

BRISTOL EDUCATION SOCIETY.

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ANSWER

UNTO

APAPER

ENTITULED.

SEPARATION no SCHISM.

By a Friend to Truth and Raity among all the SAINT

Ephes. 4.3. Endeavouring to help the of the Spirit in the Bondo Tours

I John 2:19. They went out from us, &c.

Jude 19. Outol el ou oi amoslogi sovres édutés.

London, Printed in the Year 1665.



To the Brethren and Sisters, who have separated themselves from the Churches whereof they were Members.

Beloved Friends,

Intended to put this Answer privately into the hands of those Brethren, who are Authors of that little Book called S E-PARATION NO SCHISME. But considering, that you are very much conserned in this matter, and therefore may be de-Grous to know, what can be said in Answer thereto, I have printed some Copies thereof, to the end you may peruse the same. When you were convinced by the boly Spirit and word of Sod, that you ought to be baptized, and to walk in all the Commandments and Ordinances of God you prayed that God would send forth his Light and Truth, to lead you, and bring you to is Santtnary; and after solemn seeking of direion and guidance from God, you assayed to be oyned unto the Churches whereof you have been Members, and there you gave up your selves to re Lord, and unto them, according to the will

of the Lord; at which time you were fully perswaded, that God himself did set you there, and you judged it your duty there to continue, waiting upon God according to the Laws of his house, and your professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ. Now befeech you dear friends, consider what I say, dia you so solemnly, so seriously, and so diligently ask leave of God and bie Churches, to be admitted unto communion with them in the boly Ordinances of God? And should you have withdrawn from their communion, and separated your silves from those Churches where of you were members, without and against their leave? If some particular members did sin, and defile themselves, and the Church knowing of it. did suffer those defiling sixs to remain among it them and negletted to bring the fe members to repentance, or else, if after all means used for helping and healing of them, they obstinately held fast this sin and the Church did not put away these impenitent persons from their communion, y a should have bern your metness in the Church against such defiling sins, and defiled members, and have defired, yea and with tears bumbly intreated the Church to proceed against them according to the Laws of onr Lind fefus Christ: and if the Church refused yea and rather justified their evil, and so con traffed the guilt of their iniquity, yet you one h to have continued praying, and mourning i

secret for them, and maiting for their repentance, (as our Lord did for the repentance of the Church of Pergamus, and of Thyacira, Rev. 2. 16, 21, 22.) and ought not to have Separated your selves from, them, nor forsaken the Assembling of your selves together with them, Heb. 10. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25. untill for their impenitency our Lord felus Christ bad removed the Candlestick, and unchurched them; and then you ought to for lake them, and follow the Lamb wherefoever he goes; for you may and ought to flee out of Babylon, and deliver every man his own foul, and forsake ber, (because after all means used, she is not healed,) but you may not, ought not to Separate your selves from Zion, nor for-Sake her Assemblies; compare fer. 51. 5, 6, 7, 8,9,10. with Rev. 18. 2, 3, 4, 5, and chap. 14.1, 4, 5, and Ifa. 35.10. and Mich. 4.5.6, 7. Heb. 10. 21, 10, 25.

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Those Churches in this City from whom you have separated, are, and have been so far from defending any principles or practises which by the word of God appear to them to be desiling sins, that they have been, and are ready to hear any thing of that kind objected against any of their members, and to proceed against them

sponevidence according to Rule.

And yet you have we harawn and separated your selves, yea and have for faken those Churehes

ches, and declared that you could not hold communion with them, and have gone out from them, which is your sin, to be repented of. And some of you have also not only put your selves out of the Churches, where you were formerly fully persmaded God had joyned you, and from under the Ministry of Christ, unto whose care, watchfulness, and government, you submitted your selves, with professed subjection to the Laws of Christ, (when you nere admitted members of the Church) and gave up your Selves first unto the Lord, and then unto them according to the will of God, as you were then fully persuaded, but since your separation you have associated your selves with such assemblies and perfons, who are not the true Churches, nor the true Ministers of Christ according to Gospel constitution and order.

Thous whilft you have been desirous (and I am persmaded conscientions) to keep your selves clean. (as you speak) and free from those defling sins which you judge the Churches from whom you separated, to be guilty of you have (being missed by some of those chief leaders of this singul separation, who are the Authors of the foresaid book call'd Separation no Schism) defiled your selves by this separation with many sins. I. For any particular brother or sister to sepa-

rate from a true Church of Christ whereof they

are members, for fin and defibement, before they have

bave orderly proceeded to use all means appointed by Christ for the help and healing of the Church, it is a finful separation, [Andthis Icems to be the opinion of your Brethren and com-Panions, yea and chief leaders in separation, as appears to me by what they have said in the 7, 8,9. pages of their Book] and if your Brethren themselves do judge this a sinful separation, then how much more finfully have such of you done in separating your selves from such Churches of Christ, as you cannot (could not) justly charge with any of those defiling sins, and make the matter of charge fully out by clear proof and demonstration, as your Brethren advise, you should, and ought to do before you separate, pag. 8. conf. 4. and pag. 7. Rule 1. and Pag. 9. Rule 4. Wherefore consider how sinful your separation is, and repent, and acknowledg your evilin so doing, yea, and return again to the Lord and his Churches, from whom you are departed.

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2. You are guilty of sin in holding fellowship, and having communion in the Ordinances of God, with a society or assemblie of persons, who are not a true Church of Christ according to Gospel rule and order. Your Brethren (the Authors of Separation no Schim) cannot prove by Scripture their separated Assemblies or Societies to be the true Churches of Christ in

Gospel order. Rev. 3. 9. Rom. 10. 2.

