

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

special approbation. *Matth. 7. 22, 23.* When he came to his sufferings, they all slept when they should have watched and prayed with him one hour in his agony; and this after his admonition. When they should have confessed him in suffering they all *forsook him and fled, Matth. 26. 56.* And Peter that seemed to stick closer to him, did with forswearing thrice deny him, after he had promised to die with him, and not to forsake him, though all forsook him: And when he was dead they said, *Luk. 24. We trusted this was he that should have delivered Israel*, as if their faith had been extinct. And when he rose and appeared to them they hardly believed what they saw: and Thomas, one of them, resolved that he would not believe, unless he might put his fingers into his side. And when they spake with him before his *Ascension*, they dreamed still of an earthly grandure, and askt him, *Whether now he would restore the Kingdome unto Israel? Act. 1.* And they understood not the descent of the Holy Ghost.

And when the Holy Ghost was come upon them, one of their first Deacons *Nicholas* was the original of a Sect whose doctrine Christ did hate, *Paul* and *Barnabas* contended even to parting. Peter dissembled by a sinful separation, walking not uprightly, and drew away *Barnabas* into the dissimulation: *Gal. 2. Phil. 1. 15, 16.* [Some preach Christ even of envy, and strife, and some of good will. The one preach, Christ of contentions not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds.] Many were made like the heads of Sects, and some were of *Paul*, and some of *Apollo's*, and some of *Cephas* (as the Papists be now.) And some
built

built hay and stubble, which must be consumed.

1 Cor. 3. 12, Of Timothy and the rest Paul saith.

[*I have no man like minded; for all seek their own, and not the things which are Jesus Christs.* **3 Joh. 9.**

10. Diotrephes who loveth to have the preeminence among them receiveth us not, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the Brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the Church.]

As the Apostles themselves before Christs death, were striving which of them should be the greatest; so this vice still followed many of the Pastors; so that Peter is fain to exhort them, not to Lord it over Gods heritage, nor to rule them by constraint, but willingly. **1 Pet. 5.** And what abundance of Sect-masters did arise from among the Ministers of the Gospel in the Apostles own times? Insomuch as Paul forewarneth the famous Church of Ephesus, not only that grievous Wolves (that is, Hereticks) should enter, that spared not the flocks, but also that, of their own selves men should arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. **Act. 20. 30.** And in the Apostles dayes, while one had a Prophecie and another a Psalm, &c. they brought confusion into the Church-worship, even by abuse of extraordinary gifts: And they so abused the Love-feasts at the Lords Supper, that Paul was fain to perswade them rather to eat at home. **1 Cor. 14.** and **1 Cor. 11.** so much of the true state of the Primitive Teachers and Pastors of the Church.

The faults of the Church of Rome.

What Heretical Judaizers were among them, is intimated in **c 1. & 3.** to the Romans. And how

little they understood the doctrine of Justification is intimated in cap. 3, & 4, & 5, & 6, & 7, & 8. What dissentions there were about meats, and drinks, and days, the weak judging the strong, and the strong despising the weak, appeareth, cap. 14, & 15. And some caused divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, serving not the Lord Jesus but their own bellies, and by good words and fair speeches deceiving the hearts of the simple, Rom. 16. 16, 17.

The faults of the Church of Corinth.

1 Cor. 1. 11, 12. [There are contentions among you — Everyone of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollo's, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Mark the extent of the sin (every one of you) that is, very many among you, 1 Cor. 3. 13. I could not speak to you as spiritual, but as carnal — For ye are yet carnal — v. 12. If any build on this foundation, wood, hay, stubble, — v. 15. he shall suffer loss. chap. 4. 18. 21. Some are puffed up — Shall I come to you with a rod or in love? — chap. 6. 5, 6, 7, 8. I speak to your shame, Is there not a wise man among you? Because yee go to Law one with another (before Heathens,) Nay you do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? — chap. 11. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. I praise you not that you come together, not for the better but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together in the Church. I hear that that there be divisions among you — For there must be also Heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you — When you come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lords Supper; For in eating every one taketh before other, his

his own supper, and one is hungry, and another is drunken. Vers. 23. 30. He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lords body — For this cause many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. Chap. 14. Reproveth their abuse of unknown tongues, and their disorder in Gods public worship — Chap. 15. 12, 13, 14, 15. [If Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection. But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen; And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is vain; yea and we are found false witnesses of God — v. 17. and ye are yet in your sins. 2 Cor. 12. 20, 21. I fear lest when I come, I shall not finde you such as I would, and that I shall be found to you such as ye would not. Lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, back-bitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults; and lest my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many that have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.] Besides that Paul and his Ministry was slandered and much slighted among them, as by his large and vehement apologies and expostulations doth appear; These were the faults of the Church of the Corinthians.

