

## CHAP. XXVI.

## Of Reprobation.

**R**eprobation I take to be non-election, and I dare not understand it further; for so here is Mercy and Justice wonderfully exalted in a way of righteousness: I do not find reprobation, as attributed to God, in this matter, in the terms thereof in the Scripture; and (I suppose that) all the sayings in the Scripture that seems equivalent to it, may be very safely understood in this sense; as *Prov. 16. 4. He made the wicked for the day of wrath, i. e. he knew they would be wicked, yet he made them, and designed them for their wickedness unto wrath, Rom. 9. 21, 22. The elect he designed unto honour, and others he left to themselves, and the means afforded, that continue impenitent, he designed to dishonour; for God saw the end of all, and disposed all to such ends as will be for his own Glory; Jude, ver. 4. The Apostle speaks of certain men that were of old ordained to this condemnation; that is, God fore-knowing them in their sins, ordained them to condemnation: I dare not think that God reprobated any, but in relation to their ob-*

stinacy and constancy in sin ; none shall be damned from the detriment counsel, without relation to their sins ; nor hath any act past in God to cause them to sin, but men are the cause of thir own destruction, though God for their sin hath designed them to it ; so that God will wonderfully exalt himself in his Justice and Mercy on this account.

Two parts  
in Reproba-  
tion.

Reprobation hath two parts in it, 1. A non-election, that is, a leaning to the means afforded, which is full of all sufficiency to save all, if they have hearts and grace to make use thereof : I say they are left to the means, to believe, &c. or not believe, at their own will and choice, and at their own peril ; and so he propoundeth the Gospel to all without respect, effecting the terms of life therein propounded, where and when he pleaseth : but no act of God hindreth any man, but according to the publick ministration of the Gospel, he *willeth* that all should be saved, by coming to the knowledge of the truth ; and this will towards all, he effects in whom he will, and leaves others to their own wills ; though man have lost the freeness of his will to that which is good, by his sin, yet not the power of willing, and God leaves his will free, he may believe, obey, and be saved if he will, God hinders not, unless it be by his Judicial act, as a punishment of former acts of sin and rebellion against him, as in the case



case of Pharaoh of his own people, *Joh. 12. 39, 40.* And of the rebellious Gentiles, *Rom. 1. 21, -- 24.* Which I call a Judicial hardening, *i. e.* a giving up to an hardened estate, in a way of Justice, as a punishment for sin, which is the greatest judgment that can befall persons in this World, and in this he acteth according to his own will, both in a way of Judgment and Mercy, *Rom. 9. 15, 17.* But otherwise God affords great and blessed means for man to believe and be saved: it is the devil and man himself that debilitates the understanding and will, that it will have none of God and Christ, of Grace and Life, on the terms propounded in the new Covenant, which is, Repentance, Faith, and new obedience; this, man of himself will not submit too, nor cannot, because he will not: see *2 Cor. 4. 4. Joh. 5. 40. and 6. 44.*

The second part of Reprobation of impenitent sinners is, they are decreed and appointed to pain and misery, to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his Power, *2 Thes. 1. 8, 9.*

To be set on the left hand, with this sentence, *Go ye cursed into everlasting fire,* as a punishment for their sin against God, and rejecting Grace in the day of Grace. O how does it concern every one then to look about themselves whiles they have time and means, and not profanely to plead,

that if they are elected, they shall be saved, live as they list; if not, they shall be damned, do what they can. But know, that you may believe, obey the Gospel, and be saved if you will, if you have hearts to it, God hinders you not, but on the contrary, affords you blessed means, and gives you blessed invitations, and makes you blessed offers of Life, if you will obey him; and will accept you, and perform all his good word and promises of Life, if you come in, believe, and obey the Gospel. But know, that if you resolve to keep your sins still, and to live as you list, and will not accept of Christ and Life on the terms of the Gospel, you are so far from being any of the elect ones, that you must be damned, Mar. 16. 15, 16.

*Objection.* *Obj.* But I want the power of coming to God. I have sometimes a will, but I cannot accomplish the work; sin is too hard for me, how then can I come?

*Answer.* 1. Ordinarily the defect lieth in the will; when once the will and mind is really, and in good earnest for God, the power shall not fail, for the defect is in the will; it may be there may be sometimes some convictions of sin, and apprehensions of Grace, with the need thereof, and willingness to enjoy it, but it is but weak and flashy, and soon over, but no heart-hatred of sin, but rather a love to it, and loathness to part with it; no resolution



lution to set on the work of turning to the Lord with the whole heart, and to trust him for strength therein, and thus the heart is divided; like those the Lord complains of, *Hos. 10. 2. Their heart is divided, now shall they be found faulty*; a double heart is an heart the Lord likes not; *Jam. 1. 8. A double minded man is unstable in all his waies*; and *4. 8. Purifie your hearts ye double minded*. While the will is thus divided, it's no wonder if the power be wanting; *Let not such a man think to obtain any thing from the Lord*.

2. If they will be in good earnest to turn to the Lord, to believe and obey the Gospel, to *eschew evil, and to do good*, set about the work, and do not sit still and complain for want of power, but look to the Lord, and he will not be wanting to thee; he that hath wrought the will, will not fail in helping to do, if thou set heartily about the work: I shall say in this as David said to his Son in another case, *1 Chron. 22. 16. Arise and be doing, and the Lord will be with thee*. God never did, nor never will damn any man for want of power, but for want of will, and so mens destruction is of themselves.

Obj. But Christ saith, *Joh. 6. 44. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him*.

Ans. True, but first God draws by his Word, the Preaching of the Gospel, and

the wooing invitations thereof, is the way, by which he draweth sinners to himself: these are the cords of his love by which he draweth; *Hos. 11. 4. I drew them with the cords of a man, with the bonds of love, and I laid meat before them:* and this kind of drawing hath a natural tendency to effect the work, if wilfulness keep not from the Grace presented, and invited too.

2. If the work hereby be so far effected in thee, as a real desire to come to Christ, know it is from the drawing of the Lord, therefore come to him, fall in with him while he is thus drawing thee; the Lord calls thee, *Matt. 11. 28. Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest:* dispute not the power, but an hearty and willing consent to imbrace Christ Jesus, as thy Saviour and Lord, according to the Gospel, and the work is done.

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## CHAP. XXVII.

*Of the Church of Christ in the new Covenant.*

**T**HE Church of God, under the ministration of the Law, or old Covenant, was the natural seed of *Abraham*; and so the Nation of the Jews to them was the Oracles and Ordinances given, and them did he own for his peculiar people to worship him, his people in Covenant, and under his discipline and government.

