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THE
PRACTICAL WORKS

OF THE
REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

vol. 1

THE

PRACTICAL WORKS

OF

THE REV. RICHARD BAXTER:

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

AND

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF HIS WRITINGS,

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM ORME,

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF JOHN OWEN, D.D.;" "BIBLIOTHECA BIBLICA," ETC.

VOL. XIV.

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THE
PRACTICAL WORKS
OF THE
REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

VOLUME XIV.

CONTAINING

GILDAS SALVIANUS: THE REFORMED PASTOR; CONFIRMATION
AND RESTAURATION, THE NECESSARY MEANS OF
REFORMATION AND RECONCILIATION.

THE

NEW

1851

CONTENTS

OF

THE FOURTEENTH VOLUME.

THE REFORMED PASTOR.

	PAGE
PREFACE	iii

CHAPTER I.

BRIEF explication of the Text	46
What sort of Elders they were that Paul spoke to	47
The doctrine and method	52
I. The terms opened.....	ibid.
II. Wherein we must take heed to ourselves	53
III. The moving reasons to take heed to ourselves	60

CHAPTER II.

IV. What is it to take heed to all the flock ? It is implied that every flock have their own pastor ; and that regularly the flock be no greater than the pastors may oversee, taking heed to all	74
I. The ends of this oversight	
II. Of the subject of this work	80
III. Of the object of it.....	82
1. The unconverted	87
2. The converted.....	89
(1.) The young and weaker.....	90
(2.) Those that labour under special distempers..	91
(3.) Decliners.....	92
(4.) That are fallen under some great temptation	ibid.
(5.) The disconsolate	93
(6.) The strong.....	94

	PAGE
IV. Of the action itself.....	94
1. Public preaching	ibid.
2. Sacraments	95
3. Public prayer, praise, and benediction	ibid.
4. Oversight of the members distinctly	96
(1.) Knowing them	ibid.
(2.) Instructing the ignorant	ibid.
(3.) Advising them that seek advice	ibid.
(4.) Looking to particular families	97
(5.) Resisting seduction	99
(6.) Encouraging the obedient.....	100
(7.) Visiting the sick	101
(8.) Comforting	104
(9.) Private admonishing offenders	ibid.
(10.) More public discipline	105
Public admonition, 105.—Public exhortation to open discovery of repentance, 108.—Public praying for the offender, <i>ibid.</i> —To assist the penitent, confirming, absolving, &c. 113.— Rejecting the obstinately impenitent from our communion, <i>ibid.</i> —Reception of the penitent..	114
The manner and necessity of these acts	118
Making laws for the church is not our work	<i>ibid.</i>

CHAPTER III.

The manner and concomitants of our work. It must be done	
1. Purely for God, and not for self	119
2. Laboriously and diligently.	120
3. Prudently and orderly	121
4. Insisting most on the greatest and most necessary things.....	<i>ibid.</i>
5. With plainness and evidence	123
6. In a sense of our insufficiency and dependance on Christ	124
7. In humility and condescension.	125
8. A mixture of severity and mildness.	126
9. With affectionate seriousness.	<i>ibid.</i>
10. Reverently and spiritually	127
11. In tender love to our people	128
12. Patiently. And we must be studious of union and communion among ourselves, and of the unity and peace of the church	130

CHAPTER IV.

	PAGE
The first use for our humiliation : confessing the sins of the ministry, especially of this nation ; heretofore	133
A confession of our present sins. Especially, 1. Pride	154
2 An undervaluing the unity and peace of the catholic church	164
3. Want of serious, industrious, unreserved laying out ourselves in the work of God. Discovered	
(1.) By negligent studies	181
(2.) By dull, drowsy preaching	182
(3.) By not helping them that want abroad	183
(4.) By neglect of acknowledged duties : <i>e.g.</i> Church discipline. The pretences confuted that would justify it	ibid.
(5.) By the power of worldly, carnal interests.....	198
Manifested [1.] By temporising	ibid.
[2.] Worldly business	199
[3.] Barrenness in works of charity ..	200
Applied for humiliation.....	204

CHAPTER V.

The Use of Exhortation. Motives in the text,	
I. From our office and relation to all the flock, with some subservient considerations	206
II. From the efficient cause : the Holy Ghost.....	212
III. From the dignity of the object.....	213
IV. From the price paid for the church.....	214
A more particular Exhortation,	
I. To see that the saving work of grace be wrought on our own hearts. A word to tutors and schoolmasters.....	215
II. Keep grace in vigour and activity, and preach to your own hearts first; for your work sake.....	223
III. Stir up yourselves to the work, and do it with all your might	225
IV. Keep up earnest desires and expectations of success..	226
V. Be zealous of good works. Spare no cost.....	228
VI. Maintain union and communion. The way thereto....	230
VII. Practise so much of discipline, as is certainly your duty	242
VIII. Faithfully discharge this duty of personal catechising and instruction of all the flock.....	245

CHAPTER VI.

	PAGE
Reasons for this duty,	
I. From the benefits. The great hopes we have of a blessed success of this work if faithfully managed ; shewed in twenty particulars	246
II. From the difficulty of this work	272
III. From the necessity of it: which is manifold	275
Use: what great cause of humiliation we have for neglecting this so long.....	281
An Exhortation to the faithful performance of this work. Twenty aggravations of our sin, and witnesses which will condemn the wilful refusers of so great duties, as this private instruction, and discipline are.....	283
The objections of lazy, unfaithful ministers, against personal instruction and catechising, answered	296

CHAPTER VII.

Directions for the right managing of this work,	
I. For bringing our people to submit to it.....	313
II. To do it so as is most likely to succeed for the conversion of the ungodly, and awaking of the secure. In twelve directions	318

CHAPTER VIII.

Directions how to deal with self-conceited opinionists, and to prevent or cure error and schism in our people. And how to deal with those of whose condition we are between hope and fear	336
---	-----

APPENDIX: in answer to some objections which I have heard of since the former edition	355
Address to ministers and others	395

CONFIRMATION AND RESTAURATION,

THE NECESSARY MEANS OF

REFORMATION AND RECONCILIATION.

	PAGE
TO THE READER	cccciii
QUEST. Whether those that were baptized in infancy, should be admitted to the privileges proper to adult church-members, without Confirmation or Restauration, by an approved profession of personal faith and repentance ?	
Neg.	405
A GENERAL RULE TO GUIDE REFORMERS.	
PROP. I. It is supposed, that the infants of believers should be admitted by baptism into the church, and so be partakers of infant-privileges. A Breviate of Reasons for this	407
PROP. II. There are many privileges belonging to the adult members of the church, which infant members are not capable of	409
PROP. III. The continuation of privileges received in infancy, is part of the privileges of the adult : or the restoration of them, if they be lost	410
PROP. IV. The title-condition of infant church-membership and privileges is not the same with the title-condition of the church-membership and privileges of the adult ; so that if this new condition be not performed when men come to age, their former title ceaseth, and there is no other that ariseth in its stead : Proved	ibid.
PROP. V. As a personal faith is the condition before God of title to the privileges of the adult ; so the profession of this faith, is the condition of his title before the church, and without this profession, he is not to be taken as an adult member, nor admitted to the privileges of such. Proved, and vindicated from their Objections, that plead against the necessity of an express profession ; with some application urging to the practice	414

- PROP. VI. It is not every kind of profession that is the condition, or necessary qualification of those that are to be admitted to the privileges of adult members, but such a profession as God hath made necessary by his express Word, and by the nature of the object, and the uses and ends to which he doth require it. It must be a profession of true Christianity in all the essentials. What are the essentials, as to objects and acts? It must be a credible profession. 1. It must seem to be understanding. 2. And serious. 3. And voluntary, upon deliberation. 4. Not nullified by a contradiction in word or deed. 5. It must be practice first, that must make words credible, when the person by perfidiousness hath forfeited his credit 425
- PROP. VII. The profession of those that expect the church-state and privileges of the adult is to be tried, judged and approved by the pastors of the church, to whose office it is that it belongeth. 1. An untried profession must not serve: Proved. 2. Pastors by office are the triers and judges of the profession of such, as to these ends: proved by fourteen undeniable arguments; and objections answered. Consent of the ancients 429
- PROP. VIII. Though it belong to the Pastor's office to judge of the profession of such expectants, yet are they bound up by the laws of Christ what profession to accept, and what to refuse: and if by breaking these laws, they shall dangerously or grossly wrong the church, it belongeth to the magistrate to correct them, and to the people to admonish them, and disown their sin; yea, and in desperate cases to disown them. The positive title-condition to be produced, is the profession of true Christianity. The minister that refuseth this profession, must prove it not credible. Of tolerable ignorance 443
- PROP. IX. It is evident that magistrates, ministers and people, have each a power of judging: but different, as they have different works. How far ministers are judges. Proved by ten Reasons against the popular claim, &c. How far the people must judge: How far the magistrate must judge ministers for these matters, and ministers obey them 445
- PROP. X. To this ministerial approbation of the profession and qualifications of the expectant, there is to be adjoined

a ministerial investiture or delivery of the benefit expected. How many sacraments there are. 1. More than seven in the largest sense. 2. Five in a large sense (not intolerable). 3. Two only in the strictest sense as we define them 449

PROP. XI. The solemn ministerial investiture of professors into the right of the church-privileges of the adult is either 1. Of the unbaptized, who are now first entered. 2. Or of the baptized in infancy, that never proved ungodly, nor violated that first covenant. 3. Or of those baptized (whether in infancy or at age) that have since proved wicked and broke the covenant. The first of these investitures is to be by baptism, the second by confirmation, and the third by absolution. So that the solemn investiture that now I am pleading for, is by confirmation to one sort, (that never proved ungodly since their baptism) and by absolution to the other sort (that broke their covenant) which yet hath a certain confirmation in, or with it 450

PROP. XII. This solemn investiture on personal profession, being thus proved the ordinance of God, for the solemn renewing the covenant of grace between God and the adult covenanting, it must needs follow that it is a corroborating ordinance and that corroborating grace is to be expected in it from God, by all that come to it in sincerity of heart: and so it hath the name of confirmation upon that account also 451

PROP. XIII. Ministerial imposition of hands, in confirmation and the fore-described sort of absolution, is a lawful and convenient action or ceremony, and ordinarily to be used, as it hath been of old by the universal church. But yet it is not of such necessity, but that we must dispense in this ceremony with scrupulous consciences, that cannot be satisfied to submit to it. Imposition of hands is allowed in Scripture to be used generally by spiritual superiors, to signify their desire, that the blessing, gift or power may be conferred on the inferior, for which they have a call to mediate: Proved. Particularly, 1. We find in Scripture a blessing of church members, with laying on of hands. 2. And that the Holy Ghost is in an especial manner promised to believers, over and above that measure of the Spirit, which caused them to believe. 3. And that prayer, with laying on of hands, was the outward means to be

used by Christ's ministers, for procuring this, or investing them of it. 4. And that this was not a temporary but fixed ordinance: all proved. How the Holy Ghost is given before faith, and after faith; and how sealed in baptism, and how not. What hope of the success of imposition, with prayer for the Spirit. Scripture and antiquity for it. Reasons for the non-necessity of it to the scrupulous 452

PROP. XIV. Though in receiving adult persons out of infidelity by baptism into the church, a sudden profession, without any stay to see their reformation, may serve turn, yet in receiving these that were baptized heretofore into the number of adult members, or to the privileges of such, their lives must be inquired after, which must be such as do not confute their profession 469

PROP. XV. It is not of flat necessity that the profession of the expectant be made in the open congregation, or before many, in order to his confirmation or admittance 471

PROP. XVI. When a person is admitted an adult member of a particular church, as well as of the universal, his profession and admission must be either before the church, or satisfactorily made known to the church, at least, who must approve of it by a judgment of discretion, in order to their communion with him: and this among us is the ordinary case; because it is the duty of all that have opportunity, to join themselves to some particular church, and it is in such churches that communion in public worship and order must be had; either statedly, or transiently and temporarily. Reasons to prove this interest of the people. Cases of difference between pastors and people resolved 472

PROP. XVII. It is convenient (though not of necessity) that every church do keep a register of all that are thus invested, or admitted into the number of adult members 478

PROP. XVIII. Those that were never thus ministerially and explicitly approved, confirmed or absolved (after an ungodly life), but have been permitted without it, to join usually with the church in prayer and praises, and the Lord's-supper, are approved and confirmed, eminently, though not formally, though in so doing, both the Pastors

and themselves might sin against God, by the violation of his holy order. Such therefore may be a true church, and are not to be called back to solemn confirmation, though in many cases they may be called to trial by their overseers ibid.

PROP. XIX. So exceeding great and many are the mischiefs that have befallen us by the neglect of a solemn, meet transition from an infant into the adult church-state, and which undoubtedly will continue till this be remedied, that all the magistrates, ministers and people, that dissemble not in professing themselves to be Christians, should with speed and diligence attempt the cure. The state of our parishes anatomised. Twenty intolerable mischiefs that follow the taking all into our church-communion, and neglecting this confirmation : such as all Christians should lay to heart 480

PROP. XX. So many and great are the benefits that would follow the general practice of this duty of trying, approving and confirming (or absolving) all those that enter into the number of adult Christians, that it should mightily provoke all Christian magistrates, ministers and people to join in a speedy and vigorous execution of it. Twelve excellent benefits that will come by confirmation. It is like to be an admirable increaser of knowledge, and holiness, and church-reformation. It is a singular means of agreeing the Episcopal, Presbyterians, Congregational, Erastians, and moderating the Anabaptists : Proved and urged 501

Twenty Objections against this approved profession and confirmation, answered. How little reason have princes, and parliaments to restrain most ministers here from overdoing 521

The Duties that lie upon us all, for the execution of this work 542

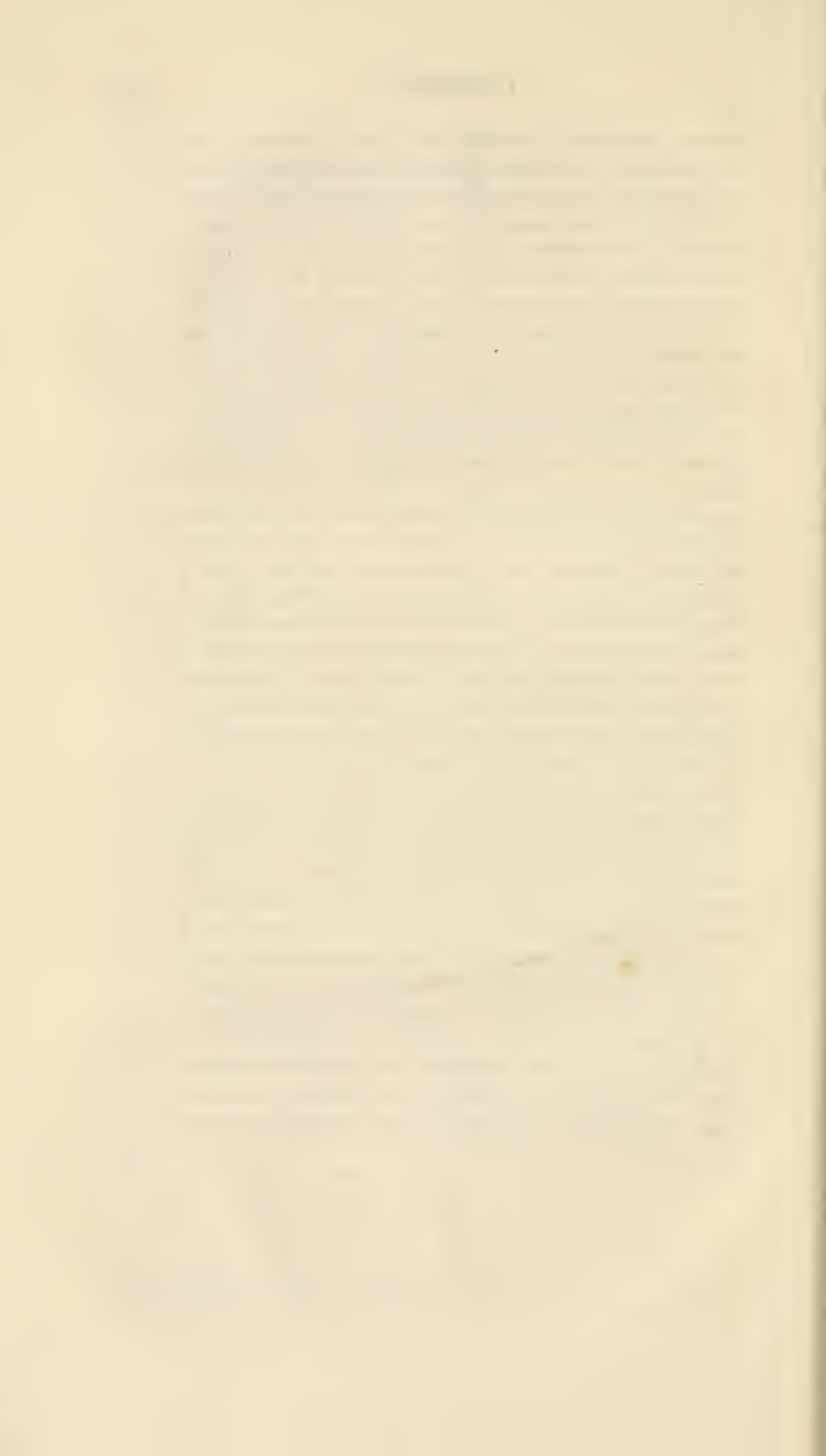
First, on Ministers. 1. We should agree upon an unanimous performance. 2. In those agreements, we must leave men to their liberty in all unnecessary modes and circumstances. 3. In taking men's profession, we must avoid both extremes, viz. Loose formality, and overmuch rigor. 4. What course must be taken with all our parishes, where some have without a personal,

approved profession already been admitted to the Lord's-supper, and some not particularly opened. 5. We must require of all the notoriously ungodly, a penitent confession in order to absolution, as well as a profession of faith and future obedience. 6. Delegates to be chosen by particular churches, to meet with the Pastors for these and other church-affairs. 7. The Pastors and churches should be all associated, and the churches that we hold communion with, differenced from the rest : that those that are confirmed and received by them, may be capable of communion with all. 8. We must be diligent in public and private teaching the catechumens, and walk inoffensively, condescendingly and vigilantly among them 543

Secondly, The Duty of the People, especially the godly, in order to this work 547

Thirdly, The Magistrates' Duty hereto. 1. To cause those people that are unfit for church-communion, to live quietly in the state of expectants, and to submit to public and personal instruction, and catechising, to prepare them. 2. To compel Ministers thus to teach and catechise them, and see that great parishes have so many teachers as may be able to do it. Reasons for compelling us. 3. To lay some penalty on all Pastors that will not guide the church by discipline, as well as preach : not forbidding them to be preachers, but to be Pastors and administer sacraments, that will not do it as Christ hath appointed. To these ends it may do well for the magistrate to have his agent or Church-justice, to join in the church-meetings, and to inform the Commissioners for Ejection, who may be empowered hereunto. 4. To promote and command the Associations and correspondencies of Pastors and churches. With what limitations, and to what ends. 5. It would much further this work, if Visitors were appointed in all parts to see it done, or put on ministers : not that any ministers should have a power of silencing, suspending, &c. ; but to let a Civil Visitor, and a Visitor of the Ministry be still joined together, and let the minister have only a power to persuade, and the other as a magistrate to compel, or to bring the causes, which are exempt from his power, to the superior commissioners. 6. It is the unquestionable duty of magistrates (not to drive men to church-communion that are unmeet, but) to restrain se-

ducers from taking advantage of their discontents and drawing them away, while they remain expectants. Ten Reasons, that deserve the serious consideration of the magistrate, that shew the great necessity of this his moderate assistance for keeping of deceivers, especially Papists, and containing the profane and ignorant people in quietness and submission to instruction in an expectant state, till they are fit for church-communion. 7. To satisfy the magistrate that is afraid of persecution, certain regulations of toleration are propounded. 1. Let all that pretend scruple of submitting to the personal or public instruction of the teacher of the parish where he lives, be compelled to submit to some one else, who may give it under his hand that he takes that care of him. 2. Let Commissioners be appointed (according to the laws given them) to guard the door of toleration, as now they are to guard the door of public allowance and maintenance: and let none be tolerated to preach or openly persuade (though for nothing) that have not an instrument of license sealed by these commissioners. Or else blasphemers and heathens may preach, for all your laws against them. 3. Let those that have a sealed toleration be as responsible to the commissioners, for their violating the laws of their toleration, as we are for breaking the laws that bind us: and let their toleration be forfeitable, as well as our maintenance. Reasons for this. To conclude, if, as before the days of William the Conqueror, magistrates and ministers might sit together, the ministers having no power but to persuade, and the magistrate the sole power of compulsion, and so 1. Approvers keep the door of toleration. 2. A Church-justice, or agent of the magistrates keep the peace of every church or parish. 3. And the Civil and Ministerial Visitors aforesaid shall be appointed to take cognizance of the state of parishes. 4. And the Commissioners for Ejection of Scandalous Ministers, be equally enabled to eject the scandalous and blasphemous from their toleration; the magistrate might assist us without danger of persecution



GILDAS SALVIANUS.

THE
REFORMED PASTOR;

SHEWING

THE NATURE OF THE PASTORAL WORK; ESPECIALLY IN PRIVATE
INSTRUCTION AND CATECHISING: WITH AN OPEN
CONFESSION OF OUR TOO OPEN SINS.

PREPARED FOR

A DAY OF HUMILIATION KEPT AT WORCESTER, DECEMBER 4, 1655,
BY THE MINISTERS OF THAT COUNTY, WHO SUBSCRIBED THE
AGREEMENT FOR CATECHISING AND PERSONAL INSTRUCTION,
AT THEIR ENTRANCE UPON THAT WORK.

*Ἐκεῖνος δὲ ὁ δαῦλος ὁ γνούς τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ μὴ ἐτοιμίαςας, μηδὲ
ποιήσας πρὸς τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ, δαρέσεται πολλάς.*

Luke xii. 47.



THE

PREFACE.

TO MY REVEREND AND DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN, THE FAITHFUL
MINISTERS OF CHRIST, IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND, GRACE
AND PEACE IN JESUS CHRIST BE INCREASED.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE subject of this treatise so nearly concerneth yourselves and the churches committed to your care, that it persuadeth and emboldeneth me to this Address, notwithstanding the imperfections in the manner of handling it, and the consciousness of my great unworthiness to be your monitor.

Before I come to my principal errand, I shall give you that account which I suppose I owe you, of the reasons of the following work, and of the freedom of speech which to some may be displeasing.

When the Lord had awakened his ministers in this county, and some neighbouring parts, to a sense of their duty in the work of catechising, and private instruction of all in their parishes that would not obstinately refuse their help, and when they had subscribed an Agreement, containing their resolutions for the future performance of it, they judged it unmeet to enter upon the work without a solemn humbling of their souls before the Lord, for their long neglect of so great and necessary a duty: and therefore they agreed to meet together at Worcester, December 4, 1655, and there to join in such humiliation, and in earnest prayer to God for the pardon of their neglects, and for his special assistance in the work that they had undertaken, and for the success of it with the people whom they were engaged to instruct: at which time, among others, I was desired by them to preach. In answer to their desires, I prepared the

following discourse; which though it proved longer than could be delivered in one or two sermons, yet I intended to have entered upon it at that time, and to have delivered that which was most pertinent to the occasion, and reserved the rest to another season. But before the meeting, by the increase of my ordinary pain and weakness, I was disabled from going thither. To recompense which unwilling omission, I easily yielded to the requests of divers of the brethren, forthwith to publish the things which I had prepared, that they might *see* that which they could not *hear*. If now it be objected, that ‘I should not have spoken so plainly or sharply against the sins of the ministry, or that I should not have published it to the view of the world; or at least that I should have done it in another tongue, and not in the ears of the vulgar, especially at such a time when Quakers and Papists are endeavouring to bring the ministry into contempt, and the people are too prone to hearken to their suggestions:’ I confess I thought the objection very considerable; but that it prevailed not to alter my resolutions is to be ascribed to the following reasons:—1. It was a purposed solemn humiliation that we were agreed on, and that this was prepared and intended for. And how should we be humbled without a plain confession of our sins?—2. It was principally our *own* sins that the confession did concern; and who can be offended with us for confessing our own, and taking the blame and shame to ourselves, which our consciences told us we ought to do?—3. I have excepted in our confessions those that are not guilty: and therefore hope that I have injured none.—4. Having necessarily prepared it in the English tongue, I had no spare time to translate it.—5. Where the sin is open in the sight of the world, it is in vain to attempt to hide it.—6. And such attempts will but aggravate it, and increase our shame.—7. A free confession is a condition of a full remission; and when the sin is public, the confession must be public. If the ministers of England had sinned only in Latin, I would have made shift to admonish them in Latin, or else have said nothing to them. But if they will sin in English, they must hear of it in English. Unpardoned sin will never let us rest or prosper, though we be at never so much care and cost to cover it: our sin will surely find us out, though we find not it. The work of confession is purposely to

make known our sin, and freely to take the shame to ourselves: and if he that confesseth and forsaketh be the man that shall have mercy, no wonder then if he that covereth it, prosper not. (Prov. xxviii. 13.) If we be so tender of ourselves, and so loath to confess, God will be less tender of us, and will indite our confessions for us. He will either force our consciences to confession, or his judgments shall proclaim our iniquities to the world. Know we not how many malicious adversaries are day and night at work against us? Some openly revile us, and some in secret are laying the designs, and contriving that which others execute, and are in expectation of a fuller stroke at us, which may subvert us at once. What is it but our sins that is the strength of all these enemies? Is not this evil from the ordering of the Lord? Till we are reconciled to him we are never safe: he will never want a rod to scourge us by. The tongues of Quakers and Papists, and many other sorts, are all at work to proclaim our sins, because we will not confess them ourselves: because we will not speak the truth, they will speak much more than the truth. Yet if we had man only to plead our cause with, perhaps we might do much to make it good; but while God accuseth us, how shall we be justified; and who shall hide our sins, when he will have them brought to light? And God is our accuser till we accuse ourselves: but if we would judge ourselves, he would not judge us.—8. The fire is already kindled which revealeth our sin: judgment is begun at the house of God. Hath the ministry suffered nothing in England, Scotland, and Ireland? and have there been no attempts for its overthrow? Hath it not been put to the vote of an assembly that some called a Parliament of England, Whether the whole frame of the established ministry, and its legal maintenance should be taken down? And were we not put to plead our title to that maintenance, as if we had been falling into the hands of Turks, that had thirsted for our subversion, as resolved enemies to the Christian cause? And who knows not how many of these men are yet alive; and how high the same spirit yet is, and busily contriving the accomplishment of the same design? Shall we think that they have ceased their enterprise, because they are working more subtly in the dark? What are the swarms of railers at the ministry sent abroad the land for, but to delude, exasperate, and disaffect

the people ; and turn the hearts of the children from their fathers, that they may be ready to promote the main design ? And is it not then our wisest course to see that God be our friend, and to do that which tendeth most to engage him in our defence ? I think it is no time now to stand upon our credit, so far as to neglect our duty and befriend our sins, and so provoke the Lord against us. It rather be- seems us to fall down at the feet of our offended Lord, and to justify him in his judgments, and freely and penitently to confess our transgressions, and to resolve upon a speedy and thorough reformation, before wrath break out upon us, which will leave us no remedy. It is time to make up all breaches between us and heaven, when we stand in such necessity of the Divine protection ! For how can an impenitent, unreformed people, expect to be sheltered by holiness itself ? It is a stubborn child, that under the rod will refuse to confess his faults ; when it is not the least use of the rod to extort confession. We feel much, we fear more, and all is for sin ; and yet are we so hardly drawn to a confession ?—9. The world already knows that we are *sinner*s ; as none suppose us perfect, so our particular sins are too apparent to the world : and is it not meet then that they should see that we are *penitent* sinners ? It is surely a greater credit to us to be penitent sinners, than impenitent sinners ; and one of the two we shall be while we are on earth. Certainly as repentance is necessary to the recovery of our peace with God, so it is also to the reparation of our credit with wise and godly men : it is befriending and excusing our sin that is our shame indeed, and leadeth towards everlasting shame ; which the shame of penitent confession would prevent.—10. Our penitent confession and speedy reformation are the means that must silence the approaching adversaries. He is imprudently inhuman, that will reproach men with their sins that bewail and penitently charge them upon themselves. Such men have a promise of pardon from God ; and shall men take us by the throat when God forgiveth us ? Who dare condemn us, when God justifies us ? Who shall lay that to our charge, which God hath declared that he will not charge us with ? When sin is truly repented of by Gospel-indulgence, it ceaseth to be ours. What readier way then can we imagine to free us from the shame of it, than to shame ourselves for it in

penitent confessions, and to break off from it by speedy reformation?—11. The leaders of the flock must be exemplary to the rest; and therefore in this duty as well as in any other. It is not our part only to teach them repentance, but to go before them in the exercise of it ourselves. As far as we excel them in knowledge and other gifts, so far should we also excel them in this and other graces.—12. Too many that have set their hand to this sacred work do so obstinately proceed in self-seeking, negligence, pride, division, and other sins, that it is become our necessary duty to admonish them. If we could see that such would reform without reproof, we could gladly forbear the publishing of their faults. But when reproofs themselves do prove so ineffectual, that they are more offended at the reproof than at the sin; and had rather that we should cease reproving, than themselves should cease sinning, I think it is time to sharpen the remedy. For what else should we do? To give up our brethren as incurable, were cruelty, as long as there are further means to be used. We must not hate them, but plainly rebuke them, and not suffer sin upon them. (Lev. xix. 17.) And to bear with the vices of the ministers, is to promote the ruin of the church. For what speedier way is there for the depraving and undoing of the people, than the depravity of their guides? And how can we more effectually further a reformation (which we are so much obliged to do) than by endeavouring the reforming of the leaders of the church? Surely, brethren, if it be our duty to endeavour to cast out those ministers that are negligent, scandalous, and unfit for the work, and if we think this so necessary to the reformation of the church (as no doubt it is), it must needs be our duty to endeavour to heal the sins of others, and to use a much more gentle remedy to them that are guilty of a less degree of sin. If other men's sin deserve an ejection, surely ours deserve and require plain reproof. For my part, I have done as I would be done by; and it is for God and the safety of the church, and in tender love to the brethren, whom I do adventure to reprehend: not (as others) to make them contemptible and odious, but to heal the evils that would make them so; that so no enemy may find this matter of reproach among us. But especially because our faithful endeavours are of so great necessity to the welfare of the church, and the saving of men's

souls, that it will not consist with a love to either (in a predominant sort) to be negligent ourselves, or silently to connive at, and comply with the negligent. If thousands of you were in a leaky ship, and those that should pump out the water and stop the leaks, should be sporting or asleep, yea, or but favour themselves in their labours, to the hazarding of you all, would you not awake them to their work, and call out on them to labour as for your lives? and if you used some sharpness and importunity with the slothful, would you think that man were well in his wits that would take it ill of you, and accuse you of pride, self-conceitiveness, or unmannerliness, to presume to talk so saucily to your fellow-workmen? or should tell you, that you wrong them by diminishing their reputation? Would you not say, 'The work must be done, or we are all dead men: is the ship ready to sink, and do you talk of reputation? or had you rather hazard yourself and us, than hear of your slothfulness?' This is our case, brethren! The work of God must needs be done: souls must not perish while you mind your worldly business, or observe the tide and times, and take your ease, or quarrel with your brethren: nor must we be silent while men are hastened by you to perdition, and the church to greater danger and confusion, for fear of seeming too uncivil and unmannerly with you, or displeasing your impatient souls. Would you be but as impatient with your sins as with reproofs, you should hear no more from us, but we should be all agreed! But neither God nor good men will let you alone in such sins. Yet if you had betaken yourselves to another calling, and would sin to yourselves only, and would perish alone, we should not have so much necessity of molesting you, as now we have: but if you will enter into the office which is for the necessary preservation of us all, so that by letting you alone in your sins, we must give up the church to apparent loss and hazard; blame us not if we talk to you more freely than you would have us do. If your own body be sick, and you will despise the remedy; or if your own house be on fire, and you will be singing or quarrelling in the streets; I can possibly bear it, and let you alone (which yet in charity I should not easily do). But if you will undertake to be the physician of an hospital, or to all the town that is infected with the plague; or will undertake to quench all the

fires that shall be kindled in the town, there is no bearing with your remissness, how much soever it may displease you. Take it how you will, you must be told of it; and if that will not serve, you must get more closely told of it; and if that will not serve, if you be rejected as well as reprehended, you must thank yourselves. I speak all this to none but the guilty.—And thus I have given you those reasons, which forced me, even in plain English, to publish so much of the sins of the ministry, as in the following treatise I have done. And I suppose the more penitent and humble any are, and the more desirous of the truest reformation of the church, the more easily and fully will they approve such free confessions and reprehensions.

The second sort of objections against this free confession of sin, I expect to hear from the several parties whose sins are here confessed. Most of them can be willing that others be blamed, so they might be justified themselves. I can truly say, that what I have here spoken, hath been as impartially as I could, and not as a party, nor as siding with any, but as owning the common Christian cause, and as somewhat sensible of the apparent wrongs that have been offered to common truth and godliness, and the hindrances of men's salvation, and of the happiness of the church. But I find it impossible to avoid the offending of guilty men; for there is no way of avoiding it, but by our silence, or their patience: and silent we cannot be, because of God's commands; and patient they cannot be, because of their guilt and partiality, and the interest that their sin hath got in their affections. I still except those humble men that are willing to know the worst of themselves, and love the light that their deeds may be made manifest, and long to know their sins that they may forsake them, and their duty that they may perform it.

Some, it is likely, will be offended with me, that I blame them so much for the neglect of that Discipline, which they have disputed for so long. But what remedy? If discipline were not of God, or if it were unnecessary to the church, or if it were enough to dispute for duty, while we deliberately refuse to perform it; then would I have given these brethren no offence.

Some, it is likely, will be offended that I mention, with

disallowance, the Separatists or Anabaptists ; as I understand some are much offended that I so mentioned them in an epistle before the Quakers' Catechism, as if they opened the door to the apostacy of these times ; and they say that by this it appeareth that while I pretend so much zeal for the unity of the Church, I intend and endeavour the contrary. To which I answer : 1. Is it indeed a sign that a man loveth not the unity of the saints, because he loveth not their disunion and division ? Who can escape the censure of such men, but he that can unite the saints by dividing them ? 2. I never intended, in urging the peace and unity of the saints, to approve of any thing which I judged to be a sin ; nor to tie my own tongue or other men's from seasonable contradicting it. Is there no way to peace but by participating of men's sin ? The thing I desire is this : (1.) That we might all consider how far we may hold communion together, even in the same congregations, notwithstanding our different opinions ; and to agree not to withdraw where it may possibly be avoided. (2.) But where it cannot, that yet we may consult how far we may hold communion in distinct congregations : and to avoid that, no further than is of mere necessity. And (3.) and principally, to consult and agree upon certain rules for the management of our differences, in such manner as may be least to the disadvantage of the common Christian truths which are acknowledged by us all. Thus far would I seek peace with Arminians, Antinomians, Anabaptists, or any that hold the foundation. Yea, and in the two last, I would not refuse to consult an accommodation with moderate Papists themselves, if their principles were not against such consultations and accommodations : and I should judge it a course which God will better approve of, than to proceed by carnal contrivances to undermine their adversaries, or by cruel murders to root them out, which are their ordinary courses. I remember that godly, orthodox, peaceable man, bishop Usher, (lately deceased,) tells us in his sermon at Wansted, for the Unity of the Church, that he made a motion to the Papist priests in Ireland ; that, because it was ignorance of the common principles that was likely to be the undoing of the common people, more than the holding of the points which we differ in ; therefore both parties should agree to teach them some Catechism containing those

common principles of religion which are acknowledged by us all : But jealousies and carnal counsels would not permit them to hearken to this motion.

3. And as concerning that epistle before my paper to the Quakers, I further answer, that by *Separatists* there I plainly mean church-dividers; even all that make unnecessary divisions in or from the churches of Christ, whom the apostle so earnestly beseecheth us to mark and avoid, (Rom. xvi. 17,) and which he calleth them carnal for, and so earnestly contendeth against, 1 Cor. i; ii; iii; and in many other places in his epistles. And if this be a tolerable sin, then the unity of the church is not a necessary thing; and then the apostles would never have condemned this sin as they have done. Do we all so sensibly smart by the effects of these sins, and is the church of Christ among us brought into such a torn and endangered condition by them, so that we are in no small danger of falling all into the hands of the common adversaries? Is so hopeful and chargeable a reformation so far frustrated by these men, and yet must we not open our mouths to tell them of it? May we not tell them of it, when we are bleeding by their hands? Is it tolerable in them to cut and wound, and let out our blood, and is it unpeaceableness in us to tell them that we suffer by them, and to beseech them to repent and to have compassion on the church of Christ? Must we be patient to be ruined by them, and have they not the patience to hear of it? What remedy? Let them be silent that dare; for I profess I dare not. I must tell them that this height of pride hath been in their ancestors a concomitant of schism. A poor drunkard or swearer will more patiently hear of his sin, than many that we hope are godly will of theirs, when once they are tainted with this sin. But godliness was never made to be the credit of men's sins: nor is sin to be let alone, or well thought of, when it can but get into a godly man. Shall we hate them most, whom we are bound to love best? and shall we shew it by forbearing our plain rebuke, and suffering their sin upon them? It must not be: however they take it in their sick distemper, it must not be. No man that erreth doth think that he erreth: these men are confident themselves that they are in the right. But the sober, prudent servants of Christ, that have escaped their disease, do see their error; and England feeleth it, and that at the very

heart: What! must we die by their hand, and our very heart-blood be let out, and the Gospel delivered up to the adversaries, before they will believe that they have done us wrong? or before they will endure to hear us tell them of it? If the ages to come do not say more against the ways of these mistaken men, than I have done in that epistle, and if either mercy or judgment do not bring them one day to think or speak more sharply of themselves, then I must confess myself quite out in my prognostics.

Another sort that will be offended with me, are some of the divines of the prelatical way, whom I had no mind to offend, nor to dishonour: but if necessary duty will do it, what remedy? If they cannot bear with just admonition, I must bear with their impatience. But I must tell them, that I spoke not by hearsay, but from sight and feeling. It is more tolerable in an Englishman to speak such things, that hath seen the sad work that was made in England, the silencing of most godly, able men, the persecution even of the peaceable, the discountenance of godliness, and the insulting scorn of the profanest in the land, than for a foreigner that hath known of this but by hearsay. When we remember what sort of ministers the land abounded with, while the ablest and most diligent men were cast out, (of which matters we cannot be ignorant, if there were no records remaining of their attested accusations,) we must needs take leave to tell the world that the souls of men and the welfare of the church were not so contemptible in our eyes, as that we should have no sense of these things, or should manifest no dislike of them, nor once invite the guilty to repent. And if you think my language harsh, I will transcribe some words of a far wiser man, and leave it to your consideration how far they concern the present case, or justify my free and plain expressions.

Gildas de Excid. Britan. edit. Polid. Virgil. sub fine. ' Quid plura? Fertur vobis in medium Matthiæ in confusionem vestram, exemplum, sanctorum quoq; apostolorum electione, vel judicio Christi, non propria voluntate sortiti, ad quod cæci effecti non videtis, quia longè à meritis ejus distatis, dum in morem et affectum Judæ traditoris sponte corruitis. Apparet ergò eum qui vos sacerdotes sciens ex corde, dicit non esse eximium Christianum. Sanè quod sentio proferam. Posset quidem lenior fieri increpatio, sed

quid prodest vulnus manu tantum palpare, unguentove ungere quod tumore jam vel fœtore sibi horrescens cauterio, et publico ignis medicamine eget? Si tamen ullo modo sanari possit, ægro nequaquam medelam quærente et ob hoc medico longius recedente. O inimici Dei, et non sacerdotes; ô licitatores malorum, et non pontifices; traditores, et non sanctorum apostolorum successores; impugnatores, et non Christi ministri. Auscultâstis quidem secundæ lectionis apostoli Pauli verborum sonum, sed nullo modo monita virtutemque servâstis, et simulachrorum more, quæ non vident, neque audiunt, eodem die alteri astitistis, licet ille tunc et quotidie vobis intonaret. Fratres, fidelis sermo est, et omni acceptione dignus. Ille dixit, fidelem, et dignum, vos ut infidelem et indignum sprevistis. Si quis episcopatum cupit, bonum opus cupit. Episcopatum magnoperè avaritiæ gratiâ, non spiritualis profectus obtentu, cupitis, et bonum opus illi condignum nequaquam habetis. Oportet ergo hujusmodi irreprehensibilem esse: In hoc namque sermone lachrymis magis, quam verbis opus est, ac si dixisset apostolus eum esse omnibus irreprehensibiliorem debere. Unius uxoris virum. Quid ita apud nos, quoque contemnitur, quasi non audiretur vel idem dicere. Et virum uxoris sobrium, prudentem? Quis etiam ex vobis hoc aliquando inesse sibi saltem optavit. Hospitalem? Id forte casu evenerit, popularis auræ potius, quam præcepti gratiâ factum. Non prodest, Domino salvatore ita dicente. Amen dico vobis, receperunt mercedem suam. Ornatum, non vinolentum, non percussorem, sed modestum, non litigiosum, non cupidum? O feralis immutatio, ô horrenda præceptorum cœlestium conculcatio; nonne infatigabiliter ad hæc expugnanda, vel potius obruenda actuum verborumque arma corripitis, pro quibus conservandis, atque firmandis, si necesse fuisset, et pœna ultrò subeunda, et vita ponenda erat? sed videamus et sequentia. Domum suam (inquit) benè regentem, filios habentem, subditos in omni castitate. Ergo imperfecta est patrum castitas, si non item et filiorum accumuletur? Sed quid erit, ubi nec pater, nec filius, mali genitoris exemplo privatus, conspicitur castus? Si quis autem domui suæ præesse nescit, quomodo ecclesiæ Dei diligentiam adhibebit? Hæc sunt verba quæ indubitatis affectibus approbantur. Diaconos similiter pudicos, non bilingues, non vino multo deditos, non turpe lucrum sectantes, habentes ministe-

rium fidei, in conscientia pura. Hi autem probentur primum, et sic ministrent nullum crimen habentes. His nimirum horrescens diu immorari, unum veridice possum dicere. Quin hæc omnia in contrarios actus mutantur, ita ut clerici quod non absque dolore cordis, fateor, impudici, bilingues, ebrii, turpis lucri cupidi, habentes fidem, et ut verius dicam, infidelitatem, in conscientia impura non probati in bono, sed in malo præsciti ministrantes, et innumera crimina habentes, sacro ministerio adsciscantur. Audistis etiam illo die, quo multo dignius, multoque rectius erat, ut ad carcerem vel catastam pœnalem quam ad sacerdotium traheremini domino scitante, quem se esse putarunt discipuli, Petrum respondisse. Tu es Christus filius Dei, eique dominum pro tali confessione, dixisse. Beatus es Simon Barjona, quia caro et sanguis non revelavit tibi, sed pater meus, qui in cœlis est. Ergo Petrus à Deo Patre doctus rectè Christum confitetur. Vos autem moniti à patre vestro diabolo iniquè, salvatorem malis actibus denegatis. Verò sacerdoti dicitur: Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram, ædificabo ecclesiam meam. Vos quidem assimilamini viro stulto, qui ædificavit domum suam, super arenam. Notandum verò est, quòd insipientibus in ædificanda domo, arenarum pendulæ mobilitati Dominus non co-operatur, secundum illud. Fecerunt sibi reges; et non per me. Itidemque quod sequitur eadem sonat dicendo. Et portæ inferi non prævalebunt, ejusque peccata intelliguntur. De vestra quidem exitiabili factura pronunciantur. Venerunt flumina, flaverunt venti, et impegerunt in domum illam, et cecidit, et fuit ruina ejus magna. Petro ejusque successoribus dicit Dominus, et tibi dabo clavis regni cœlorum. Vobis verò; non novi vos, discedite à me, operarii iniquitatis, ut seperati sinistrae partis hædi eatis in ignem æternum. Itemque omni sancto sacerdoti promittitur: Et quæcunque solveris super terram, erunt soluta et in cœlis; et quæcunque ligaveris super terram, erunt ligata et in cœlis. Sed quomodo vos aliquid solvetis, ut sit solutum, et in cœlis, à cœlo ob scelera adempti, et immanium peccatorum funibus compediti? Ut Solomon quoque ait, funiculis peccatorum suorum unusquisque constringitur. Qua ratione aliquid in terra ligabitis, quod supra mundum etiam ligetur, propter vosmetipsos, qui ita ligati iniquitatibus, in hoc mundo tenemini, ut in cœlis ne-

quaquam ascendatis, sed in infausta tartari ergastula non conversi in hac vita ad dominum, decidatis. Nec sibi quisquam sacerdotum de corporis mundi solum conscientia supplaudat, cum eorum quibus præest, si propter ejus imperitiam, seu desidiam, seu adulationem, perierint in die judicii de ejusdem manibus veluti interfectoris animæ exquirantur. Quia nec dulcior mors, quam quæ infertur ab unoquoque homineque malo, alioquin non dixisset Apostolus velut paternum legatum suis successoribus derelinquens. Mundus ego sum ab omnium sanguine, non enim subterfugi, quo minus annuntiarem vobis omne ministerium Dei. Multum namque usu ac frequentia peccatorum inebriati, et incessanter irruentibus vobis scelerum cumulatorum, ac si undis quassati unum veluti post naufragium, in qua ad vivorum terram evadatis, pœnitentiæ tabulam toto animi nisu exquirite, ut avertatur furor Domini à vobis, misericorditer dicentis, Nolo mortem peccatoris, sed ut convertatur et vivat. Ipse omnipotens Deus totius consolationis et misericordiæ paucissimos bonos pastores conservet ab omni malo, et muncipes faciat civitatis Hierusalem cœlestis, hoc est, sanctorum omnium congregationis, Pater, et Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus, cui sit honor, et gloria in secula seculorum. Amen.'

If the English translation of this book (for translated it is long ago) do fall into the hands of the vulgar, they will see what language the British clergy received from one that was neither a censorious railer, nor schismatically self-opinionated.

Perhaps some will say, 'That the matter is not much amended, when in former times we were almost all of a mind; and now we have so many religions that we know not well whether we have any at all.'

Ans. 1. Every different opinion is not another religion. 2. This is the common Popish argument against reformation, as if it were better that men believed nothing 'fide divina,' than inquire after truth, for fear of misbelief: and as if they would have all ungodly, that they might be all of a mind. I am sure that the most of the people in England wherever I came, did make religion, and the reading of the Scripture, or speaking of the way to heaven, the matter of their bitter scorn and reproach. And would you have us all of that mind again, for fear of differences? a charitable wish!—3. If

others run into the other extreme, will that be any excuse to you? Christ's church hath always suffered between profane unbelievers, and heretical dividers, as he suffered himself on the cross between two thieves. And will the sin of one excuse the other?—4. And yet I must say (lest I be impiously blind and ungrateful), that through the great mercy of God, the matter is so far amended, that many hundred drunken, swearing, ignorant, negligent, scandalous ministers are cast out; and we have many humble, godly, painful teachers in a county for a few that we had before. This is so visibly true, that when the godly are feasted, who formerly were almost famished, and beaten for going abroad to beg their bread, you can hardly by all your arguments or rhetoric persuade them that the times are no better with them than they were; though men of another nation may possibly believe you in such reports. I bless God for the change that I see in this county; and among the people, even in my own charge, which is such as will not permit me to believe that the case is as bad with them as formerly it hath been. I say, with Minutius Fœlix, p. 401. (mihi) 'Quid ingrati sumus? quid nobis invidemus? Si veritas divinitatis nostri temporis ætate maturuit. Fruamur nostro bono: Et recti sententiam temperemus: cohibeatur superstitio: impietas expietur: religio servetur.' It is the sinful unhappiness of some men's minds, that they can hardly think well of the best words or ways of those whom they disaffect; and they usually disaffect those that cross them in their corrupt proceedings, and plainly tell them of their faults. They are ready to judge of the reprover's spirit by their own, and to think that all such sharp reproofs proceed from some disaffection to their persons, or partial opposition to the opinions which they hold; and therefore they will seldom regard the reproofs of any but those of their own party, who will seldom deal plainly with them, because they are of their party. But plain-dealers are always approved in the end; and the time is at hand when you shall confess, that those were your truest friends. He that will deal plainly against your sins in uprightness and honesty, will deal as plainly for you against the sins of any that would injure you: for he speaks not against sin, because it is *yours*, but because it is *sin*. It is an observable passage that is re-

ported by many, and printed by one, how the late king Charles, who by the bishop's instigation had kept Mr. Prynne so long in prison, and twice cropt his ears, for writing against their masks and plays, and the high and hard proceedings of the prelates, when he read his notable, voluminous speech for an acceptance of the King's concessions, and an agreement with him thereupon, did, not long before his death, deliver the book to a friend that stood by him, saying, 'Take this book; I give it thee as a legacy; and believe it, this gentleman is the Cato of the age.' The time will come when plain dealing will have a better construction than it hath, while prejudice doth turn the heart against it.

I shall stand no longer on the apologetical part: I think the foregoing objections being answered, there is no great need of more of this. The title of the book itself is apologetical, which if I tell you not, I may well expect that some of my old ingenuous interpreters should put another sense upon it. I pretend not to the sapience of *Gildas*, nor to the sanctity of *Salvian*, as to the degree; but by their names I offer you an excuse for plain dealing. If it was used in a much greater measure by men so wise and holy as these, why should it in a lower measure be disallowed in another? At least from hence I have this encouragement, that the plain dealing of *Gildas* and *Salvian* being so much approved by us now they are dead, how much soever they might be despised or hated while they were living, by them whom they did reprove, at the worst I may expect some such success in times to come.

But my principal business is yet behind. I must now take the boldness, brethren, to become your monitor, concerning some of the necessary duties of which I have spoken in the ensuing discourse. If any of you should charge me with arrogancy or immodesty, as if hereby I accused you of negligence, or judged myself sufficient to admonish you; I crave your candid interpretation of my boldness, assuring you that I obey not the counsel of my flesh herein, but displease myself as much as some of you; and had rather have the ease and peace of silence, if it would stand with duty and the church's good. But it is the mere necessity of the souls of men, and my desire of their salvation, and the prosperity of the church, which forceth me to

this arrogancy and immodesty, if so it must be called. For who that hath a tongue can be silent, when it is for the honour of God, the welfare of his church, and the everlasting happiness of so many persons?

And the *first* and main matter which I have to propound to you is, Whether it be not the unquestionable duty of the generality of ministers, in these three nations, to set themselves presently to the work of catechising, and personal instructing all that are to be taught by them, who will be persuaded to submit thereunto? I need not here stand to prove it, having sufficiently done it in the following discourse. Can you think that holy wisdom will gainsay it? Will zeal for God, will delight in his service, or love to the souls of men gainsay it? (1.) That the people must be taught the principles of religion, and matters of greatest necessity to salvation, is past doubt among us. (2.) And that they must be taught it in the most edifying advantageous way, I hope we are agreed. (3.) And that personal conference, and examination, and instruction, hath many excellent advantages for their good, is beyond dispute, and afterward manifested. (4.) As also that personal instruction is commended to us by Scripture, and the practices of the servants of Christ, and approved by the godly of all ages, so far as I can find, without contradiction. (5.) It is past all doubt that we should perform this great duty to all the people, or to as many as we can: for our love and care of their souls must extend to all. If there be a thousand or five hundred ignorant people in your parish, it is a poor discharge of your duty now and then occasionally to speak to some few of them, and let the rest alone in their ignorance, if you are able to afford them help. (6.) And it is as certain that so great a work as this is, should take up a considerable part of our time. (7.) And as certain is it, that all duties should be done in order, as far as may be, and therefore should have their appointed times. And if we are agreed to practise according to these commonly acknowledged truths, we need not differ upon any doubtful circumstances.

Object. 'We teach them in public; and how then are we bound to teach them man by man besides?'

Ans. You pray for them in public: must you not also pray for them in private? Paul taught every man, and exhorted every man, and that both publicly, and from house to

house, night and day with tears. The necessity and benefits afterward mentioned prove it to be your duty. But what need we add more, when experience speaks so loud? I am daily forced to admire how lamentably ignorant many of our people are, that have seemed diligent hearers of me these ten or twelve years, while I spoke as plainly as I was able to speak! Some know not that each person in the Trinity is God; nor that Christ is God and man; nor that he took his human nature into heaven; nor many the like necessary principles of our faith. Yea, some that come constantly to private meetings are found grossly ignorant; whereas in one hour's familiar instruction of them in private, they seem to understand more, and better entertain it, than they did in all their lives before.

Object. 'But what obligation lieth on us to tie ourselves to certain days for the performance of this work?'

Answ. This is like the libertine's plea against family prayer. They ask, where are we bound to pray morning and evening? Doth not the nature and end of the duty plainly tell you that an appointed time conduceth to the orderly successful performance of it? How can people tell when to come if the time be not made known? You will have a fixed day for a Lecture, because people cannot else tell when to come without a particular notice for each day: and it is as necessary here, because this must be a constant duty, as well as that.

Object. 'But we have many other businesses that sometimes may interrupt the course.'

Answ. Weightier business may put by our preaching, even on the Lord's-day, but we must not therefore neglect our constant observance ordinarily of that day: and so it is here. If you have so much greater business, that you cannot ordinarily have time to do the ministerial work, you should not undertake the office: for ministers are men 'separated to the Gospel of Christ, and must give themselves wholly to these things.'

Object. 'All the parish are not the church, nor do I take the pastoral charge of them, and therefore I am not satisfied that I am bound to take this pains with them.'

Answ. I will pass by the question, whether all the parish be to be taken for your church; because in some places it is so, and in others not. But let the negative be supposed:

Yet, (1.) The common maintenance which most receive, is for teaching the whole parish ; though you be not obliged to take them all for a church. (2.) What need we look for a stronger obligation, than the common bond that lieth on all Christians, to further the work of men's salvation, and the good of the church, and the honour of God, to the utmost of their power ; together with the common bond that is on all ministers, to further these ends by ministerial teaching, to the utmost of their power ? Is it a work so good, and apparently conducing to so great benefits to the souls of men, and yet can you perceive no obligation to the doing of it ?

Object. ' But why may not occasional conference and instructions serve the turn ?'

Ans. I partly know what occasional conferences are, compared to this duty, having tried both. Will it satisfy you to deal with one person of twenty or forty, or an hundred, and to pass by all the rest ? Occasional conferences fall out seldom, and but with few ; and (which is worst of all) are seldom managed so thoroughly as these must be. When I speak to a man that cometh to me purposely on that business, he will better give me leave to examine him, and deal closely with him, than when it falls in on the by : and most occasional conferences fall out before others, where plain dealing will not be taken so well. But so much is said afterward to these and several other objections, that I shall add no more here.

I do now, in the behalf of Christ, and for the sake of his church and the immortal souls of men, beseech all the faithful ministers of Christ, that they will presently and effectually fall upon this work. Combine for an unanimous performance of it, that it may more easily procure the submission of your people. But if there should be found any so blind or vile as to oppose it, or dissent, God forbid that other ministers should because of that, forbear their duties. I am far from presuming to prescribe you rules or forms, or so much as to move you to tread in our steps, in any circumstances where a difference is tolerable, or to use the same catechism or exhortation as we do : only fall presently and closely to the work. If there should be any of so proud or malicious a mind, as to withdraw from so great a duty, because they would not seem to be our followers, or drawn

to it by us, as they would have approved it, if it had risen from themselves ; I advise such, as they love their everlasting peace, to make out to Christ for a cure of such cankered minds ; and let them know that this duty hath its rise neither from them nor us, but from the Lord ; and is generally approved by his church : and for my part, let them, and spare not, tread me in the dirt, and let me be as vile in their eyes as they please, so they will but hearken to God and reason, and fall upon the work, that our hopes of a more common salvation of men, and of a true reformation of the church may be revived. I must confess that I find by some experience that this is the work that must reform indeed ; that must expel our common prevailing ignorance ; that must bow the stubborn hearts of men ; that must answer their vain objections, and take off their prejudice ; that must reconcile their hearts to faithful ministers, and help on the success of our public preaching ; and must make true godliness a commoner thing, through the grace of God, which worketh by means. I find that we never took the right course to demolish the kingdom of darkness till now. I wonder at myself, how I was kept off from so clear and excellent a duty so long. But I doubt not but other men's case is as mine was. I was long convinced of it, but my apprehensions of the difficulties were too great, and my apprehensions of the duty too small ; and so I was hindered long from the performance. I thought that the people would but have scorned it, and none but a few that had least need, would have submitted to it. The thing seemed strange, and I stayed till the people were better prepared ; and I thought my strength would never go through with it, having so great burdens on me before ; and thus I was long detained in delays, which I beseech the Lord of mercy to forgive. Whereas, upon trial, I find the difficulties almost nothing, save only through my extraordinary bodily weakness, to that which I imagined ; and I find the benefits and comforts of the work to be such, as that I profess, I would not wish that I had forborne it for all the riches in the world (as for myself). We spend Monday and Tuesday from morning to almost night in the work ; besides a chapelry, catechised by another assistant, taking about fifteen or sixteen Families in a week, that we may go through the parish, which hath above eight hundred Families, in a year ; and I cannot

say yet, that one family hath refused to come to me, nor but few persons excused themselves and shifted it off. And I find more outward signs of success with most that come, than of all my public preaching to them. If you say, it is not so in most places: I answer, 1. I wish that be not much long of ourselves. 2. If some refuse your help, that will not excuse you for not affording it to them that would accept it. If you ask me what course I take for order and expedition; I have after told you: In a word, at the delivery of the catechisms, I take a catalogue of the persons of understanding in the parish; and the clerk goeth a week before to every family to tell them when to come, and at what hour; (one family at eight o'clock, the next at nine, and the next at ten, &c.) And I am forced by the number to deal with a whole family at once; but admit not any of another to be present (ordinarily).

Brethren, do I now invite you to this work without God, without the consent of all antiquity, without the consent of the reformed divines; or without the conviction of your own consciences? See what our late Assembly speak occasionally, in the Directory, about the Visitation of the Sick. 'It is the duty of the minister, not only to teach the people committed to his charge in public, but *privately* and *particularly* to admonish, exhort, reprove and comfort them upon all seasonable occasions, so far as his time, strength, and personal safety will permit. He is to admonish them in time of health to prepare for death; and for that purpose, they are often to confer with their minister about the state of their souls, &c.'—Read this over again, and consider it. Harken to God if you would have peace with God: hearken to conscience if you would have peace of conscience. I am resolved to deal plainly with you, if I displease you. It is an unlikely thing, that there should be a heart that is sincerely devoted to God in the breast of that man, that after advertisements and exhortations, will not resolve on so clear and great a duty as this is. As it is with our people in hearing the Word, so it is with us in teaching. An upright heart is an effectual persuader of them to attend on God in the use of his ordinances; and an upright heart will as effectually persuade a minister to his duty: as a good stomach needs no arguments to draw it to a feast, nor will easily by any arguments be taken off: and as a

child will love and obey his parents, though he could not answer a sophister that would persuade him to hate them; so I cannot conceive that he that hath one spark of saving grace, and so hath that love to God, and delight to do his will, which is in all the sanctified, should possibly be drawn to contradict or refuse such a work as this; except under the power of such a temptation as Peter was when he denied Christ, or when he dissuaded him from suffering, and heard an half excommunication, "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (Matt. xvi. 22, 23.)

You have put your hand to the plough of God; you are doubly sanctified and devoted to him, as Christians, and pastors; and dare you after this draw back and refuse his work? You see the work of reformation at a stand; and you are engaged by many obligations to promote it; and dare you now neglect those means by which it must be done? Will you shew your faces in a Christian congregation, as ministers of the Gospel, and there pray for a reformation; and pray for the conversion and salvation of your hearers, and the prosperity of the church; and when you have done, refuse to use means by which it must be done? I know that carnal wit will never want words and show of reason to gainsay that truth and duty which it abhors; it is easier now to cavil against duty than perform it; but stay the end before you pass your final judgment. Can you possibly make yourselves believe that you should have a comfortable review of these neglects, or make a comfortable account of them unto God? I dare prognosticate, from the knowledge of the nature of grace, that all the godly ministers in England will make conscience of this duty, and address themselves to it; except those that by some extraordinary accident are disabled, or those that are under such temptations as aforesaid. I do not hopelessly persuade you to it; but take it for granted it will be done: and if any lazy, or jealous, or malicious hypocrites, do cavil against it, or hold off, the rest will not do so; but they will take the opportunity, and not resist the warnings of the Lord. And God will uncase the hypocrites ere long, and make them know to their sorrow, what it was to play fast and loose with God. Woe to them, when they must be accountable for the blood of souls! The reasons which satisfy them here

against duty, will then be manifested to be the effects of their folly, and to have proceeded radically from their corrupted wills and carnal interest. And (unless they be desperately blinded and seared to the death) their consciences will not own those reasons at a dying-hour, which now they seem to own. They shall feel to their sorrow, that there is not that comfort to be had for a departing soul, in the review of such neglected duty, as there is to them that have wholly devoted themselves to the service of the Lord. I am sure my arguments for this duty will appear strongest at the last, whatever they do now. And again I say, I hope the time is even at hand, when it shall be as great a shame to a minister to neglect the private instructing and oversight of the flock, as it hath been, to be a seldom preacher; for which men are now justly sequestered and ejected. And if God have not so great a quarrel with us, as tendeth to a removal of the Gospel, or at least to the blasting of its prosperity and success in the desired reformation, I am confident that this will shortly be. And if these lazy, worldly hypocrites were but quickened to their duty by a sequestering committee; you should see them stir more zealously than all arguments fetched from God and Scripture, from the reward or punishment, or from the necessity and benefits of the work can persuade them to do. For even now, these wretched men, while they pretend themselves the servants of Christ, and are asking, What authority we have for this work? And if we could but shew them a command from the Lord Protector or Council, it would answer all their scruples, and put the business beyond dispute; as if they had a design to confirm the accusation of the Papists, that their ministry only is divine, and ours dependeth on the will of men. Well! for those godly, zealous ministers of Christ, that labour in sincerity, and denying their worldly interest and ease, do wholly devote themselves to God, I am confident there needs not much persuasion. There is somewhat within that will presently carry them to the work: and for the rest, let them censure this warning as subtly as they can, they shall not hinder it from rising up against them in judgment, unless it be by true repentance and reformation.

And let me speak one word of this to you that are my dear fellow-labourers in this county, who have engaged yourselves to be faithful in this work. It is your honour to lead

in sacred resolutions and agreements: but if any of you should be unfaithful in the performance, it will be your double dishonour. Review your subscribed Agreement, and see that you perform it with diligence and constancy. You have begun a happy work; such as will do more to the welfare of the church than many that the world doth make a greater stir about. God forbid now, that imprudence or negligence should frustrate all. For the generality of you, I do not much fear it; having so much experience of your fidelity in the other parts of your office. And if there should be any found among you, that will shuffle over the work, and deal unfaithfully in this and other parts of your office, I take it for no just cause of reproach to us, that we accept of your subscription, when you offer to join with us. For Catechising is a work not proper only to a minister; and we cannot forbid any to engage themselves to their unquestionable duty: but in our association for Discipline we must be somewhat more scrupulous, with whom we join. I earnestly beseech you all in the name of God, and for the sake of your people's souls, that you will not slightly slubber over this work; but do it vigorously and with all your might; and make it your great and serious business: much judgment is required for the managing of it. Study therefore how to do it beforehand, as you study for your sermons. I remember how earnest I was with some of the last parliament, to have had them settle catechists in our assemblies; but truly I am not sorry that it took no effect, unless for a few of the larger congregations. For I perceive that all the life of the work under God, doth lie in the prudent, effectual management of searching men's hearts, and setting home the saving truths: and the ablest minister is weak enough for this, and few of inferior place or parts would be found competent. For I fear nothing more, than that many ministers that preach well, will be found too unmeet for this work; especially to manage it with old, ignorant, dead-hearted sinners: and indeed if the ministers be not revered by the people, they will rather slight them and contest with them, than humbly learn and submit; how much more would they do so by inferior men? Seeing then the work is cast upon us, and it is we that must do it, or else it must be undone; let us be up and doing with all our might, and the Lord will be with us. I can tell you one thing for your encouragement: It is a

work that the enemies of the church and ministry do exceedingly vex at, and hate, and fear more than any thing that yet we have undertaken. I perceive the signs of the Papists' indignation against it. And methinks it hath the most notable character of a work extraordinarily and unquestionably good: for they storm at it, and yet they have nothing to say against it. They cannot blame it, and yet they hate and fear it, and would fain undermine it, if they knew how. You know how many false rumours have been spread abroad this country, to deter the people from it; as that the Lord Protector and Council were against it: that the Subscribers were to be ejected: that the Agreement was to be publicly burnt, &c. And when we have searched after the authors, we can drive it no higher than the Quakers, the Papists' emissaries; from whom we may easily know their minds. And yet when a Papist speaks openly as a Papist, some of them have said that it is a good work; but that it wants authority, and is done by those that are not called to it: forsooth, because we have not the authority of their pope or prelates: and some that should be more sober have used the same language; as if they would rather have thousands and millions of souls neglected, than have them so much as catechised and instructed without commission from a prelate. Yea, and some that differ from us about infant baptism, I understand repine at it; and say that we will hereby insinuate ourselves into the people, and hinder them from receiving the truth. A sad case, that any that seem to have the fear of God should have so true a character of a partial, dividing, and siding mind; as to grudge at the propagation of Christianity itself, and the common truths which we are all agreed in, for fear lest it should hinder the propagation of their opinions. The common cause of Christianity, must give place to the cause of these lower controverted points; and they grudge us our very labour and suffering for the common work, though there be nothing in it which meddleth with them, or which they are able with any show of reason to gainsay.

I beseech you, brethren, let all this, and the many motives that I have after given you, persuade you to greater diligence herein! When you are speaking to your people, do it with the greatest prudence and seriousness, and be as earnest with them as for life or death; and follow it as close as you do your public exhortations in the pulpit. I profess

again, it is to me the most comfortable work, except public preaching (for there I speak to more, though yet with less advantage to each one), that ever I yet did set my hand to ; and I doubt not but you will find it so to you, if you faithfully perform it.

My *second* request to the reverend ministers in these nations is, that at last they would, without any more delay, unanimously set themselves to the practice of those parts of Christian discipline, which are unquestionably necessary, and part of their work. It is a sad case that good men under so much liberty, should settle themselves so long in the constant neglect of so great a duty. The common cry is, *Our people are not ready for it ; they will not bear it.* But is not the meaning, that *you will not bear* the trouble and hatred which it will occasion ? If indeed you proclaim our churches incapable of the order and government of Christ ; what do you but give up the cause to them that withdraw from them, and encourage men to look out for better societies where that discipline may be had ? For though preaching and sacraments may be omitted in some cases, till a fitter season, and accordingly so may discipline be ; yet is it a hard case to settle in a constant neglect, for so many years together as we have done, unless there were a flat impossibility of the work : and if it were so, because of our incapable materials, it would plainly call us to alter our constitution, that the matter may be capable. I have spoke plainly afterward to you of this, which I hope you will bear, and conscientiously consider of. I now only beseech you that would make a comfortable account to the chief Shepherd, and would not be found unfaithful in the house of God, that you do not wilfully or negligently delay it, as if it were a needless thing ; nor shrink from the duty because of trouble to the flesh that doth attend it : for as that is too sad a sign of hypocrisy, so the costliest duties are usually the most comfortable ; and be sure that Christ will bear the cost. I could here produce a heap of testimonies, of fathers and reformed divines, that inculcate this duty with great importunity. I shall only now give you the words of two of the most godly, laborious, judicious divines, that ever the church of Christ had since the days of the Apostles.

Calvin. Institut. lib. 4. cap. xii. sec. 1, 2. “Sed quia nonnulli in odium disciplinæ ab ipso quoque, nomine abhorrent,

hi sic habeant : Si nulla societas, imò nulla domus quæ vel modicam familiam habeat, contineri in recto statu sine disciplina potest : Eam esse multo magis necessariam in Ecclesia, cujus statum quàm ordinatissimum esse decet. Proinde quemadmodum salvifica Christi doctrina anima est Ecclesiæ, ita illic disciplina pro nervis est : qua fit ut membra corporis, suo quodque loco inter se cohæreant. Quamobrem quicunque vel sublatam disciplinam cupiunt, vel ejus impediunt restitutionem, sive hoc faciant data operâ, sive per incogitantiam, Ecclesiæ certè extremam dissipationem quærunt. Quid enim futurum est, si unicuique liceat quod libuerit ? Atqui id fieret nisi ad doctrinæ prædicationem accederent privatæ monitiones, correctiones, et alia ejusmodi adminicula quæ doctrinam sustinent et otiosam esse non sinunt. Disciplina igitur veluti frænum est, quo retineantur et dumentur qui adversus Christi doctrinam ferociunt : vel tanquam stimulus quo excitentur parum voluntarii : interdum etiam velut paterna ferula, qua clementer et pro Spiritus Christi mansuetudine castigentur, qui gravius lapsi sunt. Quum ergo jam imminere cernamus initia quædam horrendæ in Ecclesia vastitatis, ex eo quòd nulla est cura, nec ratio continendi populi, ipsa necessitas clamat remedio opus esse. Porrò hoc unicum remedium est quod et Christus præcipit, et semper usitatum inter pios fuit. 2. Primum disciplinæ fundamentum est, ut privatæ monitiones locum habeant : hoc est, si quis officium sponte non faciat aut insolenter se gerat, aut minus honestè vivat, aut aliquid admiserit reprehensione dignum, ut patiat se moneri : atque ut quisque fratrem suum, dum res postulabit, monere studeat. Præsertim verò in hoc advigilent Pastores ac Presbyteri, quorum partes sunt non modò concionari ad populum, sed per singulas domos monere et exhortari, sicubi universali doctrina non satis profecerint : quemadmodum docet Paulus, quum refert se docuisse privatim et per domos : et se mundum à sanguine omnium attestatur, quia non cessaverit cum lachrymis nocte et die monere unumquemque." See the rest. And sec. 4, he adds of the necessity ; " Sine hoc disciplinæ vinculo qui diu stare posse Ecclesias confidunt, opinione fallantur : nisi fortè cedere impunè possimus eo adminiculo, quod Dominus fore nobis necessarium providit." Et sec. 5, " Atque hîc quoque, habenda est Cœnæ Dominicæ ratio, ne promiscua exhibitione profanetur. Verissimum est enim eum, cui commissæ est dis-

pensatio, si sciens ac volens indignum admiserit quem repellere jure poterat, proinde reum esse sacrilegii acsi corpus Domini canibus prostituerit.”

Hier. Zanchius de Ecclesia, vol. 3. fo. 123, 124. ‘(Disciplina) est actio qua Ecclesia, secundum facultatem sibi à Christo traditam fideles suos non solum publicè, sed etiam privatim, tam in vero Dei cultu quam in bonis moribus, idque tum doctrina, tum correctionibus, tum Ecclesiasticis pœnis et censuris, tum etiam si opus sit excommunicationibus instituit et institutos retinet.’ Fol. 124. ‘Primo habet privatam doctrinam. Habet enim Ecclesia potestatem, si publica doctrina in pùblico Templo non sufficiat, privatas fidelium domos ingrediendi; atque ibi eos privatim docendi, ac in vera doctrina ac religione Christiana instituendi: et fideles pati debent ut pastor suas ædes ingrediatur, et eos privatim instituat. Hujus exemplum est, in Acts xx. &c. Idem fecerunt reliqui Apostoli. 2. Habet privatas admonitiones, correctiones, objurgationes, &c.’ This is for private teaching: Now for the Sacrament, hear what he saith, *ibid.* fol. 79. Obj. ‘Manebimus in Ecclesia, audiemus verbum, &c. sed qui possumus in Cœnâ communionem vobiscum habere, cum ad eam admittantur multi impuri, ebrii, avari, &c. Resp. 1. Quantum ad hos peccatores, eos intelligi posse bifariam; vel qui ante fuerunt ebrii, &c. Sed postea resipuerunt. Hos dicimus secundum verbum Domini non esse excludendos à mensa Domini, quandoquidem verâ penitentiâ et fide præditi sunt: vel eos qui etiamnum ebrietati student, aliisque vitiis, et talis sine pœnitentiâ et fide accedunt: hos dicimus simpliciter non esse admittendos. Quod autem admittantur plerumque hoc contingere potest bifariam: vel ex ignorantia Ministrorum, eò quod non agnoverint tales esse, quales sunt: Et hanc certè ignorantiam, non probamus, quoniam debet minister agnoscere, qualesnam sint illi quibus cœnam Domini administrat: quod si ignorat, non potest non accusari supinæ et reprehendæ negligentiae, &c. Aut cum sint omnibus noti qualesnam sint, non student tamen eos arcere præ timore, vel aliquo alio humano respectu. Hoc damnamus in Ministro vitium timiditatis. Debet enim minister Christi esse cordatissimus et heroicus. Sed hic non est spectandum quid unus aut alter vilis minister agat (mark the title) sed quæ sit Ecclesiæ institutio, quæque communis in

omnibus Ecclesiis consuetudo : in omnibus autem Ecclesiis nostris antequam Cœna ministretur, omnibus hujusmodi, interdicitur, &c. Et certo magnum est probum, quod inter filios Dei locum habeant et porci et canes : Multò verò magis, si illis prostituuntur Sacro-sancta cœnæ Dominicæ symbola, &c. Quare ecclesiæ Christi non debent hujusmodi sceleratos in sinu suo ferre, nec ad Sacrum cœnam dignos simul et indignos promiscuè admittere : id quod plerumque sit in Ecclesiis nostris :” (How many were then the ‘vile ministri!’)

But the principal is behind, of the Necessity of Discipline : and I desire both Magistrates and Ministers, into whose hands these lines shall fall, to read and consider it.

Ibid. fol. 134, 135. “Videant igitur Principes et Magistratus qui hanc disciplinam in Ecclesiam restitutam, nolunt, quid agant. Hæc instituta est à Christo, ut perpetuo in Ecclesia tanquam singularis thesaurus conservetur : ergo qui eam exulare volunt, sciant se velle Christum exulare. Hæc pars est evangelii Jesu Christi. Ergo qui hanc restitutam nolunt, sciant se nolle evangelium Christi, sicut debet, restitutum. Quomodo igitur gloriamur restitutum esse Evangelium in Ecclesiis nostris, si hanc eamque non postremam partem Evangelii restitutam nolumus ? Hæc vitia corriguntur ; virtutes promoventur : Ergo qui hanc disciplinam restitutam nolunt, quomodo audent dicere se vitia odisse, virtutum vero amantes esse, pietatis promotores, impietatis osores. Hæc conversatur et regitur Ecclesia, singulæque Ecclesiæ membra sua quæque loco cohærent : ergò quomodo qui hanc expulsam, volunt, dicunt se velle Christi Ecclesiam, bene rectam siquando sine hac bene regi non potest. Si nulla domus, nullum opidum ; nulla urbs, nulla respublica, nullum regnum, imò ne exiguus quidem ludus literarius, sinè disciplina regi potest, quomodo poterit Ecclesia ?” I would magistrates would read the rest, which is purposely to them.

Et fol. 135. “At timetur seditio et tumultus. Resp. ergo neque Evangelium est prædicandum, &c. Quid : Annon vident principes et magistratus nostri quantum malum in Ecclesia oriatur, et intus et foris ex neglectu contemptive hujus disciplinæ ? Foris nulla res est, quæ magis Papistas et alios, arceat, vel saltem retrudet amplectendo Evangelio, atque hæc disciplinæ Ecclesiasticæ destitutio, quæ est in Ecclesiis

nostris. Intus, nihil quod magis alat vitia, hæresis, &c. Annon vident Ecclesias suas principes plenas sectis hæreticorum, et impurorum hominum? Ad has confluit omne genus hominum fanaticorum, impurorum, &c. tanquam ad asylum. Quare? Quia ibi nulla disciplina.

“Sciunt ergo Principes, et quicunque illi sint qui disciplinam Ecclesiasticam in Ecclesiis restitutam nolunt, sed ei adversantur, eamque proscribunt, se Christo adversari: Qui Ministros impediunt ne eam exerceant, se Christum et Deum impedire, ne sua fungantur potestate. Quid enim agunt Ministri cum excommunicant? Pronunciant sententiam Domini. Aitenim Christus: Quicquid ligaveritis in terris, &c. Quid igitur agunt qui impediunt Ecclesiam ne sententiam Domini pronunciet? Peccant contra Christum, et rei sunt læsæ Divinæ Majestatis. Annon reus esset læsæ majestatis Cæsareæ, si quis ejus judicem ne sententiam Cæsaris pronunciet impediatur? Videant igitur quid agant. Hactenus Christus rexit Ecclesiam suam hac disciplinâ; et ipsi Principes, imo et ministri aliquot, nolunt eam sic regi? Viderint ipsi. Pronuncio, proclamo, protestor, eos peccare, qui cum possint et debeant eam restituere, non restitunt.”

I hope both magistrates and ministers that are guilty, will give me leave to say the like with Zanchy, if not to call them traitors against the majesty of God, that hinder discipline, and adversaries to Christ, yet at least to pronounce, proclaim, protest, that they sin against God, who set it not up when they may and ought. But what if the magistrate will not help us? Nay, what if he were against it? So he was for about three hundred years, when discipline was exercised in the primitive church: To this Zanchy adds, *ib.* “Ministri Ecclesiæ quantum per consensum et pacem Ecclesiæ licet hanc disciplinam exercere debetis. Hanc enim potestatem vobis dedit Dominus, neque quispiam auferre eam potest: nec contenti esse debetis ut doceatis quid agendum, quid fugiendum sit, utut quisque pro sua libidine vivat nihil curantes, sed urgenda disciplina. vid. August. de fide et operib. c. 4. Obj. At impedimur per Magistratum. Resp. Tunc illi significate quam male agat, &c.” Read the rest of the solid advice that Calvin and Zanchy in the forecited places, do give both to ministers and people, where discipline is wanting.

The great objection that seemeth to hinder some from this work is, because we are not agreed yet, who it is that

must do it? Whether only a prelate, or whether a presbytery, or a single pastor, or the people?

Ans. Let so much be exercised as is out of doubt. 1. It is granted that a single pastor may expound and apply the word of God: he may rebuke a notorious sinner by name. He may make known to the church that God hath commanded them, with such a one, no not to eat! And require them to obey this command, &c. I shall say no more of this now, than to cite the words of two learned, godly, moderate divines, impartial in this cause. The one is Mr. Lyford a maintainer of Episcopacy, in his *Legacy of Admission to the Lord's-supper*; who, page 55, saith,

“*Quest.* 1. In which of the ministers is this power placed?”

“*Ans.* Every minister hath the power of all Christ's ordinances to dispense the same in that congregation or flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made him overseer; yet with this difference: he may preach the word, baptize, and administer the holy supper alone of himself without the assistance or consent of the people: But not excommunicate alone (*he means not without the people, though of that more must be said*); because excommunication doth presuppose an offence to the congregation, a conviction and proof of that offence, and witnesses of the party's obstinacy: and therefore hereunto is required the action of more than one, &c. Excommunication compriseth several acts: admonition, private, public: The last act is, the casting out of a wicked, obstinate person from the society of the faithful. (1.) By the authority of Christ. (2.) Dispensed and executed by the ministers of the Gospel. (3.) With the assistance and consent of the congregation, &c. 2. If you ask by whose office and ministry this sentence is denounced? I answer, by the ministers of the Gospel; we bind and loose doctrinally, in our preaching peace to the godly, and curses to the wicked: but in excommunication, we denounce the wrath of God against this or that particular person (thou art the man! thou hast no part with us): and that not only declaratively, but judicially. It is like the sentence of a judge on the bench, &c. 3. If you ask whether this be done by the minister alone? I answer no; it must be done by the assistance and consent of the congregation. (1 Cor. v. 4.) Excommunication must not be done in a corner, by the Chancellor and his Register, &c. But whosoever doth, by

his offences, lose his right to the holy things of God, he must lose it in the face of the congregation ; and that after proofs and allegations, as is aforesaid : the people hear and see the offence, complain of it, and are grieved at his society with them, and judge him worthy to be cast out. This concurrence and consent being supposed, every minister is ‘*Episcopus gregis*,’ a bishop in his own parish, (N. B.) “ To all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *ἑπισκόπους*, *overseers*.” (Acts xx. 28.) And “ Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God.” (Heb. xiii. 17.) Wherenote, (1.) That they who preach the word of God, must rule and govern the church ; and every preacher is a ruler, unto whom the people must submit. (ver. 17.) Besides, every minister is vested with this authority at his ordination : ‘ Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven : Whose sins thou dost retain, &c.’ (2.) Every minister is vested with this authority by the laws of this land. The words of the rubric for the Administration of the Lord’s-supper, which do enable us thereto, are these : ‘ If any of those which intend to be partakers of the holy Communion, be an open, notorious, evil liver, so that the congregation by him is offended, or have done wrong to his neighbours by word or deed, the curate having knowledge thereof, shall call him, and advertise him in anywise not to come to the Lord’s table, until he have openly declared himself to be truly repented and amended of his former naughty life ; that the congregation may thereby be satisfied, which afore was offended ; and that he have recompensed the parties whom he hath done wrong to ; or at least, declare himself to be in full purpose so to do as soon as he conveniently may.’ Besides this, our authority in this particular, is confirmed by an ordinance of the Lords and Commons in Parliament, &c.” So far Mr. Lyford’s words.

The other is Mr. Thomas Ball, of Northampton, in his late book for the Ministry ; where, (part iii. cap. 4.) he bringeth many arguments to prove it the minister’s duty to exercise discipline as well as to preach ; and the seventh argument is this ; “ What was given by the bishops unto such ministers as they ordained, and laid their hands upon, should not be grudged or denied them by any body : for they were never accounted lavish or over liberal to them, especially in

point of jurisdiction, that was always a very tender point, and had a guard and sentry always on it. For conceiving themselves the sole possessors of it, they were not willing to admit partners. Whatever they indulged in other points, as Pharaoh to Joseph, 'Only in the throne I will be greater than thou;' yet bishops granted to all that they ordained presbyters, the use and exercise of discipline as well as doctrine; as appears in the book of Ordering Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, whereof the interrogatories propounded to the party to be ordained is, 'Will you then give your faithful diligence always so to minister the doctrine and sacraments, and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this realm hath received the same according to the commandments of God, so that you may teach the people committed to your care and charge, with all diligence to keep and observe the same:' Which a reverend and learned brother not observing, would confine all jurisdiction to diocesan bishops, &c. Arg. 8. What is granted and allowed to ministers, by the laws and customs of this nation, cannot reasonably be denied: for the laws of England have never favoured usurpation in the Clergy, &c. But the laws and customs of this nation allow to the ministers of England the use and exercise of discipline as well as doctrine; for such of them as have parsonages or rectories, are in all processes and proceedings called Rectors, &c."

2. And as to the points of the people's interest, the moderate seem to differ but in words. Some say the people are to govern by vote: I confess if this were understood as it is spoken, according to the proper sense of the words, and practised accordingly, it were contrary to the express command of Scripture, which command the elders to rule well, and the people to obey them as their rulers, in the Lord: and it seems to me to be destructive to the being of a political church, whose constitutive parts are the *ruling* and the *ruled* parts; as every school consisteth of master and scholars, and every commonwealth of the 'pars imperans, et pars subdita:' and therefore those that rigidly stick to this, do cast out themselves from all particular political churches' communion of Christ's institution. (Which because I have formerly said, or somewhat to that purpose, a late nameless writer makes me cruel to his party, while I seem for them,

and so self-contradicting: as if it were cruelty to tell a brother of his sin, and not to leave it on him; or, as if I understood not myself, because he understands me not!) But I perceive the moderate mean not any such things as these words, in their proper sense, import. They only would have the church ruled as a free people, (as from unjust impositions,) and in a due subordination to Christ. And we are all agreed that the pastors have the ‘judicium directionis,’ the teaching, directing power, by office; and that the people have ‘judicium discretionis;’ and must try his directions, and not obey them when they lead to sin; and therefore we cannot expect that the people should execute any of our directions, except their judgment lead them to execute them. (Though if their judgment be wrong, God requireth them to rectify it.) And as for the *judicial decisive power*, about which there is so great contending, in the strictest sense, it is the prerogative of Christ, and belongeth to neither of them: for only Christ is the proper lawgiver and judge of the church, whose law and judgment is absolute, of itself determinative, and not subjected to our trial of its equity or obligation. So that we must as much conclude, that there is no final judge of controversies in a particular church, as we do against the Papists; that there is none in the Church in general. And therefore the church’s judicial decisive power is but improperly such, reducible to the former; which seeing we are agreed in, we are as far in sense agreed in this. A pastor is judge, as a physician in an hospital, or as Plato, or Zeno was in his school, or any tutor in a college of voluntary students. For any more, it belongeth to Christ, and to the magistrate. Why then do we stand quarrelling about the name? One saith, *the people have a power of liberty, and the ministers only the power of authority*. And what is this more than we yield them? viz. That the guiding authority being only in the guides, and the people commanded to obey them in a due subordination to Christ, there is a liberty belonging to all the saints; from any other kind of ministerial rule, that is, from a ‘*sic volo, sic jubeo,*’ a rule without divine authority: and therefore the people must first try and judge, whether the direction be according to God, and so obey: and this in church-censures as well as in other cases. So that, (1.) As the people ought not to dissent or disobey their guides, unless they lead them to sin: (and therefore must see a danger of sin before they suspend

obedience :) So, (2.) The guides cannot bring the people to execute their censures or directions, but by procuring their consent. And therefore though he must do his duty, and may pass his directive censure though they dissent, and ministerially require them in the name of the Lord, *e.g.* to avoid a notorious, obstinate offender, and so to obey the command of God ; that is, though we may charge them in the name of the Lord to consent and obey, and do their duty ; yet, if their judgments remain unconvinced in a case which is to them obscure, we have no more to do, but satisfy ourselves that we have done our duty. So that when we have quarrelled never so long, what is it but the people's *consent* that the moderate men on one side require ? and *consent* the other side requireth also. Call it what else you will, whether a Government, or an Authority, or a Liberty ; Consent is the thing which both require ! And are we not then in the matter agreed ? Peruse for this Mr. Lyford's words before-cited. See also what the leading men for Presbyterian government do not only acknowledge, but maintain as effectually as others : As Dav. Blondellus de Jure plebis in Regim Eccles. Calvin. Institut. lib. 4. cap. xii. sec. 4. "Ne quis tale judicium spernat, aut parvi æstimet se fidelium suffragiis damnatum, testatus est Dominus, &c." Ita Zanchius ubi sup. and many more. Indeed this consent of the people is not 'sine qua non' to the pastor's performance of his own part ; viz. 'Charging the church in Christ's name to avoid the communion of such a notorious, obstinate offender, and suspending his own acts towards him ; and so charging them to receive the innocent or penitent.' (For, if the people consent not to avoid such, and so would exclude all discipline, yet the pastor must charge it unto them, and do his part.) But it is 'sine qua non' to their actual rejecting and avoiding that offender. In a word, we must teach them their duty, and require it ; and they and we must obey and do it : and neither they nor we may oblige any to sin.

Object. 'But we are not agreed about the matter of the church that must be governed.'

Answer. Peruse the qualifications required in church-members in the writings of the moderate on both sides, and see what difference you can find ! Are not both agreed, that professors of true faith and holiness, cohabiting and consenting, are a true church ? And when they contradict that

profession by wicked actions, (doctrine or life,) they are to be dealt with by discipline. Though I confess in our practice we very much differ; most that I know running into one of the extremes of looseness or rigour.

My *third* and last request is, that all the faithful ministers of Christ would, without any more delay, unite and associate for the furtherance of each other in the work of the Lord, and the maintaining of unity and concord in his churches. And that they would not neglect their brotherly meetings to those ends; nor yet spend them unprofitably; but improve them to their edification, and the effectual carrying on the work. Read that excellent letter of Edmond Grindal, Archbishop of Canterbury, to queen Elizabeth. For ministerial meetings and exercises such bishops would have prevented our contentions and wars: You may see it in Fuller's New History of the Church of England.

And let none draw back, that accord in the substantial of faith and godliness; yea, if some should think themselves necessitated I will not say to schism, lest I offend them; but to separate in public worship from the rest: methinks if they be indeed Christians, they should be willing to hold so much communion with them as they can, and to consult how to manage their differences to the least disadvantage to the common truths and Christian cause; which they all profess to own and prefer.

And here I may not silently pass by an uncharitable slander, which some brethren, of the prelatical judgment, have divulged of me far and near; viz. That while I persuade men to accommodation, it was long of me that the late proclamation or ordinance was procured for silencing all sequestered ministers, viz. By the late Worcestershire Petition, which they say was the occasion of it; and they falsely report that I altered it after the subscription. To which I say, (1.) It was the petition of many Justices, and the Grand Jury, and thousands of the county, as well as me. (2.) There is not a word in it, nor ever was, against any godly man; but only that the notoriously insufficient and scandalous should not be permitted to meddle with the mysteries of Christ, (especially the Sacraments;) which we desire should have impartially extended to all parties alike. And so much of this as was granted, we cannot but be thankful for, whosoever grudge at it; and wish it had been

fully granted. (3.) I desire nothing more, than that all able, godly, faithful ministers, of what side soever, in our late State differences, may not only have liberty, but encouragement ; for the church hath not any such to spare, were they ten times more. In a word, I would have those, of what party soever, to have liberty to preach the Gospel, whose errors or miscarriages are not so great, as that probably they will do as much hurt as good.

Brethren, I crave your pardon for the infirmities of this Address ; and earnestly longing for the success of your labours, I shall daily beg of God, that he would persuade you to those duties which I have here requested you to perform, and would preserve and prosper you therein, against all the serpentine subtlety and rage that is now engaged to oppose and hinder you.

Your unworthy fellow-servant,

RICH. BAXTER.

April 15, 1656.

TO THE LAY-READER.

THE reason why I have called this volume *the first part* of the book is, because I intend, if God enable me, and give me time, a *second part* ; containing the duty of the people in relation to their pastors ; and therein to shew, 1. The right and necessity of a ministry. 2. The way to know which is the true church and ministry, and how we justify our own calling to this office ; and how false prophets and teachers must be discerned. 3. How far the people must assist the pastors in the Gospel, and the pastors put them on, and make use of them to that end. And, 4. How far the people must submit to their pastors, and what other duty they must perform in that relation. But because my time and strength are so uncertain, that I know not whether I may yet live to publish my yet imperfect preparations on this subject ; I dare not let this first part come into your hands, without a word of caution and advice, lest you should misunderstand or misapply it.*

The Caution that I must give you, is in two parts.

* It does not appear that the author ever published the above.—ED.

1. Entertain not any unworthy thoughts of your pastors, because we here confess our own sins, and aggravate them in order to our humiliation and reformation. You know they are men, and not angels that are put by God in the office of church-guides: and you know that we are imperfect men. Let Papists and Quakers pretend to a sinless perfection; we dare not do it; but confess that we are sinners. And we should heartily rejoice to find the signs of imperfect sincerity in them that so confidently pretend to sinless perfection; yea, if in some of them we could find but common honesty, and a freedom from some of the crying abominations of the ungodly; such as cruel bloodiness, lying, slandering, railing, &c. If it would make a man perfect, to say he is perfect; and if it would deliver a man from sin, to say, I have no sin; I confess this were an easy way to perfection.

But for our parts we believe, that he that saith he hath “no sin, deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him.” (1 John i. 8.) “And that in many things we offend all.” (James iii. 2.) And we profess to know but in part, and to have our treasure in earthen vessels, and to be insufficient for these things. And therefore see that you love and imitate the holiness of your pastors, but take not occasion of disesteeming or reproaching them for their infirmities.

2. I take it to be my duty, as a watchman for your souls, to give you notice of a train that is laid for your perdition. The Papists who have found that they could not well play their game here with open face, have masked themselves, and taken the vizards of several sects; and by the advantage of the licence of the times, are busily at work abroad in this land, to bring you back to Rome. What names or garb soever they bear, you may strongly conjecture which be they by these marks following: (1.) Their main design is to unsettle you, and to make you believe that you have been all this while misled, and to bring you to a loss in a matter of Religion; that when they have made you dislike or suspect that which you had, or seemed to have, you may be more respective of theirs. (2.) To which end their next means is to bring you to suspect first, and then to contend and reject your teachers. For, saith Rushworth, one of their writers, “Not one of ten among the people, indeed, do ground their faith on the Scripture, but on the

credit of their teachers," &c. ; therefore they think, if they can bring you to suspect your teachers, and so to reject them, they may deal with the sheep without the shepherds, and dispute with the scholars without their teachers, and quickly make you say what they list. To this end their design is partly to cry them down as false teachers ; (but how are they baffled when it comes to the proof!) and partly to persuade you that they have no calling to the work ; and urge them to prove their calling ; (which how easily can we do!) and partly to work upon your covetous humour, by crying down tithes, and all established maintenance for the ministry. And withal they are busy yet in contriving how to procure the governors of the nation to withdraw their public countenance and maintenance, and sacrilegiously to deprive the Church of the remnant that is devoted to it for God, and to leave the ministry on equal terms with themselves, or all other sects (which in Spain, Italy, France, &c. they will be loath to do). And time will shew you, whether God will suffer them to prevail with the governors of this sinful land, to betray the Gospel into their hands or not. But we have reason to hope for better things. (3.) Their next design is to diminish the authority and sufficiency of Scripture ; and because they dare not yet speak out, to tell us what they set up in its stead ; some of them will tell you of new prophets, and revelations ; and some of them will tell you, that in that they are yet at a loss themselves, that is, they are of no religion ; and then are no Christians. I shall now proceed no further in the discovery ; but only warn you, as you love your souls, keep close to Scripture and a faithful ministry ; and despise not your shepherds if you would escape the wolves. If any question our calling, send them to our writings, where we have fully proved them ; or send them to us, who are ready to justify them against any Papist or heretic upon earth. And let me tell you, that for all the sins of the ministry which we have here confessed, the known world hath not a more able, faithful, godly ministry than Britain hath at this day. If at the Synod of Dort the 'Clerus Anglicanus' was called 'stupor mundi,' before all those ignorant and scandalous ones were cast out ; what may we now call it? Brethren, let me deal freely with you ! The ungrateful contempt of a faithful ministry is the shame of the faces of thousands in this land ! And if thorough re-

penitance prevent it not, they shall better know in hell whether such ministers were their friends or foes, and what they would have done for them, if their counsel had been heard. When "the messengers of God were mocked, and his words despised, and his prophets abused, the wrath of the Lord arose on the Israelites themselves; and there was no remedy." (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.) Shall ministers study, preach and pray for you, and shall they be despised? When they have the God of heaven and their conscience to witness, that they desire not yours but you, and are willing to spend and be spent for your sakes; that all the wealth in the world would not be regarded by them in comparison of your salvation, and that all their labours and sufferings are for your sake; if yet they be requited with your contempt, or scorn, or discouraging unteachableness, see who will be the losers in the end. When God himself shall justify them with a *Well done good and faithful servant*; let those that reproached, despised, and condemned them, defend their faces from shame, and their consciences from the accusations of their horrid ingratitude, as well as they can! Read the Scriptures and see, whether they that obeyed God's messengers, or they that despised and disobeyed them sped best. And if any of the seducers will tell you, that we are not the ministers of Christ; leave them not, till they tell you, which is his true church and ministry, and where they are? and by that time they have well answered you, you may know more of their minds.

3. My last advice to you is this: See that you obey your faithful teachers, and improve their help for your salvation while you have it; and take heed that you refuse not to learn when they would teach you. And in particular, see that you refuse not to submit to them in this duty of private instruction, which is mentioned in this treatise. Go to them when they desire you, and be thankful for their help. Yea, and at other times when you need their advice, go to them of your own accord, and ask it. Their office is to be your guides in the way of life: if you seek not their direction, it seems you despise salvation itself, or else you are so proud as to think yourselves sufficient to be your own directors. Shall God in mercy send you leaders to teach you and conduct you in the way to glory, and will you shortly send them back, or refuse their assistance, and say, We have no

need of their direction? Is it for their own ease or gain that they trouble you, or is it for your own everlasting gain? Remember that Christ hath said to his messengers, "He that despiseth you, despiseth me." If your obstinate refusal of the instruction do put them to bear witness against you in judgment, and to say, 'Lord, I would have taught these ignorant sinners, and admonished these worldly, impenitent wretches, but they would not so much as come to me, nor speak with me!' Look you to it, and answer it as you can: for my part, I would not be then in your case for all the world! But I shall say no more to you on this point, but only desire you to read and consider the exhortation, which is published in our Agreement itself, which speaks to you more fully; and if you read this book, remember the duty which you find to belong to the ministers doth shew also what belongs to yourselves: for it cannot be our duty to teach, catechise, advise, &c. if it be not yours to hear, learn, and seek advice. If you have any temptation to question our office, read the London Ministers' 'Jus Divinum Minister. Evang.' And Mr. Thomas Ball's book for the Ministry. If you doubt of the duty of learning the principles, and being catechised, read the London Ministers' late Exhortation to Catechising; and Mr. Zach. Crofton's book for Catechising (now newly published).

"There will (saith Dr. Hammond) be little matter of doubt or controversy, but that private, frequent, spiritual conference betwixt fellow Christians, but especially (and in matters of high concernment and difficulty) between the presbyter and those of his charge, even in the time of health; and peculiarly that part of it which is spent in the discussion of every man's special sins and infirmities, and inclinations, may prove very useful and advantageous (in order to spiritual directions, reproof and comfort) to the making the man of God perfect. And to tell truth, if the pride and self-conceit of some, and wretchlessness of others, the bashfulness of the third sort, the nauseating, and instant satiety of any good in a fourth; the follies of men, and the artifices of Satan, has not put this practice quite out of fashion among us, there is no doubt but more good might be done by ministers this way, than is now done by any other means separated from the use of this particularly, than by that of public preaching, (which yet need not be neglected the more when

this is used) which hath now the fate to be cried up, and almost solely depended on, it being the more likely way, as Quinctilian saith, (comparing public and private teaching of youth,) to fill narrow-mouthed bottles, (and such are the most of us,) by taking them single in the hand, and pouring in water into each, than by setting them altogether, and throwing never so many bottles of water on them.”*

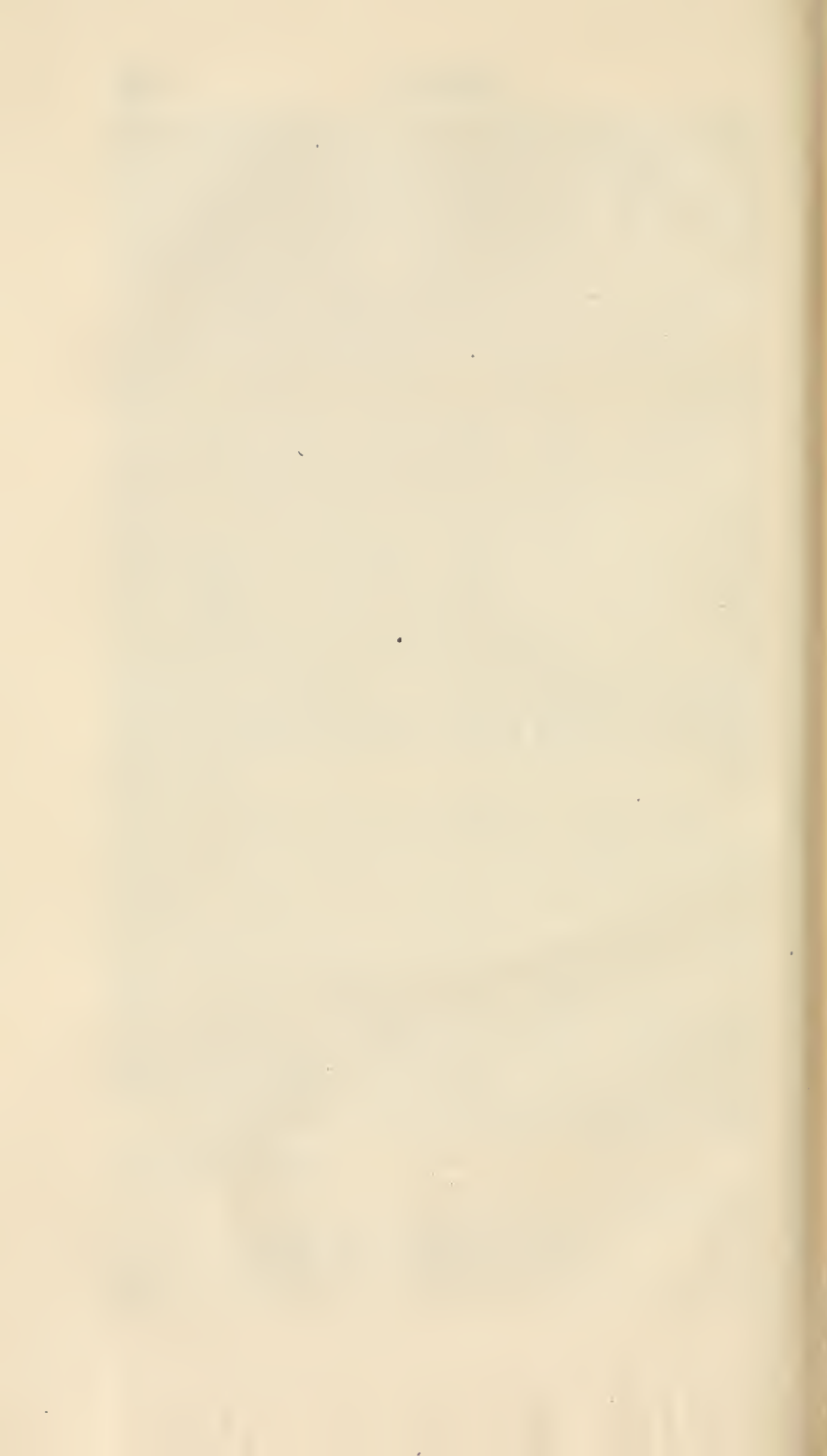
“ The ignorant soul (saith Gurnal) feels no such smart : if the minister stay till he sends for him to instruct him, he may sooner hear the bell go for him, than any messenger come for him : You must seek them out, and not expect that they will come to you. These are a sort of people that are more afraid of their remedy than their disease, and study more to hide their ignorance, than how to have it cured ; which should make us pity them the more, because they can pity themselves so little. I confess it is no small unhappiness to some of us, who have to do with a multitude, that we have neither time nor strength to make our addresses to every particular person in our congregations, and attend on them as their needs require ; and yet cannot well satisfy our consciences otherwise. But let us look to it, that though we cannot do to the height of what we would, we be not found wanting in what we may. Let not the difficulty of our province make us like some, who when they see they have more work upon their hands than they can well dispatch, grow sick of it, and sit down out of a lazy despondency, and do just nothing.—O ! if once our hearts were filled with zeal for God, and compassion to our people’s souls, we would up and be doing, though we could lay but a brick a day ; and God will be with us. It may be, you who find a people rude and sottishly ignorant, like stones in the quarry and trees unfelled, shall not bring the work to such perfection in your days as you desire ! Yet, as David did for Solomon, thou mayst by thy pains in teaching and instructing them, prepare materials for another, who shall rear the temple.”†

RICH. BAXTER.

April 16, 1656.

* Power of the Keys, c. iv. s. 104. p. 113.

† The Christian in complete Armour, page 235.



GILDAS SALVIANUS :

THE

REFORMED PASTOR.

ACTS xx. 28.

Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

CHAPTER I.

Reverend and dearly beloved Brethren,

THOUGH some think that Paul's exhortation to these elders, doth prove him their ruler, we hope, who are this day to speak to you from the Lord, that we may freely do the like without any jealousies of such a conclusion. Though we teach our people as officers set over them in the Lord, yet may we teach one another as brethren, in office as well as in faith. If the people of our charge must teach and admonish, and exhort each other daily, (Col. iii. 16; Heb. iii. 13,) no doubt teachers may do it to one another without any supremacy of power or degree. We have the same sins to kill, and the same graces to be quickened and corroborated, as our people have: we have greater works than they to do, and greater difficulties to overcome, and no less necessity is laid upon us; and therefore we have need to be warned and awakened, if not to be instructed, as well as they. So that I confess, I think such meetings should be more frequent, if we had nothing else to do together but this. And as plainly and closely should we deal with one another, as the most serious among us do with our flocks; lest if only they have

the sharp admonitions and reproofs, they only should be sound and lively in the faith. That this was Paul's judgment, I need no other proof, than this rousing, heart-melting exhortation to the Ephesian elders:—a short sermon, but not soon learned. Had the bishops and teachers of the church but thoroughly learned this short exhortation, though with neglect of many a volume which hath taken up their time, and helped them to greater applause in the world; how happy had it been for the church and them!

Our present straits of time will allow me to touch upon no part of it but my text; which, supposing Paul the speaker, and the Ephesian elders his hearers, containeth, 1. A two-fold duty. 2. A fourfold motive to enforce it.

The first duty is, to *take heed to themselves*; the second is, to *take heed to all the flock*. And the main work for the flock which is thus heedfully to be done, is expressed, even *to feed them, or play the shepherds for them*.

The motives closely laid together are these;—1. From their engagement and relation; they are the overseers of the flock: it is their office.—2. From the efficient cause, even the authority and excellency of him that called them to it; which was the Holy Ghost.—3. From the dignity of the object, which is the matter of their charge: it is the church of God, the most excellent and honourable society in the world.—4. From the tender regard Christ has of his church, and the price it cost him: he purchased it with his own blood. This motive is partly subordinate to the former.

The terms of the text have no such difficulty as to allow me the spending of much of our little time for their explanation. Προσεχειν, here is, 'maxima cura et diligentia animum adhibere:' ποιμνιον, as Jansenius and others note, a *little flock*. It signifieth not here the whole church of Christ, which elsewhere is called ποιμνιον, in reference to Christ the great shepherd; but it signifieth that particular church which these elders had a special charge of. Whether that was one or many, we shall inquire anon. What is meant by Ἐπισκόπους, *bishops* or *overseers* here, is thus far agreed on, that they were officers appointed to teach and guide those churches in the way to salvation; and that they are the same persons that are called elders of the church of Ephesus before, and bishops here: of whom more anon. The verb ἔθετο, seemeth here to import both the qualification, ordination, and particular

designation of these elders or bishops to their charge ; for we must not limit and exclude without necessity. The Holy Ghost did by all these three ways make them overseers of their flocks. (1.) By qualifying them with such gifts as made them fit for it. (2.) By directing the minds of those that ordained them to the ministry. (3.) By disposing both their own minds, and the ordainers, and the people's for the affixing them to that particular church, rather than another. "Dicit eos constitutos à Spiritu Sancto," saith Grotius, "quia constituti erant ab Apostolis plenì Spiritu Sancto, quanquam approbante plebe:" But no doubt, in those times the Holy Ghost did give especial directions, as by internal oracle, for the disposal of particular teachers ; as we read in the case of Saul and Barnabas, and for the provision of particular congregations.

Ποιμαίνειν τήν ἐκκλησίαν, is by some translated barely to *feed*, as ours here ; by others only to *rule* ; but indeed as Gerhard, Jansenius, and others note, it is not to be restrained to either, but containeth in it all the pastoral work. In one word it is 'Pastorem agere,' to do the work of a pastor to the flock. Whether it be the Ephesian congregation before called ποιμνιον, that is here called ἐκκλησίαν τῷ Θεῷ, or whether it be the universal church which they may be said to feed and rule, by doing their part towards it, in their station (as a justice of peace may be said to rule the land), is not a matter of much moment to be stood upon ; but the former seems most likely to be the sense : περιεποιήσατο, is both 'acquist et asseruit et in suam vindicavit.' It is said to be done by the blood of God, by a communication of the names of the distinct natures : and it affords us an argument against the Arians, seeing Christ is here expressly called God.

But it is necessary before we proceed to instruction and application, that we be resolved more clearly who those elders or bishops are that Paul doth here exhort. I am desirous to do all that lawfully I may to avoid controversy, especially in this place, and on such occasions ; but it is here unavoidable, because all our following application will much depend upon the explication : and if you shall once suppose that none of this exhortation was spoken to men in your office and capacity ; no wonder if you pass it over and let it alone, and take all that I shall hence gather for your practice, as impertinent. This text was wont to be thought most

apt to awaken ministers of the Gospel to their duty ; but of late the negligent are gratified with the news (for news it is,) that only bishops in a super-eminent sense, whom we usually call Prelates, are spoken to in this text ; and not only so, but that no other text of Scripture doth speak to any other church-presbyters (certainly) but them ; yea, that no other were in being in Scripture-times. Here are two questions before us to be resolved. 1. Whether the elders here mentioned, were the elders of one church of Ephesus, or of all that part of Asia, that is, of every church one ? This is but in order to the second, which is, Whether these elders were only prelates, or such bishops as among us have carried that name ?

The reasons that may be brought to prove these to be prelates of the several cities of Asia, and that the *πάν τὸ ποίμνιον*, is those many cities, are these following. 1. The affirmation of Irenæus. To which we say, (1.) There might be many elders of Ephesus present, though some from the nearest cities were there also ; which is all that Irenæus affirms. (2.) We oppose to the saying of Irenæus the ordinary exposition of the ancients : the most singular is of least authority, ‘*cæteris paribus.*’

2. It may be said that ‘Paul calls them to remember how he had been among them three years, not ceasing to warn every one, &c. But he was not three years at Ephesus only, but in Asia, &c.’ *Answ.* He may be said to be where his chief place of abode is. He that resideth ordinarily at Ephesus, though he thence make frequent excursions to the neighbouring parts, may well be said to abide so long at Ephesus. And the Ephesian elders might well be acquainted with his industry round about them, though there is no certainty that he mentioneth any more than what he did with them. For what he did in Ephesus he did in Asia, as that which is done in London, is done in England.

Object. 3. ‘But it is meant of all Asia ; for he saith, “among whom I have gone,” &c.’ *Answ.* (1.) As though Paul might not go preaching the Gospel in Ephesus. (2.) If he went further, the Ephesian elders might accompany him. *Object.* 4. ‘Ephesus was the metropolis, and therefore all Asia might be thence denominated,’ *Answ.* (1.) It must be proved that it was so denominated. All France is not called Paris, nor all England London. (2.) It is not whole countries, but a church that Paul speaks of : and it is yet unproved that the

church of one city had then any such dependance on the church of another city, as lesser cities had upon the Metropolis.

Our reasons that make us think that either all, or many of these elders, or bishops were over the particular church of Ephesus, are these, 1. It is expressly said in the text, that they were Elders of the Church, referring to Ephesus next before-mentioned. "He sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church." And it cannot be proved in all the New Testament that the bishops of other churches and cities, are called bishops of a greater city, because it is the metropolis. 2. Here is mention but of one church and one flock, in the singular number, and not of many; when yet, it is acknowledged that he speaketh not of the universal church (for then that language were not strange), but of a particular church. And it is the use of the apostles to speak still in the plural number, when they mention the particular churches of many cities, and not to call them all one church or flock. 3. And it may seem else that the Elder of each one of these cities hath a charge of all the rest. For they are required to take heed of all the flock: which though it may possibly be by taking every one his part, yet if one should fail, the rest seem to have his charge upon them, which is more than they can do. 4. Paul was now in so great haste in his journey to Jerusalem, that Luke measureth it out by the days. And it is not likely that Paul could in such haste call the elders from the several cities of Asia. If he had passed through the British seas in such haste, and lodged at Plymouth, and had thence called to him the elders of Paris, he must have staid there many days or weeks, before he could have gathered also the bishops of Rhemes, Arles, Orleans, and the rest of France. 5. The numbers of prophets and gifted men in those times, and the state of other particular churches, doth give us sufficient reason to conjecture that Ephesus was not so scant of help, as to have but one presbyter. Grotius thought that Timothy with his copresbyters, made this appearance; but others have given very probable reasons that Timothy was none of them. 6. The judgment of Expositors, ancient and modern, running so commonly the other way, commandeth some respect from us.

But, I confess the matter seemeth but conjectural on both sides, and neither part to have a certainty; but if probability may carry it, there seems to be many of the elders of Ephesus, though possibly some of the neighbouring cities might be with them. But let this go how it will, it maketh not much to the main matter in hand. What if Ephesus and each other city, or church, had then but one presbyter, will it follow that he was a prelate? No; but the contrary: it will prove that there were none such at all, if there were no subject presbyters. For there is no king without subjects; nor master without servants. 1. The stream of ancient and modern Expositors do take this text to speak of presbyters in the common sense. And we must be cautious, before we be singular in the expounding of so many texts as speak the same way. 2. If men be put now, in the end of the world, to find out a new foundation for Prelacy, supposeing it hath been amiss defended till now, and all these texts (except by one or two) amiss expounded, it will occasion the shaking of the frame itself. 3. But the best is, we begin to be pretty well agreed, at least about the whole government that ‘de facto’ was in being in Scripture-times. For, (1.) It is at last confessed, that the word Presbyter is not certainly taken any where in the New Testament, for one that is subject to a bishop, having not power of ordination or jurisdiction; and that no such presbyters were in being in Scripture-times. And by what authority they were since elected, let them prove that are concerned in it. (2.) We are agreed now that they were the same persons who in Scripture are called bishops and presbyters. (3.) And that these persons had the power of ordination and jurisdiction. (4.) And that these persons were not the bishops of many particular churches, but one only: they ruled not many assemblies ordinarily meeting for church communion: for there could no such meetings be kept up without a bishop or presbyter to administer the ordinances of Christ in each. And if there were in a diocese but one bishop, and no other presbyters in Scripture-times, then it must needs be that a diocese contained but one ordinary church-assembly, and that ‘de facto’ no bishop in Scripture-times had under him any presbyters, nor more such assemblies than one: that is, they ruled the particular churches just as our parish pastors do. So that we are satisfied that we go that way that the apostles estab-

lished, and was used 'de facto' in Scripture-times. And if any will prove the lawfulness of latter mutations, or will prove that the apostles gave power to these particular pastors to degenerate into another sort of officers hereafter, according to the cogency of their evidence, we shall believe it. In the meantime, desiring to be guided by the Word of God, and to go upon sure ground, and take only so much as is certain, we hold where we are, and are glad that we are so far agreed. Yet not presuming to censure all superior episcopacy, nor refusing to obey any man that commandeth us to do our duty, but resolving to do our own work in faithfulness and peace.

For my own part, I have ever thought it easier to be governed than to govern; and I am ready, as the British told Austin, to be obedient to any man in, and for the Lord. Nor can I think that any government can be burdensome, which Christ appointeth, but all beneficial to us; as making our burden lighter and not heavier, and helping and not hindering us in the way to heaven. Were Christ's work but thoroughly done, I should be the most backward in contending, who should have the doing of it. Let us agree but on this one thing which is plain here in my text, That the churches or flocks should be no greater than the pastors can personally oversee, so that they may "take heed to all the flock," and then let but able, faithful men be the overseers, that will make the word of God the rule, and lay out themselves for the saving of men's souls, and I am resolved never to contend with such about the business of superiority; but cheerfully to obey them in all things lawful, if they require my obedience. If the difference were not more about the matters commanded, and the work itself to be done, than who should command it: methinks humble men should be easily agreed. Would they but lay by all needless human impositions and obtrusions, and be contented with the sufficient Word of God, and not make new work to necessitate, new canons and authorities to impose it, but be content with the Gospel simplicity, and let us take that for a sufficient way to heaven that Peter and Paul went thither in; I think, I should not disobey such a bishop, though I were satisfied of his differing order or degree. Yea, if he were addicted to some encroaching usurpation of more power than is meet, would he but forbear the 'Ecce duo gladii,' and come to us only

with the sword of the Spirit, which will admit of fair debates, and works only upon the conscience, I know no reason much to fear such power, though it were undue. But enough of this.

The observations which the text affordeth us are so many, that I may not now stay so much as to name them; but shall only lay down that one which containeth the main scope of the text, and take in the rest as subordinate motives in the handling of that, in the method in which the apostle doth here deliver them to us.

Doct. 'The pastors or overseers of the churches of Christ, must take great heed both to themselves, and to all their flocks in all the parts of their pastoral work.'

The method which we shall follow in handling this point, shall be this: I. I shall briefly open to you the terms of the subject: what is meant by Pastors and Churches. II. I shall shew you what it is to take heed to ourselves, and wherein it must be done. III. I shall give you some brief reasons of that part of the point. IV. I shall shew you, what it is to take heed to all the flock in our pastoral work, and wherein it must be done. V. I shall make some application of all.

I. What the words, Pastor, Bishop, and Church do signify, I will not waste time to tell you, they being so well known. As for the things signified: By a pastor or bishop here is meant, an officer appointed by Christ for the ordinary teaching and guiding a particular church and all its members, in order to their salvation, and the pleasing of God.

Christ appointeth the office itself by his laws. The person he calleth to it by his qualifying gifts, providential disposal, secret impulses, and ordinarily by the ordination of his present officers, and the acceptance of the church.

Teaching and guidance contain the main parts at least of the work to which they are designed. The particulars we shall further stand upon anon.

A particular church is the object of their work; by which they are distinguished from apostolical, unfixed, itinerant ministers.

They are the stated, ordinary teachers of such a church; by which they are differenced, both from private men, who do occasionally teach, and from the aforesaid itinerant ministers, and do but 'in transitu,' or seldom teach a particular

church. The subject is the matters of salvation and obedience to God, and the end is salvation itself, and the pleasing of God therein; by which work and ends the office is distinguished from all other offices, as magistrates, schoolmasters, &c.; though they also have the same remote or ultimate ends.

By the flock and church is meant that particular society of Christians of which these bishops or elders have the charge, associated for personal communion in God's public worship, and for other mutual assistance in the way to salvation. Exact definitions we may not now stand on; we have more fully made some attempts that way heretofore.

II. Let us next consider, What it is to take heed to ourselves, and wherein it must be done. And here I may well, for brevity sake, adjoin the application to the explication, it being about the matter of our practice, that I may be put to go over, as little as may be, of the same things again. Take therefore I beseech you all this explication, as so much advice and exhortation to the duty, and let your hearts attend it as well as your understandings.

1. Take heed to yourselves, lest you should be void of that saving grace of God which you offer to others, and be strangers to the effectual workings of that Gospel which you preach; and lest while you proclaim the necessity of a Saviour to the world, your own hearts should neglect him, and you should miss of an interest in him and his saving benefits! Take heed to yourselves, lest you perish, while you call upon others to take heed of perishing! and lest you famish yourselves while you prepare their food. Though there be a promise of shining as the stars to those that turn many to righteousness, (Dan. xii. 3,) that is but on supposition that they be first turned to it themselves: such promises are meant, '*cæteris paribus, et suppositis supponendis.*' Their own sincerity in the faith is the condition of their glory simply considered, though their great ministerial labours may be a condition of the promise of their greater glory: many a man hath warned others that they come not to that place of torment, which yet they hastened to themselves: many a preacher is now in hell, that hath an hundred times called upon his hearers to use the utmost care and diligence to escape it. Can any reasonable man imagine that God should save men for offering salvation to others, while they

refused it themselves; and for telling others those truths which they themselves neglected and abused? Many a tailor goes in rags, that maketh costly clothes for others; and many a cook scarcely licks his fingers, when he hath dressed for others the most costly dishes. Believe it, brethren, God never saved any man for being a preacher, nor because he was an able preacher; but because he was a justified, sanctified man, and consequently faithful in his Master's work. Take heed therefore to yourselves first, that you *be* that which you persuade your hearers to *be*, and believe that which you persuade them daily to believe; and have heartily entertained that Christ, and Spirit which you offer unto others. He that bid you love your neighbours as yourselves, did imply that you should love yourselves, and not hate and destroy yourselves and them.

2. Take heed to yourselves, lest you live in those actual sins which you preach against in others; and lest you be guilty of that which daily you condemn. Will you make it your work to magnify God, and when you have done, dishonour him as much as others? Will you proclaim Christ's governing power, and yet condemn it, and rebel yourselves? Will you preach his laws, and wilfully break them? If sin be evil, why do you live in it? if it be not, why do you dissuade men from it? if it be dangerous, how dare you venture on it? if it be not, why do you tell men so? If God's threatenings be true, why do you not fear them? if they be false, why do you trouble men needlessly with them, and put them into such frights without a cause? Do you know the judgment of God, that they that commit such things are worthy of death, and yet will you do them? (Rom. i. 32.) Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, or be drunk, or covetous, art thou such thyself? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? (Rom. ii. 21—23.) What, shall the same tongue speak evil, that speaketh against evil? Shall it censure and slander, and secretly backbite, that cries down these and the like in others? Take heed to yourselves, lest you cry down sin and not overcome it; lest while you seek to bring it down in others, you bow to it, and become its slaves yourselves. For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage. (2 Pet. ii. 19.)

To whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. (Rom. vi. 16.) It is easier to chide at sin, than to overcome it.

3. Take heed also to yourselves, that you be not unfit for the great employments that you have undertaken. He must not be himself a babe in knowledge, that will teach men all those mysterious things that are to be known in order to salvation. O what qualifications are necessary for that man that hath such a charge upon him as we have ! How many difficulties in divinity, to be opened ! yea, about the fundamentals that must needs be known ! How many obscure texts of Scripture to be expounded ! How many duties to be done, wherein ourselves and others may miscarry, if in the matter, and end, and manner, and circumstances they be not well informed ! How many sins to be avoided, which without understanding and foresight cannot be done ! What a number of sly and subtle temptations must we open to our people's eyes, that they may escape them ! How many weighty and yet intricate cases of conscience have we almost daily to resolve ! Can so much work, and such work as this, be done by raw, unqualified men ? O, what strong holds have we to batter, and how many of them ! What subtle and diligent, and obstinate resistance must we expect at every heart we deal with ! Prejudice hath blocked up our way ; we can scarcely procure a patient hearing. They think ill of what we say while we are speaking it. We cannot make a breach in their groundless hopes and carnal peace, but they have twenty shifts and seeming reasons to make it up again ; and twenty enemies that are seeming friends are ready to help them. We dispute not with them upon equal terms : but we have children to reason with, that cannot understand us ; we have distracted men (in spirituals) to reason with, that will baul us down with raging nonsense : we have wilful, unreasonable people to deal with, that when they are silenced, they are never the more convinced ; and when they can give you no reason, they will give you their resolution ; like the man that Salvian had to deal with, (lib. iv. de Gubernat. p. 133.) that being resolved to devour a poor man's means, and being entreated by Salvian to forbear, told him, He could not grant his request, for he had made a vow to take it ; so that the preacher '*audita religiosissimi sceleris ratione*' was fain to depart. We

dispute the case against men's wills and sensual passions, as much as against their understandings ; and these have neither reason nor ears : their best arguments are, ' I will not believe you, nor all the preachers in the world in such things. I will not change my mind or life : I will not leave my sins ; I will never be so precise, come on it what will.' We have not one, but multitudes of raging passions and contradicting enemies to dispute against at once, whenever we go about the conversion of a sinner ; as if a man were to dispute in a fair or tumult, or in the midst of a crowd of violent scolds ; what equal dealing, and what success were here to be expected ? Why, such is our work, and yet a work that must be done.

O, dear brethren, what men should we be in skill, resolution, and unwearied diligence, that have all this to do ? Did Paul cry out, " Who is sufficient for these things ?" (2 Cor. ii. 16,) and shall we be proud, or careless and lazy, as if we were sufficient ? As Peter saith to every Christian in consideration of our great approaching change, (2 Pet. iii. 11,) " What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness ?" So may I say to every minister, seeing all these things lie upon our hands, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy endeavours and resolutions for our work ! This is not a burden for the shoulder of a child. What skill doth every part of our work require, and of how much moment is every part ! To preach a sermon I think is not the hardest part ; and yet what skill is necessary to make plain the truth, to convince the hearers ; to let in the irresistible light into their consciences, and to keep it there, and drive all home ; to screw the truth into their minds, and work Christ into their affections ; to meet every objection that gainsays, and clearly to resolve it ; to drive sinners to a stand, and make them see there is no hope, but they must unavoidably be converted or condemned : and to do all this so for language and manner as beseems our work, and yet as is most suitable to the capacities of our hearers ; this, and a great deal more that should be done in every sermon, should surely be done with a great deal of holy skill. So great a God, whose message we deliver, should be honoured by our delivery of it ! It is a lamentable case, that in a message from the God of heaven, of everlasting consequence to the souls of men, we should behave ourselves so weakly, so un-

handsomely, so imprudently, or so slightly, that the whole business should miscarry in our hands, and God be dishonoured, and his work disgraced, and sinners rather hardened than converted, and all this much through our weakness or neglect! How many a time have carnal hearers gone jeering home, at the palpable and dishonourable failings of the preacher! How many sleep under us, because our hearts and tongues are sleepy; and we bring not with us so much skill and zeal as to awake them!

Moreover, what skill is necessary to defend the truth against gainsayers, and to deal with disputing cavillers according to their several modes and cases! and if we fail through weakness, how will they insult! but this is the smallest matter: but who knows how many weak ones may be perverted by the success, to their own undoing and the trouble of the church? What skill is there necessary to deal in private with one poor ignorant soul for their conversion! (Of which more in the end.)

O brethren, do you not shrink and tremble under the sense of all this work? Will a common measure of holy skill and ability of prudence, and other qualifications serve for such a task as this? I know necessity may cause the church to tolerate the weak; but woe to us if we tolerate and indulge our own weakness. 'Doth not reason and conscience tell you, that if you dare venture on so high a work as this, you should spare no pains to be fitted to perform it? It is not now and then an idle snatch, or taste of studies that will serve to make a sound divine. I know that laziness hath lately learned to pretend the lowness of all our studies, and how wholly, and only the Spirit must qualify and assist us to the work: and so, as Salvian saith in another case, (lib. iv. p. 134,) 'authorem quodammodo sui sceleris Deum faciunt:' As if God commanded us the use of the means, and then would warrant us to neglect them! As if it were his way to cause us to thrive in a course of idleness; and to bring us to knowledge by dreams when we are asleep, or to take us up into heaven, and shew us his counsels, while we think of no such matter, but are rooting in the earth. O that men should dare so sinfully by their laziness to quench the Spirit; and then pretend the Spirit for the doing of it. 'Quis unquam,' (saith he beforementioned,) 'crederet usque in hanc contumeliam Dei, progres-

suram esse humanæ cupiditatis (ignaviæ) audaciam? ut id ipsum in quo Christo injuriam faciunt, dicant se ob Christi nomen esse facturos? O inestimabile facinus et prodigiosum! God hath required of us that we be "not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." (Rom. xii. 11.) Such we must provoke our hearers to be, and such we must be ourselves. O therefore, brethren, lose no time: study, and pray, and confer, and practise; for by these four ways your abilities must be increased. Take heed to yourselves, lest you are weak through your own negligence, and lest you mar the work of God by your weakness. "As man is, so is his strength." (Judges viii. 21.)

4. Moreover, take heed to yourselves, lest your example contradict your doctrine, and lest you lay such stumbling-blocks before the blind, as may be the occasion of their ruin; lest you may unsay that with your lives, which you say with your tongues; and be the greatest hinderers of the success of your own labours. It much hindereth our work, when other men are all the week long contradicting to poor people in private, that which we have been speaking to them from the word of God in public; because we cannot be at hand to manifest their folly: but it will much more hinder, if we contradict ourselves, and if your actions give your tongue the lie, and if you build up an hour or two with your mouths, and all the week after pull down with your hands! This is the way to make men think that the word of God is but an idle tale, and to make preaching seem no better than prating. He that means as he speaks, will surely do as he speaks. One proud, surly, lordly word; one needless contention, one covetous action may cut the throat of many a sermon, and blast the fruit of all that you have been doing. Tell me, brethren, in the fear of God, do you regard the success of your labours, or do you not? Do you long to see it upon the souls of your hearers? If you do not, what do you preach for, what do you study, and what do you call yourselves the ministers of Christ for? But if you do, then surely you cannot find in your heart to mar your work for a thing of nought! What, do you regard the success of your labours, and yet will not part with a little to the poor; nor put up with an injury, or a foul word, nor stoop to the meanest, nor forbear your passionate or lordly carriage, no not for the winning of souls, and attaining the end of all your labours!

You much regard the success indeed, that will sell it at so cheap a rate, or will not do so small a matter to attain it!

It is a palpable error in those ministers that make such a disproportion between their preaching and their living, that they will study hard to preach exactly, and study little or not at all to live exactly: All the week long is little enough to study how to speak two hours; and yet one hour seems too much to study how to live all the week. They are loath to misplace a word in their sermons, or to be guilty of any notable infirmity (and I blame them not, for the matter is holy and of weight); but they make nothing of misplacing affections, words and actions in the course of their lives. O how curiously have I heard some men preach, and how carelessly have I seen them live! They have been so accurate as to the wordy part in their own preparations, that seldom preaching seemed a virtue to them, that their language might be the more polite, and all the rhetorical jingling writers, they could meet with, were pressed to serve them for the adorning of their style, and gawds were oft their chiefest ornaments. They were so nice in hearing others, that no man pleased them that spoke as he thought, or that drowned not affections, or dulled not, or distempered not the heart by the predominant strains of a fantastic wit. And yet when it came to matter of practice, and they were once out of church, how incurious were the men, and how little did they regard what they said or did, so it were not so palpably gross as to dishonour them! They that preached precisely, would not live precisely! What difference between their pulpit speeches and their familiar discourse! They that are most impatient of barbarisms, solecisms, and paralogisms in a sermon, can easily tolerate them in their conversations.

Certainly, brethren, we have very great cause to take heed what we do, as well as what we say: If we be the servants of Christ indeed, we must not be tongue servants only, but must serve him with our deeds, "and be doers of the work, that in our deed we may be blessed." (James i. 25.) As our people must be "doers of the word, and not hearers only;" so we must be doers and not speakers only, lest we be "deceivers of ourselves." (James i. 22.) A practical doctrine must be practically preached. We must study as hard how to live well, as how to preach well. We must think and

think again, how to compose our lives as may most tend to men's salvation, as well as our sermons. When you are studying what to say to them, I know these are your thoughts, or else they are naught and to no purpose, 'How should I get within them? And what shall I say that is likely most effectually to convince them, and convert them, and tend to their salvation?' And should you not diligently bethink yourselves, 'How shall I live, and what shall I say and do; and how shall I dispose of all that I have, as may most probably tend to the saving of men's souls?' Brethren, if saving souls be your end, you will certainly intend it as well out of the pulpit as in it! If it be your end, you will live for it, and contribute all your endeavours to attain it: and if you do so, you will as well ask concerning the money in your purse, as the words of your mouth, 'Which way should I lay it out for the greatest good, especially to men's souls?' O that this were your daily study, how to use your wealth, your friends, and all you have for God, as well as your tongues! And then we should see that fruit of your labours which is never else likely to be seen. If you intend the end of the ministry in the pulpit only, then it seems you take yourselves for ministers no longer than you are there; and then I think you are unworthy to be esteemed such at all.

III. Having shewed you in four particulars, how it is that we must take heed to ourselves, and what is comprised in this command; I am next to give you the *reasons* of it, which I entreat you to take as so many motives to awaken you to your duty, and thus apply them as we go.

1. You have heaven to win or lose yourselves, and souls that must be happy or miserable for ever; and therefore it concerneth you to begin at home, and take heed to yourselves as well as unto others. Preaching well may succeed to the salvation of others without the holiness of your own hearts or lives; it is possible at least, though less usual; but it is impossible it should serve to save yourselves: Many shall say at that day, "Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" (Matt. vii. 22,) who shall be answered with, "I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity." (ver. 23.) O sirs, how many men have preached Christ, and perished for want of a saving interest in him! How many that are now in hell, have told their people of the torments of hell, and

have warned them against it! How many have preached of the wrath of God against sinners, that are now feeling it. O what sadder case can there be in the world, than for a man that made it his very trade and calling to proclaim salvation, and to help others to attain it, yet after all to be himself shut out! Alas! that ever we should have many books in our libraries that tell us the way to heaven; that we should spend so many years in reading those books, and studying the doctrine of eternal life, and yet for all this to miss it! That ever we should study and preach so many sermons of salvation, and yet fall short of it!—so many sermons of damnation, and yet fall into it! And all because we preached so many sermons of Christ while we neglected him; of the Spirit, while we resisted it; of faith, while we did not heartily believe; of repentance and conversion, while we continued in the state of flesh and sin; and of a heavenly life, while we remained carnal and earthly ourselves. If we will be divines only in tongues and title, and have not the Divine image upon our souls, nor give up ourselves to the Divine honour and will, no wonder if we be separated from the Divine presence, and denied the fruition of God for ever. Believe it, sirs, God is no respecter of persons: he saveth not men for their coats or callings; a holy calling will not save an unholy man. If you stand at the door of the kingdom of grace, to light others in, and will not go in yourselves, when you are burnt to the snuff, you will go out with a stink, and shall knock in vain at the gates of glory, that would not enter at the door of grace. You shall then find that your lamps should have had the oil of grace as well as of ministerial gifts; of holiness as well as of doctrine, if you would have had a part in the glory which you preached. Do I need to tell you that preachers of the Gospel must be judged by the Gospel; and stand at the same bar, and be sentenced on the same terms, and dealt with as severely as any other men? Can you think to be saved then by your clergy; and to come off by a ‘*legit ut clericus*,’ when there is wanting the ‘*credidit et vixit ut Christianus*?’ Alas, it will not be; you know it will not! Take heed therefore to yourselves for your own sakes; seeing you have souls to save or lose as well as others.

2. Take heed to yourselves, for you have a depraved nature, and sinful inclinations as well as others. If innocent

Adam had need of heed, and lost himself and us for want of it, how much more need have we ! Sin dwelleth in us, when we have preached never so much against it : one degree prepareth the heart for another, and one sin inclineth the mind to more. If one thief be in the house, he will let in the rest, because they have the same disposition and design. A spark is the beginning of a flame ; and a small disease may bring a greater. A man that knows himself to be purblind, should take heed to his feet. Alas ! even in our hearts, as well as in our hearers, there is an averseness to God, a strangeness to him, unreasonable and almost unruly passions. In us there is at the best the remnants of pride, unbelief, self-seeking, hypocrisy, and all the most hateful, deadly sins. And doth it not then concern us to take heed ? Is so much of the fire of hell yet unextinguished, that at first was kindled in us ? Are there so many traitors in our hearts, and is it not time for us to take heed ? You will scarce let your little children go themselves while they are weak, without calling upon them to take heed of falling. And alas ! how weak are those of us that seem strongest ! How apt to stumble at a very straw ! How small a matter will cast us down, by enticing us to folly ; or kindling our passions and inordinate desires, by perverting our judgments, or abating our resolutions, and cooling our zeal, and dulling our diligence ! Ministers are not only sons of Adam, but sinners against the grace, of Christ, as well as others, and so have increased their radical sin. Those treacherous hearts will one time or other deceive you, if you take not heed. Those sins that seem to lie dead will revive : your pride and worldliness, and many a noisome vice will spring up, that you thought had been weeded out by the roots. It is most necessary therefore, that men of such infirmities should take heed to themselves, and be careful in the dieting and usage of their souls.

