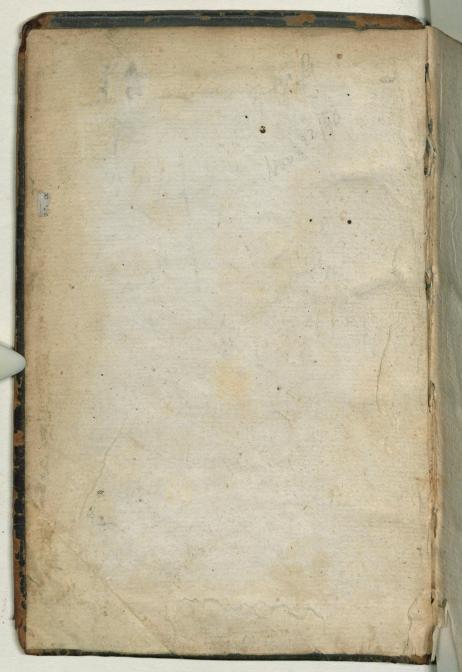
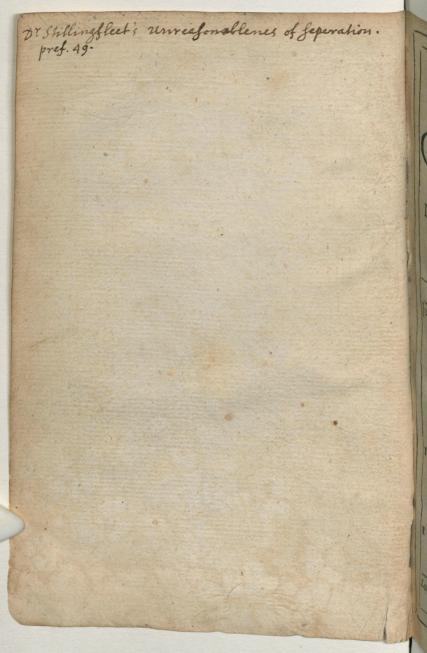
Special Note:

The following pagination shown as per original.







Church-divisions:

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OR,

Directions for weak Christians, to keep them from being Dividers, or Troublers of the Church.

With some Directions to the Pastors, how to deal with such Christians.

By Richard Baxter.

Joh. 17. 21. That they all may be one, as thon, Father art in me and I in thee: that they also may be one in us, that the World may believe that thou hast fent me. 22. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be One, even as we are One. 23. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made Perfect in One; and that the world may know that thou hast fent me, and hast Loved them, as thou hast loved me.

I Cor. I. IO. Now I befeech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jefus Chrift, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Cor. 3. 3. For ye are yet carnal : for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

London, Printed for Nevel Symmons at the three Crowns over against Holborn-Conduit, 1670. The Authors I. Purpose, II. Reasons and III. Prognosticks of this Book.

I. T is none of the bufinels of this Book to fingle out any one Party in the world, & to tell you by Application how far they are under the guilt of Schilm : I meddle with the Gause, and leave each person to make application to himfelf. It is SIM-PLE CATHOLICK CHRISTIANI-TY which I plead for , and the Love and Unity and Concord which are its Ligaments and Effential parts. And it is a SECT as a SECT, and a FACTION as a faction, and not this or that sect or Faction, which I detect and blame. Yet I doubt not but as in the fame City there are the wife and the foolifh, the found and the fick, and in the fame Army there are valiant men, and Cowards, foin the fame Churches there are Christians of various degrees of Wildom, Integrity and strength : And all men should earnestly defire to be of the mifeft, the Holieft and the most fruitful fort, and not of the

the more erroneous, impure, or scandalous and unprofitable. And if the fick will make themselves a Party, and call the found, the Aaverse Party, I will endeavour to be one of a Party in that fense; and to obey God as exactly as I am able, and to worfhip him as Spiritually and holily as I can, and to Love him with all my Mind, and Heart, and Strength, and lament that I can reach no higher, and do no more : And if any will call this by the name of Herefie or Schifm, they shall see that I can avoid Herefie and Schifm at as dear a rate, as enduring the Name and Imputation of that which I avoid. It is not the Name of a Schilmatick that I am writing against, but the Thing, by whatever Name it is called. It is UNITY, LOVE and PEACE which I am pleading for: And it is DIVISIONS, HATRED and CONTENTION which I plead against : And it is the Hypocrifie of men which I detect, who betray Love, Unity and Peace by a Fudas kifs ; and will nor, or dare not openly renounce them, and defie them, but kill them with diffembling kindnefs: who cry them up, while they tread them down and follow peace with all men, that are not of their party, as the Dog followeth the Hare, to tear it in pieces and deftroy it : Who fight for LOVE by making others