The Church of God under the ministration of the new Testament, since the death and resurrection of the Testator, Jesus Christ, are, or should be, the spiritual seed of *Abraham*; that is, true Believers, both of Jews and Gentiles. It's now no National Church, but a people gathered out of the Nations, to the profession of Faith in Christ Jesus, and obedience to him, *Gal. 3. 28, 29. Act. 10. 34, 35. Rom. 3. 29. Rev. 5. 9.*

But to speak more distinctly of the Church, the word Church (or Assembly, as the Greek word *Ekklesia* imports) is variously applied in the Scripture, to any Assembly, bad as well as good; *Act. 19. 32, 39, 41.*

39, 41. The same word is so translated, and applied to an Assembly met together for evil.

But when it intends the Church, and assembly of God, and of Christ, on the new Covenant account, (that being it we are now about) we may consider it according to Scripture, on a three-fold consideration.

*What the  
constituted  
Church of  
Christ is.*

1. It intends a people gathered out of the World by the ministry of the Gospel, to the visible profession of Faith in Christ Jesus, and obedience to him, to Faith and Holiness, the Gospel constituted Church of Christ; and this is the Church I especially intend to speak of, the visible constituted Church of Christ; and this is distinguished into several bodies, or congregational Assemblies, under the regal Government of Christ their Lord, yielding professed subiection to Jesus Christ in his Laws and Ordinances, as far as they are intrusted therein; every particular Congregation having the same power from Christ their Head and Lord; not one to Lord it over another, but to help and assist in love: and the Church of Christ is thus gathered into many particular Assemblies, by reason of distance of place, number of persons, that they cannot assemble in one, or a few Assemblies, but in as many as are necessary for their coming together, and comfortable serving of the Lord. That the  
Church



Church of Christ is, or should be gathered thus; appeareth, *Act. 14. 23. 1 Cor. 1. 2. Gal. 1. 2. Rev. 1. 4.* All which proves the truth asserted; and that they had all of them the Ordinances of Christ administred in each Assembly, as appears evidently by the Apostles reproof and direction on this account, about matters of Order and Ordinances, as relating to particular Churches, *1 Cor. 11. and 14. Chapt. Tit. 1. 5. Phil. 1. 1. Rev. 2 and 3 Chapt.*

And this Church in all its particular Assemblies is gathered out of the World, and from the World, to the Lord, by the Word and Spirit of Christ, *Matt. 28. 19, 20. Mar. 16. 15, 16. Act. 2. 41, 42, 47. and 4. 4. and 13. 48, 49.* This was the Apostles commission, *Act. 26. 17, 18.* Which work was alwaies accomplished in this way, without, and contrary to the humane power, who ordinarily hath opposed this new Covenant work of Christ.

(And what-ever Church it is that takes any other Lord or Law-giver besides Christ in religious things, and owns an humane head either in its constitution by humane power, or receiving Laws in matters of Faith and Worship, is none of Christ's Church, but an Harlot, a *Sinagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews when they are not, Rev. 2. 9.* Committing spiritual fornication with the Kings of the Earth, after the manner of the Whore of *Babylon, Rev. 17. 2. and 18, 9.*

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Taking the humane power as Head, Lord and Law-giver in Christs concernments, making them their strength, support and uphold, perswading the Magistrate to persecute all that fall not in with them; who, although Christ hath ordained that his Church should be subject to the humane powers, in humane and worldly concerns, yet this is that with which few are satisfied, being otherwise perswaded by the false Church, who delighteth in fornication, and loveth to have another Head and Lord than Jesus Christ.)

And the Churches of Christ thus gathered and constituted under Christ, their Head, Lord, and Law-giver, have an equal power from him, with their distinct offices to carry on all the administrations of his Kingdom; that is, his Church, according to the rules by him prescribed; and in these Churches is God to be worshipped in all his appointments, in spirit and in truth, *Joh. 4. 24. 1 Pet. 2. 5.*

And these visible constituted Churches of the Gospel are (or should be) all Saints, true Believers; they do bad service, who, to maintain their National Churches, and all Christendom, (as called) to be the universal visible Church, would perswade us that the visible Church of Christ have in it multitudes of Hypocrites; though it's true, that Hypocrites have been, and it's like are, and may be in the true Church of Christ,



Christ, yet they have no right, and must give an account for their being there, *Mat. 22. 12. Luk. 26. 27.* And surely they do bad work, and draw a bad conclusion from the premises; that is, because Christ's Church may have Hypocrites in it; they will pretend a Church for him, of openly profane, and ungodly Hypocrites.

But to prove that the visible constituted Churches of Christ are, or should be true Believers, this appeareth;

1. From the way of entrance, which is by Faith, Repentance, and Baptism, *Matt. 28. 19, 20. Mar. 16. 15, 16. Act. 2. 39, 41.* None must enter but in this way, to let us to know, that none else ought to be there.

2. From the provision made for them, when they are come in, that they may find feeding for their souls, according to the promise, *Job. 10. 9.* That is, his holy appointments that lead to him who is the true Bread of Life, for their building up in the Faith till they come to Glory, *Act. 2. 42. Eph. 4. 11, 12, 13.* And truly we cannot rationally, nor religiously imagine, that he hath given such Gifts, and left us such Ordinances to build up a company of profane and godless persons; I think they are profane thoughts in those that think it.

3. The order he hath left in his Church to exclude Hypocrites, when discovered, evidently declares that he never intended

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to have a Church of Hypocrites, *Matt. 18. 15, 16, 17. 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8, 13. 2 Tit. 2. 21.*

4. It appeareth by the Titles given to the Church of Christ, they are called Saints, that is, holy ones, *sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be Saints, holy Brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, the body of Christ, and members in particular, a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, &c.* With many like expressions, all which do more than evidently demonstrate, that Jesus Christ never intended to have his Church to be a den of Hypocrites, and cage of unclean and hateful birds, but to be an holy people, to shew forth his praise in the World.