3. And the rather also, take heed to yourselves, because such works as ours do put men on greater use and trial of their graces, and have greater temptations, than most other men. Weaker gifts and graces may carry a man out in a more even and laudable course of life, that is not put to so great trials. Smaller strength may serve for lighter works and burdens. But if you venture on the great undertakings of the ministry, if you will lead on the troops of Christ

against the face of Satan and his followers ; if you will engage yourselves against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places ; if you undertake to rescue captivated sinners, and to fetch men out of the devil's paws ; do not think that a heedless, careless minister is fit for so great a work as this. You must look to come off with greater shame, and deeper wounds of conscience, than if you had lived a common life ; if you will think to go through such things as these with a careless soul. It is not only the work that calls for heed, but the workman also, that he may be fit for business of such weight ; we have seen by experience, that many men that lived as private Christians, in good reputation for parts and piety, when they have taken upon them either military employment, or magistracy, where the work was above their parts, and temptations did overmatch their strength, they have proved scandalous disgraced men. And we have seen some private Christians of good note, that having thought too highly of their own parts, and thrust themselves into the ministerial office, they have been empty men, and alway burdens to the church, and worse than some that we have endeavoured to cast out. They might have done God more service in the station of the higher rank of private men, than they do among the lowest of the ministry. If you will venture into the midst of the enemies, and bear the burden and heat of the day, take heed to yourselves.

4. And the rather also, take heed to yourselves ; because the tempter will make his first or sharpest onset upon you. If you will be the leaders against him, he will spare you no further than God restraineth him. He beareth you the greatest malice, that are engaged to do him the greatest mischief. As he hateth Christ more than any of us, because he is the General of the field, and the " Captain of our salvation," and doth more than all the world besides against the kingdom of darkness ; so doth he hate the leaders under him, more than the common soldiers on the like account (in their proportion) ; he knows what a rout he may make among the rest, if the leaders fall before their eyes. He hath long tried that way of fighting, neither against great or small comparatively, but these ; and of smiting the shepherds, that he may scatter the flock ; and so great hath been his success this way, that he will follow it on as far as he is able. Take heed therefore, brethren, for the enemy hath a special eye

upon you. You shall have his most subtle insinuations, and incessant solicitations, and violent assaults. As wise and learned as you are, take heed to yourselves lest he overwit you. The devil is a greater scholar than you, and a nimbler disputant: he can transform himself into an angel of light to deceive: he will get within you and trip up your heels before you are aware: he will play the juggler with you undiscerned, and cheat you of your faith or innocence, and you shall not know that you have lost it; nay, he will make you believe it is multiplied or increased when it is lost. You shall see neither hook nor line, much less the subtle angler himself, while he is offering you his bait: and his bait shall be so fitted to your temper and disposition, that he will be sure to find advantages within you, and make your own principles and inclinations to betray you; and whenever he ruineth you, he will make you the instruments of your own ruin. O what a conquest will he think he hath got, if he can make a minister lazy and unfaithful! if he can tempt a minister into covetousness or scandal, he will glory against the church, and say, 'These are your holy preachers: you see what their preciseness is, and whither it will bring them.' He will glory against Jesus Christ himself, and say, 'These are thy champions! I can make thy chiefest servants to abuse thee; I can make the stewards of thy household unfaithful.' If he did so insult against God upon a false surmise, and tell him he could make Job to curse him to his face, what would he do if he should indeed prevail against us? And at last he will insult as much over you, that ever he could draw you to be false to your great trust, and to blemish your holy profession, and to do him so much service that was your enemy. O do not so far gratify Satan! do not make him so much sport: do not suffer him to use you as the Philistines did Samson, first to deprive you of your strength, and then to put out your eyes, and so to make you the matter of his triumph and derision.

5. Take heed to yourselves also, because there are many eyes upon you, and therefore there will be many observers of your falls. You cannot miscarry but the world will ring of it. The eclipses of the sun by day-time are seldom without witnesses. If you take yourselves for the lights of the churches, you may well expect that men's eyes should be upon you. If other men may sin without observation, so

cannot you. And you should thankfully consider how great a mercy this is, that you have so many eyes to watch over you, and so many ready to tell you of your faults, and so have greater helps than others, at least for the restraining of your sin. Though they may do it with a malicious mind, yet you have the advantage by it. God forbid that we should prove so impudent, as to do evil in the public view of all, and to sin wilfully while the world is gazing on us! He that is drunk, is drunk in the night; and he that sleepeth, doth sleep in the night. (1 Thess. v. 7.) What fornicator so impudent as to sin in the open streets while all look on? Why consider that you are still in the open light; even the light of your own doctrine will disclose your evil doings. While you are as lights set upon a hill, look not to lie hid. (Matt. v. 14.) Take heed therefore to yourselves, and do your works as those that remember that the world looks on them, and that with the quicksighted eye of malice, ready to make the worst of all, and to find the smallest fault where it is, and aggravate it where they find it, and divulge it, and make it advantageous to their designs; and to make faults where they cannot find them. How cautiously then should we walk before so many illminded observers!

6. Take heed also to yourselves; for your sins have more heinous aggravations than other men's: It is noted among king Alphonsus's sayings, That a great man cannot commit a small sin: we may much more say, that a learned man or a teacher of others cannot commit a small sin; or at least, that the sin is great, as committed by him, which is smaller in another.

(1.) You are more likely than others to sin against knowledge, because you have more than they. At least you sin against more light or means of knowledge. What! do you not know that covetousness and pride are sins? Do you not know what it is to be unfaithful to your trust, and by negligence, or self-seeking to betray men's souls? You know your Master's will, and if you do it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. There must needs, therefore, be the more wilfulness, by how much there is the more knowledge. If you sin, it is because you will sin.

(2.) Your sins have more hypocrisy in them than other men's, by how much the more you have spoken against them.

O what a heinous thing it is in us, to study how to disgrace sin to the utmost, and make it as odious to our people as we can ; and when we have done, to live in it, and secretly cherish that which we openly disgrace ! What vile hypocrisy it is, to make it our daily business to cry it down, and yet to keep it ; to call it publicly all to naught, and privately to make it our bed-fellow and companion ; to bind heavy burdens for others, and not to touch them ourselves with a finger ! What can you say to this in judgment ? Did you think as ill of sin as you spoke, or did you not ? If you did not, why would you dissemblingly speak it ? If you did, why would you keep it and commit it ? O bear not that badge of the miserable Pharisees ! “ They say, but do not.” Many a minister of the Gospel will be confounded, and not able to look up, by reason of this heavy charge of hypocrisy.

(3.) Moreover, your sins have more perfidiousness in them than other men’s. You have more engaged yourselves against them. Besides all your common engagements as Christians, you have many more as ministers. How often have you proclaimed the evil and danger of sin, and called sinners from it ? How often have you declared the terrors of the Lord ? All these did imply that you renounced it yourselves. Every sermon that you preached against it, every private exhortation, every confession of it in the congregation, did lay an engagement upon you to forsake it. Every child that you have baptized and entered into the covenant with Christ, and every administration of the Supper of the Lord, wherein you called men to renew their covenant, did import your own renouncing of the flesh and the world, and your engagement unto Christ. How often and how openly have you borne witness of the odiousness and damnable nature of sin ? and yet will you entertain it against all these professions and testimonies of your own ? O what treachery is it to make such a stir in the pulpit against it, and after all to entertain it in the heart, and give it the room that is due to God, and even prefer it before the glory of the saints ! Many more such aggravations of your sins might be mentioned ; but as we haste over these, so we must pass them by through our present haste.

7. Take heed to yourselves ; for the honour of your Lord and Master, and of his holy truth and ways, doth lie more

on you than on other men. As you may do him more service, so always more disservice than others. The nearer men stand to God, the greater dishonour hath he by their miscarriages; and the more will they be imputed by foolish men, to God himself. The heavy judgment was threatened and executed on Eli and on his house, because they "kicked at his sacrifice and offering." (1 Sam. ii. 29.) "For therefore was the sin of the young men great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the Lord." (verse 17.) It was that great aggravation of "causing the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme," which provoked God to deal more sharply with David, than else he would have done. (2 Sam. xii. 11—14.) If you are indeed Christians, the glory of God is dearer to you than your lives. Take heed therefore what you do against it, as you would take heed what you do against your lives. Would it not wound you to the heart to hear the name and truth of God reproached for your sakes? To see men point to you, and say, 'There goes a covetous priest, a secret tippler, a scandalous man; these are they that preach for strictness, when themselves can live as loose as others; they condemn us by their sermons, and condemn themselves by their lives: for all their talk, they are as bad as we.' O, brethren, could your hearts endure to hear men cast the dung of your iniquities in the face of the holy God, and in the face of the Gospel, and of all that desire to fear the Lord? Would it not break your hearts to think that all the godly Christians about you should suffer reproach for your misdoings? If one of you that is a leader of the flock should but once be ensnared in a scandalous crime, there is scarcely a man or woman that seeketh diligently after their salvation, within the hearing of it, but besides the grief of their hearts for your sin, they are likely to have it cast in their teeth by the ungodly about them, though they never so much detest and lament it. The ungodly husband will tell his wife, and the ungodly parents will tell their children, and neighbours and fellow-servants will be telling one another of it, and saying, 'These are your godly preachers: you may see what comes of all your stir; are you any better than others? you are even all alike.' Such words as these must all the godly in the country perhaps hear for your sakes. "It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." (Matt.

xviii. 7.) O take heed, brethren, in the name of God, of every word that you speak, every step that you tread, for you bear the ark of the Lord; you are entrusted with his honour, and dare you let it fall, and cast it into the dirt? If you "that know his will, and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law, and being confident that you yourselves are guides of the blind, and lights to them that are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes:" if you, I say, should live contrary to your doctrine, and "by breaking the law, dishonour God, the name of God will be blasphemed among the ignorant and ungodly through you." (Rom. ii. 19—24.) And you are not unacquainted with that standing decree of Heaven, "Them that honour me, I will honour: and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Sam. ii. 30.) Never did man dishonour God, but it proved the greatest dishonour to himself. God will find out ways enough to wipe off all that can be cast upon him; but you will not so easily remove the shame and sorrow from yourselves.

8. Take heed to yourselves; for the souls of your hearers, and the success of your labours do very much depend upon it. God useth to fit men for great works before he will make them his instruments in accomplishing them. He useth to exercise men in those works that they are most suited to. If the work of the Lord be not soundly done upon your own hearts, how can you expect that he should bless your labours for the effecting it in others? He may do it if he please, but you have much cause to doubt whether he will. I shall here shew you some particular *reasons* under this last, which may satisfy you, that he who would be a means of saving others, must take heed to himself, and that God doth more seldom prosper the labours of unsanctified men.

(1.) Can it be expected that God will bless that man's labour (I still mean comparatively, as to other ministers) who worketh not for God, but for himself? Now this is the case of every unsanctified man. None but the upright do make God their chief end, and do all or any thing heartily for his honour: they make the Ministry but a trade to live by: they choose it rather than another calling, because their parents did destine them to it, and because it is a pleasant thing to know; and it is a life wherein they have more opportunity to furnish their intellects with all

kinds of science; and because it is not so toilsome to the body, to those that have a will to favour their flesh; and because it is accompanied with some reverence and respect from men; and because they think it a fine thing to be leaders and teachers, and have others depend on them, and receive the law at their mouth; and because it affordeth them a competent maintenance. For such ends as these are they ministers, and for these do they preach; and were it not for these, and such as these, they would soon give over. And can it be expected that God should much bless the labours of such men as these? It is not Him they preach for, but for themselves, and their own reputation or gain: not Him, but themselves, that they seek and serve; and therefore no wonder if he leave them to themselves for the success, and if their labours have no greater a blessing than themselves can give them, and the word reach no further than their own strength is able to make it reach.

(2.) Can you think that he is likely to be as successful as others, that dealeth not heartily and faithfully in his work, and never soundly believeth what he saith, and never is truly serious when he seemeth to be most diligent? And can you think that any unsanctified man can be hearty and serious in the Ministerial work? It cannot be. A kind of seriousness indeed he may have, such as proceedeth from a common faith, or opinion that the word is true, and is actuated by a natural fervour, or by selfish ends; but the seriousness and fidelity of a sound believer, that ultimately intendeth the glory of God and men's salvation, this he hath not. O, sirs, all your preaching and persuading of others will be but dreaming and trifling hypocrisy, till the work be thoroughly done upon yourselves. How can you set yourselves day and night to a work that your carnal hearts are averse from? How can you call out with serious fervour upon poor sinners to repent and come to God, that never repented or came in yourselves? How can you heartily follow poor sinners with importunate solicitations, to take heed of sin, and to set themselves to a holy life, that never felt yourselves the evil of sin, or the worth of holiness? I tell you, these things are never well known till they are felt, nor well felt till they are possessed; and he that feeleth them not himself, is not so likely to speak feelingly to others, nor to help others to the feeling of them. How can you

follow sinners with compassion in your hearts, and tears in your eyes, and beseech them in the name of the Lord to stop their course and turn and live, that never had so much compassion on your own soul, as to do thus much for yourselves? What! can you love other men better than yourselves? and have pity on them, while you have none upon yourselves? Sirs, do you think they will be hearty and diligent to save men from hell, that be not heartily persuaded that there is a hell? Or to bring men to heaven, that do not sincerely believe that there is such a thing? As Calvin saith on my text; '*Neque enim aliorum salutem sedulo unquam curabit, qui suam negligit.*' He that hath not so strong a belief of the word of God, and the life to come, as will take off his own heart from the vanities of this world, and set him upon a resolved diligence for salvation, I cannot expect that he should be faithful in seeking the salvation of other men. Surely he that dare damn himself, dare let others alone in the way to damnation; and he that will sell his Master, with Judas, for silver, will not stick to make merchandise of the flock; and he that will let go his hopes of heaven rather than he will leave his worldly and fleshly delights, I think will hardly leave these for the saving of others. In reason we may conceive, that he will have no pity on others, that is wilfully cruel to himself; and that he is not to be trusted with other men's souls, that is unfaithful to his own, and will sell it to the devil for the short pleasures of sin. I confess that man shall never have my consent to have the care and charge of others, and to oversee them in order to their salvation, that takes no heed to himself, but is careless of his own (except it were in case of absolute necessity, that no better could be had).

(3.) Do you think it is a likely thing that he will fight against Satan with all his might, that is a servant of Satan himself? And will he do any great harm to the kingdom of the devil, that is himself a member and subject of that kingdom? And will he be true to Christ that is in covenant with his enemy, and Christ hath not his heart? Why this is the case of every unsanctified man, of what cloth soever his coat be made. They are the servants of Satan, and the subjects of his kingdom; it is he that ruleth in their hearts; and are they like to be true to Christ that are ruled by the devil? What prince chose the friends and voluntary ser-

vants of his enemy to lead his armies in war against him? This is it that hath made so many preachers of the Gospel to be enemies to the work of the Gospel which they preach. No wonder if such be secretly girding at the holy obedience of the faithful; and while they take on them to preach for a holy life, if they cast reproaches on them that use it! O how many such traitors have been in the church of Christ in all ages, that have done more against him under his colours, than they could do in the open field; that have spoken well of Christ, and Scripture, and godliness in the general, and yet slyly and closely do what they can to bring it into disgrace, and make men believe that those that set themselves to seek God with all their hearts, are but a company of hypocrites, or self-conceited fantastical fellows: and what they cannot for shame speak that way in the pulpit, they will do in secret amongst their companions. How many such wolves have been set over the sheep, because they had sheep's clothing; pretending to be Christians, and as good as others! If there were a traitor among the twelve in Christ's family, no marvel if there be many now. It cannot be expected that a slave of Satan, "whose God is his belly, and who mindeth earthly things," should be any better than "an enemy to the cross of Christ." What though they live civilly, and preach plausibly, and have the outside of an easy, cheap religiousness? They may be as fast in the devil's snares by worldliness, pride, a secret distaste of diligent godliness, or by an unsound heart that is not rooted in the faith, nor unreservedly devoted to God in Christ, as any others are by drunkenness, uncleanness, and such disgraceful sins. Publicans and harlots do sooner come to heaven than Pharisees, because they are sooner convinced of their sin and misery.

And though many of these men may seem excellent preachers, and cry down sin as loud as others, yet is it all but an affected fervency, and too commonly but a mere uneffectual bawling. For he that cherisheth it in his own heart, doth never fall upon it in good sadness in others. I know that a wicked man may be more willing of another's reformation than his own, and may thence have a kind of real earnestness in dissuading them from it; because he can preach against sin at easier rates than he can forsake it, and another man's reformation may stand with his own en-

joyments of his lusts. And therefore a wicked minister, or parent, may be earnest with his people or family to mend, because they lose not their own sinful profits or pleasures by another's reformation, nor doth it call them to that self-denial as their own doth. But yet for all this, there is none of that zeal, resolution and diligence, as is in all that are true to Christ. They set not against sin as the enemy of Christ, and as that which endangereth their people's souls. A traitorous commander, that shooteth nothing against the enemy but powder, may cause his guns to make as great a sound or report, as some that are laden with bullets ; but he doth no hurt to the enemy by it. So one of these men may speak loud, and mouth it with an affected fervency ; but he seldom doth any great execution against sin and Satan. No man can fight well, but where he hateth, or is very angry ; much less against them whom he loveth, and loveth above all. Every unrenewed man is so far from hating sin to the purpose, that it is his dearest treasure ; though not as sin, yet the matter of it is, as it affordeth delight to his sensual desires. So that you may see, that an unsanctified man is very unfit to be a leader in Christ's army, who loveth the enemy ; and to draw others to renounce the world and the flesh, who cleaveth to them himself as his chief good.

(4.) And it is not a very likely thing that the people will regard much the doctrine of such men, when they see that they do not live as they preach. They will think that he doth not *mean* as he speaks, if he *do* not as he speaks. They will hardly believe a man that seemeth not to believe himself. If a man bid you run for your lives, because a bear, or an enemy is at your backs, and yet do not mend his pace himself in the same way, you will be tempted to think that he is but in jest, and there is really no such danger as he pretends. When preachers tell people of a necessity of holiness, and that without it no man shall see the Lord, and yet remain unholy themselves, the people will think they do but talk to pass away the hour, and because they must say somewhat for their money, and that all these are but words of course. Long enough may you lift up your voices against sin, before men will believe that there is any such harm or danger in it as you talk of, as long as they see the same man that reproacheth it, to put it in his bosom and make it his delight.

You rather tempt them to think that there is some special good in it, and that you dispraise it as gluttons do a dish which they love, that they may have it all to themselves. As long as men have eyes as well as ears, they will think they see your meaning as well as hear it; and they are more apt to believe their sight than their hearing, as being the more perfect sense. All that a preacher doth is a kind of preaching: and when you live a covetous or a careless life, you preach these sins to your people by your practice. When you drink, or game, or prate away your time in vain discourse, they take it as if you told them, 'Neighbours, this is that life that you should all live; you may venture on this course without any danger.' If you are ungodly, and teach not your families the fear of God, nor contradict the sins of the company you come into, nor turn the stream of their vain talking, nor deal with them plainly about the matters of their salvation, they will take it as if you preached to them that such things are needless, and they may boldly do so as well as you. Yea, and you do worse than all this; for you teach them to think ill of others that are better. How many a faithful minister and private man is hated and reproached for the sake of such as you! What say the people to them? 'You are so precise, and tell us so much of sin, and dangers, and duty, and make so much stir about these matters; when such or such a minister that is as great a scholar as you, and as good a preacher as you, will be merry and jest with us, and let us alone, and never trouble themselves or us with such discourse. These busy fellows can never be quiet, but make more ado than needs; and love to fright men with talk of damnation, when sober, learned, peaceable divines can be quiet, and live with us like other men.' This is the very thoughts and talk of people, which your negligence doth occasion. They will give you leave to preach against their sins as much as you will, and talk as much for godliness in the pulpit, so you will but let them alone afterwards, and be friendly and merry with them when you have done, and talk as they do, and live as they, and be indifferent with them in your conscience and your conversation. For they take the pulpit to be but as a stage; a place where preachers must shew themselves and play their parts; where you have liberty to say what you list for an hour: and what you say, they much regard not, if you shew them not by saying it personally to

their faces, that you were in good earnest, and indeed did mean them. Is that man therefore likely to do much good, or fit to be a minister of Christ, that will speak for him an hour, and by his life will preach against him all the week besides; yea, and give his public words the lie?

And if any of the people be wiser than to follow the examples of such men, yet the loathsomeness of their lives will make their doctrine the less effectual. Though you know the meat to be good and wholesome, yet it may make a weak stomach rise against it, if the cook or the servant that carrieth it have leprous or dingy hands. Take heed therefore to yourselves, if ever you mean to do good to others.

(5.) Lastly consider, whether the success of your labours depend not on the grace and blessing of the Lord: and where hath he made any promise of his assistance and blessing to ungodly men? If he do promise *his church* a blessing even by such, yet doth he not promise *them* any blessing. To his faithful servants he hath promised that he will be with them, that he will put his Spirit upon them, and his word into their mouths, and that Satan shall fall before them as lightning from heaven. But where is there any such promise to the ungodly, that are not the children of the promise? Nay, do you not rather by your abuse of God, provoke him to forsake and blast your endeavours? at least, as to yourselves, though he may bless them to his chosen. For I do not all this while deny, but that God may often do good to his church by wicked men, but not so ordinarily nor eminently as by his own.

And what I have said of the wicked themselves, doth hold in part of the godly while they are scandalous and backsliding, proportionably according to the measure of their sin. So much for the *reasons*.

CHAPTER II.

IV. Having shewed you, what it is to take heed to ourselves, and why it must be done; I am next to shew you, what it is to "Take heed to all the flock," and wherein it doth consist, and must be exercised. It was first necessary to take into consideration, *What we must be*, and *what we must do for our own souls*, before we come to that which must

be done for others: ‘Ne quis aliorum vulnera medendo ad salutem, ipse per negligentiam suæ salutis intumescat, ne proximos juvando, se deserat; ne alios erigens, cadat,’ saith Gregor. M. de cur. past. l. 4. Yea, lest all his labours come to nought, because his heart and life is nought that do perform them. ‘Nonnulli enim sunt qui solerti curâ spiritualia præcepta perscrutantur, sed quæ intelligendō penetrant, vivendo conculcant: repente docent quæ non opere, sed meditatione didicerunt: et quod verbis prædicant, moribus impugnant; unde fit ut cum pastor per abrupta graditur, ad præcipitium grex sequatur.’ Idem ib. li. 1. cap. 2. When we have led them to the living waters, if we muddy it by our filthy lives, we may lose our labour, and yet they be never the better. ‘Aquam pedibus perturbare, est sancta meditationis studia male vivendo corrumpere, inquit.’ Idem. Ibid.

Before we speak of the work itself, we must begin with somewhat that is implied and presupposed.

And 1. It is here implied, that *every flock should have their own pastor (one or more) and every pastor his own flock*. As every troop or company in a regiment of soldiers must have their own captain and other officers, and every soldier know his own commanders and colours: so is it the will of God, that every church have their own pastors, and that all Christ’s disciples “do know their teachers that are over them in the Lord.” (1 Thess. v. 12, 13.) The Universal Church of Christ must consist of particular churches guided by their own overseers; and every Christian must be a member of one of these churches; except those that upon embassages, travels, or other like cases of necessity, are deprived of this advantage. “They ordained them elders in every church.” (Acts xiv. 23; so Tit. i. 5.) And in many places this is clear. Though a minister be an officer in the Universal Church, yet is he in a special manner the overseer of that particular church which is committed to his charge. As he that is a physician in the Commonwealth, may yet be the ‘Medicus vel Archiater cujusdam civitatis,’ and be obliged to take care of that city, and not so of any other: so that though he may and ought occasionally to do any good he can elsewhere, that may consist with his fidelity to his special charge (when an unlicensed person may not); yet is he first obliged to that city, and must allow no help to others that must occasion a neglect of them, except in extraordinary cases,

where the public good requireth it : so is it betwixt a pastor and his special flock. When we are ordained ministers without a special charge, we are licensed and commanded to do our best for all, as we shall have a call for the particular exercise : but when we have undertaken a particular charge, we have restrained the exercise of our gifts and guidance so especially to that, that we may allow others no more than they can spare, of our time and help, except where the public good requireth it, which must be first regarded. From this relation of pastor and flock, arise all the duties which mutually we owe. As we must be true to our trust, so must our people be faithful to us, and obey the just directions that we give them from the word of God.

2. When we are commanded "to take heed to all the flock;" it is plainly implied, that *flocks must be no greater regularly and ordinarily than we are capable of overseeing or taking heed of*. That particular churches should be no greater, or ministers no fewer, than may consist with a taking heed to *all*; for God will not lay upon us natural impossibilities. He will not bind men on so strict account as we are bound, to leap up to the moon, to touch the stars, to number the sands of the sea. If it be the pastoral work to oversee and take heed to all the flock, then surely there must be such a proportion of pastors assigned to each flock, or such a number of souls in the care of each pastor, as he is able to take such heed to as is here required. Will God require of one Bishop to take the charge of a whole county, or of so many parishes or thousands of souls, as he is not able to know or to oversee? Yea, and to take the sole government of them, while the particular teachers of them are free from that undertaking? Will God require the blood of many parishes at one man's hands, if he do not that which ten or twenty, or a hundred, or three hundred men can no more do than I can move a mountain? Then woe to poor prelates! This were to impose on them a natural or unavoidable necessity of being damned. Is it not therefore a most doleful case that learned, sober men should plead for this as a desirable privilege; or draw such a burden wilfully on themselves; and that they tremble not rather at the thoughts of so great an undertaking? O happy had it been for the church, and happy for the bishops themselves, if this measure that is intimated by the apostle here had been still observed. And the

diocese had been no greater than the elders or bishops could oversee and rule, so that they might have taken heed to all the flock ! Or that pastors had been multiplied as churches multiplied, and the number of overseers proportioned so far to the number of souls, that they might not have let the work be undone, while they assumed the empty titles, and undertook impossibilities ! And that they had rather prayed the Lord of the harvest to send forth more labourers, even so many as had been proportioned to the work ; and not to have undertaken all themselves. I should scarcely commend the prudence or humility of that labourer (let his parts in all other respects be never so great) that would not only undertake to gather in all the harvest in this county himself, and that upon pain of death, yea of damnation, but would also earnestly contend for this prerogative.

Object. ' But there are others to teach, though one only have had the rule.'

Ans. Blessed be God it was so ; and no thanks to some of them. But is not government of great concernment to the good of souls, as well as preaching ? If not, then what matter is it for church-governors ? If it be, then they that nullify it by undertaking impossibilities, do go about to ruin the churches, and themselves. If only preaching be necessary, let us have none but mere preachers : what needs there then such a stir about government ? But if discipline (in its place) be necessary too, what is it but enmity to men's salvation to exclude it, and it is unavoidably excluded when it is made to be his work that is naturally incapable of performing it ! He that will command an army alone, may as well say, *It shall be destroyed for want of command* : and the schoolmaster that will oversee or govern all the schools in the county alone, may as well say plainly, *they shall be all ungoverned* : and the physician who will undertake the guidance of all the sick people in a whole nation or county, when he is not able to visit or direct the hundredth man of them, may as well say, *Let them perish* !

Object. ' But though they cannot rule them by themselves, they may do it by others.'

Ans. The nature of the pastoral work is such as must be done by the pastor himself. He may not delegate a man that is no pastor to baptize, or administer the Lord's-supper,

or to be the teacher of the church : no more may he commit the government of it to another. Otherwise by so doing he makes that man the bishop, if he make him the immediate ruler and guide of the church : and if a bishop may make each presbyter a bishop, so he do but derive the power from him, then let it no more be held unlawful for them to govern, or to be bishops. And if a prelate may do it, it is likely Christ or his apostles might, and have done it ; for as we are to preach in Christ's name, and not in any man's ; so it is likely that we must rule in his name. But of this somewhat more anon.

Yet still, it must be acknowledged, that in case of necessity, where there are not more to be had, one man may undertake the charge of more souls than he is able well to oversee particularly. But then he must only undertake to do what he can for them, and not to do all that a pastor ordinarily ought to do. And this is the case of some of us that have greater parishes than we are able to take that special heed to as their state requireth. I must profess for my own part, I am so far from their boldness that dare venture on the sole government of a county, that I would not for all England, have undertaken to have been one of the two that should do all the pastoral work that God enjoineeth to that one parish where I live, had I not this to satisfy my conscience, that *through the church's necessities more cannot be had, and therefore I must rather do what I can, than leave all undone, because I cannot do all.* But cases of unavoidable necessity, are not to be the standing condition of the church ; or at least, it is not desirable that it should so be. O happy Church of Christ, were the labourers but able and faithful, and proportioned in number to the number of souls ; so that the pastors were so many, or the particular flocks or churches so small, that we might be able to take heed to all the flocks.

Having told you these two things that are here implied ; I come next to the duty itself that is expressed. And this taking heed to all the flock in general is, *a very great care of the whole and every part, with great watchfulness and diligence in the use of all those holy actions and ordinances which God hath required us to use for their salvation.*

More particularly : this work may be considered,—(1.) In respect to the subject matter of it.—(2.) Its object.—(3.)

The work itself, or the actions which we must perform.—

(4.) The end which we must intend.

I shall begin with the last, as being first in our intention, though last attained.

I. The ultimate end of our pastoral oversight, is that which is the ultimate end of our whole lives; even the pleasing and glorifying of God, to which is connexed the glory of the human nature also of Christ, and the glorification of his church, and of ourselves in particular: and the nearer ends of our office, are the sanctification and holy obedience of the people of our charge; their unity, order, beauty, strength, preservation and increase; and the right worshipping of God, especially in the solemn assemblies. By which it is manifest, that before a man is capable of being a true pastor of a church, according to the mind of Christ, he must have so high an estimation of these things, as to make them the great and only end of his life.

1. That man therefore, that is not himself taken up with the predominant love of God, and is not himself devoted to him, and doth not devote to him all that he hath, and can do; that man that is not in the habit of pleasing God, and making him the centre of all his actions, and living to him as his God and happiness: that is, that man that is not a sincere Christian himself, is utterly unfit to be a pastor of a church. And if we be not in a case of desperate necessity, the church should not admit such, so far as they can discover them. Though to inferior common works (as to teach the languages, and some philosophy, to translate Scriptures, &c.) they may be admitted. A man that is not heartily devoted to God, and attached to his service and honour, will never set heartily about the pastoral work: nor indeed can he possibly (while he remaineth such) do one part of that work, no, nor of any other, nor speak one word in Christian sincerity; for no man can be sincere in the means, that is not so in his intentions of the end. A man must heartily love God above all, before he can heartily serve him before all.

2. No man is fit to be a Minister of Christ that is not of a public spirit as to the Church, and delighteth not in its beauty, and longeth not for its felicity: as the good of the Commonwealth must be the end of the magistrate, (his nearer end,) so must the felicity of the Church be the end of the

pastors of it. So that we must rejoice in her welfare, and be willing to spend and be spent for her sake.

3. No man is fit to be a pastor of a church that doth not set his heart on the life to come, and regard the matters of everlasting life, above all the matters of this present life; and that is not sensible in some measure how much the inestimable riches of glory are to be preferred to the trifles of the world. For he will never set his heart on the work of men's salvation, that doth not heartily believe and value that salvation.

4. He that delighteth not in holiness, hateth not iniquity, loveth not the unity and purity of the church, and abhorreth not discord and divisions; and taketh not pleasure in the communion of saints, and the public worship of God with his people, is not fit to be a pastor of a church: for none of all these can have the true ends of a pastor, and therefore cannot do the work. For of what necessity the end is to the means, and in relations, is easily known.

II. The subject matter of the Ministerial work, is in general, *spiritual things*, or matters that concern the pleasing of God, and the salvation of our people. It is not about temporal and transitory things. It is a vile usurpation of the pope, and his prelates to assume the management of the temporal sword, and immerse themselves in the businesses of the world; to exercise the violent coercion of the magistrate, when they should use only the spiritual weapons of Christ. Our business is not to dispose of commonwealths, nor to touch men's purses or persons by our penalties; but it consisteth only in these two things:

(1.) In revealing to men that happiness, or chief good, which must be their ultimate end. (2.) In acquainting them with the right means for the attainment of this end, and helping them to use them, and hindering them from the contrary.

1. It is the first and great work of the Ministers of Christ to acquaint men with that God that made them, and is their happiness: to open to them the treasures of his goodness, and tell them of the glory that is in his presence, which all his chosen people shall enjoy: that so by shewing men the certainty and the excellency of the promised felicity, and the perfect blessedness in the life to come, compared with the vanities of this present life, we may turn the stream of

their cogitations and affections, and bring them to a due contempt of this world, and set them on seeking the durable treasurer : and this is the work that we should lie at with them night and day. Could we once get them right in regard of the end, and set their hearts unfeignedly on God and heaven, the chief part of the work were done ; for all the rest would undoubtedly follow.—Here we must diligently shew them the vanity of their sensual felicity, and convince them of the baseness of those pleasures which they prefer to the delights of God.

2. Having shewed them the right end, our next work is to acquaint them with the right means of attaining it. Where the wrong way must be disgraced, the evil of all sin must be manifested, and the danger that it hath brought us into, and the hurt it hath already done us must be discovered. Then we have the great Mystery of Redemption to disclose ; the person, natures, incarnation, perfection, life, miracles, sufferings, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, glorification, dominion, intercession of the blessed Son of God. As also the tenor of his promises, the conditions imposed on us, the duties which he hath commanded us, and the everlasting torments, which he hath threatened to the final impenitent neglecters of his grace. O what a treasury of his blessings and graces, and the privileges of his saints have we to unfold ! What a blessed life of holiness and communion therein have we to recommend to the sons of men ! And yet how many temptations, difficulties, and dangers to disclose, and assist them against ! How many precious spiritual duties have we to set them upon, and excite them to, and direct them in ! How many objections of flesh and blood, and cavils of vain men have we to refute ! How much of our own corruptions and sinful inclinations to discover and root out ! We have the depth of God's bottomless love and mercy, the depth of the mysteries of his designs, and works of creation, redemption, providence, justification, adoption, sanctification, glorification ; the depth of Satan's temptations, and the depth of their own hearts to disclose. In a word, we must teach them, as much as we can, of the *word* and *works* of God. O what two volumes are these for a minister to preach upon ! How great, how excellent, how wonderful, how mysterious ! All Christians are disciples or scholars of Christ ; the church is his school, we are

his ushers ; the Bible is his grammar : this is that we must be daily teaching them. The Papists would teach them without book, lest they should learn heresies from the Word of truth ; lest they learn falsehood from the Book of God, they must only learn the books or words of their priests. But our business is not to teach them without book, but to help them to understand this book of God. So much for the subject matter of our work.

III. The Object of our pastoral care is, *all the flock* : that is, the church and every member of it. It is considered by us, (1.) In the whole body or society. (2.) In the parts or individual members.

1. Our first care must be about the whole : and therefore the first duties to be done are public duties, which are done to the whole. As our people are bound to prefer public duties before private, so are we much more. But this is so commonly confessed, that I shall say no more of it.

2. But that which is less understood or considered of, is, that *all the flock*, even each individual member of our charge must be taken heed of, and watched over by us in our ministry. To which end it is to be presupposed necessary, that (unless where absolute necessity forbiddeth it, through the scarcity of pastors, and greatness of the flock,) we should *know* every person that belongeth to our charge ; for how can we take heed to them if we do not know them ? Or how can we take that heed that belongeth to the special charge that we have undertaken, if we know not who be of our charge, and who not, though we know the persons ? Our obligation is not to all neighbour-churches, or to all stragglers, so great as it is to those whom we are set over. How can we tell whom to exclude, till we know who are included ? Or how can we repel the accusations of the offended, that tell us of the ungodly or defiled members of our churches, when we know not who be members, and who not ? Doubtless the bounds of our parish will not tell us, as long as Papists, and some worse, do there inhabit. Nor will bare hearing us certainly discover it, as long as those are used to hear that are members of other churches, or of none at all. Nor is mere participation of the Lord's-supper a sure note, while strangers may be admitted, and many a member acci-

dentally be kept off. Though much probability may be gathered by these, or some of these, yet a fuller knowledge of our charge is necessary where it may be had, and that must be the fittest expression of consent, because it is consent that is necessary to the relation.

All the flock being thus known, must afterward be taken heed to. One would think all reasonable men should be satisfied of that, and it should need no further proof. Doth not a careful shepherd look after every individual sheep? and a good schoolmaster look to every individual scholar, both for instruction and correction? And a good physician look after every particular patient? And good commanders look after every individual soldier? Why then should not the teachers, the pastors, the physicians, the guides of the churches of Christ take heed to every individual member of their charge? Christ himself, the great and good Shepherd, and Master of the church, that hath the whole to look after, doth yet take care of every individual. In Luke xv. he tells us, that he is as the Shepherd that "leaveth the ninety and nine sheep in the wilderness, to seek after one that was lost;" or, as the "woman that lighteth a candle, and sweepeth the house, and searcheth diligently to find the *one* groat that was lost; and having found it, doth rejoice, and call her friends and neighbours to rejoice." And Christ telleth us, that "even in heaven there is joy over *one* sinner that repenteth." The prophets are often sent to single men. Ezekiel is made a watchman over individuals; and must say to the wicked, "Thou shalt surely die." (Ezek. iii. 18—20.) And Paul taught them "publicly, and from house to house;" which was meant of his teaching particular families; for even the public teaching was then in houses; and *publicly*, and *from house to house*, signify not the same thing. The same Paul "warned every man, and taught every man, in all wisdom, that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." (Col. i. 28.) Christ expoundeth his parables to the twelve apart. Every man must "seek the law at the mouth of the priest." (Mal. ii. 7.) We must give an account of our watching for the souls of all that are bound to obey us. (Heb. xiii. 7.) Many more passages in Scripture assure us that it is our duty to take heed of every individual person in our flock. And many passages in the Ancient Councils do plainly tell us, it was the practice of those times,

till churches began to be crowded, and to swell so big that they could not be guided as churches should be, when they should rather have been multiplied, as the converts did increase. But I will pass over all these, and mention only one passage in Ignatius, (or whoever it was, I matter not much, seeing it is but to prove what was then the custom of the church,) ad Polycarp. Πυκνότερον συναγωγαὶ γενέθωσαν· ἐξ ὀνόματος πάντας ζῆτει δέσλς καὶ δέσλς μὴ ὑπερήφανει. i. e. 'Let the assemblies be gathered, seek after (or inquire of) all by name: despise not servant-men or maids.' You see it was then taken for a duty to look after every member of the flock by name; though it were the meanest servant-man or maid. The reasons of the necessity of this I shall pass over now, because some of them will fall in when we come to the duty of Catechising and personal Instruction in the end.

Object. 'But the congregation that I am set over is so great that it is not possible for me to know them all, much less to take heed of all individuals.'

Ans. 1. Is it necessity or not, that hath cast you upon such a charge? If it be not, you excuse one sin with another. How durst you undertake that which you knew yourself unable to perform, when you were not forced to it? It seems then you had some other ends in your undertaking, and never intended to make it good, and be faithful to your trust. But if you think that you were necessitated to it, I must ask you, 1. Might not you possibly have procured some assistance for so great a charge? Have you done all that you could with your friends and neighbours to get maintenance for another to help you? 2. Have you not so much maintenance yourself as might serve yourself and another? What though it will not serve to maintain you in fulness? Is it not more reason that you should pinch your flesh and family, than undertake a work that you cannot do, and neglect the souls of so many men? I know it will seem hard to some what I say; but to me it seems an unquestionable thing: that if you have but an hundred pounds a year, it is your duty to live upon part of it, and allow the rest to a competent assistant, rather than the flock that you are over should be neglected. If you say, this is hard measure, your wife and children cannot so live. I answer, (1.) Do not many families in your parish live on less? (2.) Have not many able ministers in the prelates'

days been [glad] of [less, with liberty to preach the Gospel? There are some] yet living (as I have heard) that have offered the bishops to enter into bond to preach for nothing, so they might but have the liberty to preach. (3.) If still you say, that you cannot live so nearly as poor people do, I further ask, can your parishioners better endure damnation than you can endure want and poverty? What! do you call yourselves ministers of the Gospel, and yet are the souls of men so base in your eyes that you had rather they did eternally perish, than yourselves and family should live in a low and poor condition? Nay, should you not rather beg your bread, than put such a thing as men's salvation upon a hazard or disadvantage? yea, or hazard the damnation but of one soul? O, sirs, it is a miserable thing when men study and talk of heaven and hell, and the fewness of the saved, and the difficulty of salvation, and are not all this while in good sadness. If you were, you could never surely stick at such matters as these, and let your people go to damnation, that you might live at higher rates in the world? Remember this, the next time you are preaching to them, *that they cannot be saved without knowledge*, and hearken whether conscience do not conclude, *It is likely they might be brought to knowledge, if they had but diligent instruction and exhortation privately, man by man*; and then were there another minister to assist me, *this might be done*: and then if *I would live nearly and deny my flesh, I might have an assistant*: and then it must conclude, *Dare I let my people live in ignorance, which I myself have told them is damning, rather than put myself and family to a little want*?

And I must further say, that indeed this poverty is not so sad and dangerous a business as it is pretended to be. So you have but food and raiment, must you not therewith be content? and what would you have more than that which may enable you for the work of God? And it is not purple and fine linen, and faring deliciously every day, that you must expect, as that which must content you. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth." So your clothing be warm, and your food be wholesome, you may as well be supported by it to do God service, as if you had the fullest satisfaction to your flesh: A patched coat may be warm, and bread and drink is wholesome food. He that wanteth not these, hath but a cold ex-

cuse to make for hazarding men's souls, that he may live on a fuller diet in the world.

Object. ' If this doctrine be received, then it will discourage men from meddling with great places ; and so all cities, market-towns, and other great parishes will be left desolate.'

Ans. It will discourage none but the carnal and self-seeking, not those that thirst after the winning of souls, and are wholly devoted to the service of God, and have taken up the Cross, and follow Christ in self-denial. And for others, they are so far from being good ministers, that they are not his disciples or true Christians. Christ would not forbear to tell the world of the absolute necessity of self-denial and resigning up all, and bearing the Cross, and mortifying the flesh, for fear of discouraging men from his service ; but contrarily telleth them, that he will have no other servants but such, and those that will not come on those terms, may go their ways, and take their course, and see who will lose by it, and whether he do want more their service, or they want his protection and favour.

Object. ' But I am not bound to go to a charge which I cannot perform, and take a greater place, when I am fit but for a less.'

Ans. 1. If you would undertake it but for want of maintenance, then it is not unfitness, but poverty that is your discouragement ; and that is no sufficient discouragement. 2. We are all bound to dispose of ourselves to the greatest advantage of the church, and to take that course in which we may do God the greatest service ; and we know that he hath more work for us in greater congregations than in lesser, and that the neglect of them would be the greatest injury and danger to his church and interest ; and therefore we must not refuse, but choose the greatest work, though it be accompanied with the greatest difficulties and suffering. It must be done, why not by you as well as others ?

Object. ' But no man must undertake more than he can do.'

Ans. I will add the rest of my inquiries, which will answer this objection. 3. Would the maintenance of the place serve two others, that have less necessity, or smaller families than you ? If it will, try to get two such as may accept it in your stead. 4. If this cannot be done, nor ad-

dition be procured, and there be really so little that you cannot have assistance, then these two things must be done. (1.) You must take the charge with limitation, with a profession of your insufficiency for the whole work, and your undertaking only so much as you can do; and this you do for the necessity of the place that cannot otherwise be better supplied. (2.) You must not leave off the work of personal oversight, nor refuse to deal particularly with any, because you cannot do it with all; but take this course with as many as you are able; and withal put on godly neighbours, and especially parents, and masters of families to do the more. And thus doing what we can, will be accepted.

In the meantime, let us importune the Rulers of the commonwealth, for such a portion of maintenance to great congregations, that they may have so many ministers to watch over them, as may personally, as well as publicly instruct, and exhort them. It may please God at last to put this into the hearts of governors, and to give them a love to the prosperity of his church, and a conscience of their duty for the promoting of men's salvation.

Some more of these objections we shall answer anon, under the Uses. So much for the distribution of the work of the Ministry, drawn from the object materially considered.

We are next to consider of it in reference to the several Qualities of the object. And because we shall here speak somewhat of the acts with the object, there will be the less afterward to be said of them by themselves.

1. The first part of our Ministerial work lieth in bringing unsound professors of the faith to sincerity, that they who before were Christians in name and show, may be so indeed. Though it belong not to us, as their pastors, to convert professed infidels to the faith, because they cannot be members of the church while they are professed infidels; yet doth it belong to us, as their pastors, to convert these seeming Christians to sincerity, because such seeming Christians may be visible members of our churches. And though we be not absolutely certain that this or that man in particular is unsound, and unsanctified, yet as long as we have a certainty that many such are usually in the church, and have too great probability that it is so with several individuals whom we can name, we have therefore ground

enough to deal with them for their conversion. And if we be certain by their notorious impiety that they are no Christians, and so to be rejected from the communion of Christians; yea, if they were professed infidels, yet may we deal with them for their conversion, though not as their pastors, yet as ministers of the Gospel. So that upon these terms we may well conclude that, the work of Conversion is the great thing that we must first drive at, and labour with all our might to effect.

Alas! the misery of the unconverted is so great, that it calleth loudest to us for our compassion! If a truly converted sinner do fall, it will be but into sin, which will surely be pardoned, and he is not in that hazard of damnation by it as others be. Not, as some unjustly accuse us to say, that God hateth not their sins as well as others, or that he will bring them to heaven let them live never so wickedly; but the Spirit, that is within them, will not let them live wickedly, nor to sin as the ungodly do; but they hate sin habitually, when through temptation they commit it actually; and as they have a general repentance for all, so have they a particular repentance for all that is known; and they usually know all that is gross and much more, and they have no iniquity that hath dominion over them. But with the unconverted it is far otherwise: they are in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and have yet no part nor fellowship in the pardon of their sins, or the hopes of glory. We have therefore a work of greater necessity to do for them, even "to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sin, and inheritance among the sanctified by faith in Christ." (Acts xxvi. 18.) To soften and open their hearts to the entertainment of "the truth, if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of it, that they may escape out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." (2 Tim. ii. 25.) That so "they may be converted, and their sins may be forgiven them." (Mark iv. 12.) He that seeth one man sick of a mortal disease, and another only pained with the toothach, will be moved more to compassionate the former, than the latter, and will surely make more haste to help him, though he were a stranger, and the other a son. It is so sad a case to see men in a state of damnation,

wherein if they should die they are remedilessly lost, that methinks we should not be able to let them alone, either in public or private, whatever other work we have to do. I confess, I am forced frequently to neglect that which should tend to the further increase of knowledge in the godly, and may be called stronger meat, because of the lamentable necessity of the unconverted. Who is able to talk of controversies, or nice unnecessary points, yea, or truths of a lower degree of necessity, how excellent soever, while he seeth a company of ignorant, carnal, miserable sinners before his face, that must be changed or damned? Methinks I even see them entering upon their final woe! Methinks I even hear them crying out for help, and speediest help. Their misery speaks the louder, because they have not hearts to seek, or ask for help themselves. Many a time have I known, that I had some hearers of higher fancies, that looked for rarities, and were addicted to despise the ministry, if he told them not somewhat more than ordinary; and yet I could not find in my heart to turn from the observation of the necessities of the impenitent, for the humouring of these, nor to leave speaking to the apparently miserable for their salvation, to speak to such novelists; no nor so much as otherwise should be done, to the weak for their confirmation, and increase in grace. Methinks as Paul's spirit was stirred within him, when he saw the Athenians so addicted to idolatry, so it should cast us into one of his paroxysms, to see so many men in great probability of being everlastingly undone; and if by faith we did indeed look upon them as within a step of hell, it should more effectually untie our tongues, than they tell us that Cræsus' danger did his son's. He that will let a sinner go to hell for want of speaking to him, doth set less by souls than the Redeemer of souls did, and less by his neighbour than rational charity will allow him to do by his greatest enemy. O, therefore, brethren, whomsoever you neglect, neglect not the most miserable! Whoever you pass over, forget not poor souls that are under the condemnation and curse of the law, and may look every hour for the infernal execution, if a speedy change do not prevent it. O call after the impenitent, and ply this great work of converting souls, whatever else you leave undone!

2. The next part of the Ministerial work, is for the building up of those that are already truly converted. And ac-

cording to the various states of these, the work is various. In general, as the persons are either such as are young and weak, or such as are in danger of growing worse, or such as are already declining, so our work is all reducible to these particulars, *Confirmation, Progress, Preservation and Restoration.*

(1.) We have many of our flock that are young and weak; though of long standing, yet of small proficiency or strength. And indeed it is the most common condition of the godly: most of them stick in weak and low degrees of grace; and it is no easy matter to get them higher. To bring them to higher and stricter opinions, is very easy; that is, to bring them from the truth into error, on the right hand as well as on the left: but to increase their knowledge and gifts is not easy; but to increase their graces is the hardest of all. It is a very troublesome thing to be weak: it exposeth us to many dangers, it abateth consolation, and delight in God, and taketh off the sweetness of his ways, and maketh us go to work with too much backwardness, and come off with little peace or profit. It maketh us less serviceable to God and man, to bring less honour to our Master and profession, and do less good to all about us. We find but small benefit by the means we use; we too easily play with the serpent's baits, and are ensnared by his wiles. A seducer will easily make us shake, and evil may be made appear to us as good, truth as falsehood, sin as a duty, and so on the contrary. We are less able to resist and stand in an encounter; we sooner fall; we rise with greater difficulty; and are apt to prove a scandal and reproach to our profession. We know less of ourselves, and are more apt to be mistaken in our own estate, not observing corruptions when they have got advantage, we are dishonourable to the Gospel by our very weakness, and little useful to any about us; and, in a word, though we live to less profit to ourselves or others, yet are we unwilling and unready to die.

Seeing the case of weakness is comparatively so sad, how diligent should we be to cherish and increase their grace! The strength of Christians is the honour of the church. When men are inflamed with the love of God, and live by a lively, working faith, and set light by the profits and honours of the world, and love one another with a pure heart fervently, and can bear and heartily forgive a wrong and suffer

joyfully for the cause of Christ, and study to do good, and walk inoffensively and harmlessly in the world, as ready to be servants of all men for their good, becoming all things to all men to win them, and yet abstaining from the appearances of evil, and seasoning all their actions with a sweet mixture of prudence, humility, zeal, and heavenly spirituality; O what an honour are such to their profession! What ornaments to the church; and how excellently serviceable to God and man! Men would sooner believe that the Gospel is indeed a word of truth and power, if they could see more such effects of it upon the hearts and lives of men. The world is better able to read the nature of Religion in a man's life than in the Bible. They that obey not the word, may be won by the conversation of such. It is therefore a necessary part of our work, to labour more in polishing and perfecting of the saints, that they may be strong in the Lord, and fitted for their Master's use.

(2.) Another sort of Converts that need our special help, are those that labour under some particular distemper, which keeps under their graces, and makes them temptations and troubles to others, and a burden to themselves. For, alas! too many such there are! Some that are especially addicted to pride, and some to worldliness, and some to this or that sensual desire; and many to frowardness and disturbing passions. It is our duty to set in for the assistance of all these, and partly by dissuasions and clear discoveries of the odiousness of the sin, and partly by suitable directions about the way of remedy, to help them to a conquest of their corruptions. We are leaders of Christ's army against the powers of darkness, and must resist all the works of darkness wherever we find them, though it be in the children of light. We must be no more tender of the sins of the godly than the ungodly, nor any more befriend them or favour them. By how much more we love the persons above others, by so much the more we must express it in the opposition of their sin. And yet must look to meet with some tender persons here, especially when iniquity hath got any head, and made a party; and many have fallen in love with it: they will be as pettish and impatient of a reproof as some who are worse, and interest piety itself into their faults, and say that a minister that preacheth against them, doth preach against the godly:—A most heinous crime this, to make God and god-

liness accessory to their sins. But the ministers of Christ must do their duty, for all men's peevishness ; and must not so far hate their brother, as to forbear the plain rebuke of him, or suffer sin to lie upon his soul. Though it must be done with *much* prudence, yet done it *must* be.

(3.) Another sort that our work is about, are declining Christians, that are either fallen into some scandalous sin, or else abate their zeal and diligence, and shew us that they have lost their former love ! As the case of backsliders is very sad, so our diligence must be great for their recovery. It is sad to them to lose so much of their life, and peace, and serviceableness to God ; and to become so serviceable to Satan and his cause ! It is sad to us to see that all our labour is come to this, and that when we have taken so much pains with men, and had so much hopes of them, all should be so far frustrated. It is saddest of all to think that God should be so abused by those that he hath loved, and done so much for ; and that the enemy should get such advantage upon his graces, and that Christ should be so wounded in the house of his friends, the name of God evil spoken of among the wicked through such, and all that fear God should be reproached for their sakes. Besides, partial backsliding hath a natural tendency to total apostacy, and would effect it, if special grace prevent it not. The sadder the case of such Christians is, the more lieth upon us for their effectual recovery, "to restore those that are but overtaken with a fault by the spirit of meekness," (Gal. vi. 1, 2,) and yet to see that the sore be thoroughly searched and healed, and the joint be well set again, what pain soever it cost ; and especially to look to the honour of the Gospel, and to see that they rise by such free and full confessions and significations of true repentance, that some reparation be thereby made to the church, and their holy profession, for the wound of dishonour that they had given it by their sin. Much skill is required to the restoring of such a soul.

(4.) Another part of our Ministerial work is about those that are fallen under some great temptation. Much of our assistance is needful to our people in such a case ; and therefore every minister should be a man that hath much insight into the tempter's wiles. We should know the variety of them, and the cunning craft of all Satan's instruments that lie in wait to deceive, and the methods, and devices of the

grand deceiver. "Some of our people lie under temptations to error and heresy, especially the young, unsettled and most self-conceited; and those that are most conversant and familiar with seducers. Young, unsettled Christians are commonly of their mind that have most interest in their esteem, and most opportunity of familiar talk to draw them into their way. And as they are tender, so deceivers want not the sparks of zeal, to set them in a flame. A zeal for error and opinions of our own, is natural and easily kindled and kept alive: but it is far otherwise with the spiritual zeal for God. O what a deal of holy prudence and industry is necessary in a Pastor to preserve the flock from being tainted with heresies, and falling into noxious conceits and practice; and especially to keep them in unity and concord, and hinder the rising or increase of divisions. If there be not a notable conjunction of all accomplishments, and a skilful improvement of parts and interests, it will hardly be done; especially in such times as ours, when the sign is in the head, and the disease is epidemical. If we do not publicly maintain the credit of our ministry, and second it by unblamable and exemplary lives, and privately meet with seducers, and shame them; if we be not able to manifest their folly, and follow not close our staggering people before they fall, how quickly may we give great advantage to the enemy, and let in such an inundation of sin and calamity, that will not easily be again cast out.

Others lie under a temptation to worldlymindedness; and others to gluttony or drunkenness; and others to uncleanness: some to one sin, and some to another. A faithful pastor therefore should have his eye upon them all, and labour to be acquainted with their natural temperament, and also with their occasions and affairs in the world, and the company that they live or converse with, that so he may know where their temptations lie; and then speedily, prudently, and diligently help them.

(5.) Another part of our Work is to comfort the disconsolate, and to settle the peace of our people's souls, and that on sure and lasting ground. To which end, the quality of the complainants, and the course of their lives had need to be known; for all people must have the like consolations that have the like complaints. But of this I have spoken already elsewhere; and there is so much said by many, especially

Mr. Bolton in his "Instructions for Right Comforting," that I shall say no more.

(6.) The rest of our Ministerial work is upon those that are yet strong ; for they also have need of our assistance ; partly to prevent their temptations and declinings, and preserve the grace they have ; partly to help them for a further progress and increase ; and partly to direct them in the improving of their strength for the service of Christ, and the assistance of their brethren. As also to encourage them, especially the aged, the tempted and afflicted, to hold on, and to persevere that they may obtain the crown. All these are the objects of the Ministerial work, and in respect to all these, we must take heed to all the flock.

IV. Having done with our Work in respect to its objects, I am next to speak of the *acts themselves*. But of this I shall be very brief.

1. One part of our work, and that the most excellent, because it tendeth to work on many, is the Public preaching of the Word. A work that requireth greater skill, and especially greater life and zeal than any of us bring to it. It is no small matter to stand up in the face of a congregation, and deliver a message of salvation or damnation, as from the living God, in the name of our Redeemer. It is no easy matter to speak so plain, that the ignorant may understand us ; and so seriously, that the deadest hearts may feel us ; and so convincingly, that contradicting cavillers may be silenced. I know it is a great dispute whether preaching be proper to the ministers or not ? The decision seems not very difficult. Preaching to a congregation as their ordinary teacher, is proper to a minister in office ; and preaching to the unbelieving world, Jews, Mahometans or Pagans, as one that hath given up himself to that work, and is separated and set apart to it, is proper to a minister in office ; but preaching to a church, and infidels occasionally, as an act of charity, extraordinarily, or upon special call to that act, may be common to others. The governor of a church, when he cannot preach himself, may in a case of necessity appoint a private man, 'pro tempore,' to do it, who is able, as Mr. Thorndike hath shewed. But no private man may obtrude, without his consent who by his office is the guide and pastor of that church. And a master of a family may preach to his own

family, and a schoolmaster to his scholars, and any man to those whom he is obliged to teach; so that he goes not beyond his ability, and do it in a due subordination to church-teaching, and not in the way of opposition and division. A man that is not of the trade, may do some one act of a tradesman in a corporation for his own use, or family, or friend; but he may not separate himself to it, or set it up, and make it his profession, nor live upon it, unless he had been an apprentice, and were free. For though one man of ten thousand may do it of himself, as well as he that hath served an apprenticeship, yet it is not to be presumed that it is ordinarily so: and the standing rule must not bend to rarities and extraordinaries, lest it undo all; for that which is extraordinary and rare in such cases, the law doth look upon as a 'non ens.' But the best way to silence such usurping teachers, is for those to whom it belongeth, to do it themselves so diligently, that the people may not have need to go a begging; and to do it judiciously, and affectingly, that a plain difference may appear between them and usurpers, and that other men's works may be shamed by theirs; and also by the adding of holy lives and unwearied diligence to high abilities, to keep up the reputation of their sacred office, that neither seducers, nor tempted ones may fetch matter of temptation from our blemishes or neglects.

2. Another part of our Pastoral work is to administer the holy Mysteries, or seals of God's covenant, Baptism, and the Lord's-supper. This also is claimed by private usurpers: but I will not stand to discuss their claim. A great fault it is among ourselves, that some are so careless in the manner, and others do reform that with a total neglect; and others do lay such a stress on circumstances, and make them a matter of so much contention, even in that ordinance where union and communion is so professed.

3. Another part of our Work is to guide our people, and be as their mouth in the Public prayers of the church, and the Public praises of God: as also to bless them in the name of the Lord. This sacerdotal part of the work is not the least, nor to be so much thrust into a corner as by too many of us it is. A great part of God's service in the church-assemblies, was wont in all ages of the church till of late, to consist in public praises and eucharistical acts in holy communion: and the Lord's-day was still kept as a day of thanksgiving, in the hymns, and common

rejoicings of the faithful, in special commemoration of the work of Redemption, and the happy condition of the Gospel-church. I am as apprehensive of the necessity of Preaching as some others: but yet methinks, the solemn praises of God should take up much more of the Lord's-day than in most places they do. And methinks, they that are for the magnifying of Gospel-privileges, and for a life of love and heavenly joys, should be of my mind in this; and their worship should be Evangelical as well as their doctrine pretendeth to be.

4. Another part of the Ministerial work, is to have a special care and oversight of each member of the flock. The parts whereof are these that follow:—

(1.) We must labour to be acquainted with the state of all our people as fully as we can; both to know the persons, and their inclinations and conversation; to know what are the sins that they are most in danger of, and what duties they neglect for the matter or manner, and what temptations they are most liable to. For if we know not the temperament or disease, we are likely to prove but unsuccessful physicians.

(2.) We must use all the means we can to instruct the ignorant in the matters of their salvation; by our own most plain familiar words; by giving, or lending, or otherwise helping them to books that are fit for them: by persuading them to learn catechisms; and those that cannot read, to get help of their neighbours; and to persuade their neighbours to afford them help, who have best opportunities thereto.

(3.) We must be ready to give advice to those that come to us with cases of Conscience, especially the great case which the Jews put to Peter, and the jailor to Paul and Silas, "What must we do to be saved?" A minister is not only for public preaching, but to be a known counsellor for their souls, as the lawyer is for their estates, and the physician for their bodies: so that each man that is in doubts and straits, should bring his case to him and desire resolution. Not that a minister should be troubled with every small matter, which judicious neighbours can give them advice in as well as he, no more than a lawyer or physician should be troubled for every trifle or familiar case, where others can tell them as much as they: but as when their estate, or life is in danger they will go to these; so when their souls are in danger, they should go to ministers: as Nicodemus came to Christ, and

as was usual with the people to go to the priest, whose lips must preserve knowledge, and at whose mouth they must ask the law, because he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts. And because the people are grown unacquainted with the office of the Ministry, and their own necessity and duty herein, it belongeth to us to acquaint them herewith, and to press them publicly to come to us for advice in such cases of great concernment to their souls. We must not only be willing of the trouble, but draw it upon ourselves by inviting them hereto. What abundance of good might we do, could we but bring our people to this! And doubtless much might be done in it, if we did our duty. How few have I ever heard that heartily pressed their people to their duty in this! A sad case, that people's souls should be so injured and hazarded, by the total neglect of so great a duty, and ministers scarcely ever tell them of it, and awaken them to it; were they but duly sensible of the need and weight of this, you would have them more frequently knocking at your doors, opening their cases to you, making their sad complaints, and begging your advice. I beseech you put them more on this for the future, and perform it carefully when they seek your help. To this end it is very necessary that we be acquainted with practical cases, and especially that we be acquainted with the nature of true grace, and able to assist them in trying their states, and resolve the main question that concerns their everlasting life or death. One word of seasonable and prudent advice given by a minister to persons in necessity, hath done that good that many sermons would not have done.

(4.) We must also have a special eye upon Families, to see that they be well ordered, and the duties of each relation performed. The life of religion, and the welfare and glory of church and state, depending much on Family-government and duty. If we suffer the neglect of this, we undo all. What are we like to do ourselves to the reforming of a congregation, if all the work be cast on us alone, and masters of families will let fall that necessary duty of their own, by which they are bound to help us! If any good be begun by the ministry in any soul in a family, a careless, prayerless, worldly family is almost sure to stifle it, or at least very much hinder it. Whereas, if you could but get the rulers of families to do their part, and take up the work where you left it,

and help it on, what abundance of good might be done ! I beseech you, therefore, do all that you can to promote this business, as ever you desire the true reformation and welfare of your parishes ! To which end let these things following be performed :—[1.] Get certain information how each family is ordered, and how God is worshipped in them ; that you may know how to proceed in your carefulness for their further good. [2.] Go now and then among them when they are like to be most at leisure, and ask the master of the family whether he pray with them, or read the Scriptures, or what he doth ? And labour to convince the neglecters of their sin. And if you have opportunity, pray with them before you go, and give them an example, what you would have them do, and how ; and get a promise of them that they will be more conscientious therein for the future. [3.] If you find any unable to pray in tolerable expressions, through ignorance and disuse, persuade them to study their own wants, and get their hearts affected with them, and so go often to those neighbours who use to pray, that they may learn, and in the meantime persuade them to use a form of prayer rather than none. Only tell them, that it is their sin and shame that they have lived so negligently, as to be now so unacquainted with their own necessities, and not know how to speak to God in prayer, when every beggar can find words to ask an alms ; and therefore tell them that this form is but for necessity, as a crutch to a cripple, while they cannot do as well without it : but they must not resolve to take up there, but to learn to do better as soon as they can, seeing prayer should come from the feeling of the heart, and be varied both according to our necessities and observations. Yet it is necessary for most of those that have not been brought up where prayer hath been used, that they begin at first with a form, because they will else be able to do nothing at all, and in sense of their disability will wholly neglect the duty, though they desire to perform it. For many persons can mutter out some honest requests in secret, that be not able before others to speak tolerable sense. And I will not be one of them that had rather the duty were wholly neglected, or profaned and made contemptible, than encourage them to the use of a form, either recited by memory or read. [4.] See that they have some profitable, moving book (beside

the Bible) in each family: if they have not, persuade them to buy some of small price, and great use; such as Mr. Whately's "New-Birth," and Dod on the Commandments, or some smaller, moving Sermons. If they be not able to buy them, give them some if you can: if you cannot, get some gentlemen, or other rich persons that are willing to good works to do it; and engage them to read them at night when they have leisure, and especially on the Lord's-day. [5.] By all means persuade them to procure all their children to learn to read English. [6.] Direct them how to spend the Lord's-day; how to dispatch their worldly businesses, so as to prevent incumbrances and distractions; and when they have been at the assembly, how to spend the time in their families. The life of religion lieth much on this, because poor people have no other free considerable time; and therefore if they lose this, they lose all, and will remain ignorant and brutish. Especially, persuade them to these two things: If they cannot repeat the sermon, or otherwise spend the time profitably at home, that they take their family with them, and go to some godly neighbour that spends it better, that by joining with them they may have the better help: That the master of the family will every Lord's-day at night, cause all his family to repeat the Catechism to him, and give him some account of what they have learned in public that day. [7.] If there be any in the family that are known to be unruly, give the ruler a special charge concerning them, and make them understand what a sin it is to connive at, and tolerate them. Neglect not therefore this necessary part of your work. Get masters of families to their duties, and they will spare you a great deal of labour with the rest, or further much the success of your labours. If a captain can get his lieutenant, cornet, and other inferior officers to their duties, he may rule the soldiers with less trouble, than if all should lie upon his hands alone. You are likely to see no general reformation till you procure family-reformation. Some little obscure religion there may be in here and there one; but while it sticks in single persons, and is not promoted by these societies, it doth not prosper, nor promise much for future increase.

(5.) Another part of the work of our private oversight consisteth in a vigilant opposing of seducers, and seeking to prevent the infection of our flock, and speedy reclaiming

those that begin to itch after strange teachers, and turn into crooked paths. When we hear of any one that lies under the influence of their temptations, or that is already deceived by them, we must speedily with all our skill and diligence make out for their relief. The means I shall shew in the Directions in the end.

(6.) Another part of this oversight lieth in the due encouragement of those that are humble, upright, obedient Christians, and profit by our teaching, and are an honour to their profession. We must in the eyes of all the flock put some difference between them and the rest by our praises, and more special familiarity, and other testimonies of our approbation, and rejoicing over them ; that so we may both encourage them, and incite others to imitate them. God's graces are amiable and honourable in all, even in the poorest of the flock, as well as in pastors ; and the smallest degrees must be cherished and encouraged ; but the highest more openly honoured and propounded to imitation. They that have slighted or vilified the most gracious, because they were of the laity, while they claimed to themselves the honour of the clergy, though adorned with little or none of that grace, as they shewed themselves to be proud and carnal, so did they take the next way to debase themselves by self-exaltation, and to bring the office itself into contempt. For if there be no honour due to the real sanctity of a Christian, much less to the relative sanctity of a pastor : and he that vilifieth the person, cannot well plead for the honouring of robes and empty titles : nor can he expect that his people should give him the honour of a pastor, if he will not give them the love and honour that is due to Christians, and the members of Christ. As the orator said to Domitius, ' Cur ego te habeam ut principem, cum tu me non habeas ut senatorem.' It was an unchristian course therefore, which our late Prelates and their agents took, who discountenanced none so much as the most godly, whom they should have rejoiced in, and encouraged ; and made them not only the common scorn, but also the objects of their persecuting rage, as if they had fed their flock for the butcher, and called them out for suffering as they came to maturity. This vilifying and persecuting the most diligent of the flock, was neither the note of Christian shepherds, nor the way to be so esteemed. As Jerom saith, " Quid de Episcopis, qui verberibus timeri

volunt, canones dicant, bene fraternitas vestra novit. Pastores enim facti sumus, non percussores. Egregius prædicator dixit; Argue, obsecra, increpa in omni patientiâ et doctrina: nova vero atque inaudita est illa prædicatio, quæ verberibus exigit fidem." Much more might he have said, 'quæ verberibus castigat pietatem.'

(7.) Another part of our oversight lieth in Visiting the Sick, and helping them to prepare either for a fruitful life, or a happy death. Though this be the business of all our life and theirs, yet doth it at such a season require extraordinary care both of them and us. When time is almost gone, and they must be now or never reconciled to God, and possessed of his grace, O how doth it concern them to redeem those hours, and lay hold upon eternal life! And when we see that we are likely to have but a few days or hours more to speak to them, in order to their endless state, what man that is not an infidel or a block, would not be with them, and do all that he can for their salvation in that short space!

Will it not awaken us to compassion to look upon a languishing man, and to think that within a few days his soul will be in heaven or hell? Surely it will much try the faith and seriousness of ministers and others, to be about dying men! They will have much opportunity to discern whether they are themselves in good sadness, about the matters of the life to come. So great is the change that is made by death, that it should awaken us to the greatest sensibility, to see a man so near it, and should provoke us in the deepest pangs of compassion, to do the office of inferior angels for the soul before it is departed from the flesh, that it may be ready for the convoy of superior angels, to transmit it to the prepared glory when it is removed from sin and misery. When a man is almost at his journey's end, and the next step puts him into heaven or hell, it is time for us to help him if we can, while there is hope. As Bernard saith, The death of the righteous is "bona propter requiem, melior propter novitatem, optima propter securitatem: sed mors peccatorum est mala in mundi amissione, pejor in carnis separatione, pessima in vermis ignisque duplici contritione." Could they have any hope that it would be their 'ultima linea rerum,' and that they have no more to suffer when that dismal day is past, they might have such abatements of their terror to

die as brutes, who fear no sorrow after death. But it is so far otherwise, that death itself is the smallest matter that they need to care for : ‘ Sed moriendo quo ire cogantur, ut August.’ It is not the ‘ prima mors quæ animam pellit violenter è corpore,’ that is the most terrible, ‘ sed secunda quæ animam nolentem tenent in corpore, inquit, Idem.’

And as their present necessity should move us to take that opportunity for their good, so should the advantage that sickness and the foresight of death affordeth. There are few of the stoutest hearts but will hear us on their death-bed, that scorned us before. They will then let fall their fury, and be as tame as lambs, that were before as untractable as wasps or madmen : a man may speak to them then, that could not before. I find not one of ten of the most obstinate, scornful wretches in the parish, but when they come to die, will humble themselves ; confess their fault, and seem penitent, and promise, if they should recover, to do so no more. If the very Meditations of Death be so effectual in the time of health, that it is, saith Augustinus, “ quasi Clavis carnis omnes motus superbiæ ligno crucis affigens,” (l. 2. de Doct. Christ.), much more when it comes in, as it were, at the window, and looks men in the face. Cyprian saith to those in health, “ Qui se quotidie recordatur moriturum esse, contemnit præsentia, et ad futura festinat :” much more “ qui sentit se statim moriturum. Nil ita revocatà peccato,” saith Austin, “ quam frequens mortis meditatio.” O how resolvedly will the worst of them seem to cast away their sins, and promise a reformation, and cry out of their folly, and of the vanity of this world, when they see that death is in good earnest with them, and away they must without delay ! Perhaps you will say, that these forced changes are not cordial, and therefore we have no great hope of doing them any saving good. I confess it is very common to be frightened into ineffectual purposes, but not so common to be at such a season converted to fixed resolutions : and as Austin saith, “ Non potest male mori, qui bene vixerit ; et vix bene moritur, qui male vixit.” Yet ‘ vix’ and ‘ nunquam’ are not all one : It should make both them and us the more diligent in the time of health, because it is ‘ vix :’ but yet we should bestir us at the last, in the use of the last remedies, because it is not ‘ nunquam.’

And it will not be unuseful to ourselves, to read such lectures of our own mortality : it is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting ; for it tendeth to make the heart better, when we see the end of all the living, and what it is that the world will do for those that sell their salvation for it. When we see that it will be our own case, and there is no escape ;

‘ (Scilicet omne sacrum mors importuna prophanat,

Omnibus obscuras injicit illa manus.)’

it will make us talk to ourselves in Bernard’s language, “ Quare, O miser, non omni hora ad mortem te disponis ? Cogita te jam mortuum, quem scis necessitate moriturum : distingue qualiter oculi vertentur in capite, venæ rumpentur in corpore, et cor scindetur dolore.” When we see that (as he saith) death spareth none : “ inopiæ non miseretur, non reveretur divitias ; non sapientiæ, non moribus, non ætati denique parcit ; nisi quod senibus mors est in januis, juvenibus vero in insidiis ;” it will excite us the better to consider the use of faith and holiness ; that it is not to put by death, but to put by hell : not that we may not die as certainly as others, but that we may die better, and be certainly happy after death.

Because I do not intend a Directory for the whole Ministerial work, I will not stand to tell you particularly what must be done for men in that last extremity ; but only choose out these three or four things to remember you of : passing by all the rest.

[1.] Stay not till strength and understanding be gone, and the time so short that you scarcely know what you do ; but go to them as soon as you hear that they are sick, whether they send for you or not.

[2.] When the time is so short, that there is no opportunity to endeavour the change of their hearts in that distinct way, as is usual with others, nor to press truths upon them in such order, and stay the working of it by degrees, we must therefore be sure to ply the main, and dwell upon those truths which must do the great work : shewing them the certainty and glory of the life to come, and the way by which it was purchased for us, and the great sin and folly of their neglecting it in time of health ; but yet the possibility that remaineth of obtaining it, if they do but close with it heartily as their happiness, and with the Lord Jesus, as the way

thereto ; abhorring themselves for their former evil, and now unfeignedly resigning themselves up to Him to be justified, sanctified, ruled and saved. Three things must be chiefly insisted on.—1. The end: the certainty and greatness of the glory of the saints in the presence of God, that so their hearts may be set upon it. 2. The sufficiency and necessity of the redemption by Jesus Christ ; and the fulness of the Spirit, which we may, and must be made partakers of. This is the principal way to the end, and the nearer end itself. 3. The necessity and nature of faith, repentance and resolutions for new obedience according as there shall be opportunity. This is the subservient way, or the means that on our part, must be performed.

[3.] Labour, upon conviction and deliberation to engage them by solemn promise to Christ, and new obedience according to their opportunity ; especially if you see any likelihood of their recovery.

[4.] If they do recover, be sure to mind them of their promises. Go to them purposely to set it home, and reduce them into performance. And whenever after you see them remiss, go to them then, and remind them of what they formerly said. And because it is of such use to them that recover (and hath been a means of the conversion of many a soul), it is very necessary, that you go to them whose sickness is not mortal, as well as to them that are nearer death ; and so we may have some advantage to move them to repentance, and engage them to newness of life ; and may afterward have this to plead against their sins. As a bishop of Colen is said by Æneas Silvius to have answered the emperor Sigismund, when he asked him, what was the way to be saved ; that ‘he must be what he purposed or promised to be, when he was last troubled with the stone or gout :’ so may we hereafter answer these.

(8.) Another part of our Ministerial oversight consisteth in the right comforting the consciences of the troubled, and settling our people in a well-grounded peace. But this I have spoken of elsewhere, and others have done it more at large.

(9.) Another part of this oversight consists in reproving and admonishing those that live offensively, or impenitently, and receiving the information of those that have admonished them more privately in vain. Before we bring such matters

to the congregation, or to a representative church, it is ordinarily most fit for the minister to try himself what he can do more privately to bow the sinner to repentance, especially if it be not a public crime. A great deal of skill is here required, and difference must be made, according to the various tempers of offenders; but with the most it will be necessary to begin with the greatest plainness and power, in order to shake their careless hearts, and make them see what it is to dally with sin; to let them know the evil of it, and its sad effects, and the unkindness, unreasonableness, unprofitableness, and other aggravations; and what it is they do against God and themselves. For the matter, the following directions may be applied.

(10.) The next part of our oversight lies in the use of Church-discipline; and this consisteth after the aforesaid private reproofs.—In more public reproof.—Persuading the person to meet expressions of repentance.—Praying for them.—Restoring the penitent.—Excluding and avoiding the impenitent.—[1.] And for reproof, these things must be observed: That the accusations of none, no, not the best in the church be taken without proof, nor rashly entertained; nor that a minister should make himself a party before he have a sufficient evidence of the case. It is better let many vicious persons go unpunished, or uncensured, when we want sufficient evidence, than to censure one unjustly; which we may easily do, if we will go upon too bold presumptions; and then it will bring upon the pastors the scandal of partiality, and unrighteous and injurious dealing, and make all their reproofs and censures contemptible.—[2.] Let there be therefore, a less public meeting of chosen persons (as the officers and some delegates of the church on their behalf) to have the hearing of all such cases before they be made more public: Once a month, at a set place, they may come together to receive what charge shall be brought against any member of the church, that it may be considered whether it be just, and the offender may be dealt with then first: and if the fault be either less public or less heinous, so that a less public profession of repentance may satisfy, then if the party shall there profess repentance, it may suffice.—[3.] But if it be not so, or if the party remain impenitent, he must be reproved before all, and there again invited to repentance. This duty is not the less, because our

brethren have made so little conscience of the practice of it. It is not only Christ's command to *tell the church*, but Paul's to *rebuke such before all*; and the church hath constantly practised it till selfishness and formality caused them to be remiss in this and other duties together; and the Reformers have as much stood up for it as the rest; and as deeply are we engaged by vows, covenants, prayers, and other means, for the executing of it: of which more in the application. Austin saith, "Quæ peccantur coram omnibus, coram omnibus corripienda sunt, ut omnes timeant: Qui secreto peccant in te, secreto corripe; nam si solus nosti, et eum vis coram aliis arguere, non es corrector sed proditor." Greg. Mag. in Registro, saith, "Manifesta peccata non sunt occulta correctione purganda: sed palam sunt arguendi qui palam nocent; ut dum aperta objurgatione sanantur, hi qui eos imitando delinquerant, corrigantur. Dum enim unus corripitur, plurimi emendantur, et melius est ut pro multorum salute unus condemnetur, quam ut per unius licentiam multi periclitentur." Isidore saith, "Qui admonitus secretè de peccato corrigi negligit, publicè arguendus est, et vulnus quod occultè sanari nescit, manifestè debeat emendari." If any should say, that we shall thus be guilty of defaming men by publishing their crimes; I answer, in the words of Bernard sup. Cantic. "Cum carpuntur vitæ, et inde scandalum oritur, ipse sibi scandali causa est, qui fecit quod argui debet; non ille qui arguit. Non ergo timeas contra charitatem esse, si unius scandalum multorum recompensaveris pace. Melius est enim ut pereat unus quam unitas." There is no room for a doubt, whether this be our duty, or whether we are unfaithful as to the performance of it. I doubt many of us that would be ashamed to omit Preaching or Praying half so much, have little considered what we do in the wilful neglect of this duty, and the rest of discipline so long as we have done. We little think how we have drawn the guilt of swearing, and drunkenness, and fornication, and other crimes upon our own heads, for want of using God's means for the cure of them. As Greg. Mag. saith in Registro, "Qui non corrigit resecanda, committit: et facientis culpam habet, qui quod potest corrigere, negligit emendare," saith the Comedian. "Si quid me scis fecisse inscite aut improbe, si id non accusas, tuipse objurgandus es." Plaut.

If any say, there is little likelihood that public, personal

reprehension should do good on them, because they will be but enraged by the shame, I answer:—[1.] Philo, a Jew, could say (de Sacrif. Abel and Cain), “We must endeavour, as far as we are able, to save those from their sins that shall certainly perish; imitating good physicians, who when they cannot save a sick man, do yet willingly try all means for cure, lest they seem to want success through their own neglects.—[2.] I further answer, It ill beseems the silly creature to implead the ordinances of God as useless, or to reproach his service instead of doing it, and set their wits against their Maker. God can make use of his own ordinances, or else he would never have appointed them.—[3.] The usefulness of this discipline is apparent to the shaming of sin, and humbling of the sinner; and manifesting the holiness of Christ and his doctrine, and church before all the world.—[4.] What would you have done with such sinners? give them up as hopeless? That were too cruel. Would you use other means? Why it is supposed that all other have been used without success; for this is the last remedy.—[5.] The Church of Christ hath found reason enough to use this course, even in times of persecution, when our carnal reason would have told them that they should then above all have forborne it, for fear of driving away all their converts.—[6.] The principal use of this public discipline is not for the offender himself, but for the church. It tendeth exceedingly to deter others from the like crimes, and so to keep pure the congregations, and their worship. Seneca could say, “*Vitia transmittit ad posteros, qui præsentibus culpis ignoscit.*” And elsewhere, “*Bonis nocet, qui malis parcit.*” If you say, that it will but restrain them as hypocrites, and not convert them: I answer, It may preserve others. And who knows how God may bless his ordinance, even to them? The restraint of sin is a benefit not to be contemned. “*Audebo peccanti mala sua ostendere: vitia ejus si non excidero, inhihebo. Non desinent; sed intermittent: fortasse autem desinent, si intermittendi consuetudinem fecerint,*” said the Moralist. Sen. Epist. 40. The scorns that I have heard from many against the Scottish ministers, from bringing offenders to the stool of repentance, as if it were mere formality and hypocrisy, to take such a thing as satisfactory, when true repentance is absent, hath discovered more of the accuser’s error than of theirs. For no

doubt, it is true repentance that they exhort men to ; and it is true repentance which offenders do profess ; and whether they truly profess it, who can tell but God ? It is not for nothing that sin is brought to so much disgrace, and the church doth so far acquit themselves of it. But of this next.

Next to the duty of public reproof must be joined an exhortation of the person to repentance, and to the public profession of it for the satisfaction of the church. For as the church is bound to avoid communion with impenitent, scandalous sinners, so when they have had the evidence of their sin, they must see some evidence of their repentance ; for we cannot know them to be penitent without evidence. And what evidence is the church capable of, but their profession of repentance first, and their actual reformation afterwards ? both which must be expected.

To these may be most fitly joined the public prayers of the church, and that both for the reprov'd before they are rejected, and for the rejected (some of them at least) that they may repent and be restored. But we are now upon the former. Though this is not expressly affixed to discipline, yet we have a sufficient discovery of God's will concerning it in the general precepts. We are commanded to *pray always* ; and in *all things*, and for *all men*, and in *all places* : and *all things* are said to be *sanctified by it*. It is plain therefore, that so great a business as this should not be done without it ! And who can have any just reason to be offended with us, if we pray to God for the changing of their hearts, and the pardon of their sins ? It is therefore in my judgment a very laudable course of those churches that use for the three next days together to desire the congregation to join in earnest prayer to God for the opening of the sinner's eyes, softening his heart, and saving him from impenitency and eternal death ! And though we have no express direction in Scripture just how long we shall stay to try whether the sinner be so impenitent, as to be necessarily excluded, yet we must follow the general directions, with such diversity as the case and quality of the person and former proceeding shall require ; it being left to the discretion of the church, who are in general, to stay so long till the person manifest himself obstinate in his sin : not but that a temporary exclusion, called Suspension, may often

be inflicted in the meantime ; but before we proceed to an exclusion 'à statu,' it is very meet (ordinarily) that three days' prayer for him and patience towards him should antecede.

And indeed, I see no reason why this course should not be much more frequent than it is ; and that not only upon those that are members of our special charge, and do consent to discipline, but even to those that deny our pastoral oversight and discipline, and yet are our ordinary hearers. For so far as men have Christian communion or familiarity with us, so far are they capable of being excluded from communion. Though the members of our special charge have more full and special communion, and so are more capable of a more full and special exclusion ; yet all those that dwell among us, and are our ordinary hearers, have some communion. For as they converse with us, so they hear the word, not as heathens, but as Christians, and members of the Universal Church into which they have been baptized ; and they join with us in public prayers and praises in the celebration of the Lord's-day. From this therefore they are capable of being excluded, or from part of this, at least morally, if not locally. For the precept of *avoiding*, and *withdrawing from*, and *not eating with* such, is not restrained to the members of a governed church, but extended to all Christians that are capable of communion.

When these ungodly persons are sick, we have daily bills from them to request the prayers of the congregation : and if we must pray for them against sickness, and temporal death, I know no reason but we should much more earnestly pray for them against sin and eternal death. That we have not their consent, is no dissuasive : for that is their disease, and the very venom and malignity of it ; and we do not take it to be sober arguing, to say, 'I may not pray for such a man against his sickness, because he is sick :' or, 'if he were not sick, I would pray against his sickness.' No more is it to say, 'If he were not impenitent, so as to refuse our prayers, I would pray that he might be saved from his impenitency.' I confess I do not take myself to have so strict a charge over this sort of men, who renounce my oversight, as I do over the rest that own it ; and that is the reason why I have called no more of them to public repentance, because it requireth most commonly more time to examine

the matter of fact, or deal with the person first more privately, that his impenitency may be discerned, than I can possibly spare from the duties which I owe to my special charge, to whom I am more indebted ; and therefore may ordinarily expend no more on the rest (who are to me but as strangers, or men of another parish, and of no governed, particular church) than I can spare when I have done my main duty to my flock. But yet though I cannot use any such discipline on all that sort, nor am so much obliged to do it, yet some of them that are most notoriously and openly wicked, where less proof and short debates are requisite, I intend to deal thus with hereafter, having found some success in that kind already. But especially to all those whom we take for members of that particular church which we are pastors of, there is no question but this is our duty, and therefore where the whole parish are members, discipline must be exercised on the whole.

I confess much prudence is to be exercised in such proceedings, lest we do more hurt than good ; but it must be such Christian prudence as ordereth duties, and suiteth them to their ends, and not such carnal prudence as shall enervate or exclude them. It may be fit therefore for younger ministers to consult with others, for the more cautious proceeding in such works. And in the performance of it, we should deal humbly, even when we deal most sharply, and make it appear that it is not from any contending or lordly disposition, nor an act of revenge for any injury ; but a necessary duty which we cannot conscientiously avoid : and therefore it will be meet we disclaim all such animosities, and shew the people the commands of God obliging us to what we do.

‘ Neighbours and brethren, sin is so hateful an evil in the eyes of the most holy God, how light soever impenitent sinners make of it, that he hath provided the everlasting torments of hell for the punishment of it ; and no less means can prevent that punishment than the sacrifice of the blood of the Son of God, applied to those that truly repent of it and forsake it, and therefore God that calleth all men to repentance, hath commanded us to exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin ; (Heb. iii. 13 ;) and that we do not hate our brother in our heart, but in any wise rebuke our neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him ; (Lev. xix.

17;) and that if our brother offend us, we should tell him his faults between him and us; and if he hear not, take two or three, and if he hear not them, tell the church; and if he hear not the church, he must be to us as a heathen or a publican; (Matt. xviii. 17;) and those that sin, we must rebuke before all, that others may fear; (1 Tim. v. 20;) and rebuke with all authority. (Tit. i. 15.) Yea, were it an apostle of Christ that should openly sin, he must be openly reprov'd, as Paul did Peter, (Gal. ii. 11. 14,) and if they repent not, we must avoid them, and with such not so much as eat. (2 Thess. iii. 6. 12. 14; 1 Cor. v. 11. 13.) According to these commands of the Lord, having heard of the scandalous practice of N. N. of this church (or parish) and having received sufficient proof that he hath committed the odious sin of —; we have seriously dealt with him to bring him to repentance; but, to the grief of our hearts, do perceive no satisfactory success of our endeavours; but he seemeth still to remain impenitent, or still liveth in the same sin, though he verbally profess repentance. We do therefore judge it our necessary duty, to proceed to the use of that further remedy which Christ hath commanded us to try; and hence we desire him in the name of the Lord, without any further delay, to lay by his obstinacy against the Lord and to submit to his rebuke and will, and to lay to heart the greatness of his sin, the wrong he hath done to Christ and to himself, and the scandal and grief that he hath caused to others; and how unable he is to contend with the Almighty, and prevail against the Holy God, who to the impenitent is a consuming fire! Or to save himself from his burning indignation! And I do earnestly beseech him for the sake of his own soul, that he will but soberly consider, what it is that he can gain by his sin or impenitency, and whether it will pay for the loss of everlasting life? And how he thinks to stand against God in judgment, or to appear before the Lord Jesus, when death shall snatch his soul from his body, if he be found in this impenitent state? When the Lord Jesus himself, in whose blood they pretend to trust, hath told such with his own mouth, that except they repent they shall all perish. (Luke xiii. 3. 5.) And I do beseech him for the sake of his own soul, and require him as a messenger of Jesus Christ, as he will answer the contrary at the bar of God, that he lay by the stoutness

and impenitency of his heart, and unfeignedly confess and lament his sin before God and this congregation ! And this desire I here publish, not out of any ill will to his person, as the Lord knoweth, but in love to his soul, and in obedience to Christ that hath made it my duty ; desiring, that if it be possible, he may be saved from his sin, and from the power of Satan, and from the everlasting burning wrath of God, and may be reconciled to God, and to his church, and therefore that he may be humbled by true contrition, before he be humbled by remediless condemnation.'

Thus, or to this purpose, I conceive our public admonition should proceed ; and in some cases where the sinner taketh his sin to be small, the aggravation of it will be necessary, especially the citing of some texts of Scripture that do aggravate and threaten it.

And in case he either will not be present, that such admonition may be given him, or will not be brought to a discovery of repentance, and to desire the prayers of the congregation for him, it will be meet that with such a preface as this afore expressed, we desire the prayers of the congregation for him ourselves ; that the people would consider what a fearful condition the impenitent are in, and have pity on a poor soul that is so blinded and hardened by sin and Satan, that he cannot pity himself ; and think what it is for a man to appear before the living God in such a case, and therefore that they would join in earnest prayer to God, that he would open his eyes, and soften and humble his stubborn heart, before he be in hell beyond remedy : and accordingly let us be very earnest in prayer for such that the congregation may be provoked affectionately to join with us ; and who knows but God may hear such prayers, and cause the sinner's heart to relent. However, the people will perceive that we make not light of sin, and preach not to them in mere custom or formality. If ministers would be conscientious in thus carrying on the work of God entirely and *self-denyingly*, they might make something of it, and expect a fuller blessing. But when we shrink from all that is dangerous or ungrateful, and shift off all that is costly or troublesome, they cannot expect that any great matter should be done by such carnal, partial use of means ; and though some may be here and there called home to God, yet we can-

not look that the Gospel should prevail, and run, and be glorified, where it is so lamely and defectively carried on.

When a sinner is thus admonished, and prayed for, if it please the Lord to open his eyes and give him remorse, before we proceed to any further censure, it is our next duty to proceed to his full recovery; where these things must be observed:—(1.) That we do not either discourage him by too much severity, nor yet by too much lenity and levity make nothing of discipline, nor help him to any saving cure, but merely slubber it over. If therefore he have sinned scandalously but once, if his repentance seem deep and serious, we may in some cases restore him at that time; that is, if the wound that he hath given to the credit of the church, be not so deep as to require more ado for satisfaction, or the sin so heinous as may cause us to delay. But if it be so, or if he have lived long in the sin, it is most meet that he do wait in penitence a convenient time before he be restored.—(2.) And when the time comes, whether at the first confession, or after, it is meet that we urge him to be serious in his humiliation, and set it home upon his conscience till he seem to be truly sensible of his sin; for it is not a vain formality, but the recovery and saving of a soul that we expect.—(3.) We must see that he beg the communion of the church, and their prayers to God for his pardon and salvation.—(4.) And that he promise to fly from such sin for the time to come, and watch more narrowly, and walk more warily.—(5.) Then we have these things more to do:—To assure him of the riches of God's love, and the sufficiency of Christ's blood to pardon his sins, and that if his repentance be sincere, the Lord doth pardon him, of which we are authorised as his messengers to assure him:—to charge him to persevere and perform his promises, avoid temptations, and continue to beg mercy and strengthening grace:—to charge the church that they imitate Christ in forgiving, and retaining; or if he were cast out, receive the penitent person into their communion, and that they never reproach him with his sins, or cast them in his teeth, but forgive and forget them as Christ doth.—And then to give God thanks for his recovery so far, and to pray for his confirmation, and future preservation.

The next part of Discipline, is the rejecting and removing

from the church's communion, those that after sufficient trial do remain impenitent; where note—(1.) That if a man have sinned but once in a scandalous manner, it is but a profession of repentance that we can expect for our satisfaction; but if he be accustomed to sin, or have often broke such promises, then it is an actual reformation we must expect. And therefore, he that will refuse either of these, to reform, or to profess and manifest repentance, is to be taken by us as living in his sin: for a heinous sin, but once committed, is morally continued in till it be repented of; and a bare forbearing of the act is not sufficient.—(2.) Yet have we no warrant to rip up matters that are worn out of the public memory, and so to make that public again that is ceased to be public: at least in ordinary cases.—(3.) Exclusion from church-communion, commonly called Excommunication, is of divers sorts or degrees, more than two or three, which are not to be confounded; of which, I will not so far digress as here to treat.—(4.) That which is most commonly to be practised among us is, only to remove an impenitent sinner from our communion, till it shall please the Lord to give him repentance.—(5.) In this exclusion or removal, the minister or governors of that church are authoritatively to charge the people in the name of the Lord to avoid communion with him; and to pronounce him one, whose communion the church is bound to avoid; and the people's duty is obedientially to avoid him, in case the pastor's charge contradict not the word of God. So that he hath the guiding or governing power; and they have a discerning power, whether his charge be just, and an executive power; for it is they that must execute the sentence in part by avoiding the rejected, as he himself must execute it by denying him those ordinances and privileges not due to him, whereof he is the administrator.—(6.) It is very convenient to pray for the repentance and restoration, even of the excommunicated.—(7.) And if God shall give them repentance they are gladly to be received into the communion of the church again.

Of the manner of all these I shall say no more, so much having been said of them already. And for the manner of other particular duties, of which I have said little or nothing, you have much already, as in other writings, so in the Directory of the late Assembly.

Would we were but so far faithful in the practice of this discipline, as we are satisfied both of the matter and manner; and did not dispraise and reproach it by our negligence while we write and plead for it with the highest commendations. It is worthy our consideration, who are like to have the heavier charge about this matter at the bar of God? Whether those deluded ones, that have reproached and hindered discipline by their tongues, because they knew not its nature and necessity; or we, that have so vilified it by our constant omission, while with our tongues we have magnified it? If hypocrisy be no sin, or if the knowledge of our Master's will be no aggravation of the evil of disobedience, then we are in a better case than they. I will not advise the zealous maintainers, and obstinate neglecters and rejecters of Discipline, to unsay all that they have said, till they are ready to do as they say, nor to recant their defences of Discipline, till they mean to practise it, nor to burn all the books that they have written for it, and all the records of their costs and hazards for it, lest they rise up in judgment against them to their confusion; nor that they recant their condemnation of the prelates in this, till they mean a little further to outgo them: But I would persuade them without any more delay, to conform their practices to these testimonies which they have given, lest the more they are proved to have commended discipline, the more they are proved to have condemned themselves for neglecting it.

I have often marvelled, that the same men who have been much offended at the books that have been written for free admission to the Lord's-supper, or for mixed communion in that one part, have been no more offended at as free permission in a church state, and as free admission to other parts of communion; and that they have made so small a matter at as much mixture in all the rest: I should think that it is a greater profanation to permit an obstinate, scandalous sinner, to be a stated member of that particular church, without any first private, and then public admonition, prayer for him, or censure of him; than for a single pastor to admit him to the Lord's-supper, if he had no power to censure him; as these suppose. I should think that the faithful practice of discipline in the other parts, would soon put an end to the controversy about free admission to the Lord's-supper, and heal the hurt that such discourses have done to our people.

For those discourses have more modesty than to plead for a free admission of the censured or rejected ones ; but it is only of those that have yet their standing in that church, and are not censured. And if, when they forfeit their title to church-communion, we would deal with them in Christ's appointed way, till we had either reclaimed them to repentance, or censure them to be avoided ; it would be past controversy then, that they were not to be admitted to that one act of communion in the Supper, who are justly excluded from the whole. But as long as we leave them uncensured members, and tell a single pastor that he hath no power to censure them, we tempt him to think that he hath no power then to deny them that communion with the body which is the common privilege of all uncensured members.

And as we thus ourselves oppose discipline in part, or cherish church-corruption in part, one party being for the free admission of them, while members, to the Sacraments, and the other as freely permitting them in church-state, and other parts of communion while they exclude them from the Sacrament ; so some have learned to tie these ends together, and by holding both, set open the doors of church and chancel, pluck up the hedge, and lay the vineyard common to the wilderness. It hath somewhat amazed me to hear some that I took for reverend, godly divines, to reproach as a sect, the Sacramentarians and Disciplinarians ! And when I desired to know whom they meant, they told me, they meant them that will not give the sacrament to all the parish, and them that will make distinction by their discipline. I thought the tempter had gained a great victory if he had but got one godly pastor of a church to neglect discipline, as well as if he had got him to neglect preaching : much more if he had got him to approve of that neglect ; but it seems he hath got some to scorn at the performers of the duty which they neglect. As the impure were wont to reproach the diligent by the name of Puritans, so do they reproach the faithful pastors by the name of Disciplinarians. And I could wish they would remember what the ancient reproaches were both symptomatically, and effectively, and accordingly judge impartially of themselves, and fear a participation of the judgment that befel them. Sure I am if it were well understood, how much of the pastoral authority and work, consisteth in church-guidance, it would be almost discerned,

that to be against Discipline, is 'tantum non' to be against the Ministry; and to be against the Ministry, is 'tantum non' to be absolutely against the Church; and to be against the Church, is near to being absolutely against Christ. Blame not the harshness of the inference, till you can avoid it, and free yourselves from the charge of it before the Lord. Prelates would have some discipline; and other parties would have some. Yea, Papists themselves would have some, and plead only against others about the form and manner of it. But these are so much worse than all, that they would have none. Was not Christ himself the leader of these Disciplinarians, who instituted Discipline, and made his ministers the rulers or guides of his church, and put the keys of the kingdom into their hand, and commanded the very particular acts of discipline, and required the people to submit to them, and obey them in the Lord? What would these men have said, if they had seen the practice of the ancient church for many hundred years after Christ, who exercised a discipline so much more rigorous than any among us do, and that even in the heat of heathen persecutions; as if they read only the ancient canons, and Cyprian's Epistles, they may soon see, though they look no further. And it was not then (no nor after, under Christian magistrates,) taken to be a useless thing; nor would it appear such now, if it were shewed in its strength and beauty by a vigorous practice: for it is a thing that is not effectually manifested to the ear, but to the eye; and you will never make men know well what it is by mere talking of it—till they see it they will be strangers to it. As it is in the Military art, or in Navigation, or in the government of Commonwealths, which are so little known till learned by experience. And that will tell us that, as Cyprian saith, "*Disciplina est custos spei, retinaculum fidei, dux itineris salutaris, fomes ac nutrimentum bonæ indolis, magistra virtutis; facit in Christo manere semper, ac jugitur Deo vivere, ad promissa cœlestia, et divina præmia pervenire: Hanc et sectari salubre est, et aversari ac negligere lathale:*" as he begins his book "*de Discip. et hab. Virg.*" p. (mihi) 265. When the Martyrs and Confessors would, upon other's persuasions, have had some offenders restored before they had made confession, and manifested openly repentance for their sin, and been absolved by their pastor; Cyprian resisteth it, and tells them that they that

stand so firmly to the faith, should stand as firmly to Christ's law and discipline : " Sollicitudo loci nostri, et timor Domini compellit, fortissimi ac beatissimi Martyres, admonere vos literis nostris, ut à quibus tam devotè et fortiter servatur fides Domino, ab iisdem lex quoque et disciplina Domini reservetur, &c." Epist. 11. p. 32. Upon which Goulartius puts this note, locus " de necessitate disciplinæ in Domo Dei, quam qui tollunt, et manifestè impios ac sceleratos ad mensam Christi, sine censura Ecclesiastica, et acta pœnitentia pro delictorum ratione recipiunt, ii videant quam de gregibus sibi commissis Pastori summo rationem reddituri sint ; vel quid commune habeant in Ecclesiarum suarum regimine cum beato illo Cypriani et aliorum verè Episcoporum Christianorum seculo." And Cyp. Ep. 67. p. 199, mentioning God's threatenings to negligent pastors, addeth, " Cum ergo pastoribus talibus per quos Dominicæ oves negligantur et pereant, sic Dominus comminetur, quid nos aliud facere oportet, quam colligendis et revocandis Christi ovibus exhibere diligentiam plenam, et curandis lapsorum vulneribus paternæ pietatis adhibere medicinam ?" In Epist. 61. 28. 38. 41. 49. 53. 55, and many other places of Cyprian ; you may see that they were then no contemners of Discipline : Vide etiam, eundem de Orat. Dominic. p. 313. in Pet. 4.

Saith Augustine, " Ibi superbia, ubi negligitur Disciplina : Nam Disciplina est Magistra Religionis et veræ pietatis, quæ nec ideo increpat ut lædat, nec ideo castigat ut noceat, &c." saith Bernard, Ep. 113. " O quam compositum reddit omnem corporis statum, nec non et mentis habitum disciplina ! Cervicem submittit, pone supercilia, componit vultum, ligat oculos, moderatur linguam, frænâ gulam, sedat iram, format incessum."

I know that when the church began to be tainted with vain inventions, the word Discipline began to have another signification, for their own various rules of life and austere impositions, *touch not, taste not, handle not* ; but it is the ancient and truly Christian Discipline that I am contending for. So much for the acts of pastoral oversight.

From what hath been said, we may see that the Pastoral office is another kind of thing than those men have taken it to be, who think it consisteth in preaching and administering Sacraments only ; much more than they have taken it for, who think it consisteth in making new laws or canons to

bind the church : as if God had not made us laws sufficient ; and as if he had committed the proper legislative power over his church to ministers or bishops, whose office is but to expound, and apply and execute in their places the laws of Christ.

Object. ‘ But will you deny to Bishops the power of making canons ? What are all those Articles that you have agreed on among yourselves about catechising and discipline, but such things ?’

Answ. (1.) I know pastors may teach, and expound Scripture, and deliver that in writing to the people, and apply the Scripture generals to their own and the people’s particular case, if you will call this making Canons. (2.) And they may, and ought to agree among themselves for an unanimous performance of their duties, when they have discovered them ; that so they may excite one another, and be more strong and successful in their work. (3.) And they must determine the circumstances of Worship in special, which God hath only determined in general ; as what time and place they shall meet in, what chapter read, what text preach on, what shape the table, cups, &c. shall be ; where the pulpit, when each person shall come to be catechised or instructed, and whither, &c. But these are actions that are fitter to be ordered by them that are in the place, than by distant canon-makers : and to agree for unity in a necessary duty, as we have done, is not to make laws, or arrogate authority over our brethren. Of this I refer you to Luther de Conciliis, at large ; and to Grotius de Imper. sum. pot. that canons are not properly laws.

CHAPTER III.

HAVING spoken of the *matter* of our work, we are next to speak of the *manner* ; not of each part distinctly, lest we be too tedious, but of the whole in general, especially with reference to the principal part.

1. The Ministerial work must be managed purely for God, and the salvation of the people, and not for any private ends of our own. A wrong end makes all the work bad, as from us, how good soever in itself. It is not serving God, but ourselves, if we do it not for God, but for ourselves. They

that set about this as a common work, to make a trade of it for their worldly livelihood, will find that they have chosen a bad trade, though a good employment. Self-denial is of absolute necessity in every Christian, but of a double necessity in a Minister, as he hath a double sanctification or dedication to God. Without self-denial he cannot do God an hour's faithful service. Hard studies, much knowledge, and excellent preaching, are but more glorious and hypocritical sinning, if the end be not right. The saying of Bernard (Serm. in Cant. 26.) is commonly known; "*Sunt qui scire volunt eo fine tantum ut sciant, et turpis curiositas est; et sunt qui scire volunt, ut scientiam suam vendant: et turpis quæstus est: sunt qui scire volunt ut scientur ipsi: et turpis vanitas est: Sed sunt quoque, qui scire volunt ut ædificent; et Charitas est; et sunt qui scire volunt ut ædificentur; et prudentia est.*"

2. This work must be managed laboriously and diligently: being of such unspeakable consequence to others and ourselves. We are seeking to uphold the world, to save it from the curse of God, to perfect the creation, to attain the ends of Christ's Redemption, to save ourselves and others from damnation, to overcome the devil, and demolish his kingdom, and set up the kingdom of Christ, and attain and help others to the kingdom of glory. And are these works to be done with a careless mind, or a slack hand? O see then that this work be done with all your might. Study hard, for the well is deep, and our brains are shallow; and (as Cassiod.) "*Decorum hic est terminum non habere: hic honesta probatur ambitio; omne si quidem scientificum quanto profundius quæritur, tanto gloriosius invenitur.*" But especially be laborious in practice and in the exercise of your knowledge. Let Paul's words ring in your ears continually, "Necessity is laid upon me, and woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel." Still think with yourselves, what lieth upon your hands. If I do not bestir me, Satan may prevail, and the people everlastingly perish, and their blood be required at my hand. By avoiding labour and suffering, I shall draw on me a thousand times more than I avoid: for as Bernard saith, "*Qui in labore hominum non sunt, in labore profecto Dæmonum erunt,*" whereas by present diligence you prepare for future blessedness. For, as Gregor. in Mor. saith, "*Quot labores veritati nunc exhibes, tot etiam remu-*

nerationis pignora intra spei tuæ cubiculum clausum tenes." No man was ever a loser by God.

3. This work must be carried on prudently, orderly, and by degrees. Milk must go before strong meat : the foundation must be first laid before we build upon it. Children must not be dealt with as men at age. Men must be brought into a state of grace, before we can expect from them the works of grace. The work of conversion, and repentance from dead works, and faith in Christ must be first, frequently and thoroughly taught. The stewards of God's household must give to each their portion in due season. We must not go beyond the capacities of our people, nor teach them perfection, who have not learned the first principles. As August. saith, li. 12. de Civit. " Si pro viribus suis alatur infans, fiet ut crescendo plus capiat: si modum suæ capacitatis excedit, deficit antequam crescat:" and as Gregor. Ny-sen. saith, Orat de Pauper. amand. " As we teach not infants the deep precepts of science, but first letters, and then syllables, &c. So also the guides of the church do first propound to their hearers certain documents, which are as the elements, and so by degrees, do open to them the more perfect and mysterious matters." Therefore did the Church take so much pains with their 'Catechumeni,' before they baptized them, and would not lay unpolished stones into the building; as Chrysostom saith, Hom. 40. Imperfect; operis (or whoever else it be, p. (mihi) 318.) " Ædificatores sunt sacerdotes, qui——domum Dei componunt, sicut enim ædificatores, nodosos lapides et habentes torturas, ferro dolant, postea vero ponunt eos in ædificio, alioqui non dolati lapides lapidibus non cohærent: Sic et Ecclesiæ doctores vitia hominum quasi nodos acutis increpationibus primum circumcidere debent, et sic in Ecclesiæ ædificatione collocare: alioquin vitiis manentibus Christiani Christianis concordare non possunt."

4. Through the whole course of our Ministry, we must insist most upon the greatest, most certain and necessary things, and be more seldom and sparing upon the rest. If we can but teach Christ to our people, we teach them all. Get them well to heaven, and they will have knowledge enough. The great and commonly acknowledged Truths are they that men must live upon, and which are the great instruments of raising the heart to God, and destroying men's

sins ; and therefore we must still have our people's necessities in our eyes. It will take us off gawds, and needless ornaments, and unprofitable controversies, to remember that *one* thing is necessary. Other things are desirable to be known, but these *must* be known, or else our people are undone for ever. I confess, I think necessity should be a great disposer of a minister's course of study and labour. If we were sufficient for every thing, we might fall upon every thing, and take in order the whole Encyclopædia : but life is short, and we are dull ; eternal things are necessary, and the souls that depend on our teaching are precious. I confess necessity hath been the conductor of my studies and life ; it chooseth what book I shall read, and tells when and how long : it chooseth my text, and makes my sermon for matter and manner, so far as I can keep out my own corruption. Though I know the constant expectation of death hath been a great cause of this, yet I know no reason why the most healthful man should not make sure of the *necessaries* first, considering the uncertainty and shortness of all men's lives. Xenophon thought, " there was no better teacher than necessity, which teacheth all things most diligently." Curtius saith, " Efficacior est omni arte necessitas." Who can in study, preaching, or life, ' aliud agere,' be doing other matters, if he do but know, that *this must be done*? Who can trifle or delay, that feeleth the spurs of hasty necessity : As the soldier saith, ' Non diu disputandum, sed celeriter et fortiter dimicandum ubi urget necessitas.' So much more must we, as our business is more important. And doubtless this is the best way to redeem time, and see that we lose not an hour, when we spend it only on necessary things : It is also the way to be most profitable to others, though not always to be most pleasing and applauded ; because through men's frailty, it is true that Seneca complains of, that " Nova potius miramur quam magna."

Hence it is, that a Preacher must be often upon the same things, because the matters of necessity are few. We must not either feign necessities, nor dwell much upon unnecessary, to satisfy them that look after novelties : though we must clothe the same necessities with a grateful variety in the manner of our delivery. The great volumes and tedious controversies, that so much trouble us and waste our time, are usually made up more of opinion than necessary verities.

For, as Marsil. Ficinus saith, “*Necessitas brevibus clauditur terminis; opinio nullis.*” And as Greg. Nazianz. and Seneca often say, “*Necessaries are common and obvious: it is superfluities that we waste our time for, and labour for, and complain that we attain them not.*” Ministers therefore must be observant of the case of their flocks, that they may know what is most necessary for them, both for matter and for manner: and usually matter is first to be regarded, as being of more concernment than the manner. If you are to choose what authors to read yourselves, will you not rather take those that tell you what you know not, and speak the needful truth most evidently, though it were with barbarous or unhandsome language, than those that will most learnedly, and elegantly, and in grateful language tell you that which is false or vain, and ‘*magna conatu nihil dicere?*’ I purpose to follow Austin’s counsel, (li. de. catech.) “*Præponendo verbis sententiam, ut animas præponitur corpori: ex quo fit, ut ita mallem veriores quam discretiores invenire sermones, sicut mallem prudentiores quam formosiores habere amicos.*” And surely as I do in my studies for my own edification, I would do in my teaching for other men’s. It is commonly empty, ignorant men that want the matter and substance of true learning, that are over curious and solicitous about words and ornaments, when the ancient, experienced, most learned men, abound in substantial verities, usually delivered in the plainest dress. As Aristotle makes it the reason why women are more addicted to pride in apparel than men, because being conscious of little inward worth and ornament, they seek to make it up with borrowed ornaments without: so it is with empty, worthless preachers, who affect to be esteemed that which they are not, and have no other way to procure esteem.

5. All our teaching must be as plain and evident as we can make it; for this doth most suit to a teacher’s ends. He that would be understood, must speak to the capacity of his hearers, and make it his business to make himself understood. Truth loves the light, and is most beautiful when most naked. It is a sign of an envious enemy to hide the truth; and a sign of an hypocrite to do this under pretence of revealing it: and therefore painted, obscure sermons (like the painted glass in the windows that keep out the light,) are too often the mark

of painted hypocrites. If you would not teach men, what do you in the pulpit? If you would, why do you not speak so as to be understood? I know the height of the matter may make a man not understood when he hath studied to make it as plain as he can; but that a man should purposely cloud the matter in strange words, and hide his mind from the people whom he pretendeth to instruct, is the way to make fools admire his profound learning, and wise men his folly, pride and hypocrisy. And usually, it is a suspicious sign of some deceitful project and false doctrine that needeth such a cloak, and must walk thus masked in the open daylight. Thus did the followers of Basilides and Valentinus, and others among the old heretics; and thus do the Behmenists and other Paracelsians now; who, when they have spoken that few may understand them, lest they expose their errors to the open view, they pretend a necessity of it, because of men's prejudice, and the unpreparedness of common understandings for the truth. But truth overcomes prejudice by mere light of evidence, and there is no better way to make a good cause prevail, than to make it as plain, and commonly, and thoroughly known as we can; and it is this light that will dispose an unprepared mind. And at best it is a sign that he hath not well digested the matter himself, that is not able to deliver it plainly to another. I mean, as plain as the nature of the matter will bear, in regard of capacities prepared for it by prerequisite truths. For I know that some men cannot at present understand some truths, if you speak them as plainly as words can express them; as the easiest rules in grammar most plainly taught, will be no whit understood by a child that is but learning his alphabet.

6. Our whole work must be carried on in a sense of our insufficiency, and in a pious, believing dependance upon Christ. We must go to him for light, and life, and strength, who sends us on the work: and when we feel our own faith weak, and our hearts grown dull, and unsuitable to so great a work as we have to do, we must have recourse to the Lord that sendeth us, and say, ' Lord, wilt thou send me with such an unbelieving heart to persuade others to believe? Must I daily and earnestly plead with sinners about everlasting life and death, and have no more belief and feeling of these weighty things myself? O send me not naked and unpro-

vided to the work; but as thou commandest me to do it, furnish me with a spirit suitable thereto.' As Austin saith, (de Doct. Christ. l. 4.) "A preacher must labour to be heard understandingly, willingly and obediently, 'et hoc se posse magis pietate orationum, quam oratoris facultate non dubitet: ut orando pro se ac pro aliis, quos est allocuturus, sit prius orator quam doctor; et in ipsa hora accedens, priusquam, exeat, proferat linguam ad Deum, levet animam sitientem, &c.'" Prayer must carry on our work as well as preaching; he preacheth not heartily to his people, that will not pray for them. If we prevail not with God to give them faith and repentance, we are unlikely to prevail with them to believe and repent. Paul giveth us frequently his example, of praying night and day for his hearers. When our own hearts are out of order, and theirs so too, if we prevail not with God to mend and help them, we are like to make but unsuccessful work.

7. Our work must be managed with great humility; we must carry ourselves meekly and condescendingly to all; and so teach others, as to be as ready to learn of any that can teach us, and so both teach and learn at once: not proudly venting our own conceits, and disdaining all that any way contradict them, as if we had attained to the top of knowledge, and we were destined for the chair, and other men to sit at our feet. Not like them that Gregory M. mentioneth in Moral. l. 24. par. 5. c. xii. "In quorum verbis proditur, quod cum docent, quasi in quodam sibi videntur summitatis culmine residere, eosque quos docent, ut longe infra se positos, velut in imo respiciunt, quibus non consulendo loqui, sed vix dominando dignantur." Pride is a vice that ill beseems them that must lead men in such an humble way to heaven. And let them take heed, lest when they have brought others thither, the gate should prove too strait for themselves. For, as Hugo saith, "Superbia in cœlo nata est, sed velut immemor qua via inde cecidit, istuc postea redire non potuit." God that thrust out a proud angel, will not entertain there a proud preacher, while such. Methinks we should remember at least the title of a minister, which though the Popish priests disdain, yet so do not we. It is indeed this pride at the root that feedeth all the rest of sins: hence is the envy, the contention, and unpeaceableness of ministers, and hence the hindrances in all reforma-

tion. All would lead, and few will follow or concur ; yea, hence are the schisms and apostacies, as hence have been former persecutions, and arrogant usurpations and impositions : as Gregory M. saith, in Mor. “ Latet plerumque superbia, et castitas innotescit, atque ideo tentata diu castitas, circa finem vitæ perditur ; quia cooperta superbia usque ad finem, in correcta retinetur.” And the same may be said of other vices, which often revive when they seemed dead, because pride was unmortified, which virtually contains them all. Hence also is the non-proficiency of too many ministers, because they are too proud to learn ; unless it be as Jerom’s adversaries, ‘ publice detrahentes, legentes in angulis ;’ and scarcely will they stoop to that. But I may say of ministers as Augustine to Jerom, even of the aged of them, “ Etsi senes magis decet docere quam discere : magis tamen decet discere quam ignorare ;” humility would teach them another lesson ; ut Hugo, “ Ab omnibus libenter disce quod tu nescis : quid humilitas commune tibi facere potest, quod natura cuique proprium fecit, sapientior omnibus eris, si ab omnibus discere volueris : qui ab omnibus accipiunt, omnibus ditiores sunt.”

8. There must be a prudent mixture of severity and mildness both in our preaching and discipline ; each must be predominant according to the quality or the person, or matter that we have in hand. If there be *no* severity, there will be contempt of our reproofs. If *all* severity, we shall be taken as usurpers of dominion, rather than persuaders of the minds of men to the truth, as Gregory M. saith, Moral. li. 20. “ Miscenda est lenitas cum severitate, et faciendum ex utraque quoddam temperamentum, ut nec multa asperitate exulcerentur subditi, nec nimia benignitate solvantur.”

9. We must be sincerely affectionate, serious and zealous in all our public and private exhortations. The weight of our matter condemneth coldness, and sleepy dulness. We should see that we be well awakened ourselves, and our spirits in such a state as may make us fit to awaken others. As Gregory saith, Mor. l. 30. c. v. “ We should be like the cock, that, ‘ Cum edere cantus parat, prius alas solerter excutit, et seipsum feriens vigilantiores reddit : ita prædicatores cum verbum prædicationis movent, prius se in sanctis actionibus exercent, ne in se ipsis torpentes opere, alios excitent voce, sed ante se per sublimia facta excutiunt, et tunc

ad bene agendum alios sollicitos reddunt. Prius sua punire fletibus curant, et tunc quæ aliorum sunt punienda, denuntiant.’” If our words be not sharpened, and pierce as nails, they will hardly be felt by stony hearts. To speak coldly and slightly of heavenly things, is nearly as bad as to say nothing of them.

10. All our work must be managed reverently; as becometh them that believe the presence of God, and use not holy things, as if they were common. The more of God appeareth in our duties, the more authority will they have with men: and reverence is that affection of the soul, which proceedeth from deep apprehensions of God, and signifieth a mind that is much conversant with him. To manifest irreverence in the things of God, is so far to manifest hypocrisy; and that the heart agreeth not with the tongue. I know not what it doth by others, but the most reverend preacher, that speaks as if he saw the face of God doth more affect my heart, though with common words, than an unreverend man with the most exquisite preparations. Yea if he bawl it out with never so much seeming earnestness, if reverence be not answerable to fervency, it worketh but little. Of all preaching in the world (that speaks not stark lies), I hate that preaching which tendeth to make the hearers laugh, or to move their mind with tickling levity, and affect them as stage-players use to do, instead of affecting them with a holy reverence of the name of God. Saith Jerom in (Ep. ad Nepotian, p. mihi. 14.) “*Docente in Ecclesia te, non clamor populi, sed gemitus suscitetur; Lacrymæ auditorum laudes tuæ sunt.*” We should as it were suppose we saw the throne of God, and the millions of glorious angels attending him, that we might be awed with his Majesty, when we draw near him in his Holy things, lest we profane them, and take his Name in vain.

To this I annex, that all our work must be done Spiritually, as by men possessed of the Holy Ghost and acted by him, and men that savour the things of the Spirit. There is in some men’s preaching, a spiritual strain, which spiritual hearers can discern and relish: and in some men this sacred tincture is so wanting, that even when they speak of spiritual things the manner is such as if they were common matters. Our evidence also and ornaments must be spiritual,

rather from the holy Scripture, with a cautious, subservient use of fathers, and other writers, than from Aristotle or the authorities of men. The wisdom of the world must not be magnified against the wisdom of God ; philosophy must be taught to stoop and serve ; while faith doth bear the chief sway : and great scholars in Aristotle's school must take heed of too much glorying in their master, and despising those that are there below them ; lest themselves prove lower in the school of Christ, and *least* in the kingdom of God, while they would be *great* in the eyes of men. As wise a man as any of them, would glory in nothing but Him crucified. They that are so confident that Aristotle is in hell, should not too much take him for their guide in the way to heaven. It is an excellent memorandum that Gregory M. hath left in his Moral. l. 33. “ Deus primo collegit indoctos ; post modum philosophos ; et non per oratores docuit piscatores, sed per piscatores subegit oratores.” The most learned men should think of this.

Let all writers have their due esteem, but compare none of them with the word of God. We will not refuse their service, but we must abhor them as competitors. It is a sign of a distempered heart that loseth the relish of Scripture excellency. For there is a connaturality in a spiritual heart to the word of God, because this is the seed that did regenerate him : the word is that seal that made all holy impressions that be in the hearts of true believers, and stamped the image of God upon them. And therefore they must needs be like that word, and highly esteem it as long as they live. Austin tells us, (in his lib. 10. de Civit. Dei, c. xxix.) “ Quod initium Sancti Evangelii, cui nomen est secundum Joannem, quidam Platonius (sicut à sancto sene Simpliciano, qui postea Mediolanesi Ecclesiæ præsedet Episcopus, solebamus audire) aureis literis conscribendum, et per omnes Ecclesias in locis eminentissimis proponendum esse dicebat.” If he could so value that which suited with his Platonism, how should we value the whole which is suitable to the Christian nature and interest ! God is the best teacher of his own nature and will.

11. The whole course of our Ministry must be carried on in a tender love to our people : we must let them see that nothing pleaseth us but what profiteth them ; and that

which doeth them good doth us good; and nothing troubleth us more than their hurt. We must remember, as Jerom saith, ad Nepotian. "That bishops are not lords but fathers," and therefore must be affected to their people as their children; yea, the tenderest love of a mother should not surpass theirs: we must even "travail in birth of them till Christ be formed in them." They should see that we care for no outward thing, not money, not liberty, not credit, not life, in comparison of their salvation; but could even be content, with Moses, to have our names wiped out of the book of life, *i. e.* to be removed '*à numero viventium*:' rather than they should perish, and not be found in the Lamb's Book of Life, '*in numero salvandorum*.' Thus should we, as John saith, be ready to lay down our lives for the brethren, and with Paul, not to count our lives dear to us, so we may but finish our course with joy, in doing the work of God for their salvation. When the people see that you unfeignedly love them, they will hear any thing, and bear any thing, and follow you the more easily. As Austin saith, "*Dilige, et dic quicquid voles*." We will take all things well ourselves from one that we know doth entirely love us. We will put up a blow that is given us in love, sooner than a foul word that is given us in anger or malice. Most men use to judge of the counsel, as they judge of the affection of him that gives it: at least so far as to give it a fair hearing. O therefore, see that you feel a tender love to your people in your breasts, and then let them feel it in your speeches, and see it in your dealings. Let them see that you spend, and are spent for their sakes; and that all you do is for them, and not for any ends of your own. To this end the works of charity are necessary, as far as your estate shall reach; for bare words will hardly convince men that you have any great love to them. "*Amicitia à dando et accipiendo, nascitur*." Chrysost. But when you are not able to give, shew that you are willing to give if you had it, and do that sort of good that you can; "*Si potes, dare da, si non potes, affabilem te fac*. Coronat Deus intus bonitatem, ubi non invenit facultatem. Nemo dicat, non habeo, Charitas non de sacculo erogatur." August. in Psal. ciii. But be sure to see that your love prove not carnal, flowing from pride, as one that is a suitor for himself, rather

than for Christ, and therefore doth love because *he is* loved, or that he *may be*, pretendeth it. And therefore take heed that you do not connive at their sins under pretence of love ; for that were to cross the nature and ends of love : “ Amici vitia si feras, facis tua.” Senec. Friendship must be cemented by piety : “ Tu primum exhibe te bonum, et quæ alterum similem tibi.” Sen. A wicked man can be no true friend ; and if you befriend their wickedness, you shew that you are such yourselves. Pretend not to love them, if you favour their sins, and seek not their salvation. “ Soli sancti, et Dei sunt, et inter se amici.” Basil. “ Improborum et stultorum nemo amicus.” Id. By favouring their sin you will shew your enmity to God, and then how can you love your brother ? “ Amicus esse homini non potest, qui Deo fuerit inimicus.” Ambros. If you be their best friends, help them against their worst enemies. ‘ Amicus animæ custos.’ And think not all sharpness inconsistent with love ; parents will correct their children ; and God himself will chasten every son that he loveth. “ Melius est cum severitate diligere, quam cum lenitate decipere.” Aug.

Besides this, the nature of love is to excite men to do good, and to do it speedily, diligently, and as much as we can. “ Alios curat ædificare, alios contremiscit offendere, ad alios se inclinat, cum aliis blanda, aliis severa, nulli inimica, omnibus mater. August. de Catech. Ecce quem amas Domine infirmatur : Non dixerunt veni ; Amanti enim tantum nunciandum fuit : sufficiet ut noverit : Non enim amat, et deserit.” August. in Joan. So will it be with us.

12. Another necessary concomitant of our work is Patience. We must bear with many abuses and injuries from those that we are doing good for. When we have studied for them, and prayed for them, and besought and exhorted them with all condescension, and spent ourselves for them, and given them what we are able, and dealt with them as if they had been our children, we must look that many should requite us with scorn, and hatred, and contempt, and cast our kindness in our faces with disdain, and take us for their enemies, because we tell them the truth ; and that the more we love, the less we shall be beloved. All this must be patiently undergone, and still we must unweariedly hold on in doing good ; in meekness, instructing those that oppose

themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance. If they unthankfully scorn and reject our teaching, and bid us look to ourselves, and care not for them, yet must we hold on. We have to deal with distracted men, that will fly in the face of their physician, but we must not therefore forsake the cure. He is unworthy to be a physician that will be driven away from a frantic patient by foul words, *καθ' ἅπερ οἱ μαινόμενοι καὶ τὸν ἱατρὸν* i. e. "Sicut insani etiam medicum impetere conantur, ita et illi," saith Chrysostom of the Sodomites. Hom. 43. in Gen. "Et alibi, Medici ferant ægrotum calcibus ferientem, incessentem contumelis, et convitiis, nec offenduntur; quia nihil aliud quam salutem ægroti quærentes, licet facientis indecora, non ideo à cura desistant, sic concionator licet mala patiaturs ab auditoribus, &c." If we tell them that natural men savour not the things of the Spirit, and are besides themselves in matters of salvation, we must measure our expectations accordingly, and not look that fools should make us as grateful a return as the wise. These are things that all of us can say, but when we come to the practice with sinners that reproach and slander us for our love, and are more ready to spit in our faces, than to give us thanks for our advice, what heartrisings will there be, and how will the remnants of old Adam, pride and passion, struggle against the meekness and patience of the new man! And how sadly do many Ministers come off in this part of their trial!

Having given you these Twelve concomitants of our Ministerial labour, as singly to be performed by every Minister, let me conclude with one other that is necessary to us as we are conjoined, and fellow-labourers in the work; and it is this: We must be very studious in Union and Communion among ourselves, and of the unity and peace of the churches that we oversee. We must be sensible how needful this is to the prosperity of the whole, the strengthening of our common cause, the good of the particular members of our flock, and the further enlargement of the kingdom of Christ. And therefore Ministers must smart when the church is wounded, and being so far from being the leaders in divisions, that they should take it as a principal part of their work to prevent and heal them. Day and night should they bend their studies to find out means to close such breaches. They must not only hearken to motions for

unity, but propound them and prosecute them. Not only entertain an offered peace, but even follow it when it flieth from them. They must therefore keep close to the ancient simplicity of the Christian faith, and the foundation and centre of catholic unity. They must abhor the arrogance of them that frame engines to harass and tear the church of God, under pretence of obviating errors, and maintaining the Truth. The Scripture-sufficiency must be maintained, and nothing beyond it imposed on others; and if Papists, or others, call to us for the standard and rule of our religion, it is the Bible that we must shew them, rather than any Confessions, of Churches, or writings of men. We must learn to difference well between certainties and uncertainties, necessities and unnecessaries, catholic verities "*quæ ab omnibus, ubique et semper sunt retentæ*," as Vincent, Licen. speaks, and private opinions; and to lay the stress of the church's peace upon the former, and not upon the latter. We must therefore understand the doctrine of antiquity, that we may know what way men have gone to heaven by in former ages, and know the writings of later Divines, that we may partake of the benefit of their clearer methods and explications; but neither of them must be made the rule of our faith or charity. We must avoid the common confusion of those that make no difference between verbal and real errors, and hate that '*rabies quorundan theologorum*,' that tear their brethren as heretics, before they understand them. And we must learn to see the true state of Controversies, and reduce them to the very point where the difference lieth, and not to make them seem greater than they are. Instead of quarrelling with our brethren, we must combine against the common adversaries; Ministers must associate, and hold communion, and correspondence, and constant meetings to those ends; and smaller differences of judgment are not to interrupt them. They must do as much of the work of God in unity and concord as they can; which is the use of Synods: not to rule over one another, and make laws; but to avoid misunderstandings, and consult for mutual edification, and maintain love and communion, and go on unanimously in the work that God hath already commanded us. Had the Ministers of the Gospel been men of peace, and of catholic rather than factious spirits, the Church of Christ had not been in the case it is now; the notions

of Lutherans and Calvinists abroad, and the differing parties here at home, would not have been plotting the subversion of one another, nor remain at that distance, and in that uncharitable bitterness, nor strengthen the common enemy, and hinder the building and prosperity of the Church as they have done.

CHAPTER IV.

USE.

Reverend and Dear Brethren,

OUR business here this day is to humble our souls before the Lord for our former negligence, especially of Catechising and Personally instructing those committed to our charge; and to desire God's assistance of us in the employment we have undertaken for the time to come. Indeed, we can scarcely expect the latter without the former. If God will help us in our future Duty and amendment, he will surely humble us first for our former sins. He that hath not so much sense of his faults, as unfeignedly to lament them, will hardly have so much more as may move him to reform them. The sorrow of Repentance may be without the change of heart and life; because a passion may be easier wrought than a true Conversion; but the change cannot go without some good measure of the sorrow. Indeed, we may justly here begin our confessions: it is too common with us to expect that from our people, which we do little or nothing in ourselves. What pains take we to humble them, while ourselves are unhumbled! How hard do we press them by all our expostulations, convictions, and aggravations, to wring out of them a few penitent tears, (and all too little,) when our own eyes are dry, and our hearts are little affected with remorse, and we give them an example of hardheartedness, while we are endeavouring by our words to mollify and melt them. O, if we did but study half as much to affect and amend our own hearts, as we do our hearers, it would not be with many of us as it is! We do too little for their humiliation; but I fear it is much less that some of us do for our own. Too many do somewhat for other men's souls, while they seem to forget that they

have any of their own to regard. They so carry the matter, as if their part of the work lay in calling for Repentance, and the hearers in repenting; theirs in speaking, tears, and sorrow, and other men's only in weeping, and sorrowing; theirs in preaching duty, and the hearers in performing it; theirs in crying down sin, and the people's in forsaking it.

But we find the Guides of the Church in Scripture did confess their own sins as well as the sins of the people; and began in tears for their own and the people's sins. Ezra confesseth the sins of the Priests as well as of the people, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God. (Ezra ix. 6, 7; x. 1.) So did the Levites. (Neh. ix. 32—34.) Daniel confesseth his own sin, as well as the people's, (Dan. ix. 20,) and God calleth such to it, as well as others. (Joel ii. 15—17.) When the Fast is summoned, the people gathered, the congregation sanctified, the Elders assembled, the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, are called to begin to them in weeping, and calling upon God for mercy. I think if we consider well of the duties already opened, and withal how we have done them; of the Rule, and of our unanswerableness thereto, we need not demur upon the question, nor put it to a question, whether we have cause of humiliation. I must needs say, though I judge myself in saying it, that he that readeth but this one exhortation of Paul in Acts xx, and compareth his life with it, is too stupid and hard-hearted, if he do not melt under a sense of his neglects, and be not laid in the dust before God, and forced to bewail his great omissions, and to fly for refuge to the blood of Christ, and to his pardoning grace. I am confident, brethren, that none of you do in judgment approve of the Libertine doctrine, that crieth down the necessity of confession, contrition and true humiliation; yea, and in order to the pardon of sin! Is it not a pity then, that our hearts are not more orthodox as well as our heads? But I see our lesson is but half learned when we know it, and can say it. When the understanding hath learned it, there is more ado to teach it our wills and affections, our eyes, our tongues, and hands. It is a sad thing that so many of us do use to preach our hearers asleep; but it is sadder still if we have studied and preached ourselves asleep, and have talked so long against hardness of heart, till our own grow hardened,

under the noise of our own reproofs. Though the head only have eyes, and ears, and smell, and taste, the heart should have *life*, and *feeling*, and *motion*, as well as the head.

And that you may see that it is not a causeless sorrow that God calleth us to, I shall take it to be my duty to call to remembrance our manifold sins, or those that are most obvious, and set them this day in order before God and our own faces, that God may cast them behind his back; and to deal plainly and faithfully in a free Confession, that He who is faithful and just, may forgive them; and to judge ourselves, that we be not judged of the Lord: wherein I suppose I have your free and hearty consent, and that you will be so far from being offended with the disgrace of your persons, and of others in this office, that you will readily subscribe the charge, and be humble self-accusers; and so far am I from justifying myself by the accusation of others, that I do unfeignedly put my name with the first in the bill; for how can a wretched sinner, of so great transgressions, presume to justify himself with God? or how can he plead guiltless, whose conscience hath so much to say against him? If I cast shame upon the Ministry, it is not on the office, but on our persons, by opening that sin which is our shame. The glory of our high employment doth not communicate any glory to our sin, nor will afford it the smallest covering for its nakedness; for "sin is a reproach to any people," or persons. (Prov. xiv. 34.) And it is myself as well as others on whom I must lay the shame: and if this may not be done, what do we here to-day? Our business is to take shame to ourselves, and to give God the glory; and faithfully to open our sins, that he may cover them; and to make ourselves bare by Confession, as we have done by transgression, that we may have the white raiment that clotheth none but the penitent; for be they pastors or people, it is only he "that confesseth and forsaketh his sins, that shall have mercy, when he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief." (Prov. xxviii. 13.)

And I think it will not be amiss, if in the beginning of our Confession we look behind us, and imitate Daniel, and other servants of God who confess the sins of their forefathers and predecessors. For, indeed, my own judgment is so far from denying Original sin, even the imputed part, with the ancient opposers of it, or those of the new Edition,

that it doth not so much excuse me from the guilt of my later progenitors' offences, as most other men's do seem to excuse them. Let us fetch up then the core of our shame, and go to the bottom, and trace the behaviour of the Ministers of the Gospel, from the days of Christ till now, and see how far they have been from innocency.

When Christ had chosen him but twelve Apostles, who kept near his person, that they might be acquainted with his doctrine, life and miracles; yet how ignorant did they long remain, not knowing so much as that he must die, and be a Sacrifice for the sins of the world, and be buried and rise again, and ascend into glory; nor what was the nature of his spiritual kingdom! So that it puts us hard to it to imagine how men so ignorant could be in a state of Grace; but that we know that those points were after of absolute necessity to Salvation, that were not so then. * How often doth Christ teach them publicly and apart! (Mark iv. 34,) and rebuke them for their unbelief and hardness of heart; and yet after all this, so strange were these great Mysteries of Redemption to them, and these (now) Articles of our Creed, that Peter himself dissuadeth Christ from suffering, and goeth so far in contradicting his gracious thoughts for our Redemption, that he is called *Satan*, and 'tantum non' excommunicated: and no wonder; for if his counsel had been taken, the world had been lost for ever. And, as there was a Judas among them, so the Twelve are before Christ's face contending for superiority; so early did that pride begin to work in the best, which afterwards prevailed so far in others, as to bring the church so low as we have seen. What should we say of their jointly forsaking Christ, of their failings even after the pourings out of the Spirit! of the dissention and separation between Paul and Barnabas; how strange Peter made of the calling of the Gentiles; of his compliance with the Jews to the endangering of the liberties of the Gentiles. (Gal. ii.) Of the dissimulation of Barnabas; and the common desertion of Paul in his suffering. When he had found out Timothy, he saith, he "had no man like-minded, that would naturally care for their estate; for

* If any one about the time of Moses, offering sacrifice according to the law, were not instructed in the doctrine of the death of our Redeemer, but only believed that God through the means which he knoweth to be most agreeable and convenient, will forgive us our trespasses, it were rashness to go about to exclude such a man from salvation.—*Pet. Molinaus de Tradition. c. 19. p. 251, 252.*

all seek their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ." (Phil. ii. 20, 21.) A sad charge of self-seeking in that glory of the church for faith and purity! And what charges are against most of the angels of the seven Asiatic churches is expressed, Rev. ii; iii. And it is likely that Archippus was not the only man that had need to be warned to look to his ministry; (Col. iv. 17;) nor Demas the only man that forsook a persecuted partner, and turned after the things of the world; nor Diotrephes the only man that loved to have the pre-eminence, and made quarrels, and dealt unjustly and unmercifully in the church upon that account!