The corruptions of the Churches of Galatia.

Gal. 1. 6, 7, 8, 9. I marvel that you are so soon removed, from him that called you, to the grace of Christ, to another Gospel; which is not another; but there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ: But though we or an Angel from
heaven,

heaven, preach any other Gospel to you, than that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed— Chap. 3. 1, 2, 3. O foolish Galathians! Who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth? before whose eyes — Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain — chap. 4. 9. How turn ye again to weak and beggarly elements, whereto ye desire again to be in bondage. vers. 10. 11. Ye observe dayes, and moneths, and times, and years; I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed on you labour in vain — v. 16. Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? Tell me, ye that desire to be under the Law — v. 29. As then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now (The Legalists persecuting the Apostles) Chap. 5. 2. Behold I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. V. 3, 4. For I testifie again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole Law: Christ is become of no effect to you. Who ever of you are justified by the Law, ye are fallen from grace: v. 9. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. 12. I would they were even cut off which trouble you. Chap. 6. 12. As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised.

The corruptions of the Church of Colosse.

Col. 2. 20, 21, 22, 23. If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances? Touch not, tast not, handle not (which all are to perish with the using) after the Commandements and Doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship.

The

The corruptions of the Church of Ephesus.

Rev. 2. 4, 5. *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love — Remember from whence thou art fallen, and do thy first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick. Act. 20. 30. Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, &c. as aforesaid.*

The corruptions of the Church of Pergamus.

Rev. 2. 14, 15, 16. *I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel; to eat things sacrificed to Idols; and to commit fornication: so hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate — Repent, or else I will —*

The faults of the Church of Thyatira.

Rev. 2. 20, 21, 22, *I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, which calleth her self a Prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to Idols.*

The faults of the Church of Sardis.

Rev. 3. 1. *Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead — I have not found thy works perfect before God. 4. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments.*

The faults of the Church of Laodicea.

Rev. 3. 15, 16, 17. *Thou art neither cold nor hot — I will spue thee out of my mouth — and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.*

I have been thus large in citing the words of the Text, to make it plain to you, of what kind of

of Members the Visible Churches were then made up : And to affect their hearts with the sense of their partiality, who can plead for many things as duties, and plead against many things as sin, without one plain word of Scripture on their side ; and yet can read all these without either sense or notice.

Yet mark, I pray you, that I am far from saying that God *alloweth* any of these sins, or that any should make light of them : For all must abhor them : Nor do I say, that none of the *Churches ought* to have excommunicated any of these offenders for these sins. Some of them I doubt not, should have been cast out. But these are the uses which I desire you to make of all these Texts.

First, before you judge any Church to be *no Church*, be able to prove it hath worse crimes to nullifie it than any of these had. For none of these were for these faults pronounced *no Churches of Jesus Christ*.

Secondly, observe that no one Member, is in all these Scriptures, or any other, commanded to *come out and separate* from any one of all these Churches, as if their communion in worship were unlawful. And therefore before you *separate* from any as judging communion with them unlawful, be sure that you bring greater reasons for it, than any of these recited were.

DIRECT.

•DIRECT. VI.

Understand well the different conditions and terms of Communion with the Church as invisible and as visible; and the different priviledges of the Members; that so you may not presume to impose any conditions which God hath not imposed; nor yet to grudge at the reception of those that are not sanctified and sincere.

ALL Christians are agreed that it belongeth to God only to make the conditions of Church-communion; and therefore it belongeth not to us to invent them, nor to our wit to censure what God hath done, but to search the Scripture till we find it out, and then obey it. This is the great controversie which hath troubled the Church: When men know not who should be Members of the Church and who not, and when they have no certain rule or character to know whom they must receive, it is no wonder if confusion and contention be the complexion and practice of such Churches. And here the Pastors have torn the Church, by running into contrary extreams. Some have thought that the Visible Church must be constituted only of such persons, as satisfie the Pastors and the people of the truth of their sanctification, by some special account of their conversion or the work of grace upon their hearts, in a distincter manner than

than the ancient Church required of the baptized : Wherein being agreed of no certain terms, to know anothers sanctification by, their Churches are diversified according to the measure of the strictness or largeness, censoriousness or charity of the Pastors & the people; while one thinks that person to have true grace, whom another thinks to have none. And so they that will be *most uncharitable*, do pretend to the reputation of being the *most pure*; because they are *most strict*. And multitudes are shut out whom Christ would have to be received, & his *children* are numbred with the *dogs*.