This is the visible Kingdom of Christ in this World, though not of the World; and those powers on earth that oppose his rule and government, by his Laws in his Church, are very bad neighbours to him; he is content to let them have the outward regality, and his subjects (on that account) to be subject to them, and is a good neighbour to them, and will do them no wrong, but good all their daies, if they would but be friendly to him and his; for by him it is that Kings Reign: but if they will not permit him his right, what will be the issue, is easy to be discerned, *Pf. 2. 10, 11, 12.*

2. The word, Church of Christ, does sometimes intend all true Believers in the World, whether in or out of particular constituted Churches; and this is it which

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is so commonly called the invisible Church, which is indeed in some sense invisible; that is, none can certainly know the true believers, but God alone (*2 Tim. 2. 19. The Lord knoweth them that are his*) and none else, no not themselves, some of them, and at some times; yet in some sense the Church thus considered is visible in the world, and do visibly own the Lord, according to the measure of means and light enjoyed; the Church thus considered I take to be intended in these Scriptures, *Rom. 10. 11, 12, 13. 1 Cor. 1. 2. Eph. 1. 21, 22, 23.* where the Church is called, *The body and fulness of Christ, Col. 1. 24.* and as it is without question, that in all ages many of the visible Church in profession have miscarried, being none of Christs body truly, the Church taking its denomination from the better part, though all ought to be such; so likewise we are in charity to judge, that many may be out of the right constituted visible Church and Churches of Christ (that are Members,) though its none of their virtue so to be; God hath his people in *Babylon, Rev. 18. 4.* and his Church (on this account) hath he had in the world, throughout all ages, *Eph. 3. 21.* although for a long while, but little of visibleness, according to Gospel rule did appear, and that is it I understand is intended, *Rev. 11. 1, 2.* Where the Worshippers are measured rather by the spiritualness of their invisible Worshipping, then

then by the rule of their Ordinances, Order and publick bearing up the name of Christ in this matter, being *troden under foot of the Gentiles*, that is, of the Babylonish and Antichristian world, and this is it I take to be the Universal (and in some sort) visible Church of Christ in the World, the body of which all true believers are Members.

3. The word Church sometimes intends all the elect of God, and this is the invisible Church (as to man) and this is evident from the Scriptures, Eph. 5. 25. *Christ loved the Church* (before it was visible) *and gave himself for it*, So Heb. 12. 22. we read of the *Universal Church of the first born*, &c. the Church in this sense includes all the Elect, but it is the bounden duty of all true believers to get themselves into the visible Profession of Christ, and bearing up his Name in the World, according to the rules by him prescribed, and the highest and best light they have, or may attain therefrom in this matter, and to be under the government of Christ, in some particular constituted Church of his.

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## I CHAP. XXVIII.

*Of the Ordinances, Officers, and Administrations in the Visible Constituted Church of Christ.*

**O**UR Lord Christ Jesus hath left instituted Laws and Ordinances for his visible Church and Kingdom, that his people by their submission to him therein, might shew their subjection to his Regal Authority, as to their Lord and King. As there is no King but hath his Laws by which he rules, so Christ our Lord and King hath his Laws by which he rules in his Church, which is his Kingdom, and a government distinct from all humane and worldly governments, and admitteth not of any mixture of humane inventions or ordinances of men, nor of any humane power to inforce to the obedience thereof, *Mat. 15. 9. Isa. 29. 13, 14. Psal. 110. 3. Acts 2. 41.* His subjects must be Volunteers, voluntarily subscribing to his government, they are *a willing people in the day of his power*, being wrought thereto by his word and Spirit, he is so far from foreseeing, that he accepts none but those who serve him willingly,

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lingly ; Christ will have his Subjects like those, 2 Cor. 8. 3. *Willing of themselves* ; that is, without humane constraint, and ver. 12. *If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not* ; and this is a truth in all cases of Christs service in first listing themselves under him, ver. 5. *They first gave themselves to the Lord, &c.* this is acceptable, when souls give themselves to the Lord to be saved and ruled by him, Rom. 6. 17. and 2. in their continuance with him, it must be willing, John 6. 67, 68.

God hath in all his Administrations throughout all ages, had his instituted Ordinances, by which his people, (his Church) was distinguished from others, and in the observation of which they did visibly own God in the World, and the truth is, that the institutions of God in matters of Worship, have been the Badge of distinction between his Church and the world throughout all ages, and the cause of all the woe and misery that hath come on mankind, and on the people of God, hath been for the transgression of instituted Ordinances: *Adams* transgression of an instituted Ordinance, brought in death and misery in all mankind, and all the Plagues and miseries brought on *Israel* of old, was for transgression of the instituted Ordinances of God in the matters of his worship ; See 2 King 17. 7. to 20. all the misery and wrath

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complained of in the Lamentations of *Jeremy* was the effect of this very sin, the Transgression of the Laws of God in the matters of his Worship in his Instituted Ordinances, *Levit. 1. 18. The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled against his Commandments*, and ver. 16. *Wee unto us we have sinned*, &c. And for this will be the great controversie of God with the (pretended) Christian world in the latter days, *Isa. 24. 1. to 6.*

The Lord Christ having appeared in the latter end of the world, to put away sin by the offering of himself, he being the substance of all former institutions, they leading to him, *Col. 2. 17. Heb. 10. 1.* and so he is become the great Lord and Lawgiver of his Church; *God speaking to us by him, Heb. 1. 1. 2.* Whom we are to hear (*i. e.* to obey) in all things, *Acts 3. 22. 23.* all his Ordinances and Laws are indispensably necessary for his Subjects to obey him in, so far as they know his will; and ignorance will not altogether excuse in this matter, therefore it behoves all to be dilligently inquiring, that so they be not willingly ignorant.

The Laws, Ordinances, and Institutions of Christ for his Church, his Kingdom, to serve and worship him in, are as followeth.

1. Baptism (after believing, repenting, *x. Is Baptism* and turning to the Lord) is the first duty *rism.*

required, *Mat. 16. 15, 16. Acts 2. 38. 41.* and is the imitating Ordinance into the visible Church and kingdom of Jesus Christ, and is the duty of all true Believers; and there is no other way or door of entrance declared by Christ, but by Faith and Baptism.

Not by natural generation or birth as some imagine, that is done away, as being of the old Covenant, where the natural seed were accounted for the seed, *Gen. 17. 7. ver. 14.* but in the New Covenant the spiritual seed, that is, believers are accounted the seed and subjects of Christs Kingdom, and are to live under his laws, *Gal. 3. 26, 28.* nor by entring into Covenant as some others imagine, which is after their own devising, mistaking and misapplying the Scriptures, as that *2 Cor. 8. 5. They gave themselves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.* Hence some (and that too, men of parts and learning) gather, *That they first gave themselves to the Lord, by believing and accepting the Gospel, and after to us; that is, to the Church by some Covenant, which is a clear and palpable mistake, its true in the first sentence; that is, they gave themselves to the Lord, may be included their giving themselves to the Church by Faith and Baptisme, for those who give up themselves to be the Lords Subj<sup>ts</sup> in his Church, do give themselves to the Lord, and to us by the Will of God; that is, they gave themselves to the mini-* con-



stry of the Saints in their necessities, and that beyond what the Apostles hope was, considering their *great affliction and deep poverty*, that this is the true meaning of that Scripture is so plain, that he that runs may read it; so that I know no other way of entrance into the Church and visible Kingdom of Christ, but by Faith and Baptism.

