

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*,

and without which we can be *no members* of it. It is no Kingdome, no City, no family, and so no Church, which doth not consist of *United* members: As it is no house which consisteth not of united parts. And he is no Member which is not *united* to the *whole*. It is the great course of mens boldness in dividing ways, that they take *union* to be but some *laudable accident*, while it may be had; which yet in some cases we may be without: and think that *separations* are *tollerable* faults, even when they are forced to confess them faults: But they do not consider that *Unity* is necessary to the *being* of the *Church*, and to the *being* of our own *Christianity*. Read *1 Cor. 12. Ephes. 4.*

Thirdly, Remember also that our *Union* is necessary to our *Communion*, with *Christ* and with *his Church*: and to all the blessings and benefits of such communion. *Joh. 15. 4. Abide in me, and I in you: As the branch cannot bear fruit of it self, except it abide in the Vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me: for without me, ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. And Col. 2. 19. From the Head all the body by joynts and bonds having nourishment ministred and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. The member that is cut off from the body, hath no life or nourishment from the head or from the body, but is dead: He that is out of the Church is without the Teaching, the holy worship, the prayers, and the discipline of the Church, and is out of the*
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way where the spirit doth come ; and out of the Society which Christ is specially related to : For he is the Saviour of his body ; And if we leave his hospital, we cannot expect the presence and help of the Physician : Nor will he be a Pilot to them who forsake his Ship : Nor a Captain to them who separate from his Army : Out of this Ark, there is nothing but a deluge ; and no place of rest or safety for a soul.

Fourthly, The *Unity* of Christians is their secondary strength : Their primary strength is *Christ* and the *Spirit of grace* which quickeneth them : And their secondary strength is their *Union among themselves* : Separation from *Christ* depriveth men of the first ; and separation from one another depriveth them of the second. An *Army* is stronger than a man : And a *Kingdom* than a single person : A flame will burn more strongly than a spark : And the waves of the Ocean are more forcible than a single drop. A threefold Cord is not easily broken. Therefore it is that weak Commonwealths do seek to strengthen themselves by confederacies with other States. The Church is likened to an Army with Banners ; both, for their Numbers, their Concord, and their Order. And therefore Christ saith that a Kingdom divided cannot stand. Union is the Churches strength : And what good soever they may pretend, Dividers are certainly the weakeners and destroyers of the Church : And as those means which best corroborate the body, and fortifie the spirits, do best cure many particular diseases, which no means would cure whilst nature is debilitated : So are the Churches

diseases best cured, by uniting fortifying remedies, which will be increased by a *dividing way of Reformation*: *Dividing is wounding*, and *uniting is the closing of the wound*.

There is no good work but *Satan* is a pretender to it, when he purposeth to *destroy* it: He resisteth *Light* as an *Angel of Light*; and his *Ministers* hinder *Righteousness*, as pretended *Ministers of Righteousness*: And he will be a *zealous Reformer* when he would *hinder Reformation*. And this is the mark of *Satans way of Reformation*: He doth it by *dividing the Churches of Christ*, and teaching Christians to *avoid each other*: And to that end he zealously aggravateth the faults of every party to the rest; that they may have odious thoughts of one another; and Christian Love may be turned into averſation: As in the Plague time every one is afraid of the breath and company of his neighbour, and they that were wont to assemble and converse with peace and pleasure, do timorously shun the presence of each other; because they know that it is an infectious time, and they are uncertain who is free: even so doth *Satan* break the societies and converse of Christians, by making them believe that every party hath some dangerous infection, which as they love their souls, they must avoid.

And he destroyeth your *Love* to one another, by pretending *Love* to your selves: O how careful will he be for your souls! when the Devil would undo you, he will do it as your Saviour: And when his meaning is to save you from Heaven, and from Christ, and from his saving grace, and from Union and Communion with his Church, and
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from the impartial Love of one another, he takes on him that he is saving you only from *sin* and from *Church-corruptions*: Or rather that it is *Christ* and not *he* that giveth you counsel: And he can do much in *imitating Christ*, in the *manner* of his *suggestions*, to make you believe that it is *Christ* indeed. Perhaps his counsel shall come in in the midst of a *fervent prayer*, or presently after it, to make you believe that it is an undoubted answer of your prayers: And oft times his impulses are vehement and much affecting, to make you think that it is something above nature: And the *pious pretence* will much perswade you to think that sure this can never come from an evil spirit: But if you had well studied 2 Cor. 11. 13, 14, 15. Gal. 1. 8. Luke 9. 55. 1 Joh. 4. 1, 2. 2 Thes. 2. 2. you might be wiser and be saved from this deceit. I will not recite the words, because I would have you turn to them, and seriously study them.

