his children from his family that are weak and sick? Do not make it such a matter of wonder, that God's house should have so many rooms in it; and think it not a reproach to it, that the kitchen or the coal-house is a part of the house. Wonder not at it as a strange thing, that all the body is not a hand or eye; and that some parts have less honour and comeliness than the rest. Hath God told you so plainly and fully of these matters, and yet will you not understand, but remain so perverse? I pray hereafter remember better that the catholic church is one, consisting of all true Christians as the members.

III. My next address is to those several sects (I call them not so in reproach, but because they make themselves so), that sinfully appropriate the catholic church to themselves. Thus did the Donatists in Augustine's time, to whom he gives a confutation of very great use to all that are guilty of that sin in our days. But I shall only speak particularly now to these three sects that are most notoriously guilty: 1. The Quakers*. 2. Some Anabaptists. And, 3. The Papists.

1. The Quakers are but a few distempered people, risen up within a few years in this corner of the world: and yet they are not ashamed to condemn the most godly Christians, ministers and churches of the world, that are not of their way; as if the church were confined to these few poor, distracted, erroneous persons do not think that they are all of a mind among themselves; some of them plainly deny the very essentials of Christianity. And for these to reproach the church is no wonder: but to appropriate it to themselves that are no members of it, as if Turks or heathens should have persuaded the world that they are the only Christians. In the meantime I thank God that Christianity is in so much esteem, that even the enemies of it do pretend to it: But for those that go under that name, and deny not the fundamentals, let them consider what I said before to the Seekers: If there be no church, there is no Christ: no body, no head: And no church, no Christians; and no justification or salvation. And therefore I would know of them, where was the true church before the other day that the Quakers rose? If there were any, where was it? If there were none, then there was no Christ, no head! I remember what a boy told them lately near us, 'Your church and religion (saith he) cannot be the right, for I can remember since it first begun.' Surely Christ had a church before the Quakers.

2. The rigid Anabaptists do run the same strain, and appropriate the church to their sect alone; and this upon the Popish conceit, that baptism is either necessary to salvation, or else to the being of a member of the church. None but the re-baptized, or those that are baptized at age, are taken by them to be members of the church; (though I know that many of the Anabaptists are more moderate, and make re-baptizing necessary only in point of duty, and 'ad

* It is necessary to remark, that the people called *Quakers* and *Anabaptists*, in the present day, differ very materially from the sects so called in Mr. Baxter's time.

bene esse.' Of these men I would also know, 1. Where was a church that was against infant-baptism, since the days of the apostles, (much less among them) till within these five hundred or six hundred years at most, (perhaps these two hundred or three hundred?) Had Christ a visible church of such in all ages? If so, tell us where it was, and prove it. If not, tell us how Christ could be a king without a kingdom, a head without a body. 2. And can your hearts endure so cruel a doctrine, as to unchurch all the churches of the world, except so few and such as believe you? 3. And would you have men in their wits believe that Christ hath been so many hundred years without a visible church? Or that his church hath had a false constitution, and that now he is constituting his church aright in the end of the world? 4. Your error is so much the greater and more cruel, as your party is the smaller, and more lately sprung up; that ever it can enter into your hearts to imagine that God hath no church in all the world but you. But I shall say no more to you particularly, partly, because you are an impatient generation, that take a confutation for a persecution; and partly, because I shall offend the more sober, by such needless words, to so gross an error; and chiefly because that which I shall speak to the next party, will also be useful to your information.

3. The principal sect that appropriate the church to themselves, is the Papists. And to them I shall more largely open my mind. They make a great noise against all other parties with the name of the Roman Catholic church, and the confident ostentation that it is only they. They make the Pope the visible head of it, and exclude all from the church, besides his subjects; and all that are not of that church they exclude also from salvation, with an 'extra ecclesiam nulla salus.' What shall we say to these things?

1. Surely it must needs be some admirable qualification that must thus advance the church of Rome to be the whole and only catholic church! And what should this be? Is it their extraordinary holiness? I know they talk much of the holiness of their church: but they dare not put it upon that issue, and let us take that for the church which we find to be most holy. On those terms I think we should soon be resolved, by a little observation and experience. However it would not serve their turn, unless they could prove that

none are holy at all but they. What then is the ground of this pretended privilege? Why, because they take the bishop of Rome for the universal bishop, and are under his government. And is this it that salvation is confined to?

2. And surely it must be some very heinous matter, that all the rest of the Christian world must be unchurched and damned for; and what is that? Is it for denying any article of the faith? Which is it that we deny? When they would set them against Protestants, they boast that the Greeks are in all things of their mind, except the Pope's supremacy; and therefore this is the only heresy that might unchurch and damn them. And it is not for ungodliness; for we are ready to join with them in severer censures of ungodliness than we know how to bring them to. The damning crime is, that we believe not the church of Rome to be the mistress of all the churches, and the Pope to be their head. And indeed is this a damning sin, and inconsistent with Christianity, or church-membership? I prove the contrary, that the catholic church is not confined to the Roman, but containeth in it all that I have mentioned before.

Argum. 1. If many are true Christians that believe not in the Pope, or Roman church, as the ruler of the rest, then many may be church-members and saved that believe not in them: but the antecedent is certain. For,

1. He that truly believes in God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil, is a Christian: but so do many millions that believe not in the Pope or Roman sovereignty.

2. He that hath the sanctifying Spirit of Christ is a Christian: for Christ giveth it to no other: but so have millions that believe not the Roman sovereignty, as I shall further shew anon.

3. Those that have all that is essential to a Christian, are true Christians: but so have millions that believe not the Roman sovereignty. For they have faith, hope, charity, repentance, and sincere obedience, and therefore are true Christians. If you say, that the belief of the Roman sovereignty is essential to Christianity, you must well prove it, which yet was never done.

I prove the contrary by many arguments.

1. No Scripture tells us that your sovereignty is a truth, much less of the essence of Christianity. Therefore it is not so to be believed. What Bellarmin brings but to prove

the truth of it, I have manifested to be utterly impertinent in my book against Popery.

2. If it had been essential to Christianity, and necessary to salvation, to believe the sovereignty of the church of Rome, the apostles would have preached it to all the people, whose conversion they endeavoured, and have established the churches in it: but there is not a word in Scripture, or any church history, that ever the apostles, or any preachers of those times, did teach the people any such doctrine: much less that they taught it all the people. And sure they would not have omitted a point of necessity to salvation.

3. If the sovereignty of the Pope, or of Rome, is of necessity to Christianity and salvation, then the apostles and pastors of the primitive church would either have baptized men into the Pope or Roman church, or at least have instructed their catechumens in it, and required them to profess their belief in the Pope and Roman church. But there is not a word in Scripture, or any church records, intimating that ever such a thing was once done either by orthodox or heretics; that ever any did baptize men into the name of the Pope or Roman church, or did require of them a confession of the Roman sovereignty; no, nor ever taught any church or Christian to obey the church of Rome, as the ruler of other churches. Paul was more certainly an apostle at Rome (a bishop they call him) than Peter, and you may know his practice by 1 Cor. i. 14, 15, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say that I baptized in my own name." The ancient forms of baptism are recorded in Scripture and church history; but this is never in. He that believed in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for remission, justification, sanctification, and everlasting life, was baptized as a Christian.

4. If the sovereignty of the Roman church were necessary to Christianity and salvation, we should have had it in some of the creeds of the primitive church, or at least in the exposition of those creeds. But there we have no such thing. For their affirmation, that the word catholic church in the creed, signifieth as much as the Roman catholic church doth signify no more to us, but the dreaming ungrounded confidence of the affirmers.

5. Thousands and millions were saved in the primitive

church, without ever believing or confessing the Roman sovereignty: therefore it is not essential to Christianity. No man can prove that one Christian believed Rome to be the mistress of other churches for many hundred years after Christ, much less that all believed it.

6. If it be an article of faith, and so essential to Christianity, that Rome is the mistress of other churches, then either it was so before there was a church at Rome, or else it begun after. Not before: for when there was no church, it could not be the mistress of all churches. Not after: for then Christianity should have altered its specific nature, and become another thing, by the adding of a new essential part. But Christianity is the same thing since there was a church at Rome, as it was for many years before. And the catholic church is the same thing. It was many years a catholic church before there was any church at Rome at all.

7. If it be necessary to Christianity or salvation to believe that Rome is the mistress and head of the catholic church, then it is as necessary to know who it is that is this head and mistress; whether it be the Pope, or the particular Church of Rome, or the General Council. For else the bare name of Rome should be the thing of necessity. But if we know not what that name doth signify, it is no more to us than a nonsensical word, which a parrot may utter. But what it is that is this head or sovereignty the Papists themselves are utterly disagreed in. The Council of Constance and Basil defined, That the General Council is the head, above the Pope, and may judge and depose him, as they did divers. The Laterane Council thought otherwise: and Bellarmin saith the aforesaid council, 'judged the judge of the whole world,' and maintained the Pope to be the head and seat of sovereignty. The Italians go one way, and the French another. But if these be true General Councils, then the matter is determined against the Pope: and therefore is an article of faith to be believed on pain of damnation, that the council is above the Pope: and yet it is also an article of faith to be believed on the same penalty, that the Pope is above the General Council; for the Council at the Lateran under Leo X, hath determined it, sess. 11. So that councils are contrary, and articles of faith are contrary, and he that will be a Papist must believe contradictions. If to evade this any say, that either the Council of Constance, or that

at the Lateran, were not true General Councils, or not approved by the Pope: For that of Constance Bellarmin answers after Turrecremata, Campegius, Sanders, &c., that it was a true and approved Council. (Lib. 2. de Concil. cap. 19.) But they say, 'That it determined only that the Council is above the Pope in case of a schism, when the true Pope is not known.' But Bellarmin dare not stand to this answer: for the express words of the Council are, that 'A General Council hath immediate authority from Christ, which all are bound to obey, though of Papal dignity.' Can plainer words be spoke? But Bellarmin's other shift is worse, 'that P. Martin 5. confirmed all that was done in this council, conciliariter; but this (saith he) was not conciliariter.' See what juggling the articles of the Romish faith are liable to, and how clear an interpreter of the Scriptures, and decider of controversies we have, that speaks so enigmatically when he seems to speak most plainly, even in confirming a General Council, that his own cardinals, nor the Council itself, are able to understand him. But perhaps the Council at the Lateran was false, that determineth of the contrary, that the Pope is above councils: no, not in the judgment of Bellarmin and his party. For (Lib. 2. de concil. cap. 17.) he saith, that 'vix dici potest,' it can scarcely be said that the council was not general. And the Pope was in it, and confirmed it, and the non-reception of it by others he saith is nothing, because decrees of faith are immutable, and the not receiving cannot change them. What a case then are they in that must needs be damned? Whether they believe the Pope to be the supreme, or the Council to be the supreme? One council is against one way, and the other against the other way, and both councils confirmed by undoubted Popes. But yet they have a remedy, and that is, that yet the matter is doubtful: and where is the doubt? Why it is, whether the council defined this as an article of faith, or no? And therefore saith Bellarmin, 'they are not properly heretics that hold the contrary, but cannot be excused from great temerity.' So that you see what certainty the Papists are at in their faith. It cannot be known, nor will any succeeding Popes determine it, when a council hath decided a point, whether or no they intended it as an article of faith. (And yet in the Trent oath they are to swear obedience to all things defined and declared by the sacred canons and

œcumenical councils.) One council decrees, that the Pope is highest, another or two decree, that the council is highest, and the Pope must obey them: yea, both these are confirmed by the Pope. The subjects are sworn to obey both contradictories: and yet after this contrary decision, the case is still undecided with them, and for fear of losing half their party, they dare not say that either are properly heretics. (Mark, *properly*.) ‘Yea, (saith Bellarmin, de concil. lib. 2. c. 13,) though afterwards in the Florentine and Lateran Council the question seems to be defined, (having before been contrarily defined at Constance and Basil) yet to this day it remaineth a question among Catholics, because the Council of Florence seems not to define it so expressly: and of the Council of Lateran, which most expressly defined it, some doubt). So that as there is no understanding their councils in their highest degrees, so we have the confession of the Papists themselves, that it is yet undetermined, and no point of faith, which is the sovereign power in the church: and if it be not so much as determined, then much less is it essential to Christianity. And if it be not necessary to know who hath the sovereignty, then it cannot be necessary to know that it is in the church of Rome: For the name of the Church of Rome is nothing but a sound, without the thing that is signified by it: Moreover, the Pope is not the church of Rome; for it was never heard that one man was called a church: and a General Council is not the churches of Rome: for if there be such a thing, it representeth all churches as much as Rome. And therefore which ever be the sovereign, it cannot be the church of Rome. And as for the particular Roman clergy or people, no man that ever I heard of did yet affirm that it was the sovereign ruler of the churches. It is only the Pope and Council that are competitors.

If any say, That it is the Pope and Council only conjunct. I answer, 1. That two that are both fallible, set together, will not make one infallible power. 2. Then the far greatest part of the Papists are erroneous in holding the contrary: for almost all make either the Pope or the Council to be the seat of supremacy and infallibility. 3. Then what is become of the church when these two disagree, as frequently they have done? 4. The Pope and Council agreeing do often contradict a former Pope and Council agreeing.

5. Then the church is without a head, all this while that there is no council in being. See Bellarmin's arguments against this opinion.

8. Another argument to prove that it is not essential to Christianity, to believe the sovereignty of the Pope or church of Rome is this, it is not necessary to salvation to know that there is such a place as Rome in the world, or whether there be one, or two, or ten places of that name, or which of them it is that hath the sovereignty: and therefore it cannot be necessary to believe that it is the catholic or mistress church: Would God lay men's salvation upon the title of a city, many thousand miles from some parts of his church, which they have no knowledge of? Many Papists say, that heathens have sufficient means of salvation that never heard of Christ; and yet will they damn Christians that never heard of the city or Pope of Rome? For about three hundred years after Christ it was the seat of the greatest idolatry, impiety, and persecuting cruelty in the world. And would God all that while so advance that wicked place as to make it essential to Christianity to believe Rome to be the seat of the sovereignty of the church!

