

DIRECT. LVII.

Yet let not any here cheat you by overdoing; nor meer names and titles of Unity deceive you instead of the thing it self: Nor must you ever dream of any Head and Center of the Unity of the Catholick Church, but Christ himself.

There is no part of Religion which Satan doth not endeavour to destroy, under pretense of promoting it: And his way is to overgo Christ and his Apostles, and to seem more zealous than ever they were, and to mend their work by doing it better or doing more. Christ was not strict enough for the Pharisees, in keeping the Sabbath, nor in his company, nor in his diet. Satan hath always two ways to destroy both *truth* and *duty*; The first is by direct opposing it; But when that will not do, the next is by overdoing and pretending to defend it. If he cannot destroy *zeal*, by scorning it, and quenching it; he will try to do it by overheating and distempering it. If he cannot destroy *knowledge*, by the way of gross *ignorance*, he will try to spin it out into the finer threads of vain and innumerable questions and speculations, and to crumble it into such invisible *atomes*, that it shall be reduced to scepticisme or nothing. If he cannot destroy *faith* by open *infidelity*, he will try to make men believe too much, by making the objects of their own belief, and calling that a *particular faith*, & altering God

word

word, and casting away the Reasons and evidences of faith, to shew the *strength* and nobleness of *their faith*, which needeth no such helps as these; till by over-doing they have raised their edifice in the ayr, and rejected their foundations, and put out their eys in honour of the sun, and of their Physician, lest either of them should be accused as insufficient.

Even so when Satan findeth that he cannot directly destroy the *Unity* of the Church, and bring division into credit, he will be more zealous for unity than Christ himself: He will then endure no disagreement among Christians, no not in an opinion, nor a form, or ceremony; not in meats or drinks or keeping of days, or in judging of things lawful or unlawful, which are not of necessity to the Churches concord. He is either for Tolerating all propagation of Heresie and practise of wickedness, or else he is so much for *Unity*, that no difference almost is to be tolerated. For he well knoweth that while men are imperfect such differences *will still* be: And then if he can but perswade the world, that for Concord sake they must not be endured, what followeth but that the dissenters must be fined, imprisoned or banished to bring them (or the rest) to *unity*. And so he will set all the world together by the ears, in cruelties and blood-shed, and in hating one another, and all under pretense of making them one. You may think that till mankind be all turned Bedlams, they can never be so cheated by such a gross deceit, nor ever guilty of so mad a work. But what will you say if this be the common case, of the far greatest part of the Christian world? And what will you

say further, if after above a thousand years universal experience of the unhappy success, they continue it still as the only way to unity and peace? Look but about you with opened eyes, and see whether it be not so.

Were not he a gracious promoter of Unity in the world, that would say [Unity is so excellent a thing, that it is meet we should be all of one complexion, or at least that the world should speak but one language; and therefore no other but one should be tolerated] And here how easie is it to dilate of the great inconveniences of many languages: I could write a Volume in folio of it my self; and all true and evident. Methinks I see hereupon how these Books are scattered and read, and how those called Learned men and politicians applaud them, and shake their heads and gnash their teeth at those that would have so great a mischief tolerated: And hereupon they set about the business, and desire a Law that upon pain of imprisonment and banishment (I know not whither) no one in the world shall speak any other language but one. And now I hope Unity will be promoted indeed; when all the world is thus engaged in a war to perfect nature and make men one.

But methinks I hear one man that is awake thus bespeak the promoters of this Concord [*Unity and Concord* in those points where God hath made them necessary, cannot be over-valued: But yet it is visible that there is a marvellous diversity which nature is delighted in: when of all faces and of all voices, and of all the sorts of animals and plants; there is so discernable a difference.

ence: yea of all the millions of stones in the field, no two is perfectly like each other. And where greater Unity is most desirable, it must first be considered how much of it is possible, or to be hoped for, and next, what are the proper means to attain it. For first, the medicining of an incurable disease, especially with violent Physick, is not the way to make it better, but to exasperate it and hasten death, when a palliate and patience might do better. It is very desirable, that all the Kings subjects were *strong*, and *beautiful* and *ingenuous* and *Learned*; but it is not to be hoped: But that they may be all *Loyal*, and *honest* in their dealing with others, may be well endeavoured. And secondly, a wrong kind of medicine will much more hasten and ascertain death, than to let the disease alone to nature: It is desirable that all the Kings subjects be as is said, both *wise* and *Learned*, yea and *perfect in honesty* and *piety* without fault: But if you make a Law that for the honour of *Unity*, all that are not *Learned* and *perfect in vertue* shall be *fined*, *imprisoned* or *banished*, the King nor his subjects will be but little beholden to you for their *Unity*. So *one Language* is very desirable to the world: But first it is not attainable, and secondly a Law to punish all that speak *another Language* is not the way to procure it; but to set them together by the ears: You must appoint *Parents* and *School-masters* to teach them all one language by degrees, and keep them to their duties, and remove impediments, and thus stay the time; and what cannot this way be attained must not be expected in this world.]