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3. You

3. You are guilty of fin in partaking of the Ordinances of God administred by those brethren pho are not true Ministers of Christ, who have no true call and commission from him to dispense all the boly ordinances of the Gospel: but they are such as have caused divisions and offences contrary to the Dollrine of Christ, and you ought to avoid them, Rom. 16.17. And now if I shall become your enemy for telling you the truth, or be contemned, or reproached, for dealing thus plainly with you, endeavouring to undeceive you, and turn you from the error of your way, yet I hall heartsly love you, and earneftly pray and mourn in secret for you, and hope God will bless this my poor labour of love unto some of your souls. And convince you, yea and cause you to repent, and return unto the Churches from whom you have separated; Which shall be the prayers of him who is your Brother in the Faith of Christ, and your Companien in Suffering persecution for the Gospel of Christ.



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A VVitness against Irregular SEPARATION:

OR. An Answer unto a little Book,

Entituled .

Separation no Schism.

Have seriously read your Book, beloved Brethren, published under the Title of Separation no Schism; wherein you propose and discuss this Question, viz.

Whether a single person may orderly withdraw and separate from a Congregation for sin and defilement obstinately held fast by them?

The terms of the Question you have thus explained, fo far as I can collect out of your own words.

1. By a single person, you mean any particular Member of a Church; for you fay P. 6. Ans. 2. Then will it necessarily be a duty in-Eumbent cambent upon any particular Member----to withdraw and separate himself from the said

Congregation.

2. By a Congregation, you mean a true Congregational Church of Christ, for you fay p.7. Conf. 2. That separation from a Church (is of a trembling confideration) who is so dear and near to Christ--- and his Name being so consern'd in shem. And you fay, pag. 25. k12, 13. 14. The chief causes for separation from any (Church) that are right in the Forms and Ordi.

nances of God. &c.

3. By orderly withdrawing and separating, you mean, That a fingle person, or particular Member ought first to proceed in dealing with the Church according to the Law of Christ and the Rules of the Scripture in fuch a case; for you fay, p.7.1.3,4,5. The following Rules as much as in him lies, being conscientiously obferved by him, and the following Scripture. grounds in his eye for his faid practife. Also p. 9. the five last lines, and the 8. first lines of the tenth page, you fay, But if after such means used to convince and help the Church, there be yet an obstinate persisting in fin, defending the same, and running into a greater evil thereby then in obedience to the Lord-to declare a fe paration from them &c.

. A. By fin and defilement, you mean not eve ry fin, [for your fay, page 24. 1. 6,7,8. Th

Scriptures

Tel and the prints (3) per also Scriptures put a difference between sinning and sinning, worthy our consideration through every part of the subject] but some particular defiling fins, which you fay, pag. 25.1.12,13,14. are the causes in chief of separation from any that are right in the Forms and Ordinances of God; which particular defiling fins, you mention page 25, and 26. and make one of them 13,1 more especially the Standard of Separation, to wit, The denying and swearing away the Dominion of our Lord Jefus Christ, viz. The Headship or Lordship of him that bought them, p.25.1.25,26. to which I shall fay something in its proper place.

5. By obstinately held fast by them, you mean (as you fay p, o the latter end) An obstinate perfitting in the fin, and defending the Same, after such means used to convince and

belp the Church, Oc.

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If I have not mistaken your meaning in the explanation of the terms of the Question collected (as fully and faithfully as I could) out of your own words and expressions, here & there declared in your Book: The Separation (which you fay is no Schism) and the Affertion which you pretend to prove, is this, or to this purpofe, viz.

That any particular Member may orderly withdraw and separate from a true Church of Christ for some sins and defilements obstinately Be-

held fast by them.

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Before you give your positive Answer to the Question, or come to the proof of your Assertion, you seem to beg the Question, by what you have premised p. g. Ans. 1. and take it for granted, p. 6. Ans. 2. your words are these, That it being taken for granted that sin is contrasted, esponsed and held fast by a Congregation &c.

I grant, That the best Churches on earth are subject to have open and grievous sins break out among them. 2. That all such iniquities ought speedily to be redressed; and to that end, the Church ought to purge out that Leaven, either by bringing every guilty Member to repentance, or by casting out of the Church those particular Members who are impenitent, and obstinately hold fast their sin after all due means of restoring, helping and healing them,

have been used by the Church, &c

3. That it is the duty of every Member of that Church (where open and grievous fins break out among them) to endeavour to keep him or her felf from being defiled with those fits: And to that purpose, particular Members are, 1 To look to themselves, 2 70h 67. 8,9. And 2. To exhort one another daily, Heb. 3. 13. And 3. To tell the Church orderly of such Brethren and Sisters, whom they know to have committed such open and grievous sins, Matth. 18 17. And (4.) in case any open and grie-

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grievous finners be orderly brought before the Church, and their fin be made manifest, and the matter be fully made out by clear proof (as you advise, p. 8. Conf. s.) and if the Church should suffer such fins and sinners to remain in the Church, and to enjoy the holy Ordinan-14681 ces of God in full communion with them, and refuse or neglect to use such means to help and char heal those sinners, as Christ hath appointed to bring them to repentance, or to cast them out for their obstinate impenitency; then it is a duty necessarily incumbent upon any particular Member of that Church (so espousing that lin, by fuffering those obstinate and impenitent finners) orderly and humbly to bear their testimony in the Congregation against that 11 00 lin, and those finners; and so wait patiently until either they do repent, or else till Christ remove the Candlestick out of its place; and 15 10 when Christ shall take away their Churchstate, and so depart from that Church, then every particular Member ought to depart and forfake that Congregation, and any Member may, (yea and ought in obedience to God) follow Christ, forfaking that Congregation as a false Church, now apostated and fallen from Christ, and having provoked the Lord by their impenitency and obllingcy to depart from them.

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But that any particular Member may orderly (yea ought) withdraw and feparate from a true Church of Christ, right in the Forms and Ordinances of God, for fin and defilement, I do not grant, and shall examine how you proveit.

You propose page 10. those four-fold Scri-

ture grounds prefling the duty, viz.