9. We have no certainty of faith that Rome shall not be burned, or be possessed by Mahometans, or turn to infidelity: therefore we have no certainty that it shall be any church at all, much less the true ruling or catholic church.

10. If it were necessary to salvation to believe Rome's sovereignty, God would afford the world sufficient evidence of it, and commission preachers to preach it to the world: "For how should they believe without a preacher; and how shall he preach except he be sent?" But no such commissions are proved to be given to any from the Lord.

Having thus backed my first argument, and proved others besides Papists to be Christians, and consequently members of the catholic church, I may proceed to the rest.

Argum. 2. If millions besides Papists have the Spirit of God, and true faith, and charity, and holiness, then are they members of the catholic church. For out of the church is no salvation; but all that have the Holy Ghost and charity shall be saved, as the Papists confess, if they continue in it. But that many besides Papists have charity and sanctification, we have large experience to persuade us to conclude:

For though no man can know the certain truth of another man's profession, or heart; yet as far as men can know by one another, we have ground to be exceeding confident of the sanctity and charity of multitudes among us. I profess if it were but this one thing that hindered me, I could not be a Papist upon any terms; I live among humble, holy, and heavenly people, that live in continual breathings after God, hating a sinful thought, in great mortification, and willingness to know God's will, that they may obey it; and accordingly abundance have ended their lives in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost: None of these were Papists: and now it is impossible for a man to be a Papist, that will not conclude all these to be out of the catholic church, and consequently to be unsanctified and condemned. And if so, I am resolved never to be a Papist. If I cannot be a Papist without condemning a multitude of the holiest persons that ever I could meet with, and shutting my eyes against the admirable lustre of their graces, let them be Papists that will for me.

Argum. 3. The Lord Jesus shed his blood for all Christians as well as Papists, with a special intent to sanctify and save all that are such indeed. Therefore they are members of the catholic church. (Ephes. v. 25—27.)

Argum. 4. All Christians are subject to Christ, though they be not subject to the Pope: therefore they are the church of Christ. (Ephes. v. 24.)

Argum. 5. Those that are loved of the Father, and reconciled to him, are to be taken for members of the church. But all that believe in the Son, and love him, are loved by the Father, and reconciled to him. (John xvi. 27; Rom. v. 1, 2.)

Argum. 6. All that are justly baptized are visible members of the church: but many are justly baptized that believe not the sovereignty of Rome. Therefore, &c., the minor is evident by the Scripture-direction for baptizing, and examples of it; and millions at this day in the church of God confirm it to us.

Argum. 7. They that have a promise of pardon, and are the adopted sons of God, and heirs of glory, are members of the church (beyond all question): but so are all that believe in Christ, and love God, whether they believe in the Pope or not; as you may see expressly, John i. 12; iii. 15, 16, 18; xvii. 20—22, 24; Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 36; v. 24; vi. 35.

40. 47; vii. 38; xi. 25, 26; xii. 46; Rom. iii. 22. 26; iv. 11, 24; ix. 33; x. 9; Gal. iii. 22; 2 Thess. i. 10; Heb. iv. 3; Acts v. 14; 1 Pet. ii. 6; 1 John v. 1. 5. 10; Acts xiii. 39.

Argum. 8. If they must live in heaven with us, we have reason to take them for members of the church on earth. But all that truly love God, and believe in Christ, shall live in heaven with us, though they never believed in the Pope. Therefore, &c.

Argum. 9. They that are united in all the twenty particulars in the beginning expressed, are certainly members of the catholic church: but so are many that believe not in the Pope. Therefore,

Argum. 10. The Papists' doctrine goes against the certain experience of the sanctified. Some measure of assurance I have myself of the love of God in me; and much more many others have, as I see great reason to believe. Now popery binds me to conclude that I am void of charity, and all saving, special grace, because I believe not in the Pope; that is, to renounce the experience of God's grace in my soul, and unthankfully to deny all these mercies of God. So that as sure as any Protestant can be of charity or saving grace in himself, so sure may he be that popery is false doctrine, and that is enough.

Having spoken thus much to these several sects that would appropriate the catholic church to themselves, I shall once more speak to them altogether. Whether you are Papists, or what sect soever that are guilty of this grievous crime, I beseech you think of these following aggravations of your sin:

1. How evidently is your doctrine against the merciful nature of God, and contrary to that abundant grace which he hath manifested to mankind. Is his love itself; and his mercy over all his works reaching unto the heavens, and unconceivable by sinners? Hath he not thought the blood of his Son too dear for us? And yet can you believe those men that would persuade you that the far greatest part of the Christians of the world are out of the church, and shall be damned, because they believe not in the Pope of Rome, or because they are not rebaptized, or the like, how holy soever they are in other respects? Is this like God; or hath he thus described himself in his word? We are as willing as you to know the truth; and study, and pray, and seek as

much after it, and would most gladly find it at any rates: and the more we search; and study, and pray, the more confident we are that your way is wrong: And must we yet be all unchristened that are not of your opinion?

2. How much do you wrong and dishonour the Lord Jesus in many respects! 1. Hath he purchased his church with his own blood; and now dare you presume to rob him of the far greater part of his purchase, because they be not of your opinion? I would not stand before him with the guilt of such a sin for all the world. 2. Dare you charge so great unmercifulness on Christ, that hath so wonderfully shewed his mercy, and at so dear a rate? After all his blood and sufferings, dare you feign him to say to the world, ‘Believe in me, and love me never so much; if you obey not the church of Rome, you cannot be my disciples, or be saved?’ Yea, and would he lay our salvation on this, and yet not reveal it to us, but say so much against it? Let him be of these men’s minds that can, for I cannot. 3. Moreover, the weaknesses and diseases of the saints do honour the skill of Christ their Physician, that hath undertaken the cure, and in due time will accomplish it. And will you go and turn them all out of his hospital, and say they are none of his patients?

3. Your design is against the very nature of the catholic church, and the communion of saints. The design of Christ in the work of redemption was to gather all into one body, and bring them to God. To break down the partition-wall between Jew and Gentile, and take away the ordinances and ceremonies that occasioned the division, and to unite them all in himself the universal head. (Ephes. ii. 13—15.) “That he might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” (verse 16.) To this end, “When he ascended, he gave pastors and teachers, as well as apostles, prophets and evangelists, 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, unto a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,—that 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 that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the

measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Ephes. iv. 11, 12. 15, 16.) In these several particulars you directly strike at the very nature of the catholic church. 1. The church is but one, and you tear off a member, and call it the whole, and so would make it many, or divide it. It was the design of Christ to unite all the differing parts; and you cross his design, and go about to separate that which he hath conjoined and cemented, even by his precious blood. 2. The church is united and centered in Christ, and knows no other head: and Papists would set up a mortal and incapable man, and have all unity in him as a vicar head: and having not a word for this from Christ, they pervert one text, "The eye cannot say to the hand, &c., or the head to the feet, I have no need of you." (1 Cor. xii. 21.) See here, say they, is a visible head: But, 1. It is visible to any man that will understand, that the term *head* is used of the natural body's head, by way of similitude: but when the thing assimilate (the mystical body) is mentioned, there is not a word of a head; but the application is of the more honourable or comely parts in general: many such heads there be, that is, more honourable parts, but no Universal Governor, that is it they should prove; they may else as well pretend, that beside the Pope who is the head, there must be one or two universal eyes, and two universal hands, or feet, for the whole church. Thus men abuse themselves, when they will dare to wrest the Scripture to their interests. 2. But if it had spoke of one universal head, must it needs be the Pope, or an earthly man? I must profess that very chapter is so full and plain against popery, that were there no more I could hardly be a Papist. For mark, I pray you, 1. The Lord Jesus himself is expressly named in verse 12. And yet must we seek for another exposition of the word head? "All the members of that body being many, are one body; even so is Christ." It is Christ that the church is united in.

Object. 'But Christ may say to the feet, I have no need of you.'

Answ. For himself he hath no need of any creature: But, 1. For the completing of the body he hath need of the members, which is the thing here mentioned. 2. And to his own glory he hath use for them. He that said of a colt, when he was to ride into Jerusalem, "The Lord hath need of him,"

may as well be said to have need of his members. 3. If neither prophet, apostle, or teacher, were head of the church, then the Pope is not : for he pretends not to be greater than Peter the apostle. But none of these were the head, as is most plain, “ Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular ; and God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers,” (verse 27, 28.) So that Christ only is made the head, and apostles are all together numbered with the prime or most honourable members, and no more.

So (Colos. i. 18—20,) “ And he is the head of the body, the church :—For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell, and having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself.” What a daring vile attempt is it of that man, that would tear the greater half of the members from his body, when it hath cost him so dear to unite them in himself.

4. Moreover, your course is dishonourable to the church and cause of Christ. I know his flock is small ; but to narrow it, as you would do, is exceedingly to dishonour it. To make men believe that God hath no more in all the world but your party, is to raise temptations and hard thoughts of God in the minds of men without any cause.

5. And if such a dividing censure must needs be past, there is none less fit to do it than you, that are commonly forwardest to divide. If most of the Christian world must needs be unchurched, to whose share were it more likely to fall than to you ? Quakers I will say nothing to, their folly being so gross. Anabaptists are setting up a new church-entrance in the end of the world : and if they know any thing of church history, they must needs know that, comparatively, there are few in heaven that were of their mind on earth. And for the Papists, we have much ado to maintain our charity, in proving them to be a church at all. And the truth is, the question hath some difficulty, whether the church of Rome be a true church or no : to which I give this true and plain answer in brief.

The word *church* signifieth four things (pertinent to our present purpose.) 1. The universal or catholic church as visible : so the church of Rome is not the church at all. 2. The universal church as invisible : so the church of Rome is not the church. 3. A particular political church of Christ's

institution. And 4. A community or mere country or company of Christians, as part of the catholic church. Now as to these two last, the church of Rome signifieth, 1. Either all the Papists formally as such, that is, as united to a pretended universal bishop. And in this formal respect the church of Rome is a false church, and no true church at all of Christ's appointing. 2. By the church of Rome may be meant, the persons that live under the Papal captivity and subjection; not as his subjects formally, but as Christians, and the subjects of Christ: and thus all Christians in the church of Rome are a part of the universal church of Christ: A part, and but a part, as Christians: no part, but the plague of the church, as Papists. This is the plain truth. Your errors are great and numerous; yet we are willing to extend our charity as far as is possible, to take you for brethren: and will you be so froward as to unchurch others, even all the rest of the Christian world, that have need of so much charity to yourselves? You cry out of the heresy of the Jacobites, Georgians, Syrians, Armenians, &c. Some are Nestorians, some are Eutychians, and I know not what: but woe to Rome if worse men, and more erroneous than they, may not be of the church, and saved. Shall I set down the words of one of your own monks that dwelt among them in Judea? It is Bochardus Descript. Terra sanct. 323, 324, 325, 326. "Sunt in Terra promissionis," &c. "There are in the Holy Land (saith he), men of every nation under heaven: and every nation liveth after their own rites: and to speak the truth, to our great confusion, there are none found in it that are worse, and of more corrupt manners than the Christians:" (he means the Papists.) Page 235, he saith, "Moreover those that we judge to be damned Heretics, Nestorians, Jacobites, Maronites, Georgians, and the like, I found to be for the most part good and simple men, and living sincerely towards God and men, of great abstinence," &c.—And page 324, he tells you, "That the Syrians, Nestorians, Nubians, Jabeans, Chaldeans, Maronites, Ethiopians, and many other nations of Christians there inhabit, and some are Schismatics, not subject to the Pope; and others called Heretics, as the Nestorians, Jacobites," &c. "But (saith he) there are many in these sects exceeding simple (or plain), knowing nothing of heresies, devoted

to Christ, macerating the flesh with fastings, and wearing the most simple garments, so that they even far exceed the very religious of the Roman church."

Thus by the testimony of your own eye-witnesses, even these that you cast out for heretics and schismatics, are far beyond even the religious of your church: What then are the reformed churches? Truly sirs, it is intolerable for the parlour to say, 'I am all the house;' but for the chimney, kitchen, or coal-house, it is more intolerable. If your chief servant shall say, 'the rest are no servants,' it is not well: but for the scullion or groom to say so, is worse. If the oak say, 'I am the whole wood,' it is ill; but if the bramble say so, it is worse. If the best of your children should say, that all the rest are bastards, it is not well; but if the most vicious and deformed say so, it is worse.

And as you are unfit for quality to exclude all others, so also for number you are very unfit. As for the Anabaptists, and such inconsiderable parties, that are not past the thousandth part of the church, or perhaps the many thousandth part of it (when yet the whole visible church is supposed to be but the sixth part of the world); I do admire how any Christian can make himself believe that the love and grace of Christ is confined to so narrow a room, and his church so small. I think he that believeth once that Christ hath not one of so many thousands, is next to believing that he hath no church at all, and consequently that there is no Christ at all.

And for the Papists, how deeply also are they guilty in this! As I said, in their greatest height now they are not near one half the Christians in the world: a great part of their church are the poor Americans, whom they drive to baptism, as cattle to the water, (yet not leaving it to their choice so much as to drink when they come thither:) so that their own writers tell us, that multitudes of them know nothing of Christianity but the name, and many forget that too. Awhile ago the Papists were but a small part of the church, before Tenduc, Nubia, and other kingdoms fell away. One of their own bishops, and a legate there resident, speaks upon his own knowledge of the state of the church in the eastern parts, "That in the easterly parts of Asia alone, the Christians exceeded in multitudes both the

Greek and Latin churches." (Jacob a Vitriaco Histor. Oriental. cap. 77.) And a most learned writer of their own, (Melch. Canus Loc. Theol. lib. 6. cap. 7, fol. 201,) saith, "Pugnatum est," &c.—"Both the Greeks, and almost all the rest of the bishops of the whole world, did vehemently fight to destroy the privilege of the Roman church: and they had on their side both the arms of emperors, and the greater number of churches, and yet they could never bring it to pass, that the power of this one Roman Pope should be abrogated." You see here by their own most express confession which way the most of the churches went, and that almost all or most of all the bishops of the world were against them, (and so where our church was before Luther:) and yet are these men a competent number to condemn all the rest of the churches of Christ, and appropriate all the catholic church to themselves? O what a world of faction do we live in! I am bitterly censured on one side for believing that any Papists are parts of the catholic church: and, on the other side, we cannot persuade the Papists, that any other are parts of it: and so they will needs be either the whole church, or none of it.