And in this *dividing work*, the Devil doth as make-bates do, who first goes to one man and tell him a tale what such a one said against him, and what a dangerous person he is, and then go to the other and say as much of the first to him: So the Devil saith to the Presbyterian, O take heed of the Independents! and to the Independents, Take heed of these Presbyterians; To the Anabaptist he suggesteth, Avoid these Protestants: Take heed of them, for they Baptize infants: And to the Protestants he saith, Take heed of these Anabaptists, for they are against baptizing any till they come to full age: To one he saith, Away from that Church, or think not those persons to

be religious; for they pray by the book: And to the other he saith, Take heed of those people, as whimsical and proud, and brainfick fanaticks; for they pray *without-book* by the *Spirit*. To one sort he saith, Take heed of those people, for they wear a Surplice, or Kneel at the Sacrament, or answer the Priests in the Responses of the Common-prayer: To the other he saith, Take heed of these disobedient, stubborn, selfconceited people that will sit at the Sacrament, and will not conform to the orders of the Church. I am not now minding whose opinion is right or wrong, among all these parties, or any like them; But how charitable to your souls the Devil is, when he would destroy your *charity* and your *souls*; and how *piously* and *kindly* he would have you *take heed* when he would lead you to *perdition*: and how great a *Reformer* he will be, if he may but do it by *Dividing*.

It may be the young unexperienced Schismatick (of what sect soever) will distast these words, and think I speak like an adversary to Reformation: And so the Devil would make him think, of all other Christians as well as of me, except his party. But if one should give such counsel for the preservation of his own health and bodily comfort, as the *Dividing* spirit giveth him for the Church and for his soul, he would quickly understand it, according to my present sense. If one should come in kindness to him and bid him, [O take heed of that mouth and belly; for it getteth nothing, but devoureth all that the hands do get by labour: Cut off that hand, for it hath a crooked finger: Cut off that gouty foot that it may not trouble the
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the whole body: Rip up those guts which have such filthy excrements, he would not swell against me if I advised him to suspect such kindness.

Fifthly, Remember also, that the *Unity* of Christians is their *peace* and *ease*, as well as their *strength* and *safety*. *Psal. 133. 1. Behold how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity!* As the amity and converse with friends is pleasant, and the concord of families is their quietness and ease; so is it as to the amity and concord which is the bond of Church society. And the *divisions* and *discord* of Christians, is their mutual pain and trouble. Do you not feel your minds disturbed by it: Do you not see the Church discomposed by it? The itch of contention, doth ordinarily make it pleasant for the time, to every Sect to scratch by zealous wranglings and disputes, for their several opinions, till the blood be ready to follow: But the smart and scab doth use to convince them of their folly. But if they will go more than *Skin-deep*, they may need a *Surgeon*. Children will *claw* themselves; but it is *Madmen* that will *wound* themselves. The hurt which we get in the Christian warfare, by mortifying the flesh, or by the persecution of the malignant enemy is tenderly healed by the hand of Christ, and usually furthereth our inward peace. But if we will hurt and wound and divide our selves, what pity or comfort can we expect.

Sixthly, Consider also that the *Unity* and *Concord* of Believers is their *Honour*, and their *Divisions* and *discord* are their *shame*: And consequently
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the honour or dishonour of Christ and the Gospel, and Religion is much concerned in it. Agreement among Christians telleth the world, that they have a certainty of the faith which they profess, and that it is powerful and not ineffectual, and that it is of a healing nature, and tendeth to the felicity of the world. But Divisions and discords among Christians perswade unbelievers, that there is no *certainty* in their *belief*: or that it is of a vexatious and destructive tendency; or at best that all its power is too weak, to overcome the malignity which it pretendeth to resist; where did you ever see Christians live in *undivided unity, undisturbed peace, and unfeigned Love*, but the very infidels and ungodly round about them, did reverence both them and their religion for it. And where did you ever see Christians *divided, unpeaceable* and bitter against each other, but it made them and their profession a scorn to the unbelieving and ungodly world? and whilst they despise and vilifie one another, they teach the wicked to despise and vilifie them all?

