

either inſharc men in unneceſſary Oaths & Covenants, nor harden ſuch men againſt Repentance, by doing any ſuch thing our ſelves, much leſs by commanding it.

XVII. We are agreed that to commit a ſin by paſſion or ſudden ſurprize, is not ſo wicked as to do it on deliberation: Nor is the doing it only ſo bad, as undertaking to juſtifie it, and encourage others to do the like.

XVIII. We are agreed that God is jealous about holy things, and that wilful corrupting his Church, worſhip or diſcipline, to the diſgrace of religion and encouragement of wickedneſs is a heinous ſin: Eſpecially to Approve ſuch things.

XIX. We are agreed that to make a deliberate Covenant that I will ſin againſt God, and to ſubſcribe and declare this, is a heinous aggravation of the ſin: *e. g.* When the high places were kept up in *Judea* if any had Covenanted to keep them up, and *purpoſed* to tranſgreſs, the wilfulneſs had been the greatneſs and dangerous ſignification of ſuch ſinning.

XX. We are agreed that *Repentance* is Gods condition of forgivenesſ; and that for a man to *reſolve and Covenant to ſin* and to *profesſ it openly* to all the Church, and that *oft times*, and ſo to *renounce Repentance*, is---alas---

XXI. Moſt ſober Chriſtians are agreed that Chriſtians ſhould be united upon the terms which Chriſt himſelf hath made in the baptiſmal Covenant, and in their obedience to his Laws; and that Papall Uſurpations and impoſing of things unneceſſary as neceſſary to Union, Communion or Miniſtration, hath been the great cauſe of Schiſms through the Chriſtian world;

for about 1000 years at least: And that they who will still obey such dividing Imposers, do continue Schisms in the world by encouraging the causes of them.

XXII. We are on both sides agreed, that it were heinous hypocrisie, and prophaneness, if we should make our sacred Ministerial work the pretended reason for our sinning, and should swear, declare or subscribe that which we take to be false, and do that which we take to be sin, that we may have leave to preach against sin in others; and so offer God a Sacrifice of iniquity, and put a beam into our own eye that we may have leave to Preach against the mote that is in our brothers eye.

XXIII. We are afraid of making Separatists and Anabaptists and tempting men to avoid us, as scandalous men.

XXIV. We are afraid lest by such wilful sin, we should by a carnal interest, to defend what we have once done, be tempted to impenitence, and to persecute the just.

XXV. We are agreed that they that will run into willful heinous sin, as they deserve to be forsaken of God, so they cannot expect such a blessing on their Ministry, as Conscionable upright men may do.

XXVI. It is agreed that the ancient Christian Pastors Preached against the will of Princes for 300 years; and after that against the will of Christian Princes (*Constantius, Valens, Theodosius Junior, Valentinian, &c.*) And not only Apostles said, that God was to be obeyed rather than men, but such as *Timothy* who was ordained by man, were charged before God and the Lord Jesus

Jesus Christ who will judge the living and dead at his appearing and Kingdom, to preach the Gospel and be instant, in season; &c.

XXVII. We are agreed that the Children of Christians, when they grow up, know no more of God, of Heaven, of Christ, without *teaching*, than the Children of Heathens do: And therefore that the opening and applying the Gospel is needful in *England* as well as in *America*.

XXVIII. It is so far from saving unbelievers or ungodly persons, that they are the Children of Christians, and in the visible Church, that it maketh their case more miserable; if not worse than that of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*.

XXIX. As of old every single Church had usually many Presbyters and Deacons with the Bishop, so it is undeniable that many of our Parishes have work enough for many Ministers, and only want of maintenance is pretended for our present paucity (with the want of worthy men.)

XXX. It is granted us, that to alienate consecrated persons from the holy Ministry causlessly, is greater Sacrilege than to alienate consecrated Lands, Goods or Temples, which are but means to the use of the said Ministry. We are not here accusing our silencers of this heinous Sacrilege: Their Righteous Judge and ours, will quickly pass the final sentence: But we dare not, we will not sacrilegiously silence and alienate our selves, lest we forsake our Lord, and betray mens souls, and be doomed as the slothful servant that hid his talent, *Mat. 25.* and bring down more plagues upon the Land: We fear when we read *1 Thes. 2. 15, 16.* the signs that wrath was come to the utmost on the Jews; even their forbidding men to

preach the Gospel of salvation, lest we should contribute to such a dreadful desertion of this Land.

SECT. XVII.

The Case of the Ministers since they were silenced, and their Practice (with the Peoples.)

WE humbly crave of those narrow Seers, who venture to censure the generality; for somewhat which they dislike in some persons that are neerest to themselves, that they would truly understand the case and practice of their Brethren, before they any further in Sermons and Writings provoke the Magistrate to execute the Laws upon them, as Schismatics, Seditious, or what accusation is readiest at hand.