1. The Scriptures positively, or by necessary consequence commanding it.

2. The Worthy Examples practifing it.

3. The threatned Judgements for neglect of it.

4. The engaging Promises encouraging it.

I. The Scriptures so commanding the Du-

ty, are,

2 Cor. 6.17. I acknowledge, that Separation is positively commanded in this Scripture, [Be ye separate] but that command was not given unto any particular Member to separate from the Church; for the Apostle writing to the whole Church (as the Temple of God, v. 16. collectively) exhorted them to be separated from Pagan-Idelaters, and gives them Divine Authority for their so being and abiding, (ver. 17. doos 3mte, which is the I. Aor. Imper pass. of doos some separated; and the like Separation was prophetically deadlared Isa. 52 II. which is more clearly explained Rev. 18 4. 10 wit, a separation from Babylon,

Babylon, not from a true Church of Christ, which is the thing that this Scripture is

brought to prove.

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2 Tim. 3. 5. 1 Tim. 6. 5. and 1 Tim. 5. ישני 22. Timothy was a Minister of Christ, expresly deputed by the Apostle (as Overseer of the church at Ephesus i Tim. 1. 3,4.) to dictate and direct in matters appertaining to Doctrine and Discipline, as appears I Tim. 3.14, 15. gar 1 Tim. 4.6, 7, 11, and 1 Tim. 5.19, 20. I presume therefore, you will not affirm, that the Scriptures by you here mentioned, do politively command a particular member (namely any Sister) to separate or withdraw her self ng ili from a true Church of Chrit; and how you can produce a necessary consequence from any rati one of, or all those places in Timothy which you have cited to prove it is a duty commanduse not ed, I know not, norcan I imagine.

Nor was Timothy commanded to withdraw and separate himself from any true Church of Christ, but to reject them, who having a form of godhness, were such notorious sinners as are described, 2 Tim. 3.1,2 3.4,5. The command ver. 5. is, [nouroutes smoletare] and reject thou them, (notturn away from them, but rether turn them away) that is to say, cast them out of the Church, or excommunicate them; and so for that other Text, viz. 1 Tim 6.4,5. The Evangelist was commanded to withdraw from

from such persons as were men of corruptions and destitute of the truth, &c. [dos. suso did two tollow withdraw from such. And what is this to prove, that any particular Mimber may withdraw and separate himself, or her self from a true Church, which is the

matter to be proved by you.

As for Timothy being charged or commanded not to be partaker of other mens fins, 1 Tim. 5 22. it hath its peculiar application to the words immediately going before, to wit, Lay hands suddenly of no man. And admit it hath not reference to those words, how doth it prove the point in hand? Will you argue thus: Timothy (a Minister of Christ, an Evangelist, and overseer of the Church of Ephesus) was commanded not to be partaker of other mens sins: Ergo, Any particular Member may withdraw and separate from a true Church of Christ, &c. Is this a necessary consequence? judge your selves.

and unto the Church in Thessalonica (even to the whole collectively and joyntly) to withdraw from every brother that walked disorderly. But here is no command given to any Brother or Sister to withdraw and separate himself or her self from the whole Church,

which is the matter still to be proved.

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Eph. 5. 7, 11. In this Epistle the Apostle orrol exhorted the Church of Saints in Ephefus, Not fat to walk as other Gentiles walked, chap. 4. ver. All 17. 18, 19. whose fins he declared, chap. 5. icult ver. 3. 4, 5. Thewing the danger thereof, ver. rafel 6, and ver. 7. faith, [mi oui sived's oumesto s the residution be not yetherefore partakers of those things, or, be not ye therefore partakers with man those Gentiles. And the 11. ver. is very adefins quate to both these versions, and wil fitly quaniol drate with them both, viz. First, with the wil things, And have no fellowship with the unit il fruitfulmorks of darkenss. Secondly, with those Joth persons, namely, the Gentiles afore-mentioned, red but reprove them rather, ver. 11. However here is no command given to any particular to member to withdrawand separate from the of Church of Ephefus, which is the matter to be em proved.

Rom. 16. 17. The Apostle exhorted the rue on. Brethren at Rome, that is to fay, the Church, the which is meant by that denotation, (as Alts 15. 22, 23. not Antioch) to mark them which caused divisions and offences contrary to the Doctrine of Christ, and to avoid them. But here is no command for any member to feparate from the Church. As for those Scritpures cited out of the old Testament, pag. 11. they have not any clear proof, nor can any necessary consequence be deducted from them to

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prove your opinion in this point; for, 1. The Church of the Jews was a National, not a Congregational Church. And, 2 They were not commanded to separate from that Church, untill God had given her a Bill of Divorcement

for her Idolacry, &cc. Hof. 2.1,2.

Doth the Prophet Geremiah command any particular Member to separate from a true Church of Christ in those places you have cited, p.11. to wit, fer. 50 8. & 51. 6. 45. 6.c. Was Babylon a true Church of Christ? And is the command given by the Prophet, unto the people of God, to come out of, and flee from Rabylon, a positive command to any particular Member to separate from a true Church of Christ? Canyou draw a necessary consequence from those Scriptures to prove it a duty fo to feparate?

Your second Scripture-ground for this your opinion is, The worthy Examples practifing it; or (as you word it, p. 10) Examples of particular persons actually separating, or shewing a difosition thereto. It appears, you cannot find (for you do not produce) any one Example in the New-Testament, of any particular Member that did either separate from a true Church of Christ, or thew a disposition thereto.

And as to the Examples you have produced out of the Old Testament, pag. 11. 12. they are no proof for your Opinion in this point of Separation.

For (1.) those particular persons were fome of them Prophets, as feremiah, David; others were Priests and Governors, as Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Levites; and others were chief Magistrates, as Moses, Samuel, Nehemiah, David; not any private Brethren and Sifters of a particular Church.

2. Those particular persons were Members of the National Church of the Jews under the Mosaical dispensation of the Law, not Members of a particular Congregational Church of Christians, under the administratinon of the Gospel, which is the subject of the Question in hand.

