

Richard Baxter's

Gildas Salvianus;
or
The Reformed Pastor

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Gildas Salvianus;

THE
REFORMED
PASTOR.

Shewing the nature of the Pastoral
work; Especially in Private Instruction
and Catechizing.

With an open CONFESSION of
our too open SINS.

Prepared for a day of Humiliation kept at
Worcester, Decemb. 4. 1655. by the Ministers
of that County, who subscribed the Agree-
ment for Catechizing and Personal Instru-
ction, at their entrance upon that work.

By their unworthy fellow-servant

Richard Baxter.

Teacher of the Church at *Kedderminster.*

Luke 12. 47 [Ε'κεῖνος δὲ ὁ δοῦλος ὁ γνοὺς τὸ θέλημα τοῦ
κυρίου ἑαυνοῦ, καὶ μὴ ἑτοιμάσας μηδὲ ποιήσας πρὸς τὸ
θέλημα αὐτοῦ, δαρήσεται πολλάς]

London, Printed by *Robert White*, for *Nevil Simmons*,
Book-seller at *Kedderminster*, and are to be sold by
William Roybould, at the Unicorn in *Pauls*
Church-Yard. 1656.



To my Reverend and Dearly
beloved Brethren, the faith-
ful Ministers of Christ, in
Brittain and Ireland, Grace
and Peace in Iesus Christ be
increased.

Reverend Brethren,



HE subject of this Treatise so nearly concerneth your selves and the Churches committed to your care, that it perswadeth and emboldeneth me to this address, notwithstanding the imperfections in the manner of handling it, and he consciousness of my great unworthiness to be your Monitor.

Before I come to my principal errand, I shall give you that account which I suppose I owe you, of the Reasons of his following work, and of the freedom of speech which to some may be displeasing.

When the Lord had awakened his Ministers in this County, and some neighbouring parts to a sense of their duty in the work of Catechizing, and private Instruction of all in their Parishes that would not obstinately refuse their help, and when they had subscribed an Agreement containing their Resolutions for the future performance of it, they judged it unmeet to enter upon the work, without a solemn humbling of their souls before the Lord, for their so long neglect of so great and necessary a duty: And therefore they agreed to meet together at Worcester, Decemb. 4. 1655. and there to joyn in such Humiliation, and in earnest Prayer to God for the pardon of our neglects, and for his special Assistance in the work that we had undertaken, and for the success of it with the People, whom we are engaged to instruct: At which time among others, I was desired by them to Preach: In answer to their desires I prepared the following Discourse; which though it proved longer then could be delivered in one or two Sermons, yet I intended to have entred upon it at that time, and to have delivered that which was most pertinent to the occasion, and to have reserved the rest to another season. But before the meeting, by the increase of my ordinary pain and weakness, I was disabled from going thither: To recompence which unwilling omission, I easily yielded to the requests of divers of the Brethren, forthwith to publish the things which I had prepared, that they might see that which they could not hear. If now it be objected, that I should not have spoken so plainly or sharply against the sins of the Ministry, or that I should not have published it to the view of the world, or at least that I should have done it in another tongue, and not in the ears of the vulgar, especially at such a time when
Quakers

Quakers and Papists are endeavouring to bring the Ministry into contempt, and the people are too prone to harken to their suggestions: *I confess I thought the Objection very considerable; but that it prevailed not to alter my resolutions, is to be ascribed to the following Reasons.* 1. *It was a purposed solemn Humiliation that we were agreed on, and that this was prepared and intended for. And how should we be humbled without a plain Confession of our sin?* 2. *It was principally our own sins that the Confession did concern; and who can be offended with us for confessing our own, and taking the blame and shame to our selves, which our consciences told us we ought to do.* 3. *I have excepted in our Confessions those that are not guilty: and therefore hope that I have injured none.* 4. *Having necessarily prepared it in the English tongue, I had no spare time to translate it.* 5. *Where the sin is open in the sight of the world, it is in vain to attempt to hide it.* 6. *And such attempts will but aggravate it, and increase our shame.* 7. *A free Confession is a condition of a full Remission; and when the sin is publike, the Confession must be publike. If the Ministers of England had sinned only in Latine, I would have made shift to have admonished them in Latine, or else have said nothing to them. But if they will sin in English, they must hear of it in English. Unpardoned sin will never let us rest or prosper, though we be at never so much care and cost to cover it: Our sin will surely find us out, though we find not it. The work of Confession is purposely to make known our sin, and freely to take the shame to our selves: And if he that confesseth and forsaketh be the man that shall have mercy, no wonder then if he that covereth it, prosper not, Prov. 28. 13. If we be so tender of our selves, and so*

loath to confess, God will be the less tender of us, and he will indite our Confessions for us. He will either force our Consciences to confession, or his Iudgements shall proclaim our iniquities to the world. Know we not how many malicious adversaries are day and night at work against us? Some openly revile us, and some in secret are laying the designs, and contriving that which others execute and are in expectation of a fuller stroak at us, which may subvert us at once. What is it but our sins that is the strength of all these enemies? Is not this evil from the ordering of the Lord? Till we are reconciled unto him we are never safe: He will never want a rod to scourge us by. The tongues of Quakers, and Papists, and many other sorts, are all at work to proclaim our sins, because we will not confess them our selves: Because we will not speak the truth, they will speak much more then the truth. Yet if we had man only to plead our cause with, perhaps we might do much to make it good: but while God accuseth us, how shall we be justified? and who shall hide our sins, when he will have them brought to light? And God is our Accuser, till we accuse our selves: but if we would Iudge our selves, he would not Iudge us. 8. The fire is already kindled which revealeth our sin: Iudgement is begun at the house of God. Hath the Ministry suffered nothing in England, Scotland, and Ireland? and have there been no attempts for their overthrow? Hath it not been put to the Vote in an Assembly that some called A Parliament of England, whether the whole frame of the stablished Ministry, and its legal maintenance should be taken down? and were we not put to plead our Title to that maintenance, as if we had been falling into the hands of Turks, that had thirsted for our subversion, as resolved enemies to the
Christian

Christian cause? And who knows not how many of these men are yet alive? and how high the same spirit yet is, and busily contriving the accomplishment of the same design? Shall we think that they have ceased their enterprise, because they are working more subtilly in the dark? What are the swarms of Railers at the Ministry, sent abroad the Land for, but to delude, exasperate and dis-affect the people, and turn the hearts of the children from their Fathers, that they may be ready to promote the main design? And is it not then our wisest course to see that God be our friend, and to do that which tendeth most to engage him in our defence? I think it is no time now to stand upon our credit, so far as to neglect our duty, and befriend our sins, and so provoke the Lord against us. It rather beseems us to fall down at the feet of our offended Lord, and to justify him in his Judgements, and freely and penitently to confess our transgressions, and to resolve upon a speedy and through reformation, before wrath break out upon us, which will leave us no remedy. Its time to make up all breaches between us and Heaven, when we stand in such necessity of the Divine Protection? For how can an impenitent unreformed people expect to be sheltered by Holiness it self? It is a stubborn child, that under the rod will refuse to confess his faults; When it is not the least use of the rod to extort confession. We feel much: we fear more; and all's for sin: and yet are we so hardly drawn to a Confession? 9. The world already knows that we are sinners: As none can suppose us perfect, so our particular sins are too apparent to the world: And is it not meet then that they should see that we are Penitent sinners? It is sure a greater credit to us to be Penitent sinners, then impenitent sinners: and one of the two we shall be

while we are on earth. Certainly as Repentance is necessary to the recovery of our Peace with God, so is it also to the reparation of our credit with wise and godly men: It is befriending and excusing our sin that is our shame indeed, and leadeth towards everlasting shame; which the shame of Penitent confession would prevent.

10. Our Penitent Confession and speedy Reformation are the means that must silence the reproaching adversaries. He is impudently inhumane that will reproach men with their sins, that bewail them and penitently charge them upon themselves. Such men have a promise of pardon from God; and shall men take us by the throat when God forgiveth us? Who dare condemn us, when God shall justify us? Who shall lay that to our charge, which God hath declared that he will not charge us with? When sin is truly Repented of by Gospel indulgence, it ceaseth to be ours. What readier way then can we imagine to free us from the shame of it, then to shame our selves for it in Penitent Confessions, and to break off from it by speedy reformation? 11. The Leaders of the Flock must be exemplary to the rest; and therefore in this duty as well as in any other. It is not our part only to teach them Repentance, but to go before them in the exercise of it our selves: As far as we excell them in Knowledge and other Gifts, so far should we also excell them in this and other Graces. 12. Too many that have set their hand to this sacred work do so obstinately proceed in Self-seeking, Negligence, Pride, Division, and other sins, that it is become our necessary duty to admonish them. If we could see that such would reform without reproof, we could gladly forbear the publishing of their faults. But when reproofs themselves do prove so uneffectual, that they are more offended at the reproof then at the sin, and had rather that we should

should cease reproving, then themselves should cease sinning, I think it is time to sharpen the remedy. For what else should we do? To give up our Brethren as incurable were cruelty, as long as there are further means to be used. We must not hate them, but plainly rebuke them, and not suffer sin upon them, Lev. 19. 17. And to bear with the vices of the Ministers, is to promote the ruine of the Church. For what speedyer way is there for the depraving and undoing of the people, then the pravity of their Guides? And how can we more effectually further a Reformation, (which we are so much obliged to do) then by endeavouring the Reforming of the Leaders of the Church? Surely Brethren, if it be our duty to endeavour to cast out those Ministers that are Negligent, Scandalous and Unfit for the work, and if we think this so necessary to the reformation of the Church (as no doubt it is) it must needs be our Duty to endeavour to heal the sins of others; and to use a much gentler remedy to them that are guilty of a less degree of sin: If other mens sin deserveth an ejection, sure ours deserve and require plain reproof. For my part I have done as I would be done by: and it is for God and the safety of the Church, and in tender Love to the Brethren whom I do adventure to reprehend; Not (as others) to make them contemptible and odious, but to heal the evils that would make them so: That so no enemy may find this matter of reproach among us. But especially because our faithful endeavours are of so great necessity to the welfare of the Church and the saving of mens souls, that it will not consist with a love to either (in a predominant sort) to be negligent our selves, or silently to connive at, and comply with the negligent. If thousands of you were in a leaking ship, and those that
should

should pump out the water and stop the leaks, should be sporting or asleep, yea or but favour themselves in their labours, to the hazarding of you all, would you not awake them to their work, and call out on them to labour as for your lives? and if you used some sharpness and importunity with the sloathful, would you think that man were well in his wits that would take it ill of you, and accuse you of pride, self-conceitedness, or unmannerly-ness, to presume to talk so sawcily to your fellow workmen? or should tell you that you wrong them by diminishing their reputation? Would you not say, The work must be done, or we are all dead men: is the ship ready to sink, and do you talk of Reputation? or had you rather hazard your self and us, then hear of your sloathfulness? This is our case, Brethren! The work of God must needs be done! souls must not perish while you mind your worldly business, or observe the tide and times, and take your ease, or quarrel with your Brethren! nor must we be silent while men are hastened by you to perdition, and the Church to greater danger and confusion, for fear of seeming too uncivil and unmannerly with you, or displeasing your impatient souls! Would you be but as impatient with your sins as with reproofs, you should hear no more from us, but we should be all agreed! But neither God nor good men will let you alone in such sins. Yet if you had betaken your selves to another calling, and would sin to your selves only, and would perish alone, we should not have so much necessity of molesting you, as now we have: But if you will enter into the office, which is for the necessary preservation of us all, so that by letting you alone in your sin, we must give up the Church to apparent loss and hazard; blame us not if we talk to you more freely than you would have us do.

do. If your own body be sick, and you will despise the remedy, or if your own house be on fire, and you will be singing or quarrelling in the streets, I can possibly bear it, and let you alone (which yet in charity I should not easily do.) But if you will undertake to be the Physician of an Hospital, or to all the Town that is infected with the plague, or will undertake to quench all the fires that shall be kindled in the Town, there is no bearing with your remissness, how much soever it may displease you: Take it how you will, you must be told of it: and if that will not serve, you must be yet closelyer told of it: and if that will not serve, if you be rejected as well as reprehended, you must thank your selves. I speak all this to none but the guilty: And thus I have given you those Reasons which forced me even in plain English to publish so much of the sins of the Ministry as in the following Treatise I have done. And I suppose the more penitent and humble any are, and the more desirous of the truest Reformation of the Church, the more easily and fully will they approve such free confessions and reprehensions.

THE second sort of objections against this free Confession of sin, I expect to hear from the several parties whose sins are here confessed. Most of them can be willing that others be blamed, so they might be justified themselves. I can truly say, that what I have here spoken hath been as impartially as I could, and not as a party, nor as siding with any, but as owning the common Christian cause, and as somewhat sensible of the apparent wrongs that have been offered to common truth and godliness, and the hinderances of mens salvation, and
of

of the happiness of the Church. But I find it impossible to avoid the offending of guilty men. For there is no way of avoiding it, but by our silence, or their patience: And silent we cannot be, because of Gods commands: and Patient they cannot be, because of their guilt and partiality, and the interest that their sin hath got in their affections: I still except those humble men, that are willing to know the worst of themselves, and love the light, that their deeds may be made manifest, and long to know their sins that they may for sake them, and their duty that they may perform it.

Some its like will be offended with me, that I blame them so much for the neglect of that Discipline, which they have disputed for so long. But what remedy? If Discipline were not of God, or if it were unnecessary to the Church, or if it were enough to dispute for duty, while we deliberately refuse to perform it, then would I have given these Brethren no offence.

Some its like will be offended that I mention with disallowance the Separatists or Anabaptists, as I understand some are offended much that I so mentioned them in an Epistle before the Quakers Catechism, as if they opened the door to the Apostacy of these times; and they say that by this it appeareth that while I pretend so much Zeal for the Unity of the Church, I intend and endeavour the contrary. To which I answer: 1. Is it indeed a sign that a man loveth not the Unity of the Saints, because he loveth not their dis-union and division? Who can escape the censure of such men, but he that can unite the Saints by dividing them? 2. I never intended in urging the Peace and Unity of the Saints, to approve of any thing which I judged to be a sin, nor to tye my own tongue or other mens from seasonable contra-
dicting

dicting it. Is there no way to peace but by participating of mens sin? The thing I desire is this: 1. That we might all consider how far we may hold Communion together, even in the same Congregations, notwithstanding our different opinions; and to agree not to withdraw where it may possibly be avoided. 2. But where it cannot, that yet we may consult how far we may hold Communion in distinct Congregations: and to avoid that, no further then is of meer necessity. And 3. and principally, to consult and agree upon certain Rules, for the management of our differences in such a manner, as may be least to the disadvantage of the common Christian truths which are acknowledged by us all. Thus far would I seek peace with Arminians, Antinomians, Anabaptists, or any that hold the foundation. Yea and in the two last, I would not refuse to consult on accomodation with moderate Papists themselves, if their Principles were not against such consultations and accommodations: and I should judge it a course which God will better approve of, then to proceed by carnal contrivances to undermine their adversaries, or by cruel murders to root them out, which are their ordinary courses. I remember that Godly, Orthodox, Peaceable man, Bishop Usher, (lately deceased) tels us in his Sermon at Wansted, for the Unity of the Church, that he made a motion to the Papist, Priests in Ireland; that, because it was ignorance of the common principles that was like to be the undoing of the common people, more then the holding of the points which we differ in, therefore both parties should agree to teach them some Catechism containing those common principles of Religion which are acknowledged by us all: But jealousies and carnal counsels would not permit them to harken to this motion.

3. And

3. And as concerning that Epistle before my papers to the Quakers, I further answer; that by Separatists there I plainly mean Church-dividers: even all that make unnecessary Divisions in or from the Churches of Christ; whom the Apostle so earnestly beseecheth us to mark and avoid, Rom. 16. 17. and which he calleth them carnal for, and so earnestly contendeth against, 1 Cor. 1. and 2. and 3. and in many other places in his Epistles. And if this be a tolerable sin, then the Unity of the Church is not a necessary thing; and then the Apostles would never have condemned this sin as they have done. Do we all so sensibly smart by the effects of these sins, and is the Church of Christ among us brought into such a torn and endangered condition by them, so that we are in no small danger of falling all into the hands of the common adversaries? Is so hopeful and chargeable a Reformation so far frustrated by these men; and yet must we not open our mouths to tell them of it? May we not tell them of it, when we are bleeding by their hands? Is it tolerable in them to cut and wound, and let out our blood, and is it unpeaceableness in us to tell them that we suffer by them, and to beseech them to repent and to have compassion on the Church of Christ? Must we be patient to be ruined by them, and have they not the patience to hear of it? What remedy? Let them be silent that dare; for I profess I dare not. I must tell them that this height of Pride hath been in their Ancestors a Concomitant of Schism. A poor Drunkard or Swearer will more patiently hear of his sin, then many that we hope are godly will of theirs, when once they are tainted with this sin. But godliness was never made to be the credit of mens sins: Nor is sin to be let alone, or well thought of, when it can but get in-

to

to a godly man. Shall we hate them most, whom we are bound to love best? and shall we shew it by forbearing our plain rebuke, and suffering their sin upon them? It must not be: How ever they take it in their sick distemper, it must not be. No man that erreth doth think that he erreth: These men are confident themselves that they are in the right. But the sober prudent servants of Christ, that have escaped their disease, do see their error; and England feeleth it, and that at the very heart: What, must we die by their hand, and our very heart blood be let out, and the Gospel delivered up to the adversaries, before they will believe that they have done us wrong, or before they will endure to hear us tell them of it? If the ages to come do not say more against the waies of these mistaken men, then I have done in that Epistle: and if either Mercy or Iudgement do not bring them one day to think or speak more sharply of themselves; then I must confess my self quite out in my prognosticks.

Another sort that will be offended with me, are some of the Divines of the Prelatical way: whom I had no mind to offend, nor to dishonour: But if necessary duty will do it; What remedy? If they cannot bear with just admonition, I must bear with their impatience. But I must tell them, that I spoke not by hear-say, but from sight and feeling. Its more tolerable in an English-man to speak such things, that hath seen the sad work that was made in England, the silencing of most godly, able men, the persecution even of the peaceable, the discountenance of godliness, and the insulting scorn of the prophanest in the Land, then for a forrainer that hath known of this but by hearsay. When we remember what a sort of Ministers the Land abounded with, while the
ablest

ablest and most diligent men were cast out, (of which matters we cannot be ignorant, if there were no records remaining of their attested accusations) we must needs take leave to tell the world that the souls of men and the welfare of the Church were not so contemptible in our eyes, as that we should have no sense of these things, or should manifest no dislike of them, nor once invite the guilty to repent. And if you think my language harsh, I will transcribe some words of a far wiser man, and leave it to your consideration how far they concern the present case, or justifie my free and plain expressions.

Gildas de excid. Britan. edit. Polid. Virgil. sub fine.
 [Quid plura? I ertur vobis in medium Matthaëi in confusionem vestram, exemplum, sanctorum quoq; Apostolorum electione, vel iudicio Christi, non propria voluntate sortiti, ad quod caeci effecti non videtis, quia longè à meritis ejus distatis, dum in morem & affectum Judæ traditoris sponte corruitis. Apparet ergo eum qui vos sacerdotes sciens ex corde, dicit non esse eximium Christianum. Sanè quod sentio, proferam. Posset quidem lenior fieri increpatio, sed quid prodest vulnus manu tantum palpare, unguentove ungere, quod tumore jam vel faetore sibi horrescens cauterio, & publico ignis medicamine eget? Si tamen ullo modo sanari possit, ægro nequaquam medelam quaerente & ob hoc medico longius recedente. O inimici Dei, & non Sacerdotes ô licitatores malorum, & non pontifices; traditores, & non sanctorum Apostolorum successores; impugnatores, & non Christi Ministri. Auscultastis quidem secundæ lectionis Apostoli Pauli verborum sonum, sed nullo modo monita virtutemq; servastis, & simulachrorum more, quæ non vident,

vident, neq; audiunt, eodem die alteriastitistis, licet ille tune & quotidie vobis intonaret. Fratres, fidelis sermo est, & omni acceptione dignus. Ille dixit, fidelem, & dignum, vos ut infidelem & indignum spre-
vistis. Si quis Episcopatum cupit, bonum opus cupit. Vos Episcopatum magnoperè avaritiae gratia, non spiritalis profectus obtentu, cupitis, & bonum opus illi condignum nequaquam habetis. Oportet ergo hujusmodi irreprehensibilem esse: In hoc namq; sermone lachrymis magis, quam verbis opus est, ac si dixisset Apostolus eum esse omnibus irreprehensibiliorem debere. Unius uxoris virum. Quid ita apud nos, quoq; contemnitur, quasi non audiretur vel idem dicere. Et virum uxoris sobrium, prudentem? Quis etiam ex vobis hoc aliquando in esse sibi saltem optavit. Hospitalem? Id forte casu evenerit, popularis aerae potius, quam praecepti gratiâ factum. Non prodest, Domino salvatore ita dicente. Amen dico vobis, receperunt mercedem suam. Ornatum, non vinolentum, non percussorem, sed modestum, non litigiosum, non cupidum? O feralis immutatio, ô horrenda praeceptorum coelestium conculcatio; nonne infatigabiliter ad-haec expugnanda, vel potius obruenda actuum verborumq; arma corripitis, pro quibus conservandis, atq; firmandis, si necesse fuisset, & poena ultro subeunda, & vita ponenda erat? sed videamus & sequentia. Domum suam (inquit) benè regentem, filios habentem, subditos in omni castitate. Ergo imperfecta est patrum castitas, si non item & filiorum accumulatur? Sed quid erit, ubi nec pater, nec filius, mali genitoris exemplo privatus, conspicitur castus? Si quis autem domui suae praeesse nescit, quomodo Ecclesiae Dei diligentiam adhibebit? Haec sunt verba

quæ indubitatis affectibus approbantur. Diaconos similiter pudicos, non bilingues, non vino multo deditos, non turpelucrum sectantes, habentes ministerium fidei, in conscientia pura. Hi autem probentur primum, & sic ministrent nullum crimen habentes. His nimirum horrescens diu immorari, unum veridice possum dicere. Quin haec omnia in contrarios actus mutantur, ita ut clerici quod non absque dolore cordis fateor, impudici, bilingues, ebrii, turpis lucri cupidi, habentes fidem, & ut verius dicam, infidelitatem, in conscientia impura, non probati in bono, sed in malo praesciti ministrantes, & innumera crimina habentes, sacro ministerio adsciscantur. Audistis etiam illo die, quo multo dignius, multoque rectius erat, ut ad carcerem vel catastam poenalem quam ad sacerdotium traheremini domino scitante, quem se esse putarunt discipuli, Petrum respondisse. Tu es Christus filius Dei, ei; dominum pro tali confessione, dixisse. Beatus es Simon Barjona, quia caro & sanguis non revelavit tibi, sed pater meus, qui in coelis est. Ergo Petrus à Deo Patre doctus rectè Christum consitetur. Vos autem moniti à patre vestro Diabolo iniquè, salvatorem malis actibus denegatis. Vero sacerdoti dicitur: tu es Petrus, & super hanc petram, ædificabo ecclesiam meam. Vos quidem assimilamini viro stulto, qui aedificavit domum suam, super arenam. Notandum vero est, quod insipientibus in aedificanda domo, arenarum pendulae mobilitati Dominus non cooperatur, secundum illud. Fecerunt sibi reges; & non per me. Itidemque quod sequitur eadem sonat dicendo. Et portae Inferi non praevallebunt, ejusque peccata intelliguntur. De vestra quidem exitiabili factura pronunciantur. Venerunt flumina, flaverunt venti, & im-
pegerunt

pegerunt in domum illam, & cecidit, & fuit ruina ejus magna. Petro ejusque successoribus dicit Dominus, & tibi dabo claves regni coelorum. Vobis vero; Non novi vos, discedite à me, operarii iniquitatis, ut separati sinistrae partis hoedi eatis in ignem aeternum. Itemq; omni sancto sacerdoti promittitur. Et quaecunque solveris super terram, erunt soluta & in coelis; & quaecunq; ligaveris super terram, erunt ligata & in coelis. Sed quomodo vos aliquid solvetis, ut sit solutum, & in coelis, à coelo ob scelera adempti, & immanium peccatorum funibus compediti? Ut Solomon quoque ait, funiculis peccatorum suorum unusquisq; constringitur. Qua ratione aliquid in terra ligabitis, quod supra mundum etiam ligetur, propter vosmetipsos, qui ita ligati iniquitatibus, in hoc mundo tenemini, ut in coelis nequaquam ascendatis, sed in infausta tartari ergastula non conversi in hac vita ad dominum, decedatis. Nec sibi quisquam sacerdotum de corporis mundi solum conscientia supplaudeat, cum eorum quibus praeest, si propter ejus imperitiam, seu desidiam, seu adulationem, perierint, in die judicii de ejusdem manibus veluti interfectoris animae exquirantur. Quia nec dulcior mors, quam quae infertur ab unoquoq; homineq; malo, alioquin non dixisset Apostolus velut paternum legatum suis successoribus derelinquens. Mundus ego sum ab omnium sanguine, non enim subterfugi, quo minus annuntiarem vobis omne ministerium Dei. Multum namq; usu ac frequentia peccatorum inebriati, & incessanter irruentibus vobis scelerum cumulatorum, acsi undis quassati, unam veluti post naufragium, in qua ad vivorum terram evadatis, poenitentiae tabulam toto animae nisu exquirite, ut avertatur furor Domini à vo-

bis, misericorditer dicentis, nolo mortem peccatoris, sed ut convertatur & vivat. Ipse omnipotens Deus totius consolationis & misericordiae paucissimos bonos pastores conservet ab omni malo, & municipes faciat civitatis Hierusalem coelestis, hoc est sanctorum omnium congregationis, Pater & Filius & spiritus sanctus, cui sit honor & gloria in secula seculorum. Amen.

If the English translation of this book (for translated it is long ago) do fall into the hands of the vulgar, they will see what language the Brittish Clergy received from one that was neither a censorious railer, nor schismatically self-opinionated.

Perhaps some will say, that the matter is not much amended, when in former times we were almost all of a mind, and now we have so many Religions, that we know not well whether we have any at all. Answ.

1. *Every different opinion is not another Religion.*
2. *This is the common Popish argument against Reformation, as if it were better that men believed nothing fide divina, then enquire after truth, for fear of misbelief: And as if they would have all ungodly, that they might be all of a mind. I am sure that the most of the people in England where ever I came, did make Religion, and the reading of Scripture, or speaking of the way to heaven, the matter of their bitter scorn and reproach. And would you have us all of that mind again, for fear of differences! A charitable wish!*
3. *If others run into the other extream, will that be any excuse to you? Christs Church hath alwaies suffered between profane Unbelievers, and Heretical dividers, as he suffered himself on the Cross between two thieves. And will the sin of one excuse the other?*

4. And

4. *And yet I must say, (lest I be impiously blind and ungrateful) that through the great mercy of God, the matter is so far amended, that many hundred drunken, swearing, ignorant, negligent, scandalous Ministers are cast out; and we have many humble, godly, painful teachers in a County for a few that we had before. This is so visibly true, that when the godly are feasted, who formerly were almost famished, and beaten for going abroad to beg their bread, you can hardly by all your arguments or Rhetorick perswade them that the times are no better with them then they were; though men of another Nation may possibly believe you in such reports. I bless God for the change that I see in this Countrey; and among the people, even in my own charge; which is such as will not permit me to believe, that the case is as bad with them as formerly it hath been. I say with Minutius Fœlix, p. 401. (mihi) Quid ingrati sumus? quid nobis invidemus? Si veritas divinitatis nostri temporis aetate maturuit. Fruamur nostro bono; Et recti sententiam temperemus: cohibeatur superstitio: impietas expietur: religio servetur. It is the sinful unhappiness of some mens minds, that they can hardly think well of the best words or waies of those whom they disaffect: And they usually disaffect those that cross them in their corrupt proceedings, and plainly tell them of their faults: And they are ready to judge of the reprovers spirit by their own, and to think that all such sharp reproofs proceed from some disaffection to their persons, or partial opposition to the opinions which they hold: And therefore they will seldom regard the reproofs of any, but those of their own party; who will seldom deal plainly with them, because they are of their party. But plain dealers are*

alwaies approved in the end: And the time is at hand when you shall confess, that those were your truest friends. He that will deal plainly against your sins, in uprightness and honesty, will deal as plainly for you against the sins of any that would injure you: For he speaks not against sin, because it is yours, but because it is sin. It is an observable passage that is reported by many, and Printed by one, how the late King Charls, (who by the Bishops instigation had kept Mr. Prin so long in prison, and twice cropt his ears, for writing against their Masks and Plaies, and the high and hard proceedings of the Prelates) when he read his notable voluminous speech for an acceptance of the Kings Concessions, and an agreement with him thereupon, did, not long before his death deliver the Book to a friend that stood by him, saying, Take this Book: I give it thee as a Legacy: and believe it, this Gentleman is the Cato of the Age. The time will come when plain dealing will have a better Construction, then it hath while prejudice doth turn the heart against it.