Neither understand I well what they mean that call Baptism a Covenant, and talk so much of a Baptismal Covenant; its a language the Scripture knows not, neither know I any other Covenant then the Gospel new Covenant of Grace, which (on our part) is a willing consenting (from believing the truth of the Gospel) to be saved by Jesus Christ, and to be ruled by him as Lord and King; which faith and consent is to be confessed in order to Baptism, by which the believer visibly gives up himself to the Lord, as to be saved, so to be ruled by him. What other things are held forth in Baptism, its meet for Christians to be instructed in, as the washing away of sin, *Acts 22. 16.* that is the pardon and purging away of sin by the blood of Christ, *not the washing of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, 1 Pet. 3. 21.* Yet the washing of the flesh is a figure of that within, and a Conformity to Christ in his Death and Burial, thereby signifying our Death to sin, and our natural death likewise, to confirm our Faith in the truth of the Resurrection, *Rom. 6. 3, 4, 5, 6.*

1 Cor. 15. 29. and why Baptism and the Supper of the Lord (which is the second instituted Ordinance that I shall mention) should be so frequently called Seals as they are by some, I know not, because the Scripture knows no such things; some calls themselves to Seal Gods love to the soul, and the believers interest therein. As to this its true, the love of God and Christ is abundantly held forth therein, and the believer exercising faith, may (and I hope do) meet with refreshing and sealing consolations therein, and so he doth in other of the instituted Ordinances of Christ, i.e. the Word and Doctrine of the Gospel, but without the exercise of Faith, he profits by neither, Heb. 4. 2. Others say, they are Gods Seals to confirm his truth in his Covenant to us, and that God never sets Seal to the truth of any mans interest, that we must look to our selves, whether we have the faith to which the Covenant is made; God seals to that, he will not fail in performing of the Covenant on his part, which have something of truth in it; i.e. it behoves us to look that our faith is right, and God will not fail in performance of his Covenant of life; but its true likewise that God hath and doth set seal to the truth of his peoples faith in the Covenant of his Grace, else they can have no seal but their own, which must needs prove invalid in the day of need; if Gods seal and  
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theirs concur not in the matter. Rom. 8. 16. *The spirit it self beareth witness with (or to) our spirit, that we are the Children of God;* the spirit of Christ is the alone sealing evidence to the hearts of Christians, and that by his word and work in them, Eph. 1. 13, 14. 2 Cor. 1. 22. this is such a Sealing evidence to the hearts of Christians, as that who so have it not, is none of his, Rom. 8. 9. and to call any of his Ordinances, Seals, is besides all Scripture rule, as for the truth of God in his Covenant, I think we cannot have more confirming Seals then his Word and Oath, *two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lye*, Heb. 6. 17, 18. and the gift of his son from Heaven for Salvation of Sinners that believe and obey him. What greater and surer seals these (I know not) of the truth of God, and his Spirit working and effecting Faith, in and by those Sealing evidences of his love to men, is the Sealing Earnest of our inheritance.

The Supper of the Lord is an instituted Ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be practised by the Church till his second coming. 1 Cor. 11. 26. a like Figure (as Baptism) very significant and of special use in the Church of Christ, if Faith be rightly exercised therein, and serves especially to keep in remembrance the Death and Sufferings of our Lord Jesus, and the benefits we receive thereby, the great love of  
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God and Christ to men, being therein discovered, 1 Cor. 11. 26. and the great sin in those that partake thereof, is, in not discerning the Lords body; that is, the breaking of the Lords body, and the shedding of the Lords blood for our sins, and the greatness of the Lords love therein, 1 Cor. 11. 29. it being an Ordinance that presenteth Jesus Christ Crucified (with all his benefits) to the eye, that the eye may affect the heart; for all good comes to the heart, by the ear and by the eye; the Doctrine of the Gospel comes to the heart, by the ear in hearing, and by the eye in seeing and reading; this Ordinance is for the eye that the heart may be affected, and for the taste and stomach, that the sense of hunger and feeding may be of spiritual use, to learn the soul to feed on Christ, who is the bread of Life, in which we may observe the Wisdome of God to make use of our senses for our spiritual good, Gal. 3. 1.

This holy Ordinance is for the holy people of God, the Church, his holy Nation, who alone (by true Faith) are interested in this Crucified Jesus, who ever eats and drinks thereof, without interest therein, eats and drinks damnation to themselves. What sad and bad work then do they make that will bring in all, make up a Church of multitudes of Hypocrites to damn them, as if the design of God and Christ



Christ in the Gospel had been to get in multitudes into the Church on purpose to damn them; such will have a sorry account in the great day who thus pervert the Lords end in his Death, and corrupt and defile his Church and holy Ordinances.

3. Ordinance and Institution of Christ <sup>5. Preaching.</sup> in his Church is, the Preaching of the Gospel, for Building up of the Church in their *most Holy Faith*, as all the Ordinances of Christ are. There is a two fold Administration of the Doctrine of the Gospel, the first for conversion and gathering into the Church, *Mat. 28. 19. Mar. 16. 15, 16. Acts 2. 37, 38. and 26. 16, 17, 18.* The 2. for building up of the Church in the holy Faith after Conversion and Gathering; *Mat. 28. 20. Acts 2. 41, 42.* this being the end of Gods giving gifts to men, *Eph. 4. 11, 12, 13.* They are bad Ministers who turn the World into the Church without repentance and Faith, and so build up a multitude of Hypocrites and prophane persons instead of the Body of Christ; neither Jesus Christ, nor deceived poor Sinners will thank them for it in the end.

4. Ordinance of Christ in his Church, <sup>4. Prophe-</sup> is Prophecy, much spoken of in Scripture, <sup>cies.</sup> though I fear I may say its almost lost out of the Church; but of this I shall speak more distinctly when I come to speak of the

the Officers in the Church, though I take not this of Propheſie to be performed as an Office by an Officer as ſuch, but by a gift.

5. *Prayer.* 5. Ordinance is Prayer; although its true, this is not for the Church alone, but is the duty and property of all believers, as ſuch *Col. 4. 2. 1 Theſ. 5. 17.* yet it is a Church Ordinance, *Acts 2. 42. Where Doctrine, breaking bread, and Prayers are ſet together,* as the great and common Ordinances of the Church, in which they had fellowſhip together, in *1 Tim. 2. 1. Ephes. 6. 18. Jude verſe 20.* which in the Church (as all other of Chriſts Ordinances are) is to be performed by men and not by women, *1 Tim. 2. 8.* See more about this of Prayer, *Chap. 22.*

6. *Praising.* 6. Praiſing God or ſinging Praiſes to him, is an Ordinance of Chriſt in his Church, as well as the duty of all Saints at all times, See *1 Cor. 14, 15, 16.* where both Prayer and Singing are mentioned as it ought to be performed in the Church, *Col. 3. 16.* the manner is expreſt to be ſuch, as in Prayer, one to ſpeak to the Praise of God, ſo that the reſt may joyn in with him to ſay *Amen*, as in Prayer, for all to ſing in Meeter together, is that for which there is no rule (that I know) in Law or Goſpel. In the Old Teſtament Singers were appointed to that ſervice, *1 Chron. 9. 33. Eſr. 2. 65. Neh. 5. 67.* and did perform it



it by turn, answering each other, i Sam. 18. 6, 7. *Exod.* 15. 20, 21; But I judge that Old Testament Singing is ended as to the manner thereof, and I am sure there is no rule in the New, for that which now by most is practised.