And even while the churches were frying in the flames, yet did the pride and dissensions even of godly Pastors do more than the fire of persecution could do, to turn all to ashes. How sad a story is it that Policrates with all the Eastern churches should be arrogantly excommunicated by Victor with his Romans, upon no higher crime than mischoosing of Easter-day, which our Britains also long after were guilty of; who would think that so great weakness, and presumptuous usurpation, and uncharitable cruelty, and schismatical zeal, could have befallen the Pastors of the Church in the strongest temptations of prosperity? much less in the midst of heathenish persecutions! What toys and trifles did the ancient reverend Fathers of the Church trouble their heads about, and pester the church with; and what useless stuff are many of their canons composed of! Yet these were the great matter and work of many of their famous consultations. How quickly did they seem to forget the perfection of holy Scripture, the non-necessity and burdensomeness of ceremonious impositions: and by taking upon them an unnecessary and unjust kind of jurisdiction, they made the church so much more work than ever Christ made it, and so clogged Religion with human devices, that the Christian world hath groaned under it ever since, and been almost brought to ruin by it; and the reverence of their persons hath put so much reputation on the crime, and custom hath so taught it to plead prescription, that when the lacerated, languid churches will be delivered from the sad effects of their presumption, God only knoweth. It would make an impartial reader wonder, that peruseth their canons and the History of the Church, that ever men of piety, charity, and sobriety, could be drawn to perplex and tear in

pieces the churches by such multitude of vanities, and needless determinations (to say no worse). And that the preachers of the Gospel of peace, which so enjoineth humility, unity and love, should ever be drawn to such a height of pride, as to think themselves meet to make so many laws for the whole Church of Christ, and to bind all their brethren through the world to the obedience of their dictates, and practice of their historionical, insnaring Ceremonies ; and that upon the penalties of being accounted no less than damned heretics or schismatics. Though Paul had told them betime, that he was afraid of them, lest as the serpent deceived Eve, so they should be deceived, and drawn from the simplicity that was in Christ, (2 Cor. xi. 3,) yet quickly was this caution forgotten, and the thing that Paul feared soon befel them ; and instead of the simplicity of doctrine, they vexed the churches with curious Controversies ; and instead of the simplicity of discipline and government, they corrupted the church with pomp and tyranny, and varieties of new orders and rules of religions : and instead of the simplicity of worship, they set up such a train of their own inventions, of which the church had no necessity, that the bishops were become the masters of ceremonies, who should have been the humble and faithful observers of the pure laws and ordinances of Christ. Though their Councils were useful for the churches' communion, had they been rightly ordered, yet so unhappily did they manage them for the most part, that Gregory Nazianzen purposed to come at them no more, as having never seen any that did not more harm than good. And so bold and busy were they in additions and innovations, even in making new Creeds, that Hilary sadly complains of it, not sparing the Council of Nice itself, though their Creed were allowable, because they taught others the way, and set the rest a work. And Luther sheweth us at large in his book " De Conciliis," what thoughts he had of those assemblies. Three lamentable vices did the Prelates of the Church then commonly abound in, *pride* the root, *contention*, and *vain impositions* and *inventions*, the fruits. No charity that is not blind can hide this guilt. We had never else had the Christian world so plagued with their quarrels about superiority and vain traditions, after such warnings, and lessons, and examples as Christ had given his own apostles. When once the favour of a Christian prince did shine upon the churches, what self-exhortation and con-

tention of the Prelates did ensue? So that if they had not been restrained and kept in quiet by the Emperor, how soon would they have made a sadder havock than they did? Perhaps in their first General Council itself. And though that Council had a good occasion, even to suppress the Arian heresy, yet had not Constantine committed their mutual accusations to the flames, and shamed them from their contentings, it had not had so good an end. And yet as good as it was, Luther saith, p. 226. de Concil. “*Arianæ hæresis jocus fuit ante Nicenum Concilium, præ illa confusione quam ipsi post Concilium excitaverunt.*” Augustine’s sad complaint of the loading of the church with ceremonies, and comparing them to Judaism, is commonly known: of which see Luther’s Comment. ib. p. 55, 56. And so strange did it seem to Luther, that the learned Prelates of those better times should so scold ‘*circa nænia et nugas,*’ about pre-eminence and ceremonies, and things of nought, that he is again and again taken up in admiring it. Read that treatise throughout.

Is it not sad to think of the heat of an Epiphanius, and Theophilus Alexand. against Chrysostom, and of Chrysostom against them! Of Jerom against Ruffinus, Chrysostom, and many others; and if Austin had not been more peaceable than he, one of them must have been an heretic, or schismatic at least. How many more such sad examples have we!

And for their damnatory sentences, they were more presumptuous than their laws: few men could stand in another’s way, or fall out, but one of them must be an heretic before they had made an end. Small differences were named damnable heresies: though they had enough among them that were such indeed, whereof some of the Clergy were almost always the causes and fomenters; yet did they so multiply them by their imputation, that their catalogues swelled beyond the credit of charity. And he that had the highest reputation, was usually safest from the blot, and had power to make others heretics almost at his pleasure; and if a man had once got the vote and fame, it was dangerous gainsaying him: had Vigilantius or Jovinian had Jerom’s name, some of their heresies might possibly have been Articles of Faith.

And, as they were dangerously forward on one side, to make every small mistake a heresy, and cause divisions in the church by their unjust condemnations; so many on the other hand were as forward to provoke them, by novelties or

false conceits, especially about the Trinity, and the person and natures of Christ ; so that unquiet spirits knew not when, or where to rest : and multitudes of them did turn cheaters and deluders of the vulgar, by pretending to Miracles, and Revelations, and Visions, and drawing the people deeper into superstition ; by such means as Bonifacius Moguntinus wrote to the Pope Zachary about the hypocritical Saint Aldebert : and in that age especially, when few learned men, as Erasmus complaineth, did escape the suspicion of heresy, and he that was a mathematician was counted a magician, it had been more wit to have silenced some unnecessary verities, than to have angered impatient ignorance. Virgilius might have talked more of the world above us, and let the world below us alone, rather than to force the learned Pope Zachary to say to his brother Boniface of Mentz : “ De perversa et iniqua doctrina, quam contra Deum et animam suam locutus est ; (a high crime) si clariificatum fuerit ita eum confiteri, quod alius mundus et alii homines sub terras sint, hunc accito Concilio, ab Ecclesia pelle, sacerdotii honore privatum.” Vid. Usher. syllog. Hibernic. Epistol. p. 49, 50. But to mention the twentieth part of the proud usurpation, innovations, impositions, and sentences of those following times, especially among the Romanists, is fitter for large volumes, than a cursory lamentation of the Church’s sins. I will not meddle with the errors, and cruel bloodshed of the Popish clergy of late, against the Waldenses, and Protestants ; nor yet with the sad condition of the rest of the Clergy through the Christian world, in Æthiopia, Muscovia, Greece, &c. For you will think that this is less to us that do disclaim them : but let us come nearer ourselves, and we shall find yet matter of further lamentation. And I will purposely say nothing of any of the sins of our foreign Reformers, nor meddle with any of those sad contentions, which have brought the Reformed Churches into two such exasperated parties, *Lutherans* and *Calvinists*, as they are commonly called, and hindered their reconciliation, and frustrated all means that have been used to that end till this day ; to the exceeding shame of the Pastors of these Churches, and the publishing of our darkness, pride and selfishness to all the world. But my present business lieth only at home, and that only with the Reformed Pastors of our Churches. For though, through the great mercy of God, they are far from

the Papal cruelty, which made bonfires of their brethren better than themselves throughout the land, and as far from the worst of their errors and false worship; yet have we been so far from innocency, that all posterity is bound to lament the miscarriages of their predecessors.

Is it not a sad history of the troubles at Frankfort, to read that so many godly, learned men that had forsaken all for the reformed profession, and were exiles in a foreign land, even in a city where they had but borrowed the liberty of one church, should even then fall in pieces among themselves, and that about a liturgy and ceremonies, so far as to make a division; and after many plotting and counter-plotting, and undermining one another, one part of them must leave the city and go seek another for their liberty! What had not those few exiles that left their native country, lands and friends, and all for the Gospel, that fled so far for the liberty of God's worship, and had as great advantage as most men in the world to be sensible of the excellency of reformation and liberty; had these I say, no more Christian love and tenderness, no more esteem of what they suffered for, than to fall out with one another, and almost fall upon one another, for such things as these! Would not suffering abate their pride and passions, and close their hearts, nor yet make them so far patient as to tolerate each other in so small a difference: even when their dearest friends and fellow-servants were frying in the flames at home, and the prisons filled with them, and they had daily news of one after another that was made a sacrifice to the fury of the Papists, could they yet proceed in their own dissensions, and that to such a height? O what is man, and the best of men! Yea before this, in King Edward's days, what rigour was used against Bishop Hooper about such ceremonies! But the prison abated Bishop Ridley's uncharitableness, and they then learned more charity when they were going to the flames.

From Frankfort the sad Division at the death of Queen Mary was transported into England; and the seeds that were sown, or began to spring up in the Exiled congregation, did too plentifully fructify in the land of their prosperity. No sooner doth the sun shine upon them, but contentious spirits began to swarm; and the prison doors are no sooner open, and their bolts knocked off, but they contrive the

suppressing of the brethren, as if they had been turned loose as fighting cocks to fall upon one another, and to work for Satan when they had suffered for Christ. The party that was for Prelacy and Ceremonies, prevailed for the countenance of the State, and quickly got the staff into their hands, and many of their brethren under their feet; and so contrived the business, that there was no quiet station to be had in the Ministry, for those that would not be of their mind and way. And many of them endeavoured to have a brand of ignominy set upon their names, who desired the discipline, and order of other Reformed Churches: that all might be accounted schismatics that would not be ruled by them even in Ceremonies. The contrary minded also, were some of them too intemperate, and impatient, and unpeaceable; and some few of them turned to flat separation, and flew into the faces of the Prelates with reviling. For their sakes many wise and peaceable men were the worse used; and they that were got into the chair, began to play the scornors, and the persecutors, and thought meet to impose upon them all the nickname of Puritans, as knowing how much names of reproach and scorn could do with the Vulgar for the furthering of their cause; some of these Puritans (as now they had named them) were imprisoned, and some put to death, and some died in, and by imprisonment: they are all made incapable of being Preachers of the Gospel in England, till they would change their minds, and subscribe to the lawfulness of Prelacy, and the Liturgy, and Ceremonies, and use these accordingly when they use their ministry. O how much did many good men rejoice that the Lord had visited their native country with deliverance, and the light of the glorious Gospel of his Son! How much did they long to lay out themselves for the saving of their dear countrymen, and to improve the present freedom for the most effectual propagation of the Truth! When, alas! their own friends, some of their fellow-sufferers, animated and assisted by many temporisers, did suddenly disappoint their hopes, and shut them out of the vineyard of the Lord, and would suffer none to labour in it, but themselves and theirs. Alas! that Persecution should be so soon forgotten! And that they should have no more sense of the cruelty of the Papists, to have moved them to some more tenderness of consciences and liberties of their brethren. That they had

no more compassion on the Church of Christ, than to deprive it of the labours of so many choice and worthy men ; and that at such a time of necessity. When popish priests were newly cast out, and multitudes of congregations had no preachers at all, but some silly readers, yet might not these men be allowed to preach. If the judgments of these Prelates were never so absolute for the Divine right of their own government, yet could it not be so for the absolute necessity of the cross, surplice, and every part of the forms in their Liturgy ! Had they but countenanced mostly their own party, and silenced all that did speak against their Government and Ceremonies, and only allowed them to preach the Gospel with subscription to the lawfulness of these things, and with a silent forbearance of the use of the ceremonies, they might have better secured their own power and way, and have exercised some sense of brotherly love and compassion on the necessitous state of the Church, and in all likelihood, might have stood safe themselves to this day. A wonderful thing it seems to me, that wise and good men, for such I doubt not but many of them were, should think it better that many hundred congregations in England (to say nothing of Ireland and Scotland) should be without any preaching at all, to the apparent hazard of the damnation of men's souls, who were so deep in popish ignorance before, than that a man should preach to them that durst not use the cross or surplice ? Were these of more worth than so many souls ? It was lawful in the apostles' days to baptize without the cross, and to pray, and praise God without the surplice. And why might not the Prelates of England have tolerated that in the church's necessities, at least as a weakness in well-meaning brethren, which the Apostolical Churches used not at all ? What if they were lawful ? They that thought so might have them. Were they now become more necessary than the preaching of the Gospel, when in the apostles' times they were of no necessity or use at all ? If it were obedience to the prelates that was necessary, they might have required obedience to undoubted and necessary things, and they should soon have found it. Had they contented themselves to be officers under Christ, and to see the execution of his laws, and to meddle at least with no needless new Legislation, I think few would have questioned obedience to them but the un-

godly. But it was sadly contrived to have such impositions on men's consciences in needless, or indifferent things, as the most tender-conscienced men were likeliest to disobey, and as might be snares to those that desired to please God, when the business of Church Governors should be to promote the obedience of Christ's laws, and to encourage those that are most fearful to disobey them, and to do as the lawmakers, Dan. vi. 5. "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God."

But thus it came to pass that the enemy of the Church did too much attain his ends; such excellent men as Hildersham, Brightman, P. Bayn, Parker, Ames, Bradshaw, Dod, Nicolls, with multitudes more, were laid aside and silenced; and multitudes of them that petitioned for liberty in Lincolnshire, Devonshire, and other parts, suppressed; and the nation in the meantime abounding with gross ignorance, was brought by observing the countenance of the times, to like their own Readers better than painful Preachers, and to hate and scorn the zealous obedience to the laws of Christ, and all diligence for salvation, because they observed, that these men that were such, were so many of them hated and persecuted by the Rulers, though on the occasions before mentioned. And here was the foundation of our greatest misery laid; while some of the Rulers themselves began to turn their hatred against practical godliness (which corrupted nature hates in all), and the common people took the hint, and no longer confined the word Puritan to the Nonconformists, but applied it commonly through all parts of the land, to those that would but speak seriously of heaven, and tell men of Death and Judgment, and spend the Lord's-day in preparation thereto, and desire others to do the like; that did but pray in their families, and keep their children and servants on the Lord's-day to learn the way of salvation, instead of letting them spend it in gaming or revelling; they did but reprove a swearer or a drunkard, these were become the Puritans and the Precisians, and the hated ones of the time; so that they became a byword in all the towns and villages in England that ever I knew, or heard of, as to these things. And thus when the prelates had engaged the vulgar in their cause, and partly by themselves, and partly by them, had so far changed their cause,

us that all serious Christians that feared sin, and were most diligent for salvation, were presently engaged among their adversaries, and they were involved with the rest, though they did nothing against the Government, or Ceremonies, and the most ignorant and impious became the friends and agents of the times, and every where made the most pious and sedulous Christians a common scorn, to the dishonour of God, and the hardening of the wicked, and discouraging of the weak ; and filling men with prejudice against a godly life, and hindering many thousands from the way of salvation ; then did God himself appear more evidently as interested in the quarrels, and rose against them, and shamed them that had let in scorn and shame upon his ways. And this, even this, was the very thing that brought them down.

Besides this, there was scarcely such a thing as Church-government or Discipline known in the land, but only this harassing of those that dissented from them. In all my life I never lived in the parish where one person was publicly admonished, or brought to public penitence, or excommunicated, though there were never so many obstinate drunkards, whoremongers, or vilest offenders. Only I have known now and then one for getting a bastard, that went to the bishop's court and paid their fees ; and I heard of two or three in all the country, in all my life, that stood in a white sheet an hour in the church ; but the ancient Discipline of the Church was unknown. And indeed it was made by them impossible, when one man that lived at a distance from them, and knew not one of many hundreds of the flock, did take upon him the sole jurisdiction, and executed it not by himself, but by a lay-chancellor, excluding the pastors of the several congregations, who were but to join with the Churchwardens and the Apparitors in presenting men, and bringing them into their courts : and an impossible task must needs be unperformed. And so the controversy, as to the letter and outside, was, *Who shall be the governors of all the particular churches?* But to the sense and inside of it, it was, *Whether there should be any effectual Church-government or not?* Whereupon those that pleaded for discipline were called by the new name of the Disciplinarians ; as if it had been a kind of heresy to desire discipline in the church.

At last, the heat began to grow greater, and new impositions raised new adversaries. When conformable Puritans began to bear the great reproach, there being few of the Nonconformists left, then must they also be gotten into the net; altars must be bowed to, or towards; all must publish a book for dancing and sports on the Lord's-day, disabling the masters of families, and parents, though they had small time on the week-days, by reason of their poverty or labour, to keep in their own children or families from dancing on that day, that they might instruct them in the matters of God. If a man, as he read a chapter to his family, had persuaded them to observe and practise it, and with any reasons urged them thereto, this was called *expounding*, and was inquired of in their articles, to be presented together with adultery, and such like sins; so also was he used that had no preaching at home, and would go to hear a conformable preacher abroad. So that multitudes have I known exceedingly troubled or undone for such matters as these, when not one was much troubled for scandalous crimes. Then Lectures were put down, and afternoon Sermons, and expounding the Catechism, or Scripture in the afternoons. And the violence grew so great, that many thousand families left the land, and many godly, able ministers, Conformists, as well as others, were fain to fly and become exiles, some in one country, and some in another, and most in the remote American parts of the world. Thither went Cotton, Hooker, Davenport, Shepherd, Allen, Cobbet, Noyes, Parker, with many others that deserved a dwelling-place in England.

Yet I must profess, I should scarcely have mentioned any of this, nor taken it for so heinous a crime, had it been only cruelty to the persons of these men, though they had dealt much harder with them than they did, and if it had not been greater cruelty to the Church, and if they had but had competent men for their places when they were cast out. But, alas! the churches were pestered with such wretches as are our shame and trouble to this day. Abundance of mere readers, and drunken, profane, deboist men, were the ministers of the churches; so that we have been these many years endeavouring to cleanse the Church of them, and have not fully effected it to this day. Many that had

more plausible tongues did make it their chief business, to bring those that they called Puritans into disgrace, and to keep the people from being such: so that I must needs say, that I knew no place in these times, where a man might not more safely have been drunken every week, as to their punishment, than to have gone to hear a sermon if he had none at home. For the common people readily took the hint, and increased their reproach, as the Rulers did their persecution; so that a man could not, in any place of England that I came in, have said to a swearer or a drunkard, 'O do not sin against God, and wound or hazard your own soul,' but he should have been presently hooted at as a Puritan: he could not have said to an ignorant or careless neighbour, 'Remember your everlasting state; prepare for death and judgment: or have talked of any Scripture matters to them, but he was presently jeered as a Puritan or Precisian; and Scripture itself was become a reproach to him that talked of it, and they would cry out, 'What! we must have talk of Scripture now! You will preach to us! We shall have these Preachers ordered ere long.' So that it was become commonly in England a greater reproach to be a man truly living in the fear of God, than to live in open profaneness, and to rail at godliness, and daily scorn it, which was so far from being a matter of danger, that many took it up in expectation of preferment; and the Preachers of the times were well aware that the rising way was to preach against the precise Puritans, and not to live precisely themselves: and thus both ministry and people grew to that sad pass, that it was no wonder if God would bear no longer with the land.

Even as it was in the Western churches before the inundation of the Goths and Vandals, as Salvian, among others, tells us; indeed I know not a writer that more fitly painteth out the state of our times; I shall therefore borrow some of his words to express our case, which it seems had been then the Church's case.

"*Ipsa Dei Ecclesia, quæ in omnibus esse debet placatrix Dei, quid est aliud quam exacerbatrix Dei? aut præter paucissimos quosdam qui mala fugiunt, quid est aliud pene omnis cætus Christianorum quam sentina vitiorum? Quotum enim quemque invenies in Ecclesia non aut ebriosum aut helluonem, aut adulterum. &c.—immò facilius invenias*

qui totum sit quam qui nihil: et quod diximus nihil nimis forsitan gravis videatur esse censura; plus multo dicam, facilius invenias reum malorum omnium quam non omnium; facilius majorum criminum quam minorum, ed est, facilius qui et majora crimina cum minoribus, quam qui minora tantum sine majoribus perpetrarint. In hanc enim morum probrositatem prope omnis Ecclesiastica plebs redacta est, ut in cuncto populo Christiano genus quodammodo sanctitatis sit, minus esse vitiosum. Itaque, Ecclesias vel potius templa atque altaria Dei minoris reverentiæ quidem habent quam cujuslibet minimi ac municipalis judicis domum. Si quidem intra januas non modo illustrium potestatum, sed etiam præsidum et præpositorum, non omnes passim intrare præsumunt, nisi quos aut judex vocaverit, aut negotium traxerit, aut ipsa honoris proprii dignitas introire permiserit: ita ut, si quispiam fuerit insolenter ingressus, aut cædatur, aut propellatur, aut aliqua verecundiæ atque existimationis suæ labe mulctetur. In templa autem vel potius in altaria atque sacraria Dei passim omnes sordidi ac flagitiosi sine ulla penitus reverentia sacri honoris irrumpunt, non quia non omnes ad exorandum Deum currere debent: sed quia qui ingreditur ad placandum, non debet egredi ad exacerbandum. Neque enim ejusdem officii est indulgentiam poscere et iracundiam provocare: Novum siquidem monstri genus est; eadem pæne omnes jugitur faciunt, quæ fecisse se plangunt: Et qui intrant in Ecclesiasticam domum, ut mala antiqua defleant, exeunt; et quid dico exeunt? in ipsis pene hoc orationibus suis moliuntur." Salv. de Gubern, l. 3, p. 86, 87.

Et p. 180. "O miseriam lacrymabilem, O miseriam luctuosum! Quam dissimilis nunc à seipso est populus Christianus, id est, ab eo qui fuit quondam!—Ecce in quid reducti sumus, ut beatam fore Ecclesiam judicemus, si vel tantum in se boni habeat quantum mali. Nam quomodo non beatam arbitremur, si mediam plebis partem haberet innoxiam, quam pene totam nunc esse plangimus criminosam—superfluè unius scelera deflevimus; aut omnes enim, aut pene omnes flendi atque lugendi sunt."

Et p. 195, 196. "Omnia amamus, omnia colimus; solus nobis in comparatione omnium Deus vilis est? Siquando enim veniret, (quod sæpe evenit) ut eodem die et festivitas Ecclesiastica et ludi publici agantur, quæso ab omnium

Conscientia, quis locus majores Christianorum virorum copias haberet? Cavea ne ludi publici, an atrium Dei! Et Templum omnes magis sectentur, an Theatrum? Dicta Evangeliorum magis diligant an Thymelicorum? Verba vitæ, an mortis? Verba Christi, an mimi? Non est dubium quin illud magis amemus quod anteponimus."

Too like to these, here described, were our times grown, through the fault of those that professed themselves to have the oversight of their souls. A most sad thing it was to see those men that undertook to guide men in the ways of life, to be the chief means of discouraging them; and to hear them make a mock at holiness, that should have devoted their doctrine and life thereto. The accusation may seem harsh to those of after-times that knew not this! Or that by the patrons of iniquity are persuaded of the contrary. But I say as Salvian, l. 6, p. 197. "*Sed gravis est forsitan hæc atque iniqua congestio. Gravis profecto, si falsa.*"

Yet through the mercy of God, it was not all the Prelates of the church that thus miscarried; we have yet surviving our Usher, our Hall, our Morton, learned, godly and peaceable men; whose names are as dear to us as any men's alive. And O that it had been the will of God that all had been such! Then had we not been like to have seen those days of blood that we have seen; nor those great mutations in Church and State! But so far were these good men from being able to do the good that they would, that they were maligned for their piety, and soundness in the faith, and many a time have I heard them despised as well as others, and scorned as Puritans for all they were Prelates.

And yet, it were well if all the guilt had lain upon that party! But, alas! it was not so! Those pious and painful Divines that were oppressed, and much more that part of the people that joined with them, were too impatient under their suffering; and bent themselves, some of them, more than was meet against the persons of those that they suffered by; and too much endeavoured to make the Prelates odious with the people; as persecutors of the Church of God; and were ready to go too far from them on the other hand; and to think the worse of some things because they commanded them. Doubtless, had we all suffered with more patience, and carried ourselves with meekness and gentleness to those that we differed from, and given

them so much commendation as was their due, and put the best construction on their actions that we could, and covered their infirmities with the most charitable interpretations, we might have done more to mollify their minds ; or at least, to have maintained our own innocency. But as there was no room on their part to a motion for peace, or a petition for liberty, in the time of their prosperity ; so when advantages did seem to appear to us of vindicating our liberties, we looked upon them as irreconcilable, and too inconsiderately rushed on, and were wanting in those peaceable endeavours that were our duty. We did not in our Assembly invite them to a free consultation, that their cause might have the fullest and fairest hearing, before it had been condemned. Proposals that had any tendency to healing and accommodation, had never that entertainment from us that they did deserve. What moderate proposals were made to one party by bishop Usher, which both parties did dislike ! How many pacificatory motions and excellent treatises came from that heavenly, peaceable bishop Hall, especially his "Peace-maker," his "Pax terris," and his "Modest Offer !" But how little did they effect ! Certainly some of the men were so venerable for their admirable learning and piety, that they deserved to be heard, and consulted with too, as wise and most judicious men. And Prelacy was not so young a plant in the Church, nor had it in former and latter ages had so few or mean persons to adorn and credit it, but that it well deserved the fairest hearing and debate.

But thus have we all shewed our frailty, and this is the *heed* that we have *taken to ourselves, and to all the flock*. The Lord open our eyes at last, that we may all more fully see our own miscarriages ; for surely they lie as mountains before us, and all the world about us may see them, and yet we will hardly see them ourselves.

A man would think that now if the heart of man be curable, we should by this time be all brought to the sense of our miscarriages, and be prepared to a closure on any reasonable terms. Who would think but after all the smart of our divisions, we should long ere this have got together, and prayed, and consulted ourselves into peace ! But, alas ! there is no such matter done ; and few do I find that mind the doing of it. We continue our quarrels as hot as ever :

As Salvian saith in another case, “*Miseri jam sumus : et nec dum inugaces (discordes) esse cessamus!*” l. 6. p. 202. Et p. 200. “*Mala incessabiliter malis addimus, et peccata peccatis cumulamur : et cum maxima nostri pars jam perierit, id agimus ut pereamus omnes.— Nos non vicinos nostros tantum ardere vidimus, sed ipsi jam ex maxima nostrorum corporum parte arsimus. Et quid hoc, prohi nefas, mali est? Arsimus, arsimus, et tamen flammæ quibus jam arsimus non timemus. Nam quod non ubique agantur quæ prius acta sunt, miserie est beneficium, non disciplinæ. Facile hoc probo. Da enim prioris temporis statum, et statim ubique sunt quæ fuerunt.*”

The minds of many are as much exasperated or estranged as ever. Three sorts I meet with, that all are too backward to any accommodation.

1. The violent men of the prelates’ side, especially those of the new way, who are so far from reconciliation and healing of our breaches, that they labour to persuade the world that the contrary-minded are schismatics, and that all the ministers that have not Episcopal ordination are no ministers, nor any of the churches that have not Prelates are true churches (at least, except it can be proved to be through unavoidable necessity). And they say, to agree with such, were to strike a covenant with Schism itself.

2. Some on the other side, say, ‘Do you not see, that except an inconsiderable number, the Prelatical party are all empty, careless, if not scandalous, ungodly men? Where are almost any of them whose communion is desirable? That set themselves to the winning and saving of souls, and are serious men in the matters of Salvation, in whom you can perceive a heavenly conversation? Hath God brought down these enemies of godliness, and persecutors and depopulators of his church, and would you make a league with them again? Do you not see that they are as bitter and implacable as ever? And have not some of them the face to justify all the former impositions and persecutions, and draw, or continue the guilt of it upon their heads? And would make the world believe that they are wrongfully ejected, when so many accusations in Parliament before the division, so many centuries of horrid, scandalous ones published by Mr. White, and so many more centuries, that lie on record under depositions in the several counties of the Nation

where the Committees ejected them, will be perpetual witnesses of the quality of these men.'

3. Others there be that are peaceable men on both sides, that will not justify the former miscarriages, nor own the present evils of any ; but think, though there be too much truth in these latter accusations, yet the nature of the difference, and the quality of some of the persons is such, as deserveth our desires and endeavours of Reconciliation. But they think the work to be hopeless and impossible, and therefore not to be attempted.

And thus our breach is made : but how, or when it will be well healed, the Lord knoweth. But this is not all, it becometh us yet to come nearer home, and inquire into the ways of the present approved godly Ministers, of what party soever ; and doubtless, if we are willing to know ourselves, we may soon find that which will lay us very low before the Lord, I shall in all, have an eye at my own corrupt heart, which I am so far from justifying in this common lamentation, that I take it as my necessary duty to cast the first stone at myself.

The great sins that we are guilty of, I shall not undertake to enumerate : and therefore my passing over any particular is not to be taken as a denial of it for our justification. But I shall take it to be my duty to give instances of some few, that cry loudly for humiliation and speedy reformation. Only I must needs first premise this profession ; that for all the faults that are now among us, I do not believe that ever England had so able and faithful a Ministry since it was a Nation as it hath at this day : and I fear that few nations on earth, if any, have the like. Sure I am the change is so great within these twelve years, that it is one of the greatest joys that ever I had in the world to behold it. O how many congregations are now plainly and frequently taught, that lived then in great obscurity ! How many able, faithful men are there now in a county in comparison of what were then ! How graciously hath God prospered the studies of many young men, that were little children in the beginning of the late troubles ; so that now they cloud the most of their seniors ! How many miles would I have gone twenty years ago, and less, to have heard one of those ancient, reverend Divines, whose congregations are now grown thin, and their parts esteemed mean by reason of the notable improvement

of their juniors ! And in particular, how mercifully hath the Lord dealt with this poor county (Worcestershire), in raising up so many of these, that do credit to their sacred office, and self-denyingly and freely, zealously and unweariedly do lay out themselves for the good of souls ! I bless the Lord that hath placed me in such a neighbourhood, where I may have the brotherly fellowship of so many able, humble, unanimous, peaceable and faithful men. O that the Lord would long continue this admirable mercy to this unworthy country. I hope I shall rejoice in God while I have a being for the common change in other parts, that I have lived to see ; that so many hundred faithful men are so hard at work for the saving of souls, ‘*fremetibus licet et frendentibus inimicis* ;’ and that more are springing up apace. I know there are some men, whose parts I reverence, who being in point of Government of another mind from them, will be offended at my very mention of this happy alteration ; but I must profess, if I were absolutely prelatical, if I knew my heart, I could not choose for all that but rejoice. What, not rejoice at the prosperity of the church, because men differ in opinion about its order ! Should I shut my eyes against the mercies of the Lord ? The souls of men are not so contemptible to me, that I should envy them the bread of life, because it is broken to them by a hand that had not the prelatical approbation. O that every congregation were thus supplied ! But all cannot be done at once. They had a long time to settle a corrupted ministry ; and when the ignorant and scandalous are cast out, we cannot create abilities in others for the supply ; we must stay the time of their preparation and growth ; and then, if England drive not away the Gospel by their abuse, even by their wilful unreformedness, and hatred of the light, they are likely to be the happiest nation under heaven. For as for all the sects and heresies that are creeping in daily and troubling us, I doubt not but the free Gospel managed by an able, self-denying Ministry, will effectually disperse and shame them all.

But you may say, this is not confessing sin, but applauding those whose sins you pretend to confess ? *Answ.* It is the due acknowledgment of God’s graces, and thanksgiving for his admirable mercies, that I may not seem unthankful in confession, much less to cloud or vilify God’s graces, while I open the frailties that in many do accompany them.

Among the many things that are yet sadly out of order in the best, I shall touch upon these few particulars following :

1. One of our most heinous and palpable sins is *pride* ; a sin that hath too much interest in the best ; but is more hateful and inexcusable in us than in any men. Yet is it so prevalent in some of us, that it inditeth our discourses for us ; it chooseth us our company, it formeth our countenances, it putteth the accents and emphasis upon our words : when we reason, it is the determiner and exciter of our cogitations ; it fills some men's minds with aspiring desires and designs ; it possesseth them with envious and bitter thoughts against those that stand in their light, or by any means do eclipse their glory, or hinder the progress of their idolized reputation. O what a companion, what a tyrannical commander, what a sly, and subtle, and insinuating enemy is this sin of pride ! It goes with men to the draper, the mercer, the tailor ; it chooseth them their cloth, their trimming and their fashion. It dresseth them in the morning, at least the outside. Fewer ministers would ruffle it out in the fashion in hair and habit, if it were not for the command of this tyrannical vice : and I would that were all, or the worst, but alas, how frequently doth it go with us to our studies, and there sit with us and do our work ! How often doth it choose our subject, and more often choose our words and ornaments. God biddeth us be as plain as we can, for the informing of the ignorant, and as convincing and serious as we are able, for the melting and changing of unchanged hearts ; but pride stands by and contradicteth all ; and sometimes it puts in toys and trifles, and polluteth rather than polisheth, and under pretence of laudable ornaments, it dishonoureth our sermons with childish gauds : as if a prince were to be decked in the habit of a stage-player or a painted fool. It persuadeth us to paint the window that it may dim the light ; and to speak to our people that which they cannot understand, to acquaint them that we are able to speak unprofitably. It taketh off the edge, and dulls the life of all our teachings, under the pretence of filing off the roughness, unevenness and superfluity. If we have a plain and cutting passage, it throws it away as too rustical and ungrateful. When God chargeth us to deal with men as for their lives, and beseech them with all the earnestness that we are able, this cursed sin controlleth all, and condemneth

the most holy commands of God, and calleth our most necessary duty a madness; and saith to us, 'What, will you make people think you are mad? Will you make them say you rage or rave? Cannot you speak soberly and moderately?' And thus doth pride make many a man's sermons, and what pride makes the devil makes; and what sermons the devil will make, and to what end, we may easily conjecture. Though the matter be of God, yet if the dress, and manner, and end be from Satan, we have no great reason to expect success.

And when pride hath made the sermon, it goes with them into the pulpit; it formeth their tone, it animateth them in the delivery, it takes them off from that which may be displeasing, how necessary soever, and setteth them in a pursuit of vain applause: and the sum of all this is, that it maketh men, both in studying and preaching, to seek themselves, and deny God, when they should seek God's glory and deny themselves. When they should ask, 'What should I say, and how should I say it, to please God best, and do most good?' It makes them ask, 'What shall I say, and how shall I deliver it to be thought a learned, able preacher, and to be applauded by all that hear me?' When the sermon is done, pride goeth home with them, and maketh them more eager to know whether they were applauded, than whether they did prevail for the saving change of souls! They could find in their hearts, but for shame, to ask folks, how they liked them, and to draw out their commendation. If they perceive that they are highly thought of, they rejoice, as having attained their end; but if they perceive that they are esteemed but weak or common men, they are displeased, as having missed the prize of the day.

But yet this is not all, nor the worst, if worse may be. O that ever it should be spoken of godly ministers, that they are so set upon popular air, and of sitting highest in men's estimation; that envy the parts and names of their brethren that are preferred before them, as if all were taken from their praises that is given to another; and as if God had given them his gifts to be the mere ornaments and trappings of their persons, that they may walk as men of reputation in the world, and all his gifts in others were to be trodden down and vilified, if they seem to stand in the way of their honour! What, a saint, a preacher for Christ, and yet envy that which

bath the image of Christ, and malign his gifts for which he should have the glory, and all because they seem to hinder our glory ! Is not every true Christian a member of the body, and therefore partaketh of the blessings of the whole, and of each particular member thereof ? And doth not every man owe thanks to God for his brethren's gifts, not only as having himself a part in them, as the foot hath the benefit of the guidance of the eye ; but also because his own ends may be attained by his brethren's gifts as well as by his own ? For if the glory of God and the church's felicity be not his end, he is not a Christian. Will any workman malign another because he helpeth him to do his master's work ? Yet alas, how common is this heinous crime among men of parts and eminence in the church ! They can secretly blot the reputation of those that stand cross to their own : and what they cannot for shame do in plain and open terms, lest they be proved palpable liars and slanderers, they will do in generals and malicious intimations, raising suspicions where they cannot fasten accusations. And so far are some gone in this satanical vice, that it is their ordinary practice, and a considerable part of their business to keep down the estimation of any they dislike, and defame others in the slyest and most plausible way. And some go so far, that they are unwilling that any one that is abler than themselves should come into their pulpits, lest he should be applauded above themselves. A fearful thing, that any man that hath the least of the fear of God, should so envy God's gifts, and had rather that his carnal hearers were unconverted, and the drowsy not awakened, than that it should be done by another who may be preferred before them. Yea, so far doth this cursed vice prevail, that in great congregations that have need of the help of many teachers, we can scarcely in many places get two in equality to live together in love and quietness, and unanimously to carry on the work of God ! But unless one of them be quite below the other in parts, and content to be so esteemed, or unless one be a curate to the other, or ruled by him, they are contending for precedency, and envying each other's interest, and waking with strangeness and jealousy towards one another, to the shame of the profession and the great wrong of the congregation. I am ashamed to think of it, that when I have been endeavouring with persons of public interest and capacity to further a

good work, to convince them of the great necessity of more ministers than one in great congregations, they tell me, they will never agree together! I hope the objection is ungrounded as to the most: but it is a sad case that it should be so with any. Nay, some men are so far gone in pride, that when they might have an equal assistant to further the work of God, they had rather take all the burden upon themselves, though more than they can bear, than that any should share with them in the honour; and for fear lest they should diminish their interest in the people.

Hence also it comes to pass, that men so magnify their own opinions, and are as censorious of any that differ from them in lesser things, as if it were all one to differ from them and from God; and expect that all should be conformed to their judgments, as if they were the rulers of the church's faith! And while we cry down Papal infallibility, and determination of controversies, we would, too many of us, be popes ourselves, and have all stand to our determination, as if it were infallible. It is true, we have more modesty than expressly to say so: we pretend that it is only the evidence of truth that appeareth in our reasons that we expect men should yield to, and our zeal is for the truth and not for ourselves: but as that must needs be taken for truth which is ours, so our reasons must needs be taken for valid; and if they be freely examined, and found to be infirm and fallacious, and so discovered, as we are exceeding backward to see it ourselves, because they are ours, so how angry are we that it should be disclosed to others? We so espouse the cause of our errors, as if all that were spoken against them were spoken against our persons, and we were heinously injured to have our arguments fully confuted, by which we injured the truth and the minds of men! So that the matter is come to that pass through our pride, that if an error or fallacious argument do fall under the patronage of a reverend name (which is no whit rare), we must either give it the victory, and give away the truth, or else become injurious to that name that doth patronise it. For though you meddle not with their persons, yet do they put themselves under all the strokes which you give their arguments, and feel it as sensibly as if you had spoken it of themselves, because they think it will follow in the eyes of men, that weak arguing is a sign of a weak man. If therefore you take it for your duty

to shame their errors and false reasonings, by discovering their nakedness, they take it as if you shamed their persons ; and so their names must be a garrison or fortress to their mistakes, and their reverence must defend all their sayings from the light.

And so high are our spirits, that when it becomes a duty to any man to reprove or contradict us, we are commonly impatient both of the matter and of the manner. We love the man that will say as we say, and be of our opinion, and promote our reputation, though he be less worthy of our love in other respects ; but he is ungrateful to us that contradicteth us, and differeth from us, and that dealeth plainly with us in our miscarriages, and telleth us of our faults ! Especially in the management of our public arguing, where the eye of the world is upon us, we can scarcely endure any contradiction or plain dealing. I know that railing language is to be abhorred, and that we should be as tender of each other's reputation, as our fidelity to the truth will permit : but our pride makes too many of us to think all men condemn us that do not admire us, yea, and admire all that we say, and submit their judgments to our most palpable mistakes ! We are so tender, that no man can touch us scarcely but we are hurt ; and so stout and high-minded, that a man can scarcely speak to us : like froward children, or sick folk that cannot endure to be talked to ; the fault is not that you speak amiss to them, but that you speak to them. So our indignation is not at men for writing or speaking injuriously or unjustly against our words, but for confuting them. And a man that is not versed in complimenting, and skilled in flattery above the vulgar rate, can scarcely tell how to handle them so observantly, and fit their expectations at every turn, but there will be some word, or some neglect which their high spirits will fasten, and take as injurious to their honour : so that a plain countryman that speaks as he thinks, must have nothing to do with them, unless he will be esteemed guilty of dishonouring them.

I confess I have often wondered at it, that this most heinous sin should be made so light of, and thought so consistent with a holy frame of heart and life, when far lesser sins are by ourselves proclaimed to be so damnable in our people ! And more have I wondered to see the difference between ungodly sinners, and godly preachers in this res-

pect. When we speak to drunkards, worldlings, or any ignorant, unconverted men, we disgrace them as in that condition to the utmost, and lay it on as plainly as we can speak, and tell them of their sin, and shame, and misery : and we expect, not only that they should bear all patiently, but take all thankfully, and we have good reasons for all this ; and most that I deal with do take it patiently ; and many gross sinners will commend the closest preachers most, and will say that they care not for hearing a man that will not tell them plainly of their sins. But if we speak to a godly minister, against his errors or any sin, if we honour them and reverence them, and speak as smoothly as we are able to speak, yea, if we mix commendations with our contradictions or reproofs, if the applause be not apparently predominant, so as to drown all the force of the reproof or confutation ; and if it be not more an applause than a reprehension, they take it as an injury almost insufferable. That is considered railing against them, that would be no better than flattery in them to the common people ; though the cause may be as great.

Brethren, I know this is a sad and harsh confession ; but that all this should be so among us, should be more grievous to us than to be told of it. Could this nakedness be hid, I should not have disclosed it, at least so openly in the view of all. But, alas, it is long ago open in the eyes of the world : we have dishonoured ourselves by idolizing our honour ; we print our shame, and preach our shame, and tell it unto all. Some will think that I speak over charitably to call such persons godly men, in whom so great a sin doth so much prevail. I know where it is indeed predominant, and not hated, bewailed, and mortified in the man, there can be no true godliness ; and I leave every man to a cautious jealousy and search of his own heart. But if all are graceless that are guilty of any, or many, or most of the forementioned discoveries of pride, the Lord be merciful to the Ministers of this land, and give us quickly another spirit ; for grace is a rarer thing than most of us have supposed it to be.

Yet I must needs say, that it is not all that I intend. To the praise of grace be it spoken, we have some among us here, and I doubt not but it is so in other parts, that are eminent in humility, and lowliness, and condescension, and exemplary herein to their flocks and to their brethren ; and

it is their glory, and shall be their glory ; and maketh them truly honourable and amiable in the eyes of God and themselves : and O that the rest of us were but such ! But, alas, this is not the case of all.

O that the Lord would lay us at his feet, in the tears of unfeigned sorrow for this sin ! Brethren, may I take leave a little to expostulate this case with my own heart and you, that we may see the shame of our sin and be reformed ? Is not pride the sin of devils ? The firstborn of hell ? Is it not that wherein Satan's image doth much consist ; and is it tolerable evil in a man that is so engaged against him and his kingdom as we are ? The very design of the Gospel doth tend to self-abasing ; and the work of grace is begun and carried on in humiliation. Humility is not a mere ornament of a Christian, but an essential part of the new creature : it is a contradiction to be a sanctified man, or a true Christian, and not humble. All that will be Christians must be Christ's disciples, and come to him to learn ; and their lesson is, to be meek and lowly. O how many precepts and admirable examples hath our Lord and Master given us to this end ! Can we once conceive of him as purposely washing and wiping his servants' feet, and yet be stout and lordly still ! Shall he converse with the meanest, and we avoid them as contemptible people, and think none but persons of riches and honour to be fit for our society ! How many of us are oftener found in the houses of gentlemen, than in the poor cottages of those that have most need of our help ! There are many of us that would think it base to be daily with the most needy and beggarly people to instruct them in the matters of life, and supply their wants, as if we had taken charge only of the souls of the rich ! Alas, what is it that we have to be proud of ? Of our bodies ? Why, are they not made of the like materials as the brutes, and must they not shortly be as loathsome and abominable as the dung ? Is it of our graces ? Why the more we are proud of them, the less we have to be proud of. And when so much of the nature of grace is in humility, it is a great absurdity to be proud of it. Is it of our learning, knowledge, abilities and gifts ? Why surely if we have any knowledge at all, we must needs know much reason to be humble ; and if we know more than others, we must know more reason than others do to be humble. How little is it

that the most learned know, in comparison of that which yet they are ignorant of? And to know that things are past your reach, and to know how ignorant you are, one would think should be no great cause of pride! However, do not the devils know more than you? And will you be proud of that which the devils do excel you in? Yea, to some I may say, as Salvian, lib. 4. de Gubern. p. 98. "*Quid tibi blandiris, O homo quisquis es, Credulitate, quæ sine timore atque obsequio Dei nulla est? aliquid plus Dæmones habent. Tu enim unam rem habes tantummodo; illi duas. Tu credulitatem habes; non habes timorem: illi et credulitatem habent pariter et timorem.*" Our very business is to teach the great lesson of self-denial and humility to our people, and how unfit is it then that we should be proud ourselves! We must study humility, and preach humility, and must we not possess and practise it? A proud preacher of humility, is at least a self-condemning man.

What a sad case is it, that so vile a sin is no more easily discerned by us! But many that are most proud, can blame it in others, and take no notice of it in themselves. The world takes notice of some among us that they have aspiring minds, and seek for the highest rooms, and must be Rulers, and bear the sway wherever they come, or else there is no standing before them. No man must contradict them that will not partake of the fruits of their indignation. In any consultations, they come not to search after truth, but to dictate to others that perhaps are fit to teach them. In a word, they have such arrogant, domineering spirits, that the world rings of it; and yet they will not see it in themselves.

Brethren, I desire to deal closely with my own heart and yours. I beseech you consider, whether it will save us to speak well of the grace that we are without; or to speak against the sin that we live in? Have not many of us cause to inquire once and again, whether sincerity can consist with such a measure of pride? When we are telling the drunkard that he cannot be saved unless he become temperate; and the fornicator, that he cannot be saved unless he become chaste (an undoubted truth): have we not as great reason if we are proud, to say of ourselves, that we cannot be saved unless we become humble? Certainly, pride is a greater sin

than whoredom, or drunkenness ; and humility is as necessary as chastity and sobriety. Truly, brethren, a man may as certainly, and more slyly and dangerously make haste to hell in a way of profession, and earnest preaching of the Gospel, and seeming zeal for a holy life, as in a way of drunkenness and filthiness ; for what is true holiness but a devotedness to God, and a living to him ? And what is a wicked and damnable state, but a devotedness to our carnal selves, and a living to ourselves ? And doth any man live more to himself, or less to God, than the proud ? And may not pride make a preacher study for himself, and pray, and preach, and live for himself, even when he seemeth to outgo others in the work, if he therefore outgo them, that he may have the glory of it from men ? It is not the work without the principle and end that will prove us upright : the work may be God's, and yet we do it, not for God, but for ourselves. I confess I feel such continual danger in this point, that if I do not watch against it, lest I should study for myself, and preach for myself, and write for myself, rather than for Christ, I should soon miscarry ; and after all, I justify not myself, when I must condemn the sin. Consider, I beseech you, brethren, what baits there are in the work of the Ministry, to entice a man to be selfish ; that is, to be carnal and impious, even in the highest work of piety ! The fame of a godly man is as great a snare as the fame of a learned man : and woe to him that takes up with the fame of godliness instead of godliness. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. When the times were all for learning and empty formalities, then the temptation of the proud did lie that way ; but now through the unspeakable mercy of God, the most lively, practical preaching is in credit, and godliness itself is in credit : and now the temptation to proud men is here, even to pretend to be zealous preachers and godly men. O what a fine thing doth it seem to have the people crowd to hear us, and to be affected with what we say, and that we command their judgments and affections ! What a taking thing is it to be cried up as the ablest and godliest man in the country ! And to be famed through the land for the highest spiritual excellencies. Alas, brethren, a little grace will serve turn to make you to join yourselves with the forwardest of those men, that have these induce-

ments or encouragements. To have the people plead for you as their felicity, and call you the pillars of the church of God; and their fathers, the chariots and horsemen of Israel, and no lower language than excellent men, and able divines, and to have them depend upon you, and be ruled by you; though this may be no more than their duty; yet I must again tell you, that a little grace may serve to make you seem zealous men for this. Nay, pride may do it without any special grace. O therefore be jealous of yourselves, and in all your studies, be sure to study humility. "He that exalteth himself shall be brought low, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." I observe commonly, that almost all men good and bad do loathe the proud, and love the humble: so far doth pride contradict itself, unless it be where it purposely hideth itself, and, as conscious of its own deformity, doth borrow the homely dress of humility. And we have cause to be the more jealous, because it is the most radicated vice, and as hardly as any extirpated from the soul. "Nam sæpe sibi de se mens ipsa mentitur, et fingit se de bono opere amare quod non amat: de mundi autem gloria, non amare quod amat;" inquit Gregor. M. de cura Pastor. p. 1. c. 9. When it was a disgrace to a man to be a godly, zealous preacher, then had not pride such a bait as now. As the same Gregory saith, *ibid.* p. 21. c. 8. "Eo tempore quo quisquis plebibus præerat primus ad Martyris tormenta ducebatur; Tunc laudabile fuit Episcopatum quærere, quando per hunc quemque dubium non erat ad supplicia majora pervenire."

But it is not so now, as he saith in another place, Cap. 1. initio, "Sed quia authore Deo ad Religionis reverentiam omne jam præsentis seculi culmen inclinatur, sunt nonnulli qui intra sanctam Ecclesiam per speciem regiminis gloriam affectant honoris; Videri Doctores appetunt, transcendere cæteros concupiscunt, atque attestante veritate, primas salutationes in foro, primos recubitus in cœnis, primas cathedras in conventibus quærunt, qui susceptum curæ Pastoralis officium ministrare digne tanto magis nequeunt, quanto ad hujus humilitatis magisterium ex sola elatione pervenerunt; ipsa quippe in Magisterio lingua confunditur, quando aliud discitur, et aliud docetur." Hactenus Gregorius, et ipse nimis magnus.

But I have stood longer upon this sin than is proportion-

able to the rest of my work ; I shall be the shorter in the confession of some of the rest.

2. Another sin of the Ministers of England, and much more of many other Churches, are sadly guilty of, is *undervaluing the unity and peace of the whole Church*. Though I scarcely ever met with any that will not speak for unity and peace, or at least, that will expressly speak against it ; yet is it not common to meet with those that are addicted to promote it ; but too commonly do we find men averse to it, and jealous of it, if not themselves the instruments of division. The Papists have so long abused the name of the Catholic Church, that in opposition to them, many do either put it out of their creeds, or only fill up room with the name, while they understand not, or consider not the nature of the thing ; or think it enough to believe that there is such a body, though they behave not themselves as sensible members of it. If the Papists will idolize the Church, shall we therefore deny it, disregard it, or divide ? It is a great and common sin through the Christian world, to take up Religion in a way of faction ; and instead of a love and tender care of the Universal Church, to confine that love and respect to a party. Not but that we must prefer in our estimation and communion the purer parts before the impure, and refuse to participate with any in their sins ; but the most infirm and diseased part should be compassionated and assisted to the utmost of our power ; and communion must be held as far as is lawful, and no where avoided but upon the urgency of necessity. As we must love those of our neighbourhood that have the plague or leprosy, and afford them all the relief we can, and acknowledge all our just relations to them, and communicate to them, though we may not have local communion with them : and in other diseases which are not so infectious, we may be the more with them for their help, by how much the more they need it. Of the multitude that say, they are of the Catholic Church, it is too rare to meet with men of a Catholic spirit ; men have not a universal consideration of, and respect to the whole church ; but look upon their own party as if it were the whole. If there be some called Lutherans, some Calvinists, some, among these, of subordinate divisions, and so of other parties among us, most of them will pray hard for the prosperity of their party, and rejoice and give thanks

accordingly, when it goes well with them; but if any party suffer, they little regard it, as if it were no loss at all to the church. If it be the smallest parcel that possesseth not many nations, no, nor cities on earth, they are ready to carry it, as if they were the whole church, and as if it went well with the church in the Romish pale, and no doubt but this is an abominable schism: but, alas, how many do imitate them too far while we reprove them! And as they foist the word *Roman* into their creed, and turn the Catholic Church into the Roman Catholic Church: as if there were no other Catholics, and the Church were of no larger extent; so it is with many others, as to their several parties. Some will have it to be the Lutheran Catholic Church, as if it were all reformed, some the Anabaptist Catholic Church, and so of some others. And if they differ not among themselves, they are little troubled at differing from others, though it be from almost all the Christian world. The peace of their party, they take for the peace of the Church: no wonder therefore if they carry it no further.

How rare is it to meet with a man that smarteth or bleedeth with the Church's wounds, or sensibly taketh them to heart as his own; or that ever had solicitous thoughts of a cure? No, but almost every party thinks that the happiness of the rest consisteth only in turning to them; and because they be not of their mind, they cry, 'Down with them;' and are glad to hear of their fall, as thinking that is the way to the Church's rising; that is, their own. How few are there that understand the true state of Controversies between the several parties; or that ever well discerned how many of them are but verbal, and how many are real! And if those that understand it do, in order to right information and accommodation, disclose it to others, it is taken as an extenuation of their error, and a carnal compliance with them in their sin. Few men grow zealous of peace, till they grow old, or have much experience of men's spirits and principles, and see better the true state of the Church, and several differences, than they did before. And then they begin to write their *Irenicons*, and many such are extant at this day. Pareus, Junius, and many more, have done their parts; as our Davenant, Morton, Hall, whose excellent treatise called *The Peace-maker*, and his *Pax Terris*, deserve to be transcribed upon all our hearts, Hattonus, Amyraldus

also have done. But ‘*recipiuntur ad modum recipientis* ;’ as a young man in his heat of lust and passion was judged to be no fit auditor of moral philosophy ; so we find that those same young men who may be zealous for peace and unity, when they are grown more experienced, are zealous for their factions against these in their youthful heat. And therefore such as these before-mentioned, and Duræus, who hath made it the business of his life, do seldom do much greater good than to quiet their own consciences in the discharge of so great a duty, and to moderate some few, and save them from further guilt, and to leave behind them when they are dead, a witness against a wilful, self-conceited and unpeaceable world.

Nay, commonly it bringeth a man under suspicion either of favouring some heresy, or abating his zeal, if he do but attempt a pacificatory work : as if there were no zeal necessary for the great fundamental verities for the Church’s unity and peace, but only for parties and some particular truths.

And a great advantage the devil hath got this way, by employing his own agents, the unhappy Socinians in writing so many treatises for Catholic and Arch-Catholic unity and peace, which they did for their own ends, and would have done it on insufficient terms ; by which means the enemy of peace hath brought it to pass, that whoever maketh motion for peace, is presently under suspicion of being one that hath need of it for an indulgence of his own errors. A fearful case, that heresy should be credited, as if none were such friends to unity and peace as they ; and that so great and necessary a duty, upon which the Church’s welfare doth so depend, should be brought into such suspicion or disgrace !

Brethren, I speak not all this without apparent reason. We have as sad divisions among us in England, considering the piety of the persons, and the smallness of the matter of our discord, as most nations under heaven have known. The most that keeps us at odds is but about the right form and order of Church-government. Is the distance so great that Presbyterian Episcopal, and Independent, might not be well agreed ? Were they but heartily willing and forward for peace, they might—I know they might. I have spoken with some moderate men of all the parties, and I perceive

by their confessions it were an easy work. Were men's hearts but sensible of the Church's case, and unfeignedly touched with love to one another, and did they but heartily set themselves to seek it, the settling of a safe and happy peace were an easy work. If we could not in every point agree, we might easily find out, and narrow our differences, and hold communion upon our agreement in the main; determining of the safest way for the managing of our few and small agreements, without the danger or trouble of the Church. But is this much done? It is not done. Let each party flatter themselves now as they please, it will be recorded to the shame of the Ministry of England, while the Gospel shall abide in the Christian world. What will be recorded? What! why this: That learned and godly Ministers in England, did first disagree among themselves, and head and lead on their people in those disagreements! That they proceeded in them for the space of fourteen years already; how much more will be, God knows, and in all that time had as great advantages and opportunities for agreement as any people in the world. They had the sad experience of the conflagration of the Commonwealth, and were scourged to it by a calamitous war. They saw the fearful confusions of the Church; and the perverting of multitudes of seduced souls, some to be Seekers, some Socinians, some Ranters, Quakers, or Infidels. They saw the continual exasperation of minds, and the jealousies and bitterness that their distance bred, and how it was the fuel of a daily course of sin: and yet for all these, they were moved little to them. They had Magistrates that did not hinder them from the work; but gave them full liberty to have consulted and endeavoured a full agreement. They lived near together, and might have easily met together for the work: and if one or two, or an hundred meetings could not have accomplished it, they might have held on till it was done. And yet for all this there is no such thing done, nor any considerable attempt yet made. And O, what heinous aggravations do accompany this sin! Never men since the apostles' days, I think, did make greater profession of godliness: the most of them are bound by solemn oaths and covenants, for unity and reformation. They all confess the worth of peace; and most of them will preach of it, and talk for it, while they sit still and neglect it, as if it were

not worth the looking after. They will read and preach on those texts that command men to follow peace with all men, and as much as in us lieth, if it be possible, to live peaceably with them : and yet we are so far from following it, and doing all that we possibly can for it, that too many will snarl at it, and malign and censure any that endeavour it, as if all zeal for peace did proceed from an abatement of our zeal for holiness ; and as if holiness and peace were so fallen out, that there were no reconciling them ; when yet they have found, by long experience, that concord is a sure friend to piety, and piety always moves to concord. We have seen how errors and heresies breed by discord, as discord is bred and fed by them. We have seen to our sorrow that where the servants of God should live together as one, of one heart, and one soul, and one lip, and should promote each other's faith and holiness, and admonish and assist each other against sin, and rejoice together in the hope of their future glory, we have contrarily lived in mutual jealousies, and drowned holy love in bitter contendings ; and have studied to disgrace and undermine one another, and to increase our own parties by right or wrong ; and we that were wont to glory of our love to the brethren, as the certain mark of our sincerity in the faith, have now turned it into a love of the party only, and those that are against that party have more of our spleen, and envy, and malice than love. I know this is not so with all, nor prevalently with any true believer, but yet it is so common, that it may cause us to question the sincerity of many that are thought by themselves, and others, to be most sincere. And it is not ourselves only that are scorched in this flame, but we have drawn our people into it, and cherished them in it, so that most of the godly in the nation are fallen into several parties, and have turned much of their ancient piety into vain opinions, and vain disputes, and envyings, and animosities ; yea, whereas it was wont to be made the certain mark of a graceless wretch to deride the godly, how few are there now that stick at secret deriding and slanderings those that are not of their opinion ! A pious, Prelatical man can reverently scorn and slander a Presbyterian ; and some of them an Independent, and an Independent both. And, which is the worst of all, the common ignorant people take notice of all this, and do not only deride us, but are hardened by

us against Religion; and when we go about to persuade them to be religious, they see so many parties, that they know not which to join with, and think that it is as good be of none at all, as of any, when they are uncertain which is right; and thus thousands are grown into contempt of all Religion by our divisions; and poor, carnal wretches begin to think themselves in the better case of the two, because they hold to their old formalities, when we hold to nothing. Yea, and these pious contenders do more effectually plead the devil's cause against one another, than any of the ignorant people can do. They can prove one another deceivers, and blasphemers, and what not; and this by secret slanders among all that they can handsomely vent them to; and perhaps also, by public disputation, and printed slanderous books. So that when the obstinate drunkards are at a loss, and have nothing to say of their own, against a man that would drive them from their sin, they are prompted by the railing books or reports of factious, zealous malice; then they can say, 'I regard him not, nor his doctrine; such a man hath proved him a deceiver and a blasphemer; let him answer him if he can.' And thus the lies and slanders of some (for that is no news), and the bitter opprobrious speeches of others, have more effectually done the devil's service, under the name of Orthodoxy and Zeal for Truth, than the malignant scorners of godliness could have done it. So that the matter is come to that pass, that there are few men of note of any party, but the reproaches of the other parties are so publicly upon them, that the ignorant and wicked rabble that should be converted by them, have learned to be orthodox, and to vilify and scorn them. Mistake me not: I do not slight Orthodoxy, nor jeer at the name; but disclose the pretences of devilish zeal in pious or seemingly pious men. If you are offended with me for my harsh language, because I can tell you that I learned it of God, I dare be bold therefore to tell you further, that you have far more cause to be offended at your Satanical practices. The thing itself is surely odious, if the name be so odious as to turn your stomachs. How should the presence and guilt of it terrify you, if the name make you start! I know that many of the reverend calumniators do think that they shew that soundness in the faith, and love to the Truth, which others want. But I will resolve the case in the words of the Holy

Ghost, "Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom; but, if you have bitter envyings (or jealousy) 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 (or bitter zeal) and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy; and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." (James iii.) I pray you read these words again and again, and study them.

O doleful case to think of; that a while ago we were afraid of nothing, but lest Papists and deisto persons should have swallowed up the Gospel and our liberty, and destroyed us together; and now when the work hath been put into the hands of those men, that were joined in these fears, and are joined in the strictest profession of piety, and are of one judgment in all the Articles of the Faith, they cannot, or will not unanimously join in carrying on the work; but they either fall upon one another, or live at a distance, and cast their work upon an hundred disadvantages by the bitter disagreements that are among themselves. O what a nation might England have been ere now, if it had not been for the proud and obstinate contentions of godly Ministers! What abundance of good might we have done! Nay, what might we not have done, if our perverseness had not marred our work! Did we but agree among ourselves, our words would have some authority with the people; but when they see us some of one mind, and some of another, and snarling and reviling at each other, they think they may well enough do so too. Why may not we call them Sectaries or Deceivers, say they, when they call one another so? Nay, if we were not all of a mind in some smaller matters, yet if we did but hold communion and correspondence, and join together in the main, and do as much of God's work as we can in concurrent unanimity, the people would far more regard us, and we might be in a greater capacity to do them good. But when we are single, they slight us; and when we disagree and divide, they despise us: and who can marvel at it, when we despise one another! What, say they,

when a minister doth his duty alone, ‘Must we be ruled by every singular man? Are you wiser than all the ministers in the country? Are not such and such as learned as you?’ But when we go hand in hand, it stops their mouths. They think either themselves may be wiser than one or two ministers, or at least, other ministers may be wiser than they; but common modesty will not suffer them to think that they are wiser than all the ministers in the country, or in the world. I know that matters of Faith are not to be received upon our credit alone; but yet our credit may do much to remove prejudice, and to unblock the entrance into men’s minds, and procure the Truth a more equal hearing, and therefore is necessary to our people’s good.

Nay, more than all this—I know it—I see and hear it; that there are some ministers that are glad when they perceive the people despise their brethren that differ from them in some lesser things; they would have it so, and they foment it as far as they can for shame; and they secretly rejoice when they hear the news of it. This is next to Prelatical silencing them, and casting them out of the Church. And I confess, I cannot but suspect that such men would go near to silence them, if they had their will and way; for he that would have a minister under disgrace, would have him useless; which is next to silencing him, and tendeth to the same end. You will say, we do not desire that he should be disabled to do good, but to do hurt. I answer, but the question is, whether his error be so great, that the holding, or propagating it doth more hurt, than all his preaching, and the labours of that whole party which you would disgrace, is likely to do good? If so, then I think it is a desirable work to disgrace him, and silence him in a just measure, and by just means, and I would concur therein; but if it be otherwise, we are bound to keep up that reputation with others, which is necessary ordinarily to the success of their labours.

I may not here, without wrong to my conscience, pass over the late practices of some of our brethren of the New Prelatical way; for those of the ancient prelacy are more moderate. I know it will be displeasing to them, and I have no mind to displease them; but yet I will more avoid the treacherous or unfaithful silence which may wrong them, than the words of faithful friendship, which may displease

them ; and I will say no more to them, than, if I know myself, I should say, if I were resolved for Prelacy. It is the judgment of these men that I now speak of, that a Prelate is essential to a Church, and there is no Church without them ; and that their ordination is of necessity to the essence of a Presbyter : and that those that are ordained without them (though some will except a case of necessity) are not Ministers of Christ. Hereupon they conclude, that our congregations, here in England, are no true Churches, except where the presbyter dependeth on some Prelate, and the Ministers ordained by presbyters, only are no true Ministers ; and they will not allow men to hear them, or communicate with them, but withdraw from our congregations like Separatists or Recusants. And the same note many of them brand upon all the Reformed Churches abroad, that have no Prelates, as they do on us : so that the Church of Rome is admirably gratified by it ; and instead of demanding where our Church was before Luther, they begin to demand of us, where it is now ? And indeed, had it been no more visible in the ages before Luther, than a Reformed Prelatical church is now, they would have a fairer pretence than now they have, to call upon us for the proof of its visibility. Suppose that the Presbyters who rejected Prelacy were guilty of all that schism and other sin, as they are ordinarily accused of ; (for I will now go on such suppositions :) Must the people therefore turn their backs on the assemblies and ordinances of God ? Is it better for them to have no Preaching, and no Sacraments, and no public Communion in God's worship, than to have it in an assembly that hath not a Prelate over it ; or from a Minister ordained without his consent ? I confess I would not for all the world stand guilty before God of the injury that this doctrine hath already done to men's souls, much less of what it evidently tendeth to. They lay out themselves faithfully for the healing of that ignorance, and common profaneness which got so much head under their careless or drunken predecessors. They desire nothing more than the saving of souls ; they preach sound doctrine ; they live in peace ; and it is the greatest of their grief that many of their hearers remain so ignorant and obstinate still. And see what a help these poor impenitent sinners have for their cure ! They are taught to turn their backs upon their teachers ; and whereas before

they heard them but with disregard, they are now taught not to hear them at all; and if we privately speak to them, they can tell us, that it is the judgment of such and such learned men, that we are not to be heard, nor our Churches to be communicated with, nor we to be at all regarded as Christ's Ministers. And thus drunkards, and swearers, and worldlings, and all sorts of sensualists are got out of gunshot, and beyond the reach of our teaching or reproof: and those that do not (for shame of the world) obey their doctrine to stay from the assembly, yet do they there hear us with prejudice and contempt, and from the communion of the Church in the Lord's-supper they commonly abstain. Were it only the case of these few civil persons, that conscientiously go this way, and address themselves to these kind of men for Government and Sacraments, I would never have mentioned the thing; for it is not them that I intend. For what care I what minister they hear or obey, so it be one that leadeth them in the ways of truth and holiness? Let them follow Christ, and forsake their sins, and go to heaven, and I will never contend with them for the forsaking of my conduct. But it is the common sort of profane and sensual men, that are every where hardened against the Ministry, and they have nothing but the reputation of the Prelatical Divines to countenance it with. If their teachers do but differ in a gesture from these men, they vilify them and reject their guidance, having nothing but the authority of such men to support them. Fain would we reach our consciences to awaken them from their security; for it pitieth us to see them so near unto perdition. But we can do no good upon them; for our ministry is in contempt because of the contrary judgment of these men. Not that the poor people care any more for a Prelate, as such, than for an ordinary Minister: for if Prelates would have troubled them as much with their preaching, and reproofs, and discipline, they would have hated them as much as they do the Ministers. But because they found by experience, that under their government they might sin quietly, and make a scorn of godliness without any danger or trouble, and that to this day, the men of that way are so much against those precise ministers, that will not let them go quietly to hell, therefore are they all for Prelacy, and make this the great shelter for their disobedience and unreformed lives. So that

I confess I think that the hurt that Separatists and Anabaptists do in England at this day, is little to the hurt that is done by these men : for I count that the greatest hurt, which hardeneth the greatest number in the state and way of greatest danger. An Anabaptist may yet be a penitent and godly person, and be saved ; but the sensual and impenitent worldlings can never be saved in that condition. I see by experience, that if separation infect two or three, or half a score in a parish ; or if Anabaptistry infect as many, and perhaps neither of them mortally, this obstinate contempt of Ministerial exhortation, encouraged by the countenance of the contrary-minded, doth infect them by the scores or hundreds. If we come to them in a case where they have no countenance from the Ministry, how mute, or tractable comparatively do we find them ! But if it be a case where they can but say, that the Prelatical Divines are of another judgment, how unmoveable are they, though they have nothing else to say ! Try, when we come to set on foot this work that we are now upon of Catechising, and private Instruction, whether this will not be one of our greatest impediments ; though in a work of unquestioned lawfulness and necessity : even because they are taught that we are none of their Pastors, and have no authority over them. I know that some of these men are learned and reverend, and intend not such mischievous ends as these : the hardening of men in ignorance is not their design, but this is the thing effected. To intend well in doing ill, is no rarity. Who can, in reverence to any men on earth, sit still and hold his tongue, while he seeth the people thus run to their own destruction, and the souls of men be undone by the contendings of Divines for their several parties and interests ? The Lord that knows my heart, knows that, if I know it myself, as I am not of any one of these parties, so I speak not a word of this in a factious partiality, for one party, or against another, as such ; much less in spleen against any person ; but if I durst in conscience, I would have silenced all this, for fear of giving them offence whom I much honour. But what am I but a servant of Christ ? and what is my life worth, but to do him service ? and whose favour can recompense for the ruin of the Church ? and who can be silent while souls are undone ? Not I, for my part, while God is my Master, his Word my rule, his Work my business, and the success of it, for the

saving of men, my end. Who can be reconciled to that which so lamentably crosseth his Master's interest, and his main end? Nor yet would I have spoken any of this, if it had been only in respect to my own charge; yet I bless God, the sore is but small, in comparison of what it is in many other places. But the observation of some neighbour congregations, and others more remote, methinks should make the very contrary-minded Divines relent, if they were present with them.

Would it be a pleasant hearing to them, to hear a crowd of scandalous men to reproach their Ministers that would draw them to repentance, and to tell them they have no authority over them, and all this under the pretence and shelter of their judgments? Had they rather men went to hell, than be taught the way to heaven by Presbyters that had not their imposition of hands? Is that point of order more necessary than the substance of the work, or the end itself? Nay, I must needs in faithfulness say yet more: that it is no credit to the cause of those reverend men, nor ever was, that the generality of the most wicked men, and haters and contemners of all devotion, are the great friends and maintainers of it; and the befriending of such a party did more to gain their love, than to save their souls; and the engaging such a party for them, hath not been the least cause of their fall. This is true, however it be taken.

And what a case would the Churches of England be in, if we should yield to the motions of these reverend men! Supposing that men's judgments are not at their own wills, and therefore many cannot see the reasons for Prelacy; must we all give up our charges as no true Ministers, and desert the Congregations as no true Churches? Why, whom will they then set over them in our stead? First, it is known that they cannot, if they had fit men, procure them what liberty their way requires, because of the discountenance of authority: and it is known that they have not fit men for one Congregation of very many. And had they rather that the doors were shut up, and God had no public worship, nor the people any public teaching or sacraments, than any but they should have a hand in the performance of it? Or if the ministers keep their places, can they wish all the congregation to stay at home, and live like heathens? Nay, are they not angry with us for casting out a grossly ignorant,

insufficient, scandalous sort of ministers, who were the great means of the perdition of the people, whose souls they had taken charge of? As for the casting out any able, godly men upon mere differences, about the late troubles, and state affairs; I speak not of it, I approve not of it; if any such thing were done, let them maintain it if they can that did it; for I neither can nor will. But it is a very sad case, that any men of judgment and piety would not only be indifferent in matters of such moment, but should think it a persecution, and an injury to their party and cause, to have hundreds of unworthy wretches to be ejected, when it was a work of so great necessity to the Church.

And indeed, by all this they plainly shew what a condition they would reduce this nation into again, if it were in their power. Surely they that would have the people disown, and withdraw from them as being no ministers, and turn their backs on the word and sacraments, would silence them if they could: I think there is no doubt of that. And surely they that are so offended, that the insufficient and scandalous ones are cast out, would have them in again if they could. And if this be the change that they desire, let them not blame men that believe the Scripture, and value men's salvation, if they have no mind of their change. If it were a matter of mere opinion, we should be more indifferent with them: or, if the question were only whether men would be conducted in ways of holiness by a Prelate, or by mere Presbyters only, we should think it of less moment, than the matter that is before us: but when it comes to this pass, that the prince of darkness must be so gratified, and so much of the Church of Christ delivered overmuch into his power, and the people led by multitudes to perdition, and all for the upholding of our own parties, or interests, or conceits: we cannot make light of such matters as these: these are not mere speculations, but matters that are so obvious to sense and Christian experience, that they must not think much that serious, experienced Christians are against them.

But that I be not mistaken, it is far from my thoughts to speak what I have done of any peaceable man of the Prelatical way, or to meddle in the controversy of the best way of Government; nor do I speak to any of the new Prelatical way, but only those who are guilty of the miscarriages which I have spoken of; and for them, I had rather bear

their indignation, than the Church should bear the fruits of their destructive, intemperate conceits.

The most common cause of our divisions and unpeaceableness, is men's high estimation of their own opinions. And it ordinarily worketh these two ways: sometimes by setting men upon novelties, and sometimes by a censorious condemning of all that differ from the party that they are of.

Some are as busy in their inquiries after new Doctrines, as if the Scripture were not perfect, or Christ had not told us all that is necessary; or the way to heaven were not in all ages one and the same, from Christ to the end of the world: or the church were not still the same thing. And they look not only after new discoveries in lesser things, but they are making us new Articles of Faith, and framing out new ways to heaven. The body of Popery came in at this door: their new Fundamentals were received on these terms; their new Catholic Church, which their forefathers knew not, was thus set up. Before, it consisted of all Christians throughout the world; and now it must consist of none but the Pope's subjects. So is it with the Anabaptists; they must now in the end of the world have a new Church for Christ, even in the natural capacity of the matter! Never since the creation can it be proved that God had any where a church on earth where Infants were excluded from being members, if there were any among them. They were members before the Law, under the Promise, under the Law, and under the Gospel, through the Christian world to this day; and yet they would needs make Christ a Church now without them; as if Christ had missed it in the forming of his church till now! oras, if he begun to be weary of infants in his church now at last! or, as if the providence of God did now begin to be awakened to have a rightly formed church in the conclusion of the world; and to eject those infants as incapable, who till now have been in the bosom of his family.

Yea, this disturbing vice doth also work by setting a higher rate of necessity upon some truths, than the Church of Christ had ever done: when we will needs make that to be of absolute certainty, which hath been either not before received, or but as a dark and doubtful thing, and we will make that to be of necessity to salvation, which the former ages did hold but as a point of a far lower nature, which

some were for, and some against, without any great disagreement or mutual censure. I confess, I do hold some points of doctrine myself to be true, which I cannot find that the Church, or any in it did hold of many ages after the apostles; but then I cannot lay such a stress on them, as to think them of necessity to the welfare of the church, and the saving of souls; as the doctrine of the certain perseverance of all the justified, and some few more: If I may think, that Austin, Prosper, and all the church in those ages did err therein (as I think they did): yet to think that they erred fundamentally, were to think that Christ had no Church. I will not take the judgment or practice of the Church in any age since the apostles', as my rule of faith and life; but I will suppose, that they had all things in the most defiled age, that were of absolute necessity to salvation. I know that we must be justified in the same way as they were, and upon the same terms. Faith is the same thing now as it was then, and hath the same object to apprehend for our justification, and the same office in order to our justification. Many new notions are brought in by disputers, which must not be made matters of necessity to the soundness or integrity of the church's faith. We may talk of peace as long as we live, but we shall never obtain it but by returning to the apostolical simplicity. The Papists' faith is too big for all men to agree upon: or all their own, if they enforced it not with arguments drawn from the fire, the halter, and the strappado. And many Anti-papists do too much imitate them in the tedious length of their subscribed confessions, and novelty of impositions, when they go farthest from them in the quality of the things imposed. I shall speak my mind to these in the words of Vincentius Lirinensis, cap. 26. "*Mirari satis nequeo tantam quorundum hominum vœsaniam, tantam excœcatæ mentis impietatem; tantam postremo errandi libidinem, ut contenti non sint traditâ semel et acceptâ antiquitus credendi regulâ; sed nova ac nova in diem quærunt, semperque aliquid gestiant religioni addere, mutare, detrahare: Quasi non cœleste dogma sit quod semel revelatum esse sufficiat, sed terrena institutio, quæ aliter perfici nisi assidua emendatione, immo potius reprehensione non possit.*" When we once return to the ancient simplicity of faith, then, and not till then, we shall return to the ancient love and peace.

But the pride of men's hearts doth make them so over-value their own conceptions, that they expect all men else should be of their mind, and bow down to those reasons which others can see through, while they are as confident as if there were no room for doubting. Every sect is usually confident in their own way, and as they value themselves, so they do their reasons. And hereupon arise such breaches in affections and communion as there are, while most men cry down the divisions of others, but maintain the like. Some will have no communion with our Churches, because we have some members that they take to be ungodly, and do not pull up the tares in doubtful, unproved cases, where we cannot do it without pulling up the wheat. Others are so confident that infants should be unbaptised, and out of the church, that they will be of no church that hath infant members, till these scandalous infants be (I say not excommunicated, for that supposeth a prior right, but) taken as such that have no part or fellowship in the business, they will not join with such a society; Christ tells us, that except we become as little children, we shall not enter into his kingdom; and they say, except little children be kept out of the church, they will not enter or abide in it. Is not this extreme height of spirit to be so confident, as to avoid communion upon it, in a case where the Church hath been in all ages, or almost all by their own confession, so much against them? Would they not have separated from the whole church on the same ground, if they had lived in these times? Others, as is beforesaid, are so confident that we are no ministers or churches for want of Prelatical ordination and government, that they separate also, or deny communion with us. And thus every party in the height of their self-conceitedness is ready to divide, and condemn all others that are not of their mind.

And it usually falls out, that this confidence doth but betray men's ignorance, and that too many make up that in passion and wilfulness, which they want in reason. How many have I heard zealously condemning what they little understand? It is a far easier matter to say that another man is erroneous, or heretical, or rail at him as a deceiver or blasphemer, than to give a sound account of our belief. And as I remember twenty years ago, I have observed it the common trick of a company of ignorant, formal preachers,

to get the repute of that learning which they wanted, by railing at the Puritans, as being all unlearned : so it is now the trick of some that can scarcely give a sound reason for any controverted part of their belief.

The truth is, most Ministers in the world do take up their opinions in compliance with their several parties ; and they look more who believeth it, than what is believed ; and on what ground ; or they have nothing but what is spoken by the men that they must concur with : and thus too many take up their religion in a faction ; even the truth itself. And therefore they must speak against those that they hear that party speak against. As Prosper said of the detractors of Austin, *Præf. ad capit. Gall.* “*Injustis opprobriis Catholici prædicatoris memoria carpitur ; in quod peccatum cadunt, qui aliena instigatione commoti ; scriptorem celeberrimi nominis promptius habent culpæ, quam nosse.*” And as Salvian saith in his Preface ad Salonium : ad Cathol. *Eccles.* “*Tam imbecilia sunt judicia hujus temporis, ac pene tam nulla, ut qui legunt, non tam considerant quid legant, quam cujus legant : nec tam dictionis vim atque virtutem quam dictatoris cogitant dignitatem.*” How many a hot dispute have I heard of several subjects, which the disputants have been forced to manifest that they understood not ! And yet they will drive all to damnatory conclusions, when the parties understand not one another’s meaning, and take not the subject of the dispute in the same sense, or at least not the several predications. One disputeth for freewill, another against it : and call them to give you their definition of freewill, and you shall see to what purpose it was. And so in many other cases.

And thus do we proceed in a contentious zeal to divide the church, and censure our brethren, and make our differences seem greater than they are, while we know not well what they are ourselves, who so eagerly manage them.

3. The next sin that I shall mention, that we are lamentably guilty of, is this ; we do not so seriously, unreservedly and industriously lay out ourselves in the work of the Lord, as beseemeth men of our profession and engagements. I bless the Lord that there are so many that do this work with all their might ! But, alas ! for the most part, even of those that we take for godly ministers, how reservedly, and how negligently do we go through our work ! How few of us do

so behave ourselves in our office, as men that are wholly devoted thereto, and have devoted all that they have to the same ends! And because you shall see my grounds for this confession, I shall mention to you some of the sinful discoveries of it, which do too much abound.

(1.) It is common with us to be negligent in our Studies. Few men will be at that pains that is necessary for the right informing of their understandings, and fitting them for their further work. Some men have no delight in their studies, but take only now and then an hour, as an unwelcome task which they are forced to undergo, and are glad when they are from under the yoke. Will neither the natural desire of knowing, nor the spiritual desire of knowing God and things divine, nor the consciousness of our great ignorance and weakness, nor the sense of the weight of our Ministerial work, will none of all these keep us closer to our studies, and make us more painful in seeking after the truth? This diligence is now the more necessary for ministers, because the necessity of the church doth draw so many from the Universities so young, that they are fain to teach and learn together: and for my part, I would not discourage such young ones, so be it they be but competently qualified, and quickened with earnest desires of men's salvation, and are drawn out by the present necessities, sooner than they would go, if the church could longer wait for their preparation: and will but study hard in the country. For I know, that as Theology is a practical science, so the knowledge of it thriveth best in a practical course. Laying out here a means of gathering in; and a hearty endeavour to communicate and do good, is not the smallest help to our own proficiency. Many men have not been ashamed to confess how young and raw they were at their entrance, who yet have grown to eminent parts. Vigilius the Martyr was made Bishop of Trent at twenty years old. Ambrose de Offic. li. c. 1. saith thus; "*Homines discunt priusquam docent, et ab illo accipiunt quod aliis tradant: Quod ne ipsum quidem mihi accidit: Ego enim de tribunalibus atque administrationis infulis ad sacerdotium captus, docere vos cœpi quod ipse non didici. Itaque factum est, ut prius docere inciperem quam discere. Discendum igitur mihi simul et docendum est, quoniam non vacavit ante discere. Et quantum*

libet quisque profecerit, nemo est qui doceri non egeat dum vivit."

O what abundance of things are there that a minister should understand ; and what a great defect is it to be ignorant of them ; and how much shall we miss such knowledge in our work ! Many ministers study only to compose their sermons, and very little more, when there are so many books to be read, and so many matters that we should not be unacquainted with. Nay, in the study of our sermons we are too negligent, gathering only a few naked heads, and not considering of the most forcible expressions by which we should set them home to men's hearts. We must study how to convince and get within men, and how to bring each truth to the quick, and not leave all this to our extemporary promptitude, unless it be in cases of necessity. Certainly, brethren, experience will teach you, that men are not made learned or wise without hard study, and unwearied labours and experience.

(2.) If Ministers were set upon the work of the Lord, it would be done more vigorously than by the most of us it is. How few ministers do preach with all their might ; or speak about everlasting joy or torment in such a manner as may make men believe that they are in good sadness. It would make a man's heart ach to see a company of dead and drowsy sinners sit under a minister, and not have a word that is likely to quicken or awaken them. To think with ourselves, 'O if these sinners were but convinced and awakened, they might yet be converted and live!' And alas, we speak so drowsily or gently, that sleepy sinners cannot hear : the blow falls so light, that hard-hearted persons cannot feel it. Most ministers will not so much as put out their voice, and stir up themselves to an earnest utterance. But if they do speak loud and earnestly, how few do answer it with earnestness of matter ; and then the voice doth little good ; the people will take it but as mere bawling, when the matter doth not correspond. It would grieve one to hear what excellent doctrines some ministers have in hand, and let it die in their hands for want of close and lively application. What fit matter they have for convincing sinners, and how little they make of it ; and what a deal of good it might do if it were set home ; and yet they cannot or will not do it.

O sirs ! how plainly, how closely, and how earnestly should we deliver a message of such a nature as ours is ; when the everlasting life or death of men is concerned in it ! Methinks we are no where so wanting as in this seriousness. There is nothing more unsuitable to such a business than to be slight and dull. What ! speak coldly for God, and for men's salvation ! Can we believe that our people must be converted, or condemned, and yet can we speak in a drowsy tone ! In the name of God, brethren, labour to awaken your hearts, before you come, and when you are in the work, that you may be fit to awaken the hearts of sinners. Remember that they must be awakened or damned ; and a sleepy preacher will hardly awaken them. If you give the holy things of God the highest praises in words, and yet do it coldly, you will seem in the manner to unsay what you said in the matter. It is a kind of contempt of great things, especially so great, to speak of them without great affection and fervency : the manner as well as the words must set them forth. If we are commanded whatever our hand findeth to do, to do it with all our might, then certainly such a work as Preaching for men's salvation should be done with all our might. But, alas, how few, how thin are such men ! Here one and there one, even among good ministers, that have an earnest, persuading, working way, or that the people can feel him preach when they hear him.

(3.) If we are all heartily devoted to the work of God, why do we not compassionate the poor, unprovided congregations about us, and take care to help them to able ministers ; and in the meantime, step out now and then to their assistance, when the business of our own particular charge will give us leave. A Lecture in the more ignorant places purposely for the work of Conversion, performed by the most lively-working preachers, might be a great help where constant means are wanting.

(4.) The negligent execution of acknowledged duties, doth shew that we be not so wholly devoted to the work as we should be. If there be any work of Reformation to be set on foot, how many are there that will go no further than they are drawn ; and it were well if all would do but that much.

If any business for the church be on foot, how many neglect it for their own private business ; when we should

meet and consult together for the unanimous and successful performance of our work, one hath this business of his own, and another that, which must be preferred before God's business.

And when a work is likely to prove difficult and costly, how backward are we to it, and make excuses, and will not come on! For instance: What hath been more talked of, and prayed for, and contended about in England for many years past, than the business of Discipline? And there are but few men (the Erastians) but they seem zealous in disputing for one side or other: some for the Prelatical way, and some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Congregational. And yet when we come to the practice of it, for ought I see, we are most of us for no way. It hath made me admire sometimes to look on the face of England, and see how few congregations in the land have any considerable execution of discipline, and to think withal what volumes they have written for it; and how almost all the Ministry of the nation are engaged for it—how zealously they have contended for it, and made many a just exclamation against the opposers of it; and yet for all this will do little or nothing in the exercise of it. I have marvelled what should make them so zealous in siding for that which their practice shews that their hearts are against: but I see a disputing zeal is more natural than a holy, obedient, practising zeal. How many Ministers in England are there that know not their own charge, who plead for the Truth of their particular Churches, and know not which they are, or who are the members of them; and who never cast out one obstinate sinner; no, nor brought one to public confession, and expression of repentance and promise of reformation; nor yet admonished one publicly to call him to such repentance. But they think they do their duty if they give them not the Sacrament of the Lord's-supper, when it is perhaps avoided voluntarily by themselves, and thousands will keep themselves away without our prohibiting them; and in the meantime we have them stated members of our Churches, and grant them all other communion with the Church, and call them not to personal repentance for their sin. Read Albaspineus, a sober Papist in his Observations, 1, 2, 3, after his Annot. on Optatus, and see whether Church-communion in former times was taken to consist only in co-partaking of

the Lord's-supper. Either these hundreds that we communicate not with in the Supper, are members of our Churches, or not: if not, then we are Separatists while we so much disclaim it: for we have not cast them out, nor have we called them to any profession, whether they own or disown their membership, but only whether they will be examined in order to a Sacrament; nor do we use to let them know that we take their refusal of examination for a refusal of Church-membership, and exclusion of themselves. It follows therefore, that we have gathered Churches out of Churches before they were unchurched, or before we took God's way to cast any of them, much less all of them, out. But if they are taken for members, how can we satisfy our consciences to forbear all execution of Discipline upon them? Is it not God's ordinance that they should be personally rebuked and admonished, and then publicly called to repentance, and be cast out if they remain impenitent? If these be no duties, why have we made such a noise and stir about them in the world as we have done? If they be duties, why do we not practise them? If none of all these persons be scandalous, why do we not admit them to the Lord's-supper? If they keep away themselves, is not that a sin which a brother should not be permitted to remain in? Is it not a scandal for them to avoid the Ordinances of God and the Communion of the Church for so many years together as they do? Yea, and many a one of them avoideth also the very hearing of the Word. The ancient Discipline was stricter, when the sixth General Council at Trull, in Constantinople, ordained Can. 80, that 'whosoever was three days together from the Church, without urgent necessity, was to be excommunicated.'

Brethren, for my part, I desire not to offend any party, nor to bring the least dishonour to them; but I must needs say, that these sins are not to be cloaked over with excuses, extenuations, or denials. We have long cried up Discipline, and every party their several ways. Would you have people value your way of government or not? No doubt but you would; why, if you would have them value it, it must be for some excellency; shew them then that excellency. What is it, and wherein doth it consist? And if you would have them believe you, shew it them not only in paper, but in practice; not only in words, but in deeds.

How can the people know the worth of bare notions and names of Discipline, without the thing? Is it a name and a shadow that you have made all this noise about? How can they think that that is good which doth no good? Truly, I fear we take not the right way to maintain our cause, but even betray it while we are hot disputers for it. Speak truly; is it not these two things that keep up the reputation of the long-contended-for Discipline among men; viz. with the godly, the *mere reputation of the Ministers that stand for it*; and with many of the ungodly, the *non-execution of it*, because they find it to be toothless, and not much troublesome to them? Verily, brethren, if we get the late Prelates' carnal wisdom, and go their way to work, by ingratiating our way of government with the ungodly multitude, by the mere neglect of practice, and the befriending of their sins, we may well look for the same blessing and issue as the Prelates had. If once our government come to be upholden by the votes of those who should be corrected or ejected by it, and the worst men be friends to it, because it is a friend to them in their ungodliness, we then engage it against the Lord, and he will appear as engaged against us. Set all the execution of Discipline together that hath been practised in a whole country ever since it was so contended for, and I doubt it will not appear so observable as to draw godly people into a liking of it for the effects. How can you wonder if many that desired deeds and not words, reformation and not the mere name of reformation, do turn over to the separate congregations, when you shew them nothing but the bare name of Discipline in yours? All Christians value God's ordinances, and think them not vain things; and therefore are unwilling to live without them. Discipline is not a needless thing to the Church: If you will not difference between the precious and the vile by Discipline, people will do it by separation. If you will keep many scores or hundreds in your Churches that are notoriously scandalous, and contemners of Church-communion, and never openly, nor perhaps privately, reprove them, nor call them to repentance, nor cast them out, you cannot marvel if some timorous souls do run out of your Churches as from a ruinous edifice, that they fear is ready to fall upon their heads. I pray you consider, if you should do in the same manner with them in the Sacrament, as you do in

the Discipline, and should only shew the Bread and Wine, and never let them taste of it, could you expect that the name of a Sacrament should satisfy them, or that they would like your Communion? Why should you think then that they will be satisfied with the empty sound of the word, *Church-government*? And consider but what a disadvantage you cast your cause upon in all your disputations with men of another way. If your principles be more right than theirs, and their practice be more right than yours, the people will suppose that the question is, whether the name or the thing, the shadow or the substance, be more desirable? And they will take your way to be a mere delusory formality, because they see you but formal in the use of it, yea, that you use it not at all. I speak not against your government, but for it, all this while, and tell you, that it is you that are against it, that seem so earnest for it; while you more disgrace it for want of exercise, than you credit it by your bare arguments: and you will find before you have done, that faithful execution will be your strongest argument. Till then, the people will understand you, as if you openly proclaimed, 'We would have no public Admonitions, Confessions, or Excommunications; our way is to do no good, but to set up the naked name of a Government.' Doubtless it was a fault more past all disputation, for the Prelates to destroy Discipline and to do little or nothing in it, than for them to be Prelates; and if they had but done the good that Discipline is ordained for, Prelacy might have stood to this day, for ought I know; I am sure it would have had no opposition from many hundred godly people that have opposed it; and again, I say, if you will run into the error, you may expect their fate.

And what are the hindrances now that keep the Ministers of England from the execution of that Discipline which they have so much contended for? I hear not all speak; but I hear some, and see more. The great reason, as far as I can learn, is, 'the difficulty of the work, and the trouble or suffering that we are likely to incur by it: we cannot publicly reprehend one sinner, but he will storm at it, and bear us a deadly malice. We can prevail with very few to make a public profession of true repentance. If we proceed to excommunicate them, they will be raging mad against us; they will be ready to vow revenge against us, and to do us

a mischief: if we should deal as God requireth with all the obstinate sinners in the parish, there were no living among them; they would conspire in hatred against us to the hazard of our lives. We should be so hated of all, that as our lives would be uncomfortable, so our labours would become unprofitable; for men would not hear us when they are possessed with a hatred of us; therefore duty ceaseth to be duty to us, because the hurt that would follow would be greater than the good; and the affirmative bind not 'ad semper.'

These are the great reasons for the non-execution of Discipline, together with the great labour that private admonition of each offender would cost us. And to these I answer.

[1.] Are not these reasons as valid against Christianity itself, in some times and places, as now against Discipline? Christ came not to send us peace; we shall have his peace, but not the world's; for he hath foretold us that they will hate us. Might not Bradford, or Hooper, or any that were burnt in Queen Mary's days, have alleged more than this against duty? They might have said, it will make us hated, if we own the Reformation, and it will expose our lives to the flames. How is he concluded by Christ to be no Christian, who hateth not all that he hath, and his own life for him; and yet we can take the hazard of our life as a reason against his work! What is it but hypocrisy to shrink from sufferings, and take up none but safe and easy works, and make ourselves believe that the rest are no duties? Indeed this is the common way of escaping sufferings, to neglect the duty that would expose us thereunto. If we did our duty faithfully, Ministers should find the same lot among professed Christians, as their predecessors have done among the infidels. But if you could not suffer for Christ, why did you put your hand to his plough, and did not first sit down and count your costs? This makes the Ministerial work so unfaithfully done, because it is so carnally undertaken; and men enter upon it as a life of ease, and honour, and respect from men, and therefore resolve to attain their ends, and have what they expected by right or wrong. They looked not for hatred and suffering, and they will avoid it, though by the avoiding of their work.

[2.] And as for the making yourselves incapable to do

them good: I answer, That reason is as valid against plain preaching, reproof, or any other duty which wicked men will hate us for. God will bless his own ordinances to do good, or else he would not have appointed them. If you admonish, and publicly rebuke the scandalous, and call men to repentance, and cast out the obstinate, you may do good to many that you reprove, and possibly to the excommunicated: I am sure it is God's means; and it is his last means, when reproofs will do no good: it is therefore perverse to neglect the last means, lest we frustrate the foregoing means, when as the last is not to be used but upon supposition that the former were all frustrated before. However, those within and those without may receive good by it, if the offender do receive none; and God will have the honour, when his Church is manifestly differenced from the world, and the heirs of heaven and hell are not totally confounded, nor the world made to think that Christ and Satan do but contend for superiority, and that they have the like inclination to holiness, or to sin.

[3.] And I would know, whether on the grounds of this objection before mentioned, all Discipline should not be cast out of the Church, at least ordinarily; and so is not this against the thing itself, rather than against the present season of it? For this reason is not drawn from any thing proper to our times, but common to all times and places. Wicked men will always storm against the means of their public shame; and the use of Church censures is purposely to shame them, that sin may be shamed, and disowned by the Church. What age can you name since the days of the apostles wherein you would have executed the Discipline that you now refuse, if you go these grounds, supposing that it had not been by Magisterial compulsion? If therefore it be Discipline itself that hath such intolerable inconveniences, why have you so prayed for it, and perhaps sought for it, and disputed for it as you have done? What, must all Dissenters bear your frowns and censures, and all for a work which you yourselves judge intolerable, and dare not touch with one of your fingers? When do you look to see all these difficulties over, that you may set upon that which you now avoid? Will it be in your days? or will you wait till you are dead, and leave it as a part of your epitaph to posterity, that you so deeply engaged and con-

tended for that which you so abhorred to the death, that you would never be brought to the practice of it! And doth not this objection of yours plainly give up your cause to the Separatists; and even tell them that your contending is not for your way of Discipline; but that there may be none, because it will do more harm than good? Certainly if this be true, it would have been better to speak it out at first, before all our wars, and tears, and prayers, and contentions, than now in the conclusion to tell the world, that we did all this but for a name or word, that the thing is so far from being worth our cost, that it is not tolerable, much less desirable.

[4.] But yet let me tell you, that there is not such a lion in the way as you do imagine; nor is Discipline such a useless thing. I bless God upon the small and too late trial that I have made myself of it, I can speak by experience, it is not vain; nor are the hazards of it such as may excuse our neglect.

But I know the pinching reason is behind. They say, that, 'When we pleaded for Discipline, we meant a Discipline that should be established and imposed by the secular power; and without them what good can we do? When every man hath leave to despise our censures, and set us at naught: and therefore we will not meddle with it, say they, without authority.' To which I answer, 1. I thought it once a scornful indignity that some fellows attempted to put upon the Ministry, that denied them to be the Ministers of Christ, and would have had them called the Ministers of the State, and dealt with accordingly. But it seems they did not much cross the judgments of some of the Ministry themselves, who are ready to put the same scorn upon their own calling. We are sent as Christ's ambassadors, to speak in his Name, and not in the prince's; and by his authority we do our work, as from him we have our commission: and shall any of his Messengers question the authority of his commands? The same power that you have to preach without, or against the Magistrate's command, the same have you to exercise Pastoral guidance and Discipline without. And shall all Ministers refuse preaching if the Magistrate bid them not? Yea, or if they forbid them? 2. What mean you, when you say, you will not do it without authority? Do you mean the *love*, or the *countenance* and appro-

bation, or the *command* upon yourselves; or do you mean a *force* or *penalty* on the people to obey you? The Magistrate's leave we have; who hindereth or forbiddeth you to set up Discipline, and exercise it faithfully? Doth the secular power forbid you to do it, or threaten or trouble you for not doing it? No, they do not. To the shame of the far greatest part of the Ministers of England it must be spoken, for we have so opened our own shame that it cannot be hid, we have had free liberty to do the work of Christ which we have desired and pleaded for, and yet we would not do it. What might not the Ministers of England have done for the Lord, if they had been but willing! They had no prohibition, nor any man to rise up against them, of all the enemies whose hearts are against their work; and yet they would not do it. Nay more, for ought you know, you have no approbation of authority. You have the commands of former powers yet not repealed. You have the protection of the laws and present governors: if any one seek revenge against you for the sake of Discipline, you have not only laws, but as many willing Magistrates to restrain and punish them, as ever you knew, I think, in England. And what would you have more? Would you have a law made to punish you if you will not do your duty? What! dare you tell God that you will not do this work unless the Magistrate drive you to it with scourges? I confess if I had my will it should be so; and that man should be ejected as a *negligent* Pastor, that will not rule his people by Discipline, though yet, I might allow him to be a Preacher to the unchurched, as well as he is ejected as a negligent Preacher that will not preach. For Ruling is as essential a part of a Pastor's office as Preaching, I am sure. And therefore seeing these men would fain have the Magistrate interpose, if he did eject them for unfaithful, negligent Pastors (were it not for the necessity of the Church that hath not enough better), I know not well how they could blame him for it. It is a sad discovery of our carnal hearts, when men can do so much more with us than God, that we would obey the commands of men, and will not obey the commands of Christ. Is he fit to be Christ's officer, that will not take his command as obligatory?

But I know the thing expected is, that all the people should be forced under a penalty to submit to our discipline.

I confess, I think that the Magistrate should be the hedge of the Church, and defend the Ministry, and improve his power to the utmost to procure an universal obedience to Christ's laws, and restrain men from the apparent breach of them, especially from being false teachers and seducers of others. How far I am against the two extremes of universal licence, and persecuting tyranny, I have frequently manifested on other occasions. But I shall now say but this : 1. Doth not this further discover the carnal frame of our hearts, when we will not do our duty unless the Magistrate will do his to the full, and all we conceive may be his duty ? What ! will his neglect excuse yours ? Hath Christ bid you use the keys of the kingdom, and avoid a scandalous sinner upon condition that the Magistrate will punish him with the sword ? Is not this your meaning, if you would speak it out, that you find a great deal of difficulty in your work, and you would have the magistrate by terrifying offenders, make it easy to you ? For if it be not safe, and cheap, and easy, you are resolved you will not do it ; and of such servants Christ may have enough. Nay, is not your meaning, that you would have the magistrate to do your work for you ? Just as your pious people have long cried and prayed for discipline, and called upon ministers to do it, but we cannot get them to reprove offenders, and deal with them seriously and lovingly for their good, and inform the church-officers of them that are obstinate. So do we toward the magistrates ; the Word of God is so much beholden to us, that we would all have it done, but few will do it. We can easier censure and talk against others for not doing it, than do it ourselves. O the guilt and hypocrisy of our hearts !

2. But further, What is it that you would have the Magistrate to do ? I pray you consider, how you will answer it before God, that you should wilfully neglect your own duty, and then make it your religion to quarrel with others. Is it not a fearful deceit of heart for a man to think himself a godly minister for finding fault with them that are less faulty than himself ? I say less faulty ; for tell me truly, whether the magistrate do more of his part in government, or you in yours ? I am no more a flatterer of the magistrate than of you ; nor was ever taken for such, that I could understand : but we must deal justly by all men. Would you have the magistrate to punish men 'eo nomine,' because ex-

communicated, without any particular cognizance of the fact and case? 1. That were unjust; then he must do wrong whenever we mistake and do wrong. If an honest man were an hangman, he would be willing to know that he hanged not a man that was unjustly condemned. However, the Magistrate is not the mere executioner of the Ministers, but a judge; and therefore must be allowed the use of his reason, to know the cause, and follow his own judgment, and not punish men against it. 2. And excommunication is so great a punishment of itself, that I hope you do not think it nothing unless the magistrate add more. If so, then the temporal punishment might serve turn, and what need of yours? But I suppose that this is not your sense, but you are so just, that you would have the magistrate to punish a man as an offender, and not as excommunicated. And if so, I think it is not nothing that he doth. Are all the penalties against swearers, cursers, drunkards, peace-breakers, sabbath-breakers, &c. nothing? Certainly the laws of the land do punish much sin against God. Well, what do you as Church-governors against these same sins? The Magistrate fineth and imprisoneth them; that is his part. It is your part to bring them to open repentance, or to cast them out. Have you done this as often as he hath done his part? Doth not the Magistracy of England punish ten, twenty, what if I say, an hundred swearers, drunkards, or sabbath-breakers by the sword, for one that the elders of the church do punish by censures, or bring to public repentance for the satisfaction of the Church? Brethren, these things seem strange to me; that the case should stand thus as it doth, and yet that the deceit of our hearts should be so great, and that we should go on to account ourselves such blameless, godly men, whom magistrates and people are bound to reverence, and to speak against the magistrate so much as we do. I believe they are all slack and faulty; but are not we much more faulty? What if they should pay us in our own coin? What language might they give the ministers, that after so many years' talk of discipline will do nothing in it! I say nothing in most places: to meet together for consultation, is no exercise of discipline, nor reformation of the church, which our meetings should conduce to.

3. And I give you this further answer: What had the

Church of Christ done till the days of Constantine the Great, if it had no better pastors than you, that will not govern it without the joined compulsion of the magistrate? Discipline, and severe discipline was exercised for three hundred years together, where the Prince did not give them so much as a protection, nor toleration, but persecuted them to death. Then was the Church at the best, and discipline most pure and powerful; say not then any more for shame, that it is to no purpose without a Magistrate, when it hath done so much against their wills! O, what an aggravation is it of our sin, that you cannot be content to be negligent and unfaithful servants, but you must also fly in the face of your Lord and Master, and obliquely lay the blame on him! What do you else, when you blame church-censure as ineffectual, when you should blame your lazy, self-seeking hearts, that shift off the use of them? Hath Christ put a leaden sword into your hands, when he bids you smite the obstinate sinner? Or are you cowardly and careless, and then blame your sword instead of using it, as thinking that the easier task? Are the keys of Christ's kingdom so unmeet and useless, that they will not open and shut without the help of the sword; or are you unskilful and lazy in the use of them? If they have contracted any rust, by which they are made less fit for service, next to the Prelates, we may thank ourselves, that let them lie so long unused.

4. And I must tell you, that too much interposition of the sword with our discipline, would do more harm than good. It would but corrupt it by the mixture, and make it become a human thing. Your government is all to work upon the conscience, and the sword cannot reach that. It is not a desirable thing to have repentance so obscured by mere forced confessions, that you cannot know when men mean as they speak; and so it will be the sword that doth all, by forcing men to dissemble, and you will not discern the power of the Word and ordinance of Christ. I confess since I fell upon the exercise of some discipline, I find by experience, that if the sword interpose and force all those public confessions of sin, and professions of repentance, which I have persuaded men to by the light of the Word of God, it would have left me much unsatisfied concerning the validity of such confessions and promises, whether they

might indeed be satisfactory to the church : and I find that the godly people do no further regard it than they perceive it hearty and free ; and if it were forced by magistrates, they would take him for no penitent person, nor be any whit satisfied, but say, ‘ He doth it because he dare do no otherwise.’

And I must add this word of plainer dealing yet. You blame the Magistrate for giving so much liberty ; and is it not long of yourselves that he do so ? You will scarcely believe that such enemies to liberty of conscience are the causes of it : I think that you are ; and that the keenest enemies have been the greatest causes. For you would run too far to the other extreme, and are so confident in every controversy that you are in the right, and lay such a stress upon many opinions of your own, as if life or death did lie upon them, (when perhaps the difference may prove more verbal than real, if it were searched to the quick,) that this occasioneth magistrates to run too far the other way ; and if they look on such as ———, and dare not trust the sword in such hands, you may thank yourselves. Truly, brethren, I see by experience, that there is among many of the most injudicious of us, such a blind, confused zeal against all that is called Error by their party, that without being able to try and make a difference, they let fly pell-mell at all alike, and make a great outcry against Errors, when either we know not what they are, nor how to confute them, nor which be tolerable in the church, and which intolerable ; nor how far we may hold or break communion with the owners of them, and perhaps are the erroneous persons ourselves. The observation of this hath made the magistrates so over-jealous of us, that they think if they set in with a party in each contention, we shall never be without blood and misery. And I confess I see in some Ministers so little of the fire of Divine Love, and Christian charity, and compassion, not heavenly-mindedness, nor an humble sense of their own infirmities : and so much of the zeal that James describeth, (James iii. 14, 15,) which is kindled from another fire, that makes them full of suspicions and jealousies, and keen and eager against their brethren, censuring, defaming, and unconscionably backbiting them, and straining an ill sense out of their well-meant words and actions, and living towards them in plain envy and malice, instead of Christian love and peace ; I say, I see so

much of this in many that affect the reputation of orthodox, while they are indeed factious, that I am the less sorry that the Magistrate doth so little interpose. For were the sword in such envious, angry hands, there would be little quiet to the Church : for there are no two men on earth but differ in something, if they know or believe any thing. And these men must square the world to their own judgments, which are not always the wisest in the world : they that dare so rail at others as blasphemers, when they know not what they say themselves, durst surely smite them as blasphemers, if they had power. This may possibly make the magistrate think meet, (seeing we are so quarrelsome and impatient) to let us fight it out by the bare fists, and not to put swords into our hands till we are more sober, and know better how to use them : for if every passionate man, when he hath not wit enough to make good his cause, should presently borrow the Magistrate's sword to make it good, truth would be upon great disadvantage in the world ! Magistrates are commonly the most tempted and abused men, and therefore I know not why we should call so loud to have them become the arbitrators in all our quarrels, lest error have two victories where truth gets one. I could wish the Magistrate did more ; but if he do but give us protection and liberty, especially, if he will but restrain deceivers from preaching against the great unquestionable truths of the Gospel, and give public countenance and encouragement to those Master-truths, I shall not fear, by the grace of God, but a prudent, sober, unanimous Ministry will ere long shame the swarm of vanities that we think so threatening.

But I have been too long on this. I shall only conclude it with this earnest request to my brethren of the Ministry, —that they would speedily and faithfully put in execution, at least all the unquestionable part of the Discipline, that they have so much contended for. When we are so offended with the Parliament for their enumeration of scandals, as too defective, and a Protestation was published that we acted only on supposition that it was defective, surely we little thought then that we, that were so earnest to have had more power, would use none ; and we that must needs have authority, to reject more than the Parliament did enumerate, would censure so few even of them as we have done, since we have had more liberty to do it.

But one objection is common, which I forgot : they say, we are but single pastors, and therefore cannot excommunicate men alone, unless we should make every pastor a pope in his parish, or a bishop at least.

Ans. For my part I have no mind to obtrude my own opinion on such (for the power of a single person to excommunicate), I have sufficiently already proved myself a novelist, and singular with some, by asserting ancient and most common truths. But yet 1. I could wish these men so much moderation, as to be sure that they are in this as much wiser than the contrary-minded, as their confidence doth import, before they proceed in calling them popes : lest, as the cunning of the times is by making many antichrists, to make none ; so these men should, contrary to their intention, credit the pope, by making so many popes ; and the prelates too, by making such kind of prelates.

2. A Pope is the pretended head of the Catholic Church, and an Universal Bishop to govern it. Are single ruling pastors such ? A diocesan bishop is the ruler of all the pastors and churches in a diocese : is such a pastor one of these ?

3. Why do you in your disputes against the prelates, maintain that every minister is a bishop of his own church, and do you now abhor it ?

4. What if you might not excommunicate ; may you not therefore do the rest ? May you not personally, and publicly reprove them, pray for them, &c. ?

5. Must not the people avoid a notorious drunkard, &c. whether you bid them or not ? If not, why hath God commanded it ? If yea, why may you not bid them do that which is their duty ?

6. Have you none in your parish, not one or two to make ruling elders of, that by their conjunction you may be authorised to do more than now you do ? I mean, according to your own principles ; for I confess it is not according to mine.

7. And what hindereth but you may join together if you will ? If it must needs be many pastors conjunct, that must exercise any act of discipline, why is it not so done ? Doth any forbid them, or threaten them if they do it ? If you say, ‘ I am alone because no neighbouring minister will join with me.’ You speak hardly of all the ministers about you.

What, are they all so negligent? Blame us not then to reprove them. But it is an incredible thing that they should be all so bad that are of your judgment, that no one or two will be persuaded to assist you. And I think you will confess that two or three may do it authoritatively, though no one else in the county do it. I could wish that the Prelates had not such an argument given them as this; No one presbyter hath the power of the keys, by their own confession: therefore two or three have not; lest they go further in proving the consequence than you expect. But if it must be so, I could yet wish that no single pastor for the excusing of himself, would lay such a reproachful charge upon all the ministers in the country that be of his own judgment, as to say, that Discipline is cast aside, because they can get none to join with them in the execution! At least, till they have thoroughly tried whether it be so in deed, or not.

(5.) Another sad discovery, that we have not so devoted ourselves and all we have to the service of God, as we ought, is, *The prevalence of worldly, fleshly interests too much against the interest and work of Christ.* And this I shall further manifest in these three instances following:—Our temporising—Our too much minding worldly things, and shrinking from duties that will hinder our commodity—Our barrenness in works of charity, and in the improving of all that we have to our Master's use.

[1.] I would not have any to be contentious with those that govern them, nor to be disobedient to any of their lawful commands. But it is not the least reproach upon the Ministry, that the most of them for worldly advantage still suit themselves with the party that is most likely to suit their ends. If they look for secular advantages, they suit themselves to the Secular power; if for the air of Ecclesiastical applause, then do they suit themselves to the party of Ecclesiastics that is most in credit. This is not a private, but an epedemical malady. In Constantine's days, how prevalent were the orthodox! In Constantius's days, they almost all turned Arians, so that there were very few bishops at all that did not apostatize or betray the truth; even of the same men that had been in the Council of Nice. And when not only Liberius, but great Osius himself fell, who had been the president, or chief in so many orthodox

Councils, what better could be expected from weaker men ! Were it not for secular advantage, or ecclesiastic faction and applause, how could it come to pass, that Ministers in all the countries in the world, are either all, or almost all, of that religion and way that is in most credit, and most consistent with their worldly interest ? Among the Greeks, they are all of the Greek profession : and among the Abassines, the Nestorians, the Maronites, the Jacobites, the Ministers generally go one way. And among the Papists, they are almost all Papists. In Saxony, Sweden, Denmark, &c. almost all Lutherans : in Holland, France, Scotland, almost all Calvinists. It is strange that they should be all in the right in one country, and all in the wrong in another, if carnal advantages and reputation did not sway much : when men fall upon a conscientious search, the variety of intellectual capacities causeth unavoidably a great variety of conceits about some hard and lower things : but let the prince, and the stream of men in credit go one way, and you shall have the generality of ministers too often change their religion with the Prince in this land. Not all, as our Martyrology can witness, but the most. I purposely forbear to mention any latter change. If the Rulers of an University should be corrupt, who have the disposal of preferments, how much might they do with the most of the students, where mere arguments would not take ! And the same tractable distemper doth so often follow them into the Ministry, that it occasioneth the enemies to say, that reputation and preferment is our religion, and our reward.

[2.] How common is it with ministers to drown themselves in worldly business ! Too many are such as the Secretaries would have them be, who tell us that we should go to plough and cart, and labour for our living, and preach without so much study : and this is a lesson easily learned. Men take no care to cast off and prevent care, that their souls and the church may have their care. How commonly are those duties neglected, that are likely, if performed, to diminish our estates ! For example : Are there not many that dare not, that will not set up the exercise of any Discipline in their churches ; not only on the forementioned accounts, but especially because it may hinder the people from paying them their dues ? They will not offend sinners with Discipline, lest they offend them in their estates ; yea,

though the law secure their maintenance. I find money is too strong an argument for some men to answer, that can proclaim the love of it to be the root of all evil, and can make large Orations of the danger of covetousness.—I will say no more now to these, but this: If it were so deadly a sin in Simon Magus to offer to buy the gift of God with money, what is it to sell his gifts, his cause, and the souls of men for money; and what reason have such to fear lest their money perish with them!

[3.] But the most that I have to say is to the third discovery.—If worldly and fleshly interest did not much prevail against the interest of Christ and the Church, surely most Ministers would be more fruitful in good works, and would more lay out what they have to their Master's use. Experience hath fully proved that the works of charity do most potently remove prejudice, and open the ears to words of piety. If men see that you are accustomed to do good, they will the more easily believe that you are good, and the more easily believe that it is good that you persuade them to. When they see that you love them, and seek their good, they will the more easily trust you; and when they see that you seek not the things of this world, they will the less suspect your intentions, and the more easily be drawn by you to seek that which you seek. O how much good might Ministers do, if they did set themselves wholly to do good, and would dedicate all their faculties and substance to that end! Say not that it is a small matter to do good to men's bodies, and that this will but win them to us, and not to God, nor convert the soul; for it is prejudice that is a great hindrance of men's conversion, and this will remove it. We might do men more good, if they were but willing to learn of us; and this will make them willing, and then our further diligence may profit them.

Brethren, I pray you do not think that it is ordinary charity that is expected from you, any more than ordinary piety. You must, in proportion to your talents, go much beyond others. It is not to give now and then two-pence to a poor man: others do that as well as you. But what singular thing do you with your estates for your Master's use? I know you cannot give away that which you have not: but methinks, all that you have should be for God. I know the great objection is, 'We have wife and children to provide

for: a little will not serve them at present, and we are not bound to leave them beggars.' To which I answer, 1. There are few texts of Scripture more abused than that of the apostle, "He that provideth not for his own, and especially those of his family, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." This is made a pretence for gathering up portions, and providing a full estate for posterity, when the apostle speaketh only against them that cast their poor kindred and family on the church to be maintained out of the common stock, when they were able to do it themselves. As if one that hath a widow in his house, that is his mother or daughter, and would have her to be kept on the parish, when he hath enough himself. His following words shew that it is present provision, and not future portions that the apostle speaketh of, when he bids "them that have widows administer to them, or give them what is sufficient." 2. You may educate your children as other persons do, that they may be able to get their own livings, in some honest trade or employment, without other great provisions. I know that your charity and care must begin at home, but it must not end there. You are bound to do the best you can to educate your children, so as they may be capable of being most serviceable to God, but not to leave them rich, or a full estate; nor to forbear other necessary works of charity, merely for a larger provision for them. There must be some proportion kept between our provision for our families, and for the church and poor. A truly charitable, self-denying heart, that hath devoted itself, and all that he hath to God, would be the best judge of the due proportions, and would see which way of expence is likely to do God the greatest service, and that way he would take. 3. I confess I would not have men to lie too long under endangering strong temptations to incontinence, lest they wound themselves, and their profession by their falls: but yet, methinks, it is hard that men can do no more to mortify the concupiscence of the flesh, that they may live in a single, freer condition, and have none of these temptations from wife and children, to hinder them from furthering their Ministerial ends by charitable works. If he that marrieth not doth better than he that doth, surely ministers should labour to do that which is best; and if he that can receive this saying, must receive it, we should en-

deavour after it. This is one of the highest points of the Romish policy, which they pretend to be a duty of common necessity, that all the Bishops, Priests, and other Religious orders, must not marry, by which means they have no posterity to drain the Church's revenues, nor to take up their care : But they make their public cause to be their interest, and they lay out themselves for it while they live, and leave all that they have to it when they die : so that their Church's wealth doth daily increase, as every Bishop, Abbot, Jesuit, or other person doth gather more in their lifetime, and usually add it to their common stock. It is a pity that for a better cause we can no more imitate them in wisdom and self-denial, where it might be done. 4. But they that must marry, should take such as can maintain themselves and their children, or maintain them at the rate as their temporal means will afford, and devote as much of the church means to the church's service as they can.

I would put no man upon extremes ; but in this case flesh and blood doth make even good men so partial, that they take their duties, and duties of very great worth and weight, to be extremes. If worldly vanities did not blind us, we might see when public, or other greater good did call us to deny ourselves and our families. Why should we not live more sparingly and poor in the world, rather than leave those works undone, which may be of greater use than our plentiful provisions ? But, in matters of duty, we consult with flesh and blood ; and what counsel it will give us, we may easily know. It will tell us we must have a competency ; and many pious men's competency, is but little below the rich man's rates. If they be not clothed with the best, and fare not deliciously every day, they have not a competency. A man that preacheth an immortal crown of glory, must not seek much after transitory vanity ; and he that preacheth the contempt of riches, must himself condemn them, and shew it by his life ; and he that preacheth self-denial and mortification ; must practise these in the eyes of them that he preacheth to, if ever he would have his doctrine prosper. All Christians are sanctified, and, therefore, themselves and all that they have are consecrated, and dedicated to their Master's use ; but ministers are doubly sanctified ; they are devoted to God, both as Christians and Ministers, and there-

fore they are doubly obliged to honour him with what they have.

O, brethren, what abundance of good works are before us, and how few of them do we put our hands to ! I know the world expecteth more from us than we have : but if we cannot answer the expectations of the unreasonable, let us do what we can to answer the expectations of God, and conscience, and all just men. It is the will of God that with well-doing we should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Especially those ministers that have larger maintenance, must be larger in doing good.

I will give but one instance at this time, which I mentioned before. There are some Ministers that have 150*l.* or 200*l.* or 300*l.* per annum of Church means ; and have so great Parishes that they are not able to do a quarter of the Ministerial work, nor once in a year to deal personally with half their people for their instruction, and yet they will content themselves with public preaching, as if that were all that were necessary, and leave almost all the rest undone, to the everlasting danger or damnation of multitudes, rather than they will maintain one or two diligent men to assist them. Or, if they have an assistant, it is but some young man to ease them about Baptizings, or Burials, or such work, and not one that will faithfully and diligently watch over the flock, and afford them that Personal instruction which is so necessary. If this be not a serving ourselves of God, and not a serving God, and a selling men's souls for our fuller maintenance in the world, what is ? Methinks such men should fear, lest while they are accounted excellent preachers and godly ministers by men, they should be accounted cruel soul-murderers by Christ ; and lest the cries of those souls whom they have betrayed to damnation should ring in their ears for ever. Will preaching a good sermon serve the turn, while you never look more after them, but deny them that closer help that you find to be necessary, and alienate that maintenance to your own flesh, which should provide relief for so many souls ? How can you open your mouths against oppressors, when yourselves are so great oppressors, not only of men's bodies, but their souls ? How can you preach against unmercifulness, while you are so unmerciful ? And how can you talk against unfaithful ministers, while you are so unfaithful yourselves ? The sin is not therefore small,

because it is unobserved, and not become odious in the eyes of men ; nor because the clarity which you withhold is such as the people blame you not for withholding. Satan himself, their greatest enemy, hath their consent all along in the work of their perdition. It is no extenuation therefore of your sin that you have their consent ; for that you may sooner have for their hurt than for their good.

I shall proceed no further in these confessions and discoveries, but beseech you to take what is said into consideration ; and see whether this be not the great and lamentable sin of the Ministers of the Gospel, that *they are not fully devoted to God*, and give not up themselves, and all they have to the carrying on of the blessed work which they have undertaken ? And whether flesh-pleasing and self-seeking interests distinct from that of Christ, do not make us neglect much of our duty, and walk too unfaithfully in so great a trust, and reservedly serve God in the cheapest and most applauded part of his work, and withdraw from that which would put us upon cost and sufferings ; and whether this do not shew that too many are earthly that seem to be heavenly, and mind the things below while they preach for the things above, and idolize the world, while they call men to condemn it. And as Salvian saith, li. 4. ad Eccles. Cath. p. 454. “*Nullus salutem plus negligit quam qui Deo aliquid anteponit.*” Despisers of God will prove despisers of their own salvation.

And now, brethren, what remaineth, but that we all cry guilty, of too much of these forementioned sins, and humble our souls in the lamentation of our miscarriages before the Lord ! Is this *taking heed to ourselves, and to all the flock* ? Is this like the pattern that is given us in the text ? If we should now prove stout-hearted and unhumbled men, and disregard these confessions, as tending to our disgrace, how sad a symptom would it be to ourselves and to the Church ! The Ministry hath been often threatened here, and is still maligned by many sorts of adversaries ; though all this may shew their impious malice, yet may it also intimate to us God’s just indignation. Believe it, brethren, the Ministry of England is not the least, or last in the sin of the land. They have encouraged the common profaneness ; they have led the people into divisions, and are now backward to bring them out ; and as sin hath been found in them, so

judgments have been found and laid upon them. It is time therefore for us to take our part of that humiliation which we have been calling our people to so long. If we have our wits about us, we may perceive that God hath been offended with us, and that the voice that called this Nation to repentance, did speak to us as well as others. He therefore that hath ears let him hear the voice of railing enemies of all sorts, the voice of them that cry, 'Down with us, even to the ground;' all calling to us to try our ways, and to reform. He that hath eyes to see, let him see the precepts of repentance written in so many admirable deliverances and preservations, and written in so many lines of blood. By fire and sword hath God been calling even us to humiliation; and as judgment hath begun at the House of God, so, if humiliation begin not there too, it will be a sad prognostic to us, and to the land. What! shall we deny, or excuse, or extenuate our sins, while we call our people to such free confessions? Is it nor better to give glory to God by a full and humble confession, than in tenderness of our own glory to seek for fig-leaves to cover our nakedness; and to put God to it, to build his glory which we denied him, upon the ruins of our own, which we preferred before him; and to distraint for that by a yet sorer judgment, which we denied voluntarily to surrender to him? Alas! if you put God to get his honour as he can, he can get it to your greater sorrow and dishonour. If any of our hearers in a day of humiliation, when sin is fully confessed and lamented, should be offended at the confession, and stand up against it, and say, 'You wrong me; I am not so bad! You should have told me of this in private, and not have disgraced me before the congregation.' What could we think of such a man but that he was a hardened, impenitent wretch, and as he would have no part in the confession, so he should have none in the remission. And shall we do that which we scarcely ever see the most hardened sinner do! Shall we say, This should not have been spoken of us in the ears of the people, but we should have been honoured before them! Certainly sins openly committed are more dishonourable to us when we hide them, than when we confess them. It is the sin, and not the confession that is our dishonour. And we have committed them before the sun, so that they cannot be hid. Attempts to cloak them, do increase the guilt

and shame ; there is no way to repair the breaches in our honour, which our sin hath made, but by free confession and humiliation. I durst not but make confession of my own ; and if any be offended that I have confessed theirs, let them know, that I do but what I have done by myself. And if they dare disown the confession of their sin, let them do it at their peril. But as for all the truly humble Ministers of the Gospel, I doubt not but they will rather be provoked more solemnly in the face of their several Congregations, to lament their sins, and promise Reformation.

CHAPTER V.

The Use of Exhortation.

HAVING disclosed and lamented our miscarriages and neglects, our duty for the future lies before us. God forbid that we should now go on in the sin that we have confessed, as carelessly as we did before. Then would the exclamation of Salvian fall upon us, de Gubern. l. 3. p. 87, “*Novum siquidem monstri genus est; eadem pene omnes jugiter faciunt, quæ fecisse plangunt. Et qui intrant Ecclesiasticam domum, ut mala antiqua defleant, exeunt; et quid dico exeunt? In ipsis pene hoc Orationibus suis ac supplicationibus moliuntur: Aliud quippe ora hominum, aliud corda agunt: Et dum verbis præterita mala plangunt, sensu futura meditantur: ac si oratio eorum rixa est magis criminum quam exoratrix; ut vere illa in eis Scripturæ maledicto compleatur, ut de oratione ipsa exeunt condemnati, et oratio eorum fiat in peccatum.*”

Be awakened, therefore, I beseech you brethren, by the loud and manifold voice of God, to set more seriously to the work of God, and to do it for the future with all your might, and to *take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock*. The reasons why you should take heed to yourselves, I gave you in the beginning. The reasons why you should take heed to all the flock, I shall give you now, as motives to enforce this Exhortation ; and the Lord grant that they may work with us according to their truth and weight.

I. The first quickening consideration which the text

here affordeth us, is taken from our relation to all the flock. We are *overseers* of it. In this I shall further shew you these subordinate particulars, which will manifest the force of this consideration.

1. The nature of the office requireth us to *take heed*. What else are we overseers for? "*Episcopus est nomen quod plus oneris quam honoris significat,*" saith Polid. Virgil. p. 240; and a father before him. To be a Bishop or Pastor is not to be set up as idols for the people to bow to, or as idle, slow bellies, to live to our fleshly delight and ease. The particulars of our duty we have somewhat touched before, and more shall do anon. It is a sad case that men should be of a calling that they know not the nature of, and undertake they know not what. Do these men know and consider what they have undertaken, that live at ease and pleasure, and have time to take their superfluous recreations, and to spend an hour and more at once in loitering and vain discourses, when so much work doth lie upon their hands! Why, brethren, do you consider where you stand, and what you have taken upon you? You have undertaken the conduct, under Christ, of a band of his soldiers, against principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. You must lead them on to the sharpest conflicts; you must acquaint them with the enemies' stratagems and assaults; you must watch yourselves, and keep them watching. If you miscarry, they and you may perish. You have a subtle enemy, and therefore must be wise; you have a vigilant enemy, and therefore must be vigilant; a malicious, and violent, and unwearied enemy, and therefore you must be resolute, courageous, and unwearied. You are in a crowd of enemies, compassed with them on every side, and if you heed one and not all, you will quickly fall. And, O what a world of work have you to do! Had you but one ignorant old man or woman to teach, though willing to learn, what a tedious task were it; but if they be as unwilling as ignorant, how much more difficult! But to have such a multitude of these, as most of us have, what work will it find us! Who that ever tried it, knoweth it not by experience! What a pitiful life is it to reason with men that have almost lost the use of reason, and to talk with obstinate, wilful people, that know what they will and resolve, but not why they do it; and to argue the case with them

that neither understand themselves nor you, and yet think that no man hath understanding that contradicteth them, and that are confident they are in the right, when they can shew nothing but that confidence to make them so. Their will is the reason of their judgments and lives: it satisfies them, and it must satisfy you. O, brethren, what a world of wickedness have we to contend against, even in one soul, and what a number of those worlds! What rooting have their sins! With what disadvantage must truth come upon their ears! How strange are they to the heavenly message that we bring them; and know not what you say when you speak in that only language that they understand! And when you think you have done something, you leave your seed among the fowls of the air; wicked men are at their elbows to rise up and contradict all that you have said. They will cavil, and carp, and slander you, that they may disgrace your message, draw them away from Christ, and quickly extinguish the good beginnings that you hoped you had seen. They use indeed weaker reasons than yours, but such as come with more advantage, being near them, and familiarly and importunately urged, and such as are fetched from things that they see and feel, and which are befriended by their own flesh. You speak but once to a sinner, for ten or twenty times that the messengers of Satan speak to them; moreover, how easily do the cares and businesses of the world devour and choke the seed which you have sown! And if it had no enemy but what is in themselves, how easily will a frozen, carnal heart extinguish those sparks which you have been long in kindling; and for want of fuel and further help, they will go out of themselves. What abundance of distempers, and lusts, and passions do you cast your gracious words amongst; and what entertainment such companions will afford them, you may easily conjecture. And when you think your work doth happily succeed, and have seen men under troubles and complaints, confessing their sins, and promising reformation, and living as new creatures and zealous converts; alas, after all this, they may prove unsound and false at the heart, and such as were but superficially changed, and took up new opinions, and new company, without a new heart. How many are after a notable change, deceived by the profits and honours of the world, and fallen away while they

they think they stand! How many are entangled again in their former sensuality; and how many do but change a disgraceful way of flesh-pleasing, for a way that is less dishonourable, and maketh not so great a noise in their consciences! How many grow proud before they reach to a settled knowledge, and greedily snatch at every error that is presented to them, under the name of Truth; and in confidence of the strength of their unfurnished intellects, despise them that they were wont to learn of, and become the greatest grief to their teachers, that before rejoiced in their hopeful beginning! and like chickens that straggle from the hen, they are carried away by that infernal kite, while they proudly despise the guidance and advice of those that Christ hath set over them for their safety. O, brethren, what a field of work is there before us! not a person that you can see but may find you work. In the saints themselves, how soon do their graces languish if you neglect them; and how easily are they drawn into scandalous ways, to the dishonour of the Gospel, and their own loss and sorrow!—If this be the work of a Minister, you may see what a life he hath to lead. Up then, and let us be doing with all our might. Difficulties must quicken, and not discourage in a possible and necessary work. If we cannot do all, let us do what we can; for if we neglect it, woe to us and them! Should we pass over all these needful things, and by a plausible sermon only think to prove ourselves faithful Ministers, and to put off God and man with such a shell and formal visor, our reward would prove as superficial as our work.

2. Consider also, that it is your own voluntary undertaking and engagement, that all this work is laid upon you. No man forced you to be Overseers of the Church; and doth not common honesty bind you to be true to your trust?

3. Consider also, that you have the *honour*, to encourage you to the *labour*; and a great honour indeed it is, to be the ambassadors of God, and the instruments of men's conversion and salvation, "to save men's souls from death, and cover a multitude of sins;" indeed the honour is the attendant of the work. To do therefore, as the Prelates of the Church in all ages have done, to strive for precedency, and fill the world with vile contentions about the dignity and su-

periority of their seats, doth shew that they much forget the nature and work of that office which they strive about. I seldom see men strive so furiously, who shall go first to a poor man's cottage to teach him and his family the way to heaven ; or, who shall first endeavour the conversion of a sinner ; or first become the servant of all. Strange, that for all the plain expressions of Christ, men will not understand the nature of their office ! If they did, would they strive who would be the Pastor of a whole county and more, when there are ten thousand poor sinners in it that cry for help, and they are not so eager to engage for their relief ; nay, when they can patiently live in the houses with riotous, profane persons, and not follow them seriously and incessantly for their change ? They would have the name and honour of the work of a county, who are unable to do all the work of a parish, when the honour is but the appendix of the work. Is it names and honour, or the work and end that these desire ? O, if they would faithfully, humbly, and self-denyingly lay out themselves for Christ and his Church, and never think of titles and reputation, they should then have honour whether they would or not : but by gaping after it, they lose it. For this is the case of virtue's shadow, 'Quod sequitur fugio, quod fugit ipse sequor.'

4. Consider also, you have many other excellent privileges of the Ministerial office to encourage you to the work. If you will not therefore do the work, you have nothing to do with the privileges. It is something that you are maintained by other men's labours, and live on the commonwealth's allowance. This is for your work, that you may not be taken off it, but as Paul requireth, may wholly give yourselves to these things, and not be forced to neglect men's souls whilst you are providing for your own bodies. Either do the work then, or take not the maintenance.

But you have far greater privileges yet than this, Is it nothing to be bred up to learning, when others are bred at the plough and cart ; and to be furnished with so much delightful knowledge, when the world lieth in ignorance ? Is it nothing to converse with learned men, and talk of high and glorious things, when others must converse with almost none but silly ignorants ?

But especially, what an excellent life is it to live in stu-

dying and preaching Christ! To be still searching into his mysteries, or feeding on them; to be daily in the consideration of the blessed nature, or works, or ways of God! Others are glad of the leisure of the Lord's-day, and now and then an hour besides, when they can lay hold of it: but we may keep a continual sabbath. We may do nothing else almost but study and talk of God and glory, and call upon him, and drink in his sacred, saving truths. Our employment is all high and spiritual! Whether we be alone, or with others, our business is for another world. O, were but our hearts more suitable to this work, what a blessed, joyful life should we live! How sweet would the pulpit be, and what a delight would our conference of these things afford! To live among so many silent, wise companions, whenever we please, and of such variety,—all these, and much more such privileges of the Ministry, bespeak our unwearied diligence in the work.

5. You are related to Christ as well as to the flock; and he being also related to you, you are not only advanced but secured by the relation, if you be but faithful in the work that he requireth. You are the stewards of his Mysteries, and rulers of his household; and he that hath entrusted you will maintain you in his work. But then, "it is required of a steward that a man be found faithful." (1 Cor. iv. 2.) Be true to him, and never doubt but he will be true to you. Do you feed his flock, and he will sooner feed you as he did Elias, than forsake you. If you be in prison, he will open the doors; but then you must relieve imprisoned souls. He will give you a tongue, and wisdom that no enemy shall resist; but then you must use it faithfully for him. If you will put forth your hand to relieve the distressed, and willingly put it to his plough, he will wither the hand that is stretched out against you. The Ministers of England, I am sure, know this by large experience. Many a time hath God rescued them from the jaws of the devourer. O, the admirable preservations and deliverances that they have had from cruel Papists, from tyrannical Persecutors, from malicious Sectaries, and misguided, passionate men! Brethren, in the fear of God, consider, why it is that God hath done all this! Is it for your persons, or for his Church? What are you to him more than other men, but for his work and people's sake? Are you angels or men? Is your flesh of any better mettle

than your neighbours ? Are you not of the same generation of sinners, and need his grace as much as they ? Up then, and work as the redeemed of the Lord ; as those that are purposely rescued from ruin for his service. O, do not prepare a remediless overthrow for the English Ministry, by your ingratitude, after all these deliverances. If you believe that God hath rescued you for himself, live to him then, as being unreservedly his that hath delivered you.

II. The first Motive mentioned in the text, we have spoken of, which is from the consideration of our Office itself. The second is from *the efficient cause*. It is God by his Spirit that makes us overseers of his Church, therefore it concerneth us to take heed to ourselves, and it. I did before shew you how the Holy Ghost is said to make Bishops or Pastors of the church in three several respects : By qualifying them for the office ; by directing the ordainers to discern their qualifications, and know the fittest men : and by directing them, the people, and themselves, for the affixing them to a particular charge. All these were done then in an extraordinary sort, by inspiration, at least very often. The same are all done now by the ordinary way of the Spirit's assistance. But it is the same Spirit still ; and men are made overseers of the Church (when they are rightly called) by the Holy Ghost now as well as then. It is a strange conceit therefore of the Papists, to think that ordination by the hands of the man, is of more absolute necessity in the Ministerial office, than the calling of the Holy Ghost. God hath determined in his word, that there shall be such an office, and what the work and power shall be, and what sort of men, as to their qualifications, shall receive it. None of these can be undone by man, or made unnecessary. God also giveth men the qualifications which he requireth. So that all that the Church hath to do, whether pastors or people, ordainers or electors, is but to discern and determine, which are the men that God hath qualified, and to accept of them that are so provided, and upon consent to instal them solemnly in this office. But I purposely cut short the controvertible part.