3. Those worthy persons did not withdraw and separate from the Church of God, nor did they shew any disposition thereto, but from such multitudes, assemblies of wicked men, who did forfake the Lord, his true Worship, and did fall to abominable Idolatry, after their own inventions, as some of the Scriptures cited pag. 11,12. do testifie, especially 2 Chron 11. 14, 15, 16, &c.

Your third Scripture-ground for your opinion of Separation, is, The Judgements threatwed for the neglect of it, p. 12. to this purpose you have cited several Scriptures, pag. 12, 13.

Rev. 18.9. and Fer. 51. 6. the Judgements there mentioned, are threatned against those B 2 people

people of God who negled to forfake Babylon, and is that a Scripture- ground for any particular Saint to forfake Zion, and to separate from the Church of Christ, whereof he is a member? And what is Corahs case, Numb. 16.26. Benjamins case, Judg. 19.20. Achans case, 7. fb. 7. 17. 12. or Ephraim's case, Hof. 5. 11. to the case in hand, viz. to prove, That it's the duty of a particular member to separate from a true Church of Christ?

And the other two Scriptures which you cite, do witness Ilrasls separation from God, Ifa. \$9.2, 3, 4. and fer. 7. 18,19. But what ground is that for a particular Member to fe-

parate from a true Church of Christ?

Your fourth Scripture-ground for separation from a true Church of Christ, is, The encouraging Primifes to the practifing of it, p. 13

There is not any one Promise in all those Scriptures which you have cited pag. 13, 14. that doch encourage fuch a separation of a parricular Member from a true Church of Christ, right in the Forms and Ordinances of God.

The Promises, 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18. were made to the Church of all the Saints in Corinth, to The encourage them to be, and abide separated from Pagan-Idolaters, and Idolatry, as was a Scripture? Do these Promises give encourage. before observed in the examination of that

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from a true Church of Christ? The promises Psal. 15.1,2,3,4,5. and Psal. 24.3,4,5 are more applicatory to any particular Members who abide in the house of God, than to any Brother or Sister that shall withdraw and separate from a rrue Church of Christ, right in the Forms and Ordinances of I God.

The Promises Ezek. 44.15,16. were made CH unto the Priests and Levites who kept the charge of the Lord in his Sanctuary. And is of this a Scripture-ground for any particular Member to separate from a true Church of Christ? Nor doth that Promise fer. 15.19.

prove any thing to this purpose.

The promised Blessings to Levi, Deut. 33. 18,12. and to Phineas, Numb. 25.11,12. were for executing Judgement impartially upon fome of the rebellious Ifraelites for their Ido-) platry, in joyning themselves to Baat-Peor, as appears Exod. 32. 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, & Num. 25. 1,2,3,4,11,12,13: & Pfal,106. 28,30, 31. And what encouragement is this to any particular Member to separate from a true Church of Christ?

And because you seem to lay much weight upon these promised bleffings to Levi, I will take the liberty to shew you how weak you prove your opinion and practife of Separation from thence, by proposing the Argu-

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mentation thereof, after this manner.

The Judges of Israel were commanded to flay the Israelites who had joyned themselves unto Baal Peor, Numb. 25.1, to 5. And

Phineas executed Judgement upon Zimri an Israelite, and Cosbi a Medianitish woman,

Numb. 25.6,7,8,14.

God promifed fingular Bleffings to Levi for observing his word, and keeping his Covenant, and for executing Judgement impartially upon his Brethren, and his own children, Deut. 33.8, to 12.

Therefore these Promises are encouragements and a Scripture-ground for any particular Brother or Sifter to separate from a true Church of Christ, &c. Doth this fellow from

thefe premises ?

The last Scripture you cite for the proof of your Opinion and Practife of Separation, is, Hof. 11.12. Indahruleth with God, and was

faithful with the Saints.

What encouraging Promise is there in this Scripture, unto the duty of Separation, which you precend to prove? Yea, what argument or necessary confequence can you make from these words, to prove, That any particular Member may orderly withdraw and separate from a true Church of Christ, right in the Forms and Ordinances of God, for fin and defilement obstinately held fast by them? which In is the point in hand.

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In pag. 14. you propound an objection, and

give three Answers unto it.

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To your first Answer, p. 14. 1. 8, 9, 10. I have felyt afore shewed, 1. That those single Persons that are commanded to separate, are not any pri-7, in vate or particular Brother or Sifter, but some Prophet, Levite, Prieft, King or Governor. 2. That they were not commanded to separate from a true Church of Christ, but from Babylon, from Idolaters, and from the Assemblies of wicked and ungodly men. 3. Those they separated from, were not right in the Forms and Ordinances of God, but fuch as had forfaken the right way of the Lord, and fallen away to Idolatry.

To your second Answer, p. 14. 1. 11, to 16. where you say, What was spoken to Churches,

was spoken to every member of them.

350 Rep. --- Although I confess, That every member ought to hear what the Spirit faith unto the Church; yet I do deny, that all the commands which are given to any Church of Christ rhis (conjunctim) collectively, are to be practifed ich by every particular member (divisim) severaleni ly. And I will instance in one of the Scriptures 001 which you have cited, p. 15. viz I Cor. 5.4, dat 5. 13. The church of Corinth (collectively) all when they were gathered together in the Name -be of our Lord Jesus Christ (Authoritatively) with the Power of the Lord Jesus Christ, was

commanded to deliver the incessuous person unto Satan, v. 4. 3. and to put away from amongst them that wicked person, v. 13. And although every Member of that Church was to hear what was spoken to the Church, yet no particular Brother or Sister was commanded to do this, neither might any particular Member of that Church, by virtue of the command given to the whole, take upon him or her the Power and Authority to Excommunicate and put away that wicked person. And the same may be said concerning the Election and Ordination of Ministers, and other Ministerial actions, which ought not to be performed by particular Members.