Gospel Singing should be new Songs by a new People, suitable to the new Covenant, *Psal.* 96. 1. and 98. 1. such Songs as none can learn but the Redeemed ones, *Rev.* 14. 3. no marvail if such as are for Forms of Worship in Prayer and Praise, be for a Formal people void of the Spirit and strangers to Spiritual Worship.

And as this is an Ordinance, so it is a gift in the Church of Christ, as Prayer is, and is so to be performed, a hearty giving thanks for mercies received, so as that the rest may say *Amen*; that is, joyn in praying, which is exprest in saying *Amen*, as in Prayer, they are greatly mistaken who think that there is no Singing but in Meeter, and with a Singing Tone.

7. Ordinance of Christ in the Church is, 7. Discipline. Church Discipline, Order and Government, and the Administring Church censures according as occasion and need calls for it; and herein is the Royal and Regal Authority of Christ, in an especial manner kept up in his House, his Church, his Kingdom; which consists in the execution of his Laws upon Transgressors in all cases according

according to the fact, reproof, admonition, withdrawing, 2 *Thes.* 3. 6. rejecting, if there be no other remedy nor means can prevail, and this is that which makes much for the honour of Christ, and good of his Church, to preserve from sin, recover fallen sinners, and to preserve the Church pure from defilements; of this the Scripture is full and clear, 1 *Cor.* 5. 7, 8, 13. 2 *Tim.* 2. 21. *Heb.* 12. 15, 16. *Mat.* 18. 15, 16, 17.

2. Of the  
Officers in  
the Church  
of Christ.

2. Of the Officers in the Church of Christ, take we the Church of the New Testament since the death and Resurrection of the Testator, to be but one Church state, as the Church of the Old Covenant was, from Circumcision untill the Death of Christ. Then 1. Jesus Christ is the great Officer in & of his Church, the Angel, Messenger, Bishop, Shepherd, Prophet, Apostle, Lord, Law giver, and King of his Church, whose lawful subjects believers are; but he being ascended up on high to do work there for his Church, in order to its spiritual and eternal welfare, hath left in his room and stead, Gifts and Officers for the good of his Church, which are (as enumerated in the Scripture) Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, and all for the good of the Church, *Eph.* 4. 11. 12.

1. Apostles. 1. Apostles, men immediately called, inspired, and sent for the first publishing of



of the Gospel, and first planting of the Gospel Church, being endued with power for such a work, to give laws and directions from Jesus Christ, for his Churches direction in Faith and practice, till his second coming, but such Apostles we now have none, but they were and are our Apostles, we being of the same Gospel Church.

Though according to the common sense of the word Apostle (that is sent) so we have, or might or should have Apostles in the Church, it signifying a messenger, or one sent; as I shall more fully declare in its place.

2. Prophets, now this of Prophets I take not to be a distinct ordained Office, <sup>2. Prophets</sup> as Pastor and Teacher, but a gift in the Church, and so an Ordinance of Christ for the Churches Edification, not extraordinary any more then the other Ministry that we account to stand as the Ordinary Ministry in the Church; probably the Prophets in the Primitive times might have more and greater gifts then any now, but that Nulls not the gift nor use thereof in the Church, no more then that because, the Pastors and Teachers then had greater spiritual gifts then any now have. Therefore we should have no Pastors nor Teachers now, and so no Church, and so no Religion; those who work Prophets out of the Church, might by the same reason and rule

rule, work out all and themselves too; that by Prophets were intended ordinary Prophets for the edification of the Church (what ever gifts they then had) will appear if we consider.

1. It was a gift to be obtained by industry and endeavour (extraordinary prophetic was an immediate gift) 1 Cor. 12. 31. and 14. 39.

2. It was a Gift for the common good and Edification of the Church, most of profit, (*viz.* of the Gifts singly Administered without Office) in the Church, therefore not to be lost or expulced out of the Church.

3. Yet it was (in some sense) inferiour to that of Preaching by Office, because he that is called to Office, is not only a Prophet, but more then a Prophet, and this will appear if we consider.

1. That all the Prophets work was to speak by way of Edification, Exhortation, and Consolation; but the Elders or Officers work and duty, was, and is, to Exhort, Reprove, Rebuke, with all authority, 2 Tim. 4. 2. Titus 2. 15. which none out of Office might authoritatively doe.

2. The Doctrine of the Prophets must be judged and tryed, as supposing they might speak amiss and fail (but the Officers are supposed to have attained to such



a degree of knowledge in the School of Christ, as that there is no such rule prescribed for them) 1 Cor. 14. 29, 30, 31. nor that Officers or Elders are without all limitation in this matter, but under the Churches judgment.

3. Propheſie was ſuch an Ordinance in the Church of Chriſt, as that the Church it ſelf might be too apt to deſpiſe it by reaſon of its meaneſſes, as is implied, 1 Theſ. 5. 19. 20. *Quench not the ſpirit, deſpiſe not Prophecies*; it ſeems they were all for Preaching; but deſpiſe Prophecies, as it is too much at this day.

4. The Prophets might through weakneſſes bring forth ſomething that was not good or true, yet not to be deſpiſed, v. 21. *Prove all things, hold faſt that which is good.* Which implyeth, that there might drop ſome things from the Prophets that might not be good, yet it ſhould not be deſpiſed nor they diſcouraged, but that which was good imbraced, and that which was bad left, and the Prophets inſtructed therein, for their amendment.

All which proves that the Prophets were ordinary gifted perſons in the Church for Edification, after its firſt gathering, till Officers were choſen, and the Officers was to be choſen out of the Prophets, that is to ſay, the beſt gifted and qualified among them, and this answereth the order. 1. *Apoſtles, Secondly Prophets, &c.* and this was the

the rule observed, *Acts* 13. 1, 2. And out of these Prophets and Teachers, must *Barnabas and Saul be taken*, for more publick work and service; and if this rule were observed in the Churches, it would be a way (according to the Lord's Order) to raise up gifts in the Church fitted for Office, as occasion calls for it; for this of Prophecy is a constant order in the Churches to be continued Prophets, and an official Ministry may (and should) be together in the Church; so would not the Church be without persons gifted and fitted for office, as need requireth.