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thers feem odious and unlovely; By evil fur-16 milings, proud under valuing the worth of te others, busie and groundless centuring of men, whole cale they know not; aggravat-# ing frailties; fligmatizing the perfons, the # actions, the worship and religious perforwe mances of diffenters, with fuch odious terrible names, and Characters, as their pride of and faction do suggest; And all this to frengthen the interest of their side and n Party, and to make themselves and their of confenters to feem Wile and Good, by makhe ing others feem foolifh and bad : Though I they thereby proclaim themselves, to be fo k much the worft, by how much they are y most void of Love. They are all for Conl, cord, but it is only on their narrow factious g terms; They are for Peace; but it is not 0 of the whole street, but of their house alone; d or not of the whole City, but of their street a alone; or not of the whole Kingdom, but d of their City alone. O what a bleffed thing e were peace, if all would derive it from their , Wills, and terminate it in their interest; and : they might be the Center of Unity to the n world! that is, that they might be Gods or st Chrifts! fuch excellent Architects are they h that they can build Christs house by pulling y it in pieces; and fuch excellent Chirurgeons, that they will heal Christs body by feparating A 2 15

feparating the members, and can make as many Bodies as there are separated parts.

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2. Nor is it any or much of the business " of this book, to speak to those that I think are deeplieft guilty of the Schilms of the Chriftian world : For they are out of hearing, and will not read or regard my writings. It is the Roman Head and Center of Unity which hath done most to divide the Church. And it is the contending of Rome and Constantinople for the Supremacy which hath made the greatest Schifms that the Christian world hath known : And the Regiment of such Lords must be answerable to their Power, and Greatness; and the fimple terms of Christian Unity left us by Chrift and his Apostles, must be turned into a Religion large as the Decrees of all the Councels, and (fay half of them) and the Popes Decretals alio. And that there may be no way out of this wilderness, but the Confessors present will, you must not in all these so much as distinguish fundamentals from the reft; but fo much material belief is neceffary to Salvation, as each mans opportunities and helps obliged him to receive; that is; The faith which is neceffary to Salvation (materially or objectively) is as various as the number of perfons in the world; To one more is neceffary, to another

ther lefs, to some none at all of the Chriaker ftian faith). And you must suppose that the Priest is well acquainted with the internal = capacity of every mans Soul, and with all the instructions, opportunities, and luggestions of his whole life, and can tell what measure of belief he hath, and whether it be proportionable to his helps; and to can tell him whether he be capable of Salvation, though neither Pope nor Councel have given any Standard by which to judge. And though no man can be allured of his own Salvation; and though another man could not be faved by the faith that laveth him. So much are we miltaken to think that it is the Pope that hath the Keys of Heaven, when it is every Prieft, who is the onely judge of the measures of the perfons faith. These new made multiplyed Articles of Religion, these Additions to = Christianity, this proud Church-tyranny, I doubt not is the great cause of Schifm in the world : And when I have had opportunity to write against it, I have born my reftimony against it, as is yet legible. But it is not that fort of men that I am here most to speak to : but to them that proteis to be more teachable and willing to know the truth. and needs a

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3. And yet I add though this Book be written principally to fave the darker fort of honeft Christians, from the fin and mifery of Church divisions, I write it not principally for them to read; For I know their prejudice, weakness and incapacity, aftermentioned : But I write it to remember " the Teachers of the Churches, what principles they have to Preach and ftrengthen, and what principles to confute and to deftroy, if ever they mean to fave the people from this state of fin, and the Churches from the fad effects. And if Ministers neglect the faithful discharge of so great and neceffary a duty, let them remember that they were warned, if they find themfelves overwhelmed in the ruines.

II. The Reasons moving me to this work are these.

First, It is my calling to help to fave people from their fins; and Church divifion is a heap of fins.