What an obligation then is laid upon us by our Call ! If our commission be sent from heaven, it is not to be disobeyed. When Paul was called by the voice of Christ, he

was not disobedient to the heavenly vision: when the apostles were called by Christ from their secular employments, they presently leave friends, and house, and trade, and all, and follow him. Though our Call be not so immediate or extraordinary, yet it is from the same Spirit. It is no safe course to imitate Jonah, in turning our back upon the commands of God. If we neglect our work, he hath a spur to quicken us; and if we overrun it, he hath messengers enough to overtake us, and fetch us back, and make us do it; and it is better to do it at first than at last. This is the second Motive.

III. The third Motive in the text, is, from *the Dignity of the object*. It is the Church of God which we must oversee and feed. It is that Church for which the world is much upheld, which is sanctified by the Holy Ghost, which is united to Christ, and is his mystical body; that Church which angels are present with, and attend upon as ministering spirits, whose very little ones have their angels beholding the face of God in heaven. O what a charge have we undertaken! And shall we be unfaithful? Have we the stewardship of God's own family, and shall we neglect it? Have we the conduct of those saints that must live for ever with God in glory, and shall we neglect them? God forbid! I beseech you, brethren, let this thought awaken the negligent! You that draw back from painful, displeasing, suffering duties, and will put off men's souls with ineffectual formalities; do you think this is an honourable usage of Christ's Spouse? Are the souls of men thought meet by God to see his face, and live for ever in his glory, and are they not worthy of your utmost cost and labour? Do you think so basely of the Church of God, as if it deserved not the best of your care and help? Were you the keepers of sheep or swine, you might better let them go, and say, they be not worthy the looking after; and yet you would scarcely do so if they were your own. But dare you say so by the souls of men, even by the Church of Christ? Christ walketh among them. Remember his presence, and keep all as clean as you can. The Praises of the most high God are in the midst of them. They are a sanctified, peculiar people, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a choice generation, to shew forth the praises of him that hath called them; and yet dare you

neglect them? What a high honour is it to be but one of them, yea, but a door-keeper in the house of God ; but to be the priest of these priests, and the ruler of these kings,—this is such an honour, as multiplieth your obligations to diligence and fidelity in so noble an employment.

IV. The last Motive mentioned in my text is, *the Price paid for the Church which we oversee*. God the Son did purchase it with his own blood. O what an argument is here to quicken the negligent ; and what an argument to condemn those that will not be quickened to their duty by it ! ‘O, saith one of the ancient doctors, if Christ had but committed to my keeping one spoonful of his blood in a fragile glass, how curious should I preserve it, and how tender should I be of that glass !’ If then he have committed to me the purchase of his blood, should I not as carefully look to my charge ? What, sirs, shall we despise the blood of Christ : shall we think it was shed for them that are not worthy of our utmost care ! You may see here, it is not a little fault that negligent Pastors are guilty of. As much as in them lieth, the blood of Christ should be shed in vain : they would lose him those souls whom he hath so dearly bought !

O then let us hear those arguments of Christ, whenever we feel ourselves grow dull and careless : ‘Did I die for them, and wilt not thou look after them ? Were they worth my blood, and are they not worth thy labour ? Did I come down from heaven to earth, to seek and to save that which was lost ; and wilt not thou go to the next door, or street, or village to seek them ? How small is thy labour and condescension as to mine ? I debased myself to this, but it is thy honour to be so employed. Have I done and suffered so much for their salvation ; and was I willing to make thee a co-worker with me, and wilt thou refuse that little that lieth upon thy hands ?’ Every time we look upon our Congregations, let us believingly remember, that they are the purchase of Christ’s blood, and therefore should be regarded accordingly by us.

And think what a confusion it will be at the last day to a negligent Minister, to have this blood of the Son of God to be pleaded against him, and for Christ to say, ‘It was the purchase of my blood that thou didst so make light of, and

dost thou think to be saved by it thyself?' O, brethren, seeing Christ will bring his blood to plead with us, let it plead us to our duty, lest it plead us to damnation.

I have done with the Motives which I find in the text itself: there are many more that might be gathered from the rest of this Exhortation of the Apostle; but we must not stay to mention all. If the Lord will set home but these few upon your hearts, I dare say we shall see reason to mend our pace: and the change will be such on our hearts, and in our Ministry, that ourselves and our Congregations will have cause to bless God for it. I know myself unworthy to be your monitor; but a monitor you must have; and it is better for us to hear of our sin and duty from any body than from none at all. Receive the admonition, and you will see no cause in the monitor's unworthiness, to repent of it; but if you reject it, the unworthiest messenger may bear that witness against you that will confound you. But before I leave this Exhortation, as I have applied it to our general work, so I shall carry it a little further to some of the special parts, and modes of our duty which were before expressed.

I. And first, and above all, *See that the work of saving grace be thoroughly wrought on your own souls.* It is a fearful case to be an unsanctified Professor, but much more to be an unsanctified Preacher. Doth it not make you tremble when you open the Bible, lest you should read there the sentence of your own condemnation? When you pen your sermons, little do you think that you are drawing up indictments against your own souls! When you are arguing against sin, you are aggravating your own; when you proclaim to your hearers the riches of Christ, and grace, you publish your own iniquity in rejecting them, and your unhappiness in being without them. What can you do in persuading men to Christ, in drawing them from the world, in urging them to a life of faith and holiness; but conscience if it were but awake might tell you, that you speak all this to your own confusion! If you mention hell, you mention your own inheritance; if you describe the joys of heaven, you describe your misery that have no right to it. What can you devise to say, for the most part, but it will be against your own souls? O miserable life, that a man should

study and preach against himself, and spend all his days in a course of self-condemnation ! A graceless, unexperienced preacher, is one of the most unhappy creatures upon earth ; and yet is he ordinarily most insensible of his unhappiness ! for he hath so many counterfeits that seem like the gold of saving grace, and so many splendid stones that seem like the Christian's jewel, that he is seldom troubled with the thoughts of his poverty ; but thinks he is rich, and wanteth nothing, when he is poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked. He is acquainted with the holy Scripture ; he is exercised in holy duties ; he liveth not in open, disgraceful sin : he serveth at God's altar, he reproveth other men's faults, and preacheth up holiness both of heart and life ; and how can this man choose but be holy ? O what an aggravated misery is this, to perish in the midst of plenty, and to famish with the bread of life in our hands, while we offer it to others, and urge it on them ! That those Ordinances of God should be the occasions of our delusion, which are instituted to be the means of our conviction and salvation ; and that while we hold the looking-glass of the Gospel to others, to shew them the true face of the state of their souls, we should either look on the back of it ourselves, where we can see nothing, or turn it aside, that it may misrepresent us to ourselves. If such a wretched man would take my counsel, he should make a stand, and call his heart and life to an account, and fall a preaching awhile to himself, before he preach any more to others ; he should consider whether food in the mouth will nourish that goeth not into the stomach ; whether it be a Christ in the mouth, or in the heart that will save men ; whether he that nameth him should not depart from iniquity ; whether God will hear their prayers, if they regard iniquity in their hearts ; whether it will serve the turn at that day of reckoning to say, " Lord, we have prophesied in thy name," when they shall hear, " Depart from me, I know you not ;" and what comfort it will be to Judas when he is gone to his own place, to remember that he preached with the rest of the apostles, or that he sat with Christ, and was called by him, Friend ; and whether a wicked preacher shall stand in the judgment, or sinners in the assembly of the just ? When such thoughts as these have entered into his soul, and kindly worked awhile upon his conscience, I would advise him next to go to the Congregation, and there

preach over Origen's sermon, on Psal. l. 16, 17. "But to the wicked, saith God, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and hast cast my words behind thee?" And when he has read this text, to sit down, and expound, and apply it by his tears; and then to make a free confession of his sin, and lament his case before the assembly, and desire their earnest prayers to God, for pardoning and renewing grace; and so to close with Christ in heart, who before admitted him no further than into the brain, that hereafter he may preach a Christ whom he knows, and may feel what he speaks, and may commend the riches of the Gospel by experience.

Verily, it is the common danger and calamity of the Church, to have unregenerate and inexperienced Pastors; and to have so many men become preachers, before they are Christians; to be sanctified by dedication to the altar as God's priests, before they are sanctified by hearty dedication to Christ as his disciples; and so to worship an unknown God, and to preach an unknown Christ, an unknown Spirit, an unknown state of holiness and communion with God, and a glory that is unknown, and likely to be unknown to them for ever. He is likely to be but a heartless Preacher, that hath not the Christ and grace that he preacheth in his heart. O that all our students in the University would well consider this! What a poor business is it to themselves, to spend their time in knowing some little of the works of God, and some of those names that the divided tongues of the nations have imposed on them, and not to know the Lord himself, nor exalt him in their hearts, nor to be acquainted with that one renewing work that should make them happy. They do but walk in a vain show, and spend their lives like dreaming men, while they busy their wits and tongues about abundance of names and notions, and are strangers to God and the life of saints. If ever God awaken them by saving grace, they will have cogitations and employments so much more serious than their unsanctified studies and disputations were, that they will confess they did but dream before. A world of business they make themselves about *nothing*, while they are wilful strangers to the primitive, independent, necessary Being, who is all in all. Nothing can be rightly known, if God be not known; nor is any study well managed, nor to any great

purpose, where God is not studied. We know little of the creature, till we know it as it standeth in its order and respects to God ; single letters and syllables uncomposed are nonsense. He that overlooketh the Alpha and Omega, and seeth not the beginning and end, and Him in all, who is the *all* of all, doth see nothing at all. All creatures are as such broken syllables ; they signify nothing as separated from God. Were they separated *actually*, they would cease to be, and the separation would be an annihilation ; and when we separate them in our *fancies*, we make *nothing* of them to ourselves. It is one thing to know the creatures as Aristotle, and another thing to know them as a Christian. None but a Christian can read one line of his Physics so as to understand it rightly. It is a high and excellent study, and of greater use than many do well understand ; but it is the smallest part of it that Aristotle can teach us. When man was made perfect, and placed in a perfect world, where all things were in perfect order, and very good, the whole creation was then man's book in which he was to read the nature and will of his great Creator ; every creature had the name of God so legibly engraven on it, that man might run and read it. He could not open his eyes, but he might see some image of God, but no where so fully and lively as in himself : and therefore it was his work to study the whole volume of nature ; but first and chiefly to study himself. And if man had held on in this prescribed work, he would have continued and increased in the knowledge of God and himself ; but when he would needs know and love the creature and himself, in a way of separation from God, he lost the knowledge of all, both of the creature, himself, and God, so far as it could beautify, and was worth the name of knowledge ; and instead of it he hath got the unhappy knowledge which he affected, even the empty notions, and fantastical knowledge of the creature and himself as thus separated. Thus he that lived to the Creator, and upon him, doth now live to, and as upon the other creatures and himself ; and thus, "every man at his best estate (the learned as well as the illiterate) is altogether vanity.—Surely every man walketh in a vain show : surely they are disquieted in vain." (Psal. xxxix. 5, 6.) It must be well observed, that as God laid not by the relation of a Creator by becoming our Redeemer, nor the right of his propriety and government of us in that

relation, but the work of redemption standeth in some subordination to that of creation, and the law of the Redeemer to the law of the Creator; so also the duties that we owed God as Creator are not ceased, but the duties that we owe to the Redeemer, as such, are subordinate thereto. It is the work of Christ to bring us back to God, whom we fell from, and to restore us to our perfection of holiness and obedience; and as he is the way to the Father, so faith in him is the way to our former employment and enjoyment of God. I hope you perceive what all this driveth at, viz. that to see God in his creatures, and to love him, and converse with him, was the employment of man in his upright state; that this is so far from ceasing to be our duty, that it is the work of Christ by faith to bring us back to it: and therefore the most holy men are the most excellent students of God's works: and none but the holy can rightly study, or know them. His works are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein; but not for themselves, but for him that made them. Your study of physics and other sciences, is not worth a rush, if it be not God by them that you seek after. To see and admire, to reverence and adore, to love and delight in God appearing to us in his works, and purposely to peruse them for the knowledge of God, this is the true and only philosophy, and the contrary is mere foolery, and is called so again and again by God himself. This is the sanctification of your studies, when they are devoted to God, and when he is the life of them all, and they all intend him as their end, and principal object.

Therefore I shall presume to tell you by the way, that it is a grand error, and of dangerous consequence in the Christian Academies. (Pardon the censure from one so unfit for it, seeing the necessity of the case commandeth it,) that they study the creature before the Redeemer, and set themselves to physics, and metaphysics, and mathematics, before they set themselves to Theology: when as, no man that hath not the vitals of Theology is capable of going beyond a fool in philosophy; and all that such do is but doting about questions, and opposition of science, falsely so called. And as by affecting a separated creature-knowledge Adam fell from God, so those that mind these *βεβήλεις κενοφωνίας, καὶ ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως*, they miss the end of all right studies, *περὶ τὴν πίστιν ἡσόχισαν* while they will needs prefer

these, they miss that faith which they pretend to aim at. Their pretence is, that Theology being the end, and the most perfect, must be the last, and all the subservient sciences must go before it. But, (1.) There is somewhat of natural knowledge indeed pre-requisite, and somewhat of art, before a man can receive Theology ; but that is no more than their mothers can teach them before they go to school. (2.) And it is true, that all right natural knowledge doth tend to the increase of Theological knowledge ; but that which is a means to its perfection, may be the effect or consequent of its beginning. (3.) The end must be first known, because it must be intended before the choice, or use of means. (4.) The Scripture revealeth to us the things of God himself in the most easy way, and therefore he must be first learned there. (5.) The book of the creatures is not to shew us more of God than the Scripture doth ; but by representing him to us in more sensible appearances, to make our knowledge of him the more intense and operative, and being continually before our eyes, God also would be continually before them, if we could aright discern him in them. It is evident therefore, that Theology must lay the ground, and lead the way in all our studies, when we are once acquainted with so much of words and things as is needful to our understanding the sense of its principles. If God must be searched after in our search of the creature, and we must affect no separated knowledge of them, then Tutors must read God to their pupils in all ; and Divinity must be the beginning, the middle, the end, the life, the all of their studies : and our physics and metaphysics must be reduced to Theology ; and nature must be read as one of God's books, which is purposely written for the revelation of himself. The holy Scripture is the easiest book. When you have first learned God, and his will there, in the necessary things, address yourselves cheerfully to the study of his works, that you may there see the creature itself as your alphabet, and their order as the connexion of syllables, words and sentences, and God as the subject matter of all, and the respect to him as the sense or signification ; and then carry on both together, and never more play the mere scriveners ; stick no more in your letters and words, but read every creature as a Christian, or a divine. If you see not yourselves and all things as living, and moving, and having being in God, you see nothing, whatever you think

you see. If you perceive not in your perusals of the creatures, that God is all, and in all, and see not *ἐξ αὐτῆς, καὶ δι' αὐτῆς καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα*, (Rom. xi. 36,) you may think perhaps that you know something, but you know nothing as you ought to know. (1 Cor. viii. 2.) But he that seeth and loveth God in the creature, the same is known and loved of him. (verse 3.) Think not so basely of the works of God, and your physics, as that they are only preparatory studies for boys. It is a most high and noble part of holiness to search after, behold, admire, and love the great Creator in all his works. How much have the saints of God been employed in it! The beginning of Genesis, the books of Job, and the Psalms may acquaint us that our physics are not so little akin to Theology as some suppose. I do therefore in zeal to the good of the Church, and their own success in their most necessary labours, propound it to the consideration of all pious Tutors, whether they should not as timely, and as diligently read to their pupils, or cause them to read, the chief parts of practical divinity (and there is no other) as any of the sciences; and whether they should not go together from the very first? It is well that they hear sermons; but that is not enough. If they have need of private help in philosophy besides public lectures, much more in Theology. If Tutors would make it their principal business to acquaint their pupils with the doctrine of life, and labour to set it home upon their hearts, that all might be received according to its weight, and read to their hearts as well as to their heads, and so carry on the rest of their instructions, that it may appear they make them but subservient unto this, and that their pupils may feel what they drive at in all, and so that they would teach all their philosophy 'in habitu Theologico,' this might be a happy means to make happy souls, and a happy Church and Commonwealth. The same I mean also respecting schoolmasters to their scholars. But when languages and philosophy have almost all their time and diligence, and instead of reading philosophy like divines, they read divinity like philosophers, as if it were a thing of no more moment than a lesson of music, or arithmetic, and not the doctrine of everlasting life; this is it that blasteth so many in the bud, and pestereth the Church with unsanctified teachers! Hence it is, that we have so many worldlings to preach of the invisible felicity, and so many carnal men to declare

the mysteries of the Spirit ; and I would I might not say, so many Infidels to preach Christ, or so many atheists to preach the living God ; and when they are taught philosophy before, or without Religion, what wonder if their philosophy be all or most of their religion ; if they grow up in admirations of their unprofitable fancies, and deify their own deluded brains, when they know no other God ; and if they reduce all their Theology to their philosophy, like Campanella, White, and other self-admirers ; or if they take Christianity for a mere delusion, and fall with Hobbes to write *Leviathans*, or with Lord Herbert, to write such Treatises, ‘*de veritate*,’ as shall shew the world how little they esteem of verity : or at best, if they turn Paracelsian Behmenists, and spin them a religion from their own inventions ! Therefore I address myself to all them that have the Education of Youth, especially in order to preparation for the Ministry. You that are Schoolmasters, and Tutors, begin and end with the things of God. Speak daily to the hearts of your scholars those things that must be wrought into their hearts, or else they will be undone. Let some piercing words fall frequently from your mouths, of God, and the state of their souls, and the life to come. Do not say, they are too young to understand and entertain them. You little know what impressions they may make which you discern not. Not only that soul of the boy, but a congregation, or many souls therein may have cause to bless God for your zeal and diligence, yea, for one such seasonable word. You have a great advantage above others to do them good. You have them before they are grown to the worst, and they will hear you when they will not hear another. If they are destined to the Ministry, you are preparing them for the special service of God ; and must they not first have the knowledge of Him whom they must serve ! O think with yourselves, what a sad thing it will be to their own souls, and what a wrong to the Church of God, if they come out from you with common and carnal hearts, to so holy, and spiritual, and great a work ! Of a hundred students that be in one of your colleges, how many may there be that are serious, experienced, godly men : some talk of too small a number. If you should send one half of them on a work that they are unfit for, what cruel work will they make in the Churches, or countries ! Whereas if you be the means of their thorough sanc-

tification, how many souls may bless you, and what greater good can you do the Church? When once their hearts are savingly affected with the doctrine which they study and preach, they will study it heartily, and preach it heartily. Their own experience will direct them to the fittest subjects, and will furnish them with matter, and quicken them to set it home. I observe, that the best of our hearers can feel and savour such experimental preachers, and usually do less regard others, whatever may be their accomplishments. See therefore, that you make not work for sequestrators, nor for the groans and lamentation of the Church, nor for the great tormentor of the murderers of souls.

II. My second particular Exhortation is this: Content not yourselves to have the main work of grace, but *be also very careful that your graces be kept in life and action, and that you preach to yourselves the sermons that you study, before you preach them to others.* If you did this for your own sakes, it would not be lost labour; but I am speaking to you upon the Public account, and that you would do it for the sake of the Church. When your minds are in a heavenly, holy frame, your people are likely to partake of the fruits of it. Your prayers, and praises, and doctrine, will be heavenly and sweet to them! They will feel when you have been much with God. That which is on your hearts most, is likely to be most in their ears. I confess, I must speak it by lamentable experience, that I publish to my flock the distempers of my soul, when I let my heart grow cold, my preaching is cold; and when it is confused, my preaching will be so: and so I can observe too often in the best of my hearers, that when I have a while grown cold in preaching, they have cooled accordingly; and the next prayers that I have heard from them hath been too much like my preaching. We are the nurses of Christ's little ones. If we forbear our food, we shall famish them; they will quickly find it in the want of milk; and we may quickly see it again in them, in the lean and dull discharge of their several duties. If we let our love go down, we are not likely to raise up theirs. If we abate our holy care and fear, it will appear in our doctrine. If the matter shew it not, the manner will. If we feed on unwholesome food, either errors, or fruitless controversies, our hearers are likely to fare the worse for it.

Whereas if we could abound in faith, and love, and zeal, how would it overflow, to the refreshing of our congregations, and how would it appear in the increase of the same graces in others!

O brethren, watch, therefore, over your own hearts! Keep out sinful passions and worldly inclinations; keep up the life of faith and love; be much at home; and be much with God. If it be not your daily, serious business to study your own hearts, and subdue corruptions, and live as upon God; if you make it not your very work which you constantly attend, all will go amiss, and you will starve your auditors; or if you have but an affected fervency, you cannot expect such a blessing to attend it: above all, be much in secret prayer and meditation. There you must fetch the heavenly fire that must kindle your sacrifices. Remember, you cannot decline and neglect your duty to your own hurt alone; many will be losers by it as well as you. For your people's sake, therefore, look to your hearts. If a pang of spiritual pride should overtake you, and you should grow into any dangerous or schismatical conceits, and vent your own overvalued inventions to draw away disciples after you, what a wound might this prove to the Church that you are set over; and you might become a plague to them instead of a blessing, and they might wish they had never seen your faces. O therefore, take heed of your own judgments and affections! Error and vanity will slyly insinuate, and seldom come without fair pretences. Great distempers and apostacies have usually small beginnings. The prince of darkness doth frequently personate the angels of light, to draw children of light again into his darkness. How easily also will distempers creep into our affections, and our first love, and fear, and care abate! Watch therefore, for the sake of yourselves and others.

More particularly: a Minister should take some special pains with his heart, before he goes to the congregation: if it be then cold, how is it likely to warm the hearts of the hearers! Go, therefore, then especially to God for life; and read some rousing, awakening book, or meditate on the weight of the subject that you are to speak of, and on the great necessity of your people's souls that you may go in the zeal of the Lord into his house.

III. My next particular Exhortation is this, *Stir up yourselves to the great work of God, when you are upon it, and see that you do it with all your might.* Though I move you not to a constant loudness (for that will make your fervency contemptible), yet see that you have a constant seriousness; and when the matter requireth it, as it should do, in the application at least of every doctrine, then lift up your voice, spare not your spirits, and speak to them as to men that must be awakened either here or in hell. Look upon your congregations believingly, and with compassion, and think in what a state of joy or torment they must all be for ever; and then, methinks, it will make you earnest, and melt your heart in the sense of their condition. O speak not one cold or careless word about so great a business as heaven or hell! Whatever you do, let the people see that you are in good earnest. Truly, brethren, they are great works that are to be done, and you must not think that trifling will dispatch them. You cannot break men's hearts by jesting with them, or telling them a smooth tale, or patching up a gaudy oration. Men will not cast away their dearest pleasures upon a drowsy request of one that seemeth not to mean as he speaks, or to care much whether his request be granted. If you say, 'The work is God's, and he may do it by the weakest means;' I answer, It is true, he may do so; but yet his ordinary way is to work by means; and to make not only the matter that is preached, but also the manner of preaching to be instrumental to the work: or else it were a small matter whom he should employ that would but speak the truth. If grace made as little use of the Ministerial persuasions as some conceive, we need not so much mind a reformation, nor cast out the insufficient.

A great matter also, with the most of our hearers, lies in the very pronounciation and tone of speech. The best matter will scarcely move them, if it be not movingly delivered. Especially, see that there be no affectation, but that we speak as familiarly to our people as we would do if we were talking to any of them personally. The want of a familiar tone and expression, is as great a defect in most of our deliveries, as any thing whatsoever, and that which we should be very careful to amend. When a man hath a reading or declaiming tone, like a schoolboy saying his lesson, or an

oration, few are moved with any thing that he saith. Let us therefore, rouse up ourselves to the work of the Lord, and speak to our people as for their lives, and save them as by violence, pulling them out of the fire. Satan will not be charmed out of his profession. We must lay siege to the souls of sinners which are his garrisons, find out where his chief strength lieth, and lay the battery of God's ordnance against it, and ply it closely till a breach be made; and then suffer them not by their shifts to make it up again, but find out their common objections, and give them a full and satisfactory answer. We have reasonable creatures to deal with; and as they abuse their reason against truth, so they will accept better reason for it before they will obey. We must therefore see that our sermons be convincing, and that we make the light of Scripture and reason shine so bright in the faces of the ungodly, that it may even force them to see, unless they wilfully shut their eyes. A sermon full of mere words, how neatly soever it be composed, while there is wanting the light of evidence, and the life of zeal, is but an image, or a well-dressed carcase. In preaching there is intended a communion of souls, and a communication of somewhat from ours unto theirs. As we, and they have understandings, and wills, and affections, so must the bent of our endeavours be to communicate the fullest light of evidence from our understandings unto theirs; and to warm their hearts by kindling in them holy affections, as by a communication from ours. The great things which we have to commend to our hearers, have reason enough on their side, and lie plain before them in the Word of God; we should therefore be so furnished with all store of evidence, as to come as with a torrent upon their understandings, and bear down all before us, and with our dilemmas and expostulations to bring them to a nonplus, and pour out shame upon all their vain objections, that they may be forced to yield to the power of Truth, and see that it is great, and will prevail.

IV. Moreover, if you would prosper in your work, be sure to *keep up earnest desires and expectations of success*. If your hearts be not set on the end of your labours, and you long not to see the conversion and edification of your hearers, and do not study and preach in hope, you are not likely

to see much fruit of it. It is an ill sign of a false, self-seeking heart, that can be content to be still doing, and see no fruit of their labour. So I have observed, that God seldom blesseth any man's work so much as his whose heart is set upon success. Let it be the property of such as Judas to have more regard to the bag than to their business, and not to care much for what they pretend to care; and to think if they have their tithes, and the love and commendations of the people, that they have enough to satisfy them. But let all that preach for Christ, and men's salvation, be unsatisfied till they have the thing they preach for. He had never the right motives of a Preacher that is indifferent whether he do obtain them, and is not grieved when he misseth them, and rejoiced when he sees the desired issue. When a man doth only study what to say, and how with commendation to spend the hour, and looks no more after it, unless it be to know what people think of his own abilities, and thus holds on from year to year; I must needs think, that this man preaches for himself, and drives on a private trade of his own, and does not preach for Christ even when he preaches Christ, how excellent soever he may seem to do it. No wise or charitable physician is content to be still giving physic, and see no amendment among his patients, but have them all to die upon his hands; nor will any wise and honest schoolmaster be content to be still teaching, though his scholars profit not; but either of them would grow weary of the employment. I know that a faithful Minister may have comfort when he wants success; and though Israel be not gathered, our reward is with the Lord; and our acceptance is not according to the fruit, but according to our labour; and as Greg. M. saith, "*Et Æthiops etsi balneum niger intrat, et niger egreditur, tamen balneator nummos accipit.*" If God set us to wash blackamoors, and cure those that will not be cured, we shall not lose our labour, though we perform not the cure. But then, he that longeth not for the success of his labours, can have none of his comfort, because he was not a faithful labourer: this is only for them that I speak of, that are set upon the end, and grieved if they miss it. This is not the full comfort that we must desire, but only such a part as may quiet us, though we miss the rest. What if God will accept a physician though the patient die! He must work in compassion,

long for a better issue, and be sorry if he miss it, for all that; for it is not only our own reward that we labour for, but other men's salvation. I confess, for my part, I marvel at some ancient, reverend men, that have lived twenty, forty, or fifty years with an unprofitable people, where they have seen so little fruit of their labours, that it was scarcely discernible, how they can with so much patience still go on! Were it my case, though I durst not leave the vineyard nor quit my calling, yet I should suspect that it was God's will I should go somewhere else, and another take my place, that might be fitter for them; and I should not be easily satisfied to spend my days in such a manner.

V. *Do well*, as well as *say well*. Be zealous of good works. Spare not for any cost, if it may promote your Master's work.

1. Maintain your innocence, and walk without offence. Let your lives condemn sin, and persuade men to duty. Would you have your people be more careful of their souls than you will be of yours? If you would have them redeem their time, do not you mispend yours. If you would not have them vain in their conversations; see that you speak yourselves the things which may edify, and tend to minister grace to the hearers. Order your own families well if you would have them do so by theirs. Be not proud and lordly, if you would have them to be lowly. There is no virtue wherein your example will do more, at least to abate men's prejudice, than humility, and meekness, and self-denial. Forgive injuries, and be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Do as your Lord, who when he was reviled, reviled not again. If sinners be stubborn, and stout, and contemptuous, flesh and blood will persuade you to take up their weapons, and to master them by their carnal means; but that is not the way, further than necessary self-preservation, or public good requireth it; but overcome them with kindness, and patience, and gentleness. The former may shew that you have more worldly power than they, wherein yet they are ordinarily too hard for the faithful; but it is the latter only, that will tell them that you overtop them in spiritual excellence, and in the true qualifications of a saint. If you believe that Christ was more imitable than Cæsar, or Alexander; and that it is more glory to be a Christian than

to be a Conqueror, yea, to be a man than a beast, which often exceed us in strength; then contend with charity, and not with violence; and set meekness, and love, and patience against force; and not force against force. Remember you are obliged to be the servants of all. Condescend to men of low estate. Be not strange to the poor of your flock. They are apt to take your strangeness for contempt. Familiarity, improved to holy ends, is exceedingly necessary, and may do abundance of good. Speak not stoutly, or disrespectfully to any one; but be courteous to the meanest as your equal in Christ. A kind and winning carriage is a cheap way of advantage to do men good.

2. Remember what I said before on works of Charity. Go to the poor, and see what they want, and shew at once your compassion to soul and body. Buy them a Catechism and some small books that are most likely to do them good, and bestow them on your neighbours, and make them promise you to read them, and especially, to spend that part of the Lord's-day therein, which they can spare from greater duties. Stretch your purse to the utmost, and do all the good you can. Think not of being rich; seek not great things for yourselves or posterity. What if you do impoverish yourselves to do a greater good; will it be loss or gain? If you believe that God is your safest purse-bearer, and that to expend in his service is the greatest usury, and the most thriving trade; shew them that you believe it. I know that flesh and blood will cavil before it will lose its prey, and will never want somewhat to say against that duty that is against its interest. But mark what I say, and may the Lord set it home upon your hearts: *That man who has any thing in the world so dear to him, that he cannot spare it for Christ, if he call for it, is no true Christian.* And because a carnal heart will not believe that Christ calls for it, when he cannot spare it, and therefore makes that his self-deceiving shift; I say further, that *That man that will not be persuaded that duty is duty, because he cannot spare that for Christ, which is therein to be expended, is no true Christian;* for a false heart corrupteth the understanding, and that again increaseth the delusions of the heart. Do not take it therefore as an undoing, to make you friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness, and to lay up a treasure in heaven, though you leave yourselves but little on earth. "Nemo tam pau-

per potest esse quam natus est ; Aves sine patrimonio vivunt, et in diem pecua pascuntur ; et hoc nobis tamen nata sunt ; quæ omnia si non concupiscimus possidemus, inquit Minutius Felix. p. (mihi) 397." You lose no great advantage for heaven by becoming poor ; " Quia viam terit, eo fælicior quo levior incedit." Id.

I know where the heart is carnal and covetous, words will not wring their money out of their hands. They can say all this, and more to others ; but saying is one thing, and believing is another. But with those that are true believers, methinks such considerations would prevail. O what abundance of good might Ministers do, if they would but live in a contempt of the world, and the riches and glory of it, and expend all they have for their Master's use, and pinch their flesh that they might have wherewith to do good. This would unlock more hearts to the reception of their Doctrine than all their oratory will do ; and without this, singularity in Religion will seem but hypocrisy, and it is likely that it is so. " Qui innocentiam colit, Domino supplicat—qui hominem periculo surripit, opinam victimam cædit ; hæc nostra sacrificia ; hæc Dei sacra sunt ; sic apud nos relegiosior est ille qui justior, inquit idem Minutius Felix." ib. Though we need not do as the Papists, that will betake them to Monasteries, and cast away property, yet we must have nothing but what we have for God.

VI. The next branch of my Exhortation is, That you would *maintain your Christian and brotherly unity and communion, and to do as much of God's work as you can in unanimity, and holy concord.* Blessed be the Lord that it is so well with us, in this county in this regard, as it is ! We lose our authority with the people when we divide. They will yield to us when we go together, who would resist and contemn the best of us alone. Two things, in order to this, I beseech you to observe :

1. Still maintain your Meetings for communion ; incorporate, and hold all Christian correspondence ; grow not strange to one another, do not say that you have business of your own to do, when you should be at any such Meeting or other work for God. It is not only the mutual edification that we may receive by lectures, disputations, or conferences, though that is not to be disregarded, but it is

especially for consultations for the common good, and the maintaining of our communion, that we must thus assemble. Though your own person might be without the benefit of such meetings, yet the Church and our common work require them. Do not then shew yourselves contemnners, or neglecters of such necessary work. Distance breedeth strangeness, and fomenteth dividing flames and jealousies, which communion will prevent or cure. It will be our enemies' chief plot to divide us, that they may weaken us. Conspire not, therefore, with the enemies, and take not their course. Indeed, Ministers have need of one another, and must improve the gifts of God in one another; and the self-sufficient are the most deficient, and commonly proud and empty men. Some there be that come not among their brethren to do or receive good, nor afford them any of their assistance in consultations for the common good, and their excuse is, 'We love to live privately.' To whom I say, Why do you not on the same grounds forbear going to Church, and say you love to live privately? Is not Ministerial communion a duty, as well as common Christian communion; and hath not the Church always thought so, and practised accordingly? If you mean that you love your own ease or convenience better than God's service, say so, and speak your minds. But I suppose there are few of them so silly as to think that it is any just excuse, though they will give us no better. Somewhat else lieth at the bottom. Indeed some of them are empty men, and afraid their weakness should be known, when as they cannot conceal it by their solitariness, they might do much to heal it by communion. Some of them are careless and scandalous men; and for them we have no desire of their communion, nor shall admit it, but upon public repentance and reformation. Some of them are so in love with their parties and opinions, that they will not hold communion with us, because we are not of their party and opinion; whereas by communication they might give or receive better information, or at least carry on so much of God's work in unity as we are agreed in. But the mischief of schism is to make men censorious and proud, and take others to be unmeet for their communion, and themselves to be the only Church, or pure Church of Christ.

The Papists will have no Catholic Church but the

Romish, and unchurch all besides themselves. The Separatists, and many Anabaptists, say the like of their parties. The new Prelatical party will have no Catholic Church but Prelatical, and unchurch all except their party, and so avoid communion with others ; and thus turning Separatists and Schismatics, they imitate the Papists, and make an opposition to Schism their pretence. First, All must be accounted Schismatics that be not of their opinion and party, (when yet we find not that opinion in the Creed,) and they must be avoided because they are Schismatics. But we resolve, by the grace of God, to adhere to more Catholic principles and practices, and to have communion with all godly Christians that will have communion with us, so far as they force us not to actual sin. And for the Separating brethren, as by distance, they are like to cherish misinformations of us, so if by their wilful estrangedness, and distance, any among us do entertain injurious reports of them, and think worse of them, and deal worse by some of them, than there is cause, they may partly thank themselves.

Sure I am, by such means as these, we are many of us grown so hardened in sin, that men make no great matter what they say one against another, but stand out of hearing and sight, and vent their spleen against each other behind their backs. How many jeers and scorns have they among their companions for those that are against their party ! And they easily venture, be the matter never so safe. A bad report of such is easily taken to be true ; and that which is true, is easily made worse ; when as Seneca saith, "*Multus absolvemus, si cœperimus ante judicare quam irasci : nunc autem primum impetum sequimur.*" It is passion that tells the tale, and that receiveth it.

2. The second thing therefore, that I entreat of you is, that you would be very tender of the Unity and Peace of the Catholic Church ; not only of your own party's, but of the whole. And to this end these things will prove necessary : Do not too easily introduce any novelties into the Church, either of faith or practice : I mean not, that which seems a novelty to men that look no further than yesterday ; for so the restoring of ancient things will seem novelty to those that know not what was anciently ; and the expulsion of prevailing novelties will seem a novelty to them that know not what is such indeed. So the Papists censure us as No-

velists for casting out many of their innovations; and our common people tell us, we bring up new customs if we do not kneel at the receiving of the Lord's Supper; a notorious novelty: Even in the sixth General Council at Trull. in Constantinople, this was the ninth canon: '*Ne Dominicis diebus genua flectamus, à divinis Patribus nostris Canonicè accepimus: Quare post vespertinum ingressum Sacerdotum in Sabbato ad altare, ut more observatum est, nemo genua flectit usque ad sequentem vesperem post dominicam.*' It is that which is indeed novelty that I dissuade you from; and not the demolishing of novelties. Some have already introduced such new phrases, at least, even about the great points of faith, justification, and the like, that there may be reason to reduce them to the Primitive patterns.

A great stir is made in the world about the Test of a Christian and true Church, with whom we may have communion, and about that true centre and cement of the Unity of the Church, in and by which our common calamitous breaches must be healed. And indeed the true cause of our continued divisions and misery is for want of discerning the centre of our unity, and the terms on which it must be done; which is a great pity, when it was once so easy a matter, till the ancient test was thought insufficient! If any of the ancient Creeds might serve, we might be soon agreed. If Vincentius Lirineus' Test might serve, we might yet make some good shift, viz. To believe explicitly all that '*quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est.*' For as he addeth, '*hoc est etenim verè proprièque Catholicum.*' But then we must see, that the first age may not be excluded which gave the rule to the rest; and that this extend not to every ceremony which never was taken for unalterable, but to matters of faith; and that the acts and canons of Councils which were not about such matters of faith, but mere variable order, and which newly constituted those things, which the Apostolic age knew not, and therefore were not properly '*credita,*' much less '*semper, et ab omnibus,*' may have no hand in this work. I say, if either the ancient Western or Eastern Creed, or this Catholic faith of Vincentius might be taken as the test for explicit faith, or else rather all those Scripture texts, that express the '*Credenda*' with a note of necessity, and the whole Scripture, moreover, be confessed to be God's Word, and so believed in other points at least implicitly;

this course might produce a more general communion and agreement : and more lines would meet in this centre, than otherwise are likely to meet. And indeed, till men can be again content to make the Scripture the sufficient rule, in necessities to be explicitly believed, and in all the rest implicitly, we are never likely to see a Catholic, Christian, durable peace. If we must needs make the Council of Trent, or the Papal judgment our Test ; or if we must make a blind bargain with the Papists, to come as near them as ever we dare, and so to compose another Interim, and make that a Test (when God never made it so, and all Christians will never be of a mind in it, but some dare go nearer Rome than others dare, and that in several degrees), or if we must thrust in all the canons of the former Councils about matters of order, discipline, and ceremonies into our Test, or gather up all the opinions of the Fathers for the three or four first ages, and make them our Test ; none of all these will ever serve to do the business, and a Catholic union will never be founded in them. It is an easy matter infallibly to foretel this. Much less can the writings of any single man, as Austin, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Beza, &c. ; or the late Confessions of any Churches that add to the ancient Test, be ever capable of this use and honour.

I know it is said, that a man may subscribe the Scripture, and the ancient Creeds, and yet maintain Socinianism, or other heresies. To which I answer, so he may another Test which your own brains shall contrive ; and while you make a snare to catch heretics, instead of a Test for the church's communion, you will miss your end, and the heretic by the slipperiness of his conscience will break through, and the tender Christian may possibly be ensnared. And by your new creed the Church is likely to have new divisions, if you keep not close to the words of Scripture. In such cases, when heretics contradict the Scripture which they have subscribed, this calls not for a new or more sufficient Test, but the Church must take notice of it, and call him to account, and if he be impenitent, exclude him their communion. What ! must we have new laws made every time the old ones are broken ; as if the law were not sufficient because men break it ! Or rather, must not the penalty of the violated law be executed ? It is a most sad case that such reasons as these should prevail with so many learned men

to deny the sufficiency of Scripture as a Test for Church-communion, and to be still framing new ones that depart at least from Scripture-phrases, as if this were necessary to obviate heresies! Two things are necessary to obviate heresies, the law, and good execution; God hath made the former, and his rule and law are both for sense and phrase translated sufficient; and all their additional inventions, as to the aforesaid use, are as spiders' webs. Let us but do our part in the due execution of the laws of Christ, by questioning offenders in orderly Synods, for the breaking of these laws, and let us avoid communion with the impenitent; and what can the Church do more? The rest belongs to the Magistrate to restrain him from seducing his subjects, and not to us.

Well! this is the thing that I would recommend therefore to all my brethren, as the most necessary thing to the Church's peace, that you *unite in necessary truths, and tolerate tolerable failings; and bear with one another in things that may be borne with; and do not make a larger creed, and more necessities than God hath done.* And to that end, let no man's writings, nor the judgment of any party, though right, be taken as a Test, or made that rule. And (1.) Lay not too great a stress upon controverted opinions, which have godly men, and especially whole churches on both sides. (2.) Lay not too great a stress on those controversies that are ultimately resolved into philosophical uncertainties (as some unprofitable controversies are about freewill, and the manner of the Spirit's operation of grace, and the Divine decrees, and pre-determination). (3.) Lay not too great a stress on those controversies that are merely verbal, and if they were anatomized, would appear to be no more. Of which sort are far more, I speak it confidently upon certain knowledge, that now make a great noise in the world, and tear the church, than almost any of the eager contenders that ever I spoke with seem to discern, or are likely to believe. (4.) Lay not too much stress on any point of faith which was disowned of, or unknown to the whole Church of Christ in any age since the Scriptures were delivered us. (5.) Much less should you lay too much on those which any of the more pure or judicious ages were wholly ignorant of. (6.) And least of all should you lay too much on any point which no one age since the Apostles did ever receive, but all commonly

hold the contrary. For to make such an error which all the Church held, to be such as is damning, were to unchurch all the Church of Christ ; and to make it such, as must exclude them from our communion, doth make the whole Church excommunicable, which is absurd : and doth shew that if we had lived in that age, you would it seems have separated from the whole Church. To give an instance of the differences among errors : That any elect person shall fall away totally and finally, is a palpable, condemned error, of dangerous consequence. But that there are some justified ones not elect, that shall fall away and perish, is an error of a lower nature ; which may not break the communion of Christians : for otherwise we must renounce communion with the Catholic Church in Augustine's days, and much more before, as is said before. What then ? Shall I take this therefore for a truth which the Church then held ? Some will think me immodest to say no ; as if I were wiser than all the Church, and that in so learned an age, if not for so many : but yet I must be so immodest, as long as Scripture seemeth to me to warrant it. Why might not Augustine, Prosper, and all the rest, mistake in such a thing as that ? but then I am not so immodest, nor unchristian, as to unchurch all the Church on that account : nor would I have separated from Austin, and all the Church, if I had then lived : nor will do now from any man on that account. Both sides will be displeased with this resolution ; one, that I suppose all the Church to err, and ourselves to be in the right ; and the other, that I take it for no greater an error. But what remedy ? It will and must be so : read Prosper's *Resp. ad Capit. Gall.* and you may quickly know both Austin's mind and his.

He that shall live to that happy time, when God will heal his broken Churches, shall see all this that I am now pleading for, reduced to practice, and this moderation take place of the new dividing zeal, and Scripture-sufficiency take place, and all men's confessions and comments to be valued only as subservient helps, and not to be the Test of Church-communion, any further than they are exactly the same with Scripture. And till the healing age come, we cannot expect that healing truths be entertained, because there are not healing spirits in the leaders of the Church. But when

the work is to be done, the workmen will be fitted for it ; and blessed will be the agents of so glorious a work !

But because the love of unity and verity, peace and purity must be conjunctly manifested, we must avoid the extremes both in doctrine and communion. The extremes in Doctrine are on one side by innovating additions ; on the other side, by envying or hindering the progress of the light. The former is the most dangerous ; of which men are guilty these ways. (1.) By making new points of faith or duty. (2.) By making those points to be fundamental, or necessary to salvation, that are not so. (3.) By pretending of Prophetical and other obscurer passages of the Scriptures, that they have a greater objective evidence, and we a greater certainty of their meaning, than indeed is so.

As I have met with some so confident of their right understanding of the Revelation (which Calvin durst not expound, and profess he understood it not,) that they have framed part of their Confessions or Articles of Faith out of it ; and grounded the weightiest actions of their lives upon their Exposition ; and could confidently tell in our late changes and differences, which side was in the right, and which in the wrong, and all from the Revelation ; and thence would fetch such arguments as would carry all, if you would but grant the soundness of their Expositions ; but if you put them to prove that, you marred all.

And these corruptions of Sacred Doctrine by their additions are of two sorts. Some that are the first inventors ; and others that are the propagators and maintainers : and these when additions grow old, do commonly maintain them under the notion of ancient verities, and oppose the ancient verities under the notion of novelty, as is before said.

The other extreme about Doctrine is by hindering the progress of knowledge : and this is commonly on pretence of avoiding the innovating extreme. It must be considered therefore, how far we may go, and not be culpable innovators. (1.) Our knowledge must increase extensively ‘ ad plura ;’ we must know more verities, than we knew before, though we may not feign more. There is much of Scripture that will remain unknown to us when we have done our best. Though we shall find out no more Articles of Faith which must be explicitly believed by all that will be saved, yet we may find out the sense of more particular texts, and

several doctrinal truths, not contrary to the former, but such as befriend them, and are connected with them. And we may find out more the order of truths, and how they are placed in respect to one another, and so see more of the true method of Theology than we did, which will give us a very great light into the matter itself, and its consecutaries. (2.) Our knowledge also must grow subjectively, intensely, and in the manner, as well as in the matter of it. And this is our principal growth to be sought after. To know the same great and necessary truths with a sounder and clearer knowledge than we did: which is done. (1.) By getting strong evidence and reasons instead of the weak ones which we trusted to before, (for many young ones receive truths on some unsound grounds). (2.) By multiplying our evidence and reasons for the same truth. (3.) By a clear and deeper apprehension of the same evidence, and reasons which before, we had but superficially received: for one that is strong in knowledge seeth the same truth, as in the clear light which the weak do see, but as in the twilight. To all this must be added also, the fuller improvement of the Truth received to its ends.

I shall give you the sum of my meaning in the words of that great enemy of innovation, Vincent. Lirinens. c. 28. "*Sed forsitan dicit aliquis: Nullusne ergo in Ecclesia Christi profectus habebitur? Religionis Habeatur plane, et maximus: Nam quis ille est tam invidus hominibus, tam exosus Deo, qui istud prohibere conetur? Sed ita tamen ut vere profectus sit ille fidei; non permutatio. Siquidem ad perfectum pertinet, ut in semet ipsa unaquæque res amplificetur: ad permutationem vero ut aliquid ex alio in aliud transvertatur. Crescat igitur oportet et multum, vehementerque proficiat, tam singulorum quam omnium; tam unius hominis quam totius Ecclesiæ ætatum ac seculorum gradibus intelligentia, scientia, sapientia; sed in quo duntaxat genere, in eodem scilicet dogmate, eodem sensu, eademque sententia.*"

And more plainly, and yet more briefly, cap. 30. "*Jus est etenim, ut prisca illa cœlestis Philosophiæ dogmata recessu temporis excurentur, limentur, poliantur; sed nefas est, ut commutentur. Accipiant licet Evidentiam, Lucem, Distinctionem; sed retineant necesse est plenitudinem, in-*

tegritatem, proprietatem." Let this mean then be observed if we would perform both truth and peace.

About Church-communion the common extremes are : on one side, the neglect or relaxation of Discipline to the corrupting of the Church, the encouragement of wickedness, and confounding the kingdom of Christ and Satan : and on the other side, the unnecessary separation of proud men, either because the Churches own not their own opinions, or because they are not so reformed and strict in Discipline as they would have them, or as they should be. I have ever observed the humblest men very tender of making separations ; and the proudest most prone to it. Many corruptions may be in a Church, and yet it may be a great sin to separate from it, so that we be not put upon an owning of their corruptions, nor upon any actual sin. There is a strange inclination in proud men to make the Church of Christ much narrower than it is, and to reduce it to almost nothing, and to be themselves the members of some singular society, as if they were loath to have too much company in heaven. And by a strange delusion, through the workings of a proud fancy, they are more full of joy in their separated societies, than they were while they kept in the union of the Church. At least such powers of ordinances, and presence of the Spirit, purity and peace, is promised to the weak by the leaders that would seduce them, as if the Holy Ghost were more eminently among them than any where else in the world. This hath ever been the boasting of heretics. As the aforesaid Vincentius saith, cap. 37. "*Jam vero illis quæ sequuntur promissionibus miro modo incautos homines hæretici decipere consueverunt. Audent et enim polliceri et docere, quod in Ecclesia sua, id est, in Communionis suæ Conventiculo, magna et specialis ac plane personalis quædam sit Dei gratia, adeo ut sine ullo labore, sine ullo studio, sine ulla industria, etiamsi nec quærunt, nec petant, nec pulsant, quicunque illi ad numerum suum pertinent, tamen ita divinitus dispensentur,*" &c. But their consolations and high enjoyments being the effect of self-conceitedness and fancies, are usually so mutable and of short continuance, that either the heat of oppositions, or mutation to other sects must maintain their life, or else they will grow stale and soon decay.

Having said thus much of the means, I return to the ends of this Exhortation, beseeching all the Ministers of Christ to compassionate the poor, divided Church, and to entertain such Catholic principles and charitable dispositions, as tend to their own, and the common peace. Hath any thing in the world done more to lose our authority, and disable us for God's service, than our differences and divisions? If Ministers could but be all of a mind, or, at least concur in the substance of the work, so that the people that hear one, might as it were hear all, and not have any of us to head a party for the discontented to fall into, or to object against the rest, we might then do wonders for the Church of Christ. But if our tongues and hearts be divided, what wonder if our work be spoiled, and prove more like a Babel than a temple of God! Get together then speedily, and consult for peace, and cherish not heart-burnings, and continue not uncharitable distances and strangeness. If dividing hath weakened you, closing must recover your authority and strength. If you have any dislike of your brethren, or their ways, manifest it by a free debate to their faces, but do not unnecessarily withdraw from them. If you will but keep together, you may come to a better understanding of each other, or at least may chide yourselves. Friends, especially quarrel not upon points of precedency, or reputation, or any interest of your own. No man will have settled peace in his mind, nor be peaceable in his place, that proudly envieth the precedency of others, and secretly grudgeth at them that seem to cloud his parts and name. One or other will ever be an eyesore to such men. There is too much of the devil's image on this sin for an humble servant of Christ to entertain. Moreover, be not too sensible of injuries; and make not a great matter of every offensive word or deed. At least do not let it interrupt your communion and concord in God's work: for that were to wrong Christ and his Church because another hath wronged you. And if you be of this impatient humour, you will never be quiet; for we are all faulty, and cannot live together without wronging one another. 'Ubique causæ supersunt nisi deprecator animus accessit,' saith Seneca. And these proud, over-tender men are often hurt by their own conceits: Like a man that hath a sore that he thinks doth smart more when he conceits that some one hits it. They will think a man jeereth them, or contemneth

them, or meaneth them ill, when it never came into his thought! Till this *self* be taken down, we shall every man have a private interest, and of his own, which will lead us all into several ways, and spoil the peace and welfare of the church. While every man is for himself and his own reputation, and âll mind their own things, no wonder if they mind not the things of Christ.

And as for those opinions which hinder our Union, (alas, the great dividers of this age!) methinks, if I cannot change their minds, I might yet rationally expect of every party among us that profess themselves Christians, that they should value the whole before a part; and therefore not so perversely seek to promote their party as may hinder the common good of the Church, or so to propagate their supposed truths as to hinder the work of the main body of Divine truths. And methinks, a little humility should make men ashamed of that common conceit of unquiet spirits; *viz.* that the welfare of the Church doth so lie upon their opinions, that they must needs vent and propagate them whatever comes of it. If they are indeed a living part of the body, the hurt of the whole will be so much their own, that they cannot desire it for the sake of any party or opinion. Were men but impartially to consider in every such case of difference, how far their promoting their own judgment may help or hurt the whole, they might escape many dangerous ways that are now trod. If you can see no where else, look in the face of the Church's enemies, how they rejoice and deride us. And as Seneca saith to demulce the angry, '*Vide ne inimicis iracundia tua voluptati sit.*' When we have all done, I know not which party of us will prove a gainer: So true are the old proverbs, '*Dissensio ducum hostium succum,*' and '*Gaudent prædones, dum discordant regiones.*' And is it not a wonder, that godly Ministers, that know all this, how the common adversary derideth us all, and what a scandal our divisions are throughout the world, and how much the Church doth lose by it, should yet go on, and after all the loudest calls and invitations to peace, go on still, and few, if any, sound a retreat; and seriously call to their brethren for a retreat? Can an honest heart be insensible of the sad distractions and sadder apostacies that our divisions have occasioned? '*Sæpe*

rixam conclamatum, in vicino incendium solvit,' saith Seneca. What scolds so furious that will not give over, when the house is on fire over their heads? Well! if the Lord hath given that evil spirit, whose name is Legion, such power over the hearts of any, that yet they will sit still, yea and quarrel at the pacificatory endeavours of others who hunger after the healing of the Church, and rather carp, and reproach, and hinder such works than to help them on, I shall say but this to them: How diligently soever such men may preach, and how pious soever they may seem to be, if this way tend to their everlasting peace, and if they be not preparing sorrow for themselves, then I am a stranger to the way of peace.

VII. The next branch of my Exhortation is, that *You would no longer neglect the execution of so much Discipline in your congregations, as is of Confessed necessity and right.* I desire not to spur on any one to an unseasonable performance of the greatest duty. But will it never be a fit season? Would you forbear Sermons and Sacraments so many years on pretence of unseasonableness? Will you have a better season for it, when you are dead? How many are dead already before they ever did any thing in this work, that were long preparing for it! It is now near three years, since many of us now present did engage ourselves to this duty: and have we been faithful in the performance of that engagement? I know some have more discouragements and hindrances than others; but what discouragements can excuse us from such a duty? Besides the reasons that we then considered, let these few be further laid to heart.

1. How sad a sign do we make it to be in our Preaching to our people, to live in the wilful, continued omission of any known duty! And shall we do so year after year, and all our days? If excuses will take off the danger of this sign, what man will not find them as well as you? Read Amesius Medul. cap. 37. de Disciplin. Eccles. et Gelespi's Aaron's Rod, with Rutherford, and many more that are written to prove the need and dueness of discipline, saith Ames. ib. sec. 5. "Immo peccat in Christum Authorem ac institutorem quisquis non facit quod in se est, ad hanc disciplinam, in Ecclesiis Dei constituendam et promovendam." And do you think it safe to live and die in such a known sin?

2. You gratify the present designs of dividers, whose business is to unchurch us and unchristian us: to prove our parishes no true Churches, and ourselves no baptized Christians. For if you take them for people incapable of discipline, they must be incapable of the sacrament of the Lord's-supper, and other church-communion: and then they are no church. And so you will plainly seem to preach merely as they do, to gather churches where there were none before. And indeed, if that be your case, that your people are not Christians, and you have no particular churches, and so are no pastors, tell us so, and manifest it, and we shall not blame you.

3. We manifest plain laziness and sloth, if not unfaithfulness in the work of Christ. I speak from experience; it was laziness that kept me off so long, and pleaded hard against this duty. It is indeed a troublesome and painful work, and such as calls for some self-denial, because it will cast us upon the displeasure of the wicked. But dare we prefer our carnal ease, and quietness, and the love or peace of wicked men, before our service to Christ our Master? Can slothful servants look for a good reward? Remember, brethren, that we of this county have thus promised before God in the second article of our Agreement, "We agree and resolve by God's help, that so far as God doth make known our duty to us, we will faithfully endeavour to discharge it, and will not desist through any fears or losses in our estates, or the frowns and displeasure of men, or any the like carnal inducements whatsoever." I pray you study this promise, and compare your performance with it. And do not think that you are ensnared by thus engaging; for God's law hath laid an obligation on you to all the same duty, before your engagement did it. Here is nothing but what others are bound to, as well as you.

4. The Ministry that are for the Presbyterian Government, have already by their common neglect of the execution, made those of the separating way believe, that they do it in a mere carnal compliance with the unruly part of the people, that while we exasperate them not with our discipline, we might have them on our side. And we should do nothing needless, that hath so great an appearance of evil, and is so scandalous to others. It was the sin and ruin of many of the Clergy of the last times, to please and comply

with them that they should have reprov'd and corrected ; by unfaithfulness in preaching, and neglect of discipline.

5. The neglect of Discipline hath a strong tendency to the deluding of souls ; by making them think they are Christians that are not : while they are permitted to live in the reputation of such ; and be not separated from the rest by God's ordinance. And it may make the scandalous think their sin a tolerable thing, which is so tolerated by the Pastors of the Church.

6. We corrupt Christianity itself in the eyes of the world ; and do our part to make them believe, that to be a Christian is but to be of such an opinion, and to have that faith which James saith the devils had, and to be *solifidians*, and that Christ is no more for holiness than Satan, or that the Christian religion exacteth holiness no more than the false religions of the world : for if the holy and unholy are all permitted to be the sheep of the same fold, without the use of Christ's means to difference them, we do our part to defame Christ by it, as if he were guilty of it, and as if this were the strain of his prescripts.

7. We keep up separation by permitting the worst to be uncensured in our churches, so that many honest Christians think they are necessitated to withdraw. I must profess that I have spoke with some members of the separated (or gathered) churches, that were moderate men, and have argued with them against their way ; and they have assured me, ' That they were of the Presbyterian judgment, or had nothing to say against it, but they joined themselves with other churches upon mere necessity, thinking that discipline, being an ordinance of Christ, must be used by all that can, and therefore they durst no longer live without it when they may have it, and they could find no Presbyterian Churches that executed discipline, as they wrote for it ; and they told me, that they did thus separate only ' *pro tempore*, ' till the Presbyterians will use discipline, and then they would willingly return to them again.' I confess I was sorry that such persons had any such occasion to withdraw, and the least ground for such a reason of their doings. It is not keeping them from the Sacrament that will excuse us from the further exercise of discipline, while they are members of our Churches.

8. We do too much to bring the wrath of God upon our-

selves and our congregations, and so to blast the fruit of our labours. If the angel of the Church of Thyatira was reprov'd for suffering the seducers in the Church, we may be reprov'd on the same ground for suffering open, scandalous, impenitent ones. (Rev. ii. 20.)

9. We seem to justify the Prelates, who took the same course in neglecting Discipline, though in other things we differ.

10. We have abundance of aggravations and witnesses to rise up against us, which though I will purposely now pass over, lest I seem to press too hard in this point, I shall desire you to apply them hither, when you meet with them anon under the next branch of the Exhortation.

I know that Discipline is not essential to a Church; but what of that? Is it not therefore a duty; and necessary to its wellbeing; yea, more. The power of Discipline is essential to a particular political Church, and what is the power for, but for the work and use? As there is no commonwealth that hath not 'partem imperantem,' as well as 'partem subditam,' so no such church that hath not 'partem regentem,' in one pastor or more.

VIII. The last particular branch of my Exhortation is, that *You will now faithfully discharge the great duty which you have undertaken, and which is the occasion of our meeting here to-day, in personal Catechising and Instructing every one in your parishes that will submit thereto.* What our undertaking is you know, you have considered it, and it is now published to the world. But what the performance will be I know not: but I have many reasons to hope well of the most, though some will always be readier to say, than to do. And because this is the chief business of the day, I must take leave to insist somewhat the longer on it. And (1.) I shall give you some further motives to persuade you to faithfulness in the undertaken work; presupposing the former general motives which should move us to this as well as to any other part of our duty. (2.) I shall give to the younger of my brethren a few words of advice for the manner of performance.

CHAPTER VI.

THE *first* reasons by which I shall persuade you to this duty are taken from the benefits of it. The *second* from the difficulty. And the *third* from the necessity, and the many obligations that are upon us for the performance of it. And to these three heads I shall reduce them all.

I. And for the first of these ; when I look before me, and consider what, through the blessing of God, this work well managed is likely to produce, it makes my heart to leap for joy. Truly, brethren, you have begun a most blessed work ; such as your own consciences may rejoice in, your parishes rejoice in, the nation rejoice in, and children yet unborn ; yea, thousands and millions for ought we know, may have cause to bless God for it, when we have finished our course. And though it be our business here to humble ourselves for the neglect of it so long, as we have very great cause to do ; yet the hopes of a blessed success are so great in me, that they are ready to turn it into a day of rejoicing. I bless the Lord that I have lived to see such a day as this, and to be present at so solemn an engagement of so many servants of Christ to such a work. I bless the Lord that hath honoured you of this county to be the beginners and awakeners of the nation hereunto. It is not a controverted business, where the exasperated minds of divided men might pick quarrels with us, or malice itself be able to invent a rational reproach ; nor is it a new invention, where envy might charge you as innovators, or proud boasters of any new discoveries of your own ; or scorn to follow in it because you have led the way. No ; it is a well-known duty. It is but the more diligent and effectual management of the Ministerial work, and the teaching of our principles, and the feeding of babes with milk. You lead indeed, but not in invention of novelty, but the restoration of the ancient Ministerial work, and the self-denying attempt of a duty that few or none can contradict. Unless men do envy you your labours and sufferings, or unless they envy the saving of men's souls, I know not what they can envy you for in this. The age is so quarrelsome, that where there is any matter to fasten on, we can scarcely explain a truth, or perform a duty,

but one or other, if not many, will have a stone to cast at us, and will speak evil of the things which they do not understand, or which their hearts and interests are against. But here I think we have silenced malice itself, and I hope we may do this part of God's work quietly. If they cannot endure to be told what they know not, or contradicted in what they think, or confounded by discoveries of what they have said amiss, I hope they will give us leave to do that which no man can contradict, and to practise that which all are agreed in. I hope we may have their good leave, or silent patience at least, to deny the ease and pleasure of our flesh, and to set ourselves in good earnest to help men to heaven, and to propagate the knowledge of Christ with our people. I take it for a sign of a great and necessary work, which hath such universal approbation; the commonly acknowledged truths and duties being, for the most part, of greatest necessity and moment. A more noble work it is to practise faithfully the truths and duties that all men will confess, than to make new ones, or discover somewhat more than others have discovered. I know not why we should be ambitious of finding out new ways to heaven: to make plain, and to walk in the old way, is our work and our greatest honour.

And because the work in hand is so pregnant of great advantages to the Church, I will come down to the particular benefits which we may hope for, that when you see the excellency of it, you may be the more set upon it, and the more loath by any negligence or failing to destroy or frustrate it. For certainly he that hath the true intentions of a Minister, will rejoice in the appearances of any further hopes of attaining his ends, and nothing can be more welcome to him than that which will further the very business of his life; and that our present work is such, I shall shew you more particularly.

1. It will be the most hopeful advantage for the conversion of many souls that we can expect; for it hath a concurrence of those great things which must further such a work. (1.) For the matter of it, it is about most needful things; the principles or essentials of the Christian faith.—(2.) For the manner of exercise; it will be by private conference, where we may have opportunity to set all home to the heart.—(3.)

The common concord of Ministers will do much to bow their hearts to consent. Were it but a meeting to resolve some controverted questions, it would not have so direct a tendency to conversion. Were it but occasional, we could not handsomely fall on them so closely; but when we make it the appointed business, it will be expected, and not so strangely taken. And if most Ministers had singly set upon this work, perhaps but few of the people would have submitted; and then you might have lost your chief opportunities, and those that had most needed our help, would have had least of it. Whereas now we may hope that when it is a general thing, few will refuse it; and when they see that other neighbours do it, they will be ashamed to be so singular or openly ungodly as to deny.

The work of Conversion consisteth of two parts.—(1.) The well informing of the judgment of the necessary points.—(2.) The change of the will, by the efficacy of this truth. Now in this work we have the most excellent advantage for both. For the informing of their understandings, it must needs be an excellent help to have the sum of all Christianity still in memory; and though bare words, not understood, will make no change, yet when the words are plain, he that hath the words is far more likely to know the meaning and matter, than another; for what have we to make things known by, that are themselves invisible, but words and other subservient signs? Those, therefore, that will deride all catechisms and professions, as unprofitable forms, had better deride themselves for talking and using the form of their own words to make known their minds to others; and they may deride all God's word on the same account, which is a standing form for the guiding of Preachers, and teaching all others the doctrine of eternal life. Why may not written words that are still before their eyes, and in their memories, instruct them, as well as the transient words of a Preacher? These forms, therefore, of wholesome words are so far from being unprofitable, as some fantastic persons imagine, that they are of admirable use to all.

We shall have the opportunity by personal conference to try them how far they understand it, and how far not; and also to explain it to them as we go; and to choose out and insist on those particulars which the persons that we

speak to have most need to hear. So that these two conjunct, a form of words, with a plain explication, may do more than either of them could do alone.

Moreover, we have the best opportunity to imprint the same truths upon their hearts, when we can speak to each one's particular necessity, and say to the sinner, "Thou art the man;" plainly mention his particular case, and set home the Truth with familiar importunity. If any thing in the world is likely to do them good, it is this. They will understand a familiar speech, who hear a sermon, as if it were nonsense, and they have far greater help for the application of it to themselves. And withal you will hear their objections, and know where it is that Satan hath most advantage over them, and what it is that stands up against the Truth; and so may be able to shew them their errors, confute their objections, and more effectually convince them. We can better drive them to a stand, and urge them to discover their resolutions for the future, and to promise the use of means and reformation, than otherwise we could do. What need we more for this than our experience? I seldom deal with men purposely on this great business, in private, serious conference, but they go away with some seeming convictions, and promises of new obedience, if not some deeper remorse, and sense of their condition. And I hope your own experiences are the same.

O, brethren, what a blow may we give the kingdom of darkness by the faithful and skilful managing of this work! If then the saving of souls, of your neighbours' souls, of many souls from everlasting misery, be worth your labour, up and be doing! If the increase of the true Church of Christ be desirable, this work is excellent, which is so likely to promote it. If you would be the fathers of many that shall be new-born to God, and would see the travail of your souls with comfort, and would be able to say at last, "Here am I, and the children that thou hast given me;" up then and ply this blessed work. If it will do you good, to see your holy converts among the saints in glory, praising the Lamb before his throne; if you will be glad to present them blameless and spotless to Christ; be glad then of this singular opportunity that is offered you. If you be Ministers of Christ indeed, you will long for the perfecting of his Body, and the gathering in of his Elect; and your hearts

will be set upon it, and you will travail as in birth of them till Christ be formed in them. Then you will take such opportunities as your harvest-time, and as the sunshine days in a rainy harvest, in which it is unreasonable and inexcusable to be idle. If you have any spark of Christian compassion in you, it will surely seem worth your utmost labour to save so many souls from death, and to cover so great a multitude of sins. If you are indeed co-workers with Christ, set then to this work, and neglect not the souls, for whom he died. O remember when you are talking with the unconverted, that now there is an opportunity in your hands to save a soul, and to rejoice the angels of heaven, and to rejoice Christ himself, and that your work is to cast Satan out of a sinner, and to increase the family of God. What is your own hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not your saved people in the presence of Christ Jesus at his coming? Yea, doubtless, they are your glory and your joy. (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.)

2. The second happy benefit of our work, if well managed, will be the most orderly building up those that are converted, and the establishing them in the Faith. It hazardeth the whole work, or at least much hindereth it, when we do it not in the order that it must be done. How can you build if you first lay not a good foundation; or how can you set on the top-stone while the middle parts are neglected? '*Gratia non facit saltum*,' any more than nature. The second order of Christian truths have such dependance upon the first, that they can never be well learned till the first are learned. This makes so many deluded novices, that are puffed up with the vain conceits of knowledge while they are grossly ignorant, and itch to be preaching before they well know what it is to be Christians; because they took not the work before them, but learned some lesser matters they heard most talked of, before they learned the vital principles. This makes many labour so much in vain, and are still learning, but never come to the knowledge of the Truth, because they would learn to read before they learn to spell, or to know their letters; and this makes so many fall away, and shaken with every wind of temptation, because they were not well settled in the fundamentals. It is these fundamentals that must lead men to further truths; it is these they must bottom and build upon.

It is these that they must live upon, and that must actuate all their graces, and animate all their duties; it is these that must fortify them against particular temptations; and he that knows these well, doth know so much as will make him happy; and he that knows not these, knows nothing; and he that knows these best, is the best and most understanding Christian. The most godly people, therefore, in your congregations will find it worth their labour to learn the very words of a Catechism: and if you would safely edify them, and firmly establish them, be diligent in this work.

3. A third benefit that may be expected by the well-managing of this work, is this, It will make our public preaching to be better understood and regarded. When you have acquainted them with the principles, they will the better understand all you say. They will perceive what you drive at, when they are once acquainted with the main parts. This prepareth their minds, and openeth you a way to their hearts; when without this you may lose the most of your labour; and the more pains you take in accurate preparations, the less good you do. As you would not therefore lose your public labour, see that you be faithful in this private work.

4. And this is not a contemptible benefit, that by this course you will come to be familiar with your people, when you have had the opportunity of familiar conference; and the want of this with us, that have very numerous parishes, is a great impediment to the success of our labours. By distance and our being unacquainted, slanderers and deceivers have opportunity to possess them with false conceits of you, which prejudice their minds against your doctrine; and by this distance and strangeness abundance of mistakes between Ministers and people are fomented. Besides that, familiarity itself doth tend to beget those affections, which may open their ears to further teaching. And when we are familiar with them, they will be more encouraged to open their doubts, seek resolution, and deal freely with us. But when a Minister knoweth not his people, or is as strange to them as if he did not know them, it must be a great hindrance to his doing them any good.

5. Besides, by the means of these private instructions, we shall come to be the better acquainted with each person's spiritual state, and so the better know how to watch

over them, and carry ourselves towards them, ever after. We may know the better how to preach to them, when we know their temper, and their chief objections, and so what they have most need to hear. We shall the better know wherein to be jealous of them with a pious jealousy, and what temptations to help them most against. We shall the better know how to lament for them, and to rejoice with them, and to pray for them to God. For as he that will pray rightly for himself, will know his own sores and wants, and the diseases of his own heart; so he that will pray rightly for others, should know theirs as far as he may, and as is meet. If a man have the charge but of sheep or cattle, he cannot so well discharge his trust, if he know them not, and their state and qualities. So it is with the Master that will well teach his scholars, and Parents that will rightly educate their children: and so with Ministers who properly feed the Church of God.

6. And then this trial of, and acquaintance with our people's state, will better satisfy us in the administration of the Sacraments. We may the better understand how far they are fit or unfit. Though this give them not the state or relation of a member of that Church whereof we are overseers, yet because the members of the Church Universal, though they are of no particular church, may in some cases have a right to the ordinances of Christ in those particular churches where they come, and in some cases they have no right, we shall by this means be the better informed how to deal with them, though they be no members of that particular church. And whereas many will question a Minister that examineth his people in order to the Lord's-supper, by what authority he doth it, the same work will be done this way, in a manner beyond exception. Though I doubt not but a Minister may require his flock to come to him at any convenient season, to receive instruction, and therefore he may do it in preparation to the Sacrament; yet because Ministers have laid the stress of that examination upon the mere necessity of fitness for that ordinance, and not upon their common duty to see the estate and proficiency of each member of their flock at all fit seasons, and upon the people's duty to submit to the guidance and instruction of the pastors at all times, they have therefore occasioned people ignorantly to quarrel against their examinations, and cal

for the proof. Whereas it is an easy thing to prove that any scholar in Christ's school is bound at any time to be accountable to his teachers, and to obey them in all lawful things in order to their own edification and salvation; though it may be more difficult to prove a necessity that a Minister must so examine them in order to the Lord's-supper, any more than in order to a day of Thanksgiving, or a Lord's-day, or the Baptizing of their children. Now by this course we shall discern their fitness in an unquestionable way.

7. Another benefit will be this: we shall by this means be the better enabled to help our people against their particular temptations, and we shall much better prevent their entertainment of any particular errors or heresies; or their falling into schism to the hazard of themselves and the Church. For men will more freely open their thoughts and scruples to us, and if they are infected already, or inclined to any error or schism, they will be ready to discover it, and so may receive satisfaction before they are past cure; and familiarity with their teachers, will the more encourage them to open their doubts to them at any other time. The common cause of our people's infections and heresies is the familiarity of seducers with them, and the strangeness of their own pastors. When they hear us only in public, and hear seducers frequently in private unsaying all that we say, and we never know it, or help them against it, this settlenth them in heresies before we are aware of it. Alas, our people are most of them so weak, that whoever hath most interest in their estimations and affections; and most opportunity in frequent private conferences to instil his opinions into them, of that man's religion will they ordinarily be. It is a pity then that we should let deceivers take such opportunities to undo them, and we not be as industrious, and use our advantages to their good. We have much advantage against seducers in many respects, if our negligence and their diligence did not frustrate them.

8. Another, and one of the greatest benefits of our work will be this, It will better inform men of the true nature of the Ministerial office, or awaken them to better consideration of it, than is now usual. It is now too common for men to think that the work of the Ministry is nothing but to preach well, and to baptize and administer the Lord's-supper, and visit the sick; and by this means the people will submit to

no more, and too many Ministers are negligently, or wilfully such strangers to their own calling, that they will do no more. It hath often grieved my heart to observe some eminent and able Preachers, how little they do for the saving of souls, except in the pulpit; and to how little purpose much of their labour is by this neglect. They have hundreds of people to whom they never spoke a word personally for their salvation; and if we may judge by their practice, they take it not for their duty: and the principal thing that hardeneth men in this oversight, is the common neglect of the private part of the work by others. There are so few that do much in it, and the omission is grown so common among pious and able men, that they have abated the disgrace of it by their parts; and a man may now be guilty of it, without any common observance or dishonour. Never doth sin so reign in a Church or State, as when it hath gained reputation, or at least is no disgrace to the sinner, nor a matter of any offence to beholders. But I make no doubt through the mercy of God, but the restored practice of personal oversight will convince many Ministers that this is as truly their work as that which they now do; and may awaken them to see that the Ministry is another kind of business than too many excellent preachers take it to be. Brethren, do but set yourselves closely to this work, and follow on diligently; and though you do it silently, without any words to them that are negligent, I am in hope that most of you here may live to see the day, that the neglect of private personal oversight of all the flock shall be taken for a scandalous and odious omission, and shall be as disgraceful to them that are guilty of it, as preaching but once a day was heretofore. A schoolmaster must not only read a common lecture, but take a personal account of his scholars, or else he is likely to do little good. If physicians should only read a public lecture of physic, their patients would not be much the better for them; nor would a lawyer secure your estate by reading a lecture of law. The charge of a Pastor requireth personal dealing as well as any of these. Let us shew the world this by our practice; for most men are grown regardless of bare words.

The truth is, we have been occasioned exceedingly to wrong the Church in this, by the contrary extreme of the Papists, who bring all their people to auricular Confession;

for in the overthrowing of this error of theirs, we have run into the contrary extreme, and led our people much further into it than we are gone ourselves. It troubled me to read in an orthodox Historian, that licentiousness, and a desire to be from under the strict inquiries of the Priests in Confession, did much further the entertainment of the Reformed Religion in Germany. And yet it is likely enough to be true, that they that were against Reformation in other respects, yet partly for the change, and partly on that licentious account, might join with better men in crying down the Romish clergy. But by this means, lest we should seem to favour the said auricular Confession, we have too commonly neglected all personal instruction; except when we occasionally fall into men's company, few make it a stated part of their work. I am past doubt that the Popish auricular confession is a sinful novelty, which the ancient Church was unacquainted with. But perhaps some will think it strange that I should say, that our common neglect of personal instruction is much worse, if we consider their confessions in themselves, and not as they respect their connexed doctrines of Satisfaction and Purgatory. Many of the Southern and Eastern Churches do use a Confession of sin to the Priest, and how far Mr. Thomas Hooker in his "Soul's Preparation," and other Divines, do ordinarily require it, as necessary or useful, is well known. If any among us should be guilty of this gross mistake, as to think when he hath preached, he hath done all his work, let us shew him to his face by our practice of the rest, that there is much more to be done, and that taking heed to all the flock is another business, than careless, lazy Ministers do consider. If a man have the least apprehension that duty, and the chief duty, is no duty, he is likely to neglect it, and be impenitent in the neglect.

9. Another singular benefit which we may hope for from the faithful performance of this new work, is that it will help our people better to understand the nature of their duty towards their overseers, and consequently to discharge it better. Which were no matter if it were only for our sakes; but their own salvation is very much concerned in it. I am confident by sad experience, that it is none of the least impediments to their happiness, and to a true Reformation of the Church, that the people understand not what the work and power of a Minister is, and what is their own duty

towards them. They commonly think that a Minister hath no more to do with them but to preach to them, and visit them in sickness, and administer Sacraments, and that if they hear him, and receive the Sacrament from him, they owe no further obedience, nor can he require any more at their hands. Little do they know that the Minister is in the Church as the schoolmaster is in his school, to teach and take an account of every one in particular, and that all Christians ordinarily must be disciples or scholars in some such school. They think not that a Minister is in the Church as a physician in a town, for all people to resort to, for personal advice for the curing of all those diseases that are fit to be brought to a physician: and that the priest's lips must preserve knowledge, and the people must ask the law at his mouth, because he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts. And that every soul in the congregation is bound for their own safety, to have personal recourse to him for resolving of their doubts; and for help against their sins, and for direction in duty, and for increase of knowledge and all saving grace! And that Ministers are purposely settled in congregations to this end, to be still ready to advise and help the flock. If our people did but know their duty, they would readily come to us when they are desired, to be instructed and to give an account of their knowledge, faith and lives; and they would come themselves without sending for, and knock oftener at our doors, and call for advice and help for their souls; and ask, 'What shall we do to be saved?' Whereas now the matter is come to that sad pass, that they think a Minister hath nothing to do with them, and if he admonish them, they will bid him look to himself, he shall not answer for them. If he call them to be Catechised or instructed, or to be prepared for the Lord's-supper, or other holy ordinances, or would take an account of their faith and profiting, they will ask him, by what authority he doth these things; and think that he is a busy and pragmatical fellow, that loves to be meddling where he hath nothing to do; or a proud fellow, that would bear rule over their consciences. When they may as well ask him, by what authority he preacheth, or prayeth for them, or giveth them the Sacrament; or they may as well ask a schoolmaster, by what authority he calls his scholars to learn or say their lesson; or a physician, by what authority he enjoineth them to take

his medicines. People consider not that, all our authority is but for our work ; even a power to do our duty, and our work is for them ; so it is but an authority to do them good. Hence they talk no wiser than if they were to quarrel with a man that would help to quench the fire in their thatch, and ask him by what authority he did it ; or that would give his money to relieve the poor, and they should ask him, by what authority do you require us to take this money ; or that had offered his hand to one that had fallen, to help him up ; or to one in the water to save him from drowning, and he should ask by what authority he did so. Truly, we have no wiser nor more thankful dealing from these men ; nay, it is worse, in that we are doubly obliged, both by Christian charity and the Ministerial office to do them good. I know not of any simile that doth more aptly express the Ministerial power and duty, and the people's duty, than these two conjunct : *viz.* a Physician in an hospital, that hath taken the charge of it, and a Schoolmaster in his school, especially such as the philosophers, or teachers of any science or art, whose schools have the aged and voluntary members, as well as children. Such are Ministers in the Church, and such is their work, and their authority to do it, and the duty of the people to submit thereto ; allowing such differences as the subject requireth.

And what is it that hath brought people to this ignorance of their duty, but Custom ? It is long of us, brethren, to speak truly and plainly, it is long of us, that have not used them nor ourselves to any more than common public work. We see how much custom doth with the people. Where it is the custom, they stick not among the Papists at the confessing of all their sins to the Priest ; and because it is not the custom among us, they disdain to be questioned, catechised, or instructed at all. They wonder at it as a strange thing, and say, ' Such things were never done before.' And if we can but prevail to make this duty become as usual as other duties, they will much more easily submit to it than now. What a happy thing would it be if you might live to see the day that it should be as ordinary for people of all ages to come in course to their Teachers for personal advice, and help for their salvation, as it is now usual for them to come to the Church, or as it is for them to send their

children thither to be catechised. Our diligence in this work, is the way to do this.

10. Moreover, our practice will give the Governors of the Nation some better information about the nature and burden of the Ministry, and so may procure their further assistance. It is a lamentable impediment to the Reformation of the Church and the saving of souls, that in most populous Congregations, there is but one or two men to oversee many thousand souls, and so there are not labourers in any measure answerable to the work. Hence it becomes an impossible thing to them to do any considerable measure of that personal duty which should be done by faithful Pastors to all the flock. I have often said it, and still must say it, that this is a great part of England's misery, and a great degree of spiritual famine which reigns in most cities and great towns through the land, even where they are insensible of it, and think themselves well provided. Alas, we see multitudes of carnal, ignorant, sensual sinners, round about us! Here is a family, and there a family, and there almost a whole street or village of them, and our hearts pity them; we see that their necessities cry aloud for our speedy and diligent relief, so that he that hath ears to hear must needs hear it: and if we would never so fain, we cannot help them; not only through their obstinacy, but also through our want of opportunity. We have experience, that if we could but have leisure to speak to them, and to open plainly to them their sin and danger, there were great hopes of doing good to many of those, that receive little by our Public Teaching. But we cannot come at them: more necessary work prohibits us: We cannot do both at once: and the Public must be preferred, because there we deal with many at once: and it is as much as we are able to do, to perform the Public work, or some little more. If we take the time when we should eat or sleep, besides the ruining of our weakened bodies by it, we shall not be able after all, to speak to one of very many of them. So that we must stand by and see our people perish, and can but be sorry for them, and cannot so much as speak to them to endeavour their recovery. Is not this a sad case in a Nation that glorieth of the fulness of the Gospel? An infidel will say, no; but methinks no man that believes an everlasting joy or torment, should

say so. I will instance of my own case: We are together two Ministers, and a third at a Chapel, willing to bestow every hour of our time in Christ's work. Before we undertook this work that we are now upon, our hands were full, and now we are engaged to set apart two days every week from morning to night for private Catechising and instruction; so that any man may see that we must leave undone all that other work that we were wont to do at that time: and we are necessitated to run upon the Public work of preaching with small preparation, and so must deliver the message of God in such a raw and confused manner, and unanswerably to its dignity, and the needs of men's souls, that it is a great trouble to our minds to consider it, and a greater trouble to us when we are doing it. And yet it must be so: there is no remedy. Unless we will omit this personal instruction, we must needs run thus unprepared into the pulpit; and to omit this we dare not, it is so great and necessary a work. When we have incurred all the forementioned inconveniences, and have set two whole days every week apart for the work that we have now undertaken, it will be as much as we shall be able to do, to go over the Parish but once a year, there being in it about eight hundred families; and what is worse than that, we shall be forced to cut it short, and do it less effectually than we ought, having above fifteen families to visit in a week. And alas, how small a matter is it to speak to a man once only in a year, and that so cursorily as we must be forced to do, in comparison of what their necessities require! Yet are we in hope of some fruit of this much; but how much more might it be, if we could but speak to them once a quarter, and do the work more fully and deliberately, as you that are in smaller Parishes may do. Many Ministers in England have ten times, if not more, the number of Parishioners that I have; so that if they should undertake the work that we have done, they can go over the Parish but once in ten years! Thus while we are hoping for opportunities to speak to them, we hear of one dying after another; and, to the grief of our souls, are forced to go with them to their graves, before we could ever speak a word to them personally to prepare them for their change. And what is the cause of all this misery? Why, our Rulers have not seen a necessity of any more Ministers than one or two in such Parishes; and so they have not al-

lowed any maintenance to that end. Some have alienated much from the Church (the Lord humble all them that consented to it effectually, lest it prove the consumption of the Nation at last), while they have left this famine in the chief parts of the land. It is easy to separate from the multitude ; and gather distinct Churches, and let the rest sink or swim, and if they will not be saved by Public Preaching, let them be damned ; but whether this be the most charitable and Christian course, one would think should be no hard question. What is the cause that wise and godly Rulers should be thus guilty of our misery, and that none of our cries will awaken them to compassion ? What, are they so ignorant as not to know these things ? Are they grown cruel to the souls of men ; or are they falsehearted to the interest of Christ, and have a design to undermine his kingdom ? No ; I hope it is none of these, but for ought I can find, it is even long of us, even of us the Ministers of the Gospel, whom they should thus maintain. For those Ministers that have small Parishes, and might do all this private part of the work, yet do it not, but very few of them, and will not do it : and those in great towns and cities, that might do somewhat, though they cannot do all, will do just nothing but what accidentally falls in their way, or next to nothing ; so that Magistrates are not awakened to an observance or consideration of the weight of our work. If it be not in their eyes, as well as in their ears, they will not regard it. Or if they do apprehend the usefulness of it, yet if they see that Ministers are so careless and lazy that they will not do it, they think it in vain to provide them a maintenance for it—it would be but to cherish idle drones ; and so they think that if they maintain Ministers enough to preach in the pulpit, they have done their part ; and thus are they involved in heinous sin, of which we are the occasion. Whereas if we do but heartily all set ourselves to this work, and shew the Magistrate to his face, that it is a most weighty and necessary part of our business, and that we would do it thoroughly if we could, and that if there were hands enough at it, the work would go on ; and withal, when they shall see the happy success of our labours ; then, no doubt, if the fear of God be in them, and they have any love to his Truth and men's souls, they will put to their helping hand, and not let men perish because there is no man to speak to them to

prevent it. They will one way or other raise a maintenance in such populous places for labourers proportioned to the number of souls, and greatness of the work. Let them but see us fall to the work, and see it prosper in our hands; as if it be well managed, through God's blessing, there is no doubt but it will, and then it will draw out our hearts to the promoting of it: and instead of laying Parishes together to diminish the number of Teachers, they will either divide them, or allow more Teachers to a Parish. But when they see that many carnal Ministers do make a greater stir to have more maintenance to themselves, than to have more help in the work of God, they are tempted by such worldlings to wrong the Church, that particular Ministers may have ease and fulness.

11. Another benefit that is likely to follow our work, is this; It may exceedingly facilitate the Ministerial service to the next generation that shall succeed us, and prevent the rebellion of people against their teachers. As I said, Custom is the thing that sways much with the multitude; and they that first break a destructive Custom, must bear the brunt of their indignation. Somebody must do this. If we do it not, it will lie upon our successors; and how can we look that they should be more hardy and resolute, and faithful than we? We have seen the heavy judgments of the Lord, and heard him pleading by fire and sword with the land. We have been ourselves in the furnace, and should be the most refined. We are most deeply obliged by oaths and covenants, by wonderful deliverances, experiences, and mercies of all sorts; and if we flinch and turn our back, and prove false-hearted, why should we expect better from those, that have not been driven by such scourges, nor drawn by such cords. But if they do prove better than we, and will do it, the same odium and opposition must befall them which we avoid, and that with some increase, because of our neglect; for the people will tell them that we, their predecessors did no such things. But if we would now break through, who are set in the front, and break the ice for them that follow us, their souls will bless us, our names shall be dear to them, and they will feel the happy fruits of our labours every week and day of their Ministry. When the people shall willingly submit to their private instructions and examinations, yea, and to Dis-

cipline too, because we have acquainted them with it, removed the prejudice, and broke the evil custom that our foregoers had been the cause of; and so we may do much to the saving of many thousand souls in all ages to come, as well as in the present age that we are working in.

12. Another benefit will be this: We shall keep our people's minds and time from much of that vanity that now possesseth them. When men are at work in their shops, almost all their talk is vanity; the children also learn foolish and ribbald songs and tales; and with such filth and rubbish are their memories furnished. Many an hour is lost, and many thousands of idle thoughts and words are they guilty of. Whereas when they once know the Catechisms must be learned, and that they must all give account, it will turn much of their thoughts and time that way.

13. Moreover, it will do much to the better ordering of families, and better spending of the Lord's-day. When we have once got the Master of the family to undertake it, that he will once every Lord's-day examine his family, and hear what they can say of the Catechism, it will find them the most profitable employment; whereas otherwise, many of them would be idle, or ill employed; and many Masters that know little themselves, may yet be brought to do this for others.

14. Moreover, it will do some good to many Ministers that are apt to be too idle, and mispend their time in unnecessary discourses and businesses, as journies, or recreations; and it will let them see that they have no time to spare for such things. And so when they are engaged in so much pressing employment, of so high a nature, it will be the best cure for all that idleness or loss of time; and withal, it will cut off that scandal which usually followeth thereupon; for people used to say, such a Minister can sit in an alehouse or tavern, or spend his time at bowls, or other sports, or vain discourse; and why may not we do so as well as he? Let us set close to this part of our work, and then see what time we can find to spare, and live idly, or in a way of voluptuousness or worldliness.

15. And many Personal benefits to ourselves are consequential to these. It will do much to exercise and increase our own graces, and to subdue our own corruptions. And besides our safety, it will breed much peace to our own

consciences, and comfort us when our time and actions must be reviewed. (1.) To be much in provoking others to repentance, and heavenly-mindedness, may do much to excite them in ourselves.—(2.) To cry down the sin of others, and engage them against it, and direct them to overcome it, will do much to shame us out of our own; and conscience will scarcely suffer us to live in that which we make so much ado to draw others from. And this very constant employment for God, and busying our minds and tongues against sin, and for Christ and holiness, will do much to habituate us, and to overcome our fleshly inclinations, both by direct mortification, and by diversion, leaving our fancies no room nor time for their old employment. I dare say, that all austerities of Monks and Hermits, who addict themselves to unprofitable solitude, and are the true imitators of the unprofitable servant who hid his talent because his master was an austere man, and that think to save themselves by neglecting to shew compassion to others, will not do near so much in the true work of mortification, as this fruitful diligence for Christ will do.

16. And it will be some benefit, that by this means we shall take off ourselves and our people from vain Controversies, and from employing our care and zeal in the lesser matters of Religion, which often hinder their spiritual edification: for while we are taken up in teaching, and they in learning the fundamentals, we shall divert our minds and tongues, and have less room for lower things; and thus it will cure much wrangling and contention between Ministers and People; for we do that which we need not, and should not, because we will not fall closely to do that which we need and should. If we could contrive to get some of the most understanding sort of our people to assist us in privately helping others (though prejudice of others, and their own unripeness, and unfitness much hinder), it would be the most effectual way to prevent their running into Preaching distempers, or schisms; for this employment would take them up, and content the Teaching humour that they are inclined to; and it might make their parts more useful in a safe and lawful way.

17. Moreover, the very diligent practice of this work that we are upon, would do much to set men right about

many Controversies that now trouble the Church, and so put an end to our differences. Especially, most of those about the Ministry, Churches, and Discipline, would receive more convincing light by practice, than all our idle talking, or writing will afford us. We have fallen of late into parties, and troubled the Church about many Controversies concerning Excommunication, in such and such cases, which perhaps never will fall out; or if they do, they cannot be so well decided by any man that is not engaged in the practice. It is like the profession of a physician, a soldier, or a pilot, who can never be worth a straw at their work, by all the precepts in the world, without practice and experience. This will be the only course to make—(1.) Sound Divines in the main, which bare studying will not do.—(2.) Recover us again to the Primitive simplicity, to live upon the substantial necessary things.—(3.) To direct and resolve us in many of our quarrels which can no other way be well resolved. For example: If this work had been set on foot, and it had been but visible, what it is to have the oversight of souls, durst any Prelates have contended for the sole oversight of two hundred, four hundred, or a thousand Churches; and that the Presbyters might be but their Curates and Informers? Durst they have striven with might and main, to have drawn upon themselves such impossibilities, and have carried such mountains on their backs, and to answer to God as Overseers, and Pastors of so many thousand People, whose faces they were never likely to see, much less were they ever likely to speak one word to them for their everlasting life? Would they not have said, ‘If I must be a Bishop, let me be a Parochial Bishop, or have no more to oversee than I am capable of overseeing, and let me be such as the Primitive Bishops were, that had but one Church, and not hundreds to take care of; and let me not be engaged to perform natural impossibilities, and that on pain of damnation, and to the certain destruction of the business that I undertake.’ Surely these would rather have been their strivings. I speak not this against any Bishops that acknowledge the Presbyters to be true Pastors to rule and teach the flock, and take themselves only to be the Chief or Presidents among the Presbyters, yea, or the Rulers of Presbyters, that are the rulers of the flock; but of them

that null the Presbyter's Office, and the Church's Government and Discipline, by undertaking it alone as their sole prerogative.

Many other Controversies pertaining to Discipline I might instance, that will be better resolved by this course of practice, through the abundant experience which it will afford, than by all the disputations or writings that have attempted it.

18. The design of this work is, the Reforming and saving of all the people in our several parishes; for we should not leave out any man that will submit to be instructed. And though we can scarcely hope that every particular person will be reformed and saved by it, yet have we reason to hope, that as the attempt is universal, so the success will be more general or extensive than hitherto we have seen of our other labours. Sure I am it is most like to the spirit, precepts, and offers of the Gospel which requireth us to preach the Gospel to every creature, and promiseth life to every man if he will accept it by believing. If God would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the Truth, that is, as Rector and Benefactor of the world, he hath manifested himself willing to save all men if they will themselves, though his elect he will also make willing, then surely it beseems us to offer salvation unto all men, and to endeavour to bring them to the knowledge of the Truth: and if Christ tasted death for every man, it is meet we should preach his death to every man. This work hath a more excellent design, than our accidental conferences with now and then a particular person. And I observe that in such occasional Discourses men satisfy themselves to have spoken some good words, but seldom set plainly and closely to the matter, to convince men of sin, misery, and mercy, as in this purposely appointed work we are now more likely to do.

19. And further, it is likely to be a work that shall reach over the whole land, and not stop with us that have now engaged in it. For though it be at the present neglected, I suppose the cause is the same with our brethren as it hath all this while been with us; who by vain expectations of the Magistrates' interposition, or by that inconsiderateness and laziness which we are bewailing here this day, have omitted

it till now as we have done ; but especially a despair of a common submission of the people hath been the hindrance. But when they shall be remembered of so clear and great a duty, and excited to the consideration of it, and see with us the feisableness of it, in a good measure, when it is done by common consent, no doubt they will universally take it up, and gladly concur with us in so blessed a work. For they are the servants of the same God, as regardful of their flocks, as conscientious as we, as sensible of the interest of Christ, as compassionate to men's souls, and as self-denying, and ready to do or suffer for such excellent ends. Seeing therefore they have the same Spirit, Rule, and Lord, I will not be so uncharitable as to doubt, whether all that are godly, or the generality of them, will gladly join with us through all the land. And O what a happy thing it will be to see such a general combination for Christ ; to see all England so seriously called upon, and importuned for Christ, and set in so fair a way to heaven ! Methinks the consideration of it should make our hearts rejoice within us, to see so many faithful servants of Christ all over the land, to fall in with every particular sinner with such industrious solicitations for the saving of their souls, as men that will hardly take a denial. Methinks I see all the godly Ministers of England, setting upon the work already, and resolving to take the opportunity that unanimity may facilitate it ; which if they do, no doubt but God will succeed them. Is it not then a most happy undertaking that you are all setting your hands to, and desiring the assistance of Christ in this day ?

20. Lastly, of so great weight and excellency is the duty that we are upon, that the chief part of Church-reformation that is behind, as to means, consisteth in it ; and it must be the chief means to answer the judgment, the mercies, the prayers, the promises, the cost, the endeavours, and blood of the nation ; and without this it will not be done ; the ends of all these will never be well attained ; a Reformation to purpose will never be wrought ; the Church will be still low, the interest of Christ will be much neglected ; and God will still have a controversy with the land, and above all, with the Ministers that have been deepest in the guilt.

How long have we talked of Reformation, how much have we said and done for it in general, and how deeply and devoutly have we vowed it for our own parts (of which more

anon). And after all this, how shamefully have we neglected it, and do neglect it to this day ! We carry ourselves as if we had not known or considered what that Reformation was that we vowed. As carnal men will take on them to be Christians, and profess with confidence to believe in Christ and accept of his Salvation, and may contend for Christ, and fight for him, and yet for all this would have none of him, but perish for refusing him, who little dreamed that ever they had been refusers of him ; and all because they understood not what his Salvation is, and how it is carried on ; but dream of a salvation without flesh-displeasing, and without self-dēnying, and renouncing the world, and parting with their sins, and without any holiness or any great pains and labour of their own in subserviency to Christ and the Spirit : even so did too many Ministers and private men talk and write, and pray, and sigh, and long for Reformation, and would little have believed that man, that should have presumed to tell them, that for all this their very hearts were against Reformation, and that they that were praying for it, and fasting for it, and wading through blood for it, would never accept it, but would themselves be the rejecters and destroyers of it. Yet so it is, and so it hath too plainly proved ; and whence is all this strange deceit of heart, that good men should no better know themselves ? Why, the case is plain : they thought of a Reformation to be given by God, but not of a Reformation to be wrought on and by themselves. They considered the blessing, but never thought of the means of accomplishing it. As if they had expected that all things besides themselves should be mended without them ; or that the Holy Ghost should again descend miraculously ; or every sermon should convert its thousands ; or that some Angel from heaven, or some Elias should be sent to restore all things ; or that the law of a Parliament, and the sword of a Magistrate would have converted or constrained all, and have done the deed. Little did they think of a Reformation that must be wrought by their own diligence and unwearied labours, by earnest Preaching, Catechising, Personal instructions, and taking heed to all the flock, whatever pains or reproaches it should cost them. They thought not that a thorough Reformation must multiply their own work. We had all of us too carnal thoughts, that when we had ungodly men at our mercy, all would be

done, and conquering them was converting them, or such a mean as would have frightened them to heaven. But the business is far otherwise; and had we then known how a Reformation must be attained, perhaps some would have been colder in the prosecution of it. And yet I know that even foreseen labours seem small matters at a distance, while we do but hear or talk of them; but when we come nearer them, and must lay our hands to the work, and put on our armour, and charge through the thickest of opposing difficulties, then is the sincerity and the strength of men's hearts brought to trial, and it will appear how they purposed and promised before. Reformation is to many of us, as the Messiah was to the Jews. Before he came they looked and longed for him, and boasted of him, and rejoiced in hope of him; but when he came, they hated him, and would not believe that he was indeed the Person, and therefore persecuted and put him to death, to the curse and confusion of the main body of their nation. "The Lord whom we seek, shall suddenly come to his Temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: But who can abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and he shall 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. 1—3.) And the reason was, because it was another manner of Christ that the Jews expected, than Jesus was that did appear to them; it was one to bring them riches, and liberty, and to this day they profess that they will never believe in any but such. So it is with too many about Reformation. They hoped for a Reformation that should bring them more wealth and honour with the people, and power to force men to do what they would have them; and now they see a Reformation that must put them to more condescension and pains than ever they were at before; this will not go down with them. They thought of having the opposers of godliness under their feet; but now they see they must go to them with humble entreaties, and put their hands under their feet, if it would do them good, and meekly beseech even those that sometimes sought their lives; make it now their daily business to overcome them by kindness, and win them with love. O how many carnal expectations are here crossed!

Hence also it is, that most men do lay so great a part of Reformation in their private opinions or singular ways. The Prelatical party think that the true Reformation is to restore them to power; the Presbyterians, that if Prelacy and Independency were put down, and classes set up, the work were chiefly done; the Independents, that if they had gathered a separated body of godly people under covenant, much of the Reformation were wrought; and the Anabaptists think, that if they could but get people to be baptized again, they had done a great matter for Reformation. I am not now reproving any of these in the matter, though the last especially, well deserve it, but that they lay so much upon their several orders and formalities as many of them do: when indeed if we had our will in all such matters of order, and had the rightest form of government in the world, it is the painful execution, and the diligent and prudent use of means for men's conversion and edification, by able, faithful men, that must accomplish the Reformation.

Brethren, I dare confidently tell you, that if you will but faithfully perform what you have agreed upon, both in this business of Catechising and Personal instruction, and in the matter of Discipline formerly, where we have well waved all the controverted part, which hath so much ascribed to it, you will do more for the true Reformation, that is so desirable, and hath been so long prayed and eagerly contended for, are ever likely to effect. If Bishops would do this work, I would take them for Reformers; and if Presbyters will do it, I will take them for Reformers; and those that neglected and hindered it, I ever took for *Deformers*. Let us see the work well done, that God hath made so necessary for men's conversion, preservation, restoration and salvation, and the doers of it, whether Prelates or Presbyters, shall never have any opposition from me. But it is not bare canons, and orders, and names, and shows, that any wise man will take for the substance of Reformation! It is not circumcision or uncircumcision, to be a Jew or a Gentile, bond or free, that availeth any thing, but a new creature, and faith that worketh by love. That is the Reformation which best healeth the ignorance, and infidelity, and pride, and hypocrisy, and worldliness, and other killing sins of the land, and that most effectually bringeth men to faith and holiness. Not that I would have the least truth or duty undervalued, or

any part of God's will to be rejected : but the kingdom of God consisteth not in every truth or duty ; not in ceremonies or circumstances—not in meats or drinks ; but in righteousness and peace, and-joy in the Holy Ghost.

Dear brethren, it is you, and such as you, that under Christ must yet give this nation the fruit of all their prayers and pains, their cost and blood, and their heavy sufferings. All that they have been doing for the good of the Church, and for true Reformation for so many years, was but to prepare the way for you to come in and do the work which they desired. Alas, what would they do by fire and sword, by drums and trumpets, for the converting of souls ? The actions of Armies and famous Commanders which seem so glorious, and make so great a noise that the world rings with them, what have they done, or what can they do that is worth talking of without you ? In themselves considered, all their Victories and great Achievement s are so far from being truly glorious, that they are very lamentable ; and a butcher may as well glory that he hath killed so many beasts, or a hangman that he hath executed so many men, as they can glory in the thing considered in itself ; for War is the most heavy temporal judgment : and far less cause would they have to glory, if their cause and end were wrong. If their hearts, end, and cause be right, and they mean as honestly as any men in the world, yet are these great Commanders but your pioneers, to cut up the thorns that stand in your way, to cast out the rubbish, and prepare you the way to build the house. Alas, they cannot with all their Victories exalt the Lord Jesus in the soul of any sinner ; and therefore they cannot set up his spiritual kingdom, for the hearts of men are his house and throne. If the work should stop with the end of theirs, and go no further than they can carry it, we should be in the end, but where we were in the beginning ; and one generation of Christ's enemies would succeed another, and they that take down the wicked would inherit their vices, as they possess their places, and the last would be far the worst, as being deeper in the guilt, and more engaged in evil-doing. All this trouble then, and stir of the Nation, hath been to bring the work to your hands ; and shall it die there ? God forbid ! They have opened you the door ; and, at exceeding cost and sufferings have removed many of your impediments, and put the building-instruments into your hands ; and will

you now stand still and loiter? God forbid! Up then, brethren, and give the Nation the fruit of their cost and labour. Frustrate not all the Preparer's works: fail not the long expectations of so many thousands that have prayed in hope of a true Reformation; paid in hope, ventured in hope, suffered in hope, and waited till now in hope. In the name of God, take heed that you do not disappoint all these hopes! Have they spent so long time in fencing the vineyard, and weeding and pruning it, and making it ready for your hands, and will you fail them that are sent to gather in the vintage, and lose their labours? When they have ploughed the field, will you sow it by halves? If they had known beforehand that Ministers would have proved idle or unfaithful, how many hundreds would have spared their blood, how many thousands would have sat still, and have let the old Readers and Formalists alone, and have said, 'If we must have dullards and unprofitable men, it is as good to have one as another; it is not worth so much cost and pains to change one careless Minister for another.' The end is the mover and life of the agent in all the means. How many thousands have prayed, and paid, and suffered, and more in expectation of a great advantage to the Church, and more common illumination and Reformation of the Nation by your means; and will you now deceive them all? Again I say, God forbid! It is at your hands that they are expecting the happy issue of all. The eyes of the Nation are, or should be, all under God upon you, for the bringing in the harvest of their cost and labours. I profess, it maketh me wonder at the fearful deceitfulness of the heart of man, to see how every man can call on others for duty, or censure them for the omitting it, and what excellent judges we are in other men's cases, and how partial in our own! The very judicious Teachers of the Nation can cry out, and too justly, against one sect and another sect, and against unfaithful underminers of those that they thought would have done the work, and against the disturbers of the Reformation that was going on, and say, 'These have betrayed the Church, and frustrated the Nation's cost and hopes, and undone all that hath been so long a doing.' And yet they see not, or seem not to see, that it is we that are guilty of this, as much as they. It was not the Magistrates' driving, but the Ministers' drawing, that was the principal saving means that we waited for.

Brethren, it were a strange mistake, if any of us should think, that the price of the Nation's wealth and blood was to settle us in good benefices, and to pull down the Bishops, and give us the quiet possession of our livings which they would have deprived us of. Was this the Reformation intended, that we might live in greater ease and fulness, and succeed the ejected Ministers in their less disgraced sins ? Why, sirs, what are we more than other men, that the people should do all this for us ? That they should impoverish the whole Nation almost to provide us a livelihood ? What can they see in our persons, or countenances for which they should so dote upon us ? Are we not men, frail and corruptible flesh, and unworthy sinners like themselves ? Surely it was for our work, and the end of our work, and not for our persons, but in order to our work, that they have done all this. What say you now, brethren ? Will you deal faithfully with your creditors, and pay the Nation the debt which you owe them ? Shall all the blood and cost of this people be frustrated or not ? You are now called upon to give your answer, and it is you that must give it. The work is now before you ; and in these personal instructions of all the flock, as well as in Public preaching, doth it consist. Others have done their part, and borne their burden, and now comes in yours. You may easily see how great a matter lies upon your hands, and how many will be wronged by your failing, and how much by the sparing of your labour will be lost. If your labour be more worth than all our treasures, hazards, and lives,—more worth than the souls of men and the blood of Christ ; then sit still, and look not after the ignorant or the ungodly ; follow your pleasures and worldly business, or take your ease ; displease not sinners, nor your own flesh ; but let your neighbours sink or swim ; and if Public preaching will not save them, let them perish. But if the case be far otherwise, you were best look about you. But I shall say more of this anon.

II. Having given you the first sort of moving Reasons, which were drawn from the benefits of the present undertaken work, I come to the *second* sort, which are taken from the *difficulties* ; which if they were taken alone, or in a needless business, I confess might be rather discouragements than motives ; but taking these with those that go before and

follow, the case is otherwise. For difficulties must excite to greater diligence in a necessary work. And many difficulties we shall find both in ourselves and in our people ; which, because they are things so obvious, that your experience will leave no room for doubting, I shall take leave to pass them over in a few words.

In ourselves there is much dulness and laziness, so that there will be much ado to get us to be faithful in so hard a work. Like a sluggard in bed, that knows he should rise, and yet delayeth and would stay as long as he can ; so do we by duties that our corrupt natures are against, and puts us to the use of all our powers. Mere sloth ties the hands of many.

2. We have also a base man-pleasing disposition, which will make us let men perish lest we lose their love, and let them go quietly to hell, lest we should make them angry with us for seeking their salvation. We are ready to venture on the displeasure of God, and suffer our people to run into everlasting misery, rather than get ill-will to ourselves. This disposition must be diligently resisted.

3. Some of us have a foolish bashfulness, which makes us very backward to begin with them, and to speak plainly to them. We are so modest forsooth, that we blush to speak for Christ, to contradict the devil, or to save a soul ; when of shameful works we are less ashamed.

4. We are so carnal, that we are prone by our fleshly interests, to be drawn to unfaithfulness in the work of Christ ; lest we lose our tithes, or bring trouble upon ourselves, or set people against us, and such like. All these require diligence for their resistance.

5. The greatest impediment of all is, that we are weak in the faith ; so that when we should set upon a man for his conversion with all our might, if there be not the stirrings of unbelief within us, to rise up actual questionings of heaven and hell, whether the things that we should earnestly press be true ; yet at least the belief of them is weak, and does not excite in us fervent, resolute, and constant zeal : thus our whole motion is weak, because the spring of faith is weak. O, what need therefore have all Ministers for themselves and their work to look well to their faith, especially that their assent to the truth of Scripture, about the joy and torments of the life to come, be sound and lively.

6. And lastly, we have commonly a great deal of unskilfulness and unfitness for this work. Alas, how few know how to deal with an ignorant, worldly man for his salvation! To get within him, and win upon him, and suit all speeches to his condition and temper; to choose the fittest subjects, and follow them with the holy mixture of seriousness, terror, love, meekness, and evangelical allurements! O, who is fit for such a thing! I profess seriously, it seems to me, by experience, as hard a matter to confer aright with such a carnal person in order to his change, as to preach such Sermons as ordinarily we do, if not much more so. All these difficulties in ourselves, should awaken us to resolutions, preparations and diligence, that we be not overcome by them, and hindered from, or in the work.

In our People, we have also many difficulties to encounter. 1. Too many of them will be obstinately unwilling to be taught, and refuse to come near us, as being too good to be Catechised, or too old to learn, unless we deal wisely with them in public and private, and by the force of reason, and the power of love conquer their perverseness, which we must carefully endeavour.

2. Many that are willing are so extremely dull, that they can scarcely learn a leaf of a Catechism in a long time, and therefore will keep away, as ashamed of their ignorance, unless we are wise and diligent to encourage them.

3. When they do come, so great is their ignorance, that you will find it a wonderful hard matter to get them to understand you; so that if you have not the skill of making things plain, you will leave them as strange to it as before.

4. Yet harder will you find it to work things upon their hearts, and set them so close to the quick, as to produce that saving change, which is our end, and without which our labour is lost. O what a rock is a hardened, carnal heart! How stiffly will it resist the most powerful persuasions, and hear of everlasting life or death as a thing of naught! If you have not therefore great seriousness, and fervency, and fitness of expression, what good can you expect? And when all is done, the Spirit of Grace must do the work; but as God and men do use to choose instruments most suitable to the nature of the agent, work or end, so here the Spirit of wisdom, life, and holiness, doth not use to

work by foolish, dead or carnal instruments, but by such persuasions of light, life, and purity, as are most like himself and the work that is to be wrought thereby.

5. And when you have made some desirable impressions on their hearts, if you look not after them, and have a special care of them when they are gone, their hearts will soon return to their former hardness, and their old companions, and temptations will render all abortive. I do but briefly hint these things which you so well know. All the difficulties of the work of Conversion, which you use to acquaint the people with, are here before us in our present work; which I will forbear to enumerate, as supposing it unnecessary.

III. The *third* sort of moving reasons are drawn from the *necessity* of the undertaken work: for if it were not necessary, the lazy might be discouraged rather than excited, by the forementioned difficulties. And if we should here expatiate, we might find matter for a volume by itself. But because I have already been longer than I did intend, I shall only give you a brief hint of some of the general grounds of this necessity.

In the first place it is necessary by obligation, ‘*Ut Officium, necessitate præcepti:*’ in the second it is necessary ‘*ad finem;*’ and that for God, for our neighbours, and for ourselves.

(1.) We have on us the obligation of Scripture-precepts, both general, and special.—(2.) The subservient obligation by promises and threatenings.—(3.) These are seconded by executions, of actual judgments, and mercies.—(4.) We have the obligation of our own undertaking upon us. These all deserve your consideration, but may not be insisted on by me, lest I be over tedious.

1. Every Christian is obliged to do all that he can for the salvation of others; but every Minister is doubly obliged, because he is separated to the Gospel of Christ, and is to give up himself wholly to that work. (Rom. i. 1; 1 Tim. iv. 15.) It is needless to make any further question of our obligation, when we know that this work is needful to our people’s conversion and salvation, and that we are in general

commanded to do all that is needful to those ends, as far as we are able. That they are necessary to those ends hath been shewed before; and shall be more anon. Even old professors have need to be taught the Principles of God's oracles, if they have neglected or forgotten them, saith the Apostle, *πάλιιν χροίαν ἔχετε τῇ διδάσκειν ὑμᾶς τίνα τὰ σοιχείᾳ τῇ ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων τῇ Θεῷ.* (Heb. v. 12.) That the unconverted have need of Conversion, and the means of it, I hope is not doubted among us; and whether this be a means, and a needful means, experience may put us far out of doubt, if we had no more. Let them that have taken most pains in public, examine their people, and try whether many of them be not yet as ignorant and as careless almost as if they had never heard the Gospel. For my part, I study to speak as plainly and affectingly as I can; next my study to speak truly, this is my chief study, and yet I frequently meet with those that have been my hearers eight or ten years, who know not whether Christ be God or man, and wonder when I tell them the history of his birth, life, and death, and sending abroad the Gospel, as if they had never heard it before; and that know not that infants have any original sin: and of those that know the history of the Gospel, how few are there that know the nature of that repentance, faith and holiness, that it requireth; or at least, that know their own hearts! But most of them have an ungrounded affiance in Christ, trusting that he will pardon, justify and save them, while the world hath their hearts, and they live to the flesh; and this affiance they take for justifying faith. I have found by experience, that an ignorant sot that hath been an unprofitable hearer so long, hath got more knowledge and remorse of conscience in half an hour's close discourse, than they did from ten year's public preaching. I know that the public preaching of the Gospel is the most excellent means, because we speak to many at once; but otherwise, it is usually far more effectual to preach it privately to a particular sinner; for the plainest man that is, can scarcely speak plain enough in public for them to understand; but in private we may much more. In Public, we may not use such homely expressions, or repetitions, as their dulness doth require, but in private we may. In Public our speeches are long, and we quite overrun their understandings and memories, and they are confounded and at a loss, and not able to

follow us, and one thing drives out another, so that they know not what we said ; but in private we can take our work ‘*Gradatim*,’ and take our hearers with us as we go ; and by questions and their answers, can see how far they go with us, and what we have next to do. In Public by length and speaking alone, we lose their attention ; but when they are interlocutors, we can easily cause them to attend. Besides that, we can, as we above said, better answer the objections, and engage them by promises before we leave them, which in public we cannot do. I conclude, therefore, that Public preaching will not be sufficient : for though it may be an effectual means to convert many, yet not so many as experience and God’s appointment of further means may assure us. You may long study and preach to little purpose, if you neglect this duty.

For instances of particular special obligations, we might easily shew you many, both from Christ’s own examples, who used this interlocutory preaching both to his disciples and to the Jews, and from the Apostles’ examples, who did the like : but that indeed it would be needless tediousness to recite the passages to those that so well know them, it being the most ordinary way of the Apostles’ preaching, to do it thus interlocutorily and discourse it out in the conclusion. Thus Peter preached to the Jews, (Acts ii,) and to Cornelius and his friends, (Acts x,) and thus Philip preached to the Eunuch, (Acts ix,) and thus Paul preached to the jailor, (Acts xvi,) and to many others. It is plain that it was the most common manner of preaching in those times, which occasioneth the Quakers to challenge us to shew where any ever took a text, and preached as we do ; (though they might have found that Christ did so, Luke iv. 18.) Paul preached privately to them of reputation, lest he should have run, and laboured in vain ; (Gal. ii. 2 ;) and that earnest charge, no doubt, includeth it, 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. “ I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom ; preach the word, be instant in season, and out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.” Both public preaching, and all sorts of reproofs and exhortations are here required.

And how these precepts are seconded with promises and

threatenings, is so well known, I shall pass it over with the rest.

2. There is a necessity also of this duty 'ad finem.'

(1.) For bringing greater glory to God, by the more full success of the Gospel: not simply to his glory, as if he could not have his glory without it: for so our salvation is not necessary to his glory; but to his greater glory, because he is most honoured and pleased when most are saved; for he hath sworn that he hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he return and live. And, doubtless, as every Christian liveth to the glory of God as his end, so will he gladly take that course that may most effectually promote it; for what man would not attain his end? O, brethren, if we could set this work on foot in all the parishes of England, and get our people to submit to it, and then prosecute it skilfully and zealously ourselves, what a glory would it put upon the face of the nation, and what glory would redound to God thereby! If our common ignorance were thus banished, and our vanity and idleness turned into the study of the way of life, and every shop, and every house, were busied in learning Catechisms, and speaking of the word and works of God, what pleasure would God take in our cities and countries! He would even dwell in our habitations, and make them his delight. It is the glory of Christ that shineth in his Saints, and all their glory is his glory; that therefore which honoureth them, in number or excellency, honoureth him. Will not the glory of Christ be most wonderful and conspicuous in the new Jerusalem, when the Church shall have that shining lustre that is described in Rev. xxi. It is He that is the Sun and the Shield of his Church, and his light is it in which they shall have light; and the business of every Saint is to glorify him. If therefore we can increase the number or strength of the Saints, we thereby increase the honour of the King of Saints; for he will have service and praise where before he had disobedience and dishonour. Christ also will be honoured in the fruits of his bloodshed, and the Spirit of Grace in the fruit of his operations; and do not all these ends require that we use the means with diligence?

(2.) This duty also is necessary to the welfare of our People. How much it doth tend to their salvation, is manifest. Brethren, can you look believingly on your miserable

neighbours, and not perceive them calling for your help? There is not a sinner whose case you should not so far compassionate, as to be willing to relieve them at a dearer rate than this. Can you see them as the wounded man by the way, and unmercifully pass by? Can you hear them cry to you, as the man of Macedonia to Paul in his vision, "Come and help us;" and yet will you refuse your help? Are you entrusted with an hospital, where one languisheth in one corner, and another groaneth in another, and crieth out 'O help me, pity me for the Lord's sake,' and a third is raging mad, and would destroy himself and you; and yet will you sit idle, or refuse your help? If it may be said of him that relieveth not men's bodies, how much more of them that relieve not men's souls! "If you see your brother have need, and shut up the bowels of your compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in you?" You are not such hard-hearted men, but you will pity a leper—you will pity the naked, imprisoned, or desolate—you will pity him that is tormented with grievous pain or sickness; and will you not pity an ignorant, hard-hearted sinner? Will you not pity one that must be shut out from the presence of the Lord, and lie under his remediless wrath, if thorough repentance speedily prevent it not? O what a heart it is that will not pity such an one! What shall I call the heart of such a man? A heart of stone, or a very rock, or adamant, or the heart of a tiger, or rather, the heart of an *Infidel*; for surely if he believed the misery of the impenitent, is it not possible but he should have pity on him! Can you tell men in the pulpit, that they shall certainly be damned except they repent, and yet have no pity on them when you have proclaimed their danger; and if you pity them, will you not do this much for their salvation? What multitudes round about you are blindly hastening to perdition; and your voice is appointed to be the means of reclaiming them! The physician hath no excuse, who is doubly bound to relieve the sick, when every neighbour is to help him.

Brethren, what if you heard sinners cry after you in the streets, 'O sirs, have pity on me, and afford me your advice. I am afraid of the everlasting wrath of God! I know I must shortly leave this world, and I am afraid lest I shall be miserable in the next!' Could you deny your help to such a sinner? What if they came to your study-door, and

cried for help, and would not go away till you had told them how to escape the wrath of God ; could you find in your hearts to drive them away without advice ? I am confident you could not. Why, alas, such persons are less miserable than they that cannot cry for help. It is the hardened sinner that cares not for your help, that most needeth it ; and he that hath not so much life as to feel that he is dead, nor so much light as to see his danger, nor so much sense left as to pity himself—this is the man that is most to be pitied. Look upon your neighbours round about you, and think what numbers need your help in no less a case than the apparent danger of damnation. And every impenitent person that you see, and know about you, suppose that you hear them cry to you, ‘ If ever you pitied poor wretches, pity us, lest we should be tormented in the flames of hell ; if you have the hearts of men pity us ! ’ Do that for them that you would if they followed you with such complaints. O how can you walk, and talk, and be merry with such people, when you know their case ! Methinks when you look them in the face, and think how they must lie in perpetual misery, you should break forth into tears, as the Prophet did when he looked upon Hazeal, and then begin with the most importunate exhortations ! When you must visit them in their sickness, will it not wound your hearts to see them ready to depart into misery, before you have ever dealt seriously with them for their recovery ? O then for the Lord’s sake, and for the sake of poor souls, have pity on them, and bestir yourselves, and spare no pains that may conduce to their salvation.

(3.) And I must further tell you, that this Ministerial fidelity is necessary to your own welfare, as well as to that of your people ; for this is your work, according to which you shall be judged. You can no more be saved without Ministerial diligence and fidelity, than they or you can be saved without Christian diligence and fidelity. If you care not for others, at least care for yourselves. O what is it to answer for the neglect of such a charge ; and what sins more heinous than the betraying of souls ! Doth not this threatening make you tremble : “ If thou warn not the wicked—their blood will I require at thy hands.” I am afraid, nay, I am past doubt, that the day is near when unfaithful Ministers will wish that they had never known that charge ; but that they had rather been colliers, or tinkers, or sweepers of channels, than Pas-

tors of Christ's flock! When, besides all the rest of their sins, they shall have the blood of so many souls to answer for.

O brethren, our death as well as that of our people, is at hand; and it is as terrible to an unfaithful Pastor as to any! When we see that die we must, and there is no remedy, no wit or learning, no credit or popular applause, can put by the stroke, or delay the time; but willing or unwilling, our souls must go, and that into a world that we never saw, where our persons and worldly interest will not be respected. O then for a clear conscience, that can say, 'I live not to myself but to Christ; I spared no pains, I hid not my talent; I concealed not men's misery, nor the way of their recovery.' O, sirs, let us therefore take time while we may have it, and work while it is day; for the night cometh when none can work. This is our day too; and by doing good to others, we must do good to ourselves. If you would prepare for a comfortable death, and a sure and great reward, the harvest is before you: gird up the loins of your minds, and quit yourselves like men, that you may end your days with confident triumph: "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith, I have finished my course; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God the righteous Judge shall give me." And if you would be blessed with those who die in the Lord, *labour now*, that you may rest from your labours then; and do such works as you would wish should follow you, and not such as will prove your terror in the review.

Having found so great reason to move us to this work, I shall, before I come to the directions, (1.) Apply them further for our humiliation and excitation. And (2.) Answer some objections that may be raised.

1. What cause have we to plead before the Lord this day, that have neglected so great and good a work so long—that we have been Ministers of the Gospel so many years, and done so little, by personal instruction and conference, for the saving of men's souls! If we had but set about this business sooner, who knows how many more might have been brought over unto Christ, and how much happier we might have made our Parishes, ere now; and why might we not have done it sooner? I confess many impediments were in our way, and so there are still, and will be while there is a devil to tempt, and a corrupt heart in man to resist the light; but if the

greatest impediment had not been in ourselves, even in our own darkness, and dulness, and undisposedness to duty, I see not but much might have been done before now. We had the same God to command us, and the same miserable objects of compassion, and the same liberty from Governors of the Commonwealth ; but we stood looking for changes, and we would have had the Magistrate not only to have given us leave to work, but to have done our work for us, or at least to have brought the game to our hands ; and while we looked for better days, we made them worse by the lamentable neglect of a chief part of our work. And had we as much petitioned Parliaments for the interposition of their authority to compel men to be Catechised and instructed by the Minister, as we did for maintenance and other matters, it is likely we might have obtained it long ago, when they were forward to gratify us in such undisputable things. But we have sinned, and have no just excuse for our sin ; somewhat that may perhaps excuse ‘a tanto,’ but nothing ‘a toto ;’ and the sin is so great, because the duty is so great, that we should be afraid of pleading excuse too much. The Lord in mercy forgive us, and lay not this or any of our Ministerial negligences to our charge. O that he would cover all our unfaithfulness ; and by the blood of the everlasting Covenant, wash away our guilt of the blood of souls, that when the chief Shepherd shall appear, we may stand before him in peace, and may not be condemned for scattering his flock. And O that he would put up his controversy which he hath against the Pastors of his Church, and not deal more severely with them for our sakes, nor suffer underminers or persecutors to scatter them, as they have suffered his sheep to be scattered ! And that he will not care as little for them, as they have done for the souls of men ; nor think his salvation too good for them, as they have thought their labour and sufferings too much for men’s salvation. And as we have had many days of humiliation in England, for the sins of the land, and the judgments that have lain upon us ; I hope we shall hear that God will more thoroughly humble the Ministers, and cause them to bewail their own neglects, and to set apart some days through the land to that end, that they may not think it enough to lament the sins of others, while they overlook their own ; and that God may not abhor our solemn National humiliations, because they

are managed by unhumiliated guides ; and that we may first prevail with him for a pardon for ourselves, that we may be the fitter to beg for the pardon of others.

And, O that we might cast out the dung of our pride, contention, self-seeking and idleness, lest God should cast our sacrifices as dung in our faces, and should cast us out as the dung of the earth, as of late he hath done many others for our warning ! And that we might presently resolve in concord to mend our pace, before we feel a sharper spur than hitherto we have felt.

2. And now brethren, what have we to do for the time to come, but to deny our lazy, contradicting flesh, and rouse up ourselves to the business that we are engaged in. The harvest is great ; the labourers are too few ; the loiterers and contentious hinderers are many ; the souls of men are precious ; the misery of sinners is great, and the everlasting misery that they are in danger of is greater ; the beauty and glory of the Church is desirable, the joy that we are helping them to, is inconceivable ; the comfort that followeth a faithful stewardship is not small ; the comfort of a full success also will be greater. To be co-workers with God and his Spirit, is not a little honour ; to subserve the bloodshed of Christ for men's salvation, is not a light thing ; to lead on the armies of Christ through the thickest of the enemies, and guide them safely through a dangerous wilderness, and steer the vessel through such storms, and rocks, and sands, and shelves, and bring it safe to the harbour of rest, requirereth no small skill and diligence. The fields now seem even white unto harvest, the preparations that have been made for us, are very great, the season of working is more warm and calm than most ages before us have ever seen : we have carelessly loitered too long already ; the present time is posting away : while we are trifling, men are dying, and passing quickly into another world. And is there nothing in all this to awaken us to our duty, and to resolve us to speedy and unwearied diligence ? Can a man be too careful and active under all these motives and engagements ? Or can that man be a fit instrument for other men's illumination, that were himself so blind ? Or for the quickening of others, that were himself so senseless ? What, sirs, are you that are men of wisdom, as dull as the common people ? And do we need to heap up a multitude of words to per-

suade you to a known and weighty duty ? One would think it should be enough to set you on work, to shew a line in the Book of God to prove it to be his will ; or to prove to you that the work hath a tendency to men's salvation ; or that the very sight of your miserable neighbours should be sufficient to draw out your most compassionate endeavours for their relief. If a cripple do but open his sores, and shew you his disabled limbs, it will move you without words ; and will not the case of souls that are near to damnation move you ? O happy Church, if the physicians were but healed themselves ; and if we had not too much of that infidelity and stupidity which we daily preach against in others ! Were there but such clear and deep impressions upon our souls, of those glorious things that we daily preach, O what a change would it make in our Sermons, and in our private discourse ! O what a miserable thing it is to the Church and to themselves, that men must preach of heaven and hell, before they heartily believe the reality of either, or have felt the weight of the doctrines which they preach ! It would amaze a sensible man to think what matters we preach and talk of ! What it is for the soul to pass out of this flesh, and go before a righteous God, and enter upon unchangeable joy or torment ! O with what amazing thoughts do dying men view these things ! How should such matters be preached and discoursed of ! O the gravity, the seriousness, the incessant diligence that these things require ! I know not what others think of them, but for my part, I am ashamed of my stupidity, and wonder at myself that I deal not with my own and other's souls, as one that looks for the great day of the Lord ; and that I can have room for almost any other thoughts or words, and that such astonishing matters do not wholly occupy me. I marvel how I can preach of them slightly and coldly, how I can let men alone in their sins, and that I do not go to them and beseech them for the Lord's sake to repent, however they take it, and whatever pains or trouble it may cost me ! I seldom come out of the pulpit, but my conscience smiteth me that I have been no more serious and fervent. It accuseth me not so much for want of human ornaments or elegance, nor for letting fall an uncouth word ; but it asketh me, ' How couldst thou speak of life and death with such an heart ? How couldst thou preach of heaven and hell, in such a careless,

sleepy manner? Dost thou believe what thou hast said? Art thou in earnest or in jest? How canst thou tell people that sin is such a thing, and that so much misery is upon them and before them, and be no more afflicted with it? Shouldst thou not weep over such a people, and should not thy tears interrupt thy words; shouldst not thou cry aloud, and shew them their transgressions, and entreat and beseech them as for life and death? Truly, this is the peal that Conscience doth ring in my ears, and yet my drowsy soul is not fully awakened. O what a thing is a senseless, hardened heart! O Lord, save us from the plague of infidelity and hard-heartedness ourselves, or else how shall we be fit instruments of saving others from it? I am even confounded to think what a difference there is between my views in sickness, and my pulpit discourse, and conversation in health concerning the life to come: that that can appear so light to me now, which seemeth so great and astonishing a matter then; and which I know will be so again when death looks me in the face. O, brethren, surely, if you had all conversed with death as often as I have done, and as often received the sentence in yourselves, you would have an unquiet conscience, if not a reformed life in your Ministerial diligence and fidelity; and you would have something within you that would frequently ask you such questions as these: 'Is this all thy compassion for lost sinners? Wilt thou do no more to seek and to save them? Is there not such and such a one,—O, how many round about thee, that are yet the visible sons of death? What hast thou said to them, or done for their recovery? Shall they die and be in hell before thou wilt speak to them one serious word to prevent it? Shall they there curse thee for ever that didst no more in time to save them?' Such cries of conscience are daily in my ears, though, the Lord knows, I have too little obeyed them. The God of Mercy pardon me, and awake me with the rest of his servants that have been thus sinfully negligent! I confess to my shame, that I seldom hear the bell toll for one that is dead, but conscience asketh me, 'What hast thou done for the saving of that soul before it left the body? There is one more gone to judgment; what didst thou to prepare that immortal spirit for judgment?' And yet I have been slothful and backward to help the rest that do survive. How can you refrain, when you are laying a corpse in the grave, from thinking, 'Here

lieth the body, but where is the soul, and what have I done for it, before it departed? It was part of my charge—what account can I give of it? O, sirs, is it a small matter to you to answer such questions as these! It may seem so now, but the hour is coming when it will not. If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and will condemn us much more, with another kind of condemnation than conscience doth. The voice of conscience now is a still voice, and the sentence of conscience is a gentle sentence, in comparison of the voice, and the sentence of God. Alas! conscience seeth but a very little of our sin and misery, in comparison of what God seeth. What mountains would those things appear to your souls, which now seem mole-hills; and what beams would these be in your eyes that now seem motes, if you did but see them with a clearer light; I dare not say, as God seeth them. We can easily make shift to plead the cause with conscience, and either bribe it, or bear its sentence; but God is not so easily dealt with, nor his sentence so easily borne. “Wherefore we receiving (and preaching) a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence, and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire.” (Heb. xii. ult.) But because you shall not say, that I affright myself or you with bugbears, and tell you of dangers and terrors when there are none, I will here add the certainty of that condemnation that is likely to befall negligent Pastors, and particularly that will befall us, that are here this day, if we shall hereafter be wilful neglecters of this great work. Many will be ready to rise up against us to our condemnation.

(1.) Our Parents that destinated us to the Ministry may condemn us, and say, ‘Lord, we devoted them to thy service, and they made light of it, and served themselves.’

(2.) Our Masters that taught us, our Tutors that instructed us, the schools and universities that we lived in, and all the years that we spent in study may rise up in judgment against us, and condemn us. For why was all this, but for the work of God?

(3.) Our learning, knowledge, and Ministerial gifts, will condemn us. For to what are we made partakers of these, but for the work of God?

(4.) Our voluntarily undertaking the charge of souls

will condemn us ; for all men should be true to the Trust that they have undertaken.

(5.) All the care of God for his Church, and all that Christ hath done and suffered for them will rise up in judgment against us, and condemn us ; because by our negligence we destroyed them for whom Christ died.

(6.) All the severe precepts, and charges of holy Scripture, with the Promises of assistance and reward, and all the threatenings of punishment, will rise up against the unfaithful and condemn them : for God did not speak all this in vain.

(7.) All the Examples of the Prophets and Apostles and other preachers recorded in Scripture, will rise up against such and condemn them : even this pattern that is set them by Paul, (Acts xx,) and all the examples of the diligent servants of Christ in these later times, and in the places around them. For these were for their imitation, and to provoke them to an holy emulation, in fidelity and Ministerial diligence.

(8.) The Holy Bible that is open before us, and all the books in our studies that tell us of our duty, directly or indirectly, condemn the lazy and unprofitable servants ; for we have not all these helps and furniture in vain.

(9.) All the Sermons that we preach to persuade our people to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, to lay violent hands upon the crown, and take the kingdom as by force, to strive to enter in at the strait gate, and so to run as that they may obtain, will rise up against us and condemn us ; for if it concern them to labour for their salvation, doth it not concern us who have the charge of them to be also violent, laborious, and unwearied in striving to help on their salvation ? Is it worth their labour, and patience, and is it not also worth ours ?

(10.) All the Sermons that we preach to them to set out the danger of a natural state, the evil of sin, the need of Christ, and grace, the joys of heaven, and the torments of hell, yea, and the truth of the Christian Religion, will rise up in judgment against us and condemn us. And a sad review it will be, when we shall be forced to think, ‘ Did I tell them of such great dangers and hopes in public, and would I do no more to help them in private ? What, tell them daily of threatened damnation, and yet let them run into it so easily ?

Tell them of such a glory, and scarcely speak a word to them personally to help them to it. Were these such great matters with me at Church, and so small when I came home? All this is dreadful self-condemnation.

(11.) All the Sermons that we have preached to persuade other men to such duties; as neighbours to exhort one another daily, and plainly to rebuke them that sin; parents and masters to do it to their children and servants; all these will condemn us. For shall we persuade others to that which we will not do ourselves? When we threaten them for neglecting it, we threaten our own souls.

(12.) All our hard censures of the Magistrate for doing no more, and all our reproofs of him for permitting seducers, and denying his further assistance to the Ministers, doth condemn ourselves if we refuse our own duty. What, must all the Rulers of the world be servants to our slothfulness, or light us the candle to do nothing, or only hold the stirrup to our pride, or make our beds for us, that we may sleep by daylight? Should they do their part in a subordinate office to protect and further us, and should not we do ours, who stand nearest to the end?

(13.) All the Maintenance that we take for our Service, if we be unfaithful, will condemn us: for who is it that will pay a servant to take his pleasure, or sit still, or work for himself? If we have the fleece, it is surely that we may look to the flock. By taking the wages, we oblige ourselves to do the work.

(14.) All the honour that we expect, or receive from the people, and all the Ministerial privileges before mentioned will condemn the unfaithful; for the honour is but the encouragement to the work, and obligeth to it.

(15.) All the witness that we have borne against the scandalous, negligent Ministers of this age, and the words we have spoken against them, and all the endeavours that we have used for their removal, will condemn the unfaithful; for God is no respecter of persons. If we succeed them in their sins, we spoke all that against ourselves; and as we condemned them, God and others will condemn us, if we imitate them; and though we be not so bad as they, it will prove sad to be too like them.

(16.) All the judgments that God hath executed on them in this age before our eyes, will condemn us, if we be un-

faithful; hath he made the idle shepherds and sensual drones to stink in the nostrils of the people, and will he honour us, if we be idle and sensual? Hath he sequestered them, and cast them out of their habitations, and out of the pulpits, and laid them by as dead while they are alive, and made them a hissing and a by-word in the land; and yet dare we imitate them? Are not their sufferings our warnings? If any thing in the world should awaken Ministers to self-denial and diligence, one would think we had seen enough to do it. If the judgments of God on one man could do so much, what should so many years' judgment on so many hundreds do? Would you have imitated the old world, if you had seen the flood that drowned them! Would you have taken up the sins of Sodom, "pride, fulness of bread, and idleness," if you had stood by and seen the flames of Sodom? This was God's argument to deter the Israelites from the Nations' sins, because, "for all these things they had seen them cast out before them." Who would have been a Judas that had seen him hang himself; or a lying sacrilegious hypocrite, that had seen Ananias and Sapphira struck dead? Who would not have been afraid to contradict the Gospel, that had seen Elymas struck blind? And shall we approve self-seeking, idle Ministers, when we have seen God scourging such out of his Temple, and sweeping them away in his displeasure? God forbid! for then how great, and how manifold will our condemnation be!

