

ERRATA.

PAg. 22. l. 21, 22. for *cælus* r. *cælus*. p. 40. l. 30. for *committed* r. *permitted*.
 p. 41. l. 3. for *that* r. *the*. l. 15. for *phrases*. r. *praises*. p. 42. l. 8. for *referred*,
 r. *preferred*. p. 45. l. 16. for *desire* r. *desire*. p. 46. l. 7. after *pardon*, r. *is*.
 p. 77. l. 21. for *Tho.* r. *Though*. p. 77. l. 16. for *essem* r. *esse*. and l. 26. r. *mercedis*. and l.
 31. r. *locationem*. and l. 35. r. *complexionem*. p. 81. l. 19. for *better* r. *bitter*. p. 94.
 l. 31. r. *Soluium*. p. 114. l. 2. for *which* r. *while*. p. 127. l. 36. for *Divines* r. *Divinity*.
 p. 129. l. 7. for *intercession* r. *intercision*. p. 130. l. last. for *of* r. *or*. p. 137. l. 8. for
uncio r. *unico*. p. 148. l. 22. for *of* r. *as*. p. 149. l. 7. for *Chirgius* r. *Clingius*. p. 171.
 Col. 3. l. 17. before *Shrine*. r. a *Martyrs*. p. 181. l. 6. Col. 2. for *h* r. *h* k. p. 197. l. 28.
 for *be not* r. *is*. p. 204. l. 28. blot out *and*. p. 205. l. 19. for *may* r. *he may*. p. 206. l. 29.
 for *meditation* r. *mediation*. p. 232. l. penult. for *required* r. *reigned*. p. 249. l. 6. for
that r. *then*. p. 254. l. 8. r. *Legatary*. *Donatary*. p. 256. l. 14. for *agente* r. *aiente*. and
 l. 32. r. *obtinendi*. and l. 37. r. *comparandum*. p. 257. l. 7. r. *Cognito*. p. 288. l. 3. for
church r. *Ghost*. p. 297. l. 14. r. *excepted*. p. 298. l. 36. for *meer* r. *more*. p. 299. r. *the*
matter. p. 305. l. 6. and 11 for *licked* r. *ticed*. p. 314. l. 29. r. *Beumler*. p. 321. l. 32. r.
Good. p. 335. l. 2. r. *part* of. p. 347. Col. 2. l. 1. for *our* r. *one*.

ERRATA

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CHAP. I.

The Occasion and Scope of this Writing.

IT is now about five years since I published a Book Entituled, *Aphorisms of Justification*, &c. which I let pass in haste, before I had well digested or perfected, being not likely to have much longer time on earth: I chose rather so to publish it, then to suppress it, that at least I might provoke others when I am dead to make a further discovery of the truth. It was the first that I published, and I was then a stranger to the dispositions of Divines, and simply thought that none would be offended with one that held the same Christian Doctrine, for attempting a clearer explication of it, though he differed from them in lesser things; yea, though he failed in his attempt, as long as he abhorred dividing from the Church: I thought I might have boldly said to Christian Ministers, as *Justin Martyr* did to Heathens, *Apolog. 1. Fin. These things we offer to your consideration: If they seem agreeable to Reason and Verity, honor them, but if they seem toys, as toys contain them, but do not hostilely persecute*

secure them. But I am now a little better acquainted with the world, and the best part of the world then before I was. The Reasons of my publishing that book (at first drawn forth by the occasion of one Question, about the sence of *Mat. 25.*) were these: 1. A hope of clearer discovery of some common Truths, by dispelling some confusions, and some cloudy novel groundless distinctions; That so when truth was more clearly seen, it might be more deeply received, affectionatly entertained, firmly retained, and successfully improved. 2. A strong conceit that I should take out of the hands of many adversaries (Papists, Pelagians and Libertines) some great advantages which formerly some have given them against us, and should clear in some measure, the way of a more effectual confutation of their Errors. Especially, I confess, mine eye was upon the Libertines, commonly called Antinomians, through the whole, being wakened to a compassion of many ignorant well meaning Christians, who were then following their delusions in a full career. 3. A hope also I had that many Christians who had seemed to differ more then indeed they did, in these points, might be brought to an Agreement by the Evidence of truth; at least that meer verbal differences might not seem Real and Doctrinal.

But I quickly found that some thought too well, and some too ill of what I had written. Lest therefore I should prove a further offence to my Brethren, and a wrong to the Church, I desired those that thought it worth their labor to vouchsafe me their Animadversions, which I have spent much of these three last years in considering, that I might Correct whatsoever was discovered to be Erroneous, and give them an account of my Reasons of the rest. I have not only since suppressed that Book which did offend them, but also laid by those Papers of Universal Redemption which I had written, lest I should be further offensive. But I find all this gives no satisfaction. Some further course therefore I am obliged to take: For if the offence had been only taken and not given, yet Christian Charity binds me to do my best to remove it: But when I do freely confess that some part of the offence was given by me, by some indigested and obscure passages, and some over-sights in that book, I am much more bound to satisfy the offended, as far as is in my power to do.