6. This factious course of unchurching all the Christians, saving yourselves, is contrary to the very internal nature of Christianity. Every Christian as a Christian is taught of God to love the brethren, and by this all must know that we are Christ's disciples; and "he that loveth not his brother abideth in death." There is a holy disposition to unity and closure in all Christians. And if you have not this disposition yourselves, you are but hypocrites: if you have it, how dare you sin against it? Though you must not unite with any in their sin, you must unite with all that are Christians in their Christianity.

7. Moreover, your course is contrary to Christian humility, and proclaimeth the most abominable pride of the dividers. That you should call all the rest of the Christian world Schismatics and Heretics, and say, that none are Christians but you: Why, what are you above other men, that you should say, 'Come not near me, I am holier than thou?' Have none in the world, think you, faith, hope, and charity, but you? Can you indeed believe that none shall be saved but you? Alas, that you should not only so much overlook God's graces in your brethren, but also be so in-

sensible of your own infirmities! Have you so many errors and sins among you, and yet are none of the church but you? Methinks an humble soul should say, 'Alas, I am so bad, that I am more likely to be cast out than they; I am unworthy of the communion of saints!

8. Yea, you trespass against common reason itself. Do you think it reasonable for us to believe, that all those that we see walk uprightly with God and men, earnest in prayer, and study to know the truth; holy, and humble, and heavenly Christians, are yet out of the church, and state of life, because they be not re-baptized with the Anabaptists, or because they believe not in the Pope of Rome, with the Papists? It is hard to imagine that he that pretends to believe such unreasonable things as these, doth well believe Christianity itself.

9. And how could you honour and gratify the devil more, and magnify his kingdom, than by teaching men that most of the churches are his? Will you not be content to let him go away with all the unbelieving world, and all the hypocrites also in the church, but you will proclaim him the king of Christ's inheritance, even of the best and greatest part of his disciples, because they are not of your opinion, or your sect? What dealing is this for a Christian to be guilty of?

10. Lastly, consider what uncomfortable doctrine it is that you deliver, especially to yourselves? You will not believe that all these sects and differing parties that hold the essentials are members of the catholic church: You scorn at such a church, and say, What a medley church is this! Will Christ entertain men of so many opinions, and of so much corruption? Yea; or else woe to you, and such as you are! Methinks you should rather say, 'Alas, what will become of me, if sinners and erring persons may not be Christians, but must all perish? O what sins have I that are greater than many of their errors! And who is more likely to err than such an ignorant wretch as I!' Take heed lest you cut a shoe too little for your own foot; and lest you shut out so many that you must yourselves go out with the first. I must profess, after long, impartial studies, if I were of the opinion that most of the Christian world are, out of the catholic church, I could not believe that the Papists are in it.

Consider now of these aggravations of your sin: To

think and say, 1. That one piece of the church is the whole church: 2. Yea, and a piece that is no greater: 3. That none of the best, nor far from the worst: 4. Nor any of the ancientest, whatever is pretended. 5. And to exclude the greatest part of Christians for such a matter, as not believing in the Pope of Rome: And 6. Lastly, to do all this in pretence of unity, even to cast away the most of the church to unite it. What an unreasonable, unchristian course is this! Dividing spirits may plead what they will, but God will one day shew them their sin in a fouler shape than here I have opened it, though it seem to them but pious zeal.

V. My next address is to the Papists, for answer to their great question, ‘Where was your church before Luther? Give us a catalogue of the persons of all ages that were of your church?’

Ans. Of OUR CHURCH! Why, sirs? Do you think we have a catholic church by ourselves? Is there any more universal churches than one? Do you not know where the catholic church was before Luther, and in all ages? Why, *there was our church*; for we have no other, we know but one. Do you not know where there were any Christians before Luther, or in all ages? Or would you have us give you a catalogue of Christians? Wherever there were true Christians, there was our church. Would you have the world believe that there were no Christians but the subjects of the Pope? Can you believe it yourselves? Doth not your Canus confess, as before cited, that most of the churches and bishops of the whole world were against the privileges of the church of Rome, and had the arms of emperors on their sides? Doth not your Reinerius long ago say, or whoever was the author of that conclusion, “The churches of the Armenians, Ethiopians, and Indians, and the rest which the apostles converted, are not under the church of Rome.” (Contr. Waldens. Catal. in Biblioth. Patr. T. 4. Page 773.) What fuller confessions can we desire? Nay, do we not know how small a part of the world did believe your universal sovereignty till almost a thousand years after Christ; and none at all for many hundred years after him, that any credible history tells us of? and yet do you ask us, where was our church?

But you must have us tell you where was a church that had all our opinions? To which I answer, 1. When you

have shewed us a catholic church that held all your opinions, we shall quickly tell you of one that held ours. 2. It is not all our opinions that are essential to a Christian, and the catholic church. It is Christianity that makes us Christians and members of the church: It is not inferior truth. That which makes us Christians and catholics, all true Christians in the world have as well as we: And, therefore, we are of the same catholic church. Æthiopians, Syrians, Armenians, Egyptians, Georgians, Jacobites, the many nations of Greeks, Muscovites, and Russians, and all other that are against the Roman sovereignty, are of the same religion and catholic church as we: and so are all among yourselves too that are Christians indeed. The points which we agree in make us all Christians, and church-members: but the points in which we differ from the Papists do make us so much sounder and safer Christians than these, that I would not be one of them for all the world. A sound man is but a man; and so is a man that hath the plague: but yet there is some difference, though not in their manhood.

If, therefore, you will at any time try whether your doctrines or ours be the sounder, we are heartily willing to appeal to antiquity! Spit in his face, and spare not, that will not stand to this motion: That the oldest way of religion shall carry it: and they that are of latest beginning shall be judged to be in the wrong. I abhor that religion that is less than sixteen hundred years of age, and therefore I cannot be a Papist. I confess in the streams of after-ages there have been divisions in the integrals of Christianity, or the points that tend to the soundness of the churches. And in this, I say, let the oldest be the best. But for the essentials of Christianity, and the Church, there never was division among true Christians: for they could not be Christians that wanted any essential part. And, therefore, that one church which contained all the Christians in the world was our church before Luther; and the catalogues of the professors are our church rolls: but we count by thousands, and by countries, and not by names.

But perhaps you will say, 'You cannot be of the same church with the Greeks, or us, or the other parties that you name; for we and they do all renounce you.' I answer, as if it were in your power who shall be no member of Christ and his church by your renouncing him! Your renouncing

may prove you no Christians yourselves perhaps, by proving you, in some cases, uncharitable : but it can do nothing to unchurch or unchristen others. If I should say myself, I am no member of the church, that doth not make me none, as long as I am a Christian : much less can your saying so. Saith Paul, " If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body : is it therefore not of the body ? and if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body : is it therefore not of the body ? " (1 Cor. xii. 15, 16.) The words of a man's mouth make not another to be what he is not, or cease to be what he is. Every one is not a bastard, or a whore, that another in railing passion calleth so. If Christ do but consent we will be members of his body, whether the Pope will or not.

And now, beloved hearers, you have been acquainted from the Word of God of the nature and unity of the catholic church, I beseech you resolve to retain this doctrine, and make use of it for yourselves and others. If any man ask you what church you are of, tell him, that you are of that particular church where you dwell : but for the catholic church you know but one, and that you are of. Thrust not yourselves into a corner of the church, and there stand quarrelling against the rest : make not sectaries of yourselves, by appropriating Christ, and the church, and salvation to your party : abhor the very thoughts and name of any universal church of Christ, which is of narrower extent than Christianity, and containeth fewer than all true Christians, and is pretended to be confined to a sect. It is not the Papists that are the catholic church, nor is it the Greeks, no, nor the Protestants, much less the new prelates alone ; but it is all Christians through the world, of whom the Protestants are the soundest part, but not the whole. Again, consider what a lamentable case it is, that so great a part of the church do seem to be at a loss about the church, as if they knew not where it is ? That they run up and down the house of God, complaining that they cannot find the house, and know not which room it is that is the house. But in the house of God are many rooms and mansions : one for Greeks, and one for Æthiopians, one for Armenians, and Georgians, and Syrians ; one for many that are called Papists ; one for Lutherans and Arminians ; one for Anabaptists, and one for many that are truly guilty of

schism and separation from particular churches: there is room for Episcopal, Presbyterians, Independents and Erasmians: there is room for Augustinians, called Jansenists, and room for Calvinists: but yet no room for any but Christians and catholics. Alas, that after so many warnings in plainest words of Scripture, and the history of so many ages, so many Christians should yet be so carnal, as to be saying, I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos, and I of Cephas, that is, Peter: Yea, that after Cephas is here named as a party, the Papists should be so wilfully blind as still to make him the head of a party! That one is for Rome, and another for Constantinople, and another for Alexandria! When that Augustine hath so long ago decided this point against the Donatists, and told them which is the catholic church, even that which begun at Jerusalem, and is extended over the world wherever there be Christians: alas, that still men are so stupid in their divisions, as to be crying out, 'Here is Christ, and there is Christ: here is the church, and there is the church: we are the church, and you are none of it.' When the body of Christ and its unity is so frequently and plainly described in the Scripture. I know that none are members of the church that deny any essential point of Christianity: but I know that many other mistaken parties are. Consider what an uncharitable, dangerous thing it is to give Christ's spouse a bill of divorce, or cast his children out of his family. And in the name of God take heed whilst you live, 1. That you never confine the church to a sect or party. 2. Nor ever cast out the least true Christians, seeing Christ will never cast them out.

But because this disease hath miserably tormented us for so many ages, and because we see so many sick of it at this day, distractedly looking for the catholic church in this or that party, and thinking that all others are shut out, I shall here tell you what are the causes of this distraction, and in the discovery of the causes you may see the remedies. And withal I shall shew you the hindrances of the concord and peace of the church, while so many seem to be all for peace! For it may seem a wonderful thing to hear almost all men cry up the church's peace and concord, and yet that it flieth further from us, when it is in our power to be possessors of it, if we were but truly and generally willing, as we pretend to be, and think that we are.

1. Some men understand not the nature of the union and concord of the church, nor how much is to be expected in this life, and therefore looking for more than is to be looked for, they think we have no unity, because we have not that which they ignorantly expect: and thereupon finding greater unity in this or that sect among themselves than they find in the whole body, they presently conclude that that sect is the church: they see a great many differing parties, and hear them condemning one another, and therefore they foolishly think that all these cannot possibly be of the true church: and then they hear the Papists boast of their unity, as having one head, and one judge of controversies, and one expounder of Scripture, and being all of one belief, and therefore they think that the Papists are the true church.

But consider before you run past your understandings of these two things: First, There is no perfect concord to be expected upon earth: this is the glory that is proper to the life to come. You may easily see this if you were but considerate. For, 1. There can be no perfect concord, but where there is perfect light and knowledge: for while we are ignorant, we shall unavoidably err and differ. What do we quarrel about but matter of opinion? One thinks this is the right, and another thinks that is the right: And if we had all so much knowledge as to resolve all these doubts, do you think we should not be sooner agreed? Doubtless our disagreements are much for want of knowledge; we quarrel in the dark: if such a light would come among us, as would shew us all the truth, it would soon make us friends. But this is not to be expected in this life: even Paul saith, that here we know but in part; we understand as children; and think and speak as children; and is it any wonder to have children fall out? "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away: Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: Now we know in part; but then we shall know even as we are known." (1 Cor. xiii. 9—12.) And therefore we find even Paul and Barnabas so far disagreed as to part asunder, because they had not both so much knowledge as to know whether Mark should be taken with them or not. In heaven only we shall know perfectly: and therefore in heaven only we shall be united, and agree perfectly.

2. And we can never be perfect in union and agreement

among ourselves till we are perfect in union and agreement with Christ. For we cannot regularly be nearer to each other than we are to our Centre: for it is the Centre only in which we must unite. It is not possible to be more nearly united among ourselves by a Christian union than we are to Christ: and therefore seeing it is only in heaven that we are perfectly united to Christ, and at agreement with him, it is only in heaven that we must be perfectly united among ourselves. You marvel that we so much differ from one another, but you forget how much we all differ yet from Jesus Christ; and that this is the difference that must be first made up before we do any good of the rest.

3. Moreover, we can never be perfectly united and agreed till we are perfectly holy, and every grace be perfect in us: for holiness is that new nature in which we must be one; and every grace hath a hand in our accord. When we are perfect in love, and perfect in humility, and meekness, and patience, and perfect in self-denial, and all other graces, then, and never till then, shall we be perfect in our union and agreement among ourselves: while there is the least sin in the soul it will hinder our full agreement with God and men. It is sin that woundeth both the soul and the church, and makes all the debate and divisions among us; and when all sin is gone, then all differences will be done, and never till then. What an ignorant thing then is it of you to wonder so much at our many differences, and yet not to wonder at our sinfulness, and unholiness, and difference with Christ, in whom we must agree. Well, remember hereafter, that unity and concord is here to be expected but according to the proportion of our holiness, and therefore so much sin and ignorance as remains, no wonder if so much division remain.

The second thing which I desire you to remember is this: That in all the essential matters of Christianity there is as true a union among all the differing sorts of Christians, as there is among the Papists; or any one sect: even in all the Twenty points of union, which I named at the beginning. And this is the union that is most to be esteemed; or at least, this is enough to make us of one Christ. As the great essential points of faith are of far greater moment and excellency than our several controverted by-opinions, so is a union in these great essential points more excellent than an

union in smaller matters : though both together is best of all, if joined with the truth.