I. That the elder sort of the Nonconformists are ordained by Bishops, and most of the rest by such Pastors of Churches, of Cities, Corporations and other Parishes associate, as the times then allowed; and that in this Ordination (be the Ceremonious part right or wrong) they are all by Consent or Covenant devoted to the sacred Ministry, and that not for a time, as hirelings, but for life: this is denied by none that we know of.

II. It is known to all Faithful Ministers and others, who converse with the common sort of men, that a great part of the people of *England* are ignorant of the very Essentials of Christianity, and a great part dull and worldly neglecters of all serious religiousness; and a great part sensual, drowned in filthy fleshly sins: Besides the ignorance, weakness, and unwarrantable
opinions

opinions and passions of many that are more seriously religious than the rest. And that it is a hard work to cure *one* ignorant, erroneous, vicious soul: And each one is precious, and not to be left in sin as desperate; considering the everlasting consequents.

III. It is certain that most great Parishes, especially in Cities and great Towns, have more souls which call for *Ministerial help*, than Conformists and Nonconformists, if they lovingly joyned, are able well to afford necessary help to.

IV. The Ministers that dwell in Cities or Corporations, when they were cast out, did quietly surrender Temples and Tythes: But many of their people claimed the continuance of their Relation and Ministry; and many professed that they could not trust their souls to the Pastoral guidance and care of many of those who were placed in the Temples in their stead; and charged the neglect of their souls on such as refused.

V. The Bills of Mortality shew us that the 7 Parishes within the walls of *London* are not the seventh part of the whole, including all the outer Parishes: And of the 97 there were very few Churches left unburned; and there are but few that are yet built up; and instead of many, there are small Tabernacles, and instead of others nothing: And the outer Parishes are mostly so great, as that the Temples will hold but a small part of the people: It is conjectured by the Inhabitants, that in *Martins* Parish are about three-score thousand souls, and in *Stepney* and *Giles's Cripplegate*, each about fifty thousand, and in *Giles's* in the Fields between 20000 and 30000, and in *Clements Danes*, *Margarets Westminster*,
 Q 3 *Andrews*

Andrews Holborn, Sepulchres, and the Churches in Southwark, at Aldgate, White-Chappel, Shore-ditch, and divers others, there are in some six times the number that can hear in the Temples, in some more, and in others not much less. And in most Churches the Preachers voice will not extend to above two thousand, if more can come in. So that take one with another, and it is conjectured that it is not above the seventh or eighth part of the Inhabitants that can come to hear in the outer Parishes: And if the other six or seven parts should seek for room in the emptier Churches of other Parishes within the walls, it cannot be supposed that above one part of these six or seven would find room: So that all set together, there is supposed to be place but for about the fifth, or fourth part at most, of all the people within and without the walls: And London is to be denominated rather from three, four or five parts, than from One of these: And we all agree, that the famousst and happiest City for Religion in the world should not be left to turn Infidels, Pagans, Atheists, or to be kept from all publick Worship of God. And it must be considered that the great Parishes where one of twenty cannot hear, are far off from the Churches that have room; and that such persons cannot easily know before-hand what Churches have room, and where to seek it: And that those that have most need, have least desire, and when they cannot be taught near home, will rather stay at home, or in the streets, or Ale-houses, than go far to seek room in the Alleys of other Churches. And it's known that by this means Papists have got opportunity of seducing

cing multitudes, and many get them to baptize their children. And whereas it is said that some may go one day, and some another; it is answered, 1. That if they did go half the families by turns, still the greater part would be shut out. 2. It is all, that are bound by God constantly to hear and worship him. 3. And those that most value it will still croud in, and keep out the rest, and will not bargain away their own duties and benefits for other mens sakes: Nor can Parishes come to agree upon such a bargain.

VI. Experience assureth us that men are not usually brought to knowledge, repentance, faith and holiness, by the Gospel *ex opere operato*, or as by a charm; but as an apt morall cause; And that the Preaching of judicious, convincing, serious, affectionate Ministers hath incomparably more success, than the affected language, or dull reading speeches of injudicious novices or wordly formalists or hypocrites: God usually worketh according to the morall aptitude of the means (though not alwaies.)

VII. It cannot be denied but that the number of raw cold, dry, yea and scandalous Ministers, in many Counties of this Kingdom is too great: And the more ignorant and bad the people are, the abler Ministers, and more diligent do they need: And those people who feel what profiteth their Souls, will not take up with cold, uneffectual teaching, if they can have better.

VIII. He that hath no Preacher but a Reader in his parish, is by the Church Laws forbidden to refuse his Ministry, and all such are forbidden frequent going to other parishes, communicating in them: what want soever they have at home.