To this end I have two sorts of men to address my speech to.

1. Those

1. Those Divines that go the way of the Libertines (commonly called Antinomians) in whole or in part: For these I perceive are most deeply offended with me. 2. Some Orthodox sober Divines, who are offended with me for some lesser differences, wherein I seem to them to affect singularity, and too easily to depart from the Common judgement of the Reformed Churches.

1. I do confess (being once half ensnared my self in the opinions of *Justification before Faith, and that Justification by Faith, was but in foro Conscientiæ, &c.*) I have a strong apprehension of the danger of those Doctrines, and their concomitants: and that upon four grounds. 1. Either I am exceedingly mistaken, or else they do as directly and fully subvert the main scope of the Doctrine of Christ, as any Errors that I know of in *England*, that are maintained by any considerable number of men who have any great appearance of Piety and Sobriety. Were *England* well rid but of Libertinism, Socinianism and Popery, it were a happy Land: But the first party do more dangerously insinuate with the weaker sort of Godly people then either of the latter, by the advantage of the name of Free-grace, and by their pretences to a singular extolling of Christ, and by their declaiming against legal Preachers, and against the advancement of our own Works or Righteousness, and especially by leading men in so easie a way, which flesh and blood hath so little against, as being too consistent with mens Carnal Interest. 2. The evident tendency also of these licentious Doctrines to a licentious Life, and to the destruction of Godliness, I confess doth increase my detestation of them. He that seeth not in the face of them written, an opposition to Mortification and Watchfulness, and the life of Godliness, seeth not with my eyes. 3. The experience which we have seen of the real Issue, and sad effects of this licentious Doctrine, I confess hath further confirmed me against it. I am none of those that shut my eyes against the workings of Providence, nor yet against the discoveries of Causes in their Effects. Three black Clouds of Witnesses we have of this. 1. The unhappy miscarriages, and shameful lives of those Libertines that lived in *England* before these late years of trouble. Whereof both *London*, and the Grundletonians in *York-shire*,
* and *Arthingtons Seduction*, with the whole story of *Hacket* and

* I have heard from an ancient Godly man that knew Arthington and Coppinger, that they were possessed with the spirit of the Grundletonians. The same man affirmed that he went but once among them himself, and after prayer they breathed on him, as giving him the holy Ghost, and he was so strangely transported for three days, that he was not as the same man: and his family

wondered what was the matter with him: he had no confession of sin, but an elevated strain in Prayer, as if he had been in strange raptures: and after three days he was as before, and came no more at them.

Coppinger, can give too full Testimony. 2. The sad miscarriages of this Sect in *New-England*, wherof see Mr. *Weld* his *Rise and ruine of Antinomianism in N.E.* 3. Their late Actions in old *England*, since (uniting with the spirit of Anabaptistry, the far smaller evil) they have proceeded as far as *Ranting*, hath further shewed what spirit they are of, to those that will see the Sun at Noon-day: Nor have the Publique transactions or attempts of the more subtile among them, much honored their Principles in the eyes of the observing and judicious through the Land. 4. And (which I have oft mentioned, and will do while I can speak) the Miracles of God against them in *New-England* were so real a Testimony from heaven, that I am resolved to take them for a Decision of that controverſie, being conjunct with so full a Testimony of the word. Three Sects did all lately imbody together, Anabaptists, Separatists and Antinomians, and so made up one, (though some of the first sort disclaimed the last, and went the *Pelagian* way :) And what man dare obscure the witness that God hath given against them, unless he will be found a fighter against God? I profess, for my part, I am fully satisfied from plain Scripture against them, though I had seen no further witness; But yet should I shut mine eyes against such a Testimony as God hath given in *New-England* by those Monsters, and in *Old-England*, by multitudes of fouler Monsters, even Ranters, Quakers, Seekers and Blasphemers, I should sure be guilty of a hainous sin. God doth not ordinarily thus appear; but very rarely, and in great extremities, and against those that his soul doth deeply detest. And to wink at such wonders, what is it but to despise God in the dreadfulest of his works? They that can read the book of Providence, and expound it so well as some pretend, and yet overlook such Providences as these, shall be no Tutors of mine, in the Exposition of this blessed Book.