I shall stand no longer on the Apologetical part: I think the foregoing Objections being answered, there is no great need of more of this. The Title of the Book it self is Apologetical (which if I tell you not, I may well expect that some of my old ingenuous Interpreter; should put another sense upon it) I pretend not to the Sapience of Gildas, nor to the Sanctity of Salvian (as to the degree:) but by their names I offer you an excuse for plain dealing. If it was used in a much greater measure, by men so wise and holy as these, why should it in a lower measure be dis-allowed in another? At least from hence I have this encouragement, that the plain dealing of Gildas and Salvian being so much approved

Proved by us now they are dead, how much soever they might be despised or hated while they were living, by them whom they did reprove, at the worst I may expect some such success in times to come.

But my principal business is yet behind. I must now take the boldness, Brethren, to become your Monitor concerning some of the necessary duties, of which I have spoken in the ensuing discourse: If any of you should charge me with arrogancy or immodesty, for this attempt, as if hereby I accused you of negligence, or judged my self sufficient to admonish you; I crave your candid interpretation of my boldness, assuring you that I obey not the counsel of my flesh herein, but displease my self as much as some of you; and had rather have the ease and peace of silence, if it would stand with duty and the Churches good. But it is the meer necessity of the souls of men, and my desire of their salvation, and the prosperity of the Church, which forceth me to this Arrogancy and Immodesty, if so it must be called. For who that hath a tongue can be silent, when it is for the honour of God, the welfare of his Church, and the everlasting happiness of so many persons?

1. And the first and main matter which I have to propound to you, is, Whether it be not the unquestionable duty of the generality of Ministers in these three Nations, to set themselves presently to the work of Catechizing, and Personal Instructing all that are to be taught by them, who will be perswaded to submit thereunto? I need not here stand to prove it, having sufficiently done it in the following discourse. Can you think that holy wisdom will gain-say it? Will zeal for God, will delight in his service, or love to the souls of men gain-say it? 1. That people must be taught the Principles

ciples of Religion, and matters of greatest necessity to salvation, is past doubt among us. 2. And that they must be taught it in the most edifying advantageous way, I hope we are agreed? 3. And that personal Conference, and Examination, and Instruction, hath many excellent advantages for their good, is beyond dispute, and afterward manifested. 4. As also that personal Instruction is commended to us by Scripture, and the practices of the servants of Christ, and approved by the godly of all ages, so far as I can find without contradiction. 5. It is past doubt that we should perform this great duty to all the people, or as many as we can: For our love and care of their souls must extend to all. If there be a 1000. or 500. ignorant people in your Parish, it is a poor discharge of your duty now and then occasionally to speak to some few of them, and let the rest alone in their ignorance, if you are able to afford them help. 6. And it is as certain that so great a work as this is, should take up a considerable part of our time. 7. And as certain is it, that all duties should be done in order, as far as may be, and therefore should have their appointed times. And if we are agreed to practise according to these commonly acknowledged truths, we need not differ upon any doubtful circumstances.

Obj. We teach them in publike; and how then are we bound to teach them man by man besides?

Answ. You pray for them in Publike: Must you not also pray for them in private? Paul taught every man, and exhorted every man, and that both publicly and from house to house, night and day with tears. The necessity and benefits afterward mentioned prove it to be your duty. But what need we add more, when experience speaks

speaks so loud? I am daily forced to admire, how lamentably ignorant many of our people are, that have seemed diligent hearers of me this ten or twelve years, while I spoke as plainly as I was able to speak! Some know not that each person in the Trinity is God; Nor that Christ is God and man; Nor that he took his humane nature into heaven; Nor many the like necessary principles of our faith. Yea some that come constantly to private meetings are found grosly ignorant: Whereas in one hours familiar instruction of them in private, they seem to understand more, and better entertain it, then they did in all their lives before.

Obj. But what obligation lyeth on us to tye our selves to certain daies for the performance of this work?

Answ. This is like the Libertines plea against family prayer. They ask, where are we bound to pray morning and evening? Doth not the nature and end of the duty plainly tell you that an appointed time conduceth to the orderly successful performance of it? How can people tell when to come if the time be not made known? You will have a fixed day for a Lecture, because people cannot else tell when to come without a particular notice for each day: And it is as necessary here, because this must be a constant duty, as well as that.

Obj. But we have many other businesses that sometimes may interrupt the course.

Answ. Weightyer business may put by our preaching, even on the Lords day; but we must not therefore neglect our constant observance ordinarily of that day: And so it is here. If you have so much greater business, that you cannot ordinarily have time to do the Ministerial work, you should not undertake the office:

For Ministers are men separated to the Gospel of Christ, and must give themselves wholly to these things.

Obj. All the Parish are not the Church, nor do I take the Pastoral charge of them, and therefore I am not satisfied that I am bound to take this pains with them.

Answ. I will pass by the question, Whether all the Parish be to be taken for your Church: because in some places it is so, and in others not. But let the negative be supposed: Yet 1. The common maintenance which most receive, is for Teaching the whole Parish, though you be not obliged to take them all for a Church. 2. What need we look for a stronger obligation, then the common bond that lyeth on all Christians, to further the work of mens salvation, and the good of the Church, and the honour of God, to the utmost of their power: together with the common bond that is on all Ministers, to further these ends by Ministerial teaching to the utmost of their power? Is it a work so good, and apparently conducing to so great benefits to the souls of men, and yet can you perceive no obligation to the doing of it?

Obj. But why may not occasional Conference and Instructions serve the turn?

*Answ. I partly know what occasional conferences are compared to this duty, having tryed both. Will it satisfie you to deal with one person of 20. or 40. or an hundred, and to pass by all the rest? Occasional conferences fall out seldom, and but with few; and (which is worst of all) are seldom managed so thoroughly, as these must be. When I speak to a man that cometh to me purposely on that business, he will better give me
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leave to examine him, and deal closely with him, then when it falls in on the by: And most occasional conferences fall out before others, where plain dealing will not be taken so well. But so much is said afterward to these and several other Objections, that I shall add no more.

I do now in the behalf of Christ, and for the sake of his Church, and the immortal souls of men, beseech all the faithful Ministers of Christ, that they will presently and effectually fall upon this work. Combine for an unanimous performance of it, that it may more easily procure the submission of your people. But if there should be found any so blind or vile as to oppose it, or dissent, God forbid that other Ministers should because of that forbear their duties. I am far from presuming to prescribe you Rules or Forms, or so much as to motion to you to tread in our steps, in any circumstances where a difference is tolerable, or to use the same Catechism or Exhortation as we do: Only fall presently and closely to the work. If there should be any of so proud or malicious a mind, as to withdraw from so great a duty, because they would not seem to be our followers, or drawn to it by us, when as they would have approved it, if it had risen from themselves; I advise such, as they love their everlasting peace, to make out to Christ for a cure of such cankered minds; and let them know that this duty hath its rise neither from them nor us, but from the Lord; and is generally approved by his Church: And for my part, let them, and spare not, tread me in the dirt, and let me be as vile in their eyes as they please, so they will but harken to God and reason, and fall upon the work, that our hopes of a more common salvation of men, and of a true Reformation

tion of the Church may be revived. I must confess I find by some experience that this is the work that must Reform indeed; that must expell our common prevailing ignorance; that must bow the stubborn hearts of men; that must answer their vain objections; and take off their prejudice; that must reconcile their hearts to faithful Ministers; and help on the success of our publike preaching; and must make true godliness a commoner thing, through the Grace of God, which worketh by means. I find that we never took the rightest course to demolish the Kingdom of Darkness till now. I do admire at my self, how I was kept off from so clear and excellent a duty so long. But I doubt not but other mens case is as mine was. I was long convinced of it, but my apprehensions of the difficulties were too great, and my apprehensions of the duty too small, and so I was hindred long from the performance. I thought that the people would but have scorned it, and none but a few that had least need would have submitted to it: and the thing seemed strange: and I stayed till the people were better prepared; and I thought my strength would never go through with it, having so great burdens on me before: and thus I was long detained in delays, which I beseech the Lord of mercy to forgive. Whereas upon tryal, I find the difficulties almost nothing (save only through my extraordinary bodily weakness) to that which I imagined; and I find the benefits and comforts of the work to be such, as that I profess I would not wish that I had forborn it, for all the Riches in the world (as for my self.) We spend Monday and Tuesday from morning to almost night in the work; (besides a Chappelrie catechized by another assistant) taking about 15. or 16. families in a week
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(that we may go through the Parish (which hath above 800. families) in a year:) and I cannot say yet that one family hath refused to come to me, nor but few persons excused and shifted it off. And I find more outward signs of success with most that come, then of all my publike preaching to them. If you say, It is not so in most places: I answer, 1. I wish that be not much long of our selves. 2. If some refuse your help, that will not excuse you for not affording it to them that would accept it. If you ask me, what course I take for order and expedition; I have after told you: In a word; at the delivery of the Catechisms, I take a Catalogue of all the persons of understanding in the Parish: and the Clark goeth a week before to every family to tell them when to come, and at what hour (one family at 8. a Clock, the next at 9. and the next at ten, &c.) And I am forced by the number to deal with a whole family at once; but admit not any of another to be present (ordinarily.)

Brethren, do I now invite you to this work, without God, without the consent of all antiquity, without the consent of the Reformed Divines or without the conviction of your own consciences? See what our late Assembly speak occasionally, in the Directory, about the visitation of the sick, It is the duty of the Minister not only to teach the people committed to his charge in publike, but Privately and Particularly to admonish, exhort, reprove and comfort them upon all seasonable occasions, so far as his time, strength, and personal safety will permit. He is to admonish them in time of health to prepare for death: And for that purpose, they are often to confer with their Minister about the estate of their souls, &c. Read this
over

over again and consider it. Harken to God if you would have peace with God: Harken to conscience if you would have peace of conscience. I am resolved to deal plainly with you, if I displease you: It is an unlikely thing that there should be a heart that is sincerely devoted to God in the breast of that man, that after advertisements and exhortations, will not resolve on so clear and great a duty as this is. As it is with our people in hearing the word, so it is with us in teaching: An upright heart is an effectual perswader of them to attend on God in the use of his Ordinances; and an upright heart will as effectually perswade a Minister to his duty: As a good stomach needs no arguments to draw it to a feast, nor will easily by any arguments be taken off: And as a child will love and obey his parents, though he could not answer a Sophister that would perswade him to hate them: so I cannot conceive that he that hath one spark of saving Grace, and so hath that love to God, and delight to do his will, which is in all the sanctified, should possibly be drawn to contradict or refuse such a work as this: except under the power of such a temptation as Peter was when he denyed Christ, or when he dissuaded him from suffering, and heard an half excommunication, Get thee behind me Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou favourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men, Mat. 16. 22, 23. You have put your hand to the plough of God: You are doubly sanctified or devoted to him, as Christians, and as Pastors; and dare you after this draw back and refuse his work? You see the work of Reformation at a stand; and you are engaged by many obligations to promote it: and dare you now neglect that means by which it must be done? Will you shew your faces in a Christian Congregation,

Congregation, as Ministers of the Gospel, and there pray for a Reformation, and pray for the Conversion and Salvation of your hearers, and the prosperity of the Church: and when you have done, refuse to use the means by which it must be done? I know carnal wit will never want words and shews of reason to gain-say that truth and duty which it abhors: It is easier now to cavil against duty than perform it: but stay the end, before you pass your final judgement. Can you possibly make your selves believe that you shall have a comfortable review of these neglects, or make a comfortable account of them unto God? I dare prognosticate from the knowledge of the nature of Grace, that all the Godly Ministers in England will make conscience of this duty, and address themselves to it (except those that by some extraordinary accident are disabled, or those that are under such temptations as aforesaid:) I do not hopelessly perswade you to it, but take it for granted that it will be done: And if any lazy, or jealous, or malicious hypocrites, do cavil against it, or hold off, the rest will not do so: but they will take the opportunity, and not resist the warnings of the Lord. And God will uncase the hypocrites ere long, and make them know to their sorrow, what it was to play fast and loose with God. Wo to them, when they must be accountable for the blood of souls! The Reasons which satisfied them here against duty, will then be manifested to be the effects of their folly, and to have proceeded radically from their corrupted wills, and carnal interest. And (unless they be desperately blinded and scared to the death) their consciences will not own those Reasons at a dying hour which now they seem to own. Then they shall feel to their sorrow, that there is not that
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comfort to be had for a departing soul in the reviews of such neglected duty, as there is to them that have wholly devoted themselves to the service of the Lord. I am sure my arguments for this duty will appear strongest at the last, whatever they do now. And again I say, I hope the time is even at hand when it shall be as great a shame to a Minister to neglect the private Instructing and oversight of the Flock, as it hath been to be a seldom Preacher; for which men are now justly sequestred and ejected: And if God have not so great a quarrel with us as tendeth to a removal of the Gospel, or at least to the blasting of its prosperity and success in the desired reformation, I am confident that this will shortly be. And if these lazy worldly hypocrites were but quickened to their duty by a Sequestering Committee, you should see them stir more zealously than all arguments fetcht from God and Scripture, from the Reward or Punishment, or from the Necessity and Benefits of the work can perswade them to do. For even now these wretched men, while they pretend themselves the servants of Christ, and are asking, What Authority we have for his work? and if we could but shew them a command from the Lord Protector or Council, it would answer all their scruples, and put the business beyond dispute, as if they had a design to confirm the accusation of the Papists, that their Ministry only is Divine, and ours dependeth on the will of men. Well! for those godly zealous Ministers of Christ, that labour in sincerity, and denying their worldly interest and ease, do wholly devote themselves to God, I am confident there needs not much perswasion. There is somewhat within that will presently carry them to the work: And for the rest, let them censure this warning as subtilly as they can, they shall
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not hinder it from rising up against them in judgement, unless it be by true Repentance and Reformation.

And let me speak one word of this to you that are my dear fellow-labourers in this County, who have engaged your selves to be faithful in this work. It is your honour to lead in sacred Resolutions and Agreements: but if you should any of you be unfaithful in the performance, it will be your double dishonour. Review your subscribed Agreement, and see that you perform it with diligence and constancy. You have begun a happy work: such as will do more to the welfare of the Church then many that the world doth make a greater stir about. God forbid now, that imprudence or negligence should frustrate all. For the generality of you, I do not much fear it, having so much experience of your fidelity in the other parts of your office. And if there should be any found among you, that will shuffle over the work, and deal unfaithfully in this and other parts of your office, I take it for no just cause of reproach to us that we accept of your subscription, when you offer to joyn with us. For Catechizing is a work not proper only to a Minister; and we cannot forbid any to engage themselves to their unquestionable duty: But in our Association for Discipline we must be somewhat more scrupulous, with whom we joyn. I earnestly beseech you all in the name of God, and for the sake of your peoples souls, that you will not slightly slubber over this work; but do it vigorously and with all your might, and make it your great and serious business: Much judgement is required for the managing of it. Study therefore how to do it beforehand, as you study for your Sermons. I remember how earnest I was with some of the last Parliament, to have had them

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settle Catechists in our Assemblies; But truly I am not sorry that it took not effect (unless for a few of the larger Congregations.) For I perceive that all the life of the work under God, doth lie in the prudent effectual management; in searching mens hearts, and setting home the saving truths: and the ablest Minister is weak enough for this, and few of inferiour place or parts would be found competent: for I fear nothing more, then that many Ministers that preach well, will be found too unmeet for this work; especially to manage it with old, ignorant, dead-hearted sinners: And indeed if the Ministers be not revered by the people, they will rather slight them and contest with them, then humbly learn and submit: how much more would they do so by inferiour men? Seeing then the work is cast upon us, and it is we that must do it or else it must be undone, let us be up and doing with all our might, and the Lord will be with us. I can tell you one thing for your encouragement; It is a work that the enemies of the Church and Ministry do exceedingly vex at, and hate and fear more then any thing that yet we have undertaken. I perceive the signs of the Papists indignation against it. And me thinks it hath the most not able character of a work extraordinarily and unquestionably good: For they storm at it, and yet have nothing to say against it. They cannot blame it, and yet they hate and fear it, and would fain undermine it, if they knew how. You know how many false rumours have been spread abroad this Country to deter the people from it: as that the Lord Protector and Council were against it: That the subscribers were to be ejected: That the Agreement was to be publikely burnt, &c. And when we have searcht after the authors, we can drive it no higher then the Quakers, the Papists Emis-
saries;

saries; from whom we may easily know their minds. And yet when a Papist speaks openly as a Papist, some of them have said, that it is a good work, but that it wants authority, and is done by those that are not called to it: Forsooth, because we have not the Authority of their Pope or Prelates: And some that should be more sober have used the same language: as if they would rather have thousands and millions of souls neglected, then have them so much as Catechized and Instructed, without Commission from a Prelate. Yea and some that differ from us about Infant Baptism, I understand, repine at it; and say that we will hereby insinuate our selves into the people, and hinder them from the receiving of the truth. A sad case that any that seem to have the fear of God, should have so true a Character of a partial, dividing, and siding mind, as to grudge at the propagation of Christianity it self, and the common truths which we are all agreed in, for fear least it should hinder the propagation of their opinions. The common cause of Christianity, must give place to the cause of these lower controverted points: and they grudge us our very labour and suffering for the common work, though there be nothing in it which medleth with them, or which they are able with any shew of reason to gainsay. I beseech you Brethren let all this, and the many motives that I have after given you, perswade you to the greater diligence herein! When you are speaking to your people; do it with the greatest prudence and seriousness, and be as earnest with them as for life or death; and follow it as close as you do your publike exhortations in the Pulpit. I profess again, it is to me the most comfortable work, except publike preaching (for there I speak to more, though yet with less advantage to each

one) that ever I yet did set my hand to: And I doubt not but you will find it so to you, if you faithfully perform it.

2. **M***Y second request to the Reverend Ministers in these Nations is, that at last they would without any more delay, unanimously set themselves to the practice of those parts of Christian Discipline, which are unquestionably necessary, and part of their work. It is a sad case that good men under so much liberty, should settle themselves so long in the constant neglect of so great a duty. The common cry is, [Our people be not ready for it: they will not bear it.] But is not the meaning, that you will not bear the trouble and hatred which it will occasion? If indeed you proclaim our Churches incapable of the Order and Government of Christ, What do you but give up the cause to them that withdraw from them? and encourage men to look out for better societities where that Discipline may be had? For though preaching and Sacraments may be omitted in some cases, till a fitter season, and accordingly so may Discipline be; yet it is a hard case to settle in a constant neglect, for so many years together as we have done, unless there were a flat impossibility of the work: And if it were so, because of our incapable materials, it would plainly call us to alter our constitution, that the matter may be capable. I have spoke plainly afterward to you of this, which I hope you will bear, and conscionably consider of. I now only beseech you that would make a comfortable account to the chief Shepherd, and would*
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not be found unfaithful in the house of God, that you do not wilfully or negligently delay it, as if it were a need-less thing; nor shrink not from duty because of trouble to the flesh that doth attend it: For as that's too sad a sign of hypoorisie; so the costlyest duties are usually the most comfortable; and be sure that Christ will bear the cost. I could here produce a heap of testimonies, of Fathers and Reformed Divines, that charge this duty with great importunity. I shall only now give you the words of two of the most godly, laborious, judicious Divines that most ever the Church of Christ had since the daies of the Apostles.

Calvin. *Institut. li. 4. cap. 12. sect. 1, 2.* Sed quia nonnulli in odium Disciplinae ab ipso quoq; nomine abhorrent, hi sic habeant: Si nulla societas, imo nulla domus quae vel modicam familiam habeat, contineri in recto statu sine disciplina potest: Eam esse multo magis necessariam in Ecclesia, cujus slatum quam ordinatissimum esse decet. Proinde quemadmodum salvifica Christi doctrina anima est Ecclesiae, ita illic disciplina pro nervis est, qua fit ut membra corporis suo quaeq; loco inter se cohaereant. Quamobrem quicumq; vel sublatam disciplinam cupiunt, vel ejus impediunt restitutionem, sive hoc faciant data operâ, sive per incogitantiam, Ecclesiae certe extremam dissipationem quaerunt. Quid enim futurum est, si unicuiq; liceat quod libuerit? Atqui id fieret nisi ad doctrinae praedicationem accederent privatae monitiones, correctiones, & alia ejusmodi adminicula quae doctrinam sustinent & otiosam esse non sinunt. Disciplina igitur veluti fraenum est, quo retineantur & domentur qui adversus Christi doctrinam ferociunt: vel tanquam stimulus quo excitentur parum voluntarii:

tarii: interdum etiam velut paterna ferula qua clementer & pro spiritus Christi mansuetudine castigentur, qui gravius lapsi sunt. Quum ergo jam imminere cernamus initia quae dam horrendae in Ecclesia vastitatis, ex eo quod nulla est cura, nec ratio continendi populi, ipsa necessitas clamat remedio opus esse. Porro hoc unicum remedium est quod & Christus praecipit, & semper usitatum inter pios fuit. 2. Primum disciplinae fundamentum est, ut privatae monitiones locum habeant: hoc est, siquis officium sponte non faciat aut insolenter se gerat aut minus honestè vivat, aut aliquid admiserit reprehensione dignum, ut patiat se moneri, atq; ut quisq; fratrem suum dum res postulabit monere studeat. Praesertim vero in hoc advigilent Pastores ac presbyteri quorum partes sunt non modo concionari ad populum sed per singulas domos monere & exhortari, sicubi universali doctrina non satis profecerint, quemadmodum docet Paulus, quum refert se docuisse privatim & per domos; & se mundum à sanguine omnium attestatur, quia non cessaverit cum lachrymis nocte & die monere unumquemque. *See the rest. And sect. 4. he adds of the necessity:* Sine hoc disciplinae vinculo qui diu stare posse Ecclesias confidunt, opinione fallantur: Nisi fortè carere impune possimus eo adminiculo, quod Dominus fore nobis necessarium providit. *Et sec. 5.* Atq; hic quo{que} habenda est coenae Dominicae ratio ne promissa exhibitione profanetur. Verissimum est enim eum cui commissa est dispensatio si sciens ac volens indignum admiserit quem repellere jure poterat, proinde reum esse sacrilegii acsi corpus Domini canibus prostitueret.

Hier. Zanchius *de Ecclesia* Vol. 3. f. 123, 124.
(Disciplina

(Disciplina) est actio qua Ecclesia, secundum facultatem sibi à Christo traditam fideles suos non solum publicè, sed etiam privatim, tam in vero Dei cultu quam in bonis moribus id{que} tum doctrina, tum correctionibus, tum Ecclesiasticis poenis & censuris, tum etiam si opus sit excommunicationibus instituit & institutos retinet. *Fol.* 124. Primo habet privatam doctrinam. Habet enim Ecclesia potestatem, si publica doctrina in publico templo non sufficiat, privatas fidelium domos ingrediendi, at{que} ibi eos privatim docendi, ac in vera doctrina ac religione Christiana instituendi: & fideles pati debent ut Pastor suas ædes ingrediatur, & eos privatim instituat. Hujus exemplum est, in *Act.* 20. &c. Idem fecerunt reliqui Apostoli. 2. Habet privatas admonitiones, correctiones, objurgationes, &c. *This is for private teaching: Now for the Sacrament, hear what he saith, ibid. fol.* 79. *Obj.* Manebimus in Ecclesia, audiemus verbum, &c. sed qui possumus in coenâ Communionem vobiscum habere, cum ad eam admittantur multi impuri, ebrii, avari, &c. *Resp.* 1. Quantum ad hos peccatores, eos intelligi posse bifariam: vel qui ante fuerunt ebrii, &c. Sed postea resipuerunt. Hos dicimus secundum verbum domini non esse excludendos à Mensa domini, quandoquidem verâ poenitentiâ & fide præditi sunt: vel eos qui etiamnum ebrietati student, aliisq; vitiis, & talis sine poenitentiâ & fide accedunt: Hos dicimus simpliciter non esse admittendos. Quod autem admittuntur plerum{que} hoc contingere potest bifariam: vel ex ignorantia Ministrorum, eo quod non agnoverint tales esse, quales sunt: *Et hanc certè ignorantiâ non probamus, quoniam debet Minister agnoscere, qualesnam sint illi quibus coenam Domini*

ni administrat: quod si ignorat, non potest non accusari supinae & reprehendendae negligentiae, &c. Aut cum sint omnibus noti qualesnam sint, non student tamen eos arcere prae timore, vel aliquo alio humano respectu. *Hoc damnamus in Ministro vitium timiditatis.* Debet enim Minister Christi esse *cordatissimus & heroicus.* Sed hic non est spectandum quid unus aut alter vilis Minister agat (*mark the Title*) sed quae sit Ecclesiae institutio, quaeque communis in omnibus Ecclesiis consuetudo: In omnibus autem Ecclesiis nostris antequam coena Ministretur, omnibus hujusmodi interdicatur, &c. Et certò magnum est probrum, quod inter filios Dei locum habeant & porci & canes: Multò verò magis, si illis prostituuntur sacro-sancta coenae Dominicae symbola, &c. Quare Ecclesiae Christi non debent hujusmodi scelerators *in sinu suo ferre*, nec ad sacram coenam dignos simul & indignos promiscuè admittere: id quod plerumque fit in Ecclesiis nostris: (*How many then were the viles Ministri!*)

But the principal is behind of the necessity of Discipline: And I desire both Magistrates & Ministers, into whose hands these lines shall fall, to read and consider it.

Ibid. fol. 134, 135. Videant igitur principes & Magistratus qui hanc disciplinam in Ecclesiam restitutam nolunt, quid agant. Haec instituta est à Christo, ut perpetuo in Ecclesia tanquam singularis thesaurus conservetur: Ergo qui eam exulare volunt, sciant se velle, Christum, exulare. Haec pars est Evangelii Jesu Christi. Ergo qui hanc restitutam nolunt, sciant se nolle Evangelium Christi, ficut debet, restitutum. Quomodo igitur gloriamur restitutum esse Evangelium in Ecclesiis nostris, si hanc eamque non postremam partem Evangelii restitutam-nolumus? Hâc
vitia

vitia corriguntur: virtutes promoventur: ergo qui hanc disciplinam restitutam nolunt, quomodo audent dicere se vitia odisse, virtutum vero amantes esse, pietatis promotores, impietatis osiores. Hâc conservatur & regitur Ecclesia, singulae{que} Ecclesiae membra suo quae{que} loco cohaerent: Ergo quomodo qui hanc expulsam volunt dicunt se velle Christi Ecclesiam, bene rectam si quando sine hac bene regi non potest. Si nulla domus nullum opidum, nulla urbs, nulla respublica, nullum regnum, imo ne exiguus quidem ludus literarius, sinè disciplina regi potest, quomodo poterit Ecclesia? *I would Magistrates would read the rest, which is purposely to them.*

Et fol. 135. At timetur seditio & tumultus. Resp. Ergo neq; Evangelium est praedicandum, &c. Quid: Annon vident Principes & Magstratus nostri quantum malum in Ecclesia oriatur, & intus & foris ex neglectu contemptuve hujus disciplinae? Foris nulla res est quae magis Papistas & alios, arceat, vel saltem retrudet amplectendo evangelio, atq; haec disciplinae Ecclesiasticae destitutio, quae est in Ecclesiis nostris. Intus, nihil quod magis alat vitia, haeresis, &c. Annon vident Ecclesias suas principes plenas sectis haereticorum, & impurorum hominum? Ad has confluit omne genus hominum fanaticorum, impurorum, &c. tanquam ad asylum. Quare? quia ibi nulla disciplina.