IX. The Nonconformists that do but affirm any thing in the Liturgy, Ceremonies, Articles, Government, &c. to be unlawful, and such as they may not subscribe to, are by the Church Laws excommunicate *ipso facto*: And all that dare not take the Sacrament kneeling, are to be denied the Communion of the Church; And all that dare not submit their Children to be baptized by the foredescribed undertaking of God-fathers, and to receive the Cross as a dedicating badge of Christianity, must not have their Children Christened; And all that dare not commit their souls to the *Pastoral Guidance of ignorant readers, or other men whom they think by their unskilfulness; unsoundness, aversness to a holy life, strangers to intimate cases of conscience, or notorious negligence and sloth, or non-residence, to be unmeet for them to trust themselves to, in so great a matter, in which their salvation is so much concerned, and so dare not take the Sacrament from such as their Pastors, all these are forbidden Communion with any other Parish Churches by the Canon, and all Ministers forbidden to receive them. And if they dare not say that they are willing to be confirmed (in the English mode) they must no where be admitted to communion: And being excommunicate, must not be buried according to the Church-Office when they are dead; so that they are cast out of the Church, before they Congregate in other Assemblies.*

X. In this case the Nonconformists are not agreed what to do: One part and the far greatest say, 1. We will forbear affirming the unlawfulness of any of the foresaid impositions, till we are called to speak out: And because the case of these

these times calls us often to it, we will do it as privately and modestly as we can: 2. And though we are *excommunicated ipso facto*, yet we are not bound our selves to execute their sentence; but may stay in Communion till they prove the fact and do the execution on us themselves by refusing us: And this we take to be the most peaceable way: But others say, That though in some cases for peace this way may be taken, yet ordinarily we are not bound to seek and expect Communion with that Church which hath already thus excommunicated us; especially when all the Ministry subscribe and declare their Conformity to the Church orders, and swear Canonical obedience to the Ordinaries, and are themselves to be suspended if they give us the Communion: We must not, say they, strive against their Laws, nor seek that Ministers should be perjured, false to their promises and professions to admit us to Communion against their Laws: Nor can any Church that first excommunicateth us, call us Schismatics for not communicating with them, unless they prove that we give them just cause to excommunicate us. Here it is supposed that the Reader understandeth that [*to be excommunicated ipso facto*,] is *sine sententia*, without any need of a Judges sentence, *to be actually excommunicate upon our fact done*, so that the bare proof and notice of the fact is enough to warrant the execution (Though a Judge may also pass a sentence if he see cause,) *vid. Calv. Lexic. Jurid.* And others commonly. There are some others that go further, and think it unlawful to have Communion with the Parish Churches, because they thus excommunicate us first, without more cause,

cause, and because they take the Pastors to be scandalous by the foresaid Oaths, Declarations and subscriptions, and those that have not the peoples consent, to be no true Pastors. But these are herein disowned by the most; and very few Ministers are of their mind that we know of, though many of the people much incline to it; especially they that live where the Priests are ignorant, scandalous, slothful, or malignant; because *Paul* saith, [*With such, no not to eat.*] But others tell them that

1. It is not the Parish-Ministers that made the excommunicating Laws:
2. And if they sin themselves, it is ignorantly:
3. And we have not a call and opportunity to hear and judge them.

XI. Even those called Independents hold (if Mr. *Ph. Nyes* Manuscript to that end may tell us their minds) that it is lawful to hear the publick Parish Ministers, because the Magistrate may set Teachers over the People, and require them to hear them: Though they hold that the People should choose their Pastors, and that the Sacraments should be administred and received freely, and not by force. Yea such Anabaptists as Mr. *Tombes* (as is visible in his Book) hold that Communion with the Parish Church is lawful, in the Word, Prayer, and Lords Supper.

XII. We commonly hold that men unjustly excommunicated, are not thereby disoblighd from publick worshipping of God, and living under Pastoral oversight and Church-discipline, nor are bound to endanger their own salvation by neglecting such duties, and losing such helps and privileges; and therefore must be of such Churches as they can, if they cannot be of such as they would,

would, or as are allowed by the Magistrate.

XIII. It is not in the power of our selves to escape such excommunications: For we are not able to change our own understandings, so far as to hold every thing before named, to be lawful: Some of us are able to say that we have with a willingness to see the truth, studied the case of the old Conformity above forty years, and the case of the New-conformity now above seventeen years, and read almost all that hath been written for them, which we thought might add to our information, and prayed earnestly that God would not suffer us to erre; and the longer we study it, the more we are confirmed: In this case we suffer publick and private obloquy and reproach, and not only these seventeen years the loss of all Ministerial Maintenance, but the danger of 40 L. a Sermon, and imprisonment in common Gaols, and the ruine of our estates and health: And in reason its as easie to think that they that hold their opinion on such terms, are like to be as impartial in their studies, as they whose way leadeth to preferment, wealth and honour; of which we were capable of a part: We say therefore again, that to *Conform*, or prevent the *Canons Excommunication ipso facto*, is not in our power. And they that say, God will not condemn men for that which they were not able to avoid or help, should not do otherwise themselves.