The speech being ended the hearers derided it, and made a Law for Unity to destroy it, and set every man on hating and fighting against his neighbour, to make all one.

It is very desirable that all Christians were perfect in knowledge, gifts and graces, and consequently that there were no different opinions, nor no different forms or modes of worship; but that all were equal to the wisest, and to the most sober, pious, zealous and sincere. But if a Law be made that none shall be endured in any Kingdome, that are not of this temperament and stature, the subjects of all Princes may soon be numbered. Set Parents, Schoolmasters and Ministers at work, to make men wiser, and drive them on to diligence in their duty, and restrain men from hindering them, and from intollerable wickedness and sin, and patiently expect the success of this: And what this will not do expect not.

And I intreat the Separatists who will think this doctrine of forbearance gratifieth them, to observe that I speak all this to them as well as to Magistrates. I told you that there is a Church-persecution and a Church-forgbearance, as well as a Civil. If Christ will have Magistrates forbear the weak, he will have you forbear them: and not say, we will have no Communion with those that pray by such Forms and Liturgies, or that use such a Ceremony, or are not of our own opinions: Read Rom. 14. and 15. and you will see that it was a Church-forgbearance towards one another, and a Receiving dissenters to Christian communion (even as Christ receiveth us for all our weakneses) which Paul there pleadeth for, and not only a forbearance of

of *smiting* them with the sword. What a wonder and what a lamentation is it, that those men that cry out so much for forbearance to the Magistrate, should themselves be as rigid and more by *Church-severities*, and less *forbear* dissenters, even in a form or ceremony, as to communion, and yet never see the same sin in themselves, which they so much complain of.

And here my principal business is to warn you of the Papal way of *Unity*: They are so great enemies to divisions and sects, that they must have all the Christian world, united not only in one *Christ*, by one profession & baptism, but also in one *mortal Monarch* as his Vicar, that men may know at the Antipodes when they understand not the Scripture, or differ in opinions, who to step to for the ending of their controversies, and to give them an infallible commentary on the Bible, and to tell them with whom they must hold communion. And all their differences may thus have a speedy dispatch: If it be doubted whether one in *Abassia* or much further off, be a Heretick, or an impenitent sinner and to be excommunicated or not; and the Church where he liveth is divided about it, if the matter be but referred to the Pope, as the supream Judge, it is but going to *Rome*, and sending thither all the parties and witnesses on both sides, and the Pope can decide it much more judiciously than those that are on the place and know the persons and all the circumstances. And all this may be done in three years time or less, if wind and weather and all things serve: And if all the persons die by the way, the controversie is ended: If one part only die, let

the longer liver have the better, and be justified. Or if the Pope will rather send Governours to the place to decide the controversie, whether the next Lords day you shall hold communion with such a man, or not, and so forward, its like in a few years time some of them may live to come thither. And if you must still appeal to the Pope himself for fear lest a Priest be not the infallible or final Judge (and can do no better than other folks Priests,) you may after all, have the liberty of the voyage: And if you cannot in that age get the case dispatched, yet you must believe that you have appeared to the only center of Unity.

This cheating noise and name of *Unity*, hath been the great divider of the Christian world. And under pretense of suppressing Heresie and Schism, and bringing a blessed peace and harmony amongst all Christians, the Churches have been set all together by the ears, condemning and unchurching one another, and millions have been murdered in the flames, inquisition and other kinds of death, and those are Martyrs with the one part, who are burnt as Hereticks by the other: And more millions have been murdered by wars. And *hated* and *confusion* is become the mark and temperament of those, who have most loudly cried up *Unity*, and *Concord*, *Order* and *Peace*.

It is a common way to set up a sect or faction, by crying down schism, sects and factions. And a common way to destroy both *Unity* and *Peace*, by crying up *Unity* and *Peace*. Therefore let not bare *Names* deceive you.

Remem^r

Remember that one of the old sects or factions of carnal Christians, cried up *Cephas*, that is, *Peter*, and said we are of *Cephas*; which I know not how they could be blamed for, if he was the Churches *Constitutive* or *Governing* Head. *1 Cor. 1. 12.* and *3. 22.* And remember that the Church is not the *body* of any *Apostle*, but of *Christ*, and that all the *Apostles* are but the nobler sort of members, and none of them the Head. *1 Cor. 12. 27, 28.* Now ye are the *body* of *Christ*, and members in particular: and God hath set some in the Church, first *Apostles*, secondarily *Prophets*, thirdly *Teachers*, &c. But *Bellarmino* (aware of this) hath devised this shift, that the *Pope* succeedeth *Peter*, in more than his *Apostle-ship*, even his *Head-ship*: But when he hath proved *Peter* more than an *Apostle*, and the *Pope* his successor, he will do the business: Till then we must say, that if the *Pope* were but a good *Priest* or *Bishop*, below an *Apostle*, we should give him more honour, than his treasonable usurpation of *Christ's* prerogatives is like to procure him. For he that will needs have all, shall have none, and he that exalteth himself, shall be brought low; and he that will be more than a man shall be less than a man.