On the other side there is one or two of late among us, who think that the Church is but *Christs School*, where he *teacheth the way* to true Regeneration; and not a *Society of professed Regenerate ones or Saints*: And that all who own Christ as the *Teacher* of the Church, and submit to the *Government of the Pastors*, and are willing to learn how to be regenerate, should be baptized, though they profess not any *special saving faith or repentance*. And their reasons are, because first, else all that doubt of their sincerity must *lie*, or be kept out. Secondly, because that in the Church of the Jews, the multitude were such as were *openly ungodly*. And some of the Papists talk also at this rate, though indeed they are themselves yet utterly unresolved in this point.

What Church soever is constituted according to either of these *two opinions*, will not be constituted according to the mind of Christ: But yet with this difference: The first Opinion introduceth Church-tyranny, and *injustice*, and is founded in the want of *Christian charity*, and know-
ledge

ledge, and tendeth to endless separations and confusions. But the second opinion inferreth all these greater mischiefs.

First, it confoundeth the *Catechumens* with the *Christians*, and maketh all *Christians* who are but willing to learn to be *Christians*. Secondly, it maketh the Christian Church to consist of such as are no *Christians*: As that person certainly is not, who consenteth not that Christ be his Teacher, Priest and King: For to such a one, he is no *Christ*; seeing these are the essential parts of his *Mediatory* office. And the new device of distinguishing *Christ's* *Apostolike* and *Mediatory* offices, & so the Church *congregate* and the Church *regenerate* accordingly, will not seem to defend this conceit. For as Christ is not divided, so his office for which he is called *Christ* is but *One*, which entirely is called the office of a *Saviour*, or *Redeemer*, or *Mediator*, which are all one: And the essential parts of it are, first his *Priestly*, second *Teaching* and *Ruling* offices or works: And this which is called his *Apostleship*, is but the same which is called his *Teaching* or *Prophetical* Office, and is a part of his *Mediatory* or *Saving* Office. And he is no *Christian*, nor is that any *Congregated Christian Church*, which professeth not to take Christ for his *Mediator*, his *Priest* and *King*, as well as for an *Apostle* a *Prophet* or *Teacher*. Thirdly, they therefore who hold the aforesaid doctrine, do introduce a new sort of Christianity. Fourthly, and a new sort of *Baptism*, which the Church of Christ never knew to this day. And therefore they do ingenuously profess their dissent from our form or words in *Baptism*, because we put the baptized to renounce the

the flesh the world and the devil, and to use such covenanting words, as must signifie special grace. But through the great mercy of God, Baptism is still the same thing in all the Christian Churches in the world, the Reformed, the *Roman*, the *Greek*, the *Armenian*, yea and the *Ethiopian* too, for all their seeming reiteration of it. And Baptism among them all, is the same now as it hath been in all Generations, from Christs institution of it. So that we fully maintain as well as the *Romans*, that Christianity hath by *this sacred Tradition* been safely delivered down to us to this day. What a Christian is, and what Christianity is, may be most certainly known, by this which is commonly called our *Christening*; In which the profession and covenant which maketh men Christians is so expresse and unchanged from age to age. Therefore these men who would have our Baptism changed, do speak plainly, but impudently; as if they were raised in the end of the world, to reform the Baptism and Christianity of all ages, and were not only wiser than the universal Church from Christ till now, but also at last must make the Church another thing. I intreat the Reader who would know the judgement of all antiquity about Baptism, as supposing saving grace, to read those numerous citations of Mr. *Gataker* in the Margin of his book against *Davenant*, of Baptism. Fifthly, and by this new doctrine they destroy all that *special Love* which Church-members or visible Christians as such, should bear to one another. For if no *faith* or *consent* must necessarily be professed at Baptism, but that which is *common* to the *ungodly* and

and children of the devil, then all Church-members as only such, must be taken to be but ungodly, and no man must love a Church-member as such, with a special love, as a visible Saint; but only as one of the hopefuller sort of the ungodly. Sixthly, and hence it will follow, that either none must make any profession of saving Faith and Repentance (and so all appearance of holiness must be driven out of the world) or else the Church must be constituted of two sorts of professions and professours, *tota specie* distinct from one another; yea more distinct than Infidels are from their new sort of Christians. And consequently it must needs be indeed two Churches and not one, viz. One Church of those who take Christ for their Teacher only, and another of those that take him entirely as Christ. Seventhly, and by this rule the Socinians and Mahometans, who confess Christ to be a great Teacher, but deny him to be the Priest and sacrifice for sin, may be baptized, and taken for Christians. These and many more absurdities follow upon this new conceit. But I must desire the Reader who would see more of it, to peruse my Disputations about *Right to Sacraments*, where it is handled at large.