To your third Answer, p. 14,15. where you say, There will appear the same (if not greater) reason of the Separation of One from many, as of many from One, if the Ends thereof be confidered; whereof you mention eleven, p.

14.15.

I reply, 1st, In general.

What will your neak Reasoning signisse, when your Scripture-grounds proposed, do sail of sull proof (upon examination) as I have made plainly to appear? Seeing then the holy Scripture of Truth doth not warrant your Opinion and Practise of Separation, your Reason (being insurance) capnot justifie the same.

2dly, In particular.

Those Ends (which you propound) of separation in general, may be obtained without this unlawful separation of one particular brother or fifter from a true church of Christ, Go. which you so plead for, and cannot prove.

For, r. The Name of God may be fanction

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2. Holiness may be encouraged and promored.

- 3. Unholiness may be reproved and removed.
- 4. Gods Bleffing and Presence may be re-
- 5. Fallen fouls may be recovered and resto-

6. The clean way may be kept undefiled.

7. Union and communion may be continued.

8. Both the Church and Members may be preserved from wrathand judgement.

9. They may tellific true love to each other.

10. The World may be kept from just cause of offence, scandal and stumbling.

II. Others may hear and fear, &c.

All those Ends may be obtained by the church, her orderly admonishing, and reproving those particular brethren or fisters who walk disorderly.

2. By

2. By the Church her orderly withdraw-

ing from impenitent perfons.

3. By the Churches orderly excommunicating and putting away obstinate and impenitent finners.

Before I pass this, I must remind you of your former error now again repeated, of begging the Question; for I cannot grant that any of the faid Churches are guilty of the fins you charge them with; yet if they were, the Apostle hath taught us, That an evil action is not to be done, that good Ends may be obtained, in that known place, Rom. 3.8. Sanls punishment from the Lord for his rash offering facrifice, I Sam.13. is a sufficient instance in the cafe.

But you fay, p. 15. 1. 25, 26. All which bolding good in the case of One, will much

more hold good in many.

I take your meaning to be this, viz. If all those Ends hold good in the case of a true Church ber separating from any one particular member, they will much more hold good in the case of any one particular member's separating from atrue Church. And if this be not your meaning. I know not what you mean; Unto which I make this Reply, viz.

Rep. 1. All those Ends will hold good in a true Church, her orderly dealing with, admonishing of, withdrawing from, yea, and cast-

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ing out any One particular Member for sin obstinately held sast, &c. because a true church of Christ hath Authority and Power from Christ, and are expressy and positively commanded so to deal with, admonish, withdraw from, and to put away such impenitent and obstinate Members

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Rep. 2. None of all those ends wil holdgood in a particular brother or sister, his or her withdrawing and separating from a true Church of Christ for sin and desilement obstinately held fast by them, (if any true Church of Christ should so do, and could yet remain his true Church) because a particular private person, Brother or Sister, hath no Authority or power from Christ, nor is he or she commanded by Christ to withdraw and separate from a true Church of Christ

In the end of pag. 15. and the beginning of pag. 16. you propound another objection, which you branch into four parts, and give feveral Answers thereto: from pag. 16. to 29. wherein.

First you consess two sorts of evils were charged upon those Churches in Asia, which Christ reproved, viz. Herese, or false Doctrine, Apostacy or spiritual declension, pag. 16. the four last lines. But

Secondly you say, pag. 17: line 8.9, 10. That the Evils charged upon them were not a-

ny manifest breach of Morals, or publike

known insquity.

Rep. Was not the falling from her first love, a manifest Breach of that Moral Law of God, Deut. 6. 5. and Deut. 11. 1, 13, 22. and also a breach of that Royal Law of Christ, Matth. 22. 36. to 40. ver. & Pet. 1. 22. And her neglect of doing her first works was a transgression of the Lawes of Chrift, written Jam. 1. 22, 23. 25. Tit 3 8. Phil. 2.2. Alfotheluke-warmness and the vain boasting of the Church of the Laodiceans was transgression against the Law of our Lord Jefus Chrift, 2 Cor. 10. 15. 7am. 4. 16 Col. 2. 18. and a manifest breach of the Law of God, Dent. 10. 12, 13. So were those deeds which they were to repent of, Rev 2.21, 22 Nor were the evils charged upon the Churches of Thyatira feeret, for Christ blamed that Church and her Angel for fuffering them that did teach and seduce his servants (by their false doctrine) to commit fornication and to eat meat facrificed to Idols, Rev. 2. 20. &c.

To the second part of the objection, pag. 19. line 6. &c. But Christ owns them as Churches, for (or notwithstanding) all their defilements, having not removed his Candlestick

from them.

This part of the objection you do very plainly and fully confess, pag. 20. the two last

lines,

lines, your words are these, viz.

It is true, Christ owns them as Churches, having but newly discovered their sin, giving of them space to repent, but spon impenitioney 60 threatens to remove their Canalestick and unchurch them, and that quickly too, Rev. 25.

O my Brethrea ! had you deale thusingenioully all along in your Book, the point had

been out of Question.

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And were you yet so ingenious after this your confession of the truth, as to follow Christ sexample herein, and to wait patiently till Christ remove the Candleflick and unchurch any of his Churches, before you either separate fcht from them your felves, or thus groundiefly hole encourage others to withdraw and separate ,211 from them, Our controverfy would foon be at the an end, and your contention would ceafe. But med you are (that I fay no more) very difingenihem ous in this matter, for you have not only confessed the truth, pag. 20. ans. 2. the two last lines, and the three first lines of the 21 page, but you have also acknowledged that the practise of Christ herein is for our example in like cafes: pag. 18. the four last lines, and the four first lines of the 19. page; your words are, The manner of Christs dealing with them (to wit. the Churches in Asia) he 1. discovers and reproves. 2. Calls to repentance, for which he gives space; then threatneth, if they repent not, to with-

withdram, separate from, and fight against them with the sword of his mouth; and his practife herein is for our example in the like cafes, &c. And norwith standing both these confessions, you perfift through your whole Book to maintain your opinion and finful practife of separation from true Churches of Christ, before he have removed their Candleflick and unchurched them. Yea, and not only fo, but you do endeavour to cause divisions, and to make schisms in the Churches of Christ, by encouraging the particular members thereof to withdraw and separate from them, Afferting, that any particular member may, (yea, and that it is their duty so to do) withdraw and separate from a true Church of Christ for fin, &c.