(17.) All the disputations and eager contests that we have had against unfaithful men, and for a faithful Ministry, will condemn us, if we be unfaithful; and so will the books that we have written to those ends. How many scores, if not hundreds of Catechisms are written in England; and yet shall we forbear to use them? How many books have been written for Discipline, by English and Scottish Divines; and how fully hath it been defended! And what reproach hath been cast upon the adversaries of it through the land: and yet shall we lay it by as useless, when we have free leave to use it? O fearful hypocrisy! What can we call it less? Did we think when we were writing against this sect, and that sect that opposed Discipline, that we were writing all that against ourselves? O what evidence do the booksellers' shops, and their own libraries contain

against the greatest part, even of the godly Ministers of the land ! The Lord cause them seasonably to lay it to heart.

(18.) All the days of fasting and prayer that have been of late years kept in England for a Reformation, will rise up in judgment against the unreformed, that will not be persuaded to this part of the work. And I confess it is so heavy an aggravation of our sin, [that it makes me tremble to think of it. Was there ever a Nation on the face of the earth, that so solemnly and so long followed God with fasting and prayer as we have done? Before the Parliament began, how frequent and fervent were we in secret ; after that for many years' time together, we had a Monthly Fast commanded by the Parliament ; besides frequent private and public Fasts. And what was all this for? Whatever was the means that we sometimes looked at, yet still the end of all our prayers was Church-reformation, and therein, especially, these two things: *a faithful Ministry; and exercise of Discipline in the Church.* Did it then once enter into the hearts of the people, yea, or into our hearts to imagine, that when we had all that we wished for, and the matter was put into our own hands, to be as diligent as we could, and to exercise what Discipline we pleased, that then we would do nothing but preach publicly ; that we would not be at the pains of catechising and instructing our people personally, nor exercise any considerable part of Discipline at all? It astonisheth me to think of it! What a depth of deceit is in the heart of man! What, are good men's hearts so deceitful? Are all men's hearts so deceitful? I confess I told many soldiers, and other sensual men then, that when they had fought for a Reformation, I was confident they would abhor it, and be enemies to it, when they saw and felt it: thinking that the yoke of Discipline would have pinched their necks; and that when they had been catechised and personally dealt with, and reproved for their sin, in private and public, and brought to public confession and repentance, or avoided as impenitent, they would have scorned and spurned against all this, and have taken the yoke of Christ for tyranny. But little did I think that the Ministers would have let all fall, and put almost none of this upon them, but have let them alone for fear of displeasing them, and have let all run on, as it did before.

O the earnest prayers that I have heard in secret for a faithful Ministry, and for Discipline! They prayed as if they had wrestled for salvation itself! Yea, they commonly called Discipline, The Kingdom of Christ; or the Exercise of his Kingly Office in his Church; and so preached and prayed for it, as if the setting up of Discipline had been the setting up of the kingdom of Christ: and did I then think that they would refuse to set it up when they might! What! is the kingdom of Christ now reckoned among the things indifferent!

If the God of heaven, that knew our hearts, had in the midst of our prayers and cries on one of our Public monthly Fasts, returned us this answer with his dreadful voice, in the audience of the Assembly: 'You deceitful-hearted sinners, what hypocrisy is this, to weary me with your cries for that which you will have if I would give it you, and thus to lift up your voices for that which your souls abhor! What is Reformation, but the instructing and importunate persuading of sinners to entertain my Christ and grace as offered them, and the governing my Church according to my Word? And these, which are your work, you will not be persuaded to, when you come to find it troublesome and ungrateful. When I have delivered you, it is not me, but yourselves that you will serve; and I must be as earnest to persuade you to reform the Church in doing your own duty, as you are earnest with me to grant you liberty for Reformation; and when all this is done, you will leave it undone.' I say, if the Lord, or any messenger of his, had given us in such an answer, would it not have amazed us, and have seemed incredible to us, that our hearts should have been such as now they prove! And would we not have said as Hazael, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing;" or as Peter, "Though all men forsake or deny thee, yet will not I." Well, brethren, sad experience hath shewed us our frailty: we have denied the troublesome and costly part of the Reformation that we prayed for: but Christ yet turneth back, and looketh with a merciful eye upon us. O that we had but the hearts, immediately to go out and weep bitterly, and do as we have done no more, lest a worse thing come unto us; but henceforth follow Christ through labour and suffering, though it were unto death.

(19.) All the judgments upon the Nation, the cost, the

labour, the blood, and the deliverances, and all the endeavours of the Governors for Reformation, will rise up against us, if we now refuse to be faithful for a Reformation, when it is before us, and at our will.

I have said somewhat of this before. Hath God been hewing us out away with his sword, and levelling opposers by his terrible judgments, and yet will we sit still or play the sluggard? Have England, Scotland, and Ireland, paid so dear for a Reformation, and now shall some men treacherously strangle it in the birth, and others expose it to contempt, and overrun it? And others sit still and look on it as a thing not worth the trouble? How many thousand persons may come to the condemnation of such men! The whole countries may say, 'Lord we have been plundered and ruined, or much impoverished, we have paid taxes these many years, and it was a Reformation that was pretended, and that we were promised, in all; and now the Ministers, that should be the instruments of it, do neglect it.' Many thousands may say, 'Lord we ventured our lives, in obedience to a Parliament that promised Reformation, and now we cannot have it.' The souls of many, that have died in these wars, may cry out against us, 'Lord it was the hopes of a Reformation that we fought and suffered for, in obedience to those Governors that professed to intend it; and now the Pastors reject it by their idleness.' The Parliament may say, 'How long did we sit and consult about Reformation, and now the Ministers will not execute the power that is granted them.' The nation may say, 'How often did we beg of God, and petition the Parliament for it, and now the Ministers deny us the enjoyment of it.' Yea, God himself may say, 'How many prayers have I heard; and what dangers have I delivered you from: how many, how great, and in what a wonderful manner; and what do you think it was that I delivered you for? Was it not that you should do my work? and will you betray it, or neglect it after all this?' Truly, sirs, I know not what others think; but when I consider the judgments that we have felt, and the wonders of mercy that my eyes have seen, to the frequent astonishment of my soul, as I know it is great matters that these things oblige us to, so I am afraid, lest they should be charged on me as the aggravation of my neglect. I hear every exasperated party still flying in the faces of the rest;

and one saith, 'It was you that killed the King,' and the other saith, 'It was you that fought against a Parliament, and put them to defend themselves, and drenched the land in blood.' But the Lord grant that it be not *we*; if we prove negligent in our Ministry, and betray the Reformation that God hath called us to, that shall have all this blood and misery charged upon us, yea, though we had never any other hand therein; and that the Lord say not of us, as of Jehu, even when he had destroyed the house of Ahab by his command, because he accomplished not the Reformation which that execution tended to, "Yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreal on the house of Jehu." (Hosea i. 4.) O, sirs, can we find in our hearts to lose all the cost and trouble of the three nations, and all to save us a little trouble in the issue, and so to bring the guilt of all upon ourselves? Far be it from us, if we have the hearts of Christians.

(20.) Lastly, If we still refuse a Reformation, by instructing the ignorant, or exercising Christ's Discipline, many vows and promises of our own will rise up in judgment against us, and condemn us! (1.) In the National Covenant, those that entered into it did vow and promise most solemnly before the Lord and his people, that 'Having before our eyes the glory of God, and the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ—we would sincerely, really, and constantly endeavour, in our several places and callings, the Reformation of Religion in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government—and we did profess our true and unfeigned purpose, desire and endeavour for ourselves and all others under our power and charge, and both in public and private, in all duties we owe to God and man to amend our lives, and each one to go before another in the example of the Reformation. And this covenant we made as in the presence of God, the Searcher of all hearts, with a true intention to perform the same, as we shall answer at the great day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed.' O dreadful case then, that we have put ourselves into, if Infinite mercy help us not out! May we not say after the law, (2 Kings xxii. 13; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 21,) 'Great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because we have not done according to this Covenant. Could a people have devised a readier way to thrust

themselves under the curse of God, than by taking such a solemn, dreadful Covenant, and when they have done, so long, so wilfully, so openly to violate it?' Doth not this plainly bind us to the private as well as the public parts of this duty; and to a real reformation of Discipline in our practice? Again, therefore, I must needs say, what a bottomless depth of deceit is the heart of man! O what heavy charges have we brought against many others of these times, for breaking this solemn vow and covenant (from which I am far from undertaking to acquit them), when yet we that led the way, and drew on others, and daily preached up Reformation and Discipline, have so horribly violated this covenant ourselves, that in a whole country it is rare to find a Minister that hath set up Discipline or private instruction. And he that can see much done towards it in England, hath more acquaintance, or better eyes than I have.

(2.) Also in our frequent, solemn humiliation days in the time of our deepest distress and fear, how publicly and earnestly did we beg for deliverances, not as for our sakes, but for the sake of the Church and Gospel, as if we had not cared what had become of us, so that the Reformation of the Church might go on; and we promised if God would hear and deliver us, what we would do towards it. But O how unfaithful have we been to those promises! I confess it filleth my own soul with shame, to consider the unanswerableness of my affections and endeavours to the many fervent prayers, rare deliverances, and confident promises of those years of adversity! And such experience of the almost incredible unfaithfulness of our hearts, is almost enough to make a man never trust his heart again; and consequently to shake his certainty of sincerity. Have we now, or are we likely to have any higher resolutions than those were which we have broken? And it tends also to make us question in the next extremity, even at the hour of death, whether God will hear and help us any more, who have forfeited our credit with him by proving so unfaithful. If so many years' Public Humiliation, spurred on by such calamities as neither we nor our fathers for many generations had ever seen, had no more in them than now appears, and if this be the issue of all, how can we tell how to believe ourselves hereafter? It may make us fear lest our case be like the Israelites, (Psalm lxxviii. 34—37. 41, 42. 57,) who "when

he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned, and inquired early after God; and they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with God, neither were they steadfast in his Covenant. They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.—But turned back and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: They were turned aside like a deceitful bow.”

(3.) Moreover, if we will not be faithful in duties that we are engaged to, our own agreements and engagements which remain subscribed by our hands, and are published to the view of the world, will rise up in judgment against us and condemn us. We have engaged ourselves under our hands near three years ago, that we will set up the exercise of Discipline, and yet how many have neglected it to this day, without giving any just and reasonable excuse! We have now subscribed another Agreement and engagement for Catechising and Instructing all that will submit. We have done well so far; but if now we should flag and prove remiss and superficial in the performance, our subscriptions will condemn us,—this day of humiliation will condemn us. Be not deceived, God is not mocked; it is not your names only, but your hearts and hands also that he requireth: there is no dallying with God by feigned promises; he will expect that you be as good as your word. He will not hold him guiltless, that by false oaths, or vows, or covenants with him doth take his holy name in vain. “When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools; pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than thou shouldst vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error; wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thy hands?” (Eccles. v. 4—6.)

Thus I have shewed you what will be the consequence of your not setting yourselves faithfully to this work, to which you have so many obligations and engagements: and what an inexcusable thing our neglect will be, and how great and manifold a condemnation it will expose us to. Truly, brethren, if I did not apprehend the work to be of ex-

ceeding great moment to yourselves, to the people, and to the honour of God, I would not have troubled you with so many words about it, nor have presumed to have spoken so sharply as I have done. But when it is for life and death, men are apt to forget their reverence, and courtesy, and compliments. For my part, I apprehend this as one of the best and greatest works that ever I put my hand to in my life. And I verily think that your thoughts of it are as mine ; and then you will not think my words too many or too keen. I can well remember the time when I was earnest for the reformation of matters of Ceremony ; and if I should be cold in such a substantial matter as this, how disproportionate would my zeal appear ! Alas, can we think that the Reformation is wrought, when we have cast out a few Ceremonies, changed some vestures, gestures, and forms ! O no, sirs ! it is the converting and saving of souls that is our business. The chief part of the Reformation is that which doth most good, and tendeth most to the salvation of the people. Let others take it how they will, I will so far speak my conscience for your just encouragement, as to say again, that I am verily persuaded that as you are happily agreed and combined for this work, so if you will but faithfully execute this Agreement, together with your former Agreement for Discipline, you will do much more for a true Reformation, and that peaceably without meddling with controverted points, than has yet, been done in any part of England, though no more than is unquestionably your duty.

I am next to answer some of those Objections which backward minds may cast in our way.

1. Some may object, that ‘ this course will take up so much time that a man shall have no time to follow his studies : most of us are young, and have need of much time to improve our own abilities, which this course prohibits us.’ To which I answer :

(1.) We suppose them whom we persuade to this work, to understand the substance of the Christian Religion, and to be able to teach others ; and the addition of lower and less necessary things is not to be preferred before this needful communication of the fundamentals. I highly value common knowledge, and would not encourage any to set light by it ; but I value the saving of souls before it. That work which is immediately connected with the end of all our

labours must be done, whatever be undone. It is a very desirable thing for a physician to be thoroughly studied in his art; and to be able to see the reason of his experiments, and to resolve such difficult controversies as are before him; but if he had the charge of an hospital, or lived in a city that had the raging pestilence, if he would be studying ‘*de fermentatione, de circulatione sanguis, de vesiculo chylo, de instrumentis sanguificationis,*’ and such excellent, useful points, when he should be looking to his patients, and saving men’s lives, and should turn them away, and let them perish, and tell them that he cannot have while to give them advice, because he must follow his own studies, I should take that man for a preposterous student that preferred the remote means of his studies before the end itself: and indeed, I should think him but a civil kind of murderer. Men’s souls may be saved, without knowing whether God did predetermine the creature in all its acts; whether the understanding necessarily determines the will; whether God works grace in a physical or moral way of causation; what freewill is; whether God have ‘*scientiam mediam,*’ or positive decrees ‘*de malo culpæ;*’ with a hundred such like, which are the things that you would be studying when you should be saving souls. Get well to heaven, and help your people thither, and you shall know all these things in a moment, and a thousand more, which by all your studies you can never know; and is not this the most expeditious and certain way to knowledge?

(2.) If you grow not extensively in knowledge, you will by this way of diligent practice obtain the intensive and more excellent growth. If you know not so many things as others, you will know the great things better than they; for this serious dealing with sinners for their salvation will help you to far deeper apprehensions of their saving principles, than will be got by any other means; and a little more of the knowledge of these is worth all the other knowledge in the world. O, when I am looking heavenward, and gazing towards the inaccessible light, and aspiring after the knowledge of God, and find my soul so dark and distant, that I am ready to say, ‘I know not God—he is above me—quite out of my reach;’ this is the most killing and grievous ignorance! Methinks I could willingly exchange all other

knowledge that I have for one glimpse more of the knowledge of God and the life to come. O that I had never known a word in logic, metaphysics, &c.; nor known what schoolmen said, so I had but one spark more of that light that would shew me the things that I must shortly see. For my part, I conceive that by serious talking of everlasting things, and teaching the Creed and Catechism, you may grow more in knowledge, though not in the knowledge of more things, and prove much wiser men, than if you spent that time in common, or curious and less necessary things.

(3.) Yet let me add, that though I count this the chief, I wish you to have more; because those subservient sciences are very useful: and therefore I say, that you may have competent time for both, lose none upon vain recreations and employments; trifle not away a minute; consume it not in needless sleep; do what you do with all your might, and then see whether you have not competent time. If you set apart but two days in a week for this great work, you may find some for common studies out of all the other five.

(4.) Duties are to be taken together, and the greatest preferred; but none neglected that can be performed; nor one pleaded against another, but each in its proper place. But if there were such a case of necessity, that we could not read for ourselves in the course of our further studies, and instruct the ignorant too, I would throw by all the libraries in the world, rather than be guilty of the perdition of one soul; at least I know this is my duty.

Object. 2. 'But this course will destroy the health of our bodies, by continual spending the spirits, and allowing us no time for necessary recreations; and it will wholly lock us up from any civil and friendly visitations, so that we must never stir from home, nor take our delight at home one day with our friends, for the relaxation of our minds; but as we shall seem discourteous and morose to others, so we shall tire ourselves, and the bow that is still bent will be in danger of breaking at last.'

Ans. (1.) This is the mere plea of the carnal mind for its own interest. The sluggard saith, there is a lion in the way. He will not plough because of the cold. There is no duty of moment and self-denial, but if you consult with flesh and blood, they will give you as wise reasons as these

against it. Who would ever have been burnt at a stake for Christ, if this reasoning had been good ; yea, or who would ever have been a Christian ?

(2.) We may take time for necessary recreation for all this. An hour, or half an hour's walk before meat, is as much recreation as is of necessity for the health of most of the weaker sort of students. I know something of this by long experience. Though I have a body that hath languished under great weakness many years, and my diseases have been such as require as much exercise as almost any in the world, and I have found exercise the principal means of my preservation till now, and therefore have as great reason to plead for it as any man that I know alive, yet I have found that the aforesaid proportion hath been blessed to my preservation, though I know that more would have tended to increase my health. I do not know one Minister in a hundred, who needeth so much as I do. Yea, I know abundance of Ministers that scarcely ever use any exercise at all, though I commend them not for it. I doubt not but it is our duty to use as much exercise as is of necessity for the preservation of our health, so far as our work requireth : else we should for one day's work lose the opportunity of many. But this may be done, and yet the works that we are engaged in, be done too. On those two days a week that you set apart for this work, what hinders but you may take an hour or two to walk for the exercise of your bodies, much more on other days.

But as for those men that limit not their recreations to their stated hours, but must have them for the pleasing of their voluptuous humour, such have need to study better the nature of Christianity, learn the danger of living after the flesh, and get more mortification and self-denial before they preach these things to others. If you must needs have your pleasures, you should not have put yourselves into that Calling that requireth you to make God and his service your pleasure, and restraineth you so much from fleshly pleasures. Is it your Baptismal engagement to fight against the flesh ; and do you know that much of the Christian warfare consisteth in the combat between the flesh and the Spirit ; and that is the very difference between a true Christian and a wicked wretch, that one liveth after the Spirit, and mortifieth the deeds and desires of the body, and the other liveth

after the flesh? And do you know that the overcoming of the flesh is the principal part of our victory, on which the crown of life depends; and do you make it your Calling to preach all this to others, and yet must you needs have your pleasures? If you must, then for shame give over preaching the Gospel, and the profession of Christian self-denial, and profess yourselves to be as you are; and as you sow to the flesh, so of the flesh shall you receive the wages of corruption. Doth such an one as Paul say, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." (1 Cor. iv. 26, 27.) And have not we need to do so? Shall we pamper our bodies, and give them their desires in the unnecessary pleasures, when Paul must keep under his body, and bring it into subjection? Must Paul do this, lest after all his preaching he should be a cast-away; and have not we cause to fear it of ourselves much more? I know that some pleasure itself is lawful; that is, when it is of use to fit us for our work. But for a man to be so far in love with his pleasures, as that he must unnecessarily waste his precious time in them, and neglect the great work of God for men's salvation, yea, and plead for this as if it might be done, and so to justify himself in such a course, is wickedness inconsistent with the common fidelity of a Christian, much more with the fidelity of a teacher of the Church. Such as are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, must look to be loved of him accordingly, and are more fit to be cast out of Christian communion, than to be the chief in the Church; for we are commanded from such to turn away. (2 Tim. iii. 5.) Recreations for a student, must be especially for the exercise of his body, he having before him such variety of delights for his mind; and they must be as whetting is with the mower, only to be used so far as is necessary to his work. And we must be careful that it rob us not of our precious time, but be kept within the narrowest bounds that may be. I pray peruse well Mr. Wheatley's Sermon of Redemption of Time. The labour that we are now engaged to perform, is not likely much to impair our health. It is true, we must be serious; but that will but excite and revive our spirits, and not spend them. Men can talk all the day long of other

matters without any abatement of their health; and why may not we talk with men about their salvation, without such great abatement of ours?

(3.) It is to be understood that the Direction that we give, and the work which we undertake is not for dying men, that are not able to preach or speak; but for men of some competent measure of strength, and whose weaknesses are tolerable, and may admit of such labours.

(4.) What have we our time and strength for, but to lay both out for God? What is a candle made for but to burn? Burnt and wasted we must be, and is it not more fit it should be in lighting men to heaven, and in working for God, than in living to the flesh? How little difference is there between the pleasure of a long and short life, when both are at an end! What comfort will it be at death, that you lengthened your life by shortening your work! He that works much, lives much. Our life is to be esteemed according to the end and work of it, and not according to the mere duration. As Seneca can say of a drone, '*Ibi jacet, non ibi vivit; et diu fuit, non diu vixit.*' Will it not comfort us more at death to review a short time faithfully spent, than a long time unfaithfully?

(5.) And for the matter of Visitations and civilities, if they be for greater ends or use than our Ministerial employments are, you may break a Sabbath for them; you may forbear Preaching, and also this private work. But if it be otherwise, how dare you make them a pretence to neglect so great a duty? Must God wait on your friends? What if they be lords, or knights, or gentlemen! Must they be served before God? Is their displeasure or censure a greater hurt to you, than God's displeasure? Or dare you think when God will question you for your neglects, to put him off with this excuse, '*Lord, I would have spent more of my time in seeking men's salvation; but that such a gentleman, and such a friend would have taken it ill if I had not waited on them.*' If you yet seek to please men, you are no longer the servants of Christ. He that dares spend his life in flesh-pleasing and man-pleasing, is bolder than I am; and he that dares waste his time in compliments, doth little consider what he hath to do with it. O that I could but improve my time according to my convictions of the necessity of it! He that hath looked death in the face as often as I have done,

will thereby be taught to value his time. I profess I wonder at those Ministers that can hunt, shoot, bowl, or use the like recreations two or three hours, yea, whole days together; that can sit an hour together in vain discourses; and spend whole days in complimentary visits, and journies to such ends. Good Lord, what do these men think on! When so many souls about them cry for help, and death gives us no respite, and they know not how short a time their people and they may be together; and the smallest Parish hath so much work that may employ all their diligence night and day!

Brethren, I hope you are content to be plainly dealt with. If you have no sense of the worth of souls, and the preciousness of that blood that was shed for them, and of the glory that they are going to, and of the misery that they are in danger of; then are you no Christians, and therefore very unfit to be Ministers: and if you have, how can you find time for needless recreations, visits, or discourses? Dare you, like idle gossips, chat and trifle away your time, when you have such works as these to do, and so many of them? O precious time! how swiftly doth it pass away!—how soon will it be gone! What are the forty years of my life that are past? Were every day as long as a month, methinks it were too short for the work of a day! Have we not lost enough already in the days of our vanity? Never do I come to a dying man that is not utterly stupid, but he better sees the worth of time! O then, if they could call time back again, how loud would they call! If they could but buy it, what would they give for it! And yet can we trifle it away! Yea, and allow ourselves in this, and wilfully cast off the greatest works of God! O what a foolish thing is sin, that can thus distract men that seem so wise! Is it possible that a man of any true compassion and honesty, or any care of his ministerial duty, or any sense of the strictness of his account, should have time to spare for idleness and vanity!

I must tell you further, brethren, that if another might take some time for mere delight which were not strictly necessary, yet so cannot you; for your undertaking binds you to a stricter attendance than other men are bound to. May a physician in the time of the plague, take any more relaxation or recreation than is necessary for his life, when so many are expecting his help in a case of life and death? As

his pleasure is not worth men's lives, so neither is yours worth men's souls. Suppose your cities were besieged, and the enemy on one side watching all advantages to surprise it, and on the other seeking to fire it, with grenadoes which are cast in continually. I pray you tell me now, if certain men undertake it as their office to watch the ports, and others to quench the fires that might be kindled in the houses, what time would you allow these men for recreation or relaxation? At the utmost, you would allow them none but what was absolutely necessary.

Do not grudge at this now, and say, "This is a hard saying, who can bear it?" For it is your mercy; and you are well, if you know when you are well, as I shall shew you in answering the next Objection.

Object. 3. 'I do not think that it is required of Ministers that they make drudges of themselves. If they preach diligently, and visit the sick, and do other Ministerial duties, and occasionally do good to those they converse with, I do not think that God requires that we should thus tie ourselves to instruct every person distinctly, and to make our lives a burden and a slavery.'

Ans. (1.) Of what use and weight the Duty is, I have shewed before; and how plainly it is commanded. And do you think God doth not require you to do all the good you can? Will you stand by and see sinners gasping under the pangs of death, and say, 'God doth not require me to make myself a drudge to save them?' Is this the voice of Ministerial or Christian compassion, or rather of sensual laziness and diabolical cruelty? Doth God set you work to do, and will you not believe that he would have you do it? Is that the voice of obedience, or of rebellion? It is all one whether your flesh do prevail with you to deny obedience to acknowledged duty, and say plainly, 'I will obey no further than it pleaseth me,' or whether it may make you wilfully reject the evidence that should convince you that it is a duty, and say, 'I will not believe it to be my duty, unless it please me.' It is the true character of an hypocrite, to make a religion to himself of the cheapest part of God's service, which will stand with his fleshly ends and felicity; and to reject the rest, which is inconsistent therewith. To the words of hypocrisy, this objection superaddeth the words of gross impiety. For what a wretched calumny is this against the most high God, to

call his service slavery and drudgery? What thoughts have these men of their Master, their work, and their wages? The thoughts of a Believer or of an Infidel? Are these men like to honour God, and promote his service, that have such base thoughts of it themselves? Do they delight in holiness who account it a slavish work? Do they believe indeed the misery of sinners, that account it such a slavery to be diligent to save them? Christ saith, he that denieth not himself, and forsaketh not all; and taketh not up his cross and followeth him, cannot be his disciple; and yet these men count it a slavery to labour hard in his vineyard, and deny their ease, in a time when they have all accommodations and encouragements? How far is this from forsaking all; and how can these men be fit for the Ministry, that are such enemies to self-denial, and so to true Christianity? Still therefore I am forced to say, that all these objections are so prevalent, and all these carnal reasonings hinder the Reformation; and in a word, hence is the chief misery of the Church, *that so many are made Ministers before they are Christians*. If these men had seen the diligence of Christ in doing good, when he neglected his meat to talk with one woman, (John iv,) and when they had no time to eat bread, (Mark iii. 22,) would not they have been of the mind of his carnal friends, that went to lay hold on him, and said, "He is beside himself." They would have told Christ he made a drudge or a slave of himself, and that God did not require all this ado. If they had seen him all night in prayer, and all day in preaching and healing, it seems he would have had this censure from them for his labour! I advise these men to search their own hearts, whether they unfeignedly believe the word that they preach? Do you believe indeed that such glory attends those that die in the Lord, and such torment those that die unconverted? If you do, how can you think any labour too much, for such weighty hands? If you do not, say so, and get you out of the vineyard, and go with the prodigal to keep swine, but do not undertake to feed the flock of Christ.

Do you not know that it is your own benefit which you grudge at? The more you do, the more you receive: the more you lay out, the more you have coming in. If you are strangers to these Christian paradoxes, you should not have taken on you to teach them to others. At the present our incomes of spiritual life and peace are commonly in way of

duty ; so that he that is most in duty hath most of God : exercise of grace increaseth it. And is it a slavery to be more with God, and to receive more from him, than other men ? It is the chief solace of a gracious soul to be doing good, and receiving by doing, and to be much exercised about those divine things which have his heart. A good stomach will not say at a feast, what a slavery is it to bestow my time and pains so much to feed myself ? Besides, we prepare for fuller receivings hereafter. ' We set our talents to usury, and by improving them we shall make five become ten, and so be made rulers of ten cities. We shall be judged according to our works. Is it a drudgery to send to the utmost parts of the world to exchange our trifles for gold and jewels ? Do not these men seek to justify the profane, that consider diligent godliness a drudgery, and reproach it as a precise and tedious life ? They say they will never believe but a man may be saved without all this ado. Even so say these in respect to the works of the Ministry ; they take this diligence for ungrateful tediousness, and they will not believe but a man may be a faithful Minister without all this ado ! It is a heinous sin to be negligent in so great a business ; but to approve of that negligence, and to plead against duty as if it were none ; and when they should lay out themselves for the saving of souls, to say, ' I do not believe that God requireth it ; ' this is so great an aggravation of the sin, that, where the Church's necessity doth not force us to make use of such, for want of better, I cannot but think them worthy to be cast out as the rubbish, and as salt that hath lost its savour, that is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill, but men cast it out. " He that hath ears to hear, saith Christ in these words, let him hear." (Luke xiv. 34, 35.) And if such Ministers become a by-word and reproach, let them thank themselves ; for it is their own sin that maketh them vile. (1 Sam. iii. 13.) And while they thus debase the service of the Lord, they do but debase themselves, and prepare for a greater abasement at the last.

Object. 4. ' But if you make such severe laws for Ministers, the Church will be left without : for what man will put himself upon such a toilsome life, or what parents will choose such a burden for their children ? Men will avoid it both for

the bodily toil, and the danger to their consciences, if they should not well discharge it.'

Ans. (1.) It is not we, but Christ that hath made and imposed these laws which you call severe ; and if I should silence, or misinterpret them, or tell you that there is no such things, that would not relax them, nor excuse you. He that made them, knew why he did it, and will expect the performance of them. Is infinite goodness itself to be questioned or suspected by us, as making bad or unmerciful laws ? Nay, it is mere mercy in him that imposeth this great duty upon us. If physicians be required to be diligent in hospitals or pest-houses, or with other patients, to save their lives, were there not more mercy than rigour in this law ? What, must God let the souls of your neighbours perish, to save you a little labour and suffering, and this in mercy to you ? O what a miserable world should we have, if blind, self-conceited man had the ruling of it !

(2.) And for a supply of Pastors, Christ will take care. He that imposeth duty, hath the fulness of the Spirit, and can give men hearts to obey his laws. Do you think Christ will suffer all men to be as cruel, unmerciful, and self-seeking as you are ? He that hath undertaken himself the work of Redemption, borne our transgressions, and been faithful as the chief Shepherd and Teacher of the Church, will not lose all his labour and suffering for want of instruments to carry on his work ; nor will he come down again to do all himself, because no other will do it : but he will provide men to be his Servants and Ushers in his school, that shall willingly take the labour on them, and rejoice to be so employed, and account that the happiest life in the world which you account so great a toil ; nor would they change it for all your ease and carnal pleasure ; but for the saving of souls and the propagating of the Gospel of Christ, will be content to bear the burden and heat of the day, and to fill up the measure of the sufferings of Christ in their bodies, and to do what they do with all their might, and to work while it is day, and to be the servants of all, and not to please themselves but others for their edification ; and to become all things to all men, that they may save some ; and to endure all things for the elect's sake ; and to spend and be spent for men, though the more they love, the less they should be beloved, and should be

accounted their enemies for telling them the truth ; with such Pastors will Christ provide his people after his own heart, that will feed them with knowledge : as men that seek not theirs, but them. What, do you think Christ can have no Servants, if such as you shall with Demas, turn to the present world, and forsake him ? If you dislike his service, you may seek you a better where you can find it, and boast of your gain in the conclusion : but do not threaten him with the loss of your service. He hath made such laws as you will call severe, for all who will be saved, as well as for his Ministers, though he impose not on them the same employment ; for all must deny themselves, and mortify the flesh, and be crucified to the world, and take up their cross, and follow Christ, that will be his disciples. And yet Christ will not be without disciples, nor will he hide his seeming hard terms from men, to entice them to his service, but will tell them of the worst, and then let them come or choose. He will call to them beforehand to count what it will cost them, and tell them that “ the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.” He comes not to give them worldly peace and prosperity, but to call them to suffer with him, that they may reign with him, and in patience to possess their souls, and conquer, that they may be crowned with him, and sit down on his throne ; and all this he will enable his chosen to perform. If you be at that pass with Christ as the Israelites were once with David, and say “ Will the son of Jesse give you fields and vineyards ? Every man to your tents, O Israel.” And if you say, “ Now look to thy own house O David,” you shall see that Christ will look to his own house ; and do you look to yours as well as you can, and tell me at the hour of death or judgment which is the better bargain, and whether Christ had more need of you, or you of him.

And for scrupling it in conscience for fear of failing ; It is not involuntary imperfections that Christ will take so heinously, but unfaithfulness and wilful negligence : and it shall not serve your turn to run out of the vineyard or harvest, on pretence of scruples that you cannot do the work as you ought. He can follow you and overtake you as he did Jonas, with such a storm, as shall lay you out in the belly of hell : totally to cast off a duty, because you cannot endure

to be faithful in the performance of it, will prove but a poor excuse at last. If men had but reckoned well at first, of the difference between things temporal and eternal, and of what they shall lose or get by Christ, and had that faith which is the evidence of things not seen, and lived by faith and not by sense, all these objections would be easily resolved; and all the pleas of flesh and blood for its interest, would appear to have no more reason, than a sick man's plea for cold water in a pestilential fever.

Object. 5. 'But to what purpose is all this, when most of the people will not submit? They will but make a scorn at your motion, and tell us, they will not come to us to be Catechised, and that they are too old now to go to school; and therefore it is as good to let them alone, as trouble ourselves to no purpose.'

Answ. (1.) It is not to be denied, but too many people are obstinate in their wickedness, too many simple ones love simplicity, and too many scorers delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge. But the worse they are, the more deplorable is their case, the more to be pitied, and the more diligent should we be for their recovery.

(2.) I would it were not too much long of Ministers, that a great part of the people are so obstinate and contemptuous. Did we shine and burn before them as we should, had we convincing sermons and convincing lives, did we set ourselves to do all the good we could, whatever it cost us; were we more humble and meek, more loving and charitable, and let them see that we set light by all worldly things in comparison of their salvation, much more might be done than is, and the mouths of many would be stopped, and though still the wicked will do wickedly, yet more would be tractable, and the wicked would be fewer and calmer than they are. If you say, that the ablest and most godly Ministers in the world have had as untractable and scornful parishioners as any others; I answer, that even, able godly men, have some of them been too lordly and strange, and some of them too uncharitable and worldly, and backward to difficult, though necessary works; and some of them have done but little in private, when they have done excellently in public, and so have hindered the fruit of their labours. But where these impediments are absent, experience telleth us that the suc-

cess is much greater, at least, as to the bowing of people to more calmness and teachableness; but we cannot expect that all should.

(3.) Their wilfulness will not excuse us from our duty. If we offer them not our help, how know we who will refuse it? Offering it is our part, and accepting is theirs. If we offer it not, we leave them excusable, (for then they refuse it not), but it is we that are left without excuse; but if they refuse our help when it is offered, we have done our part, and delivered our own souls.

(4.) If some refuse our help, others will accept it; and the success with them may be so much, as may answer all our labour. It is not all that are wrought on by your public preaching, and yet we must not therefore give it over as unprofitable.

Object. 6. 'But what likelihood is there that men will be informed or converted by this means, that will not by the preaching of the word, when that is God's chief ordinance appointed to that end? Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word preached.'

Answ. (1.) The advantages I have shewed you before, and therefore will not stand to repeat them; only, lest any think that this will wrong them by hindering them from preaching, I add to the twenty benefits before-mentioned, that it will be an excellent means to help you in preaching. For as the physician's work is half done when he fully knows the disease, so when you are well acquainted with your people's case, you will know what to preach on; and it will furnish you with matter to talk an hour with an ignorant or obstinate sinner, as much as an hour's study will do; for you will know what you have need to insist on, and what objections of theirs to refute.

(2.) I hope there is none so silly as to think this conference is not preaching. Doth the number we speak to make it preaching; or doth interlocution make it none? Surely a man may as truly preach to one as to a thousand; and, as is aforesaid, if you search, you will find, that most of the Gospel preaching in those days, was by conference, or serious speeches to people occasionally, and frequently interlocutory; and that with one, two, or more, as opportunity served. Thus Christ himself did most commonly preach.

Besides, we must take account of our people's learning, if we regard the success of our work.

There is nothing therefore from God, from the Spirit, nor from right reason, to cause us to make any question of our work, or to be unwilling to it; but from the world, the flesh, and the devil, we shall have much, and more perhaps than we yet expect. But against all temptations, if we have recourse to God, and look on his great obligations on one side, and the hopeful effects and reward on the other, we shall see that we have little cause either to draw back, or to faint.

Let us set before us this pattern in the text, and learn our duty thence, and imitate it. To serve the Lord, and not men or ourselves, with all humility of mind, and not proudly, and with many tears, to keep back nothing that is profitable to the people, and to teach them publicly and from house to house; that the matter of our preaching be repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; that though we go bound in the spirit, not knowing particularly what shall befall us, but only that every where bonds and afflictions await us, yet none of these things shall move us, neither will we count our life dear to ourselves, so that we may finish our course with joy, and the Ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God; to take heed to ourselves and to all the flock, particularly against domestic seducers and schisms, without ceasing to warn every one day and night with tears; to covet no man's silver, or gold, or apparel, as counting it more honourable to give than to receive. O what a lesson is here before us! but how ill is it learned by those that still question whether all this be their duty. I confess some of these words of Paul have so often been presented before mine eyes, and stuck upon my conscience, that I have been deeply convinced by them both of my duty and negligence: and I think this one speech better deserves a twelvemonth's study, than most things that young students do lay out their time in. O, brethren, write it on your study doors, or set it as your copy in capital letters still before your eyes! Could we but properly learn two or three lines of it, what Preachers should we be!—(1.) For our general business, **SERVING THE LORD WITH HUMILITY OF MIND.**—(2.) Our special work, **TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES, AND TO ALL**

THE FLOCK.—(3.) Our doctrine, REPENTANCE TOWARDS GOD, AND FAITH TOWARD OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.—(4.) The place and manner of teaching, I HAVE TAUGHT YOU PUBLICLY AND FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE.—(5.) The object and internal manner, I CEASED NOT TO WARN EVERY ONE NIGHT AND DAY WITH TEARS. This is it that must win souls and preserve them.—(6.) His innocency and self-denial for the advantage of the Gospel, I HAVE COVETED NO MAN'S SILVER OR GOLD.—(7.) His patience, NONE OF THESE THINGS MOVE ME, NEITHER COUNT I MY LIFE DEAR.—(8.) And among all our motives, these have need to be in capital letters before our eyes. We oversee and feed THE CHURCH OF GOD, WHICH HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD.—GRIEVOUS WOLVES SHALL ENTER IN AMONG YOU, NOT SPARING THE FLOCK, and OF YOUR OWNSELVES SHALL MEN ARISE, SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS, TO DRAW AWAY DISCIPLES AFTER THEM. Write all this upon your hearts, and it will do yourselves and the Church more good than twenty years' study of lower things, which though they get you greater applause in the world, yet separated from these, will make you but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.

The great advantage of a sincere heart is, that God and glory, and the saving of souls are their very end; and where that end is truly intended, no labour or suffering will stop them, or turn them back; for a man must have his end, whatever it cost him. He still retains this lesson, whatever he forget, ONE THING IS NECESSARY: and *seek first the kingdom of God*, and therefore says, *Necessity is laid upon me, and woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel!* This is it that will most effectually make easy all our labours, make light all our burdens, make all our sufferings seem tolerable, and cause us to venture on any hazard in the way. That which I once made the motto of my colours in another warfare, I desire may be still before my eyes in this, which yet, according to my intention, is not altogether another. On one side, *He that saveth his life shall lose it*; on the other, *Nec propter vitam vivendi perdere causas*. This, Doctor Reynolds thought had reason enough in it to hold him to his labours, though it cost him his life. He that knoweth that

he serveth a God that will never suffer any man to be a loser by him, need not fear what hazard he runs in his cause ; and he that knows that he seeks a prize, which if obtained, will infinitely overmatch his cost, may boldly engage his whole estate on it, and sell all to purchase so rich a pearl.

Well, brethren, I will spend no more words in exhorting wise merchants to such a bargain, or telling Teachers themselves of such common truths ; and if I have said more than needs already, I am glad. I hope now I may take it for granted, that you are resolved on the utmost diligence and fidelity in the work. On which supposition I shall now proceed.

CHAPTER VII.

Directions for the right managing this Work.

IT is so happy a work which we have before us, that it is a thousand pities it should be destroyed in the birth, and perish in our hands. Though I know we have a knotty generation to deal with, and that it is past the power of any of us to change a carnal heart without the effectual grace of the Holy Ghost ; yet it is so usual with God to work by means, and to bless the right endeavours of his servants, that I cannot fear, but great things will be done, and a wonderful blow will be given to the kingdom of darkness by our work, if it do not miscarry through the fault of the Ministers themselves. The chief danger is want of diligence and skill: of the former I have spoken much already : as for the latter, I am so conscious of my own unskilfulness, that I am far from imagining that I am fit to give directions to any but the younger and inexperienced of the Ministry ; and therefore must expect so much justice in your interpretation, as that you will suppose me now to speak to none but such. But yet something I shall say, and not pass over this part in silence, because the number of such is so great, and I am so apprehensive that the welfare of the Church and Nation doth much depend on the management and success of this work.

The points wherein you have need to be solicitous are these two.—(1.) To bring your people to submit to this

course of private instruction : for if they will not come near you, what good can they receive?—(2.) To do the work so as may most tend to the success of it, when they do come.

I. And for the *first*, the best directions that I can give are these following :

1. The chief means of all is, for a Minister so to behave himself in the main course of his Ministry and life, as may tend to convince his people of his ability, sincerity, and unfeigned love to them ; for if they take him to be ignorant, they will despise his teaching, and think themselves as wise as he. If they think him self-seeking, or hypocritical, and one that doth not mean as he saith, they will suspect all that he saith and doth for them, and will not regard him. If they think he intendeth but to domineer over their consciences, and to trouble and disgrace them, or merely to exercise their wit and memory, they will flee away from him as an adversary, and from his endeavours as hurtful and disgusting. Whereas when they are convinced that he understandeth what he doth, and have high thoughts of his abilities, they will reverence him, and the more readily stoop to his advice. When they are persuaded of his uprightness, they will the less suspect his motions ; and when they perceive that he intendeth no private ends of his own, but merely their good, they will the sooner be persuaded by him. Because those that I write to are supposed to be none of the most able Ministers, and therefore may despair of being revered for their parts ; I say to such :—(1.) You have the more need to study and labour for their increase.—(2.) You must necessarily have that which Amesius makes the lowest degree tolerable, viz. to be ‘*supra vulgus fidelium* ;’ and it will produce some reverence when they know you are wiser than themselves.—(3.) And that which you want in ability, must be made up in the other qualifications, and then your advice may be as successful as others.

If Ministers are content to purchase an interest in their People at the dearest rates to their own flesh, and would condescend to them, and be familiar, and loving, and prudent in their carriage, and abound according to their ability in good works, they might do much more than usually they do. Not that we should much regard an interest in them for our own sakes ; but that we may be more capable of promoting the interest of Christ, and of furthering their own

salvation. Were it not for their own sakes, it were no great matter whether they love or hate us : but what commander can do any great service by an army that hates him ? And how can we think that they will much regard our counsel, while they abhor or disregard the persons that give it ! Labour therefore for some competent interest in your People's estimation and affection, and then you may the better prevail with them.

Object. ' But what should a Minister do that findeth he hath quite lost his interest with them ?'

Ans. If they be so vile a people that they hate him not for any weakness, nor through misreports about particular things, but merely for endeavouring their good, though in prudence as well as zeal, and would hate any other that should do his duty ; then must he in patience and meekness continue to instruct these that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth. But if it be upon any weaknesses of his, or difference in lesser opinions, or prejudice merely against his own person, let him try first to remove the prejudice by all lawful means ; and if he cannot, let him tell them, ' It is not for myself, but for you that I labour ; and therefore seeing that you will not obey the word from me, I desire that you will agree to accept of some other that may do you that good, which I cannot : ' and so leave them, and try whether another man may not be fitter for them, and he for another people. An ingenious man can hardly stay with a people against their wills ; and a sincere man can more hardly, for any interest of his own, remain in a place where he is likely to be unprofitable, to hinder the good which they might receive from another man, who hath the advantage of a greater interest in their estimation and affection.

2. Supposing then this general Preparation ; the next thing to be done is, to use the most effectual means to convince them of the benefit and necessity of this Course, to their own souls. The way to win the consent of any man to any thing that you offer, is to prove it to be good for him, and to do this by evidence that hath some fitness and proportion with his own understanding ; for if you cannot make him believe that it is good or necessary for him, he will never receive it. You must therefore preach to them some plain and convincing Sermons to this purpose before-

hand, which shall fully shew them the benefit and necessity of the knowledge of Divine Truths in general, and of knowing the Principles in special, and that the aged have the same duty and need as others, and in some respects much more. Heb. v. 12, affordeth us many observations suitable to our present business.—As, (1.) That God's Oracles must be man's lessons.—(2.) Ministers must teach these, and people must learn them.—(3.) The Oracles of God have some principles or fundamentals, that all must know that will be saved.—(4.) These Principles must be first learned.—(5.) It may be well expected that people thrive in knowledge according to the means or teaching which they possess; and if they do not, it is their sin.—(6.) If any have lived long in the Church under the means of knowledge, and yet be ignorant of these first Principles, they have need to be taught them yet, how old soever they may be. All this is plain from the text; whence we have a fair opportunity by twenty clear and convincing reasons to shew them the necessity of knowing God's Oracles, especially, the first Principles; and especially for the aged, that have sinfully lost so much time already, have long promised to repent when they were old, should now have been Teachers of others, and whose ignorance therefore is a double sin and shame, who have so little time to learn it, and are so near their judgment; and who have souls to save or lose as well as others. Convince them how impossible it is to walk in the way to heaven without knowing it, when there are so many difficulties and enemies in our way. Men cannot do their worldly business without knowledge, nor learn a trade without an apprenticeship. Who can love, or seek, or desire that which he knoweth not? Convince them what a contradiction it is to be a Christian, and yet refuse to learn. For what is a Christian but a Disciple of Christ, and how can he be his Disciple, that refuseth to be taught by him? They that refuse to be taught by his Ministers refuse to be taught by him. For Christ will not come down from heaven again to teach them by his own mouth, but hath appointed his Ministers to keep school and teach them under him. To say therefore that they will not be taught by his Ministers, is to say, they will not be taught by Christ; and that is to say, they will be none of his Disciples. Abundance of such undeniable evidences, we have at hand to convince them of their duty.

Make them understand that it is not an arbitrary business of our own devising and imposing, but necessity is laid upon us, and if we look not to every member of the flock according to our power, they may perish in their own iniquities, but their blood will be required at our hands; it is God and not we, that is the contriver and imposer of the work; therefore they blame God, more than us in accusing it. Would they be so cruel as to wish a Minister to cast away his own soul knowingly and wilfully, for fear of troubling them in hindering their damnation? Especially acquaint them fully with the true nature of the Ministerial office, and the Church's necessity of it; how it consisteth in teaching and guiding all the flock; shew them that they must come to the congregation as scholars to school, and must be content to give an account of their learning, and be instructed man by man. Let them know what a tendency this hath to their salvation, what a profitable improvement it will be of their time, how much vanity and evil it will prevent; and when they once find that it is for their own good, they will the more easily yield to it.

3. When this is done, it will be necessary, according to our Agreement, that we give one of the Catechisms to every Family in the Parish, poor and rich, that they might be so far without excuse; for if you leave it to themselves, perhaps half of them will not get them. Whereas, when they have them put into their hands, the receiving is a kind of engagement to learn them; and if they do but read the Exhortation, it will perhaps convince them, and excite them to submit. In delivering them, the best way is, for the Minister first to give notice in the congregation that they shall be brought to their houses, and then go himself from house to house and deliver them, and take the opportunity of persuading them to the work; and as you go, take a catalogue of all the persons at years of discretion in the several Families, that you may know whom you have to take care of and instruct, and whom to expect when it cometh to their turn. I have formerly, in the distributing of some books among them, desired every Family to fetch them; but I found more confusion and uncertainty in that way; but in small Parishes either way may serve. And for the charges of the books, if the Minister be able, it will be well for him to bear it; if not, the best affected of his people of the richer sort should

bear it among them : or on a day of humiliation preparatory to the work, let the collection that is wont to be for the poor be employed to buy Catechisms, and the people be desired to be more liberal, and what is wanting, the well-affected to the work may make up. And for the order of proceeding in small Parishes, the matter is not great ; but in greater it will be needful that we take them in order, Family by Family, beginning the execution a month or six weeks after the delivery of the books, that they may have time to learn ; and thus taking them together in common, they will the more willingly come, and the backward will be the more ashamed to keep off.

4. Be sure that you deal gently with them, and take off all discouragements as effectually as you can.—(1.) Tell them publicly, that if they have learned any other Catechism already, you will not urge them to learn this, unless they desire it themselves ; for the substance of all Catechisms that are orthodox is the same ; only our reasons for offering them this, was its brevity and fulness, that we might give them as much as we could in a few words, and so make their work more easy. If any of them would rather learn any other orthodox Catechism, let them have their choice.—(2.) As for the old people of weak memories, and not likely to live long in the world, who complain that they cannot remember the words ; tell them that you do not expect that they should perplex their minds about it, but hear it often read over, and see that they understand it, and get the matter into their minds and hearts, and then they may be borne with, though they remember not the words.—(3.) And let your dealing with those that you begin with be so gentle, convincing and winning, that the report of it may be an encouragement to others to come.

5. If all this will not serve to bring any particular persons to submit, do not so cast them off ; but go to them and expostulate the case with them ; know what their reasons are, and convince them of the sinfulness and danger of their contempt of the help that is offered them. A soul is so precious, that we should not lose one for want of labour ; but follow them while there is any hope, and not give them up as desperate, till there is no remedy. Before we give them over as dogs or swine, let us try the utmost, that we may have the experience of their obstinate contempt or

renting us, to warrant our forsaking them. Charity beareth and waiteth long.

II. Having used these means to procure them to come in and submit to your teaching, the next thing to be considered is, how you should deal most effectually with them in the work : and again I must say, that I think it an easier matter by far, to compose and preach a good sermon, than to deal rightly with an ignorant man for his instruction in the necessary principles of religion. Much as this work is contemned by some, I doubt not but it will try the parts and spirits of Ministers, and shew them the difference between one man and another, more fully than pulpit preaching will do. And here I shall, as fitting to my purpose, transcribe the words of a most learned, orthodox and godly man, Bishop Usher, in his sermon before King James at Wansted, on Ephes. iv. 13. " Your Majesty's care can never be sufficiently commended, in taking order that the chief heads of the catechism should in the ordinary ministry be diligently propounded and explained unto the people throughout the land ; which I wish were as duly executed every where, as it was piously by you intended. Great scholars possibly may think, that it standeth not so well with their credit, to stoop thus low, and to spend so much of their time in teaching these rudiments and first Principles of the doctrine of Christ. But they should consider that the laying of the foundation skilfully, as it is the matter of greatest importance in the whole building ; so is it the very masterpiece of the wisest builder. According to the grace of God which is given to me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, saith the great apostle. And let the most learned of us all try it whenever we please, we shall find, that to lay this groundwork rightly, (that is, to apply ourselves to the capacity of the common auditory, and to make an ignorant man to understand these mysteries in some good measure) will put us to the trial of our skill, and trouble us a great deal more, than if we were to discuss a controversy, or handle a point of learning in the schools. Yet Christ did give as well his apostles, and prophets, and evangelists, as his ordinary pastors and teachers, to bring us all, both learned and unlearned, unto the unity of this faith and knowledge : and the neglecting of this, is the frustrating of the

whole work of the Ministry. For let us preach never so many sermons to the people, our labour is but lost, as long as the foundation is unlaïd; and the first Principles untaught, upon which all other doctrine must be builded."

The Directions which I think necessary to be observed in the managing of the work, for matter and manner, are these following:

Direct. 1. When your neighbours come to you, one family, or more, begin with a brief preface, to demulce their minds, and take off this offence, unwillingness or discouragement, to prepare them to entertain your following instructions.—'Neighbours and brethren, it may perhaps seem to some of you, an unusual and troublesome business, that I put you upon; but I hope you will not think it needless; for if I had thought so, I should have spared you and myself this labour. But my conscience hath told me, yea, God hath told me in his Word, what it is to have the charge of men's souls, and how the blood of them that perish in their sins will be required at the hands of a Minister that neglecteth them, that I dare not be guilty of it. Alas, all our business in this world is to get well to heaven; and God hath appointed us to be guides to his people, to help them safe thither. If this be well done, all is done; and if this be not done, we are for ever undone! The Lord knows how short a time you and I may be together; and therefore it concerns us to do what we can for our own and your salvation, before we leave you, or you leave the world. All other employments in the world are but toys and dreams in comparison of this! The labours of your calling are but to prop up the cottages of your flesh, while you are making ready for death and judgment, which God knows is near at hand. And I hope you will be glad of help in so needful a work, and not think it much that I put you to this trouble, when the trifles of the world cannot be got without greater trouble.'

This, or something to this purpose, may tend to make them more willing to hear you, and receive instruction, and give you an account of their knowledge or practice, which must be the work of the day.

Direct. 2. When you have spoken thus to them all, take then the persons one by one, and deal with them as far as you can in private, out of the hearing of the rest. For some

cannot speak freely before others, and some cannot endure to be questioned before others, because they think it tendeth to their shame to have others hear their answers ; and some persons that can make better answers themselves, will be ready when they are gone to tattle of what they heard, and to despise those that speak not so well as they. You must therefore be very prudent to prevent all these inconveniences. But the main reason is, as I find by experience, people will better take plain, close dealing, about their sin, and misery, and duty, when you have them alone, than they will before others ; and if you have not opportunity to set it home and deal freely with them, you will frustrate all. If therefore you have a convenient place, let the rest stay in one room, while you confer with each person by themselves in another ; only for the necessary avoiding of scandal, we must speak to the women, in the presence of some others : and if we do lose some advantage by it with regard to the success of our instructions, there is no remedy ; better do so, than by giving occasion to those who are seeking it, destroy all the work. Yet we may so contrive it, that though some others be in the room, yet what passages are less fit for others' observance, may be spoken '*submissâ voce*' that others may be no hearers of it ; and therefore they may be placed at the remotest part of the room : or at least let none be present but the members of the same family, that are more familiar, and not so likely to reproach one another. In your rousing examinations and reproofs, address yourselves chiefly to the most ignorant, secure, and vicious, that you may have the clearer ground for your *closest dealing*, and that the hearing of it may awaken the by-standers, to whom you seem not so directly to apply it. These small things deserve attention, because they are parts of a work that is not small ; and small errors may hinder a great deal of good.

Direct. 3. Let the beginning of your work be, by taking an account of what they have learned of the catechism, receiving their answer to each question ; and if they are able to recite but a little or none of it, try whether they can rehearse the Creed and the Decalogue.

Direct. 4. Then choose out some of the weightiest points, and try, by further questions, how they understand them. And therein be careful of these things following : (1.) That you do not begin with less necessary points, but these which

themselves may perceive do most nearly concern them. As, 'What do you think becomes of men after death? Do you believe that you have any sin; or that you were born in sin; and what doth sin deserve? What remedy hath God provided for the saving of sinful, miserable souls? Hath any one suffered for our sins, in our stead; or must we suffer for them ourselves? Who are they that God will pardon? Who shall be saved by the blood of Christ? What change must be made on all that shall be saved, and how is it made? Where is our chief happiness? What is it that our hearts must be most set upon? and such like.'—(2.) Take heed of asking them nice, needless, or doubtful and very difficult questions, though about matters of the greatest weight in themselves; especially be very cautious how you put them upon the definitions or descriptions. Some self-conceited men will be busy with questions which they cannot answer themselves, and as censorious and severe with the poor people that cannot answer them, as if life and death depended thereon. You will ask them perhaps, What is God? and how defective an answer must you make yourselves! You may tell what he is not, sooner than what he is. If you ask, What is *Repentance*, what is *Faith*, or what is *Forgiveness of Sin*? how many Ministers may you ask, before you have a right answer, or else they would not be so disagreed in the point: so if you ask them What *Regeneration* is, what *Sanctification* is? But you will, perhaps, say, 'If men know not what God is, what repentance, faith, conversion, justification and sanctification are, how can they be true Christians and be saved?' I answer, It is one thing to know exactly what they are, and another thing to know them in their nature and effects, though with a more general and indistinct knowledge; and it is one thing to *know*, and another thing to *tell* what this or that is. The very name as commonly used doth signify to them, and express from them the thing without a definition; and they partly understand what that name signifieth, when they cannot tell it you in other words. As they know what it is to repent, to believe, to be forgiven; by custom of speech they know what these mean, and yet cannot define them, but perhaps put you off with the country answer: To repent, is to repent; and to be forgiven, is to be forgiven; or if they can say, It is to be

pardoned, it is fair. Yet do I not absolutely dissuade you from the use of such questions; but do it cautiously, in case you suspect some gross ignorance in the point; especially about God himself.—(3.) In such a case so contrive your question, that they may perceive what you mean, and that it be not a nice definition, but a necessary solution that you expect. Look not after words but things, and there leave them to a bare yea or nay, or the mere election of one of the two descriptions which you yourself shall propound. As ‘What is God: is he made of flesh and blood as we are, or is he an invisible Spirit: had he any beginning: can he die? What is faith: is it a believing all the Word of God? What is it to believe in Christ: is it all one as to become a true Christian; or to believe that Christ is the Saviour of the world, and to accept him for your Saviour to pardon, teach, govern and glorify you? What is repentance: is it only to be sorry for sin, or is it the change of the mind from sin to God, or both?—(4.) And as you must do thus when you come to hard points, as definitions, or the like; so in all points where you perceive that they understand not the meaning and stress of your question, you must first draw out their answer into your question, and demand but his yea or nay; yea, if it be never so easy a point that you are upon, you must do thus at last, in case by the first question you have had an unsatisfactory answer. e. g. I have often asked some very ignorant people, How do you think your many and great sins will be pardoned? And they tell me by their repenting and mending their lives; and never mention Jesus Christ. I ask them further, But do you think that your amendment can make God any amends or satisfaction for the sin that is past? They will answer, ‘We hope so, or else we know not what will.’ One would think now that these men had no knowledge of Christ at all: and some I find have indeed none. Hence, I tell them the history of the Gospel, and what Christ did and suffered, and why: they stand wondering at it as a strange thing that they had never heard before, and say, they never heard this much till now, though they came to church every Lord’s-day. But others, I perceive, give such answers, because they understand not the scope of my question, but think that I take Christ’s death as granted, and only ask them what shall

make God satisfaction, as their part under Christ. And when I asked them whether their deeds can merit any thing of God? they say 'No; but they hope God will accept them.' And if I ask, Can you be saved without the death of Christ? they say, 'No.' And if I ask, What hath he done or suffered for you? they will say, 'He shed his blood for us;' and will profess that they place their confidence in that for salvation. Many men have that in their minds, which is not ripe for utterance, and through want of education and practice, they are strangers to the expressions of those things which they have some conceptions of: and, by the way you may here see how needful it is to deal very tenderly with the common people for matter of knowledge and defect of expression, if they are teachable, and willing to use means, and to live obediently; for many even aged, godly persons, cannot speak their minds in any tolerable expressions; no, nor can they learn when expressions are put into their mouths. Some of the most pious, experienced and approved Christians that I know, complain exceedingly to me with tears, that they cannot learn the words of the Catechism, and when I consider their advantages, that they have lived under the most excellent helps, in constant duty, and in the best company for forty, fifty, or sixty years together, it teacheth me what to expect from poor, ignorant people, that never had such advantages, and not to reject them so hastily as some hot, and too high professors, would have us do.—(5.) This also must be observed, that if you find them at a loss, and perceive them troubled that they cannot answer, step in yourself and take the burden off them, answering the question yourself; and then do it thoroughly and plainly, and make a full explication of the whole business to them, that by your teaching they may be brought to understand it before you leave them. And herein it is commonly necessary that you fetch up the matter 'ab origine,' and take it on in order till you come to the point in question.—(6.) Usually, with the grossly ignorant, it is necessary that you run over all the sum of our Religion to them in the most familiar way that you can possibly devise. But this must be the next Direction.

Direct. 5. When you have done what you see cause in the trial of their knowledge, proceed next to instruct them yourselves, according to their several capacities. If it be a pro-

fessor that understandeth the fundamentals, fall on what you perceive he most needeth, either explaining further some of the doctrines of the Gospel, or laying the grounds of some duty which he may doubt of, or shewing the necessity of what he neglecteth, or meeting with his sins or mistakes, as may be most convincing and edifying to him. If it be one that is grossly ignorant, give him a plain recital of the sum of the Christian Religion in a few words ; for though it be in the Catechism already, yet a more familiar way may better help them to understand it. As thus : ‘ You must know, that from everlasting there was one only God that had no beginning, and can have no end, who is not a body as we are, but a most pure, spiritual Being, that knoweth all things, and can do all things, and hath all goodness and blessedness in himself. This God is but one, but yet three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in an incomprehensible manner, above our reach ; yet we have somewhat in ourselves and other creatures that may give us some resemblance of it. As in a man, his power, his understanding, and will, are but one soul, and yet they are not one faculty, but differ one from another : or as in the sun, the being or power, and the heat and the light, are not all one ; and yet there is but one sun ; so in a more incomprehensible manner it is in God. And you must know that this one God did make all the world by his Word ; the heavens he made to be the place of his glory, and made a world of holy angels to serve him, in his glory ; but some of these did by pride or other sin fall from God, and are become devils that shall be miserable in torments for ever ; when he had made the rest of this lower world, he made man, as his noblest creature here, even one man and one woman, Adam and Eve ; and he made them perfect without any sin or fault, and put them into the garden of Eden, and forbid them to eat but of one tree in the Garden, and told them that if they did, they should die. But the devil that had first fallen himself did tempt them to sin, and they yielded to his temptation, and by wilfully sinning they fell under the curse of God’s law, and fell short of the glory of God. But God of his infinite wisdom and mercy did send his own Son Jesus Christ to be their Redeemer, who as he was promised in the beginning, so in the fulness of time, sixteen hundred and fifty-five years ago, was made man, and was born of a Vir-

gin by the power of the Holy Ghost, and lived on earth among the Jews about thirty-three years; preached the Gospel himself, and wrought many miracles to prove his doctrine, and bring men to believe in him; healing the lame, the blind, the sick, and raising the dead by the word of his mouth, by his Divine power; and at the end, by the malice of the Jews, and his own consent, he was offered upon the Cross, as a sacrifice for our sins, to bear that curse that we should have borne; and when he was buried, he rose again the third day, and lived on earth forty days after: and before his departure he sent his Apostles and other Ministers to preach the Gospel of Salvation to the world, and to call home lost sinners by repentance, and to assure them in his name, that if they will but believe in him and take him for their Saviour, and unfeignedly lament their former sins, and turn from them to God, and will take everlasting glory for their portion, and be content to resign their carnal interests and desires, he will pardon freely all that is past, and be merciful to them for the time to come, and will lead them up into spiritual communion with God, and bring them to his glory when this life is ended. But for them that make light of their sins and of his mercy, and will not forsake the pleasures of this world for the hopes of another, they shall be condemned to everlasting punishment. This Gospel Christ hath appointed his Ministers to preach to all the world; and when he had given this in charge to his Apostles, he ascended up into heaven before their faces, where he is now in glory with God the Father, in our nature, ruling all; and at the end of this world, he will come again in that nature, and will call the dead to life again, and set them all before him to be judged, and all that truly repented and believed in him and were renewed by his Spirit, and renounced this world for the hopes of a better, shall be judged to live with God in glory, and shall be like to his angels, and praise him for ever; and the rest that repented not, and believed not in him, but lived to the flesh and the world, shall be condemned to everlasting misery. So that you may see by this, that man's happiness is not in this world but in the next, and that all men have lost their hopes of that happiness by sin, and that Jesus Christ, the only Son of God and the Redeemer of the world, hath recovered it for us by the price of his blood, and hath made a New

Covenant with us, assuring us of life and salvation, if we repent and believe in him for that life, and mortify our fleshly desires. To this end he sendeth forth his Holy Spirit to convert all that shall be saved, and to turn their hearts from this world to God. If ever you mean to be saved, therefore, it must be thus with you: your former sins must be the grief of your soul, and you must fly to a crucified Christ as your only refuge from the deserved curse, and the Spirit of Christ must convert you, and dwell in you, and make you wholly a new creature: or there is no salvation.' Some such short, plain rehearsal of the principles of Religion, in the most familiar manner that you can devise, with a brief touch of application in the end, will be necessary when you deal with the grossly ignorant; and if you perceive they understand you not, go over it again till they do; and if possible fix it in their memories.

Direct. 6. Whether they be grossly ignorant or not, if you suspect them to be ungodly, in the next place make a prudent inquiry into their state; and the best and least offensive way will be by a few words to prepare their minds, by convincing them of the necessity of it; as thus, or to this purpose, 'You see in the seventh Article proved in Scripture, that the Holy Ghost doth by the word enlighten men's minds, and soften and open their hearts, and turn them from the power of Satan to God by faith in Christ, and so makes them a sanctified, peculiar people to God; and that none but these are made partakers of Christ and life. Now though I have no desire needlessly to pry into any man's state, yet because it is the office of Ministers to give advice to people in the matters of salvation, and because it is so dangerous to be mistaken, where life or death everlasting doth lie upon it, I would entreat you to deal truly, and tell me whether you ever found this great change upon your own heart, or not? Did you ever find the Spirit of God by the word, come in upon your understanding with a new and heavenly life, as hath made you a new creature? The Lord that seeth your heart doth know whether it be so or not; therefore I pray you, see that you speak the truth!' If he tell you, he hopes he is converted—all are sinners—but he is sorry for his sins, or the like; then tell him more particularly in a few words what true conversion is, and so renew and enforce the inquiry thus: 'Because your salvation or damnation lieth upon it, I would

fain help you a little in this, that you may not be mistaken in a business of such consequence, but may find out the truth before it be too late; for as God will judge us impartially, so we have his word before us, by which we may know now, how God will judge us then; for this word tells us most certainly who they be that shall go to heaven, and who to hell. Now the Scripture tells us that the state of an unconverted man is this: he seeth no great matter of felicity in the love and communion of God in the life to come, which may draw his heart thither from this present world; but he liveth to himself, and the main bent of his life is, that it may go well with his body here. The world and flesh are highest in his esteem, and nearest to his heart, and God and glory stand below them and further off, and all their service of God is but a giving him that which the world and flesh can spare. This is the true case of every unconverted man; and all that are in this case, are in a state of misery. But he that is truly converted, hath had a light shining into his soul from God, which hath shewed him the greatness of his sin and misery, and made it a heavy load upon his soul; and hath shewed him what Christ is, and hath done for sinners, and made him admire the riches of God's grace in him! O what glad news is it to him, that yet there is hope for such lost sinners as he—that so many and so great sins may be pardoned—and that this is offered to all that will accept it! How gladly doth he entertain this message and offer: and for the time to come he resigneth himself and all that he hath to Christ to be wholly his, and disposed of by him, in order to the everlasting glory which he hath promised. He hath now such a sight of the blessed state of the saints in glory, that he despiseth all this world as dross and dung in comparison of it, and there he layeth up his happiness and his hopes, and takes all the matters of this life but as so many helps or hindrances in the way to that; so that the very bent and main care and business of his life is to be happy in the life to come. This is the case of all that are truly converted, and shall be saved. Is this your case or not? Have you found such a change or work as this upon your soul? If he say, he hopes he hath, descend to some particulars distinctly, e. g. 'I pray you then answer these two or three questions.—(1.) Can you truly say, that all the known sins of your life past are the grief of your heart, that

you have felt everlasting misery is due to you for them, and that in the sense of this heavy burden, you have felt yourself a lost man, and have gladly entertained the news of a Saviour, and cast your soul upon Christ alone for pardon by his blood?—(2.) Can you truly say, that your heart is so far turned from your former sins, that you hate the sins that formerly you loved, and love that holy life that you had no mind to before, and that you do not now live in the wilful practice of any known sin? Is there no sin which you are not heartily willing to leave whatever it cost you, and no duty which you are not willing to perform?—(3.) Can you truly say, that you have so far taken the everlasting enjoyments of God for your happiness, that it hath the most of your heart, of your love, desire, and care; and that you are resolved by the strength of grace to let go all that you have in the world rather than hazard it; and that it is your daily and principal business to seek it? Can you truly say that, though you have your failings, yet your main care and bent of your whole life is to please God and enjoy him for ever; and that your worldly business is but as a traveller seeking provision in his journey, and heaven is your home?" If he say yea, to the first and third, tell him how great a thing it is for a man's heart to abhor his sin, and to lay up his happiness unfeignedly in another world, and to live in this world for one that is out of sight; and therefore desire him to see that it be so indeed. If he say yea, to the second question, then turn to the ninth, tenth, eleventh, or twelfth Articles of the Catechism, and read over some of those duties which you must suspect him to omit; and ask him, whether he performs such or such a duty, especially Family and private prayer, and the holy spending of all the Lord's-day; because these are of so great moment (of which anon).

Direct. 7. When you have either by former discovery of gross ignorance, or by these latter inquiries into his spiritual state, discerned an apparent probability that the person is yet in an unconverted state; your next business is to endeavour with all your skill and power to bring his heart to the sense of his condition.—'Truly, neighbour, I have no desire, the Lord knows, to make your condition worse than it is, nor to put any causeless fear or trouble in your mind: but I suppose you would take me for a flattering enemy,

and not a faithful friend, if I should daub you, and not tell you the truth. If you sought to a physician in your sickness, you would have him tell you the truth, though it were the worst: much more here; for, there the knowledge of your disease may by fears increase it, but here you must know it, or else you can never be recovered from it. I much fear that you are yet a stranger to the new life of all them that Christ will save; for if you were a Christian indeed, and truly converted, your very heart would have been set on God and the life to come, you would have admired the riches of grace in Christ, you would have made it your business to prepare for eternity, and you durst not, you would not live in any wilful sin, nor in the neglect of known duties. Alas, what have you done, how have you spent your time till now! Did you not know that you had a soul to save or lose, and that you must live in heaven or hell for ever, and that you had your life and time in this world for that purpose, to prepare for another! Alas, what have you been doing all this while that you are so ignorant, and so unprepared for death if it should now find you! If you had but as much minded heaven as earth, you would have known more of it, and done more for it, and inquired more diligently after it than you have! You can learn how to do your business in the world, and why could you not have learned more of the will of God? You have neighbours that could learn more, that have had as much to do in the world as you, and as little time? Do you think that heaven is not worth your labour, or that it can be had without care and pains, when you cannot have the trifles of the world without seeking after them, and when God hath bid you, first seek his kingdom and the righteousness thereof? Alas, neighbour, what if you had died before this hour in an unconverted state! what had become of you, and where had you now been? Why you did not know all this while that you should live a day to an end! O that ever you would be so cruel to yourselves as to venture your everlasting state so desperately as you have done! What did you think of? Did you not all this while know that you must shortly die, and be judged as you were then found? Had you any greater work to do, or any greater business to mind than your salvation? Do you think that all that you can get in this world will comfort you in a dy-

ing hour, or purchase your salvation, or ease the pains of hell-fire?"—Set these things home with a more earnest voice than the former part of your discourse; for if you get not to the heart, you do little or nothing, and that which affecteth not is soon forgotten.

Direct. 8. Next this, conclude the whole with a practical exhortation, which must contain two parts:—(1.) The duty of the heart in order to a closure with Christ, and that which is contained in that closure.—(2.) The use of external means for the time to come, and the avoiding of former sins.—‘Neighbour, I am heartily sorry to find you in so sad a case, but I should be more sorry to leave you in it; and therefore let me entreat you, for the Lord’s sake, and for your own sake, to regard what I shall say to you, for the time to come. It is the Lord’s great mercy that he did not cut you off in your unconverted state, that you have yet life and time, and that there is a sufficient remedy provided for your soul in the blood of Christ; and he is yet offered with pardon and life to you as well as others; God hath not left sinful man to utter desperation, for want of a ransom by a Redeemer as he hath done the devils; nor hath he made any exception in the offer or promise of pardon and life against you any more than against any others. If you had yet but a bleeding heart for sin, and would come to Christ believingly for recovery, and resign yourself to him as your Saviour and Lord, the Lord would have mercy on you, pardon your sins, and save your soul; and I must tell you that as it must be the great work of God’s grace to give you such a heart, so if ever he pardon and save you, he will make this change upon you, that I have before mentioned; he will make you feel your sin as the heaviest burden in the world, as that which is most odious in itself, and hath laid you open to the curse of God; he will make you see that you are a lost man, and that there is no way but one for you, even everlasting damnation, unless you are pardoned by the blood of Christ, and sanctified by his Spirit; he will make you see the need you have of Christ, and how much you are beholden to him for the shedding of his blood, and how all your hope and life is in him: he will make you see the vanity of this world and all that it can afford you, and that all your happiness is with God, in that everlasting life, where, with saints and angels, you may behold his glory,

and live in his presence, and praise him for ever, when those that reject him shall be tormented with the devils; and because it is only Christ the Redeemer that can bring you to that glory, and deliver you from that torment, he will make you look to him as your hope and life, and cast your burdened soul upon him; and give up yourself to be saved, and taught, and ruled by him; and he will possess you with the Spirit of Holiness, that your heart shall be set upon God and heaven as your treasure, and the care of your mind, and the business of your life, shall be to obtain it, and you shall despise this world, deny your fleshly interests and desires, and cast away the sin with abhorrence which you delighted in; and count no pains too great—no suffering too dear for the obtaining of that everlasting life with God. Let me tell you, that till this work be done, you are a miserable man; and if you die before it is done, you are lost for ever. Now you have hope and help before you, but then there will be none. Let me therefore entreat these two or three things of you, and do not deny them me, as you love your soul.—(1.) That you will not rest in this condition: be not quiet in your mind, till you find a true conversion wrought. Think when you rise in the morning, O what if this day should be my last, and death should find me in an unrenewed state! Think when you are about your labour, O how much greater a work have I yet to do, to get my soul reconciled to God and possessed of his Spirit! Think when you are eating, or drinking, or looking on any thing that you possess in the world, What good will all this do me, if I live and die an enemy to God, a stranger to Christ and his Spirit, and so perish for ever. Let these thoughts be day and night upon your mind, till your soul be changed.—(2.) Think seriously what a vain thing this world is, and how shortly it will leave you to a cold grave, and everlasting misery, if you have not a better treasure than this. Think what it is to live in the presence of God, to reign with Christ, and to be like the angels; and that this is the life that Christ hath procured you, and is preparing for you, and freely offereth you if you will accept it in and with himself upon his easy and reasonable terms. Think whether it be not madness to slight such endless glory, and to prefer these fleshly dreams, and earthly shadows before it. Use yourself to such considerations as these, when you are alone, and let them dwell upon your

mind.—(3.) Presently, without any more delay, accept of felicity, and this Saviour : close with the Lord Jesus that offereth you this eternal life. Joyfully and thankfully accept his offer, as the only way to make you happy ; and then you may believe that all your sins shall be done away by him.—(4.) Resolve presently against your former sins ; find out what hath defiled your heart and life, and cast it away by repentance, as you would poison out of your stomach, and abhor the thought of taking it in again.—(5.) Set yourselves close to the use of God's means till this change be wrought, and then continue his means till you are confirmed, and at last perfected. Because you cannot of yourselves make this change upon your heart and life, betake yourself daily to God for it by prayer, and beg earnestly as for your life that he will pardon all your former sins, and change your heart, shew you the riches of his grace in Christ, and the glory of his kingdom, and draw up your heart to himself. Follow God day and night with these requests. Fly from temptations and occasions of sin, and forsake your former evil company, and betake yourselves into the company of those that fear God, and will help you in the way to heaven. Especially spend the Lord's-day in holy exercises, both public and private, and lose not one quarter of an hour of any of your time, but especially of that most precious time, which God hath given you purposely that you may set your mind upon him, be instructed by him, and to prepare yourself for your latter end. What say you ? Will you do this presently ? At least so much of it as you can. Will you promise me to think of these things that I before mentioned, and to pray daily for a change of heart till you have obtained it, and to change your company and courses, and fall upon the use of God's means in reading and hearing the Scriptures, and meditating on them, especially on the Lord's-day ? And here be sure if you can, to get their promise, and engage them to amendment, especially to use means, and change their company, and forsake actual sinning because these are more in their reach, and in this way they may wait for the accomplishing of that change that is not yet wrought. And to do this solemnly, remembering them of the presence of God that heareth their promises, and will expect the performance.

Direct. 9. Before you dismiss them, add a few words to

this effect; 'I pray you take it not ill that I have put you to this trouble, or dealt thus freely with you! It is as little pleasure to me as to you. If I did not know these things to be true and necessary, I would have spared this labour to myself and you. But I know that we shall be here but a little while—we are almost at the world to come already—and therefore it is time for us all to look about us, and see that we be ready when God shall call us.' Because it is but seldom that we ourselves shall have opportunity to speak with the same persons, set them in a way for the perfecting of what is begun. Engage the Governor of each Family to call all his Family to account every Lord's-day evening, before they go to bed, what they can rehearse of the Catechism, and so to continue till they have all learned it perfectly; and when they have done so, yet still to continue to hear them recite it, that they may not forget it; for, even to the most judicious it will be an excellent help to have still in memory, a sum of the Christian doctrine, for matter, method and words. As for the Rulers of Families themselves, or those that are under such Rulers as will not help them, if they have learned some small part of the Catechism only, engage them either to come again when they have learned the rest, or else to go to some experienced neighbour, and recite it to them, and take their assistance, when they cannot have yours.

Direct. 10. Have all the names of your Parishioners by you in a book; and when they come and recite the Catechism, note in your book who come, and who do not; and who are so ignorant as to be utterly unfit for the Lord's-supper and other holy communion, and who not. And as you perceive the necessities of each, so deal with them for the future. But for those that are utterly obstinate, and will not come to you, nor be instructed by you, remember the last article of our Agreement, 'to deal with them as the obstinate despisers of instruction should be dealt with, in regard of the Communion, and the application of sealing and confirming Ordinances;' which is to avoid them, and not hold holy or familiar communion with them, in the Lord's-supper or other Ordinances; and though some reverend brethren are for admitting their children to Baptism, and offended with me for contradicting it, yet so cannot I be, nor shall dare to do it upon any pretences of their ancestor's

faith, or of a dogmatical faith of the rebellious Parents, supposing them both to be such as in that article we have mentioned. To these particulars, I add this general:—

Direct. 11. Through the whole course of your conference with them, see that the manner as well as the matter be suited to the end. Concerning the manner, observe these particulars:—(1.) Speak differently according to the difference of the persons that you have to deal with. To the dull and obstinate you must be more earnest and sharp; to the tender and timorous that are already humbled, you must rather insist on direction and confirmation; to the young you must lay greater shame on sensual voluptuousness, and shew them the nature and necessity of mortification; to the aged you must do more to disgrace this present world, and make them apprehensive of the nearness of their change, and the aggravations of their sin, if they should live and die in ignorance or impenitence; to inferiors and the younger sort you must be more free; to superiors and elders more respectful; to the rich this world must be more disgraced, and the nature and necessity of self-denial opened, and the deceitful consequence of preferring the present prosperity to future happiness, as also the necessity of improving their talents in well doing; to the poor shew the riches of glory which are propounded to them in the Gospel, and how well present things may be spared, where the everlasting may be got. Also those sins must be most insisted on to which their age or sex, or calling and employment in the world doth most incline them to. As in females, loquacity, evil speeches, passion, malice, pride, &c. Of all which, and abundance more differences, calling to us for different carriage. See “Gregor. Mag. de Officio Pastor.”—(2.) Be as condescending, familiar, and plain as is possible, with those that are of a weaker capacity.—(3.) Give them Scripture proof for all you say, that they may see it is not you only, but God by you that speaketh to them.—(4.) Be as serious in all, but especially in the applicatory part as you can. I scarcely fear any thing more than lest some Ministers should slubber over the work, and do it superficially and without life, and destroy this as they do all other duties, by turning it into mere formality; putting a few cold questions to them, and giving them two or three cold words of advice, without any life and feeling in themselves, and therefore not likely to

produce any in the hearers. But surely he that valueth souls, and knoweth what an opportunity is before him, will do accordingly.—(5.) To this end I should think it very necessary that we, both before and in the work, take special pains with our own hearts; especially to excite and strengthen our belief of the Truth of the Gospel, and the invisible glory and misery that is to come. I am confident this work will exceedingly try the strength of our faith; for he that is superficially a Christian, and not sound in the faith, will likely feel his zeal quite fail him, especially when the duty is grown common, for want of a proper sense of the things which he is to treat of to keep it alive. An affected fervency and hypocritical stage action, will not hold out in such duties long. The pulpit will have more of them, than a conference with poor ignorant souls; for the pulpit is the hypocritical Minister's stage. There, and in the press, and in public acts, where there is room for ostentation, you are sure to have his best, and almost all. It is other kind of men that must effectually do the work now in hand.—(6.) It is therefore very meet that we prepare ourselves to it by private prayer; and if time would permit, if we did begin and end with a short prayer with our people, it were best.—(7.) Carry on all, even the most earnest passages, in clear demonstrations of love to their souls, and make them feel through the whole, that you aim at nothing but their salvation, and avoid all harsh, discouraging passages, throughout.—(8.) If you have not time to deal so fully with each one particularly as is here directed, then omit not the most necessary parts; take several of them together that are friends, and will not seek to divulge each other's weaknesses, and speak to them in common as much as concerneth all; and only the examinations of their knowledge and state, and convictions of misery and special directions, must be used to the individuals alone; but take heed of slubbering it over, or being too brief, without real necessity.

Direct. 12. Lastly, if God enable you, extend your charity to the poorest sort, before they part from you: give them somewhat towards their relief, and from the time that is thus taken from their labours, especially for encouragement of them that do best; promise as much when they have learned the Catechism. I know you cannot give what you have not; but I speak to them that can.—So much shall serve for di-

rections to the younger Ministers, in their dealing with the more ignorant or carnal sort of persons.

As for them that are under fears and troubles of mind, who yet give us hopes of the work of saving grace on their souls, though it deserve a full discourse to direct us in dealing with them, yet I shall not meddle with it now; because I intended this discourse for another end, and because I have done so much as I think necessary already in my "Directions for Peace of Conscience."

CHAPTER VIII.

ANOTHER sort there are, that we may have occasion of conference with, though they will scarcely stoop to be catechised; and that is, opinionative questionists, that being tainted with pride and self-conceitedness, are readier to teach, than to be taught, and to vent their own conceits, and quarrel with you, as being ignorant or erroneous yourselves, than to receive instruction: and if they are tainted with any notable error or schismatical dispositions, they will seek to waste time in vain janglings, and to dispute, rather than to learn. I am not now directing you what to do with those men at other times (of that I shall give a touch anon); but only in case they come to you at this time which is appointed for catechising and edifying instruction: nor is it my thought to presume to direct any but the weaker sort of Ministers in this, any more than in the former.

It is likely you will have some come to you amongst the rest, that when they should give an account of their faith, will fall into a teaching and contentious discourse: one will tell you, that you have no true Church, because you have such bad members; another will ask you, by what authority you baptize infants; another will ask you, how you can be a true Minister, if you had your ordination from Prelates; and another will tell you, that you are no true Minister, because you had not your ordination from Prelates; another will ask you, what Scripture you have for praying or singing psalms in a mixed assembly; and another will quarrel with you, because you administer not the Lord's-supper to them, in the gesture and manner as they desire, and were wont to receive it; or because you exercise any discipline among

them. If any such person should come to you, and thus seek to divert your better discourse, I should think it best to take this course with them:—

1. Let them know that this Meeting is appointed for instructing the people in the Principles of Religion, and you think it very unmeet to pervert it from that use; it being a sin to do God's work disorderly, or to be doing a lesser work, when you should be doing a greater: and therefore as you durst not turn God's Public Worship on the Lord's-day into vain or contentious disputing, which discompose men's minds, and spoil a greater work; so neither do you think it lawful to abuse these times to lower uses, which are appointed for higher.

2. Yet let him know that you do not this to avoid any trial of the Truth; and therefore that you will at any other fit season, endeavour to give him full satisfaction; or you will as willingly receive instruction from him, if he be able, and have the truth, as you desire he should receive instruction from you: and if it must be so, you will yield to his desire before you part, if there be but time when you have dispatched the greater work: but upon condition only, that he will submit to the greater first.

3. Then desire him first to give you some account of the Principles in the Catechism: and if he deny it, convince him before all of the iniquity of his course.—(1.) In that it is the first principles that salvation most dependeth on, and therefore being of greatest excellency and necessity, are first to be taken into consideration.—(2.) In that it is the appointed business of this day.—(3.) It is orderly to begin with the fundamentals, because they bear up the rest, which suppose them, flow from them, and cannot be understood without them.—(4.) It is the note of a proud, vainglorious hypocrite, to make a flourish about lesser things, and yet either to be ignorant of the greater, or to scorn to give that account of his knowledge, which the people, whom he despiseth, refuse not to give.

If he yield to you, ask him only such questions as are of great weight, and yet strain him up a little higher than you do the common people; and especially put him most upon defining or distinguishing, or expounding some terms or sentences of Scripture. As such questions as these may

be put to him, which call for definitions, wherein it is ten to one but you will find him ignorant. ‘What is God? What is Jesus Christ? What is the Holy Ghost? What is Person in the Trinity? How many Natures hath Christ? Was Christ a Creature before his Incarnation or the Creation? Is he called the Firstborn of all Creatures as God, or as man? Is he called the Image of the invisible God, and the Express Image of the Father’s person or subsistence as a creature, or as God? Was Adam bound to believe in Christ? Was one or two Covenants made with Adam before his fall? Did the first Covenant of Nature make any promise of everlasting celestial Glory? Did it threaten hell-fire or temporal death? Did it threaten eternal torment to the soul only, or to the body also? Should there have been any Resurrection of the body, if Christ had not come to procure it? Should Christ have come, or have been our head, or have brought us to glory, if man had not fallen? What is the first Covenant? What its conditions? What the second Covenant, and its conditions? What was the difference between the Covenant with Adam, and that by Moses? Was it a Covenant of works or of grace, that was made by Moses? What were the Conditions of salvation before Christ’s incarnation? What is forgiveness of sin? What is justification? How are we said to be justified by faith? How by works? What is faith? What repentance? What sanctification, vocation, regeneration? Is the Covenant of grace made with the elect only, or with all; or with whom? What is freewill? Is there any conversion without the Word? What is the true nature of special grace; and what is the proper difference of a regenerate man from all others? What is the Catholic Church? How will you know the true Church? How know you the Scripture to be the word of God? What is Christ’s priestly, prophetical, kingly office? Be they three offices, or but one; and be they all?’—with abundance of the like.

If it be Sacrament controversies which he raiseth, tell him it is necessary that you be first agreed, what Baptism and the Lord’s-supper are; before you dispute who should be baptized; and it is twenty to one, he is not able truly to tell you what the Sacraments themselves are. A true definition of Baptism or the Lord’s-supper is not so commonly given, as is pretended.

4. If he discover his ignorance in the cases propounded, endeavour to humble him in the sense of his pride and presumption ; and let him know what it is, and what it signifieth to go about with a contentious, proud behaviour, while he is indeed so ignorant in things of greater moment.

5. See that you are able to give him better information yourselves in the points wherein you find him ignorant.

6. But especially take care that you discern the spirit of the man ; and if he be a settled, perverse Schismatic, or Heretic, so that you see him peremptory, and quite transported with pride, and have no great hopes of his recovery ; then do all this that I have before said openly before all that are present, that he may be humbled or shamed, and the rest confirmed. But if you find him godly and temperate, and that there is any hope of his reduction, then see that you do all this privately, between him and you only ; let not fall any bitter words that tend to his disparagement. And thus I advise, both because we must be as tender of the reputation of all good men, as fidelity to them, and to the truth, will permit ; we must bear one another's burdens, and not increase them, and we must restore those with a spirit of meekness that fall through infirmity, remembering that we ourselves also may be tempted ; and also because there is small hope that you should ever do them good, if once you exasperate them, and disaffect them towards you.

7. See that to such erring persons as you have any hopes of, you carry yourselves with as much tenderness and love as will consist with your duty to the Church of God : for most of them, when they are once tainted this way, are so selfish and high-minded, that they are much more impatient of reproof than many of the profaner sort of people.

This way did Musculus take with the Anabaptists, visiting them in person, and relieving them, even while they railed at him as antichristian, and so continued without disputing with them, till they were convinced that he loved them, and then they sought to him for advice themselves, and many of them were reclaimed by him.

8. Either in the conclusion of your meeting, or at an appointed time, when you come to debate their controversy with them, tell them, ' That seeing they think you unable to teach them, and think themselves able to teach you, it is your desire to learn ; you suppose disputing, as tending usually

to exasperate men's minds, rather than to satisfy them, is to be used as the last remedy ; therefore you are here ready, if they are able to teach you, to learn of them and desire them to speak their minds.' If they refuse, tell them, you think it the humblest and most Christian edifying way for him that hath most knowledge to teach, and the other to learn ; and therefore your purpose is to be either a learner or a teacher, and not be a disputant, till they make it to be necessary. When they have declared their minds to you in a teaching way, if it be nothing but the common pleas of the seduced, as it is likely it will not, tell them, ' That this is no new thing to you ; it is not the first time that you have heard it, or considered of it, and if you had found a Divine evidence in it, you had received it long ago : you are truly willing to receive all truth, but you have received that which is contrary to this doctrine, with far better evidence than they bring for it, &c.' If they desire to hear what your evidence is, tell them, if they will hear as learners, you shall communicate your evidence in the meekest way you can, which if they promise to do, let them know that this promise obligeth them to impartiality and an humble, free entertainment of the truth, and that they do not turn back in rash carping and contention, but take what shall be delivered into serious consideration : which if they promise, if you are so far versed in the point in hand, as to manage it well ' *ex tempore*, ' or the person be temperate and fit for such debates, then come in with your evidence in a way of discourse, first shewing your reasons against the grossest imperfections of his own discourse, and then giving him your grounds from Scripture ; not many, but rather a few of the clearest and best approved. When you have done, (or without verbal teaching if you find him unfit to learn that way) give him some book that most effectually defendeth the questioned truth, and tell him, ' That it is a vain thing to say that over so often, which is so fully said already, and a man may better consider of what he hath before his eyes, than of that which slideth through his ears, and is mistaken or forgotten : and therefore you desire him as an humble learner to peruse that book with mature consideration ; because there are the same things that you would say to him, and desire him to bring you in a sober and solid answer to the chief strength of it, if after perusal he judge it to be unsound, ' and if possible, fasten some one of the most striking evi-

dences on him before you leave him. If he refuse to read the book, endeavour to convince him of his unfaithfulness to the truth and his own soul: doth he think that God's truth is not worth his study? or, will he venture his soul, as the ungodly do, and the Church's peace with it, and all to save himself so small a labour? Is it not just with God to give him over to delusion, that will not be at a little pains to be informed, nor afford the truth an equal hearing?

9. But above all, before you part, yea, or before you debate the controversy, see that you do sum up the precedent truths wherein you are both agreed. (1.) Know whether he agree to all that is in the Catechism, which you teach the people? (2.) Whether he suppose that you may attain salvation, if you be true to so much as you are agreed in? (3.) Whether they that are so far agreed as you are, should not live in love and peace, as children of the same God, and members of the same Christ, and heirs of the same kingdom? (4.) Whether you are not bound, notwithstanding your smaller differences, to be helpers in the main work of the Gospel for the conversion and saving of souls? (5.) Whether they are not bound to manage the private differences so, as they may not hinder the main work, and therefore to let the lesser stoop to the greater? (6.) Whether they ought not to hold communion in public worship, and Church-relation, with those that are so far agreed, and walk in the fear of God? (7.) And whether it be not schism to separate from them, for the sake of that small disagreement, themselves being not necessitated by communion to any actual sin?

I speak all this only of the tolerable differences that are among men fearing God; and in that case, if the person be sober and understanding, he must needs yield to the affirmative of these questions: which if he do, or to any of them, let him subscribe it, or openly aver it; and then let all the by-standers be made apprehensive, that none of the great matters that you deal with them about, are questioned, but all yielded unquestionable; and the affixed Scripture leaves them so; therefore there is no cause for them to receive the least discouragement.

I confess it is past doubt, that differing brethren may well join in recommending the truth that they are agreed in to the ignorant people! Bishop Usher told king James, in his Sermon at Wansted, on the Church's Unity,

that he made this motion even to the Papist Priests themselves, that they might join in teaching the people of that barbarous nation the common principles that both were agreed in: a motion too Christian for sullen, factious zeal to entertain. I will repeat his own words, page 33, "The danger then of this ignorance being by the confession of the most judicious Divines of both sides, acknowledged to be so great; the woful estate of the poor Country wherein I live is much to be lamented, where the people generally are suffered to perish for want of knowledge, (he meant the Papists,) the vulgar superstitions of Popery not doing them half that hurt that the ignorance of those common Principles of the Faith doth, which all true Christians are bound to learn. The consideration whereof hath sometimes drawn me to treat with those of the opposite party to move them, that however in other things we differ one from another, yet we should join together in teaching those main points, the knowledge whereof was so necessary to salvation, and of the Truth whereof there was no controversy betwixt us. But what, for the jealousies which these distractions in matters of Religion have bred among us, and what, for other respects, the motion took small effect; and so betwixt us both, the poor people are kept still in miserable ignorance, neither knowing the grounds of the one Religion, nor of the other." So far this learned Christian Bishop.

And what wonder if Popish Priests refuse this motion, when now among us it is so rare a matter to find any in England, though he differ only in the point of Infant-Baptism, that will calmly and without fraudulent designs of secretly promoting his own opinions by it, entertain and prosecute such a motion from the common good; as if they had rather, that Christianity were thrust out of the world, or kept under, than infants should be admitted into the Church! Well, let any party or person pretend what they will of zeal or holiness, I will ever take the 'Dividatur' for an ill sign: the true mother abhors the division of the child; and the true Christian doth prefer the common interest of Christianity, before the interest of a faction, or an opinion, and would not have the whole building endangered, rather than one peg should not be driven in, as he would have it; he had rather a particular truth, if we suppose it a truth, should suffer, than the whole or the main.

Having given you this Advice, what to do with this kind of men in your conference on the occasion now in question, I shall add a word or two of Advice, how to carry yourself towards them at other times ; for the preservation of the unity and peace of your congregations doth much depend on your right dealing with such as these. For, alas, for grief and shame, it is most commonly men that profess more than ordinary religiousness, that are the dividers of the Church.

1. I must premise, that the chief part of your work to preserve the Church from such, doth consist in the prevention of their fall ; for when they are once thoroughly infected, be the error what it will, they are but seldom recovered ; but if they be beaten out of the error, which they first fell into, they go to another, and perhaps thence to another ; but seldom return to the Truth.

2. To which end, it is most desirable that the Minister should be of parts above the people, so far as to be able to teach them, and awe them, and manifest their weaknesses to themselves, or to all. The truth is, for it cannot be hid, it is much long of the Ministers, that our poor people are run into so many factions ; and particularly, the weakness of too many is not the least cause. When a proud seducer shall have a nimble tongue, and a Minister be dull and ignorant, so that such a one can baffle him, or play upon him in the ears of others, it brings him into contempt, and overthrows the weak ; for they commonly judge him to have the best cause, that hath the most confident, plausible, triumphant tongue. But when a Minister is able to open their shame to all, it mightily tendeth to preserve the Church from their infection.

3. It is necessary also to this end, that you frequently and thoroughly possess your people with the nature, necessity, and daily use of the great unquestionable Principles of Religion, and of the great sin and danger of a perverse zeal about the lower points before the greater are well laid, and let them be made sensible how it is the Principles, and not their smaller controversies that life or death depend upon.

4. Make them sensible of the mischiefs of Schism, and the great and certain obligations that lie upon us all to maintain the Church's unity and peace.

5. When a fire is kindled, resist it in the beginning, and

make not light of the smallest spark ; and therefore go presently to the infected person, and follow him by the means hereafter mentioned, till he be recovered.

6. Especially use a fit diversion. When a small controversy begins to endanger the Church, raise a greater yourself, which you have better advantage to manage, and which is not likely to make a division ; this is, let them know that there are far greater difficulties than theirs to be first resolved, such as some of the questions before mentioned, and so give them a catalogue of them, and set them at work upon them, that they may be matter of avocation from that sore, where the humours begin their conflux, and also that they may be humbled in the sense of their ignorance, and their proud self-conceits may be somewhat abated.

7. See that you preach to such auditors as these, some higher points, that stall their understandings, and feed them not with all milk, but sometimes with stronger meat ; for it exceedingly puffs them up with pride, when they hear nothing from Ministers but what they know already, or can say themselves. This makes them think themselves as wise as you, and as fit to be Teachers ; for they think you know no more than you preach : and this hath set so many of them on preaching, because they hear nothing from others but what they can say themselves ; and Ministers do not set them such patterns as may humble them, and deter them from that work. Not that I would have you neglect the great fundamental verities, or wrong the weak and ignorant people, while you are dealing with such as these ; but only when the main part of your sermons is as plain as you can speak, let some one small part, be such as shall puzzle these self-conceited men ; or else have one sermon in four or five on purpose for them ; not by heaping up citations of fathers, nor repeating words of Latin or Greek, unless when you are convincing them of the difficulty of a text of Scripture, for they will but deride all this ; but take up some profound questions, such as the schools voluminously agitate, and let them see that it is not your obscure manner of handling, but the matter itself that is too hard for them, and so may see that they are yet but children that have need of milk, and that you would be more upon such higher points, if it were not that their incapacity doth take you off.

8. See that you preach as little as may be against them

in the pulpit, in any direct manner, opposing their Sect by name, or by any reproachful titles; for they are exceedingly tender, proud, passionate, and rash, ordinarily, that are entangled in a Schism; and they will but hate you, and fly from you as an enemy, and say you rail. The way therefore is, without naming them, to lay the grounds clearly and soundly, which must subvert their errors; and then the error will fall of itself: and when you are necessitated to deal with them directly, do it not by short, unsatisfactory applications, and toothed snatches, or irritating reproaches; but, without naming them, take up the controversy, and handle it thoroughly, peaceably, and convincingly, and so let them alone in public; yet be not too long upon it; but give them your fullest evidence in a few sermons, not saying all that may be said, but choosing out that which they can have least pretence to quarrel with, and passing over that which they may say more against, or will require more ado to clear and defend.

9. Be sure to keep up some Private meetings, draw them in among you, and manage them prudently. By this means you may keep them from dividing meetings among themselves, where they may say what they will behind your back without control; for most professors are addicted to Private meetings, which, well ordered, are of great use to their edification; and if they have not the opportunity of such as they should have, they will attend such as they should not. In the managing of them, as to the present purpose, observe these things:—(1.) Be sure to be always with them yourselves.—(2.) Let not the main exercises of the meeting be such as tend to contention, or to private men's proud ostentation of their parts, but such as tend to the edification of the people; not for private men to preach or expound Scripture, nor, as some do, to let every one of them speak to questions of their own propounding; but to repeat the sermons that you have preached, to call upon God, and sing his praise.—(3.) Yet let there be some opportunity for them to speak, and appear in a learning way. To which purpose, when you have done repeating, let all that are present know, that if they doubt of any thing that was delivered, or would have any thing made plainer to them, or would be resolved in any thing else that concerneth the subject in hand, or any other case of need, you desire them to propound their

doubts; and so let them have the liberty of questioning as learners, while you remain the Teacher, and resolve all the doubts yourselves, and do not set them on disputing, by leaving it to them to make the answer. And if you have not competent abilities 'ex tempore' to resolve their doubts, you were much better let pass this too; but if you have, it will be of very great use, both for their edification, and the maintaining of order and their necessary dependance on you.—(4.) But if you perceive them so set upon the exercise of their own parts for ostentation, that they are likely to divide, if they have not opportunity to do it, be not too stiff against them; but mildly let them know that it is for their good that you dislike it, both because it is a sign of a proud heart, that had rather teach than learn, especially where a teacher by office is in place, and where there is no necessity; and also because you fear it will not tend to the edification of the flock, but to vain janglings, or to excite others that are unable to an imitation. Desire also to know of them, whether they have any truth of God to reveal to them, that you do not reveal. If they have not, why should they desire needlessly to tell them what they are daily told by you? If they have, it is necessary that you know it and consider it, before you consent it should be taught to your flock. But if this mild resistance satisfy not, let them take their course awhile, rather than separate from you, unless they be already perverse and subtle heretics, and when they have done their exercises, tell them, that as you give liberty to all to propound their doubts about what you have delivered, so you must take the like liberty that you give: and so propound, first, Whether the understandings of people are likely to be more edified by such vain obtrusions of vanity, or by a fastening well upon their memories the things that they have lately heard; and so whether such exercises or repetitions be more necessary: and then open the weaknesses of their discourse; the mis-expounding of Scriptures, the errors in matter, in method, and in words; and that not in a contemptuous or disgraceful way, but as the points wherein you remain unsatisfied. By such means as these you will quickly shame them out of their way of ostentation, and make them give it over.

10. Make use of your people's parts to the utmost, as your helpers, in an orderly way, under your guidance, or

else they will make use of them in a disorderly and dividing way in opposition to you. It hath been a great cause of Schism, when Ministers would contemptuously cry down private men's preaching, and withal desire not to make any use of the gifts that God hath given them for their assistance ; but thrust them too far from holy things, as if they were a profane generation. The work is likely to go poorly on, if there be no hands employed in it but the Ministers. God giveth not any of his gifts to be buried, but for common use. By a prudent improvement of the gifts of the more able Christians, we may receive much help by them, and prevent their abuse, even as lawful marriage preventeth fornication. And the uses you must especially put them to, are these :—(1.) Urge them to be diligent in Teaching and Praying with their own Families, especially Catechising them, and teaching them the meaning of what they learn, and setting it home on their affections ; and there if they have a mind to preach to their children and servants, so they undertake not more than they are able to do, I know no reason but they may.—(2.) Urge them to step out now and then to their poor ignorant neighbours, and catechise and instruct them in meekness and patience, from day to day ; and that will bring them more peace of conscience, than contemning them.—(3.) Urge them to go often to the impenitent and scandalous sinners about them, and deal with them with all possible skill and earnestness, yet also with love and patience, for the converting, reforming, and saving their souls.—(4.) Acquaint them with their duty of watching over each other in brotherly love, and admonishing and exhorting one another daily ; and if any walk scandalously, to tell them their fault before two or three, after the contempt of private reproof ; and if that prevail not, to tell the officers of the Church, that they may be proceeded with, as Christ hath appointed.—(5.) At your private meetings, and on days of humiliation or thanksgiving in private, employ them in prayer, and in such learning questions as is aforesaid.—(6.) If there be any very ignorant or scandalous sinner that you know of, and you cannot possibly have time yourselves to speak to them at that season, send some of those that are able and sober, to do it in their stead, to instruct the ignorant, and to admonish the offenders, as far as a private man on a message from a Minister, and in dis-

charge of his own duty may go.—(7.) Let some of them be chosen to represent the Church; or to see that they have no wrong, and to be their agents to prepare all cases of discipline for public audience, and to be present with the Church-officers at appointed meetings, to hear the evidences that are brought in against any scandalous, impenitent sinners; and to discern how far they are valid, and how far the persons are obliged to make satisfaction, and give public testimony of repentance, or to be further proceeded against.—(8.) Let such as are fit, be made subservient officers, I mean Deacons; and then they may afford you help in a regular way, and will by their relation feel themselves obliged to maintain the Unity of the Church, and authority of the Ministry, as they have some participation of the employment and honour; and so by a complication of interests you will make them firmer to the Church; but then see that they be men competently fit for the place.

I am persuaded, if Ministers had thus made use of the parts of their ablest members, they might have prevented much of the divisions, and distractions, and apostacies that have befallen us; for they would have then found work enough upon their hands for higher parts than theirs, without invading the Ministry, and would rather have seen cause to bewail the imperfection of their abilities to that work which doth properly belong to them. Experience would have convinced and humbled them more, than our words can do. A man may think he can stir such a block, or pluck up a tree by the roots, that never tried; but when he sets his hand to it he will come off ashamed. See that you drive them to diligence in their own works, and let them know what a sin it is to neglect their families, and their ignorant, miserable neighbours; and then they will be kept humble, and have no such mind to be running upon more work, when they feel you spurring them on to their own, and rebuking them for the neglect; nor will they have any leisure for schismatical enterprises, because of the constancy and greatness of their employment.

11. Still keep up Christian love and familiarity with them, even when they have begun to warp and make defection; and lose not your interest in them, while you have any thoughts of attempting their recovery.

12. If they do withdraw into separate meetings, follow

them, and be among them, if it may be, continually. Enter a mild dissent as to the lawfulness of it; but yet tell them that you are willing to hear what it is that they have to say, and to be among them for their good, if they will give you leave, for fear lest they run to further evil, and be not easily removed; but hold on, unless they absolutely exclude you; for you may thereby have the opportunity of a moderate, gentle, opposing their errors, and so in time may manifest the vanity of their course; and you will prevent much of that impudent reviling, and grosser venting of further error, which they will do more freely where there is no one to contradict. They may say any thing when there is none to gainsay them; and make it seem good in the eyes of the weak. By this means, if any Seducers from abroad come in to confirm them, you will be ready to oppose them; and so at the least you will do much to prevent the increase of their party. It hath been a very great cause of the Schisms in England, that Ministers have only contemned them, and when they have withdrawn into private separate meetings, have talked against them to others, or reproved them in the pulpit, and in the meantime fled away from the faces of them, or been strangers to them, while they have given Seducers opportunity to come among them, be familiar with them without contradiction, and to have the advantages of deceiving them, and even doing what they listed. O that the Ministry had been more guiltless of those errors and schisms that they talk against! But it is easier to chide a Sectary in the pulpit, and to subscribe a testimony against him, than to play the skilful physician for his cure, and do the tenth part of the duty that lieth upon us to prevent and heal such calamitous distempers. I am not finding fault with the prudent reprehensions of such in Public, or testimonies against them; but I think too many of us have cause to fear, lest we do but publicly proclaim our own shame in the guilt of our negligence, or imprudent weaknesses; and lest in condemning them, and testifying against them, we testify against and condemn ourselves.

13. If you be not well able to deal with them, do as I before advised; give them the best book on that subject to peruse.

14. If all this will not do, get the fittest neighbouring Minister that you know, to come over and help you; not in

public, nor as a set disputation, (without necessity ; but let him come as occasionally, and ‘*ex improviso*,’ come upon them in one of their private meetings, as desirous to see and hear them, and so take the opportunity to deal with them. And, if after that there be any disputations appointed, be sure to observe the old rule, fight with them on their own ground, and keep up the war in their quarters, and let it come as little as you can into your own : and therefore go to their assemblies, but let them not come into yours. For with them, you can lose little, and may gain much ; but at home, you can gain little, but it is two to one, will lose some, let the error be never so gross. The Sectaries commonly observe this course themselves, and therefore you will have much ado to get their consent to bring your disputations into their own assemblies.

15. Let not the authors of the Schism outdo you, or go beyond you in any thing that is good : for as truth should be more effectual for sanctification than error ; so if you give them this advantage, you give them the day, and all your disputations will do but little good : for the weaker people judge all by the outward appearance, and by the effects, and are not able to judge of the doctrine itself. They think that he hath the best cause, whom they take to be the best man.

I extend this rule both to doctrine and life. If a Libertine preach up free-grace, do you preach it up more effectually than he : be much upon it, and make it more glorious on right grounds, than he can do on wrong. If, on the like pretences, he magnify the grace of love, and, in order to cry down fear and humiliation, be all for living in pure love to God ; do not contradict him, in the assertive, but only in the negative and destructive part ; but outgo him, and preach up the love of God, with its motives and effects, more fully and effectually than he can do on the corrupt grounds on which he doth proceed : or else you will make all the silly people believe that this is the difference between you, that he is for free-grace and the love of God, and you are against it : for if you dwell not upon it in your preaching as well as he, they will not take notice of a short concession or profession. So, if an enthusiast do talk all of the Holy Ghost, and the light, and witness and law within us ; fall you upon that subject too, and do that well which they did ill ; and preach up the office of the Holy Ghost, his indwelling and opera-

tions, and the light, and testimony, and law within us, better than they do. This is the most effectual way of settling your people against seduction. So if you be assaulted by the Pelagians, if they make a long story to prove that God is not the author of sin, do you fall upon the proof of it too. If they plead for freewill, do you plead for that freewill which we have, (the natural liberty, which none deny, consisting in a self-determining power, and supposing actual indetermina- tion,) and deny only that liberty which the will hath not; that is, either a freedom from God's government, or from the necessary guidance of the intellect, and moral force of the object; or that true spiritual, ethical freedom from various inclinations, which consisteth in the right disposition of the will: though the Sanctified indeed have this in part, and that predominantly. So if any Pelagian or Semi-Pelagian will go about industriously to prove man's power, or rather impotency, to will or do evil; do it as effectually as he: for this is indeed but to prove a man a sinner, under pretence of proving him free, or at least to prove him defectible, if it be not the ill inclination, but the possibility of sinning that they defend: in which case we can say more than they. So if they go about laboriously to prove that Christ died for all, I would endeavour to do it as effectually as they, that it might appear to the people, that the difference between us is not in this, That they would magnify the riches of grace above me, or that I would leave sinners hopeless and remediless, and without an object for faith, any more than they; nor that I abase or reject express Scriptures, when they own them in their proper sense: but I would let them know, that the controversy lieth elsewhere; viz. Whether Christ, in offering himself a Sacrifice for sin, had not a special intention or resolution, in compliance with his Father's predestinating will, infallibly and effectually to save his Chosen, even such and such by name, in making his blood applied, effectually to the pardon of all their sins, and to give them his Spirit to seal them unto glory; having no such will, intention, resolution, in dying (no more than his Father had in predestinating) as to the rest of the world. So if one that is for private men's preaching, come and inveigh against Ministers for inhibiting them to use the gifts of God for the edification of the Church, I would not presently set to thwart him; but I would rather fall a persuading private men to use their gifts

in all the ways that I even now mentioned: and sharply chide them for using them no more; and then among my cautions or reprehensions meet with his desired abuse in the end. And what I have said by way of instance in these few points, I mean in all others. Preaching Truth is the most successful way of confuting Error; and I would have no seducer to have the glory of outgoining us in any good, and so not in befriending or defending any truth. Once more: If a Socinian should fall a pleading for the Church's peace, and for Unity upon the ancient simplicity of faith, I would labour to outgo him in it: and then would shew that the ancient simple faith condemned him. If he would plead reason for Scripture, or the Christian religion, I would endeavour to outgo him in it, and he should not have opportunity to glory that he only had reason for what he held, and I had none. But I would shew, that as I have reason to believe the Scriptures, so that Scripture condemneth his errors. If a Separatist will plead for the necessity of Church-order and Discipline, so would I as well as he: and shew him that it is only disorder, and confusion inconsistent with right Order and Discipline that I dislike in him or those of his way. And so would I do by others in this case.

And you should be as loath that they should outgo you in the practice of a holy and righteous life, any more than in sound, diligent teaching. Do any of them express a hatred of sin, and desire of Church-reformation? so must we do more. Do any of them use to spend their time when they meet together in holy discourse, and not in vain janglings? Let us do so much more. Are they unwearied in propagating their opinions? Let us be more so in propagating the truth: Do they condescend to the meanest, and creep into houses to lead captive the silliest of the flock? Let us stoop as low, and be as diligent to do them good. Are they loving to their party, and contemnors of the world? Let us be lovers of all, and especially of all saints, and do good to all, as we have power; and especially to all the household of faith; and love an enemy, as well as they can do a friend. Let us be more just than they, more merciful, more humble, more meek and patient; "for this is the will of God, that by well-doing we may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." Let us excel them in a holy, harmless, righteous, merciful, fruitful, heavenly life, as we do in soundness of doctrine; that

just than they, more merciful, humble, meek and patient; that by our fruits we may be known, and the weaker sort of our people may see the truth in this reflection, that cannot see it in itself; and that our light may so shine before men, that they may see our conversation, and glorify our Father which is in heaven; and even they that obey not the word, may without the word be won by the conversation of their Teachers. (1 Pet. iii. 1, 2.) O how happy had England been—how happy had all the Church been, if the Ministers of the Gospel had taken these courses! It would have done more against errors and schism, than all our chiding at them hath done, or than all the force can do which we desire from the Magistrate.

Three sorts of Persons that we may meet with in our conference, are now over:—(1.) The grossly ignorant and unconverted.—(2.) The doubting, troubled believer.—(3.) The cavilling questionist, or seduced schismatic. The fourth sort that I should speak of in this direction are, those that by a professed willingness to learn and obey, and by other signs, do give us some probability, that they may have true repentance and faith, and yet by their ignorance, or lukewarmness (being not noted for any special profession of godliness), or by some uneven walking, do make our fears to be as great or greater than our hopes: so that we are between hope and fear of them, doubting the worst of their present safety, though we have not ground to charge them to be unconverted, impenitent, unsanctified persons. I think half that come to me are of this sort, and ten of this sort, if not forty, for one that I dare flatly say are unregenerate. Now it may be a great difficulty with some younger Ministers what you should do with this sort of people, where they have no sufficient ground to determine of them as godly or ungodly, whatever their fears or hopes may be. Of these I shall only briefly say this:—

1. The first Directions may suffice in the main, for dealing with these, and are as much fitted to these as to the worst: for as we may tell a notorious, ungodly man, ‘Your case is miserable, you are a child of death;’ so may we tell, these, ‘I much fear your case is sad—these are ill signs—I wonder how you dare so hazard your salvation;’ and so abating of the several degrees of the hopeful good that appeareth in them, we may see in the first case, how to deal in this.

2. I would advise you to be very cautious how you pass too hasty or absolute censures on any that you have to do with; because it is not so easy a matter to discern a man to be certainly graceless that professeth himself a Christian, as many do imagine it to be: and you may do the work in hand as well without such an absolute conclusion as with it, as the former examples, which will serve all with a little alteration, do shew.

3. The general Description of the Ministerial work may supply the rest. I shall therefore only add:—(1.) Keep them close to the use of private and public means.—(2.) Be often with the lukewarm, to awaken them, and with the careless to admonish them.—(3.) Take the opportunity of sickness, which will bow their hearts and open their ears.—(4.) See that they spend the Lord's-day, and order their families aright.—(5.) Draw them from temptations, and occasions of sin.—(6.) Charge them to come and seek help in all great straits, and open their temptations and dangers before they are swallowed up.—(7.) Strike at the great radical sins: self-seeking, fleshly-mindedness, sensuality, pride, worldliness, and infidelity. Keep them to the reading of Scripture and good books, and direct them to those that are most likely to awaken them.—(8.) Engage their godly neighbours to have an eye upon them.—(9.) Keep up discipline to awe them.—(10.) Maintain the life of grace in yourselves, that it may appear in all your sermons to them; that every one that comes cold to the assembly may have warming helps before he departs.

I have done my Advice, and leave you to the practice. Though the proud may receive it with scorn, and the selfish and slothful with some distaste and indignation, I doubt not but God will use it, in despite of the oppositions of sin and Satan, to the awakening of many of his servants to their duty, and promoting the work of a right Reformation: and that his much greater blessing shall accompany the present undertaking for the saving of many a soul, the peace of you that undertake and perform it, the exciting of his servants through the Nation to second you, and to increase purity and the unity of his Churches,—Amen.

APPENDIX :

In Answer to some Objections which I have heard of, since the former Edition.

It is a hard case, that either so good a Master and work should have servants so bad, as will plead against their duty when they practise it ; or that good men themselves should be so backward, and need so many words to draw them to so needful an employment ! There is no sanctified man but hath virtually in him a love to the main work that is urged in this Treatise : and it is hard that men should oppose, or stiffly refuse the duties which as Christians they love, and by their nature are inclined to ! And it is harder, that those should be Ministers of the Gospel that have no such sanctified natures and inclinations ! (Though I am thankful to God that useth even such for the service of his Church.) If we are sanctified, we are devoted, separated and resigned up to God as being wholly his. And if indeed we are absolutely resigned up to God, we shall have no time or labour that will seem too much and too good for his service. It is one of the clearest, surest differences between a damnable hypocrite, and a truly sanctified man, that the hypocrite hath something, but the sanctified hath nothing so dear to him that he cannot spare it for God. If we love not our work for the end, and therefore the end more than the work, we are deceitful workmen : and if we do but value the success of our labour, methinks we should be willing of that sort of labour in which we have greatest probability of success ; though it may be somewhat troublesome in the performance ! If we are faithful servants, the work of God will be pleasant to us : and if it were pleasant, methinks we should not be drawn to it, as a bear to the stake ; much less should we fly from it, and oppose it like enemies ! Whatever a Jonas may do in a temptation against one particular act, methinks the ordinary discharge of such duties should neither be opposed

nor wholly neglected by the faithful. Methinks while we live among the miserable, and see such multitudes near to hell, compassion should be argument enough to persuade us to do all that we can for their relief, and humanity should be enough to convince us of the duty, and stop our mouths from cavilling against it.

Though I seemed to myself even unmannerly bold with my brethren in this book, yet I must needs say, that conscience did not accuse me for it, but provoke me to it, and often asked me, is there not a cause? Nor can I repent of this adventure, when I consider the necessity and the success. I bless God that I have lived to hear of so many faithful servants of Christ falling closely to this work of *Personal Instruction*, not only in this county, but in many other parts of the land. Now I begin to hope that the Pastoral office will be better understood, by some competent time of experience, both by our people and ourselves, and that they will come in time to understand what use they have of Ministers, and what duty towards them they are obliged to perform: I hope now that misunderstandings between people and their Teachers will be removed; and they will perceive what we aim at, and how far we are from intending their hurt, or lording it over them, when they see us take our greatness and dignity to consist in *being the servants of all*. Now I am in hopes that we shall get a more universal, effectual advantage against the common ignorance, and profaneness, and security that have discouraged and disappointed both us and our predecessors; and that we shall have a more satisfactory acquaintance with the state of our hearers, to direct us in the several acts of administration and discipline. These, and abundance more fruit we may expect, if the Lord will but give us hearts to proceed with a vigorous seriousness in the work, and not to faint and be weary of well-doing. The greatest thing that I fear next *unskillfulness*, is *laziness*; lest we begin to favour ourselves, and say, What a toil is this? and so the flesh pervert our reason, and make us say, 'I do not think that I am bound to all this stir and trouble;' especially lest when we have gone once over the parish, we lazily say, 'I have done enough already, what need I do the same again?' Though I hope experience of men's necessity, and the benefit will do much to save us from the power of these temptations.

I have no great fear of any opposition from conscience or unbiassed reason ; but only from unwillingness, and from reason biassed by the flesh. Most of the objections that I have heard of since the publishing of this book, are the same that are already answered in it, especially in the Preface ; and yet I hear of no reply that they make to those answers. I shall not think it my duty to answer the same again, because men will not observe what is answered already ; but shall answer now to the new Objections only.

Object. 1. Some carry about this objection at a distance, that my whole book doth run upon a false supposition, viz. ‘That Discipline and Personal Instruction, are essential to our Ministry.’

Answ. I know of no such word that ever I spoke or wrote. Nor do I build on any such supposition, otherwise I should have said, that all that perform not these duties are no Ministers. But these words I did write indeed, *Ruling is as essential a part of the Pastor’s office as preaching, I am sure.* But then I difference the special office of a Pastor from the general office of a Minister ; and secondly, I distinguish between the power and duty of Ruling, and Personal Instructing, and the exercise of that power and performance of that duty : and I distinguish between the Ministry or Office, and the Pastor. And so I conclude, (1.) That it is essential to the office or ministry of a Pastor of a particular church to have the power of ruling as well as of public preaching, and to be *obliged* on fit occasions to Rule as well as to Preach. (2.) But actually to Rule is not essential to his being a Pastor ; for to be a *Pastor*, is to be *impowered* and *obliged* : these only are contained in the office, and the exercise followeth as an effect. A man is a Pastor before ever he preach ; and continueth to be so when he interrupteth his exercise. (3.) Ruling taken for authoritative guidance in the way to heaven, (which is our Ministerial kind of rule ; even as a physician ruleth his patient, supposing him to be of Divine institution,) is the general work of the Ministry, and comprehendeth public preaching, and therefore is more necessary than a part alone. (4.) A man may be a faithful Minister, and yet never preach a sermon. If a great congregation have six or more Pastors, and two or three of them be the ablest preachers, and the rest more judicious, and fit for discourse and private oversight, these

latter may well employ themselves in such oversight, conference, and other Ministerial works, and leave public speaking in the pulpit to them that are more able for it, and so they may divide the work among them according to their parts: and it will not now follow that they are no Pastors, that preach not publicly. I think then that all this laid together, will warrant me to say, that *Ruling is as much essential to a Pastor's office as Preaching*. At least, though methinks it should be enough to persuade us to our duty to know that it is commanded, without disputing whether it be essential to our office.

Object. 2. 'The same persons say, that they cannot agree with us, because we make a difference between the members of our flock, or church, and the rest of the parish, and so take not all the parish to be our Church, as in the tenth article of our Agreement is expressed.'

Ans. 1. The palpable vanity of this objection, is a dishonour to the heads or the hearts of the objectors, and doth but open their own nakedness. What force is in this reason, or what shew of force? If they take all their parish for their Church, cannot they agree to catechise and instruct them personally, because we take not all of our Parishes for Church-members? They may as well give over preaching, and say, they cannot agree to preach to their own parish-churches, because we take not all in our parishes to be of our Churches. Who can believe that this is a reason to excuse them from their duty? 2. But, to give them also an account of our actions, I add, that we expressly there exclude none of our parishes from our Churches, but *such as have withdrawn themselves from our charges, and particular Church, by refusing to own and profess their membership*. And for our parts, we have not the faculty of making men Church-members, whether they will or no, or discerning them to be such, whether they will signify it or no; much less when they disown it, and after many public invitations, and a year or two's waiting for their fuller information, do still refuse to profess themselves members. They that have this faculty let them use it: in the meantime, let them know, that their doctrine obligeth them to more duty than ours; and therefore will be no excuse to them for doing less. We shall endeavour to instruct and catechise men, whether they be members of our churches or not: but we take not our-

selves bound to rule and watch over all those in our parishes that withdraw themselves from our pastoral oversight, with the same exactness and authority as we must guide and oversee the members of our charge. But you that take all in the parish to be of your churches, must see that you rule and oversee them accordingly.

Object. 3. ‘Others object against the following words in the same article of our Agreement, ‘that we shall in regard of communion, and the application of sealing and confirming ordinance, deal with them as the obstinate despisers of instruction should be dealt with.’ And who are these that we must so deal with? Those that after sufficient admonition shall contemptuously and obstinately refuse to be either catechised or instructed thus personally by us giving us no valuable reason of their refusal.’

Ans. It seems then, that these objectors first, either take not those for obstinate despisers of instruction, that ‘after sufficient admonition shall contemptuously and obstinately refuse either to come to the Minister, or to let the Minister come to them, and be instructed by them, not giving any valuable reason of such refusal.’ By which it may appear what Reformation they desire, and how they judge of the qualifications of Church-members: and why cannot they also be as charitable to those that contemptuously and obstinately refuse to hear them preach, and will join only in Sacraments and Common prayer. I like not charity unreasonably large for the exempting of ourselves from the labour of duty: I would not choose such a charitable physician that would make his patients believe that they are in no danger, to save himself the labour of attending them for the cure. 2. Or else they think that we must not deal with such men, in regard of Church-communion and Sacraments as they should be dealt with, which we agree to: but this surely can never be their sense. But I suppose they will say, that the thing offensive is the intimation, that such persons should be denied the sealing and confirming Ordinances. And indeed, would you not have it so? If people will neither come to you for instruction, nor let you come to them, nor give you any valuable reason, yea, contemptuously and obstinately refuse this, after sufficient admonition, would you yet have these admitted to communion in the Sacraments? It seems then, either this is no scanda-

lous sin with you, or you would have the garden of Christ lie common as the wilderness ; and you would be their Pastor in despite of them, that contemptuously and obstinately refuse to take you for their Pastor ? Or, you will divide Christ and his Ordinances, and give them one part at their will, that obstinately refuse the other. But think as you please of this Resolution of ours ; and admit all the most obstinate refusers of your instruction to the Sacrament (which yet a Papist will not do), if you can make it good : but what is this to the business of Catechising and instructing those that will submit ? Cannot you agree with us in the rest, because of this clause ? Cannot you agree to instruct them that will submit, because we resolve to deal with the obstinate refusers as we ought ?

Object. 4. ‘ You cut us a shoe too narrow for our foot. You judge all our Congregations by your own : we have stubborn people that will not be instructed, nor come near us, and are not fit for Church-discipline. Had we a tractable people, we would yield to all.’

Ans. 1. If I understand this, the meaning of it is, we are resolved not to suffer the hatred, ill-will and railing of our neighbours : if we had a people that would take it, well, and put us to no such suffering, but rather drive us on to duty, then we would do it. If this be the meaning, it sounds not well. 2. The worse your people are, the more need they have of instruction and help. 3. If a thousand refuse your help, will that excuse you from offering it to them, and affording it to a thousand others that will not refuse it ? Surely your people will not so refuse it. 4. Are your whole parishes fit to be Church-members, and to be admitted to communion in all Ordinances, and yet are they unfit for Discipline ? This cannot ordinarily be : it is a contradiction. If indeed all your parishioners be infidels, or ungodly, and unfit matter to constitute a Church, confess then that you are no Pastors of a particular Church, and give them no Communion Ordinances, but preach to them as infidels, to make them Christians. But if indeed, you take yourselves for Pastors, and your parishes, or part of them for Churches, use them as Churches, and rule as Pastors are bound to rule, and take not an office which you constantly refuse to exercise ; and choose not out that part of the work

of your office, which is least costly, or distasteful to flesh and blood, but be true to your undertakings.

Object. 5. ‘But you build much on Acts xx. 20. Paul’s teaching from house to house, whereas, *κατα οἴκας* and *κατα οἶκον*, in the New Testament is ever spoken of the houses where the Churches did usually assemble for public worship.’

Ans. If I had misinterpreted Acts xx. 20, it is excusable to err with so good company. Mr. Mede confesseth, (p. 31,) that the most of the Reformed writers, and some of the other side are against him : and (p. 44,) that the phrase, *κατα οἶκον* is commonly expounded against his way. And Beza on 1 Cor. xvi. 19, saith, “Apparet enim Apostolum commendare Aquilæ et Priscillæ familiam quasi sit Ecclesia quædam.” And he expounds, *κατα οἶκον*, Acts v. 42, by ‘Privatim ubicunque opus erat, ut vere testatur de se Paulus infr. xx. 20 ;’ and so gives us his sense of that place also. And, to let pass ordinary interpreters, and speak only of those critics that may be expected most to befriend Mr. Mede’s opinion, Grotius, on Rom. xvi. 5, saith, “Eodem modo de illorum domo loquitur Paulus, 1 Cor. xvi. 20. Quia recens ab exilio redibant Christiani, credibile est cum hæc Paulus scriberet nullos Romæ fuisse communes Christianorum conventus, neque Presbyteros quos alioqui salutaret Paulus. Tali autem tempore quæque domus Ecclesia est, sicut Tertullianus ait, ubi tres, Ecclesia est, licet laici.” And on Acts xx. 20, he saith, *καὶ κατα οἴκας*, “singulos, occasione data ;” and on Philem. 2. “In ejus domo complures erant Christiani.” And 1 Cor. xvi. 20, *συν τῇ κατα οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίᾳ*. “Id est, cum tota familia sua quæ erat Christiani. Quocunque illi ibant, secum ferebant Ecclesiam.” So he expoundeth Col. iv. 15.

And Dr. Hammond, (1 Cor. xvi,) saith, “It is evident what is meant by the Church in their house, i. e. all the believers of their Family ; the same are called, *ἡ κατ’ οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησία*, (Rom. xvi. 4.) the Church or Christians belonging to their family. The prepositions *ἐν* and *κατὰ* being promiscuously used in the writings. And he expoundeth Acts xx. 20, thus : “Willing to use all opportunities of instructing any, both in the public synagogues, and in private schools, and in your several houses, whither I also came.”

I confess myself somewhat inclinable to the Exposition of the objectors, though I come not quite up to their sense ;

and I am somewhat stopped by this consideration, that there is mention of the Church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla in several cities. And it is not probable that such movable persons coming as strangers to such places, should have the opportunity of making their house still the public meeting-place of the several Churches where they come.

And moreover, besides the texts observed by some, that in Acts viii. 3, will hardly be proved to be spoken only of Church-houses. Σαῦλος δὲ ἐλυμαίνετο τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, κατὰ τὰς οἰκὰς εἰς πορευόμενος. I confess it was likely that he made his first assault on the Assemblies; but improbable that this is all that is there meant.

The Apostles then did preach to several sorts of auditors: 1. Sometimes to any multitude they could fitly, to speak for their conversion; either in the Temple, in the Market-place, at the Judgment-seat, or any place of concourse. 2. Sometimes in mixed Assemblies of Christians and infidels; admitting unbelievers to be their auditors in order to their conversion. So Paul admitted all that would come into his own hired house. (Acts xxviii. 30, 31.) And it was ordinary for the Church to admit unbelievers to be present, as appears, 1 Cor. xiv. 23—25. 3. Sometimes there were solemn assemblies of the Church above, where they all came together into one place, that is, it was the place of their most public meeting; where the main body assembled, and no others with them, as in breaking bread, and feasting together, and such acts of special communion. 4. Sometimes there were occasional meetings of certain parcels of the Church, as that was Acts xii, when they were praying for Peter. And such a meeting I suppose there was in almost every house where the apostles were known to come, among Christians. It is not probable but that many would come in to them, if they did but go into any private house to visit or exhort the persons of that house. 5. Besides these, they ordinarily used to teach particular persons, as the Gaoler, the Eunuch, &c., as often as they had opportunity. Now our question of Acts xx. 20, is, which of these three last senses it is taken in. I agree not with the objectors, that it is taken in the first of the three only, though I will not exclude that: but understand it more comprehensively, as extending to all the three last sorts, and comprising all that House-teaching of Christians that was then usual with the

Apostles, both first, teaching the Churches in houses: and secondly, teaching such companies of Christians as were in the houses where the Apostles came, as Cornelius, Acts x, had gathered his friends to hear Peter, so Christians would call their next friends when an Apostle came to visit them: thirdly, and teaching the particular Families where they had opportunity; especially the second.—*Object.* ‘But this was not an orderly taking the houses of a Parish or Church before them, and go in to every one.’—*Ans.* Very true; I know of no such parishes that then were; nor do I make it a Minister’s duty absolutely to go up and down from house to house, to each house in his parish, or of his charge, I would not so much as advise you to do this, without necessity; but first call the people to come to you, and learn of you at your own house, or the Church-house, or where you please, so that you will but give them that personal instruction, upon necessary pre-inquiry into their states, which their conditions do require. And then go to those that will not come to you, if they will consent, and you are able. For my own part, I am not able to go from house to house; there being not one house of many among the poor people, where I can stand half an hour in the midst of summer, without taking cold, to the apparent hazard of my life; so that those few that will not come to me, I must send to. And I think it more to the people’s benefit to accustom them to attend their Pastor, than for him to go to hunt up and down after them, he scarcely knows where and when. But men’s obstinacy may make that necessary, which is inconvenient.

2. But I have spoken all this but as on the by, as to this objection. My answer to it is this: It is not either only or chiefly on this text or any like it, that I build my persuasions of you to this duty. In good sadness can you find nothing but Acts xx. 20, in all these papers that is urged to convince you of the duty in hand? If you have observed no more, read again, and save me the labour of recitals. If there were nothing but the general command of taking heed to all the flock, and no more but your very Pastoral relation to each member, as a Master to every servant, and a Teacher to every scholar in his school, and a Physician to every patient in his hospital, and a Shepherd to every sheep in his flock, and a Commander to every soldier in his regiment;

what need there be more to convince you that you should take care of them, and help every one particularly as effectually as you can. In a word, the sum of the question is, whether you are bound to do the best you can to save the souls of all your Parishioners? Do this and I desire no more. Do you think in your conscience that you do the best you can, if you can exhort, instruct, or catechise them personally, and will not?

As to the objection, 'Where are we bound to spend two days a week in this, or one day, or to take the houses in course, or the like?' I have answered it already in this book, whither I refer you. As if the general precept of 'Teaching every one, exhorting every man, doing good to all, taking heed to all the flock, &c.' were not sufficient! What if God only bid you pray continually, or on all fit occasions, will you approve of those deluded ones that ask, Where am I bid to pray morning and night, or in my Family; or before and after meat, or before and after sermon? &c. Providence will direct you, and honest prudence will discern the season and other circumstances of your duty. What if God hath not told us on what day or hour our lecture shall be, or what chapter I shall read, what psalm I shall sing, what text I shall preach on, or whether on any or not; or how the seals and utensils shall be ordered, must we not therefore determine these ourselves, as Providence shall lead us, and as may conduce to the end of our work? I do not think but you do as much, and justly do it, beyond God's particular Scripture determination, in your ordinary Preaching, as we do in Catechising, and Personal instructing. But methinks with Ministers I should not need to say so much to such a rustical objection as this, from the defect of particular precept.

Object. 6. 'If all Ministers should bestow two days a week, they would have but a little time to study, and so the adversaries would have their will when our Ministry comes to the unlearned, or unskilled in Controversies.'

Ans. 1. I have answered this already in the book: 2. I only add, these things are not objected to mere by-standers; we try the work, and can tell by some experience what it is. Is not four days a week, after so many years in the University, a fair proportion for men to study Controversies and Sermons? Though my weakness deprive me of abundance

of time, and extraordinary works take up six, if not eight parts of my time, yet I bless God I can find time to provide for preaching two days a week, notwithstanding the two days for Personal instruction. Now for those that are not troubled with any extraordinary work, I mean writings, and conversations of several sorts, besides the ordinary work of the Ministry, I cannot believe, but if they are willing, they may find two half days a week at least for this work. 3. And perhaps they will find before we have done, that this employment tends to make men able Pastors for the Church, much more than private studies alone. He shall be the ablest Physician, and Divine, and Lawyer too, that addeth practice and experience proportionably to his studies; and that man shall prove a useless drone, that refuseth God's service all his life, under pretence of preparing for it; and lets men's souls pass on to perdition, while he pretendeth to be studying how to recover them, or to get more ability to help and save them.

Object. 7. 'The times that Paul lived in required more diligence than ours; the Churches were but in the planting, the enemies many, and persecution great, but now it is not so.'

Ans. This was the Bishops' argument against so much Preaching when they put it down. But it savours of a man locked up in his study, and unacquainted with the world. Good Lord! are there such multitudes round about us that know not whether Christ be God or man, the first person in the Trinity or the second; whether he have taken his body to heaven or left it on earth, and what he hath done for them; and what they must trust to for pardon and salvation: are there so many thousands round about us that are drowned in presumption, security, and sensuality, that break the hearts of Preachers, and when we have done all, will neither feel us, nor understand us! Are there so many wilful drunkards, worldlings, self-seekers, railers, haters of a holy life, that want nothing but death to make them remediless! Are there so many ignorant, dull, and scandalous professors, so many dividers, seducers, and troublers of the Church! and yet is the supineness of our times so great, that we may excuse ourselves from *personal instruction*, because of the less necessity of the times? What need is there but faith and experience, to answer this objection? Believe better within, and look more without among the miserable, and I war-

rant you, you will not see cause to spare your pains for want of work, or of necessities to invite you ; what conscientious Minister finds not work enough to do, from one end of the year to another, if he have not an hundred souls to care for? Are ungodly men the less miserable, because they make profession of Christianity, or the more?