3. *Evangelists.*

The next out of the Prophets, are Evangelists, Gospel cryers, or Gospel preachers, or Apostles, that is, ordinary Apostles: this is an office of great use in the Church, though almost left out, and lost, as if it were extraordinary, and only for the primitive times; the reason thereof rendred, because there are no such Gifts now, nor Apostles to call them to the work, or direct them in it. A wonderful weak way of reasoning; by the same rule we may reason out all offices and officers out of the Church, yea, and reason out Church and all, for want of Apostles and Gifts; and here lieth the great reason of the seekers loss, want of Gifts, and gifted persons, as the Apostles, to administer Gospel Ordinances, and this is next of kin to it; for the same reason that works out Evangelist,



gelist will (if followed) work out all.

1. That there were such called, and authorized Officers and Ministers belonging to the Church, not extraordinary, (as the first Apostles) but ordinary, not infallibly inspired, but such as received all their rules, relating to their work, from the Apostles, as the Pastors and Elders did both in their ministerial work, and in conversation, 1 Tit. 2, 3, Chap. and Chap. 4. 11, to 16. and Chap. 5. throughout; and 6. 11, 12, 13. 2 Tit. 2. 14, 15, 16, 22, to 26. So the Epistle to Titus proves the same, with many others that might be mentioned.

2. There is the same use and need of such a Ministry to preach the Gospel to the World, for conversion and gathering, and to take care for the establishing of the Churches, and Officers therein; which, as it is Gods order in his Churches, so would it be a mercy and a blessing to the Churches, and much loss hath befallen the Church in the neglect hereof: such a ministry (if spirited for the work) would be of general advantage to the Churches of Christ.

3. That their call unto it was ordinary, that is, in the primitive times, by the Apostles, and Churches; for there was no extraordinary Ministers, but such as was immediately called, as the Apostles were, and all Officers in the Church besides Apostles, were and are ordinary, and to continue. That they were so called to it, is clear;

*Timothy* was called to this office, by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, 1 Tit. 4. 14. And these sort of Ministers were called sometimes Evangelists, i. e. Gospel Preachers, or Cryers, 2 Tit. 4. 5. *Act.* 21. 8. Sometimes Apostles, 2 Cor. 8. 23. *The Apostles of the Churches, and the Glory of Christ,* Phil. 2. 25. The Apostle calls *Epaphroditus* his brother and companion, &c. and your Apostle, that is, the Churches Apostle: by all which it appears, that this official Ministry was ordinary, and should be in the Church still, and the Church suffereth much in the loss thereof; for Gods Ordinances are not in vain; and out of the Prophets in the Church should this and other Ministers be chosen, according to the order stated, *First Apostles, then Prophets, and then Evangelists, and Pastors and Teachers,* Eph. 4. 11. This is the method of God's Order in the Church, 1 Cor. 12. 28. Where Evangelists in the term are left out, but very probably included in that of Teachers, that including all the official Ministry, besides the first Apostles, *Paul and Barnabas*, who were not inferior Apostles, yet in as much as their call was not from the mouth of Christ in the manner as the rest was, they must (for order sake) be taken out from among the Prophets, and sent to the work in the ordinary orderly way of the Gospel, *Acts* 13. 1, 2, 3.

2. Out of the Prophets are Pastors and Teach-



Teachers to be chosen by the Church, and ordained; and although there be various Titles given in Scripture to these Officers, as Pastors, Teachers, Elders, Bishops, &c. It imports not variety of Offices, but the fulness of the work, every Title being significant, Pastor to feed, Teacher to instruct, Elder to rule, Bishop to oversee; it's possible that all may be in one man, but in as much as these gifts may be more eminent, some in one, and some in another, suitably should they be exercised.

That those Titles hold not forth any distinction in Office, or variety of Offices, or any superiority in Office one above another, in way of authority, though in distinction by gift, doth appear, *Tit. 1. 5, 6, 7.* Where the Apostle first calls them Elders, *ver. 5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou mightest ordain Elders, &c.* and after, *ver. 7. Bishops; for a Bishop must be blameless, &c.* By which it appears, that Bishops and Elders are one and the same Office, *1 Tit. 3.* The Apostle sums up all the Ministry of the Church on this account, under the Name of Bishop, and *Chap. 5. 17.* under the Name of Elders; by which it appears, that Bishops and Elders was one and the same Office, only Elders distinguished, by ruling and teaching, which distinguisheth not the Office, but the exercise therein, suitable to the gift, both in teaching and ruling; the like distinction we have, *Rom. 12.*

7, 8. distinguished by the Gift more than by the Office. Elders may have a gift to teach well, and rule well too; others may have a gift to rule well, and teach but little; or teach well, and little gift to rule; and suitable should they be exercised in the Church, *Phil. 1. 1.* These sorts of Officers are all included in that of Bishops; and *1 Pet. 5. 1.* They are all included in Elders, who were Pastors to feed the flock, *ver. 2.* *Acts 20. 17.* Paul calleth the *Elders of the Church of Ephesus to him*; and *ver. 28.* Calleth the same Elders, Bishops, Overseers; and Peter calleth himself an Elder, and a Witness of the sufferings of Christ, *1 Pet. 5. 1.*

So that if any will suppose a superiority in Office among those varieties of Titles, there is least ground of all for that of Bishop; for Peter himself saith, that he was an Elder, but he no where calls himself a Bishop; and Ordination was performed by the Presbytery, not Episcopacy, *1 Tit. 4. 14.* and *Hebr. 13. 7, 17.* They are summed all under that of rule, and guides; and these Officers are to carry on the administrations of the Church in an orderly way, though the power of all is committed to the Church, *Matt. 28. 20.* Yet the Church are to choose out such persons as God hath gifted and qualified for the Work, that although the gift be from the Lord, yet the authority of administering must



must be from the Church electing, and Ordination of the Presbytery, by Fasting and Prayer, and imposition of hands, *Act. 13. 3.* *1 Tim. 4. 14.* *Act. 6. 3, 6.* Who were the first Officers ordained in the Church, and were ordained Elders: though their work was to take care of the poor, yet they were ordained Elders. 1. All Offices was in the Apostles, next to Jesus Christ, they were Apostles, Evangelists, Elders, Deacons, did all, and were all, as is evident in this first Church, and all other Officers and Offices came from them, as necessity called for it; and the first Office and Officers ordained in the Church, were those, *Act. 6.* and were ordained Elders; though then especially to take care of the poor, which the Apostles did before, and Elders still may do, if the work be not too much for them: that they were ordained Elders, is apparent; 1. In that we read of no Officers in that Church, but Apostles and Elders, *Act. 15. 6. ver. 22.* The whole are summed up in three distinctions, *i. e. Apostles and Elders, and the whole Church,* *ver. 23. Apostles, Elders and Brethren;* and *Chap. 11. 30.* The contribution was sent to the Elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul: and without all controversy, it was sent to them that had the care of that matter, and here they are called Elders: I mind this the more for clearing, that election of Elders belong to the Church; the Apostles, though infallible,

would not rob the Church of this right; see *Act. 14. 23.* *When they had ordained them Elders* (by election, or lifting up of hands) *in every Church, Cheirotoneſai,* to choose by holding up the hand, to create by general voice of suffering; and thus all Officers, *i. e.* Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers, must be chosen by the Churches, and by Ordination, be authorised to the work; *2 Cor. 8. 19. 23.*

And Officers when thus chosen, and set apart to the office and work, are to administer all Ordinances in the authority of Christ, yet so as to have the Church with them in the work; and the Church is to encourage them, and be subject to their administrations in the Name of the Lord, while they abuse not their authority; and yet they are to be accountable to the Church, in case of male-administring, or abuse of power and authority; and the Church who authorized them, may again deſtroy them of their authority, without repentance and reformation, or in case of scandalousness in conversation.