But you say, pag. 20. line 23. 24, 25, 26. That it is the frequent and familiar practife of the Baptized Churches to receive members from the Independent Congregations Separating themselves for desilement in worship.

The Baptized Churches have received fome. who were members of the Independent congregations, but not upon this principle or opinion of separation from a true Church of Christ for fin and defilement. But

1. Some of those Members have been convinced, that they ought to be baptized, and being they could not enjoy, or be made parta-

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ker of that Ordinance of God according to the institution of Christ in that congregationwherof they were members, they defired leave of the Church to joyn with some other Congregation, where they might be baptized, and so dewho parting by consent, have been received into

for fome Baptized church.

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cheso 2. Some of the baptized churches do suppose, and! that the Independent congregations are not COM rightly constituted, and therefore think or are of opinion that they are not true churches of Christ according to the Gospel. And those bed churches have received severa lof the members of the Independent congregations; though aych. those particular persons have not so judged of the congregations from whence they departed as was beforefaid.

What my private opinion is of the Independent congregations, not only fome of them know, but most of the baptized Churches do also know, and my practise also in this particular case of receiving any of the members

of their congregations.

And whereas you fay in the same 20. pag. line 5.6 &c. That the writings and practife both offormer and latter dayes witnesses, the Waldenses, Wickliffians, Lutherans & Calvinists formerly; and the Brownists, Independents, OU and Baptists laterly, who have both in writing and practife maintained such separation, Ge. Repo

Rep. Will your faying (fuch) a separati. on, fave your credit, and make them the Patrons of your rigid and irregular separation, which is nothing fuch? I presume you cannot Thew many of their writings, where they justifie fuch a separation as you plead for, and practife. And if you could produce some pasfages in any of their writings in favour of your opinion, yet the consent of many in any opia nion in Religion wanting proof of Scripture, doth only render it to be a greater error, and the more dangerous to be received.

And for those Go dly Men of bleffed memory (namely, Mr. Burrowes, Mr. Cotton, and M. feffe) it's wel known they were neither of your opinion nor practife touching separation: nor do any of those places that you cite out of their Books, pag. 20. teltifie, that they were for fuch a separation, to wit, That a particular member may separate from a Church right in the forms and ordinances of God, for sin, Ge folong as Christ owns them for his Church, and bath not removed the Candleftick, nor unchurched them.

To the third part of the objection, pag. 21. line 4, 5, 6. viz. But it is faid in the third place. That here were those that kept clean notwithstanding in these defiled Churches.

And in your Answer 1. pag. 21. lin. 7. &c. you fry, Suppose there were such good men that keps

(29)

rat kept clean in abose defiled Churches, &c. And p in your fecond Answer, p. 21. 1. 16, 5. you fay, Let it also be minded what before was hin-noted, That Christ had but just aiscovered their. It sins, giving them admonition, and waiting for proper to own them as Churches, &c. And in your 3d Ans. p.22. 1.6, &c. you say, If is fronts be supposed here were such moral defile-with ments as suggested, yet would there be no neces-sity to conclude, That they were in full Communion with such a defiled Congregation, without proceeding with them for their sin; for it might be supposed (say you) That the clean Members bad manifested some Ast that might preserve their their purity, which must be some wirness as Rule, which they might do by exhorting, warning reproving mourning over them, waiting for their repentance.

Now, Brethren, you feem to be ingenious again, and that which you suppose, is most like to be the Truth, to wit, I. That those in Sardis who had not defiled their Garments, but were clean, did not separate themselves from the Church. 2. That they were watchful, and preserved their Purity, by witnessing against sin, according to Rule. And 3. That they were waiting (as Christ did) for their half Repentance. And if you would also be so inge-

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nious as to acknowledge, That those fem Names in London who have not defiled their Garments, (if you think there be any fuch) might likewife preferve their Purity, and keep themselves clean from desilement, by witnes. fing against sin according to Rule, and by waiting for their Brethren and the Churches Repentance, (according to Christs Example.) and yet (as you fay) own them for true Chur. ches until Christ remove their Candlestick, and not separate from them until our Lord Jesus have unchurched them for their impenitency, and obstinately holding fast their sin, notwithstanding Christs Admonitions and Reproofs; then (I say again) our controversie would be at an end, and your contention would ceafe. But you labour still for separation, and would have that granted which you cannot prove; and therefore query (in the next words p. 22, 1.22,23. 50.) Might they not proceed yet in a further degree, VIZ. Separating from them, and maiting apart, even in Sardis, in the same City. for their Repensance, and beyet reckened of them.

Rep. Oh how, you love Separation, and lean to your own opinion! And, how fain would you heg the Question, though under a plain contradiction? Consider what you say, Could those few Names in Sardis be separated from the Church, and yet bereckoned of the Church.

(27)

e AChurch at the same time, and that by Christ

the bimself?

But not satisfying your selves with this contradiction, you query again (in your next words, p. 22, & 23.) Might it not be underof stood according to Truth and our known Experience, That a Remnant or particular Socies polity in a great City, might keep clean, whilft other Congregations in the Same City are defiled As in Rome (were) several Churches, whereof selsome in private bouses, Rom. 16. 3, 4, 5. yes en reputed but one Church. The like in the City Colofs, where we read of a Church in Philemon's house, Phil. 2. yet both reputed but one Church, viz. the Church of the Coloffians, as it may be also said of the Church of God in London.