XIV. When the 1800, or 2000 Ministers were silenced, the far greatest part of them forbore all publick Preaching, and only taught some few in private, at such hours as hindered not the publick Assemblies, and many of them lived as private men.

XV To

XV. To this day it is so with many of the Nonconformists: Those that live where they find small need of their Preaching, or else have no call or opportunity, and cannot remove their dwellings, do hold no Assemblies, but as other men content themselves to be Auditors. Those that live where are godly and peaceable Ministers in Publick, who yet need help, do lead the people constantly to the Parish-Churches, and teach them themselves at other hours, and help them from house to house: This is ordinary in the Countries, and even in *London*, with many Ministers that hold no Assemblies; yea many that were ejected out of City Parish-Churches.

XVI. Those called Independents do keep up such Churches as they had gathered before; when none of our present oaths, declarations, subscriptions or practices were imposed on them, which is not therefore to be taken as new.

XVII. As to the rest, it was the great and terrible Plague in 1665. which made this change in their Assembling and Ministration. When the publick Ministers forsook the City, and the rich left the poor to misery and death, and people lookt every day for their last; when they that heard a Sermon one day, were buried the next; when death had awakened the people to Repentance, and a regard of their everlasting state, divers Nonconformable Ministers resolved to stay with them; They begg'd money out of the Countries for the poor, and relieved them: They got into the empty Pulpits, and preached to them: And when Preachers and Hearers lookt every day for their last, it is easie to conceive that there was serious Preaching, and serious Hearing: By this many

many that died were helpt in their preparations; and through God's great mercies, multitudes that survived, repented and became the serious seekers of a better world. The men that did this were mostly unmarried, and could easilier venture their own lives, than such as had families; and some of them that had families, yet trusted God, and most did scape. We know but of one (pious *Germane* Minister that died of the Plague in the City (and one of another Disease, if not through want) and two that fled from it in the Country.) And when God had blest these mens faithful labours with the conversion of many souls (especially Apprentices and young people) the experience so engaged their mutual affections, that the Ministers resolved that they would live and die in such service as God had so blessed and preserved them in; and their hearers resolved that they would not forsake their Teachers: And thus the dreadful Plague began that which so much now offendeth men, as a dangerous Schism.

XVIII. And when some men out of excessive caution, were ready to think that when that Plague was ceased (having killed about an hundred thousand) the Ministers should lay by that publick work, and retire again into secret corners, God confuted them by his next dreadful judgement, burning down the City the next year, 1666: So that there were neither Churches to go to, nor Ministers in the Parishes to Preach, nor rich men to maintain them: And could any soul that hated not Christ and mens salvation, have wished the Nonconformists then to desert the miserable people. When they newly came
front

from under the terrour of such a dreadful Plague, and when success and Gods protection had so greatly encouraged them, and when presently they were deprived of their worldly treasure, and had not houses, or goods, or money, but thousands utterly ruined in the world, and crept into holes and lived in poverty, when it was a wonder that they dyed not by hundreds of famine, and when such a sight as *London* in its ruines was before mens eyes, (which he that saw sure can never forget,) If then men, because that the Bishops or Parliament forbad them, should have refused to Preach the Gospel of Christ, and to teach men to lay up a treasure in Heaven, and to comfort such a ruined City, what excuse would such unfaithfull servants have had at the bar of their great Judge?

XIX. These two great and notorious necessities succeeding in those two dreadful years 1665 1666. calling the Nonconformable Ministers out of their retirements, and latent and silent state, resolved them to serve God more diligently and openly than they had done, whatever it cost them: And many Country Ministers were awakened to the like by the examples of those in *London*: Though yet a great number who are in places of less need, or not called out as aforesaid, still lie much silent.

XX. WHILE THE DREADFUL FIRE WAS WASTING LONDON and OTHER CORPORATIONS, THE PARLIAMENT and BISHOPS WERE AT OXFORD MAKING AN OATH TO DRIVE ALL NONCONFORMISTS ABOVE FIVE MILES FROM ALL CITIES and CORPORATIONS that send Bur-

gesles

gesses to Parliament, and all other places where ever they had Preached since the act of oblivion. So that, had they obeyed the Laws, *London* had been deserted in the Plague and in the ruines, and few people suffered publickly to worship God: At the mention of which the heart of the writer of this trembleth; especially to think how much further the Bishops went in this then the Synod of *Ithacius* and *Idacius* went, from which *Martin* separated to the death by Gods miraculous instruction.

