

it may be sanctified to us in a little time.

1. Consider I pray you, why else it is, that God hath so multiplied commands, to dig for it as for Silver, and search for it as a hidden treasure: to cry for Knowledge and lift up our voice for understanding: to wait at the posts of wisdoms doors: to search the Scriptures and meditate in them day and night: Is not this such study and labour as men use, to get understanding in other kind of professions? Are not these the plain commands of God? and are they not their deceivers who contradict them.

2. Is it not a blaspheming of Gods spirit, to make it the Patron of mens sloth and idleness, under pretense of magnifying grace? When so many Texts command us diligence, and slothfulness is so great a sin? And none are so forward to preach as these same men that cry down mens teaching.

3. Why hath God settled a Teaching Office in his Church, and commandeth all to attend and hear and learn; if we are taught by the Spirit without mans help? Why were the Apostles sent out into all the world? And why are they commanded to teach all Nations, and to teach the Church all that Christ commanded them? and why doth he promise to be with them to the end of the world? but that this is the way of the Spirits teaching, to teach those first who are our outward teachers, and then to help us to understand them? And those are taught of God, who are taught by those who are sent of God to be their teachers, and have the inward concurrence of his grace.

4. Advise with the experience of all the world who was the man that ever you knew able to expound one Chapter in the Bible, by the inward teaching of the Spirit alone without any labour of his own, or help from others, by voice or writing? Where dwelleth that man who by meer inspiration, can turn one Chapter out of Hebrew or Greek into the vulgar tongue? The first part of our preaching or publishing the Scriptures is by Translating them into a language which is understood. When *Ezra* in his Pulpit of wood, did read the Law and give the sense, the meaning is, that he read it in the ancient Hebrew tongue in which it was written, and turned it into the language which the Jews then used (who were grown much strangers to their ancient speech.) Where is the man that can solidly unfold any Doctrine of Divinity, which he never read or heard of, or can teach that truth, and defend that Religion, which he was never taught by man? He is a stranger in the world who seeth not, that as in Law and Physick and other professions, though some are ignorant even when they are old, yet commonly all men are wisest and ablest in their own profession, and those know most, who having natural capacities have had best help, and longest time, and hardest studies, the Spirit assisting them by his *common help* to make it Knowledge, and by his *special grace* to make it a *sanctifying knowledge*. Therefore remember to give due respect to them that have been *longer* in Christ than you, and to them that have *longer studied* the Scriptures, and to them that have had greater helps and experience: And do not too easily imagine, that those who are be-
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low them in all these advantages, are yet above them in sound understanding: Though such a wonder may sometime come to pass.

DIRECT. II.

Observe well the secret and subtil workings of spiritual pride, and how deep-rooted and dangerous a sin it is, and what special temptations to this odious sin, the younger and empty headed Christians have; that the resistance of them may be your daily care.

PRide is the self-idolizing sin: the great rebel against God: the chief part of the Devils image: that one sin which breaketh every commandment: the Heart of the old man: the root and Parent and summary of all other sin: the Antichristian vice, which is most directly contrary to the life of Christ: the principal object of Gods hatred and disdain, and the mark of those whom he delighteth to tread down; and the certain Prognostick of dejection and abasement, either by humbling repentance, or damnation.

It is called [*Spiritual Pride*] from the Object, = when men are proud of *spiritual excellencies*, real or supposed. And this is so much worse than Pride of Beauty, apparel, riches, high places, or high birth, as the abuse of great and excellent things, is worse than the abuse of vanities and trifles: and as things spiritual are in themselves
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more contrary to the nature of pride, and therefore the sin hath the greater enormity.

The common exercise of this Religious or spiritual Pride is first about our *Knowledge*, and secondly about our *Godliness* or *Goodness*.

1 *Pride of our understandings*, worketh thus : First, a man that was formerly in darkness, is much affected with the new-come light, and perceiveth that he knoweth much more than he did before : And then he groweth to a carnal and corrupt estimation of it, valuing it more as *Nature* is pleased with it, than as it is sanctified by it : Delighting in *knowledge* for it self, more than for the purity, Love and heavenliness which it should effect. Then he looketh about him on the ignorant sort of people, who know not what he knoweth, and seeth how far they are below him : And he thinketh with himself, what a difference hath God made between *Me* and *Them* : And because *Thankfulness* is a duty, he observeth not how *Pride* doth twist it self with it, and creep in under the protection of its name : And how *Thankfulness* and *Pride* have the same expressions, and both of them say, *I thank thee O Father that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes : I thank thee O God that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican, Luk. 18. 11.* And then he is sota-ken up with the things which he knoweth, that he perceiveth not what knowledge yet he wanteth. And the deep affection which his knowledge worketh in him, or the tickling pleasure which he hath in knowing, joyned with this ignorance of his