As to their Objections I answer. First, no man is called to lie, nor yet are they fearful to be shut out: For as no man is perfectly acquainted with his own heart, so no man is to profess a perfect knowledge of it: But if a man speak as he thinketh upon faithful endeavours to avoid self-deceit, no more can be expected of him. He that can say [Though I am not certain that there is no secret fraud in my heart, yet as far as I can

discern it, I am willing to be a Christian upon the terms of Gods Covenant, and to take Christ for my Teacher, Priest and King] must offer himself, and must be received into the Church.

Secondly, and as to the Jews case, I have proved in the fore-mentioned Disputations, First, that it was no less than a profession of saving faith, which was made in the Covenant of Circumcision. Secondly, that men were then to be put to death, for almost all those enormous crimes which we now excommunicate men for: And the dead are not members of the Church on earth. Thirdly, that all that in *matter of fact* was found among them contrary to this, was contrary to Gods Law: And to argue against the Law from mans breach of the Law, a *facto contra jus*, is very bad arguing. Fourthly, that it is farre surer and clearer reasoning about the Evangelical state and order of the Church, from the Gospel, than from the Law of Moses, much more than from the violations of that law. Fifthly, but yet all the corruptions of the Churches, as I have cited and proved them before, do shew us the difference between the Church as *visibly Congregate*, and as *Regenerate*; and shew us that the presence of scandalous sinners, will not warrant us to separate or to unchurch the Church. And this may suffice against that error.

The true conditions of admittance into the Church and state of Christianity are these.

First, *A true belief in God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and a Devoting of our selves sincerely to Him, as our reconciled Father, our Saviour, and our Sanctifier, in a resolved Covenant, or Consent, re-*
nouncing

nouncing the Devil, the world, and the flesh, (expressly or impliedly) is the whole and the only condition of our Communion with the Church mystical or the living body of Christ (which is called The Church, in the first and most famous sense.)

Obj. If this must be wrought in us before we are in the mystical Church, then a state of holiness may be found in such, as are yet out of the body of Christ in the world: But if this be after our entrance into the Church, than less may sufficiently qualifie us for admittance.

Ans. It is neither before nor after: but it is our change and entrance it self. To be a member of the Church mystical, and to be a Christian is all one: And this is Christianity. If I should say that the making a man a Rational free agent, is the making him a member of the Rational world; would you think that this must be either antecedent or consequent to his change, which is nothing else but the change it self?

Secondly, That which maketh a man a member of the Universal Church as Visible, is his Baptism. Which is, his profession of the same true Faith aforesaid; and consent to the Covenant; or his visible dedication to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as his Reconciled Father, his Saviour and Sanctifier, by a Vow and Covenant in Baptism.

Where note that Baptism hath two parts: The Covenant there made and openly declared between God and Man: And the Sacramental, obsigning and investing sign; which is the washing in water. The Profession it self, or open covenanting with God, is the thing statedly necessary to the being of Vi-

visible Christianity : And the *washing with water*, is necessary as a duty where it may be had, and as a means to the orderly and regular entrance; by which the Church is commonly to judge who are its admitted members and who not. As *inward consent* and *outward profession of consent*, and *publike solemnization*, are the necessities to a state of marriage; the first being as the *soul*, the second as the *body*, and the third as the *wedding garments*; so is it in this case. So that in short, if you take *Baptism* aright for the *Covenant* and the *Sign*, there is no other entrance into the *Visible Church*, nor any other condition necessary to a title to its communion. But if you take *Baptism* improperly, for the *washing* alone, there is no title to such *washing* necessary but *Professed faith* and *Covenanting*. So that if you require more, or invent and impose any further conditions, and deny *baptized professors of Christianity* to be *visible members* of the Church, you are superstitious devisers of a way of your own, and makers of *will-worship*, and not obedient submitters to the way of God.