To these let me add also a third consideration ; that it is no wonder to find the Papists as a sect agreed among themselves ; for so are other sects as well as they : yea, let me add more, that I know, not of any one sect in the world that differ so much among themselves as the Papists do. The Greeks are kept from so much difference by their want of learning, which keeps them from meddling so much with niceties, and running into so many controversies as the Papists do. The like may be said of the Ethiopians, Armenians, and many more. The Protestants differ not in half, nor a quarter so many points as the Papists do. Nay, the very Anabaptists themselves do not differ among themselves in the tenth part so many points as the Papists. If the many hundred differences among their commentators, schoolmen, casuists, and other writers, were collected and presented to your view, I much doubt whether there be any one sect on the face of the earth that hath the twentieth part so many differences among themselves as the Papists have. Though they think they salve all by saying that they differ not in articles of faith, yet their differences are never the fewer for that. And others may say more in that than they can do.

Well! remember this advice : expect not a heavenly perfection of unity and concord till you come to heaven.

2. Another cause of our distractions and hindrance of concord is, that very few men have peaceable spirits, even when they are extolling peace. A peaceable spirit must have these qualifications, which most men want. 1. He must be united to Christ, the head and centre of union, and have a sanctified nature, and value God's honour above all things else, that so his desires of peace may flow from a right principle, and may proceed upon right grounds, and to right ends ; and he may seek a holy peace : And, alas, how few such spirits have we !

2. A peaceable spirit must be a public spirit, highly esteeming the welfare of the whole body, above any interest of his own, or of any sect or party. The great grace of self-denial is of necessity herein. No man hath a Christian, peaceable spirit, that doth not most highly value the peace and prosperity of the universal church, so far as to submit to losses or sufferings himself for the obtaining of it ; and that

had not rather his party suffered than the whole. But, alas, how rare is a public spirit in any eminency ! how private and selfish are the most ! The good of the church can no further be endeavoured, with too many, than self will give leave, and than their party will give leave : these must be made the masters of the consultation.

3. A peaceable spirit must be a charitable spirit ; loving all the saints as saints ; and that with a pure heart, and fervently : this would put by the matter of contentions : this would provoke men to healing endeavours ; and it would put the best construction on men's opinions, words and actions, that they can bear : " Charity suffereth long, and is kind : Charity envieth not : Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeking not her own ; is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth all things ; believeth all things ; hopeth all things ; endureth all things." (1 Cor. xiii. 4—7.) O what an effectual healer is charity ! what a tender hand will it bear to any distressed member ! much more to the whole church. What causeth our distractions more than want of charity ; what else makes men look so scornfully, and speak so disgracefully of every sort of Christians, but themselves ? And to endeavour to make others as odious as they can ; and to make mere verbal differences seem real, and small ones seem exceeding great ; and to find out a heresy or a blasphemy in the smallest error, and perhaps in a harmless word : All is blasphemy with some men, or error at least, which they do not understand. Alas, we have real heresies and blasphemies enough among Arians, Socinians, Ranters, Quakers, Seekers, Libertines, Familists, and many others ; let us reject these that are to be rejected, and spare not ; but we need not feign heresies and blasphemies where they are not, as if we wanted matter for our indignation.

4. A peaceable spirit must be in some measure meek and patient, with a humble consciousness of its own frailties and offences : but, alas, what passionate, rash and turbulent spirits do abound in the poor divided church ! Such as are made of gunpowder, and speak fire and sword ; that will do no right, nor bear any wrong ; that will speak well of few but their own party, and yet cannot endure to be ill spoken of themselves ; that are possessed with the " wisdom which is

from beneath, which is earthly, sensual and devilish," and are strangers to the heavenly "wisdom, which is first pure, and then peaceable; gentle, and easy to be entreated." (James iii. 15. 17.) Even preachers of peace are some of them become the fervent agents of the divider, and go up and down with destroying rage, and make their tongues the bellows of hell, resisting the peaceable endeavours of their brethren.

5. A peaceable spirit must have a high esteem of peace, and be zealous for it, and industrious to obtain it. Only against ungodliness and unpeaceableness must he be unpeaceable. Many have a good wish and a good word for peace, as hypocrites have for godliness, but this will not serve the turn. He that is not for us is against us, and he that gathereth not with us scattereth abroad. The wicked and unpeaceable are zealous and industrious against peace; and those that are for peace are cold and indifferent for the greater part; and the zealous and industrious are so few, that their voices cannot be heard in the contentious crowd. The unpeaceable are commonly the loudest, and are actuated by a fervent zeal, which nature agreeth with, and Satan cherisheth and excites: such will, even as the Quakers, go up and down from one assembly to another, and in the market-places, and other places of concourse, revile, and rail, and reproach the ministry, and speak as earnestly as if they were the agents of Christ. And others are busy in secret, that will not incur the disgrace of such visible impiety. And when the enemies of unity and peace are many, and hot, and loud, and the friends of unity and peace are either few, or cold, and dull, and silent, what is likely to be the issue but even the mischiefs which we feel? Forsooth, some dare not be fervent for peace, lest they be censured for their fervour to be unpeaceable: these shew how much they love the praise of men, and stick yet in the power of self. There is need of zeal for peace, as well as for other parts of holiness. All the resistance that the enemies of hell and earth can make will be made against it: and will be carried on against all by sleepy wishes, and sitting still! I am sure this agrees not with the precepts of the Spirit. "Follow peace with all men." (Heb. xii. 14.) "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth live peaceably with all men." (Rom. xii. 18.) It is a sorry surgeon, or physician, that will think it enough to wish well to their patient; the house of God will be neither

built nor repaired without zeal, and industry, and patience in the work. If men's hearts were set upon the church's peace, and they did but feel the disjoining of her members, the breaking of her bones, and the smart of her wounds, as sensibly as they feel the like in their own bodies; and if ministers and other Christians, were as sensible of the evil of divisions as they are of drunkenness, and whoredom, and such other sins; and if we were all awakened to quench the flames of the church, as earnestly as we would do the fire in our houses, and would preach for peace, and pray for peace, and plead, and labour, and suffer for peace, then some good might be done on it against the rage and multitude of dividers.

3. One of the greatest hindrances of concord and peace, is the setting up of a false centre, and building peace on grounds that will never bear it. Christian unity is no where centered but in Christ the head, and no way maintained but by the means which he hath ordained to that end. But the miserable world will not discern or take up with this. The Papists are of two churches; for they have two heads, or sovereigns, which specify the society. One of the Popish churches make the Pope the head and centre, and all the church must unite in him, or it can be no church! The other Popish church do make a general council the head, and the Pope only the subordinate sovereign in the vacancy. And these think to have the whole church to unite upon these terms. But it will never be. As Divine faith will have no formal object but Divine veracity, so neither can Christian unity have any universal proper centre but Christ. As at the building of Babel, when men would unite for their future security in their own devices, it brought them to utter confusion, which the world groaneth under to this day; so when men will build a Babel of their own invention, for the preventing of the inundation of heresies, they are upon the most dreadful work of confusion. The church is taught by the Scripture, and the Holy Ghost within them, to take up nowhere short of God; to call no man on earth the father or master of our faith, nor to trust in man, and make flesh our arm. Man is too dark and too weak a creature to be the head or centre of the church-deluded Papists! You think you befriend the church's unity, when you hang it by a hair, and build it on the sand, and found it on mere weakness:

could you prove that ever God had promised abilities and gifts to the Pope of Rome, proportionable to such a work, we should most gladly look out to him for the exercise of those abilities. God setteth none on work but he furnisheth them with a suitableness for it. Have all Popes or councils propheticall and apostolicall inspirations and directions? What! those that have been censured, and some of them deposed, for blasphemy, heresy, sodomy, adultery, murder, simony, and such works of darkness! The Spirit useth not to dwell in such persons, nor light to have communion with such darkness. Nay, if all Popes were holy, yea, as holy as Peter, they were too weak to bear up with the unity of the church. It is Christ, and not Peter, that is called the rock, on which the church is built, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. This rock is Christ. (1 Cor. x. 4.) The church is the spouse of Christ, and must not be made a harlot, by being wedded to the Pope, or any other. Nothing hath more hindered the fuller union of the church than this idol, self-exalting head, and false centre of union.

And if any would unite the church in kings, in councils, in any human devices, they will but divide it.

4. And the same course take they that must needs build our union on insufficient, subordinate means. Some must have confessions in words of their own, to which all that will be accounted Christians must subscribe; or at least, that would have communion with them. Though we would subscribe to the whole Scripture, or any confession drawn up in its phrase and matter, yet this will not serve for union and communion. They tell us, heretics will subscribe to the Scripture: and I tell them, that heretics may subscribe also to their confessions, and force a sense of their own upon them: and that God never left them to make better confessions, and fitter to discover heresies, than Scripture doth afford. But if heretics will subscribe to the Scriptures, or confessions taken wholly out of them, they should be no heretics in our account till they discover that they maintain some heresy against the sense of the Scripture, or confession which they subscribed to; and then they are to be censured by the churches accordingly; not for want of subscribing to a sufficient confession, but for abusing and contradicting the confession which they did subscribe; and so to be corrected for it as a crime against a sufficient law and rule; and

we must not think to prevent it by making a better law or rule, which shall tie them more strict, and which they cannot break. It is a strange rule, which can necessitate the subject to observe it, and which cannot be violated. And it is a wild head that must have new laws and rules made, because he sees that malefactors can break these! The law is sufficient to its own part, which is to be the rule of duty, and of judgment. It tells men sufficiently what they must believe and do; but if they will not do it, it judgeth them as offenders. You will never form a confession, or make a law that cannot be misinterpreted and broken. The Papists have set up whole volumes of councils and decrees for the *rule* forsooth, because the Scripture is dark, and all heretics plead Scripture. And what have they done by it, but cause more darkness, and set the world and their own doctors too in greater contentions, so that now councils cross councils, and they can neither agree which be true approved councils, and which not; nor when they intend a decree to be an article of faith, and when not; no, nor what sense to take their words in, and how to reconcile them. And thus men lose themselves, and abuse the church, because God's word will not serve their turn as a rule for us to unite upon. This is the one rule that God hath left, and men will needs blame this as insufficient, and mend God's works by the devices of their addle brains, and then complain of divisions, when they have made them! One company of bishops must needs make a company of canon laws for the church, and all must be schismatics that will not be ruled by them: another company that are of another mind make contrary canons, and those must be obeyed, or else we are schismatics. They must make us our sermons, and call them Homilies, and make us our prayers, and call them a Liturgy: and the fruit of their brains must be the rule of all others, or else they are schismatics. So wise and holy are they above all their brethren, that none must publicly speak to God in any words but what they put into their mouths. (Read Dr. Heylin's Discourse of Cant. 5. 5. against ministers praying in the church in any other words but what is in the common-prayer-book.) So they do also by their vestures, and gestures, and other ceremonies: Nothing hath more divided the church than the proud impositions of men, that think so highly of their own words and forms, and ceremonious devices, that

no man shall have communion with Christ and the church in any other way. Never will the church unite on such terms. The rule that all must agree in must be made by one that is above all, and whose authority is acknowledged by all. Experience might tell these men, that they are building but a Babel, and dividing the church. In the Lord's-supper, where they have limited us to a gesture, we are all in pieces. In singing psalms, where they left us free, we have no dissention. In the places where garments and other ceremonies are not imposed, God's worship is performed without contention, and with as little uncomeliness as with them. Proud quarrelsome men, that must needs be lording it over the church, and turning legislators, may set all on fire for the promoting of their ways, and rail at all that will not be under their yoke: but when they have all done, they will find they are but busily dividing the church, and their canons are but fiery engines to batter its unity and peace. A thousand years experience and more, might have taught us this to our cost. Never will the church have full unity, till the Scripture-sufficiency be more generally acknowledged. You complain of many opinions and ways, and many you will still have, till the one rule, the Scripture, be the standard of our religion. As men that divide and separate from us, do use to accuse the ministers, and then be every man a teacher to himself; so they use to accuse the Scriptures, and, as the Papists, call them dark, and dangerous, and insufficient: and then every sect must make us a new rule, when they have disparaged that which Christ hath given us. Then one makes the Pope a rule by his decretals, and another a council, and another the bishops, canons or articles, and another his own suggestions and impulses. Stick close to this one Bible, and let nothing come into your faith or religion but what comes thence; and when controversies arise, try them by this; and if you cannot do it yourselves, then take the help of ministers or synods, and use them not as masters, but as helpers of your faith; not to make you another rule, but to help you to understand this only rule, and thus may you come to be of one religion, but never otherwise.

5. To these I may add the damnable sin of pride and selfishness, touched at before. All men would have peace: but most would have it on their own terms; yea, and most

parties would be the very centre of the churches. If all the world will come over to them, they will be at peace with them, otherwise not. If we will all swear allegiance to the Pope, and turn to them, we shall have concord with the Papists. If we will all renounce Presbyterian ordination, and submit to Episcopacy, with all their canons, forms and ceremonies, we shall have concord with the rigid of that party. If we will all be for an office of unordained elders, that have no power to meddle with preaching or sacraments, we shall have peace with the more rigid sort of that way. If we will causelessly separate, and make the major vote of the people to be church-governors, we may have peace with men of that way. And if we will be re-baptized, we may have peace with the Anabaptists. But can all the catholic church unite upon these private, narrow terms? Every man would be the Pope or the general council himself: or rather every one would be the God of the world; that all men may receive the law at his mouth, and his name may be honoured, and his kingdom may be set up, and his will may be done throughout the world: this is the nature of self-idolizing pride. And hence it is that the church hath as many dividers, as unsanctified men; because every unsanctified man is thus made an idol by his pride, and knows no further end but self. Is there never a man of you that hears me this day, that would not have all the town, and country, and world to be of one mind? I think there is not one but wisheth it. But what mind must it be? It must be of your mind! Or else it will not satisfy you! And alas you are so many, and of so many minds among yourselves, that this way will never unite the world! One must have all of his mind, and another must have all of his mind, when no man well agrees with another, and yet none will be brought to another's mind. But God is one, and his mind is certainly right and good: and the Spirit is one, and the Scripture indited by it is one; and if you would come to that as the only rule, you might be of one religion, and mind, and way: but till then you do but labour in vain. But you will say still, that every sect pretendeth to the Scripture, and there is so many expositions of it, that we see no hopes that this way should unite us: To this I next answer.