These Reasons having excited my Zeal against this Sect above many others, I have accordingly judged it my duty to bend my self against them in all my writings: Especially when I saw how greedily multitudes of poor souls did take the bait, and how exceedingly the Writings and Preachings of *Saltmarsh* and many of his fellows did take with them. Upon this I perceive the men, that in any measure go that way, are enraged against me: How to appease them I know not. I would as willingly know the truth as some of them, if I could. Sure I am, I have as much Reason. My
soul

soul should be as precious to me; Christ should be as much valued: Grace should be as much magnified: Self should be as much denied. I am as deeply beholden to Christ and Free-Grace as most poor sinners in the world: And should I vilifie or wrong them, for an Opinion, or I know not what! Every man that is drawn from Christ, is drawn by some contrary prevailing Interest: What interest should draw me to think meanly of my Saviour, or his Free-Grace? For Free-Remission alone without any condition, or an Eternal Justification; I do not perceive but that my very Carnal part would fain have it to be true. I have flesh as well as they; and if I am able to discern the pleadings or inclinations of that flesh, it runs their way in contradiction to the Spirit. And the Lord knows I have as little reason to extol my own Righteousness, or place my confidence in Works and Merits, as other men have. I must truly say, The Lord holdeth my sins much more before mine eyes than my Good-Works: The one are Mountains to me, the other I can scarce tell whether I may own in propriety, without many Cautions and Limitations. I have therefore no Carnal interests of my own that I can possibly discover, to lead me against the way of these men, or Engage me to contend against them. Yet am I not able to forbear. I confess I am an unreconcilable Enemy to their Doctrines, and so let them take me. I had as live tell them so, as hide it. The more I pray God to illuminate me in these things, the more am I animated against them. The more I search after the truth in my Studies, the more I dislike them. The more I read their own Books, the more do I see the Vanity of their Conceits: But above all, when I do but open the Bible, I can seldom meet with a leaf that is not against them. And what further means I should use, besides Prayer, Study, Reading their Books, and Reading the Scripture, I do not remember. If they blame my *will*, I cannot find any Byas against them, from fleshly interest (as I said) but from Spiritual. Nor am I able to Believe what men would have me, nor whatsoever I would my self. My will hath not the full command of my Belief. If they blame my understanding, I will blame it too, but I cannot clear it. Only I am resolved to wait on God in the use of his means, and by the help of his Grace, to search as diligently for the Truth as I can, and to Redeem my time thereto as much, and spare my flesh as little, as will stand with my life, and a freedom from the sin of self-murder. And if yet I must differ, there's no remedy.

The indignation of these exasperated men, hath found out of late a strange kind of vent. To be revenged on me for calling them Antinomians, they have resolved to call me Arminian, Socinian, Papist, and Jesuite; Yea, and as if they were in good sadness, to perswade the world that by Antinomians, I mean Anti-papists and that I am indeed a down-right Papist, and of the grosser sort too, and that I subtilly endeavour the propagation of Popery, and all my pretences to the contrary are but Jesuitical dissembling: And in particular, that there is no Papists, that speak more for Merits then I do. To this purpose it seemed good to Mr. *Eyre* of *Salisbury* to write in his Book against Mr. *Benjamin Woodbridge*, on which I have sent him my Admonition: In which he commendeth one Mr. *Crandon* that was writing against me, whose writing is now come forth in the light: Such a piece as I confess my eyes never saw before: The lively picture of the wiser sort of Libertines: Expressing much of that in Print, which the Ranters do in transient actions: so much palpable darkness, so many mistakes of my sence, so many errors, and so much presumption, is there congested; But above all, so many notorious falsehoods in matter of fact, as I do profess I never saw in one volume to my knowledge, either of Jesuite, or any the vilest Heretick. I would be loath to bestow my time in numbering them, till my Arithmetick be better; Only Ile say, that I yet have not observed one leaf in all that great Volume that hath not many: How many hundred then may such a bulk contain? What an unsavory, uncleanly task would it be to Reply to such a man, if I had so little wit, and so many words and hours as such a work requires? And indeed it could not be better in matter of truth, when the whole Volume is animated with one falsehood, as the soul of it; That is, that I am a Papist: This is the whole from first to last: If you have this, in the dress of a *Billings-gate* Dialect, you have all. Hence is the man carried, even where I speak that which he cannot reprehend, to enter into the secrets of my soul, and lay open my heart, for the expounding of my lines, and to tell them over and over that I do but subtilly equivocate and dissemble; I say one thing, but I mean or think another, so that he hath written a Volume much in the confutation of my most secret thoughts; yea, of such as he feigneth, contrary to the full expression of my writings. I confess when I read the first leaf that I opened at, it seemed to me a sad, yet for the

the gravity of the Fiction, a ridiculous Object ; to see the man come upon the Stage, and act his part so confidently and seriously, as if he did verily think I were a Papist indeed. That I am a Papist, or that I must be an Antinomian, are equally credible to me : And if there be no middle way between those two, I confess I am I know not where. I deny not but all Mr. *Eyres* commendations of this man may be true : But then if voluminous slanders, and grossest falsehoods, considerately Printed and Published, may consist with Grace, and such eminency of Grace too in the leaders of the flocks, I would advise these Brethren hereafter to consider whether they should not be very compassionate to others, and how they do Judge of the qualification of their Church-members. To cast out or censure a member for swearing or lying once or twice, when the Pastor may slander and rail voluminously, is scarce equal dealing. Truly when I read this mans Book, it forced me to say, Oh what a depraved nature hath man ! what a dark understanding ! what a deceitful heart ! what a sad case are our poor people in, when their guides are in such darkness and contention ! what a patient God have we ! and what reason therefore to be patient with one another ?