Object. 8. ‘ You have here too confidently determined, that it is Ministers’ duties that have large congregations, to procure assistance, though they leave themselves by it but that low allowance to live upon, which you mention. We must not be wise above what is written. And you will scarcely shew us where this, or the ‘ quota pars Temporis’ for Catechising, or taking a set time, are written in the Scripture.’

Ans. 1. Must I go to turn to my Bible to shew a Preacher, where it is written, that a man’s soul is more worth than a world, much more than an hundred pounds a year ; much more are many souls more worth ? or that both we and that we have are God’s, and should be employed to the utmost for his service ? or that it is inhuman cruelty to let many souls go to hell, for fear my wife and children should live somewhat the harder, or live at a lower rate, when, according to God’s ordinary way of working by means, I might do much to prevent their misery, if I would but a little displease my flesh, which all that are Christ’s have crucified with its lusts ? Every man must give God the things that are God’s, and that is all. How is all pure and sanctifiedtous but in the separation, dedication, and using them for God ? Are not all his talents, and must be employed to his service ? Must not every Christian first ask, which way may I most honour God with my substance ? are not these things written ? Do we not preach them to our people ? Are they true to them, and not to us ? Yea, more ; is not the Church-maintenance devoted in a special manner to the service of God for that Church ; and should we not then use it for the utmost furtherance of the end ? If any Minister that hath two hundred pounds, can prove that an hundred pounds of it may do God more service if it be laid out on himself or wife and children, than if it maintain one or two meet assistants to help the salvation of the flock, I shall not presume to reprove his expences ; but where this cannot be proved, let not the practice be justified.

No wonder that we have so many sensual gentlemen that do little good with all their riches ; but see their brother

have need, and shut up the bowels of their compassion from him, rather than they will live at lower rates, or not fare deliciously every day; and that they can find no Scripture that commandeth them such things; when even the Preachers of the Scriptures cannot see the wood for trees; they want a letter to express to them the common moral verities. No wonder if these gentlemen can find no Scripture that requireth them to buy in Impropropriations, to endow or build Colleges, to give a common stock for the poor, or the like, or out of two or three thousand pounds portion to a daughter to give one or two hundreds to some pious, charitable use, though the daughter have the less. How should gentlemen find any Scripture for self-denial, or preferring God before themselves, yea their flesh, or children's superfluities and snares, when some Ministers of the Gospel can find no such Scripture, when the case concerns themselves; or at least can meet with no Expositor that can make them understand such difficult texts.

And for the other matters, of the stated time for Catechising, and the 'quota pars.' As I never presumed to impose an unnecessary task on any, nor should do, were it in my power, but leave it to their prudence that are on the place to determine of circumstances: so I know not why any man should be loath to tie himself to this duty, especially in order to a common Reformation, and after so long and general a neglect, unless because he is loath to practise it. If set times be not needful for the constant performance of such a work as this, devise for us some way of doing it without a stated time; and do not keep a set time for your Lectures, class meetings, family duties, no nor your studies, or secret prayers. When you have shewed me a written word for these, and for your Preaching once or twice every Lord's-day, then I will shew you more than one text for the things in question.

Object. 9. The next Objections made, are against my urging them to associate: and one is, 'Why cannot I do my duty to God, and for my people at home, without travelling many miles to a meeting of Ministers? What Scripture binds me to this labour?'

Ans. Were I in a disputation, I would give you several formal arguments for all these things: but in this brief way of answering objections, I think it more profitable to them that

are in love with truth, to take up with the general grounds of the duty, which may afford them matter for many arguments. And to the objection, can you find no Scripture that commandeth Christians to be of one mind, and mouth, and way, and to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace? Cannot you prove from Scripture, that God would have Ministers to be one, in mind and heart, "as Christ and the Father are one?" (John xvii. 21.) Do you doubt whether you should do the work of God with as much unity and concord as is possible; and do you know that constant communion and correspondence is necessary to that end? You cannot be ignorant how the unity and consent of Ministers is their honour, and much of their strength with the people; and takes off much prejudice and odium that would fall on single men; and that singular actions brings us into contempt with them. Doubtless, as many Christians are bound to hold communion together in particular Churches, so many particular Churches, by their guides, are bound to maintain communion as far as nature makes them capable. And I hope few Ministers are ignorant that these Ministerial Assemblies for Concord among ourselves and the Churches, have been the constant practice of the Churches of Christ, as high as we have any history to acquaint us with their practice (I mean when the persecution made it not impossible). And shall we now in the end of the world begin to be wiser; and one single Pastor, and perhaps of no seraphical intellects, correct this practice of the Universal Church, as a needless thing, and say, Why may not I do my duty as well at home alone?

You owe duty to your neighbouring Ministers and Churches, for communion and in order to the common good, and the promoting of your common work. Are you humble men, and yet can you think that yourselves have no need of the advice and assistance of your brethren? I should hardly think you humble if you say so. But if you be so far above teaching, advice, or any other help to yourselves, your brethren have the more need of you, by how much the less need you have of them. There are many young Ministers that very much need the helps that such communion may afford them, and the advice of more grave, experienced men for carrying on the work of the Ministry; and many so humble and sensible of their need of such communion, that they would

be loath to be deprived of it. One would think we should no more need such a stir to make Ministers desire the communion of Ministers, than to make Christians desire the communion of Christians, or to make men desire the society of men.

Object. 10. ‘ But we have observed in most associations where we have been, that some one, or two, or few more, do all, and the rest do but follow them : it is as good then to go to these men alone, if we need advice.’

Ans. There is no one that pretends to any authority over their brethren, in our Association ; neither Civil coercive power, nor Ecclesiastical directive power. You cannot say therefore, that any one doth either force the rest, or awe them by any pretended commission from Christ. So that if any have so much power as you speak of, it is likely it is but the power of truth in them, and such as light hath against darkness ;’ or, if it be from the strength of their parts and gifts, have not you need even of the gifts of your brethren ? And are they not given for the body ? It seems by this objection, that you justify our Associations from all popular or factious prevalency of the multitude, or major part ; and that they lay not the cause upon number and votes, but upon wisdom, and the prevailing power of evidence ; and that one man that can bring more reason than others, shall be heard and regarded by all. What could you have said more to the honour of our Associations, to vindicate them from all imputations of pride and faction, and clamorous running on with the most.

And where you say, It is as good to go to those men in private, I answer, those men themselves do not think so. Perhaps, they that you call the leaders of the rest, do find themselves more in need of the help of those whom you say they lead, than you do of theirs. Among many, that may be spoken by a man of inferior parts, that came not into the minds of wiser men : which of you are so wise that needs no addition or assistance ; and what Minister is so weak that may not sometimes add to the wiser ? Moreover, among many, they that are of greater parts have the better opportunity to do the greater good with them, than with one in a corner. Would you have your neighbours say, ‘ What shall we do at the Congregation—there is but one man that does all, and I

can go as well to him at home : ' it is sooner done to speak to twenty or forty at once, than one by one.

But if indeed, you think that these leading Ministers do mislead the rest, there is the more need of the presence of such as you that discern it ! Care you not that your brethren and the Churches be misled ? If you see it, you can give your reasons that may disclose it ; and how know you what your light may do : seeing your brethren are not forced into error, but seduced ; if it be so, why may not you do as much to undeceive them ?

Object. 11. ' But, as I hear many say, under pretence of associating, you will but fall into a multitude of fractions ! Not two counties can agree upon the same terms : but one company go one way, and another go another way ; and why should we join with any of them till there be a greater likelihood of Union among themselves ?'

Ans. 1. A self-condemning, unreasonable objection. Are they more divided where they associate, than you that are single, and every man goes on his own head ? What if there were as many ways as counties ? that is not so bad as to have as many ways as parishes. Have you no more modest a way to excuse your singularity and disunion, than by charging Communion itself with singularity, and uniting with division ? 2. But wherein is it that this diversity of ways consisteth, which you complain of ? Tell us the particulars ; for I see no such great diversity ! Most counties that I hear of that have associated, do only agree to hold communion in stated meetings, and there to afford the best help they can to one another ; and have not proceeded to any more particular agreements, unless perhaps to Catechise, or personally instruct the people. And you cannot accuse them for diversity of ways, that descend to no more particular agreements. Indeed this county, (Worcestershire) and the counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland, have published the articles of their Associations and Agreements : and I pray you compare them, and see whether one egg be more like another than they are in sense.

But it is likely you mean, that our Articles are not in the same words, and it is not the same forms ' in terminis ' that we agree upon. And what of that ! I think there be above an hundred Catechisms now in England, that yet contain the

very same Principles of Religion. Will you fall out with Catechising, and use none, because we all agree not in one, for the terms : or should you not be more encouraged to it, because among so many there is such full agreement in sense, that they are all but as one? How many of the ancient Councils of the Church, did determine only of the same canons; and yet this was not called a disagreeing diversity.

The truth is, this objection is commonly made by men that place the Unity of the Church in matters that God never placed it in! We must not be one, because we subscribe not the same form of words, and agree not in every circumstance and expression. Whereas, indeed, we shall never be one, while Unity is placed in such indifferent things. There are no greater dividers of the Church in the world, than they that overdo in their pretendings to unity, and lay the Unity of the Church upon that which will not bear it. The Papists must needs centre all the Churches in their pope, and by this means have made the agreement of the Churches with them to be impossible; whereas, if they would have left out these false means of Union, and the concomitants, we might have held our Union and communion with them. So if formalists will lay the Union of the Church on this gesture, and that vesture, and this order, and these words in prayer, preaching, &c., they will presently make Union with them impossible; for there is a possibility of bringing all true Christians to unite in the revealed will of God, but no possibility of bringing them all to be of every formalist's opinion, and to use every gesture or form of words that he and his like shall impose upon them. I speak not against agreement in circumstances, but against unnecessary impositions therein, much more against laying the Church's Unity and peace upon them. For example: at the reception of the Lord's-supper all were forced to kneel: at the Eucharistical action of singing psalms, when we speak to God in the highest worship that we can perform on earth, no man was forced to kneel, or to any one gesture. In the former we were altogether by the ears, and driven from communion; and to this day thousands do separate from Assemblies because they may not kneel, as formerly some did, because they might not have it any other way but kneeling: but in the other case, of singing, where all were left at liberty, I never heard of one contention about the gesture to this day; no nor of

any offence that one took at another. So in reading that parcel, that was then peculiarly called *the Gospel*, all were bound to stand; and this bred contention: but at the reading of the same words in the chapter, all had liberty to choose their gesture; and there I never heard of contention or offence. So I may say in our present case, we do not intend by associating to tie one another to new forms and ceremonies, nor make new terms of Union. In this county we only chose out so much of the unquestionable work of Presbyters, about that government which had been long neglected, which Episcopal Presbyterians, and Congregational, are agreed in, and resolved at present to practise that which all are for, rather than to neglect an acknowledged duty, because of by-circumstances in which we differ: so that all these parties may join with us, without deserting the principles of their parties: and I think this is no way of division or discord.

Object. 12. ‘ But if this be all, what need we subscribe to Articles of Agreement? Is it not enough that we have all subscribed to the Scriptures already, if you require no more than what is there?’

Ans. We require no more, but that all agree to perform those duties which God’s word doth command; and freely, without force, accord about those circumstances which Scripture hath not particularly determined, but given as general rules to discern according to providential changes, how to determine them ourselves. I mean only such circumstances in which an agreement may further us in our work, without agreeing in those where agreement is wholly unnecessary, and without laying the Church’s peace upon any of them. We associate, not to make new laws and duties, but to accord in obeying the laws of God; and therefore the articles which we agree upon are Scripture-articles. And if any scruple subscribing to any that are not the very express words of Scripture, we will not differ with them, but will give them as much as is necessary in such Scripture-words to subscribe. And the reason why we subscribe to these Articles, though we have already subscribed to Scripture, is because they are matters long and generally neglected; and we do but hereby awaken ourselves to duty, and bind ourselves faster by renewing our obligations; and manifest our repentance for our former neglects, and our resolution for new obedience. As the people did in Ezra, that had

taken heathen wives, and as it was ordinary in the Old Testament, after some notable breach of covenant, to renew this covenant with God: and as we use to do at Sacraments, and days of Humiliation, though we have formerly taken the same covenant, yet we see cause to renew it again and again, especially as against those sins, and for those duties, where we have lately been most faulty.

And if it be no more than is your duty already; whether you subscribe or no, what reason have you to refuse an agreement or subscription to such duty, unless, as I said, because you are unwilling to perform it. He that is resolved to do it, is willing to be as much as may be obliged to it. When it must be done, the strongest bonds are surest.

Object. 13. ‘ But some Associations do not only practise, but subscribe to such things that we cannot in conscience agree to: as the use of lay-elders, as the Presbyterians do; the calling people to profess that they own us for their Pastors, as you do.’

Ans. I hope you are not of such dividing principles, as that you cannot in conscience hold Communion with men that differ from you in as great a matter as this, if they will but leave you free. Else, if you should plead conscience for such dividing, I would desire you to see that you can plead Scripture as well as conscience for it; for an erring conscience, engaging men against the will of God, is a poor excuse for sin: it is no more than to say, when I sin, I think I do not sin. It is a very good answer that Mr. Lawson, in his book against Hobbs’s Politics, doth give to the common question, Whether an erring conscience bind? He saith, that an erring conscience, is not conscience; for conscience is a sort of science, and error is not science, or knowledge.

But if these brethren would force you to subscribe with them in such matters as you mention, which your judgment is against, or else they will hold no communion with you, then it is they that exclude you, and not you that exclude yourselves. But I hope no Associations now with us, will be guilty of such a course. I hope they are not resolved to refuse communion with all that are not for lay-elders, or such like matters. Then they would be the Dividers, that lay the Church’s Unity and Peace on such a doubtful point. But if they do themselves subscribe to that, may not you desire to join with them, with a modest excepting of that

article alone in which you are unsatisfied ? which, no doubt, if they be peaceable men they will admit. And for the instance you give of our calling people to an express Consent, viz. (1.) To Christianity : (2.) To their Membership in the Churches where we are Pastors : I answer, It is a strange conscience that can find matter of scruple against this : when we are assured, that people cannot be Members or Christians against their wills, and their wills cannot be known to us but by the expressions of it, may we not call them to express it ? Especially, since parish-habitation is grown a less fit note than heretofore, and hearing is certainly no sufficient evidence ; and people will take it to be a heinous injury to them if we should exercise Discipline on them without their Consent, and perhaps would have an action against us at law for it ! And where Consent must be necessarily signified, is not the most express signification more satisfactory to us, and obligatory to them, than an uncertain, implicit dark signification, which our own consciences tell us, with abundance of them, is really no signification, nor intended by them to any such use, as not knowing what a Church is, or what Discipline is, but thinking that to be a Church-member, is no more than to be a parishioner, and come to Church. Though we might well prove against the Separatists that this much, with the professions of the rest that had more knowledge, was enough to prove the truth of our Churches, when we could do no more ; yet if we shall now, (after so many years of fullest liberty, when we may reform if we will,) proceed no further, but tolerate, yea, plead for all such defects as will but consist with the truth of the Churches ; yea, pretend conscience against them, it is just with God to lay upon us so much of his wrath, and withdraw from us so much of his mercy as shall leave us no more to comfort us, but that still we are truly men, as our Churches are truly Churches.

But I must farther tell you, that the objection is grounded on a mere mistake and wilful or careless oversight. For our Agreement to call our people to a profession of their Christianity and Church-membership, is but with this exception : ' Except any of us should judge that they can better exercise the forementioned Discipline without calling their people to such a profession of Consent, in which case we will declare our reasons to our brethren of the Ministry, in our

Meetings, and hear their advice when the case is opened. If indeed you can and will exercise Christ's Discipline on all in your parish, without their express consent, we shall not refuse communion with you : only let us see in good sadness that you do it. First privately, and at last openly admonish all the scandalous, obstinate sinners in your parish ; and if they do not repent and reform, reject them ; and then we will not differ with you about calling them to this profession. But if you will not do this, you must pardon me, if I conclude, that whatever you pretend, it is not the calling your people to this Profession that you scruple in conscience, but it is the trouble and opposition that Discipline exercised would draw upon you, that makes your flesh scruple any thing that would engage you to it. And if this be so, faithfulness to God, and you, commandeth me to tell you, that the searching day of God is at hand, when self-seeking hypocrites shall have their reward. If I may speak according to my experience of the state of our ordinary congregations, I must needs conclude, that if you did but perceive that you must exercise Christ's Discipline impartially, we should need no other argument to bring you to call for your people's consent, than your own safety and self-love, and that very flesh would be for it that is now against it. For I imagine, that if you should exercise this Discipline on all your parish, especially in great and bad congregations, you would hardly escape long from being knocked in the head, without a special preservation of God.

Object. 14. ' But some Associations are forming canons, and putting laws upon us which we know not that we are obliged to obey.'

Answ. 1. Associations sometimes draw up articles of agreement, whereto the several members oblige themselves by Consent : but I know of none with us that presume to impose any laws on others. 2. If the things you speak be made already your duty by God, either expressly by a particular command, or else by a general word determined by Providence, as about some necessary, variable circumstances, then it is no man, but God that imposeth on you, and it is not your refusing your Consent that shall disoblige you or excuse you. But if they be things evil, that are imposed on you by men ; put in the reasons of your dissent, and take the

leave of differing in that one point without withdrawing unnecessarily from their communion. If it be but about indifferent circumstances, as I would not have any, no, not by an agreement, much less by imposition, make common determinations of such without any need ; so if they did, I must tell you, that Union and Communion of Churches is not indifferent but necessary ; and therefore reject it not upon the account of such things as you say yourselves are but indifferent.

Object. 15. ‘ But we are not satisfied with their practice of suspending men from the Lord’s-supper, that are not excommunicated : nor do we know any warrant for it.’

Ans. Suspension is either penal, or not penal. That which is not penal is of two sorts : (1.) Sometimes I deny to give men the Sacrament, merely because I have no call or obligation on me to do it. In this case, the proof lies on you, viz. to prove my obligation. For example : I take not myself obliged to give the Sacrament to all the county, if they require it ; nor to any neighbour parish that have a Pastor of their own ; nor to any of this parish where I live that are separated members of another Church ; or, that through hatred of Discipline will be members of no particular Church ; or, that will be members of no particular Church, and yet will not come near me to acquaint me with their reasons. Nor am I bound to watch over, or administer Sacraments to any that will not take me for their Pastor in an ordinary stated course : no, nor at all, when I have so much to do with my own flock, that I cannot do such offices for others without neglecting as great duties to those whom I am more especially related and obliged to. Thus I suspend from the Sacrament many thousands ; that is, I do not give it them that I have nothing to do with, or no obligation to give it to. (2.) Sometimes we may forbear to give men the Sacrament, while we are admonishing them of their sin, and calling them to repentance, or doing some necessary previous duty. As if the whole congregation would have the Sacrament on Thursday, I may desire them to stay till the Lord’s-day, and in the meantime to humble themselves and prepare : If you will call this a suspending of the whole Church, you may speak as you please : So if you know a man that hath offended his brother, you may persuade him, yea, require him Ministerially, by authority from Christ, to leave his gift at the

altar, and go first and be reconciled to his brother, and then come and offer his gift. Though if he disobey, I will not presently without further trial censure him.

These acts are but negative (a not giving the Sacrament) and not properly privative, and therefore not properly suspension. Duties must be done in right order : no duty is at all times to be performed. I am not bound to give a man the Sacrament when I meet him in an alehouse, nor when I am admonishing him about a scandal : nor when three or four, or a dozen shall send to me to bring it them to a private house without any more ado. All things must be done decently, orderly, and to edification : and the forbearing a disorderly, indecent, unedifying administration, is no proper penal suspension.

And I am even ashamed that the Church is troubled about this question voluminously, by good men, that are for Discipline and Excommunication : when as the things that we make such a stir about, are cases that are not likely to fall out in a congregation once in twenty years. For if a man have offended, and no man have admonished him, nor the fact by notoriousness, or accusation be brought to the Church, or officers, we are not bound to take notice of it, so far as to suspend any : nor do any that I know of plead for such a thing. But if the case be duly brought to the Pastors, cannot they go to the person, or send for him before the very hour of the Sacrament ? Cannot they try whether he be penitent or not ? And if he be penitent, we yield that he is not to be penally suspended. If he be not after other admonition, and the case is brought to the Church, how can the officers be bound at the same time to give the Sacrament to an impenitent person, and also to avoid him for his impenitency, or to tell the congregation, in order to his recovery ? If these men are for Discipline, they must confess that I am bound either to tell the congregation of this offender (and that I must do when he demandeth communion), or else, if telling the officers be enough, I must require them to avoid him, if he be impenitent.

2. And this brings us to the other sort of Suspension, which is penal and properly so called : and this is nothing but an avoiding of the communion of the offender, ‘*pro hac vice.*’ Where note : that it is one thing to be unsatisfied of the fact, and another to be unsatisfied of the person’s repen-

tance. In case the fact be not manifest, we confess there must be no Suspension, save what prudence requires on the first mentioned grounds : as not properly penal. But if the fact be manifest any of these three ways, By notoriety ; or violent presumption ; or valid testimony ; and yet the person express not his repentance, we are bound by God to avoid communion with him till he repent : and therefore though I cannot sentence him as habitually obstinate, and therefore shall yet stay longer in a course of admonition before we reject him, as from his church-relation, or state of communion ; yet on the proved act of sin, till he manifest his repentance, I must forbear the actual communion with him, and deny him actual communion with us : for I cannot take him to be penitent till he profess it (probably) : and if I take him not to be penitent, I must take him to be yet in his sin, e. g. to be an adulterer, a drunkard, &c., and so am frequently commanded to avoid him, and forbidden to have communion with him. And this suspension is nothing but initial, actual excommunication. Even exclusion from the act of communion, before (upon the proof of fixed obstinacy) we exclude from the state of communion. This is plain, and methinks is enough to end, or at least, to quiet this needless controversy. But if this be all ; if you would indeed excommunicate only, and not suspend, this need not hinder any association. If you will go further than others, you may : as I confess you have great cause to go further than the most.

Object. 16. ‘ But, say others, is not denying them the Lord’s-supper a sufficient exercise of Discipline on the most ? What do you more to those that join not with you ?’

Answ. Either your not giving them the Sacrament is penal, or not. If not, it is no exercise of Discipline at all. Do you exercise Discipline on all the county, when you give them not the Sacrament ? If it be penal, it is irregular and harsh dealing to punish and initially excommunicate, for so it is, one half of a parish without an orderly trial, or calling them to speak for themselves, or without taking Christ’s course of first admonishing them. So that it seems to me not very much to differ from them that gather Churches irregularly, by casting off the most without a trial as no Church-members. And it is absurd to deprive them of actual communion so many years, and yet to let them remain in a *state* of communion, without any question. And if it be not a penal

suspension, but they keep away themselves, it is gross neglect to let them alone so many years in the omission of Church-communion, and God's ordinances while they are members.

As to our case, and the second part of the objection, I answer ; we take not ourselves to have a Pastoral charge of those that separate from us, and wilfully refuse to be members of our charge. We cannot make them our flock against their wills. We cast not out men, that cast not out themselves, but only in an orderly regular way of Discipline, that is not our fault, but their own.

And yet I must tell you, that I let not them all so pass : but though I think not that I have such a charge of them as the rest, yet I sometimes publicly admonish the most notorious, and pray for them, and require the Church to avoid them, as to private familiarity, as they withdraw themselves from Sacramental communion. For I think, if a man call himself a brother, that is, a Christian, and yet live scandalously, I must avoid him, and warn my people so to do, though he never joined himself to any Church. Though I know what Beza's conjectural observation is on Acts xxi. that they are called merely *Disciples* as they are Christians not yet under the Church-order and officers, and they are called *Brethren* when they are under officers and order : the observation hath its use ; but it is not so always, but often otherwise.

Object. 17. ' But are not there seasons when Discipline may be forborne ?'

Ans. Yes, no doubt, and Preaching too ; but that must not be ordinarily. It is hard that there was scarcely ever yet a season in England to execute it. I marvel when it will be seasonable, if not now !

Object. 18. ' But why do you go without the Magistrate, and lay his interest aside ?'

Ans. 1. We go not without his licence, for he grants us liberty. 2. Nor without his encouragement. 3. But if we had neither, for Discipline, Sacraments, Preaching, or Praying, should we not use them ? Is not Christ our Master ? Is not his authority sufficient ? How did all Christian Churches till Constantine's days ?

See our Agreement, Artic. 6. et Reg. 20. Whether we go without or wrong the Magistrate. Our Monthly meeting in this Church for matters of Discipline consisteth of two or three Justices of Peace, two or three Presbyters, three or

four Deacons, and about twenty-four Delegates of the People, of the most wise and pious men, chosen yearly by themselves to represent them, not prohibiting any other to be there, disclaiming any proper office, but only looking that the Church have no wrong, and doing that which private members may do.'

Object. 19. 'But some of the Prelatical men are offended at our leaving out the clause of *Christ's descent into hell* in our profession.

Ans. 1. The Creed is part of our profession, and if these men cannot find it, and that clause in our papers, it is not our fault. 2. The rest is about our Exposition of the Creed, for our people's understanding: and either that clause is plain and commonly agreed on, as to the sense, or not. If it be, then what need we expound it. If not, methinks they should rather commend our modesty that thought ourselves unmeet judges of so great a controversy, where the Church is so divided. 3. It seems a late clause that came not into this Creed for some hundred years after Christ. 4. The word *hell* was never put into the Creed by the Greek or Latin Church, and if it were a full and plain translation of the Greek *ἀδης*, or the Latin *inferi*, we should the more easily receive it without scruple; but if we should change this English word by a stricter translation, you would be offended much more. See Dr. Hammond in his Practical Catechism, pp. 286, 287, against the local descent into hell at large. Or if you would see much more, read that learned Treatise of Sandford and Parker, "*de Descensu Christi*," and Bishop Usher, in his answer to the Jesuit "*de Limbo, et Descensu Christi ad inferos*:" Read well but those two discourses, and you will but pity the self-conceitedness and confidence of such dry and raw discourses, as Mr. Ashwell, and many of his train, that seem to place more hope of their success in reproaching the contrary-minded, and in bold pretences to antiquity and universality, than in any evidence that should compel assent.

If these men have the moderation of true Protestants, let them hear the words of one of them, Bishop Usher *de Limbo*, p. 417. "And to speak truth, it is a matter above the reach of the common people to enter into the discussion of the full meaning of this point of the Descension into hell; the determination whereof dependeth upon the knowledge of the

learned tongues, and other sciences that come not within the compass of their understanding——It having here likewise been further manifested, what different opinions have been entertained by the ancient Doctors of the Church.——I leave it to be considered by the learned, whether any such controverted matter may fitly be brought in to expound the rule of Faith, which being common both to the great and the small ones in the Church, (August. Ep. 57. ad Dard.) must continue such verities only as generally are agreed on by the common consent of all true Christians.” Or if they have more respect to the judgment of a Jesuit, let them hear one of greatest name there cited. Suarez. tom. 2. in 3. part; Thom. Disp. 43, sect. 4. Si nomine articuli.——“If by an Article of Faith we understand, a truth which all the faithful are bound explicitly to know and believe: so I do not think it necessary to reckon this among the Articles of Faith; because it is not a matter altogether so necessary for all men; and because that, for this reason peradventure, it is omitted in the Nicene Creed; the knowledge of which Creed seemeth to be sufficient for fulfilling the precept of Faith. Lastly, for this cause peradventure Augustine and other fathers expounding the Creed, do not unfold this mystery to the people.”

And, saith Bishop Usher, *ibid.* “That he descended not into the hell of the damned by the essence of his soul, or locally, but virtually only, by extending the effect of his power thither, is the common doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, and the rest of the schoolmen. Card. Bellarmine at first held it to be probable, that Christ’s soul did descend thither, not only by his effects, but by his real presence also; but after having considered better of the matter, he resolved that the opinion of Thomas and the other schoolmen was to be followed.”

And whereas, some of them do with confidence persuade us that this Article was in the Creed from the beginning, they might also from a Jesuit have learned more modesty; John Busæus, de descensu Christi, Thes. 33. cited by Bishop Usher, de Limbo, p. 309, who saith, “Saint Cyprrian, or Ruffinus rather, in his Exposition of the Creed, denieth that this Article is read in the Creed of the Church of Rome, or the Churches of the East: and some of the most ancient fathers, while either they gather up the sum of the Christian Faith; or expound the Creed of the Apostles, have omitted this point of doctrine! But at what time it

was inserted into the Creed, it cannot certainly be determined." So far the Jesuit. And yet I will not imitate Mr. Ashwell's Royal Authority on his title-page, and so believe it to be from the Apostles, till another certain author is found out, as he saith, of the Creed; but I will contrarily believe it is not by the Apostles, because it cannot be proved by the affirmers to be by them, and because I can prove a time since them, when it was not in the common Creed.

And, saith Bishop Usher, *ib.* p. 310. "The first particular Church that is known to have inserted this article into her Creed, is that of Aquilia; which added also the attributes of *invisible* and *impassible* unto God the Father Almighty, in the beginning of the Creed, as appeareth by Rufinus, who framed his Exposition of the Creed according to the order used in that Church. But whether any other Church in the world, for five hundred years after Christ, (mark this), did follow the Aquilians in putting the one of these additions to the Apostles' Creed more than the other, can hardly, I suppose, be shewed out of any approved testimony of antiquity." He goes on further to prove this by instances of many authors' recitals of the Creed, and out of some ancient manuscripts, as is there to be seen, pp. 310, 311. Mr. Ashwell thankfully confesseth some things that he learned of him; if he had had the patience to have learned these and many more, before he had so far exalted himself against those that are not of his opinion, he had not done amiss.

Whether the Arians first put it into the Church Creed, I leave men to conjecture as they see cause, when they have perused the said Bishop's allegations, p. 308; but certainly, when the Nicene fathers had none of it, the symbols of the Eastern Church, not knowing it, as Rufinus tells us, these bastard fatherlings, the Arians, saith the Bishop, did not only insert this clause, 'He descended to the places under the earth,' but added for amplification, 'whom hell itself trembled at.' The like did they in another and a third Creed.

And as Rufinus testifieth, that this Article was neither in the Eastern nor the Roman Creeds, so he adjoined presently, as the Bishop noteth, p. 339. 'yet the force or meaning of the word seemeth to have been buried,' which some, saith

the Bishop, think to be the cause, why in all the ancient symbols that are known to have been written, the first six hundred years after Christ, that of Aquilia only excepted, which Ruffinus followed, where the burial is expressed, there the descending into hell is omitted, as in that of Constantinople, for example, commonly called the *Nicene Creed*; and on the other side, where the descent into hell is mentioned, there the article of the burial is passed over, as in that of Athanasius: and to say the truth, the terms of *burial* and *descending into hell*, in the Scripture-phrase, tend much to the expressing of the selfsame thing, &c.” So he.

These good men, therefore, that (some of them over their pots in an alehouse) do learnedly reproach us, for not expounding the article of the descent to hell, or not twice expressing it, should have considered, that with us they more reproach the *Nicene* and twenty other Creeds; yea, that, of Marcellus in Epiphanius, which is nearest to that now called the Apostles’ of any so ancient a form that I have met with; and they should have thought it enough in us to retain it in our Creed, without presuming to expound it, till they can answer what Bishop Usher, Parker, and other Protestants in this cause have delivered; or if they be of their mind, they should confess that it is expressed in the terms which we in our explication do retain.

But, as they must confess, the Creed was not delivered by the Apostles in English, and so the word *hell* was not in the original, so if we must stick to the Creed indeed, we must translate it truly, and you must help us to some word that is of as comprehensive a signification as *ἄδης* is; which, as is most largely proved by Usher and Parker, besides many more, signifieth the ‘state of the dead’ in general; or as applied to souls ‘the invisible state of separated souls;’ whereas, whatever the etymology of the word *hell* be, yet we are sure that the common use (which is the master of language) hath among the vulgar appropriated it to the damned’s place or state of torment; saith Bishop Usher, p. 388, “Some learned Protestants do observe, that in these words there is no determinate mention made either of *ascending* or *descending* either to heaven or hell, taking hell according to the vulgar acceptation; but of the general only, under which these contraries are indifferently comprehended; and that the words literally interpreted, import no more than this, *HE*

WENT UNTO THE OTHER WORLD. Allow us but this translation, and we shall please you ; and surely you will not say, that the Apostles agreed on your translation.

If you say, 'Then the words are superfluous, as intimating no more than his death before expressed;' I answer, that you may as well say, the Apostles superfluously expressed Christ's reviving after his rising. (Rom. xiv. 9.) "For this end he both died, rose, and revived." When indeed his reviving expresseth not the first re-union of soul and body, for that was before his rising; but his state of life among the living after. So here, his death expresseth his entrance into that state; but *ἀδης* signifieth the world of souls, or state itself of the dead, which dying he presently passed into. But of this Bishop Usher hath said enough in answer, *ib.* pp. 407, 408, and forward.

But yet for my part, I shall further tell you, that as I take the controversy to be of no greater moment than Suarez, Usher, and others, do express, so also I suppose our difference about it is not so great as many do imagine: lay but aside the metaphysical controversy about the locality of spirits, and the Popish conceit of Christ's fetching the Old Testament fathers from hell, which Usher shews that Marcion in all likelihood first hatched, and then our difference is but small; for what would you have that we do not grant you? Would you have us yield that Christ's body lay in the grave? Why, who denieth it? Would you have us yield that his soul was in the region of the dead, or in a state of separation from the body? Who is there that questions it? Would you have us yield that this state was penal both to soul and body? We easily grant it you. Not that Christ had the pain of sense, or the loss of heaven, but the penalty of death: the soul's being separated from the body was a penal state, as such. If any say, that Christ's soul was in Paradise, and there is no pain, I answer, There may be somewhat penal, where there is not that which vulgarly is called pain: and what glory soever the separated soul of Christ did partake of, yet the separation from the body, as separation, was penal. There remaineth a desire in separated souls to be reunited to their bodies, and therefore it is a better state; and glory is not perfect till the man be perfect. Death is a penalty to the whole man, and not to the body alone; and thus far it is a most undoubted truth, that both to the sepa-

rated soul of Christ, and now of the saints with Christ, there is something penal in this separation and imperfection remaining, though joined with exceeding glory. Saith Bishop Usher, p. 390, "Heaven itself may be comprised within the notion of $\alpha\delta\eta\varsigma$: heaven, I say, not considered as it is a place of life and perfection, nor as it shall be after the general Resurrection ; but so far forth only as death, the last enemy that shall be destroyed, (1 Cor. xv. 26,) hath any footing therein ; that is to say, as it is the receptacle of the spirits of dead men, held as yet dis severed from their bodies ; which state of dissolution, though carried to heaven itself, is still a part of death's victory, (1 Cor. xv. 54, 55,) and the saints' imperfection." (Heb. xi. 40.) Thus he. And Peter plainly saith, "Whom God did raise up, loosing the sorrows of death, forasmuch as it was not possible that he should be holden of it." (Acts ii. 24.) And "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth now no more : death hath now no more dominion over him," saith Paul, Rom. vi. 9. So that he was, as to his whole man, under some power or dominion of death for a time. Of this penalty on Christ's separated soul, and ours, see most fully Parker, l. 2. sect. 46. ad 50.

What would you have yet more granted ? Is it that Christ triumphed over Satan and hell, and convinced the unbelieving, impious, damned souls of their sin and remediless misery ? Why, we do not deny you ; for as the damned man (Luke xvi.) is said to see Abraham and Lazarus in his bosom, and the wicked in hell have such a knowledge of God and heaven, as sufficeth to convince them of the loss and misery, and to torment them ; so we deny not but they might have such a sight of Christ, and he might make such a manifestation of himself to them.

Would you have us grant that he went to $\alpha\delta\eta\varsigma$, to procure the deliverance of the captives of $\alpha\delta\eta\varsigma$? we deny it not : his humiliation is the cause of our exaltation ; his death and going to $\alpha\delta\eta\varsigma$ was to purchase deliverance for all his members, dead and living, that the dead bodies might in time be raised, and the separated souls be re-united to the bodies, and the whole man perfected. Would you have us believe that he went to bring the glad tidings of this to the spirits of the just ? we do believe it ; so that they that believed in him before might intuitively behold their Lord in whom they

believed, in their own present state, and might be the assurance of the resurrection of their bodies, and their final perfection.

But if besides all this, you would have us believe, that Christ's soul was locally in its essence in the hell of the damned; and that thence he fetched the souls of the old fathers out of the Limbus, that is part of hell, here we must leave you: 1. Because that else we must be worse than the Papists, whose schoolmen are content with a virtual presence, and deny a local: 2. Because we know not what locality of spirits is: and 3. Because in the latter branch, we are loath to be either Marcionites, or Papists, till we see more reason for it; especially, we have no mind of your speculations in our Creed.

Object. 20. The last objection that I have been troubled with, is against the title that we put over the old Creed, *the ancient Western Creed*. And what is the matter here? Engagement to their opinion makes them jealous; and jealousy suspecteth the most innocent syllables. Was not this the *ancient Western Creed*? Yes, no doubt, they mean not to deny it; but they think we intimate hereby a distinction between the Eastern Creed and the Western; and consequently intimate, that this Creed was not the Universal Creed of the Church, and composed and delivered for that use by the Apostles.

But our intimated distinction can be supposed necessary to intimate no more, than that the East and West did ordinarily make use of several Creeds in Baptism and other solemnities; and that this was it that the West made use of. So that whether the East also, and all Churches used this sometimes, or whether it were thus formed by the Apostles, are questions that we never intended to decide.

But being called to it, I must give a further account of my own opinion. You cannot in modesty surely, either deny the aforesaid ground of the distinction from the use of the several Churches, nor yet the antiquity of the terms of the distinction; much less can you think that learned and wise men have not used it, and brought it to our hands. He that is your chief author for the Apostolic composure of it, doth give you himself the matter and terms of this distinction; I mean Ruffinus, and Bishop Usher useth it frequently in the

aforesaid dispute, and his “*Dissertatio de Symbolis*,” and in other writings, to say nothing of Pithæus, Vossius, or any others. Why then doth the quarrel begin with us?

I have read Mr. Ashwell, and others of his opinion, as impartially as I could, being as willing to believe that the Apostles were the authors of this symbol as not, if I could see any evidence for it; but I must confess the reading of such writings as his, do more confirm me in my former opinion, which is as followeth:

1. I do believe that Christ himself is the Author of the ancient Creed; expressly in Matt. xxviii. 19, “Baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” And that the Creed at first contained but these three articles: and that all that were baptized, at age, were to profess this belief, viz. that they believed in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And I desire them that are confident of the contrary opinion, to confute what Parker hath so copiously brought for the proof of it: and learned Ludov. Crocius that followeth him.

2. And yet I do fully believe, that before the New Testament was written, the Apostles taught their Catechumens and persons admitted to Baptism, the sum of the Gospel or Christian Religion in a few distinct articles. For it is certain, that they could not deliver all the history or doctrine of Christ to every convert; and as certain, that they must deliver all the essentials before they could make a Christian, and that every Christian that was converted by them, was made such by the power of these essential truths; for the essentials of the subjective Christianity are the image and effects of the essentials of objective Christianity or Faith; as the image in the wax is of that in the seal.

3. I am persuaded that the method of the Apostles in delivering their Creed, or essential Verities, was according to Christ's platform; even to deliver the doctrine of the Trinity, and what was found necessary to the explication of any one of the three Articles; and consequently, that they ordinarily taught the same doctrine that is now in our Creed to all their converts; yet enlarging it, especially on the second article, which was it that the world did most resist.

4. I do believe that it cannot be proved, and therefore should not be affirmed, that the Apostles did in any one precise form of words, explain the three Articles laid down

by Christ; but as they ordinarily preached the same truths, and that much in the same or like phrase, not affecting novelty; so they did not compose this into any precise form of words, but delivered the same great truths in such expressions as they found meet for the persons with whom they had to do.

5. Thus I believe that every Christian, and Church was a living Gospel, or Book, in which the Creed, and all essentials of Christianity, doctrinal and practical, were written by the Spirit of God, through the instrumentality of the preaching of these fundamental truths; and this before the Scripture of the New Testament was written.

6. This I believe was the great Tradition of the essentials of Religion, distinct from Scripture: Baptism itself was a notable means to deliver down these truths.

7. Yet I am not against a strict agreement upon such a form of profession 'in terminis' without liberty to change a word; but think that exactness is as necessary in this, both for the sake of truth and unity, as in most matters that are left to man.

8. The reasons why I cannot believe that this present form of words, as now in our hands, was either composed by the Apostles, or the Universal Creed from the beginning, are these following, among many more.

(1.) Because of the no-proof that is brought by the affirmers that should prove it.

(2.) Because I find the Fathers in the first ages constantly giving up the Creed of that Church in other words; and in forms all differing one from another, and not one of them giving us this very form of above three hundred years at least after Christ. Ignatius, Irenæus, Origen, Tertullian, thrice recite the Church's Faith, and so do many others; and all in several forms of words, and not one of them in this form. So that it would make a man shake the head to read such kind of proofs as Mr. Ashwell's, that this is the Apostles' Creed; he heaps up other forms to prove the Apostolic composure of this form. What did he think of his readers when he offers them with highest confidence such proofs as most effectually disprove the thing he brings them for. Who can think that all these men would offer to give us the very symbol of Christianity in forms of their own, and various forms, and none of them use the Apostles' form, if

such a thing in precise terms had then been by them commended to the Churches. Those willing men that can make their own faith, may believe many such matters as these; but so cannot I. The first that I remember to have read, that is like the present form, though maimed, is that of Marcellus, in Epiphanius 72. Heresies, which are delivered with scuh expressions adjoined, as would make a man imagine that it was the matter and not the form of words which he professeth to have received from his ancestors; nor is there any one cited by Mr. Ashwell himself of those elder times, that seems the same form with ours, but only this of Marcellus, and that of the Latin Chrysostom and one of Tertullian's de Veland. Virg. seems to be part of this. And among such abundance of forms of words, it were strange if they could possibly miss sometimes of delivering these few Principles in the terms we now use. And for that of Marcellus, it is in many things different from ours; and that of Tertullian is so different that no man can prove that ever the author had seen our form. And as for that of Chrysostom, if it were his, he was about four hundred years after Christ; but indeed there is no such matter in his works. No wonder if Mr. Ashwell could not find it in Sir H. Sevil's edition, of "*Fronto Ducæus des,*" but only in the Latin edition of Erasmus, saith a far greater antiquary, Bishop Usher de Limbo, pp. 310, 311, "For as for the two Latin Expositions thereof that go under the name of S. Chrysostom, the latter whereof hath it, the former hath it not, and the others that are found in the tenth tome of S. Austin's works among the Sermons de tempore; because the authors of them, together with the time wherein they were written, be altogether unknown, they can bring us little light in this Inquiry." All the rest of the three first centuries at least, that Mr. Ashwell citeth, are set as if it were on purpose to make his reader wonder at his self-confutation.

(3.) Another of my reasons is, because I find so many clauses, new in this form that we now have, and find withal that the arising of new heresies was an avowed reason of adding new clauses to the Creed in those days, that it makes me much suspect that all the rest, except the three essential Articles were brought in by degrees, as heresies gave occasion, and never formed all at once.

That several new clauses were added to this, Bishop

Usher may satisfy you in his “*Dissertatio de Symbolis*,” and other writings, *ibid.* p. “*Quo tamen hodie Romana Ecclesia utitur Symbolum, additamentis aliquot auctius legi, res ipsa indicat—*” The additions not found in any of the more ancient copies are these ‘Creator of heaven and earth,’ added to the first article : which in likelihood was against that rabble of Heretics that feigned the world to be created by Angels, yea, bad Angels : also the word ‘conceived’ is added ; the oldest forms having it ‘born of the Holy Ghost, and the Virgin Mary.’ Also the word ‘dead’ is added ‘he descended into hell,’ and the name of ‘God’ and the attribute ‘Almighty’ to the article of Christ’s sitting at the Father’s right hand. Also the word ‘Catholic’ is added to the ‘holy Church’ and so is ‘the communion of saints’ and ‘the life everlasting.’ All which are a considerable part of so short a form. And that clauses were used to be put into the Creed upon occasion of heresy, is well known of other Creeds ; and Ruffinus confesseth of their Aquileian Creed, thus, “*His additur invisibilem : et impossibilem sciendum quod duo isti Sermones in Ecclesiæ Romanæ Symbolo non habentur : constat autem apud nos additos hæreseos causa Sabellii, illius perfecto quæ à nostris Patri passiana appellatur.—Ut ergo excluderetur talis impietas de Patre, videntur hæc addisse majores, &c.*” Ruffin. in Symb. c. 7.

Saith Bishop Usher, in his Sermon of the Church’s Unity, p. 17. “*This Creed, though for substance, it was the same every where, yet for form was somewhat different, and in some places received more enlargements than in others. The Western Churches herein applied themselves to the capacity of the meaner sort, more than the Eastern did ; using in their Baptism that shorter form of Confession, commonly called the Apostles’ Creed, which in the more ancient times was more brief also than now it is : as we may easily perceive by comparing the symbol recited by Marcellus Ancyranus, with the Expositions of the Apostles’ Creed written by the Latin Doctors, wherein the mention of the Father’s being ‘maker of heaven and earth,’ the Son’s ‘death’ and ‘descended into hell,’ and the ‘communion of saints’ is wholly omitted. All which, though they were of undoubted verity, yet—and need not necessarily be inserted into that symbol, which is the badge and cognizance whereby the believer is to be differenced and distinguished from the unbeliever. The*

Creed which the Eastern Churches used in Baptism, was larger than this; being either the same, or very little different from that which we commonly call the Nicene Creed.

“ And he begins his Dissertation de Symb. thus ‘ Licet apud omnes tum orientis, tum occidentis Ecclesias ut unus Dominus, et Baptismus ita et una fides fuerit; una tamen et eadem verborum formula fidei symbolum, quo in cultus Domini professione, et Baptismi susceptione, illæ sunt usæ, non fuisse conceptum, omniumque Romanum fuisse brevissimum, in symboli explicatione, Ruffinus Aquileinsis Presbyter jamdudum nos docuit: de additamentis etiam apud Occidentales ad Romanum hoc oppositis in præmio suo sic præfatus.’

“ And he useth the distinction in his preface ‘ Meam de Occidentalis et Orientalis Ecclesiæ Symboli sententiam, &c.” Et passim pp. 18. 13. 19, 20, 21. 26, &c.

(4.) And it is enough to debilitate the force that some imagine to lie in the title Apostolic, that the Nicene Creed was as confidently, and for ought ever I yet saw proved, as anciently called the Apostles’ Creed, as this, and said to be delivered from the Apostles. Saith Usher, Dissert. p. 16. “ Sed et ab Occidentalibus consimiliter Ecclesiis longius istud Symbolum et Apostolicum habitum et Nicænum etiam nominatum fuisse, observare liceat. Sic enim habet Ordo Romanus in præfatione Symboli cujus recitationi præmissa, ante administrationem baptismi: Audite suscipientes Evangelici symboli Sacramentum, a Domino, inspiratum, ab Apostolis institutum, cujus pauca quidem verba sunt, sed magna Mysteria.—Et in Cænæ Sacræ celebratione Latina Missa, quæ circa annum DCC. in usu fuit, de eodem adjicit Finito symbolo Apostolorum dicat Sacerdos, Dominus vobiscum.”

And p. 17, he had before said “ Hanc fidei formulam, ut ab Apostolis Ecclesiæ traditum, et à Nicænis Patribus promulgatum, laudat Epiphanius.” And Cyril, or John of Jerusalem calls the Jerusalem Creed by the name of Ἀγίας καὶ ἀποστολικῆς πίστεως, Catech. 18. Bishop Usher de Limbo. p. 309, saith that, “ The Creed of the Council of Constantino-ple, much larger than our common Creed, was itself no less than the other (N. B.) heretofore both accounted and named the Apostles’ Creed: and it is not to be thought it would leave out any article that was then commonly believed to have been any parcel of the Creed received from the Apos-

ties." And he citeth for the title Epiphan. in "*Ἀγκυρ* ; p. 518. and the Latin ancient Missal before mentioned. And citing Epiphan. again to the same purpose in his Sermon on Unity, he addeth that "Cassianus avoucheth as much, where he urgeth this against Nestorius, as the creed anciently received by the Church of Antioch, from whence he came: and that the second General Council at Constant. approved it as most ancient and agreeable to Baptism," apud. Theod. lib. 5. cap. 9.

Many other reasons that stick with me are at large expressed in "*Parker de Descen. lib. 4 ;*" which whoever will read impartially with judgment, I dare venture him easily upon Mr. Ashwell's answer to them: the sum of which alloweth the Fathers to make additions, as being but an explanation; when as our question is only of the Form of words. If any of them may be altered, and additions made, who knows which of them be Apostolical? and why may not others now do the like? What commission can those Fathers shew more than other Pastors of the Church?

Far am I from believing him, that none but by an Apostolical spirit could have known by the Scriptures which were fundamental Articles of Faith: thus far to have summed them up. When Scripture so expressly tells men, which are the Principles, and which life and death are laid upon.

And further am I from believing him that there is so much difference between the Creed and the Scripture as he expresseth, as if there were no understanding nor keeping our Religion for all the Scripture, were it not for the Creed, but the whole frame of our Religion would fall instantly to the ground; and the contempt which he spitteth in the face of the Scriptures, I must needs say, I do dislike, and think it most unseemly in a man that is so tender of having the nakedness of the Fathers opened, and that hath no more sensible an answer to give to those testimonies of the Church of France and of England, so valued by him, and of Cyril and Paschasius, who all take the Creed on the authority of the Scripture from whence it is gathered. (See his p. 115. 168, 169. and 178. to Object. 9.) It is past my understanding, that the bare words that Christ 'was crucified, dead, buried,' &c. should teach a man more plainly to what end it was that Christ did all this, whether only for example, as the Socinians, or for ransom, sacrifice, propitiation, &c. than the Scriptures that at large set forth these ends. As

plain as the Creed is, he must needs reserve the undoubted exposition, and applying of this rule to the Church and ancient Fathers, "in whose writings, he saith, the Apostles have left it us, these being their successors, to whose care and custody they not only committed the oracles of God in writing, and the Creed by word of mouth, but the interpretation also of both, as they heard them expounded from their own mouths, while they preached and lived amongst them ; for in vain had the Apostles given them the words, if they had not given them the sense withal, to stop the mouths of Heretics."——True ; it were in vain, if the words themselves are nonsense. I know the Apostles have successors so far, as to have the care of expounding this Scripture delivered to them, by the ordinary helps of grace, art, and nature ; discerning the sense by the words ; but O that I knew where to find that Church that could give me the sense of all God's oracles, by this undoubted tradition, as from the Apostles themselves. Or, that I knew the names, or characters of those Fathers that had this *depositum* by tradition from the Apostles, and where I may find it left to us ? Is it each Father individually, or is it the greater number together ? And how shall we take the vote ? or know which of them to account a Father and which not ? Surely when I read them telling us no more of the sense of the oracles, and so often erring, and disagreeing, I cannot believe that their memories were all so good, as to deliver down from father to son an exposition of the Bible, without writing, and if ever any of them had such a voluminous Commentary in his brain, from the hand of an Apostle, which was not thought meet to be given in writing, the issue by this time may convince us, that either it was intended only for themselves, or else that indeed such a world of matter would have been more surely kept in writing, than this tradition hath hitherto kept it. For I think most of us love our fleshly ease so well, that if we knew where the book or the Church were that would give us such a certain exposition of Scripture, as from the Apostles, we would be glad of it, not only to the quieting of our minds, but also for the sparing our time and labour that we now bestow in studying.

Yet still I say as before, that I doubt not but the principles were preached before the Gospel was written, and that thousands were made Christians by the reception of those

principles; and that all Christians and Churches of them, successively contained these principles written in their hearts; and that the great Articles of the Creed, believing in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, were in terms imposed on the Church by himself: and that the meaning of them was still taught to the Catechumens and the Church. And that the Churches did well to keep the sum of Faith in certain forms of words; and I would they had made fewer, and changed them less: and I think it meet that they be still used in Baptism, and on other occasions of Public Confession of Faith in our Congregations.

But yet I am not convinced that the Apostles did compose this form of words, or any other to that use; nor that it was composed for some hundreds of years after Christ, though the same Articles were then professed in several forms of words. And those Articles were all delivered from Christ and his Apostles: nor do I believe that the form now called the Apostles' Creed, was any more theirs, or more ancient than some other forms; nor do we owe it any more belief or reverence, than we do the Jerusalem or Nicene Creed; and yet I truly much reverence both, and believe them all. Nor do I think that ever this Creed was the form which the Universal Church did use above others; but think that in the third century, the Nicene was the more common. So much (and perhaps too much) to these Objections.

TO THE
 REVEREND AND FAITHFUL MINISTERS OF CHRIST

IN THE SEVERAL COUNTIES OF THIS LAND,

AND THE GENTLEMEN AND OTHER NATIVES OF EACH
 COUNTY, NOW INHABITING THE CITY OF LONDON.

Reverend and Beloved Brethren,

THE whole design and business of this Discourse, being the Propagation of the Gospel, and saving of men's souls, I have thought it not unmeet to acquaint you with another work to that end, which we have set on foot in this County, and to propound it to your consideration, and humbly invite you to an universal imitation. You know, I doubt not, the great inequality in Ministerial abilities, and that many places have Ministers that are not qualified with convincing lenity, and awakening gifts. Some must be tolerated, in the necessity of the Church, that are not likely to do any great matters towards the Conversion of ignorant, sensual, worldly men; and some that are learned, able men, and fitted for Controversies, may yet be unfit to deal with those of the lower sort. I suppose, if you peruse the whole Ministry of a County, you will not find so many, such lively, convincing Preachers as we could wish. I take it for granted, that you are sensible of the weight of Eternal things, and the worth of Souls; and that you will judge it a very desirable thing that every man should be employed according to his gifts, and the Gospel in its light and power should be made as common as possibly we can: upon these and many the like considera-

tions, the Ministers in this County resolved to choose out four of the most lively, yet sober, peaceable, orthodox men, and to desire them once a month to leave their own Congregations, to the assistance of some other, and to bestow their labour in the places where they thought there was most need; and as we were resolving upon this work, the natives of this County, inhabiting the city of London, having a custom of feasting together once a year, and having at their Feast collected some monies by Contribution, for the maintaining of a Weekly Lecture in this County, besides other good works, did, by their Stewards, desire us to set up the said Lecture, and to dispose of the said monies in order thereto; and their judgments upon consultation did correspond with our design. So that the said money being sufficient to satisfy another that shall in their absence, Preach in their own places, we employ it accordingly, and have prevailed with some Brethren to undertake this work.

I propound to your consideration, reverend Brethren, and to you, the Natives of each County, in London, whether the same work may not tend much to the edification of the Church, and the welfare of souls, if you will be pleased speedily and effectually to set it on foot through the land? Whether it may not, by God's blessing, be a likely means to illuminate the ignorant, and awaken the secure, and counter-mine seducers, and hinder the ill-success of Satan's itinerants, and win over many souls to Christ, and establish many weak ones in the faith?—and not doubting but your judgments will approve of the design, I humbly move, that you will please to contribute your faculties to the work; *viz.* That the Londoners of each County will be pleased to manifest their benevolence to this end, and commit the Monies to the hands of the most faithful, orthodox Ministers, and that they will readily and self-denyingly undertake the work.

I hope the Gentlemen, natives of this County, will be pleased to pardon my publishing their example, seeing my

end is only the promoting of men's Salvation, and the common good.

And that you may more fully understand the scope of our design ; I shall annex the Letter directed to the several Ministers of the County which the Lecturers send to the Ministers of the place, and receive his answer, before they presume to preach in any Congregations.

TO
ALL THE REST OF THE MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL
IN THIS COUNTY,
OUR REVEREND AND BELOVED BRETHREN, GRACE AND
PEACE IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Reverend Brethren,

THE communication of the heavenly evangelical light, for the glory of our Redeemer in the conversion, edification, and salvation of men's souls, is that which we are bound to by many obligations, as Christians, and as Ministers of Christ for his Church, and therefore must needs be solicitous thereof; and it is that which the Spirit of Grace, where it abideth, doth proportionably dispose the heart to desire: by convictions of the excellency and necessity of this work, and of our own duty in order thereto, and by the excitation of undeserved grace, our hearts are carried out, to long after a more general and effectual illumination and saving conversion of the inhabitants of this County in which we live; which, while we were but entering upon a consultation to promote, it pleased God, without our knowledge of it, to put the same thoughts into the hearts of others. The natives of this County of Worcester, who dwell in London, meeting at a Feast (as is their yearly use), collected a sum of money for the setting of eight poor Boys to Trades, and towards the maintaining of a Weekly Lecture, and have committed the execution of this last to our care; and upon consultation with their Stewards, and among ourselves, both they and we are satisfied, that a movable Lecture, on the Lord's-day, is the likeliest way for the improvement of their Charity, to the attainment of their ends. For many people through poverty cannot, and many through negligence will

not come to a week-day's Lecture; experience telleth us, that such are usually attended but little by those that have the greatest need; and thus the benefit may extend to more, than if it were fixed in one place.

We have therefore desired our reverend and dear Brethren, Mr. Andrew Tristram, Minister at Clent, Mr. Henry Oasland, Minister at Bewdley, and Mr. Thomas Baldwin, Minister at Wolverley, and Mr. Joseph Treble, Minister at Lench, to undertake this work, and that each of them will be pleased every fourth Lord's-day to preach twice in those places where they shall judge their labours to be necessary; and as we doubt not but their own Congregations will so far consent for the good of others; so we do hereby request of you our Brethren, that when any of them shall offer their labours for your Congregations, in preaching the said Lecture, you will receive them, and to your power further them in the work. For as we have no thoughts of obtruding their help upon you without your consent, so we cannot but undoubtedly expect, that men fearing God, and desiring their People's everlasting good, will cheerfully and gratefully entertain such assistance. And we hope that none will think it needless, or take it as an accusing the Ministry of insufficiency; for the Lord doth variously bestow his gifts. All that are upright are not equally fitted for the work; and many that are learned, judicious, and more able to teach the riper sort, are yet less able to condescend to the ignorant, and so convincingly and fervently to rouse up the secure, as some that are below them in other qualifications; and many that are able in both respects, have a barren people; and the ablest have found by experience that God hath sometimes blessed the labours of a stranger to that which their own hath not done. We beseech you, therefore, interpret not this as an accusation of any, which proceedeth from the Charity of our worthy Countrymen in London, and from the earnest desires of them and us to further the salvation of as many as we can. And that you may have no jealousies of the persons deputed to this work, we assure you that they are approved men, orthodox, sober, peaceable, and of upright lives, happily qualified for their Ministerial work, and zealous and industrious therein; and so far from being likely to sow any errors, or cause divisions, or draw the hearts of People from their own faithful Pastors, that they will be

forward to assist you against any such distempers in your flocks. Not doubting, therefore, but as you serve the same Master, and are under the same Obligations as we, so as many as are heartily addicted to his service will readily promote so hopeful a work : we commend you and your labours to the blessing of the Lord.

Your Brethren and Fellow-labourers in the Work of the Gospel,

Kidderminster :

In the name, and at the desire	}	RICHARD BAXTER,
of the Ministers of this		JOHN BORASTON,
Association,		JARVIS BRYAN.

Evesham :

In the name of the Ministers	}	GILES COLLIER,
of this Association,		GEORGE HOPKINS,
		JOHN DOLPHIN.

END OF THE REFORMED PASTOR.

CONFIRMATION

AND

RESTAURATION,

THE NECESSARY MEANS OF

REFORMATION AND RECONCILIATION;

FOR THE

HEALING OF THE CORRUPTIONS AND DIVISIONS OF THE CHURCHES.

SUBMISSIVELY, BUT EARNESTLY TENDERED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE SOVEREIGN POWERS, MAGISTRATES, MINISTERS, AND PEOPLE, THAT THEY MAY AWAKE, AND BE UP AND DOING IN THE EXECUTION OF SO MUCH, AS APPEARETH TO BE NECESSARY, AS THEY ARE TRUE TO CHRIST, HIS CHURCH AND GOSPEL, AND TO THEIR OWN AND OTHERS' SOULS, AND TO THE PEACE AND WELFARE OF THE NATIONS; AND AS THEY WILL ANSWER THE NEGLECT TO CHRIST, AT THEIR PERIL.

“For I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring, and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.” Isa. xliv. 3, 4, 5.

TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,

HAVING in divers Writings, moved for the restitution of a solemn transition, of all that pass from an infant state of Church-membership, into the number of the adult, and are admitted to their privileges, and the Associated Ministers of this County, having made it an Article of their Agreement, at last came forth an excellent Exercitation on Confirmation, written by Mr. Jonathan Hanmer, very learnedly and piously endeavouring the restoration of this practice. Being very glad of so good a work, upon an invitation, I prefixed an Epistle before it; which hath occasioned this following Disputation. For when the book was read, the design was generally approved, as far as I can learn, and very acceptable to good men of all parties. But many of them called to me, to try whether some more Scripture proofs might not be brought for it, that the Preceptive, as well as the Mediate necessity might appear. At the desire of some Reverend godly Brethren, I hastily drew up this which is here offered you; partly to satisfy them in the point of Scripture Evidence; but principally to satisfy my own earnest desires, after the Reformation, and Healing of the Churches, to which I do very confidently apprehend, this excellent work to have a singular tendency. Here is a medicine so effectual to heal our breaches, and set our disordered societies in joint, (being owned in whole by the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Erastian, and in half, by the Anabaptists,) that nothing but our own self-conceitedness, perverseness, laziness, or wilful enmity to the peace of the Churches, is able to deprive us of a blessed success. But, alas, our minds are the subjects of the disease; and are so alienated, exulcerated, and so selfishly partial and uncharitable, that when

the plaister is offered us, and peace brought to our doors, I must needs expect that many should peevishly cast it away, and others betray it, by a lazy commendation, and so disable the few that would be faithful, practical and industrious, from that general success, which is so necessary and desirable.

As for them that lay all our peace on Episcopacy and Liturgy, I intend if God will, to send them after this, some healing motions on those subjects also. And if they have no better success, than presently to satisfy my own conscience, in the faithful performance of so great a duty, and to awaken the desires, endeavours and prayers of the more moderate and impartial, I shall not think my labour lost. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love it. Let us seek it of God, as well as men; which is the daily, though too defective practice, of

The most unworthy Servant

of the King of Peace,

RICHARD BAXTER.

April 7, 1658.

If Magistrates or others, who are obliged to promote the work, which is here commended to them, do want leisure, or patience to read the whole, I desire them to peruse the Contents of this book, and those parts of the work, in which they are most unsatisfied.

CONFIRMATION AND RESTAURATION

THE NECESSARY MEANS OF

REFORMATION AND RECONCILIATION.

QUEST. *Whether those that were baptized in Infancy, should be admitted to the privileges proper to adult Church-members, without Confirmation or Restauration, by an approved Profession of Personal Faith and Repentance? Neg.*

THOUGH the distempers of the Churches of Christ in England, are not so great as the Popish adversaries, or some discontented brethren do pretend, nor as some inconsiderate lamenters of our condition do imagine, who observe less our enjoyments than our wants, and that have not the faculty of discerning our true agreements, where there is any difference, but think that many things are wanting that are not, because they cannot find them; yet is our discomposure such as the wisest have cause to mourn for, and all of us should contribute our endeavours to redress. For the accomplishment of this blessed work, two things must be done: The first is, to discover the principles that must reform and heal us, if ever we be healed; and to acquaint the world with the necessary means. The second is, to concur for the execution, in the application and use of the remedy, when it is discovered. The first is a work, that is usually done best by a few at first; though the more receive and approve of the discovery, the better it will be brought into use. But it is here, saith Pemble, as in discerning a thing afar off, where one clear eye will see further than many that are dim, and the greatest conjunction of unfurnished intellects,

affords not so much assistance for the discovery, as the greater sight of a few may do. But in the executive part there must be many hands to the work. If the pastors and people do not consent, it cannot be accomplished; and if they barely consent, and be not up and doing, discoveries will lie dead, and nothing will go on: and if the Christian magistrate afford not his assistance, his guilt will be great, and the work will go the more heavily on. Though all the body be not an eye, and therefore be not as good at discovering as the eye is; yet must each member perform its own office, and none be idle, or withdraw its help, because it is not an eye, but all must execute by the guidance of the eye.

In order to the discovery of the healing means, among others, this rule is worthy our observation:—‘If any church-order, or administration seem offensive to you, before you wholly cast it out, consider whether there be not somewhat that is necessary and excellent either in the substance, or in the occasion and reason of it; and you will find, that Reformation is to be accomplished more by restoration of ordinances, and administrations to their primitive nature and use, than by the utter abolition of them.’—Satan found it easier to corrupt the ordinances of Christ, and to cause them to degenerate into somewhat like them, than to introduce such of his own as were wholly new, and as Christ had given no occasion of. I could give you very useful instances in many of the Popish administrations, which require a restoration, rather than an abolition, lest that which is Christ’s part, be cast out with that which is man’s, and we should throw away the apple which should be but pared; and lest we cast away our necessary food, and most precious jewels, because they have fallen into Romish dirt. But my present business is to instance only in Confirmation and Penitence, so far as is requisite to the decision of the question now before us.

I know you will easily excuse me from the needless labour of explaining any terms in the question which you understand already: I think the best method to lay the matter naked before your understandings, will be by approaches and degrees in the opening and confirming of these Propositions:—

PROP. 1. *It is here supposed, that the Infants of Believers should by Baptism be admitted into the Church, and so be partakers of Infant Privileges.*

THEIR sin and misery is come upon them without any actual consent of their own, by the will of others; and the remedy must be applied to them accordingly; not by any actual consent of their own, which is as impossible, but by the will of others, as the condition, and by the gift of God as the cause. In his dealing with mankind, God is not so much more prone to wrath and vengeance than to mercy, as to put infants into the comminatory terrible part of the covenant, with their parents, and not into the remedying part; and to condemn them for their first father's covenant-breaking, and give them no help from their gracious parents' covenant-keeping; and to fetch weight from parents' sins to weigh down the scale of vindictive justice, and to put nothing from the gracious parents into the other end. Yet is it not to infants, as the mere natural issue of godly parents, that God extendeth this grace. But (1.) As they are naturally their own, the parents have a power of them to dispose of them for their good. (2.) Every man that is sanctified, hath devoted himself, and in general all that he hath to God, according to the several capacities of what he hath, that every thing may be for God in its proper capacity. (3.) Virtually then the children of the godly, even in the womb, are thus devoted unto God. (4.) It is the revealed will of God, that infants should be actually dedicated and devoted to him. (5.) He that requireth us to make this dedication, doth imply therein a promise of his acceptance of what is dedicated to him by his command; for his precepts are not vain or delusory. (6.) He hath also expressly signified this in Scripture promises, extending his covenant to the seed of the faithful, and telling us that his kingdom is of such. (7.) This dedication is to be made by Baptism, the ordinance which God hath appointed to that end; and in which he is ready to signify his acceptance, that so there may be a mutual, solemn covenant.

The servants of God, before Christ's coming, were enabled and required to enter their infants into the covenant of God, sometimes and ordinarily in circumcision, and sometimes, as in the wilderness, (Deut. xxix,) without it. And they have the same natural interest, and as large a disco-

very that it is the will of God, for the dedicating of their children to God, and choosing for them, and entering them into the holy covenant, now as then. If then a child that had no exercise of its own will, might by the will of his parents choose the Lord, and be entered into covenant with him, it is then so still. God hath no where reversed or abrogated that command which obliged parents to enter their children into covenant with God, and devote them to him. Nay, Christ chided those that would keep them from him, because his kingdom, that is, his Church, is of such. A place that doth purposely and plainly express the continuance of his love to infants, and that the Gospel entertaineth them as readily as the Law or Promise before did. Often and again, doth Christ signify to the Jews that he would have gathered them wholly to his church, and not have broken them off, if they had not by unbelief been broken off, and in the same olive hath he engrafted the Gentile Church. Infants are members of all commonwealths on the face of the earth, though they know not what a commonwealth is, nor yet what sovereignty or subjection mean; and he that should say they are no members, because they are imperfect members, would but be laughed at: and Christ hath not cast them out of his family or commonwealth, nor shut the door against them.

And that in this infant state they are capable of many privileges is apparent: they have original sin, which must be pardoned, or they are lost. Most of the Anabaptists, that I hear of, do hold that all the infants in the world are pardoned by Christ, and shall be saved if they die in infancy, and run in the downright Pelagian road. But this is not only utterly unproved, but contrary to Scripture, which telleth us, that sin is not pardoned by the bloodshed of Christ, till men be brought into union with him, and participation of him, and for all his bloodshed, no man shall have pardon by it till it be given him by the act of pardon in the Gospel. Now the Gospel no where gives out pardon to every infant in the world; nay, it frequently and plainly makes a difference. The parents' will doth accept the offer, and choose for them that cannot choose for themselves; for others, whatever God will do with them, doubtless they have no promise of mercy. And it is strange that they should deny baptism to infants that deny not salvation to them; yea, that think, though ungroundedly, that they are all in a

state of salvation. For either infants have original sin, or not: if they have none, then they need no Saviour, and must be saved without a Saviour; for the whole need not the physician, but the sick. If they have original sin, and that it is pardoned to them by Christ, then how can men deny them the sign and seal of pardon, or the solemn investing means? If they are sure that they are washed with Christ's blood, how can they deny to wash them with that water, that is appointed to signify and invest?

Moreover, infants are capable of many other privileges; and of being the adopted sons of God, the members of Christ, the heirs of heaven, as having right thereto; and being the members of the church, and being under the special protection and provision of God, and in an especial sort partakers of the prayers of the church, with divers more. As in the commonwealth, an infant is capable of having honour and inheritance in right, though not actually to use them; and of the protection of the laws for life, reputation and estate; and of being tenant, and obliged to pay a certain rent and homage when he comes of age, and in the meantime to have provisions from the estate that he hath title to.

But all this I have more fully expressed elsewhere. Having lately read Mr. Tombes's last, and large Reply, to part of my book, and many others; I must needs say that it leaves me still persuaded that it is the will of Christ, that the infants of his servants should be dedicated to him in baptism, and members of his visible church; and though upon the review of my arguments I find that I have used too many provoking words, for which I am heartily sorry, and desire pardon of God and him, yet I must say, that I am left more confident than before, that the cause is God's which Mr. Tombes opposeth. Of which, if God will, I intend yet to give some further account: in the meantime I deal with this but as a supposition that is already sufficiently proved, though all men, yea, all good men, see not the sufficiency of the proof.

PROP. 2. There are many Privileges belonging to the Adult Members of the Church, which Infant Members are not capable of.

THIS is true both of natural and moral capacities. The privileges which I mean are, the pardon of many actual sins, committed since they are adult; the exercise of all holy

graces ; knowing God ; loving him ; trusting him ; serving him ; the communion that we have with God herein ; as particularly in prayer, in holy praises and thanksgivings, in heavenly meditations ; the peace and joy that followeth believing, and the hopes of everlasting life ; the communion which we have with the Church of Christ in hearing, praying, praises, the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ ; in distribution by giving and receiving, and an endearing holy love within. These and many more privileges are proper to the adult.

That infants are not naturally capable of these, is as needless to prove, as that they are infants : and then that they are not morally capable, is an inseparable consequent. For though natural capacity may be without moral ; yet moral cannot be without natural ; in point of duty, infants are not bound to the work ; as to hear, pray, praise, &c. beyond the natural capacity of their intellects and bodies. And so in point of benefit we must have more sobriety than to suppose God to make over any benefit to them which they are not capable of : all this is plain.

PROP. 3. *The continuation of Privileges received in Infancy, is part of the Privileges of the Adult ; or the Restoration of them if they be lost.*

IF the cause discontinue, the effect will cease. Adult privileges comprehend the infant privileges, partly as that which is perfect comprehendeth the imperfect, and partly as the whole comprehendeth the parts, and partly as the thing continued is the same with the thing begun. Infant privileges would all cease with infancy, if the causes or conditions cease, and there be no other cause for their continuance. God never took infants into his church and covenant, with a purpose so to continue them, without any other condition than that upon which they were admitted. This is past denial, and will be more cleared in the next.

PROP. 4. *The Title-condition of Infant Church-membership and Privileges, is not the same with the Title-condition of the Church-membership and Privileges of the Adult ; so that if this new Condition be not performed when Men come to Age, their former Title ceaseth, and there is no other that ariseth in its stead.^a*

1. WE are agreed I think, that our title, (which is ‘ Funda-

^a See the Rubric of the Common Prayer-Book before Confirmation after cited.

mentum Juris' is God's covenant, grant, or gift.^b As it is his precept that constituteth our duty, so it is his promise or deed of gift which is our title to the benefit.

2. And we are agreed I hope, that this promise, or grant from God is conditional; for if church-membership and privileges be absolutely given, then it is to all, or but to some: not to all: for then the church, and the world are all one; and then it is not '*Ecclesia cœtus evocatus*;' and then Heathens and Infidels have right; which are things that no Christian, I think, will grant. If it be but some that have title, then there must be some note to know them by; or else the some will be equal to all, or to none. And if they be marked out, then it must be by name or by description: not by name; for we find the contrary. Scripture doth not name all that have title to church-privileges. If it be by description, it is either by mere physical or by moral qualifications that they are described: the former, none doth imagination, that I hear of. If they are moral qualifications, then either they are such as are prerequisite to our right and privileges, or not: that they are prerequisite all must confess that read the promise, and all do confess that they are prerequisite to all the following privileges: and if prerequisite, then either as means or no means. The latter none can affirm, without going against so much light, as ordinary Christians have still ready at hand to confute them with: and if they are required as means; then either as causes or conditions. And I think you will sooner yield them to be conditions than causes, though either concession sufficeth to the end that is before us. But of this we need to say no more, both because it is commonly confessed, and because that the words of the promises are so plain, and undeniable, being uttered in conditional terms. Nor is this either inconsistent with, or any way unsuitable to an absolute decree; for as a threatening, so the conditionality of a promise, are instruments admirably suited to the accomplishment of an absolute purpose or decree. He that is fully resolved to save us, or to give us the privileges of his church, will deal with us as men, in bringing us to the possession of the intended benefits; and there-

^b G. Cassander Consult. de Confirm. Hujusmodi sane Institutionem seu Catechismi explicationem in pueris fieri debere, et Veteres præcipiunt, et Recentiores quoque ex utraque parte consentiunt. Vide August. Serm. 116. in Ramis palmarum, et Wallafridum de rebus Ecclesiast. cap. 26. et quæ scripsit Ruardus Tappenus Lovan. tom. 2. ad illud Calvini Instit. c. 17.

fore will by threats and conditional promises excite us to a careful performance of the condition in us; and that grace which is resolved to effect the very condition in us, is also resolved to make a conditional promise, yea, and a threatening the instrument of effecting it.

3. Note, that the great question, Whether all the infants of true believers are certainly justified, or whether some of them have but lower privileges, is not here to be determined, but in a fitter place: and therefore I determine not what privileges they are that will cease, if our infant title cease; but that according to the tenor of the promise, the continuance of them, with the addition of the privileges proper to the adult, are all laid upon a new condition.

4. Note also, that when I call it another or different condition, I mean not that it is different in the nature of the act, but in the agent or subject. It is the same kind of faith which at first is required in the parent, for the child's behoof, and that afterward is required in ourselves. But the condition of the infant's title is but this,—that he be the child of a believer, dedicated to God; but the condition of the title of persons at age is, that they be themselves believers, that have dedicated themselves to God. The faith of the parent is the condition of infant title: and the faith of the person himself, is the condition of the title of one at age.

That their own faith is not the condition of an infant's title, I think I need not prove: For (1.) They are incapable of believing without a miracle: (2.) If they were not (as some Lutherans fondly think), yet it is certain that we are incapable of discerning by such a sign. I think no minister that I know, will judge what infants do themselves believe, that he may baptize them. (3.) And I think no man that looks on the command, or promise, and the person of an infant, will judge that he is either commanded then to believe, or that his believing is made the condition of his infant title.

But that a personal believing is the condition of the title of them at age, is as far past doubt; and it is proved thus:—

Arg. 1. The Promise itself doth expressly require a faith of our own, of all the adults that will have part in the privileges; therefore it is a faith of our own that is the condition of our title. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not, shall be damned.” (Mark xvi. 16.) “And the Eunuch said, See here is water, what

doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." (Acts viii. 36, 37.) "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," &c. (Acts ii. 38, 41.) Then they that gladly received his word were baptized. Acts x. 44, 47, 48; xvi. 14, 15, 30, 32, 33; Rom. x. 13—14, with many other texts, do put this out of doubt.

Arg. 2. We were engaged in our infant baptismal covenant to believe and repent, when we came to age, as a means to our reception of the benefits of the covenant, proper to the adult; therefore we must perform our covenant, and use this means, if we will have the benefits.

Arg. 3. If another condition were not of necessity to the aged, beside the condition that was necessary to them in infancy, then Turks, Jews and Heathens, should have right to church-membership, and privileges of the adult; but the consequent is notoriously false, therefore so is the antecedent.

The reason of the consequent is evident; because a man that hath believing parents may turn Turk, (as is known in thousands of Janizaries), or Jew, or Pagan; and therefore, if it were enough that he was the child of a believer, his title to church-privileges would still continue. And so among professed Christians, the child of a believer may turn Heretic, or notoriously profane and scandalous, and yet have title to church-privileges, if his first title still hold, and a personal faith be not a necessary condition of his right. Add to these, the many arguments tending to confirm the point in hand, which I have laid down on another occasion in my "Disputations of Right to Sacraments." But I think I need not spend more words to persuade any Christians, that our parents' faith will not serve to give us title to the church-privileges of the adult, but we lose our right even to church-membership itself, if when we come to age, we add not a personal faith, or profession at least, of our own.

I only add, that this is a truth so far past doubt, that even the Papists and the Greeks have put it into their Canons. For the former you may find it in the Decrees, part 3. dist. 3. p. (mihi) 1241, cited out of Augustin in these words, 'Parvulus qui baptizatur, si ad annos rationales veniens, non crediderit, nec ab illicitis abstinuerit, nihil ei prodest, quod

parvulus accepit.' That is, an infant that is baptized, if coming to years of discretion, he do not believe, nor abstain from things unlawful, that which he received in infancy, doth profit him nothing.

And for the Greeks; that this is according to their mind, you may see in Zonaras in Comment. in Epist. Canon. Can. 45, cited ex Basilli Mag. Epist. 2. ad Amphiloeh, thus, 'Siquis accepto nomine Christianismi, Christum contumelia afficit, nulla est illi appellationis utilitas:' that is, if any one having received the name of Christianity, shall reproach Christ, he hath no profit in the name. On which Zonaras added, 'Qui Christo credidit, et Christianus appellatus est, cum ex Divinis præceptis vitam instituere oportet, ut hoc ratione Deus per ipsum glorificetur, quemadmodum illis verbis præcipitur, sic luceat Lux vestra coram hominibus, &c. Siquis autem nominatur quidem Christianus, Dei vero præcepta transgreditur, contumeliam irrogat Christo, cujus de nomine appellatur, nec quicquam ex ea appellatione utilitatis trahit:' that is, Seeing he that believed in Christ, and is called a Christian, ought to order his life by the commandments of God, that so God may be glorified by him; according to that "Let your light so shine before men, &c." If any one that is called a Christian, shall transgress God's commands, he brings a reproach on Christ, by whose name he is called; and he shall not receive the least profit by that title, or name. This is somewhat higher than the point needs, that I bring it for.

And indeed it were a strange thing, if all other infidels should be shut out of the privileges of the church, except only the treacherous covenant-breaking infidel; (for such are all that being baptized in infancy, prove no Christians when they come to age;) as if perfidiousness would give him right.

PROP. 5. As a personal Faith is the Condition before God of Title to the Privileges of the Adult; so the Profession of this Faith, is the Condition of his right before the Church; and without this Profession, he is not to be taken as an Adult Member, nor admitted to the Privileges of such.

THIS proposition also, as the sun, revealeth itself by its own light, and therefore commandeth me to say but little for the confirmation of it.

Arg. 1. The church cannot judge of things unknown; ‘non entium, et non apparentium eadem est ratio:’ not to appear, and not to be, is all one as to the judgment of the church. We are not searchers of the heart, and therefore we must judge by the discoveries of the heart, by outward signs.

Arg. 2. If profession of faith were not necessary ‘coram Ecclesia’ to men’s church-membership and privileges, then Infidels and Heathens would have right, as was said in the former case, and also the church and the world would be confounded, and the church would be no church; but these are consequents that I hope no Christians will have a favourable thought of; and therefore they should reject the antecedent.

Arg. 3. It is a granted case among all Christians, that profession is thus necessary. The Apostles, and ancient Churches admitted none without it; no more must we. Though all require not the same manner of profession, yet that profession itself is the least that can be required of any man, that layeth claim to church-privileges and ordinances proper to adult members; this we are all agreed in, and therefore I need not add more proof, where I find no controversy.

But yet as commonly as we are agreed on this, yet because it is the very point which most of the stress of our present disputation lieth on, it may not be amiss to foresee what may possibly be objected by any new comers hereafter.

Object. Perhaps some may say, 1. That we find no mention of professions required in Scripture: 2. It is not probable that Peter received a profession from those thousands whom he so suddenly baptized: 3. Our churches have been true churches without such a profession, personally and distinctly made; therefore it may be so still. To these I answer briefly, yet satisfactorily:

1. The Scripture gives us abundant proof that a plain profession was made in those times by such as were baptized at age, and so admitted, by reason of their ripeness and capacity, into the church; and to the special communion and privileges of the adult at once. To say much of the times of the Old Testament, or before Christ, would be but to interrupt you with less pertinent things; yet there it is apparent, that all the people were solemnly engaged in covenant with God, by Moses, more than once; and that

this was renewed by Joshua, and other godly princes; and that Asa made the people not only "enter into covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their hearts, and with all their souls; but that whosoever would not seek him should be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman: and they sware to the Lord with a loud voice, and with shoutings, and with trumpets, and with cornets." (2 Chron. xv. 12—14.) So following princes called the people to this open covenanting. But this is not all; to take "the Lord only to be their God," (with the rest of the law,) was the very essence of an Israelite's religion, which they did not only openly profess, but excessively sometimes glory in. As circumcision sealed the covenant, and therefore supposed the covenant to infants and aged whoever were circumcised, so had they many sorts of sacrifice, and other worship, in which they all were openly to profess the same religion and covenant. Many purifications also, and sanctifyings of the people they had; and many figures of the covenant. "I am the Lord thy God," &c. "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me," &c. was the tenor of the covenant which every Israelite expressly, and by frequent acts, professed to consent to; The law is called a covenant, which all were to own, and avouch the Lord to be their God, and themselves his people. See Deut. xxvi. 17, 18; xxix. 10, 11, 14, &c.; 2 Kings xxiii. 3; 2 Chron. xxiii. 3, 16; xxix. 10; Ezra x. 3; Neh. ix. 38; Psal. l. 5; Ezek. xx. 37; Jer. l. 5; Isa. lvi. 4, 5; Exod. xxxiv. 27; Psal. ciii. 18; xxv. 10; xviii. 10, &c.

And yet I hope no Christian would wish that we should deal no more openly and clearly with God, the church, and ourselves, in days of Gospel light and worship, than the Jews were to do in their darker state, under obscure types and shadows.

We find that when John Baptist set up his ministry he caused the people to "confess their sins;" (Matt. iii. 6;) And "if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." (1 John i. 19.) And whereas some say, that John baptized them, that he calleth "a generation of vipers;" I answer, (1.) We will believe that when they prove it. It seems rather that he put them back. (2.) If he did baptize them, it was not till they "confessed their sins" (because that all did;) and it seems by his charge, till

they promised to “bring forth fruits meet for repentance.” (Matt. iii. 8.)

Christ would not have so instructed Nicodemus in the nature and necessity of regeneration, before he was a disciple, if a professed, or apparent preparation had not been necessary; nor would he ordinarily have taught men the necessity of denying themselves, and forsaking all for a treasure in heaven, with such like, if they would be his disciples, if the profession of so doing had not been necessary, to their visible discipleship.

I grant that so full a profession was not made before Christ's resurrection as after; for many articles of our belief were afterwards made necessary: and the Apostles themselves were unacquainted with what the weakest Christian did afterwards believe. But still the essentials of faith, then necessary in existence to men's justification, were necessary in profession to men's visible Christianity or church-membership.

2. As to those, Acts ii. 37, &c. It is plain, that they made an open profession, if you consider, (1.) That they were openly told the doctrine which they must be baptized into, if they did consent: (2.) It is said, “They that gladly received that word, were baptized.” (3.) It is certain therefore that they first testified their “glad reception of the word.” (4.) We may not imagine that Peter was God, or knew the hearts of all those thousands, and therefore he must know it by their profession, that “they gladly received the word.” (5.) Their own mouths cry out for advice in order to their salvation. (6.) It had been absurd for the Apostles to attempt to baptize men, that had not first professed their consent. (7.) The Scripture gives us not the full historical narration of all that was said and done in such cases, but of so much as was necessary. (8.) The institution and nature of the ordinance tells us, that baptism could not be administered without a profession, to the adult; for they were to be “baptized into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” and therefore were to profess that they “believed in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” Yea the very receiving of baptism was an actual profession. (9.) The constant practice of the Universal Church, hath given us by infallible tradition, as full assurance of the order of baptism,

and in particular of an express profession and covenant then made, as of any point that by the hands of the church can be received by us. (10.) And it was in those days a more notorious profession to be so baptized, and to join in the holy assemblies than now it is. When the profession of Christianity did hazard men's liberties, estates, and lives, to be openly then baptized upon covenanting with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and openly join with a hated, persecuted sort of men, was an eminent sort of profession. It being also usually private in houses, as separated from the main body of the people, and not in public places like ours, where men are justly driven to come as learners for instruction.

Moreover, it is said of all that were baptized, being then at age, that they first believed; and how could the baptizers know that they believed, but by their profession? Yea, it is said of Simon Magus, that he believed and was baptized; which (though he might really have some historical faith, yet) implieth, that he openly professed more than he indeed had, or else he had scarcely been baptized: which hath caused interpreters to judge that by *faith* is meant *a profession of faith*. And if so, then surely a profession was still necessary. Yea, Christ in his commission directeth his apostles to "make disciples," and then "baptize them;" promising, that "he that believeth, and is baptized shall be saved." And who can tell whether a man be a Disciple, a Believer, or an Infidel, but by his profession? How was it known but by their profession, that "the Samaritans believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ," before they were "baptized, both men and women?" (Acts viii. 12.)

Philip caused the Eunuch to profess, before he would baptize him, that he "believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;" which upon his teaching the rest, did import the rest, if it were not more fully professed. (Acts viii. 37, 38.)

Saul had more than a bare profession before baptism. (Acts ix. 5. 15. 17.)

Cornelius and his company had a profession, and more, for they had the Holy Ghost poured on them, "speaking with tongues, and magnifying God;" that use of the gift of tongues importing more than the gift itself. (Acts x. 46.)

Yea, the Spirit bid Peter, "Go and not doubt." (Acts xi. 12.) And it was such a gift of the Spirit, as caused the apostles to conclude, that "God had granted the Gentiles repentance unto life." (Acts xi. 18.)

How was it known but by their profession, that that "great number believed and turned to the Lord," and the "grace of God" was such as Barnabas saw. (Acts xi. 21. 23.)

And when Saul after his baptism "assayed to join himself to the disciples at Jerusalem," they so suspected him, that they would not receive him, till Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles, and declared to them, how God had dealt with him, and how boldly at Damascus he had preached in the name of Jesus; which shews they did not admit men to their communion, till their profession seemed credible to them; for no doubt Saul told them himself that he was a believer, before he was put to make use of the testimony of Barnabas.

The converted Gentiles, (Acts xiii. 48,) shewed their belief and gladness, and openly glorified the word of the Lord. How but by a profession did it come to pass, that the great multitude at Iconium, both Jews and Greeks, were known to be believers? (Acts xiv. 1.) The same I may say of the jailor, (Acts xvi,) who by works, as well as words, declared his conversion. Likewise the Bereans; (Acts xvii. 12;) and the Athenians; (Acts xvii. 34;) and Crispus, with the Corinthians. (Acts xviii. 8.) The believing Ephesians, "confessed and shewed their deeds, and many of them burnt as many of their books of ill arts as came to fifty thousand pieces of silver." (Acts xix. 18.) In a word, it is the standing rule, that "If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." He that bids us "receive him that is weak in the faith, but not to doubtful disputations," implieth, that we must not receive them that profess not at least "a weak faith." (Heb. v; vi. 1—3.) Shew that the "principles of the doctrine of Christ," were first laid as the foundation before baptism. And who received those principles could not be known but by a profession. To this let me add, that 'Pœnitentiam agere' was judged by the ancient

doctors, the repentance that was prerequisite to baptism; and that is, a manifested, professed repentance.

God's order is, to the adult, first to send preachers to proclaim the Gospel; and when by that men are brought so far, as to profess, or manifest that "their eyes are opened, and that they are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," then must they be "baptized for the remission of their sins, and to receive the inheritance among the sanctified by faith in Christ." (Acts xxvi. 17, 18.) As their sins are not forgiven them till they are converted, (Mark iv. 12,) so they must not be baptized for the forgiveness of sins, till they profess themselves converted, seeing to the Church '*non esse, et non apparere*,' is all one. "Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," is the sum of that preaching that maketh disciples, (Acts xx. 21,) and therefore, both these must by profession seem to be received, before any at age are baptized.

"If as many as are baptized into Christ, are baptized into his death, and are buried with him by baptism into his death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead, so we also should walk in newness of life, (Rom. vi. 4, 5,) then no doubt but such as were to be baptized, did first profess this mortification, and a consent to be buried and revived with Christ, and to live to him in newness of life. For Paul was never so much for the '*opus operatum*' above the Papists, as to think that the baptizing of an infidel, might effect these high and excellent things. And he that professeth not faith, nor ever did, is to the church an infidel.

In our baptism "we put off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, being buried with him, and rising with him through faith—quickened with him, and having all our trespasses forgiven." (Col. iii. 11—13.) And will any man, yea, will Paul ascribe all this to those that did not so much as profess the things signified, or the necessary condition? Will baptism, in the judgment of a wise man, do all this for an infidel, or one that professeth not to be a Christian?

Baptism is said to save us, (1 Pet. iii. 21,) and therefore they that will be baptized must profess the qualifications necessary to be saved.

“The keys of the kingdom of heaven” are put into the church’s hands; and they that are loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven (if the key do not err); and therefore pastors of the church must absolve none, by baptism, that do not by profession seem to be absolvable in heaven. They must profess to have “the old man crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth they might not serve sin.” (Rom. vi. 5—8.)

“As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, and are all one in Christ Jesus, and are Abraham’s seed, and heirs, according to promise,” (Gal. iii. 27—29,) Thus speaks the Apostle of the probability grounded on a credible profession; and therefore it is clear, that the profession was presupposed, that might support this charitable judgment. Our baptism is the solemnizing of our marriage with Christ; and it is a new and strange kind of marriage, where there is no profession of consent.

The baptized are in Scripture called men *washed, sanctified, justified*, &c. (1 Cor. vi. 11; 1 Cor. xiv. 33.) They are called *saints, and churches of saints*, (1 Cor. i. 2.) All Christians are called *sanctified ones*, or *saints*; therefore it is certain that they professed themselves such.

But why should I go any further in this, when the main substance of my “Dispute of Right to the Sacraments” proves it? I entreat the reader that would have more, to prove not only the necessity of a profession, but also of the profession of a saving faith, to peruse that book, or at least the second Disputation, where are twenty arguments for it; and the sense of all the ancient churches there cited out of Mr. Gataker’s Collections. See also Dr. Hammond’s many testimonies to prove the use of the Abrenunciation, Parænes. p. 18—20. I love not needlessly to recite what others have already cited; but he that knows not that the Universal Church from the days of the apostles, hath baptized the adult, upon a personal profession of faith, and repentance, and vow, or promise, or covenant for obedience, knows little of what the church hath practised. And I hope few sober men will be found that will be so singular and self-conceited, as to contradict the practice of the Universal Church in such a case as this, and set up their own private judgment against it, and go about to persuade us to a new way of church entrance, and admission, now in the end of the world. Blame

me not to be confident with you, where I have so good ground as Scripture, and so good company as the primitive Universal Church.

To this let me add, that most, or too many, that we are to receive to the privileges of adult members, have violated their baptismal covenant, and proved ungodly after baptism, and that by open, notorious scandals. Now Scripture, and the practice of the universal ancient church direct us, to require of these an open confession of sin; for they need an absolution, and not a mere confirmation. It is past all controversy, that such have both an open confession and profession to make. Yea, how scrupulous the ancient church was of receiving and absolving such violators of the baptismal covenant; and on how severe terms they did it, is known to all, that know any thing of those times. I pray amongst others see what Grotius (*Discus. Apol. Rivet.* pp. 221, 222,) cited from Irenæus, Tertullian, Pacianus, Jerom, &c. ad p. 235. n.

3. As to the last objection, that our churches were true churches, when we made no particular professions, I answer, (1.) Without some profession of true Christianity, our churches could not have been true churches. And therefore against those that would prove them no churches, we plead, and justly, that a profession was made by them. (2.) But I pray you mark, that that will prove a church to be a true church, which will not prove every person in the parish, to be a true member of that church. (3.) And he that thinks it enough, that our churches have a mere metaphysical verity, (such as Bishop Hall, and multitudes of learned Protestants allow the church of Rome itself) is as good a friend to it, as he is to his wife and child, that will let them go naked; yea, and be contented that they catch the plague, or leprosy; yea, and plead for it too; and all because they have still the truth of human nature.

I know that any thing that may truly be called a profession, will, in that point, seem to prove the being of the church. But as it will not seem to prove the well-being; so an obscure profession doth but obscurely prove the being of it, which an open, plain profession doth more clearly prove. Let us not befriend either the kingdom of darkness, or the Separatists so much, as to leave our churches so open to their exceptions, and so apt to cherish and befriend their

ignorance, and infidelity of the world. If coming to church, and sitting there, be somewhat a probable argument that men do implicitly believe as that church believes; yet it is a very dark proof, that they understand what the church believes; especially when experience hath acquainted us with the contrary of many of them.

But now I have said this much for a personal and plain profession, I would fain know what any man hath against it. The church, through the great mercy of God, hath yet liberty to use it; and we see how many thousands make a blind kind of show of Christianity^c, going from one public duty to another, and knowing not what they do. And is there not need that they should be brought out into the open light, and see their way? If covenanting with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be the essence of our Christianity; in the name of God, I desire you to consider whether it be a thing to be huddled up in the dark? Unless it be men's design to hide the nature of Christianity, and keep people in destructive ignorance, and delude their souls with a name and show of a religion, which they understand not; they will surely be willing that men should know the covenant that they make, and understand what they do, before they enter into a marriage-bond with Christ, if at age, or own it, if they have been entered in infancy. Why should we choose darkness rather than light? Why should an implicit covenant and profession be pleaded for, when the being of a profession is 'palam fateri,' openly to make known; and when we know by sad experience, that when we have all done the best we can, to make our ignorant people understand, we shall find enough to do to accomplish it? Ignorance hath no need of friendship; and from ministers it deserveth none; especially in so great a point as the covenant that men make with Christ. We have wares that deserve the light, and need not a dark shop. We have a Master that we need not be afraid, or ashamed, explicitly and publicly to confess. It beseems not so high and honourable a profession as that of a Christian, to be wrapped up in obscu-

^c Albaspin. in Tertul. de Præscript. c. 43. p. 308. Non nisi magna cum deliberatione quenquam in societatum et communionem Ecclesiarum venire patiebantur —Ait igitur diu multumque Orthodoxos deliberare, quorum Sententiis subscribere, quosve in societatem ejusdem Ecclesiæ et corporis recipere debeant: contra vero hæreticos ullo discrimine cum omnibus hæreticis pacem miscere.

rity. Such a glorious state as sonship to God, to be an heir of heaven &c. should be entered into with great solemnity, and owned accordingly at our first rational acceptance and acknowledgment. Kings are crowned more solemnly, than poor men take possession of their cottages. Christ will be ashamed of them before the angels, that are ashamed of him before men : and will confess them before his Father. that confess him before men. Christianity is not a game to be played under-board. Why then should any be against an open professing, and covenanting with Christ? If it be needful that we covenant, certainly the plainest and most explicit covenanting is the best. And what will be his portion that hath a male in his flock, and offereth the worst, yea, the halt and blind to God?

Let us therefore deal as openly, plainly, and understandingly in the covenant of God as we can, and not contrive it in the greatest darkness, that is, consistent with the essence of a church. Nay, let us not tempt men to unchurch us, or separate from us, by leaving our cause to such arguments as this: ‘such a man sitteth among other hearers, in the congregation, therefore he maketh a profession of the Christian faith;’ lest they think it followeth not ‘therefore he seemeth to understand the Christian faith,’ much less ‘he professeth it;’ especially when it is known that so many understand it not; and that the Papists in their writings, maintain it lawful for them to be present at our assemblies; and infidels tell us, that they can hear any man, and do come thither^d.

Nehemiah caused the Jews “to subscribe the covenant, and seal it.” (ix. 38.) Even under the law it was the character of visible “saints, to make a covenant with God by sacrifice,” (Psal. l. 5,) at least now God “hath caused us to pass under the rod.” Let us yield to be “brought under the bond of the covenant,” (Ezek. xx. 37,) and let us as weeping Israel and Judah, “seek the Lord our God, and ask the way to Zion, with our faces thitherward, saying; come and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten.” (Jer. l. 4, 5.) Let us “take hold of his covenant, and choose the things that please him, that he may bring us into his holy mountain, and make us joyful in his house of prayer, and our sacrifices may be accepted on his altar.” (Isa. lvi. 4, 6, 7.) Are not these the

^d Vid. Thom. a Jesu de Convers. Omn. Gentium de hac quæst.

days of which it is said, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." (Isa. xlv. 3—5.) I would have as little covenanting for doubtful, needless, or mutable things, in church or state, as is possible; but in the great things of our salvation, even the essence of Christianity, we cannot be bound too fast, nor deal too understandingly, and openly with God.

PROP. 6. *It is not every kind of Profession, that is the Condition, or necessary qualification of those that are to be admitted to the Privileges of Adult Members; but such a Profession as God hath made necessary, by his express Word, and by the Nature of the Object, and the Uses, and Ends, to which he doth require it.*

THE negative is not controverted among us. If any were so quarrelsome or ignorant, it is easily proved. And I shall do it briefly, but satisfactorily in the opening of the affirmative.

I have proved in my first "Disputation of Right to Sacraments," (which I desire the reader, that would have further satisfaction, to peruse,) the necessity of these following qualifications of this profession.

1. In general, as to the *object* of our faith, it must be a profession of true Christianity, and no less. It must be a profession of our entertainment, both of the truth of the Gospel, and of the good therein revealed and offered. More particularly, it must be a profession that we believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as to the nature, persons, and works, which they have done or undertaken for us. Yet more particularly, and explicitly; it must be a profession, (1.) That we believe in God the Father, and so the pure Deity, as our Creator, Sovereign, and chief Good, who gave us the law of nature, by breaking of which, we have lost ourselves, and all our part in everlasting life. (2.) That we believe in Jesus Christ, God and Man, that taking our nature, fulfilled the law, overcame the devil, died as a sacri-

fice for our sins, rose again, and conquered death, ascended into heaven, where he is Lord of all, and the King, Prophet, and Priest of his Church, in glory with the Father. That he hath offered himself with pardon, and eternal life, to all that will accept him on his terms ; that he will come again at last to raise us from death, and judge the world, and justify his saints, and bring them to eternal glory, and cast the wicked into utter misery. (3.) That we believe in God the Holy Ghost, that inspired the prophets and apostles, to deliver and confirm the word of God, and who is the Sanctifier of all that shall be saved, illuminating their understandings, and changing their hearts and lives, humbling them for their sin and misery, causing them to believe in Christ, the remedy, and heartily and thankfully accept him ; possessing them with an hearty love of God, a heavenly mind, a hatred of sin, a love of holiness, turning the principal bent of their hearts and lives, to the pleasing of God, and the attaining of eternal life. This much must be believed, and the belief of this much, must be somehow professed.

2. As to the *acts* of the thing professed, it must be, not only the naked assent of the understanding ; but both this assent that the Gospel is true, and a consent of the will, to take God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to the forementioned ends, in the forementioned relations ; and to give up ourselves unfeignedly to him, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil.

3. As to the nature of the profession itself. (1.) It must in general be credible ; for no man is bound to believe that which is incredible. The words are the signs of the mind, and as such they are to be uttered, and received. If they be contrary to the mind, they are false ; and if wilfully contrary, they are a lie : and God doth not make a lie to be the condition of church-membership, or privileges ; nor doth he bind his ministers, or church, to believe a known lie : nothing but real, or seeming truth is to be believed^e. (2.) More particularly, the profession which we speak of, must have these qualifications.

[1.] It must be, or seem to be *understanding*. ‘ Ignor-

^e Therefore it is to be made at years of understanding. The Papists themselves say in their catechism, composed for the Armenians, translated by Peter Paulus, p. 194, *Tum recipiendum est sacramentum hoc, quando ad usum rationis pervenit homo, fidemque profiteri incipit, et ut confirmetur, et stabiliatur in gratia opus habet*.

rantis non est consensus.' If a parrot could say the creed, it were not a credible profession of faith. Therefore the ancient church was wont, by catechists, to prepare them to understand the doctrine which they were to believe, and profess. This is past controversy. I think no minister would take that man's profession, that seemeth not to understand what he saith.

[2.] No profession is credible, but that which is, or seems to be *serious*. He that speaks in scorn, or jest, is not to be believed, as one that speaks his mind; nor is it to pass for a profession.

[3.] No profession is credible or sufficient, but that which is, or seems to be free and voluntary. Though some force, or outward urgencies in some cases may help to incline the will, yet *willing* it must be; or it is not a credible profession. He that professeth himself a Christian, when a sword or pistol is at his breast, is not to be credited, if he continue it not when he is free. And also, that which is done in a mere passion, without deliberation, is not to be taken as the act of the man, and a true expression of the bent of his mind; unless he afterwards stand to it upon deliberation.

[4.] It must be a profession not nullified by a contradiction in word or deed. Though there may an obscure contradiction, not understood, consist with it; or a contradiction only in degree: as, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief;" yet there must be no contradiction of the essentials of our profession, that nullifieth it, by shewing that we lie, or speak against the bent of our hearts. If a minister can by contrary words or deeds disprove the profession of the party, he is not to believe it, or accept it; for we are not to believe without evidence of credibility, much less against it. I have given instances of this in the aforesaid "Disputation of the Sacrament," p. 10.

[5.] When by covenant-breaking, and perfidiousness, or often lying, a man is become incredible, having forfeited the credit of his word, with wise and charitable men, this man must give us a practical, as well as verbal profession, before we can again admit him to the privileges of the church. For though we are not to be so strict, as some old fathers seem to have been, and the Novatians were, that would not admit such penitents again into the church at all, but leave them to

God's own judgment; yet must we not go against reason and Scripture, and the nature of the thing, in believing that which is not to be believed; nor to cast by all order and discipline, and prostitute God's ordinances to the lusts of men, and make them a scorn, or level the church of Christ with the world.

The testimonies cited by me on another occasion, in the aforesaid disputations, shew the judgment of Protestants in these points, and somewhat of the judgment of antiquity. I shall recite but those on the title-page of the third Disputation.

Tertullian Apologet. cap. 16. "*Sed dices etiam de nostris, excedere quosdam à Regulis disciplinæ. Desinunt tum Christiani haberi penes nos: Philosophi vero illi cum talibus factis, in nomine et honore Sapientiæ perseverant:*" that is, But you will say, that even of ours, some swerve from, or forsake, the rules of discipline.

Answ. They cease then to be counted Christians with us: but your philosophers with such deeds, do keep the name and honour of wisdom.

The judgment of the French professors at Saumours, you have in these words, *Thes. Salmuriens. vol. 3. p. 39. Thes. 39. "Sacramenta non conferuntur nisi iis, qui vel fidem habent vel saltem eam præ se ferant, adeò ut nullis certis argumentis compertum esse possit, eam esse e mentitam:"* that is, Sacraments are conferred on none, but those that either have faith, or at least pretend, or profess, to have it, so that it cannot by any certain arguments be proved to be feigned.

The judgment of the Scottish divines, may be much discovered in these two testimonies following: Gillespie, Aaron's Rod Blossoming, p. 514. "I believe no conscientious minister would adventure to baptize one, who hath manifest and infallible signs of unregeneration. Surely we cannot be answerable to God, if we should minister baptism to a man whose works and words, do manifestly declare him to be an unregenerated, unconverted person. And if we may not initiate such a one, how shall we bring him to the Lord's-table."

Rutherford, *Due Right of Presbyteries*, p. 231. n. 2. "But saith Robinson, most of England are ignorant of the first rudiments and foundations of religion; and therefore cannot be a church."

Ans. Such are materially not the visible Church, and have not a profession : and are to be taught ; and if they will fully remain in that darkness, are to be cast out.

If you would have the testimonies of Protestants, you may read above threescore of them, expressly maintaining that it is a profession of saving faith, that is prerequisite to our right of Sacraments, cited in my forementioned second Disputation. To which I add thirty-three more, cited to a like purpose in my fifth Disputation of Sacraments. And to these add the large testimony of Davenant, with his many arguments, on Col. i. 18, too large to recite.

And for the latter sort of episcopal Divines, that they also agree in the same, I will satisfy you from an eminent man among them, Mr. Herbert Thorndike, in his Discourse of the Right of the Church, p. 31, 32, where he saith, “ And hereby we see how binding and loosing sins, is attributed to the keys of the church : which being made a visible society, by the power of holding assemblies, to which no man is to be admitted, till there be just presumption, that he is of the heavenly Jerusalem, that is above.” I shall add more from him anon.

Somewhat I have elsewhere cited, of the Fathers’ judgments in this point, and more anon I shall have occasion to produce. But in a point that we are agreed on, that is, not every profession, but only a credible profession of true Christianity, even of faith and repentance, that must be taken as satisfactory by the church, I hope I may spare any further proof.

PROP. 7. The Profession of those that expect the Church-state and Privileges of the Adult is to be tried, judged, and approved by the Pastors of the Church, to whose office it is, that this belongeth.

THIS proposition hath two parts : 1. That it is not a profession untried, and unapproved, that must serve the turn. 2. That the trying and approving of it, belongeth to the office of the pastors of the church.

The *first* is granted by almost all Christians that I know of, and therefore need not many words.

(1.) If every man should be the sole judge of the soundness and validity of his own profession, then heretics and heathens, and infidels may all crowd into the church ; for

when there is any outward advantage, or other common motive to induce them to it, they would all join with the church, as if they were Christians. And we see that it is the custom of heretics to intrude: and who shall say to any of them, why do you so, if themselves are the only judges? We meet daily among our own neighbours, with many that know not whether Christ be God or man; nor who he is, nor what he hath done for us, nor why he came into the world, and are ignorant of almost all the essentials of the Christian faith; and with many more that live in common drunkenness, scorning at holy duties, and at a godly life, hating those that use it, and giving up themselves wholly to the flesh, and the world: and yet all these men are so confident of the soundness and validity of their own profession, that they will hate that minister, that shall make any question of their right to the privileges of the church. I speak not by hearsay, or conjecture, but by sad experience. And if they be their own judges, all these will be approved, and admitted where Christianity is in credit, or hath any worldly advantages. So that it is certain, that this would pluck up the hedge, and lay open the vineyard of Christ unto the wilderness. For self-love is such a powerful, blinding thing, that it will make every man almost, especially of the worsers sort, approve of that which is their own.

(2.) If every man should be the sole judge of his profession, and fitness for church-privileges, then there could be no Communion of Saints; for all the most ignorant and impious persons would intrude into our communion; and it would be a communion not only of actual, but of professed impious men. But the consequent is intolerable, as being contrary to an article of our Belief, and a principal part of Christian practice.

(3.) If each man were the only judge of his own profession, then there could be no exercise of Church Discipline, nor keeping, or casting out the wicked: but the consequent is insufferable: therefore,

(4.) If each man be the only judge of his own profession, then the church is an unguided, ungoverned society: but the consequent is false; therefore so is the antecedent.

2. And now I prove that it belongeth to the office of the ministers to judge of, and approve the profession of such as expect admission, or the privileges of the church.

Arg. 1. If persons are not the sole judges themselves, then it must belong to the minister to judge: but the antecedent is before proved. The consequence is proved thus: It must belong either to the pastors, or the magistrate only, or the people only; or to all, or some of these conjunctly. Not to the *magistrate only*; for, 1. No man that I know of affirmeth it. 2. It is another man's office. Not to the *people only*: for, 1. None that I know of affirmeth this; they all include the pastors. 2. As I said, it is made part of the pastor's office. If you say that it belongs to *magistrates, people, and pastors jointly*, then you include the pastors: and I grant that in some sort it belongs to them, but in a different sort, as I shall tell you under the next Proposition.

Arg. 2. It is to ministers, as such, that the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed; but to approve of the profession of such as are to be admitted into the church, or to its privileges, is part of the exercise of the keys of the kingdom: therefore it is ministers, to whom it belongeth thus to judge and approve.

I have proved in another place, (and so have many others, more at large,) that the keys were not given to Peter, or to the Apostles, as to private men; for so they were not; nor as to a church of private Christians; for so they were not; nor the representatives of any such: nor yet as to Apostles only; for then they should have belonged to none but themselves; the contrary whereof is certain; not as to fixed diocesan bishops; for such they were not; and it is generally granted that the keys belong also to Presbyters, either wholly, or the chief of them, and particularly, that in question: nor yet were the keys given them only as a Synod, or Presbytery; for Peter was not such: and this in question hath ever been exercised by such ministers.

Arg. 3. The rulers of the church are the lawful judges, or approvers of the profession of those that come into the church, or demand the privileges of it: but it is the ministers of Christ, that are the rulers of the church, as is expressed, 1 Thess. xii; Acts ii. 28; Heb. xiii. 7; xvii. 24; 1 Tim. v. 17; therefore,

Arg. 4. Those that are by office the stewards of the mysteries of God, and rulers over his household, to give them meat in due season, which they must do as faithful and wise servants, till their Lord cometh, are the men that must judge

of and approve the qualifications of those that come under their stewardship, government, and administration, of these mysteries. But such are the ministers of Christ; (1 Cor. iv. 1; Matt. xxiv. 45—47;) therefore,

Arg. 5. To whom it belongeth, to receive men at age into the church; to restore by absolution, them that fall off, and to administer Christ's ordinances to those that are within; to them doth it belong to try, judge, and approve of them, that are to be thus received, absolved, or that expect the privileges of the church. But it belongeth to Christ's ministers to receive men, absolve them, and administer the ordinances to them: therefore the antecedent is commonly granted, and plain in Scripture. The consequence hath reason so evident, as needs no confirmation.

Arg. 6. If all that enter into the church, or that are restored by absolution, or are stated in a right to church privileges of the adult, are therewithal engaged into a mutual, voluntary relation to Christ's ministers, then must their profession be judged of and approved by Christ's ministers: but the antecedent is certain: therefore so is the consequent. The antecedent is clear, because, 1. All that enter into the Universal Church, do enter under the hand of the ministry, and thereby acknowledge their relation to them, and authority to admit them. 2. Because all such do engage themselves to be Christ's disciples, and learn of him as their master, not as coming down from heaven, to teach them personally, but as teaching them by his word, Spirit, and ministers conjunctly, saying, "He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me." (Luke x. 16.) 3. Because they all engage themselves to take Christ for their king, who ruleth them by his laws and officers; and his ministers are his ruling officers. (1 Tim. v. 17; Heb. xiii. 7; xvii. 24; 1 Thess. v. 12.) 4. Because they are all engaged to take Christ for the great High Priest of the Church, who hath appointed his ministers to officiate under him, in leading them in public worship of the church; and in offering up the praises of God, and blessing the people, and praying for them, and celebrating the commemoration, and representation of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. 5. Because they that enter into a particular church, where only the constant stated use of holy ordinances, and privileges, are to be had, (though occasionally elsewhere,) do enter into a relation to

the pastors of that particular church, as members of their flock and church, whom they must oversee and watch over: all this is past controversy.

And then for the consequent of the major proposition: 'that therefore ministers must approve of their profession,' I prove it thus: Ministers are naturally freemen, as well as others; and therefore no man can become a member of their charge, and put them upon so great a duty as the relation doth require, against their wills, without their consent, and contrary to their judgment and consciences. It is an exceeding great burden that lieth on us, and a great deal of work that is required of us, to each particular soul. In our charge we must exhort, instruct, admonish, in season, and out of season, publicly and privately, and watch over, and govern them, visit them in sickness, comfort, strengthen them, &c. O what a mountain lieth on me, and how should I bear it, if God did not support me! And if every man that *will*, shall make me more work, and put himself under my care, without my consent, then I am so far from being a freeman, as all others are, that I am enslaved, and undone in slavery. For, 1. They may oppress me, when they will, with number; and so many may flock into my charge, in despite of me, as shall nullify the particular church, and by the magnitude make it another thing, by making it incapable of its ends. 2. And hereby they may force me to leave undone my duty, both to them and others, by oppressing me with work; for when I have ten times more than I can teach and oversee, I must needs neglect all or most of them. 3. And they may abuse the church, and me with the evil qualities, as well as the excessive quantity of members; and we shall be obliged to give that which is holy to dogs, and to use those as church-members, that are enemies to the church; and to administer sacraments to any, that will have them, how unfit soever; and to profane all God's ordinances, and turn them to a lie. 4. And by this means, the church will be utterly ruined, and made a den of thieves, and a sty of swine; for besides that all the worst may at pleasure be members of it, all men that are faithful, or most at least, will run away from the ministry, and sooner turn chimney-sweepers than pastors. For what man dare venture his soul on so great a charge, for which he knows he must give an ac-

count, when he is certain to leave undone the work of his office, in so great a measure, and when he knows he may be thus oppressed in soul and body, and so undone by wicked men, whenever they please; yea, if they purposely do it to despite him.

Arg. 7. That which belongeth to all other superiors, in voluntary relations, is not to be denied to ministers in theirs; but a free consent, and approbation of them, that they are related to, belong to all other superior, voluntary relations: therefore to us.

A schoolmaster, is to approve the capacity of his scholars; and a physician is to judge of the fitness of a person to be his patient, and his fitness for this or that medicine in particular. Not only a master would take it ill, if he may not have the approbation of his own servants, but have as many, and as bad thrust on him, as shall please; but a husband would think it hard, if he might not have the approbation, and choice of his own wife, but that any might force him to take them that they please. And are the pastors of Christ's church, the only slaves on earth? How improbable a thing is this!

Arg. 8. That relation which must be rationally, regularly, and faithfully managed, must be rationally, regularly, and freely entered, for otherwise we cannot so manage it; but the relation of a Minister to each member of his charge must be thus managed: therefore,

Arg. 9. It is plainly expressed in the minister's commission, that he is to approve of the profession of disciples; therefore it belongeth to his office, "Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them—teaching them to observe all things." (Matt. xxviii. 19.) Which plainly manifesteth, that it is they that must judge, when a man is made a disciple, and when not, or else how can they either baptize them as such, or teach them the precepts of Christ as such? So when he giveth to his servants the keys of the kingdom, (Matt. xviii. &c.,) it sheweth that they are to judge who is to be admitted, and who not, as is aforesaid; or else he would never have set them at the door, and made them the porters, and key-bearers of his church, to let men in.

Arg. 10. No man in the administration of holy ordinances, is ordinarily to renounce his own reason and conscience,

and to act against them ; but thus it would be if we have not the approving of the profession, or qualification of those that we must administer them to : therefore—He that is to execute here, is to judge : for, (1.) Else you will force ministers to go against their reason and conscience in all administrations. (2.) You will deny them so much as ‘judicium discretionis,’ which you allow to every Christian, much more ‘judicium directionis,’ which belongeth to their office. Every man must judge and understand what he doth, and why he doth it. You will not force the people to participate of sacraments, against their consciences, why then should ministers be forced to give them against their consciences ? Administering is their work ; and therefore they must know why they do it, and on what grounds : else you will make them but like hangmen, or worse, if they must do execution against their judgments, because it is another’s judgment. And whose judgment is it that we must follow, when we go against our own ?

Arg. 11. If it belong to Christ, to pass an open approbation of the qualification of such as are to be admitted into his church, or to his special ordinances or church-privileges, then doth it belong to the ministers of Christ, as his instruments ; but it doth belong to Christ. (1.) For all that enter either into an infant, or adult church-state, do join themselves into a near relation to Christ : and will Christ have men married to him, and made his children, and members, and servants, without his approbation of them, or against his particular will ? (2.) All that thus come into the church, or are restored, and claim church-privileges, do expect and claim the benefits of Christ, and the greatest benefits in the world. And shall any man have Christ’s great and precious benefits against his will, and without his approbation ? It may be, you will say, that he hath already expressed his consent in the free promise of the Gospel, to all believers. I answer, he hath so to believers : but he hath done it only to believers, and he hath not said in the Gospel that you are a believer.

Object. ‘ But it is sufficient, that my own conscience bear me witness.’

I answer, It is so ; as to all matters of conscience that are to be transacted only between God and you, as about your justification, and glorification, &c^f. And yet in this

^f It is before proved, that men are not here their own judges.

case, ministerial absolution is a great means to help the peace of your consciences. But where the minister hath to do with you by administrations, and the church hath to do with you in the way of communion, there they must know what they do and why, and must have some expression of what you say your conscience testifieth to you.

And the consequence of the major is plain, ‘that if it belongs thus to Christ to approve, then it belongs to his ministers,’ (1.) Because he appointeth not personally on earth, nor useth, or approveth any other way, to signify his own approbation of you in particular, for a church-state, and privileges. (2.) Because he hath expressly intrusted his ministers with this power, as to speak to men in Christ’s stead, (2 Cor. v. 19,) so to espouse them in Christ their husband, that we may present them a chaste virgin to Christ; (2 Cor. xi. 2;) yea, and hereupon they are to give up themselves to the Lord first, and to us by the will of God. (2 Cor. viii. 5.) Christ’s ministers are his agents, or ambassadors, as to solicit men in his name to be reconciled to him, so to approve them in his name, and tell them that he is reconciled to them. And therefore they are to deliver himself, his body, and blood, in his name to them in the Lord’s-supper; and to bind, and loose in his name; and whatsoever they loose on earth, according to his promise, shall be loosed in heaven: so much of his work doth Christ by his officers.

And even men’s first faith is a believing the preacher, and Christ by them. (Acts viii. 12.) They believed Philip preaching, &c.

Arg. 12. To whomsoever the labour belongeth, to them the power of doing it belongeth: but it is to ministers that the labour of trying and judging of such professions, and qualifications, belongeth; therefore it is to ministers, that the power belongeth.

The major is undoubted; for else we must be bound by God, to do that which we have no power or authority to do, and others must have power to do it, and not be bound to it, which are both senseless. The minor I prove,

(1.) From the frequent commands of Scripture, that lay this burden on the ministers, but not magistrates or people, in the way that is now in question. All the directions, and canons which Paul giveth to Timothy, Titus, to the elders of Ephesus, (Acts xx,) and other pastors, together with the ex-

hortations to performance, and terrible charges given them to be faithful, do shew that it is they that must do the work.

(2.) From common consent: all would have the honour and power; but who besides the pastors would have the work, and care, and severe obligations to perform it? Will magistrates, or all the people undertake it, to try, and judge of the professions of every man that enters upon adult church-membership, or privileges, or such as are to be restored? They that will undertake this work must attend it, and give themselves wholly to it, and confer with the persons, and do so much work as our people would be hardly brought to do, if they were able. It is unexperienced rashness and perverseness, that makes them so jealous of the minister's power in such cases, and some of them to reproach us for it. Ah blind, unthankful souls! Do you know what the ministry and this power is? It is a power to be the servants of all: a power to spend and to be spent, even for the unthankful. It is a power to do the most toilsome and displeasing work to flesh and blood; one of them in the world, such as flesh calls a very drudgery. I profess unfeignedly, that if God had left it to my choice, and I should consult with flesh and blood, I had rather preach twice or thrice a week for nothing, and do no more, than to have this power and duty of guiding and governing this one parish, though I had for it many hundred pounds a year. Nothing doth bring so much trouble upon us, as that power which unthankful persons scorn at. I had rather, if I might consult with flesh and blood, be advanced to the power of holding or driving plough for you, if not of sweeping your streets: though yet because of God's interest, and the ends of the work, I count it the happiest life in the world. And do you grudge us such a power as this? Would you grudge me the power of thrashing your corn; or will you grudge a physician the power of judging of your disease, and the remedy to save your life; or a schoolmaster the power of examining, and teaching your children? Do the work, and take the power, if you are able, and can go through with it, and spare not.

Arg. 13. It is only ministers of Christ, that are able and capable to receive the power and to do the work: and therefore it is they only that have authority thereto.

Nothing but the antecedent needs proof. And that I prove by three several enablements, which ministers have, and

others want. (1.) Ministers only have ability of mind for the work of this trial and approbation. Here I speak of them ordinarily, and I have these grounds for it. [1.] God hath commanded that the most knowing, able, faithful, holy men, shall be destined to this work, (1 Tim. iii; Titus i. &c.,) and therefore it is supposed that usually they are such, or else it is the shame of the magistrate that should see to it. [2.] It is they only that set themselves apart to the work and study from their youth, for the accomplishments that are requisite (unless here and there one of other sorts); and men are most likely to be understanding in that, which they have all their days set themselves to study. [3.] We see by experience that they are the most able, unless it be (alas how few!) here and there a godly, studious gentleman, or other person; who are most of them to blame, that they become not ministers, I think.

(2.) It is only the ministers, who being separated to the Gospel and work of God, do lay by all other business, and give themselves wholly to these things. Gentlemen, (much less all the people of the church,) cannot lay by their callings to attend this business of trying and judging of men's professions as ministers must do, if they will be faithful. Should private members have so much church-governing work as some cut out for them, and should they bear such a burden, as some would lay upon them, under the name of power and privileges, it would undo them soul or body, or both; they would find time little enough for it in some places, if they all cast off their outward callings.

(3.) The pastors only are capable, because of unity: for should the people have this work, as some would have it, the multitude would hinder execution, and they would turn all to wrangling. [1.] Such bodies move slowly. [2.] Multitude with that diversity of parts and minds that is among them, would set them by the ears; and the church would be always in a flame. If every man that is to make profession of his faith, on this or the like occasion, must be tried and judged by all; some would approve, and others would disapprove and reject, in most or very many cases. Whereas the pastors being single, or not many, and more experienced, and able, and vacant for a full inquiry, have less reason to be partial, injurious, or disagreed.

Arg. 14. The practice of the Apostles, Evangelists, and

the Pastors of Christ's Church in all ages, doth put us quite out of doubt, that it is not only belonging to the ministerial office, to judge and approve of such professions, but that it is a very great part of that office.

John Baptist received, and judged of the profession of his penitents, before they did baptize them. The twelve apostles, (Matt. x. 13, 14,) were to judge of the worthiness, or unworthiness, of those that they were to abide with. (Mark vi. 11.) Who were the judges or approvers of the profession of the three thousand converts, (Acts ii. 41,) but the apostles that baptized them, or judged them to be baptized? Who else approved of all the believers that were added, (Acts v. 14,) even multitudes both of men and women? They that continued in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, (Acts ii. 42,) and under their government, no doubt entered at first under their conduct. Philip was the judge of the eunuch's profession. (Acts viii. 37, 38.) Ananias was scrupulous of admitting Paul, but as God himself approved of him to Ananias. (Acts ix. 13—15.) So Ananias also must ministerially approve him, (verse 17.) Who judged of Lydia's profession, and the jailor's, (Acts xvi,) but the apostles, or other ministers of Christ? What need we instance any more, when we all know, that no convert entered at age into the church but under the hand of some minister of Christ, that did baptize him, or appoint him to be baptized?

Object. 'But this is not our case, for we were baptized in infancy, and are in the church already.'

Ans. You entered not into the number of adult and more perfect members in your infancy; nor did you make any personal profession in your infancy: that is yet to be done. Your parents' profession will serve you no longer than your infant state. These being not in the Gospel church before, were at once baptized, and entered thereby into the number of the adult members. So would we do if we converted those that were the seed of heathens or infidels. But though this be not your case in respect of baptism, and an infant church-state, yet this is your own case in regard of personal profession, and adult church-state.

If the ministers of Christ in Scripture-times, admitted none into an adult church-state, and to the privileges of such, but upon a personal profession, approved by the said minis-

ters, then neither must we do so now. But the antecedent is past doubt: therefore—

The reasons of the consequence is, because the Scripture is our rule, and the reasons of the cases are the same. If you say with the Anabaptists, that I may as well argue from the apostles' example, for the baptizing of the aged: I answer, so I will, when the case is the same: when they are converted from infidelity, or are not born and baptized into the Gospel-church before. The apostles did not baptize at age, any person that was born of believing parents in the Gospel-church, after baptism was instituted. As to them that say, that 'Mary was a Christian, and yet Christ was not baptized till full age;' I answer, (1.) That Mary was not a baptized person: (2.) That baptism into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was not instituted in Christ's infancy; how should he be baptized in infancy, when there was no such ordinance of God in the world, as Gospel-baptism, or John's baptism? If you think baptism, and profession, or church-membership so inseparable, that we must not require such a profession, but in order to baptism: 1. You speak without proof: 2. You speak even contrary to the experience of the Jewish church, where in the wilderness, circumcision was separated from profession, and church-membership, both of infants, and adults; the latter being without the former. 3. If we may be baptized in infancy, without a personal profession, then they are separable; but the antecedent is proved in due place. No man denieth, that I know of, but that personal profession approved by the ministers, is necessary in several cases, after baptism. But all the examples of the baptized adult in the New Testament, will fully prove, that all men should enter into the state and number of adult church-members, upon a personal profession approved by the ministers of Christ; for so did all in the Scripture times, on reasons common to them and us; and no man can put by the obligation of the example, by any pretence of an imparity of reason, but what will be as strong to evacuate almost all Scripture example, and much of the commands. But as to the baptizing persons at age, we will do the same, when the persons are such as the apostles baptized; and that they baptized none others was never yet proved; but more said for the affirmative.

Ever since the apostles' days, it hath been the constant

practice of the church, that the profession and claim of the adult, should be tried by the ministers of Christ. (1.) In case of infant baptism, the minister was to receive and approve the parents' profession. (2.) In case of the baptism of the aged, they always entered under the trial, approbation or hand of the minister. (3.) In case of the confirming of those at age, that were baptized in infancy, it was always done under the hand and judgment of the minister. (4.) In case of absolution of those that fell after either infant, or adult baptism, it was always upon a profession approved by the minister. To prove these things is vain, it being the subject of so many canons, and so commonly known, both by record and practice.

Mr. Herbert Thorndike in his forecited Discourse of the Right of the Church, is full upon it. P. 32, he saith, "As the power of judging who is, and who is not thus qualified, presupposes a profession; so that an instruction, obliging the obedience of them, which seek remission of sins, by the Gospel, and therefore confidently assuring it to them, which conform themselves. In a word, because admitting to, and excluding from the church, is, or ought to be, a just and lawful presumption of admitting to, or excluding from heaven, N. B. it is morally and legally the same act, that entitleth to heaven, and to the church; that maketh an heir of life everlasting, and a Christian; because he that obeyeth the church, in submitting to the Gospel, is as certainly a member of the invisible, as of the visible church." You see here in his judgment, both what kind of profession it must be, and who is the judge of it (of which he is more large). And surely, they that see confirmation, and penance, or absolution, grown up to the reputation of proper sacraments, and understandeth how they came to it, will never question whether the Universal Church hath still taken the pastors for the lawful judges and approvers of that confession and profession, which in such cases was requisite.

And that it was a profession, both of saving faith, and repentance, that was expected by the church; which the pastors were to judge of, I mentioned some plain testimonies of antiquity, Apol. p. 95, to which I shall add some more.

Justin Martyr, Apol. 2. expressing how baptism was then administered to the adult, saith, "As many as being per-

suaded, do believe these things to be true which we teach, and to promise to live according to them, they first learn, by prayer and fasting, to beg pardon of God, for their former sins, ourselves also joining our prayer and fasting; then they are brought to the water, and born again, in the same way as we ourselves were born again." And of the Lord's-supper he saith, "This food we call the Eucharist, to which no man is admitted, but he that believeth the truth of our doctrine, being washed in the laver of regeneration, for the remission of sin, and that so liveth as Christ hath taught."

Nazianzen, *Orat.* 40. vol. 1. p. 641. "The force and faculty of baptism, is nothing else, but a covenant entered with God, for a second (or new) life, and a more pure course of living. And therefore that we should all exceedingly fear, and with all diligence keep our souls, lest we be found to have violated this covenant." Basil's words, and many more to the like purpose there recited, I forbear.

And that a man baptized, is not so much as to be taken for a Christian, if by word or deed he nullify that profession, much more when he never made a personal profession, when he is at age, the ancients commonly agree. Some I cited before: Tertullian again saith, *Apol.* cap. 44, speaking of the jailor, "Nemo illic Christianus, nisi plane tantum Christianus, aut se et aliud, jam non Christianus."

Athenagoras, in *Legat. pro Christ.* p. 3. "Nullus Christianus malus est nisi hanc professionem simulaverit."

Damascene *Orthodox.* fid. lib. 4. cap. 11. p. 303. "Qui enim secundum traditionem Catholicæ Ecclesiæ credit, sed communicat operibus Diabolo, infidelis est."

Salvian. de *Gubern.* lib. 4. in the beginning: "Nam cum hoc sit hominis Christiani fides, fideliter Christi mandata servare: fit absque dubio ut nec fidem habeat, qui infidelis est, nec Christum credat qui Christi mandata conculcat. Ac per hoc totum in id resolvitur, ut qui Christiani nominis opus non agit, Christianus non esse videatur. Nomen enim sine actu, atque officio suo nihil est."

Cyprian, de *dupl. Mart.* "Frustra miscetur cœtui Sanctorum, in Templo manufacto, si submotus est ab universo Corpore Mystico Christi."

August. de *Baptis. cont. Donatist.* lib. 4. cap. 2. "Ad

Ecclesiam non pertinet omnes qui sunt intus, sed qui sunt in ea piè viventes. Et cap. 4. In corpore unicæ columbæ, nec hæretici, nec improbi nominantur."

See the like passages of the ancient schoolmen, cited by Davenant in Col. i. 18. p. 118.

And thus I have shewed you the necessity of a profession, and of what sort of profession, and that the pastors of the church are by office appointed by Christ, to try, approve, and receive it.

PROP. 8. Though it belong to the Pastor's office to judge of the Profession of such Expectants, yet are they bound up by the Laws of Christ what Profession to accept, and what to refuse: and if by breaking these Laws they shall dangerously, or grossly wrong the Church, it belongeth to the Magistrate to correct them, and to the People to admonish them, and to disown their sin.

IN sum, as is aforesaid, It is a credible profession of true Christianity, which they must accept. And as that which seemeth not to be understanding, serious, voluntary and deliberate, is not credible; nor that which is nullified by verbal, or actual contradiction; nor that which is made by one that hath forfeited the credit of his word; so on the other side, a credible man's profession is his title-condition, in the judgment of the church, or that evidence of the condition that we must take up with. And if a man produce the positive evidence of his title, we must be able to disprove, and invalidate it, before we reject him: so that it is a profession of true Christianity, which we cannot prove to be false, at least by a violent presumption, (as the lawyers speak,) which we must accept.

By this it appears, 1. That a grossly ignorant person, that knoweth not the essentials of Christianity, is not to be taken for a professed Christian. For trial of such, the Ordinance of Parliament, of October 20, 1645, doth give us satisfaction (recited in the Form of Church Government, of March 29, 1648): 2. Nor one that denieth any of the said essentials heretically: 3. Nor one that speaketh ludicrously, and jestingly: 4. Nor one that speaks in a passion, not deliberately: 5. Nor one that is manifestly forced and unwilling: 6. Nor one that saith and unsaith: 7. Nor one whose life doth prove his profession to be incredible: 8. Nor one that

hath perfidiously been a breaker of covenant with God already, till his reformed life shall recover the credit of his word. So that with a credible person, his bare profession is evidence before the church of his right ; and we must prove him a liar, or false in his profession, before we can reject him. But a man that hath been wicked, after open covenanting with God or profession of Christianity, hath forfeited his credit, and therefore must shew us a new life, as well as a verbal profession, before he is to be restored to his privileges. In the first case, with a credible person, we must prove his profession false, before we reject him : but in the second case, with an incredible person, he must evidence his profession to be true, by probable evidences, that shall make it credible. If I thought that the very light and law of nature, joined with the known general rules of Scripture, did not put this past controversy, with most judicious Christians, I should stand to prove all this by parts.

But on the other side, it is hence manifest, 1. That the pastors of the church, must refuse no man that hath the least degree of grace, or makes a credible profession of the least : 2. And that we must not require as a matter of necessity, such ripe, or clear and judicious expressions from the ignorant, bashful, or such, as for want of use and good breeding, are unable to express their minds, as we may from others. If a man or woman be unable in good sense to express their faith, in the very essentials, or to reveal the grace of God within them, yet if upon our interrogations, and helping them, they can do it in any intelligible manner, so that we do but perceive that it is a sound profession in the essentials, which they mean, though they cannot handsomely utter it, we may not reject any such as these : 3. Note also, that defects in knowledge must be indeed exceeding gross, where the person is willing to be taught, and ruled by Christ, and use his means, and thus seems to love God and holiness, before they will warrant us to reject them. Should the judgments of such persons seem unacquainted with some fundamentals, about the Trinity, and the like mysteries, I should search them better ; and I should plainly tell them presently of the truth, and if they received information, I should not reject a willing soul. The very apostles of Christ had the sacrament administered to them by Himself, when they did not understand and believe, the death and resurrection of

Christ. I know that this will not warrant us to give such persons the Eucharist now; because that those great truths were not then of such great necessity, as after Christ's death and resurrection they did become; as being not so fully revealed, nor the actual belief of them so peremptorily imposed. But yet it shews us this much, that even in persons admitted to the Lord's-supper, if there be but a belief in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the points of absolute necessity, though in rude and imperfect conception, and a love to Christ, and a willingness to learn of him, and obey him, a great deal of lamentable ignorance may be borne with, in those that have wanted either means of knowledge, and clear discoveries of the truth, or natural ripeness of understanding to receive it. You see then that pastors are not arbitrary, not merely left to their own wills.