Profession then of *Belief* and *consent to the Covenant*, is our *title-condition* to communion with the *Universal Visible Church*. This profession must be solemn, and solemnized under the hand of a *Minister of Christ*, who hath the *Keyes* of the Church, or *Kingdom of heaven*; that it may be satisfactory to the Church, and valid at its barre. Those that are baptized at age, have present Right to communion with the adult. Those that are baptized in *Infancy* (upon good right) are admitted to such *Infant-communication* as they are capable of. And at years of discretion, they themselves must

must own the Covenant, which their Parents entered them into. The more solemnly this is done (as it was in baptism) the better it is: But if it be done but by a professing themselves to be Christians, and attending Christs ordinances with his Church, it is valid; unless they forfeit the credit of their profession, by proved Heresies or crimes in which they live impenitently.

But then it must be here observed, what a *Profession of Christianity* is, which intitleth to Baptism and Church-communion. And *objectively*, it must be the *whole Baptismal Covenant* that must be professed: No less is to be taken as a *profession of Christianity*: And as to the *Act*, it must be first, A *signification* of the mind, by word or writing, or some intelligible sign. Secondly, it must seem to be understood: For no man consenteth to that which he *understandeth not*. But herein any intelligible sign of a *tollerable understanding* must be accepted, though we find that the persons conceptions are raw and not so distinct and clear as they ought, nor the expressions ready, orderly or compt. Thirdly, it must seem to be *serious*: For that which is apparently dissembled or ludicrous is null: Fourthly, It must be *de presenti*, a *present giving up* our selves to Christ, and not *only* a promise *de futuro*, that we will hereafter take him for our *Saviour* and *Lord*, and not at present. Fifthly, it must seem to be *voluntary*, and not constrained: for then it is not serious. Sixthly, it must seem to be *deliberate*, and *resolute*, and *settled*, and not only the effect of a mutable passion. This goeth to make it a real *Profession* in the common sense of all mankind.

Obj. But how few among us do so much as seem! be understanding, serious, and resolved in covenanting with Christ?

Ans. In the Degree of these we all fall short of that which is our duty: But if you accuse any of the want of so much as is necessary to an acceptable Profession; First, you must be sure that you speak not by uncharitable surmise and hearsay, but upon certain proof or knowledge. Secondly, and that therefore you speak it not at a venture of whole Parishes or families, but only of those persons by name, whom you know to be guilty. Thirdly, and that you remember that it is the Pastors office to judge, and that you expect not that every one must give an account of their knowledge to you: And if there be a mis-judging, it is the fault of the Pastor, and not yours (of which more anon.) Fourthly, that persons Baptized are already admitted into the Church, and therefore if they make profession of Christianity, they must not be put to bring any other proof of their title; but it lies on you to disprove it, if you will have it questioned. And to reject them from communion without a proved accusation, is Tyranny and Lording it over the Church of God. These are Gods terms of Church-communion; And if you will needs have stricter, you must have none of his making but your own.

Obj. But all visible Christians and Churches, are visible Saints and Regenerate; and so are not ours.

Ans. To be a visible Saint, is to profess to be a Saint: And whosoever doth profess the Baptismal Covenant professeth to be a Saint. Conversion, Regeneration Faith and Repentance, are all contain-

contained, into taking God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for our Father, Saviour, and Sanctifier.

Obj. But you may teach a Parrot to speak those words.

Ans^r. Its true: And perhaps to speak any words which you use your selves: But if you will thence conclude that words must not be taken as a Profession, you grossly err, or abusively wrangle; or if you infer thence that your neighbour understandeth himself no more than a Parrot doth, you must prove what you say to the Pastor of the Church: For God hath not allowed him to excommunicate baptized persons, because you say that they are ignorant. And if they are willing to learn it is fitter to teach them than to excommunicate them.

And here I must lament it, that I have met with many censorious Professors, who would not communicate with the Parish Churches, because the people are ignorant, who, when I have examined themselves, have proved ignorant of the very substance of Christianity, so that I have been much in doubt whether I ought to admit them to the Lords Table or not. They knew not whether Christ was Eternal, or whether he was God when he was on earth, or whether he be Man now he is in heaven; nor what Faith is, or what Justification or Sanctification is, nor what the Covenant of grace is; nor what Baptism or the Lords Supper are; nor could prove the Scripture to be the word of God, or prove mans soul to be immortal; but gave false or impertinent answers about all these: And yet could not joyn with the ignorant Churches.