2. The more I love them that I hope are tender Confcienced, and dare not fin, when they are convinced of it, the more I am bound to endeavour their conviction, remembring who hath faid, Thou shalt not bate thy Brother in thy heart, thou shalt in any wife rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer fin upon bim. Lev. 19. 17. 3. LOYE

3. LOVE is not an appurtenance of my = Religion, but my Religion it felf. God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him: (who can speak a higher word of any thing in all the world ?) Love is the end of faith, and faith is but the Bellows to kindle Love : Love is the fulfilling of all the Law; the end of the Gofpel; the nature and mark of Christs Disciples; the divine nature; the fum of holinefs to the Lord; the proper note by which to know, what is the man, and what his state, and how far any of his other acts are acceptable unto God : without which if we had all knowledge and belief, all gifts of utterance and highest profession, we were but as founding Brass, and as a tinkling Cymbal. And if all our goods were given to the poor, and our bodies to the fire, it would profit nothing. Love is our foretast of Heaven, and the perfection of it is Heaven it felf, even the ftate and work of Angels and of Saints in glory. And he that is angry with me, for calling men to Love, is angry for calling them to Holinefs, to God, and Heaven. Holiness which is against Love is a contradiction : It is a deceitful Name, which Satan putteth upon unholinefs. All Church principles which are against Univerfal Love, are against God, and Holinefs, and

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and the Churches life. And he that faith, he loveth God, and hateth his Brother is a Lyar. To be holy without Love, is to fee without light, to live without life. He that faid, The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, &c. did no more dream of separating them, then of dividing the head of a man from his heart, to fave his life: Jam. 3. 17. Nor no more than he that faid, Follow Peace with all men, and Holines: Heb. 12.14. No necessity can justifie fuch a division: Holiness and Love to God, are but two names for one thing. Love to God and to man, are like Soud and Body, that are feparated no way but by death. Love and Peaceableness, differ but as Reason and Reafoning : Love may be without Paffive Peace (from others to us,) but never without A-Etive Peace (from us to others.)

4. I have had fo great opportunity in my time, to fee the working of the mysterie of iniquity, against Christian Love, and to fee in what manner Christs House and Kingdome is edified by divisions, that if I be ignorant after such fad experience, I must be utterly unexcutable, and of a feared Conficience, and a heart that feemeth hardened to perdition. God knoweth how hardly fin is known in its fecret root, till men have tasted the bitterness of the fruit: Therefore

Therefore he hath permitted the two Extreams to shew themselves openly to the world in the effects : And one must be noted and hated and avoided, as well as the other. I thought once that all that talk = against Schifm and Seets, did but vent their malice against the best Christians, under those names : But fince then I have feen what Love-killing principles have done! I have long flood by while Churches have been divided, and fub-divided; one Congregation of the division labouring to make the other contemptible and odious; and this called, the Preaching of truth, and the purer worthiping of God : I have feen this grow up to the height of Ranters in horrid Blasphemies, and then of Quakers, in difdainful pride and furliness; and into the way of seekers, that were to feek for a Ministry, a Church, a Scripture, and confequently a Christ. I have many a time heard it break out into more horrid revilings of the best Ministry and Godliest people, than ever I heard from the most malignant Drunkard : I have lived to fee it put to the Queftion in that which they called, the little Parliament, whether all the Ministers of the Parishes of England should be put down at once. When Love was first killed in their own breasts, by these lame

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fame principles, which I here detect, I have feen how confidently the killing of the King, the Rebellious demolishing of the Government of the Land, the killing of many Thousands of their Brethren, the turnings and overturnings of all kinds of Rule, even that which they themselves set up, have been committed, and justified, and prophanely fathered upon God. These with much more fuch fruits of Love-killing principles, and divisions I have seen. And I have seen what fierce, censorious, proud, unchriftian tempers they have cauled or fignified; In a word, I have long leen that envious wifdom (whatever it pretend) is not from above, but is earthly fenfual and devilish; and that where envy and strife is upon pre-tence of Religious precedency of wisdom there is confusion and every evil work, Jam. 3. 15, 16. And if after fo long, fo fad, fo notorious experience, you would have me fill to be tender of the brood of Hell, I mean these Love-destroying wayes, and to fnew any countenance to that which really hath done all this, you would have me as blind as the Sodomites, and as obdurate as Pharaoh and his Egyptians, and utterly refolved never to learn the will of God, or to regard either good or evil in the world. 5. The 5. The fame fins are continued in without repentance. The fame pride and ignorance is ftill keeping open our divisions: And if after fuch warnings, as the world fcarce ever had the like, we shall be ftill impenitent; if we shall fin our felves into fuffering, and fin in our fuffering as we did before, even the very fame fin of Divisions which brought us to it; how heinous is our Crime, and how dreadful the Prognostick of our greater ruine; And how guilty are those Ministers of the blood of Souls, that will not tell men of the fin and danger.