Seventhly, I may therefore add, that the *Unity of Believers*, is one of Gods appointed means for the conversion and salvation of *unbelievers*: And their *Divisions and discord* are an ordinary means of hardening men in infidelity and wickedness, and hindering their love and obedience to the truth. As a well ordered Army, or a City of uniform comely building, is a pleasing and inviting sight to the beholders; when a confused rout, or a ruinous heap, doth breed abhorrence: even so the very sight of the concordant societies of Christians, is amiable and alluring to those without

without ; when their disagreements and separations make them seem odious and vile. As a musical instrument in tune, or a set of musick, delight the hearer by the pleasing harmony ; when one or more instruments out of tune, or used by a rude unskilful hand, will weary out the patience of the hearer ; so is it in this case ; and the difference is much greater, between concordant and discordant Christians. Who loveth to thrust himself into a fray ? And what wise man had not rather partake of the friendly converse, than joyn with drunken men that are fighting in the streets ? Peace and Concord are amiable even to nature ; And you can scarce take a more effectual means, to win the world to the Love of Holiness, than by shewing them that Holiness doth make you *unfeigned* and *fervent* in the Love of one another. **1 Pet. 1. 22.** Nor can you devise how to drive men more effectually from Christ, and to damn their souls, than to represent Christians to them like a company of mad men, that are tearing out the throats of one another ? How can you think that the unbelievers and ungodly should think well of them, that all speak so ill of one another ? When the Lutheran flyeth from the Calvinist, and the Episcopal from the Puritan, and the Protestant from the Anabaptist, and the Presbyterian from the Independent, and all the other side implacably fly from them, Can you wonder if the Infidel and the Idolater fly further from you all ? Mark well the words of Christ in his prayer, *Joh. 17. 20, 21, 22, 23.* *For them which shall believe on me by their word, that they all may be 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.

All these observations are obvious in these words. 1. That the unity of Christians must be *universal*, even of all that believe the Gospel of Christ. 2. That this Union should have some low resemblance to the Union of the Father and the Son. 3. That it is Christs great desire and intercession for his Followers, that they may be one. 4. That their glory is for their Unity. 5. That their Unity is their perfection. 6. That the Father and Son are the Head or Center of the Unity. 7. That this Unity is the great means of converting the world to the Christian faith, and convincing Infidels of the truth of Christ, as sent by God. Open but your eyes and you may see all these great doctrines in this Prayer of Christs for his peoples Unity: O that all the Christian Churches would try this means for the worlds Conversion! (Not on the impossible terms of Popery, but on the necessary terms proposed by Christ.)

8. *External Unity* and peaceable Church-communion doth greatly cherish our *Internal unity* of Love: And Church-divisions do cherish wrath and malice and all the works of the flesh described by Paul, Gal. 5. 21, 22, 23. I pray you consider how he describeth the fleshly and the spiritual man: v. 14, 15. *For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self. But if ye bite and devour one another,*

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take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. I say then, walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, &c. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, adultery — enmities or hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, (or as it may be read Divisions or factions) heresies, envying, murders, &c. But the fruit of the spirit is Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance : Against such there is no law. And they that are Christs have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Obj. O but those that I separate from are guilty of this and that and the other fault.

Ans. Chap 6. 1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one, in the spirit of meekness, considering thy self lest thou also be tempted : Instead of censorious disdain and separation, bear ye one anothers burthen, and so fulfil the Law of Christ : which you think you fulfil by your unwarrantable separations, while you are but fulfilling your fleshly passions.

When once parties are engaged by their opinions in Anti-churches and fierce disputings, the flesh and satan will be working in them against all that is holy, sweet and safe. When united Christians are provoking one another to Love and to good works, and minding each other of their heavenly cohabitation, and harmonious praise and are delighting God and man by the melody of their concord ; The contentious zealots in their separate Anti-churches, are preaching down Love

Love and preaching up hatred, and making those that differ from them seem an odious people not to be communicated with, by aggravating their different opinions or modes of worship, till they seem to be no less than Heresie or Idolatry. If many thousands yet living in England or Ireland, had not heard this with their ears, yet James may be believed, Chap. 3. 1, &c. *My Brethren, be not many Teaching-Masters* (for that is the word) *knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation: For in many things we offend all* (which he addeth because the arrogancy of Sectaries was caused by the aggravating of other mens offences.) *If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man* (that is, If you will shew that you are perfecter & better your selves than those whom you account so bad, see that your foul back-biting, reviling, censorious contentious tongues, do not prove the contrary) *13. 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: (that is, Let him that would be thought more knowing and religious than his neighbours, be so much more blameless and meek to all men, and excel them in good works) v. 14. But if ye have a bitter zeal: (for so is the Greek word) and strife in your hearts, glory not, (in such a zeal, or in your greater knowledge) and lie not against the truth. 15. This wisdom descendeth not from above (as you imagine who father it on Gods word and spirit) but is earthly, sensual (or natural) and devillish. (O doleful mistake, that the world, the flesh, and the Devil, should prove the cause of that conceited spiritual knowledge and excellency, which they thought*

thought had been the inspiration of the spirit) v. 16. *For where zeal and strife is (that is, a striving contentious zeal against brethren) there is confusion (or tumult and unquietness) and every evil work, O lamentable reformers, that set up every evil work, while they seemed zealous against evil!)* v. 17. *But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easie to be intreated; full of mercy and good fruits; without partiality (or wrangling) and without Hypocrisie. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace: when peace-breakers that sow in divisions and contention, shall reap the fruit of unrighteousness, though they call their way by the most religious names.*