Sciant ergo principes & quicunq; illi sint qui Disciplinam Ecclesiasticam in Ecclesiis restitutam nolunt, sed ei adversantur eamq; proscribunt, se Christo adversari: qui ministros impediunt ne eam exercent, se Christum & Deum impedire, ne sua fungantur potestate. Quid enim agunt Ministri cum excommunicant?

Pronunciant

Pronunciant sententiam Domini. Ait enim Christus: Quicquid liga veritis in terris, &c. Quid igitur agunt qui impediunt Ecclesiam ne sententiam Domini pronunciet? Peccant contra Christum, & rei sunt læsæ Divinae Majestatis. Annon reus esset læsæ Majestatis Caesareae, si quis ejus judicem ne sententiam Cæsaris pronunciet impediat? Videant igitur quid agant. Hactenus Christus rexit Ecclesiam suam hac Disciplina; & ipsi Principes, imo & *Ministri aliquot*, nolunt eam sic regi? Viderint ipsi. *Pronuncio, Proclamo, Protestor, eos peccare, qui cum possint & debeant eam restituere, non restituunt.*

I hope both Magistrates and Ministers that are guilty, will give me leave to say the like with Zanchy, if not to call them Traitors against the Majesty of God, that hinder Discipline, and adversaries to Christ, yet at least to Pronounce, Proclaim, Protest, that they sin against God, who set it not up when they may and ought. But what if the Magistrate will not help us? Nay, What if he were against it? So he was for about 300. years, when Discipline was exercised in the primitive Church. To this Zanchy adds, ib. Ministri Ecclesiae quantum per consensum & pacem Ecclesiae licet hanc Disciplinam exercere debetis. Hanc enim potestatem vobis dedit Dominus, ne{que} quispiam auferre eam potest: nec contenti esse debetis ut doceatis quid agendum, quid fugiendum sit, utut quis{que} pro sua libidine vivat nihil curantes, sed urgenda disciplina. vid. August. de fide & operib. c. 4. Obj. At impedimur per Magistratum. Resp. Tunc illi significate quam male agat, &c. Read the rest of the solid advice that Calvin and Zanchy in the forecited places, do give both to Ministers and people where Discipline is wanting.

The

The great Objection that seemeth to hinder some from this work, is because we are not agreed yet, who it is that must do it? Whether only a Prelate? or whether a Presbyterie? or a single Pastor? or the People? Answ. Let so much be exercised as is out of doubt. 1. Its granted that a single Pastor may expound and apply the word of God: He may rebuke a notorious sinner by name. He may make known to the Church that God hath commanded them, with such a one no not to eat? and require them to obey this command, &c. I shall say no more of this now, then to cite the words of two learned, godly, moderate Divines, impartial in this cause. The one is Mr. Lyford a maintainer of Episcopacy, in his Legacy of Admission to the Lords Supper: who pag. 55. saith, [Q. In which of the Ministers is this power placed?] Answ. Every Minister hath the power of all Christs Ordinances to dispense the same in that Congregation or Flock, over which the Holy-Ghost hath made him Overseer; yet with this difference: he may preach the word, baptize, and administer the holy Supper alone of himself without the assistance or consent of the People: But not excommunicate alone (he means not without the people, though of that more must be said:) because excommunication doth presuppose an offence to the Congregation, a conviction and proof of that offence, and witnesses of the parties obstinacy: and therefore hereunto is required the action of more then one, &c. Excommunication comprizeth several acts: Admonition, private, publike: the last act is, the casting out of a wicked obstinate person from the society of the faithful. 1. By the authority of Christ. 2. Dispensed and executed by the Ministers of the Gospel. 3. With the assistance

assistance and consent of the Congregation, &c. 2. If you ask by whose office and Ministry this sentence is denounced? I answer, by the Ministers of the Gospel: we bind and loose doctrinally, in our preaching peace to the godly and curses to the wicked: But in excommunication we denounce the wrath of God against this or that particular person (Thou art the man! thou hast no part with us:) and that not only declaratively, but judicially: It is like the sentence of a Judge on the bench, &c. 3. If you ask, Whether this be done by the Minister alone? I answ. No; it must be done by the assistance and consent of the Congregation, 1 Cor. 5. 4. Excommunication must not be done in a corner, by the Chancellor and his Register, &c. But whosoever doth by his offences lose his right to the holy things of God, he must lose it in the face of the Congregation, and that after proofs and allegations, as is above-said: the people hear and see the offence, complain of it, and are grieved at his society with them, and judge him worthy to be cast out. This concurrence and consent being supposed, every Minister is *Episcopus Gregis*, a Bishop in his own Parish (N. B.) Act. 20. 28. *To all the Flock over which the Holy-Ghost hath made you ἑπισκόπους, Overseers.* And Heb. 13. 17. *Remember them which have the Rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God.* Where note, that they who preach the word of God, must Rule and Govern the Church; and every Preacher is a Ruler, unto whom the people must submit. v. 17. Besides every Minister is vested with this authority at his Ordination, Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven: whose sins thou dost retain, &c.

2. Every

2. Every Minister is vested with this authority by the Laws of this Land: The words of the Rubrick for the administration of the Lords Supper which do enable us thereto are these [If any of those which intend to be partakers of the holy Communion, be an open notorious evil liver, so that the Congregation by him is offended, or have done wrong to his neighbours by word or deed, the curate having knowledge thereof, shall call him, and advertise him in any wise not to presume to the Lords Table, until he have openly declared himself to have truly repented and amended his former naughty life, that the Congregation may thereby be satisfied, which afore were offended; and that he have recompenced the parties whom he hath done wrong to, or at least declare himself to be in full purpose so to do as soon as he conveniently may: Besides this our Authority in this particular is, confirmed by an Ordinance of the Lords and Commons in Parliament, &c.! *So far Mr. Lyfords words.*

The other is Mr. Tho. Ball of Northampton in his late Book for the Ministry, where Part 3. Cap. 4. he bringeth many Arguments to prove it the Ministers duty to exercise Discipline as well as to preach: and the seventh Argument is this, [What was given by the Bishops unto such Ministers as they ordained and laid their hands upon, should not be grudged or denied to them by any body: for they were never accounted lavish or over liberal unto them, especially in point of Jurisdiction: that was alwaies a very tender point, and had a guard and centry alwaies on it: for conceiving themselves the sole possessors of it, they were not willing to admit of partners:
Whetevre

Whatever they indulged in other points, as *Pharaoh* to *Joseph* [Only in the throne I will be greater then thou] Yet Bishops granted to all that they ordained Presbyters, the use and exercise of Discipline as well as Doctrine, as appears in the Book of ordering Bishops, Priests and Deacons, whereof the Interrogatories propounded to the party to be ordained is, [Will you then give your faithful diligence alwaies so to Minister the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Realm hath received the same according to the Commandments of God, so that you may teach the people committed to your care and charge with all diligence to keep and observe the same:] Which a Reverend and Learned Brother, not observing would confine all jurisdiction to Diocesan Bishops, &c. *Argu.* 8. What is granted and allowed to Ministers by the Laws and Customs of this Nation cannot reasonably be denied: for the Laws of *England* have never favoured usurpation in the Clergy, &c. But the Laws and customs of this Nation allows to the Ministers of *England* the use and exercise of Discipline as well as Doctrine: for such of them as have Parsonages or Rectories, are in all process and proceedings called Rectors, &c.

2. *And as to the point of the Peoples interest, the moderate seem to differ but in words. Some say the People are to Govern by Vote: I confess if this were understood as it is spoken, according to the proper sense of the words, and practised accordingly, it were contrary to the express commands of Scripture, which Command the Elders to Rule well, and the people to obey them as their Rulers, in the Lord: And it seems to me to be destructive*

structive to the Being of a Political Church, whose constitutive parts are the Ruling and the Ruled parts: as every School consisteth of Master and Scholars, and every common-wealth of the Pars imperans, & pars subdita: And therefore those that rigidly stick to this, do cast out themselves from all particular Political Churches Communion of Christs institution. (Which because I have formerly said, or somewhat to that purpose, a late nameless Writer makes me cruel to his party, while I seem for them, and so self-contradicting: as if it were cruelty to tell a Brother of his sin, and not to leave it on him: Or as if I understood not my self, because he understands me not!) But I perceive the moderate mean not any such things as these words in their proper sense import. They only would have the Church Ruled as a free people (as from unjust impositions) and in a due subordination to Christ. And we are all agreed that the Pastors have the Judicium Directionis, the Teaching, Directing Power, by Office: and that the People have Judicium Discretionis; and must try his Directions, and not obey them when they lead to sin; and therefore we cannot expect that the people should execute any of our Directions except their Iudgement lead them to execute them. (Though if their Iudgement be wrong, God requireth them to rectifie it) And as for the Judicial Decisive power (about which there is so great contending) in the strictest sense it is the Prerogative of Christ, and belongeth to neither of them: For only Christ is proper Law-giver, and Iudge of the Church, whose Law and Iudgement is Absolute, of it self Determinative, and not subjected to our tryal of its equity or obligation. So that we must as much conclude that there is no final Iudge of Controversies in a Particular Church,

Church, as we do against the Papists, that there is none in the Church in general. And therefore the Churches Judicial Decisive Power is but improperly such, reducible to the former, which seeing we are agreed in, we are as far in sense agreed in this. A Pastor is Iudge as a Physician in an Hospital, or as Plato or Zeno was in his School, or any Tutour in a Colledge of voluntary Students. For any more, it belongeth to Christ, and to the Magistrate. Why then do we stand quarreling about the names? One saith, The people have a Power of Liberty, and the Ministers only the Power of Authority. And what's this more then we yield them; viz. That the guiding Authority being only in the Guides, and the people commanded to obey them in a due subordination to Christ, there is a Liberty belonging to all the Saints; from any other kind of Ministerial Rule, that is, from a sic volo, sic jubeo, a Rule without Divine authority: and therefore the people must first try and judge, whether the Direction be according to God, and so obey: And this in Church censures as well as other cases. So that, 1. As the people ought not to dissent, or disobey their Guides, unless they lead them to sin (and therefore must see a danger of sin before they suspend obedience.) So 2. the Guides cannot bring the people to execute their Censures or Directions, but by procuring their consent. And therefore though he must do his duty, and may pass his Directive censure though they dissent, and Ministerially require them in the name of the Lord, e.g. to avoid a notorious obstinate offender, and so to obey the command of God; that is, though we may charge them in the name of the Lord to consent, and obey, and do their duty, yet if their Judgements remain unconvinced in a case which is to them obscure,

obscure, we have no more to do, but satisfy our selves that we have done our duty. So that when we have quarrelled never so long, what is it but the Peoples consent that the moderate men on one side do require? and consent the other side requireth also: Call it what else you will, whether a Government, or an Authority, or a Liberty; Consent is the thing which both require! And are we not then in the matter agreed? Peruse for this Mr. Lyfords words before cited. See also what the leading men for Presbyterian Government do not only acknowledge but maintain as effectually as others: as Dav. Blondellus de Jure plebis in Regim. Eccles. Calvin Institut. l. 4. c. 12. sect. 4. Ne quis tale judicium spernat, aut parvi aestimet se Fidelium suffragiis damnatum, testatus est Dominus, &c. Ita Zanchius ubi sup. and many more. Indeed this Consent of the people is not sine qua non to the Pastors performance of his own part; viz. Charging the Church in Christs name to avoid the Communion of such a notorious obstinate offender, and suspending his own acts towards him: and so charging them to receive the innocent or penitent.] (For if the people consent not to avoid such, and so would exclude all Discipline, yet the Pastor must charge it on them, and do his part.) But it is sine qua non to their actual rejecting and avoiding that offender. In a word, we must Teach them their duty and require it: and they and we must obey and do it: and neither they nor we may oblige any to sin.

Obj. But we are not agreed about the matter of the Church that must be Governed.

Answ. Peruse the qualifications required in Church-members in the writings of the moderate on both sides, and see what difference you can find! Are not both

(C)

agreed

agreed, that Professors of true faith and holiness, co-habiting and consenting, are a true Church? and when they contradict that Profession by wicked actions, (Doctrine or life) they are to be dealt with by Discipline. Though I confess in our practise we very much differ; most that I know running into one of the extremes, of looseness or rigor.

3. **M***Y third and last Request is, that all the faithful Ministers of Christ would without any more delay Unite and Associate for the furtherance of each other in the work of the Lord, and the maintaining of Unity and Concord in his Churches. And that they would not neglect their Brotherly meetings to those ends, nor yet spend them unprofitably, but improve them to their edification, and the effectual carrying on the work. Read that excellent Letter of Edmond Grindal Arch-Bishop of Canterbury to Q. Elizabeth, for Ministerial meetings and exercises (such Bishops would have prevented our contentions and wars:) You may see it in Fullers new History of the Church of England.*

And let none draw back that accord in the substantial of faith and godliness: Yea if some should think themselves necessitated (I will not say to Schism, least I offend them; but) to separate in publike worship from the rest, me thinks, if they be indeed Christians, they should

should be willing to hold so much Communion with them as they can, and to consult how to manage their differences to the least disadvantage to the common truths and Christian cause which they all profess to own and prefer.

And here I may not silently pass by an uncharitable slander which some Brethren of the Prelatical Judgement have divulged of me far and near: viz. That while I perswade men to Accommodation, it was long of me that the late Proclamation or Ordinance was procured for silencing all Sequestred Ministers; viz. by the late Worcestershire Petition, which they say was the occasion of it (and they falsly report that I altered it after the subscription.) To which I say. 1. It was the Petition of many Justices, and the grand Jury, and thousands of the County, as well as me. 2. There is not a word in it, nor ever was, against any godly man, but only that the notoriously insufficient and scandalous should not be permitted to meddle with the mysteries of Christ (specially the Sacraments;) which we desired should have impartially extended to all parties alike. And so much of this as was granted, we cannot but be thankful for, whoever grudge at it; and wish it had been fully granted. 3. I desire nothing more, then that all able, godly, faithful Ministers of what side soever in our late State differences, may not only have liberty, but encouragement: For the Church hath not any such to spare, were they ten times more. In a word; I would have those of what party soever to have Liberty to preach the Gospel, whose errours or miscarriages are not so great, as that probably they will do as much hurt as good.

Brethren, I crave your pardon for the infirmities of
(c 2) this

this address: and earnestly longing for the success of your Labours, I shall daily beg of God, that he would persuade you to those duties which I have here requested you to perform, and would preserve and prosper you therein, against all the Serpentine subtilty and rage that is now engaged to oppose and hinder you.

April 15.

1656.

Your unworthy fellow-servant,

Rich. Baxter.

TO
The Lay-Reader.



THE reason why I have called this volume, *the first Part* of the book, is because I intend, if God enable me, and give me time, a *Second Part*, containing the duty of the people in relation to their Pastors, and therein to shew; 1. The Right and Necessity of a Ministry. 2. The way to know which is the true
(c 3) Church

Church and Ministry, and how we justifie our own calling to this office, and how false Prophets and Teachers must be discerned. 3. How far the people must assist the Pastors in the work of the Cospel, and the Pastors put them on, and make use of them to that end. And 4. How far the people must submit to their Pastors, and what other Duty they must perform in that Relation. But because my time and strength is so uncertain, that I know not whether I may live to publish my yet-imperfect preparations on this subject, I dare not let this first Part come into your hands, without a word of caution and advice, lest you should misunderstand or misapply it.

1. The caution that I must give you, is in two parts.

1. Entertain not any unworthy thoughts

thoughts of your Pastors, because we here confess our own sins, and aggravate them in order to our humiliation and reformation. You know it is men and not Angels that are put by God in the office of Church-guides! And you know that we are imperfect men: Let Papists and Quakers pretend to a sinless perfection; we dare not do it; but confess that we are sinners. And we should heartily rejoyce to find the signs of imperfect sincerity, in them that so confidently pretend to sinless perfection; yea if in some of them we could find but common honesty, and a freedom from some of the crying abominations of the ungodly, such as cruel bloodiness, lying, slandering, railing, &c. If it would make a man perfect to say he is perfect, and if it would deliver a man from sin, to say,

I have no sin, I confess this vvere an easie vway to perfection.

There is one *Richard Farnworth* called a Quaker, that hath lately published a *Pamphlet* against our Agreement for Catechizing; and the substance of it is this: because vve confess that by neglecting that vvork of the Lord, vve have sinned, and do beg pardon of our miscarriages, and say that by Nature vve are children of vvraith, and prone to do evil, &c. therefore he vvill prove us deceivers and no Ministers of Christ, as from our ovvn Confession. As if they that are Dead by Nature, may not be made alive by Grace! And as if *Are* is not as proper a term as *Were*, when we speak of the state of all mankind in their natural condition, wherein the most do still abide! And as if the confessing our sin would prove us to be

be ungodly! O shameless men! God saith, He that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy. And the Quaker maketh it a matter of his reproach. *Iohn* saith, If we confess, he is faithful and just to forgive: And the Quaker maketh it a sign that we are not forgiven. God will not forgive us, if we refuse to confess: And the Quaker makes us unpardoned, because we do it. What would this wretch have said to *David*, *Ezra*, *Nehe-miah*, *Daniel*, &c. if he had lived in their daies, who made such full confessions of their sins! God hit them not in the teeth with them; but the Quakers will! Christ did forgive even *Peters* denial of him! but it seems the Quaker would have condemned him for the penitent lamenting of it: Is *Paul* damned for confessing himself the chief of sinners (*of whom I am*
chief,

chief, (1 Tim. 1. 15.) and that formerly he was a persecutor, blasphemer, &c. Or because he saith, Eph. 3. 8. Vnto me, who am less then the least of Saints. Or for crying out, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! What I would that I do not, and what I hate that do I. I find a Law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me, &c. Rom. 7. 24. 15. 21. Or is Isaiah a wicked man, and no Prophet of God, for saying, Wo is me, I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, &c. Isa. 6. 5. Or Jacob, for saying, Gen. 32. 10. I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, &c. Or Job for abhorring himself in dust and ashes, Iob 42. 6. It irketh me to spend words upon such Impudent revilers! But in this much you have a sufficient Reply to his book.

But for our parts we believe that he
that

that saith he hath no sin, deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him, 1 *Iohn* 1. 8. and that in many things we offend all, *Iam.* 3. 2. and we profess to know but in part, and to have our treasure in earthen vessels, and to be insufficient for these things. And therefore see that you love and imitate the holiness of your Pastors, but take not occasion of dis-esteeming or reproaching them for their infirmities.

2. I take it to be my duty as a watchman for your souls, to give you notice of a train that is laid for your perdition. The Papists who have found that they could not well play their game here with open face, have masked themselves, and taken the vizards of several sects; and by the advantage of the licence of the times, are busily at work abroad this Land, to bring
you

you back to *Rome*. What names or garb soever they bear, you may strongly conjecture which be they by these marks following. 1. Their main design is to unsettle you, and to make you believe that you have been all this while misled, and to bring you to a loss in a matter of Religion, that when they have made you dislike or suspect that which you had (or seemed to have) you may be the more respective of theirs. 2. To which end their next means is to bring you to suspect first, and then to condemn and reject your Teachers. For saith *Rushworth*, one of their Writers, *Not one of ten among the people indeed do ground their faith on the Scripture, but on the credit of their teachers, &c.* therefore they think, if they can but bring you to suspect your teachers, and so to reject them, they may deal with the
sheep

sheep without the Shepherds, and dispute with the Scholars without their Teachers, and quickly make you say what their list. To this end their design is partly to cry them down as false teachers (but how are they baffled when it comes to the proof?) and partly to perswade you that they have no calling to the work; and urge them to prove their calling (which how easily can we do?) and partly to work upon your covetous humour, by crying down tythes, and all established maintenance for the Ministry. And withal they are busie yet in contriving how to procure the Governors of the Nation, to withdraw their publique countenance and maintenance, and sacrilegiously to deprive the Church of the remnant that is devoted to it for God, and to leave the Ministry on equal terms with themselves

or all other sects (which in *Spain, Italy, France, &c.* they will be loth to do.) And time will shew you, whether God will suffer them to prevail with the Governors of this sinful land to betray the Gospel into their hands, or not? but we have reason to hope for better things. 3. Their next design, is to diminish the Authority, and sufficiency of Scripture: and because they dare not yet speak out, to tell us what they set up in its stead, some of them will tell you of New Prophets, and Revelations, and some of them will tell you, that in that they are yet at a loss themselves: that is, they are of no Religion; and then they are no Christians. I shall now proceed no further in the discovery: but only warn you, as you love your souls, keep close to Scripture and a faithful Ministry! and despise not
your

your Shepherds if you would escape the wolves. If any question our calling, send them to our writings where we have fully proved them; or send them to us, who are ready to justify them against any Papist or Heretick upon earth. And let me tell you, that for all the sins of the Ministry which we have here confessed, the known world hath not a more able, faithful, godly Ministry then *Brittain* hath at this day. If at the Synod of *Dort* the *Clerus Anglicanus* was called *stupor mundi*, before all those Ignorant and Scandalous ones were cast out; what may we now call it? Brethren, let me deal freely with you! The ungrateful contempt of a faithful Ministry, is the shame of the faces of thousands in this Land! and if through-Repentance prevent it not, they shall better know in hell, whether such Ministers were
their

their friends or foes, and what they would have done for them, if their counsel had been heard. When the Messengers of God were mocked, and his words despised, and his Prophets abused, the wrath of the Lord arose on the Israelites themselves: and there was no remedy, 2 Chro. 36. 16. Shall Ministers study, and preach, and pray for you, and shall they be despised? When they have the God of Heaven and their own consciences to witness, that they desire not yours but you, and are willing to spend and be spent for your sakes, and that all the wealth in the world would not be regarded by them in comparison of your salvation, and that all their labours and sufferings is for your sakes; if yet they shall be requited with your contempt, or scorn, or discouraging unteachableness, see who will prove the losers in the end: When God
himself

himself shall Justifie and Condemn them, with a *Well done good and faithful servant*; let those that reproached, despised, and condemned them, defend their faces from shame, and their consciences from the accusations of their horrid ingratitude, as well as they can! Read the Scripture and see, whether they that obeyed Gods Messengers, or they that despised and disobeyed them sped best? And if any of the Seducers will tell you, that we are not the Ministers of Christ, leave them not, till they tell you, which is his true Church and Ministry, and where they are? and by that time they have well answered you, you may know more of their minds.

3. My last advice to you is this. See that you Obey your faithful Teachers, and improve their help for your salvation while you have it; and take
(d) heed

heed that you refuse not to learn when they would teach you. And in particular, see that you refuse not to submit to them in this duty of Private Instruction, which is mentioned in this Treatise. Go to them when they desire you, and be thankful for their help. Yea and at other times when you need their advice, go to them of your own accord, and ask it. Their office is to be your guides in the way to life: If you seek not their Direction, it seems you either despise salvation it self, or else you are so Proud as to think your selves sufficient to be your own Directors. Shall God in mercy send you Leaders to Teach you and Conduct you in the way to Glory, and will you stoutly send them back, or refuse their assistance, and say, We have no need of their Direction? Is it for their own case or gain that they trouble

trouble you, or is it for your own everlasting gain? Remember that Christ hath said to his Messengers, He that despiseth you, despiseth me! If your obstinate refusal of their Instruction, do put them to bear witness against you in Judgement, and to say, *Lord, I would have taught these ignorant sinners, and admonished these worldly impenitent wretches; but they would not so much as come to me, nor speak with me!* look you to it, and answer it as you can: For my part I would not be then in your case for all the world. But I shall say no more to you on this point, but only desire you to read and consider the exhortation, which is published in our *Agreement* it self, which speaks to you more fully: And if you read this book, remember that the Duty which you find to belong to the Ministers, doth shew also

(d 2) what

what belongs to your selves. For it cannot be our duty to Teach, Catechize, Advise, &c. if it be not yours to Hear, and Learn, and seek Advice. If you have any temptation to question our office, read the *London Ministers Ius Divinum Minister. Evang.* and Mr. *Tho. Balls* book for the Ministry: If you doubt of the duty of learning the Principles, and being Catechized, read the *London Ministers* late Exhortation to Catechizing, and Mr. *Zach. Croftons* book for Catechizing (now newly published.)

April 16. 1656.

Rich. Baxter.

Dr. *H. Hammond* of the Power
of the Keyes, cap. 4. sect.
104. pag. 113.

NAY *thirdly, there will be little matter of doubt or controversie, but that private, frequent, spiritual conference betwixt fellow-Christians, but especially (and in matters of high concernment and difficulty) between the Presbyter and those of his charge, even in the time of health; and peculiarly, that part of it, which is spent in the discussion of every mans special sins and infirmities and inclinations may prove very useful and advantagious (in order to spiritual directions, reproof and comfort) to the making the man of God perfect. And to tell truth, if the Pride and self conceit of some, the wretchlesness of others, the bashfulness of a third sort, the nauseating, and instant satiety of any good in a fourth, the follies of men, and artifices of Satan had not put this practice quite out of fashion among us, there is no doubt but more good might be done by Ministers this way, then is now done by any other means separated*
(d 3) from

from the use of this particularly, then by that of Publike Preaching (which yet need not be neglected the more when this is used) which hath now the fate to be cryed up, and almost solely depended on, it being the likelier way, as Quintilian saith, (comparing Publike and private teaching of youth) to fill narrow mouth'd bottles (and such are the most of us) by taking them single in the hand, and pouring in water into each, then by setting them altogether, and throwing never so many bottles of water on them.

Mr.

*Mr. William Gurnal in his
excellent Book called, The
Christian in compleat Armour,
pag. 2, 5.*

THE ignorant soul feels no such smart:
If the Minister stay till he sends for
him to instruct him, he may sooner
hear the bell go for him than any Messenger
come for him: You must seek them out, and
not expect that they will come to you. These
are a sort of people that are afraid more of
their Remedy, than their disease, and study
more to hide their ignorance, then how to
have it cured; which should make us pity
them the more, because they can pity them-
selves so little. I confess it is no small un-
happiness to some of us, who have to do with
a multitude, that we have neither time nor
strength to make our addresses to every parti-
cular person in our Congregations, and at-
tend on them as their needs require; and yet
cannot well satisfie our consciences other-
wise. But let us look to it, that though we

cannot

(d 4)

cannot do to the height of what we would, we be not found wanting in what we may. Let not the difficulty of our Province make us like some, who when they see they have more work upon their hands, than they can well dispatch, grow sick of it, and sit down out of a lazy despondency, and do just nothing.— O if once our hearts were but filled with Zeal for God and compassion to our peoples souls, we would up and be doing, though we could but lay a brick a day; and God would be with us. May be, you who find a people rude and sottishly ignorant, like stones in the quarry and trees unfell'd, shall not bring the work to such perfection in your daies as you desire! Yet as *David* did for *Solomon*, thou mayst by thy pains in teaching and instructing them, prepare materials for another, who shall rear the Temple.—

Read the rest.

The

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Readers, you will right me, and ease your selves, if
 you will mend these mis-Printings with your pen,
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Gildas Salvianus;

THE

REFORMED

PASTOR.

ACTS 20. 28.

*Take heed therefore to your selves, and to all the Flock,
over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you Over-
seers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath pur-
chased with his own blood.*

CHAP. I.

SECT. I.

Reverend and Dearly Beloved Brethren,



Hough some think that *Pauls* Exhorta-
tion to these Elders, doth prove him
their Ruler, we hope, who are this
day to speak to you from the Lord,
that we may freely do the like, with-
out any jealousies of such a Conclusion. Though we
teach our people as Officers set over them in the

B

Lord,

Lord, yet may we teach one another, as Brethren in Office as well as in Faith. If the people of our charge must teach and admonish, and exhort each other daily, *Col.* 3. 16. *Heb.* 3. 13. no doubt Teachers may do it to one another without any supereminency of power or degree. We have the same sins to kill, and the same graces to be quickened and corroborated, as our people have: we have greater works then they to do, and greater difficulties to overcome, and no less necessity is laid upon us; and therefore we have need to be warned and wakened, if not to be instructed, as well as they: So that I confess I think such meetings should be more frequent, if we had nothing else to do together but this: And as plainly and closely should we deal with one another, as the most serious among us do with their Flocks; lest if only they have the sharp admonitions and reproofs, they only should be sound and lively in the Faith. That this was *Pauls* judgement, I need no other proof, then this rowring heart-melting exhortation to the *Ephesian* Elders: A short Sermon; but not soon learnt. Had the Bishops and Teachers of the Church but throughly learned this short exhortation, though with the neglect of many a Volume which hath taken up their time, and helpt them to greater applause in the world, how happy had it been for the Church and them!