Yet notwithstanding this, in matters of rule and order, they ought not to seek so much to please men as to displease the Lord; for they are the Lords servants, (as well as the Churches,) and must endeavour to do all things according to the pattern and right rule, and to please the Lord, to whom they must give an account, though



though men be displeased therewith, and in case they suffer from men on that account, yet they will have Peace with God and in their own souls.

Two things I fear are much wanting in the Churches. 1. A Spirit of Government in the authority of Christ, as Wisdom, Impartiality, Courage, Meekness, Love, and the fear of the Lord. 2. A Spirit in the Church to be Ruled and Governed according to the Will of Christ, Heb. 13. 17. *Obeey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves.*

And in case of need we read of helps, 1 Cor. 12. 28. *Helps Governments*, in as much as all power is invested in the Church, in case Officers be wanting, till they may be obtained; the Church hath authority to appoint such as are most suitably gifted, either upon tryal in order to Eldership, or as helps in case of need to carry on all the Administrations of the Church, or where are Officers, being sick, or a way, or weak with age, the Church may do the like; *i. e.* appoint helps to the Officers in Government, or any other of the Administrations of Christ in his Church.

The fourth sort of Officers in the Church <sup>4. Deacons;</sup> are Deacons, whose work and office is to look after the necessities of the poor, and to make a just distribution of the Churches Treasure committed to them on that behalf,

behalf, that as it is an Ordinance of Christ, that his should be free to communicate. 1. Privately, *Mat. 6. 34.* So likewise by giving into the hands of the Deacons, who are to take a general care of the poor, and distribute to every one as they have need.

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This is an honourable service and work of the Lord, the poor being in the Church in the room of Christ, to prove the truth of his peoples love to him, Christ saith, *Me you have not always with you, the poor you have always with you.* You may shew your love to me, in loving them, when I am gone, and in doing good to them; hence Christ will say at the last day, *I was naked and ye clothed me, hungry and ye fed me, Sick and in Prison, and ye visited me, &c.* What the qualifications and work of the Deacons are, you may see, *1 Tim. 3. 8. to 13. 1 Pet. 4. 11.* *If any man Minister (that is, Deacons doe the work of a Deacon) let him do it as of the ability that God giveth, that is in the Church.* In a word, it is to do that which the Apostles did before and ordained the Elders to do. *Acts 6. 1, 2, 3.*

I shall endeavour to answer one weighty question, and so shall conclude this matter.

Quest.

Quest. Is there no Supream Power and order in the Churches, to regulate miscarriages, but is every Church absolutely independant and unaccountable in any case,  
if



if not, then to whom must the account in Church miscarriages be given? and what way is left to regulate Church miscarriages?

*Ans.* 1. That a Church may miscarry *Ans.* either in Doctrine, Gal. 1. 6. Manners, 2 Cor. 12. 20, 21. Discipline, either in the Non-administring of censures, 1 Cor. 5. 1, 2. or in the evill and wrong Administring thereof, 3 John, ver. 9, 10. is very evident.

2. That every Church with their Officers have a like power from Christ in all Administrations, without any accountableness to any one above the rest, in way of Superiority, is likewise clear.

Yet 3. There must be an accountableness of all the Churches each to other, in case of offence and miscarriage, though not to any one as Supream above the rest, yet a common accountableness must be owned, without which their fellowship must necessarily be dissolved, the reasons thereof are as followeth.

1. From the Law of Relation and unity in the same faith and fellowship, which cannot be kept up and maintained but by a Brotherly accountableness, as Sister Churches, for the mutual help of each other, and preservation of the whole in the truth; if the laws of Unity in any Society be broken, the Society must needs be broken; Christ new Covenant Laws (in matters

ters of faith and practice) are the ground of Christians and Churches unity and society each with other; if any Church make a breach there, without being accountable for Reformation, the foundation of Fellowship is broken; therefore for preservation of the foundations of Fellowship of Churches, must this brotherly accountableness be maintained.

2. To reason from the lesser to the greater, as in a particular Church, though there be an equality and no Superiority among Members, as Members, but what God makes in gifts and office, yet every Member ought to be accountable each to other, especially in matters of offence, *Mat. 18. 15. &c.* and so at last to the Church, so from the same rule and reason all the Churches in the same faith and practice, and having the same relation one to the other, as members in the particular Church, should have the same care of each other, which cannot be unless there be the same accountableness to each others as Churches, as is in the members of one and the same Church, as all the Members in a particular Church make up the Church, so all the Churches are but so many parts and Members of the Universal, and should have the same care and keep up the same accountableness, and this is without all single Superiority.

3. Without this particular Churches



ches are in worse case, then Members in particular Congregations, who have the benefit of the Laws and Administrations of Christ, for their preservation in the Faith; the want of which accountableness of Churches must necessarily render them, 1. The more lyable to sin, and miscarry because not accountable. And 2. In case of sin and miscarriage, are left miserable; that is, without any means of recovery to repentance, which is ridiculous and perverse for any to imagine, that Christ should be more careful of particular Members, then of particular Churches.

4. Without this accountableness of Churches and power of dealing, with a transgressing sinning Church for Reformation, it must necessarily import a necessity for the whole to have Fellowship with a sinning Church in their sin; that principle that leaves sinners without any help from their sins, and so leaves them to perish without hope or help, and leaves the whole under the gift of their sins and miscarriages, by holding fellowship with them in that Estate, is to be abhorred of all Christians and Churches of Christ.

Obj. These are weighty reasons for accountableness of Churches, and appeals in case of sin on any account, make Administrations of censures, or wickedness in conversation justified, or false Doctrine maintained

tained; but in as much as plain Scripture rule, is that which binds conscience, and justifieth practice; some may startle from this for want of plain Scripture rule to warrant in this case, or at least make a plea to justify them in their *non* accountableness, therefore Precept or President would be of use to clear and confirm us in this matter.