his ignorance in other things, doth make him over-confident of all his apprehensions, as if every thing which he imagineth were an absolute certainty: And so he wanteth that humble suspicion of his own understanding, which a true acquaintance with his ignorance would have caused in him: And thus he groweth to over-value all his own conceivings; and to under-value all the opinions and reasonings of others, which are contrary to his own: And thence he proceeds to corrupt his Religion with such mis-apprehensions; and his rash unsuspected understanding entertains one error first, and then that lets in many more; till he have espoused a self-chosen frame of doctrine, instead of the sacred truths of God, and method of the Gospel: And from hence he proceedeth to choose his Religious exercises also, according to these mis-apprehensions: These make him Duties, which are no Duties, and sins which are no sins: And thus he calleth evil, good, and good, evil; and putteth darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. And having made him a Religion of his own, he confidently thinketh that it is of God: And next he valueth all men that he hath to do with according as they are nearer or farther off, from this which he accounteth the way of God: He chooseth his Church or party whom he will joyn with, by the test of this Religion, which his pride hath chosen: He zealously declaimeth against the opposers of his way, as against the adversaries of truth and Godliness, and consequently of God himself. He prayeth up his opinions, and preacheth them up, and contendeth for them; and pray-

prayerh and preaceth and disputeth down all that is against them. He laboureth to strengthen the party that is for them, and to weaken that which is against them: And thus he divideth the kingdom and family of Christ; He destroyeth first, the Love of his brother and neighbour in himself, and then laboureth to destroy it in all others, by speaking against those that are not of his way, with contempt and obloquy to represent them as an *unlovely* sort of men: And if the interest of his cause and party do require it, perhaps he will next destroy their persons: And yet all this is done in zeal of God, and as an acceptable service to him: And they think all are Neuters and Lukewarm, who prosecute not the Schism as fervently as they, and fight not against Love with as much vehemency: Yea and in all this, they are still confident, that they *Love the Brethren* with a *special Love*, and make it the mark that they are Christs disciples, and that they are passed from death to life, because they love the party and persons, who are of their own opinion and way. And thus PRIDE insensibly, while they perceive it not at all, doth choke their Opinions, their Religions, their Parties, and make their Duties and their sins, and rule their judgments, affections and their actions; which is all but the same thing, = which the Scripture in one word calleth HERESY. And all that I have said, you may find said in other words in the third Chapter of *James*.

And there are two things which greatly promote this sin: The one is a conceit that all their = apprehensions are the *Spirits dictates*, or the effect of

of its illumination. And the works and teachings of the spirit, are not to be contradicted, or suspected, but to be honoured. Therefore they think that it is a resisting of the spirit, to resist their judgment: And they are perswaded that their apprehensions are caused by the spirit, partly because they had no such thing whilest they lived in wickedness, but it came in either with their change or shortly after: And therefore they think that the same light which shewed them their sinful state, doth shew them also all these principles: And partly because they find themselves as deeply affected with these misapprehensions, as with other which are sound and right; therefore they are confident that they come from the same spirit: And specially when these thoughts come in upon the reading of the Scripture, or in meditation, or after earnest prayer to God, to teach them by his spirit and lead them into the truth, and not to suffer them to err; and when they find that they have good ends and meanings, and a desire to know the truth; all this perswadeth them that it is the spirit from whom their thoughts proceed; when yet it may be no such thing.

And another much greater and commoner cause of this *self-conceitedness* is this: All mens understandings are naturally imperfect: Our knowledge about *Natural* things is small and dark, much more about things *supernatural*: The wisest must say, *We know but in part*: And the variety of mens degrees of knowledge, joyned with the difference of their educations, and advantages and fore-going thoughts, doth make as
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great a diversity of understandings as of complexions: And yet it is very hard to any man, to have a sufficient diffidence and suspicion of his mistaking mind. For what a man *knoweth*, he *knoweth* that he *knoweth*. But no man that erreth doth know that he erreth: For that is a contradiction. If I knew that I erred in judgment, I must know that the thing is otherwise than I judged it to be: which is impossible to the same understanding at the same time: For then *judging* were *no judging*, as being contrary to knowledge: When I see such a difficulty about a point, as to pass *no judgment* at all, but remain in meer suspense, then I can easily perceive that I am ignorant of it: But when I pass any judgment, I cannot perceive that my judgment is false, except it be in the cure of it, and by the same light which changeth it: when I err, I can never know that I err, but *in sensu diviso*, when I cease my error: when I know that I erred, I so err no longer. And because every thing which appeareth to us, doth appear in some kind of light or other, and appeareth in some form, and as clothed with some qualities, the understanding therefore presently hath some thought or other of it: If we take any notice of it, we shall have some kind of conception and opinion of it: And few things in the world do appear to us in such equal diverse shapes, as to leave the understanding wholly dubious, whether it be this or that. Though of that which hath *no appearance* at all, I am wholly ignorant, and have no conception. And when one part of a thing is seen, and many other parts of it are unseen, we are all apt to conceive of the