Thus I have briefly shewed you what **V**anity and **D**ivision are, that wrong apprehensions draw you not to sin.

DIRECT. VIII.

When any thing needeth amendment in the Church, remember that the best Christian, must be the forwardest to reformation, and the backwardest to Division: and must search and try all means of Reforming, which make not against the concord of the Church.

I Do not here determine in what cases you may or may not separate, from any company of faulty Christians. I only say that you must never separate what God hath conjoynd; the Holiness
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and the *Unity* of believers: If corruptions blemish and dishonour the Congregation; Do not say [Let sin alone; I must not oppose it for fear of division] But be the forwardest to reduce all to the will of God: And yet if you cannot prevail as you desire, be the backwardest to divide and separate; and do it not without a certain warrant, and extream necessity. Resolve with *Austin*, I will not be the chaff, and yet I will not go out of the floor, though the chaff be there. Never give over your just desire and endeavour of Reformation: And yet as long as possibly you can avoid it, forsake not the Church which you desire to reform. As *Paul* said to them that were ready to forsake a sea-wrackt vessel, *If these abide not in the ship, ye cannot be saved*: Many a one by unlawful flying and shifting for his own greater peace and safety, doth much more hazard his own and others.

DIRECT. IX.

Forget not the great difference between casting out the wicked and impenitent from the Church by discipline; and the godlies separating from the Church it self, because the wicked are not cast out. The first is a great duty: The second is ordinarily a great sin.

THe question is not, *Whether the impenitent should be put away from Church-Communion?* Thats not denied. But whether you should

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separate from the Church because they are permitted: This is it which we call you to beware: Not but that in some cases, a Christian may lawfully remove from one Church to another, that hath more light and purity, for the edification of his soul. But before you separate from a faulty Church, *as such, as may not lawfully be communicated with,* you must look well about you, and be able to prove that thing which you affirm.

Many weak Christians marking those Texts which bid us *avoid a man that is an Heretick*, and to have *no company* with disorderly walkers, and not to eat with flagitious persons, do not sufficiently mark their sense, but take them as if they call'd us to separate from *the Church* with which these persons do communicate. Whereas if you mark all the Texts in the Gospel, you shall find, = that all the separation which is commanded in such cases (besides our separation from the Infidels or Idolatrous world, or Antichristian and Heretical confederacies, and no-Churches) is but one of these two sorts. First, either that *the Church* cast out the impenitent sinner by the power of the *Keys*. Secondly, or that *private men* avoid all *private familiarity* with them. And both these we would promote, and no way hinder. Thirdly, but that the *private* members should separate from the *Church*, because such persons are not cast out of it, shew me one Text to prove it if you can.

Let us here peruse the Texts that speak of our withdrawing from the wicked. 1 Cor. 5. Is expressly written to the whole Church, as obliged to put away the incestuous person from among them,

and so not to eat with such offenders. So is that in 2 *Thes.* 3. and that in *Tit.* 3. 10. *A man that is an Heretick after the first and second admonition avoid* : Unless it be a Heretick that hath already separated himself from our communion ; And then it can be but private familiarity which we are further to avoid. In brief, there is no other place of Scripture, that I know of, which commandeth any more. I have before shewed that abundance of Church corruptions, or of scandalous members, were then among them, and yet the Apostle never spake a syllable to any one Christian, to separate from any one of all those Churches : Which we cannot imagine that the Holy Ghost would have wholly omitted, if indeed it had been the will of God.

Obj. But then why did Luther and the first Protestants, separate from the Church of Rome ; and how will you justify them from Schisme ?