If any expect that I should particularly Reply to that Book, I must say of that and of divers others that have been lately published against me (*Fisher, Keyes, Hagger :*) my time is like to be but short on earth : I live in pain and languishing, and expectations of my change, and therefore I dare not wast so short, so precious time on such an employment ; Nor dare I give such an account of those hours to God, which he hath given me for better and more useful works. If any object, that the ignorance of common people is such, that confidence, and railing, and slanders will take with them, as if they were valid Arguments, and therefore have need of as diligent confutation ; I answer, it is not in my power to cure the ignorance of such people, nor the slanderous tongues or pens of such Writers ; And if I must Write as long as slanderers will make me work, or ignorant men need it, then I shall have work enough to do, and my labours be at the command of every mans Vices. If any object, that I owe it to my own Reputation, I *Ans.* I Write not for my self, nor for so low an end ; But for the good of others. And whereas some say, that I am bound to vindicate my Reputation, that I may not hinder other mens profiting by my

This was written before I saw Mr. Caryls Epistle, which gave me a further call to say so much to Mr. Crandon, as I have since done.

my labors. I *Ans.* 1. If God take away my Reputation, he will no more expect I should serve him by it, then he will expect I should serve him by health or wealth when he hath taken them away: Nor doth he expect that I should be so solicitous for its recovery as to neglect any greater work the while. 2. God hath permitted the Columniator to play his part so grossly, and to assert those things voluminously and confidently which contradict themselves, and which all that know me, know to be false, that I think such a tongue is not much capable of diminishing a mans Reputation, nor is it any way needful to Vindicate it from such.

Yet though I will not give a particular answer to any such Writings as these are, I shall against the whole substance and scope of the undertaking anon prove against Mr. *Crandon*, and Mr. *Eyre*, that the Papists give more to works then I do, and I shall give them the Confession of my faith, that they may truly know how much I give to them.

2. But first I must take notice of the other sort, who have been offended in the respects forementioned at my Doctrine, and whom I am more obliged to satisfy; and because the things they blame me for, are 1. Some mistakes in Doctrine. 2. Affectation of singularity. 3. Or at least too easie dissenting from the judgement of the Orthodox; For the first, I am left incapable of satisfying them: For change my judgement I cannot, till evidence of truth do it: And if I should, it would not serve turn: For then I should offend all on the other side, who are for that Doctrine which I deliver: So that man-pleasing is a frivolous; yea, an impossible work. And to give them the Reasons of my judgement, will but offend them more; for I find men are impatient of contradiction, and of uttering that which is against their opinions But to go as far as I am able to satisfy both these offended parties, both the Heterodox slanderers, and the Orthodox sober Godly Divines (I mean so many of them as are offended, for very many I know are not) I shall now in order perform these several things following. 1. I will make a true confession of my faith, by which you may Judge of Mr. *Eyres*, and Mr. *Crandons* charge of Popery, Socinianism, Arminianism, &c. 2. To the General Confession I will add a more particular account, how much I give to mans Works, and how much I deny to them. 3. Because Mr. *Eyre*, and Mr. *Crandon* affirm so boldly, that by Antinomians, I mean Antipapists, (the

(that they might get the honorable Title of the Protestant Reformed Religion put upon their Opinions) I shall tell you what it is that I mean by Antinomianism. 4. Because they contend so much for justification before faith, and that justification by faith is but *in foro Conscientie*, or terminated in Conscience, I shall give my Reasons against both those Assertions. 5. I shall shew how modestly Mr. *Eyre*, and Mr. *Crandon* do aver that the Papists (yea none of the Papists) give no more to Works or Merits than I. 6. I shall prove that I am not so singular, as is supposed; and that I do give no more to Works, than the Reformed Churches and Divines ordinarily do; by a large recital of their own words. And in the performances of these six things lyes all the satisfaction that I yet understand my self able to give to those that are offended: Supposing what I have said in the Preface.

CHAP. II.

A true Confession of my Faith.

SECT. I.