6. It is the bane of unity when men must make every in-

ferior opinion the seat of unity, and will not unite in the essentials of Christianity, endeavouring in love to accord as well as they can in the rest. Though the truth of the whole Scripture, that is known to be holy Scripture must be acknowledged; yet the understanding of the meaning of the whole Scripture is not of necessity to salvation, or church unity: otherwise woe to every one of us! For there is no man on earth that hath the perfect understanding of all the holy Scriptures. And yet all that is in it propounded to be believed is 'de fide' matter of faith, and it is our duty to believe it, and understand it, and our sin that we do not; but not a sin that proves us graceless, or unjustified. I wonder the Papists have not venial errors in matter of faith, as well as venial sins against moral precepts! But all that is 'de fide,' must with some of them be fundamental or essential to Christianity. The Scripture is a full and beautiful body, which hath its flesh, and skin, and a multitude of nerves, and veins, and arteries, as well as the head, the heart, and stomach, and other natural parts; without which parts, that are the seat or chief instruments of the animal, vital and natural spirits, the body were no body. All in the Scripture is true and useful, but all is not essential to Christianity. And in the essentials all Christians do agree; and if you would know how such should behave themselves to one another, hear the Holy Ghost himself, (Phil. iii. 12—16,) "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus: Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things that are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you: Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." So 1 Cor. iii. 11—15. "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If

any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward: If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." Errors may bring heavy judgments in this life, and out of this fire the erroneous may escape, and not fall into the eternal fire; for thus will God "sit as a refiner, and purifier of silver, and will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness." (Mal. iii. 2, 3.) Dislike every error, and escape as many as you can; but think not that every error must dissolve our unity, or that every truth is necessary to our unity.

And where you say that all sorts do plead the Scriptures, I answer, 1. That all sorts of Christians in the essentials do rightly understand the Scripture. 2. And for the rest, their very pleading that, shews that all sorts are convinced that it is the rule of truth, even where they do not understand it. 3. And this is no proof of the insufficiency of Scripture, but of the imperfection of men's understandings; and instead of seeking for another rule, you should labour for a better understanding of this, and use the help of ministers thereto. The law of the land is the rule of the subjects' actions, and tenures; and yet what controversies are about it, even among the wisest lawyers! and one pleadeth it for one cause, and another saith that the law is for the contrary cause! Yea, one judge differs from another. What then! must we cast away the law? Let us know where to have a better first! But rather, men should labour to know it better, and meddle not contentiously with the niceties of it without need. And thus we must do about the law of God. Agree in the essentials, and learn the rest as well as we can.

7. Another great impediment to our concord is, abundance of dividing, unpeaceable principles, that be grown into credit, or entertained in the world: and if such principles meet with the most peaceable disposition, they will make the man become unpeaceable. For the best men that are will think they must obey God; and therefore when they mistake his will, they will think they will do well when they are sinning against him. There are too few in the world of a peaceable principle: Some lay all peace, as is said, on the opinions of their own parties; and some lay it on a multitude of such low opinions, and such doubtful things, that they might know can never be the matter of universal con-

sent: Some think they must not silence any thing which they conceive to be a truth, for the peace of the church, or the promoting of greater undoubted truths. Some think they ought to reproach and disgrace all that are not of their mind; and some think they ought to destroy them, or cast them out, and think this a part of their faithfulness to the truth of Christ, and that this is but to help him against his enemies. And there is no more desperate principle of division and persecution than this uncharitableness, which makes the children of God, and the members of Christ, to *seem* his enemies, and then use them as his enemies: To dress them in a false attire, as they did Christ, and then smite him: To put them in the shape of schismatics, or heretics, or devils, as the Papists do when they burn them, and then use them accordingly. Many more unpeaceable principles I might recite; and if it were not too tedious, I think it would be useful.

8. Another hindrance of unity and peace is, a carnal zeal in matters of religion, which is frequently mistaken for the true zeal of the saints. When men are confident that their opinions are the truth, and overvalue them as to the necessity, because they are their own, though they observe not the reason, they presently think they must be hot against all the gainsayers of their opinions; and herein they place the most, or at least too much of their religion.

There is not one of many that hath this zeal, but thinks it is of God, and is part of their holiness. When as it is often from the devil and the flesh, even when the doctrine is true which they contend for. You may know it from true zeal by these following marks. 1. It is more for controversies and speculations than for practical holiness. 2. It is selfish, and kindled by an overvaluing their own conceits or ways. 3. It is private, and would promote a lower truth to the loss of a greater, or a doubtful point to the loss of undoubted truth; or a single truth to the loss or hindrance of the body of common truth; and it is hotter for a party than for the catholic church, and will promote the interest of an opinion or party, to the wrong of the common interest of the church. 4. It is blind, and carries men to sinful means; as resisting authority, order, or ordinances, or the like. 5. It is unmerciful and unpeaceable, and little sensible of the case of others, or smart of the divided church. Many are calling for fire from heaven for the cause of Christ, that little "know what

spirit they are of." (Luke ix. 55.) O how true is this of many, that think they excel in knowledge or zeal, and are but defending the truth against erroneous adversaries! But "who is the wise man, and endowed with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom: But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth: This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish: for where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work: But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." (James iii. 13 to the end.) But of this I have formerly spoken at large in many sermons on these words of James. Dividing zeal is a grievous distracter of the church's peace.

6. Another hindrance is, that of the many that are for peace and unity, there are few that have any great skill to promote it, and those few that have skill, want opportunity or interest, and are cried down by the opposers. There is a great deal of skill necessary to discern and manifest the true state of controversies, and to prove verbal quarrels to be but verbal, and to take off the false visors which ignorance and passion puts on them, to aggravate the differences that are debated. There is much wisdom necessary for the securing of truth, while we treat for peace, and the maintaining peace, while we defend the truth. Alas, how few escape one of the extremes in most differences themselves, and, therefore, are unfit reconcilers of others. Few are possessors of that blessed light that doth shew the error of both extremes, and must be the means of our concord, if ever we agree! Few know that truth between contrary errors in which both must meet. How much skill also is necessary to deal with touchy, froward spirits, and to handle both nettles and thorns that must be dealt with. And how few men of wisdom and peace are much regarded by the firebrands of the churches! And how few of them have language, and health, and maintenance, and authority, and a skilful activity to set others on work, which are almost needful for this healing design? And what abundance of private wishes have been buried by the most skilful men for want of

opportunities ! And how many private writings cast by, that have that in them that deserved public entertainment, and might have been very fit instruments for this healing work.

10. And the various carnal interests of the world, are an exceeding hindrance to the church's peace. The interest of one prince lieth for one party ; and another is for another party : one prince thinks it for his interest to unite, and another thinks it for his interest to divide, or secretly to cherish and continue divisions. The ministry also have too oft a carnal interest, which lieth usually in siding with the prince ; and the great carnal interest of the Roman clergy lieth sticking close to the Pope. The people hereupon are commonly in such distractions and disturbances, by wars, or secular cares and wants, that motions of peace can scarcely be heard, or attended to ; but the noise of guns, drums, and lamentations, and reproaching of enemies, drowneth all. And when the crossing of secular interests hath made them one another's enemies, they will hardly treat as friends for unity in religion, or the healing of the church.

11. And it is no small hindrance that the princes of the earth are commonly so bad, as either to be strangers to the true interest of Christ and his church, or else to prefer their own before it. It is they that have the greatest interests and opportunities, and might do most for unity if they would. And withal they think that nobody should meddle without their leave ; and commonly when they do nothing themselves, they will not suffer the ministers to do it that are their subjects. How easy were it with the Christian princes and states, if they had so much wit and grace to agree together, to bring the churches in their dominions to much agreement. But alas, highest places have greatest temptations, and therefore too oft the worst men : so that they that should do it, and might do it, have no heart to it. And the princes are very rare that prefer Christ's interest before their own ; and have truly learned the lesson of denying themselves, and forsaking all they have for him. The great work of converting the heathen world should be promoted by them ; but how little is there done in it by any princes !

12. Moreover, the multitude are everywhere almost averse to holy unity and peace : Their dispositions are against it : their principles are against it : their parts unfit for it : and yet how to do it without them will be hard. For 1. They

have all of them almost conceits of their own fitness; and think all matters in religion should be regulated by them. They detest that a few should overtop them, and do the work while they stand by; and they grow to a hatred of those few, because they are counted wiser and better than they; yea, they naturally hate the godly, and the practical truths of God: and yet the greater vote must carry it, or else the swarm will be about your ears: When it is a hundred to one, but a hundred for one in most places of the world, are in the wrong, if not bitter enemies to the right. And in the best parts of the world, it is a wonder if the greater part be not the worse. Or if in a corner or two it should be better, what is that to all the Christian world? 2. At least if they will not be passively peaceable, how little can we do, when it is they that must, in part, consent, and it is they that have the strength to resist.

13. And even among the godly the peacemakers are far the smaller number, I mean as to the healing of our common divisions. For the younger sort of Christians, in age, or grace, or gifts, are the greatest number: and these also are of the most active, hot dispositions, and will be forwardest in all agitations, and will not stand by. And alas, how few of them have meekness, prudence, and charity, answerable to their heat and activity! They will lead their leaders; and their way must carry it, or else all are censured and trod down by them: and how ordinarily is their way unpeaceable and confusive! And how seldom doth it end according to their expectations, for the churches' good. But for the wise and judicious, experienced, sober, peaceable men, alas, how few are they; till they grow aged few attain to this. And yet nothing will be done for the peace and welfare of the church but by the conduct and direction of these few experienced, judicious, moderate men. None else can do it: and yet few other will suffer them to do it. And thus we see here in these nations, that even religious men have been the hinderers of our peace.

14. And withal, the devil, who is the great enemy of peace and unity, is still watching to cast in some bone of contention, and to make use of the opinions and passions of all, both good and bad, for the accomplishing of his ends. And alas, his subtlety overreacheth not only the ignorant people, but the most learned divines, and prudent princes-

They shall not manage their affairs of state so carefully, but he will engage them against Christ and the peace of the church, before they are aware: He will do his utmost to make the interest of Christ and the prince, of the church and the commonwealth, to seem to stand at an enmity to each other, and make princes walk in a jealousy of Christ, and his Gospel, and ministers, lest they should encroach upon their honour and greatness: and too oft he engageth them in flat opposition, till this stone fall upon them, and grind them to powder.

And the ministers of the Gospel shall scarcely manage their work so wisely, but he will cast in some wildfire, and find some occasion to make a dissention by. Either the subtlety of men too wise and learned, in their own eyes, shall start some dividing, fruitless controversies; or the zeal of men that are orthodox over much, shall rise up unpeaceably against all dissenters: or he will entangle the godly in some dangerous errors; or he will seek to make men lay snares for their brethren, by needless impositions, under pretence of order, and decency, and unity, and authority: or some passionate words shall kindle the fire. There are many unsound hypocrites among the godly ministers; and there is too much pride and passion in the best, and Satan knows how to make use of all: What saith he to the proud, Shall such a one be preferred before thee? Shall he bear away the applause? Shall he eclipse and stand in the way of thy reputation? Did he not speak dishonourably of thee; or carry himself disregardfully towards thee? Did he not disgrace thee by such an opposition or dispute? A hundred temptations hath Satan at hand to kindle dissention, even among the ministers of Christ: and where he meets with proud hearts he seldom misseth of his purpose. If the disciples were striving which should be the greatest, and if Paul and Barnabas fall out to a parting, no wonder if pride and dissention be yet found among the most renowned men. Though it is a sad case that it should be so, when we daily preach humility to our people, and know, that except conversion make us like little children, we can in no wise enter into the kingdom of God. (Matt. xviii. 3.)

How hard a task hath a peaceable minister to keep one congregation of Christians in peace. But differences will be rising, and one will be provoking another by injuries, or

hard words, and few can bear, and forbear, and forgive: Yea, a master of a family finds it hard to keep one small family in peace. Yea, two persons will find somewhat to do to keep peace, especially if they have much trading, or dealing with each other, or any crossing in matters of commodity. Yea, husband and wife, that are as one flesh, have much ado to avoid dissentions. No wonder then if the enemy of peace can disturb the church of Christ.

15. Another cause of divisions is, living among, and hearkening to schismatical persons that are still blowing the coals. It is a dangerous case, especially to young, unexperienced Christians, to fall among those that make it their religion to vilify others as enemies of Christ: When they hear one sect only extolled, and all others spoken of as ignorant, or carnal, or enemies to the church, it is two to one but this imprinteth a schismatical disposition in the hearers' minds. Conversing only with one party doth usually occasion great uncharitableness towards all others, and sear the conscience, so that it grows insensible of revilings, and opprobrious speeches, against those that differ from them.

16. And the unity of the church is exceedingly hindered by an unworthy privacy and retiredness of most Christians that live like the snail in a shell, and look but little abroad into the world. Some know not the state of the world, or of the church, nor much care to know it; but think it is with all the world as it is with us in England: when as if they knew the fewness of Christians, the huge numbers of infidels, the corruptions of other churches, in comparison of ours, it would surely set them lamenting, and praying that the kingdom of Christ might come. Yea, many ministers are of so base a privacy of spirit, that they look little further than their own parishes, and think if all be well there, all is well everywhere; and seldom inquire how it goes with the church in the rest of the world: nor will scarcely be brought to associate and keep correspondence with their brethren, for the union and communion of the several churches and the common good: far unlike the temper of Paul and the other apostles and servants of Christ in those days. They have not a care of all the churches. They long not to hear of their welfare. They would think it much to travail and labour for it the thousandth part so much as they. They cannot say, "who is weak, and I am not weak," &c.