Ans. Its pity that sloth and sortishness, should keep any Protestant (or Papist either) in such ignorance, as to need any help to answer so easie a question at this day ! Let not equivocal names deceive us, and the case is easie. By the word *Church* the Scripture still meaneth ; first, either the *Universal Church* which is the body or Kingdom of Christ alone : Secondly, or *particular Congregations* associated for personal communion in Gods worship : But the Pope hath feigned another kind of thing, and called it *The Church* : That is, *The Universality of Christians as headed by himself, as the constitutive and governing head.* Whereas, first, God never instituted or allowed such a Church, Secondly, nor did ever the
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Universality of Christians, acknowledge this usurping Head. Shew me in Scripture, or in Church-History, that either there ever was *de facto*, or ought to be *de jure*, such a thing in the world as they call *the Church*, and I profess I will immediately turn Papist. But if you ask why we separated from the Papal Church? I answer, Because, first, it was *no Church of Christ* (as such.) And secondly, It was a *Church of traiterous combination*, against the prerogative of Christ, and therefore by the Protestants called the *Anti-christian Church*. We separated not from *Rome* either as the *Universal Church* (for that it was not) nor as *part of the Universal Church*; (for so we hold communion with those that are Christians in it still) Nor as a true worshipping *Congregation* (for they consist of many thousand congregations which we had never local communion with: And as true worshipping congregations in *specie*, we still hold communion with them in mind, so far as they are such indeed: But in two senses we separate from them: First, as a *Papal Catholick Church*; because in that sense they are *no Church of Christ*, but a pack of rebels: Secondly, as *particular Congregations in specie* which have mixed Gods worship with false doctrine and Idolatrous bread-worship and other unlawful things, which by oaths and practise they would force those to be guilty of, who will communicate with them. And thus we disown them only as *neighbour Churches*, that never were their *lawful subjects*; but bear our testimony against *their sin*. And our forefathers who were members of their Churches,

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departed to save themselves from their iniquity, and because they were refused by themselves, unless they would lie, & forswear & be idolaters, and communicate with them in their sin. Nor would they then, nor will they to this day admit any into communion of their particular Churches, as such, who will not first come in to their pretended Universal Church, which is no Church, and worse than none. If this answer seem not plain and full to you, it is because you understand not Christian sense and reason.

DIRECT. X.

Expect not that any one lawfully received by Baptism into the Christian Church, should be cast out of it, or denied the privilege of members, but according to the rules of Christian discipline, by the power of the Keyes, that is; for obstinate impenitency in a gross or scandalous sin, which the person is proved to be guilty of: and this after private and publick admonition, and tender patient exhortation to Repentance.

Here are two things which I desire you to observe. First, what is Christs appointed way, for removing members from the Communion of the Church. Secondly, how great a sin it is to remove them by a contrary and arbitrary way of our own presumptuous invention.

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First, It is here supposed that the person is not a professed *Apostate*: For there needeth no casting out of such. He that turneth *Turk* or *Heathen*, or openly renounceth Christianity, or ceaseth the Profession of it, doth go out of the Church himself, and needeth not to be cast out. Unless it be any Tyrant who will come to the Communion in scorn, while he professeth but to shew his lawless will. He that seeketh the Communion of the Church in sobriety, thereby professeth himself a Christian: and for such as being Baptized continue this profession, Christs way of rejecting them is plainly described in the Gospel. *Mat. 18. 15, 16.* If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother: But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more; that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established: And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the Church: But if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee as a *Heathen man*, or a *Publican*.

Tit. 3. 10. A man that is an *Heretick* after the first and second admonition reject.

1 Cor. 5. Ye are puffed up and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed, might be taken away from among you: For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already as though I were present, concerning him, that hath so done this deed; in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together and my spirit; with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ to deliver such a one to Satan. — *V. 7.* Purge out therefore the old leaven — *V. 11, 12, 13.* With such a one no not to eat — Do

not ye judge them that are within? — Therefore put away from among your selves that wicked person.

By all this it is plain that the Church must exercise a regular course of justice, with every person that it shall reject: He must first be told privately of his fault, and then before two or three; (unless, at least, the open notoriety make the private admonition needless) And then it must be told the Church: And the Church must with compassion, tenderness and patience, and yet with the authority of the Lord Jesus and the powerful evidence of truth, convince him and persuade him to repent: And he must not be rejected, till after all this, he obstinately refuse to hear the Church, that is, to Repent, as they exhort him.

Note here, that no sin will warrant you to cast out the sinner, unless it be seconded with Impenitency: It is not simply as a drunkard, or a fornicator or swearer, that any one is to be rejected: but as an *impenitent* drunkard, or fornicator, or swearer, &c.

Also that it is not all *impenitency* that will warrant their rejection: But only *impenitency* after the Churches admonition.

Note also, that no private person may expect, that any offender be cast out, either because his sin is known to him, or because he is commonly famed to be guilty, till the thing be proved by sufficient witness.

Yea that the admonition given him must be proved, as well as the fault which he committed.