the whole according to the part which we see, and not allow a just suspension or suspicion for all the parts which are unseen. That which I see, affecteth me as a thing seen: But that which I see not, is nothing to me, and therefore affecteth me not at all. That part which I know, I know that it is, & so far, what it is: It is in my mind & memory: But that part which I know not, I know not that it is, or know not what it is: so that seeing one part of things, and not seeing another, (yea perhaps many others,) doth not only cause our error in judging of them, but also maketh it very hard, to question or distrust our judgments: For we must not be *Scepticks* and doubt of all things: Nor must we deny belief to so much as is revealed to us: And therefore however at the present we apprehend things, just such we are usually confident that they are. And in this difficulty all error and the lamentable consequences of it do come in.

But what shall a man do in so hard a streight? Why this every humble man must do. He must tread safely, and proceed warily, and try the spirits, and try the doctrines offered him thoroughly, and this by all the means which God hath appointed him for that use. He must not strive against the light; but he must take heed of taking darkness for light, or hearkening to the deceiver, when he transformeth himself into an angel of light: (which is not unusual) what cometh with evidence of truth must be received as truth, and held fast, and not again let go; however sometimes it may have a second and third tryal. And when you see any truth, remember that it is still with a defective sight, and that you see but

but in part: And therefore allow a freedom in your understandings, to receive the rest. You are *certain* that you see *not all* that is to be seen, of any Doctrine or Science, any more than of any creature: And you are uncertain what influence the unknown parts, would have upon that part which you know, or what alteration it would make upon your apprehension, if you saw them altogether in their connexion. Therefore be sure that in your most confident apprehensions, you never forget that there is still much more *unknown* to you than you yet know. And this will preserve a humility and modesty in your understandings and a capacity and fitness to receive more knowledge: When the forgetting of this, will make you proud and arrogant and presumptuous, and like the fool that *rageth* and is *confident*, even in your ignorance and shame; and will shut up your minds against that knowledg which you want.

But especially if you know that your advantages for knowledge have been less than other mens: that you are young, or that it is but a few years since you entred upon the study of the Scriptures, or that you have not any stronger natural parts than other men; or that you have not had that measure of Learning which might further your knowledge of the holy Scriptures; but that others that differ from you have had much more of all these helps and means than you; common reason here commandeth you to be modest, and not over-confident in your own opinion, nor too much to slight the judgements of such others.

Especially if those that differ from you, be not only more Learned, but as truly conscionable as you,

you, and as like to be unfeigned lovers of truth, and have prayed more, and meditated more, and have had more religious experiences than your selves: And yet more, if they are the greater number of the godly that differ from you, and you are singular in your conceits; in this case rash confidence in your own opinions, is too palpable a sign of a religious pride.

Obj. *But the Learnedst men are not always the wisest, in the matters of Religion.* Answ. Many men are Learned in the Languages and Sciences, who are not Learned in the Scriptures; because they applied not their studies that way. And many men are Learned in the Scriptures, and the Sacred tongues, who yet live in sin, though they are able to teach the truth for others. But those that well understand the Scriptures, without Learning the Languages which they are written in, and the Customs of those times and Countreys, or without much reading and long study both of the Scriptures themselves, and the writings of them that better understand them, are so few, so very few, if any at all, that if you will pretend to be one of them, you had need of some miracle or something like a miracle, to make your selves or others believe that you are not deceived. See what I have said of this at large, in my *Unreasonableness of Infidelity*.

Obj. *The greater number are not always in the right; therefore why should my singularity discourage me?* Answ. The greater number through the world are not in the right about Christianity, for they are not Christians. And the greater number of vulgar Christians be not in the right perhaps

in many points of Learning, and Scholattick controversies, because they are not Learned in such controversies. But all Godly men and Christians are in the right in all points *essential* to *Godliness* and *Christianity*: And therefore they are in the certain way of life. And if in any *integral* or *accidental* point, you think that you are wiser than the greater part, of men as Learned and as Godly as your self, you must give very good proof of it to your self and others, before it is to be believed. I know that in all ages, God giveth some few men more excellent *natural* parts, than others: and he engageth some in deeper and more laborious studies than others: and he blesteth some mens studies more than others: and therefore there are still *some few* who know more, than the rest of the Countrey or of mankind: and it were well for the rest if they knew these and would learn of them: But these are such as come to their knowledge by *hard and laborious studies and meditation*, though also by the *spirit* blessing their endeavours: And they are such as *give proof* of the knowledge which they pretend to: And they are such as *employ* their knowledge to preserve the *peace and concord* of believers, and do not proudly make a stir with it, to set up their own names, though thereby they set the world on fire.