XXI. The Plague, Fire, Poverty, which have seized not only on *London*, but on many other Corporations of *England*, more than other places, and more than hath been known in our forefathers daies, make many wish that the Corporation-Oath and Declaration might be reviewed and that Gods Judgments as a Trumpet sounding REPENT O ENGLAND were heard by all the Corporations of the Land, before we hear that time is past: And that it might be considered whether either an *Unlawful Imposing*, or an *Unlawful taking*, or the neighbourhood of any *Unlawful particulars*, can warrant any man to declare that neither he nor any other person, is obliged by that Vow, to Repent of his sin, or to oppose prophaneness, Popery or Schism, or any thing contrary to sound Doctrine and Godliness. And to enquire in what Countrey or age of the world, Christian, Mahometan, or Heathen, there was ever such a Law before. It was that age of the Church in which Hell ruled most on earth, even in the Wars between Pope Gregory 7th. and the Emperour, when the Pope swore them on one side, and the Emperour on the other; and
men

men swore, and unswore, and forswore, as the powers that they were under bid them; which made *Abbas Urspergensis*, *Chron* p. 30. say [*Ut omnis homo jam sit perjurus & predictis facinoribus implicatus, ut vix excusari possit quin sit in his, sicut populus sic & Sacerdos.* And that pleasant man (who knoweth his own name) who merrily deriderh his adversaries, for gathering a doubt of our fundamentals from our differences, may more feelingly know one day that *God will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain*: And may consider that it was no more precise a man than *Cotta* in *Cicero* (*de Nat. Deor.* l. I.) that would prove men did not believe that there was a God, because they durst be perjured; instancing in perjured and ungodly *Carbo*: It was not a sign of Schismaticks, but of very charitable moderate men, that could hear and regard such a perjured Ministry, as *Urspergensis* saith was then in the *Roman Church*, especially in *Germany*, where the temptation lay.

XXII. A little after the Plague and Fire, some Nonconformable Ministers about *London*, met, to consider whether our actuall forbearance to joyn with the Parish Churches in the Sacrament, might not tend to deceive men and make them believe that we were for separation from them, and took their Communion to be unlawful: And upon the Reasons given in, they agreed that such Communion was lawful and meet, when it would not do more harm than good: But because at that time a storm was coming on men, from the Act against Conventicles, and their judgment was against ruining those that in this were not of their minds (on the reasons aforesaid) and being credibly

credibly informed that their communicating at such an unseasonable time would not only persuade men that force compelled them, but also draw them to ruine others that durst not imitate them, they resolved to delay for a fitter opportunity, because God will have mercy and not sacrifice; and our *Liberty* is not alwaies our *Duty*, nor must be used to other mens destruction. Thus violence crosseth the Authors ends.

XXIII. Shortly after, when such thoughts returned, and many thought it meet to joyn in the publick Assemblies, the *Oxford* Oath and Act of Confinement was put in execution, and drove them all away: For the reasons aforesaid had satisfied them not to desert the souls in all Cities, Corporations and places where they had Preached; and so they were fain to hide themselves to avoid six months imprisonment in the common Gaols (whither some of us were sent;) so that if they had come to the Parish-Churches, to Common-prayer or Sacraments, they had exposed themselves to multitudes of witnesses, and so to certain imprisonment: Except in some odd corners of the Country where they were strangers (about five miles from Corporations or acquaintance) where their example would have wrought little on any in the Cities, or that had known them: So that the *Oxford* Act most effectually forbad them coming to Church, or holding Communion with any Parish-Churches within five miles of any such City, Corporation or Village where they had Preached since the Act of Oblivion: This they could not avoid.

XXIV. Yet many Ministers were afraid of introducing

roducing unwarrantable separations, by avoiding the severities of the Law and Bishops; and many that did retire to Country-Villages five miles distant, as confined, did there constantly joyn with the Parish-Churches in Liturgy and Sacrament: But this being far from Cities, and not in the sight of the people that were most disaffected to the Prelates and Liturgy, did little with them; and so they were disabled by the Bishops or Rulers to do what they desired against other mens extreams.

XXV. Before this, many Ministers had offered thankfully to accept the Liberty of Preaching in the Parish Churches where the Liturgy is used, and being present at it: And some to this day that live in the Country, where they can get so much favour, preach in the Parish-Churches, and joyn in the Liturgy, and draw others to it, and go from place to place thus to avoid being taken.