Yea if all the town do know him to be guilty, and witness prove that he hath been privately admonished,

monished, he may not be rejected till he be heard speak for himself, and till he refuse also the publike admonition.

This is Christs order, whose *wisdom*, and *mercy* and *authority* are such, as may well cause us to take his way as best. And yet the ignorance or rathness of many professors is such, that they would have all this order of Christ overturned: And some of them must have such a drunkard and such a swearer kept away and rejected, before ever they admonished them or exhorted them to Repentance, or prove that any one else hath done it; much more before they have told the Church, or proved that he hath neglected the Churches admonition. And some go so much further, that they must have all the Churches taken for no Churches, till they have gathered them a new; and must have all the Parish at once rejected (till they have gathered out some few again) without any such order of proceeding with them, as Christ appointeth: It may be a thousand shall be cast out at once, when never a one of them was thus admonished.

Obj. They were never members of a true Church; and therefore need no casting out.

Ans. Were they never baptized? or is not baptism Christs appointed means of admission into his Church.

Obj. They were baptized in their Infancy, and afterward bred up in ignorance and profaneness, & know not what their baptism is, nor ever soberly owned it.

Ans. Either they still profess themselves Christians, and attend Gods ordinances with the Church or not; If not, then they are Apo-

states : If they do, then they do own their Baptismal Covenant by a continued profession : If you accuse them of not *understanding* this profession, or of living contrary to it, you must proceed against them one by one as Christ appointeth ; and first admonish them, and then tell the Church ; and not say *they* are ignorant and profane, and expect upon your saying so, they should all be unchurched. Yea if you prove them ignorant, if they be willing to learn, it is fitter presently to instruct them than to excommunicate them : nor do you reade of any excommunicated for meer ignorance. But we confess that in gross ignorance, they may shew themselves incapable of sacramental Communion, and may be denied it while they are learning to know what they do. But the mercy of God hath made points absolutely necessary so few, that this may be done in a short time, if the Persons be willing, and the Teachers diligent, and sufficiently numerous for that work. And though it is to be lamented, that in many great City-Parishes, the Ministers are not enough to catechize the twentieth part of the people, yet for the generality of Parishes through the Land, if Catechizing were used as it might be, there would not any great numbers be long kept away for meer ignorance. And he that is the cause of his Parishes ignorance by neglecting Catechizing and personal conference, & then unchurcheth them, for the ignorance which he is guilty of, doth take but a preposterous course, for his own account and comfort, or for the peoples good.

Obj.^o But they refuse to learn or be instructed.

Ans.

The sin of disorderly unchurching men. 89

Ans. If that and their gross ignorance be proved together, as you may delay them for the later, so you may reject them for the former; because it sheweth their impenitence: But this must be proved of them, and not affirmed without proof.

Obj. But their Baptisme made them members only of the Universal Church, and not of any particular Church: And therefore will not prove them such.

Ans. True: But he that is a member of the Universal Church, is fit to be received into a particular Church; And there wanteth no more but mutual consent: And if he have stately joyned with a particular Church in ordinary communion, Consent hath bin manifested, and he is a member of that particular Church, and must not be rejected by it, but in Christs way. And this is the common case in *England*. The persons who were baptized in Infancy, were at once received into the Universal Church, and into some particular Church, & have held communion at age with both; and have right to that communion till they are publikely proved to have lost their right.

And if we had no Churches, but particular Churches were to be gathered anew, yet he that is a baptized member of the Universal Church, and consenteth to communion with that particular Church in all the ordinances of Christs appointment, doth lay a sufficient claim to his admission, and cannot lawfully be refused, unless he stand justly censured by a Church which formerly he was in. Yet this we confess, that he can be no member of that particular Church, who subjecteth not himself to the particular Pastors of it, and to the necessary acts or parts of their Office

Office and Ministration : Because he denieth his own consent.

II. The sinfulness of unchurching Persons or Parishes, without Christs way of regular process, consisteth in all these following parts. 1. It is a casting off the Laws of the great Law-giver of the Church, and so a contempt of his authority, wisdom and goodness; and a making of our selves greater, or wiser, or holier than he. 2. It is gross *injustice*, to deprive men of so great Privileges without any sufficient proof of their forfeiture! It is worse than to turn whole Parishes out of their Houses and Possessions, without any lawful process or proof; upon rumours or private affirmations that they are Delinquents. It is not doing as we would be done by, what if any should say of you, that you are Heretical and deny Fundamental Truths? Or what if they should say of a separated Church, that they are generally Hereticks or of wicked lives (as the Heathens did of the ancient Christians) and therefore that they are *no Church*, nor to be communicated with; would you not think that they should every one personally be accused, and proof brought against them, and that they should speak for themselves, before they were thus condemned? 3. And it is an aggravated Crime in them, that so much cry down *Church-tyranny* in others, to be thus notoriously guilty of it themselves? what greater injustice and tyranny can there be, than that all mens Christianity and Church-rights, shall be judged Null, upon the censures and rumours of suspicious men, without any just proof or lawful tryal? That it shall be in the power of every one, who