DIRECT. LVIII.

Take heed of Superstition, and observe well the circular course of zealous superstition, malignity, formality, and peevish singularity and schism, that you may not be misled by respect of persons. I mean, that First, Indiscreet zeal and devotion hath been the usual beginner of Superstition; Secondly, Malignity in that age hath opposed it for the Authors sake; Thirdly, In the next age the same kind of men have adored the Authors and made themselves a Religion, of the formal part of that superstition, and persecuted those that would not own it. Fourthly, And then the same kind of men that first made it, do oppose it in enmity to those who impose and own it, and suffer and divide the Church in dislike of that which was their own invention.

IT is marvellous to observe this partial dance: But Church-History may convince the understanding Reader, that so it hath been, and so it is; First, the zeal of some holy persons doth at first break forth in some lawful, and in some indiscreet and unwarrantable expressions. Secondly, the malignant enemies of Godliness, hate and oppose these expressions, for the sake of the persons and the zeal exprest. 3. When they are dead, God per-
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forming his promise, that the memory of the just shall be blessed, Prov. 10. 7. The carnal party of that age as well as others, do honour those whom their fore-fathers hated and murdered. *Math. 23. 29, 30.* Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: because ye build the tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the dayes of our Fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets: Wherefore ye be witnesses to your selves, that ye are the children of them which killed the Prophets: Fill you up then the measure of your fathers. The wicked of one generation kill Gods servants, and the wicked of the next Generation do honour their names, and celebrate their memorial: The reason is because, it is the *Life of Godliness*, which the sinner is troubled with and hateth: And therefore it is the *living saint* whom he abhorreth. But the *name and form of Godliness* is less troublesome to him, yea and may be useful to make him a Religion of, to quiet his conscience in his sin: And therefore the *name of dead saints* he can honour, and the *form of their worship*, and *corps of piety* he can own. And having become so Religious, both his former enmity to *living holiness*; and his carnal zeal for his *Image of Religion*, engage him to make a stir for it; and persecute those that are not of his way. And when the zealous and devout people of that age see this; they loath that carcass or Image which the formalist contendeth for, and many flye from it with too great abhorrence for the persons sake who now esteem it; forgetting its original, and that it was such as they, that set it up, and were the first inventers.

For instance: The most of the persons whom the Papists now keep holy dayes for, were very religious godly people: And the zealous Religious people of that age, did think that the honouring of the memories of the Martyrs, was a great means to invite the infidels to Christianity, and to encourage the weak to stick to Christ: And therefore they kept the dayes of their martyrdom, in thanksgiving to God, and in honour of them. The wicked of that age hated and persecuted both the Martyrs and them that honoured them. In the next age Religion being uppermost in the world, the wicked did turn Hypocrites, and keep Holy dayes for the honour of their names whom their fore-fathers murdered. At last when it was observed that the Papists who burned the living Saints, were the greatest honourers of the dead, the most religious people turned quite to dislike and reject those very dayes, which their predecessors had set up in thanksgiving to God, for the doctrine, example and constancy of the Martyrs.

The same all along I may say about the Relicks of Martyrs, and pilgrimages to their shrines, which the Religious sort began at first, and last at last.

So also those forms of Liturgy which now are most distasted, were brought in by the most zealous religious people at the first: The many short invocations, versicles and responses which the people use, were brought in when the souls of the faithful did abound with zeal, and in holy fervours break out into such expressions, and could not well endure to be bare auditors, and not vocally

cally to bear their part in the praises of God, and prayers of the Church. And in time those very words which signified their raptures, were used by formal hypocrites without their zeal who first exprest them; and so being mortified, and made dead Images and used but by rote, in a senseless canting among the Papists, and also forced upon others; it is now become a point of *zeal* to *avoid* them, and take them as *unlawful*, and it is a great reason; because they are in the Mass-book: when the Mass-book received them from the predecessors of many of *those men* that now refuse them: But though indeed the highest expressions of zeal and rapture, are most lothsome when they are counterfeited and turned into a meer lifeless form: Yet it is the privation of life which is the fault of the Image, and not the thing as in itself. Restore the same spirit to those words, and they will be as good as they were at the beginning.