XXVI. Many, seeing how we were thus driven not only from *Preaching*, but such *Parish-Communion*, were tempted to hard thoughts of such affairs, as if it came from the Papists, who would have equalled, and mas'd us up with themselves.

XXVII. Shortly after this, the Kings Clemency saw cause to make an alteration, and to give us his gracious indulgence by his Licenses for places and persons: Upon this, Ministers boldly set up Chappels under the Parish Churches; and in all the time of this their Liberty, when there were witnesses enough, if they had offended, we remember not that any were ever convict of any word of seditious or unsound doctrine, or any unpeaceable attempts. But while they had this leave to Preach themselves, they thought best to
take

take it at the same convenient hours that the Parish Churches meet at: Other times being so inconvenient, as that families cannot observe them without hurt. And they could not *Preach, and hear in the Parish-Churches* at once.

XXVIII. All this while, though they had the Kings authority for their Assemblies, some Clergy men ceased not to accuse them of Schism; shewing that it is the want of something else rather than the Kings authority on which they ground their accusation.

XXIX. Some Nonconformists have these 17 years forbore to baptize or administer the Lords Supper, or to be Pastors of any Churches, but only Preached occasionally where the Parishes were so great, that one of ten or twenty had no room in the Church; and where some of many years had heard no publick worship of God: And they have published to the people that they assembled them not to separate from the Parish Churches or their worship, but for their meer necessity, perswading none to come to hear them, but such as cannot come into the Parish Churches to hear: Yet are they accused for drawing men from the Church.

XXX. These Ministers in these places have been prosecuted more severely than the rest, by imprisonments, fines and guards against their meetings; which induced others to Preach in the City where there seemed less need, because they found quietness no where else, and because some out of the remoter needy Parishes might come thither to them.

XXXI. Though they have lost all Ministerial maintenance, and are lyable to pay 20 l. the first Sermon, and 40 l. the rest, and 20 l. for the ground

for all that they Preach, besides six months imprisonment in the common goals, and poverty disableth City and Countrey to maintain them; and some with Wives and Children have long lived on little besides brown Rye-Bread and Water; and others, that can live of their own, expend all in the charges of the places and adjuncts where they Preach for nothing; and some never took any pay, from the first these 17 years, but patiently serve God and waſt their ſtrength under mens obloquy and reproach; yet are there not wanting perſons of the Clergy, who repreſent their greateſt and deareſt ſervices as their greateſt ſins, and accuſe them as enemies of the Churches peace, and the leaders of Schiſm, and in pulpit and print provoke authority to execute the Laws more ſeverely on them; Though the execution hath coſt ſome excellent men their lives already, and they may know that no execution ſhort of death or utter diſablement will make the moſt conſcionable forſake their duty, and ſacrilegiouſly deſert the Office to which they were dedicated and ordained: (As the late caſe of the *Hungarian* Miniſters declareth :) And ſuch courſes never ended in the honour of thoſe of the Clergy that procured them: Yea ſome as *going to the bar of God, have undertaken to prove, that it is through pride and covetouſneſs that we conform not.* And becauſe ſome Churches called Independent withdraw not their maintenance from their Paſtors, and ſome few others have maintenance of their own, or friends that will not ſee them want, they would make ſtrangers believe that the common ſort of Nonconformiſts, whoſe families live in ſufferings
and

and wants, are gainers by their Nonconformity : Though themselves that have the most and richest on their side, would be loth to take up with such maintenance, and often Preach, how sad a case the Church would be in, if Ministers were left to the peoples charity : While they live in fulness thus they envy their poor brethren, who that they may finish their course, would be glad of leave to labour for nothing, and live on alms, taking Gods favour for their reward.

XXXII. And to compleat all, some blush not to accuse them, as the bringers in of Popery, by desiring Liberty ; as if Preaching the Gospel did not do more to keep out Popery, than the ignorance of untaught people : As if our earnest requests eighteen years ago, that we might not be mass'd up with the Papists, nor a door opened to them by our divisions and sufferings, were all forgotten : As if the Nonconformists were neerer Popery than they that would have the Pope to be *Principium Unitatis* to the Universal Church : As if their Printed Morning Lectures against Popery, and many other Writings, did not sufficiently shew their distance from it : As if the *Papists* desired the *Liberty*, rather than the *silencing* of the Nonconformists ; or desired any thing more than that so many hundred adversaries to Popery, and all the Protestants of *England* who adhere to them, might be cast out, and brought as low as themselves, and put into the same condition, that they might stand or fall together. Nay, what if on such necessity they should accept of favour from any Papists that would save them ? If one Party would bring men to such a pass that they must be hanged, imprisoned,

ruined, or worse, unless the favour of the Papists deliver them; and the other Party had rather be saved by Papists, than be hanged or ruined by Protestants, which of these were more to be suspected of Popery? especially if the same men that give us the Alarm that Popery is coming in, undertook the sole teaching of those by whom they suspect its entrance, and yet would not abate a needless Oath, or covenant or ceremony to keep it out, or strengthen the Protestants by the Union, for which we have so long patiently begg'd and waited.