17. Yea, some are drawn from the church's unity and peace by misunderstanding those texts of Scripture that call for separation from the world, and that speak of the fewness of those that shall be saved. I have heard of one that turned Separatist upon this conceit, because he thought that, seeing the flock of Christ is little, the Protestants were too many to be it : at last the separated church grew so big, that he thought, surely this is not the little flock, and so turned to the Anabaptists : at last the Anabaptists' church so increased, that he thought, surely this is too big to be the little flock ; and so went seeking about for the least, as thinking that must needs be in the right. Alas, what low thoughts have such of the church of God ! Yea, and of the love and gracious nature of God, and of the great design of Christ in the work of redemption ! But the main cause of the delusion of these poor souls is, because they know not the state of the world abroad. If they did but know that it is the sixth part of the world that are baptized common Christians, and not past a sixth or seventh part of that sixth part that are common Protestants, but all the rest are Papists, and Greeks, and many sorts of more ignorant, unreformed Christians ; and among the Protestants, no country for godliness is like to England ; they would not go about to pen up the church into a narrower room. To believe that Christ died, and made so much ado for so small a part of the world, as comes not to one of forty, or fifty, or an hundred thousand, is next to flat infidelity itself ; which thinks he died for none at all.

And for the command, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate," it is pity that any Christian should need be told, that it speaks only to the church to come out of the heathen, infidel world, (such as are Jews, and Mahometans, and heathens ;) but there is never a word in all the Bible that bids you 'Come out of the church, and be ye separate !' Wonderful ! that God should be so abused by misunderstanding Christians ! Because he commands men to come out of the infidel world into the church, they plead it as if he commanded them to come out of the church into a separated sect. The church is the house of Christ ; forsake it not, while *he* stays in it : forsake it not, for he hath promised never to forsake it. Particular churches indeed he may cast off, but never the universal. Dwell therefore where he dwells.

18. Another hindrance of peace is, that so many Christians as they have carnal dispositions, so they are still looking at carnal means. The endeavours of the ministry they account as nothing; but they are still looking what the Magistrate will do: and till he force them they will not stir, and till he do it they think there is nothing done: such base thoughts have some, even ministers, of their own callings. And hence it is that such men are always on the stronger side, and of the king's religion; or else are seeking carnal advantages to carry on their cause. So the Jesuits are more busy to get the princes of the world engaged for them, and the arms of the nations employed for their ends, than we are to treat of unity and peace: And every party, instead of seeking peace, is seeking to get highest, that they may be able to force all others to their will: and we can never get any peaceable debates upon equal terms, because the several parties do seldom stand on equal terms: but still one is up, and another is down: and he that is in the saddle will not light to treat of peace, nor hearken to any equal motions, but must have his will, and nothing less will serve the turn: and when he is down, and the other party is up, the case is the same. Still he that is lowest is most reasonable and peaceable, (except some impious, implacable spirits:) but the party that is highest will not be brought to reason. And thus the peace of the church is hindered, to our grief and shame.

19. Another great hindrance of unity and concord is the great weaknesses and miscarriages of the professors of godliness, partly because of hypocrites among them, and partly because they are sanctified but in part. Among others, by these several ways, they do disturb our peace.

1. By an ignorant quarrelling with their teachers, thinking themselves fit to correct their guides before they are considerably grounded in the catechism.

2. By entertaining false opinions, and making a disturbance for them.

3. By the great diversity of opinions among themselves, by which they become a scorn or stumbling-block to many about them.

4. By the uncharitable bitterness of their spirits, in rash censures and contendings.

5. By their scandalous lives, and falls, disgracing their profession, and hardening and alienating the minds of others.

And, 6. By their imprudent and intemperate dealing with others; using proud or provoking language, or carriage that more savoureth of contempt than of compassion. And thus the children of the church do divide it. Especially by their childish fallings out with one another, and hearkening to malicious, contentious hypocrites, that would lead them to despise their guides, and break them into shreads among themselves. (Rom. xvi. 17.)

20. Lastly, The greatest hindrance of our unity is, the ungodliness of the most that profess themselves Christians, whereby they become incapable matter for our truest, nearest union, and yet think that we must be united to them all: when they will not join with us in the vitals of Christianity, but stick in the bark, and take up with the name, yet do they think that we must join with them, and be of their communion and opinions in all external things, and if we differ from them they think we are schismatics. Men lay the church's unity too much in mere speculations, which they call the Articles of faith, and too little in practicals, and holiness of life, whereas there is no article of faith, but is for practice; and as truly as the understanding and will are both essential to the soul; so truly the sanctity of understanding and will are both essential to a Christian: And as the holiness of the heart is as essential as faith to a real Christian, or member of the church regenerate; so the profession of holiness is as essential as the profession of faith to make a man a member of the church visible or congregate. And therefore as we can have no inward union and communion with any but the truly sanctified, so can we have no visible church-union or communion but with those that profess to be truly sanctified. It is a shameful thing to hear every drunkard and scorner at godliness to rail at the many divisions in the church, and to call for unity and concord, when it is he, and such as he, that hinder it, that will not be united to Christ himself, nor join with us in the only centre of union, nor in the greatest and most necessary things, without which all Christian union is impossible. But because I take this to be a necessary point, I shall handle it, God willing, more fully by itself.

To conclude all, let me exhort all Christians to drink in this truth into their judgments and affections. If you are Christians indeed, you are catholics. And if so, you must

have, 1. Catholic principles, And, 2. Affections. I beseech you look to both these well.

And as you keep the great catholic principle, which is the subject of our discourse, viz. to know what a true catholic is, and which is the catholic church, that so you may not do as the Papists, that take up a sect under the abused name of Catholicism, and plead against the catholic church for that sect under the name of the catholic church; so also you must know and keep close to the true catholic rule; and not do as the Papists, that have honoured a private and crooked rule by that name, to the church's trouble, and their own delusion: and also you must keep close to the true catholic governor of the church, and judge of controversies, and turn not aside with Papists and others, to an usurper, or a private judge. In these three your catholicism must much consist. The first, what the catholic church is, and what a true catholic, I have said as much to as I conceive necessary. The other two I shall say a little more to, viz. the catholic rule, and the catholic judge, and then of the fourth and last, which is, the catholic spirit or affections.

1. We are all agreed that the will of God revealed, must be, and is, the catholic rule of faith and life. But we are not all agreed which is this revelation of the will of God. That the book of the creatures and the principles of nature do reveal much natural-moral verity and duty we are agreed: but the doubt is of supernatural revelation. And of this we are agreed, that 'whatsoever is certainly delivered to the church by prophet or apostle, or any person infallibly proving a Divine inspiration or command to deliver what he speaks, must be received as from God. And whatever is so revealed concerning faith or duty, by way of imposition, is our rule: and if revealed to all, it is the rule to all.' We are agreed also, that the holy Scriptures containing those books which the Reformed churches take for the canon, are a Divine, infallible revelation concerning faith and duty. And therefore we are all agreed that the holy Scriptures are the rule. But whether they be the whole rule we are not agreed. The Reformed churches say, that the sign is but to make known the doctrine signified: and that while the inspired apostles were themselves alive, their own voices were the sign, and instead of a written word to all that heard them, and more. But knowing that they must die, and that the word of per-

sons not infallibly inspired, is no rule of faith, and how hardly things not written are preserved from alteration and deprivation, therefore they left their doctrine in writing, for the easier and surer, and more universal communication and preservation. And that universal, infallible tradition hath delivered us down both this Scripture, and also (by itself) the sum of Christianity, in the creed and baptismal covenant, and in the hearts of the faithful from age to age. So that we make very high account of tradition, as bringing us in one hand the essentials of Christianity, and in the other the whole body of sacred doctrine in the Scriptures, containing all these essentials, and more. And this is the rule of our faith and life: Yet we confess, that if any could prove a certain delivery of any more from the apostles to the church, we are ready to receive it, which way ever it be delivered. But the Papists add, that partly tradition, and partly the canons and decrees of the church, are to be received as the rule as well as Scripture, and that much is revealed by verbal tradition to that end, which is not in Scripture, which is with equal pious affection and reverence to be received; and that the church, which is the keeper of this tradition, is only the Roman church, or all that believe in the Pope of Rome, as the universal head or sovereign of the church.

Now the question is, 'Whether theirs or ours be the catholic rule?'

And here the wickedness of factious disputers hath done the church a world of wrong on both sides. Some are so mad in their contentions, that they care not what they say scarcely, so they do but cry down one another. The Papists cannot cry up their tradition, but they must speak so reproachfully, impiously, foolishly, of the Scriptures, as if they were stark infidels. To omit others, the reading of Rushworth's Dialogues, and White's Additions and Defence, is a notable bait to tice men to infidelity, and those dialogues contain the very same arguments which the new apostate infidels use. And on the other side, many to say as much as they can against the Papists, do so cry down traditions, that they ('tantum non') disable themselves to make good the Scripture itself. O perverseness! O doleful fruits of contentions! Whereas a true catholic should be glad of any light from heaven whatsoever: and must know, that God

in great mercy to his church hath by these two hands delivered us his will: not some part in Scripture, and the rest by unwritten traditions, as say the Papists; but some part by such tradition, and all by Scripture, and that Scripture by tradition. So that God hath given us two strings to one bow: and the Papists will have two bows also; and others will have but one string.

Well; 1. I prove that the Scripture is the catholic rule.

That is the catholic rule of faith, which the whole church in all ages and places hath received as the rule: But such is the Scripture. Papists and Protestants, Greeks and Armenians, Abassines and all Christians, confess that the canonical Scriptures are the revelation of the will of God: so that this must be catholic, which the catholic church receiveth.

2. And I prove that the Papists' rule is a sectarian, crooked rule, and not catholic. 1. That is not the catholic rule of faith which the catholic church did never receive: But such is the popish rule of Roman tradition: Therefore if you take it in the general, viz. the traditions of the Roman church to be received by her peculiar authority. (1.) The Reformed churches now disown it. (2.) The Greeks and other Eastern and Southern churches now disown it. (3.) The primitive church did never own it: so that all the church was once a stranger to their rule, and the most of it is an adversary to it at this day. And can that be the catholic rule which most of the catholic church disclaims? The Eastern and Southern churches think that the Roman traditions are of no more authority than their own; nay, of far less, and much of them false. 2. If you look to their additions of the apocryphal books, to the canon of the Scriptures, the ancient catholic church was against them; as Dr. Reignolds, and newly Dr. Cosin at large, and through every age hath shewed. 3. If you come to particulars: the very essence of the Roman catholicism and church, and the universal headship still of their Pope, which are the master points of their tradition, are denied and detested by the far greater part of the catholic church on earth to this day. And is this a catholic rule which the catholic church denieth? A great stir the Papists make about catholic tradition, and the judgment of the catholic church. But what good would this do them if we were as much for tradition as they? When

the most of the catholic church condemneth them and their traditions, or own them not, even in the principal points essential to their religion?

And what have they to say to this? Nothing but what any thief may say of a true man when he hath cut his purse, even to call him thief first! Forsooth, most that are called Christians, by far, are all heretics, and therefore none of the catholic church; and therefore their votes are no impeachment to the papal claim. And how prove you that? 'Why the Pope saith so, and so do his faction.' Why, but he is a party! How know we that he saith true? Why, here you must leave them: 'He saith that he saith true; therefore he saith true: He saith that the most of the church are not of the church, but heretics, and that none but his subjects are of the church, therefore it is true.' And so he must be the judge in his own cause, and be believed by the catholic church on his own authority. Read but the third section of Rushworth's Second Heathenish Dialogues, and see what a silly shift the self-conceited disputant is at in answering this objection, 'All Christians agree in the acceptance of the Scripture, and far fewer in divers points of doctrine: for the churches of the Roman communion are no such extraordinary part of Christendom, compared to all the rest. *Ans.* For the extent of the churches I cannot certainly tell you the truth, because I fear many are called Christians, who have little either in their belief or lives to verify that name: But you know in witnesses the quality is to be respected, as well and more than the quantity: so that those countries in which Christianity is vigorous, are to be preferred before a greater extent of such where little remains more than the name. Suppose, in a suit at law, one party had seven legitimate witnesses, the other as many, and besides them twenty knights of the post, (known perjured knaves,) would you cast the cause for this wicked rabble?' Thus Rushworth.

And is this all? And is this a catholic cause or rule? You see now from their most violent subtle disputers, that they dare not stand to the major vote. They cannot deny but the Papists are the far smaller number: And most must not carry it! How then? Why we must be judged by the best, and not by the most. Content: And I must solemnly pro-

fess, that if my salvation lay upon it, and I were to go to-morrow, either to heaven or hell, according to my choice of the holier party to trust my faith upon, I should make as little doubt whether the Reformed or the Roman professors be more holy, (as far as ever I was able to discern,) as I should do whether the Latin or the Greek church be the more learned. If godliness and honesty of witnesses must carry it, I must live and die where I am. But especially when the Papists are worsted at both, and have neither the greater part, nor the more honest, (of which I am quite past doubt, as I am whether England be better and greater than the Orcades,) where then is their catholic faith and rule?

As for all the heathenish cavils of Rushworth against the certainty of Scripture, because of the language, the translations, and such blind, malignant exceptions, I shall answer them, if God will, in a more fit place.

2. Having spoken of the catholic rule, let me next advise you to keep close to the Catholic Governor and Judge. And who is that? Even Jesus Christ himself, and none but he. Why, but is there not a visible head and catholic judge of controversies on earth? To deny this seems an intolerable absurdity to a Papist: Then every man may believe what he list, or what his own fancy leads him to? *Answ.* 1. And if the Pope can cure heresy or infidelity, why doth he suffer most of the world to be infidels, and most of professed Christians to be, in his judgment, heretics? And if he can decide all controversies, why suffers he so many hundreds to be undecided among his followers. And it seems by the late determination of the Five Jansenian Articles, that neither he nor his subjects know when he hath decided a controversy, and when not. He said he condemned five points of the doctrine of Jansenius: the Jesuits say so too: the Jansenists say, It is not so, they are none of his doctrines, nor to be found in him in word or sense. 2. The catholic judge doth not contradict the catholic rule; but the Pope and his Council doth. 3. The catholic Judge contradicteth not himself, but so do Popes and Councils. 4. That is not the catholic judge whom most of the catholic church disowneth, and never did own: but most of them never owned the Pope. But of all this I entreat the unsatisfied reader to peruse what I have written in the Second and Third Disputation against Popery.