Our present straits of time will allow me to touch upon no part of it but my Text; which, supposing *Paul* the speaker, and the *Ephesine* Elders his hearers, containeth, 1. A two-sold duty. 2. A four-fold motive to enforce it.

The first duty is to *Take heed to themselves*. The
second

second is, *to take heed to all the Flock*. And the main work for the Flock which is thus heedfully to be done, is expressed, even *to feed them, or play the Shepherds for them*.

The motives closely laid together are these.

1. From their engagement and Relation: They are the Over-seers of the Flock; It is their office.

2. From the efficient cause; even the authority and excellency of him that called them to it: which was the Holy Ghost.

3. From the dignity of the object, which is the matter of their charge; It is the Church of God: the most excellent and honourable society in the world.

4. From the tender regard that Christ hath to this Church, and the price it cost him: He purchased it with his own blood.

This Motive is partly subordinate to the former. The terms of the Text have no such difficulty as to allow me the spending of much of our little time for their explication.

προσέχειν, here: is, *maxima cura & diligentia animum adhibere*; *ποίμνιον*, as *Iansenius* and others note, a little Flock. It signifieth not here the whole Church of Christ, which elsewhere is called *ποίμνιον*, in reference to Christ the great Shepherd; but it signifieth that particular Church which these Elders had a special charge of.

Whether that was one or many, we shall enquire anon. What is meant by *ἐπισκόπους*, Bishops or Over-seers here, is thus far agreed on, that they were Officers appointed to Teach and Guide those Churches in the way to salvation; and that it is the same persons that are called Elders of the Church of *Ephesus* before, and Bishops here. Of whom more anon. The verb *ἔθετο*, seemeth here to import both the Qualification, Ordination, and particular

ticular designation of these Elders or Bishops to their charge: for we must not limit and exclude without necessity. The Holy Ghost did by all these three waies make them Over-seers of their Flocks. 1. By qualifying them with such gifts as made them fit for it. 2. By directing the minds of those that Ordained them to the ministry. 3. By disposing both their own minds, and the Ordainers, and the peoples for the affixing them to that particular Church rather than another. *Dicit eos constitutos à spiritu sancto*, saith *Grotius*, *quia constituti erant ab Apostolis plenì spiritu sancto, quanquam approbante plebe*: But no doubt, in those times the Holy Ghost did give special directions as by internal oracle, for the disposal of particular teachers, as we read in the case of *Saul* and *Barnabas*, and for the provision for particular Congregations.

Ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, is by some translated barely to feed, as ours here; by others only to Rule; but indeed as *Gerhard*, *Jansenius*, and others note, it is not to be restrained to either, but containeth in it all the Pastoral work. In one word it is *Pastorem agere*, to do the work of a Pastor to the Flock. Whether it be the *Ephesine* Congregation before called ποίμνιον, that is here called ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, or whether it be the Universal Church which they may be said to feed and Rule, by doing their part towards it in their station (as a Justice of Peace may be said to rule the Land) is not a matter of much moment to be stood upon: but the former seems most likely to be the sense; περιποιήσατο, is both *acquisivit & asseruit & in suam vindicavit*. Its said to be done by the blood of God, by a Communicati-
on

on of the names of the distinct natures: And it affords us an argument against the *Arrians*, seeing Christ is here expressly called God.

SECT. II.

BUT it is necessary before we proceed to Instruction and Application, that we be resolved more clearly who those Elders or Bishops be that *Paul* doth here exhort. I am desirous to do all that lawfully I may to avoid controversie, especially in this place, and on such occasions; But here it is unavoidable, because all our following application will much depend upon the explication: and if you shall once suppose that none of this Exhortation was spoken to men in your office and capacity; no wonder if you pass it over and let it alone and take all that I shall hence gather for your practise, as impertinent. This Text was wont to be thought most apt to awaken the Ministers of the Gospel to their duty: but of late the negligent are gratified with the News, (for news it is) that only Bishops in a supereminent sense, whom we usually call Prelates are spoken to in this Text; and not only so, but that no other Text of Scripture doth speak to any other Church Presbyters (certainly) but them; yea, that no other were in being in Scripture times. Here are two Questions before us to be resolved. 1. Whether the Elders here mentioned were the Elders of one Church of *Ephesus*, or of all that part of *Asia*, that is, of every Church one. This is but in order to the second, which is, whether these Elders were only Prelates,

or such Bishops as among us have carried that name.

The reasons that may be brought to prove these to be the Prelates of the several Cities of *Asia*, and that the *πάν τὸ ποίμνιον*, is those many Cities, are these following. 1. The affirmation of *Irenaeus*. To which we say; 1. There might be many Elders of *Ephesus* present, though some from the neerest Cities were there also: which is all that *Irenaeus* affirms. 2. We oppose to the saying of *Irenaeus* the ordinary exposition of the antients: The most singular is of least authority, *caeteris paribus*.

2. It may be said that *Paul* calls them to remember how he had been among them three years, not ceasing to warn every one, &c. But he was not three years at *Ephesus* only, but in *Asia*, &c. *Answ.* He may be said to be where his chief place of abode is. He that resideth ordinarily at *Ephesus*, though he thence make frequent excursions to the neighbour parts, may well be said to abide so long at *Ephesus*. And the Ephesian Elders might well be acquainted with his industry round about them, though here is no certainty that he mentioneth any more then what he did with them. For what he did in *Ephesus*, he did in *Asia*, as that which is done in *London* is done in *England*. *Obj.* 3. But it is meant of all *Asia*; for he saith, *among whom I have gone*, &c. *Answ.* 1. As though *Paul* might not go preaching the Gospel in *Ephesus*? 2. If he went further, the Ephesine Elders might accompany him. *Ob.* *Ephesus* was the Metropolis, and therefore all *Asia* might be thence denominated. *Answ.* 1. It must be proved that it was so denominated. All *France* is not called *Paris*, nor all
all

all *England London*. 2. It is not whole Countries, but a Church that *Paul* speaks of; and it is yet unproved that the Church of one City had then any such dependance on the Church of another City, as lesser Cities had upon the Metropolis.

Our Reasons that make us think that either all or many of these Elders or Bishops were over the particular Church of *Ephesus*, are these. 1. It is expressly said in the Text, that they were Elders of the Church, referring to *Ephesus* next before mentioned. *He sent to Ephesus, and called the Elders of the Church*. And it cannot be proved in all the New Testament that the Bishops of other Churches and Cities, are called Bishops of a greater City, because it is the Metropolis. 2. Here is mention but of one Church and one Flock in the singular number, and not of many: when yet it is acknowledged that he speaketh not of the Universal Church (for then that language were not strange) but of a particular Church. And it is the use of the Apostles to speak still in the plural number when they mention the particular Churches of many Cities, and not to call them all one Church or Flock. 3. And it may seem else that the Elder of each one of these Cities hath a charge of all the rest. For they are required to take heed of all the Flock: which though it may possibly be by taking every one his part, yet if one should fail, the rest seem to have his charge upon them, which is more then they can do. 4. *Paul* was now in so great hast in his journey to *Jerusalem*, that *Luke* measureth it out by the daies. And it is not like that *Paul* could in such hast call the Elders from the several Cities of *Asia*. If he had passed through

the Brittish Seas in such haste, and lodged at *Plymouth*, and had thence called to him the Elders of *Paris*, he must have staid many dayes or weeks, before he could have gathered also the Bishops of *Rhemes*, *Arles*, *Orleance*, and the rest of *France*. 5. The numbers of Prophets and gifted men in those times, and the state of other particular Churches, doth give us sufficient reason to conjecture that *Ephesus* was not so scant of help, as to have but one Presbyter. *Grotius* thought that *Timothy* with his Com-Presbyters made this appearance; but others have given very probable reasons that *Timothy* was none of them. 6. The Judgement of Expositors antient and modern running so commonly the other way, commandeth some respect from us.

But 1. I confess the matter seemeth but conjectural on both sides, and neither part to have a certainty: but if probability may carry it, there seems to be many of the Elders of *Ephesus*, though possibly some of the neighbouring Cities might be with them. 2. But let this go how it will, it maketh not much to the main matter in hand. What if *Ephesus* and each other City or Church had then but one Presbyter? will it follow that he was a Prelate? No; but the contrary: It will prove that there was then none such at all, if there were no subject Presbyters. For there is no King without subjects; nor master without servants. 1. The stream of antient and modern Expositors do take this Text to speak of Presbyters in the common sense. And we must be cautelous before we be singular in the expounding of so many texts as speak the same way. 2. If men be put now in the end of the world to find out a new
foundation

foundation for Prelacy, supposing that it hath been amiss defended till now, and all these Texts (except by one or two) amiss expounded, it will occasion the shaking of the frame it self. 3. But the best is, we begin to be pretty well agreed, at least about the whole Government that. *de facto* was in being in Scripture-times. For 1. It is now at last confessed, that the word Presbyter is not certainly taken any where in the New Testament, for one that is subject to a Bishop, having not power of Ordination or Jurisdiction; and that no such Presbyters were in being in Scripture-times. And by what authority they are since erected let them prove that are concerned in it. 2. We are agreed now that they were the same persons who in Scripture are called Bishops & Presbyters. 3. And that these persons had the power of Ordination & Jurisdiction 4. And that these persons were not the Bishops of many particular Churches, but one only: They ruled not many Assemblies Ordinarily meeting for Church Communion: for there could no such meetings be kept up without a Bishop or Presbyter to administer the Ordinances of Christ in each. And if there were in a Diocess but one Bishop, and no other Presbyters in Scripture times, then it must needs be that a Diocess contained but one ordinary Church Assembly, and that *de facto* no Bishop in Scripture-times had under him any Presbyters nor more such Assemblies then one. That is, they Ruled the particular Churches just as our Parish Pastors do. So that we are satisfied that we go that way that the Apostles established and was used *de facto* in Scripture-times: And if any will prove the lawfulness of latter mutations, or will prove that the

the Apostles gave power to these particular Pastors to degenerate into another sort of officers hereafter, according to the Cogency of their Evidence, we shall believe it. In the mean time, desiring to be guided by the word of God, and to go upon sure ground, and take only so much as is certain, we hold where we are, and are glad that we are so far agreed. Yet not presuming to censure all superiour Episcopacy, nor refusing to obey any man that commandeth us to do our duty, but resolving to do our own work in faithfulness and peace.

For my own part, I have ever thought it easier to be Governed then to Govern; and I am ready (as the *Brittish* told *Austin*) to be obedient to any man in and for the Lord: Nor can I think that any Government can be burdensom, which Christ appointeth; but all beneficial to us; as making our burden lighter and not heavyer, and helping and not hindering us in the way to heaven. Were Christs work but thoroughly done, I should be the backwardest in contending, who should have the doing of it. Let us agree but on this one thing which is plain here in my Text, That the Churches or Flocks should be no greater then the Pastors can personally over-see, so that they may *Take heed to all the Flock*; and then let but able faithful men be the Over-seers, that will make the word of God the Rule, and lay out themselves for the saving of mens souls, and I am resolved never to contend with such about the business of superiority; but cheerfully to obey them in all things lawful, if they require my obedience. If the difference were not more about the matters commanded, and the work it self to be done, then,

then, Who should command it: me thinks humble men should be easily agreed. Would they but lay by all needless humane impositions and obtrusions, and be contented with the sufficient word of God, and not make new work to necessitate, new Canons and Authorities to impose it, but be content with the Gospel simplicity, and let us take that for a sufficient way to heaven, that *Peter* and *Paul* went thither in, I think I should not disobey such a Bishop, though I were not satisfied of his differing Order or Degree. Yea, if he were addicted to some encroaching usurpation of more power than is meet, would he but forbear the *Ecce duo gladii*, and come to us only with the sword of the spirit, which will admit of fair debates, and works only upon the conscience, I know no reason much to fear such power, though it were undue. But enough of this.

SECT. III.

THE Observations which the Text affordeth us are so many, that I may not now stay so much as to name them: but shall only lay down that one which containeth the main scope of the Text, and take in the rest as subordinate motives in the handling of that, in the method which the Apostle doth here deliver them to us.

Doct.

Doct. *THE Pastors or Over-seers of the Churches of Christ, must take great heed both to themselves, and to all their Flocks in all the parts of their Pastoral work.*

The method which we shall follow in handling this point, shall be this. 1. I shall briefly open to you the terms of the subject: What is meant by Pastors and Churches. 2. I shall shew you what it is to Take heed to our selves, and wherein it must be done. 3. I shall give some brief Reasons of that part of the point. 4. I shall shew you, What it is to Take heed to all the Flock in our Pastoral work, and wherein it must be done. 5. I shall make some Application of all.

SECT. IV.

I. *WHAT* the words, Pastor, Bishop and Church do signifie, I will not wast time to tell you, they being so well known. As for the things signified. 1. By a Pastor or Bishop here is meant, *An Officer appointed by Christ for the ordinary Teaching and Guiding a particular Church and all its members, in order to their salvation and the pleasing of God.*

Christ appointeth the Office it self by his Laws. The person he calleth to it by his qualifying Gifts, Providential disposals, secret impulses, and ordinarily

narily by the Ordination of his present Officers, and the Acceptance of the Church.

Teaching and Guidance contain the main parts at least of the work to which they are designed. The particulars we shall further stand upon anon.

A particular Church is the object of their work; by which they are distinguished from Apostolical unfixed itinerant Ministers.

They are the stated Ordinary Teachers of such a Church, by which they are differenced, both from private men, who do occasionally teach; and from the foresaid Itinerant Ministers, that do but *in transitu*, or seldom teach a particular Church. The subject is the matters of Salvation and Obedience to God, and the end is salvation it self, and the pleasing of God therein; by which work and ends the office is distinguished from all other offices, as Magistrates, School-masters, &c. though they also have the same remote or ultimate ends.

By the Flock and Church is meant that particular society of Christians of which these Bishops or Elders have the charge, associated for personal Communion in Gods publike worship, and for other mutual assistance in the way to Salvation. Exact Definitions we may not now stand on; we have more fully made some attempts that way heretofore.

SECT.

SECT. V.

II. **L**ET us next consider, What it is to take heed to our selves, and wherein it must be done. And here I may well for brevity sake adjoyn the Application to the Explication, it being about the matter of our Practise, that I may be put to go over as little as may be of the same things again. Take therefore I beseech you all this Explication, as so much Advice and Exhortation to the duty, and let your hearts attend it as well as your understandings.

I. Take heed to your selves, lest you should be void of that saving Grace of God which you offer to others, and be strangers to the effectual workings of that Gospel which you preach; and lest while you proclaim the necessity of a Saviour to the world, your own hearts should neglect him, and you should miss of an interest in him and his saving benefits? Take heed to your selves, lest you perish, while you call upon others to take heed of perishing! and lest you famish your selves while you prepare their food. Though there be a promise of shining as the stars to those that turn many to righteousness, *Dan. 12. 3.* that is but on supposition that they be first turned to it themselves: Such promises are meant, *caeteris paribus, & suppositis supponendis*. Their own sincerity in the faith is the condition of their glory simply considered, though their great ministerial labours may be a condition of the promise of their greater glory; Many a man hath warned others
that

that they come not to that place of Torment, which yet they hasted to themselves: Many a Preacher is now in hell, that hath an hundred times called upon his hearers to use the utmost care and diligence to escape it. Can any reasonable man imagine that God should save men for offering salvation to others, while they refused it themselves: and for telling others those truths which they themselves neglected and abused? Many a Taylor goes in raggs, that maketh costly cloathes for others: And many a Cook scarce licks his fingers, when he hath dress't for others the most costly dishes. Believe it Brethren, God never saved any man for being a Preacher, nor because he was an able Preacher: but because he was a justified, sanctified man, and consequently faithful in his masters work. Take heed therefore to your selves first, that you *be* that which you perswade your hearers to *be*, and believe that which you perswade them daily to believe: and have heartily entertained that Christ and Spirit which you offer unto others. He that bid you love your neighbours as your selves, did imply that you should love your selves & not hate and destroy your selves and them.

SECT. VI.

2. **T**AKE heed to your selves, lest you live in those actual sins which you preach against in others, and lest you be guilty of that which daily you condemn. Will you make it your work to magnifie God, and when you have done, dishonour him as much as others? Will you proclaim Christs
Governing

Governing Power, and yet condemn it, and rebel your selves? Will you preach his laws, and willfully break them? If sin be evil, why do you live in it? If it be not, why do you dissuade men from it? If it be dangerous, how dare you venture on it? If it be not, why do you tell men so? If Gods threatenings be true, why do you not fear them? If they be false, why do you trouble men needlessly with them, and put them into such frights without a cause? Do you know the Iudgement of God, that they that commit such things are worthy of death, and yet will you do them? *Rom.* 1. 32. Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thy self? Thou that saiest a man should not commit adultery, or be drunk, or covetous, art thou such thy self? Thou that makest thy boast of the Law, through breaking the Law dishonourest thou God? *Rom.* 2. 21, 21, 23. What, shall the same tongue speak evil, that speaketh against evil? shall it censure, and slander, and secretly backbite, that cries down these and the like in others? Take heed to your selves, lest you should cry down sin, and not overcome it, lest while you seek to bring it down in others, you bow to it, and become its slaves your selves. For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage, *2 Pet.* 2. 19. To whom you yield your selves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. *Rom.* 6. 16. It is easier to chide at sin, then to overcome it.

SECT.

SECT. VII.

3. **T**AKE heed also to your selves, that you be not unfit for the great employments that you have undertaken. He must not be himself a babe in knowledge, that will teach men all those mysterious things that are to be known in order to salvation. O What qualifications are necessary for that man that hath such a charge upon him as we have! How many difficulties in Divinity to be opened? Yea, about the very fundamentals that must needs be known! How many obscure Texts of Scripture to be expounded? How many duties to be done, wherein our selves and others may miscarry, if in the matter, and end, and manner, and circumstances, they be not well informed? How many sins to be avoided, which without understanding and foresight cannot be done? What a number of slye and subtile temptations must we open to our peoples eyes, that they may escape them? How many weighty and yet intricate cases of conscience have we almost daily to resolve? Can so much work, and such work as this be done by raw unqualified men? O what strong holds have we to batter, and how many of them? What subtile, and diligent, and obstinate resistance must we expect at every heart we deal with? Prejudice hath blockt up our way: we can scarce procure a patient hearing. They think ill of what we say while we are speaking it. We cannot make a breach in their groundless hopes and carnal peace, but they have twenty shifts and seeming rea-

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sons to make it up again; and twenty enemies, that are seeming friends, are ready to help them. We dispute not with them upon equal terms: But we have children to reason with that cannot understand us: we have distracted men (in spirituals) to reason with, that will bawl us down with raging non-sense: We have wilful unreasonable people to deal with, that when they are silenced, they are never the more convinc't: and when they can give you no reason, they will give you their resolution: like the man that *Salvian* had to deal with (*lib. 4. de Gubernat. p. 133.*) that being resolved to devour a poor mans means, and being intreated by *Salvian* to forbear, told him, He could not grant his request, for he had made a Vow to take it, so that the Preacher *audita religiosissimi sceleris ratione* was fain to depart. We dispute the case against mens wills and sensual passions as much as against their understandings; and these have neither reason nor ears: Their best Arguments are, *I will not believe you, nor all the Preachers in the world in such things. I will not change my mind, or life: I will not leave my sins; I will never be so precise, come on it what will.* We have not one, but multitudes of raging passions, and contradicting enemies to dispute against at once, whenever we go about the conversion of a sinner; as if a man were to dispute in a Fair or tumult, or in the midst of a crowd of violent scolds: what equal dealing, and what success were here to be expected? why such is our work, and yet a work that must be done.

O Dear Brethren what men should we be in skil, resolution & unwearied diligence, that have all this to do?

do? Did *Paul* cry out, *who is sufficient for these things?* 2 *Cor.* 2. 16. and shall we be proud or careless, and lazy, as if we were sufficient: As *Peter* saith to every Christian in Consideration of our great approaching change, 2 *Pet.* 3. 11. *What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness?* so may I say to every minister, seeing all these things do lie upon our hands, What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy Endeavours and Resolutions for our work! This is not a burden for the shoulders of a child. What skill doth every part of our work require? and of how much moment is every part? To preach a Sermon I think is not the hardest part; and yet what skill is necessary to make plain the truth, to convince the hearers; to let in unresistible light into their consciences, and to keep it there, and drive all home! to scrue the truth into their minds, and work Christ into their affections; to meet with every objection that gainsaies; and clearly to resolve it; to drive sinners to a stand, and make them see that there is no hope, but they must unavoidably be converted or condemned: and to do all this so for language and manner as be-seems our work, and yet as is most suitable to the capacities of the hearers, this and a great deal more that should be done in every Sermon, should sure be done with a great deal of holy skill. So great a God whose message we deliver, should be honoured by our delivery of it! It is a lamentable case, that in a message from the God of heaven, of everlasting consequence to the souls of men we should behave our selves so weakly, so unhandsomly, so imprudently, or so sleightly, that the whole business should

miscarry in our hands, and God be dishonoured, and his work disgraced, and sinners rather hardened then converted, and all this much through our weakness or neglect! How many a time have carnal hearers gone jearing home at the palpable and dishonourable failings of the Preacher! How many sleep under us, because our hearts and tongues are slepy: and we bring not with us so much skill and zeal as to awake them!

Moreover what skill is necessary to defend the truth against gain-sayers, and to deal with disputing Cavillers according to their several modes and case! And if we fail through weakness, how will they insult? but that is the smallest matter: but who knows how many weak ones may be perverted by the success, to their own undoing and the trouble of the Church?

What skill is there necessary to deal in private with one poor ignorant soul for their conversion (of which more in the end?)

O Brethren, do you not shrink and tremble under the sense of all this work! Will a common measure of holy skill and ability of prudence and other qualifications, serve for such a task as this! I know necessity may cause the Church to tolerate the weak: But woe to us if we tolerate and indulge our own weakness. Doth not reason and conscience tell you, that if you dare venture on so high a work as this, you should spare no pains to be fitted to perform it? It is not now and then an idle snatch or taste of studies that will serve to make a sound Divine. I know that laziness hath lately learned to pretend the lowness of all our studies, and how wholly and only the Spirit

Spirit must qualifie and assist us to the work: and so, as *Salvian* saith in another case (*lib. 4. p. 134.*) *Authorem quodammodo sui sceleris deum faciunt*: As if God commanded us the use of means, and then would warrant us to neglect them! As if it were his way to cause us to thrive in a course of idleness; and to bring us to knowledge by dreams when we are asleep, or to take us up into heaven, and shew us his counsels, while we think of no such matter, but are routing in the earth. O that men should dare so sinfully by their laziness to quench the Spirit, and then pretend the Spirit for the doing of it. *Quis unquam* (saith he before mentioned) *crederet usque in loanc contumeliam Dei, progressuraam esse humanae cupiditatis (ignaviæ) oudaciam! ut id ipsum in quo Christo injuriam facium, dicant se ob Christi nomen esse facturos! O inestimabile facinus & prodigiosum!* God hath required of us, that we be *not sloathful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, Rom. 12. 11.* Such we must provoke our hearers to be, and such we must be our selves. O therefore Brethren lose no time: study, and pray, and confer, and practise: for by these four waies your abilities must be increased. Take heed to your selves lest you are weak through your own negligence; and least you marr the work of God by your weakness. As the man is, so is his strength, *Judg. 8. 21.*

SECT. VIII.

4. **M**oreover take heed to your selves, lest your example contradict your Doctrine, and lest you lay such stumbling blocks before the blind, as may be the occasion of their ruine. Lest you unsay that with your lives, which you say with your tongues; and be the greatest hinderers of the success of your own labours. It much hindereth our work when other men are all the week long contradicting to poor people in private, that which we have been speaking to them from the word of God in publike because we cannot be at hand to manifest their folly: But it will much more hinder, if we contradict our selves, and if your actions give your tongue the lye, and if you build up an hour or two with your mouths, and all the week after pull down with your hands! This is the way to make men think that the word of God is but an idle tale: and to make preaching seem no better then prating. He that means as he speaks, will sure do as he speaks. One proud surly Lordly word, one needless contention, one covetous action may cut the throat of many a Sermon, and blast the fruit of all that you have been doing. Tell me Brethren, in the fear of God: Do you regard the success of your labours, or do you not? Do you long to see it upon the souls of your hearers? If you do not, What do you preach for! What do you study for! and what do you call your selves the Ministers of Christ for? But if you do, then sure you cannot find in your heart

heart to mar your work for a thing of nought! What, do you regard the success of your labours, and yet will not part with a little to the poor, not put up an injury or a soul word, nor stoop to the meanest, nor forbear your passionate or lordly carriage, no not for the winning of souls, and attaining the end of all your labours! You much regard the success indeed, that will sell it at so cheap a rate, or will not do so small a matter to attain it!

It is a palpable error in those Ministers that make such a disproportion between their preaching and their living, that they will study hard to preach exactly, and study little or not at all to live exactly: All the week long is little enough to study how to speak two hours: and yet one hour seems too much to study how to live all the week. They are loth to misplace a word in their Sermons or to be guilty of any notable infirmity (and I blame them not, for the matter is Holy and of weight;) but they make nothing of misplacing affections, words and actions in the course of their lives. O how curiously have I heard some men preach! and how carelessly have I seen them live! They have been so accurate as to the wordy part in their own preparations, that seldom preaching seemed a virtue to them, that their language might be the more polite, and all the Rhetorical jingling writers they could meet with, were prest to serve them for the adorning of their stile, (and gawds were oft their chiefest ornaments.) They were so nice in hearing others, that no man pleased them that spoke as he thought, or that drowned not affections, or dulled not, or distemper-

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ed not the heart by the predominant strains of a phantastick wit. And yet when it came to matter of practice, and they were once out of Church, how incurious were the men, and how little did they regard what they said or did, so it were not so palpably gross as to dishonour them! They that preached precisely, would not live precisely! What difference between their pulpit speeches and their familiar discourse? They that are most impatient of Barbarisms, Solecisms, and Paralogisms in a Sermon, can easily tolerate them in their conversations.

Certainly Brethren, we have very great cause to take heed what we do, as well as what we say: If we will be the servants of Christ indeed, we must not be tongue-servants only, but must serve him with our deeds, *and be doers of the work, that in our deed we may be blessed, Jam. 1. 25.* As our people must be *Doers of the word, and not hearers only*; so we must be Doers and not speakers only, least we be *deceivers of our selves, Jam. 1. 22.* A practical Doctrine must be practically preached. We must study as hard how to live well, as how to preach well. We must think and think again how to compose our lives as may most tend to mens salvation, as well as our Sermons. When you are studying what to say to them, I know these are your thoughts (or else they are naught and to no purpose) *How should I get within them? and what should I say that is likely most effectually to convince them, and convert them, and tend to their salvation?* And should you not as diligently bethink your selves, *How shall I live, and what shall I say and do, and how shall I dispose of all that I have, as may most probably tend to the saving of mens souls?* Brethren,
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if saving souls be your end, you will certainly intend it as well out of the pulpit as in it! If it be your end, you will live for it, and contribute all your endeavours to attain it: And if you do so, you will as well ask concerning the money in your purse, as the words of your mouth, *Which way should I lay it out for the greatest good, especially to mens souls?* O that this were your daily study, how to use your wealth, your friends, and all you have for God, as well as your tongues? and then we should see that fruit of your labours that is never else like to be seen. If you intend the end of the Ministry in the pulpit only, then it seems you take your selves for Ministers no longer then you are there. And then I think you are unworthy to be esteemed such at all.

SECT. IX.