who hath but uncharitableness enough to think evil of his neighbours, or to believe reports against their innocency to cast them out of the Family of God, and to unchristen and unchurch men arbitrarily at their pleasure? That any man that is but unconscionable enough to say [They are all *ignorant and prophane*] shall expect to have his neighbours excommunicated. 4. It maketh all Churches to be lubricous and uncertain shadows: when a censorious person may unchurch them at his pleasure. What you say of others, another may say of you; and as justly expect to be believed. 5. It unavoidably bringeth in incurable *divisions*: For there is no certain rule of justice with such persons: and therefore they know not who are to be received to their Communion, and who not: And the same man that one thinketh is to be rejected and kept out, another will think is to be received: And who knoweth which of them is to be obeyed. If one say that a Parish is a Church, and another say that they are to be unchurched, who knoweth which of them to believe. 6. It is a reproach to the Church and Christian religion, when we tell the world that, that we have not so much *justice and equity* among us, as Heathens have in their worldly societies. 7. It depriveth the Church of the solace of her Communion, when the best man is not sure, but a censorious person may at his pleasure turn him out as unworthy. 8. It greatly wrongeth Jesus Christ, who so dearly loveth the weakest of his flock; and hath purchased their priviledges at so dear a rate: and whose body is maymed, when any of his members are cut off: and who taketh
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the wrong that is done them as done unto himself. These are the great virtues of that censorious zeal, which unchurches Persons or Parishes without just tryal and proof, upon rumours of fame, or their own surmises.

DIRECT. XI.

Understand well what is the power of the Keyes, and what the Pastoral officae is, as they are the Governours of the Church entrusted by Christ with the power of admission and rejection; that so you may know how far you are to rest in the judgement of the Pastors, and may not attempt to take any part of their office to your selves.

THe power of the Keyes, is the power of taking into the Church, and of Governing it, and of casting out: Both in respect to present Order, and in respect to future happiness, by a Ministerial declaration of the sense of the Gospel, concerning the state of such as they.

The power of Baptizing, is the power of the Keyes for reception into the Church. The private members have not the power of baptizing, nor were the Pastors ever appointed to do it, by their advise, consent or vote. Therefore the private members have not the power of the Keyes for admission, And it is most apparent in the Gospel, that the Keyes for admission and for exclusion are given

given into the same hands, and not one to the Ministers and another to the Flock: Therefore the people that have not the first, have not the later.

For full proof of this observe the meaning of these Texts. Isa. 22. 22. *And the Key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open and none shall shut: and he shall shut and none shall open.* Isa. 9. 6. *The Government shall be upon his shoulder.* Mat. 16. 19. *I will give thee the Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, &c.* Mat. 18. 18. *Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye bind on earth shall be bound, &c.* Joh. 20. 23. *Whose soever sins ye do remit, they are remitted to them; and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained.* Math. 28. 19. *Go and teach all Nations baptizing them, &c.* Joh. 20. 21. *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.* Acts 1. 16, 17. *Judas was numbred with us, and had obtained part of this Ministry.* Acts 20. 28. *Take heed to your selves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, to feed the Church of God —* Rom. 1. 1. *Paul a Minister of Jesus Christ, called an Apostle, separated to the Gospel of God.* 1 Cor. 4. 1. *Let a man so esteem of us as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the mysteries of God.* Acts 14. 23. *They ordained them Elders in every Church.* Tit. 1. 3. *Ordain Elders in every City, as I appointed thee.* V. 7. *A Bishop must be blameless as the Steward of God.* 1 Tim. 3. 5. *For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?* 1 Tim. 5. 17. *Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour —* 1 Pet. 5. 2. *Feed the flock of God*
which

which is among you, taking the oversight thereof — Heb. 13. 7, 17, 24. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God — Obey them that have the rule over you and submit your selves; for they watch for your souls — salute them that have the rule over you — 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. We beseech you brethren to know them (that is, acknowledge their power and labours) that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake, and to be at peace among your selves.