Object. ‘But what! Will you have no visible judge of controversies?’ *Answer.* Yes: but not over all the catholic church. *Quest.* ‘But who then shall be judge?’ *Answer.* The case is plain, if men were but impartial. Discerning is one thing, teaching is another, and deciding or determining is another. A discerning judgment, as far as they are able, belongs to all: A directing or teaching judgment occasionally and ‘ex charitate’ belongs to all that are able; and publicly and ordinarily, ‘ex officio,’ it belongs to all pastors and teachers. Neither of these is the judgment now inquired after, but the third. If a man know not the articles of faith, the teachers of the church are to instruct him. But if a man deny the articles of faith, the same teachers of the church are to endeavour to convince him of his error, and better inform him: and thus far judicial decisive power is unnecessary. But if he will not be convinced, but still deny the articles of the faith, then comes in the judicial decisive power in order to his punishment. The articles of faith are to be discerned, and judged by, but not judged themselves any otherwise than to be taught: but it is the heretic or offender that is to be judged. And the judgment being in order to execution, there is a twofold judgment, as there is a twofold execution.

1. If the question be, Who shall be taken for a heretic, in order to the corporal punishment or forcible coercion of him by the sword, here the magistrate only is the judge: and it is, 1. A vile usurpation in the Pope to take this power out of his hands.
2. And it is an intolerable abuse of magistrates! It makes them but like hangmen, or mere executioners, when the Pope and his clergy must be the judges of heresies, and the magistrate must but execute their judgment: What if the church or Pope judge a catholic to be a heretic, must the magistrate therefore burn an innocent member of Christ? They confess themselves that the Pope may err in matter of fact, and judge a man to be a heretic that is none: and if he could not err, yet surely his clergy may: Yea, they confess a General Council may, and say, they did err in condemning Pope Honorius of heresy. And must kings, and judges, and all magistrates, hang and burn all innocent people that the Popish clergy shall falsely judge heretics? Will it justify them before God to say, The Pope or bishops bid us burn them? No, I had rather be a dog, than be a king upon these conditions.
3. And indeed it is impossible for the Pope him-

self to be judge of all men through the world that are guilty of heresy. For he is many hundred or thousand miles off: and there must be a present judge that shall hear the cause and witnesses; and there must be many thousand of these judges to the whole world: and can the Pope or Council then serve alone? If every heretic in England escape till a Pope or Council have the hearing or judging of him, he will not fear.

Object. ' But the Pope and Council are to judge what is heresy, and what not, though not to judge all particular causes; and then the bishops must judge the causes.'

Answ. God hath told us already in his word, which are the articles of our faith, and the universal church hath delivered us all the essential articles in creeds, professions, and the baptismal covenant! And therefore here is no work for a judge, but for a teacher. The pastors of the church must teach us ' *ex officio,*' with authority, which are the articles of faith; but they have no power to judge an article to be no article, nor to make any new article: and to judge an article to be an article, any man may do by judgment of discerning, and any teachers by a judgment of direction. If moreover you would have no article of faith to be believed to be such, but on the word or credit of the Pope or Council, and so resolve our faith into them, I have fully confuted this in my Third Dispute against Popery! The word of God must be believed, whether men know the mind of the Pope and Council, or not: but this is the highest arrogancy of the Papal sect, that they must not have God's own laws believed, or received by any, but upon their word and credit: and so we must know that they are authorized hereto, and infallible, before we know the articles of our faith; and so we must believe in Christ's vicar before we can believe in Christ? This is the ground of the Papal cause. Well, I think I may take it for granted by this time, that with reasonable, impartial, considerate men the case is plain, that it is magistrates, and not the Pope, that are judges who is to be corporally punished for heresy! And if every bishop must do it, then, 1. They must prove every bishop infallible; and, 2. Then they have not one catholic judge of faith but many.

And what if we had granted them a power in the Pope or Council to judge of God's law, and what is an article of faith, and what is heresy? Yet this will be far from restraining heresies, as long as there is no judge of the particular

case: And if we have as many judges of the cause and person as there be bishops, then we have not one catholic judge of persons and causes; and if we must have fallible bishops, yea, and Popes, to judge of the person and fact, then we have but fallible restrainers of heresy.

2. The second sort of judgment is in order to church punishments. When the question is not, Who shall be punished by the sword? But Who shall be avoided by the church as a heretic? Here it is the church that is to judge; even that church that must avoid or reject them from communion. And therefore as communion is of narrower or wider extension, so must excommunication, and judging of heretics be. If the question be only, whether this man be to be avoided as a heretic by this particular church where he liveth? That church must judge. If the question be, Whether he be to be avoided as a heretic by all the churches of the country or nation, it is all these churches that must judge. For who should judge but those that must practise, and answer for their practice? And how can the Pope or Council be able to judge persons and causes that they know not; and to judge so many millions throughout the world? If you could prove that the whole catholic church were bound to take notice of this individual heretic, and were capable of actual communion, and avoiding communion with him, and of congregating to judge him, then I should consent that all Christendom should meet to excommunicate a heretic, if they had no better work the while to do. But the case is plain, that the church that must execute, must judge: the church that must avoid the communion of the heretic, must judge him to be avoided: and I think the Pope and General Councils will not undertake all this work.

You have nothing therefore to say, but to recur to the former way in your objection, viz. That it is the work of Pope and General Councils to judge what is faith and heresies, and the work of provincial synods or bishops to judge the offenders by their canons.

Ans. That is plainly; the Pope and Council must make the law, and the bishops judge by it. But, 1. God hath made the church's law already: we know but this one Law-giver to the church, to constitute articles of faith and spiritual duty. And is this all that you make such a noise about, when you say, Who shall be judge of faith, and heresy,

and controversy? That is, Who shall make laws against them, to tell us which is faith, and which is heresy? Why God hath done this already in the Scripture. 2. And this will not answer your own expectations in resolving your doubt: For if the Pope's legislation be all his judging of controversies, there will be never the fewer controversies or heresies in the world: for there is no law that hath a virtue sufficient to compel all the subjects to obey it. If God's law cannot do it, neither can the Pope's.

Object. ' But every heretic pleadeth Scripture, and saith, it is for him; and shall there be no judge to put an end to all these controversies about the sense of Scripture?'

Answ. 1. If there be any absolute judge of the sense of Scripture, his work is to give the world a decisive commentary upon it: which no Pope or Council hath done. 2. And he should actually decide all the controversies afoot, which the Pope dare not attempt; but leaves hundreds undecided among themselves, and more than ever were among the Protestants. 3. It is the work of a teacher, and not a catholic judge, to acquaint men with the meaning of the law. 4. For all their malignant accusation of the Scriptures, they do as plainly deliver us the articles of Christian faith, and the necessary Christian duties, as any Pope or Council hath done. And if all the work for a Pope or Council be to teach God how to speak or mend his word, and make sense of it, when God hath made it but nonsense, in their presumptuous judgments, then we can well spare such a judge as this. 5. There is as much contention among yourselves about the meaning of the canons of Councils, and the Pope's decretals: and who must be judge of all these controversies? Even the late Council of Trent is pleaded by one party for one side, and another for the contrary: yea, even by the particular divines that were members of the Council: and yet no deciding judge steps up, but let the contenders worry one another, and there is no end of their disputes.

So that the case is as plain as can be desired, 1. That constituting by a law or universal rule, to determine what shall be taken for faith, and what for heresy, this God hath done, who is the only Universal Lawgiver, and we need no Pope for it. 2. To judge who is to be corporally punished as a heretic belongs to the magistrate in his own jurisdiction, and not to the Pope or bishops: (as hath been made

good in all ages against them, since they claimed it, as the many tractates of Goldastus' collection manifests.) 3. To judge who shall be cast out of the communion of the church as a heretic, and avoided, belongs to the church that hath communion with him, and that is to avoid him; and to all other churches, so far as they are naturally capable of communion and non-communion with him, and of the cognizance of the case, and bound to take notice of it. So that all human judgment is but limited, and 'ad hoc,' the judgment being but in order to the execution. 4. And therefore the absolute final judgment is only that of Christ himself, to whom we must make our appeals, and from whom there is no appeal: And this is the true decision of this question, that makes so loud a noise, 'Who shall be judge of controversies in faith, and of heresies?' And thus you see that Scripture is the catholic rule, and Christ the catholic judge, and the magistrate the judge 'ad hoc,' who shall be corporally punished, and the pastors and church where communion or avoiding the party is a duty, are judges 'ad hoc,' whether he be to be avoided. And this is the next catholic principle.

Before I come to speak of the last, (which is, catholic affections) I shall briefly name some principles contrary to the catholic principles, which I would warn you to avoid: and I shall not stand upon them, but touch them.

1. It is a private and not-catholic principle, to hold that we are not baptized into the catholic church, but into a particular church only. As the case of the eunuch, (Acts viii,) and the baptismal institution shew.

It is a private principle, contrary to catholicism, to hold that an authorized minister of Christ, is only a minister in that church which is his special charge, and where we confess he is bound to exercise his ordinary labours, and that he may not preach, baptize, administer the Lord's-supper, yea, and rule 'pro tempore,' as a minister in another church to which he is called. As physicians must first have a general licence, upon exploration and approbation, to practise physic when they are called, and afterward may have a special call and engagement to a particular hospital or city as their charge, and so do practise occasionally upon a particular call abroad, but ordinarily at home, as to their special charge, but to both as physicians; so is it with a pastor in the church of Christ.

3. It is a private and uncatholic principle, that a minister

is so bound to that one congregation which is his special charge, as that he must prefer them and their service before the more public service of the churches, and must neglect opportunities of doing apparently much greater good, for fear of neglecting them. All our obligations are strongest to our ultimate end, and next to that which is next that end, and so more to the public than to any particulars as such.

4. And it is a private uncatholic principle, that a minister should more fear or avoid the offending or hurting of his own particular flock, than the offending and hurt of the catholic church, or of many particular churches, where the interest of Christ and the Gospel is greater, we are more obliged to God, and the catholic church, than we can be to any man or particular church. A physician of an hospital, 'cæteris paribus,' must prefer his own charge before any others, and rather neglect a stranger's life than theirs : but he should rather neglect one of his own charge, than a prince, or many considerable persons abroad, or all his own charge, than persons, or cities, or countries of far more public use and interest.

5. It is a private uncatholic principle, that ministers may satisfy their consciences if they stay at home, and only look after their own congregations, and never go to the assemblies of the ministers, where more public affairs of the churches are transacted, nor by preaching abroad where necessity requireth it, be helpful to other places.

6. And it is an uncatholic principle, to hold that the assemblies and associations of pastors, and concatenation of churches by them, is a needless thing ; or that they are not to be ordinary, and fixed, for a certain settled way of the communion of churches and brethren, but only occasional and seldom ; and that it is indifferent whether we be there.

7. And it is an uncatholic dividing principle to hold, that when the churches agree upon a circumstance of worship as convenient, any particular persons shall walk singularly, and refuse to consent to that agreement, unless it be against the word of God.

8. It is not according to catholic principles, for any man of another church to make light of the reproofs, advice or teaching, of any faithful minister of Christ, because they are not members of his charge.

9. Nor is it a catholic principle for a minister to hold, that a fit person of another church may not have communion

with him and his charge, and partake of the ordinances among them, when they are for a time cast into their neighbourhood, and give sufficient testimony of their fitness.

10. It is a dividing uncatholic principle, to think that for every disorder, or gross sin, that (against our wills) is connived at in the church, we must therefore withdraw from the communion of that church, before sufficient means and patience have been used with them, and before the church do own the sin.

11. It is a dividing uncatholic principle, to hold that we must necessarily require the profession of more than the essentials of Christianity in order to the baptizing of any into the church, or that profession is no satisfactory evidence, (though there be no proof on the contrary to invalidate it,) unless there be some other discovery of the truth of grace. To deny the catholic qualification of visible members is not catholic.

12. It is a dividing, and not a catholic principle, that we must needs preach, profess, or declare every thing that we take to be a truth, though to the apparent hazard of the church, and hindrance of the great essential truths; and that no truth must be silenced for the church's peace, and the advantage of the more necessary truths. And that we may not hold communion with those that agree not with us in some integrals of the Christian faith, though they agree in the essentials, and forfeit not the communion of the church by wicked lives.

Too many more such principles might be named, but I only warn you briefly of these few.

3. The last part of my advice is, that you labour to preserve a catholic spirit and affections. And a catholic spirit consisteth, 1. In a catholic love. 2. A catholic compassion. 3. A catholic care. And 4. A catholic endeavour to be serviceable to all.

1. A catholic love consisteth in these particulars, 1. That you love a Christian as a Christian, for the sake of Christ, and not for by-respects only: Not chiefly because he is rich, or honourable, or of eminent place, or parts, or personage, or because he loveth you, or any such lower respects; though these may have their parts in subserviency to the main; but the chief reason of your love must be, because he is a member of Christ, and beareth his image, and is ser-

viceable to the glory of God, and one that is likely to join with you in his everlasting praises.

2. That your love may be catholic, it must be a love to all that are Christians, as far as you can discern them, and have opportunity to observe them. Though he should differ from you in many points of religion, yet if he hold the essentials, and manifest the grace of God in his life, you must love him with the special love of a Christian. Though he have fallen out with you, or wronged you by word or deed, or have a low esteem of you, and slight you, whether deservedly or in a mistake, yet if he manifest the image of God, by his holy profession and conversation, you must afford him this special Christian love. Though he be a very weak Christian of parts, or graces, and subject to passions and infirmities, (consistent with grace) and his profession reach not to that height as may make him eminent, nor his life to that degree of diligence as may make you confident of his sincerity, yet if he have a profession of true faith, and repentance, and holiness, seemingly serious, and not invalidated or disproved by a contrary profession or practice, you must allow him the special love of a Christian. He that loveth a Christian as a Christian, must needs love all Christians that he discerneth to be such: and he must not by uncharitableness hinder that discerning.