BEcause Mr. *Crandon* is pleased through his Book to affirm with such confidence that I do subtilly equivocate and dissemble my judgement, hiding the worst, and meaning one thing when I speak another, and so leaves me incapable by any Profession, Protestations or Oaths, of satisfying any who are of his mind; and as audaciously arrogate the Prerogative of God, in knowing and judging the heart of man, even against his own Professions; I shall therefore premise only this general profession to them who will believe it, and they that will not may choose. *I will never worship and serve that God, that I do not believe to be able and willing to bear me out in his service; and save me harmless, and see that I be no loser by my owning him and his will. The God Whom I serve I am sure is both able and willing. I will never serve a God that I have*

cause to be ashamed of. To be ashamed of him, is so far to deny him to be God. Nor will I ever be of that Religion which gives men leave to lye, and to deny it: My Religion doth not: To deny it therefore, is so far to disclaim and renounce it: Therefore so far as I deny it, so far I am not of that Religion. I believe that no man shall be saved by the Christian Religion that will not lay down his life rather then deny it: Much less he that will not let go the favor and esteem of men: and especially he that prefers his credit with such a man as Mr. Crandon, before his Religion, hath sure very low thoughts of that Religion, and mean expectations from it, and may well look that his Reward should be answerable. So much for Preface.

1. **I** Do Believe the Holy Canonical Scriptures, and all things therein contained to be infallibly true, as being the Word of God. And I do Believe it to be a sufficient and perfect Rule or Law, needing no Additions of Tradition, or Humane Testimony to supply its defects, though it suppose some Tradition and Humane Testimony as necessary to its Promulgation and Explanation.

I suppose this single Confession freeth me from the charge of Infidelity, and of Popery: For an Infidel believes not the Scripture, and a Papist believes it to be but part of Gods Word, and Tradition the other part; and upon that ground they let in all their inventions and Will-worship. And seeing the main point wherein we differ from the Papists, is in maintaining the sufficiency of the Scripture, I suppose I need not add any Creed or other Confession as necessary to be subscribed, as if this word alone were an insufficient Test, to try by who is Orthodox, and of the right Religion. So that I think I have in this made a sufficient Confession, did not mens misapprehensions require more.

Object. *The Papists believe the Scripture.*

Ans. Blessed be God for it: But they believe not its sufficiency, but take it, as I said, to be but part of Gods Word.

Object. *The Socinians and Arminians believe the sufficiency of Scripture.*

Ans.

Answ. So long there is the more hope of their reduction. But they believe not some plain particular Doctrines of Scripture: The Socinians believe not the Godhead of Christ, or the Holy Ghost, though the first be oft in terms, and the latter at least in sense, expressed in the Scripture: Nor do they believe Christs satisfaction: Therefore they do not believe the Doctrine of the Scriptures, though they believe in general that the Scripture is true. If any will prove that I deny any Doctrine of that word which in general I believe, I will revoke it when I see it so proved: In the mean time I protest, that it is my resolution to search as impartially after the true meaning of the word as I can, and that I would fain know the mind of God therein, though it cost me the utmost pains, and the loss of mens estimation and favour, and though my greatest Temptation to partiality in my studies doth lye in my loathness to dissent from Godly Divines, whom I most highly value and honour, and whose love I more esteem than any other mens; Yet, by the Grace of God, I resolve as faithfully as I can, to resist even this Temptation also, and to lay open my soul to the teachings of Christ by his Word and Spirit.

But because it is expected that there be a more particular profession of the several Doctrines contained in this Word; and because I confess such a Profession very fit and necessary in other respects, (it being not every word in Scripture that is of flat necessity to Salvation, it is very fit that those which be so, should distinctly and explicitly be believed) I shall descend to such particulars. And because the summ of my Belief for Assent and Consent, is expressed in our late *Worcester-shire* Profession of faith, I shall here recite it (because it is but short) with the change of one word for abbreviation: Supposing the Apostles Creed.

SECT. II.

2. **I** Believe that there is one only God; The Father, Infinite in Being, Wisdom, Goodness and Power: the Maker, Preserver and Disposer of all things, and the most Just and Merciful Lord of all.

I Believe that mankind being fallen by sin from God

and happiness, under the wrath of God, the curse of his Law, and the power of the Devil, God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son to be their Redeemer, who being God, and one with the Father, did take to him our nature, and became man, being conceived of the Holy Ghost in the Virgin *Mary*, and born of her, and named *Jesus Christ*; and having lived on earth without sin, and wrought many Miracles for a witness of his truth, he gave up himself a Sacrifice for our sins, and a Ransom for us, in suffering death on the Cross: and being Buried, he Rose again the third day, and afterward ascended into heaven, where he is Lord of all in Glory with the Father: And having Ordained that all that truly Repent and Believe in him, and love him above all things, and sincerely obey him, and that to the death, shall be saved, and they that will not shall be damned, and commanded his Ministers to Preach the Gospel to the world; he will come again and raise the bodies of all men from death, and will Judge all men according to what they have done in the body; and the Righteous shall go into life Eternal, and the rest into everlasting punishment.

* Or, [and the Son] which you will.