Rep. By this third Query you feem to affert, and affirm it to be according to truth and your experience, viz.

1. That there were more Churches than one even in Sardis, as there was in Rome, in

Colofs, and as there is in London.

2. That those few Names in Sardis who anhad not defiled their Garments, were a separafated Remnant, or a particular Society in that city, who kept themselves clean, whilst other Congregations in the same City were defiled.

3. That yet notwithstanding they were reckoned of them, & were all but one Church 146

of God, as it may be laid of the Church of

God in London.

This supposition of yours is no proof of your Opinion and Practife of Separation; for if among the Churches in Sardis some separate from the rest, as not to be communicated with, how then can the whole, (to wit, those that feparate, and those from whom they separate)

be accounted but One (hurch?

And if those separated from, are to be accounted a Church, as well as those that separate, then what means their separation? And what warrant from Christ, or what comfort or peace of Conscience can such separate Churches have in standing at such a distance from the other churches, themselves being still reputed one church with them. Is it according to truth, and may it be faid of the church of Godin London, I. That there are several churches in this great city. z. That those feveral churches are reputed but one church of God. 3. That there are a Remnant or particular Society in this great City, who keep clean, whilft the other congregations in the same city are defiled. 4. That although that Remnant or particular Society have separated themselves from all the defiled churches in London, yet they may be reckoned of them, and are all to be in truth reputed but one church , viz. the charch of God in Londow. And may it be for under

(29)

d understood (as you fay) according to truth, and our known experience, of those few names of in Sardis? And if it were fo in truth, will it hence follow . That any particular member rol may separate from a true Church of Christ for fin. &c. ? which is the matter in hand, and the Point ftill to be proved.

To the 4th part of the Objection, p.23. 1. ate 9.10. But Christ neither reproves for being there, nor commands to separate from them.

Unto which you give in effect this answer, eps' in the 19, & 20 lines of the 23. page, That commands having been plainly given in other places, we way not expelt that Christ should now

gol again repeat them.

R.p. You have not quoted one place of Scripture where Christ doth plainly command a particular Member to separate from a true for their Repentance, which was the case of those churches in Asia at that time, and for amy thing you have faid, or can fay to the contrary, this part of the Objection flands firm, and is true, viz. That notwi bftanding there were feveral defiling fins both in doctrine and conversation among some of those churches in Asia, and also, that some suffered those sins to remain amongst them; for which sins our Lord Jefus reproved those churches, and their Ministers, yea, and threatned them, if they did

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add impenitency to their fins; yet Christ owns them for his Churches, and doth neither reprove or blame any particular member for having communion with them: nor doth he commandany particular member to separate from those Churches of his, whilst he is waiting for their repentance and reformation: Christs practife herein (as you have acknowledged, pag. 19. line 2, 3. and pag. 20. the two last lines, and pag. 21 lin. 1.2, 3.) being for our example in like cases.

There remains one objection more, which you are pleased to propose pag. 23. and the end. Objection, But there are fins in these who separate, and particular agreements in writing, which we see no warrant for in the Scrip-

To the former part of this objection, you fay pag. 24. line 1, 2. True it is, in many things we offendall, &c. and pag. 26. line 19.20, 23, 24. and are men of like passions, it may be, with

these me separate from, &c.

It is well you are found acknowledging your selves men subject to like passions as other men, and i many things offenders, p should heartily rejoyce to see you cordial and thorow in fearthing and judging your own felves and wayes by the word of God, duly considered and rightly understood; especially and more particularly examining thereby the path

(31)

path of separation, wherein you run on so con fidently. But Ifear your consession is but matter of form, the more speciously to usher in your heavy and uncharitable (to say no morse) charge

and accusation of your brethren. 10 You further say, p. 24.1.5 6,7. The Scripof tures put a difference betwixt sinninger sinning, morthy our consideration through every part of of this subject, orc. and pag. 25. line 12.13, 144 d As causes in chief for separation from any that you nominate and innumerate p. 25. and 26. whichose heinous sins, viz. 1. Hakirual hypocrifle nd and want of uprightness manifested by double is mindedness not regarding the word of God shey have professed, nor the works of God they sen bave formerly owned. 2. Imbracing the prefent world in their oppertunity, and making a league of fellowship or confederacy with every finful his interest. 3. Denying, yea swearing away the Headship or Lordship of him that bought them, whaving lost their hearts for truth. 4. Presumptuous despisers of the Law of God. 5. Conformde ing in many ordinances of worship to the invenso tions of men, through divers lusts, against forget mer professed separation therefrom. 6. Openly ald smiting, and secretly supplanting their fellow offervants, who run not with them to the fame Dexcefs. These are the fins, which (you fay pig-25. line 12. 13, 14.) you desire carefully to ob-

ferve, as causes in chief of your separation, &c. Rep. I acknowledge these are very grievous

and God-provoking fins : And did I know a. ny congregation of professors to be guilty of those great iniquities, and the matter and charge of those fins made out by clear proof and demonstration, (as you advise before fe paration, pag. 8. Conf. 4.) and after all means used to help and heat that congregation there should be yet an obstinate persisting in those firs impenitently, and a deferding of the fame, (as you feem to make the cafe pag. 9. the five last lines,) I should conclude that that congregation is not a true (hurch of Christ, because they do not hold the head, Col 2. 19. bur are fenfual not having the Spirit walking after their own lufts, fade 16.10 And judging that Christ hath removed the Candleflick, and hath unchurched them, and forfaken them, I would also forfake them (as being a part of Mistical Babylon, fer. 15.8,9. 10.) and joyn my felf to fome true Church of Chrift, who is not poluted with thole defiling fins.

But, my Biethren, give me leave to tell you plainly, I do not believe that any one of the baptized (hurches in this City, (whereof you. or any of you were members, or with whom you formerly had, and held communion, and from whom you have withdrawn and separa.