PROP. 9. *It is most evident, that Ministers, People and Magistrates, have each a Power of Judging; but differently, as they have different Works.*

1. WHEN the question is, 'To whom the sacraments, and other ordinances, and church-relations and privileges are to be ministerially delivered as from Christ, and to whom not?' Here the ministers of Christ are the judges. And so are they, when the question is, 'Whom must we teach, direct, and persuade, and in Christ's name command the people to avoid or to hold communion with? for those two are our own work in the execution. And if either magistrate, people, or any other must be judge, where ministers must execute and work; then 1. We have not that common 'judicium discretionis' to guide our own actions, which is allowed, and necessary to every Christian: 2. Then the rulers of the church, are not only degraded, and made no rulers, but are put into that slavery, and subjection to them, that are commanded to obey them, which no pastor must desire the people, or any one of them to be in; for we must not deny them a judgment of discretion, about their own actions: 3. And by this course, ministers that are the eyes of the body, must not only be guided by other parts, but they must execute against their own knowledge, and conscience, when other men misjudge: 4. And if so, either God commandeth us to sin, whenever people, or magistrates bid us (which none dare say), or else it is no sin, when it doth but get their vote, and so we may

warrantably do what the magistrate bids us (as Hobbes thinks), or what the people bids us (as others as unreasonably think). As if it would be a sufficient excuse for me, to say, 'Lord I did what the magistrate, or the major vote of the people bid me, though it was that which thou forbiddest;'

5. If the people have no such power over one another, then they have none over their rulers or guides: but they have none such over one another. Indeed, in order to unity, a major vote may (not effectually oblige) but occasion an obligation: but as to government, let them shew us if they can from Scripture, where the major vote of a church hath the government of the lesser part; or that the lesser may go against their own judgment, and conscience, merely because the greater part requireth it. This governing vote, is as strange a thing to the Scripture as a pope is: 6. Pastors, or general, unfixed ministers, may receive persons into the universal church sometimes, without receiving them into any particular church: and what have any people there to do with the trial, or approbation of their profession or qualifications? One can lay no more claim to it than another: and surely all the world must not have the trial of them: 7. What people did Philip advise with before he baptized the eunuch? or who but Philip alone was the judge of his profession? What vote approved of the three thousand converts, (Acts ii,) or of Paul, (Acts ix,) or of Lydia, or the jailor, (Acts xvi,) or any other that ever were admitted by the ministers of Christ in Scripture times? And what magistrates were the approvers for three hundred years after Christ? no, nor after: 8. If in this part of our office we must obey men, against God (whether magistrate or people), then in other parts: and so if the vote of the church, or magistrate, forbid me to pray or preach against pride, covetousness or drunkenness, I must obey them; that is, I must obey men before God, and please men, and be no longer the Minister of Christ: 9. What can be more plainly contrary to Scripture, than for the people by a major vote, to rule those whom God commandeth them to obey, as their rulers? (Heb. xiii. 7; xvii. 24; 1 Tim. v. 17; 1 Thess. v. 12; Acts xx. &c.)

Object. 'Pastors have but a ministerial ruling power.'

Answ. Who doubts of that? But is a ministerial rule no rule? No man on earth hath more than a ministerial power; for all are under God, and the Redeemer. All judges, jus-

tices, and other officers in the commonwealth, have but a ministerial rule as officers: but is that no rule; or shall the people therefore rule these rulers? We are Christ's ministers for the people: we are their's finally, but have our power from Christ only efficiently. If the people are the rulers, who are the ruled? It is a strange society, when the ruling and ruled part is the same; where all the body is a head and an eye: 10. If people or magistrates will oblige the ministers by their power, whom they shall baptize, confirm, or absolve, and what profession they shall accept; then must the people and magistrates undertake to answer it before God, and to bear all the blame and punishment, if we miscarry in obedience to them. And truly, if they dare undertake this, we should gladly accept of the condition, with a thousand thanks, if we could but be sure that God would give us leave, and thus acquit us, and accept of our service on these terms. O then how easy a thing were it to obey, rather than to rule! So much for the power of the ministers in this, and other such like work.

2. When the question is, 'Whether such a professor be fit for our own communion or not, and whether it be our duty to avoid him or not,' then the people have a judgment of discretion; not a governing judgment, as the pastors have, but a judgment that must be the immediate guide of their actions. Yet this is to be thus exercised: they are to look to God's word as the rule, and to trust that with a divine faith: they are also to look at the judgment and directions of the pastors, that are their authorised guides; and to trust them as the officers of Christ. For the Word is their regulating guide; and the pastors are their authorised directing guides; and their own understandings, are their immediate discerning guides. So that they must not be wise in their own conceits, nor lean to their own understanding, without the use of Scripture, and ministry; but use their understandings for the improvement of these. So, that if they know not that the pastors of the church do mislead them, contrary to the word of God, they cannot deny them obedience, for the command to obey them is unquestionable. Or if they have not a grounded strong presumption, or probability of it, they may not suspend their obedience; but must leave the pastors to the work of their office, and trust them in it, and avoid those whom they reject, and hold com-

munion with those whom they accept, and introduce, confirm, or restore. But in case they know that a pastor leadeth them into sin, they are not to follow him; and if they have just ground for a strong suspicion of it, they must suspend, and consult with other pastors, and get full information; for Christian people are not to be ruled as beasts, but as the children of God; and must understand what they are required to do, and why, as being free subjects, (though subjects) in the kingdom of Christ, and to be governed accordingly.

3. When the question is, ‘Whether ministers are to be punished for abusing their power, receiving or rejecting men to the injury of the church, and contrary to the word of God;’ here the magistrate is the judge. For as forcing, or punishing corporally is his work, so he must be the judge, where he is the executioner, or else he should be forced to go against his own judgment, and to be a mere servile executioner, which were to him an insufferable injury.

But here, 1. The magistrate must not give the minister a law to govern the church by, unless the determination of circumstantial appendants; but must see that we govern it according to the word of God, our only and sufficient rule. 2. And he must not be over-busy, nor unnecessarily intermeddle in the work of another’s office, nor be too confident of his own understanding in the matters of the pastor’s work, as if he knew better than they. 3. But he must correct or cast out those ministers that will not obey the word of God; punishing us for breaking the old rule, and not making new rules for us, is their work, so be it, he can procure a better supply. 4. In this case, if the magistrate’s judgment be right, he doth his duty, and ministers must obey him; if he err, he may be guilty of persecution, in hindering good, under pretence of punishing evil. If his error tend not to the destruction, or great and certain hurt of the church; the ministers whom he casteth out, are bound to obey him, and give place to others, and bestow their labours in some other country, or in some other kind at home: but if his error lead him to destructive persecution, we must passively submit, but not actively or negatively obey him, but must preach as long as we are able, and do our duty, till by prison, or death he stop us in the exercise.

PROP. 10. *To this Ministerial Approbation of the Profession, and Qualification of the Expectant, there is to be adjoined a Ministerial Investiture, or Delivery of the Benefit expected.*

THIS is the proper work of the ministers of Christ. He that is himself in the heavenly glory, hath left his Spirit within to draw men to him, and his ministers without, to deliver up the counter-covenant on his part, in his name, and to espouse them to Christ, and to accept them in his name and stead. And this investiture is one of the principal parts of the nature and use of sacraments, which all have not fully considered. The Papists tell us of seven sacraments, Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, the Eucharist, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction. Calvin sticks not to yield them three. The name of *Sacrament* being not in Scripture, but of mere Ecclesiastic use, and being a word that will stretch, I distinguish between three sorts of sacraments. (1.) For any Divine institution which notably signifieth spiritual grace; and so, though I think Extreme Unction none, as being now no duty, yet, I doubt not, but there is more than seven. (2.) For any solemn investiture of a person by ministerial delivery, in a state of church-privileges, or some special Gospel-mercy. And so I grant that there are five sacraments; Baptism, Confirmation, Absolution, the Lord's-supper, and Ordination. As a man that delivereth possession of a house, doth deliver the key to him that enters; and as we are invested in the possession of land, by the delivery of a twig or turf; and as ministers were wont to be invested, or have induction into the churches by giving them the books, and the bell-ropes; and as women were wont to be married with a ring, and as a prince doth knight a man by a sword; so Christ, by his ministers, doth first by Baptism invest us in our church-state, and infant-privileges; and by Confirmation, confirm us in our church-state, and invest us with a right to the privileges of the adult; and by Absolution re-invest us in the privileges that we had forfeited; and by the Lord's-supper deliver to us Christ and his benefits, for our ordinary nourishment, and growth in grace; and by Ordination he investeth the person ordained with ministerial power. (3.) But taking the word *Sacrament* in that strictest sense, as our divines define a sacrament, as it is an outward

sign of Christ's institution, for the obsignation of the full covenant of grace, betwixt him and the covenanter, and a delivery, representation, and investiture of the grace, or benefits of that covenant; thus we have only two sacraments, Baptism, and the Lord's-supper. But truly, I would not quarrel with them for the mere name, as to the five which I mentioned.

PROP. 11. *The solemn Ministerial Investiture of Professors, into the Right of the Church-privileges of the Adult, is either*
 1. *Of the Unbaptized, who are now first entered.* 2. *Or of the Baptized in Infancy, that never proved ungodly, nor violated that first Covenant.* 3. *Or of those Baptized, whether in Infancy or Age, that have since proved wicked, and broke that Covenant.* *The first of these Investitures is, to be by Baptism; the second by Confirmation; and the third by Absolution.* *So that the solemn Investiture that I am pleading for, is by Confirmation to one sort, that never proved ungodly since their Baptism, and by Absolution to the other sort that broke their Covenant.*

THE baptism of the adult, we have not now to do with. Of those that are baptized in infancy, some do betimes receive the secret seeds of grace, which by the blessing of a holy education, (and some among the profane) is stirring within them, according to their capacity, and working them to God by actual desires, and working them from all known sin, and entertaining further grace, and turning them into actual acquaintance with Christ, as soon as they arrive at full natural capacity; so that they never were actual ungodly persons. To these their investiture in the state of adult-members upon their personal, approved profession, is a confirmation of the mutual covenant that it findeth them under, and of them in that covenant.

But there are others (I doubt the most), that since their infant-baptism, have proved actual wicked and ungodly persons; if not openly flagitious and scandalous, yet at least unacquainted with any special sanctifying work, till after they attain to the full years of discretion. These break their covenant made with God in baptism^g, in which they were devoted to him, and engaged to live to him, forsaking

^g De Exhomologes. vide Albaspin. in Tertul. de Pœnit. c. 10. p. 297. et Observ. passim.

the flesh, the world, and the devil. And therefore these must come in as penitents, even as if they had proved wicked after an adult-baptism, they must do; and therefore it is first an absolution which they must receive; not only a particular Absolution from an act of heinous sin, which afterwards may be renewed upon particular penitence, but a General Absolution from a state of sin. Yet this doth consequently participate of the nature of the former, and hath a confirmation in it, or with it; not a confirmation in the wicked state that such have lived in, but a renewal, and solemn confirming of the covenant, between God and them, which in baptism was made. So that to such it is as an Absolution, and Confirmation conjunct.

PROP. 12. *This solemn Investiture on personal Profession, being thus proved the Ordinance of God, for the solemn renewing of the Covenant of Grace, between God and the Adult Covenanters, it must needs follow, that it is a corroborating Ordinance, and that corroborating Grace is to be expected in it from God, by all that come to it in sincerity of heart; and so it hath the name of Confirmation upon that account also.*

THE Papists quarrel with us, and curse us in the Council of Trent, for denying their ends of confirmation, and making it another thing. But they falsely describe our opinion: we do not take it to be a mere catechising, or receiving the catechised to the Lord's-supper, or to a higher form; but we take it to be the approbation of the personal profession of them that claim a title to the church-state, and privilege of the adult, and an investing them solemnly therein, upon the solemn renewal (and personal adult entrance) into covenant with God. Now in this renewed covenant, as they give up themselves to Christ afresh, and personally engage themselves to him, and renounce his enemies, owning their infant-baptism, when this was done by others in their names; so God is ready on his part to bless his own ordinance, with the collation of that corroborating grace, which the nature of the renewed covenant doth import. Otherwise God should appoint us means in vain, and fail them in the use of his own ordinances, that use them as he hath appointed; which is not to be imagined. Though the unsound hypocritical receivers may miss of this blessing; and though as the degree of corroborating grace, God is free to give it out as

he pleaseth. So that the Papists shall have no cause to say, that we needlessly, or erroneously deny either the name of Confirmation, or the true use and ends of it, or the notional title of a Sacrament to it in a larger, yet not the largest sense. We affect not to fly further from them than we needs must; much less to fly from the ancient practice of the Universal Church. But we must crave their pardon, if we introduce not their Anointing, though ancient, seeing when it was used of old but as an indifferent ceremony, they have turned it now into a proper, necessary sacramental sign: and if we give not the confirmed a box on the ear, as they do for a holy sign, or abuse it not as they in many respects, and turn it not into a mere deceiving formality, in this also we must needs crave their pardon. So much of the name, and ends of Confirmation.

PROP. 13. Ministerial Imposition of Hands in Confirmation, and the fore-described sort of Absolution, is a lawful, and convenient Ceremony, and ordinarily to be used, as it hath been of old by the Universal Church. But yet it is not of such Necessity, but that we must dispense in this Ceremony with scrupulous Consciences, that cannot be satisfied to submit to it.

Thus must we take heed of both extremes; either of rejecting a ceremony, that hath so much to be said for it as this hath; or of making it more necessary than it is, to the wrong of tender consciences that are not yet ripe enough, to be well informed of it, and to answer the objections that they have heard against it; nor yet to receive your answers.

^{s. h} I. For the first part of the proposition, I think it may

^h Grotius Epist. 154. pp. 377, 378. Mihi legendo compertum est manuum impositionem ceremoniam fuisse Judaicam, usurpatam, non Lege ulla Divina, sed moribus, ubicunque precandi pro aliquo causa quædam emergerat. Tunc enim Judæi orabant ut sic Dei efficacia esset super illum, sicut manus, efficaciam symbolum, ei imponerentur. Hunc quemque morem ut Synagogæ pleraque secutus est Christus, sive pueris benedicendum fuit, sive ægrotis adhibenda sanatio addita, ut semper honos Patri haberetur, prece, Eodem more non ex ullo præcepto est quod Apostoli manus imposuere iis, quibus ignoto ante hac jure dona conspicua Sancti Spiritus precando conferebant: quod Presbyteri eundem ritum adhibuere non tantum in allegendis Presbyteris, puta Timotheo. (1 Tim. iv. 15.) Sed et ipsis Apostolis, ubi novi aliquid opus aggredierentur. (Acts xiii. 2.) Ita ut si quotiens manus imponitur toties Sacramentum est, jam nulla futura sit ad precandum pro aliquo occasio, quæ non eo nomine veniat; quod nec vocis origo, nec veterum in eâ usus repudiat. Et ex una hac non imperata sed usitata Judæis Christianisque ceremonia, existitere illa, quæ dicuntur Sacramenta Confirmationis, Ordinationis, Pœnitentiæ, Extremæ Unctionis, imo et Matrimonii.

suffice, (1.) That Imposition of hands was used in Scripture-times, and so used, as may invite us to imitation, but not deter us from it at all. (2.) And that it hath been since of ordinary use in the Universal Church, in this very case, so that no other original of it can be found, but apostolical; yea, we have exceeding probable evidence, that the use of it was never interrupted, from the days of the apostles, down to the Reformation. (3.) Nor is it laid aside in many of the Reformed Churches. So that you will find, that as it is easy to prove it *lawful*, so it is more likely to be a Divine institution, necessary ‘*necessitate præcepti*,’ than to be *unlawful*. I shall purposely say the less of it, because Mr. Hanmer hath said so much already as to the judgment of the ancients; and my intent is to pretermitt that part, or say less to it, which he hath performed. But that it is lawful and fit, if not of some necessity, I shall prove by the aforementioned evidence.

1. Imposition of hands, is allowed in Scripture, to be used generally by Spiritual superiors, to signify their will and desire, that the blessing may fall on the inferior, or the gift, or power be conferred on him, for which they have a call to mediate: so that it is not confined to any particular blessing, power, or ordinance; and therefore if there had been no example of the use of it, in this particular case (of Confirmation, or Absolution) yet hence it is proved to be lawful and meet, because it hath this general use and allowance. The lifting up of hands in prayer was used to signify from whom, and whence they did expect the blessing; even from our Father which is in heaven: and the laying of hands on the head of the person, in or after prayer, was used as an applicatory sign, to signify the ‘*terminus ad quem*’ of the blessing desired, or the person, on whom they would have it bestowed. And as you will not cast away the use of lifting up of hands, though it be for such mercies, as you read no Scripture instance, that hands were lift up for; because the general warrant is sufficient; so you have as little reason, to scruple or cast away the laying on of hands, though in such cases as you read not that the sign was used for in Scripture; because the unlimited general use, is sufficient warrant, in such particular cases. God shewed that the very outward sign of lifting up of the hands, was not to be despised, when Amalek had the better, when Moses’

hands fell down, though but through weakness, so that Aaron and Hur were fain to underset them. (Exod. xvii.) And I think we have no reason to condemn the laying on of hands, which in grounds and nature, is so near a-kin to the other. And as spreading forth the hands, doth not cease to be good and meet, for all that God hath said he will "not hear them" that spread forth hands that are full of blood; (Isa. i. 15;) so the laying on of hands doth not cease to be good and meet, though in some cases the blessing do not follow it. Still we must every where "lift up holy hands" in prayer, "without wrath and doubting." (1 Tim. ii. 8.) Though the sign be not of absolute necessity in every prayer, yet it is very meet, and too much neglected among us: and so I may say of the other. When Solomon prayed in the Temple he "spread forth his hands towards heaven;" (1 Kings viii. 22;) and so he supposed all would do, that look to be heard by the God of heaven, when (verse 38) he prayeth for the people thus: "What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart (that was their prayer-book) and spread forth his hands towards this house, then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and do," &c. (See verse 54; 2 Chron. vi. 12, 13. We must "lift up our hearts with our hands to God in the heavens." Lam. iii. 41.) We must prepare our hearts, and stretch out our hands towards him." (Job xi. 13.) Praying "to a strange God," (Psal. xlv. 20.) Even in praises the people were to lift up their hands towards heaven, (Neh. viii. 6,) yea, and in blessing, lifting up the hands was used to signify whence the blessing came. (Luke xxiv. 50.) Now this being so commonly applied, the other that is so near a-kin to it, may without scruple be used in any case that falls under the fore-described general case. Indeed every man must lift up hands, because every man must pray; and it is an engagement, that those hands that are lifted up to God, be not used in wicked works; but laying on of hands is ordinarily the act of a superior, to the ends above-said.

Thus Jacob, (Gen. lxxviii. 14, 15,) laid his hands on the sons of Joseph in blessing them. Moses laid his hands on Joshua, when he ordained him his successor. (Numb. xxvii. 18, 23; Deut. xxxiv. 9.) Yea, even in the execution of evil

they laid on hands, as an applicatory sign, as in sacrificing; as if they should say, 'Not on me, but on this substitute let the evil of punishment be.' (See Lev. xvi. 21, 22; Exod. xxix. 10. 15; Lev. iv. 15; viii. 14. 22; Numb. viii. 12.) Yea, in putting a blasphemer and curser to death, they first laid their hands on his head, as an applicatory sign, in whom the fault was, and to whom the punishment did belong. (Lev. xxiv. 14.) In the ordination, or consecration of the Levites, the people were to lay their hands on them; (Numb. viii. 10;) not to give them authority, but to consecrate, and give them up to God. By laying on of the hands, as an applicatory sign, did Christ and his disciples heal diseases, &c.; (Mark v. 23;) where note, that the ruler of the synagogue Jairus, took this as an ordinary sign of conferring blessings from a superior, and therefore he mentioneth it with the blessing desired. (Mark vi. 5; viii. 23. 25; Luke xiii. 13; iv. 40.) So you may see also the apostles did; yea, and other believers, as the promise runs, Mark xvi. 18; Acts xxviii. 8. Also by laying on of hands, as an applicatory sign, they invested the seven deacons in their office. (Acts vi. 6.) And the prophets, and teachers in the church of Antioch, separated Barnabas and Paul, to the work that God appointed them; (Acts xiii. 2. 3;) by fasting, and prayer, and imposition of hands. And Timothy received his ministerial gift, by the laying on of Paul's hands, and the hands of the Presbytery. (1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.) If this last text be understood of the ministerial ordination and gift, which I rather think is meant of the apostolical imposition of hands, after baptism, for giving of the Holy Ghost. So that this sign was used upon several occasions, and is not at all forbidden in this, directly, or indirectly, and therefore it is undoubtedly lawful; seeing that without doubt the less is blessed of the greater; (Heb. vii. 7;) and the duty and power of the pastor to bless the person in this case is unquestionable, and this imposition of hands is an allowed sign in blessing, as lifting up the hands is in prayer: here is Scripture enough to prove it lawful, and very meet.

2. But let us inquire whether the Scripture lay not some kind of obligation on us, to use this ceremony in confirmation. To which end let these several things be well considered¹.

(1.) We find in Scripture a blessing of church-members,

¹ Leg. Albaspin. Observat. 31. lib. 2. p. 166—168.

with laying on of hands. (2.) We find in Scripture, that the Holy Ghost is in a special manner promised to believers, over and above that measure of the Spirit, which caused them to believe. (3.) We find that prayer with laying on of hands, was the outward means to be used by Christ's ministers, for the procuring of this blessing. (4.) We find that this was a fixed ordinance to the church, and not a temporary thing. Lay all this together, and you will see as much as my proposition doth affirm. Let us try the proof of it.

I. Though the proof of the first be not necessary to the main point, yet it somewhat strengtheneth the cause. Mark x. 16; Christ took the children up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them; so Matt. xix. 15. This is not I confess a Confirmation upon personal profession, which I am now pleading for; but this is a benediction by laying on of hands: and the subjects of it were such children as were members at least of the Jewish church, being before circumcised.

II. But to come nearer the matter; let us inquire what this gift of the Holy Ghost was, that is promised to believers. Whatsoever the Pelagians say, the Scripture assure thus, that Faith and Repentance, which go before Baptism in the adult, are the gifts of the Holy Ghost; and yet for all that the Holy Ghost is to be given afterward; and though very often this after-gift is manifested by tongues, prophecy, and miracles, yet that is not all that is meant in the promise of the Holy Ghost. God hath not tied himself by that promise to any one sort of those extraordinary gifts, nor constantly to give any of them; but he hath promised in general to give believers the Spirit; and therefore there is some other standing Gift, for which the Spirit is promised to all such. And indeed, the Spirit promised is one, though the gifts are many; and the many sorts of gifts make not many Spirits. If any man therefore shall ask, whether by the promised Spirit be meant sanctification, or miracles, or prophecy, &c., I answer with Paul, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, as there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord, and diversities of operations, but the same God." (1 Cor. xii. 4—6.) It is therefore no wiser a question to ask, whether by the Spirit be meant this gift, or that, when it is only the Spirit in general that is promised, than to ask, whether by the Lord be meant this or

that administration; and whether by God be meant this or that operation. "To one is given the word of wisdom by the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit, to another faith, by the same Spirit," &c. (verse 8—10.) Now I confess, if any man can prove that this promise of the Spirit to the faithful, is meant only of the Extraordinary gift of Miracles, then he would weaken the argument that I am about. But I prove the contrary, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. It is the gift of the Spirit, by which we are one body, which is called Christ's, by which we are all baptized into this one body; and such members as have a lively fellow-feeling on each other's state; (verse 26, 27;) yea, such as giveth to the elect, the excellent, durable grace of charity. (verse 31. and chap. xiii.)

Gal. iv. 6. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." Note here, that it is not only the gift of Miracles, but the Spirit of Adoption that is here mentioned; and that it is given to believers, because they are sons. And all the first part of Rom. viii. to verse 29, doth shew, that it is the Spirit of Adoption, supplication, and that by which we mortify the flesh, that is given to believers.

2 Cor. i. 21, 22. "Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." It is not the common gifts of the Spirit only that are here spoken of, nor is it the first gift of faith, but it is confirmation, or inward establishment in Christ, and that Spirit, which is the Father's seal upon us, and the earnest of the inheritance. I believe not that it is outward anointing, or sealing with the sign of the cross, that is here mentioned, as many Papists dream; but inward unction, seal, earnest, and confirmation by the Spirit, are here expressed. So, 2 Cor. v. 5.; Zech. xii. 10. It is the Spirit of grace and supplication that is promised to the church. See the pattern in Christ our head, on whom after baptism the Spirit descended, and to whom it is promised. (Matt. xii. 18.)

Ephes. i. 13, 14. "In whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." Here it is evident, that it is such a gift of the Spirit, which is an earnest of heaven that is given to men, after they believe.

John vii. 39. "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given them, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Yet the apostles had saving faith then. And that it is not meant only of the apostles' extraordinary gifts of miracles, the foregoing words shew: "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow living waters: but this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive."

By all this it is evident, that there was an eminent gift of the Holy Ghost promised to them that had already the grace of faith, repentance, and love to Christ, wrought in them by the Holy Ghost; and that though this eminent gift, did very much consist in gifts of languages, prophecy, and mighty works for the confirmation of Christ's doctrine, which was then to be planted in the world; yet was it not only in those gifts, but as some had only those common, though extraordinary gifts for the good of the church; so some had an eminent addition of special gifts, to seal them up to the day of redemption, and be the earnest of the inheritance, to the saving of the soul. If you ask, 'Wherein these special eminent gifts of the Holy Ghost do consist,' I answer, 1. In a clearer knowledge of Christ, and the mysteries of the Gospel; not an ineffectual, but a powerful, affecting, practical knowledge. 2. In a fuller measure of love, agreeable to this knowledge. 3. In joy and peace, and sweet consolation. 4. In establishment, and corroboration, and firmer resolution for Christ, and everlasting life.

For the understanding of which we must know, that as the doctrine is the means of conveying the Spirit, so the Spirit given is answerable to the doctrine, and administration that men are under. It is a very great question, whether Adam in innocency had the Spirit or not? But as the administration, according to the mere light, and law of nature, is eminently in Scripture attributed to the Father, so Adam certainly may be well said to have had the Spirit of the Father, to enable him with gifts that were answerable to the law that he was under, and the state that he was in: But we cannot fitly say, that he had that which the Scripture calleth the Spirit of the Son, as not being under the administration of the Son. But after the promise, till the coming of Christ, as the administration was mixed of law and promise, nature and grace, as the dawning of the day before sun-rising doth partake of darkness and of light; so the Spirit that was

then given, was answerable to the administration and doctrine. And therefore, as there was somewhat of the Gospel in those times, though yet God hath not thought it meet to call it (at least usually) by that name, but rather by the name of the Promises, and Prophecies of Christ; so there was somewhat of the Spirit of Christ, though it be not usually so called; but when it appeared in some eminent servants of Christ, as the prophets were, in whom the Spirit of Christ is said to have been. (1 Peter i. 11.) Now as it was part of that work ascribed to the Father, to send and give the Son, and to give men to the Son; so commonly those gifts are ascribed to him which are contained in these expressions, and are the accomplishment of this work; and that not only in the Old Testament, but in the New: and therefore it is called the giving and the drawing of the Father, by which we are brought to believe in the Son; though yet the grace of faith is a special saving grace, and not common to the wicked, as the Papist's dream, because they find an ineffectual assent to be common.

But now, as Christ at his coming doth bring to the world a clearer light, and fuller revelation of himself, and the mysteries of redemption, and bring life and immortality to light in the Gospel; and as the rising sun dispelleth the remnants of legal darkness, and his doctrine is fully called, the Gospel, the Testament of Jesus Christ, so answerably he doth by, and with this doctrine, give out such a measure of the Spirit, to the church, as is eminently called, the Spirit of Jesus-Christ: which carrieth us higher than the first grace of faith and repentance, to those fuller degrees which were not ordinary; no not to the godly in the time of the law. And as this Spirit of Christ did extrinsically shine in the glory of tongues and wondrous works, while those were necessary to the church, and Christ's service; so both then, and ever after it doth work, but in various degrees, for the sanctifying of believers, and conforming their hearts and lives to Christ; in his humiliation, patience, self-denial, meekness, contempt of the world, obedience, &c. till at last we be conformed to him in his glory.

III. I have cleared the second point, 'That there is no eminent gift of the Holy Ghost to be expected after our first believing, even such as ceased not with miracles.' I now come to the third point, which is, 'That ministerial prayer, with

laying on of hands, was the Scripture-way for the giving of this eminent gift of the Spirit.'

For the understanding of this, observe these things:—

1. How Sacraments, and investing Signs, confer grace.—2. How the Spirit is given in Baptism.—3. How far God hath, as it were, tied himself to Ordinances for conferring grace.—4. What proof the Scripture yields us of the proposition.—5. What aptitude there is in Ministerial Confirmation, for the attainment of these ends.

1. We find in Scripture, that sacraments are not appointed (nor to be used according to the intent of the institutor) for the conferring of that grace which men have not in any degree already: But they are, (1.) Partly a solemn investiture in that which before we had a fundamental right to; as the enlisting of a soldier, or the solemnization of marriage after a firm contract; the crowning a king; the delivering possession by a key, a twig, a turf; the knighting a man by a sword, &c. This is as to relative benefits, and right to physical benefits. (2.) And withal they are by actual excitation of grace, to increase the inherent grace received, and so to give us more. All this is evident in baptism itself, where we are to receive both remission of sins, with right to everlasting life, and also an increase of grace in the adult: and yet no man at age, is to come to baptism, to require it, that is not a penitent believer already; and consequently that hath not the beginning of special saving grace, and somewhat of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, and title to forgiveness, and everlasting life. For he is under the promise, that "whosoever believeth, shall not perish, but have everlasting life." And a Papist will grant, that the 'votum baptismi' may serve to his salvation, if he die without it. And the case of infants is the same, as to these mercies which are necessary to their state of life. Their parents must be believers, before they dedicate them to God, and consequently the child hath the covenant right before it is sealed. And it is ridiculous in the Papists to damn all infants, for want of baptism, and not the aged; and to make the 'votum' to serve for the parent, and yet not for his child, when yet the parent's faith must serve to prove his title to baptism itself. But to leave these corrupters, and innovators; we see now what is to be expected by Confirmation: not that men that have no signs of corroborating grace, should come thither first to receive it; but that such as ap-

pear initially resolved, confirmed, and corroborated, may be (though not by a full and proper sacrament, yet) ministerially; 1st. Invested into the state of the confirmed, and their privileges, which is a higher form in the school of Christ: 2d. And may receive yet further confirmation, and corroboration by God's approbation and ordinance.

2. ' But hath not baptism done all this already, seeing we are baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost?' This is our second point to be resolved. I answer, It is a great error, to think that adult persons that have nothing of the Holy Ghost, may demand baptism, and that baptism doth not give the Holy Ghost: but yet it is one thing to give the Holy Ghost in relation, and fundamental right, and another thing to give the graces of the Spirit; and it is one thing to seal and increase the initial, special grace of the Spirit, and another thing to invest in a stablishing degree: and so it is evident, that baptism, as such, is appointed but for the two first: that is, (1.) As we must have some faith and repentance, before a person at age may come to baptism, and so must have fundamental right by promise, to Christ, pardon, and life; so this is sealed in baptism, and we are solemnly invested in it, and our grace excited for increase: but is it not requisite that a man have a further degree of grace before he come. (2.) In baptism, it is our very relation to God, as our Father and God, to Christ as our Saviour, and to the Holy Ghost as our Sanctifier, that is sealed to us, and we are invested with; which is the foundation of all that afterward from the Spirit is given us. As in marriage, the persons in relation, are given to each other for marriage ends; so in baptism, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God in three persons, are solemnly given to us in relation to themselves, for Christian baptismal ends. But as after marriage, the man takes home his wife, and delivereth her a possession of his house first, and after admits her to bed and board, according to his covenant; so Christ doth after baptism, take home the Christian into his church, and admit him to the several privileges of it, in the season, and manner as he seeth meet, so that as all the good that we do after baptism, is but the fulfilling of our baptismal covenant, and yet we did not the good, when we covenanted to do it: so all the after mercies, that God giveth us by promise (at least) on his part, are but the fulfilling, or fruits

of his baptismal covenant; and that he did not give them in our baptism. So that confirmation is no full, and proper Gospel sacrament as baptism is, but a particular subsequent investiture, in some of the fruits of baptism itself, in the season of them.

3. ‘ But have we any certainty that this ordinance shall prove effectually confirming to us? If not, it will be but an idle, empty ceremony?’ This is our third question: to which I answer, (1.) Ordinances are duties, which we must use, and in which we must wait on God for his blessing if we will have it: and therefore in the way of duty we must be found. (2.) What if you have not a certainty that your prayers shall be granted, will you not therefore pray? or if you are not certain that a sermon shall profit you, will you not hear it? or that reading shall profit you, will you not read? or that the Lord’s-supper shall increase your grace, will you not use it? (3.) But I may say more: if you come prepared, you may be sure of a blessing in some degree: as it is not every one that prayeth, and heareth, and receiveth the Lord’s-supper, that shall certainly have the blessing, but the prepared soul that is the subject of the promise, which is annexed to that ordinance; so it is not every one that is externally confirmed by prayer, and imposition of hands, that shall be sure of the blessing, but the soul that is prepared as aforedescribed. (4.) But yet the several degrees of blessing, God hath kept in his own hand, and not affixed them by promise to any person, in any ordinance: He may bless the word, prayer, the Lord’s-supper, &c. to one true Christian more than to another, and yet perform his promise to them all: and so he may this outward Confirmation.

4. ‘ But what proof is there in Scripture of such an ordinance, or practice?’ That is our fourth question: to which I answer, (1.) For the main point in question, it is already proved, beyond all controversy, *viz.* the necessity of a personal profession, and covenant, before men be admitted to the church-privileges of the adult, and that it belongeth to the office of Christ’s ministers to judge of, and approve this profession, &c. It is none of this we have now to prove, but only the manner of admission hereupon, whether it be to be done by prayer, with benediction, and imposition of hands. And it is not the lawfulness of this, for that is proved before: but whether this manner and solemnity be a thing which

ordinarily we should observe? And that it is so, this seems to me to prove, as beyond controversy it belongeth to spiritual superiors, even the ministers of Christ, to pray for the people, and bless them, so this must be in a special manner exercised upon great and special occasion: but the admission of the adult upon their personal covenanting and profession, is a great and special occasion. This is as good an argument as any we have for stated family-prayer, that I remember; and it is clearly good for both.

(1.) I should but trouble you to prove the general part of the major, that it belongeth to the pastors to pray for, and bless the people ministerially. And the application to this reason is proved thus: "All things are sanctified by the word and prayer:" therefore this. If the great and special works, and changes of our lives, be not thus to be sanctified, much less the smaller; and so the whole command would be void. We agree, that at marriage, at our investiture in the ministerial office, &c. there must be ministerial prayer, and benediction, usually to sanctify it to the faithful: but here there is as great, if not greater reason for it, the change and blessing being in some sort greater¹.

And as this is plain for ministerial prayer and benediction, so it seems that the weight and nature of the work doth determine us to the sign of imposition of hands, seeing God hath not tied it to any one or two particular cases, but made it a sign of general use, in spiritual benediction, and collations of authority, from a superior, or great and special occasions.

(2.) But we have yet a more clear proof from Scripture example, Acts viii. 15—17. Peter and John were sent to Samaria, when they heard that they believed, and "when they were come down, they prayed for them, that they might

¹ As some doubt, whether conversion, or building up, be the greater work, and give it to the latter, that they may conclude the latter only to be the work of pastors, and the former, but of gifted private men, so the doubt in this case is, on the same ground, whether baptizing, and confirming be not as great as ordaining; and some give it to the latter, lest Presbyters be thought to have power to ordain. But I answer both, as Aquila in Scotell. in sent. 4 Des. 7, 8. et 2. p. 816. In the case of Confirmation. 'Quando bene sit comparatio harum gratiarum: hæc potest fieri dupliciter. Uno modo sine præcisione; et sic omnino major est gratia confirmationis, quam baptismalis; sicut bene et perfecte vivere, est melius quam vivere: si autem fiat comparatio harum gratiarum cum præcisione, sic major est gratia baptismalis quam confirmationis, quia majoris virtutis est mortuum vivificare, quam vivificatum fortificare.' So I say between initiating a Christian, and initiating a minister.

receive the Holy Ghost ; for as yet he was fallen on none of them ; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus : then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." So Acts xix. 5, 6, "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus : And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." And Acts ix. 17, Ananias laid his hands on Saul (before converted by a voice from heaven, though not baptized) that he might receive his sight and the Holy Ghost at once.

And this was the gift that Simon Magus would have bought with money, And it seemeth to me most probable, that this was the gift that Timothy received by laying on of Paul's hands (which being for the service of the church, 1 Cor. xii. 7, he was to stir up, and exercise in his ministry, 2 Tim. i. 6.) And that the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, (1 Tim. iv. 14,) was at another time. That the Holy Ghost was then given by prayer, with imposition of hands, is thus evident.

IV. But the last point remaineth, 'Whether this were not temporary, and now ceased : ' where I shall take in the fifth particular, before named, about the aptitude of the means now. And when I have proved it once appointed, it lieth on the contrary-minded, to prove it changed or ceased ; that is the task of them that affirm it ceased. If I shew them an obligation once laid, they must prove it taken off. Their only argument is, that the persons and occasion were only extraordinary, and are ceased, and therefore so is the sign or means. To which I answer, 1. By the denying the Antecedent ; both as to persons and occasion : they were not only extraordinary. 2. By the denying the Consequence, as it is inferred from the persons : for extraordinary persons were our patterns for ordinary, durable works.

But I prove the negative : 1. The use and ends of the ancient imposition of hands do still continue : therefore we are to judge that the sign and means is not to cease. For the proof of the antecedent, remember that I have before proved, that it was not only (though very eminently) the gift of tongues and miracles, that was then meant by the Holy Ghost that was given, but also corroborating grace. And the necessity and actual collation, and use of this doth still continue.

2. There is still a discernible aptitude in the means to these necessary ends. The baptized believer may yet want the joy of the Holy Ghost, and boldness of access to God, and the shedding abroad of fuller love in the heart; (Rom. v. 5;) and that consolation which is much of the work of the promised Spirit, which therefore is called the Comforter; and that corroboration and stability which he needeth. Now to have a messenger of Christ that hath received a binding and loosing power, in the name of Christ to encourage us in our profession, and to put up solemn prayers for us, and as it were take us by the hand, and place us in the higher form, at least, to place us at our first personal profession, among adult believers, and make particular application of the promise to us, and bless us in the name of Christ, by virtue of their ministerial office; this must needs tend much to confirm, and comfort, and encourage the weak. Though still further ministerial confirmation by praying, and exhortation will be necessary to the end. (Acts xiv. 22; xv. 31, 32.)

3. The Scripture signifieth to us, that Imposition of hands was of standing use in the church, and therefore not to cease with miracles. In Heb. vi. 2, we find it named among the parts of the foundation, "laying on of hands." Now all the doubt is, what imposition of hands is there mentioned. 1. For them that think the apostle meaneth Jewish imposition, when he mentioneth the Christian foundation points, I think their opinion saveth me the labour of confuting it. 2. Either then it is imposition of hands, in case of ordination, of confirmation, or of absolution, or of working miraculous cures. The last alone it cannot be, because we find it among foundation points, and find it a continued thing; and because there is no evidence, to lead us to such a restrained exposition. And if it be in the case of absolution, or ordination, that imposition is to continue, it will by consequence be proved, that it no more ceaseth here than there. And usually, they that question the use of it in one case, question it in the rest. 3. For my part, I think that it is no one of these cases alone, that the Scripture here speaketh of, but of the power and use of it in general, for the ministers of Christ to be his instruments, in conferring evangelical gifts and power, by imposition of hands. We must not limit and restrain the sense of Scripture, without evident

cause. It is as if the apostle had said, ‘ You are long ago taught the necessity of repenting, and forsaking the works of death, and of believing in the true God, and of being dedicated, and engaged to Father, Son and Holy Ghost in the baptismal covenant, in which you yourselves have been consecrated unto God, and received the remission of sin; and you have seen the power that is given to the ministers of Christ, that by their prayers and imposition of hands, miracles have been wrought to confirm their doctrine, and grace is given to confirm the soul, and absolution and peace is given to the penitent, and ministerial power delivered to others, &c.’ But however you understand this imposition of hands, without apparent violence, you must confess either imposition in the case that we are speaking of, or that which will warrant it, and stands on the same ground, to be here meant.

So, 1 Tim. v. 22, “ Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins.” Some think that here is meant imposition of hands in ordination, and some that it is meant only of confirmation, and some of absolution; but however, it will help us in the following argument.

4. Scripture fully proveth that laying on of hands, is a thing to be continued to other uses, where the reason of continuance is the same: therefore we are not to judge it ceased as to this use. This text last named shews that it is a standing, or continued thing; and if for absolution, then for confirmation; and if for ordination, then for both the other. So, 1 Tim. iv. 14, sheweth, that the Presbytery did lay hands on Timothy in ordination: and if it cease not to this, it ceaseth not to other continuing uses.

Thus much from Scripture, for imposition of hands, is more than nothing; though it may not be so full as you expected: but on the contrary, nothing is brought to prove it unlawful, that is worth the mentioning.

The last thing that I have to do, is to argue from the practice of the church, as the exposition of these texts of Scripture. If the Universal Church of Christ have used confirmation by prayer, and laying on of hands, as a practice received from the apostles, and no other beginning of it can be found; then have we no reason to think the ceremony to be ceased, or to interpret the forementioned Scripture, contrary

to this practice of the Universal Church. But the antecedent is true, as I now come briefly to prove, supposing what Mr. Hanmer hath said. It is commonly known, that the most ancient canons of the church do speak of this as the unquestioned practice and duty of the church: so that to recite canons were loss of time in so known a case. And if any say, that anointing and crossing were ancient; I answer, 1. That 'they were as ancient in the Popish use, as the matter of a sacrament, or as necessary signs,' is not true, nor proved, but disproved by our writers, against the Popish confirmation frequently. 2. Nor can it be proved that they were as ancient as indifferent things. 3. We prove the contrary, because they were never used in Scripture-times, there being no mention of them. 4. So that we bring antiquity but to prove the continuance of Scripture practice, and so to clear the sense of it; but the Papists plead the Fathers, for that which Scripture is a stranger to^k.

If Ignatius ad Heronem Diaconum be genuine, there is this testimony, "*Nihil sine Episcopis operare. Sacerdotes enim sunt: tu autem Diaconus Sacerdotum: Illi baptizant, sacrificant, manus imponunt, tu autem ipsis ministra.*" I recite it out of Usher's Latin copy, as supposed the most pure.

Tertullian, lib. de Prescript. cap. 36, appealing to the practice of the Apostle John, in the African churches, mentioneth, as his faith that he taught; one God the Creator, and Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the resurrection of the body; and that he joined the law and prophets, with the evangelical and apostolic writings, and thence drunk this faith. And of his practice he saith, "*Aquâ signat, Sancto Spiritu vestit, Eucharistia pascit;*" as three distinct ordinances, Lib. de Baptismo cap. 8, Having mentioned baptism, and the unction joined to that, and not then to confirmation, he addeth, "*Dehinc manus imponitur, per benedictionem advocans, et invitans Spiritum Sanctum.*"

Idem de Resur. Carn. cap. 8. "*Sed et caro abluitur, ut anima immaculetur: Caro unguitur, ut anima consecratur:*

^k Greg. M. in Epist. ad Quirin. (Leg. inter Usserii Hybernic. Epist. 2. p. 6.) Et quidem ab antiqua Patrum institutione didicimus, ut qui apud hæresin in Trinitatis Nomine Baptizantur, cum ad Sanctam Ecclesiam redeunt, aut unctione Chris-matis, aut Impositione manuum, aut sola professione fidei, ad sinum matris Ecclesiæ revocentur.

Caro signatur, ut et anima muniatur. Caro manus Impositione adumbratur, ut et anima Spiritu illuminetur.”

Cyprian ad Stephan. Epist. 72. Et ad Jubaian, is too much for it. I will not trouble you in citing any writers, since General Councils were in use, because their testimony is enough. He that would see such, may read Baronius ad An. 35. at large. So much for the proof of the fitness of imposition of hands in confirmation.

I come now to the second part of my proposition, viz. ‘That this ceremony is not of such necessity, as that such as scruple it, should be denied liberty of forbearing the reception of it, if they submit to the ministerial trial and approbation of their profession, and admission, and reception to church-privileges.’

¹ For proof of this, consider, 1. That we do not find that God any where instituted this sign, as a matter of necessity still without interruption, to be used; but only that by holy men it was applied as a convenient sign, or gesture to the works, in which they used it. Even as lifting up of hands in prayer was ordinarily used as a fit gesture, not wilfully to be neglected without cause, and yet not of flat necessity; or as kneeling in prayer, is ordinarily meet, but not always necessary. We find no more Scripture for the one than for the other: which indeed sheweth on one side, how causeless it is to question the lawfulness of it, any more than of lifting up the hands, or kneeling; and yet how little reason there is on the other side, to make it a matter of flat necessity.

2. As we find that kneeling in prayer, and lifting up the hands, were often omitted, so we find that sometimes the Holy Ghost is given before baptism, or imposition of hands. (Acts x.) And we find not that the apostles used it to all,

¹ The ancient church also used it so variously, as that it is plain, they fixed it to no one case alone. Of the divers cases, in which they imposed hands (on the catechumens, and four times on the penitents, and divers other,) you may see in Albaspinæus Observationes, Obs. 31, 32. et passim. Grotius Epist. 154. p. 379. ‘Manus-impositas baptizatis, nisi ab iis, qui jus haberent conferendi cælestia illo dona, primis temporibus non apparet. Serius id introductum est in Episcoporum honorem, quo magis in Apostolicum jus successisse crederentur. Nec causa aberat, quam ceremoniæ illi, velut naturalem diximus, precandi, scilicet, Deum, ut ei qui baptizatus jam fidem erat professus, ea largiri vellet, quæ ad præstandum in fide, maxime in periculis gravibus, sunt necessaria.’

though I confess, the negative arguing is infirm, yet it seems not probable, that this was always done.

3. It is somewhat suspicious to find in Justin Martyr's description of the Christian Churches' practices, no mention of this, nor any sacrament, but baptism, and the Lord's-supper; nor any of the Roman ceremonies. And Irenæus, and some others are silent in it.

4. God maketh no ceremonies under the Gospel so necessary, except the two sacraments; nor layeth so great a stress on them, as under the law; and therefore we are not to interpret the Gospel as laying men's salvation, or the peace of the church on any ceremonies; unless we find it clearly expressed.

5. For all that I have said from Scripture for imposition of hands in confirmation, though the lawfulness of it is proved past doubt, yet the proof of the duty of using it, is liable to so many objections, as that I must needs conclude, that the Gospel tenderness, and the sense of our mutual infirmities, and our care of tender consciences, and of the church's peace, should restrain all the sons of piety and peace, from making it a matter of flat necessity, and forcing them that scruple it, to submit to it.

And now having said thus much of imposition of hands, and confirmation, as grounded on the apostles' example; I must again and again remember you, that this is in a manner but 'ex abundanti,' and that the cause I am pleading, doth not at all need it; but that I did before most clearly manifest the truth of my position upon other grounds, upon which I shall proceed; and having shewed the necessity of ministerial judging of men's profession, and the personal covenanting of the adult, and the lawfulness of imposing hands therein, I go on as to the manner.

PROP. 14. *Though in receiving Adult Persons out of Infidelity by Baptism into the Church, a sudden Profession without any stay to see their Reformation, may serve turn; yet in the receiving those that were Baptized heretofore, into the Number of Adult-members, or to the Privileges of such, their lives must be inquired after, which must be such as do not confute their Profession.*

WE find in Scripture, that the converted were suddenly baptized, and they stayed not for any reformation of life to

go before. Indeed, the ancient churches afterwards kept their catechumens long in expectation ; but that was not to see their lives first reformed, but that they might have time to teach them the doctrine of Christ, which they must know before they could be converts indeed. The apostles did suddenly baptize converted Jews and proselytes, because they had so much preparatory knowledge, as that a shorter teaching might acquaint them with the Christian doctrine. But the heathens must be long in learning so much as the Jews knew before conversion¹.

Yet if the catechumens did fall into gross sin, in time of their expectation and learning, they were so much the longer delayed, because it signified, that their first professed desires of entering into the church, upon Christ's terms, were not right.

But the baptized stand upon other terms : For 1. They are already in covenant with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; and have renounced the flesh, the world, and the devil, and promised obedience to God, and to live according to their covenant. And this the church hath still required of them, as I shewed out of Justin Martyr, and others before^m, Dionysius, (or whoever else) in lib. de Hierarch. Eccles. saith, '*Ipsæ autem se omnino ea quæ tradentur, sequuturum esse pollicetur;*' and '*Ex eo præterea quærit, num ita instituat vivere, cum promisit asseverationibus;*' &c. upon which saith Albaspinæus, '*Quia scilicet, fidem Christianam, Christianumque vivendi genus, et mores, sese complexos persequuturosque jurabant, antequam baptizarentur.* (in Tertul. de Pœnit. p. 289.) et postea. Non accedebant ad Baptismum nisi de rebus fidei plane instructi, id est, de Dei magnitudine, et potestate, rebusque quæ in Evangeliiis continentur, uno excepto, Eucharistiæ mysterio ; neque baptizabantur, nisi postquam ea omnia se credere jurassent, quorum fides a fide pœnitentiæ incipiebat, &c. Et in sequ. Jurabant in Baptismo solennibus verbis, se nunquamⁿ peccaturos ; deinde renunciabant diabolo et pompis ejus. Denique cen-

¹ Lege quæ habet Grotius, Disceus, Apol. Rivet, p. 235. cum antecedentibus ex Antiq. et de suis.

^m Read the whole order of Baptism in Dionysius, *ibid.* c. 4.

ⁿ That is, not to turn to an ungodly life, but to endeavour and perform sincere obedience. Albaspin. in Tertul. de Pœnitent. cap. 7. Sexcentis locis, non dicam hoc capite ; unam ait tantum a lavacro veniam superesse, neque ullum primis illis temporibus inter privatum aut publicam graviorum criminum discrimen invenient. Vide cætera.

surâ si peccarent post Baptismum coercebantur.' So that men that are engaged in covenant with God, must keep covenant, or manifest themselves penitent, for the violation of it, before they are admitted to further privileges. There is a long time, in which they grow up from an infant state to an adult; and how they live in that time, must be inquired after.

2. Otherwise the apostates would have equal acceptance and privileges with the faithful.

3. And so penitence and absolution would be excluded and confounded with mere confirmation.

4. Moreover the baptized are obliged to be responsible for their lives, being under the government of Christ's ministers, and among his saints.

5. For the sake of their own souls, and of the church and ordinances, we must endeavour to preserve them from corruption, which lying professions would introduce; and therefore we must not overlook, or neglect such evidence as is within our reach.

6. Else ministers that are by office to judge of their profession, would be unfaithful judges, and forfeit their trust, if they shall wilfully neglect any evidence within their cognizance, by which they may be enabled to judge.

But yet it is not the certainty of inward, saving grace, that we must find out by men's lives; for no man can have such certainty of another; but only that their lives be not such, as null and invalidate, and confute their profession, and they live not in the perfidious violation of their baptismal covenant.

PROP. 15. It is not of flat necessity that the Profession of the Expectant be made in the open Congregation, or before many, in order to his Confirmation and Admittance.

PROVED, 1. It is not of necessity, that converted infidels be admitted by baptism into the state of adult members, upon a public profession in a congregation; therefore it is not of necessity, that others be so admitted in confirmation. The antecedent is proved by the instance of the eunuch, (Acts viii,) whom Philip baptized in their way, and the jailor and his household, (Acts xvi,) baptized in the night at home. The consequence is proved by the parity of reason and case.

2. If a man may by confirmation be admitted into the number of adult Christians, in the Church Universal, without

being admitted into a particular church, then his profession and admission need not, in that case, to be before the congregation: but the antecedent is true; as I prove thus. A man may, by adult baptism, be admitted first into the Universal Church only; as was the eunuch, the jailor, Lydia, Sergius Paulus, and every first convert in any city, where the apostles came; therefore a man may, by confirmation, be admitted into the number of the adult, in the Catholic Church only: for the reason is the same, and the former admitteth them into the same number.

The consequence of the major is plain. For no one congregation more than another, can claim the cognizance of the admission of a member into the Universal Church, or confirming them in it.

3. Scripture hath no where made such public admission to be of constant necessity; therefore it is not so.

4. Else none could be admitted, or confirmed when persecution hindereth church assemblies.

5. The church is to believe and trust the pastors, to whom it doth by office belong to try and admit them.

6. General, unfixed ministers may thus try, approve, and confirm, who are not pastors of any particular church, such as Apostles, Evangelists, and others were; therefore they are not always to do it before a particular church; nor indeed did they always do so.

PROP. 16. When a Person is admitted among the Adult Members of a particular Church; as well as the Universal, his Profession and Admission must be either before the Church, or satisfactorily made known to the Church at least, who must approve of it by a Judgment of Discretion, in order to their Communion with him; and this among us is the ordinary Case; because it is the Duty of all that have opportunity, to join themselves to some particular Church; and it is in such Churches, that Communion in public Worship and Order must be had, either stately, or transiently and temporarily.

1. THE solemnity itself of our transition into the number of adult members, and their communion, is of very great advantage, as I shall manifest more anon.

2. We that are commonly against the private admission of infants (at least except in some urgent case) have less reason to be for the private transition and admission of men

among the adult, and that into a particular governed church°.

3. The whole society among whom such a person is entered, do owe him much duty and brotherly assistance. They must love him with a special love; they must live, though not in a levelling, yet in a charitable community with him, not shutting up the bowels of compassion from him, when they see him in want, but relieving him, as if they suffered with him; they are not only to love him, and relieve him as a man; but as one of Christ's little ones, or friends; yea, as his brethren, yea, as loving and relieving Christ in them, Matt. xxv. 35, to the end. They must receive and relieve a disciple in the name of a disciple. Besides this, they must have church-union and communion with him, as one body; and must pray for him, rejoice with him in God's praises, and the Lord's-supper, and watch over him, and admonish and reprove him in sin, for his recovery; and avoid him if he walk disorderly, and be impenitent in scandalous sin, &c.

Now, 1. No man can perform all this duty, to a man that he knoweth not to be thus related to him. If he know not that he owes him this duty, any more than to any one else in the world, how shall he pay it to him? To say, that we are bound to take all men that converse with us to be such, is to say, that Christians must renounce their wits, and turn the church into bedlam.

2. And as this proves, that the church-members must be made known to one another, so it proves that they must have a judgment of discretion in receiving them; though the pastors have the judgment of governing direction. For God hath not left the pastors at liberty, to take in whom they please; but hath described what profession they shall accept, or what persons they shall admit, and whom they shall reject. If therefore the pastors go against the word of

° Read Dr. Hammond's Pract. Catech. l. 5. sect. 4. pp. 298, 299. Of the Communion of Saints.

Albaspinaeus in Tertul. de Pœnitent. cap. 8, 9. p. 291. Cum pro foribus templi starent pœnitentes, prætereuntibus sacerdotibus, cæterisque fidelibus omnibus, omnino dolentis animi signis pœnitentiam suam testabantur, lacrymis non parcebant, precibus institebant, volvebantur, et si quæ alia habet pœnitentia, quæ misericordiam movere possint; non omittebant, ut pacem recupearent. Primum ante sacerdotes procumbebant, martyribus deinde adgeniculabantur, cæteris denique fratribus et viduis, ut ait Pacianus, enixè supplicabant, ut à Deo et ab Ecclesiâ veniam pro se impetrarent.

God, then this following is the people's duty: (1.) If they know not the error, or the case be doubtful, they are to rest in obedience to their pastors (for that is undoubtedly their duty), the work being the pastor's and not theirs. (2.) But if the case be plainly contrary to Scripture, as if he would admit an impenitent drunkard, fornicator, &c., they must disown his sin, that it lie not upon them, and refuse private familiarity with that person; but not withdraw from public ordinances, because of his presence; for when they have done their duty, and rid themselves of the guilt by a dissent, the person is to them as morally absent, though locally and physically present; and the ordinance is not defiled to them by his corporal presence; but the guilt will lie on the rulers of the church; otherwise all churches should be broken in pieces, if the people must separate, when every one that they are confident is unworthy is introduced; and the governed will become the governors. (3.) But if it be not a few that the pastors thus introduce against the certain word of God, but so many and such as will corrupt the substance of the church, and make it an incapable matter for the form, and so to become another thing, and destroy the very ends of church-association, so that it is no longer a communion of saints; then the people fearing God, are bound to stop this before it have quite corrupted the church, by admonishing the pastors, and advising with neighbour-churches to admonish them; and if that prevail not, by rejecting them: and if they cannot do so, by reason of a major vote of incapable persons, they ought to withdraw themselves, and worship God in such a church as is truly capable of the name and ends. And this is a lawful and necessary separation; of which as it is a duty, God is the cause; and as it is a forsaking of the rest, the culpable cause is only in themselves. I can easily prove all this, but that I think it needless tediousness^P.

(4.) And indeed, it would be very hard measure, if at the corrupt administration of a carnal, or careless, or erroneous pastor, all the church must be under an obligation to give their estates by way of relief to every one, that he will put the name of a Christian and church-member upon unwor-

^P Albaspin. ubi sup. Animadvertendum est, pœnitentes non solum hæc et similia egisse, ut cum Deo in gratiam redirent, verum etiam ut sacerdotes, et cæteros fratres aequiores haberent, in quorum arbitrio et judicio nonnunquam erat, eos in Ecclesia revocare.

I cite this to shew what cognizance the people were to have of such affairs.

thily : then may he force them to maintain all the beggars and rogues about them, though they were infidels and impious men. I speak not of the common relief of the needy ; for that I know they owe to an infidel ; but of the special community, which charity must make among the disciples of Christ. It is against all reason, that an erring or careless pastor, shall thus command all the people's estates, by introducing such without their consent, whom they are bound thus to maintain.

(5.) Yea indeed, the Spirit of God is, in the saints, a spirit of discerning ; so that it is not possible that all the church should in their affections obey such a corrupt administrator, by loving all the notorious, ungodly men, as saints, with the special love of brethren, whom he will carelessly, or erroneously put in the place of saints. I cannot possibly love that man as a saint, or disciple of Christ, that I am certain is his enemy, and none such.

I conclude therefore, that though the people be not church-governors by a vote (that is a great error), yet they have a judgment of discerning, according to which, they must obey, or reject their pastor's administrations. And he that denieth this, and would have them yield an absolute obedience, without trying, choosing and refusing, would not only make the pastors to be of the Papal strain, but would give them a Jesuitical obedience, above what the moderate Papists give the Pope. And therefore seeing that 'ad finem' there is a necessity that the people consent, or else they cannot obey, nor hold communion with the person, therefore there is also the same necessity 'ad finem' that they have satisfaction offered them, and have either the cognizance of the profession, and admission of the person, or that they be satisfied in the fidelity of their pastors in administration, and that he seek their consent ; or, which is best, that some chosen persons do represent them, and be present at such professions with the pastors ; and the pastors, and their own delegates together, do acquaint the congregation of all that are admitted, and of their satisfactory profession, that they may hold communion with them. This I speak of those (which are very many) that are fit for Church-communion, and yet through bashfulness, or want of utterance, are unable to make a public profession before all. (The choicest Christians that I have known, have been such.) But those

that are able, should rather in public make their own profession.

Object. ‘But what if one part of the congregation approve of the person and profession, and the other disallow it?’

Ans. 1. They are to be governed by the pastors. 2. And consult with the pastors of neighbour-churches, in cases of great weight and danger. 3. And the lesser part of the church, in doubtful cases, and tolerable differences, is to yield to the greater part: not as if a major vote had the government of the rest, much less of their governors; but in order to unity the fewer must submit.

Quest. ‘But what if the people would have the pastor baptize, confirm, or introduce an open heretic, or wicked person in his impenitency?’

Ans. The pastor must obey God, and refuse to obey them.

Quest. ‘And what if the people think a man unfit, whom the pastor would approve and introduce?’

Ans. 1. He may admit him into the Universal Church, notwithstanding their unjust refusal: 2. He hath power to admit him into that particular church, against their unjust dissent, as he is the ruler of the church, and the administrator of the ordinances: 3. He hath authority to persuade and command them from Christ, to hold communion with the person, and to do their duty to him; which if they do not, they commit a double sin; one of injustice and uncharitableness, in a causeless rejecting of a member of Christ; and another of disobedience, against the fifth commandment: 4. But yet the pastors cannot force the people to obey their advice and command, nor effectually procure it perhaps: 5. And therefore their forementioned power is not always to be exercised. For it is in vain to use a means, that will rather hinder the end than attain to it; and so is at that time, no means. Sometimes the pastor may see just cause to exercise all this power, and execute his part of church-communion with the person, in administering the ordinances to him, and leave the people answerable to God, for refusing their part; but this is not an usual case: usually, if he see the people resolve against communion with that person, how fit soever, he is publicly to clear himself by disallowing them in their sin, and reproving them for it, and leaving the blame on them; and then in prudence to forbear the introducing of

the person; because no duty is at all times a duty to be performed; and especially when the hurt that will follow upon it, in the divisions of the church, is like to be far greater than the good, if it be done: 6. But if the church should be so corrupted, as that the major vote doth set against faith and godliness as such, and so will not admit a sound member to be added to them, the pastor, with the minor part, may after due admonition and patience, as justly reject the guilty and obstinate, as if they were but one man, and not a major part.

What is said of this case of admission, holds also of rejection by excommunication, and of other antecedent acts of discipline.

(4.) Lastly, If excommunication must usually be done in public, before the whole church, that they may know whom to avoid, and know the reason of it; then admission must usually be done in public, the person or the pastor opening the case to the people, that they may know whom to have communion with; and know the reason of it: but the antecedent is confessed by almost all. And it is proved plainly by Paul's practice and direction, 1 Cor. v, throughout: and it was the custom of the Christian churches in Tertullian's days, Apolog. cap. 39. 'There also (in the Christian meeting for worship) are exercised exhortations, castigations, and the Divine censure: for judgment is passed with great deliberation, or weight, as with men that are assured of the presence, or sight of God: and it is the highest representation of the judgment to come, if any one so offend, as that he be discharged, or banished from communion of prayer, and of the assembly, and of all holy commerce, or fellowship.'

Abundance more out of Cyprian, and others, might be easily produced, to prove that this which I have spoken, was the ancient history of the people in these church-affairs, yea in the choice of their pastors; yea, and in rejecting unworthy pastors, Cyprian saith, they had a chief interest: not by ruling power, but by a prudent exercise of obedience, choosing the good, and refusing the evil. Self-preservation is natural to every body, where it is not by evil means, and to the hurt of the public state. It is hard if a natural body may not lawfully refuse, or cast up poison, if a governor should give it them. God bindeth none to the perdition of their souls; nor any holy society to destroy itself, or suffer

itself to be destroyed, or corrupted by others, without the use of all just means to resist the bane. But of this I shall desire the reader, that would know the judgment and practice of the ancient church, to peruse Dr. Blondel's "de Jure plebis in Regimine Ecclesiast." adjoined to that excellent piece of Grotius "de Imperio summarum Potestatum circa Sacra"⁹.

This much may satisfy you, that it should not be usually a secret, but a solemn transition from an infant-state of membership, into an adult-state; and that by a public profession or notification of it, the particular church should have satisfaction herein.

PROP. 17. *It is convenient, though not of necessity, that every Church do keep a Register of all that are admitted thus into the Number of the Adult-Members.*

As we were wont to keep a register of the infants baptized, so have we as much reason of the adult, approved and confirmed, or restored. Corporations of old, were wont to keep a book of the names of their burgesses or citizens; in respect to which, God is said to have a Book of Life, wherein he writes men's names out of which he blots them, speaking after the manner of men. The church hath great reason for this practice, the business being of so great weight; that we forget not who are of our communion, which without register, in great congregations, must needs be done. If any be so vain, as to demand a Scripture-proof of this; let him first bring me a Scripture-proof, that he may read with spectacles, or write a sermon from the preacher's mouth, or use notes in the pulpit, or print, &c., and then I will give him proof of this: in the meantime if this do not satisfy him, he shall have liberty to disuse it.

PROP. 18. *Those that were never thus ministerially and explicitly approved, confirmed or absolved (after an ungodly life,) but have been permitted without it to join ordinarily with the Church in Prayer and Praises, and have been admitted to the Communion of the Church, in the Lord's-supper, are approved and confirmed, eminently though not formally; though in so*

⁹ To recite more after all those of Blondel, is but to do a needless work. There is enough to satisfy all that are moderate for popular interest.

doing, both the Pastors and themselves did sin against God, by the Violation of his holy Order. So that such may be a true Church, though much corrupted or disordered.

THIS I add for two reasons: 1. To confute them that say our churches are no true churches, for want of an explicit profession: 2. And to acquaint you who it is among us, that are, or are not to be called to confirmation.

1. It is not the degree of clearness and openness in our profession, or in the ministerial approbation or admission, that is essential to a church-member. An obscure profession may be truly a profession. Some obscure profession, hath been ordinarily made by our people in this land heretofore, by their ordinary hearing the word, and standing up at the recital of the creed; and joining with the church in prayer and praise, and confessing the Scriptures to be the word of God, and acknowledging the ministry: and a further profession they made, by actual receiving the Lord's-supper, which is a silent profession of their faith in Christ. And though they were not solemnly approved and confirmed, (except that one of many, had a ceremonious confirmation from the bishop in their childhood,) yet were they actually admitted to daily communion with the church, and the special part of communion in the Lord's-supper. And though this profession and admission was lamentably defective, (of which more anon,) yet it is such as may prove our ordinary assemblies to have been true churches.

2. And I do not think it fit, that any that have been already admitted to church-communion in the Lord's-supper, should be now called out to confirmation, by imposition of hands; though where there is just cause to question their knowledge, faith, or lives, they may by the pastor be called to give an account of them: and put upon a clearer profession than they have yet made: but surely when they have been admitted, to the Lord's-supper, by any regular ministry and church, they are to be taken for adult-members, till they are justly cast out, or do cast out themselves. For the more perfect doth include the less perfect in it. If a man be ordained a presbyter, that was never ordained deacon, he is not to be called back again and made a deacon. If you make a man free of your trade, before he was ever bound apprentice, you cannot call him back again, and

bind him apprentice after this. If the University give a man the degree of Doctor of Divinity, or Master of Arts, that never took degree of Bachelor of Divinity, or of Arts, they cannot afterwards call him back to take his Bachelor's degree. If you have irregularly admitted the untried, unapproved, unconfirmed to the Lord's-supper, you have 'eminenter' though not 'formaliter' confirmed and approved him though irregularly. Of this more anon.

PROP. 19. *So exceeding great and many are the Mischiefs that have befallen us, by the neglect of a solemn, meet Transition from an Infant, into the Adult Church-state, and which undoubtedly will continue, till this be remedied, that all Magistrates, Ministers, and People, that dissemble not, in professing themselves to be Christians, should with speed and diligence attempt the Cure.*

LET us here take a view of the case of our nation, and congregation, and then consider the effects and consequents.

All the people of our parishes, except Anabaptists, do bring their children to be baptized; which, if it were faithfully done, were a happy means of an early engagement unto Christ, and a happy entrance upon further mercy. Multitudes of those know not what baptism is, nor to what use and end it is appointed, nor what benefit their children may receive by it. I speak upon too sure and large experience; nor do they know what Christianity is, nor who Jesus Christ is, nor what it is they are to do in baptism; but there they make a promise customarily, as they are bid, in words not understood, that they will acquaint their children at age with the covenant there made, which they never understood themselves, and that they will educate them in godliness, when they hate godliness at the heart. And when they come home, they perform their promise accordingly: they teach them nothing of the doctrine of Christianity, and the life to come, but they give them up to the flesh and the world, there in words they did renounce; and they teach them by their daily examples to curse, and swear, and rail, and to be proud and covetous, and voluptuous, serving their bellies instead of God; and hatefully reproaching a godly life, instead of teaching it their children. These children are customarily brought to the assemblies, where they hear the plainest teaching, without understanding, or regarding

it, and grow hardened under daily reproofs and exhortations ; living as their parents taught them, some in gross ignorance and worldliness, without any signs of godliness, further than to come to church ; some in drunkenness, some in whoredom, abundance in a malignant hatred of a holy life, making them that use it the common scorn, and taking them for the most hateful persons in the parish, or country where they live. For custom-sake, and to quiet their conscience in their sin, they will come to the Lord's-table, if they be admitted by the pastor, and may have it in their mode and way : and if a minister shall desire them to come to him first, that he may understand their knowledge and profession, they scorn it ; and ask him by what authority he would examine them, and what proof he hath that men must be examined, before they be admitted to the Lord's-supper ? And some self-conceited, half-witted writers have taught them this lesson, and made ministerial trial and approbation odious to them. But because they were once baptized, and have since come to hear and join with us in the assembly, therefore they think that they have right to all ordinances, and are true Christians and adult-members of the church ; and also exempt from the government of the pastors, that require them to submit to the means of their own good. In the bishops' days, some few of them were confirmed : in the country where I lived, about one in ten or twenty, and what that was, and how it was done I can tell you, by what I once made trial of. When I was a schoolboy, about fifteen years of age, the bishop coming into the county, many went to him to be confirmed : we that were boys, ran out to see the bishop among the rest, not knowing any thing of the meaning of the business : when we came thither, we met about thirty or forty in all, of our own stature and temper, that had come for to be *bishopped*, as then it was called : the bishop examined us not at all in one article of the faith ; but in a church-yard, in haste we were set in a rank, and he passed hastily over us, laying his hands on our head, and saying a few words, which neither I nor any that I spoke with, understood ; so hastily were they uttered, and a very short prayer recited, and there was an end. But whether we were Christians or infidels, or knew so much as that there was a God, the bishop little knew, nor inquired. And yet he was es-

teemed one of the best bishops in England. And though the canons require, that the curate or minister send a certificate that children have learned the catechism ; yet there was no such thing done, but we ran of our own accord to see the bishop only ; and almost all the rest of the county, had not this much : this was the old, careless practice of this excellent duty of confirmation. Some few, perhaps half a parish in the best places, will send their children to church, to be catechised yet ; but even those few that learn the words, for the most part understand not what they say, and are as ignorant of the matters, as if they never learned the words. This is the common way, by which our parishes come to be churches, and our people to be Christians ; supposing some to be mixed among them, that are more faithfully devoted to God in baptism, and better educated, in the fear of God.

Now let us see what are the real, visible, undeniable fruits of this defective sinful course. Because men build upon this fundamental falsehood, that infant baptism, upon the parents' profession, doth give them right to the church-state and privileges of the adult, without any personal profession and covenanting with God, when they come to the use of reason, which the church must have cognizance of ; and so they that entered somewhat more regularly into an infant church-state, do become adult members secretly, unobservedly, and no body well knows how. Hereupon it followeth,

1. That our churches are lamentably corrupted and diseased, though they are true churches, and have life in them, while they are made so like the unbelieving and ungodly world ; and the garden of Christ is made too like the common wilderness : for heathens, and impious persons, and all sorts of the unclean (almost) are the members of them, where parishes, or parish-meetings are made convertible with churches. I would make the case neither worse nor better than it is. Till within these few years, I knew but very imperfectly how it is, and I thought the case had been better with some and worse with others than I have found it upon trial. And had I not set upon the duty of personal instruction, I should never have known the state of the people : but now we have dealt with them almost all in private personally, I shall truly tell you the state of this parish, by which you may conjecture at the rest of the nation. I know not a con-

gregation in England that hath in it proportionably so many that fear God: and yet our whole parish consisteth of all these sorts following: (1.) Among eight hundred families, there are about five hundred persons such as the vulgar call precise, that are rated to be serious professors of religion, or perhaps are somewhat more. These live in unity, and seem to me to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and are of as peaceable, harmless, humble spirits, and as unanimous without inclination to sects, or ostentation of their parts, as any people I know. (2.) Besides these, there are some of competent knowledge and exterior performances, and lives so blameless, that we can gather from them no certain proof, or violent presumption that they are ungodly, or that their profession is not sincere. So many of these joining with the rest, as make about six hundred, do own their church-membership, and consent to live under so much of church order and government, as unquestionably belongeth to Presbyters to exercise, and to be my pastoral charge. (3.) There are some that are tractable and of willing minds, that by their expressions seem to be ignorant of the very essentials of Christianity; which yet I find to have obscure conceptions of the truth, when I have condescendingly better searched them, and helped them by my inquiries. These also (as weak in the faith) we receive. (4.) Some there are that are of competent understandings, and of lives so blameless, that we durst not reject them; but they hold off themselves, because they are taught to question, if not to disown our administrations; for all that, we give liberty to all that in tolerable things do differ^a. (5.) Some there are that are secret heathens, believing with Aristotle, that the world was from eternity; making a scorn of Christ, and Moses, and heaven, and hell, and Scripture, and ministers, and all religion; thinking that there is no devil, no immortality of the soul, or everlasting life: but this they reveal only in secret, to those that they find capable by viciousness, unsettledness, or any malignity, or discontent against the godly, or the orders of the church: and yet for the hiding of their minds,

^a Of this fourth sort I hope are many that truly fear God, that some on one pretence and some on another, forbear to join with us in the communion of the church, in the Lord's-supper: but yet hear, and live in love and peace with us. And some do join with us (on the grounds as godly strangers may be admitted) sometimes in the Lord's-supper; that yet expressly own not a membership in the particular church.

they will hear, and urge us to baptize their children, and openly make the most orthodox confessions, and secretly deride it when they have done, as I can prove. And this is the only differing party among us in judgment and design, that is in danger of leavening many, that God forsaketh. (6.) Many more there are that have tolerable knowledge, and live in some notorious, scandalous sins: some in gross covetousness, and these will not be convinced: some in common drunkenness, and those will confess their faults, and promise amendment a hundred times over, and be drunk within a few days again; and thus have spent the most part of their lives: some in as constant tippling, drinking as great a quantity, but bearing it better away: some in ordinary swearing, cursing, ribaldry, whoredoms sometimes. Many in neglect of all family-duties, and the Lord's-day: and some in hateful, bitter scorns at prayer, holy conference, church-order, and holy living, and the people that use it; sometimes rising up in tumults against the officers that endeavour to punish a drunkard, or sabbath-breaker, and rescuing them, and seeking the ruin of the officers^r. (7.) Some there are that are of more tractable dispositions, but really know not what a Christian is; that hear us from day to day, yea and some few of them learn the words of the catechism, and yet know not almost any more than the veriest heathen in America. They all confess, that we must mend our lives, and serve God; but they know not that God is eternal, or that Christ is God, or that he is man, but say, he is a Spirit; some say neither God nor man; some say God and not man; some say man and not God; abundance say, he was man on earth, but now he is not: abundance know not what he came to do in the world; nor that there is any satisfaction made for sin, but what we must make ourselves; and they tell me, they trust to nothing for pardon and salvation, but God's mercy, and their good serving him (which is only saying every night

^r As I would not have mentioned the faults of any of my parishioners, but on this necessity of opening the state of the nation 'de facto,' so they have no reason to take it ill of me. For, 1. I accuse none by name, much less the generality. 2. The innocent do themselves know, and bewail the sins that I mention. 3. I am so far from making them worse than other parishes, that I unfeignedly profess, that I do not know any other in England of so much godliness, and tractableness; which testimony is true, and more to their honour, than the mentioning of the remnants of ignorance and ungodliness is to their dishonour. If it be thus, here, how much worse is it in most parts of the land!

and morning in bed, or as they undress them, the Lord's-prayer, and the Creed for a prayer, and coming to church). They say openly, they do not know of any surety that we have, or any that hath borne the punishment of our sin, or suffered for us: and when I repeat the history of the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Christ to them, they stand wondering, and say, they never heard it before: what the Holy Ghost is, they know not; nor what sanctification, faith, or justification is; nor what baptism is; nor the Lord's-supper; nor to what use, but in general, for our salvation. What a church is, they know not; nor what is the office of pastor or people, save only to preach and hear, and give and receive the sacraments. If I ask them what Christianity is, the best answer is, that it is serving God as well as we can, or as God will give us leave. So that there is scarce an article of the Creed, or very few, that they tolerably understand. Nay one of above fourscore years of age (now dead) thought Christ was the sun, that shineth in the firmament; and the Holy Ghost was the moon. (8.) Many there be, that join this heathenish ignorance and wicked obstinacy together; hating to be instructed; scorning to come near me, to be taught, and to be told of their sin, when they come. They will rail at us bitterly behind our backs, if we will not let them have their own will and way about the sacraments, and all church-affairs; but they will not submit to that teaching, that should bring them to know what Christ or Christianity is. (9.) Some there be that are of tolerable knowledge, and no drunkards, nor whoremongers that the world knoweth of, but of more plausible lives, and have some forms of prayer in their families: but yet live in idle or tippling company, or spend their lives in vanity, and hate more a diligent serving of God, and heavenly life, than the open drunkards do: These make it their work to possess people with a hatred of strict professors, and of our churches and administrations, and to that end get all the books that are written for admitting all to the Lord's-table, that they can light of; and contrary to the authors' meanings, they make them engines to harden others in their impiety, and hatred of reformation. The like use they make of the writings of many dissenting divines, about church government; or any from whence they

* I have but very few of these; but I know neighbour parishes that have too many, to the grief of their godly ministers.

may fetch matter of reproach against the pastors and ordinances among us. (10.) Another sort there are, that are deeply possessed with a conceit, that God having determined before we are born, whether we shall be saved or not, it is in vain to strive ; for if we be predestinated, we shall be saved whatever we do ; and if we be not, we shall not, whatever we do ; and that we can do nothing of ourselves, nor have a good thought, but by the grace of God, and if God will give it us, we shall have it ; and the devil cannot prevail against him ; but if he will not give it us, it is in vain to seek it ; for it is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy ; and therefore they give up themselves to security and ungodliness, because they can do nothing of themselves. And thus by misunderstanding some texts of Scripture, and abusing some truths of God, they are hardened in ungodliness, thinking that all is wrong of God ; and they will not so much as promise reformation, nor promise to use the means, because they say, they cannot tell whether God will put it into their hearts, and it is all as he will^t. (11.) Besides these, there is one or two honest, ignorant professors that are turned Anabaptists, and join with the church of them in the next parish. (12.) And some Papists are among us ; and whether only those that stay from the assemblies, I cannot say^u.

Of these twelve sorts of people, this parish is composed ; which I therefore mention, that the state of our parishes may be truly known ; while others are compared with this : for every one hath not had the opportunities which I have had, to know all their people, or the most.

And now if all these are fit to go for Christians, then must we make a new kind of Christianity ; and a new Gospel, and a new Christ. And if all these are fit to be church-members, then we must make a new kind of churches.

And why then may not those be Christians and church-

^t This tenth sort, are some of them infected by the infidels (who are all for Hobbes's Necessity) but most of them have got it, I know not how : but so many are possessed by these conceits, that I little thought, that near so many of the ungodly vulgar, had so abused the doctrine of predestination and grace ; as if they had been hired to disgrace it.

^u Our Papists are but few ; but if the rest of them be such as ours, their church hath small reason to boast of its holiness.

Besides, if all these were fit to be members, yet we must know their own consent, which mere living in the parish, or coming to church doth not signify.

members, that never heard of the name of Christ, as well as many of these?

2. By this untried entrance of all sorts into our churches, we bring a dishonour on the very Christian name, and so on the Lord Jesus himself, and on his Gospel and holy ways. Christianity is not a matter of mere opinion: Christ came not into the world only to persuade men to have high thoughts of him, but to save his people from their sins, and to destroy the works of the devil. And when the church of Christ shall be turned into a den of thieves, or a sty of swine, what a great dishonour is it to the Lord? As if we would persuade the world that his servants are not holier than others, and differ but in an opinion from the world. Christ needeth not disciples, and therefore will not take in all that refuse to come upon his terms; but hath fixed his terms; and will have only those that will yield to them. Though I abhor the rigor of the contrary extreme, that would make the church narrower than it is, and pin it up in so small a number, as would tempt men to doubt of Christianity itself; and teacheth men to exclude their brethren merely because they are themselves uncharitable judges, when they are not able to disprove their profession; yet must I also detest this horrible dishonouring of the Lord, as if his body were no better than the army of the devil.

3. And by this means the heathens, Jews, Mahometans and all infidels are exceedingly hindered from believing in Christ; when they can say as the Turks, when men question their fidelity; *What! dost thou think I am a Christian?* He that knows any thing of religious affairs, knoweth that commonly the first thing that draweth men to any party, is the liking of the persons and their practices; from whence they grow to inquire with inclination into their doctrines. The ancient Christians that lived before the days of Constantine, did bring Christianity into reputation by their holiness, and God was then more eminently seen among them. But when the countenance of the emperor, and worldly advantages had drawn in all men to the church, and the bishops did set the door too wide open, Christianity looked like another thing, and that inundation of wickedness overspread the church, which Salvian and so many more complain of. Our most likely way to win the Jews, and all infidels to the church, is

by shewing them the true nature of Christianity in the church-members.

4. Hereby also we confound the ancient order of Catechumens, or Expectants with the true members of the church, and lay the church and the porch, yea, and the church-yard, if not the commons, all together. By which also our preaching and administrations are confounded : so that whereas the ancient churches had their common sermons (and some prayers) which were fitted to the unconverted or expectants, and had also both doctrine, prayers, praises, and other worship, proper to the church, especially on the Lord's-days, we must now speak to all, and join with all ; and the church, and the enemies of the church, must sing the same praises, as if they were one body. And God is not the God of confusion but of order in the churches. He that put two sorts of preaching and doctrine into the apostles' commission ; (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20 ;) one for making disciples, and another for the edifying and guidance of disciples, did never intend that these should be confounded.

5. And then by this means, the souls of millions of poor people are deprived of the great benefits of the ordinances and administrations suitable to their state. The begetting word goeth before the feeding, strengthening word, even before the milk for babes. The laying of the foundation must go before our building thereon. Every one will thrive best in his own element and place. A fish will not prosper on dry land, nor a man under water. The womb is the only place for the embryo and unborn child, though not for those that have seen the sun. If you will break the shell before the chicken be hatched, that you may hasten its production, or honour it with a premature association with the rest that see the sun, your foolish charity will be the death of it. And so deal abundance of mistaken zealots with the souls of men ; who cry out against the wisest and most conscientious ministers, as if they were unchristianing the people, and undoing the world, because they would feed them with food convenient for them, and will not be such hasty midwives, as to cast the mother into her throes, if not rip her up, that she may have the child at her breasts, which should be many days or months in the womb. Moreover they thus cause our people, to lose all that benefit of preparations, and so-

lemn engagement to Christ: of which more anon, among the benefits.

6. By this means also, the souls of our poor people are deluded, and they are made to believe that they are Christians when they are not, and in a state of salvation, when it is no such thing. As Mr. Thorndicke saith, as aforecited, “No man is to be admitted to the assemblies, or visible societies of Christians, till there be just presumption that he is of the heavenly Jerusalem that is above:— And admitting to, and excluding from the church is, or ought to be a just and lawful presumption, of admitting to, or excluding from heaven: it is morally and legally the same act that entitleth to heaven, and to the church, that maketh an heir of life everlasting and a Christian^y:——” And if so, then what greater mischief can we do the soul of an ungodly man, than so to delude him, by our admitting him into the church; and make him believe he is in a state of salvation, when it is no such thing! False faith, and false hopes, are the things that fill hell, and are the common undoing of the world; and all that ever we can do, is too little to cure it. When I bend all my studies and labours, but to make a wicked man know that he is wicked, I cannot procure it. I can make him believe that he is a sinner, but not that he is an unconverted, ungodly sinner, and in a state of condemnation. O the power of blinding self-love, that will not suffer them to see themselves miserable, when they see themselves sinful, and all because they would not have it so, when yet it is most visible to others! And shall we all join to strengthen this potent enemy? and lay this snare, and thrust men headlong to hell, that are running down hill so fast already; and all under pretence of charity and compassion!

7. We shall put them by this means into a way, not only of losing the fruit of ordinances, but of misapplying all to the increasing of their deceit; when we preach peace to the believer, the wicked will misapply it, and say, it belongs to them: when we speak against the unbelievers and ungodly, they will think that this is not their part, but bless themselves because they are Christians. In our praises they are tempted with the Pharisee to thank God, and perhaps for mercies which they never had, as justification,

^y Mr. Thorndicke, see Dr. Hammond's Practic. Catech. lib. 2. sec. 2. p. 103. and l. 6. sec. 52. pp. 311, 313, 314. 319—323, &c.

adoption, sanctification, &c. The sacraments by misapplication will confirm them in presumption; and thus as they enter by deceit, among adult believers, so will they turn all the ordinances of God, and the privileges of the church to feed that deceit, more effectually than among the expectants it would have been.

8. But the greatest mischief that troubleth me to think of, is this; that by this hastening and admitting all the unprepared into the number of adult Christians, and members of the church; we do either put a necessity upon ourselves to throw away church-discipline, or else to be most probably the damnation of our people's souls, and make them desperate, and almost past all hope, or remedy. I must confess, that what I am saying now, I was not sensible of, till lately that experience made me sensible. While I meddled not with public reproofs or censures, I disputed of these things, without that experience, which I now find is one of the greatest helps to resolve such doubts; which makes me bold to tell the church, that the practice of so much discipline, as we are agreed in, is a likelier way, to bring us all to agreement in the rest, than all our disputings will do without it; and that I resolve hereafter, to take that man for an incompetent judge, and unmeet disputer about church-discipline, that never exercised it, or lived where it was exercised; and I shall hereafter suspect their judgments, and be almost as loath to follow such, as to follow a swimmer that never was before in the water, or a pilot that was never before at sea, or a soldier that never saw wars before, but could have only learned their skill by the book. Our case stands thus: If we take all our parishes according to the old church-constitution, to be particular churches, and all the parishioners to be members; then either we must exercise the discipline which Christ hath commanded, or not. If not, then we disobey our Lord and Master, and own such a church as is utterly incapable of church-ends, and consequently of the essence, seeing that it is a relative being. For it is supposed that it is not for any unusual accident, that we cannot exercise this discipline, but from the very church-constitution, or incapacity of the matter. And then, (1.) We shall be traitors to Christ, under the name of pastors, if we will wilfully cast out his ministerial, kingly government. (2.) We shall betray the church to licentiousness. And, (3.)

We shall set up a new church-way, which is contrary to that which hath been practised in all ages, from the apostles' days, till impiety had overspread the Christian world. He that dare take on him to be an overseer and ruler of the church, and not to oversee and rule it, and dare settle on such a church-state, as is incapable of discipline, is so perfidious to Christ, and ventureth so boldly, to make the church another thing, that I am resolved not to be his follower.

But if we shall exercise the discipline of Christ upon all in our ordinary parishes, what work shall we make? I will tell you what work, from so much experience, as that no reasonings can any more persuade me to believe the contrary, than that wormwood is not bitter, or snow not cold.

(1.) We shall have such a multitude to excommunicate, or reject, that it will make the sentence grow almost contemptible by the commonness. (2.) We shall so extremely enrage the spirits of the people, that we shall go in continual danger of our lives; among so many that are publicly reprobated, and cast out, it is two to one, but some desperate villains will be studying revenge^z. But all this is nothing; but that which sticks upon my heart is this: (3.) We shall be the cruelest enemies to the souls of our poor people in the world; and put them the very next step to hell. For as soon as ever we have rejected them, and cast them under public shame, they hate us to the heart, and either will never hear us more, or hear us with so much hatred and malice, or bitterness of spirit, that they are never likely to profit by us. If you say that, doubtless discipline will have better fruits, if it be an ordinance of God: I answer, 1. It is no time now in the end of the world, to question whether that be an ordinance of God, which Scripture speaks of so fully, and so plainly; and which the Catholic Church hath so long practised, and that with such severity as it hath done. 2. I know that discipline is of excellent use, and is likely to have excellent effects; but upon whom? upon such as are fit to come under discipline, and with such I have seen the usefulness of it; but with the rest it makes them next to mad. They that before would patiently hear me, in the plainest, sharpest sermons that I could preach, and would quietly bear any private admonition, when once they are

^z This is no dishonour to the discipline; for we find it hath great effect on such as are capable of it.

publicly admonished and cast out, are filled with the gall of malice and indignation, and never more likely to profit by a sermon. Nay, they set themselves with malice to reproach and oppose, and stir up others; and fall in to any party, that will receive them that are enemies to the ministry; so that I look upon some of them, when once they are cast out, almost as if they were already in hell: for they are desperately hardened against any further means of their recovery: 3. Yea, I am persuaded, that if we exercise Christ's discipline according to the Scripture rule, upon all the parishes in England, it would endanger a rebellion; and the rage of the people would make them ready, to take any opportunity to rise up against the Sovereign Power that doth maintain and protect us; and if we were not protected, we should soon have enough of it.

Object. Perhaps you will say, 'That public admonitions, and church censures are not to be easily exercised, nor upon any but notorious, scandalous sinners, and that in case of obstinate impenitency.'

Ans. I am as much against a rash, unnecessary censure, or use of the severity of discipline, as another: I know that a fly must not be killed with a beetle. Let it be exercised but according to the Parliament's ordinance, called 'The Form of Church Government, to be used in the Church of England and Ireland, Aug. 29, 1648.' Or let it be exercised but with one half, or the sixth part of the severity of the ancient canons of the church, and you shall certainly see the effects that I tell you of. Do you think to use it but with few, when impenitent, scandalous sinners are so many? But perhaps you think to use it only 'in terrorem,' or now and then one, and let others alone that are in the same case. But, 1. That is the same disobedience to God, as to use it upon none at all. He that hath commanded us to 'reject a heretic, to have no company with the disorderly livers, to turn away from scandalous, ungodly men, and not to eat with drunkards, railers,' &c., hath not bid us do thus by some, but by all. 2. God condemneth partiality. 3. Your partiality will presently be so noted by men, that it will turn to your reproach, and make both you and your discipline odious, when they can say, 'He casteth out one, and forbeareth others in the same case.'

Object. 'But were there not more offenders than the in-

cestuous man at Corinth? And yet Paul casteth out but him.'

Ans. 1. How can you tell how many Paul cast out? 2. Doth he not give the church a flat command to cast out and avoid the rest. (1 Cor. v. 11, 12.) When will you make us believe, that Paul at that time commanded them to do that which he would not have them do? 3. Corinth had many offenders, whom Paul in that epistle reprehendeth; but can you prove that any of them were obstinately impenitent, after admonition? I know you cannot.

But perhaps you will think, that you should by the preparatory, private admonition so bow them, and work upon them, that few of them should be so obstinate as to fall under censure.

I answer, You speak this because you never tried, and know not the world. I must presume to tell you, (though to tell you the reasons be unmeet), that there are but few men in England must expect more advantage for interest in their people, than I have in mine; and yet all is nothing, when I come to exercise discipline, and cross their selfish, sensual inclinations. Those that will tell me, they are beholden to me for their lives, yet will not hear me when I persuade them to any humbling confession. Those that cannot hide their sin, will confess it, and commit it over and over; will you accept of their private confession for satisfaction, that will publicly slander their neighbours, and be drunk openly every week or month, or swear every day. But many of them will not so much as confess before a few ministers or officers of the church, that they have sinned, but will stand impenitently in it to the last. Let us entreat them with all the submissiveness and earnestness that I can, when one hath beat or slandered another, or in the like cases, if I would kneel to them, I cannot get many of them once (hypocritically) to say, I am sorry, or I did amiss; and those that do say so, in a cold, hypocritical, heartless manner, will join with it such bitter words against the accuser or reprover, and shew such hatred to those that admonish them, that declareth their impenitency^a. If you have such

^a I desire those that are over rigid and uncharitable in censuring others, not to extend these complaints to more than I extend them; nor to take it as an occasion for the unchurcing of whole parishes, or any one particular person, without sufficient evidence. For I must profess that I meet with hundreds in my parish, that I can

extraordinary abilities, to melt and mollify hardened sinners, more than we have, you are the more inexcusably unfaithful to God and man, that will not use them. And all are not so happy as to have your conquering parts. For my part, I can say in uprightness of heart, that I do what I can, (abating those neglects which are the consequents of my frailty) and if I knew how to do more, I would, with study, preaching, conference, labour or estate; and yet with many I am not able to prevail, so much as to make them capable of discipline. So that I see plainly by unquestionable experience, that either we must have churches without the discipline of Christ, and be rulers without ruling it; or else we must utterly undo our people, body and soul for ever, and plunge them into a desperate state, and make all our following labours in vain to multitudes of them: or else we must take another course, than to admit our parishes to adult church-membership, as was formerly done, without preparation, and fitness for such a state.

And yet in their blindness, gentlemen, ministers, and all that plead for common church-membership, pretend to be charitable to the people's souls, when they are exercising this grievous cruelty. It is just as if in mercy to the schoolboys, you should set them that cannot read English, in the highest form, where they must make orations in Latin and Greek, or else be whipped: would they thank you for such advancement? It is as if you should put an ignorant, unexercised, cowardly soldier, or one that is but learning to use his arms, into the front of the battle, for his honour: or as if you should prefer a pupil to be a tutor, or put a freshman in the doctor's chair, or admit a new baptized novice to be a pastor of the church, where the blood of the people shall be required at his hands; or as if to honour him, you should admit any common mariner to the pilot's place, or any apothecary to play the physician to other men's ruin, and his own shame. If you set such children on horseback, while you pretend their good, you will break their necks. No man is safe out of his own rank and place. If the husbandman know that every sort of plants and grain, must have their proper soil and

comfortably hold communion with, that some men of stricter principles, or more censorious dispositions would reject; yea, and I take abundance for truly godly men, that are not noted for any eminency of religion, perhaps their parts, or callings, or opportunities, being such as to keep them much from the knowledge of others.

season, and the gardener knoweth that several herbs and flowers, must be variously manured, or else they will not prosper; why should we be less wise in the work of God? As country schools are seminaries to the academies, so the catechumens or expectants is the seminary to the church, and the state of infant church-membership, the seminary to the state of the adult, into which they must be seasonably and solemnly transplanted, when they are ripe and ready, and not before. Truly our merciful hastlings do but yoke untamed bullocks, that are fitter to strive and tire themselves than to plough; and do but saddle such wild, unbroken colts, as are more likely to break their own and their rider's necks, than to go the journey which they are designed for. In the state of expectants, these men may profit by preparing ordinances, and the season may come, when they may fitly be transplanted: but if we put them 'inter fideles,' that are infidels, among actual believers, and adult church-members that are not such, nor prepared for the station, we bring them under a discipline which will exasperate them, and turn them to be malignant enemies, and undo them for ever. The disposition of the matter, must go before the reception of the form; for indisposed matter will not receive it. As the operation followeth the being, and the disposition, so we must employ every person and thing, in such operations only, as their being and qualification is capable of, and suited to. A due placing of all according to their qualifications, is the chief part of our government. Misplace but one wheel in your watch, and try how it will go. If any person or thing be not good in his own place, he will be much worse out of it, in the place of his superior. Fire is better in the chimney than in your bed, or upon your table: a good clerk may make but a sorry counsellor; and a good subject may make but an ill magistrate: and many a man becomes the seat of a justice, that would not become the prince's throne. If you would not undo men's souls by a discipline which they cannot bear; let them stay in the seminary of expectants, till they are ripe for it.

Object. 'But how do the churches of France, Holland, Geneva, and Scotland, that have exercised discipline upon all?'

Ans. 1. Must I be sent to another nation to know that which I have made trial of, and attained the certain know-

ledge of, at home? I was never in France, nor at Geneva, and therefore I know not what number of obstinate, impenitent, scandalous persons are there; nor how many that know not who Jesus Christ is, nor what a Christian or a church is; but I have been in England, and I partly know what store of these are there, and what usage they will bear, and what not. 2. Either other churches have such materials as our parishes or not. If not, their cause is none of ours: if they have, then either they exercise Christ's discipline on them faithfully and impartially, or not: if not, then they are not to be imitated by us in their negligence, unfaithfulness, or partiality. If they do, and yet do not undo the people, they have not such a people as ours, or else they have other means to further their ends. 3. The truth is, as in France, they are but a people gathered from among the Papists, whose church doth drink up most of the scum; so the other churches: 1. Are too lamentably careless, partial, or defective, in executing their own discipline^b: and if I should come to think it lawful, to forbear the execution of it upon nineteen, I should soon think it lawful to forbear the twentieth; and then what should we think of Scripture, and the canons of the Universal Church? 2. By this neglect it is, that reformed churches have contracted the greatest dishonour that is upon them, while they are sound in doctrine, and have learned pastors, able to confound the Romish adversaries; but, alas! too many unmeet church-members. 3. They have (and Scotland had till lately) the magistrate's sword to drive men on, and force them to submit to discipline, which is not our case, nor was the case of the Primitive Church. It is not there the church's censure that doth the work, but the magistrate's sword, no more than it was with our bishops in England. 4. And yet what work a little exercise of discipline made, may appear in the case of Calvin, at Geneva, when for suspending the sacrament, when the people were in enmity, he was banished Geneva, and their dogs called by the name of Calvin; and when the suspending of one Bertelerius could put them all into such a flame.

^b Melancthon Epist. (Impres. Lugdun. 1647.) ad Dominum Schleupnerum, saith, 1. Quia in tanta multitudine vix pauci sunt Christiani, et apti qui sacramento fruantur, cavendum est ne vulgus invitetur ad prophanandum Corpus Domini.

Lege Calvin. Institut. lib. 4, cap. 12, sect. 1, §2; Zanch. de Ecclesia, vol. 3, fol. 123, 124, 134, 135, and others cited in the Preface of my "Reformed Pastor."

Object. 'But, fiat Justitia, et ruat cœlum; let us trust God with his own ordinances: we must do our duty, whatever come of it?'

Answ. This doth but beg the question: God's ordinances are not for destruction, but edification; at least as to the multitude of the ungodly, they tend to their conversion, and not to their perdition. Is that likely to be God's ordinance, which certain experience telleth us, will put such multitudes of men into a hopeless case, or next to hopeless? Ministers are appointed to *make disciples*, and gather men to Christ, and further their conversion, and not plunge them into a remediless state, and to hurry them all unprepared into church-communion, that they may be thrust out again, and brought to hate the church. It is another's work to advance them to the pinnacle of the Temple, that he may cast them down headlong. And I never yet knew the man, or saw his face, that practised what this objection pleads for; and exercised discipline, faithfully on a whole parish. Nor do I believe that any man can do it that would; unless the magistrate do it for him. For he cannot do it without the people's consent: and if he sentence such to be avoided by the people, they will despise his sentence, and hold communion with them the more, and do as our drunkards do, when one of their companions is put in the stocks, bring him ale and good cheer, and eat, and drink, and make merry with him, if the magistrate restrain them not.

Object. 'But Excommunication must not be used, till all other remedies will do no good, and when all will do no good, what good will it do such to be kept under other means?'

Answ. To do good for the bringing a man out of that sin, for which he is admonished, is one thing; and to do good, for his information and conversion in the main, is another thing: it is the use of discipline, to cure men of the particular sins that they are reprov'd for, rather than to convert them from a state of wickedness in general. 2. Nor is excommunication to be deferred, as long as there is any hope by other means; but only till we have used other means in vain, for such a season as is meet; that the ends of discipline be not frustrated: for else there should never man be excommunicated: for there is some hope that

preaching against his sin may do him good at last; though he come drunk to the Lord's-table twenty years together, you cannot say that his conversion is impossible: and yet we must not hereupon defer the casting out of such a member. But in his expectant state, or among the Catechumens, we may bear with him lawfully in his wickedness, without excluding him from among our hearers; and if he hear us seven and seven years in vain, there is yet some hope of his conversion, while he waiteth in his own place and way.

And yet I yield this much to the objectors freely, That when fit persons are taken into the church, (yea, or unfit, by negligence,) we must wait with all patience that is consistent with the ends of government, and cutting off must be the last remedy; and that when it is necessary, it must be used, though we see that it is ten to one it will plunge the person (occasionally) into a worse condition. For the public ends of discipline, the credit of Christianity, the preservation of the church, and abundance more, are to be preferred before the good of that man's soul: and as '*Pœna debetur Reipublicæ,*' and we cut not off malefactors for their own good, so much as the commonwealth's, which by their hurt must be promoted, so as it is to the church. But this must be done but upon a few, for example; and therefore but few that will need this severity, are supposed to be in our communion. And I cannot believe that way to be of God, that would bring such multitudes into this miserable state.

Object. 'Your very keeping them from the communion of the church, and not approving or confirming them, would as much exasperate them.'

Answ. It is no such matter. Much it may, but not near so much, as I certainly know by experience: those not admitted, hear with hope; but to the rejected I speak as almost hopeless, except such as were fit to live under discipline, on whom it may have its due effect.

9. And by this admitting all men, without trial and confirmation, to come unobservedly into the state of adult Christians, we breed and feed continual heart-burnings against the ministers of Christ; while we are necessitated to do our work upon such unprepared souls. And how much the hatred and contempt of ministers doth conduce to

the destruction of the people, Satan is not ignorant, who is the diligent promoter of it.

10. By this means also we frustrate our own studies, and ministerial labours, to abundance of our people; partly by deluding them actually, in the reception of them among Christians, that really are no Christians, and partly by this provocation of their hatred.

11. By this means also we breed and feed abundance of controversies in the church; for when once we displace any parts of the frame, we shall find almost all in pieces, and one error draweth on so many, that controversies grow numerous, and will never be reconciled by mere words and writings, till we actually set the church in joint again.

12. By this course also, we lay open the ordinances of God, to a continual profanation, while many that know not who Christ is, nor what Christianity is, are admitted as Christians, to our Christian communion; and so themselves are involved in more sin, and God's own worship turned into provocation; so that we may fear lest God should frown upon our assemblies, and withdraw the tokens of his presence, and deny his blessing to those profaned ordinances. Though the innocent may still have their share in the blessing, yet may the pastors and the guilty majority, deeply suffer by this great abuse of holy things.

13. By this means also it is that so many scruples are cast in our way, about administrations, and reception of ordinances; and the comfort of ministers and people in them, is much abated.

14. And I doubt it is an hindrance to the conversion of many sects about us, and of many ungodly ones among us, who if they saw the primitive holiness of churches might be drawn in.

15. And it much corrupteth the communion of saints, and turneth it to another thing; when this holy communion is so much of our duty and our comfort, and such a representation of heaven itself.

16. And if it be not a practical denial of some of the articles of our faith, it is well. We say there, That we believe the Catholic Church to be holy; and that it is a communion of saints, that is by the parts of it, to be exercised. And shall we deny this in our works, which in words we profess?

17. By this means also we dishonour the work of Refor-

mation, when we hinder the fruits of it, that should be visible to the world; and make men believe that it lieth but in a change of bare opinions. They that see no great difference between the Reformed and the Romanists in their lives, will think it is no great matter, which side they are joined to. It is noted by some Protestant writers, that when Luther opposed Popery in Germany, abundance of the common, licentious people, that were weary of Popish confessions, and penances, did join with those that were truly conscientious, and dishonoured the Reformation by their lives, though they increased the number, and did the service as Erasmus's Gospeller, that used to carry a bottle of wine, and Erasmus's New Testament, with great brass bosses, and when he disputed with a Papist, knocked him about the pate with the Bible, and so confuted him.

18. And by this means we give the Papists more room than they should have, to reproach our churches, and glory comparatively of the holiness of theirs. Though I know that their glory is exceeding unreasonable, and that our impurities are no more to theirs than a few boils to a leprosy; yet we do ill to give them so much occasion, as we do, who are ready to make the worst of all.

19. By this means also we leave all sects to quarrel with us, and dispute against us, even whether we be true churches of Christ or not; because our adult profession and covenant is no more express, and discernible than it is. And though we have enough to prove ourselves a church, yet do we leave them under their temptations, and ourselves under the obloquy. And indeed we perversely maintain our dishonour, while we think it a condition to be rested in, if we can but prove ourselves true churches; when our learned divines do give as much to the Romanists themselves, though not as Papal, yet as Christian. A leper is a true man, and yet his cure is a thing to be desired.

20. Lastly, By this means also, we tempt many well-meaning people among us, to a dangerous separation from us, and to fly from our churches, as if they would fall on their heads; and we too much harden those that are already separated, and all because we will not yield to the healing of our own diseases, or will do little or nothing to procure it. I know these men have no just ground for their hard conclusions, and censures of us; but we have little reason to give them

this occasion, and cast a stumbling-block in the way of so many precious souls.

To what is here briefly thrust together, if the reader will add the twelve reasons, in my "Christian Concord," pp. 11—14, and what is said in my "Book of Right to Sacraments," where these matters, or those that sustain them, are handled more at large; I suppose he may easily be convinced, that the former church-governors, in England, have been lamentably negligent, and our churches by their means are much disordered; and that the present ministers should be more forward, and diligent, and unanimous for the cure; and that the magistrate, if he love the church of Christ, and the souls of men, should speedily afford his help, and all too little to remedy these great and many evils, which we have let in, by suffering such a loose, unobserved transition from the state of infant church-members, or from apostacy, into the number of adult-members, without approved profession and confirmation.

PROP. 20. *So many and great are the Benefits, that would follow the general practice of this duty, of Trying, Approving, and Confirming (or Absolving) all those that enter into the number of Adult Christians, that it should mightily provoke all Christian Magistrates, Ministers and People, to join in a speedy and vigorous execution of it.*

1. ONE excellent fruit of this practice, will be the great increase of knowledge, and godliness, and the destruction of ignorance, and notorious impiety. This is an effect, most apparent in the causes. When men are made to understand, that by the law of God, seconded by the common consent of the church, and the most learned, godly pastors, and, if it may be, by the law of the land; no man is to be accounted, or numbered with adult Christians, but those that make a sober, serious, understanding profession of Christianity, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil; and not contradicting, and nullifying this profession, by a wicked life; this will engage parents to teach their children, and children themselves to learn what Christianity is, when they cannot have the name, or the honour, and the privileges of Christians, without some credible appearance of the thing. For doubtless while Christianity is in credit, the same motives that now prevail with the multitude to seem Christians, and

to desire the baptism of their children, will continue then, to make them desire to be numbered with Christians, when they are at age; and so will provoke them to do that, without which they know they cannot be esteemed Christians. And as it is now a common thing to be baptized in infancy, so will it be then a common thing, for our young people to learn the principles of Christianity, yea, and to reform their lives, (I hope with the most) when they understand, that else they must be taken to be no Christians. And if it were but the making of the understanding, profession, and outside of Christianity, to be more common among us, it would be a precious fruit of our endeavours. But much more, when true Christianity itself, in the life and power of it, would also be more common. As no doubt but it would; for the knowledge of the letter, is the way to the receiving of the Spirit; and among the multitudes that have the outside of true religion, there will be far more, that have the life and soul of it, than among those that have not so much as the outside. Any man in reason may foresee, that if we be openly agreed, and it be publicly enacted, or declared, That none be taken into the number of adult Christians, nor admitted to their privileges, till they have made an approved profession of Christianity, and so be received by Jesus Christ himself, acting by his ministers, it will set all that care for the name, or hopes or privileges of Christians, to learn, and be, and do, that which they know will be so required of them. Whereas, as things go now in most places, they may bring their children to baptism, without understanding what baptism is; and those children may slide into the state of the adult Christians, and possess the name, and place, and outward communion, and other honours and privileges of such, without knowing whether Christ were a man or a woman, or who he is, or what business he came about into the world. And when no outward necessity is laid upon them by the church, to know more, or to seem better, no wonder if so many heathens do sit among Christians, and if the multitude look not much after knowledge or godliness.

2. And moreover, it will be a very great help to their consciences, in order to the convincing them of their sin and misery, and of the insufficiency of that condition which multitudes do now rest in; and so to awaken them to look after a safer state, and to be what they must seem to be, if

they will be taken to be Christians. It is a great help to the deceiving of the multitude of the ungodly, to be currently esteemed Christians, when they are not: and self-love is such a blinding thing, that a little help will go far with it, in the promoting of such deceits. Naturally men are very easily brought to think well of themselves, and hardly brought to confess their misery. Every man almost will easily confess himself a sinner, and a very great sinner, so you will but allow him to be a Christian, and a pardoned sinner. For this is a common confession, and brings no very terrible conclusion and message to the soul. But when a man must confess himself no true Christian, but unsanctified, unpardoned, and a slave of Satan, this is as much as to confess himself in a state of damnation, in which if he die he is lost for ever, and men are hardly drawn to believe so terrible a conclusion; when yet it is so necessary where it is true, that we can scarcely imagine how a man can be saved without it. He that knoweth not himself to be out of his way, will hardly be persuaded to turn back; and he that knows not himself to be unpardoned, will hardly value or seek a pardon; and he that thinks he is sanctified, and a true Christian already, will not seek to be made what he takes himself already to be. And how much reputation doth to help or hinder men, even in self-judging, is easily perceived. Now here is a threefold reputation, of very great moment, to concur, either for men's deception or conversion. (1.) The reputation of Prince and Parliament, and so of Law-givers and Rulers of the Nation, who by their laws do manifest, whom they esteem good Christians, and this the people very much look at. (2.) The reputation of all the pastors of the church, which is to be manifested in their agreements, confessions, or declarations and practices. (3.) The common consent of Christian people, which is to be manifested by their actions, according to the laws of Christ, and the direction of their guides. If magistrates, ministers, and people do concur, to repute all the infidels, and utterly ignorant, wicked men among us to be Christians; how many thousand souls may this deceive, and undo for ever! Whereas if magistrates, ministers and people that fear God, would all agree according to the laws of Christ, to esteem none adult Christians, but those that by a credible profession of Christianity, do seem to be such, it would abundantly help to convince them

of their misery, and the need of Christ, and grace, and the absolute necessity of a change. We see even among good men, in the case of a particular sin, how much common reputation doth help or hinder the work upon their consciences; among the Reformed Churches beyond the sea, what conscience is troubled for these actions, or omissions on the Lord's-day, which in England would much trouble men of the same temper in other things. Among several sects it troubleth them not, freely to revile the servants of Christ that are against them, because they find it rather go for commendable, than much condemnable, by those whom they most esteem. Among the Papists, the believing in a Vice-Christ, and the worshipping of his image and cross with divine worship, and also the consecrated Host, and the condemning all the churches of Christ that do it not, do go for virtues, and Christian practices, though they are most heinous, odious sins; and what is it but common reputation of princes and priests, and multitudes of people, that could make so many, yea, and such persons as some of them are, to continue in such sins, as if they were a part, yea, an essential part of holiness, and one generation to succeed another in them? Were these sins but commonly reputed to be as odious as indeed they are, what a change would it make on millions of souls! So that it is strange to see the power of reputation.

3. Moreover, this course would be an excellent help to the labours of the ministers of Christ, for men's salvation. They would better understand and apply our sermons; whereas now, they lose the benefit by misapplying them. Now we must labour all our lives, and with most, in vain, to make unbelievers and ungodly persons understand what they are, and no means will serve to convince many people, that they are not truly Christians, that know not what it is to be a Christian, or that hate it and fight against it. When they all go together under the name of Christians, whatever comforts they hear offered to believers, they take them to themselves, or mistake them as offered to them; and all the threatenings that are uttered against unbelievers, they put by and think it is not they that are spoken against. But if once we could but get men to stand in their own places, and to know themselves, how easily then would our message work! Methinks the devil should not be able to keep one

man of an hundred in his power, if they knew themselves to be in his power ; nor one of an hundred, in a state of ungodliness and condemnation, if they knew that they are in such a state. At least, I am sure men will not so numerously, nor easily run into hell, when they know they are going into it, as when they are confident that they are good Christians, and in the way to heaven.

4. If this fore-described confirmation be practised, it will more powerfully oblige our people to Christ, than a secret sliding into the number of adult Christians will do. And doubtless solemn engagements and obligations, have some force upon conscience, to hold men to Christ, and restrain them from sin ; or else baptism itself would be much frustrated, and the Jews should not have been so often called by Moses, Joshua, Asa, and other princes, to renew their covenant with God. But with us, men feel no such bonds upon them ; and many question whether they are bound at all, by their parents' promises for them in baptism.

5. The profiting of our people will be much greater in their own place, when those that are not yet fit for adult-membership and privileges, are kept in the place of catechumens or expectants. Every thing doth thrive and prosper best in its own place : if you tear them not out of the church's womb, till they are ready for the birth, they will prosper there, that else may perish. Your corn will best prosper in the cold earth, where it seems to be dead and buried, till the springing-time shall come. And you should not violently unhose the ears, till nature put them forth. The first digestion must be wrought, before the second, and nature must have time allowed it, and the stomach must not too hastily let go the food, if you would have good sanguification and nutrition follow. Men think they do a great kindness to grossly ignorant, or impious men, to take them into the church, before they are capable of such a station, and the work, or privileges thereto belonging ; but, alas ! they do but hurry them to perdition, by thrusting them out of the state, where they might have thriven in preparation to a church-state, into a state which will set them abundance of work, which they are utterly unfit for, and under the pretence of benefits and privileges, will occasion abundance of aggravations of their sins. A boy in his A, B, C, will learn better in his own place, among his fellows, than in a higher

form, where he hath work set him, which he is incapable of doing.

6. By this means also church-discipline will attain its ends; it will awe and preserve the church, and terrify, and reduce offenders, and help them to repentance, and preserve the order of the church and Gospel, when it is exercised upon such as are capable of it; that know the nature of it, and either are habitually disposed to profit by it, or at least understand, what it was that they were engaged to, and understandingly consent to live under such a discipline; and when it is exercised upon few, and we have not such multitudes to sweep out of the church.

7. By this means, both church-associations, and ordinances may attain their ends; and people will be capable of doing the duty of Christians to one another, when others are capable of receiving it. Church-members are bound to "exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin," (Heb. iii. 13,) and to "teach and admonish one another." (Col. iii. 16.) But before "swine, we must not cast such pearls, nor give that which is holy to dogs." (Matt. vii. 6.) Therefore it necessarily followeth, that dogs and swine should be kept out of the church, and cast out if they be crept in. Nothing hath more destroyed that charitable community, which should be among the members of the church, and that loving and relieving Christ in church-members, than the crowding of such into the place, as indeed are Satan's members, and appear not capable of that special love, nor are capable of returning it to others.

8. This will make easy the minister's work, and free him from abundance of hatred, trouble, and disadvantage, when like a workman's tools in his shop, that all are in their place, and so at hand when he should use them, so his hearers are in order, and each one looks but for his portion, and none are snatching at our fingers, for the children's bread, that belongs not to them, and men be not drawn to hate and rail at ministers, for not fulfilling their desires.

9. By this means also, the ordinances will be more purely administered, agreeably to their nature, and the institution; and so God will bless them more to his church, and own his people, with the fuller discoveries of his presence, and take pleasure in the assemblies and services of his saints.

10. By this means also, the communion of the saints, and the holy ordinances of God, will be abundantly more sweet to his servants, when we have it in the appointed way, and it is not imbittered to us, by the pollutions of infidels, and notorious ungodly men. Though yet I know, that in a negligent, polluted church, God's servants may have their share of comfort, in his ordinances, when they have done their own duty for reformation, without success.

11. By this means the church, and the Christian religion will be more honourable in the eyes of the world, who judge by the members' and professors' lives, before they can judge of the thing as in itself; and as Christ will be thus honoured, and the mouths of adversaries of all sorts stopped, so it will do much to further their conversion, when they have such a help to see the beauty of the church and Christian faith. Many more such benefits I could name, but that you may gather some of them, from what was said of the contrary inconveniences: only I add,

12. Lastly, it is a way that is admirably suited both to reformation, and reconciliation; to unity, as well as purity; which removeth many of the impediments, that else would trouble us in the way. For as all wicked men will agree against it, as they will against any holy practice; so all parties considerable among us, do in their doctrine and professions own it; and it will suit the principles, or the ends of all that fear God, either wholly or very far. I shall here distinctly shew you, 1. That the Episcopalians: 2. Presbyterians: 3. Independents: 4. Anabaptists: 5. Yea, and I may put in, the Papists themselves, have no reason to be against this practice; but all of them have great reason to promote it, supposing them to be what they are.

1. That this is so far agreeable with the doctrine of the Church of England, that our Episcopal party have reason to be for it, appeareth: (1.) By the Rubric, for Confirmation, in the Common-Prayer Book^d, which saith as followeth, 'The curate of every parish, or some other at his appointment, shall diligently upon Sundays and Holydays, half an hour before Evening-prayer, openly in the church, instruct and examine so many children of his parish, sent unto him, as the time will serve, and as he shall think convenient, in

^d The rest of the Rubric see^hafter.

some part of this catechism. And all fathers, mothers, masters, and dames, shall cause their children, servants, and apprentices (which have not learned their catechism), to come to the church at the time appointed, and obediently to hear, and be ordered by the curate, until such time as they have learned, all that is appointed here for them to learn. And whensoever the bishop shall give knowledge, for children to be brought before him, to any convenient place for their confirmation, then shall the curate of every parish, either bring, or send in writing, the names of all those children of his parish, which can say the Articles of the faith, the Lord's prayer, and the Ten commandments, and also how many of them can answer to the other questions, contained in this catechism. And there shall none be admitted to the holy communion, till such time as he can say the catechism, and be confirmed.'

So that you see we must not admit any but the confirmed to the sacrament. And I suppose in common reason, they will extend this to the aged, as well as unto children, seeing ignorance in them is more intolerable : and indeed the words themselves exclude the unconfirmed, and that cannot say the catechism, from the sacrament, of what age soever. (2.) And I may take it for granted, that it is not the bare saying the catechism, that they expect, but also a profession that they own their baptismal covenant to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost^e. And also that it be a profession somewhat understood; and not barely to say the words which they understand not, as a parrot doth. And this I prove to be their meaning, yea, and also that they live a Christian life, from the prayer in confirmation, adjoined, which is this; 'Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins; strengthen them, we beseech thee O Lord with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel, and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness.' So that here you see that the Church of England supposeth all those that are to be confirmed, to have already the Holy Ghost, and the spirit of

^e The first part of the Rubric anon cited, also proves this.

wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, and true godliness, which they beg of God, as to an increase only for the confirmed. And surely they do not think that every notorious, ungodly man, hath the 'spirit of true godliness' if he can but say the catechism; or that every ignorant person or infidel hath the spirit of knowledge, wisdom, &c. as soon as he can speak the words which he understands not. And in the following prayer they say, 'we have laid our hands on them, to certify them (by this sign) of thy favour and gracious goodness towards them.' And surely they will not think to certify men that know not what Christianity is, or that live not Christian lives, for this favour of God towards them, merely because they say the words which they do not understand. So that if they will but let men understand what they do, and make good what is here expressed, we are agreed with them that stand for common-prayer, that such as are unconfirmed be not admitted to the holy communion. And as for the person confirming, I shall speak to that anon.

† 2. I will next speak of the Papists, because in their words I shall have opportunity to recite some more of our own, even those of the Canons. Convocat. London, An. 1603. c. 60. I will pass by Frans. de S. Clara, and such reconcilers, lest you should say, that is not the common judgment of the Papists: and at this time it may suffice to instance in one, that most petulant, insolent Jesuit, Hen. Fitz Simon, in his *Britanomach.* lib. 3, cap. 4, pp. 289—291. Where he reciteth the words of our Canon, that 'seeing it was a solemn, ancient, laudable custom in the church of God, observed even from the days of the apostles, that all bishops laying hands on those that were baptized in infancy, and are instructed in the catechism of the Christian religion, should pray over them, and bless them, which we commonly call confirmation,—we will and ordain, that every bishop, or his suffragan, do in their proper person, diligently observe this rite and custom, in their ordinary visitations.' To which saith the Jesuit, 'What do I hear?—All this is very or-

† De hoc dissidium nullum futurum Sperem, &c. De tempore Confirmationis, Video bonis viris utriusque partis non displicere, si ejus usus ad ætatem paulo adultiorem differatur,—ut parentibus, susceptoribus, et Ecclesiarum præfectis occasio detur, pueros de fide quam in Baptismo professi sunt, diligentius instituendi et admonendi. (Georg. Cassander, in Consult. de Confirmatione.)

thodox, very Catholic, if uttered in good sadness——' And citing the Rubric before-mentioned, he mentioneth the Conference at Hampton Court, pp. 10, 11. 32, 33. ' That the doctrine of Confirmation was part of the Apostles' Catechism, rashly rejected by some churches, but in Calvin's judgment to be taken up again, and is ungrateful to the Puritans only, because they may not themselves administer it.' And p. 64, he would persuade us, that most certainly the bishops borrowed this passage from the Rhemist's Test. Annot. in Heb. vi. 2. against the Puritans. More he adds from Resp. Oxon. ad Libel. supplic. Covell, &c., and concludes, ' All this the Formalists (as he constantly calls that party) do freely grant us, than which the Catholics themselves, as to the sound of the words, seem scarcely able to think, or speak any thing more honourable of confirmation.' And that you may see how far he accepts also of Calvin's concession, he doth with ostentation cite the words of Calvin, in Acts ii; and Instit. lib. 4, cap. 19, sect. 28. that ' It is incredible that the Apostles should use imposition of hands, but by Christ's command; and that it was not an empty sign, and that it is to be accounted for a sacrament.' So that these two parties cannot be against us, in the matter of confirmation, though I know that the Papists are against us for laying by their ceremonies and abuse of it.

3. And as for the Presbyterians they cannot be against it: for, (1.) The most eminent divines of that judgment, have written for it, of whom I could cite abundance. But Calvin, Hyperius, and others, cited by Mr. Hanmer already, sufficiently declare their desires, after the restoring of confirmation: and Chemnitius, a Lutheran, is large for it, and others of that way. (2.) And it is so clearly useful and necessary to the reforming of distempers in the church, and the quiet of the ministry, and the safe and successful exercise of discipline, that I know they will heartily consent to it.

4. And for the Congregational party, (1.) Some of them have declared their judgments for it, in the approving or promoting Mr. Hanmer's book. (2.) And I have spoke with some of the most eminent of that mind, that are for it. (3.) And the solemn covenant or profession, which they require of all that enter among them, as church-members, doth shew that they are for it in the substance, though how far

they like, or dislike the sign of imposition of hands I know not. It is the want of this, that they are so much offended with in our parish-church, and therefore doubtless they will consent.

5. And for Anabaptists, though we cannot expect their full consent, because they admit not infants into the visible church; and therefore baptize those whom we confirm or restore, yet doubtless, they will like this as next to that which they suppose to be the right; and because we come as near to them as is fit and lawful for us to do, it is the likeliest way to abate their censures, and procure with them so much peace, as in reason may be expected, with men that differ from us in the point of infant-baptism^s. Three sorts of them, I suppose we may meet with: 1. Some that grant that infants are Christ's disciples, Christian, and visible church-members, but yet think that baptism is not for their admission, but only for the adult. I confess I know of none so moderate, nor am I sure there are any such, but by hearsay, or conjecture; but if there be, our differences with these men would be most in the external sign. If they do but as much by infants, as the express words of the Gospel do commend, and Christ did chide his disciples for opposing, that is, if they yield that they shall be offered unto Christ, and that the minister of Christ do in his name, 'Receive them, lay his hands on them, and bless them, because of such is the kingdom of God;' and then baptize them, when at age they make a personal profession; and if we on the other side offer them to Christ, and the minister in his name accept them by baptism, and at age confirm them, upon their personal covenanting or profession, the difference here would be most, that they change the outward sign, and they use imposition of hands when we use baptism; and we use baptism when they use imposition. And with such it were easy for moderate men to hold brotherly love and peace. 2. Some we shall meet with, that deny infants to be visible church-members, and yet think the infants of believers, to have some promises more than the rest of the world, or at least that they are 'Candidati Christianissimi,' Expectants of a church-state, and are as soon as they un-

^s Some few also there are, that are Antipædobaptists (against baptizing infants) and yet not Anabaptists (as not judging it a nullity, not to be iterated); and these, one would think we might live at peace with.

derstand any thing, to be bred up as catechumens in the Church-seminaries, and to be baptized, as soon as they are actual believers. And as far as I understand them, some of them will consent that they be offered and dedicated to God in infancy, and solemnly received, by ministerial imposition of hands, into the state of expectants. If these men be of peaceable, moderate spirits, and agree with us in other matters of religion, in the substance at least, they must needs acknowledge, that in the fore-described practice of confirmation, we come so near them, that they cannot deny us brotherly love and peace. For I hope they will not think, that they may lawfully deny these, yea, or their communion, to all that be not punctually of their opinion, against the church-membership and baptism of infants. 3. And as for all the rest of the Anabaptists, that hold also the doctrine of Pelagianism, or Socinianism, or Libertinism, or Familism, or Quakers, or Heathenism, they are not in a capacity for us, to treat with about accommodation, or Christian peace.

But yet as to all the intemperate, dividing, unpeaceable Anabaptists, that will but reproach us for our drawing so near them, at least we shall have this advantage against their reasonings, that we shall be far better able to manifest the vanity of them, than otherwise we could do. For whereas their common argument against infant baptism is, that it defileth the church, by letting in all the children in the nation, which must be cast out again, or the most will be openly vile; and that it defraudeth the adult of the benefits of solemn engagement to Christ; all this will be taken off by confirmation, and will lie no more on us, than on themselves, seeing by this means, we can as faithfully hold the church-door against the adults, that are unfit to enter into the number, as they can.

And here I shall entreat the moderate, godly persons among us, that are of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, or Erastian judgment, yea, and the first and second sort of Anabaptists, to consider how nearly we are all agreed, or how near to an agreement, when we are not aware of it, or live at such a distance, as if we were not aware of it; and whether it be not our duty to close upon this practice, at least much nearer than we are? It is a sad and fearful case, when men professing godliness, and all pretending to a love of unity, peace, and holiness, shall hate or oppose

each other, and separate from each other, upon a pretence that we differ in things that we are not agreed in; and when such shall persuade the common enemies, and the ignorant people, that we differ where we do not: as if the enemy had not already matter enough of reproach against us, nor the ignorant matter enough of temptation and offence, but we must falsely give them more, by seeming to differ when there is no such thing! And if this be caused, by any men's hating their own principles, when they see them in another's hand, or yet by hating the practice of their own principles, I leave it to the consideration of sober men, whether such are more like to the ministers of Christ, or Satan.

Give me leave here a little, by way of Application, to review what I said concerning our accord.

1. How much many brethren of the Episcopal judgment, do censure other men's attempts, for reforming their congregations, is too open to be hid. But how much little cause they have to be offended with any moderate attempts, let their own forecited principles be judge. I know that it is the administration of government of the churches, that seems by the noise of opposition among us, to be the greatest point of differences; but as far as I can discern, it is not so. The constitution of our churches is the great difference: it is a shame to speak it; we differ most where we are agreed. I have so much experience of the minds of godly ministers, and private men in England, that I dare boldly say, would we but all agree in practice, in the constituting our churches of due materials, where, for ought I know, we are almost all agreed in principles, there were no probability, that all the rest of our disagreements, would keep us at a quarter of the distance as we are. Truly the common, honest, godly people, stick not much on the difference in formalities, and extrinsic modes of government. If they hear a minister pray heartily, preach soundly, judiciously and powerfully, live holily, righteously, and charitably, and beat down sin, and set himself to promote true piety, they are, commonly where I am acquainted, if not indifferent what forms of government he is for, yet at least, can easily bear with him, though he differ from them. Let us have the work of God well done, and we shall care the less who it is that doth it. The greatest offence, that commonly is taken

against Episcopacy is, 1. The former viciousness, negligence and persecution, that men of that way were guilty of; and, 2. Because men know that a diocesan bishop hath so much work upon his hands, that he will certainly leave the far greatest part undone. So that the question is not so much 'who shall do the work,' as 'whether it shall be done or not.'

But now if this principle were practised, in which we are agreed, about confirmation, or at least, a public profession, that so our churches might be constituted of fit materials, and not be pestered with so many infidels, or persons so ignorant as that they know not Christ; or persons so notoriously vicious, as they are openly brutish and profane, and make a very scorn of honesty and godliness, this would do much to heal all the rest of our divisions. The Country knows, that the reason why the multitude of ignorant, ungodly people are for Episcopacy, is principally because they think that government will do as it did, and rather curb the Precisians, as they call them, than them, and will not trouble them with a differencing discipline or administrations, nor urge them so hard to labour for knowledge, and live a godly life. Take away this conceit from them, by the faithful practice of your own principles, and they will hate you as much as others. What great satisfaction would you give to all that fear God among us, if you would practise but that which the Rubric of the Common-Prayer Book requireth of you, in this one point? For it requireth not only a learning of the catechism, but also a public owning of their baptismal covenant in the face of the congregation, and a solemn promise to live a holy, obedient life, and this at full age; and after this they must be confirmed, before they be admitted to the sacrament of the Eucharist. That it may appear how fully we are agreed in this point, I shall transcribe some more of the Rubric of Confirmation, which is as followeth:

The reasons given why none shall be confirmed, till they can answer such questions of the catechism, as they shall be opposed in, are these, '1. Because that when children come to the years of discretion, and have learned what their godfathers and godmothers promised for them in baptism, they may then themselves with their own mouth, and with their own consent, openly before the church ratify and con-

firm the same; and also promise, that by the grace of God they will evermore endeavour themselves, faithfully to observe and keep such things as they by their own mouth and confession have assented unto. 2. Forasmuch as confirmation is ministered to them that be baptized, that by imposition of hands, and prayer, they may receive strength and defence, against all temptations to sin, and the assaults of the world and the devil, it is most meet to be admitted, when children come to that age, that partly by the frailty of their own flesh, partly by the assaults of the world and the devil, they begin to be in danger, to fall into sundry kinds of sin. 3. For that it is agreeable with the usage of the church in times past; whereby it was ordained, that confirmation should be ministered to them that were of perfect age; that they being instructed in Christ's religion, should openly profess their own faith, and promise to be obedient to the will of God.'

This, with what was before cited shews, that in this main point we are agreed with the brethren of the Episcopal judgment, and therefore may expect their concurrence: and to that end, we desire them to promote the practice of their own principles: and let us not leave the work of God undone, while we strive who shall do it, or rather who shall not do it. If the canons allow the bishop's suffragan to do it, you may bear with others of the same order to do it, rather than leave it undone.

2. And for the Presbyterians, I entreat them to consider, (1.) How much the faithful practice of this duty, will put by all the offence and mistaken reasons of the Erastians, who ask them so earnestly, 'How they can prove that people must be examined by the minister, in order to the Lord's-supper, any more than in order to a day of thanksgiving?' I know it is an easy matter, to prove that a pastor may call his people to private, personal instruction, at any fit season; and therefore before a sacrament when he sees just cause; and they are bound to obey him, ordinarily, by virtue of the general precept, "Obey them that rule over you," &c. (Heb. xiii. 17.) But if you make this the reason and use of your examination, to admit men out of a state either of catechumens, or infant members, into the number of adult members, and never trouble them afterward with examinations, unless upon some special occasion, or in your ordinary course

of personal instruction, this would put by the opposition of gainsayers ; and I think, satisfy all of them that have any sober considerations and love to the prosperity of the church.

(2.) And consider also how much this way would facilitate your course of discipline ; you would be much more clearly satisfied, who are your church-members, and of your special charge, and on whom you are specially bound to exercise discipline, and to whom you owe your special care and labour ; and your people will be better satisfied than now they are, both of the quality, and regular reception of members, and who they be, to whom they owe the special duty of members, and whom they are more especially bound to communicate their worldly goods in their necessity. How much uncertainty, confusion, dissatisfaction and neglect of duty remaineth in those congregations, where this work is quite omitted, is obvious to common observation.

(3.) And if any should have a jealousy of this design, as seeming to set up the Congregational way of covenanting ; I entreat such to remember, 1. What an enemy to the unity of the church, and how unbeseeming a charitable Christian, a spirit of causeless jealousy is. 2. That it should be the more grateful to you, because it is acceptable to your brethren. If you are lovers of unity and peace, you will be far from avoiding a practice, because those hold it with whom you would be united, that is, because it tends to unity ; but rather you will be glad of such a healing means. 3. Consider that it is no more the Congregational men's principle, than the Episcopal Presbyterians, and the Erastians. It is our common principle, let us therefore make it our practice ; an easy, a reasonable way of agreement. The not practising of this, hath cast us into confusion ; and the practice of it, must be it that must restore our church order, and heal most of our divisions. I know it is agreeable to your judgments. I move you not to forsake your principles, but to practise them. Do but enrol those only for your adult church-members, that are confirmed, or approved, upon a personal credible profession of true Christianity, and consent to live under your ministerial discipline ; and it will do more than you can easily now apprehend for an union with your brethren, and for the closing of the sad and long continued divisions of the churches.

3. And to the Congregational brethren, I may boldly say, it is a practice so suitable to your own practice already, (although I think it is a more regular performance of it that I propound, than most have used) that in reason we may expect your approbation and concurrence. Perhaps you will fear that some of your brethren may slubber over the work, and make but a ceremony of it: but so may some of your own mind, if they be personally remiss and negligent, as well as others. And perhaps others will fear lest *you* should use it over-rigorously, and make it a pretence for excluding many that are not to be excluded. But this will be according to the prudence and charity of particular pastors; and is nothing to those principles, in which we are all agreed: only I beseech you in the fear of God, take heed of giving just occasion of this offence. Be not righteous overmuch: remember how tender Christ is of his little ones; and how he is displeased with those that keep them from him; and will not break the bruised reed. If he carry the lambs in his arms, and gently drive those that are with young, it be- seems not us to turn them out of the fold, or to disown them. We are commanded to "receive him that is weak in the faith, though not to doubtful disputations." (Rom. xv. 1.) It is a conjunction of impiety, injustice and uncharitableness, to thrust back those that Christ would have admitted. It is *impiety*, to rob Christ of his church-members, and diminish his visible flock, and wrong those whom he values as his jewels, and is tender of as the apple of his eye. It is great *injustice*, to defraud men of their due, in so great a matter as his church-privileges and helps to heaven. It is greater injustice, than to turn them out of their houses and lands; for the benefits are greater. It is *uncharitableness*, to deal so cruelly with us, in matters of such consequence. And it is the greater, 1. Because it is none of our own, but our Master's treasure which we deny them. 2. And because we are conscious, if we are Christians indeed, of so much sin and unworthiness ourselves, as should provoke us to deal the more tenderly and compassionately with others. I would not have you blind under pretence of charity, nor to let in known swine, for fear of keeping out the sheep. But remember, that when the case is but so doubtful and difficult, that you cannot know certainly the tares from the wheat, or cannot make a separation without a danger of pull-

ing up the wheat with the tares, it is better to let both alone till harvest. We will not be wilfully guilty of men's lying, or hypocritical professions; but if they be guilty of them, we may yet believe that God hath much service for hypocrites in his church. And the number shall be some honour to him; and some encouragement to some that are yet without, to draw nearer us. Though it be the intention of Christ in instituting his ordinances, and the intention of the church, that men be truly penitent believers before they are baptized, at age, or admitted into the number of adult church-members, and to the Lord's-table; and so never made the Eucharist an ordinance which is primarily and directly intended for conversion of the unregenerate, and which known ungodly men may seek, and be admitted to, in order to their conversion: Bellarmine himself confessing that such come into the church '*præter intentionem Ecclesiæ.*' Yet Christ that knew abundance of unsound professors would thrust themselves into the church, hath provided those ordinances there, which conduce much to their regeneration: and even the Lord's-supper, though instituted primarily for another use, may be a means of this, to those that yet unworthily drew near it. However, if we be commanded to invite, yea, and compel men to come into the church, that the house of Christ may be filled, we must not be too scrupulous in admitting them, nor too busy in keeping them back. If any where, it is here that Christ is likely to say, '*Odi servum nimis diligentem.*' If men make a credible profession, I dare not refuse them: nor dare I by my uncharitable incredulity, take that for incredible, which I cannot prove to be so. His profession is the evidence of his title with the church. If I will deny him when he seeks admittance, I must disprove that profession, and shew it to be invalid. Truly much-experience hath taught me, that many that were never commonly noted for godliness, and that through bashfulness, or want of expressions, or the hindrance of carnal friends, and worldly affairs, have lived as strangers to those that are eminent for the fear of God, have yet at last, disclosed themselves to me, to have been humble, serious Christians many years, as far as I was able to judge. Especially take heed how you slight or reject people for want of parts, or gifts, or utterance. I have known excellent Christians, that through bashfulness are not able to give an account of

their knowledge of the very fundamentals of religion, to a person whom they much reverence, and are in awe of. And I meet with many ignorant people, that in answer to many of my questions, do seem to be ignorant of Christ himself, who yet shew the contrary, when by other words, I have caused them better to understand me. If people be but desirous, and willing, and diligent, it must be very gross ignorance indeed, that must warrant us to refuse them. Many thousands are guilty of wrongly intruding into the church, when the ministers and church were not guilty of wrongly admitting them, but had been culpable if they had refused them.