6. I know that Dividing Principles and Dispositions, do tend directly to the ruine and damnation of those in whom they do prevail. That which killeth Love, killeth all grace and holinefs, and killeth Souls: That which quencheth Love, quencheth the Spirit (a thousand fold more then the restraining of our gifts of utterance doth:) That which banisheth Love, banisheth God. That which is against Love is against the defign of Christ in our Redemption, and therefore may well be called Antichristian : And if the Roman Kingdem (for foit is rather to be called than a Church) had not fuch Meral marks of Antichriftianity, (which Dr. More hath notably opened

in his Mysterie of iniquity;) If they were not the Engineers for the Division of the Christian world; by a false Center, and by impossible terms of Unity, and by the engine of tearing dividing impositions; If among them were not found the blood of the Saints and the Martyrs of Jesus, I should in charity, fear to suspect them of Antichristianity; notwithstanding all the Prophetical passages which seem otherwise to point them out; because I should still suspect my understanding of those Prophecies, when the Law of Loving my neighbour as my felf, is plain to all.

They are dangeroufly miftaken that think that Satan hath but one way to mens damnation. There are as many wayes to Hell, as there be to the extinguishing of Love. And all tendeth unto this, which tendeth to hide or deny the Lovelinefs, that is, the Goodnels, of them whom I muft Love : much more that which representeth them as odious. And there are many pretenses and wayes to make my Neighbour feem unlovely to me : One doth it as effectually by unjust or unproved accusa-" tions of ungedlinefs, or faying, Their worship is Antichristian, formal, ridiculous, vain; as another doth by unjust and unproved accufations of Schifm, Difobedience

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or Sedition. And they that love Godlinefs, may be tempted to cast off their love of their Neighbours, yea of the truly Godly, when they once believe that they are ungodly. And the white Devil is a Love-killer as well as the black. He is as mortal an enemy to Love, who backbiteth another, and faith, he is Prophane, or he is an empty formalist, or he is a lukewarm temporizing complying manpleafer] as he that faith [He is a pievish factious Hypocrite.] I am fure he was no Malignant, nor intended to gird at Godliness, nor to grieve good men, who told us that it is Satans way to transform himfelf into an Angel of Light (that is, one that pretendeth to make higher motions for Light and for Religions strictness, than Christ himself doth;) and that his Ministers are sent forth by him as Ministers of Righteousness, 2 Cor. 11. 14,15, 16. who will feem more Righteous, than the Preachers of truth, Satan will pretend to any fort of strictness, by which he can but mortifie Love. If you can devife any inch strictness of opinions, or exactness in Church orders, or ftrictness in worthip, as will but help to kill mens love, and fet the Churches ia divisions, Satan will be your helper, and will be the fricteft and exacteft of you all : He will reprove Chrift

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Chrift as a Sabbath breaker, and as a gluttonous perfon, and a Wine-bibber, and a friend (or Companion) of Publicans and Sinners, and as an enemy to Cafar too. We are not altogether ignorant of his wiles, as young unexperienced Christians are. You think when a wrathful envious heat is kindled in you again ft men for their faults, that it is certainly a zeal of Gods exciting : But mark whether it have not more wrath than Love in it : and whether it tend not more to difgrace your brother than to care him, or to make parties and divisions, than to heal them : If it be so, if St. Fames be not deceived, you are deceived as to the author of your zeal, Jam. 3. 15, 16. and it hath a worfe Original than you fuspect. It is one of the greatest reasons which mak-" eth me hate Romifh Church tyranny, and Religious cruelties against diffenters, because as they come from want of Love, fo I am fure that they tend to deftroy the Love of those on whom they are inflisted, and to do more hurt to their Souls than to their Bodies. The Devil is not fo filly an Angler as to fifh with the bare Hook; nor fuch a Fool as when he would damn men, to intreat them openly to be damned; norwhen he would kill mens Love, to intreat them plainly, not to Love but hate their neighbours :