I believe that God the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of the Father and the Son, was sent from the Father * by the Son, to Inspire and Guide the Prophets and Apostles, that they might fully reveal the Doctrine of Christ: and by multitudes of evident Miracles and wonderful gifts, to be the great witness of Christ and of the truth of his holy word, and also to dwell and work in all that are drawn to believe, that being first joyned to Christ their Head, and into one Church, which is his body, and so pardoned and made the sons of God, they may be a peculiar people sanctified to Christ, and may mortifie the flesh, and overcome the world and the Devil, and being zealous of good works, may serve God in Holiness and Righte-

Righteousness, and may live in the special Love and Communion of the Saints, and in hope of Christs coming, and of Everlasting Life.

*Profession of
Consent.*

I do heartily take this one God, for my only God and my chief good; and this Jesus Christ for my only Lord, Redeemer and Saviour; and this Holy Ghost for my Sanctifier; and the Doctrine by him revealed, and witnessed by his Miracles, and now contained in the holy Scriptures, I do take for the Law of God, and the Rule of my faith and life. And Repenting unfeignedly of my sins, I do resolve through the Grace of God sincerely to obey him, both in holiness to God, and Righteousness to men, and in special love to the Saints, and Communion with them, against all the temptations of the Devil, the World, and my own Flesh, and this to the Death.

I do also take the ten Commandments for a general standing Rule of obedience: And the Lords Prayer for a perfect rule for prayer, most admirable for Comprehension of matter, and exactness of Method. And I believe that Christ hath instituted Baptism for our enterance into his Church, and the Lords Supper for our Confirmation; and hath appointed ministers to be the teachers of his Church, and to guide it in Concord, according to his Word.

THis is my Religion: This I profess, subscribe and stand to. If any man ask what Religion I am of, hither I refer him. If this be not enough for him, but he must needs have yet a larger profession, or else he will not account me Orthodox, let him take his course, and judge of me as he please. He that professeth this, and lives accordingly, shall by me be taken for a good Christian, by what name or title soever men call him. I say as Hilary, *quod non per difficiles questiones ad vitam beatam nos ducat Deus*. If the Church of Rome will profess but this much, and not subvert it when they have done by evident contradiction, I will acknowledge them.

as Brethren of the same Religion with me ; and if they will unite upon these terms, I will unite with them : Though if they add superfluities which do not subvert this Doctrine, I will not joyn with them in any of those Additions ; but let them build their stubble alone for me.

As to my self, if any man will prove that I hold any thing contrary to one word of this Confession, I will presently renounce it. In the mean time, if I should hold any thing contrary to it, it is ignorantly, and upon supposition that it is not contrary. And therefore no man can charge me with the not believing any thing here contained : For I renounce any thing in my writings that is contrary to this, though unknown : and if I cannot hold any other of my Opinions, and this confession both, I disclaim all such Opinions, and will let go them, and not this.

Thus much might well serve as a discovery of my Belief, were it not that prejudice and jealousy requires more : I add therefore.

SECT. III.

§. 3.

3. I Do heartily approve of the shorter Catechism of the Assembly, and of all therein contained : and I take it for the best Catechism that ever I yet saw, and the Answers continued for a most excellent summ of the Christian faith and Doctrine, and a fit Test to try the Orthodoxy even of Teachers themselves.

I Know the faith of many in these latter Ages of the world is more extensive then intensive, grasping at much in the Object, but little and feeble in the act, and infirmly radicated in the Subject. These men will think that I am yet too short to be accounted Orthodox, and that in embracing this Catechism, it is but a childish faith that I embrace. But I am bold to tell them these things by way of Answer. 1. *Theologia est scientia Affectiva-practica.* God hath laid more on the heart and hand, and less on the head, as to the extent of knowledge, then such men take notice of. We

may

may find us work enough, yea and make a happy progress and growth, by an increase of our firmness, and clearness in the apprehension of the common truths, and an improvement of them on the heart and life. And it had been happy for the Church in all Ages, especially this, if they had looked more after this kind of growth in knowledge, (as to intension, affection, and execution, and less gaped after new Light and Revelation, and an extensive increase. Though yet I would have none under-value Gods grace in this kind of increase, nor neglect any due means for the attaining of it. 2. I would have these men that have such a swelled belief, to compare the Assemblies shorter Catechism, not only with the Epistles which the Apostles wrote to particular Churches, but with all the Confessions of Faith that were made for four hundred years after Christ in the Church; and see if any of them used a more extensive form? Nay, all the Creeds and Confessions of the Church set together for many hundred years (except the Scriptures) were not comparable to this, for fulness and exactness of order and expression. Only in the point of the Myserie of the Trinity, you may find many more copious, and wordy, as urged to it by the several Heresies of those times. But whether they are therefore ever the more excellent, I will not presume to censure. Nay, what talk I of Creeds and Confessions, when you may read many and many Volumes of the Fathers that contain not so much of the body of *Theologie*, as this Catechism. I speak not this in any contempt or diminution of the Authority of the Writings of the Fathers and first Ages of the Church: I do in several other respects (for their reverend Antiquity, their better opportunity to know the way of the Apostles in matters of fact, &c.) prefer them before any Writings of these times, and so give them the Preheminence *secundum quid*; but *simpliciter*, and for the innate worth of the Writings themselves, I prefer the latter, and specially this in question much before them.