I might instance in most of the Popish superstitions, and shew you, that for the most part, it was the godliest sort of people of that age, who at first did either set them up, or that which did occasion them; and that the hypocrite after made them his Religion, taking up the form without the life, and that upon this the godly of after ages did abhor them.

But what is my inference from all this? Why first, I would advise you, to look more to the nature of the things themselves, and less to the persons; and regard the honour of humanity, if you regard not the honour of Religion; and make not the Infidel world deride you, while they see you

you alter your opinions and practise in meer opposition to one another ; and to take up and lay down as the two ends of the ballance move, which must be contrary to each other. Secondly, that you truly understand what interest such zealous persons as your selves had in those opinions, forms and practises at the first, that if you will
 " avoid them for *some mens* sake, you may think the better of them for *other mens* : so far as to bring
 " you to some impartiality. Thirdly that you suspect that zeal in your selves, which you think so much miscarried in your ancestors.

I do not take all that I have mentioned for *superstition*, but I shew you the circulation which *zeal*, and *formality* and *malignity* make, both in things warrantable and unwarrantable.

But especially take heed of that which is true *superstition* indeed : By which here I mean, the making of any new parts of Religion to our selves, and fathering them upon God, who never made them. Of this there are two sorts, *Positive* and *Negative* : When we falsely say, *This is a Duty commanded by God* ; or when we falsely say, *This is a sin forbidden by God*. Take heed of both. I do not speak here of *doing* or *not-doing* the same things upon any other account (as humane duties, or meer conveniences or the like) but as they are falsely pretended to be *Divine*.

For first, this is properly a *belying* of God, and that adding to his word (whether precepts or prohibitions) which he hath so strictly forbidden us. *Jer. 5. 12. Deut. 12. 32.*

Secondly, it *debaseth* Religion objectively
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considered, as mixture of base mettals debaseth the Kings coyn: To joyn things humane with things *divine*, and say they are *Divine* when they are not, is putting of dung into the treasuries of God. Nothing will be found fit for Divine reverence and honour, which is not Divine indeed.

Thirdly, it corrupteth Religion in the *minds of men*; and causeth them to fear where no fear is, and to be devout erroneously: As if one should mistake the person of the King, and give his honour to another who is like him: or should run into a play-house to do his devotion, and think that he is in the Church. *Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship. Joh. 4. 22.*

Fourthly, This *superstition* tendeth to destroy true Religion, by gratifying and increasing aversion and opposition; by making it seem an unlovely tiresome thing. All that is truly of God is *Rational* and *amiable*, and wisely contrived for our good: And the enemies of Godliness, have not a word of solid Reason, to say against it: But that which is brought in by *corrupters* may be confuted: And *unnecessary* things become a burden, *Act. 15. 28.* What a toilsome task doth Popery contain? of positives and negatives? ceremonies, and austerities, and useless labours? And then they that take their pilgrimages, and penances, and night-risings, and multiplied formalities to be a burden, and hear them called by the name of Religion, do account Religion it self a burden, as taking this to be a part of it: And when Religion is not loved it is lost. To make it seem bad and unlovely, is the way by which the devil destroyeth it in the world.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, *Superstition* is the great dividing engine, which satan useth to cut the Churches of Christ into Sects and pieces; and consequently to stir up party against party, to the hating and persecuting of one another: For while some take that for Religion which is none; others will see their error and avoid it: And thus the division will lay the foundation of disputes and quarrels, of enmity and opposition. For who can think that all the Churches should ever be so blind and slavish, as to take up that as a part of Religion, and a divine institution, which was forged by the private spirit of some erroneous person of an overheated brain.

Sixthly, Lastly, *Superstition* much displeaseth God; and maketh us sinners, even in that, in which we think especially to honour him. *Math. 15. 9. In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men:* Though God in mercy can distinguish between his own and ours, and doth not count the whole worship to be in vain, where any degree of superstition is mixed (For then most zealous persons were undone;) yet the *superstitious* part of worship is alwayes in vain; and all the rest is made as vain, where that is the predominant and denominating part. Thus *over-doing* is *undoing*, and thus the superstitious are (materially) *righteous overmuch*. And not only much cost and pains is lost, but the soul corrupted, the Church divided, Religion debased and endangered and God displeased, by ignorant zeal.

Here note to prevent mistakes; First, that as God is related to our actions, either as the effi-
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cient commanding, or as the *final* cause; so there is a double superstition; One (which is the greatest as comprehending the other) when that which God never commanded or forbade, is feigned to be commanded or forbidden by him: The other when we feign him *finally* to be pleased with a Religious worship of our own invention, though we confess it to have no higher an original than our selves.