Make therefore no more of these vain defences of your Pride: Let no man think of himself and his own understanding above what is meet. I perswade you not to deny any truth, which indeed you know, nor to doubt of any thing which is made truly *certain* to you. But value not your understandings above their worth, and fix not

too rashly upon your first apprehensions; and go not away with a passionate confidence, in your poor, raw, untryed and defective conceptions. But remember that you know but little, and must have time and labour to grow up to the rest. *Be not wise in your own conceits.* Rom. 12. 16. & 11. 25. Prov. 26. 5. & 28. 11. And this is commonly the sin of the *slothful*, that never were at that pains for knowledge, by which it must be attained. *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason,* Prov. 26. 16. You little think when you are conceited of your knowledge, that you are further from wisdom than a fool. Prov. 26. 12. *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool, than of him.* *Be not wise in thy own eyes,* Prov. 3. 3. *Wo to them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.* Isa. 5. 21. *Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thy self over-wise: why shouldst thou destroy thy self?* The self-conceited must become fools in their own esteem, if ever they will be wise, as the worldly wise must own that which is folly in the judgment of the world, if ever they will be wise: 1 Cor. 3. 18.

2. And there is a *Religious Pride of Goodness*, as well as of *Knowledge*, which must yet more carefully be avoided, as being yet worse than the former, as the thing abused is much better. And this worketh as subtilly and secretly as the former. It may not only consist with many complaints and confessions of *insfulness*, *weakness* and *unworthyness*, but even with doubts of *sincerity* and so much dejectedness as seemeth to draw near to desparation. It is an ordinary thing to hear the same persons

talk in a complaining, doubting and almost despairing manner of speech, and yet to have *high expectations* of respect from others, and to be most *proudly impatient* of the least undervaluing or neglect. Yea *Pride* will make an *advantage* to it self, of all these *humble confessions and complaints*: And = it is an old observation, that many are proud of their *humility*: For though it be true that *Austin* saith, that *Grace is a thing which no man can use amiss*; the meaning is only, that *Grace efficiently* can do nothing amiss: (For if it do amiss so far it is not grace:.) Yet *objectively* all *Grace* may be abused, that is, a man may make it the object of his *Pride*, and the occasion of many other sins.

And this *Religious Pride of Goodness*, doth ordinarily work under the pretext of *Thankfulness* to God for his grace, and *Zeal* for *Holyness*: But it may be known by this, that it always tendeth to lift us up, and to the diminishing of Love to others, and to the contempt of the weak, and the censuring of our brethren, and the division and disturbance of the Church of God. They are lamentable effects which this *Pride* produceth, in the Church and all Societies where it cometh. It maketh all mens *Goodness* seem little, except our own: It causeth the people to undervalue their Pastors, and turneth compassion of mens weaknesses into a sower contempt: It setteth a man in his own conceit, so near to God, that he looketh down on other men, as earthly animals in comparison of himself. It maketh new terms of Church-Communion, and teacheth men to make narrower the door of the Church, than God hath made

worketh, and appeareth, and is aggravated. 31

made it: It causeth men to deny and vilifie Gods grace, in those that answer not their expectations: And to think that the Church is not worthy of their Communion: And to think that none are so fit as they, to be the Reformers of the Church and of the world.

I intreat those who are in danger of this pernicious sin, to think with themselves. 1. What a heynous crime and folly it is for one that but lately was a child of the Devil, and a sink of sin, to be proud so quickly of their goodness: And for one that so lately was groaning and weeping with a broken heart for a sinful life, to be already puffed up with the conceits of godlyness. And for one who daily maketh confession to God, of a sinful heart, and a faulty life, and of great unworthiness, to contradict all this by an over-valuing of his own piety; And how incongruous it is for one, who professeth to hope for justification by free grace & mercy only, & to have nothing of his own but what's defiled, and who abhorreth the Doctrine of merit, and talketh so much of our emptyness and insufficiency, to be yet puffed up with the conceit of his spirituality and worth. And what an odious self-contradiction it is, to make your self like the Devil in pride, because you think you are like God in holiness.

2. And consider, that the more you are proud of your *Goodness*, the less you have to be proud of: If this sin be predominant, it is certain that you have no saving grace at all: And what an odious thing and miserable case is it, to be proud of Holyness, when you are unholy; and to be damned both for want of it, and for being proud of it:

That a man should be proud of that, for want of which he must suffer the fire of Hell! But if your pride be not predominant, yet it is certain that in what measure soever you have that vice, in that measure you are destitute of grace: For true grace and pride are as contrary as life and death.