I speak all this to the Congregational brethren rather than the rest, because they are most suspected to be over-strict in their admissions; and because I would entreat them to avoid all just occasions of offence, and disunion in their practice, when we are all so happily agreed in our principles, in this great point, of the necessity of an approved profession.

4. And for the Erastians, as in the point of discipline, they commonly contend with us upon a mere mistake, thinking we claim a proper 'Imperium,' or Magisterial power, when as we claim but the power of an Ambassador, with such a kind of power as a physician hath over his patients, or as Plato, or Zeno had in their schools, (besides the ministerial power in worshipping) so their principal quarrel with us, will be removed by the practice of confirmation. You talk much of the sacraments being converting ordinances, and against examining men in order to the Lord's-supper, and keeping men away. But are you not agreed with us, That a personal understanding, serious profession of Christianity, even of faith and repentance, which containeth a renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil, is necessary to those that will, either by baptism or confirmation, be admitted into the number of adult members of the church? And do you not grant that the adults, whether before baptism or confirmation, are to be tried and approved by the pastors, before they baptize or confirm them? Grant us but this, and that the ancient discipline should be exercised in the church, which the Scriptures and all the church-cansons do record, and we shall be agreed with you in a moment. For baptism we are no stricter than the Common-prayer-book, that required that the party, by himself or others, did 'Pro-

mise and vow, 1. To forsake the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of the wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. 2. To believe all the Articles of the Christian faith. 3. To keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of his life.' That so, it may be truly said of the baptized, that 'He is made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor (or heir) of the kingdom of heaven:' and of the confirmed, we expect but that which is here said to be given, and assured in baptism, viz. 'A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; that being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace:' yea, we expect but what is required of persons to be baptized; viz. 'Repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament.' All these are the words of the catechism in the Common-prayer book. Yea, we expect but that open profession before the congregation, which the forecited rubric of Confirmation requireth; no, nor always so much as that. So that I may well suppose, that no godly, moderate man of the Erastian way, can dissent from us in this point of confirmation: and a consent in this, will be next to a consent in all, between us and them.

5. And for the Anabaptists themselves, though we expect not their consent, yet we may well expect their moderation, and non-opposition, and that as we thus draw as near them as possibly we can, so they would lay by all bitterness and reproach, and divisive carriage, and come as near us as they can. And as now with the more moderate of them, our difference appeareth less than many of them imagined, so it may appear, that the distance in affection and communion shall be no greater than there is cause. The odium of division and unpeaceableness, hath so long lain upon their party, that methinks they should be willing to have it taken off. And there is no way to take it off, but their visible amendment; by becoming lovers and promoters of union, communion, and peace among the churches of Christ. Men will never take your opinion to be of God, while general experience shall shew them, that it will not stand with that love, union and communion of the saints, but engageth almost all that receive it, in divisions, opposition and reproach of the servants of Christ and his churches. Though you think

your own opinion right, let it not so far dispossess you of charity and reason, as to unchurch all the churches of Christ, that think otherwise, or to cast off communion with the godly that are not of your opinion; as long as we come so near you, as to take none into the number of adult church-members, but those that are confirmed, or approved by Christ's ministers, upon their personal, credible profession of faith and holiness.

Lay all this together, and we may well conclude, that this practice of ministerial approbation and confirmation, or restoration of all that are admitted into the number of adult Christians, or visible church-members, and to their privileges, is so necessary, and so admirably fitted, both for Reformation and Reconciliation of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Independent, Erastian and moderate Anabaptists, and to stop the mouths of the intemperate, and of the Papists, that all magistrates, ministers and people, that love the church's purity and people, and long to see it cleansed and healed, should gladly embrace it, and vigorously promote it.

I have two things yet more to do upon this subject, 1. To answer some Objections; and 2. To give some Directions to all sorts, for the effectual putting it in execution. The Objections are these.

Object. 1. 'You will tempt the Anabaptists to say, that this is but a shift of our own devising, instead of baptism, lest we should yield to them, when we are convinced of the necessity of a personal covenanting with the adult.'

Ans. There is no ordinance or truth of God, that will not be spoken against by mistaken men, and yet we must not therefore cast them away. Nor is it the way to vindicate a truth or ordinance from reproach, to disclaim it, and so to reproach it actually ourselves. Nor is it the way to get advantage of an adversary, to fly from him too far into the contrary extreme, but rather to come as near him as the truth will give us leave. And to the Anabaptists' objection, we shall give them our reasons against their way, in a more fit place, and have already done it. We are most certain that the servants of God of old, both with circumcision and without it, (Deut. xxix,) did enter their children into covenant with God, as well as themselves. And if it be the express word of God, that both infants and aged should be entered

and engaged to him in covenant, we will obey his word, and do both, though the Anabaptists will do but the one. He must have a hard face, that will deny that it was once the duty of parents, to offer their children to God, and enter them into covenant with him; and when they have proved that this duty or power is recalled, (which I never yet saw done, no not in Mr. Tombes's last voluminous review,) then we will forbear it; but till then it is not men's talk and confident words that must make a tender conscience yield, to omit so great and plain a duty, or give up so great a mercy as this is. I am sure that infants were then no more able to believe themselves, nor enter themselves into covenant with God than now; and I am sure parents by God's appointment, did it for them, offering and engaging them to God, and that God hereupon is called their God, and they his people, and that usually the sign of the covenant was annexed. And I am sure that parents have as much natural interest in their children now as then: and I never yet saw where God had acquitted us of this duty, or withdrawn this mercy from us, and our seed.

Object. 2. 'The proof which you bring for this confirmation is so obscure, that it is not likely to be generally received.'

Answ. 1. It was generally received in almost all the churches on earth, till lately: and as far as I plead for it, it is yet, doctrinally at least, owned and maintained, even by those churches that practically have disused it. Of all the Christians on earth, I suppose there is a thousand, if not ten thousand for it, (doctrinally or dogmatically) for one that is against it, if we judge by the laws, confessions and writings of their guides. Though the Greeks I know do not own the Popish confirmation, nor have it so formally as they should, and the Papists have corrupted it by their abuse; yet the thing in substance is owned dogmatically by almost all the Christian world: and they must be very singular persons that disown it. 2. And I think the proof that hath been given you is clearer, than you have for the morality of the Lord's-day, for constant family prayer, for infant baptism, and many a holy duty, which yet we have sufficient proof for. What would you have plainer? Is there the least doubt of it, whether a personal profession and covenanting with God, be necessary to him that will be taken into the number of

adult Christians, and possess their privileges and communion? or whether this profession must be approved by the pastor of the church, and known to them that must hold communion with him? Prove, if you can, that ever one man was admitted among adult Christians to enjoy communion with them, without such a personal profession. You cannot prove it. If infant-covenanting were enough for the adult, then infidels are believers.

Object. 3. 'But this will make ministers to be lords of the church; when no man can be taken into the church, or possess the privileges of a Christian, till he be approved by them. This will put a tyrannical power into their hands.'

Answer. 1. Such a tyrannical power as every physician hath, who may choose or refuse his patients; or every school-master hath, that may choose or refuse his scholars, if he engage not himself to the contrary, as Plato, Zeno, and every philosopher did in his school.

2. It is such a tyranny as Christ hath unquestionably set up; and to accuse him of setting up tyranny, is an unkind part of them that look to be saved by him.

3. It is a power that hath constantly been exercised by the officers of Christ, and did not men find out the tyranny of it till now? What prince did govern the church doors, and judge who should be admitted, from the days of Christ till Constantine's days, when the church was at the purest; yea, or ever after so many hundred years? Did not all the apostles, and every preacher of the Gospel baptize those that they converted, and judge of them whether they were baptizable? And did not the bishops confirm the baptized, without consulting another power? Half that were admitted into the church by baptism, for some hundred years after Christ, were the adult; and of these the pastor required a personal covenant and profession. The other half were their infants; and for them they required the parents' profession, and entering them into covenant: but still the pastors were the judges, who were the administers.

4. If you think it too much power for us, I beseech you think it too much work for us: and dream not that we have a work, and not power to do it, or discern what we do. Set others to do it, that you can better trust.

5. Who would you have trusted with this power? Some-

body must have it. I have proved to you fully, that every man must not be the sole judge of his own fitness for baptism or church-privileges; and that the people or magistrates are not the sole or chief judges: and who should it be but they to whom it is committed by Christ in their call to the office of the ministry?

6. Ministers, as I before shewed, have no tyrannical or arbitrary power; for Christ hath tied them by a law, who to admit, and whom to reject; and if they disobey this law, the magistrate may correct them: so that in the exercise of this tyrannical power, every minister is under the lash of the magistrate's violence, if he grossly offend, whereas none of the people are under any violence, or force from us to obey us; but if all of them disobey us and rebel, it is their own loss, and we have no remedy. This is the tyranny.

7. Lastly, if you think it (as it is) so great a power, for us to judge of men's profession and fitness for church-privileges, let it awaken you the more, to get the wisest, ablest men you can for the ministry, that are fit for so great a trust. If the best that are to be got, are not in the office, beshrew our governors, and the choosers. And if you do not cast us all out, if you can put fitter men into the place, that are more meet for the trust, beshrew you for your negligence: we give you no thanks for it. But if you have no fitter for this work and trust, will you cast it upon *unfitter*, or on none? It is a great trust for a physician to be trusted with your lives, and a schoolmaster and tutor with your children: But what of that? will you therefore trust the good women, or common neighbours about you with them; yea, or the magistrate himself? Or will you have no tutors or physicians? Or rather will you not be the more careful to keep out empirics and unworthy persons, and get the ablest and most faithful that you can? O unthankful men! that grudge us the power of labouring and spending ourselves for their salvation, and judging, where we must act!

Object. 4. 'Is it not the use of the Lord's-supper to confirm us; and do not men there renew their covenant and profession? What need is there then of any more?'

Answer. 1. You would think much, if at the Lord's-supper we should openly call each man to a personal explicit profession of his faith, and covenanting with God: and indeed

it would be a tedious, as well as unseasonable work. It is but a general or joint profession of all together, that is there renewed; and notwithstanding that, there may for ought we know, be many a one there that is an infidel, and knoweth not what Christianity is. 2. The Lord's-supper is the food of the soul, confirming by way of nutrition and augmentation; and therefore you must shew that you are alive, before you may partake of it. It is a feasting upon Christ, and with him in his family, and at his table: it is a work of communion with Christ and with his saints: it is one of the highest privileges of the church: and therefore you must produce your title, before you can lay claim to it. If a man must be admitted to the Lord's-supper, without any precedent, personal profession or covenanting with God, upon supposition, that by the act of receiving he doth all this; then men that know not whether there be a Christ, or what he is, may be admitted: for multitudes of such there are, that in infancy were baptized: and I know not by seeing him receive, whether he know or believe any thing of Christianity. If a man converted at age from heathenism, may not be admitted to the Lord's-table without a personal profession in baptism, then neither may such as are baptized in infancy, be admitted without a personal profession, in confirmation, or such as is without any other baptism. Our parents' profession will not serve our turn, instead of our own, when we come to age. And therefore this objection is vain, unless infidels may be admitted to communion, and all be common. But I need not speak much of this, because I shall have few such objectors to deal with: even the Papists themselves are many of them against promiscuous communion, though the Jesuits of late, have fitted almost all their work, to their man-pleasing design: (See Joh. Thauleri flores. cap. 23, 24. p. 257, &c.; an old Puritan, among the Papists:) and they make confession also prerequisite.

Object. 5. 'According to your arguing, confirmation is not necessary to those that were baptized at full age; and therefore it is not necessary to any, if not to all.'

Ans. I have given some reasons why it should be used with all that have opportunity after baptism; but I have proved it more necessary to those that were baptized in infancy: and if it were necessary to no other, it would not follow, that it is not necessary at all, because not to all.

Object. 6. 'Is it not better take up with an implicit profession and covenanting, than make so great a trouble to ourselves, and disturbance among the people, as this will make?'

Answ. 1. Methinks, not only the face of the Roman church, but of our own, might by this time have afforded us satisfying experience, what implicit faith, and implicit professions are, and to what they tend. Peruse the forementioned evils of this course, and look upon the state of our people, where you may see them in existence, and then judge whether this objection be answered.

2. An implicit profession, is the lowest and least, that in any case of extremity or necessity can be thought tolerable, and accepted by God, and consistent with the life and being of a church. And shall we deliberately choose to offer God the worst, the least, the lowest that is possible to find acceptance? Nay, he will have the best, as he deserves the best or he will not accept it, when we have it to give: shall we think that in a case of freedom, the same will be accepted, which necessity only can excuse? Or shall we be content that our churches have as many diseases as will consist with life and being?

3. An implicit profession makes or proves men but implicitly Christians. Such dumb uncertain signs, do leave us in so great uncertainty of the thing signified that it seems but a very mocking of God (that will not be mocked) when we have opportunity for an open intelligible profession, and will not use it, or require it.

4. It is against nature, for a man that hath a tongue in his head, to refuse to utter his mind any otherwise than by dumb shows, and yet expect to be understood and accepted. What is the tongue made for but to express the mind? Indeed if a man be dumb, and can neither speak nor write, it is more tolerable to take an uncertain sign from such a man, than from another that hath the use of tongue or pen.

5. It is a very implicit denying of Christ, which many call an implicit profession. If a man that hath a tongue in his mouth, shall refuse to profess the Christian faith, and quarrel with the minister that calls him to it, and say, We shall have no other profession from him than to come to church, and put the bread and wine into his mouth, and not to deny Christ expressly, I leave it to any reasonable man,

whether there be not so much of an implicit denying Christ in this refusing to confess him, when they are called to it by their pastors, whom God hath commanded them to obey, and that in a case and season, when all the church hath required it, or taught it to be due.

6. It is contrary to the honour of Christ, and the very nature of Christianity, for men to take up with implicit, uncertain professions, when we have opportunity of more open, free professions. He is not a master to be ashamed of: and he will have no servants that will not confess him before men, even in the hazard of life; much more in days of the freedom of the Gospel. As "with the heart men must believe to righteousness, so with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. x. 10.) What reason have we to whisper or draw back in a cause of such a nature and weight as this?

7. Shall we thus teach our people to esteem Christianity, as an unobservable thing, by no more observing it? The solemnity of men's transition into the adult state of actual believers, doth make it more observable in the eyes of men; and they will see that there is more in it, than commonly is now esteemed. I find by experience that our people hate no preaching more, than *differencing* preaching, which leaves or shuts them out from the number of the sanctified, and sets them as on the left hand, in the face of the congregation, and judgeth them before the time; but fain they would have ministers confound and jumble all together; and then you may make them as great sinners as you will, so you will make them no worse than the justified, that are forgiven, and shall be saved: and so in practice, they love no differencing ways. But shall we so far gratify the devil and the flesh? No; we must labour to make the difference between Christ's servants and the world, as conspicuous as we can, that the consciences of poor sinners may rather be awakened, than cheated by us; and therefore we should choose the most solemn transition, and record the names of the confirmed, and let the people be brought to a public observation, of the necessity of faith and holiness, while the covenant and profession of it is made so necessary.

8. That is the best means, that is fittest to attain the end; the end of a covenant is to oblige, and the end of a profession to declare the mind: and I pray you which is fittest for these ends; an express profession and covenant,

or a dumb uncertain sign, by coming to church, paying tithes, &c.?

9. Such dumb professions are less tolerable now, because we have many in our assemblies that we know to be no Christians. I know of many that will hear, that believe no life to come, and secretly make a scorn of Christ and Scripture, and many more that know not what Christianity is, as is aforesaid. Now shall we take up with such signs of Christianity, as we see and know are commonly used by infidels, when we may have better?

10. It is essential to a profession to be in some measure, explicit; for 'proficeri' is but 'palam vel publice fateri'; it is no profession if it be not, or pretend not to be, an expression of the mind; and therefore to be implicit and not express, is so far to be against the very nature of the profession; in that measure as your profession is implicit, as it is called, and not express, in that measure it is no profession at all.

Object. 7. 'But when you have the most express covenant or profession, you are not sure that it is true, and that the man is a believer at the heart.'

Ans. 1. I am sure that it is truly a profession, that is, a pretended sign of the mind, though I am not sure that it is true profession, that is, a true infallible sign of the mind: I can know the metaphysical, though not the moral truth of it. And then I can be sure that I do my duty, and take up according to the directions of Christ. It is his work to judge the heart immediately, as being his prerogative to know it: but it is my work to judge of the credibility of the profession. 2. And what if I have no infallible certainty? Must I therefore throw up all, and make the pastoral church-government to be void, and cast open the vineyard of Christ to the wilderness, and not so much as require a credibility, because we cannot have an infallibility? This may not be.

Object. 8. 'But this will encourage the Anabaptists and Congregationalists, in their express covenantings, by our coming so near them?'

Ans. 1. I may better say, you will make men Anabaptists, and drive them too far by your looseness, and wilfully shunning plain duty. How can weak professors be drawn to think well of that party, which they see do shun so needful a work of God? 2. Love and peace will teach all Chris-

tians to say, that it is the best for unity and healing of our breaches, to come as near dissenting brethren as we may, and not to fly the further from them. At least we may not run from truth and duty, that we may be unlike our dissenting brethren. 3. And I take it to be my duty to tell this aloud to the Christian world, that after long contest with the Anabaptists, and opposition of their ways, I am grown, as I confidently think, to this discovery of the mind of God in suffering them among us; that he had this great truth and duty, to which he saw it necessary to awaken us; the church having been so lamentably defiled, discipline made an impossible thing, and men's salvation grievously hindered, by the common *secret, unobserved* transition of all people into the name, number and privileges of adult Christians; therefore did God permit these men to step too far on the other side, that the noise might be the greater, and his call the more observable; so that they are his messengers, calling aloud to England, and all other Christian churches in Europe, to keep the door, and repair the hedge, and no more to take an infant-baptism, and profession of our parents, as a sufficient evidence of the title of the adult, to the name, peace, or privileges of Christians; but to give them infant privileges upon the parents' profession; but to require of them a sober, serious profession and covenanting by themselves, in owning their baptismal covenant, before we number them with adult Christians. And that God hath suffered the Anabaptists to make such a stir among us, will prove a mercy to us in the end, if we have the wit and grace to learn this, upon this troublesome occasion; and then the Reformation will do us more good, than ever the Anabaptists did us harm. But if we will not learn, nor obey God's call, we must yet look to be molested by them more, or else to do and suffer worse.

Object. 9. 'But if you will not take a non-renouncing of Christ, and infant baptism as sufficient, without a personal covenant and profession, you may on the same grounds call men every week to such a profession, because that the former profession shews not what they afterwards are, but what then they are.'

Ans. 1. The case is quite another: In your instance, it is but the continuance of the same profession and condition

that is requisite; and I am bound to take it as continued, while I have no evidence to question it, and see the performance of it, as far as belongeth to my cognizance. But in my case, the conditions, and the professions are not the same; a new condition of right, is necessary to the adult, which they had not at all in their infant baptism. Then they entered upon their parents' faith or profession; but at age they must necessarily have a faith, or profession of their own, or else they actually cease to be Christians.

2. And yet, let me add, that frequent professions of faith, and renewing covenant with God, hath ever been used in the church; both before Christ's incarnation and since, and indeed, the Lord's-supper doth import it; and for my part, I think it a very convenient, edifying course, to have the Articles of our faith every day repeated, as the belief of that church, and the people to stand up at it, to signify their consent: so be it, you will not take up with this silent profession alone, and exclude a more explicit one, when it is requisite. But this fitly signifieth our standing to the first.

Object. 10. 'But this will cast you upon the same difficulties which you object to the Anabaptists; you will not know at what age to take men for adult Christians.'

Ans. 1. We shall not accept them for their age, but for their profession; and we can easily tell when they offer themselves to trial and profession, and desire the communion of the church; as the ancient churches could tell when their catechumens were to be baptized.

2. And for the time when we must judge their infant church-state to cease, if they own not the covenant personally, we cannot set a certain year, nor is it necessary; but when their infancy ceaseth, then their infant-state ceaseth; that is, when they come to the full or competent use of reason. But then observe, (1.) That if they be called at such a time to profess their faith, and own their covenant, and refuse it, then we must judge them refusers of Christianity, unless the reasons of the refusal allows another judgment. (2.) Or, if they wilfully neglect, for a considerable space, to own their baptismal covenant, and to seek a standing among the adult Christians, it is a strong presumption that they are backsliders. (3.) If they only suspend their personal

profession at age, we must only suspend our judgment, till we have some light to discern the cause; and cannot be sure that they are deserters or apostates. (4.) But we are sure that they are not to be numbered by the church among adult Christians, till they have produced the evidence of their title, which is no other than *a credible, personal profession*. So that it is easy to know when any such person is to be admitted, and publicly owned as an actual believer, though it be not so easy to discern of all, before that time, whether they are to be reckoned as deserters or not. He that wilfully neglecteth to come among the adult Christians, long after he hath the full use of reason, which is not with all at the same age, is to be much suspected, at least; and commonly about sixteen, or seventeen, or eighteen years of age, is the time when we have reason to expect that they should seek the communion and privileges of the adult; for about that age, they have a competent use of reason.

Object. 11. 'But if you admit them into the church in infancy, say the Anabaptists, you will be obliged to excommunicate them all, that prove ungodly when they come to age, and not to let them silently pass out of the church again.'

Ans. Excommunication is either an excluding them from all relation of members to the Catholic church, or from the actual communion of the church, or from both. The former we can do but declaratively. In the latter we also adjoin the charge of God, for the execution of the sentence. But those that were never personal professors of faith, nor admitted into the communion of adult Christians, are not fit to be cast out of it; and this is the common use of excommunication, to remove those, as unfit, from the communion of the adult, that once were in it, and forfeit that communion; which cannot belong to them that never were in it. And for our declaring them deserters, or apostates, we may do it upon just occasion, but we are not bound to do it publicly by all that are guilty; this being not the excommunication, that is so enjoined in the Scriptures. Where do you find that the church, in Scripture-times or after, was wont to excommunicate apostates? And yet apostates were formerly of the church. It is those that hang on, and pretend still to be of the church, and intrude into the actual

communion of it, that we must cast out, when they deserve it.

Object. 12. ‘ But if they cease to be Christians, you must baptize them again, if you will receive them.’

Ans. No such matter: the Anabaptists themselves will not rebaptize an apostate, when he returneth to the church. He is to be received by confession and absolution, and not by baptism. If a Christian turn Turk, and afterward return, he is not to be rebaptized.

Object. 13. ‘ But by this means you will unchristian the people, and they will be exasperated, and turn heathens, or hearken to any seducers that will mislead them.’

Ans. 1. No: we will unchristian no man; but do that honour to Christianity, and that right to the church and the souls of men, as to make a difference between Christians and infidels, and that somewhat wider than the bare names. He that is a Christian shall be more encouraged by this course, and he that is not, cannot be unchristianed by us. If men will not unchristian themselves, they need not fear lest the just trying and approving of their Christianity should unchristian them. 2. How little honour it is to Christ and the church, to have the number made up, by such as we would disallow, I have shewed you before, and also what a mischief that is to themselves, which some would give them as a benefit. 3. If magistrates and ministers do their duty, yea, or but ministers alone, they will better be kept from heathenism, or other evils in the state of expectants and catechumens, than in the state of church-members, where discipline will make them mad.

Object. 14. ‘ But at least your design looks as if you would keep the children of all such unchristianed; and what work would that make?’

Ans. I meddle not with that question, but leave every man to his own judgment. And if I did myself keep off such children, I think it would prove but very few. For, 1. I would refuse none of the parents that had ‘ aliquid Christi,’ that made but a credible profession of Christianity. 2. I am persuaded that this practice would bring almost all the people to a tolerable profession, when they know it is expected, and what lieth on it. 3. Upon experience now I find, that both the parents are seldom so bad as to be in-

capable of offering their child to God, in the judgment of the church. Nay, commonly here, the more one of the persons is in scandalous sin, the more the other hates it; and they are seldom both grossly ignorant. And those that were delayed on these terms, would receive no wrong by it. God's way is the best. The children of unbelievers must not be inchurched in ways of our devising, nor respected before the honour of Christ, and the common good of the church of God. But of this I say again, I interpose not my judgment, but leave each man to his own.

Object. 15. 'But though confirmation be a duty, yet none but bishops have power to do it; and therefore it is not a lawful thing for presbyters to attempt it.'

Ans. 1. What mean you by bishops^h? It is a word that hath, by men's application, got so many significations, that we may well expect that you give us the definition of a bishop, before you make him the matter of your dispute. And yet I have read so many books that dispute for Episcopacy, and so few that tell us what they mean by it, that I must needs say, that most of them lose their labour, with such as I. If by a bishop you mean such as our English bishops were, or any fixed pastor of many particular churches, I deny that such were ever instituted by Christ, much less have they the sole power of such administrations.

2. Do you mean that it is by God's law, or the laws of men, that diocesan bishops only may confirmⁱ? If by God's laws, prove it, and we shall quickly yield. But that is very unlikely you should do. If you say that only the apostles had this power, I answer, (1.) That then fixed diocesan bishops had none of it; for the apostles were none such. (2.) Then Timothy, Titus, Epaphroditus, &c., whom they pretend to have been bishops, had it not. (3.) Ananias was no apostle, that laid hands on Paul, that he might receive the Holy Ghost. Of this more anon. But if you say, that this power is given to the bishops merely by the laws of

^h *Leg.* Grotii, *Epist.* 162, ad Bignon. p. 397. *Clem. Roman.* against a lower Episcopacy than ours.

ⁱ Petav. himself saith, *Dissert.* *Eccles.* lib. 1, cap. 3, p. 35, Ignorare non potuit Hieronimus quibusdam in locis absente Episcopo Presbyteros idem illud Sacramentum Confirmationis, dedisse: Quod de Ægypto testatur commentarius, &c. And p. 36, he saith, *Constat* solum solos Episcopos ordinario jure tam baptismam, quam pœnitentium reconciliatione administrasse. So that they may then as well forbid presbyters to baptize.

men; than either by the laws of magistrates or of bishops. For the former we know of none in force with us, to that purpose; and if it were, it is a work out of their line, which Christ hath done before them, and not left to them, to describe the offices of the church. And for bishops' canons, we know no power that any bishops ever had, to make standing laws for the Universal Church; nor of any such laws that are obligatory to us: and the opponents themselves do violate the Canons of General Councils without scruple (as the 20th of 1 Con. Nic., and abundance more), and how can they oblige us more than them?

3. Presbyters have the keys of the kingdom; therefore they may take in, and confirm thereby.

4. Presbyters may by baptism take in members into the Universal Church, and judge of their fitness in order thereto; therefore much more may they confirm them, and judge of their fitness in order thereto.

5. It is granted, that presbyters may absolve, which was ordinarily by imposition of hands, yea, saith Bishop Usher, the deacons were sometimes allowed it: therefore presbyters may confirm; or if you yielded but absolution, you would yield much of what we contend for, seeing so many violate their baptismal covenant, that absolution for restoring of them will be as necessary as confirmation.

6. Jerom, that makes presbyters and bishops by God's law to be the same, doth yet according to the custom of the church say, that 'What doth the bishop, except ordination, which the presbyter doth not?' Therefore he supposed that presbyters might confirm.

7. The same Jerom expressly saith, that "Imposition of hands was reserved to the bishop, for the honour of priesthood, rather than by divine ordination^k:" therefore it is but a human institution.

^k Hier. cont. Lucifer. Ad honorem potius sacerdotii, quam ad legis necessitatem. Alioqui si ad Episcopi tantum imprecationem Sp. Sanctus defluit, lugendi sunt, qui in vinculis, aut castellis, aut in remotioribus locis, per Presbyteros et Diaconis Baptizati, ante dormierunt, quam ab Episcopis inviserentur.

Clem. Alexand. Pedagog. 3. Cui imponet Presbyter manus.

Ambros. in Eph. 4. Apud. Ægyptum Presbyteri consignant, si præsens non sit Episcopus.

Grotius Epist. cordes. 154. p. 382. Si recte expendantur quæ ipse Aurelius, de rebus nec vetitis, nec prohibitis disserit, non mirum si in iis alibi atque alio tempore alii fuerint mores; non erat causæ satis, cur tantis animis, tam odiosis illationibus ista

8. The Episcopal divines, and other writers of their side, do commonly maintain the validity of presbyters' ordination, viz. that in case of necessity it is lawful, and where there is no flat necessity, it is not a nullity where it is irregular. I cited "Christian Concord," pp. 53, 54, &c. Many bishops and their defenders, that thus justify the Protestant churches, that have no bishops; as Dr. Field, Bishop Downe, Bishop Jewel, Saravia, Bishop Alley, Bishop Pilkington, Bishop Bridges, Bishop Bilson, Grotius, Lord Digby, Mr. Chisenhal, Bishop Davenant, Bishop Prideaux, Nowel, Bishop Andrews, Mr. Chillingworth: to whom I add (to make up twenty), Bishop Bramhal, of Schism; and Dr. Steward, in his Answer to Fountaine's Letter; Dr. Ferne, and Bishop Usher, in his Judgment, lately published. Abundance more might be easily added; but Mr. Mason's book in Vindication of the Ordination of the Foreign reformed Churches, may serve instead of more.

9. We have no bishop to do it, and therefore it must be done by presbyters: or we have none that we know of; and 'non esse, et non apparere,' are to us all one.

10. Presbyters may impose hands in ordination, and ever did here in England: therefore much more in absolution and confirmation.

11. King Charles, by the advice of his doctors in the Isle of Wight, reserved only ordination, and not confirmation and absolution to the bishops.

12. Presbyters are governors of the churches, which are their pastoral charge; and are called Rectors: (See Bishop Usher's Reduction of Episcopacy, &c. proving it:) Therefore they may do this, which is an act of government or guidance of the particular church.

13. Presbyters must teach and oversee the people as their charge, and deliver them the sacrament: therefore they must judge to whom they must do it.

14. A diocesan bishop is incapable of doing it faithfully. Could one man try, approve and confirm faithfully, all the

questio tractaretur. Nam etiamsi aut baptizatus nunquam ungeretur, aut ungeretur tantum baptismi tempore, baptizante etiam presbytero. Adde etiam si nulla sequeretur manuum impositio, donis illis quæ per manuum impositionem conferebant Apostoli pridem cessantibus, non ideo periret honor præsentis Episcopalis quæ tunc etiam in Ecclesia fuit cum Episcopi et Presbyteri nomen indiscriminatim usurparetur, et cum præsentia illa, non Electione, quæ Alexandriæ primum fieri cepit, Marco mortuo, sed participati consensus gradu deferetur.

souls in two or three hundred churches? It is known that here they did not; and it is plain they cannot. If they lay hands on them without trial, upon the presbyter's words, then (1.) This yieldeth all, save the ceremony which we require. (2.) And it is a venturing their practices on the judgment and fidelity of other men; who may send them infidels to be confirmed for ought they know. But if they try themselves, they are never able to do it for so many, in season; some will be old men, before the bishop will have leisure to confirm them; and many a hundred die without it. Nor do they know the people as their pastors do.

15. The doctrine and practice of the Church of England, under the bishops, is for the power of presbyters herein as far as we desire: for (1.) The presbyters of curates, had by their rubric, the trial and approbation of those, that were sent to the bishop for confirmation. (2.) The bishops accordingly took them on *their words*, with a certificate, and used not to try them themselves, but only to impose hands with prayer and blessing. (3.) And this by the canon, their suffragan also might do; which yieldeth that a presbyter may do it.

16. The pope himself doth yield that presbyters may do it. And Gregory's Epist. to that end, is put into their canon-law, Dist. 95. 1. part. 'Baptizatos etiam Chrismate eos tangere conceditur;' and Gregory's Epist. to Januar. Calaritan. is annexed. By which it appeareth that they took his former prohibition so ill, that he was fain to reverse it. And though (c. 11.) he be forbidden 'Infantes signare,' in the presence of the bishop, without his command, yet so he was forbidden also to administer the Eucharist; yea, and the rural presbyters might not give the cup or bread in the presence of the city presbyters, (c. 12. ex Concil. Neocæsar. 1. c. 13.) But certainly this proveth neither the one nor the other, out of their power.

17. The Papists commonly confess, that presbyters may 'ex dispensatione,' confirm by imposition of hands; so Bellarmine himself. And the schoolmen ordinarily make it an act of the presbyter's power.

18. If it be proper to bishops, that is, either because of their order or jurisdiction. Not of order; for they are of the same order with presbyters, as is frequently confessed by bishops and Papists themselves, and differ but in degree.

Not of jurisdiction ; for it is no more an act of jurisdiction to confirm, than to baptize or give the Eucharist.

19. Protestant divines are commonly agreed, that confirmation is not proper to bishops, but may be used by presbyters. For, (1.) France, Belgia, Helvetia, Denmark, Saxony, Sweden, the Palatinate, the countries of the Duke of Brandenburg, the Duke of Brunswick, the Landgrave of Hassia, with the rest of the Protestant princes of Germany, and also Hungary, Transilvania, the Protestants in Poland, &c., besides Scotland, and so many in England, are all without bishops, having put them down. And though three or four of these countries have superintendants, yet they make not confirmation proper to them. (2.) The English bishops, ordinarily maintain against the Papists, that presbyters may confirm ; and therefore we have their concurrence, as in Dr. Field, Bishop Downname, Mason, and many others is apparent.

20. If all this will not satisfy you, for peace sake, we will forbear imposition of hands, which you suppose to be the bishop's prerogative : and we will be content to do no more, than presbyters always did in baptizing the adult ; even to judge and approve of the capacity of those whom they baptized ; and so will we only judge of the profession and capacity of those that we take charge of, and own as adult Christians, and must administer the Lord's-supper to : and this common reason cannot deny us.

Object. 16. ' But if presbyters may do it, yet so cannot you : for you are no presbyters, as wanting Episcopal ordination : or else schismatical, as having cast them off to whom you were sworn.'

Answ. 1. In my " Second Sheet for the Ministry," and my " Christian Concord," I have answered this already. And for fuller answer, I refer you to " The London Ministers' Vindication," to " Mr. Mason's Vindication of the Ordination of the Protestant Churches," &c. If Bishop Bancroft himself, as Dr. Bernard mentions, in Bishop Usher's judgment, and the rest of the prelates, were against the reordination of the Scots ministers, methinks few should be so much more intemperate, than that intemperate prelate, as to judge their ordination null. And if the Papists in the canon-law, do judge that in some cases an excommunicate man's ordination is valid, methinks Protestants should not be worse to the church than they : especially those that are for the ne-

cessity of an uninterrupted succession of justly ordained pastors ; who must (I dare boldly say) derive their succession from more unmeet, and more incapable hands, than English pastors.

2. No more is necessary to the authority and just ordination of a pastor, but that he enter according to the laws of God ; which laws require us to submit to the trial of our rulers and brethren, magistrates (in some cases) and pastors ; and to come in according to the best means, for election and approbation, that are then to be had and used ; but they bind us not to come in by ways impossible, nor to see that our predecessors through all generations have been lawfully ordained.

3. I have shewed already, and God willing, shall more fully do it, in a Disputation on that subject, that our English Episcopacy was not that which God established, but intolerably inconsistent with it : and therefore neither are men the less ministers for being without their ordinations, nor are they schismatics for consenting to their deposition.

4. As for breaking oaths of canonical obedience to them, I think but few among us did take any such oath, and therefore broke none.

5. Many among us were ordained by bishops, and some that were ordained took not that oath ; and others that did, yet obeyed them while they stood ; and what could they do more ?

6. The younger of ministers had no hand in taking down the bishops, and therefore are not schismatical thereby : and that their ordination is no nullity, Bishop Usher and the other twenty prelatial witnesses forecited will testify.

Object. 17. ‘ But on the contrary side it will be said, that you would set up the Popish sacrament of confirmation again.’

Ans. The Papists have made another thing of it : they use it to infants, and so will not we : they make a proper sacrament of it : they make the visible signs to be anointing and crossing, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; and they make imposition of hands no part of it, but cast it off, though in words they own it. They adjoin a box on the ear, to signify the opposition that Christ’s soldiers must expect¹. They make it to imprint I know not what in-

¹ Vid. Chamier, l. 4. de Sacra, cap. 10, 11.

delible character, and to give grace ‘*ex opere operato* :’ They make it to be an entering of us into Christ’s militia, abusing baptism, as being but an entering us into his family, and not his warfare : all this is nothing to that which I am pleading for, and which the Protestant writers do wish for.

Object. 18. ‘At least you will revive the prelatical confirmation again, which the old nonconformists were against.’

Ans. We will revive nothing of it, but what was good : the corruption we shall omit. They did it but on a few, contrary to their own laws, but we would have it used to all. They confirmed children that understood not what they said : but we shall expect an understanding profession of faith. They did it in a hurry, as an idle ceremony : we would have it done deliberately and with great reverence. The bishop only did it with them, that knew not whom he did confirm, but ventured on other men’s words, or without : but we will have the pastor do it, that knoweth the persons, and hath time to try them, having one parish, and not two hundred to oversee.

Object. 18. ‘But, at least, the Papists and prelates will be hardened or encouraged by your coming so near them.’

Ans. I will not cast off the work of God, because that any will make it an occasion of sin. And I take it to be the more my duty and not the less, because it tends to peace with all. I take it not to be any part of my religion, to study how to cross my brethren, or forbear a practice, yea, so necessary a duty, because they like it. I detest that principle and spirit. I rather fear, lest their own self-conceitedness, interest, prejudice and discontent, will make them dislike it.

Object. 19. ‘What have we to do with the sign, when the thing that occasioned the use of it is ceased ? Imposition of hands was at first only for the gift of miracles.’

Ans. 1. It was much for the gift of miracles, but not only. And if the giving of one sort of the gifts of the Holy Ghost be ceased ; yet the other, more excellent and necessary gifts continue ; and therefore no reason the sign should cease, because it was not appropriated to the gift of miracles. But 2. If any man scruple either the sign of imposing hands, or the name of confirmation, we desire him his liberty ; these are not the things that we contend for. Let him but yield us that which I have shewed to be most certain, and most useful to the church : that is, ‘a solemn transition out of an

infant church-state into an adult, under approbation of the pastors, and the just cognizance of the church,' and let him call it what he will, I shall not much contend with him about the name, or sign of imposition.

Object. 20. 'Abundance of ministers are raw, imprudent young men, and not fit to manage so great a trust: and so it will mar all; while some are so strict, that they will refuse all that seem not godly to their censorious minds; and some will be loose man-pleasers, and let in all, and turn it but to an unprofitable formality.'

Ans. 1. While men are men, they will act as men. If we shall have no church-ordinances and administrations, till you are secured from human abuse of them, you must shut up your church-doors, and give up all; and shut up your Bibles, till Papists and infidels can find no matter of cavilling at the translation. 2. As I said before, this indeed should provoke the magistrate to set a faithful guard on the church-doors, that seeing the pastors have so great a trust, and the danger of abusing it is so great, the worthiest should be chosen that can be had. And if it be not so, you reproach yourselves, that are choosers and pastors, and have the rule. Why choose you not better, if you know where to find them? 3. This objection, is as much against our judging of those that are to be baptized, which yet the ministers that did baptize, have ever done; and were you not baptized already, we must admit you, and judge who is to be admitted, as the ancient preachers of the Gospel did. 4. The Episcopal brethren had no more wit, than to be against confirmation, because one man may use it too strictly, and another too loosely. The Congregational men are not against church-covenants or professions, because one pastor or church may be too strict, and another too loose in judging of men's piety. The Presbyterians are not against trying men before admission to the Lord's-supper, nor against discipline, because one eldership may be too strict, and another too loose. The Anabaptists are not against rebaptizing men at age, because one minister may refuse the fit, and another may take in all that come. Why then should a possibility of ministers' miscarriage cause you to be more against this, than all the rest? 5. If ministers be associated, they will be accountable for such miscarriages; and the advice and admonition of their brethren may do much to prevent or reform such abuses: and the faithful

people of their charge, will somewhat observe them, and “bid Archippus take heed to the ministry that he hath received in the Lord, that he fulfil it.” (Col. iv. 17.) 6. As long as you are not forced into our charge, but have your liberty to choose your pastor, as now it is, you have the less reason for this complaint. If the laws of Zeno, or Plato be thought too strict in their schools, as long as the scholars may choose to come there, and all are volunteers, they may the better bear it. 7. As I said before, the trust must be put in some or other to judge: and where can it be fitter than in them, who by study are prepared, and by office appointed by Christ hereunto? 8. If you will give a presbytery, or one eminent minister in every market-town, or visiters of your own appointment, a special care to oversee the rest in doing this, and such like works, I shall be no gainsayer, so the work be but done: the more inspection and circumspection the better. 9. If one minister refuse the fit, there be many more that will not. 10. Your commissioners may have power moderately to correct the ministers’ abuses in their work.

But because I perceive that rulers are unreasonably jealous, lest the pastors of the church will do too much, rather than lest they do too little, and are more solicitous to use the bridle of restraint, than the spur of instigation; I entreat them to consider these things:—

1. That most certainly there is no part of all our ministry, that stirs up near so much ill-will, passion, malice, yea and persecutions against us, as this part, about taking in and casting out, and exercising the keys of the kingdom; in which you are so jealous of us.

2. And alas! ministers are flesh and blood, as well as others; and all of them too tender of their interest, of profit, of reputation, and ease; which are all contradicted notably by this work. Do you think ministers will be so hot on it, to have their neighbours hate them and revile them, and to live as owls in the places where they live, and to put themselves on a great deal of trouble? Surely it is a very self-displeasing thing to the very nature of man, unless he be a monster, to displease his neighbours, and be hated and baited by them. And it will provoke them not only to forbear all acts of kindness or bounty, but to deny them their due maintenance, as far as ever they can: and many if not most ministers, have no great mind to be so used; nay, had rather lose,

than go to law for all their dues ; the trouble, and cost, and odium of it is so great. So that our Parliaments have been too much afraid, lest ministers should cease to be men, or to be sinners, and to be man-pleasers, and to indulge their flesh ; and lest we should run into the fire, and lie down among the thorns, and choose a life of trouble and sufferings.

3. And methinks, experience should satisfy men of this. Do you not see how backward ministers are to church-reformation, and discipline in the exercise, when they have been most forward for the power ? How little is yet done in it, for all our liberty, after all our prayers, and petitions, and writing for it ? Do you find in most parishes that ministers are prone to overdo ? certainly you do not.

4. Do you not know that all the work of God is so much against nature, and hath such abundance of enemies and difficulties in the way, that few men are likely to be guilty of overdoing ? Why are you not as careful to hinder men from overdoing in sanctifying the Lord's-day, in teaching and praying with their families, &c. but because you see that few need your curb. I am confident, should Parliaments do their best to drive on ministers to such works as these, and make laws upon laws, to spur them to the practice, they would not be able to bring one half of us, nor the tenth man, to reach so far, as Christ hath bound us ; no nor one man of us, in all respects.

And yet I again say, that if any rash men are over rigid and abuse their trust, (which is likeliest to be those whose maintenance no whit cometh from the people ; for in the rest there is more danger of the contrary,) we desire not that we should be exempted from the magistrate's, minister's, or people's due means for their amendment. But let the spur be most used, seeing there is most need ; and let us see some severe laws, to drive us on to those duties, that flesh and blood, and all the world are so much against.

I come now to the last part of my task, which is to give some brief Directions for the most effectual practice of this excellent, needful work. And I shall *first*, speak of the duty of ministers in order to it ; and *secondly*, of the people's duty ; and *lastly*, of the magistrate's. The duty of the pastors I judge to consist in these particulars :—

Direct. 1. Let the pastors in each county meet together, and agree as one man, in faithfulness and self-denial, to do their duty; that the most conscientious may not be liable to the reproach of singularity, because the rest betray them, and the church, and cause of Christ, by withdrawing, and leaving the work undone; too long hath the church already suffered by the neglect, even of godly ministers, that in such a time of leave and help, we still hold off, and dare not venture on a little displeasure of the people, when our ancestors ventured on the flames; I grieve to think what a shame it will be to our names, and to the reformed churches, and what a confusion it may bring upon our faces, before our Righteous Judge. And it is a grief to me, if I were sure of magistrates' assistance, that all our enemies shall say, and that the histories of this age shall tell posterity, that the ministers of England, after fasting, prayers, wars, and vows pretended for reformation, would yet do little or nothing toward it, but preach; even in times of liberty and encouragement, till the magistrate did it: and that it must be the work of the magistrate, after our unworthy, lazy, or treacherous desertion of it. Had we no more help than we have, we might do much, were we willing and unanimous.

Direct. 2. Let us take heed of extending these agreements to any unnecessary circumstances, so as to lay the stress of the business on them, or to make that necessary, which is unnecessary: but let us agree on the general certain points, and leave particular men to their liberty, in modes and circumstances, not judging each other, if we differ herein: or if one be more or less strict than another in the execution.

Direct. 3. Let us all be very careful, that in point of trial and judging men's profession, we avoid extremes: on one side let us not be righteous overmuch, by keeping out any that make the most broken, intelligible profession of faith and repentance, and a godly life, that may be taken for credible: and remember that we are not searchers of the heart, and that charity judgeth not evil of any that are capable of a better judgment. And certainly a humble soul that is conscious of its own infirmities and unworthiness, will be very tender of condemning another, without very satisfying evidence. Of this I refer you to my first dispute, of "Right to Sacraments."

On the other side, let us take heed of turning this duty

into a mere formality, and making nothing of it, but mocking the church and God. Let us not take up with a profession of any other kind of faith, but the true Christian saving faith; nor with any profession of this faith, which we are able to prove to be incredible.

Direct. 4. None of the aged that have already been admitted to the communion of the church in the Lord's-supper, may be brought under confirmation by imposition of hands, as we have before shewed. But all that were yet never admitted to this special part of communion, nor have made any solemn approved profession, should you be called to it, be they young or old, when they demand church communion.

If you ask me what will be done with the rest, seeing they were admitted irregularly, without any profession of the faith? I answer, 1. Acquaint them plainly with the nature of Christianity, and what a church is, and what is the office of a pastor, and what the duty of the flock to God, to him, and themselves, and one to another. 2. Then tell them, that you resolve to proceed according to these rules in the government of your flock; and to exercise this discipline. Tell them plainly (that they be not deceived) both what are the benefits of a church-state and discipline, and what are the difficulties that unprepared men are likely to grudge at; and how hardly they will take it to be followed, and not suffered to rest in sin, and openly reprov'd and cast out with shame, if they will not be penitent and reform. And then tell them, that if there be any that have slipped into a church-state, in show, and knew not what Christianity was, or what they did, and find themselves as yet unfit for it, if they do forbear the privileges of the church, till they are better prepared, and acquainted with them, and can use them to their profit, you shall in the meantime be ready to teach them publicly and privately, till they are prepared: and those that are fit to continue, and use such privileges, advise not to forbear them. But let them know, that you can neither take all the parish, as such, for members of the Universal Church, or of your charge; and therefore must have some better evidence, especially after such a confusion, that negligence hath brought into the church: and you cannot take any man to be of your charge against his will, and therefore you must know their minds. 3. Give them notice, that all that own their church-membership, and will have communion with that church,

under your ministry and pastoral oversight, are desired by you to signify their desires, by giving in their names to the clerk of the parish, or some other fit person; or if they refuse that, by coming to you. 4. When you have their names, keep them some time, while you get information of the persons' lives. And then give notice to all (if it may, to avoid imputation of partiality; or at least, of all that you have reason to suspect of gross ignorance or impiety) by streets, villages, or houses, to come to speak with you, on some appointed days; where you may discern the fitness of some; and such as you find to be grossly ignorant or scandalous, advise them to stay till they are prepared, offering them your help; because else you must do that in a way of discipline, that they are unfit to bear. 5. All that disown their own standing and church-membership, or present right to privileges, and withdraw into the order of catechumens, as being ignorant in what they did before, you may safely teach them as catechumens, and are not bound to enrage them by church-discipline, which they consent not to, and are not capable of. 6. All those that you find tolerable, that have owned their church-membership, and not withdrawn themselves, you ought to keep their names, in a church-book for memory, and to call them solemnly (at some days of Humiliation, or other fit season) to own their relation publicly; their names being read, that all may know with whom they are to hold communion. And if there be need, you may justly require them there openly to renew their profession and covenant with God. 7. Your flock being then reformed and known, you need not call them again, to examination before particular sacraments, or other parts of church-communion. 8. When any members are after added, they should, if unconfirmed, and such as never did communicate, be received solemnly by prayer and benediction; and if they be such as have been admitted to communion, let them be only approved upon renewing their profession. For the one sort are confirmed in their relation to both catholic and particular church; but the other, only enter then into the particular church, being solemnly received into the catholic church before, and perhaps into some other particular church, or into that from which they departed.

Direct. 5. If any come in that have violated his baptismal covenant, by a wicked life, he is before you, receive him,

to give some open testimony of his repentance, if his sin were open, that so he may be ministerially absolved, and the church receive him, not merely as an adult believer, but as a convert, with prayers and rejoicing. And the fuller confession he makes of his ungodly life, and of the way and love of God in his recovery, and the fuller warning he giveth others of the sins that he was guilty of, and the fuller he communicateth to them the satisfying reasons that caused him to turn, the better it is, and more suitable to the state of a penitent; as also the fuller he professeth his resolution to stick close to Christ, by the help of his grace, for the time to come.

Direct. 6. For the execution of this; because all the people cannot be still ready, nor attend, because it is fit they have some cognizance of these things; let some of the most sober, judicious persons be chosen by the church, not into office, but as their delegates, or trustees, to meet with the pastors monthly in some convenient place, where all persons may first address themselves that seek the privileges of the church, and where matters of discipline may be first transacted, before we bring them to the assembly, yet not forbidding any other of the church to be there present that will. And either in that meeting may members after be admitted, and their names made public at the next communion; or else some meetings publicly appointed, four times a year or more, for admitting such in public, as shall be found fittest, which may be at a Fast before a Sacrament: and let any of the church, at that preparative meeting, have leave to put in what exceptions they have against the person for his profession or conversation.

Direct. 7. Let the pastors and churches that live within the reach of any communion, be as many as is possible, associate and meet for the maintaining of communion of churches, by their officers and delegates. And those that differ in such tolerable matters, as may not hinder their Christian or church-communion, and yet are not satisfied to join in Synods with the rest, let them agree upon such terms of communion and Christian correspondence as their principles will admit. And let no stranger be admitted to our church-communion, that bringeth not a certificate (called of old *Communicatory Letters*), or some sufficient testimony from one of these sorts, either from the churches nearly associated,

or those that we agree to take for brethren. And those that bring such certificates must be admitted by us, without any further trial or confirmation; unless there be some notable cause of suspicion. But for those who live in heretical or impious societies, or such as refuse all church order and communion with neighbour-churches, or are justly disowned by the associated churches, we should not admit them to our communion, without a particular trial, or a better certificate than those churches can give them. And thus should all the churches be concatenated, and their communion settled.

Direct. 8. Above all, let every minister see that he wisely and diligently carry himself to the rest of his parish; avoiding indeed, the excommunicate as heathens: but for all that are willing to learn in an expectant state, let us deal lovingly, gently and tenderly with them, denying them nothing that lawfully we can yield them, in matters of burial, marrying, praying, preaching, or the like. And be sure to carry on the necessary duty of catechising, and personal conference and instruction with them, family by family, by which you may the better know them, and prepare them for church-communion, and have opportunity to quiet them, and answer their objections; and they may see that you cast them not off as heathens, but only prepare them for the state and privileges, which they are yet unfit for.

Especially, let us by all possible condescension, meekness, and loving carriage, blameless lives, and charitable contribution to the utmost of our abilities, endeavour to win them, and take off that offence, or at least abate it, or hinder the success of the reproaches of those, that will undoubtedly be offended, by our reformation and discipline. And let us have a vigilant eye upon any seducers, especially infidels, and Papists, that may creep in among them, to take advantage of their discontents; that we may prudently and effectually counterwork them. This much faithfully done by ministers, might be an admirable mercy to the church.

Secondly, The people's duty in order to this reformation before mentioned is—1. Of the godly, and such as are fit for church-communion.—2. Of the grossly ignorant and ungodly that are unfit.

1. The duty of the first sort lieth in these particulars. (1.) They must highly value the benefit of pastoral oversight and church-communion, and therefore be ready to promote

any work of reformation that is necessary, to their more fruitful and comfortable enjoyment of them. (2.) They must so behave themselves as may honour and further the work, and take heed of that by which it may be hindered; lest they weaken our hands and be a stumblingblock to others. For what can a minister do himself, if the church assist him not; much less if they hinder him? Especially, [1.] They must take heed of scandalous sins, which may be a shame to their profession, and open the mouths of the enemies of the church. [2.] They must take heed of sects and divisions, and quarrellings among themselves, which will break them in pieces, or hinder their edification, and make them a stumblingblock to the weak, and a laughingstock to the wicked. [3.] They must take heed of surliness, and pride, and domineering carriage towards those that are yet without: and must be as eminent in meekness, humility, patience, forbearance, and self-denial, as they are in the profession of religion. For a proud, domineering spirit, or strangeness and unnecessary distance, doth lose the ungodly, whom you should be a means to win. [4.] They must study to do all the good they can to those without; be as little as may be in executing penalties on them, and as much as may be possible in speaking kindly and familiarly to them; relieving them in wants, and visiting them in sickness, and think it not much to purchase their love, in order to their salvation, with the loss of your right, or with the price of much of your worldly goods. For all men love those, or at least, will less dislike them, that do no hurt to any, but do good to all, or as many as they can. To be the servants of all, is the highest Christian dignity, and the way to win them. [5.] Take heed of falling out, or contending with any of them, or of giving them any harsh, provoking words, to their faces, or behind their backs. But put up any wrong that is merely your own, and is in your power to forgive, for the sake of peace, and your own neighbours' good. [6.] Be not men of common spirits, or common speech, or a common conversation; but as we must make a difference between you and others in our communion and church-administrations, so let the rest see that it is not without cause. For if you be but like other men, we shall seem to be partial in making a difference between you and other men. Let your light therefore shine before men to the glory of your Heavenly Father. Let them see that you de-

spise the world, and live above it, and can easily part with it; that you can forgive and bear a wrong; that your heart is in heaven, and your treasure there; and that you are the heirs of another world: let all men hear and see by you, that you have a higher design in your eye, than the ungodly, and that you are driving on another trade, than the men that have their portion in this life. Heaven is your real glory; and to be heavenly is your true reputative glory, not only in the eyes of the wise, but of the common earthworms of the world. [7.] Set yourselves in the most diligent and faithful improvement of all your parts and interests to help on the work of God on men's souls. Though you preach not, you have work enough in your own places to do, to further the preacher's work. Speak to poor people prudently, seasonably, and seriously about the state of their souls, and everlasting life: and consult with the ministers, how to deal with them. Tell them in what state you find the people, and take their advice in further dealing with them. O, if our neighbours would but help us in private, and do their parts, and not cast all the burden on the minister, there would much more be done than is! Nay, alas, to our grief and hindrance, some of our professing people are so hot, and self-conceited, and proud, that unless we will outrun our own understandings and be ruled by them, that shut out abundance that the word of God allows us not to shut out, and be righteous overmuch, and shut up the church of Christ, as in a nut-shell; they presently murmur and rebel, and separate, and must betake themselves to a stricter congregation. And others of them, must have us cast off discipline, and cut up the hedge, and admit all to the communion and privileges of the church, and all under a blind pretence of charity; and some learned gentlemen, by words and writings, do enrage our ignorant and ungodly neighbours against us, and make them believe, that we do them some grievous wrong, because we will not indeed deceive them and undo them, and set up new church-orders (or disorders) now in the end of the world, so contrary to all the ancient canons and orders of the church. I honour and dearly love the names of many of these studious, pious gentlemen: but seriously, I must tell them, that they want humility, and in their good meanings do the church a world of wrong. And though they may be more learned even in Theology, than we, yet it is a great matter to have, or to want experience.

They have not been so much in church administrations as we, nor had so much to do with ignorant souls. And verily I must say again, that the bare theory maketh but a bungler in this work : I must much suspect the judgment of that man in matters of church-government, or dealing with poor souls, that wants experience. Let these gentlemen, but turn ministers, (be it known to their faces, there's none of them too good for it, nor too great,) and let them but try our life a little while, and I shall set more by their judgments, than now I do. I read many a physicians' writings, before I was fit to attempt a cure. It is a raw, deceitful kind of knowledge in these practical affairs, that is not furthered by experience.

2. As for the duty of the ignorant, ungodly people, I shall say little of it, because I suppose they are not likely to read or regard what I say. Only in general, it is their first duty, to become truly godly persons, and so to live in communion with the church. But upon supposition that they will not yet be such, their next choice should be to live in quiet submission to their teachers, and patiently stay among the catechumens, and expectants, till they are fit for a higher place and privileges. And with the reasonableness of this motion, and how it conduceth to their good, we should labour to acquaint them, and make them sensible of it, that they may be patient in their station.

Thirdly, Our last work is to tell you, what is the magistrates' part, for the promoting of this work. And I shall urge them here to no great matters, because they shall not say, that we would either drive them in the dark upon questionable things, or put them upon that, which any reason can call persecution, or make them think, that we can do nothing but by their sword. And therefore whether they should force people to be church-members, or Christians, or to come under discipline, are questions that at this time I shall not meddle with ; but

^m *Direct.* 1. It is a great part of the magistrate's duty to

^m In Tertullian's days, saith Albaspinæus in Tert. de prescrip. c. 41, p. 306. The Catechumens being somewhat instructed at home, 'cum cæteris tandem in Ecclesia primis concionibus, quæ in gratiam Catechumenorum habebantur, intererant ; quibus peractis rursus omnes idem ipsi Catechumeni ex templo discedere jubebantur, ne scilicet Divina mysteria rudium conscientia polluerentur.' So that it seems they had then in the morning a sermon fitted for the Catechumens, and all the after part of the worship was more Eucharistical, fitted to the communion of saints.

cause the people that are yet unfit for church-communion, to keep in their visible station, and to behave themselves as expectants, and submit to that instruction of their teachers, which is necessary to prepare them for the privileges of the church ; and to this end the magistrate should, by laws and proclamations, own this ministerial reformation. Alas ! how little knew they, what they did that have so long been jealous of us, lest we should do too much, and under pretence of discipline inflame, or abuse them by severity ! When as it is a work that casteth on us so much rage and hatred, of rich and poor, and calls for such abundance of faith and zeal, and diligence and self-denial, when we have so little, and are commonly like other men, addicted too much to man-pleasing, and to save ourselves, that if we had all the help that magistrates can give us, it is ten to one but we should leave the most of this work undone. Preaching is a very cheap and easy work, in comparison of church-government. They have taken great pains to stop poor, lazy, short-winded men from running up the steepest hill, and carrying the heaviest burden, and passing through the greatest sufferings, that in those prosperous times we can expect. And indeed I know it to be true, that for all the countenance of authority, he that will faithfully execute the pastoral oversight and discipline, shall live a persecuted life, which by mere preaching he might avoid.

Therefore the chief governors of the nation ought to make laws, and cause them to be executed, for the constraining of the grossly ignorant and ungodly, to hear the word preached publicly, and to submit to be privately catechised, and instructed by the ministers, and to command them patiently to wait, as learners in this condition, till they are fit to be approved members of the church. These carnal people look more at the sword and will of the magistrate, in matters of religion, than others do ; because they understand no other argument, and can savour nothing but the things of the flesh. Did but the rulers of the nation hear how they daily inquire what religion shall be owned and

In the ancient churches the Catechumens were not suffered to sit with the church-members, but had a separated place by themselves ; and Tertullian accuseth the heretics for breaking this order, *ut vid. Albaspin. in Tertul. de Præscription. c. 41, p. 306.* He blames them also, that they suffered them to join with the church in prayers, and other holy worship ; *ut Albaspin. ibid.*

settled by them, they would surely think it their duty, to lend them a little more of their help. We desire you not to drive them to Christianity, nor to sacraments, or church-communion; only drive them to hear, and learn, and be instructed, that the light of truth may do the rest. Surely none can reasonably suspect, that this is against the liberty of their consciences, unless the slavery of Satan be their liberty, and it be their liberty to be free from Christ, and righteousness, and heaven. It is hard to believe that governor to be a Christian, that will not do this much to help his subjects to be Christians.

Direct. 2. And as the magistrate should constrain such people to submit to be instructed, so should he constrain the ministers to instruct them, both by public preaching, and by private conference and catechising, if they be able: and if through the greatness of the place, one minister is not able to perform it, there should be so many maintained proportionably, to the number and necessities of souls, as may be able. The reason why ministers themselves should be compelled by penalties are, (1.) Because some are so dull, that they need the spur. (2.) Because our performances will be the less resisted by the people, when they know we are forced by the magistrate. (3.) Because the magistrate's judgment puts much authority and honour on the work, in the people's eyes; compel us therefore, as well as them.

Direct. 3. The magistrate should also impose a penalty upon all that undertake to be pastors of a church, and administer the Lord's-supper, and yet will not make any necessary trial of the knowledge, faith, and lives of those, to whom they do administer it, nor exercise any church discipline on the scandalous; but utterly neglect that oversight and church-government, which is as much a part of the pastoral work, as public preaching is. They that will undertake to be pastors, and meddle with sacraments, must be compelled to do the work of pastors, and to dispense the sacraments in a tolerable order. Though yet we are not for compulsion in any doubtful points, of lesser moment, where a difference among the godly may be tolerated; but that pastors should act as no pastors, and rectors of the churches be as no rectors, and should cherish all ignorance, infidelity, and impiety, and profane God's ordinances, and subvert the communion of saints, and lay the garden of Christ open to

the common wilderness, and thereby make all seem singular to the people, that will not do as wickedly as these; this is not to be tolerated; but the commissioners for ejecting scandalous ministers with the advice of the assistants, should have power to correct them, and in case of obstinate unreformedness, to eject them: not to silence them from preaching to the catechumens or any; but to prohibit them from the actions proper to church rulers or pastors, till they will perform them more agreeably to the Scripture rule.

And this compulsion also of the ministers, we desire especially for the people's sake, who we are content should be excused themselves from any such penal laws, to restrain them from sacraments; but when they know that ministers are under such penalties, they will bear it at their hands, and take it the better, when we deal with them, as the word of God requireth. I hear it with my ears, to the grief of my heart, how some of my neighbours' ministers are spoken against, with bitterness by their people, because they give not the Lord's-supper to all, even to the most ignorant and ungodly, that refuse to be instructed, or so much as to take themselves for any members of the minister's charge: and that which they say is, that 'though bishops and common prayer be taken down, yet the giving of the sacraments to all the parish, is not taken down.' And they that now submit so quietly to the diffusing of so many other things, because ministers are punishable if they use them, would also do the like in this case. And yet if you are jealous, that ministers will go as far on the other hand in refusing the people that are not to be refused, (though with one of an hundred, there is little fear of that) we are contented that you look to us also in this: To which end these two things will be sufficient. (1.) Let the magistrates join with the pastors and delegates of the church in their meetings, where church-affairs are transacted, that he may see what we do. If there be no justice of peace in the parish, let every church have a church-magistrate purposely chosen by the chief-magistrate; or some agent on his behalf deputed thereunto. (2.) And let the magistrate's agent acquaint the commissioners how things are transacted, in cases of complaint, and let them, by the advice of the assistant ministers, correct us as we deserve, if you should imagine this to be necessary.

Direct. 4. The magistrate should promote, encourage, countenance, yea, command the pastors to associations and brotherly correspondences, for the more cautious, and vigorous, and effectual management of these works; and for the concatenation and communion of churches, and the right understanding of each other's affairs; that he that hath communion in one church, may by communicatory letters, have communion in any of the rest; and he that is cast or kept out of one may not be received by the rest, till it be proved that he is excluded unjustly. And those that join not so fully as the rest, may yet be provoked to own one another as far as we can; so that we may maintain brotherly love, with all that differ from us by tolerable differences; and may own them as churches, though we cannot own their different opinions or ways; may have such communion with them, as we may, and upon their letters may admit their members to our communion. This the magistrate should at least openly provoke, and encourage the churches and pastors to; seeing no man can doubt whether it be for the edification of the church.

Direct. 5. For the better promoting of this necessary work, I conceive it would be a very ready and unquestionable way, for the magistrate to appoint an able, godly, moderate minister to be a visiter in each county, or rather in each half or quarter of a county, to see the churches thus reformed, and provoke the several pastors to their duty, and assist them in it, where there is need; but not to have any Episcopal power to punish, or cast out any minister, or excommunicate them, suspend them, or the like; but let every visiter have an agent of the magistrate joined with him, armed with authority to convene the ministers, and examine witnesses, and do what more the chief-magistrate shall see meet, so that still these two visitors go together, but have not the same authority or work; but let the ministers only inquire, direct, exhort, and give account and advice to the civil visiter; and let the civil visiter have all the coercive power; and let both of them transmit such causes as are extempt from their determination, to the commissioners for ejecting scandalous ministers, who by the advice of the assistant ministers, may determine them. These visitors did very much to the first and great Reformation of Scotland, when Popery had overrun all; nor did they scruple the using of them, for all that they were against prelacy.

Direct. 6. It is one of the chief and unquestionable parts of the magistrate's duty, in order to the reformation and peace of the churches, and the saving of men's souls, to see that dangerous seducers be restrained, from infecting and carrying away the ignorant, ungodly, discontented people, that are kept under ministerial teaching, as expectants. I do not move to have men driven into our churches; nor do I move to have an unnecessary restraint laid upon men's tongues or pens, in case of tolerable differences, among the servants of Christ. In this case I only desire now, that the Dissenting godly brethren, would agree together, to meddle with their differences no more than needs, and to manage their disagreements with such cautions, and in such manner, and season, and measure, as may least hinder their success in the common work, viz. the promoting of the common fundamental verities, and the converting and saving of the ignorant and ungodly, and getting down the reigning sins of the world. And then they will find, (1.) That if there be any truth in the private opinions, which they would propagate, it will far easier be received, when the minds of their brethren are sedate and peaceable, than when they are alarmed to the conflict, by unseasonable preaching for the said opinions. (2.) And that the errors, of this lower nature among brethren, which some fear a toleration of, will sooner die of themselves for want of fuel in such peaceable deportment, than when the bellows of opposition, contradiction, reproach, and violence are blowing them up, and putting life continually into them. For most dividers are proud and selfish, and must needs be noted, for somewhat extraordinary; and you take the principal way to animate them, when you make so much ado with them: whereas a few years' neglect, and not observing them, as if there were no such men in the world, (unless when they impose a necessity on us,) would more happily extinguish them. I speak but what I have seen and tried. This therefore is not the matter of my present request, that magistrates would use rigour and violence with godly men, about tolerable differences; which the power of greater light and love in the contrary-minded, is the principal means to reconcile.

But the thing requested now of magistrates is, That they would keep out the wolves, while we are feeding the sheep, or help us in it. That they suffer not damnable deceivers,

or any that plainly go about to subvert men's souls, or the state of the church, to fall in with our ignorant, ungodly people, in the time of their learning and expectancy. And as I shall be ready against any libertine; infidel, or Papist in the world, to prove this to be in the magistrate's power, and his flat duty, of which I hope no sober Christian doubteth, so I shall here lay before the magistrate, the reasons that shall evince the need of his help, in the present case.

Reason 1. The people that we now speak of, are so utterly ignorant, that it is easy to deceive them. It is no dishonour to truth, that a fool or a child may be deluded; but such are not to be left to the malice and craft of juggling enemies.

Reason 2. So wicked are the hearts of those, that we now speak of, or many of them, that they are prepared for deceit, and willing of it materially, though not formally, as such. It is easy drawing men from that which they hate, or their hearts are bent against, and to that which they love, and their hearts are set upon: such gunpowder will soon take fire.

Reason 3. Our people by the aforementioned work of Reformation, will undoubtedly be cast into *discontents*; they will be sorely displeased with their teachers; which is a small matter, were it not that it hindereth their own salvation. They have so long been used to have their own will, and to be admitted even in heathenish ignorance and impiety to the communion of the saints, and all the outward privileges, without any considerable exercise of discipline over them, that now it will be a strange provoking thing to them, when their custom be altered. So that in the discontent and hatred of their minds, if infidels or Papists, or any such malignant adversaries shall come among them, their own malignity and discontent will drive them by multitudes into their nets; and they will turn to the first that comes with any plausible though pernicious doctrine. With half an eye we may easily see this; and therefore, if the magistrate will not help us to quiet and secure the people, and keep off deceivers, while we are catechising and instructing, and preparing the grossly ignorant and ungodly, it will be to the hazard of many thousand souls, and a temptation to many fainthearted ministers again to cast open the hedge, and lay the church's communion common, for fear of the ill

consequence, that will follow to the people by displeasing them.

And yet I may well conclude, that though still the church will have need of some of the magistrate's help in this same way, yet nothing so much hereafter, as at first. (1.) It is custom that most holdeth the people now, and enrageth them against the breakers of it. And when once the custom is broken and turned, they will be much more quiet. (2.) We now find the churches in the rubbish, and have the harshest work at first to do, which will soon be over, and the churches and minds of men more settled. (3.) A few years' practice of confirmation, in the fore-described way, I hope, will introduce such abundance of knowledge, and so increase the face of godliness, that we shall have little need of the magistrate's help, in this kind as now we have. But now at first our necessity is very great.

Reason 4. Moreover, our doctrine and practice is most contrary to men's sins, and carnal interest, and therefore though it be true, yet it is provoking, and seemeth to be against them; as bloodletting, fasting, and bitter medicines to a child, or a foolish patient. And therefore no wonder, if tolerated seducers can draw them from it, by sense or nonsense, in such a case. A little reason seems to take men off from that, which seem against them, or which they hate.

Reason 5. On the contrary, the doctrine and practice of deceivers is suited to their nature, and purposely suggared for them by art. For instance: if Papists fall in with them in the depth of their discontent, and first rail at us as no ministers, but liars and heretics; and then revile us for receiving maintenance (which is their way, though their clergy receive so exceedingly much more) and then tell them of all their ancestors, and then set them upon an easy outside piety, which 'ex opere operato,' will certainly confer grace, and shall take up at the strictest with an auricular confession, instead of necessary humiliation and true church-discipline; and shall make those venial and improper sins, which we make damnable; and shall send many but to purgatory, that according to Scripture, we send to hell: in a word, when they shall comply with carnal hearts and interests but as much, as Montalte, the Jansenian, sheweth us, that the Jesuits do; what wonder if our ignorant, discontented people, do greedily swallow such baits as these,

and turn to such a kind of religiousness! and this makes the Jesuits glad of our Reformation, and stand by us as the crows by the sheep, that they may have our leavings, or all that we cut off: for it is number that they regard; and, if they will but believe in the Pope, they shall be welcome to them; yea, be Catholics and be saved, though they believe not in Christ and the Holy Ghost, nor know what Christianity is. He that thinks I wrong them; (1.) Let him look on millions, and millions in their churches. (2.) Let him but read Fr. a Sancta Clara, Problem. 15 and 16ⁿ.

Reason 6. The adversaries also are very industrious, and have many advantages of us from without. In most churches they will meet, though with godly, yet with young, inexperienced disputers; because our ministry is but reviving, and the young ones must have time to grow. And the Jesuits, Friars, and other missionaries, have a pope and cardinals, and bishops, and princes, and lands, and revenues, and wealth, and seminaries, and trained soldiers in abundance, at their backs beyond sea, to furnish them with continual supply. And how eager and busy they are, the Christian world hath had long experience; so that if such be let loose on ignorant souls, what wonder if they prevail!

Reason 7. And for the event, if the magistrates shall refuse us this reasonable and unquestionably lawful aid, it may be the means of the damnation of many thousand souls. I suppose I speak to Christians, that believe that sin is the poison of the soul, and believe that faith in Christ is necessary, and that there is a heaven and a hell; and if so, they must needs understand what it is to suffer men to draw their subjects from Christ, from Scripture, from the means of Grace, and a holy life; and to draw them into sin. That this is but to give men leave to do their worst, to undo and damn as many as they can; and to take them at the greatest advantage in their ignorance and discontent to trip up their heels, and entice them into hell; how dreadful a thing is this to a magistrate, once to think of, that hath but any belief of Scripture, and pity on the souls of men! And therefore, as long as we do not now call upon them, so much as to force Papists or infidels, either to be of our religion, or to profess that they are so, or join in communion with us, but only desire, that they may keep their venom to themselves,

ⁿ In his "Deus, Natura, Gratia;" where abundance more are cited of his side.

and may not be suffered to take the advantage of our people's ignorance and discontent, undoubtedly the rulers that are friends to Christ and the souls of men, will never find in their hearts, to deny this assistance.

Reason 8. And if they should deny it, in reason they must needs see, that they will fully give up the churches of Christ, that are under their government, to distraction and confusion. They know well enough what would come of it, if every man have the liberty to persuade their armies into mutinies and rebellion; or to persuade the subjects against themselves that rule them; or to entice men's children, or servants to lewdness, or their wives to unchastity. And will they, under pretence of mercy or liberty, permit men to do that against Christ, and the church, and the souls of many that are bad enough already, which they would not, they durst not permit against men's bodies, or against themselves, or against the peace of the commonwealth.

And what a dishonour will it be to Christ and the church, and reformation, and religion; and what a joy to all the enemies of these, to see that our reformation shall breed such confusion, and bring upon us such inconveniences; and all because the magistrate shall refuse his help!

Reason 9. And perhaps, the magistrates will quickly find, that the distractions of the church will breed, and feed such distractions in the commonwealth, as may make them wish they had quenched the fire, while it was yet quenchable. Our unity is not only *our* strength, but *their* strength, especially if they promote it: our divisions weaken us as well as them. What will the magistrate do, if he help us not in this case? Ministers cannot in conscience always forbear their duty, but will set about it. Either the rulers will suffer us to do it, or not. If they suffer us and assist us, it will be our peace, and theirs, and our people's good. If they suffer us, and assist us not, as is now desired, we shall exasperate so many of their subjects by our reformation, and shutting them from church-communion, that will shake the peace of the commonwealth, and the odium will fly on the governors, for setting up a ministry that so provoketh them, and so the people will be still in discontents, and prepared for rebellion, or any violent change. And the fire that began in the church, if it be let alone, may reach the court. But if to mend this, they will put down or hinder ministers, their

persecution will bring down God's judgments on them, and turn the hearts of honest men against them. They have seen what deformation and persecution have done, before their eyes.

Reason 10. Lastly, it will bring a most heavy guilt on the magistrate's soul, which he will never be able to stand under, before the King of all the world. To be guilty of the neglect of an office so divine, received from God, that it might be used for him; and to be guilty of the frustrating of much of our ministerial work; and of grieving the hearts of so many that fear God, and frustrating such hopes as we lately had, to say nothing of the prayers, tears, hazards, blood, and ruin of so many thousands, and the promises, oaths, and covenants to God; to be guilty of the sins of so many thousands, and of their everlasting condemnation; to be guilty of the distractions, and betraying of the church and cause, and people of the Lord, and to be guilty of the insultings of so many enemies; all this and much more, that would certainly follow the denial of this moderate necessary help, would be a burden intolerable.

Direct. 7. ' But because both the magistrates and many others are afraid, lest by going too far in such assistance, they may be guilty of persecution, by restraining men from preaching, or private persuasion, or by keeping the ignorant and wicked from church-communion, or by compelling them to come to hear, and to be personally instructed, I humbly propound these following things, for such a regulation of their granted liberty, as may free them from all danger of persecuting, without depriving us of their principal help.

1. If you compel not the ignorant and ungodly to hear, and be personally instructed by the minister of the parish where they live, yet at least compel them thus to submit to some minister; and let that minister certify under his hand, that he takes care of him as a catechumen, or expectant, by public and private instruction.

2. Let not every man that will, be tolerated either to teach, persuade, or hold assemblies; but let your toleration be regulated, as well as your approbation is. To which end (1.) Let such persons as are thought meet for such a work, be appointed as commissioners, to approve or judge of such as shall be tolerated through the land, as the commissioners now approve of such, as shall have the public maintenance. For there is no reason, that the tolerated should not go under

trial, as well as the allowed. And indeed without some such course to keep the door of toleration, as well as the door of public, allowed teachers, you cannot put any reasonable laws of toleration into execution ; but any will come in, whatever your laws say. (2.) Let these commissioners for trying the tolerated have rules given them by the lawgivers, whom to license or tolerate, and whom not. (3.) Let all that will gather assemblies, or administer sacraments, or preach, have an instrument of toleration, under the hands and seal of these commissioners, and let them be hindered, that have no such instrument. Otherwise if you stay till they are convicted of blasphemy, they may do more mischief first, (for who will persecute them) than ever the magistrate can comfortably be accountable to God for suffering.

3. When a man hath a sealed toleration, to preach, or hold assemblies, let him yet be as liable to any just accusation, before the commissioners for ejection, as the approved, public ministers are : that so if he be proved to be wicked and scandalous, or to preach any thing excepted from toleration, by the legislators, the said commissioners may be authorised to deprive them of their toleration, as they do others of their public station and maintenance. And this is a most reasonable and necessary thing.

(1.) For else the public ministers will be more hardly dealt with than they. It is supposed that there is so much difference in the soundness of their doctrine, that one deserveth the public encouragement, as well as the other deserveth a toleration : or else the lawgivers would make no difference. And that being supposed, if they shall not be questionable, as well as we, nor their right forfeitable as well as ours, they are more cherished proportionably than others.

(2.) And if you do not this, it is as good do nothing, but openly license heathens, and Papists, and all blasphemers : for they will make a fair confession, till they have got their sealed toleration, and then preach contrary to that profession°. Two sorts we know this to be true by : 1. Papists, that are for equivocation, and mental reservation, in their

° I humbly propound it to the consideration of the sovereign rulers, whether it be not fit, that the testimonies of these two sorts of men, in any weighty case, against another be invalidate. And is it not a pitiful case that the lives of the godly people whom they hate, shall be at the mercy of any two of these wretches, that make no more of an oath, than of another word.

professions and oaths: or for the popes to dispense with them. 2. Heathens and infidels, that believe not that there is any sin, or devil, or hell, or heaven; and therefore care not what they swear. And indeed these are the two sects that now are up: and all other are likely to fall into these. Alas! by sad experience I speak it: those that will openly, and to my face make an orthodox confession, do secretly harden many poor souls, by making a scorn of Scripture, as a fable, and of the immortality of the soul, and of Christ and the Holy Ghost, and heaven, and hell, and say all these are nothing but the inventions of men; and that the knave-priests do persuade men that there are devils and hell, as a bugbear, to make them do what they would have them, and all religion is but deceit. Such heathens are the predominant sect in many places, and higher in England, than once I thought to have seen them. And if all such perfidious infidels and Jesuits shall have leave to blaspheme God, Christ and Scripture, because they once made an orthodox profession, then let hell be turned loose upon our people, and the devil that was bound up from deceiving the nations, have a toleration from the magistrate to do his worst.

Thus I have shewed that magistrates, if they will, may help the church without any danger of persecuting the truth, if they take not Popery, damnable heresy and heathenism for truth. 1. If the approvers keep the door of toleration, as well as of public maintenance and ministry. 2. If a church-justice, or civil agent, do keep the church's peace. 3. If the civil visiter do purposely take cognizance of the state of parishes, and see the laws put in execution. 4. If the commissioners for ejections, have power of judging all seducers, and blasphemers, as well as the public ministers. And if these only have the coercive power; but some able, chosen, godly ministers be joined with them for advice and exhortation: as magistrates and ministers sat together before the days of William the Conqueror.

“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” (John xiii. 17.) “And the servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten much.” (Luke xii. 47.)

POSTSCRIPT.

READER,

As great and needful a duty as this is, that I have here proposed, and commonly agreed on by all the parties before mentioned; I am yet far from expecting, that all men should acknowledge it and obey it; or that no person of contrary apprehensions or intentions, should rise up against it as an enemy, with all the strength that the measure of his wit and passions can prepare. We cannot speak for God himself, for Christ, for Scripture, for men's own salvation, but we meet with contradiction and resistance, even from them that we would save. And were it not for this, what blessed work would the Gospel make! and why might we not hope, that all our people should be saved? No wonder then, if whenever we attempt reformation or reconciliation, we meet with learned, reverend brethren that come against us, armed with plausible cavils and contempts, and cast away the medicine as dangerous, or ungrateful, and strenuously vindicate the disease that should be healed^p. And were it not that the church hath many, very many such, what should have kept us unhealed so long? and who could have continued our deformities and divisions, and frustrated such means as have been used for our cure? Satan is not so poor a politician, as to be without his agents in our ecclesiastic armies, and councils, and pulpits, to speak for his cause and to do his work, and resist and frustrate that which would displease him; and all this under pretence of enmity to Satan, and friendship to Christ, and a better doing of his work. As the names of the chief of Christ's servants, were not cast out as holy, but as evil, (Luke vi. 22,) so their doctrine was not cast out as truth, nor as saving, but as deceit. And his means will not be openly resisted, (at least by those that are building with us) as reforming or reconciling, but as groundless or unproved, or troublesome or unseasonable, or as suspected of some ill-design or event. Some will say, It is mere prelacy, or a prelatical design; and some that it is Independency,

^p Nunquam enim, ait Lutherus, periclitatur Ecclesia nisi inter Reverendissimos.

or an independent design; and some that it is but Presbyterian examination. Whereas they might know, that it is proper to none of them, which is common to them all. If it be Prelacy, how comes it to be found with Independents? If it be Independency, how comes it to be approved by Prelates and Presbyterians? Is it not rather like Christianity itself, and the truths and duties which we commonly own; and therefore not to be appropriated to any?

By all that I have heard and read of late, concerning this subject, I understand that the principal objections that are likely to be used against the doctrine of this treatise are these following:—

Object. ‘We were all baptized in our infancy, and therefore are church-members, and have right to the privileges of the adult, when we are adult, without any new title or condition: our first right continueth, though we never make profession of the Christian faith, nor personally renewed the covenant with God that we made in baptism. And therefore, though in some cases such an approved profession be a duty, yet is not any more necessary to our church-state, and right to the communion of the adult, than that we were born church-members, and so baptized. Nothing but heresy, schism, or apostacy can cut us off. And therefore all that were baptized, and are not thus ‘cut off’, are still church-members, and have right to all the ordinances in the church.’

Ans. I have said enough to this already to satisfy the considerate, impartial reader; proving the necessity of personal faith before God, and of some profession of it ‘ecclesia judice,’ before the church, to the being of the said title of the adult, as its condition; and that all Scripture examples do make for the confirmation of this truth. Moreover let me add, to answer the new, or foreseen assaults,

1. If there be no word of promise in the Scripture, that giveth the privilege of adult-communion to any, upon their infant title-condition only, nor any example in the Gospel, or the ancient church, that any possessed or used that privilege upon that title-condition only, then are we not to imagine that the infant title-condition alone, is sufficient to the said privilege: but the antecedent is true; as hath in part been manifested, and will be more, when the Dissenter shall bring forth his pretended evidences, by which his title should be proved.

2. The title-condition of infants is not sufficient to make any morally capable of the ends of the adult communion; therefore it is not sufficient to make them capable of a proper, plenary right to such communion. For the right and relation are for these ends; if a natural incapacity may consist with a plenary title, so cannot a moral. No man can really possess and exercise the communion of the adult intrinsically without faith, or extrinsically without profession of faith; therefore no man without faith, or profession of faith, can have a plenary right to that communion. For a man to have a plenary right to please God, and celebrate with the church the memorial of our redemption, and participate of the Redeemer, and his benefits, that believeth not in him, is a palpable absurdity.

3. If the mere title-condition of infants will serve 'in foro ecclesiæ,' for the adult, then it will serve also 'in foro Dei:' for the church looks but to the outward appearance, or visibility of that, whose reality and sincerity God expecteth. And it is God's covenant that giveth us our right; and therefore if the church find us to have true right, it must find us receiving it from God's covenant; and therefore find us the heirs of the promise. The reason why the church takes our birth-privileges for a sufficient title-condition, is because God is supposed so to take it. But that this will not serve the adult 'in foro Dei' is manifest; because God will not own such infidels, as neither have faith, nor a profession of it.

4. If the title-condition of infidels may serve them when adult, then is there no personal difference in acts, or qualities; no not so much as in profession, required on our parts, to distinguish Christians from infidels and atheists: (required I mean as necessary conditions :) but the consequent is absurd; therefore so is the antecedent. If no differencing character between actual believers and infidels or atheists, be made thus necessary, then the church and the infidel world, are laid together; and the body of Christ, and consequently Christ himself, is dishonoured and blasphemed, as common and unclean. But if any personal difference be necessary, it must be the personal profession of Christianity, or nothing less than this can be it. For our birth-privilege cannot be it. Atheists and infidels are born of Christian parents. Much of the Turkish army of janizaries have their birth-privileges to shew, as well as we. It is a probable argument;

‘ Such an infant is born of Christian parents ; therefore he will be an actual believer.’ But it is not a probable argument, ‘ Such a man at age, that professeth not Christianity, had Christian parents ; therefore he is a believer :’ much less, ‘ therefore he had a right to the benefits of the covenant, whether he be an actual believer or not.’ If Christians have no visible note, by which they must be known from infidels, then either the church is not visible, or infidels may be the visible church, without so much as disowning their infidelity.

5. If the title-condition of infants may suffice the adult for church-right and communion, then heretics and apostates have such right : but the consequent is denied by them that I now dispute with. They confess that heresy and some schism, and apostacy, do cut off from the church, and so from this right. But it is plain that such heretics and apostates have that which was their infant-condition : as they were the seed of believers in infancy, so they are since apostacy : they cease not to be the seed of believers, by their renouncing Christ. If this therefore would prove a right in silent infidels, it will prove a right in professed apostates.

Object. ‘ The apostates cast away their right ; and therefore have it not.’

Answ. 1. Either it dependeth on their own wills when they come to age, or not. If it do not, then they cannot cast it away. They may refuse to use their right, but they cannot cast it away, or nullify it ; for they cannot make themselves not to be the children of Christian parents. The foundation stands whether they will or no : and therefore so must the relation. But if the relation or right do now depend upon their own wills, then our cause is granted ; for from their wills then, must the condition or evidence be fetched. 2. Yea, such persons, ordinarily as we have now in question, are actual apostates, and are so to be taken by the church ; and therefore not to be taken as church-members, having right to sacraments. He that being engaged to God the Father, S^{on}, and Holy Ghost, in his infancy, doth make no profession of actual faith at full age, is ordinarily to be taken for an apostate ; but such are the persons in question. I say ordinarily, because I except them that have been cast upon natural impossibilities or impotency, or wanted a call and opportunity : that is, all persons that prove idiots, or deaf and dumb, or otherwise destitute of natural capacity ; such

come not to the use of reason and freewill, and therefore are not bound to actual belief. Such also as have their tongues cut out, are separated from human society, or otherwise disabled from profession. But for the common case of mankind: (1.) It is plain that they have their tongues given them by nature to express their minds. And (2.) That Christ commandeth confession with the tongue, and professing him before men. (3.) That much of his worship lieth in holy profession, and all of it containeth answerable confession. (4.) That we have constant calls from God, even to profess our Christianity: the godly and the wicked that live among us call us to it: we have daily invitations to profess our Christianity one way or other. And among all these occasions of profession, he that professeth not, is to be taken for an infidel and apostate. For the business is so exceeding great and weighty, and the object so glorious, and the duty so incumbent, and the very life of Christianity so inconsistent with a non-profession, that we have just reason to conclude, that he that professeth not himself a Christian, ordinarily is to be taken for none by the church.

Object. ‘But though at the first admitting of a foreigner into a commonwealth, you require an oath of fidelity, or profession of subjection, yet when we are born subjects, we must be supposed to continue such, till we rebel, and so declare the contrary; and our fidelity is not to be questioned.’

Ans. 1. The case doth exceedingly differ from ours in hand. Princes vary their commands as their affairs require. If you are born in the midst of a peaceable republic, you may perhaps have no oath of fidelity imposed, because the peace of the commonwealth requireth it not: for while there is no enemy near you, to solicit you to rebellion or treason, or with whom you may conjoin, it is supposed, that you have either no mind, or no power to it. And it is only the common peace that is concerned in the cause. But our case is otherwise: for we live among devils and wicked men, and are known to have hearts ourselves, that are naturally treacherous, and at enmity to God. So that we are still among enemies, that would seduce us, and with whom we are inclined to take part. And besides that, our profession is not only necessary to the common safety, but to our personal performances, and daily communion with the saints, and worship of God. 2. If it be in a garrison that is near the

enemy, or in a country that is inclined to rebellion, or where rebellion is on foot, and the enemy hath a party, there princes use to cause all their subjects to take an oath of fidelity; and ordinarily also in peaceable kingdoms this is practised. At such an age all persons are to take an oath of allegiance, or fidelity, or to make profession of their subjection, in many places; and in other places they do it, before they enter upon any office. And if you will come nearer the case, and suppose that men were born in a school, or an army, as well as a republic, I think you would yield, that when they come to age, it is necessary that they have more than their birth-privilege to shew, to prove them scholars or soldiers. We are Christ's disciples and soldiers, as well as his subjects; and one is as essential to our Christianity as the other. We may be initiated into his school and army in our infancy, and so stand related to him; but surely we are apostates, if when we come to age, we have nothing to shew but our infant-condition; and to more we must be called.

3. The case also differeth in this; princes do make known to all in their laws, that no man that is an enemy, yea, or that is not 'pro tempore' a subject, shall dwell on their soil, among their subjects; they suffer not subjects and enemies to live promiscuously together in their dominions; and therefore it is supposed that a man's very abode and residence in their land, is a profession of subjection; much more when they live in obedience to the laws, and hold their estates by them. But Christ dealeth not thus: he suffereth believers and infidels to live together, and his flock to be but little in the world; so that it cannot be the least presumption, that a man is a Christian, because he liveth among Christians.

4. At least let us not teach Christ, what he should have done, when we find he hath done otherwise; we find that he requireth personal faith and profession of all at age, that are naturally capable; and therefore we must perform it, and not give reasons why we should not do it. No good subject that is called to profess his fidelity will refuse, and say, you have no reason to question me, and put such a trial or obligation upon me.

So that I may conclude, that an adult person not professing Christianity is not a visible Christian, notwithstanding his birth-privileges; and therefore not a visible church-member; and therefore an apostate, seeing he was once en-

gaged in covenant to Christ, (though not an apostate from actual faith), and therefore such as hath no proper right to church-communion and privileges.

Object. 'If his infant-title be cut off, it is either by ignorance, wickedness, heresy, schism, or apostacy: but ignorance and wickedness do not cut him off; and heresy, schism, or apostacy, he is not guilty of; therefore, &c.'

Ans. 1. His infant-title will cease of itself without any other cutting off, if it be not continued by his personal actual believing, when he comes to capable age. His birth-privileges alone, or his parents' dedicating him to God in baptism, will serve no longer of itself. It is therefore for want of personal faith, 'coram Deo,' and of the profession of faith, 'coram ecclesia,' that his right doth cease.

2. Ignorance, where it proveth infidelity, must needs prove a cessation of the infant-title, when they come to a capable age, and ignorance is privative. He that knoweth not that there is a God, a Christ, or what he hath done for us, or what a Christian is, can have no faith in God, or Christ; and therefore is an atheist, and an infidel privatively, if at a capable age, among means at least. It is not only he that denieth Christ, that is an infidel, but he that never heard of him, negatively at least; and he that having heard of him, understood not what he heard, and therefore believeth not in him, because he knoweth not. And it is not only he that denieth God, that is an atheist, but he that knoweth not that there is a God. And therefore if ignorance cut not off, then infidelity and atheism cut not off. And if neither of these cut off, then no particular heresy can; nor any such apostacy, as men are capable of, that had but an infant church-state: gross ignorance at a capable age, proveth gross ungodliness and apostacy. For if men's hearts had been towards God, they would have sought to know him, and if they know him not, their hearts are atheistical, and without him.

3. Wickedness is either such as may consist with habitual adhering to God in Christ; or such as shews a separation or renunciation; the one being ungodliness partial, and 'quoad actum particularem,' (as Peter's denial) and the other being ungodliness 'quoad statum.' He that saith the former cutteth not off from the church, will scarcely say, that it doth not meritoriously suspend the offender from the

communion of the church, till he appear penitent. And he that saith the latter cuts not off, from the church meritoriously, must say that nothing doth it; for this is apostacy, and comprehendeth the greatest heresy. Such heretics hold that the pleasure of sin for a season, is to be chosen before a life of holiness, with the hopes of everlasting life; and the flesh to be pleased before the Lord: and I think this is heresy. But whether these be cut off from the church or not, either they bring the person under the guilt of excommunication, or else there is no excommunication to be used. And if they be excommunicated, we shall not much contend with you about their rights. As long as you grant that they have no such right as that they may have the use of church-communion, we are satisfied. And yet I must say, that it is a blind conclusion, that the excommunicate are church-members, without distinguishing of excommunication. If a man shall openly declare that he believeth not in Jesus Christ that died at Jerusalem, nor that there is any life to come; but yet he believeth in a Christ within him, and a heaven and hell within men (as the Ranters, Familists, &c. did); and yet this man, that he may pervert the souls of others, will hold communion with the church, and declare, that he takes the Scripture in his sense, I doubt not but this man, though a professed infidel and apostate, is yet to be excommunicated, while he pretendeth to communion; and if this excommunicate man be not of the Catholic Church, then no man is out of it, and you may next question whether the devil be not a member, that believeth much more than he.

But when I say that infidelity, impiety, heresy, do cut off or cast out, I mean it but meritoriously. Either these crimes are private and unknown, or proveable. If not proveable, then they merit this, and more ‘*coram Deo*,’ but not ‘*ecclesia judice*,’ that is, though there be guilt or demerit, yet we are no capable judges of it. But if the crime be proveable, then it is either such, as needs a judgment or not. If it need a judgment, the person is only ‘*de jure*’ cast out before the sentence, (which is ‘*terminus diminuens*,’ and is not actual casting out,) and he is actually cast out by the sentence, and the execution: so that his sin cast him out meritoriously, the law obligatorily, the pastors of the church sententially, and the whole church, pastors and people, executively in avoiding him. But if there need no

judgment, then he is excommunicate actually ‘ipso jure,’ by the law alone, without a judge, which may be in many a case; as if he be a notorious infidel, atheist, blasphemer, or notoriously beyond all doubt or controversy, one of those that the law commands us to avoid; we must execute this law, though there be no sentence pronounced. The want of a man’s sentence will not excuse us from obeying God’s laws. And where there is no controversy through the notoriety of the case, there needs no judge.

6. If birth-privilege will serve alone for the adult to prove their title to the church-state and privileges of the adult, then no man that is born of Christian parents can be obnoxious to excommunication, or justly excommunicate; for he is still a child of believing parents; and no sin will make them otherwise. And therefore if that were enough, he hath a good title still. Nay, it would follow that he cannot apostatize; for he cannot fall away from this. But the consequence is absurd, therefore so is the antecedent.

7. If infant-title only be sufficient to the adult, then no parent is necessarily obliged to profess himself a Christian, or actual believer, in order to prove the interest of his child to baptism (nor any that offered him in the parent’s stead). For it is sufficient if the parents, or susceptors, say, ‘we were infant-members and baptized, and therefore our child must be so. But whether we are actual believers, now, it is not necessary that we tell you.’ But the consequent is so absurd, that whoever shall have offered a child to baptism on these terms in the ancient church, (or any church that I know of, till very lately) would have been rejected. The acceptance and baptism of our infants, is one of the privileges of believers; but no one hath right to this privilege, that his children be thus accepted into the church, upon a bare infant-title, without the profession of a personal actual faith. Therefore, &c.

8. If the opposed doctrine should hold good, then all the world hath right to church-communion, or millions of infidels, at least: but the consequent is false; therefore so is the antecedent. The reason of the consequence is plain; because Noah was a church-member, and all the world came out of his loins: and the men of Thracia, Bithynia, and most of Asia, where Mahomet is worshipped, may say, ‘Our ancestors were Christians;’ therefore the birth-privileges still

going down from generation to generation, even to the thousandth generation, it must follow that the present generation of Mahometans and other infidels, are church-members still; for they lost not their natural relation to their parents.

9. It will not prove a society of adult persons to be a Christian church, if they have no more but their infant-condition; therefore it will not prove a single person to be a member of the church. That which is necessary to make a society, a Christian society, is necessary to make a person, a Christian person. But I hope none will deny, but that some kind of profession is necessary, to make or prove a company of men, to be a Christian Church; therefore some profession is necessary, to make or prove a man, to be a church-member.

10. If infant-conditions will suffice to the adult for church-membership, and common privileges, then will they serve for justification, and salvation, that are special privileges; but the consequent is false; therefore so is the antecedent. The reason of the consequence is, because though the benefits be various, yet the covenant and conditions are the same, by which we have a right to one and to the other. It is the appearance of the same faith, by profession before men, that gives title, 'coram ecclesia,' whose inward sincerity giveth right 'coram Deo,' as was aforesaid. And God giveth title to all the blessings of the covenant, 'coram Deo,' on the same conditions. And there is also a parity of reason. For if it be enough to prove our right to adult communion to praise God, and have all his ordinances and helps in the church, &c., that we had Christian parents, then must it be enough to prove our title in all the rest of our benefits. The ancient fathers and churches thought that baptism did as certainly give the infant, rightly baptized, a right to pardon of original sin, and eternal life, as to outward church-privileges. And if the same covenant give both on the same condition, then he that hath the condition of one, hath of both. I have proved in another disputation, that God hath not two covenants of grace on his part, one of spiritual or inward mercies, and another of outward ordinances; and that he giveth not these inward benefits and the outward signs of them, upon various conditions, but on the same.

11. Faith, or the profession of it in the adult, is either necessary to church-communion, or unnecessary; if unnecessary, then Christians have no more to do in the church than heathens; if necessary, then either as a mere duty, or as a condition, or other means. Not as a mere duty; for then still the infidels should be equally received, though not applauded; it must be therefore necessary as a means. And the very words of the promise tell us what sort of means it is, that makes faith to be its condition.

12. I would know of my adversary, what he would do with the son of a believer that were unbaptized at forty or fifty years of age? Would he baptize him without a profession of actual faith of his own, or not? If he would, then he would make new-fashioned Christians and churches; and might baptize all the posterity of the apostates, or the ancient Christians in the world, that would consent. Yea, he could not indeed baptize them; for baptism essentially containeth a profession of consent unto the covenant, which therefore others make for infants that have the disposal of them. But if we would not baptize such, without profession, then it seems he takes not their birth-privileges to be a sufficient condition of their title thereunto.

13. A covenant-breaker can claim no right to the benefits of the covenant (supposing him to violate the main conditions on which the benefits are suspended): but all those at capable age that have nothing but their infant-condition to shew, are covenant-breakers; therefore they have no right to the benefits of the covenant. They therefore were engaged personally to believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, when they came to the use of reason; as we have cause therefore to see whether they have broke, or kept this covenant; and if they have broke it, they can at present claim no title to the benefits.

14. He "that cometh to God must believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him:" therefore those that profess not this belief, cannot come to God, and consequently not have communion with the church. "Without faith it is impossible to please God," (Heb. xi. 5, 6,) therefore, without a profession of faith, it is impossible to have right to just communion; which is purposely for the pleasing of God.

Object. 'But it is said infants have faith; that is, a re-

lative faith, and a fæderal faith, as well as a relative fæderal holiness : their right is not only in their parents, but in themselves ; and therefore their faith is in themselves ; and this continueth with the aged till heresy and schism cut it off.’

Ans. Call any thing under heaven by the name of faith, so you will but explain your meaning, and we will quarrel as little as may be with you about words : but little know we what you mean by relative or fæderal faith, unless it be plainly, to be ‘semen fidelium,’ the seed of believers. That there is a relative and fæderal holiness, is Scripture doctrine, and good sense ; for the formal nature of the thing is a relation which commonly is expressed by the name of holiness, and which in that phrase is implied. But I remember not that Scripture ever speaks of a relative or fæderal faith ; for I believe not that in was infants, that Christ calls the “ little ones that believe in him.” And faith being an act or habit, you must mean some other species of faith, which consisteth in relation. I know it not, nor will I use your language ; though I think it more tolerable to call the infant relatively a believer, than to say he hath relative faith ; for in so saying, no more is meant, but that he is a disciple of Christ, or belongs to him as he is the seed of a believer in covenant. But let this word of fæderal relative faith be used by you as you please ; if the thing signified by it be any more than I have expressed, you should tell us what you mean ; if it be no more but to be the seed of a believer, then we doubt not but this continueth when they come to age ; but it doth them no good at age, as to the continuing of their title to church-membership before God, without a faith of their own, nor before the church without a profession of it. That the infant himself is the subject of his own right, is a thing that no man, that I know, makes doubt of, that believeth him to have any right ; but the active main condition of that right is not to be performed by himself, but by the parent ; and only the passive condition is to be found in himself, that he be the seed of that parent. If he must be a believer’s seed, it is the parent that must believe ; but that will not serve his turn at age, if he do not also believe himself.

15. It is granted by the Dissenters, that the ignorant, for all their infant-title, have no immediate right to the communion of the church. And we will not contend about

names : this satisfieth us in the main. It is not actual right, if it be not immediate plenary right : that which they call a remote right, is properly no actual right, but a term of diminution, as to it ; when right hath two conditions, you may call it right, when the first and greatest is performed ; but actually it is none, till all be performed : for it is still but conditional, while any part of the condition is unperformed ; saith learned Mr. Fullwood, p. 274. “The rule, to give all their due, is of indispensable obligation ; but seeing ignorant persons have no such immediate right in the supper, what injury or wrong is there done them ?”

Object. ‘But ignorance doth not wholly cut a man off from the church ; for such a knowledge goeth not to the essence of the church ; for its form is society or community.’

Ans. 1. It is sufficient to our present purpose, that it excludeth men meritoriously from immediate right to the communion of the adult. 2. Ignorance ‘qua talis’ materially is no sin, as in idiots, paralytics, &c., and therefore cuts not off^a. But ignorance in a subject, where knowledge should be found, is culpable, and complicate always with infidelity, or not believing ; and therefore doth declare the person to be matter incapable. If you choose to say, it cuts not off, I easily can prove, that it manifesteth that he is not in the invisible, and ought not to be esteemed of the visible church, by reason of his incapacity ; his former title ceasing, for want of the condition of its continuation. 3. Knowledge in the capable adult, is as essential to the church, as a society. A church is a society of Christians ; as it is a society, Christianity is not essential to it, and so not knowledge : for there are societies of heathens, and infidels enough. But as it is a Christian society, knowledge is essential to it ; and therefore, as it is a church. It is essential to a field of wheat, that there be wheat in it ; or a heap of wheat, that it be of wheat. And yet not as a *field*, or as a *heap* ; for there are *heaps* of dirt also. The aggregation of a number of individuals, makes it a community, and the form of the body aggregated, as to the mutual relation of the parts, makes it a body politic or society. But the essential qualifications of individuals, viz. Christianity is essential to that society in specie, as a Christian church. And

^a It is total ignorance that the objection extendeth to, or ignorance of the Christian faith.

faith in the adult is essential to Christianity, and knowledge is essential to faith, or inseparable from it.

Object. 'Then one should not take another to be a church-member, till he is satisfied of his knowledge, which were a stranger thing.'

Ans. Not so strange as true : supposing him an adult person capable of knowledge. For he cannot be satisfied of his faith without being satisfied of knowledge, nor of his Christianity without his faith ; for we are yet unacquainted with the Christian infidels. But then consider, what must be satisfactory to other men concerning their brother's knowledge. It must satisfy them, that he is by the pastors of the church, who are to judge, approved and enumerated with believers ; and that he professeth himself to be a believer, which cannot be without knowledge. This must satisfy them, till he nullify this evidence, by a clean betraying of his infidelity.

Object. 'But the Scripture saith not that ignorant persons cannot be church-members, or so much as that they ought merely for their ignorance to be excommunicate.'

Ans. Doth not the Scripture exclude visible unbelievers, and take in only visible believers, of the adult, and make the church a society of believers separated from unbelievers ? Such ignorance therefore as is essential to, or inseparable from infidelity, is in Scripture made the very brand of them, that are without, excluded from the church. "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ," &c. (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.) That preaching which discipleth men, (Matt. xxviii. 19,) doth give them knowledge, or else it could not give them faith ; for it "openeth their eyes, and turneth them from darkness to light," &c. (Acts xxvi. 18.) And surely we are "translated out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of Christ." (Col. i. 14.) "Those that in time past were not a people, but now are the people of the living God, are called out of darkness into his marvellous light." (1 Pet. ii. 9, 10.) "And what communion hath light with darkness, righteousness with unrighteousness, Christ with Belial, the believer with the infidel." (2 Cor. vi. 14—16.)

Object. 'If knowledge, as such, were necessary to membership, then none could be a member without it : but that is not so.'

Answ. 1. Knowledge, as such, is necessary no otherwise, than faith as such, and all one; you may therefore as well plead thus against the necessity of faith. 2. And we grant that neither knowledge, nor faith, are necessary to incapable subjects, that is, in themselves. You know faith in infants, (such as we call faith) is not necessary to their justification: and yet will you say, it is not necessary to the adult? The promise hath made it necessary to the capable. 3. And we grant that neither knowledge, nor faith (justifying or dogmatical) are necessary to the being of a visible member, that is merely such: God only seeth the heart. But yet the appearance or profession of faith, and so of knowledge, in the essentials of Christianity, is of necessity. 4. But though a personal faith, or knowledge, in truth or in profession, be not necessary to an infant, either for membership or justification, yet their parents' faith or profession is necessary; or else the promise is to more, than believers and their seed, 'quod restat probandum.'

Object. 'But a negative consent is sufficient, to continue such in covenant, as before were admitted in infancy, or at age: and this negative consent, is but non-actual dissent, or a non-renouncing of the Gospel: and therefore, as positive consent, so actual faith and knowledge, are not necessary.'

Answ. A dangerous doctrine^b! A negative consent is no consent. Why then should the ears of men be abused by the name, when there is nothing to answer it? A negative faith, in English is infidelity, or not believing. Is not this a delusory teaching of the church, to call unbelief by the name of negative faith or negative consent? If a block, a brute, or a subject otherwise naturally incapable, be the subject; then indeed it is inculpable, and your negative consent or faith is properly but a negative dissent, or unbelief. But if a capable, obliged person be the subject (which is our case), then your negative consent is in English priva-

^b Should a man never think of God, Christ or heaven, and so never have actual dissent, he were yet an atheist and infidel. Much more when he heareth, and therefore must needs think of them: for then it is impossible, the will should neither dissent nor consent.

Faith is a positive being and therefore must have a positive discovery: perhaps many a janizary never renounced Christ in words, nor many another child of Christians, that is carried away, where they never heard of Christ.

tive not consenting, and privative unbelief, or rejecting Christ. What a means is here to convey flat infidels into the church, or continue them there, under the cloak of an abusive name ! even by calling a non-dissenting conjunct with their infidelity, or not consenting to the covenant of grace, by the name of *negative consent*. Were it a person that had entered at age, yet if he have afterwards but your negative consent, (which is neither to consent or dissent), he is an apostate : and if he refuse consent, when called to it by his lawful governors, he gives occasion to be suspected of apostacy, much more when he continueth to refuse consent, when so much of the life and practice of Christianity consisteth in it, and in the manifestation of it ; but especially when persons were baptized in infancy, and never yet professed a faith or consent of their own. If that man that had no faith but his parents', (and his being a believer's seed, which you call fæderal faith) shall be continued at age a member of the church, by a not-actual dissenting or renouncing Christ, by express words, then let us talk no more of a church, nor abuse poor heathens and infidels so much as to question their salvation, or set them below us. But again, I answer you, that not consenting, is dissenting in the inward act ; it is undoubted, that he that for one year, or month doth not consent, doth certainly dissent. There is no middle state between believers and infidels ; consenters and refusers. How shall they escape that neglect so great salvation ? Neglecting and not consenting in a capable, invited subject, is certain infidelity ; and therefore in the external profession, we must judge accordingly. He that will not confess Christ, even in a Christian church, and a peaceable age, deserves not to be called a Christian : he that is not for him is against him.

Object. ' But God's covenant people under the law, were not only admitted without their voluntary consent or knowledge, but commanded to renew their covenant in such a manner, as that they that were absent, and not in place to express consent, were included in those that were present.'

Answ. 1. None but infants were admitted without consent : nor they without the consent of their parents, natural or civil, that had the power of disposing of them. 2. Those that were admitted upon others' consent, were not continued

at age without their own. 3. The covenant, Deut. xxix. 11, 12. 15, was no mutual covenant to the absent or unborn there mentioned ; but only a covenant offered to the nation, and conditionally made on God's part as a promise, to them and their posterity, even to many generations : but those unborn generations, were not in covenant on their parts, as promisers in the stipulation.

Object. 'Wickedness itself doth not put a man out of the visible church. For a man is said to be cut off, but either 'de jure,' or 'de facto,' meritoriously, or effectually: the former is improperly called cutting off, being but the desert of it: therefore if those baptized in infancy, prove afterwards wicked, they are not thereby cut off.'

Ans. 1. Such persons as we have in question, lose their right and title by a cessation, for want of that personal condition, which the covenant made necessary to its continuance ; so that we need not prove any other cutting off. 2. If he be but meritoriously cut off, it is the church's duty to do it sentimentally and executively ; it being of indispensable obligation, to give to all their due. 3. It is granted that heresy cuts off ; but how doth heresy cut off any otherwise than meritoriously ? If therefore wickedness do as much as heresy, then thus far they are equal. 4. Either wickedness signifieth some actual crime like David's or Peter's, when the church knoweth not whether it be joined with habitual impenitence, or else it signifieth habitual, stated wickedness with impenitency. The first sort requireth but an exclusion from actual church-communion (called suspension by some), as it is but actual sin that deserveth it. The second sort must have an exclusion from their state and church-relation, as it is a state of impenitency, that deserveth it. The first sort of excommunication leaveth a man in the church, 'quoad statum et relationem,' but out of it 'quoad actum et usum.' The second sort leaves him out of it, both in state and act. Not that the excommunication puts him out of the church, as invisible: for that he did first himself meritoriously, and so efficiently, even by the efficiency of his demerits ; as the law of Christ did it, by its obligatory efficiency. But when he hath put himself out of the church invisible, and plainly declared this to the church by his impenitent courses, the church further declareth it by their sentence, and puts him out of the church visible executively,

when he had before put out himself meritoriously. 5. As I said before, the person's wickedness is either notorious and out of question, (as if a man be an open persecutor of godliness, or daily blaspheme God in the open streets, or congregation, and many lower cases), or else it is controvertible, needing proof, and not notorious. In the latter case a wicked man is not actually cast out of the communion of the visible church, or cut off from it, by his demerits, till his fault be proved, and sentence be passed. But in the former case he is excommunicate 'ipso jure,' which is more than 'de jure.' We call him excommunicate 'de jure,' who ought to be excommunicate 'de facto:' but we call him excommunicate 'ipso jure,' which is actually excommunicated by the law, without any further sentence of a judge, the law itself sufficing to enable men to the execution: so the law of Christ commanding us to avoid and have no company with drunkards, adulterers, heretics, &c. if any be notoriously such, past doubt, every man is obliged by this law to avoid them in their several capacities, after the due admonitions given them, which the law requireth, whether the pastors censure them or no; but his censure layeth on them a double obligation.

Object. 'If wickedness cut off a man, excommunication cannot do it, because it is done already.'

Answ. If wickedness being not notorious do only cut him off meritoriously, and 'de jure' only he be excommunicate, then actual excommunication must do that which was not actually done, but ought to be done. But if by the notoriety of the crime he be cut off 'ipso jure,' the sentence yet may do the same thing, by adding, a second obligation to the first. A traitor in actual prosecution of the sovereign, seeking his life, is condemned 'ipso jure,' and any subject may kill him without sentence: and yet he may be proclaimed or sentenced a traitor for all that.

Object. 'It is proved by some writers, that such persons as have neither grace indeed, nor in show, may yet have both a real and visible interest in the covenant and church; and the arguments for this are yet unanswered: therefore persons baptized in infancy are in the church and covenant at age, though they never by profession made so much as a show of grace.'

Ans. It was never proved by any writer, nor ever will be, that any person at age, and natural capacity ought to be a member of the church of Christ, under the Gospel (no nor under the law neither), without a show of grace, even of faith by his profession of consent to the holy covenant^c. It is the arguments against them that remain unanswered: but that all their arguments, that I remember, are sufficiently answered, I shall take for granted, till I see a reply. And for them that tell us of the church-membership of the adult, considered without respect to saving grace, I shall regard them, when they have proved, either that faith and repentance are no saving graces; or that profession of faith hath no respect to faith: or that men may have title to church-membership, without respect to profession of faith; even of their parents, if they are infants; or their own if at age. All these three points are yet unproved.

If any think the learned Mr. Fullwood to be of another mind, let them judge by his own words: of the Visible Church, cap. 28, p. 180. Saith he; "However I humbly conceive though more than a bare historical faith should be requisite, yet less than a faith that justifieth (I do not say less than the profession thereof) may truly entitle to visible church-membership," &c., mark the parenthesis. And in his Epist. Propos. 3 and 4. "From the promises it seems at least probable to me, that the church is to have some kind of respect unto the saving condition of the person she is about to admit into communion, &c. 4. Yet I humbly conceive that more than a bare outward profession is requisite, to give real interest in the visible church, and the privileges thereof, before God; though no more is requisite to give visible interest before men," &c. And for immediate right to the communion of the church in the Lord's-supper, he saith, p. 270, "Where there is want of knowledge (whether naturally or morally), there, we are sure, the condition of right is wanting; and consequently admission is to be denied, when all is done." And for the main design of this book, he saith, Append. pp. 1, 2, (mentioning Mr. Hanmer's book,) "Some happily may be willing to surmise that our two propositions are irreconcilable, and interpret me an enemy to that most ancient, useful, and desirable ordinance.

^c I would fully answer such kind of writings, but that judicious readers are weary of such contending, and think it not worth the reader's time or mine.

Wherefore, if I may possibly prevent so scandalous a censure, I shall not venture to hold my reader in so long suspense, till he come to the pages, where confirmation is considered in the book; nor yet barely to acknowledge my allowance of it under my hand; but after my humble thanks heartily tendered to our worthy author, for his excellent pains, in so seasonable a subject, I do also presume earnestly to beseech my reverend brethren, that what Mr. Baxter hath so smartly pressed upon the ministry about it, may be speedily and seriously considered, and undertaken by us." And many pages after he adds: 7. "Yea, though after all due pains and endeavours used, we shall not be able to reconcile our principles in every point, yet if we can meet in the same practice about confirmation, though on some small differing grounds, why may not the church be happily edified, and the peace thereof in a measure obtained, by such an unity, uniformity in practice, while the persons differing but in lighter matters, may wait upon the Lord in this good service, for the great blessing of unanimity, promised also?"

Object. 'But he addeth the proviso, that confirmation be not thought to have any ingrediency into the nature or being of our membership; and that the temper of the people be found such, as will admit of such a change.'

Answ. We shall easily grant, that confirmation, as it is a solemn reception of the person by imposition of hands, or without imposition in a purposed solemnity, commonly known by that name, is not of necessity to the being of our membership: and that all those that are received upon profession of faith may be church-members; and that the ordinary use of Christian assemblies, and exercises of worship, is a profession, though obscure; and that a baptized person that never was called to a verbal profession may be taken for a Christian, or church-member, upon such a practical sort of profession, joined with a not denying of Christ in word or life. But yet we are far from thinking that the infant-title-condition of such an one, serveth to prove his present church-state and title, now he is at capable age. The infant-title ceaseth, if he continue it not by a personal profession at age. And as there is no middle between believers and unbelievers, so there is no such thing in a capable subject, as non-dissenting, in a moral sense, but true consent-

ing. It is not possible for the soul to be neuter, when the thing is offered to our consent, but we must either will or nill, consent or dissent; though if it were, yet not willing, or not consenting, is infidelity and rebellion in such a subject. And accordingly we maintain, and must maintain, that profession of some sort or other is a necessary condition of the title and church-state of the capable adult, and of right to the privileges; and as an obscure kind of profession may serve, when a man is called to no more, to prove his right, so a clearer sort of profession is necessary to the clearer proof, and 'ad bene esse ecclesiæ.' And I have shewed what great and weighty reasons we have, to require an open, clear, intelligible profession; and he that is justly called to for such, giveth cause to the church, to question him of apostacy, if he refuse without cause. So that of the three conditions in question, the first, which is our infant-condition, is utterly insufficient to the capable adult; and the second, which is an obscure signification of our mind, by our Christian practices, may serve 'ad esse,' at least when no more is required; and the third, which is an open approved profession by word or subscription, is necessary ordinarily 'ad bene esse.'

Thus far we are agreed; but what if we were not? Must we therefore refuse to agree in the practice of the aforesaid confirmation? Will any good and peaceable man refuse to join with those that think it necessary to adult church-membership? If this opinion, of the said non-necessity, had been an article of faith, and among the necessary 'credenda' of the church, we should have had it in some creed, or heard more of the necessity of it than we have done, from the ancient churches. If we meet about the 'agenda' in our practice, let them take heed how they divide from such as differ in the reasons of their practice, till they can prove that they deny some article of the faith, which is of necessity to be believed.

And as for the people's unfitness, or any disturbance that will follow thereupon: 1. If there be such a thing, it will be much long of the ministers: let them unanimously agree, and they may do well enough with the people, or much the better. But when ministers themselves are the bellows of faction, and think they can never sufficiently vilify Dissenters, and so have themselves taught the people to take such

a practice for a prelatical foppery, or formality, or for an independent rigidity and extremity ; no wonder, if when they come to practise their duty, they meet with such reproaches from the people, as they have taught them. 2. But suppose that people would disturb us, that may in some cases excuse us, as to the mode of confirmation, or profession ; but no unfitness of the people can excuse us, as to the substance of the duty, the requiring and approving their profession. We are false to our trust, and the church of God, if to avoid disturbance, we will confound believers and infidels, and destroy the nature of the church and ordinances, under pretence of the people's good.

Object. ' But it would be your only sure and happy course to exercise discipline upon all that are baptized in their infancy ; whether at age they consent or no : and finding them in the church, you must do so.'

Ans. I have said enough to this before. Have they that talked thus, tried this course, or have they not? If they have not, we will bear with them as wellmeaning men, that talk of what they never tried ; as we would do with a confident man, that would condemn the actions of soldiers and seamen, that himself was never in the wars, nor at sea. But if they have tried it, what kind of discipline do they exercise? Would they make us believe, that they are able in a parish of four, five, or six thousand souls, to exercise the discipline mentioned in Scripture, and the canons of the ancient churches, and that upon such persons, as our parishes commonly consist of? I know they cannot do it; I have had trial to tell me what a man can do. With the help of divers ministers, and many hundred godly people, to watch over others, and promote this work, I am not able to do it on all this parish, if I might. There are so many offenders weekly to be dealt with, and so much time required to hear witnesses, and admonish them, that it is more than I could possibly do. How bishops deal with dioceses, let them see themselves. And if we could do it, yet the people will not consent ; if you send for them, they will not come near you ; if you admonish them in the congregation by name, they will have an action at law against you, if they can. However, you will have such a multitude enraged by the exercise of discipline, if it be faithfully, though never so tenderly done, that the church will be in a flame, and your ministry hated,

and the people undone, as I have before declared. So that it is but a name of discipline, to the destruction of discipline, that this objection pleadeth for; or else it dishonour-eth itself and the authors.

And as they do by discipline, so they do by Christian charity, which is a greater thing. Of old, the visible members of the church were the objects of brotherly, Christian love; and so as they seemed to them to be believers and penitent persons, the living members did love all the body with that special love, that was the matter of the new commandment, and proved them to be Christ's disciples. No man knew the hearts of others, and therefore knew not whom to love as Christians infallibly discerned. But the profession of saving faith and holiness, being then and ever the test of adult-members, they took all the members of the visible church as credibly of the invisible; though with different degrees of credibility. And accordingly they loved them all, with a Christian, special love, of the same species, though with different degrees of that love. Whereas this popish, new-found trick, of making a new common sort of faith, and visible membership, that hath no respect to saving faith, doth teach all Christians, to love the members of the visible church, but with a common love; and relieve and help them, but with a common charity. And so the device is to confine our special, brotherly love and charity, to a corner of the visible church; to a few, whom we will please to think to be godly.

I have often marvelled in observing some learned divines, that bend that way, that they think compassion, and Christian charity is on their side. What charity can their doctrine glory of? They will be so merciful to infidels, that are incapable of a church-state, as to plead them into the church; and when they are there, they leave them under the curse, and in a state of damnation in their own judgments; teaching us to judge uncharitably, of the visible church in general for their sakes; and to look on them as without respect to any saving grace, and so without any special love. A cold comfort! to bring them into no more capacity of God's mercy nor of our charity; but into much more capacity of aggravated damnation, which they might better have prevented by being kept in their proper station till they were capable of more. I confess, though my belief of men's pro-

fession, have different degrees, as I see in them different degrees, of credibility, yet I have more charitable thoughts of the members of the visible church, than these that make so low and miserable a description of them. And though I know that there are abundance among them, that are hypocrites, and unsanctified, yet know I none but saints and hypocrites, that are tolerable in the church ; nor will I accuse particular persons of hypocrisy, till I have cause. Neither in my secret, or open censures, will I pluck up the tares upon any such terms, as will not stand with the safety of the wheat, but rather let them grow together in my esteem and in the church, till the time of harvest. And that I may think charitably of the church, and walk charitably in, and towards it, therefore I would not have it consist of such notorious, ungodly, or heretical men, as are incapable objects of Christian, brotherly love. For heresy, the aforesaid learned brother tells us, that it cuts men off from the church. I say so too, meritoriously at least, if by heresy be meant the exclusion of any essential article of the Christian faith : but p. 199, where he saith, “ the controversy may be easily ended, by parting stakes : viz. that some heresy, which absolutely denieth some particular fundamental truth, and taketh up some one, or few stones thereof, is consistent with church-interest ; and other heresy, which raiseth up the very foundation of religion, denying most, or the most chief, if not all of the articles of our Christian faith, is inconsistent therewith.” I must humbly, but very confidently say, that this answer will not serve the turn. If by fundamentals, be meant (as commonly) the essential articles of Christian faith, then the absolute denying of any one article, doth prove that person to be no Christian, nor capable of a church-state ; for the form is wanting, where any essential part is wanting. But if any thing else be meant by fundamentals, no man can decide the controversy by it, till it be known what it is ; and it will be hard to fasten it on any thing, where the absolute denial of many points shall unchurch, and the absolute denial of one or two points of the same rank and kind not do it. Saith he, p. 198. “ The Jews held that an heretical Israelite, had no communion with the church of Israel : and why ? but because communion supposeth union ; and union with Israel, or the true church, is lost with faith : they also held, (as Selden noteth,) that an

Israelite turning an heretic, i. e. denying any of the thirteen fundamental articles, to be as an heathen man." And a few lines before, he saith, that "historical faith, which hath the doctrine of faith for its object, none do doubt to be an essential, requisite to a true church-member." Yet that with me is a visible member, that hath not this much, which is said to be essential, no mandoubting of it. If they profess true faith, though they are stark atheists at the heart, and have not so much as historical faith, I shall believe them, till they nullify their own profession: but if they profess not also to consent to have Christ to be their Saviour, I shall not take it for a profession of Cristianity.

Certain I am, that ancient doctors with one consent, did look on the baptiz'd generally as pardoned, justified, and adopted; and therefore thought that visible church-membership, did imply a credibility at least of a state of saving grace. Saith Cprian, Epist. 76, Magn. "In baptismo unicuique peccat sua remittuntur." And upon this supposition run the arguments of the Council of Carthage, and Firmilian, Epist. i. l. d.

Saith Augustine, *De Catechizandis rudibus*, cap. 26, "His dictis interrogands est, an hæc credat, atque observare desideret? Quod cum responderit, solemniter utique signandus est, et ecclesie more tractandus." Obedience itself was promised, and a consent to it professed before baptism then, and ever since Christian baptism was known.

Idem Epistol. 119, *Ad Januar.* cap. 2. "Secundum hanc fidem et spem et dilectionem, quæ cæpimus esse sub gratia, jam commortui sumus cum Christo, et consepulti per baptismum in morte," &c. Baptism then supposeth credibly faith, hope and love.

Idem Epist. 23. Having shewed why parents' faith profiteth infants, and yet their after-sins hurt them not, saith, "Cum autem homo sapere cæperit, non illud Sacramentum repetit, sed intelliget, ejusque veritati consonâ etiam voluntate coaptabitur. Hoc quamdiu non potest (N. B.) valebit Sacramentum ad ejus tutelam adversus contrarias potestates; et tantum valebit utsi ante rationis usum ex hac vita emigraverit, per ipsum Sacramentum Ecclesiæ charitate ab illa condemnatione, quæ per unum hominem intravit in mundum, Christiano adjutorio liberetur. Hoc qui non credit, et fieri non posse arbitrat, profecto infidelis est, et si

habeat fidei Sacramentum, longeque melior est ille parvulus, quietiamsi fidem nondum habeat in cogitatione, non ei tamen obicem contrariæ cogitationis opponit, undè Sacramentum ejus salubriter percipit."

And saith the Synod of Dort, Aric. 1. 8. 17. "Quandoquidem de voluntate Dei ex verbo ipsius nobis est judicandum, quod testatur liberos fidelium, esse sanctos, non quidem natura, sed beneficio fæderis gratuiti, in quo illi cum parentibus comprehenduntur, pij præntes de electione et salute suorum liberorum, quos Deus in infantia ex hac vita evocat, dubitare non debent." And if there be such certainty of the election and salvation of all such infants of the godly, as ought to exclude all doubting, surely the visible church-state of the adult also, hath some respect to saving grace, so far as that it is credible 'fide humanâ' that such have saving faith.

And saith Mr. Fullwood, Appendix p. 6, "I conceive that such an one's personal profession in his general owning the true faith, and usual attending God's public worship, doth superadd a kind of new right, and mingle it with such a person's former right, had by his birthprivilege." And if the *new right* be not a necessary right, I think it will prove no right.

I will contend with no man whether the approved profession which I have pleaded for in this book, be the very same thing with the ancients' confirmation. I have given you my thoughts of it, and I am sure the thing in question is our duty, and the name not unfit, and that it is the same with the confirmation owned by the divines of the Reformed churches, and particularly with the established and recommended in the Book of Common-prayer, here in England, for the substance.

I shall conclude with this serious request to my brethren, seconded with weighty reasons. Even that they would take heed of both extremes in their judging of church-members, and managing the discipline and ordinances of Christ. 1. Should we be so loose as to cast out discipline, or settle the churches either with such materias for quality, or quantity, as that it shall be incapable of discipline, we shall never be able to answer it to Christ. And should we make a new qualification of adult church-members, even their infant-tittle-condition alone, or the profession of a faith that is not

saving, we should come too near the making of a new baptism, and church. And truly if we do but slubber over the business, and to avoid offence or trouble to ourselves, should take up with a profession utterly incredible^d, especially in these times when we have so much liberty and countenance from the magistrate, for a fuller reformation, we shall be guilty of so much injury to the church, and the Christian name, and our people's souls, as is little considered by many that have their eye only on the contrary extreme, as if there were no danger but on one side.

2. On the other side, if we go so rigidly and unrighteously to work, as some men are bent to do, we may accomplish those ends, that we are endeavouring to overthrow, and frustrate our own, which we think to attain. If we will reject the Scripture ancient character or evidence of title to church-privileges, even a credible profession of Christianity, we shall confound ourselves, and trouble the church, and be at a loss for a certain evidence, and never know what ground to rest upon. And we shall injure the souls of multitudes of true believers, and keep out those, that Christ will entertain. For there are no other terms, besides taking men's profession by a human faith, on which we can admit persons, without excluding multitudes, that should not be excluded. I doubt many ministers, that have had a more ingenuous education themselves, are not sufficiently sensible of the great disadvantage, that country people are under, by their want of such education. Many that are bred where holy discourse is strange, and never were used to any thing of that nature, no, nor to common urbanity of speech, or behaviour, may be brought to hearty sorrow for sin, and desires after Christ and grace, long before they can express their knowledge or desires, in any such manner, as some men do expect. Many gracious souls (as far as I can discern) I have met with, that never were noted for any thing extraordinary in religion, though they lived among such. I had rather let in many, that are unregenerate, into the church, than keep out one that is a true believer, if there be no other remedy. The Lord Jesus that died for them, and sent the ministry for them, and will at last admit them into heaven, will give us little thanks, for excluding his weakest

^d I am sensible also how the arguments for both extremes do either drive or draw the reader to the Anabaptists.

members from the church, and from the use of the sacrament and communion of saints, who have most need of them, of any that have right to them. For my part, I desire not, nor dare be guilty of that way of government in the church, as shall grieve those that Christ would not have grieved, and exclude the weak, and turn or keep out the infants in grace, from the family of the Lord. A compassionate minister is most like to Christ, that will not break the bruised reed. How dealt he with the woman taken in adultery? How tenderly excuseth he the sluggishness of his disciples, that could not watch and pray with him one hour, in his last extremity, with "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak!" when many now that think well of themselves would almost excommunicate men for as small a fault: we know not in such cases, what spirit we are of.

But this is not all; I must confess, brethren, (which I beseech you patiently to hear,) these three things very much stick upon my thoughts. 1. I cannot but observe, how many eminent professors of piety have miscarried, and grievously miscarried of late, when some of lower professions have stood fast. And I think God suffers the falls of many of his own, to let them know the frailty of our natures, and cause them to be compassionate to others. And some censorious men's hearts might smite them, if they had heard from their Master, "Let him that is faultless cast the first stone."

2. And it sticks very much upon my thoughts, how small a handful the censorious way would reduce the catholic church of Christ to. When it is but about the sixth part of the world that are at all baptized Christians; and scarce the sixth part of them, that are Protestants; and of the Protestants, so few, except in England, that are so qualified for holiness, as in your admissions you expect^e. And in England how small is the number that you would admit, I am deeply afraid lest you heinously injure the cause of Christ, by your excessive rigor: and lest confining even the visible church into so exceeding small a compass, should tempt men to infidelity. For he that to-day can believe that Christ

^e The most experienced holy of my flock are very tender of the scandalous themselves, and would not have me to cast them out while there appeareth any present hope; remembering the condition that once they were themselves in, and their failings after convictions, and what had become of them if then they had been cast out.

died not for one of a hundred thousand in the world, may to-morrow believe that he died for none at all. I hope the little flock of the elect, is not so little as some would have the visible church of the called.

3. We are deeply sensible of the increase of infidels in England. They are too thick about us, under several garbs, especially under the mask of Seekers; and are persuading people against the Christian faith, and truth of Scripture, and the life to come: and so much do these apostates now abound, that we have reason to be jealous of them. And if any of you should strike in with good men, that are of this censorious, over-rigorous way, consider how far they may make use of such to accomplish their designs. If by you they can get almost all the world unchurched in estimation; and fifty for one, if not a hundred for one, in England, actually unchristianed, and their children after them left unbaptized: what will follow? I doubt this, if God should not save us from your miscarriages, when there is but one of a hundred in all the land that is a Christian, the rest will want neither malice, nor power to put an end here to the Christian name; or at least to the liberty and glory of Christianity. They may choose our parliaments for us, and in a word, do with us what they list, when they are exasperated to the greatest hatred of us; and cut off our liberties, and set up infidelity or heathenism by a law. I trust God will never suffer this; but let us take heed of gratifying infidels, and casting all our safety upon miracles, lest we be found to be but foolish builders, and tempters of God: still you may find that over-doing is the most effectual undoing. And if you would find out the most dangerous enemies of the Gospel, look for them among those that seem over-zealous against the enemies of the Gospel, and seem to overdo in the work of the Gospel. I desire to bring no party of godly men into suspicion or odium by this; but indeed I desire to countermine the apostates; and it would be the most amazing, confounding thing, that could befall us in this world, if we should see the church of God betrayed into the hands of infidels, and the Gospel lost by the indiscreet and inconsiderate over-doing of those well meaning men, that did the work of infidels and ungodly men for them, while they thought that none were so much against them. If the neck of religion be broken among us, I am afraid the imprudent

will be some cause, that would lead us above the top of the ladder.

Sure I am between you both, you have the easiest way to the flesh, that run into extremes. Durst I cast off discipline, and only preach, and please all the parish in sacraments and other ordinances, how easy a life should I have to the flesh ! And if I durst take out one of a hundred, that are eminent in piety, that will scarce ever call me to any penal acts of discipline, I should have a much more easy life than the former. But they are both so easy, that I the more suspect them to be the fruit of the wisdom of the flesh. Indeed, both the extremes do cast off discipline for the most part, whatever they pretend. One sort never mean to exercise it : and the other sort extol it ; and when they have done, they separate a few of the best that are likely to have no need of the troublesome part of it, and so sit down without the exercise of it ; pretending to be physicians, but refusing to receive the sick into their hospitals. Brethren, I speak not as an accuser, but a monitor, and shall continue to pray for the church's purity and peace, while I am

R. B.

July 30, 1658.

DR. H. HAMMOND, in his *View of the Direct.* sec. 41. pp. 45, 46. "For Confirmation, which being so long and so scandalously neglected in this kingdom, (though the rule have also been severe, and careful in requiring it) will now not so easily be digested, having those vulgar prejudices against it; yet must I most solemnly profess my opinion of it; That it is a most ancient Christian custom, tending very much to edification: which I shall make good by giving you this view of the manner of it. It is this; that every rector of any parish, or curate of charge, should by a familiar way of catechising, instruct the youth of both sexes within his cure, in the principles of religion, so far, that every one of them before the usual time of coming to the Lord's-supper, should be able to understand the particulars of that vow, made in baptism, for the 'credenda' and 'facienda;' yea, and 'fugienda' also. What must be believed, what done, and what forsaken; and be able to give an intelligent account of every one of these: which being done, every such child so prepared, ought to be brought to the bishop for confirmation. Wherein the intent is, that every such child, attained to years of understanding, shall singly and solemnly before God, the bishop, and the whole congregation, with his own consent, take upon himself the obligation to that, which his god-fathers and godmothers in baptism, promised in his name; and before all those reverend witnesses, make a firm, public, renewed promise, that by God's help he will faithfully endeavour to discharge that obligation in every point of it, and persevere in it all the days of his life. Which resolution and promise, so heightened with all those solemnities, will in any reason have a mighty impression on the child, and an influence on his actions for ever after. And this being thus performed by him, the bishop shall severally impose his hands on every such child, (a ceremony used to this purpose by Christ himself) and bless and pray for him, that now, that the temptations of sin begin more strongly in respect of his age, to assault him, he may receive grace and strength against all such temptations or assaults, by way of prevention and special assistance; without which, obtained

by prayer from God, he will never be able to do it. This is the sum of Confirmation ; and were it rightly observed, (and no man admitted to the Lord's-table, that had not thus taken the baptismal-bond from the sureties into his own name ; and no man after that, suffered to continue in the church, which break it wilfully ; but turned out of those sacred courts by the power of the keys in excommunication) it would certainly prove by the blessing of God, were it begun, a most effectual means to keep men, at least within some terms of Christian civility, from fallings into open, enormous sins ; and that the defaming and casting out of this so blameless, gainful order, would be necessary or useful to any policy, save only to defend the devil from so great a blow, and to sustain and uphold his kingdom, I never had yet any temptation or motive to suspect or imagine. Instead of considering any objections of the adversary against this piece, whether of Apostolical or Ecclesiastical Discipline, (which I never heard with any colour produced) I shall rather express my most passionate wish unto my friends, those who sincerely wish the good of this National church, that they will endeavour their uttermost to revive these means of regaining of purity and exemplary lives of all its members, when God, by restoring our peace, shall open a door for it."

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