XXXIII. The most of our acquaintance take it for their duty to do their best to keep up the reputation of the publick Conformable Ministry, that it may further Love and Concord, and the success of their labours with the people; and they profess to take their own Assemblies but as Chapels, and not as *distinct*, much less as separated Churches: And those of them who do administer the Sacraments, and do that which is like the Separatists way, yet do it not on their principles, but *pro tempore*, till God shall give them opportunity to serve him in the established way (if ever it may be hoped for :) it being reformed or well ordered Parish-Churches under the Government and countenance of the Christian Magistrates, which are most agreeable to their desires.

XXXIV. When we go into the Parish-Churches, we find those that have able godly Ministers usually to be as full as will consist with the peoples hearing the voice (which in many places will not reach to a great part of the Congregation:) we find such Preachers, whether Conformable, or Non-

Nonconformable, every where almost crouded after; which shews that it is not meer faction that moveth the hearers; and that worthy men have no cause of discouragement: And if none of either side be valued much above their worth (for the bare *Office* sake) we cannot help it; nor would it be helped if there were no Nonconformists: Some of us well remembring the time (1632. till 1640.) when we were troubled or threatned also for going out of our own Parishes to hear worthy, able men that were very conformable.

XXXV. It is very ordinary with Gentlemen and others that are zealous for the present Church-State in *London*, to go from their own Parishes, though the Canon be against it: so that it is not, sure, the breach of the Canon that they stick at.

XXXVI. We shall never dissuade men from making the strictest Laws to punish any Nonconformist that shall be proved guilty of Sedition, Disloyalty, Drunkenness, Fornication, Swearing, and any other immorality; but we know of none of them that was silenced, ejected, or punished on any such account: Nay, if they Preach against their Church Government, Liturgy, or Ceremonies, we must expect that they should be restrained. Our earnest desire is, that the Magistrate would keep up Peace and Order in the Church, that Popish Clergy men may not think that it belongeth to them alone to do it.

XXXVII. Whereas there is a sort of ignorant or ill meaning men, that still say [*we know not what the Nonconformists would have, and why will they not tell us what would satisfie them,*] While

we offer to beg on our knees for leave to do it; we humbly intreat them to weary men awake no more with that canting. 1. As long as the Kings Declaration about Ecclesiastical affairs is visible. 2. And as long as our *Reply* and our *Reformed additions to the Liturgy*, and our *Petition for Peace* which respected the old Conformity remain unanswered by those to whom in 1660 we did present them: 3. And till we are once called or allowed to *speak for our selves* against the *new conformity*; a favour which the justice of old Romane Heathens, yea and splenetick Jews did grant to all that were accused before they punished them, but since Popery prevailed in the world is become a thing among them not to be expected. 4. And as long as men know that Bishop *Wilkins* and Dr. *Burton* appointed by the Lord Keeper Bridgman to treat with some of us of the terms of *Union*, (saying it was His Majesties Pleasure,) did come to a full agreement with us in *terminis*, which was drawn up into the form of an Act by no worse a man than that PILLAR OF JUSTICE the excellent Judge *Hale*, and the Parliament presently Voted that no such Act should be brought in and offered. Dear Brethren, God is the father of Lights and with him is no darkness: Men may be mocked, but God is not mocked: If the day that will bring works of darkness to light, and finally clear the Innocent, be not the object of certain faith and hope, let our cause be bad, and let us as fools be judged such as have forsaken our best hopes: But that it is otherwise we believe, and therefore appeal to a righteous God from an unrighteous world.

XXXVIII. What harm our Preaching the doctrine of salvation can do to the Bishops or people of the Land (while they may punish us for any word that we speak amiss :) And why we should not rather speak *openly* (where men may bear witness of our errours,) than in secret (where men are tempted to too much boldness :) And what but a spirit of envy, or a carnal interest cross to the interest of Christ and mens salvation, should grudge at such Preaching, while we are responsible for all that we say or do amiss, we cannot tell.

XXXIX. Nor can we tell, if our *not swearing, or not entering into the Bishops National Covenant*, be as great a crime as our penalties import, why no other mulct or penalty will serve turn to expiate *such crimes*, but our ceasing to preach the Gospel of Salvation, while we are willing to do it under the strictest Laws of Peace and Order.