Read these with judgement, and then believe if you can, that the power of the Keys or Government is in the People. Shew us what text doth give them that power? and where the Scripture calleth them to exercise it by Votes? Or where God requireth ability in them for Church-government? or where he calleth them to leave their Callings and attend this work? When those that must perform it, he separateth to it as by office, and calleth them to give themselves wholly thereunto. 1 Tim. 4. 15, 16. Tell us when the people were authorized to baptize? or to rule the Church, that is, themselves.

Obj. Mat. 18. 15. *Tell the Church*: if he hear not the Church, &c. *Ans.* Many Expositors think that by the Church there is meant the Ministers only, by this reason: The Church that must teach must be heard: the Church that must be heard must be told: But that is only the Pastors and not the People: Ergo — But I easily grant you, that the word [Church] there signifieth the whole Congregation (as Dr. Taylor in his Second Dis-

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swasive hath well shewed) But it is as an Organized body only. And so the Office is to be performed only by the Organical part ; and not by any of the rest. When I say to a man [*Hear me*] I do not mean that he should hear me with his eyes, but only with his ears : And when I bid him *See* or *Read*. I bid him not do it with his ears but with his eyes. Nor do the eyes receive this power from the feet or hands, but immediately from the Head : Though if they were separated from the body they could not retain it. So if another Kingdome send to *England*, to desire an Army of Men to help them, they mean the King only as the *Commander* of them, and the people as the executors of his Command. So when you are bid to *tell* the Church, it is *quatenus auctori*, that it must be told ; And when you are bid to *hear* it, it is as *Teaching* that it must be heard. So that this talketh not of any Government in the people, either to *use* or to *give*.

Obj. 1 *Cor.* 5. *Paul* biddeth all the Church to put from among them that wicked person.

Ans. Note ; that *Paul* passeth the sentence first himself [*I have judged as if I were present* (not that you deliver, but) to deliver such an one to *Satan* : And therefore he doth this in himself [*in the name of the Lord Jesus*] and supposeth himself among them in spirit and power when they do it [*and my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.*] 2. And I have said, He speaketh to an organized Church, = which had two parts, and accordingly two works to do : The *Ruling* part was to put away the Offender by *Judgement*, or *Sentence* ; And the people were all to put him away, by actual shunning his Commu-

Communion, which is but the obeying of that sentence. If the King send to a Corporation to execute any Law, he meaneth not that *all persons* must do it in the like manner; but the Magistrates by Command, and the people by obeying them, and executing their Commands. If I desire a man to transcribe me a Book and bring it me; I mean not that every part of him shall herein have the same office; But that he *read* it only with his eyes, and understand it with his *reason*, and transcribe it with his hand, and travel with his feet. The Pastors only excommunicate by Judgement or Sentence; and the people by obedient execution of it.

Obj. Who then shall cast out an Heretick or pernicious Pastor, if he himself must be rejected?

Ans. 1. The Neighbour Pastors shall renounce Communion with him, and reject him from their neighbour Communion. And they shall warn that people to avoid him (by virtue of the common relation which they have to the universal Church of Christ.) 2. The people (as Cyprian determineth) are bound to forsake him: not by an act of Government over him or themselves; but by an act of obedience to God, and of self-preservation; As Souldiers must forsake a trayterous General, or Seamen a perfidious or desperately unskilful Pilot that would cast them all away. As the people did always choose their Pastors to Govern them, so may they in such a case refuse them, without usurping any Government themselves.

Well! Now let us see what influence this
truth

truth should have upon your Church-Communion.

Do you say that your neighbours are not to be accounted members of the Church, nor to be communicated with? Who took them into the Church by Baptism? Was it not a Minister of Christ? If you say no, you must prove your accusation. If you grant it, was it not his *Office* so to do? Hath not God made his Ministers Judges, whom they are to baptize? And afterward also whom to catechise and instruct and admit to the communion of the Church? There is no doubt of it. If then they are admitted by an entrusted Officer, will you venture to usurp the place, yea and to do them the wrong to say that they are no members? Is it any of your trust or work? I pray you mark = what a mercy it is to you, that the Officers and not the private members are entrusted with this work. First, if it were *your work*, you must *stand* and be able to perform it. Secondly, you must *watch* for it, and *constantly attend* it. If a Heretick pervert the Text of Scripture, you must convince him by your skill in the Originals, or in the sense. How many hundred or thousand persons are there in a Parish to be tried? The worst of them must have a hearing and just trial at least, before you can refuse him lawfully: And how accurately must this difficult work be done, that the weakest be not denied his right, nor the unfit admitted? How long must a sinner be admonished and exhorted to repentance? And are *you able* and *willing* to leave all your callings, to do all this?

If the *Minister* that doth it, must lay by the