III. **H**AVING shewed you in four particulars, How it is that we must Take heed to our selves, and what is comprized in this command; I am next to give you the Reasons of it, which I intreate you to take as so many Motives to awaken you to your duty, and thus Apply them as we go.

Reas. 1. You have a Heaven to win or lose your selves, and souls that must be happy or miserable for ever: and therefore it concerneth you to begin at home, and to take heed to your selves as well as unto others. Preaching well may succeed to the salvation of others, without the holiness of your own hearts or lives; It is possible at least, though less usual:

usual: but it is impossible it should serve to save your selves: [Many shall say at that day, *Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? Mat. 7. 22.* Who shall be answered with an *I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity. v. 23.* O Sirs, how many men have preached Christ, and perished for want of a saving interest in him! How many that are now in hell, have told their people of the torments of hell, and warned them to avoid it! How many have preached of the wrath of God against sinners, that are now feeling it! O what sadder case can there be in the world, then for a man that made it his very trade and calling to proclaim salvation, and to help others to attain it, yet after all to be himself shut out! Alas that ever we should have so many books in our libraries that tell us the way to heaven, that we should spend so many years in reading those books, and studying the Doctrine of eternal life, and after all this to miss of it! That ever we should study and preach so many Sermons of salvation, and yet fall short of it! so many Sermons of damnation, and yet fall into it! And all because we preached so many Sermons of Christ while we neglected him: of the Spirit while we resisted it; of faith, while we did not heartily believe; of Repentance and conversion, while we continued in the state of flesh and sin; and of a Heavenly life, while we remained carnal and earthly our selves. If we will be Divines only in Tongue and Title, and have not the Divine Image upon our souls, nor give up our selves to the Divine honour and will, no wonder if we be separated from the Divine presence, and denied the fruition of God for ever. Believe it Sirs, God is

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no respecter of persons: He saveth not men for their coats or callings; A holy calling will not save an unholy man. If you stand at the door of the Kingdom of Grace, to light others in, and will not go in your selves; when you are burnt to the snuff you will go out with a stink, and shall knock in vain at the gates of glory, that would not enter at the door of Grace. You shall then find that your lamps should have had the oyl of grace as well as of ministerial Gifts; of Holiness as well as of Doctrine, if you would have had a part in the glory which you preached. Do I need to tell you that Preachers of the Gospel must be judged by the Gospel; and stand at the same bar, and be sentenced on the same terms, and dealt with as severely as any other men? Can you think to be saved then by your Clergy? and to come off by a *legit ut Clericus*, when there is wanting the *credidit & vixit ut Christianus*? Alas, it will not be: You know it will not. Take heed therefore to your selves for your own sakes, seeing you have souls to save or lose as well as others.

SECT. X.

2. **T**AKE heed to your selves; For you have a depraved nature, and sinful inclinations as well as others. If innocent *Adam* had need of heed, and lost himself and us for want of it, how much more need have such as we? sin dwelleth in us, when we have preached never so much against it. And one degree prepareth the heart to another, and
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one sin inclineth the mind to more; If one theif be in the house, he will let in the rest; because they have the same disposition and design. A spark is the beginning of a flame: and a small disease may bring a greater. A man that knows himself to be purblind, should take heed to his feet. Alas, even in our hearts as well as in our hearers, there is an aversness to God, a strangeness to him, unreasonable and almost unruly passions. In us there is at the best the remnants of pride, unbelief self seeking, hypocrisie, and all the most hareful deadly sins. And doth it not then concern us to take heed? Is so much of the fire of hell yet unextinguished, that at first was kindled in us? Are there so many Traytors in our very hearts, and is it not time for us to take heed? You will scarce let your little children go themselves while they are weak, without calling upon them to take heed of falling. And alas how weak are those of us that seem strongest? How apt to stumble at a very straw? How small a matter will cast us down, by ticing us to folly, or kindling our passions and inordinate desires, by perverting our Judgements, or abating our resolutions, and cooling our zeal, and dulling our diligence? Ministers are not only sons of *Adam*, but sinners against the Grace of Christ as well as others, and so have increased their radical sin. Those treacherous hearts will one time or other deceive you, if you take not heed. Those sins that seem now to lie dead will revive: Your pride, and worldliness, and many a noysom vice will spring up, that you thought had been weeded out by the roots. It is most necessary therefore, that men of such infirmities should take heed
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to themselves, and be careful in the dieting and usage of their souls.

SECT. XI.

3. **A**ND the rather also Take heed to your selves; because such great works as ours do put men on greater use and tryal of their graces, and have greater temptations, then many other mens. Weaker gifts and graces may carry a man out in a more even and laudable course of life, that is not put to so great tryals. Smaller strength may serve for lighter works and burdens. But if you will venture on the great undertakings of the Ministry, if you will lead on the Troops of Christ against the face of Satan and his followers; if you will engage your selves against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places; if you undertake to rescue captivated sinners, and to fetch men out of the Devils paws: do not think that a heedless, careless Minister is fit for so great a work as this. You must look to come off with greater shame, and deeper wounds of conscience, then if you had lived a common life, if you will think to go through such things as these with a careless soul. It is not only the work that calls for heed, but the workman also, that he may be fit for business of such weight; we have seen by experience, that many men that lived as private Christians, in good reputation for parts and piety, when they have taken upon them either military employment, or Magistracy, where the work was above their parts, and temptations did overmatch

match their strength, they have proved scandalous disgraced men. And we have seen some private Christians of good note, that having thought too highly of their parts, and thrust themselves into the Ministerial office, they have been empty men, and almost burdens to the Church, and worse then some that we have endeavoured to cast out. They might have done God more service in the station of the higher rank of private men, then they do among the lowest of the Ministry. If you will venture into the midst of the enemies, and bear the burden and heat of the day, Take heed to your selves.

SECT. XII.

4. **A**ND the rather also, Take heed to your selves; because the Tempter will make his first or sharpest onset upon you. If you will be the leaders against him, he will spare you no further then God restraineth him. He beareth you the greatest malice, that are engaged to do him the greatest mischief. As he hateth Christ more then any of us, because he is the General of the field, and the *Captain of our salvation*, and doth more then all the world besides against the Kingdom of darkness; so doth he hate the Leaders under him, more then the common souldiers on the like account (in their proportion) He knows what a rout he may make among the rest, if the leaders fall before their eyes. He hath long tryed that way of fighting, *neither against great or small* comparatively, but these: and of *smiting the Shepherds, that he may scatter the Flock*: And

so great hath been his success this way, that he will follow it on as far as he is able. Take heed therefore Brethren, for the enemy hath a special eye upon you. You shall have his most subtile insinuations, and incessant sollicitations, and violent assaults. As wise and learned as you are, Take heed to your selves lest he over-wit you. The Devil is a greater Scholar then you, and a nimbler disputant: he can *transform himself into an Angel of light to deceive*: He will get within you, and trip up your heels before you are aware: He will play the juglar with you undiscerned, and cheat you of your faith or innocence, and you shall not know that you have lost it; nay he will make you believe it is multiplyed or increased, when it is lost. You shall see neither hook nor line, much less the subtile Angler himself, whole he is offering you his bait. And his baits shall be so fitted to your temper and disposition, that he will be sure to find advantages within you, and make your own principles and inclinations to betray you, and when ever he ruineth you, he will make you the instruments of your own ruine. O what a conquest will he think he hath got, if he can make a Minister lazy and unfaithful; if he can tempt a Minister into covetousness or scandal! He will glory against the Church and say, *These are your holy Preachers: you see what their preciseness is, and whither it will bring them*. He will glory against Jesus Christ himself, and say, *These are thy Champions! I can make thy chiefest servants to abuse thee; I can make the Stewards of thy house unfaithful*. If he did so insult against God upon a false surmise and tell him he could make *Job* to curse him to his face (*Job* 1. 11.) What would he

he do if he should indeed prevail against us? And at last he will insult as much over you, that ever he could draw you to be false to your great trust, and to blemish your holy profession, and to do him so much service that was your enemy. O do not so far gratifie Satan, do not make him so much sport: suffer him not to use you as the *Philistines* did *Samson*, first to deprive you of your strength, and then to put out your eyes, and so to make you the matter of his triumph and derision.

SECT. XIII.

5. **T**AKE heed to your selves also, because there are many eyes upon you, and therefore there will be many observers of your fals. You cannot miscarry but the world will ring of it. The Eclipses of the Sun by day time are seldom without witnesses. If you take your selves for the Lights of the Churches, you may well expect that mens eyes should be upon you. If other men may sin without observation, so cannot you. And you should thankfully consider, how great a mercy this is, That you have so many eyes to watch over you, and so many ready to tell you of your faults, and so have greater helps then others, at least for the restraining of your sin. Though they may do it with a malicious mind, yet you have the advantage by it: God forbid that we should prove so impudent, as to do evil in the publike view of all, and to sin wilfully while the world is gazing on us! He that is drunk, is drunk in the night; and he that sleepeth, doth

doth sleep in the night, 1 *These.* 5. 7. What fornicator so impudent as to sin in the open streets while all look on? Why consider that you are still in the open light; Even the Light of your own Doctrine will disclose your evil doings. While you are as Lights set upon a hill, look not to lie hid, *Mat.* 5. 14. Take heed therefore to your selves, and do your works as those that remember that the world looks on them, and that with the quick-sighted eye of malice, ready to make the worst of all, and to find the smallest fault where it is, and aggravate it where they find it, and divulge it and make it advantagious to their designs; and to make faults where they cannot find them. How cautelously then should we walk before so many ill-minded observers!

SECT. XIV.

6. **T**AKE heed also to your selves; for your sins have more hainous aggravations then other mens: Its noted among King. *Alphonsus* sayings, that a great man cannot commit a small sin; we may much more say, that a learned man, or a Teacher of others cannot commit a small sin: or at least, that the sin is great, as committed by him, which is smaller in another.

I. You are liker then others to sin against knowledge, because you have more then they. At least you sin against more light or means of knowledge. What, do you not know that Covetousness and Pride are sins? do you not know what it is to be

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unfaithful to your trust, and by negligence or self-seeking to betray mens souls? You know your masters will, and if you do it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. There must needs therefore be the more wilfulness, by how much there is the more knowledge. If you sin, it is because you will sin.

2. Your sins have more hypocrisie in them then other mens, by how much the more you have spoke against them. O what a hainous thing is it in us, to study how to disgrace sin to the utmost, and make it as odious to our people as we can, and when we have done, to live in it, and secretly cherish that which we openly disgrace? What vile hypocrisie is it, to make it our daily work to cry it down, and yet to keep it? to call it publikely all to naught, and privately to make it our bed-fellow and companion? To bind heavy burdens for others, and not to touch them our selves with a finger? What can you say to this in judgement? Did you think as ill of sin as you spoke? or did you not? If you did not, why would you dissemblingly speak it? If you did, why would you keep it and commit it? O bear not that badge of a miserable Pharisee, *They say but do not*, Mat. 23. 3. Many a minister of the Gospel will be confounded, and not be able to look up, by reason of this heavy charge of hypocrisie.

3. Moreover, your sins have more perfidiousness in them then other mens. You have more engaged your selves against them. Besides all your common engagements as Christians, you have many more as Ministers. How oft have you proclaimed the evil and danger of it, and called sinners from it? how oft

oft have you declared the terrors of the Lord? all these did imply that you renounced it your selves. Every Sermon that you preacht against it, every private Exhortation, every Confession of it in the Congregation, did lay an engagement upon you to forsake it. Every child that you have baptized, and entred into the Covenant with Christ: and every administration of the Supper of the Lord, wherein you called men to renew their Covenant, did import your own renouncing of the flesh and the world, and your engagement unto Christ. How oft and how openly have you born witness of the odiousness, and damnable nature of sin? and yet will you entertain it against all these professions and testimonies of your own? O what treachery is it to make such a stir in the Pulpit against it, and after all to entertain it in the heart, and give it the room that is due to God, and even prefer it before the glory of the Saints?

Many more such aggravations of your sins might be mentioned: but as we haste over these, so we must pass them by through our present haste.

SECT. XV.

7. **T**AKE heed to your selves; for the honour of your Lord and Master, and of his holy Truth and waies, doth lie more on you then on other men. As you may do him more service, so also more dis-service then others. The neerer men stand to God the greater dishonour hath he by their miscarriages: and the more will they be imputed by foolish men, to God himself. The heavy Judgement was threatned and executed on *Eli* and on his house, because they *kicked at his sacrifice and offering*: 1 Sam. 2. 29. *For therefore was the sin of the young men great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the Lord; vers. 17.* It was that great aggravation, of *causing the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme*; which provoked God to deal sharplyer with *David* then else he would have done, 2 Sam. 12. 11, 12, 13, 14. If you are indeed Christians, the glory of God is dearer to you then your lives. Take heed therefore what you do against it, as you would take heed what you do against your lives. Would it not wound you to the heart to hear the name and truth of God reproached for your sakes! To see men point to you, and say, *There goes a covetous Priest, a secret Tipler, a scandalous man; these are they that Preach for strictness, when themselves can live as loose as others; they condemn us by their Sermons, and condemn themselves by their lives: For all their talk they are as bad as we.* O Brethren, could your hearts endure to hear men cast the dung of
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your iniquities in the face of the Holy God, and in the face of the Gospel, and of all that desire to fear the Lord? would it not break your hearts to think on it, that all the poor godly Christians about you should suffer reproach for your mis-doings? why, if one of you that is a Leader of the Flock should but once be ensnared in a scandalous crime, there is scarce a man or woman that seeketh diligently after their salvation, within the hearing of it but besides the grief of their hearts for your sin they are likely to have it cast in their teeth by the ungodly about them, though they never so much detest it and lament it. The ungodly husband will tell the wife, and the ungodly parents will tell their children, and neighbours and fellow servants will be telling one another of it, and saying, *These are your godly Preachers? you may see what comes of all your stir; are you any better then others? you are even all alike.* Such words as these must all the godly in the Countrey perhaps hear for your sakes. It must be that offence come; but wo to that man by whom it cometh, *Mat. 18. 7.* O Take heed brethren in the name of God of every word that you speak, every step you tread, for you bear the Ark of the Lord, you are intrusted with his honour; and dare you let it fall, and cast it in the dirt? If you *that know his will, and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law, and being confident that you your selves are Guides of the blind, and lights to them that are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes, &c.* If you I say, should live contrary to your Doctrine, and *by breaking the Law dishonour God, the name of God would be blasphemed*

among the ignorant and ungodly through you, Rom. 2. 14, 20, 21, 23, 24. And you are not unacquainted with that standing Decree of Heaven, 1 Sam. 2. 30. Them that honour me, I will honour: and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed. Never did man dishonour God, but it proved the greatest dishonour to himself. God will find out waies enough to wipe off all that can be cast upon him: but you will not so easily remove the shame and sorrow from your selves.

SECT. XVI.

8. **T**AKE heed to your selves; for the souls of your hearers, and the success of all your labours do very much depend upon it. God useth to fit men for great works, before he will make them his instruments in accomplishing them. He useth to exercise men in those works that they are most suited to. If the work of the Lord be not soundly done upon your own hearts, how can you expect that he should bless your labours for the effecting it in others? He may do it if he please, but you have much cause to doubt whether he will. I shall here shew you some particular Reasons under this last, which may satisfie you, that He that would be a means of saving others, must take heed to himself, and that God doth more seldom prosper the labours of unsanctified men.

Reas. 1. Can it be expected that God should bless that mans labours (I still mean comparatively,
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as to other Ministers) who worketh not for God, but for himself? why this is the case of every unsanctified man. None but the upright do make God their chief end, and do all or any thing heartily for his honour: They make the Ministry but a trade to live by: They choose it rather than another calling, because their parents did destinate them to it, and because it is a pleasant thing to know, and it is a life wherein they have more opportunity to furnish their intellects with all kind of science; and because it is not so toylsom to the body, to those that have a will to favour their flesh; and because it is accompanied with some reverence and respect from men, and because they think it a fine thing to be Leaders and Teachers, and have others depend on them, and receive the Law at their mouth, and because it asfordeth them a competent maintenance. For such ends as these are they ministers, and for these do they preach; and were it not for these, and such as these, they would soon give over. And can it be expected that God should much bless the labours of such men as these? It is not him they preach for, but themselves, and their own reputation or gain: It is not him but themselves that they seek and serve, and therefore no wonder if he leave them to themselves for the success, and if their labours have no greater a blessing then themselves can give them, and the word reach no further then their own strength is able to make it reach.

2. Can you think that he is likely to be as successful as others, that dealeth not heartily and faithfully in his work, & never soundly believeth what he saith, & never is truly serious when he seemeth to be most

ligent? And can you think that any unsanctified man can be hearty and serious in the ministerial work? It cannot be. A kind of seriousness indeed he may have, such as proceedeth from a common faith or opinion that the word is true, and is actuated by a natural servour, or by selfish ends: But the seriousness and fidelity of a sound believer that ultimately intendeth God and mens salvation, this he hath not. O Sirs, all your preaching and perswading of others will be but dreaming and trifling hypocrisie, till the work be thoroughly done upon your selves. How can you set your selves day and night to a work that your carnal hearts are averse from? How can you call out with serious servour upon poor sinners to repent and come in to God, that never Repented or came in your selves? How can you heartily follow poor sinners with importunate sollicitations, to take heed of sin, and to set themselves to a holy life, that never felt your selves the evil of sin, or the worth of holiness? I tell you, these things are never well known till they are felt, nor well felt till they are possessed: And he that seeleth them not himself, is not so like to speak feelingly to others, nor to help others to the feeling of them. How can you follow sinners with compassion in your hearts, and tears in your eyes, and beseech them in the name of the Lord to stop their course and return and live, that never had so much compassion on your own souls as to do this much for your selves? What, can you love other men better then your selves? and have pitty on them that have none upon your selves? Sirs, do you think they will be hearty and diligent to save men from hell, that be not
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heartily perswaded that there is a hell? Or to bring men to heaven, that do not soundly believe that there is such a thing? As *Calvin* saith on my Text; *Neque enim aliorum salutem sedulo unquam curabit qui suam negligit*. He that hath not so strong a belief of the word of God, and the life to come, as will take off his own heart from the vanities of this world, and set him upon a resolved diligence for salvation, I cannot expect that he should be faithful in seeking the salvation of other men. Sure he that dare damn himself, dare let others alone in the way to damnation; and he that will sell his master with *Iudas* for silver, will not stick to make merchandize of the flock; and he that will let go his hopes of heaven rather than he will leave his worldly and fleshly delights, I think will hardly leave these for the saving of others. In reason we may conceive, that he will have no pitty on others, that is wilfully cruel to himself; and that he is not to be trusted with other mens souls, that is unfaithful to his own, and will sell it to the Devil for the short pleasures of sin. I confess that man shall never have my consent to have the care and charge of others, and to over-see them in order to their salvation, that takes not heed to himself, but is careless of his own (except it were in case of absolute Necessity, that no better could be had.)

3. Do you think that it is a likely thing, that he will fight against Satan with all his might, that is a servant to Satan himself? And will he do any great harm to the Kingdom of the Devil, that is himself a member and subject of that Kingdom? And will he be true to Christ that is in Covenant
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with his enemy, and Christ hath not his heart? why this is the case of every unsanctified man, of what cloth soever his coat be made. They are the servants of Satan, and the subjects of his Kingdom; It is he that ruleth in their hearts: And are they like to be true to Christ that are ruled by the Devil? What Prince will chose the friends and voluntary servants of his enemy to lead his Armies in war against him? This is it that hath made so many Preachers of the Gospel to be enemies to the work of the Gospel which they Preach: No wonder if such be secretly girding at the Holy obedience of the faithful; and while they take on them to preach for a holy life, if they cast reproaches on them that use it! O how many such Traytors have been in the Church of Christ in all ages, that have done more against him under his colours, then they could have done in the open field! That have spoken well of Christ and Scripture, and godliness in the general, and yet silyly and closely do what they can to bring it into disgrace, and make men believe that those that set themselves to seek God with all their hearts, are but a company of hypocrites, or self-conceited fantastical fellows: And what they cannot for shame speak that way in the Pulpit, they will do it in secret amongst their companions. How many such Wolves have been set over the sheep, because they had sheeps cloathing; pretending to be Christians and as good as others. If there were a Traytor among the twelve in Christs family, no marvel if there be many now. It cannot be expected that a slave of Satan, *whose God is his belly, and who mindeth earthly things*, should be any better then *an enemy to the*
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Cross of Christ. What though they live civilly, and preach plausibly, and have the out-side of an easie cheap Religiousness? They may be as fast in the Devils snares by worldliness, pride, a secret distaste of a diligent godliness, or by an unsound heart that is not rooted in the faith, nor unreservedly devoted to God in Christ, as any others are by drunkenness, uncleanness and such disgraceful sins. Publicans and Harlots do sooner come to heaven then Pharisees, because they are sooner convinced of their sin & misery.

And though many of these men may seem excellent Preachers, and cry down sin as loud as others, yet is it all but an affected fervency, and too commonly but a meer uneffectual bawling. For he that cherisheth it in his own heart, doth never fall upon it in good sadness in others. I know that a wicked man may be more willing of anothers reformation then his own, and may thence have a kind of real earnestness in dissuading them from it; because he can preach against sin at easier rates then he can forsake it, and another mans reformation may stand with his own enjoyments of his lusts. And therefore many a wicked Minister or Parent may be earnest with their people or family to amend, because they lose not their own sinful profits or pleasures by anothers reformation, nor doth it call them to that self denyal as their own doth. But yet for all this, there is none of that zeal, resolution and diligence, as is in all that are true to Christ. They set not against sin as the enemy of Christ, and as that which endangereth their peoples souls. A trayterous Commander, that shooteth nothing against the enemy but powder, may cause his Guns to make as great a sound or report,

port, as some that are laden with bullets: but he doth no hurt to the enemy by it. So one of these men may speak as loud, and mouth it with an affected fervency: but he seldom doth any great execution against sin and Satan. No man can fight well, but where he hateth, or is very angry: Much less against them whom he loveth, and loveth above all. Every unrenewed man is so far from hating sin to purpose, that it is his dearest treasure; though not as sin, yet the matter of it is, as it affordeth delight to his sensual desires. So that you may see, that an unsanctified man is very unfit to be a Leader in Christs Army, who loveth the enemy; and to draw others to renounce the world and the flesh, who cleaveth to them himself as his chiefest Good.

4 And it is not a very likely thing that the people will regard much the Doctrine of such men, when they see that they do not live as they preach. They will think that he doth not *mean* as he speaks, if he *do* not as he speaks. They will hardly believe a man that seemeth not to believe himself. If a man bid you run for your lives, because a Bear, or an enemy is at your backs, and yet do not mend his pace himself in the same way, you will be tempted to think that he is but in jest, and there is really no such danger as he pretends. When preachers tell people of a necessity of Holiness, and that without it no man shall see the Lord, and yet remain unholy themselves, the people will think that they do but talk to pass away the hour, and because they must say somewhat for their money, and that all these be but words of course. Long enough may you lift up your voices

ces against sin, before men will believe, that there is any such harm or danger in it as you talk of, as long as they see the same man that reproacheth it, to put it in his bosom, and make it his delight. You rather tempt them to think that there is some special good in it, and that you dispraise it as gluttons do a dish which they love, that they may have it all to themselves. As long as men have eyes as well as ears, they will think they *see* your meaning as well as *hear* it; and they are apter to believe their sight then their hearing, as being the more perfect sense. All that a Preacher doth is a kind of preaching; And when you live a covetous or a careless life, you preach these sins to your people by your practice. When you drink, or game, or prate away your time in vain discourse, they take it as if you told them, *Neighbours, this is that life that you should all live: you may venture on this course without any danger.* If you are ungodly, and teach not your families the fear of God, nor contradict not the sins of the company you come into, nor turn the stream of their vain talking, nor deal with them plainly about the matters of their salvation, they will take it as if you preacht to them that such things are needless, and they may boldly do so as well as you. Yea, and you do worse then all this, for you teach them to think ill of others that are better. How many a faithful Minister & private man is hated and reproached for the sake of such as you? What say the people to them? *You are so precise, and tell us so much of sin, and danger, and duty, and make such a stir about these matters; When such or such a Minister that is as great a Scholar as you, and as good a Preacher as you, will be*
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merry and jest with us, and let us alone, and never trouble themselves or us with such discourse. These busie fellows can never be quiet, but make more ado then needs; and love to fright men with talk of damnation, when (ober, learned, peaceable Divines can be quiet, and live with us like other men. This is the very thoughts and talk of people, which your negligence doth occasion. They will give you leave to preach against their sins as much as you will, and talk as much for godliness in the pulpit, so you will but let them alone afterwards, and be friendly and merry with them when you have done, and talk as they do, and live as they, and be indifferent with them in your conscience and your conversation. For they take the Pulpit to be but as a stage; a place where Preachers must shew themselves and play their parts; where you have liberty to say what you list for an hour: and what you say they much regard not, if you shew them not by saying it personally to their faces, that you were in good earnest, and indeed did mean them. Is that man likely therefore to do much good, or fit to be a Minister of Christ, that will speak for him an hour, and by his life will preach against him all the week besides; yea and give his publike words the lye?

And if any of the people be wiser then to follow the examples of such men yet the loathsomness of their lives will make their Doctrine the less effectual. Though you know the meat to be good and wholsom yet it may make a weak stomach rise against it, if the Cook or the servant that carryeth it have pocky, or leprous, or dingy-hands. Take heed therefore to your selves, if ever you mean to do good to others.

5. Lastly

5. Lastly, consider, Whether the success of your labours depend not on the grace and blessing of the Lord; And where hath he made any promise of his assistance and blessing to ungodly men? If he do promise *his Church* blessing even by such, yet doth he not promise *them* any blessing. To his faithful servants he hath promised that he will be with them, that he will put his Spirit upon them, and his word into their mouthes, and that Satan shall fall before them as lightening from heaven. But where is there any such promise to the ungodly, that are not the children of the promise? Nay, do not you rather by your abuse of God, provoke him to forsake and blast your endeavours? at least, as to your selves, though he may bless them to his chosen. For I do not all this while deny but that God may often do good to his Church by wicked men, but not so ordinarily nor eminently as by his own.


And what I have said of the wicked themselves, doth hold in part of the godly while they are scandalous and back-sliding, proportionably according to the measure of their sin. So much for the Reasons.

CHAP.



CHAP. II.

SECT. I.

IV. AVING shewed you, What it is to Take heed to our selves, and Why it must be done? I am next to shew you, What it is to *Take heed to all the Flock*, and wherein it doth consist and must be exercised. It was first necessary to take into Consideration, *What we must be*, and *what we must do for our own souls*, before we come to that which must be done for others: *Ne quis aliorum vulnera medendo ad salutem, ipse per negligentiam suae salutis intumescat; ne proximos juvando, se deserat; ne alios erigens, cadat*, saith Gregor. *M. de cur. past. l. 4.* Yea left all his labours come to nought, because his heart and life is nought that doth perform them. *Nonnulli enim sunt qui solerti curâ spiritualia praecepta prescrutantur, sed quae intelligendo penetrant, vivendo conculcant: repente docent quae non opere, sed meditatione didicerunt: & quod verbis prædicant, moribus impugnant; unde fit ut cum pastor per abrupta graditur, ad praecipitium grex sequatur. Idem ib. li. 1. cap. 2.* When we have led them to the living waters, if we muddy it by our filthy lives,

lives, we may lose our labour, & yet they be never the better. *Aquam pedibus perturbare, est sancta meditationis studia male vivendo corrumpere, inquit Idem. ibid.*

Before we speak of the work it self, *we must* begin with somewhat that is implied and presupposed.