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neighbours: But he doth it by making you believe that there is just and necessary cause for it; and that it is your duty; and that you fhould be lukewarm in the caufe of God, of truth, of Godlinefs, if you did not do it : that fo you may go on without fcruple, and do so again, and not repent. Even they that killed Chrifts Apoftles, did it as a duty, and a part of the fervice of God, Joh. 16. 2. And Paul himfelf did once think verily that he ought to do many things which he did, against the Name and Cause and Servants of Jesus, Act. 26.9. And as he did, fo he was done by; and as he measured to others, it was measured to him again; For they that bound them felves in an Oath to kill him did deeply intereffe God and Conscience in the cruelcy. But believe it, it is Apostacy to fall from Love : . your fouls dye, when Love dyeth. The opinions, the Church Principles, the fideings, the Practifes, which destroy your love, deftroy your graces and your Jouls. You dye while you have a name to live, and think that you grow apace in Religion. Therefore better understand the Tempter, and when backbiters are deriding or vilifying your neighbours, take it to fignific in plain English [I pray you love not these men, but hate them.] And I have told YOU

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you in this Treatife, that when one faith unjuftly [Kill them, banish them] and another faith [Have no Communion with them] it is too often the fame inward affection which both express, but in various wayes: They are agreed in the affumption, that their neighbour is unlovely.

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And when Love is dead, and yet Religionfeemeth to furvive and to be increased by it, it is lamentable to think what a degenerate, fcandalous, hypocritical Religion, that will be, and how odious and difhonourable to God. To preach without Love, and to hear without Love, and to pray without Love, and to communicate without Love, to any that differ from your Sect, O what a loath some Sacrifice is it, to the God of Love? If we must leave our guift at the Altar, till we are reconciled to one offended brother, what a gift is theirs, who are unreconciled to almost all the Churches of Chrift? or to multitudes of their Brethren, becaufe they are not of their way ? yea, that make their Communion, the very badge and means of their uncharitablenefs and divisions ? Sirs, these are not matters of indifferency, nor to be indulged by any faithful Paftor of the Church.

7. And I know that these principles are as mortal to the Churches, as they are to Soulso

Souls. And that if ever the Churches have peace; prosperity or healing; it must be by the means of Love and Concord, and by de-= ftroying the principles which would deftroy them. One thinketh that it must be by a Spanish Inquificion, and by forcing or killing the diffenters; And another thinketh it must be by Excommunicating them all, and making them odious, and making their own party feem thereby to be better than theirs. But I know that it must be by revived Love; or it will never be. I know it; and whoever is angry with me for it, I cannot choose but know it. When the Papists had murdered fo many hundred thousands of the Albigenses and Waldenses, who would have thought, but they had done their work? When the French Massacre had murdered 30000 or 40000, and difpatcht the Leaders of the Protestant party, who would have thought that they had but ftrengthened them ? When the Duke D' Alva had done fo much to drown the Belgick Protestants in blood, he little thought that he was but fortitying them. Queen Maries Bishops little thought that their English Bonfires were but to light men to fee the mischief of their cause; and like the firing of a Beacon to call all the Land to take them for the Enemies of man-

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kind; and that the cafe would have been fo quickly altered. When the Irish had murdered two hundred thousand, they little thought that they had but excited the Survivers to a terrible revenge. I will come no nearer, but you may eafily do it your felves. If we bite and devour one another, we fall be devoured one of another, Gal. 5.15. The question is, but who shall be devoured " first, and who referved for the second course. If any man have an ear to hear let him hear : He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity : He that killeth with the Sword, must be killed with the Sword : Here is the Patience and Faith of the Saints. Rev. 12. 9. 10. God Ruleth the world ftill when he worketh not miracles ! Have we not seen a proud Victorious Army diffolved without a drop of blood : and have we not seen that God approveth not of proud felf-exaltation, and violating the Sacred power of our Governours, and usurping their places of Authority : Hath. not the drunken world had yet experience enough to teach them, that the Church of God is not to be built up or repaired, by their tumultuous quarrellings and frayes.

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How long Lord, must thy Church and Ciuse, be in the hands of unexperienced turious fools, who know not what Holiness

or Healing is, but think that victory over mens Bodies, must be the cure of their Souls, and that hurting them is the way to win their Love ! or that a Church is con-Attuted of Bodies alone while Souls are abfent, or no parts ! who will make themfelves the Rulers of thy Flock in despite of thee and of thy Caule and Servants, without thy call or approbation, and think shat the work of a Soldier, is the work of a Father and a Physician! whole cures are all by amputation; and whole piety confilteth in flying from each other, and effeeming and using their Brethren as their foes; who fcatter thy flocks on all the mountains, when Chuist hath prayed that they may all be one !