3. And study well the meaning of all these Scriptures (For you shall not say that I misinterpret them to you.) Why was it that Christ mentioneth the Parable of the Pharisee, and the Publican? one thanking God that he was not so bad as others, and the other thinking himself unworthy to look up to heaven. *Luke 18. 10, 11. &c.* Why did he give us the parable of the prodigal who confesseth that he was unworthy to be called a Son; and of his elder brother who swelled with envy at his entertainment? Why was it that Christ seemed not strict enough to the Pharisees, in keeping the Sabbath, nor in his Diet, nor in his Company, but they called him a gluttonous person and a wine-bibber, and a friend of Publicans and sinners? Was it not because their *Pride* and superstition made them think too highly of their own religiousness? and to make sins and duties which God never made, and then to condemn the innocent for want of this humane religiousness? What was the sin condemned in *Isa. 65. 5.* [*Which say, stand by thy self; come not near to me; for I am holier than thou.*] What meaneth that command in *Phil. 2. 3.* *Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves*] Read this verse over upon your knees, and beg of God

to write it on your hearts: And I would wish all Assemblies of dividers and unwarrantable Separatists, to write it over the doors of their meeting places. And joyn with it *Rom. 12. 10. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another (that is, before your selves.)* But specially read and study, *Jam. 3.*

In a word, if God would cure the Church of Religious pride, the pride of wisdom, and the pride of Piety and Goodness, the Church would have fewer Heresies and contentions, and have much more peace, and much more true wisdom and Goodness it self.

DIRECT. III.

Overvalue not the common gift of utterance, nor a high Profession, as if the presence or absence of either of them, did prove the presence or absence of true saving grace.

YET I shall anon tell you, that neither of these must be undervalued, nor accounted needless useles things. But the overvaluing them, hath caused great distempers in the minds and affections, and communion and practise, of many very well meaning Christians. When God had first brought me from among the more ignorant sort of people, and when I first heard religious persons pray without forms, and speak affectionately and seriously of spiritual and heavenly things, I thought verily that they were all

undoubted Saints; and the sudden apprehension of the difference of their gifts and speech from others, made me think confidently that the one sort had the mark of God upon them, and the other had nothing almost of God at all: Till ere long of those whom I so much honoured, one fell off to *sensuality* and to *persecuting formality*, and another fell to the foulest *heresie*; and another to disturb the Churches peace by turbulent animosities and divisions. But the experience of this Kingdom these twenty six yeares, hath done so much to convince the world what crimes may stand with high professions, that I know not that I ever met with the man, that would deny it: seeing every sect casteth it upon all the rest, however some of them would justify themselves. But I greatly fear lest the generation which is now springing up and knew not those men, nor their miscarriages, will lose the benefit of these dreadful warnings, and scarce believe what high professors did turn the proudest overturners of all Government; and resisters and despisers of ministry and holy order in the Churches and the most railing Quakers, and the most filthy and blaspheming Ranters; to warn all the world to take heed of being *Proud of superficial gifts and high professions*; and that he that standeth in his own conceit, should take heed lest he fall.

When gifts of utterance in prayer or talking are thus overvalued and high professions are taken to have more in them than they have, men presently moddle their *affections*, and then the Church according to these mis-conceivings: And a talkative person who by company and use hath

got more of these gifts, than better Christians, shall be extolled and admired, when many a humble upright soul, that wanteth such utterance, shall be said to be *no professor*, and so to be unworthy of the Communion of Saints.

Mistake me not: I know that though profession may be without sincerity, yet sincerity cannot be without some profession, when there is opportunity to make it: And I know that Grace is a vital principle, and like fire which will work and seek a vent if you would restrain it: And that Gifts of utterance are great mercies of God for the Edification of the Church. But herebyeth your unhappy error in this case. 1. You take the *common profession of Christianity* to be *no profession* at all, because there is wanting a profession of *greater zeal* and forwardness. When as the *common sort* of people in this Land, do profess to stand to their baptismal Covenant, in which they own the essential parts of Godliness and Christianity, and all that is of absolute necessity to Salvation. He that truly understandeth the baptismal Covenant, and Consenteth to it, doth perform all which is necessary to a state of grace: If he profess this, he professeth, both true faith and repentance, and sanctification and mortification, and all that is necessary to make a man a Christian. How then can you say that these are *no Professors*? I tell you (except a few Apostates) the *common sort* of people in this Land are Professors of true faith and godliness! Whether they are *true Professors* without dissembling is another question; but they are *professors of the truth*.

If you say, that Their ignorance and ungodly lives doth shew that they either understand not the baptismal Covenant, or Consent not to it. I answer, Mark well what you say your selves: For this doth but shew that they are *Hypocrites*: You cannot say then that they are *no Professors*, but that they are *dissembling professors*. They profess the truth, they do not truly and uprightly profess it. I tell you, ~~fall~~ the common sort of the people in *England*, are either Saints or Hypocrites: see how I have proved this to them in my Treatise called *The formal Hypocrite*. They all profess enough to save them if they sincerely professed it. He that is baptized and professeth himself a Christian, and yet is a drunkard, a swearer, a fornicator, or such like, is certainly an Hypocrite as going against his own profession: The very Creed, Lords Prayer and Ten Commandments have enough to condemn him as an hypocrite. And will you now come in, and justify these men from their *hypocrisie*, by saying that they are *no Professors*? If they were no Professors, they could be no *Hypocrites*, but meer Atheists or Infidels. I know that those are the *highest* sort of *Hypocrites*, who counterfeit the highest zeal and piety, by the highest profession: But this is but a difference in *degree*. Who ever professeth to be a Christian, professeth true Repentance, faith and holiness, and is an Hypocrite if he be not a Saint.