And 1. It is here implied, that *Every Flock should have their own Pastor (one or more) and every Pastor his own Flock.* As every Troop or Company in a Regiment of souldiers must have their own Captain and other officers, and every souldier know his own Commanders and Colours: so is it the will of God, that every Church have their own Pastors, and that all Christs Disciples *do know their Teachers that are over them in the Lord,* 1 *Thes.* 5. 12, 13. The Universal Church of Christ must consist of particular Churches guided by their own Over-seers; and every Christian must be a member of one of these Churches; except those that upon Embassages, travels, or other like cases of necessity, are deprived of this advantage, *Acts* 14. 23. *They ordained them Elders in every Church;* so *Tit.* 1. 5. and in many places this is clear. Though a Minister be an Officer in the Universal Church, yet is he in a special manner the Overseer of that particular Church which is committed to his charge: As he that is a Physitian in the Common-wealth may yet be the *Medicus vel Archiater cujusdam Civitatis*, and be obliged to take care of that City, and not so of any other: so that though he may and ought occasionally to do any good he can else where that may consist with his fidelity to his special charge, (when an unlicenced person

son may not) yet is he first obliged to that City, and must allow no help to others that must occasion a neglect of them, except in great extraordinary cases, where the publike good requireth it. So is it betwixt a Pastor and his special Flock. When we are Ordained Ministers without a special charge, we are licenced and commanded to do our best for all, as we shall have a call for the particular exercise: but when we have undertaken a particular charge, we have restrained the exercise of our gifts and guidance so specially to that, that we may allow others no more then they can spare, of our time and help, except where the publike good requireth it, which must be first regarded. From this Relation of Pastor and Flock, arise all the duties which mutually we owe. As we must be true to our trust, so must our people be faithful to us, and obey the just Directions that we give them from the word of God.

2. When we are commanded to *Take heed to all the Flock*; it is plainly implied, that *the Flocks must be no greater regularly and ordinarily then we are capable of Over-seeing or taking heed of*. That particular Churches should be no greater, or Ministers no fewer, then may consist with a Taking heed to *all*. For God will not lay upon us natural impossibilities: He will not bind men on so strict account as we are bound, to leap up to the Moon, to touch the Stars, to number the sands of the Sea. If it be the Pastoral work to Over-see and Take heed to all the Flock, then sure there must be such a proportion of Pastors assigned to each Flock, or such a number of souls in the care of each Pastor, as he is able to take such heed to as is here required. Will God require of
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one Bishop to take the charge of a whole County, or of so many Parishes or thousands of souls, as he is not able to know or to over-see? Yea and to take the sole Government of them, while the particular Teachers of them are free from that undertaking? Will God require the blood of so many Parishes at one mans hands, if he do not that which ten or twenty, or an hundred, or three hundred men can no more do then I can move a Mountain? Then wo to poor Prelates? This were to impose on them a natural or unavoidable necessity of being damned. Is it not therefore a most doleful case that learned sober men should plead for this as a desirable privilege? or draw such a burden wilfully on themselves? and that they tremble not rather at the thoughts of so great an undertaking? O happy had it been for the Church, and happy for the Bishops themselves, if this measure that is intimated by the Apstole here had been still observed: and *the Diocess had been no greater then the Elders or Bishops could Over-see and Rule*, so that they might have *Taken heed to all the Flock*? Or that Pastors had been multiplied as Churches multiplyed, and the number of Over-seers proportioned so far to the number of souls, that they might not have let the work be undone, while they assumed the empty titles, and undertook impossibilities! And that they had rather prayed the Lord of the harvest to send forth more Labourers, even so many as had been proportioned to the work; and not to have undertaken all themselves. I should scarce commend the prudence or humility of that Labourer (let his parts in all other respects be never so great) that

would not only undertake to gather in all the harvest in this County himself, and that upon pain of death yea of damnation, but would also earnestly contend for this prerogative.

Obj. But there are others to Teach, though one only have had the Rule.

Ans Blessed be God it was so: and no thanks to some of them. But is not Government of great concernment to the good of souls, as well as Preaching? If not, then what matter is it for Church-Governors? If it be, then they that nullifie it by undertaking impossibilities, do go about to ruine the Churches and themselves. If only preaching be necessary, let us have none but meer Preachers: what needs there then such a stir about Government? But if Discipline (in its place) be necessary too, what is it but enmity to mens salvation to exclude it? and it is unavoidably excluded, when it is made to be his work that is naturally incapable of performing it. He that will command an Army alone, may as well say, *It shall be destroyed for want of command:* And the School-master that will Over-see or Govern all the Schools in the County alone, may as well say plainly, *they shall be all ungoverned:* And the Physician that will undertake the Guidance of all the sick people in a whole Nation, or County, when he is not able to visit or direct the hundreth man of them, may as well say, *Let them perish.*

Ob. But though they cannot Rule them by themselves, they may do it by others.

Ans. The nature of the Pastoral work is such, as must be done by the Pastor himself. He may not delegate a man that is no Pastor to Baptize or administer

nister the Lords Supper, or to be the Teacher of the Church: No more may he commit the Government of it to another. Otherwise by so doing he makes that man the Bishop, if he make him the immediate Ruler and Guid of the Church: And if a Bishop may make each Presbyter a Bishop, so he do but derive the power from him, then let it no more be held unlawful for them to Govern, or to be Bishops. And if a Prelate may do it, it is like Christ or his Apostles might and have done it; for as we are to preach in Christs name, and no in any mans; so its likely that we must Rule in his name. But of this somewhat more anon.

Yet still it must be acknowledged that in case of necessity, where there are not more to be had, one man may under take the charge of more souls then he is able well to over-see particularly. But then he must only undertake *to do what he can* for them, and not to do all that a Pastor ordinarily ought to do. And this is the case of some of us that have greater Parishes then we are able to take that special heed to, as their state requireth; I must profess for my own part, I am so far from their boldness that dare venture on the sole Government of a County, that I would not for all *England* have undertaken to have been one of the two that should do all the Pastoral work that God enjoyneth to that one Parish where I live, had I not this to satisfie my conscience, that *through the Churches necessities more cannot be had; and therefore I must rather do what I can, than leave all undone because I cannot do all.* But cases of unavoidable necessity, are not to be the standing condition of the Church; or at least it is not desirable

that it should so be. *O happy Church of Christ, were the Labourers but Able and Faithful, and proportioned in number to the number of souls; So that the Pastors were so many, or the particular Flocks or Churches so small, that we might be able to Take heed to All the Flocks.*

SECT. II.

HAVING told you these two things that are here implied. I come next to the duty it self that is exprest. And this Taking heed to All the Flock in general is, *A very great care of the whole and every part, with great watchfulness and diligence in the use of all those holy actions and Ordinances which God hath required us to use for their salvation.*

More particularly, this work is to be considered:

1. In respect to the *subject* matter of it.
2. In respect to the *object*.
3. In respect to the work it self, or the *Actions* which we must do.

And 4. In respect to the *End* which we must intend. Or it is not amiss if I begin first with this last, as being first in our intention, though last as to the attainment.

1. The ultimate end of our Pastoral over-sight, is that which is the ultimate end of our whole lives; Even the Pleasing and Glorifying of God, to which is connext the Glory of the humane nature also of Christ, and the Glorification of his Church,
and

and of our selves in particular: And the neerer ends of our office, are, the sanctification, and holy obedience of the people of our charge, their unity, order, beauty, strength, preservation and increase; and the right worshipping of God, especially in the solemn Assemblies.

By which it is manifest, that before a man is capable of being a true Pastor of a Church according to the mind of Christ, he must have so high an estimation of these things, that they may be indeed his ends.

I. That man therefore that is not himself taken-up with the predominant love of God, and is not himself devoted to him, and doth not devote to him all that he hath and can do; that man that is not addicted to the pleasing of God, and maketh him not the Center of all his actions, and liveth not to him as his God and Happiness: That is, that man that is not a sincere Christian himself, is utterly unfit to be a Pastor of a Church.

And if we be not in a case of desperate necessity, the Church should not admit such, so far as they can discover them. Though to inferiour common works (as to teach the Languages, and some Philosophy, to translate Scriptures, &c.) they may be admitted. A man that is not heartily devoted to God, & addicted to his service & honour, will never set heartily about the Pastoral work: nor indeed can he possibly (while he remaineth such) do one part of that work, no nor of any other, nor speak one word in Christian sincerity. For no man can be sincere in the means, that is not so in his intentions of the end. A man must heartily Love God above all,

before he can heartily serve him before all.

2. No man is fit to be a Minister of Christ that is not of a publike spirit as to the Church, and delighteth not in its beauty, and longeth not for its felicity: As the good of the Common-wealth must be the end of the Magistrate (his neerer end) so must the felicity of the Church be the end of the Pastors of it. So that we must rejoyce in its welfare, and be willing to spend and be spent for its sake.

3. No man is fit to be a Pastor of a Church that doth not set his heart on the life to come, and regard the matters of everlasting life, above all the matters of this present life: and that is not sensible in some measure how much the inestimable riches of glory are to be preferred to the trifles of this world. For he will never set his heart on the work of mens salvation, that doth not heartily believe and value that salvation.

4. He that delighteth not in holiness, hateth not iniquity, loveth not the Unity and Purity of the Church, and abhorreth not discord and divisions, and taketh not pleasure in the Communion of Saints, and the publike worship of God with his people, is not fit to be a Pastor of a Church. For none of all these can have the true ends of a Pastor, and therefore cannot do the works. For of what necessity the end is to the Means, and in Relations, is easily known.

SECT.

SECT. III.

II. **T**HE *subject* matter of the Ministerial work, is in general, spiritual things, or matters that concern the Pleasing of God, and the Salvation of our people. It is not about temporal and transitory things. It is a vile usurpation of the Pope and his Prelates to assume the management of the temporal sword, and immerse themselves in the businesses of the world; to exercise the violent coercion of the Magistrate, when they should use only the spiritual weapons of Christ. Our business is not to dispose of Common-wealths, nor to touch mens purses or persons by our penalties: but it consisteth only in these two things.

1. In revealing to men that Happiness, or chief Good, which must be their ultimate end.

2. In acquainting them with the right means for the attainment of this end, and helping them to use them, and hindring them from the contrary.

1. It is the first and great work of the Ministers of Christ to acquaint men with that God that made them, and is their Happiness: to open to them the treasures of his Goodness, and tell them of the Glory that is in his presence, which all his chosen people shall enjoy: That so by shewing men the *Certainty* and the *Excellency* of the promised felicity, and the perfect blessedness in the life to come, compared with the vanities of this present life, we
may

may turn the stream of their cogitations and affections; and bring them to a due contempt of this world, and set them on seeking the durable treasure. And this is the work that we should lie at with them night and day: could we once get them right in regard of the end, and set their hearts unfeignedly on God, and heaven, the chiefest part of the work were done: for all the rest would undoubtedly follow.

And here we must diligently disgrace their seeming sensual felicity, and convince them of the baseness of those pleasures which they prefer before the delights of God.

2. Having shewed them the right end, our next work is to acquaint them with the right means of attaining it. Where the wrong way must be disgraced, the evil of all sin must be manifested, and the danger that it hath brought us into, and the hurt it hath already done us, must be discovered. Then have we the great mysterie of Redemption to disclose; the Person, Natures, Incarnation, Perfection, Life, Miracles, Sufferings, Death, Burial, Resurrection, Ascension, Glorification, Dominion, Intercession of the blessed Son of God. As also the tenor of his promises, the conditions imposed on us, the duties which he hath Comanded us, and the Everlasting Torments which he hath threatned to the final Impenitent neglecters of his grace. O what a treasury of his blessings and Graces, and the priviledges of his Saints have we to unfold! What a blessed life of Holiness and Communion therein have we to recommend to the sons of men: And yet how many temptations, difficulties and dangers to disclose, and
assist

assist them against! How many precious spiritual duties have we to set them upon, and excite them to, and direct them in! How many objections of flesh and blood, and cavils of vain men, have we to confute! How much of their own corruptions and sinful inclinations to discover and root out! We have the depth of Gods bottomless Love and Mercy, the depth of the mysteries of his Designs and Works, of Creation, Redemption, Providence, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, Glorification; the depth of Satans temptations, and the depth of their own hearts, to disclose. In a word, we must teach them, as much as we can of the whole *Word* and *Works* of God. O what two volumns are there for a Minister to Preach upon! how great, how excellent, how wonderful and mysterious! All Christians are Disciples or Schollars of Christ, the Church is his School; we are his Ushers, the Bible is his Grammer: This is it that we must be daily teaching them. The Papists would teach them without book, lest they should learn heresies from the Word of truth; least they learn falshood from the Book of God, they must learn only the books or words of their Priests. But *Our* business is not to teach them without Book, but to help them to undrstand this Book of God. So much for the subject matter of our work.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

III. **T**HE *Object* of our Pastoral care is, *All the Flock*: That is, the Church and every member of it. It is considered by us, 1. In the whole body or society. 2. In the parts or individual members.

1. Our first care must be about the whole. And therefore the first duties to be done are publike duties, which are done to the whole. As our people are bound to prefer publike duties before private, so are we much more. But this is so commonly confessed, that I shall say no more of it.

2. But that which is less understood or considered, is, That *All the Flock* even each individual member of our charge must be taken heed of and watched over by us in our Ministry. To which end, it is presupposed necessary, that (unless where absolute necessity forbiddeth it, through the scarcity of Pastors, and greatness of the Flock) *We should know every person that belongeth to our charge*. For how can we take heed to them, if we do not know them? Or how can we take that heed that belongeth to the special charge that we have undertaken, if we know not who be of our charge, and who not (though we know the persons?) Our obligation is not to all neighbour Churches, or to all straglers, as great as it is to those whom we are set over. How can we tell whom to exclude, till we know who are included? Or how can we refel the accusations of the offended, that tell us of the ungodly or defiled members

bers of our Churches, when we know not who be members, and who not? Doubtless the bounds of our Parishes will not tell us, as long as Papists and some worse do there inhabit. Nor will bare hearing us certainly discover it, as long as those are used to hear that are members of other Churches, or of none at all. Nor is meer participation of the Lords Supper a sure note, while strangers may be admitted, and many a member accidentally be kept off. Though much probability may be gathered by these, or some of these, yet a fuller knowledge of our charge is necessary where it may be had, and that must be the fittest expression of Consent, because it is Consent that is necessary to the Relation.

All the Flock being thus *known*, must afterward be *Heeded*. One would think all reasonable men should be satisfied of this, and it should need no further proof. Doth not a careful Shepherd look after every individual Sheep? And a good School-master look to every individual Scholler, both for instruction and correction? And a good Physitian look after every particular Patient? And good Commanders look after every individual souldier? Why then should not the Teachers, the Pastors, the Physitians, the Guides of the Churches of Christ, take heed to every individual member of their charge? Christ himself the great and good Shepherd, and master of the Church, that hath the whole to look after, doth yet take care of every individual. In the 15. of *Luke* he telleth us that he is as the Shepherd that *leaveth the ninety and nine sheep in the Wilderness to seek after one that was lost:* or as the *woman that lighteth a Candle, and sweepeth the*
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the house, and searcheth diligently to find the one goat that was lost; and having found it, doth rejoyce, and call her friends and neighbours to rejoyce. And Christ telleth us, that even in heaven there is Ioy over one sinner that repenteth. The Prophets are oft sent to single men. *Ezekiel* is made a watch man over individuals: and must say to the wicked, *Thou shalt surely dye*, *Ezek.* 3. 18, 19. and 18 And *Paul* taught them *publikely and from house to house*, which was meant of his teaching particular families; for even the publike teaching was then in houses; and *publikely and from house to house*, signifie not the same thing. The same *Paul* warned every man, and taught every man, in all wisdom, that he might present every man perfect in Christ Iesus, *Col.* 1. 18. Christ expounded his publike parables, to the twelve a part, *Mark* 4. 34. Every man must seek the Law at the mouth of the Priest, *Mal.* 2. 7. We must give an account of our watching for the souls of all that are bound to obey us, *Heb.* 13. 7. Many more passages in Scripture assure us that it is our duty to Take heed to every individual person in our Flock. And many passages in the antient Councils do plainly tell us, it was the practice of those times, till Churches began to be crowded, and to swell so big that they could not be guided as Churches should be (when they should rather have been multiplyed, as the Converts did increase.) But I will pass over all these, and mention only one passage in *Ignatius* or whoever it was I matter not much seeing it is but to prove what was then the custom of the Church) *ad Polycarp.* πυκνότερον συναγωγὰι γενέθωσαν ἐξ ὀνόματος πάντας ζήτει δούλους καὶ δοῦλας μή ὑπερήφρηνει. i. e. *Let Assemblies*
be

be often gathered; seek after (or enquire of) all by name: despise not servant-men or maids. You see it was then taken for a duty to look after every member of the flock by name, though it were the meanest servant-man or maid. The Reasons of the necessity of this I shall pass over now, because some of them will fall in when we come to the duty of Catechizing and personal instruction in the end.

Obj. But the Congregation that I am set over is so great that it is not possible for me to know them all, much less to take heed of all individuals.

Ans. 1. Is it necessity or not that hath cast you upon such a charge? If it be not, you excuse one sin with another: How durst you undertake that which you knew your self unable to perform, when you were not forced to it? It seems then you had some other ends in your undertaking, and never intended to make it good, and be faithful to your trust. But if you think that you were necessitated to it, I must ask you, 1. Might not you possibly have procured assistance for so great a charge? Have you done all that you could with your friends and neighbours to get maintenance for another to help you? 2. Have you not so much maintenance yourself as might serve your self and another? What though it will not serve to maintain you in fulness? Is it not more reason that you should pinch your flesh and family, then undertake a work that you cannot do, and neglect the souls of so many men? I know it will seem hard to some that I say; But to me it seems an unquestionable thing:
That

That if you have but an hundred pounds a year, it is your duty to live upon part of it, and allow the rest to a competent assistant, rather than the Flock that you are over should be neglected. If you say, That this is hard measure; your wife and children cannot so live. I answer, 1. Do not many families in your Parish live on less? 2. Have not many able Ministers in the Prelates daies been glad of less, with liberty to preach the Gospel? There are some yet living (as I have heard) that have offered the Bishops to enter into bond to preach for nothing, so they might but have had liberty to preach. 3. If still you say, that you cannot live so neerly as poor people do, I further ask; Can your Parishoners better endure damnation, then you can endure want and poverty? What, do you call your selves Ministers of the Gospel, and yet are the souls of men so base in your eyes that you had rather they did eternally perish, then your selves and family should live in a low and poor condition? Nay, should you not rather beg your bread, then put such a thing as mens salvation upon a hazard, or disadvantage? Yea or hazard the damnation but of one soul? O Sirs, it is a miserable thing when men study and talk of Heaven and Hell, and the fewness of the saved, and the difficulty of salvation, and be not all this while in good sadness! If you were, you could never sure stick at such matters as these, and let your people go to damnation, that you might live at higher rates in the world? Remember this, the next time you are preaching to them, *that they cannot be saved without knowledge*: and hearken whether conscience do not conclude, *Its likely they*
might

might be brought to knowledge, if they had but diligent instruction and exhortation privately man by man; and then were there another minister to assist me, this might be done: and then if I would live neerly and deny my flesh, I might have an assistant: and then it must conclude, Dare I let my people live in that Ignorance which I my self have told them is damning; rather then put my self and family to a little want?

And I must further say, that indeed this poverty is not so sad & dangerous a business as it is pretended to be. So you have but food and rayment, must you not therewith be content? and what would you have more then that which may enable you for the work of God? And it is not purple and fine linnen, and faring deliciously every day, that you must expect as that which must content you. *A mans life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth.* So your cloathing be warm, and your food be wholsom, you may as well be supported by it to do God service, as if you had the fullest satisfaction to your flesh: A patcht coat may be warm, and bread and drink is wholsom food. He that wanteth not these, hath but a cold excuse to make for hazarding mens souls, that he may live on a fuller dyet in the world.

Obj. If this Doctrine be received, then it will discourage men from medling with great places; and so all Cities, Market-Towns, and other great Parishes will be left desolate.

Answ. It will discourage none but the carnal and self-seeking, and not those that thirst after the winning of souls, & are wholly devoted to the service of

God, and have taken up the Cross and follow Christ in self-denyal. And for others, they are so far from being good Ministers, that they are not his Disciples or true Christians. Christ would not forbear to tell the world of the absolute necessity of self-denial and resigning up all, and bearing the Cross, and mortifying the flesh, for fear of discouraging men from his service; but contrarily telleth them that he will have no other servants but such, and those that will not come on these terms, may go their waies, and take their course, and see who will lose by it, and whether he do more want their service, or they want his protction and favour.

Obj. But I am not bound to go to a charge which I cannot perform, and to take a greater place, when I am fit but for a less.

Ans. 1. If you would undertake it but for want of maintenance, then it is not unfitness, but poverty that is your discouragement: and that is no sufficient discouragement.

2. We are all bound to dispose of our selves to the greatest advantage of the Church, and to take that course in which we may do God the greatest service; and we know that he hath more work for us in greater Congregations then in lesser, and that the neglect of them would be the greatest injury and danger to his Church and interest: and therefore we must not refuse, but chuse the greatest work, though it be accompanied with the greatest difficulties and suffering. It must be done, and why not by you as well as others?

Obj. But no man must undertake more then he can do.

Ans.

Answ. I will add the rest of my enquiries, which will answer this objection. 3. Would the maintenance of the place serve two others, that have less necessity, or smaller families then you? If it will, try to get two such as may accept it in your stead. 4. If this cannot be done, nor addition be procured, and there be really so little that you cannot have assistance, then these two things must be done. 1. You must take the charge with limitation, with a profession of your insufficiency for the whole work, and your undertaking only so much as you can do; and this you do for the necessity of the place that cannot otherwise be better supplied. 2. You must not leave off the work of personal Oversight, nor refuse to deal particularly with any, because you cannot do it with all: But take this course with as many as you are able: and withall put on godly neighbours, and specially parents and masters of families to do the more. And thus doing what we can, will be accepted.

And in the mean time let us importune the Rulers of the Common-wealth, for such a proportion of maintenance to great Congregations, that they may have so many Ministers to watch over them, as may personally as well as publickely instruct and exhort them. It may please God at last to put this into the hearts of Governors, and to give them a love to the prosperity of his Church, and a conscience of their duty for the promoting of mens salvation.

Some more of these Objections we shall answer anon, under the Uses. So much for the distribution of the work of the Ministry, drawn from the Object materially Considered.

We are next to consider of it in reference to the several qualities of the object. And because we shall here speak somewhat of the Acts with the Object, there will be the less afterward to be said of them by themselves.

I. The first part of our Ministerial work lyeth *in bringing unsound Professors of the faith to sincerity*, that they who before were Christians in name and shew, may be so indeed. Though it belong not to us as *their Pastors*, to convert professed Infidels to the faith, because they cannot be members of the Church while they are professed Infidels; yet doth it belong to us as their Pastors, to convert these seeming Christians to sincerity, because such seeming Christians may be visible members of our Churches. And though we be not absolutely certain that this or that man in particular is unsound, and unsanctified, yet as long as we have a certainty that many such are usually in the Church, and have too great probability that it is so with several individuals whom we can name, we have therefore ground enough to deal with them for their conversion. And if we be certain by their notorious Impiety that they are no Christians, and so to be ejected from the Communion of Christians; yea if they were professed Infidels, yet may we deal with them for their conversion, though not as *Their Pastors*, yet as Ministers of the Gospel. So that upon these terms we may well conclude that, The work of conversion is the great thing that we must first drive at, and labour with all our might to effect.

Alas, the misery of the unconverted is so great, that it calleth lowdest to us for our compassion. If
truly

truly converted sinner do fall, it will be but into sin which will sure be pardoned, and he is not in that hazard of damnation by it as others be. Not (as some unjustly accuse us to say) That God hateth not their sins as well as others, or that he will bring them to heaven, let them live never so wickedly: but the spirit that is within them will not let them live wickedly, nor to sin as the ungodly do; but they hate sin habitually, when through temptation they commit it actually; and as they have a General Repentance for all, so have they a particular Repentance for all that is known; and they usually know all thats gross and much more, and they have no iniquity that hath dominion over them. But with the unconverted it is far otherwise. *They are in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and have yet no part nor fellowship in the pardon of their sins, or the hopes of glory; We have therefore a work of greater necessity to do for them, even to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among the sanctified by faith in Christ, Acts 26. 18.* To soften and open their hearts to the entertainment of *the truth, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of it, that they may escape out of the snare of the Devil, who are taken Captive by him at his will, 2 Tim. 2. 25* That so *they may be converted, and their sins may be forgiven them, Mark 4. 12.* He that seeth one man sick of a mortal disease, & another only pained with the tooth-ach, will be moved more to compassionate the former, then the latter, and will sure make more haste to help him,

though he were a stranger, and the other were a Son. It is so sad a case to see men in a state of damnation, wherein if they should dye they are remedilessly lost, that me thinks we should not be able to let them alone, either in publike or private, whatever other work we have to do. I confess, I am forced frequently to neglect that which should tend to the further encrease of knowledge in the godly, and may be called stronger meat, because of the lamentable necessity of the unconverted. Who is able to talk of Controversies or nice unnecessary points, yea or truths of a lower degree of necessity, how excellent soever, while he seeth a company of ignorant, carnal, miserable sinners before his face, that must be chang'd or damn'd? Me thinks I even see them entring upon their final woe! Me thinks I even hear them crying out for help, and speediest help. Their misery speaks the lowder, because they have not hearts to seek or ask for help themselves. Many a time have I known, that I had some hearers of higher fancies, that lookt for rarities, and were addicted to despise the Ministry, if he told them not somewhat more then ordinary; and yet I could not find in my heart to turn from the observation of the necessities of the impenitent, for the humouring of these, nor to leave speaking to the apparently miserable for their salvation, to speak to such novelists, for the clawing of their ears; no nor so much as otherwise should be done, to the weak for their confirmation, and increase in grace. Me thinks as *Pauls Spirit was stir'd within him, when he saw the Athenians so addicted to Idolatry, Acts 17.* 16. so it should cast us into one of his paroxisms, to see so many
men

men in great probabilitie of being everlastingly undone; and if by faith we did indeed look upon them as within a step of hell, it should more effectually untye our tongues, then they tell us that *Cræsus* danger did his sons. He that will let a sinner go to hell for want of speaking to him, doth set less by souls then the Redeemer of souls did, and less by his neighbour then rational Charity will allow him to do by his greatest enemy. O therefore Brethren, whomsoever you neglect, neglect not the most miserable! Whatever you pass over, forget not poor souls that are under the condemnation and curse of the Law, and may look every hour for the infernal execution, if a speedy change do not prevent it. O call after the impenitent, and ply this great work of converting souls whatever else you leave undone.

2. The next part of the Ministerial work, is for the building up of those that are already truly converted. And according to the various states of these, the work is various. in general, as the persons are either such as are young and weak, or such as are in danger of growing worse, or such as are already declining, so our work is all reducible to these three, *Confirmation* and *Progress*, *Preservation* and *Restoration*.

1. We have many of our flock that are young and weak; though of long standing, yet of small proficiency or strength, *Heb.* 5. 11, 12. And indeed it is the most common condition of the godly: Most of them stick in weak and low degrees of grace: And it is no easie matter to get them higher. To bring them to higher and stricter opinions, is

very easie; that is, to bring them from the truth into error, on the right hand as well as on the left: but to encrease their knowledge and gifts is not easie; but to encrease their graces is the hardest of all. It is a very troublesom thing to be weak: It keepeth under dangers, it abateth consolation, and delight in God, and taketh off the sweetness of his waies, and maketh us go to work with too much backwardness, and come off with little peace or profit: It maketh us less serviceable to God and man, to bring less honour to our Master and profession, and do less good to all about us. We find small benefit by the means we use: we too easily play with the Serpents baits, and are insnared by his wiles. A Seducer will easily make us shake, and evil may be made appear to us as Good, truth as falshood, sin as a duty; and so on the contrary; we are less able to resist and stand in an encounter; we sooner fall; we hardlier rise; and are apter to prove a scandal and reproach to our profession; We less know our selves, and are more apt to be mistaken in our own estate not observing corruptions when they have got advantage: we are dishonourable to the Gospel by our very weakness, and little useful to any about us; and in a word, though we live to less profit to our selves or others, yet are we unwilling and too unready to dye.