Secondly, That the *matter* of this later sort of superstition is either that which God *forbidderh* and so is *displeased with*; or that which he hath made and holdeth *indifferent*; and so is neither pleased or displeased with, in any moral consideration, in it self considered. He that offereth God a *sacrifice* of *sin* (or things prohibited) or of a worthless and indifferent thing, and taketh God to be *pleased* with the later, or *not displeased* with the former, doth indeed displease him by either of these conceits. And the *general prohibition* of not *adding* or *diminishing*, rightly understood, may notifie things as under the former head.

Thirdly, But it is no superstition to hold a good thing to be good; a bad thing to be bad; or an indifferent thing to be indifferent.

Fourthly, Nor yet to determine of those circumstances of worship which God hath left to humane determination; being made necessary *in genere* by nature or scripture: Nor yet to judge that God is pleased with such a prudent determination.

Fifthly, it is not superstition to do the same material thing, which another doth superstitiously;

ously ; if we have not the same superstitious conceit of it as he hath. If a Papist should anoint the sick, as a Sacrament, and a Protestant do it as a medicine, the former is superstition, and not the later. And so in other things.

Sixthly, Whether that indifferent thing remain indifferent to our use, which others use to superstition, is a case which a judicious collation of circumstances must determine. His superstitious use doth not make it simply a sin in any other, who hath none of his false conceits and ends : (else some superstitious persons so abusing meat and drink and cloaths, and all things in the world might make all things become unlawful to us : or at least deprive us of all our liberty in things indifferent.)

Seventhly, If we avoid *another's superstition* as to the *form* or *intention* which maketh it superstition, and this as a sin, we do well : If we avoid the *matter* it self which he useth superstitiously, because it is by him made *scandalous*, we do our duty, when it is *scandalous indeed*, & no contrary greater accident maketh it *our duty*. But if we take it to be *simply superstition* or *sin*, to do materially the same action, which a superstitious person doth we are *superstitious* in avoiding his *superstitious act*.

For instance, a Papist visiteth the Lady of *Lanretto* as a divine duty : This is superstition : A Protestant goeth thither upon lawful and necessary business : This is no superstition : Another Protestant who hath no necessary business there, avoideth it that he may not be *scandalous* and encourage others to it. This is well done. A Sectary thinketh it *superstition* or other sin, simply to

go thither what ever his *necessity* or *intention* be : This is superstition : Or a feigning God to forbid that which he forbiddeth not.

A Papist fasteth on Friday, or avoideth flesh in Lent as a *Divine duty* : *superstitiously* : A Protestant fasteth the same day ; because an Act of Parliament commandeth it , which renounceth the Papists religious end ; Or because his Physician prescribeth it as necessary for his health. This is not superstition. Another Protestant avoideth it through necessity for his health : And another in Popish Countries avoideth it only as *scandalous* : Neither of these are superstitious. Another fasteth on a Friday for his own necessity or convenience , as a time which he may lawfully choose. And another fasteth on a Friday ; because the Master of the family, or the Pastors of the Church , have appointed a fast on that day. This is no superstition. A Sectary thinketh that it is superstition or some other sin to fast the same day that the Papists do, because the Papists do it *superstitiously*. This is superstition (unless in the case of scandal as aforesaid.)

The multitudes of superstitions by which the *Papists* or *any others*, have corrupted and debased the *Christian Religion*, I shall not now digress to mention ; But only touch upon a few instances , of the *superstitions* of *these godly persons of this age*, to whom I am now writing : To shew them, that it is the *Religious sort*, that are the common beginners of superstition, by *over-doing*, out of a mistaken zeal, or fear of sinning.

I refer the Reader to *Bilson* for full proof.

But here again I must first crave the patience of

of those that love not error better than information; and desire them not to be too angry with me for telling them what I confidently hold, though it differ from the opinions of many whom I greatly reverence and honour; while I profess withall that I do it not in a Magisterial imposing way, nor as slighting the persons from whom I differ, but as offering my brethren that Light which I think needful to their own and to the Churches cure: And I will thank them if they will do the like by me, if I be guilty of any superstitious error.

First, the Scripture telleth us of no *Church-Elders* but what were *ordained*; and of none but such as were of the same *Office* with the preaching Pastors or Elders: of none that had not authority to baptize and administer the Lords supper: Nor doth Church-history tell us of any other as a Divine office. But when one Assembly had many Elders or Pastors, those that were best gifted for publike Sermons did preach; and the rest did help to rule the Church, and to catechize, and instruct and visit particular families and persons, and other parts of the office, as there was cause. But now we have concluded that there is a *distinct office* of Ruling-Elders, who need not be *ordained*, and who have no power to baptize or to administer the *Lords Supper*. This I think is a *superstition*: For we feign God to have made a *Church-office* which he never made. And though we must honour and hold *Communion* with the Churches which have this blemish; yet still it cannot be freed from *superstition*.