And then Consider, that if you would exclude any of these from the Communion of the Church, it must not be because they are *no professors*, but because they are hypocrites, ignorant or scandalous? And if so, then no man must be shut out,
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but upon *sufficient* proof: An unproved hypocrite = or sinner, is *no* hypocrite or sinner in the judgment of the Church: and therefore Hypocrites are always a great part of the visible Church. Otherwise Church-Communion would be founded on meer injustice and tyranny, if men shall be called Ignorant, Scandalous and Hypocrites without proof. And therefore to exclude baptized professors, by whole Parishes or Multitudes, without bringing proof against each person one by one, is quite to over-turn Christs rules and order, and Church Constitutions and all Church justice. I confess it is the thing which I have long lamented (and often written of especially in my Treatise of *Confirmation*) that those who are baptized in Infancy, are not called to a more explicate understanding profession of the Covenant then made, and have not a more solemn transition into the number of adult Communicants: And we are not out of hope that this may at last be brought to pass. But in the mean time, the *same* persons though *less* regularly do make profession of the same thing both at the *Lords Table*, and in their *publick* worship, and in their common *claim* to the faith and honour of Christianity, so that all such must be rejected as hypocrites upon accusation and proof of *Impenitency* in *some* gross sin, and not in the *lamp* as if they were *no* professors. For professors certainly they are.

And though I abhor their malignity who would vilifie Religion, by over-hasty accusing of higher Professors; and would flatter the wicked and ignorant, by making an indifferency and tepidity seem sufficient in the things of God; yet God would

would have me bear witness to this truth to cure some mens contrary extream: that as this age as is said, doth need no proof, how heinously *high professors* may miscarry; so in the place where I exercised my Ministry, I found some give me a satisfying evidence in their last sickness, that they had long lived a truly godly life, who were never noted by their Neighbours, for any extraordinary zeal at all. If you ask me, How can it stand with grace to be so much hid? I answer, They made the *common professor* of Christianity: they usually attended the publick worship: they lived blamelessly in their places: but they were of silent retired dispositions, and were inferiours, who by their superiours were restrained from *private meetings*, and some converse with more zealous persons, which they desired. And for ought you know there may be very many such; who must not be rejected as *no professors*, nor without a particular accusation and proof: unless you would be ased in the like kind your selves.

DIRECT. IV.

Affect not to be made eminent and Conspicuous in Holiness, by standing at a further distance from these lower Professors, than God would have you.

IT is the loathsome scab of the Romish Church that they who will be taken for *Religious*, must go into a Monastery of Fryars and Nuns, and separate

parate themselves from the rest of Christians, as worldly secular people : that so their *Religion* may be a *noted thing*, & they may be set up in their singularity, as publike spectacles, for the world to admire : Though perhaps they come thither but under the gripes of Conscience, to expiate the guilt of whoredome, murder, or some notorious sins, which the condemned seculars never committed. And it is somewhat easie to proud corrupted nature to enter into a life of greater self-denial, than most Monasticks are put upon, when by it they shall be thus separated from the rest of mankind, as a people of more admired holiness. To set our selves up in a separated society, as persons whom the world must account more Religious than the common sort of Christians, hath so much ostentation in it, as is a great allurement to Pride. For many a one, who perceiveth how childish a thing it is, to set out ones self to be observed for *fine cloaths*, or for *bodily comeliness*, or for *high entertainments*, *curiosities*, houses, lands or such vanities, doth yet think that it is an excellent thing, to be honoured by men, especially by the wisest and the best, as a person of *Wisdom*, and *Piety*, and *Goodness*. And indeed it is the truest and the highest Honour to be *Wise* and *Good* : And it is exceeding natural to man to desire honour : And it is lawful to have a due and moderate sense and regard to our honour : And all this being so, how easie is it for Pride to take this advantage, and to go a little farther, while we think that we go but this far, and keep within our bounds.

And the root of the error lyeth in *Atheism*,
Self-

Self-fishness, and *Carnality*. By the first, we neglect the *Honouring* of God, which should be our utmost aim, and to which all our *own Honour* should be purely referred, as a means: By the second, we *Idolize* our *selves*, and are sunk into, and centered in our *selves*, and seek that honour to our *selves*, which we should wholly refer to God alone. And by the third, we over-value *Man* and his esteem, and live upon the thoughts and breath of mortals, and seek the honour which is given by one to another more than the honour which is of God: Whereas we should make it our grand care and study, to be pleasing to our Maker, which is the highest honour, and lawful and necessary to be sought; and should be more indifferent as to the esteem and thoughts of man, as being no further regardable, than it conduceth to our divine and ultimate end.