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Perhaps, Reader, thou art one of them that thinketh, that the fettlement and happinefs of the Church, must be won like a game at foot-ball, and therefore fcrupleft not to tofs it in the dirt, and tumultuously to ftrive with and ftrike up the heels of all that are against thee, (fo that peaceable passed on the ftreets.) But when you have got the Ball, have you done the work? Are you still fo ignorant as not to know, how uncertain still you are to keep it, and that one spurn can take it from you? And fuppose

fuppose you could secure all your conquests, are the Churches healed ever the more? Mens hearts must be conquered be-" fore this healing work is done. And therefore the Apostle faith that we are more than Conquerours, when we are killed all the day long and accountea as Sheep to the flaughter, Rom. 8. 34, 39. that is, it is more gain and honour to our selves, to suffer in faith and patience by our enemies, than to conquer them in the field; And it is more profitable also unto them, and tendeth to a more desirable conquest of them : Because when Conquerors do but exasperate them; and if we hurt their bodies, we harden them the more against our cause, and against the means of their own Salvation, our patient Martyrdom and fuffering by them, may rend at last to open their eyes, and turn their hearts, and fave their fouls, by fhewing them the Truth, the Goodness and the Power of Chrift, and of his Word and Spirit. This is the meaning of being more than Conquerours. The Irif are conquered by us, but not converted : The Scots and English were conquered by Crommed, but their hearts were not conquered, nor their Religion changed by him. They that think that if they could get and keep the upper ground, and have Diffenters bodies and eftats

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estates at their will, they could soon settle the Church in Unity and Concord, do tell all the world, how ignorant they are of the nature of Christianity, and of the fear of God, and of the means of the peace and Consord of the Church : Either you would give up your own judgments and Consciences, or practice your felves to the will of men, if you were in their power, or nor. If you would not, why should you think that others will? If you would, you do but tell the world, that you are Atheifts, and have neither a God, nor Confcience, nor Religion. But it is not evidence enough of your tolly, to fay in your hearts there is no God, and to fear them that can but kill the body, more than Him that can punish both body and foul in hell; but you must also shew that you know neither God nor Man, by thinking that all others are Atheifts allo, and judging of them by your felves; as it they fee their Souls and their everlasting hopes, at as base a price as you do yours. I tell you again that a Battel or a Foot-ball skuffle will not settle, the discomposed and divided Churches; unlefs you think that a heap of Carkasses flain in the field, pollefs the quietnefs, and concord which you defire : The Soul is the man , and Love is the Christian Life, and the true Cement of the BA

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the Churches unity; And Love must caufe Love, as fire caufeth fire; And hurtful wrath doth most powerfully quench it, and hath these fifteen hundred years, (but especially these thirteen hundred) been the wolvish Scatterer of the flocks of Christ: And must that be now the way to build it, which hath so long been the way to build it, which hath so long been the way to pull it down. It is Love that must be our Union,
and Love that must caufe it, or we shall never have the Union of a Christian Church. By this shall all men know that you are Christs Disciples, if you have Love one to another. If you believe not this, pretend not to believe in Jesus Christ, who doth affirm it.

I confest I am fo far guilty of fupersition my felf, that if I had been one of the Changers of our ancient Government, I should have been somewhat the more backward for his Name fake to the beheading of Christopher Love, left it should be an ill omen both to Church and State, but especially to the Astors of it.

8. Another of the Motives of this Difcourfe is, becaufe I know that times of most temptation, are times of greatest danger, and commonly of greatest fin. And all faithful Pastors must know what are the special Temptations of the Time and and Place which they live in. When had we ever greater Temptations to Love-killing principles and practices than now, except in the times of the miferable Wars? I need not name them to you. The harder it is for men to Love them that hate them, = that cenfure them unjuftly, that revile them, and reproach them, and make them odious, or that hurt them, the more caufe have Ministers and all Christians to set a double watch upon their Love; Less before they are aware, a *flaming* and confuming zeal, do tell others that they know not what manner of Spirit they are of, Luk. 9. 55.

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9. Yea it is not only a time of great Tempration to this fin, but of common guilt: They are multitudes that are overtaken already with this fin. Is not the Land in a = continual heart war? Are there not parties against parties, and cause against cause, and heart-risings, and passions, and censurings of Distenters, to say no worse? And is it not time to bring water when we see the flames?

10. And I perceive few know to heinous a fin to be any fin at all; But all factions and parties are ftill juftifying their Love-killing = wayes, and reproaching those whom they have wronged; As if when they have finfully withdrawn their Love from them, it were