3. Further let the Objectors consider whether this were not the first corrupting of the Church and the Christian Doctrine, by being, as I may say, Orthodox over-much, and making too strict paths for other men to walk in, and enlarging the borders of their Belief too far, and condemning all that entertained not the Notions of some. Also whether this were not the great cause of all the sad divisions that in all Ages have distracted and disturbed the Church, and proved the greatest disgrace and hindrance to our Religion.

Religion. The *Quartoderimani*, the *Audiani*, and many more Hereticks, might well have gone for Catholicks, had it not been for this *Diotrephes*. And will no experience warrus? 4. Nay, consider whether this be not the very disease of the *Roman Church*, and the mark of that beast, to obtrude their superfluities and swelled Confessions on others? Had the *Trent Creed* but broke off about the middle, (at the end of the *Nicene* or *Constantinopolitane Creed*) we had been all agreed in matter of Doctrine.

I have heard divers object, that this is but the trick of all Hereticks that hold somewhat which dare not see the light, and therefore they must either take up with the bare Scripture Expressions, or if they yield to any Confessions, they must be short and general, that they discover not, and contradict not their Errors: and specially the Socinians are guilty of this. *Ans.* 1. I might as truly say, this is the Objection of the Papists, to charge an insufficiency on the expressions of Scripture, and make it the property of Hereticks to appeal only to the Scripture: And thus we may sling Popery and Socinianism in one anothers faces, with more spleen then wit. 2. Certainly many such Divines have done more by such indiscreet Objections, to strengthen that unhappy Sect (the Socinians) then they could ever have done for themselves. When men plead reason for Christianity and Scripture Authority, they say, It is Socinianism: when we plead for the sufficiency of Scripture alone, and appeal to it; they say, This is Socinianism too. Make the World believe once that the Socinians have reason and Scripture on their side; that is, the Light and Law of Nature, and the Light and Law of supernatural Revelation, and who would not turn Socinian? Its pity that these men can find no Arguments to use against Socinians, but the very same which is the Papists *Goliath* against the Reformed Churches and their Doctrine.

5. I will add this much more for your consideration. Our Divines have hitherto observed, that it is a suspicious sign that any affection or course is not of God, which nature is very prone to; and that the contrary is of God which nature is backward to. Though I know this Rule needs some limitations, yet I think it not unuseful in such cases as this. I have ever observed that a violent Passion called Zeal for a mans opinions, which he accounts Orthodox, is so easie and natural, that there needs little means to kindle

kindle it : Nay, all the means that can be used will scarce allay the inordinate rage of it : But a Zealous love of God, and delight in him, and a Zeal for holiness, and against sin, and a Zealous love to Gods Truths as they hold forth Christ and Glory, and guide us to duty, this is so contrary to the nature of man, that no means is sufficient to excite it. O how easily without Grace, and against Grace do Carnal Ministers, and professors make a huge bussel in the world for their opinions, compassing Sea and Land to make a Proselite ! they will ride and go with unwearied diligence to propagate their opinions ; perhaps some of them true, (though as usually false) Truly I have wondred many a time what it should be, that animates such men with so implacable a thirst, to make all others of their own mind, that they care not to venture all they have for it ; yea, to subvert Kingdoms, and cast off natural affection to their nearest friends. It is no more love to Christ and his word, and will, then others have : For they are cold enough in obeying his will, and venture to disobey him more easily then others. Indeed it is Idolatrous pride. Every man naturally being his own Idol, he would have all others bow down and worship him, and would have the glory of perfect light, and infallibility, and have his judgement be the Rule of all other mens, and would be a Law-giver to the world, that is, would be God : I know Gods truth cannot too much be loved : But I know withall, that a proud affectation of the honor of knowing more then others, and being better acquainted with the secrets of God, is a thing that a man may get without Grace, but cannot get down without Grace. From whence it comes to pass, that the worst sort of men are often the most Zealous and violent contenders for that which they call the Orthodox Doctrine, when yet the affectionate and practical improvement of the very Creed, they do abhor. Witness the doleful state of the present Church of *Rome*, which hath so many hundred Jesuites and others that wholly devote their lives to the propagation of their opinions, which they call, and take to be, the Catholic-like Religion, and Orthodox Doctrine : Witness the Fire and Fagot, the Inquisitions, the bloody Massacres, by which this fire of Zeal for Opinions, hath found vent, and made its eruptions. And though it too ordinarily falls out that the pretenders to Orthodoxy are not the most Orthodox, and the most erroneous are readiest to cry down Errors, yet no doubt, but a carnal mind may

make Gods own pretious truths the occasion of this forementioned sin, and may hate the Communion of Saints, even when he is Zealous for the Catholike Church, the forgiveness of sins, or the Resurrection of the body.