Secondly, God hath required nothing but *profession*

session of the Baptismal Covenant, to prove a mans title to his enterance and priviledges in the *universal Church*: And a *consent* to our *Relation* to the *particular Churches*, to our membership in them. But mistaking-zeal hath accounted this too loose a way, and hath devised stricter terms: Many must have other proofs of Godliness, besides the *understanding, voluntary assent and consent* to the *Baptismal Covenant*: Yea of those that are in the *universal Church* already; before they can be admitted to its priviledges, or to a *particular Church*. And which is worse, they here give the Church no *certain rule*, instead of Christs rule, which they cast by: But one man requireth one account, and another requireth another; and the rule and test doth vary as the charity or prudence of men do vary. This is a *superstition*, which hath already torn the Churches in pieces, and is going on still to do worse: And its raised by mistaking-zeal.

Thirdly, that none that at the same time or before are not entered members of some *particular Church*, may by *Baptism* be entered into the *Universal Church*; is a *superstition*, which some good men have taken up.

Fourthly, that he who is a member only of the *Universal Church*, may not *in transitu* be admitted to communion with *particular Churches*, unless he bring a *Certificate* from a *particular Church* of which he sometime was a Member.

Fifthly, that the Pastor may not lawfully receive any member into a *particular Church* without the consent of the *Major Part* of the people.

Sixthly, that a Minister of Christ may not by *Baptism* receive any into the *Universal Church*, but by the consent of the *Major Vote* of some particular Church.

Seventhly, that no man is a Minister or Commissioned Officer of Christ, for the discipling and baptizing of those *without* the Church, unless he be also the Pastor of some particular Church (or at least have been such.)

Eighthly, that the people do not only chosse the persons who shall be *their Pastors*, but also give them their *office* or power.

Ninthly, that the people have the power of the *Keyes*, or of Church Government, by *Vote*.

Tenthly, that the people of a particular Church, do give authority to men to be *Ministers* in the *Universal Church*, and to *preach* and baptize among those that are *without*.

Eleventhly, that he that is a member of one Church, may not *communicate* with any other, but by the consent of the *Pastor* and people of *that* one.

Twelfthly, That he that is a member of a Church may not *remove* his relation to another Church, (when his occasions and personal benefit require it, and the publick good of many is not hurt by it) without the consent of the Pastor and people of that Church.

Thirteenthly, that it is simply unlawful to use a form of prayer, or to read a prayer on a book.

Fourteenthly, That if a School-master *impose* a form upon a schollar, or a parent on a child, it maketh it become unlawful.

Fifteenth-

Fifteenth, that our *presence* maketh us guilty of all the errors or unmeet expressions of the Minister in publick worship: At least if we be-fore know of them. And therefore that we must joyn with none whose errors or mis-expressions, we know of before.

Sixteenth, that as oft as a Minister is removed from his particular flock, he becometh but a private man, and is no longer a Minister and Officer of Christ.

Seventeenth, that we are guilty of the sins of all unworthy or scandalous Communicants if we communicate with them: Though their admission is not by our fault.

Eighteenth, that he whose judgement is against a *Diocesan Church*, may not lawfully joyn with a *Parish Church*; if the Minister be but subject to the *Diocesan*.

Nineteenth, that whatsoever is unlawfully commanded is not lawful to be obeyed.

Twenty, that it is unlawful to do any thing in the worship of God which is imposed by men, and is not commanded it self in the Scripture (As what Translation of the Scripture shall be read; what meetre and what Tune of Psalms shall be in use; what hour and at what place the Church shall meet; Pulpits, Tables, Fonts, &c. Printing the Bible, &c. dividing it into Chapters, verses, &c.)

These and more such as these are *superstitions* which some religious people have brought up.

And among those who are of another opinion, & wil speak against all the fore-mentioned superstitions,

stitutions, there are too many introduced, which they are as fond of, because they are their own.

As that all the Pastors of the Protestant Churches abroad, who had only the election of the people and the ordination of Parochial Pastours, and not of Diocesan Bishops, are no true Ministers of Christ, but Lay-men.

That therefore those Churches are no true Churches (in a political sense, and as organized.)

That therefore their Baptism is unlawful, and a nullity, and all those nations are not baptized Christians. (Though the Papists who hold the validity of Lay-mens baptizing, do here censure more easily.)

That it is not lawful to communicate in such Churches, and receive the Sacrament of the Lords supper from such Ministers.

That those Countries which are baptized by such, should be rebaptized.

That those Ministers who are ordained by such, should be re-ordained.