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ted) are (or were then) guilty of those hainous fins. And you cannot justifie your separation from the Churches whereof you were members, upon your own declared grounds, unless you can make clear proof, and full demonstration, that they are guilty of those hainots fins, and that after you witneffed orderly against those wickednesses, and used all means to help and heal them, yet they perfifted obstinately, and impeniently to hold fast the same fins, and did defend them, and for an into great ter evil thereby; confider again your own thecal words, pag. 9. the five last lines, and the seven

fift lines of the 10. pag. of your Book.

Brethren, before I conclude this matter, I cannot but earnestly increat you to examine your own consciences, whether you do believe, that any of the faid Churches are guilty of those abominable fins mentioned by you; And not rather from many years experience have known them adhering to, and contending for the faith and worship once delivered to the Saints, And are at this day hazarding their defili All in maintaining and practifing the ordinances of chiff, according to the pattern deliveredby Christ and his Apolles. As also, that there hath been and is amongst them a tender regard to eof yo the power of Godliness, and the holy walking b who of their members; and that the only ground of all those bitter Invectives against them is, and Sepan hath

(34)

hath been, their not closing with you in fome new notions relating to Civil government, lately entertained, and unbrotherly, year

unwarrantably maintained by you.

And now having feriously considered and weighed all that you have faid in defence of your opinion and practife of separrtion, I do testifie agair ft you in this matter, and affirm, that your separation is a schisme; and I do also affert, that you who have written this Book. and do justifie it, have caused divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine of Christ; yea, and I do deny any of those societies or congregations which you, or any of you have planted, or gathered upon the separation you plead for and practife, to be true churches of Christ in Gospel order. And I do declare, that none of those baptized churches (who formerly joyned in publishing their confession of faich) ought to own your Assemblies as true churches of Christ, nor have Gospel communipion with you or them; but those churches whereof you were members, and from whom any of you withdrew and separated your felves thus disorderly and finfully, should rather mourn over you, and use the power that Christ hath given them to help and heal you,& fo reflore you again; confider 2 Chron. 28. 10. And now je purpose to keep under the childrn of Judah and Ferusalem for bondmen and bond. women

u momen unto you: but arethere not with you, even yel with you, fins against the Lord your God? Nor. gregations true Churches, which you fo much and (and with fo little strength of Scripture) plead

ofor: pag. 26. Ans. 2. and pag. 27.

I cannot but wonder greatly, Brethren, for find you pleading for mutual written Agreeallments, as of fuch excellent use, and so necessary for communion in the Churches of Saints unve opposed by the baptized Churches, because there is no Law, or command given by Christ or his Apostles, for making or requiring any fuch agreement or covenant as the Shibboleth of church communion; Nor president or example of any such thing (practifed by any of the Churches of Christ,) lest upon recording the new Testament. But you offer one text out of the new Testament. But you offer one text out tro of the new Testament, and say your written agreement is doubtless contained in that Scripche ture, (orat least a proof for it,) to wit, Rev. hol 14. 3, 4 the words are, And they Jung a new ou song before the Throne, and before the four Beasts, and the Elders: and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and fourty and four s thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they that are not defiled with momen, ist for they are Virgins; these are they which follow and the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: These were redeemed

redemed from among men, being the first fraise

unto God, and to the Lamb.

I have read the text and weighed every branch thereof, and yet I can understand no. thing in this Scripture to prove any written a greement, much less such an agreement as your is, and which you plead for, here is neither Name nor Thing. Were it any of the leaders or guides of the Baptized Churches, that should do such a thing, you would (at least some of you I fear would) with very great Indignation call it an Antichristian usurpation upon the consciences of men.

But a word or two to your Possicrip, pag. 28. This enseavour (you say) being from such as have deeply considered the season of it.

as well as the subject of it of.

Rep Alas, my bre hren, is this DAY of Jacobs trouble, a fit feason to cause divisions among the precious Saints of God, and to make separations and schisms in the churches of Christ?

You say, pag. 28 line 13, 14, 15. That you bave long conflicted herewith in tears before the Throne; with Travel of soul also in consultati-

on about this case (of sepration) &c.

Rep. These are good words, but I do heartily wish you in the bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ, Brethren, to examine the root of your schism and separation; Whether it be not spi-

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ritual pride, envy, affectation and defire of Domination; especially in some principal leaders of the party in this finful separation, who were formerly private members of those churthes, which for many years have been known and distinguished throughout these three Natios by their confession of faith often published and subscribed in the name, and by the consent and appointment of the faid churches. Unto which confession of faith the churchesthat you have separated from, and do now brand with the fore-mentioned hainous fins, (though vepory faifly) do yet, (for ought I know to the concrary) stedfastly adhere: And if so, it is you, (and not the Churches) who have A Postatized, and fallen, yea, departed from the faith which you therein confessed & projessed fo publikely, when you were (Ifay) private members of those churches; but fince that of olace years you have separated your selves from those churches, and have taken upon you to be s Principal leaders in that finful separation, you have caused divisions in other congregations also; and by those divisions, contentions, offences, and separations, which you have occafioned, you have gotten two or three focieties, which you call clean churches, and count undefiled congregations of separated Saints; And of private Brethren, are become publike Teachers, yea, and some of you have usurped

(38)

the Ministry of Christ, and take upon you to dispence all the holy ordinances of God, and exercise dominion over your Brethren and Sinters, as if you had commission, authority and power from Christ, his Church, and the holy Spirit of God soto do. But instead of rubbing this fore any longer, I shall conclude (as you do) Besecching you in the bowels of brotherly love, to read and consider those Scriptures, 2 Chron. 28. 10. Eph. 4.1,2,3,45,6 Phil. 2.1, 2, 3. Col. 3. 12, 13, 14, 15. 7 am. 3. 1, 2, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 ver.

The good Lord in mercy and pity to your precious fouls, open these Scriptures unto you and open your understanding also, and turn you from the error of your way of separation.

Amen, and Amen.