And seeing the case of weakliness is comparatively so sad, how diligent should we be to cherish and encrease their grace? The strength of Christians is the honour of the Church. When men are inflamed with the Love of God, and live by a lively working saith, and set light by the profits and honours of the world,

world, and love one another with a pure heart fervently, and can bear and heartily forgive a wrong, and suffer joyfully for the cause of Christ, and study to do good, and walk in offensively and harmlesly in the world, as ready to be servants of all men for their good, becoming all things to all men to win them, and yet abstaining from the appearances of evil, and seasoning all their actions with a sweet mixture of Prudence, Humility, Zeal and Heavenly spirituality; O what an honour are such to their professions? What ornaments to the Church? and how excellently serviceable to God and man! Men would sooner believe that the Gospel is indeed a word of truth and power, if they could see more such effects of it upon the hearts and lives of men. The world is better able to read the nature of Religion in a mans life then in the Bible. They that obey not the word, may be won by the conversations of such as these, 1 *Pet.* 3. 1. It is therefore a necessary part of our work, to labour more in the polishing and perfecting of the Saints, that they may be strong in the Lord, and fitted for their masters use.

2. Another sort of Converts that need our special help, are those that labour under some particular distemper, that keeps under their graces, and maketh them temptations and troubles to others, and a burden to themselves. For alas too many such there are. Some that are specially addicted to Pride, and some to worldliness, and some to this or that sensual desire, and many to frowardness, and disturbing passions. It is our duty to set in for the assistance of all these, and partly by disswasions and clear discoveries of the odiousness of the sin, and partly by suitable

directions about the way of remedy, to help them to a fuller conquest of their corruptions. We are leaders of Christs Army against the powers of darkness, and must resist all the works of darkness wherever we find them, though it be in the children of light. We must be no more tender of the sins of the godly then the ungodly, nor any more befriend them or favour them. By how much more we love the persons above others, by so much the more must we express it in the opposition of their sins. And yet we must look to meet with some tender persons here, especially when iniquity hath got any head, and made a party; and many have fallen in love with it; They will be as pettish and impatient of a reproof as some worser men, and interest piety it self into their faults, and say that a Minister that preacheth against them, doth preach against the godly; A most haynous crime! to make God and godliness accessory to their sins; When all the world besides hath not the thousandth part of that enmity and opposition against them. But the Ministers of Christ must do their duties, for all mens peevishness; and must not so far *hate their Brother, as to forbear the plain rebuking of him, or suffer sin to lie upon his soul, Levit. 19. 17.* Though it must be done with much prudence, yet done it must be.

3. Another sort that our work is about, is Declining Christians, that are either fallen into some scandalous sin, or else abate their zeal and diligence, and shew us that they have lost their former Love! As the case of back-sliders is very sad, so our diligence must be great for their recovery. Its sad to them

them to lose so much of their Life, and peace, and serviceableness to God: and to become so serviceable to Satan & his cause. It is sad to us to see that all our labour is come to this, and that when we have taken so much pains with men, and had so much hopes of them, all should be so far frustrate. It is saddest of all to think that God should be so abused by those that he hath so loved, and done so much for, and that the enemy should get such advantage upon his graces, and that Christ should be so wounded in the house of a friend, and the name of God evil spoken of among the wicked through such; and all that fear God should be reproached for their sakes. Besides that partial back-sliding hath a natural tendency to total Apostacie, and would effect it, if special grace prevent it not.

The sadder the case of such Christians is, the more lieth upon us for their effectual recovery, to restore those that are but overtaken with a fault by the Spirit of meekness, *Gal.* 6. 12. and yet to see that the sore be thoroughly searcht and healed, and the joynt be well set again, what pain soever it cost; and especially to look to the honour of the Gospel, and to see that they rise by such free and full confessions and significations of true Repentance, that some reparation be thereby made to the Church, and their holy profession, for the wound of dishonour that they had given it by their sin. Much skill is required to the restoring of such a soul.

4. Another part of the Ministerial work is about those that are fallen under some great Temptation. Much of our assistance is needful to our people in such a case. And therefore every Minister should
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be a man that hath much insight into the Tempters wiles. We should know the great variety of them, and the cunning craft of all Satans instruments that lie in wait to deceive, and the methods and devices of the grand deceiver! some of our people lie under Temptations to Error and Heresie, especially the young unsettled, and most self-conceited: and those that are most conversant or familiar with Seducers. Young, raw ungrounded Christians, are commonly of their mind that have most interest in their esteem, and most opportunity of familiar talk to draw them into their way. And as they are tinder, so deceivers want not the sparks of zeal, to set them on a flame. A zeal for error and opinions of our own, is natural, and easily kindled and kept alive: but it is far otherwise with the spiritual zeal for God. O what a deal of holy Prudence and Industry is necessary in a Pastor to preserve the flock from being tainted with heresies, and falling into noxious conceits and practices, and especially to keep them in Unity and Concord, and hinder the rising or increase of Divisions. If there be not a notable conjunction of all accomplishments, and a skilful improvement of parts and interests, it will hardly be done, especially in such times as ours, when the sign is in the head, and the disease is Epidemical. If we do not publicly maintain the credit of our Ministry, and second it by unblamable exemplary lives, and privately meet with Seducers, and shame them; if we be not able to manifest their folly, and follow not close our staggering people before they fall, how quickly may we give great advantage to the enemy, and let in such an inundation
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of sin and calamity, that will not easily be again cast out!

Others lie under a temptation to worldliness! and others to gluttony or drunkenness; and others to lust; some to one sin, and some to another. A faithful Pastor therefore should have his eye upon them all, and labour to be acquainted with their natural temperament, and also with their occasions and affairs in the world, and the company that they live or converse with, that so he may know where their temptations lie: and then speedily, prudently and diligently to help them.

5. Another part of our work is to comfort the disconsolate, and to settle the Peace of our peoples souls, and that on sure and lasting grounds. To which end, the quality of the Complainers, and the course of their lives had need to be known; for all people must not have the like Consolations that have the like complaints. But of this I have spoken already elsewhere, and there is so much said by many, especially Mr. *Bolton* in his Instructions for right Comforting, that I shall say no more.

6. The rest of our Ministerial work is upon those that are yet strong: For they also have need of our assistance: Partly to prevent their temptations and declinings, and preserve the grace they have; partly to help them for a further progress and encrease; and partly to direct them in the improving of their strength for the service of Christ, and the assistance of their brethren. As also to encourage them, especially the aged, the tempted, and afflicted to hold on, and to persevere that they may attain the Crown. All these are the objects of the Ministerial work,

work, and in respect to all these we must *Take heed to all the Flock*. Abundance more distributions of our work, with directions how to perform it to rich and poor, young and old, &c. You may find in *Gregor. M. de cura pastorali*, worth the reading. You may have the Book by it self of Mr. *Jer. Stephens* Edition.

SECT. V.

IV. **H**AVING done with our work in respect of its Objects; I am next to speak of the Acts themselves. But of this I shall be very brief.

1. Because they are intimated before.
2. And because they are so fully handled by many.
3. And because I find I have already run into more tediousness then I intended.

1. One part of our work, and that the most excellent, because it tendeth to work on many, is the publike preaching of the word. A work that requirith greater skill, and especially greater life and zeal, then any of us bring to it. It is no small matter to stand up in the face of a Congregation, and deliver a Message of salvation or damnation, as from the living God, in the name of our Redeemer. It is no easie matter to speak so plain, that the ignorant may understand us, and so seriously, that the deadeast hearts may feel us; and so convincingly, that the contradicting Cavilers may be silenced. I know it is a great dispute whether preaching be proper to the Ministers or not? The decision seems not very difficult.

difficult. Preaching to a Congregation as their ordinary Teacher, is proper to a Minister in office; And Preaching to the unbelieving world (Jews, Mahometans or Pagans) as one that hath given up himself to that work, and is separated and set apart to it, is proper to a Minister in office: But Preaching to a Church or to Infidels, occasionally, as an act of Charity, extraordinarily, or upon special call to that act, may be common to others. The Governor of a Church, when he cannot preach himself, may in a case of necessity appoint a private man *pro tempore*, to do it that is able (as Mr. *Thorndike* hath shewed.) But no private man may obtrude without his consent, who by office is the Guide and Pastor of that Church. And a master of a family may preach to his own family, and a School-master to his Scholars, and any man to those whom he is obliged to teach; so be it he go not beyond his ability, and do it in a due subordination to Church-teaching, and not in a way of opposition and division. A man that is not of the trade, may do some one act of a trades-man in a Corporation for his own use, or his family, or friend; but he may not addict or separate himself to it, or set it up, and make it his profession, nor live upon it, unless he had been Apprentice and were free. For though one man of ten thousand may do it of himself as well as he that hath served an Apprentiship, yet it is not to be presumed that it is ordinarily so: And the standing Rule must not bend to rarities and extraordinaries, lest it undo all: For that which is extraordinary and rare in such cases, the Law doth look upon as a *non ens*.

But the best way to silence such usurping Teachers,

ers, is for those to whom it belongeth, to do it themselves so diligently, that the people may not have need to go a begging; and to do it so judiciously, and affectingly, that a plain difference may appear between them and usurpers, and that other mens works may be shamed by theirs; and also by the adding of holy lives, and unwearied diligence to high abilities, to keep up the reputation of their sacred office, that neither Seducers, nor tempted ones may fetch matter of Temptation from our blemishes, or neglects. But I shall say no more of this duty.

2. Another part of our Pastoral work is to administer the holy mysteries, or Seals of Gods Covenant, Baptism and the Lords Supper. This also is claimed by private usurpers: but I'll not stand to discuss their claim. A great fault it is among our selves, that some are so careless in the manner, and others do reform that with a total neglect, and others do lay such a stress on circumstances, and make them a matter of so much contention, even in that ordinance where Union and Communion is so profest.

3. Another part of our work is to Guide our people, and be as their mouth in the publike prayers of the Church, and the publike praises of God: as also to bless them in the name of the Lord. This sacerdotal part of the work is not the least, nor to be so much thrust into a corner as by too many of us it is. A great part of Gods service in the Church-Assemblies, was wont in all ages of the Church till of late, to consist in Publike Praises and Eucharistical acts in holy Communion: and the Lords Day

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was still kept as a day of Thanksgiving, in the Hymns and Common rejoycings of the faithful, in special Commemoration of the work of Redemption, and the happy condition of the Gospel Church. I am as apprehensive of the necessity of Preaching as some others: but yet me thinks, the solemn Praises of God should take up much more of the Lords day then in most places they do. And me thinks, they that are for the magnifying of Gospel Priviledges, and for a life of love and heavenly joyes, should be of my mind in this; and their worship should be Evangelical as well as their Doctrine pretendeth to be.

4. Another part of the Ministerial work, is, to have a special care and over-sight of each member of the Flock. The parts whereof are these that follow.

1. We must labour to be acquainted with the state of all our people as fully as we can; Both to know the persons, and their inclinations, and conversations, to know what are the sins that they are most in danger of, and what duties they neglect for the matter or manner, and what temptations they are most liable to. For if we know not the temperament or disease, we are like to prove but unsuccessful Physicians.

2. We must use all the means we can to instruct the ignorant in the matters of their salvation; by our own most plain familiar words; by giving or lending, or otherwise helping them to books that are fit for them: by perswading them to learn Catechisms; and those that cannot read, to get help of their neighbours; and to perswade their neighbours,

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to afford them help, who have best opportunities thereto.

3. We must be ready to give advice to those that come to us with cases of conscience, especially the great case which the Jews put to *Peter*, and the Jaylor to *Paul* and *Silas*, *Acts* 16. *What must we do to be saved?* A Minister is not only for Publike Preaching, but to be a known Counsellor for their souls, as the Lawyer is for their estates, and the Physitian for their bodies: so that each man that is in doubts and straits, should bring his case to him and desire Resolution. Not that a Minister should be troubled with every small matter, which judicious neighbours can give them advice in as well as he, no more then a Lawyer or Physitian should be troubled for every trifle or familiar case, where others can tell them as much as they: but as when their estate or life is in danger they will go to these, so when their souls are in danger they should go to Ministers: As *Nicodemus* came to Christ and as was usual with the people to go to the Priest, whose lips must preserve knowledge, and at whose mouth they must ask the Law, because he is the Messenger of the Lord of hosts. And because the people are grown unacquainted with the office of the Ministry, and their own necessity and duty herein, it belongeth to us to acquaint them herewith, and to press them publike-ly to come to us for advice in such cases of great concernment to their souls. We must not only be willing of the trouble, but draw it upon our selves by inviting them hereto. What abundance of good might we do, could we but bring our people to this? And doubtless much might be done in it, if we did
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our duties. How few have I ever heard that heartily prest their people to their duty in this? A sad case; that peoples souls should be so injured and hazarded, by the total neglect of so great a duty, and Ministers scarce ever tell them of it, and awaken them to it! were they but duly sensible of the need and weight of this, you should have them more frequently knocking at your doors, and open their cases to you, and making their sad complaints, and begging your advice. I beseech you put them more on this for the future, and perform it carefully when they seek your help. To this end its very necessary that we be acquainted with Practical Cases, and specially that we be acquainted with the nature of true Grace, and able to assist them in trying their states, and resolve the main question that concerns their everlasting life or death. One word of seasonable prudent advice given by a Minister to persons in necessity, hath done that good that many Sermons would not have done.

4. We must also have a special eye upon families: to see that they be well ordered, and the duties of each relation performed. The life of Religion, and the welfare and glory of Church and State, dependeth much on family Government and duty. If we suffer the neglect of this, we undo all. What are we like to do our selves to the Reforming of a Congregation, if all the work be cast on us alone, and Masters of families will let fall that necessary duty of their own, by which they are bound to help us! If any good be begun by the Ministry in any soul in a family, a careless, prayerless, worldly family is like to stifle it, or very much hinder it. Where-

as if you could but get the Rulers of families to do their part, and take up the work where you left it, and help it on, what abundance of good might be done by it? (as I have elsewhere shewed more at large) I beseech you therefore do all that you can to promote this business, as ever you desire the true Reformation and welfare of your Parishes. To which end let these things following be performed.

1. Get certain information how each family is ordered, and how God is worshipped in them: that you may know how to proceed in your carefulness for their further good.

2. Go now and then among them, when they are like to be most at leisure, and ask the master of the family, Whether he pray with them, or read the Scripture, or what he doth? And labour to convince the neglecters of their sin. And if you can have opportunity, pray with them, before you go, and give them an example, What you would have them do, and how. And get a promise of them that they will be more conscionable therein for the future.

3. If you find any unable to pray in tolerable expressions, through ignorance and disuse, persuade them to study their own wants, and get their hearts affected with them, and so go oft to those neighbours who use to pray, that they may learn: and in the mean time persuade them to use a form of prayer rather than none. Only tell them that it is their sin and shame that they have lived so negligently, as to be now so unacquainted with their own necessities, as not to know how to speak to God in prayer;
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when every beggar can find words to ask an alms; and therefore tell them that this form is but for necessity, as a crutch to a Cripple, while they cannot do as well without it; but they must not resolve to take up there, but to learn to do better as soon as they can, seeing prayer should come from the feeling of the heart, and be varied both according to our necessities and observations. Yet is it necessary to most unaccustomed ill-bred people, that have not been brought up where prayer hath been used, that they begin at first with the use of a form, because they will else be able to do nothing at all, and in sense of their disability will wholly neglect the duty, though they desire to perform it. For many disused persons can mutter out some honest requests in secret, that be not able before others to speak tolerable sense. And I will not be one of them that had rather the duty were wholly neglected, or else prophaned and made contemptible, then encourage them to the use of a form, either recited by memory, or read.

4. See that they have some profitable moving book (besides the Bible) in each family: If they have not, perswade them to buy some of small price, and great use; such as Mr. *Whateleys* New Birth, and *Dod* on the Commandments; or some smaller moving Sermons; If they be not able to buy them, give them some if you can: if you cannot, get some Gentlemen or other rich persons that are willing to good works, to do it. And engage them to read on it at nights when they have leisure, and especially on the Lords day.

5. By all means perswade them to procure

cure all their children to learn to read English.

6. Direct them how to spend the Lords day: how to dispatch their worldly businesses so as to prevent encombrances and distractions; and when they have been at the Assemblie, how to spend the time in their families: The life of Religion lieth much on this, because poor people have no other free considerable time: and therefore if they lose this they lose all, and will remain ignorant and brutish. Specially perswade them to these two things. 1. If they cannot repeate the Sermon, or otherwise spend the time profitably at home, that they take their family with them, and go to some godly neighbour that spends it better, that by joyning with them, they may have the better help. 2. That the Master of the family will every Lords day at night cause all his family to repeat the Catechism to him, and give him some account of what they have learn't in publike that day.

7. If there be any in the family that are known to be unruly, give the Ruler a special charge concerning them, and make them understand what a sin it is to connive at them and tolerate them.

Neglect not therefore this necessary part of your work: Get masters of families to their duties, and they will spare you a great deal of labour with the rest, or further much the success of your labours. If a Captain can get his Lieutenant, Cornet, and other inferiour officers to do their duties, he may rule the Souldiers with less trouble, then if all should lie upon his own hands alone. You are like to see no general Reformation, till you procure family Reformation.

formation. Some little obscure Religion there may be in here and there one; but while it sticks in single persons, and is not promoted by these societies, it doth not prosper, nor promise much for future increase.

5. Another part of the work of our private Over-sight consisteth in a vigilant opposing of Seducers, and seeking to prevent the Infection of our Flock, and speedy reclaiming those that begin to itch after strange Teachers, and turn into crooked paths. When we hear of any one that lies under the influence of their temptations, or that is already deceived by them, we must speedily with all our skill and diligence make out for their relief. The means I shall shew in the Directions in the end.

6. Another part of this oversight lieth in the due encouragement of those that are humble, upright, obedient Christians, and profit by our teaching, and are an honour to their Profession: We must in the eyes of all the Flock, put some difference between them and the rest by our Praises, and more special samiliarity, and other testimonies of our approbation and rejoycing over them; that so we may both encourage them, and incite others to imitate them. Gods graces are amiable and honourable in all; even in the poorest of the Flock, as well as in the Pastors: and the smallest degrees must be cherished and encouraged, but the highest more openly honoured and propounded to imitation. They that have slighted or vilified the most gracious, because they were of the Laity, while they claimed to themselves the honour of their Clergy, though adorned with little or none of that grace, as they shewed

themselves to be Proud and Carnal, so did they take the next way to debase themselves by self-exaltation, & to bring the office it self into contempt. For if there be no honour due to the Real sanctity of a Christian, much less to the relative sanctity of a Pastor: and he that vilifieth the *Person*, cannot well plead for the honouring of *Robes* and empty *Titles*: Nor can he expect that his people should give him the honour of a Pastor, if he will not give them the love and honour that is due to Christians and members of Christ. As the Orator said to *Domitius*, *Cur ego te habeam ut principem, cum tu me non habeas ut Senatorem*. It was an unchristian course therefore, which our late Prelates and their Agents took, who discountenanced none so much as the most godly, whom they should have rejoiced in, and encouraged; and made them not only the common scorn, but also the objects of their persecuting rage, as if they had fed their Flock for the Butcher, and called them out for suffering as they came to any maturity. This vilifying and persecuting the most diligent of the Flock, was neither the note of Christian Shepherds, nor the way to be so esteemed. As *Hierom* saith, *Quid de Episcopis, qui verberibus timeri volunt, canones dicant, bene fraternitas vestra novit. Pastores enim facti sumus, non percussores. Egregius praedicator dixit, Argue, obsecra, increpa, in omni patientiâ & doctrina: Nova vero atq; inaudita est illa praedicatio, quae verberibus exigit sidem*. Much more might he have said, *quae verberibus castigat pietatem*.

7. Another part of our Over-sight lieth in visiting the sick, and helping them to prepare either

for a fruitful life, or a happy death: Though this be the business of all our life and theirs, yet doth it at such a season require extraordinary care both of them and us. When time is almost gone, and they must be now or never reconciled to God & possessed of his grace: O how doth it concern them to redeem those hours, and lay hold upon eternal life! And when we see that we are like to have but a few daies or hours time more to speak to them in order to their endless state, What man that is not an Infidel, or a block, would not be with them, and do all that he can for their salvation in that short space!

Will it not waken us to compassion to look upon a languishing man, and to think that within a few daies his soul will be in heaven or hell? Surely it will much try the faith and seriousness of Ministers or others, to be about dying men! and they will have much opportunity to discern whether they are themselves in good sadness about the matters of the life to come. So great is the change that is made by death, that it should awaken us to the greatest sensibility, to see a man so neer it, and should provoke us in the deepest pangs of compassion, to do the office of inferiour Angels for the soul before it is departed from the flesh, that it may be ready for the convoy of superiour Angels, to transmit it to the prepared glory when it is removed from sin and misery. When a man is almost at his journeys end, and the next step puts him into heaven or hell, its time for us to help him if we can, while there is hope. As *Bernard* saith, The death of the righteous is *bona propter requiem, melior propter novitatem, optima propter securitatem: sed mors peccatorum est mala*

mala in mundi amissione, pejor in carnis separatione, pessima in vermis ignis{que} duplici contritione. Could they have any hope that it would be their *ultima linea rerum*, and that they have no more to suffer when that dismal day is past, they might have such abatements of their terror as to die as brutes, who fear no sorrow after death. But its so far otherwise, that death it self is the smallest matter that they need to care for: *Sed moneudo quo ire Cogantur, ut August.* Its not the *prima mors quae animam pellit violenter è corpore*, thats the most terrible, *sed secunda quae animam nolentem tenet in corpore, inquit Idem.*

And as their present necessity should move us to take that opportunity for their good, so should the advantage that sickness and the fore-sight of death affordeth. There are few of the stoutest hearts but will hear us on their death-bed, that scorned us before. They will then let fall their fury, and be as tame as Lambs, that were before as intractable as wasps or mad men. A man may speak to them then, that could not before. I find not one of ten of the most obstinate scornful wretches in the Parish, but when they come to dye, will humble themselves, confess their fault, and seem penitent, and promise if they should recover, to do so no more. If the very Meditations of death be so effectual in the time of health that it is saith *August, quasi Clavis carnis omnes motus superbiae ligno crucis affigens* (l. 2. de Doct. Christ.) much more when it comes in as it were at the window, and looks men in the face. *Cyprian* saith to those in health, *Qui se quotidie recordatur moriturum esse, contemnit praesentia, & ad futura festinat:* much more *qui sentit se statim mori-*

moriturum. Nil it a revocat à peccato, saith Austin, quam frequens mortis meditatio. O how resolvedly will the worst of them seem to cast away their sins, and promise a reformation, and cry out of their folly, and of the vanity of this world, when they see that death is in good sadness with them, and away they must without delay! Perhaps you will say, that these forced changes are not cordial, and therefore we have no great hope of doing them any saving good. I confess that it is very common to be frightened into uneffectual purposes, but not so common to be at such a season converted to fixed resolutions. And as *Austin* saith, *Non potest male mori, qui bene vixerit; & vix bene moritur qui male vixit.* Yet *vix* and *nunquam* be not all one: It should make both them and us the more diligent in the time of health, because it is *vix*; but yet we should bestir us at the last, in the use of the last remedies, because it is not *nunquam*.

And it will not be unuseful to our selves to read such Lectures of our own mortality: It is better to go into the house of mourning, then into the house of feasting: for it tendeth to make the heart better, when we see the end of all the living, and what it is that the world will do for those that sell their salvation for it. When we see that it will be our own case, and there is no escape;

(*Scilicet omne Sacrum mors importuna prophanat,
Omnibus obscuras injicit illa manus.*)

it will make us talk to our selves in *Bernards* language, *Quare O miser non omni hora ad mortem*
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te disponis? Cogita te jam mortuum, quem scis necessitate moriturum: distingue qualiter oculi vertentur in capite, venae rumpentur in corpore, & cor scindetur dolore. When we see that (as he saith) death spareth none: *inopiae non miseretur, non reveretur divitias; non sapientiae, non moribus, non aetati deniq; parcit; nisi quod senibus mors est in januis, juvenibus vero in insidiis;* it will excite us the better to consider the use of faith and holiness; that it is not to put by death, but to put by hell; not that we may not dye as certainly as others, but that we may dye better, and be certainly happy after death.

Because I intend no such thing as a Directory for the whole Ministerial work, I will not stand to tell you particularly what must be done for men in that last extremity; but only choose out these three or four things to remember you of, passing by all the rest.

1. Stay not till strength and understanding be gone, and the time so short that you scarce know what to do; but go to them as soon as you hear that they are sick (whether they send for you or not.)

2. When the time is so short, that there is no opportunity to endeavour the change of their hearts in that distinct way, as is usual with others, nor to press truths upon them in such order, and stay the working of it by degrees; we must therefore be sure to ply the main, and dwell upon those truths which must do the great work: Shewing them the certainty and glory of the life to come, and the way by which it was purchased for us, and the great sin and folly of their neglecting it in time of health; but
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yet the possibility that remaineth of obtaining it, if they but yet close with it heartily as their happiness, and with the Lord Jesus as the way thereto, and abhorring themselves for their former evil, can now unfeignedly resign up themselves to him to be justified, sanctified, ruled and saved by him. Three things must be chiefly insisted on.

1. The End: The Certainty and Greatness of the Glory of the Saints in the presence of God: that so their hearts may be set upon it.

2. The sufficiency and necessity of the Redemption by Jesus Christ; and the fulness of the Spirit, which we may and must be made partakers of: This is the principal way to the end; and the neerer end it self.

3. The Necessity and Nature of faith, repentance and resolutions for New Obedience according as there shall be opportunity. This is the subservient way, or the means that on our part must be performed.

3. Labour, upon Conviction and Deliberation, to engage them by solemn promise to Christ, and new obedience according to their opportunity: specially if you see any likelihood of their recovery.

4. If they do recover, be sure to mind them of their promises. Go to them purposely to set it home, and reduce them into performance. And when ever after you see them remiss, go to them then, and mind them what they formerly said. And because it is of such use to them that recover (and hath been a means of the conversion of many a soul) it is very necessary that you go to them whose sickness

ness is not mortal, as well as to them that are neerer death: that so we may have some advantage to move them to repentance, and engage them to newness of life; and may afterward have this to plead against their sins: As a Bishop of *Colen* is said by *Aeneas Sylvius* to have answered the Emperour *Sigismund*, when he askt him, What was the way to be saved; that *he must be what he purposed or promised to be, when he was last troubled with the stone and the gout*; So may we hereafter answer these.

8. Another part of our Ministerial Oversight consisteth in the right comforting the consciences of the troubled, & settling our people in a well grounded peace. But this I have spoken of elsewhere, and others have done it more at large.

9. Another part of this Oversight, is, in Reproving and admonishing those that live offensively or impenitently, and receiving the information of those that have admonished them more privately in vain. Before we bring such matters to the Congregation, or to a Representative Church, it is ordinarily most fit for the Minister to try himself what he can do more privately to bow the sinner to repentance, especially if it be not a publike crime. A great deal of skill is here required, and difference must be made according, to the various tempers of offenders; but with the most it will be necessary to fall on with the greatest plainness and power, to shake their careless hearts, and make them see what it is to dally with sin; to let them know the evil of it, and its sad effects, and the unkindness, unreasonableness, unprofitableness, and other aggravations; and what it is that they do against God and themselves.

selves. For the manner, the following directions may be hither applied.

10. The next part of our Oversight consisteth in the use of Church-Discipline: and this consisteth after the foresaid private Reproofs. 1. In more publike Reproof. 2. And perswading the person to meet expressions of Repentance. 3. And Praying for them. 4. In restoring the Penitent. 5. And excluding and avoiding the impenitent.

1. And for Reproof, these things must be observed. 1. That the Accusations of none (no not the best in the Church) be taken without proof, nor rashly entertained, nor that a Minister should make himself a party, before he have a sufficient evidence of the case. It is better let many vicious persons go unpunished, or uncensured when we want full evidence, then to censure one unjustly; which we may easily do if we will go upon too bold presumptions: and then it will bring upon the Pastors the scandal of partiality, and unrighteous and injurious dealing, and make all their reproofs and censures become contemptible.

2. Let there be therefore a less publike meeting of chosen persons (the Officers and some Delegates of the Church on their behalf) to have the hearing of all such cases before they be made more publike: that once a moneth at a set place, they may come together, to receive what charge shall be brought against any member of the Church, that it may be considered whether it be just and the offender may be dealt with then first: And if the fault be either less publike, or less hainous, so that a less publike profession of Repentance may satisfie, then if the
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party shall there profess Repentance, it may suffice.