That it is unlawful to joyn with those Churches, where the Minister prayeth only from a *Habit* of prayer (called *extemporary*) without a fore-known form; because they know not but he may put somewhat unlawful into his prayers; and because the mind cannot so readily try and approve and consent to words, which are hastily uttered, and not known to the hearers before.

These and abundance other superstitions some men would introduce on the other side. And by all such inventions fathered upon God, and made a part of Religion, the minds of men are corrupted

ted and disquieted, and the Churches disturbed and divided; by departing from primitive simplicity.

I shall only now propose this to the consideration of those of the first sort.

Whether they are sure that these superstitions of theirs may not run the round as other superstitions have done before them? Or some of them at least? What if the next age should turn them into a dead formality? And what if the next age after that should make Laws to enforce them? And then Godly people first scruple them, and then flye from them as discerned superstition? And then the worst men be glad of that advantage to persecute those that would not submit to them? By this circulation, if the same men who invented *un-ordained Elders, new and needless Church-Covenants, &c.* could but live two or 300 years; they might come to be among the number of those who cry out of them as *superstitious*, and suffer persecution because they will not use them.

Yea there are among you now many things of a lower nature, which some dare scarce plainly say, God commandeth or forbideth, and yet they are censorious enough about them: As heretofore many were against wearing the hair of any considerable length; Against wearing cuffs upon a day of humiliation: Against dressing meat or feasting at least, on the Lords day (which is a day of Thanksgiving of divine institution) and held, That it is necessary to feast twice at least, upon a day of Thanksgiving (of mans appointment:) That a Minister should not lift up his eyes, much less kneel down to signify his

private prayer, when he goeth into the Pulpit. Nor any other when they enter into the Church : That no prayer may be used, and no Psalm sung in our common mixt Assemblies, which have any expressions, which all both good and bad may not fitly use as for themselves : That no Minister may use notes in preaching to help his memory. That the sacramental bread and wine must not (say some) or must (say others) be delivered by the Minister into each mans hand. That no gesture but sitting is lawful at the sacrament. That it is unlawful to wear a Gown in divine worship, if it be commanded : That it is unlawful to keep any anniversary day of humiliation or thanksgiving of mans appointment : That just such and such hours for family worship must be observed by all : Or as others say, that no set times or number of family prayers are to be observed. That it is not lawful to preach or hear a sermon upon a humane holiday. With abundance more such, (about phrases, and gestures, and fashions of apparel, and customes, &c.) I am not at all now accusing these opinions of superstition, nor telling you whether I take them to be right or wrong : Much less would I perswade any to make no conscience how they order these or any other the smallest circumstances of their lives. Obedience must extend to the smallest parts of the lawes of God. But I am shewing you the circular course of many religious people in the world. Suppose now that the next age should make strict lawes for every one of your own opinions, in all these points. And that the Religious people should then scruple them, because they are

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imposed: And that the Rulers then should make their Lawes more strict, and that all the common people should take up these opinions, and all that sort of men that first were zealous for them, should turn against them, because the common people are for them; and should call them Popish superstitions, and should suffer imprisonment rather than conform to them; I pray you tell me if you fore-saw all this, what is it you would advise a sober Christian to do, in such a time and case as that? Would you have the same men that now are for these opinions, cry out against them, and censure all as superstitious who are for them: and separate from them; and rejoyce in their sufferings on that account? Why I tell you that many of the customes and practises in the Church, which you now thus avoid as superstition, were brought in at the first thus, by the most Religious sort of people: And yet it is now accounted by many, a necessary part of Religion to avoid them: And all because that men take up their opinions of such matters in Religion, from the estimation of the persons that are for them; and avoid those things with prejudice and scrupulosity, which are liked, or practised or commanded by those, whom they think ill of, and take for the adversaries of Religion. *v. p. 219.*

DIRECT. LIX.

If through the faults of either side or both, you cannot meet together in the same particular Church or place, yet preserve that unity in Faith, Love and practise, which all neighbour Churches should maintain with one another, and use not your different Assemblies to revile each other, and kill your Love.

ALL distances are undesirable and tend to more: But yet our Unity lyeth not so much in meeting in one place, as in being of one Mind, and Heart and Life: Many occasions may warrant our corporal distance; but Heart-divisions should be most avoided. It is the principles and motives upon which you withdraw, which are more considerable than the local distance.

Therefore on one side let us take heed how we *an church* and *unchristen* any with whom we do not corporally joyn: And on the other side, let us take heed how we revile them all as Sectaries and Separatists, who do not joyn with our assemblies: But let us know the reason of their practise before we peremptorily judge them.