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.*

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* 1. In cases left doubtful and dark in Scripture, we must (and its a common received principle) resolv'd by Scripture Reason, and Scripture Reason is a sufficient rule, as that without this, Churches must suffer sin in each other without any means of help, which is contrary to *Lev.* 19. 17. 2. Without this there is a necessity for all Churches to have fellowship with an erroneous Church, in their sins, contrary to *Eph.* 5. 11. and so justly draw the guilt of sin upon themselves, *Ezek.* 3. 18. *Acts* 18. 6. and 20. 26. 3. Without this Churches are left in worse case then Members, without the means of help and recovery in case of sin; Christs Ordinances proves of advantage, sometimes to keep from sin, sometimes to recover out of sin, when insinuated therewith; therefore those who oppose this accountableness of the Churches, are therein no friends unto them, nor to Jesus Christ.

4. Without this, wronged persons in matters of censure could have no redress

but



but must lye under their oppressions without remedy, (which is that which some have asserted, that if a Church cast out its best Members unjustly, that there is no help, a horrid principle to be hushed out of all Christian Society) which would render the Church and Government of Christ more obnoxious and dangerous then any humane Government (which in many cases admitteth of appeals, on supposition of Male Administrations) and uncomfortable for any serious souls to come into the Church, who probably some time or other may fall under a *Diotrephes*, without all hope or help.

But I shall yet propound some further weighty Scripture grounds for confirmation of this practice.

1. The many Scriptures that gives us very much light in this matter, *Acts* 15. 2, 3. in the case of the difference at *Antioch* about Circumcision, the Church appealed to the Apostles and Elders at *Jerusalem*, with the whole Church, as appears *ver.* 1. 2. with *ver.* 23. *The Apostles, Elders and Brethren*, which was the whole Church; so in the case of the Incestuous person, *1 Cor.* 5. 1. the Apostle determines the matter, and they follow his advice, See *chap.* 7. 1. &c. about the matter of Marriage, and putting away of the unbeliever; about which they had written to him, he resolves the case, and that not altogether in way of power with-

without the Church, as is evident, 2 Cor. 1. 24. *Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.* So he determines the case of the disorderly Members, 2 Thes. 3. 6. 1 Job. ver. 9, 10. in the case of Diotrephes, evil Administration of censures, casting out such as he should not, *Wherefore (saith the Apostle) I come, I will remember his deeds which he doth, &c.* Now what in ordinary cases the Apostles did formerly, the Ministers and Churches may and ought to do now, in like cases, it being patterns for all times, as occasion requires, in the Administrations of the Church, and for the preservation of the peace and purity of the whole, Mat. 28. 20. *Teaching them (that is, the Church Baptised Believers, with their Ministry) to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* So that the Churches have as full power from Christ for preservation of the whole, in their Loyalty to him, in Purity and in Peace, as the Apostles had, which is a full and warrantable authority in this matter.

As an illustration of this matter, remarkable to this purpose is that of the two Tribes, and half building an Altar; Josh. 22. 10. which was an act (in appearance) contrary to the Law of God, and so a matter of fact to be inquired into, Exod. 20. 24. with Lev. 17. 18. Deut. 12. 5, 6. and the rest of the Tribes sent Phineas, and ten

Princes



Princes with him, to inquire after the matter, and to lay (as they judged) sin to their charge; and those Tribes owned their brethren in the matter, and gave them a good account to their satisfaction, *ver. 22.* those Tribes had no Lordship given them over each other, yet was it their duty to look to each other, that the Law of God was not transgressed, and to execute the Law in such cases. The like we read about the abuse of the *Levites Wife*, *Judg. 19. 20. chap.* on his complaint they all, as one man, joyn in the matter to avenge the sin; by all which it appeareth, that the Church of God throughout all ages hath had this power to rebuke sin, and maintain truth, in dealing with either persons or assemblies, in case of sin, according to the rule of the present ministration, under which they lived, and without repentance, to withdraw Communion from them, and in their obstinacy in an evill way to reject.

2. This likewise comes under that general rule, *Phil. 4. 8, 9.* it is just and honest, and lovely, makes for Purity and Peace, for the Churches to be subject one to another (as it behoves Members) in this case, *1 Pet. 5. 5.*

So that then it follows, 1. That Church which refuseth to be accountable of any of their actions to their neighbour Churches (being desired on complaint of mis-carriages

carriages) on this ground, that they have no power to inquire after any of their matters, and that they are accountable to none but God, do hereby make a breach upon the Law of relation, and exclude all Churches from their fellowship, and so stand by themselves alone.

2. That such a Church is no more fit for the Communion of Churches, then a Member in a particular Church, that will not live under the Law of the Relation, and will be accountable to none but God; a principle that makes persons not meet to live among men, much less in the Society of the Churches of Christ.

3. That (on the grounds stated) it is the duty of the Churches in case of complaint of scandal, in Doctrine, Discipline, or Manners, of any particular Church in the same fellowship, to make dilligent and speedy inquiry into the matter, that they may thereby shew their love to, and zeal for the Glory of God, the purity and peace of his Church; the good of the offenders, and preservation of themselves from the guilt of others sins.

4. That if any Church come under a report or complaint of miscarriage and scandal in Doctrine, Manners, or unjust censures, and refuse to give an account thereof, being tenderly desired, or to clear up the matter in a just way (that is, the supposed Offenders and offended, with their

wit-



witnesses, to be heard before the Neighbour Churches, or their Ministers and Members appointed for that service) the Churches ought to withdraw their fellowship from such a Church, to preserve themselves pure from their sin: whatever is a just ground for one Church to exclude a Member, is a just ground for a Church to be excluded in like case; and this is a just ground to exclude a Member. 1. Report, and complaint of scandalous sin. 2. It being inquired after, a positive refusal to give an account, especially before the witnesses that accuse. 3. A denying the power of the Church to make inquiry and to deal in the matter, &c. If such a person be fit for fellowship in a particular Church then such a Church may be fit for the Fellowship of Churches, *Mat. 18. 17.* So that in a word its evident, that its not only the Churches sin that refuseth to be accountable to her Neighbour Sister Churches, but that the Churches do sin in neglecting or delaying to call such a Church to account (which is under complaints, reports, and jealousies of sin in any case) in not performing their duty to God or men; nor can they acquit themselves before the Lord, untill they have impartially done their duty in this matter: that it is a duty, and to be done in Christs authority, is clear and full, from *Col. 3. 17.* or else they must leave Christs authority, or leave the work

ly undone, which is contrary to the true sense and reason of the Scripture, as hath been before proved, or do it in their own will and authority.

CHAP.

Ch. 29  
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