But yet I am not so singular as to make this a pretence for my own Errors; and therefore to give fuller satisfaction, I further add.

SECT. IV.

§. 4.

4. **I** Have perused the larger Catechism of the Assembly, and judge it a most excellent summ of Divinity: and so much the more excellent, in that it is sparing in the difficult, and more abstruse part, and most full in the practical part: And I find no word that I dissent from, so I may have leave but to interpret four words, as followeth.

1. **VV** Here it is said, that *the Covenant of Grace was made with Christ, as the second Adam, and in him, with all the Elect.* I understand it of the Genus of the Covenant, one species being made with Christ, and another with man, and not as if it were one and the same Covenant in *specie* that was made with Christ and with man: though I acknowledge that the promise made to Christ, contained the Salvation of his Elect as the matter of it.

2. Where it is said: *Nor as if the Grace of faith, or any act thereof were imputed to him for his justification:* 1. I understand it thus, and so assent to it, that our faith is not imputed to us, as being instead of a perfect Righteousness of obedience, to the ends as it was required by the Law of Works, nor is our faith the matter, or the meritorious cause of the Remission of our sin, our right to Salvation. I think this is the meaning of the Reverend Assembly (if I may think that they had all one meaning) and that in sence I differ not from them. 2. But I will never subscribe these words,

nor

nor any like them, without the liberty of an explication, when they are expressly **in terminis*, contrary to the Scripture, and must have such an interpretation to reconcile the sense. Nor will I ever approve of such passages in Catechisms and Confessions, as shall determine a point expressly against the words of God, though Hereticks might abuse those words; but would rather distinguish, and shew in what sense faith is not imputed for Righteousness, then flatly and simply to say; It is not, when God saith, it is. Else we shall give the adversary the greatest advantage that he can desire or expect; when he shall shew those words in Scripture which we flatly deny: And hereby we shall lay the greatest temptation before the ignorant, that know not how to interpret those Scriptures. And that I have not missed the sense of the Assembly, I am induced to believe, by what that Learned Reverend man Mr. *Gataker*, who was one of them, hath wrote in Explication of this controverſie against *Saltmarsh Shad.* Pag. 53, 54, 55, 56, 57. to which I wholly subscribe (expounding the word *Instrument*, as I have declared) And where he shews that the difference is but meerly Verbal, so far is it from being in Fundamental Doctrine.

* As in the
Confession of
Faith. cap. 11.
§. 1.

3. Where the next words say, *but only as it is an Instrument by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and his Righteousness*, as I note that they say not that it is an Instrument of Justifying us, so I understand them thus, *as it is the Moral reception of Christ and Righteousness freely given*, improperly called an Instrument: and that they speak of that aptitude in faith, for which it was chosen to this office, supposing its being a condition of the Covenant, or Gift, as its nearest Interest. If I have hit their sense, I assent to this.

4. Where it is said, *The word of God is to be Preached only by such as are sufficiently gifted, and also duly approved and called to that office*, I understand it only of that sort of Preaching which is proper to Ministers, believing that there is also a Preaching which a Master may use in his Family, and other Christians occasionally: and herein I doubt not but I hit their sense.

By the Spirits that I have been haunted with, and the measure that I have received, I am forced to expect, that some should here charge me with taking an occasion to quarrel with the Assembly, or shew my own conceited wisdom, in the correcting of their works.

works. But I appeal from unconscionable calumniators, to the righteous Judge. I so highly reverence that Assembly, that I think this Nation, since the Apostles days, had never any that excelled it for Piety, and Ability: and I doubt not, but the frustration of much of their labour lies heavy on some, that yet make light of it. But with such envious and censorious persons as I have to deal, I find my self in the case of *Poggins* Countreyman with his Ass (they that would laugh may read the Fable; but I am serious:) I am cast into an impossibility of escaping their censures. Should I have professed my Assent, without these explanations, I should wrong my Conscience. Should I have said nothing of this Catechism, they would have concluded that I dissented in some weighty points, and durst not subscribe it. I considered these, and chose rather to cast my self on the smaller censure, then the greater; hereby manifesting that it is a small matter, or nothing, wherein I dissent.

The like I must say of the Assemblies Confession of faith: Some have told me, If I be Orthodox, they expect my Assent to that: But without some explanations I cannot Assent, which will give the same occasion of censure to these men: and if I wholly pass it by, they will surmise that it is for greater matters that I refuse. I will therefore in this also venture on the lesser inconvenience, seeing one is become unavoidable.

SECT. V.

S. 5.

I Have perused oft the Confession of the Assembly, and verily judge it the most excellent for fulness and exactness that I have ever read from any Church; And though the truths therein being of several degrees of Evidence and Necessity, I do not hold them with equal clearness, confidence or certainty; and though some few points in it are beyond my reach, yet I have observed nothing in it contrary to my judgement, if I may be allowed these Expositions following.

I. Ch.