And next I desire you here to observe the different Priviledges, as well as the different Conditions,

36 *Different priviledges of Members.*

ditions, of *Visible* and *Invisible* Churchmembership.

The members of the Church mystical or Regenerate, have the pardon of all sin, and acceptance with God, and communion with him and with his Church in the spirit, and are the adopted children of God, and heirs of everlasting life, and shall live in heaven with Christ for ever.

The meer *Visible* Members of the Church, that are not regenerate by the *spirit* as well as sacramentally by *water*, have only an *outward Communion* with the Saints, and have only the *Bread and Wine* in the Sacrament, and only a *name to live* when they are dead. And are these such great matters that we should envy them to poor sinners that must have no more? Have we the *Kernel*, and do we envy them the *Shell*? Have we the *Spirit*, and do we envy them the *flesh*, or *outward signes* alone?

Yea consider further, that it is more for the sake of the truly faithful, than for their own, that all Hypocrites have their station and priviledges in the Church: God maketh use of their *Gifts* and *Profession* for his elect; to many great services of the Church: And is it not then a foolish ingratitude in us, to murmur at their presence?

Understand well the conditions and Reasons of this visible state of membership, and how far it is below the state of the Regenerate, and it will turn your separating murmuring into a thankful acknowledgment of the wisdom of God.

DIRECT. VII.

Get right and deep apprehensions of the Necessity and Reasons of Christian Unity and Concord: and of the sin and misery of Divisions and Discord.

WHen we have but slight apprehensions of a duty we easily neglect it, and scarce reprove our selves for it, or repent of our omission. And when we have but slight apprehensions of the evil of any sin, a little temptation draweth us to it; & we are hardly brought to thorough repentance for it: And there is in many Christians, a strange inequality and partiality in their apprehensions of good and evil. Some duties they dare not omit, and they judge all ungodly who omit them: when some others as great are past by, as if they were no part of religion. And some sins they fear with very great tenderness, when we can scarce make their consciences take any notice, of others as great.

And usually they let out all their zeal on one side only, while they over-look the other. The Papist seemeth so sensible of the good of *Unity*, and the evil of *Divisions*, that he thinketh usurpation of an Universal Church-Monarchy, and Tyranny and horrid blood-shed, to be not only lawful, but necessary for the prevention and the cure. But to make him as sensible of the wickedness of these *unlawful means*, and of the good of a *serious spiritual Religiousness*, and of *Christian*

Love

Love and tenderness and forbearance, here is the great difficulty.

And on the other side, many are very sensible of the need of spirituality and seriousness in Religion, and of the evil of hypocritical formality and imagery, and of usurpation of the prerogatives of Christ, and of the plague of persecuting Pride and cruelty, who yet have little sense at all, of the good of Unity, and of the mischiefs of divisions in the Church. Yea many are so careful to be found exact in their obedience to God, that they build very much for *duties* and against *sins*, upon dark and very far-fetcht consequences, and upon a few obscure and doubtful passages in Scripture, when there is no express words, or clear text at all, to bear them out: And doubtless the darkest intimations of the will of God, must not be disregarded. But on the other side, we cannot bring them to lay to heart, some duties and sins, which are over and over, an hundred times, and that with vehemency, express and urged in the plainest words.

And because all Christians pretend to submit to the word of God, I will try whether it be not thus with you in the present case, and will cite many plain expressions of Scripture, for Christian *Unity* and *Concord*, that you may either better perceive your duty, or plainly shew your great partiality.

Zech. 14. 9. In that day there shall be One Lord and his name One. Ezek. 34. 23. And I will set up One Shepherd over them. Ezek. 37. 22. I will make them One Nation — and One King shall be King to them all, and they shall be no more two Nations, nor divided

divided into two Kingdomes any more. 24. And David my servant shall be King over them, and they shall have One shepherd. Jer. 32. 39. I will give them one heart and one way. So Ezek. 11. 19. Joh. 21, 22. That they all maybe One; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be One in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me; and hast loved them as thou hast loved me. Joh. 11. 52. That he should gather together in One, the children of God that are scattered abroad. Act. 1. 14. These all continued with one accord, in prayer and supplication. And chap. 2. 1. They were all with one accord in one place. Act. 4. 24, 32. They lift up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God— And the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart, and of one soul. Act. 5. 12. They were all with one accord in Solomons Porch. Act. 15. 25. It seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord—2 Cor. 11. 2. I have espoused you to one husband— Eph. 4. 1, &c. I the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that ye walk worthy of your vocation where-with ye are called with all lowliness and meekness; with long-suffering forbearing one another in love: endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is One body, and One Spirit, Even as ye are called in One hope of your calling. One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.— v. 12, 13. For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of

of the body of Christ. Till we all come in the Unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lye in wait to deceive: But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things who is the Head, Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joynt supplyeth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, to the edifying of it self in love.