And when *Pride* hath thus turned the eye of the soul, from God, to our *selves*, and to the *Creature*, it is a *working sin*, and will be always seeking to fetch in fuel for its self to feed on, and to find out ways to make our selves conspicuous and observed in the world: And to separate our selves into distinct societies, that the world may see we are above *Communion* with the colder duller sort of Christians, is one of the most notable means to this self-exalting end.

And many Christians that are more humble do yet so much mis-understand the Scripture principles of *Communion*, that they think they should corrupt the Church, and sin against God, if they stood not in a *separated state* from those of the colder sort. And this is caused much, by
taking

taking those Scriptures to speak of all cold and carnal Christians, which speak only of the Heathen and Infidel world. And this cometh to pass by the happiness of their *birth* and *breeding*: because they are born and bred where there are almost none, but professed Christians, and they see not the swarms of Heathens that worship idols and creatures, or of the Infidels who scorn and persecute the Christian name, therefore they live as if there were no such persons. They know that the world and the *Church* comprehend all mankind; and that the *Church* is gathered out of the *World*: And because they see the *Church*, but see not the *world*, out of which it is gathered; therefore they are looking for the *world* in the *Church*, and think that the commoner sort of Christians are the *World*; and the better and more zealous sort only are the *Church*, which therefore must be gathered out of the *World*: And so they gather the *Church* out of the *Church*, while they think that they gather it out of the *World*. And all this is because they know no more than they see, or at least are affected with no more; but live as if *England* or *Europe* were all the world. One years abode in *Asia* or *Africa* might cure this error.

In *2 Cor. 6. 12, 13, &c.* the Apostle forbiddeth the Christians to marry with Infidels; because *light hath no communion with darkness, nor righteousness with unrighteousness, nor Christ with Belial*. And therefore inferreth, that he that believeth hath no part with an Infidel, nor the Temple of God any agreement with Idols. And for this he citeth the words of the Prophet, Come

out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing. All these words which the Apostle so plainly speaketh only against marrying with Infidels and Idolaters, and having communion with them, either *intimately* or in their *sin*, are by abundance of ignorant Professors abused, as if they had commanded us to separate from the colder and common sort of Christians, and to come out of the Church whereof they are members. What profaning of Gods word is this? and how gross and palpable a contradicting of its plain expressions? It was a Church of such mixed Christians as our Churches do consist of, to which the Apostle wrote those words; And because he commandeth them to separate from intimacy with *Heathens* and *Infidels* (yet so as when they are once married to them, to continue in it); therefore these men say, that one part of the Church is called to come forth and separate from the rest.

And with the like abuse they apply the command [*Come out of Babylon*] to them that have no communion with *Babylon*; And when ignorance, uncharitableness, and passion, have taught them to call Christs Churches *Babylon*, they add sin to sin, the sin of separation to the sin of slander and reproach; and abuse the Text according to their false exposition of it.

DIRECT.

DIRECT. V.

understand rightly the true difference between the Mystical and the Visible Church, and the qualification of their Members; and do not confound them, as if it were the same persons only, that must be Members of both.

THE Mystical Church indeed hath none but true Saints. But the *Visible Church* containeth multitudes of *Hypocrites*; who profess themselves to be what they are not: They profess to believe in God, while they neglect him; and to be ruled by God, while they disobey him; and are ruled by their lusts: They profess to Love God and forsake the world, whilest they love the world, and God is not in all their thoughts: They profess to love the holy Scriptures, whilest they neglect them and love not the holiness of their precepts. They profess to believe in Jesus Christ, whilest their hearts neglect his grace and government. They profess to believe in the holy Spirit, and to hold the Communion of Saints in the Catholick Church; whilest they resist the Spirit, and love not Saints. All this sheweth that they are *Hypocrites*. But abundance of *Hypocrites* are in the *Visible Church*. Nay, God would have no *Hypocrites* cast out, but those who bewray their hypocrisy by impenitency in proved Heresie or gross sin.

We must not model the Church of Christ according

cording to our private fancies: We are not the Lords of it, nor are we fit or worthy to dispose of it! Look into the Scripture, and take it for the Rule, and see there of what manner of persons the Visible Church hath been constituted in all ages of the world till now. In the first Church in *Adams* family, a *Cain*, was the first born member, and so continued, till he was excommunicated for the murder of his brother. In a Church of eight persons who were saved out of all the world, the Father and Pastor was overtaken with gross drunkenness, and one of his sons was a cursed *Cham*. In a Church of six persons saved from the wickedness of *Sodom*, two of them (*Lot's* sons in law) perished in the flames among the unbelievers: a third was turned into a pillar of salt: the Father and Pastor was drunk two nights together, after the sight of such a terrible miracle, and after so strange a deliverance to himself: and committed incest twice in his drunkenness: The two that remained (his daughters) caused his drunkenness purposely and committed incest with him. In the Church in *Abrahams* family, there was an *Ishmael*: And in the Church in *Isaacs* family there was an *Esau*: and even *Rebeka* and *Jacob* guilty of deceitful equivocation: And *Abraham* and *Isaac* denied their wives to save themselves in their unbelief. In *Jacob's* family was a *Simeon* and *Levi*, who murdered multitudes under a pretense of Religion, and under the cover of false deceit: And almost all his sons moved with envy, sold their brother *Joseph* for a slave; and some were hardly kept from murdering him: And his daughter *Dinah* was de-
filed