3. And catholic love will be somewhat suitable to the excellency of the object, which is a member of Christ. He that loveth a Christian truly, doth love him above gold, and silver, and worldly things; and therefore can part with his substance to relieve him, and venture his life for him, when God and his honour do require it. And therefore it is that Christ will not at the last day barely ask, Whether we have loved him in his members? but whether our love were such as could carry us to clothe, and feed, and visit, and relieve them to our power.

4. Lastly, catholic love must be diversified in the degree according to the apparent degree of men's graces and serviceableness to God. He that loveth men as Christians and godly, will love those best where he seeth most Christianity and godliness, and those least where he seeth least of it.

There is, 1. A common love of men as men; and this you owe to all, even to an enemy; and this may consist with a dislike or hatred of them as wicked, and God's enemies.

2. There is a love to men for some lovely, natural, or acquired parts; as wit, learning, eloquence, gentleness, a loving nature, and the like: and this is proper to them that are the qualified objects of it; you owe it not to all, and yet you may allow it to those that are no saints. But this is not the catholic love which I speak of. 3. There is the before-described love to a Christian, as a Christian; and this is the catholic love which is due to all that seem Christians. 4. There is a special degree of this love, which you owe to stronger and more excellent Christians, and to those whose profession and conversation doth put you into a more confident persuasion of their sincerity, than you have of many or most common professors. And this special degree is not due to all Christians. As we have but very small and doubtful persuasions of some men's sincerity, and more confident persuasions of others; so our love must be greater to one than to another, even where a special Christian love is due to them all. 5. There is a special suitableness in the spirits of but few, even of those that are stronger Christians, whereby they are fitted to be your bosom friends. And this extraordinary love of a bosom friend, such as was between David and Jonathan, and should be between husbands and wives, is not due to all, no, not all that all are strong Christians.

For natural love to parents, and children, and other natural relations; and for grateful love to benefactors, I shall say nothing to them, as not pertaining to our business; nor yet of the heavenly degree of love which is proper to glory. But I have shewed you what that special Christian love is which is truly catholic; and that it must be to all, and to all with a high degree; but not to all with an equal degree, but must be much diversified by their degrees of grace.

The love which is called, "The fulfilling of the law," containeth all the sorts beforementioned; but the love which is the new commandment of the Gospel, is this special endearment of Christians to one another in their new relation, even, 1. As they believe in the Messiah as come, in whom they are all fellow-members and brethren. And 2. As they are disposed and elevated to this love, by a special measure of sanctification by the Spirit, proper to Gospel times.

This is the love to the brethren, by which we may know that we are translated from death to life, and so that we are true catholic Christians. (1 John iii. 14.) "He that hath

not this love abideth in death. By this it is that all men must know us to be Christ's disciples, that is, catholic Christians. (1 John xiii. 33.) If Christ have more skill in knowing his own sheep and sheepmark than the Papists have, then this is a better mark of a catholic than believing in the Pope, as the universal sovereign of the church: even loving one another as Christians, for Christ's sake, and that "with a pure heart fervently." (1 Pet. i. 22.) "Not in word and tongue, but in deed and in truth," so as to part with worldly goods for our brethren's relief. (1 John iii. 17, 18; Matt. xxv. 34. 40.)

Reader, thou art a blessed man if thou hast this charitable catholic spirit, that thou canst love all Christians, as far as thou canst discern them, with a special Christian love. When others hate and reproach all those that are not of their sect, or at least have no special Christian love for them, let them be dear to thy heart, and amiable, because of the image and interest of thy Lord, even when thou art called to disown and rebuke (yea, or chasten, if a governor) their errors and imperfections. This lesson is written in the very heart of a true catholic; for "they are all taught of God to love one another." (1 Thess. iv. 9.) Those, therefore, that malign all dissenters, and malice those that are not of their party, do carry about with them the brand of sectaries, how much soever they may seem to detest them. Those that deny the essentials of Christianity are not the objects of Christian love, but of common love only; but whatever infirmities are consistent with Christianity are insufficient to excuse us from this special love.

And here let me mind you of one other principle, which is notoriously uncatholic, while it pretendeth to be most catholic, and is here most fitly to be mentioned, as being the bane of catholic, Christian love; and that is the doctrine of many Papists, and some few Protestants, that make the necessary qualification of a church-member to be (the reality, 'coram Deo,' and the profession, 'coram Ecclesia,' of) a kind of dogmatical faith, which is short of justifying faith. From whence it followeth, that visible church-members, as such, are not to be taken by us for true living members of the body of Christ; but that esteem is due only to some few that manifest their holiness by an extraordinary profession, or fuller discovery: and consequently, that we are not

bound to love any as living members of Christ, but such eminent professors: and so the special catholic love, which is the new commandment, and the badge of a disciple, is turned into a common love specifically different from it, and answerable to the common not-justifying faith: and the special catholic love is reserved as another thing for some few of the visible church: whereas indeed we may say of all that are duly visible members, by profession of a saving faith, not nulled, that as it is the same faith with that of the holiest saints which they profess, so it is the same specific love that is due to the holiest saint that they must be loved with: a great difference there must be in degree, but none in kind. We love none of them as infallibly known to be true living Christians, but all of them as probably such by profession; but with very different degrees, because of the different degrees of probability.

And let me add another principle, that tendeth to corrupt this catholic love, and that is theirs that would have the church lie common; and men that profess not saving faith, or that null that profession by a wicked, impenitent course of life, to be permitted in the church, and discipline laid aside, and so the common and unclean to be numbered with the visible saints. And so when the permitted members are such as by right are no members, nor so much as seeming saints, they cannot be the objects of catholic love. Destroy the object and you destroy the art.

II. The second catholic affection in compassion towards a Christian as a Christian in his sufferings. A sensibleness of their sufferings, as if we suffered with them, "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." (Heb. xiii. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 26.) "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep: Be of the same mind one towards another." (Rom. xii. 15, 16.) "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" (2 Cor. xi. 29.) A true catholic is grieved to see his brother's calamity, and especially to hear of the dangers, and losses, and sufferings of the churches: be they never so distant from him, it is near to his heart, for their interest is his own.

He that feels nothing but his own afflictions, and can make a small matter of the losses and sufferings of the church,

perhaps under pretence of trusting God, so that if all be but well with himself, is certainly no catholic or Christian. And he that little feels the losses of the church, if his own sect or party do but gain or increase by it, doth shew that he hath more of a sectary than of a Christian. Catholic compassion (to which I adjoin also catholic rejoicing) do prove a true catholic.

III. Another catholic affection is a special care of the common Christian state and cause; and of the case of all our brethren that are known to us. I mean not that care which belongs to God only, and which we are forbidden to use, even for ourselves; but, 1. An estimation of the interest of the church and brethren as their own, and 2. An ordinate solicitousness about their welfare, containing an earnest desire of it, and a care to use the means that should obtain it. A catholic spirit is busily careful about the church's and brethren's welfare as well as his own. "That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another." (1 Cor. xii. 25.) Timothy naturally cared for the state of the churches: Such a care by grace he had of the churches, as he had by nature of himself; proceeding from so deep a love, as was a kind of new nature to him. (Phil. ii. 20.) "That our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you." (2 Cor. vii. 12.) Titus had an earnest care for the Corinthians. (2 Cor. viii. 16.) Every pastor must have a care of his church, (1 Tim. iii. 5,) but not stop there; but with Paul, "have a care of all the churches," (2 Cor. xi. 28,) though not an apostolical charge of them like his. Carelessness of the church and brethren is not catholic.

IV. Lastly, A true catholic spirit must appear in catholic endeavours, for the good of all the members of the church. 1. It is contrary to a base, covetous, selfish spirit, which causeth men to mind and seek only their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ, and of their brethren: and will not allow men to part with any more than some inconsiderable pittance out of their superfluity, for their brethren's relief, or the church's service. "But whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John iii. 17.) He that cannot pinch himself, and deny himself even in his daily bread for the

church and brethren, when God requireth it, is not a true catholic Christian.

2. And it is contrary much more to a spirit of malignity, by which men envy the good of others, or of those that are not of their party; and yet more to persecution, when men would tread down and destroy their brethren, and the inheritance of the Lord, in a selfish, devilish zeal.

3. But yet it is not contrary to a charitable, moderate correction of offenders, which tendeth either to their own or the church's good, and is necessary to the restraint of iniquity, and the preserving of others from the infection of error; and therefore the sword of the magistrate and the discipline of the church must both be employed in the cause of God; and this is so far from being contrary to the endeavours of a catholic spirit, that it is a necessary part of it. Correction first, proceedeth from love, and secondly, tendeth to good, and thirdly, is not used but in necessity; and this differeth from persecution, as the whipping of a child, from the malignant hurting of the innocent.

Quest. 'But how can the endeavours of a private Christian be extended to the catholic church?'

Answ. 1. His daily and earnest prayers to God may be extended to the whole; and must be. He is not of a catholic spirit that is not disposed to fervent prayers for the universal church of Christ. 2. And his actual assistance must reach as far as he can extend it; and then he that doth good to a part of the church, may well be said to do good to the catholic church in that part.

Quest. 'But what good is it that we should do?'

Answ. Besides that of prayer before-mentioned, 1. Maintain catholic truths and principles; earnestly contend for the catholic faith; and resist dividing, uncatholic principles and errors. 2. Maintain catholic affections in others to your power, and labour to draw them from privateness of spirit, and selfish or dividing affections. 3. Endeavour the actual healing of breaches among all catholics as soon as you perceive them. To that end, 1. Acquaint yourselves with healing truths; and labour to be as skilful in the work of pacifying and agreeing men, as most are in the work of dividing and disagreeing. Know it to be a part of your catholic work to be peace-makers; and therefore study how to do it as a workman that needeth not be ashamed. I

think most divines themselves in the world do study differences a hundred hours, for one hour that ever they study the healing of differences; and that is a shameful disproportion. 2. Do not bend all your wits to find what more may be said against others, and to make the differences as wide as you can, but study as hard to find out men's agreements, and to reduce the differences to as narrow a compass as is possible. 3. And to that end, be sure that you see the true state of the controversy, and distinguish all that is merely verbal, from that which is material; and that which is but about methods, and modes, and circumstances, from that which is about substantial truths; and that which is about the inferior truths, though weighty, from that which is about the essentials of Christianity. 4. Be as industrious for peace among others as if you smarted by it yourself; seek it, and beg it, and follow it, and take no nay. Make it the work of your lives. When once God hath so awakened the hearts of his servants to see the beauty, and feel so much of the necessity of unity and peace in the church, as shall make them generally more zealous, and diligent, and unwearied in seeking them, than dividers are in seeking to destroy them, then may we expect a healing, and strength, and glory to the catholic church: but wishing will not serve the turn, nor will we much thank wishers for it if we be healed.

Lastly. Lay the unity of the church upon nothing but what is essential to the church. Seek after as much truth, and purity, and perfection as you can: but not as necessary to the essence of the church, or any member of it; nor to denominate and specify your faith and religion by. Tolerate no error or sin, so far as not to seek the healing of it: but tolerate all error and sin, consisting with Christian faith and charity, so far as not to unchristian and unchurch men for them. Own no man's errors, or sins, but own every man that owneth Christ, and whom Christ will own, notwithstanding those errors and infirmities that he is guilty of. Bear with those that Christ will bear with; especially learn the master-duty of self-denial: for it is self that is the greatest enemy to catholicism. Self-conceitedness, and self-love, and self-willedness, and selfish interests, are the things that divide, and would make as many religions in the world as selfs. Even among many accounted orthodox, pride and

selfishness causeth them so far to overvalue their own judgments, as to expect that all should be conformable to them, and bow to their arguments which have no strength, if not to their sayings and wills without their arguments; and to disdain, and passionately censure and reproach all that dissent and gainsay them. And thus every man, so far as he is proud and selfish, would be the Pope or centre of the catholic church. And therefore it is observable that Christ hath told us, "That except we be converted, and become as little children, we cannot enter into his kingdom." (Matt. xviii. 3.) "And if we deny not ourselves we cannot be his disciples." (Luke ix. 23.) But of this I have spoken in another treatise.

And thus I have plainly from the word of God declared to you the true nature of catholicism, and which is the catholic church, and who a catholic. I hope it may do somewhat to cure the frenzy of the world, that makes men cry, Here is the church, and there is the church. That makes one sect say, We are the church, and another say, We are the church. I hope it may do somewhat to the confounding of the arrogancy and presumption of all sects, especially the sect of Papists, that being but a piece of the church, and that none of the best, dare pretend to be the whole, and restrain the name of Catholics or Christians to themselves! And I hope it may do somewhat to awake the servants of Christ to more catholic considerations, and principles, and affections, and endeavours, that those that have lived too much to themselves, and too much to their own parties, as if the church had been confined to their narrow provinces, may hereafter look more abroad into the world, and remember the extent of the kingdom of Christ, and not think so dishonourably of it as they have done. I hope also it may help to abate the censoriousness and presumption of those that would rob Christ of the greatest part of his inheritance, and deliver it up to Satan, his enemy. And I hope it may somewhat disgrace the dividing principles and practices of these times, and turn soldiers into surgeons, wounding into healing, and excite in some a stronger desire for unity and peace, and cause them to extend their care and charity further than they have done. However, this here described, is the catholic church which God will own. This is it that is

built on Christ the Rock, which the gates of hell shall not prevail against. Here is the safe standing, from whence you may look with boldness, thankfulness, and compassion, upon the many sects, and furious contentions of the world; and lament their giddiness, without being brought yourselves to a loss about the truth of your church or faith: and may see the folly of them that are puzzled to find out the true catholic church and religion. And here you may see the admirable privilege of a truly regenerate, sanctified person, that is most certainly a member of the true catholic church, whoever deny it. To conclude, you may hence see that it is not as Romanists, Greeks, Armenians, Abassines, Jacobines, Lutherans, Calvinists, Arminians, &c., that men are saved, but as catholic Christians, aspiring to the highest perfection.

END OF TRUE CATHOLIC, AND CATHOLIC CHURCH DESCRIBED.