XL. It is visible that the Parish-Churches of those Ministers (*ceteris paribus*) are fullest of Auditors, who are most willing that the Nonconformists help them in due time and place, and desire to live with them in Love and Concord: For all that have the spirit of holy *love and peace*, do love those that have the same spirit: And such serious, holy Conformists as *Bolton, Whately, Fenner, Preston, Sibbs, Stoughton, Gouge*, and such other, were formerly as much crouded after as Nonconformists: But it is those that Preach against holy Love and Concord, and wrangle with the most Religious sort whom they should encourage, whose Congregations are thinnest (usually) through the tepidity of their followers, and the distaste of others.

XLI. When we read in the Council of *Calced.*
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the *Egyptian* Bishops crying so long *miseremini, miserumini*, lying prostrate on the earth, even when they could say, *Non dissentimus*, and begging of their fellow Bishops for their lives and consciences, and their Brethren crying against all [*Away with them, They are Hereticks*] while they professed the same Faith; while the men that with such out-crys were condemning those of their own confession, had newly cried, *Omnes peccavimus*, for condemning *Flavianus*, and the Truth, and saying, that *they did it for fear*, and owned that Eutychianism, which yet these *Egyptian* Bishops now disowned, it mindeth us that even Bishops had need to be remembered, that while the wheel is turning, the *upper side* should not tempt men to forget what side will be uppermost shortly and for ever.

*Additions : more particularly of
National Churches.*

§ 1. **T**HERE are some worthy persons who plead more specially for *National Churches* as of Divine Institution, whose Doctrine calls us to a special consideration of it. But though some of us have oft desired it, we have not hitherto obtained any satisfaction what they mean by *A National Church*, or any true definition which they agree in : Some of them deride us for doubting and asking the question, and some answer it to the increase of our doubt.

§ 2. It must be presupposed that we speak not of a meer Community that hath no Pastors, but strictly of a Society called by some Political, by others

others *Organized*, constituted of Pastors and People mutually related ; which is the ordinary sense of the word [*Church.*] And we must premise what being commonly agreed on, is none of our doubt or question.

§ 3. The question is not whether any, or all Nations and Kingdoms should be Christians, and so be the Kingdoms of Christ : That's past doubt. 2. Nor is it whether in such Kingdoms the King be the Head, as to the power of the sword ; that is, a Christian Civil Governour of a Christian People that are his Subjects. We daily pray that the Kingdoms of the world may all be Christian ; and we believe that their Kings are the Governours by the sword, of all the Clergy, as well as others. 3. Nor is the question whether Kings may call all their Kingdoms into a holy Covenant with God (by lawful means) giving them an example first themselves. 4. Nor do we contend about an Equivocal Name, whether a *Christian Kingdom*, as such, may be called a *National Church*. 5. No nor whether a *Christian Nation*, governed by a Heathen or Mahometan King, may be called a Christian Church or Kingdom ; or a Protestant Nation ruled by a Papist King, is to be called a Protestant Kingdom or Church: for this is but about bare *names*. 6. Nor do we question whether a Christian King may make such accidental disparity between the Pastors, as we have before described. 7. Nor yet whether the Pastors of one Kingdom may associate and hold Synods for Unity and Counsel, and be named a *National Church*, as they are such Associations, obliged to Concord.

§ 4. But our doubts are these ; 1. Whether

it

be in it self specially instituted by God, that every Kingdom or Nation of Christians shall have [*One summam Potestatem essentialiter Ecclesiasticam*, or one *Priest-Head*, (whether a *single person*, or an *Aristocracy*, or a *Common Synod*) as a constitutive part of the National Church. 2. Whether this *Priest-Head* (whether High-Priest, or Council,) stand in subordination to the King, as part of the same formal Church, as a General, or a Viceroy, that maketh not a distinct Kingdom, (though he may make a distinct subordinate Society as an Army, City, &c.) or is he Head of a coordinate different species, so as that the same Kingdom shall be two Policies formally, *viz.* a Christian Kingdom or Royal Church, and a Priestly Church; each being supream in their proper species, and both made coordinate by Christ; and so they are formally two Churches National. About the Jews the Controversie is made by Dissenters (*e. g. Galaspie, Coleman, Selden, &c.*) exceeding difficult. 3. Whether the very Jewish Church-Policy be established by Christ for the Christian Church, or be repealed? 4. Whether the said Ecclesiastical Head must be *One* as the High Priest, or an Aristocracy of many, or a Synod of the whole Clergy? or whether it be left indifferent which? 5. Or whether God hath ordained such a National Church-form, only by the general Command of doing all things in Order and Unity and to Edification? 6. Which is the Priestly-Head, or highest Governour of the Church of *England*, which is a constitutive part, as a King in a Kingdom? 7. Who is it that chooseth or authorizeth the National Priestly Head, that we may know when we have a lawful Chief Pastor, and