I Cor. 12. 3, 12, 13. No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost — As the Body is One, and hath many Members, and all the members of that One body, being many are One body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit, we are all baptized into One body. — v. 22, 23. Nay much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble are necessary: And those members of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need; but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part that lacked: that there should be no Schisme in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all suffer with it, and if one be honoured, all rejoyce — v. 15. If the foot say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body — (By all this you may see, that even the lowest, dishonoured, weak and uncomely members, must not be denied to be

be of the Church or body of Christ.)

1 Cor. 13. 4, 5. Charity suffereth long, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil — The greatest is charity, v. 13.

1 Cor. 1. 10. Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 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 judgement. v. 12, 13. Every one saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollo — Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul. Ch. 3. 15. If any mans work be burnt, he shall suffer loss; yet he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. — Ch. 3. 3, 4. For ye are yet carnal: For whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? while one saith, I am of Paul, &c.

Rom. 14. 1. Him that is weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtful disputations. v. 3. Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not: and let not him which eateth not judge him which eateth: for God hath received him: who art thou that judgest another mans servant? to his own Master he standeth or falleth. One man esteemeth one day above another: Another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully perswaded in his own mind: He that regardeth a day, regardeth it to the Lord! v. 10. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ. Let us not therefore judge one another any more. v. 13, 14. I know and am perswaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of it self; but to him that esteemeth any thing unclean, to him it is unclean. v. 17. For the Kingdom of God is

not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost : For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men : Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace. **v. 22.** Hast thou faith ? Have it to thy self before God. **Ch. 15. 1, 2.** We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves. Let us every one please his neighbour for his good, to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself — **v. 5. 6.** Now the God of patience and consolation, grant you to be like minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus : that ye may with **ONE MIND**, and **ONE MOUTH** glorifie God. — wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ received us, to the glory of God.

Ch. 16. 17, 18. Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them. For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Act. 20. 30. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away Disciples after them.

Joh. 13. 35. By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have love one to another.

1 Cor. 11. 17, 18. I hear there are divisions among you : For there must be also heresias among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest.

Math. 13. 29, 30. Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them : Let both grow together till the harvest — **41.** The Angels shall gather out of his Kingdom, all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into
a fire

a furnace of fire — Then shall the righteous shine forth as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father.

V. 47. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a net, cast into the Sea; which gathered of every kind: which when it was full, they drew to the shore; and sat down and gathered the good into Vessels, and the bad they cast away: so shall it be at the end of the world.

Math. 22. 9, 10. Go into the high ways, and as many as ye find, bid to the marriage (or as Luk. 14. Compel them to come in) so those servants went unto the high ways, and gathered all as many as they found both bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests. And the King saw there a man that had not on a wedding garment, and said, Friend, How camest thou in hither, &c. (Mark, thus he will condemn wicked hypocrites themselves, but blameth not the Ministers that compelled them, or that let them in.) Gal. 6. 1. If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness: Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one anothers burdens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ, Let every man prove his own work.

Note, that Paul purified himself as having a Vow: He circumcised Timothy; He became a Jew to the Jews, and all things to all men, that he might win some.

Phil. 1. 15, 16. Some preach Christ of envy, &c. as aforecited.

Phil. 2. 1, 2, 3. If there be any consolation in Christ, — fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory;

64 Scriptures against a separating disposition.

glory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves — 14. Do all things without murmurings and disputings —

Ch. 3. 15, 16. Let as many as are perfect be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. But wherunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule; let us mind the same things.

1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. We beseech you brethren, to know them that labour among you and are over you in the Lord, &c. and be at peace among your selves.

Tit. 3. 10. A man that is an heretick, after the first and second admonition avoid. knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

Jam. 3. 1, 2, 13, &c. My brethren be not many Masters, knowing that ye shall receive the greater condemnation, For in many things we offend all — who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you, Let him shew out of a good conversation, his works with meekness of wisdom: But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth: This wisdom descendeth not from above; but is earthly, sensual, devilish: For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. The wisdom from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easie to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits; without partiality, without hypocrisy: and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Mat. 12. 25. Jesus said, every Kingdom divided against it self, is brought to desolation: and every City or house divided against it self, shall not stand.