filed by desiring to see the company and fashions of the world. In the Church of the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, after all the miracles which they had seen, and the mercies they had received, so great were their sins of unbelief and murmuring, and lust, and whoredomes, and idolatry, and disobedience, that but two of them that came out of *Egypt*, were permitted to enter the promised land: In the times of the Judges they so oft renewed their idolatry, besides all their other sins, that they spent a great part of all those ages in captivity for it. And when the villanies of *Gibeab* had imitated the *Sodomites*, and ravished a woman to death, the Tribe of the *Benjamites* defended it by a war, and that in three battels, till fourty thousand of the innocent *Israelites* were slain, and twenty five thousand of the *Benjamites*. Look through all the Books of *Samuel*, the *Kings*, and *Chronicles*, and the *Prophets*; from the sad story of the sons of *Eli* and of *Samuel*, to all the wicked Kings that followed, who kept up odious Idolatry (even *Solomon* himself) and scarce two or three of the best did put down the high places: And when *Hezekiah* was zealous to reform, the hearts of the subjects were not prepared, but derided or abused the Messengers whom he sent about, to call the people home to God: *Mannasseh's* wickedness is scarcely to be parallel'd: And when God sent his Prophets to call them to repentance, they mocked his Messengers, and despised and abused his Prophets, till the wrath of the Lord arose, and there was no remedy: *2 Chron. 36. 15, 16.* Read over the Prophets, and see there what a people this Church

of God was. The ten Tribes were drawn by *Jeroboam* to sin, by setting up Calves at *Dan* and *Beth-el*, and making Priests of the vilest of the people, and forsaking the Temple and the true worship of God, and the lawful Priests. And these lawful Priests at *Jerusalem*, were ravening Wolves, and greedy Dogs, and careless and cruel Shepherds: The false Prophets who deceived the people were most accepted: The people are accused of cruelty, oppression, whoredom, drunkenness, Idolatry, and hatred of those that would reform them. They were grievous persecutors: *Which of the Prophets did not your fathers kill and persecute?* saith Christ, *Matth. 23.* Yet this was the Church of God, and many think his only visible Church: And all these twelve Tribes were not so big as *England*, and were to the bigness of all the Earth, no more than one tree to a large Wood or Forrest.

But doubtless the Gospel Church was both more large and pure. Let us therefore take a view of it: And I beseech you remember, that what I say is not to make sin less odious, nor the Church or Godly less esteemed: but to shew you the frame of the visible Church in all Generations, and how it differeth from the invisible; lest you should take on you to be wiser than God, and to build his house after a better rule than his Gospel, and the primitive pattern, and marr all by being wise in your own conceits, and by being righteous overmuch. *Eccles. 7.* And I pray you forget not, that the *Primitive Church* was the most pure, and the pattern of those following; and had inspired Apostles to be its Guides, and inspired

Prophets to be its *Helpers*, and abundance of *Miracles* and extraordinary gifts, to *gather* and *edifie* it; to silence its enemies, and to terrifie and restrain offenders, and to bring up the Church to the highest degree of holiness that could be well expected. And withall, the Members were not driven in by force by Magistrates, nor allured by any worldly commodities, but were a few *Volunteers*, who in a time of persecution, professed Christ, to their hazard or suffering in the world. Yet see what they were.

The faultiness of the Teachers.

The Apostles before the death of Christ, though they had so long heard his doctrine, and seen his miracles, understood not that he must die for our sins, and be buried, and rise again, and ascend into Heaven, and there intercede for us, and rule the Church. *Joh. 12. 16. and 10. 6. Luk. 18. 34. and 9. 45. and 24. 43, 44, 45.* Peter so much perswaded Christ from that suffering by which the world was to be redeemed, that Christ speaketh to him as he did to the Devil. *Matth. 4. Get thee behind me Satan; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Matth. 16. 22, 23.* James and his beloved disciple John (called sons of thunder, perhaps for this or such like zeal) would have called for fire from heaven to destroy the unbelieving adversaries of the Gospel, and knew not of what spirit they were. Judas was one that was sent out to preach the Gospel by Christ himself, (who knew his heart.) Many that preached and prophesied and cast out Devils in his name, were workers of iniquity, whom he never knew with