I. Perhaps you think that such or such a Church-government, or Forms, or Ceremonies, are unwarrantable, and such and such oaths and subscriptions are unlawful, and therefore you cannot have local communion with the Churches that impose them. If it were so, yet take heed of accounting these no Churches of Christ, or pretending

tending that Christ disowneth and rejecteth them. If they cast out you by imposing any thing which you think is sin, yet take heed that you excommunicate not them. If there be a difference between a weak and culpable Christian, and no-Christian, there is a difference between a weak and culpable Church, and no-Church; And as there are innumerable degrees of good or evil, strength or weakness in particular Christians, so there is in Churches also.

You may perhaps find that another Minister is more profitable to you, and another Churches principles more pleasing to you, and their discipline better in your account: And therefore you think that you are bound, to choose the best for your personal Communion. Be it so: There is yet some modesty in these terms: But do not therefore conclude that Communion with that Church which you turn from is *simply unlawful*; or that *another* may not use it who can have no better! Or that you your selves should not rather joyn with that than with *none*? Or that you may not occasionally sometimes communicate with them, though your more ordinary communion be elsewhere. Nor do not disown all *spiritual* communion with them, though in body you are absent. But when ever you pray to God, go to him as a member of the Universal Church, and not of a Sect only: Pray for the whole Church, and desire a part in the prayers of the whole. Own them and their worship so far as Christ owneth them. While you disown their errors and failings, yet own their faith, and all that is sound in their prayers and worship; And

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see that you love them as members of Christ, who if weak are yet Christians, and perhaps in other respects better than you. (To say nothing whether it be they or you that are in the right.) You like not all that is done in the *Lutherans* Churches, much less in the *Greek* and *Ethiopian*: And yet I hope you disown not their spiritual communion as Churches though faulty, and as members of the same body. But if you are not content to choose an ordinary communion most suitable to your self, but you must conclude that such are no Ministers or no Churches of Christ: their worship is not accepted by him, it is not lawful to have communion with them, but rather to joyn with no Church, than with them; and will accordingly condemn them and irritate and alienate mens minds against them; Be sure that you prove well what you say, or wonder not if all wise and sober men do take this for downright odious schism, and one of the worst of the works of the flesh. *Gal. 5. 20, 21. 1 Cor. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4.*

II. On the other side if any withdraw from our Communion, let us not too hastily accuse them of schism: And when we do, let us well distinguish of schism, and not go further from them than they have gone from us, and to be our selves the Schismatics while we oppose it. There are many cases in which *local separation* may be lawful. First, As if our callings justly remove us to another place or Country. Secondly, If our spiritual advantage bind us to remove to a better Minister and more suitable society

ciety when we are free. Thirdly, if our lawful Pastors be turned out of the place, and we follow them, and turn away but from Usurpers. Fourthly, If the Pastors turn Hereticks or Wolves. Fifthly, If the publick good of the Churches require my removal. Sixthly, If any sin be imposed on me, and I be refused by the Church unless I will commit it. In these and some other such cases a remove is lawful.

And when it is *not lawful*, yet it may be but such a blemish in the departers, as the departers find in the Church which they depart from; which will on neither side dis-oblige them from Christian Love, and such Communion as is due with neighbour Churches.

There is a schism *from the Church*, and a schism *in the Church*: There is a schism from *almost all* the Churches in the world, and a schism from *some one or few* particular Churches. There is a separation upon *desperate intollerable principles and reasons*, and a separation upon some *weak but tollerable* ones. These must not be confounded. The Novatians were tolerated and loved by the sober Catholicks, Emperours and others; when many others were otherwise dealt with.

If any good Christians in zeal against sin, do erroneously think that an undisciplin'd Church should be forsaken, that they may exercise the discipline among themselves which Christ hath appointed; It is the duty of that Church to take this warning to repent of her neglect of discipline, and then to *love and honour* those that have (though upon mistake perhaps) withdrawn. But if when they have occasioned the withdrawing by
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their corruption, they will prosecute the persons with hatred, reviling, slanders, contempt or persecution, and continue impenitent in their own corruption, they will be the far greater Schismatics, and err a more pernicious error.

DIRECT. LX.

When the Love-killing spirit, either cruel or Dividing is abroad among Christians, be not idle nor discouraged spectators, nor betray the Churches Peace by a few lazy wishes; but make it a great part of your labour and Religion, to revive Love and peace, and to destroy their contraries: And let no censures or contempt of any Sect or party take you off: But account it an honour to be a Martyr for Love and Peace, as well as for the Faith.

OF all parts of Religion, (I know not how unhappily it comes to pass) men think that Negatives are sufficient for the service of Peace: If a man live not unpeaceably and do no man wrong, nor provoke any to wrath, this is thought a sufficient friend to peace. And therefore it is no wonder that Love and Peace so little prosper. When Satan and his instruments do all that they can by fraud and force against it, and we think it enough to stand by and do no harm. It is the Peace-makers that Christ pronounceth blessed, for
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