I have cited so many Texts against division
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and for the Unity of the Church and concord of Christians, as one would think by the very hearing of them, without expositions or argumentation, should utterly mortifie all inclination to divisions and hard censures, in all true believers: yea so many Texts as I am perswaded many that most need them, will think it tedious to read them over. And yet I have cause to fear lest many such will feel as little of the *sense* and *authority* of them, as if there were no such words in the Scripture, and none of this had been set before them.

Out of all these you may gather, these reasons of the necessity of Unity, and of the evil of schism or division.

First, It is *One God, One Head, One Saviour,* and *One Holy Spirit*, into whose name we are all baptized. Secondly, It is *One Covenant* which all in Baptism make with this *One God*. Thirdly, It is *One Spirit* by which we are all *regenerated*, and *One new Nature* which is in all the truly sanctified. Fourthly, It is *One Gospel* or holy word of God, which is to us all, the seed of our new birth, the rule of our faith and lives; and the foundation of our *hope*, and must be our daily meditation and delight, and the food on which the children of Gods family must all live. Fifthly, It is *One Body* of Christ, whereof we are all members. As Christ is not divided, so his Body, that is his Church, both as *Mystical*, and as *Visible*, is but *One*; however the Members and their *Gifts* and degrees of grace are many. Sixthly, It is *One way* of Faith and Holiness which all must walk in. Seventhly, And it is *One end* and happiness

pineness which we all expect; and in *One Heaven* that we must meet and live for ever (so many as are sincere in the faith which we profess): And in Heaven we shall have one Mind and Heart, and One employment in the Love and praise of our Creator and Redeemer, and one felicitating fruition of his Glory for evermore. Therefore he that seeth not the necessity of *Unity*, knoweth not the *Nature* of the *Church*, or *Faith*, or true *Religion*.

The *Honours* and *Benefits* of *Unity*, and the *shame* and *mischiefs* of *Divisions*, may appear to him, that further considereth the instances which follow.

First, Our *Union* with the *Church*, is a sign of our proportionable *union* with Christ: And our *separation* from the *Church*, doth signify that we are separated from Christ. He that is *United* but to the *Visible Church*, is but *visibly* (by Baptism and Profession) united to Christ: such a union is spoken of in *Joh. 15.2.* Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. He that is united to the *mystical Church*, of the Regenerate and spiritual, is united to Christ by *faith* and by the *spirit*: For his union to Christ is at the same instant of time, with his union with the *Church*: but in order of nature goeth before it. He that is divided from this *mystical Church*, cannot possibly (at that time) be a Member of Christ in the spiritual sense: As the member which is cut off from the *body*, is also separated from the *Head*. And he that himself forsaketh the *Visible Church* as such, forsaketh the *mystical Church* and Christ himself. For to forsake the *Visible Church*

as such, is to cease to be a *Professor* of Christianity. One may be a *Member* of the *Visible Church*, and not of the *spiritual*; but you cannot be a *Member* of the *spiritual Church*, if you forsake and refuse the *visible Church* as such. For though a man may be *regenerate by the Spirit*, before he make an *open profession* or be baptized (and without baptism in some few cases) yet so he cannot be, if he refuse to be a *Professor*. Its possible indeed to be a member of the *Universal Church*, both as *Mystical*, and as *Visible*; as *spiritual* and as *professing*; while we have not opportunity to joyn with any one particular Church, or to separate from some particular Church, without separating from the *Universal*: But to separate from the *Universal Church*, is to separate from *Christ*.

But then you must understand, that the *Universal Visible Church* is nothing else, but all *professing Christians in the world*, as *visibly subjected to Christ as their Head*: And that there is no such thing in being, as the *Papists* call the *Catholick* = or *Universal Church*; that is, the *universality of Christians subjected to one Vicar of Christ as their Head*, either *Constitutive* or *Governing*. Such a pretended Head is an *Usurper* and no true authorized *Vicar of Christ*; And therefore such a *Church as such*, is nothing but a company of seduced *Christians*, following such a traiterous *Usurper*. And to separate from the *Pope*, is not to separate from *Christ* or from his *Church*.

Secondly, Consider also, that *Union* is not only an *Accident* of the *Church*, but is part of its very essence, without which it can be no *Church*,