3. But if it be not so, or if the party remain impenitent, he must be reprov'd before all, and there again invited to Repentance. This duty is never the less, because our Brethren have made so little conscience of the Practice of it; It is not only Christs command to tell the Church, but *Pauls* to *rebuke such before all*, and the Church hath constantly practised it, till selfishness and formality caused them to be remiss in this and other duties together, and the Reformers have as much stood up for it as the rest; and as deeply are we engaged by Vows, Covenants, Prayers and other means, for the execution of it, (of which more in the Application) *Austin* saith, *Quae peccantur coram omnibus, coram omnibus corripiendae sunt, ut omnes timeant: Qui secreto peccant in te, secreto corripe; nam si solus nosti, & eum vis coram aliis arguere, non es corrector sed proditor.* *Greg. Mag. in Registro* saith, *Manifesta peccata non sunt occulta correctione purganda: sed palam sunt arguendi qui palam nocent; ut dum aperta objurgatione sanantur, hi qui eos imitando deliquerant, corrigantur. Dum enim unus corripitur, plurimi emendantur; & melius est ut pro multorum salute unus condemnetur, quam ut per unius licentiam multi periclitentur.* *Isidore* saith, *Qui admonitus secrete de peccato corrigi negligit, publice arguendus est, ut vulnus quod occulte sanari nescit, manifeste debeat emendari.* If any shall say, that we shall thus be guilty of defaming men by publishing their crimes; I answer in the words of *Bernard sup. Cantic.* *Cum carpuntur vitia, & inde scandalum oritur, ipse sibi scandalum causa est, qui fecit quod*

quod argui debet; non ille qui arguit. Non ergo timeas contra charitatem esse, si unius scandalum multorum recompensaveris pace. Melius est enim ut pereat unus quam unitas. There is no room for a doubt, whether this be our duty, nor any to doubt whether we are unfaithful as to the performance of it. I doubt many of us that would be ashamed to omit preaching or praying half so much, have little considered what we do in living in the willful neglect of this duty, and the rest of Discipline so long as we have done. We little think how we have drawn the guilt of swearing, and drunkenness, and fornication, and other crimes upon our own heads, for want of using Gods means for the cure of them. As *Gregor. M. saith in Reg. Qui non corrigit rosecanda, committit: & facientis culpam habet, qui quod potest corrigere, negligit emendare,* saith the Comedian. *Si quid me scis fecisse inscite aut improbe, si id non accusas, tuipse objurgandus es.* Plaut.

If any say, There is little likelihood that publike personal reprehension should do good on them, because they will be but enraged by the shame; I answer.

1. *Philo* a Jew could say, (*de Sacrif. Abel & Cain*) *We must endeavour as far as we are able to save those from their sins that shall certainly perish; imitating good Physitians, who when they cannot save a sick man, do yet willingly try all means for cure, least they seem to want success through their own neglects.*

2. I further answer, It ill beseems the silly creature to implead the Ordinances of God as useless, or to reproach his service instead of doing it, and set

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their wits against their Maker. God can make use of his own Ordinances, or else he would never have appointed them

3. The usefulness of this Discipline is apparent, to the shaming of sin, and humbling of the sinner; and manifesting the holiness of Christ, and his Doctrine, and Church before all the world.

4. What would you have done with such sinners? give them up as hopeless? that were too cruel. Would you use other means why it is supposed that all other have been used without success; for this is the last remedy.

5. The Church of Christ hath found reason enough to use this course, even in times of persecution, when our carnal reason would have told them, that they should then above all have forborn it, for fear of driving away all their converts.

6. The principal use of this publike Discipline, is not for the offender himself, but for the Church. It tendeth exceedingly to deter others from the like crimes, and so to keep pure the Congregations and their worship. *Seneca* could say, *Vitia transmitit ad posterios, qui praesentibus culpis ignoscit*. And elsewhere. *Bonis nocet, qui malis parcit*. If you say, that It will but restrain them as hypocrites, and not convert them. I answer, 1. As I said, it may preserve others. 2. Who knows how God may bless his Ordinance, even to them? 3. The restraint of sin, is a benefit not to be contemned. *Audebo peccanti mala sun ostendere: vitia ejus si non excidero, inhibebo. Non desinent; sed intermittent: fortasse autem desinent, si intermittendi consuetudinem fecerint*, said the Moralist. *Sen. Epist.* 40. The scorns that I have heard from
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many against the Scottish Ministers, for bringing offenders to the stool of Repentance, (as if it were meer formality and hypocrisie, to take such a thing as satisfactory, when true Repentance is absent) hath discovered more of the accusers error then of theirs. For no doubt, it is true Repentance that they exhort men to; and it is true Repentance which offenders do profess: and whether they truly profess it, who can tell but God? It is not nothing that sin is brought to so much disgrace, and the Church doth so far acquit themselves of it. (But of this next.)

2. Next, To the duty of Publike Reproof, must be joyned an exhortation of the person to Repentance, and to the Publike Profession of it for the satisfaction of the Church. For as the Church is bound to avoid Communion with impenitent scandalous sinners, so when they have had the Evidence of their sin, they must see some Evidence of their Repentance; for we cannot know them to be penitent without Evidence. And what Evidence is the Church capable of, but their Profession of Repentance first, and their actual reformation afterwards? both which must be expected.

3. To these may most fitly be adjoynd the public prayers of the Church, and that both for the Reproved before they are Rejected, and for the Rejected (some of them at least) that they may repent and be restored: but we are now upon the former. Though this is not expresly affixed to Discipline, yet we have sufficient discovery of Gods will concerning it in the general precepts: We are commanded to *pray always*, and in *all things*, and for
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all men, and in all places, and all things are said to be *sanctified by it*. It is plain therefore that so great a business as this should not be done without it! And who can have any just reason to be offended with us, if we pray to God for the changing of their hearts, and the pardon of their sins. It is therefore in my Judgement a very laudable course of those Churches that use for the three next daies together to desire the Congregation to joyn in earnest prayer to God for the opening of the sinners eyes, and softening of his heart, and saving him from impenitency and eternal death! And though we have no express direction in Scripture just how long we shall stay to try whether the sinner be so impenitent as to be necessarily excluded, yet we must follow the general directions, with such diversity as the case and quality of the person and former proceeding shall require, it being left to the discretion of the Church, who are in general to stay so long till the person manifest himself obstinate in his sin: not but that a temporal exclusion (called suspension) may oft be inflicted in the mean time; but before we proceeded to an exclusion *à statu*, it is very meet (ordinarily) that three daies prayer for him, and patience towards him should antecede.

And indeed I see no reason but this course should be much more frequent then it is; and that not only upon those that are members of our special charge, and do consent to Discipline, but even to those that deny our Pastoral oversight and Discipline, and yet are our ordinary hearers. For so far as men have Christian Communion or familiarity with us, so far are they capable of being excluded from Communion.

on. Though the members of our special charge have fuller and more special Communion, and so are more capable of a fuller and more special exclusion; yet all those that dwell among us, and are our ordinary hearers, have some Communion. For as they converse with us, so they hear the word, not as heathens, but as Christians, and members of the universal Church into which they are baptized. And they joyn with us in publike prayers and praises in the celebration of the Lords day. From this therefore they are capable of being excluded, or from part of this, at least. Morally, if not Locally! For the precept of *avoiding*, and *withdrawing from* and *not eating with* such, is not restrained to the members of a Governed Church, but extended to all Christians that are capable of Communion.

When these ungodly persons are sick, we have daily bills from them to request the prayers of the Congregation: And if we must pray for them against sickness and temporal death; I know no reason but we should much more earnestly pray for them against sin and eternal death. That we have not their consent, is no dissuasive: For that is their disease, and the very venom and malignity of it; and we do not take it to be sober arguing to say, I may not pray for such a man against his sickness, because he is sick: Or, if he were not sick, I would pray against his sickness. No more is it to say, If he were not impenitent so as to refuse our prayers, I would pray that he might be saved from his impenitency. I confess I do not take my self to have so strict a charge over this sort of men, that renounce my oversight, as I do over the rest that own it; and

thats the reason why I have called no more of them to publike Repentance, because it requireth most commonly more time to examine the matter of fact, or to deal with the person first more privately, that his impenitency may be discerned, then I can possibly spare from the duties which I owe to my special charge, to whom I am more indebted; and therefore may ordinarily expend no more on the rest (who are to me but as strangers, or men of another Parish, and of no governed particular Church) then I can spare when I have done my main duty to my own Flock. But yet though I cannot use any such discipline on all that sort, nor am so much obliged to do it, yet some of them that are most notoriously and openly wicked, where less proof and shorter debates are requisite, I intend to deal thus with hereafter, having found some success in that kind already. But specially to all those whom we take for Members of that particular Church which we are Pastors of; there is no question but this is our duty. And therefore where the whole Parish are members, Discipline must be exercised on the whole.

I confess much prudence is to be exercised in such proceedings, least we do more hurt then good; but it must be such Christian prudence as ordereth duties, and suteth them to their ends, and not such carnal prudence as shall enervate or exclude them. It may be fit therefore for younger Ministers to consult with others, for the more cautelous proceeding in such works. And in the performance of it, we should deal humbly, even when we deal most sharply, and make it appear that it is not from any contending,
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or Lordly disposition, nor an act of revenge for any injury but a necessary duty which we cannot conscientiously avoid: And therefore it will be meet that we disclaim all such animosities, and shew the people the commands of God obliging us to what we do.

E. G. Neighbours and Brethren, sin is so hateful an evil in the eyes of the most holy God, how light soever impenitent sinners make of it, that he hath provided the everlasting torments of Hell for the punishment of it; and no lesser means can prevent that punishment then the Sacrifice of the blood of the Son of God, applied to those that truly Repent of it and forsake it; and therefore God that calleth all men to Repentance, hath commanded us to exhort one another daily, while it is called to day, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, Heb. 3. 13. and that we do not hate our Brother in our heart, but in any wise rebuke our neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him, Lev. 19. 17. and that if our brother offend us, we should tell him his fault between him and us; and if he hear not, take two or three; and if he hear not them, tell the Church; and if he hear not the Church, he must be to us as a heathen or a Publican, Mat. 18. 17. and those that sin, we must rebuke before all, that others may fear, 1 Tim. 5. 20. and rebuke with all authority, Tit. 1. 15. Yea were it an Apostle of Christ that should openly sin, he must be openly reproved, as Paul did Peter, (Gal. 2. 11, 14.) and if they repent not, we must avoid them, and with such not so much as eat, 2 Thes. 3. 6, 12, 14. 1 Cor. 5. 11, 13. According to these commands of the Lord, having heard of the scandalous practice of N. N. of this Church (or Parish) and having re-

ceived sufficient proof that he hath committed the odious sin of—We have seriously dealt with him to bring him to repentance; but, to the grief of our hearts, do perceive no satisfactory success of our endeavours; but he seemeth still to remain impenitent (or, still liveth in the same sin, though he verbally profess repentance.) We do therefore judge it our necessary duty, to proceed to the use of that further remedy which Christ hath commanded us to try; and hence we desire him in the Name of the Lord without any further delay to lay by his obstinacy against the Lord, and to submit to his rebuke, and will, and to lay to heart the greatness of his sin, the wrong he hath done to Christ and to himself, and the scandal and grief that he hath caused to others; and how unable he is to contend with the Almighty, and prevail against the Holy God, who to the impenitent is a consuming fire! or to save himself from his burning indignation! And I do earnestly beseech him for the sake of his own soul, that he will but soberly consider, What it is that he can gain by his sin or impenitency, and whether it will pay for the loss of everlasting life? and how he thinks to stand before God in Iudgement, or to appear before the Lord Jesus one of these daies, when death shall snatch his soul from his body, if he be found in this impenitent state; when the Lord Jesus himself in whose blood they pretend to trust, hath told such with his own mouth, that except they repent they shall all perish, Luk. 13. 3, 5. And I do beseech him for the sake of his own soul, and require him as a Messenger of Iesus Christ, as he will answer the contrary at the Bar of God, that he lay by the stoutness and impenitency of his heart, and unfeignedly confess and lament his sin before God and this Congregation!

gation!. And this desire I here publish, not out of any ill will to his person, as the Lord knoweth, but in love to his soul, and in obedience to Christ that hath made it my duty; desiring that if it be possible, that he may be saved from his sin, and from the power of Satan, and from the everlasting burning wrath of God, and may be reconciled to God, and to his Church, and therefore that he may be humbled by true contrition, before he be humbled by remediless condemnation.

Thus or to this purpose I conceive our publike admonition should proceed: And in some cases where the sinner taketh his sin to be small, the aggravation of it will be necessary, and specially the citing of some texts of Scripture that do aggravate and threaten it.

And in case he either will not be present, that such admonition may be given him, or will not be brought to a discovery of Repentance (and to desire the prayers of the Congregation for him) it will be meet that with such a preface as this afore expressed, we desire the prayers of the Congregation for him our selves; That the people would consider what a fearful condition the impenitent are in, and have pitty on a poor soul that is so blinded and hardened by sin and Satan that he cannot pitty himself; and think what it is for a man to appear before the living God in such a case, and therefore that they would joyn in earnest prayer to God, that he would open his eyes, and soften and humble his stubborn heart, before he be in hell beyond remedy: And accordingly let us be very earnest in prayer for them, that the Congregation may be provoked affectionately to joyn with us; and who knows but God
may

may hear such prayers, and the sinners heart may more relent, then our own exhortation could procure it to do. However, the people will perceive that we make not light of sin, and preach not to them in meer custom or formality. If Ministers would be conscionable in thus carrying on the work of God entirely and self-denyingly, they might make something of it, and expect a fuller blessing: But when we will shrink from all that is dangerous or ungrateful, and shift off all that is costly or troublesom, they cannot expect that any great matter should be done by such a carnal partial use of means: and though some may be here and there called home to God, yet we cannot look that the Gospel should prevail, and run, and be glorified, where it is so lamely and defectively carryed on.

4. When a sinner is thus Admonished and Prayed for, if it please the Lord to open his eyes and give him remorse, before we proceed to any further censure, it is our next duty to proceed to his full recovery, where these things must be observed.

1. That we do not either discourage him by too much severity, nor yet by too much facility and levity make nothing of Discipline, nor help him to any saving cure, but meerly slubber and palliate it over. If therefore he have sinned scandalously but once, if his Repentance seem deep and serious, we may in some cases Restore him at that time; that is, If the wound that he hath given us to the credit of the Church be not so deep as to require more ado for satisfaction, or the sin so hainous as may cause us to delay. But if it be so, or if he have lived long in the sin, it is most meet that he do wait in Penitence

tence a convenient time before he be Restored.

2. And when the time comes (whether at the first confession, or after) it is meet that we urge him to be serious in his humiliation, and set it home upon his conscience till he seem to be truly sensible of his sin; For it is not a vain formality, but the Recovery and saving of a soul that we expect.

3. We must see that he beg the Communion of the Church, and their prayers to God for his Pardon and Salvation.

4. And that he Promise to fly from such sins for the time to come, and watch more narrowly, and walk more warily.

5. And then we have these things more to do.

1. To assure him of the riches of Gods love, and the sufficiency of Christs blood to pardon his sins, and that if his Repentance be sincere, the Lord doth pardon him, of which we are authorized as his Messengers to assure him.

2. To charge him to persevere and perform his promises, and avoid temptations, and continue to beg mercy and strengthening grace.

3. To charge the Church that they imitate Christ in forgiving, and retain (or if he were cast out, receive) the Penitent person in their Communion, & that they never reproach him with his sins, or cast them in his teeth, but forgive and forget them as Christ doth.

4. And then to give God thanks for his recovery so far, and to pray for his confirmation, and future preservation.

5. The next part of Discipline, is the Rejecting
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and Removing from the Churches Communion, those that after sufficient tryal do remain impenitent. Where note.

1. That if a man have sinned but once (so scandalously) or twice, it is but a Profession of Repentance that we can expect for our satisfaction; but if he be accustomed to sin, or have oft broke such Promises, then it is an actual reformation that we must expect. And therefore he that will refuse either of these, to Reform, or to Profess and manifest Repentance, is to be taken by us as living in the sin: For a hainous sin, but once committed, is morally continued in till it be Repented of; and a bare forbearing of the act is not sufficient.

2. Yet have we no warrant to rip up matters that are worn out of the publike memory, and so to make that publike again that is ceased to be publike: at least in ordinary cases.

3. Exclusion from Church-Communion, commonly called Excommunication, is of divers sorts or degrees, more then two or three, which are not to be confounded; of which, I will not so far digress as here to treat.

4. That which is most commonly to be practised among us, is, Only to remove an impenitent sinner from our Communion, till it shall please the Lord to give him Repentance.

5. In this Exclusion or Removal, the Minister or Governors of that Church are Authoritatively to charge the people in the name of the Lord to avoid Communion with him: and to pronounce him one, whose Communion the Church is bound to avoid: and the Peoples duty is Obedientially to
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avoid him, in case the Pastors charge contradict not the word of God. So that he hath the Guiding or Governing Power; and they have, 1. A discerning power, whether his charge be just. 2. And an executive power; For its they that must execute the sentence in part, by avoiding the Rejected, as he himself must execute it by denying him those Ordinances and Priviledges not due to him, whereof he is the Administrator.

6. It is very convenient to pray for the Repentance and restauration, even of the Excommunicate.

7. And if God shall give them Repentance, they are gladly to be received into the Communion of the Church again: Of the manner of all these I shall say no more, they being things that have so much said of them already. And for the manner of other particular duties, of which I have said little or nothing, you have much already, as in other writings, so in the Directory of the late Assemblie.

Would we were but so far faithful in the Practice of this Discipline, as we are satisfied both of the matter and manner: and did not dispraise and reproach it by our negligence, while we write and plead for it with the highest commendations. It is worthy our consideration, Who is like to have the heavier charge about this matter at the Bar of God? Whether those deluded ones that have reproached and hindred discipline by their tongues, because they knew not its nature and necessity; or we that have so vilified it by our constant omission, while with our tongues we have magnified it? If
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hypocrisie be no sin, or if the knowledge of our Masters will be no aggravation of the evil of disobedience, then we are in a better case then they. I will not advise the zealous maintainers, and obstinate neglecters and rejecters of Discipline, to unsay all that they have said, till they are ready to do as they say, nor to recant their defences of Discipline, till they mean to practice it, nor to burn all the Books that they have written for it, and all the Records of their cost and hazzards for it, least they rise up in Judgement against them to their confusion; nor that they recant their condemnation of the Prelates in this, till they mean a little further to outgo them: But I would perswade them without any more delay, to conform their Practices to these Testimonies which they have given, lest the more they are proved to have commended Discipline, the more they are proved to have condemned themselves for neglecting it.

I have often marvelled that the same men who have been much offended at the Books that have been written for Free Admission to the Lords Supper, or for mixt Communion in that one part, have been no more offended at as Free permission in a Church state, and as Free admission to other parts of Communion; and that they have made so small a matter at as much mixture in all the rest: I should think that it is a greater profanation to permit an obstinate scandalous sinner, to be a stated member of that particular Church, without any private (first) and then publike Admonition, Prayer for him, or censure of him; then for a single Pastor to admit him to the Lords Supper, if he had no power to
censure

censure him, as these suppose. I should think that the faithful Practice of Discipline in the other parts, would soon put an end to the Controversie about Free Admission to the Lords Supper, and heal the hurt that such Discourses have done to the rebellions of our people. For those Discourses have more modesty then to plead for a Free Admission of the Censured or Rejected ones; but its only of those that have yet their standing in that Church, and are not censured. And if when they forfeit their title to Church-Communion, we would deal with them in Christs appointed way, till we had either reclaimed them to Repentance, or censured them to be Avoided, it would be past controversie then that they were not to be admitted to that one act of Communion in the Supper, who are justly excluded from the whole. But as long as we leave them uncensured members, and tell a single Pastor that he hath no power to censure them, we tempt him to think that he hath no power then to deny them that Communion with the body, which is the common priviledge of uncensured members.

And as we thus our selves oppose Discipline by Parts, or cherish Church-corruption by parts, one party being for the Free admission of them, while Members, to the Sacraments, and the other as Freely Permitting them in Church-State, and other parts of Communion, while they exclude them from the Sacrament; so some have learned to tye these ends together, and by holding both, to set open the doors of Church and Chancel, and pluck up the hedge, and lay the Vine-yard common to the Wilderness. It hath somewhat amazed me to hear some that I
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took for Reverend godly Divines, to reproach as a Sect, the Sacramentarians and Disciplinarians! and when I desired to know whom they meant, they tell me, they mean them that will not give the Sacrament to all the Parish, and them that will make distinction by their Discipline. I had thought the Tempter had obtained a great victory if he had but got one godly Pastor of a Church to neglect Discipline, as well as if he had got him to neglect Preaching: Much more if he had got him to approve of that neglect; but it seems he hath got some to scorn at the performers of the duty which they neglect. As the impure were wont to reproach the diligent by the name of Puritans: so do these reproach the faithful Pastors by the name of Disciplinarians. And I could wish they would remember what the antient Reproaches were both Symptomatically and Effectively, and accordingly Judge impartially of themselves, and fear a participation of the Judgement that befell them. Sure I am, if it were well understood, how much of the Pastoral authority and work, consisteth in Church Guidance, it would be also discerned, that to be against Discipline is *tantum non* to be against the Ministry: and to be against the Ministry, is *tantum non* to be absolutely against the Church; and to be against the Church is neer to being absolutely against Christ. Blame not the harshness of the inference, till you can avoid it, and free your selves from the charge of it before the Lord. Prelates would have some Discipline; and other parties would have some. Yea Papists themselves would have some, and plead only against others about the form and manner of it. But these
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are so much worse then all, that they would have none. Was not Christ himself the leader of these Disciplinarians who instituted Discipline, and made his Ministers the Rulers or Guides of his Church, and put the Keyes of the Kingdom into their hand, and commanded the very particular acts of Discipline, and requireth the people to submit to them, and obey them in the Lord? What would these men have said, if they had seen the Practice of the anti-ent Church for many hundred years after Christ, who exercised a Discipline so much more rigorous, then any among us do, and that even in the heat of heathen persecutions? as if they read but the antient Canons, and *Cyprians* Epistles, they may soon see, though they look no further. And it was not then (no nor after under Christian Magistrates) taken to be a useless thing; nor would it appear such now, if it were shewed in its strength and beauty by a vigorous Practice: For its a thing that is not effectually manifested to the ear, but to the eye: and you will never, make men know well what it is by meer talking of it; till they see it they will be strangers to it: As it is in the military act, or in Navigation, or in the Government of Common-wealths, which are so little known till learned by experience. And that will tell us that, as *Cyprian* saith, *Disciplina est custos spei, retinaculum fidei, dux itineris salutaris, fomes ac nutrimentum bonae indolis, magistra virtutis; facit in Christo manere semper, ac jugiter Deo vivere, ad promissa coelestia & divina praemia pervenire: Hanc & sectari salubre est, & aversari ac negligere lethale:* as he begins his Book *de Discipl.* & hab. *virg. pag. (mihi) 265.* When the Martyrs and

Confessors would (upon others perswasions) have had some offenders restored before they had made Confession, and manifested openly Repentance for their sin, and been absolved by the Pastor; *Cyprian* resisteth it, and tels them that they that stand so firmly to the faith, should stand as firmly to Christs Law and Discipline: *Sollicitudo lori nostri & timor Domini compellit, fortissimi ac beatissims Martyres, admonere vos literis nostris, ut à quibus tam devote & fortiter servatur fides Domino, ab iisdem lex quoque & Disciplina Domini reservetur, &c. Epist. 11. pag. 32.* Upon which Goulartius puts this note, *Locus de Necessitate Disciplinae in Domo Dei, quam qui tollunt, & manifeste impios ac sceleratos ad mensam Christi, sine Censura Ecclesiastica, & acta Paenitentia, pro delictorum ratione recipiunt, ii videant quam de gregibus sibi commissis Pastori summo rationem reddituri sint; vel quid commune habeant in Ecclesiarum suarum regimine cum beato illo Cypriani & aliorum verè Episcoporum Christianorum seculo.* And *Cyprian, Epist. 67. p. 199.* mentioning Gods threatnings to negligent Pastors, addeth, *Cum ergo pastoribus talibus per quos. Dominicae oves negligentur & pereant, sic Dominus comminetur, quid nos aliud facere oportet, quam colligendis & revocandis Christi ovibus exhibere diligentiam plenam, & curandis lapsorum vulneribus paternae pietatis adhibere medicinam?* In *Epist. 61. 28, 38, 41, 49, 53, 55.* and many other places of *Cyprian*; you may see that they were then no contemners of Discipline: *Vide etiam, eundem de Orat. Dominis. pag. 313. in Pet. 4.*

Saith *Augustine, Ibi superbia, ubi negligitur Disciplina: Nam Disciplina est Magistra Religionis &*

verae pietatis, quae nec ideo increpat ut laedat, nec ideo castigat ut noceat, &c. saith Bernard, Ep. 113. O quam compositum reddit omnem corporis statum, nec non & mentis habitum Disciplina! Cervicem submittit, ponit supercilia, componit vultum, ligat oculos, moderatur linguam, fraenat gulam, sedat iram, format incessum.

I know that when the Church began to be tainted with vain inventions, the word *Discipline* began to have another signification (for their own various Rules of life and austere impositions, *touch not, taste not, handle not*) but its the antient and truly Christian Discipline that I am contending for. So much of the Acts of Pastoral Oversight.

From what hath been said, we may see that the Pastoral office is another kind of thing then those men have taken it to be, who think that it consisteth in preaching and administering Sacraments only; much more then they have taken for, that think it consisteth in making of new Laws or Canons to bind the Church: As if God had not made us Laws sufficient; and as if he had committed the proper Legislative power over his Church to Ministers or Bishops? whose office is but to expound, and apply and execute in their places the Laws of Christ.

Obj. But will you deny to Bishops the power of making Canons? What are all those Articles that you have here agreed on among your selves about Catechizing and Discipline, but such things?

Ans. 1. I know Pastors may teach, and expound Scripture, and deliver that in writing to the people, and apply the Scripture Generals to their own and the peoples particular cases, if you wil cal this making

Canons. 2. And they may and ought to Agree among themselves for an unanimous performance of their duties, when they have discovered it; that so they may excite one another, and be more strong and successful in their work. 3. And they must determine of the Circumstances of worship in special, which God hath only determined in General, (as what time, and place they shall meet in, what Chapter read, what Text preacht on, what shape the Table, Cups, &c. shall be; where the Pulpit, when each person shall come to be catechized or instructed, and whither, &c.) But these are actions that are fitter to be ordered by them that are in the place, then by distant Canon-makers: And to Agree for unity in a necessary duty (as we have done) is not to make Laws, or arrogate Authority over our Brethren. Of this I refer you to *Luther de Conciliis*, at large: and to *Grotius de Imper. sum. pot.* That Canons are not properly Laws.

CHAP.



CHAP. III.

SECT. I.



AVING spoken of the matter of our work, we are next to speak a little of the manner; not of each part distinctly, least we be too tedious, but of the whole in general: But specially referring to the principal part.

I. The Ministerial work must be managed Purely for God and the salvation of the people, and not for any private ends of our own. This is our sincerity in it. A wrong end makes all the work bad, as from us, how good soever in it self. Its not a serving God, but our selves, if we do it not for God, but for our selves. They that set upon this as a common work, to make a trade of it for their worldly livelihood, will find that they have chosen a bad trade, though a good imployment. Self-denyal is of Absolute necessity in every Christian, but of a double necessity in a Minister, as he hath a double Sanctification or Dedication to God. And without self-denyal he cannot do God an hours faithful service.

Hard studies, much knowledge, and excellent preaching, is but a more glorious hypocritical sinning, if the ends be not right. The saying of *Bernard*, *Serm. in Cant.* 26. is commonly known. *Sunt qui scire volunt co sine tantum ut sciant, & turpis curiositas est: & sunt qui scire volunt, ut scientiam suam vendant; & turpis quaestus est: sunt qui scire volunt ut sciantur ipsi: & turpis vanitas est: Sed sunt quoque qui scire volunt ut aedificent; & Charitas est; & sunt qui scire volunt ut aedificentur; & prudentia est.*

2. This work must be managed Laboriously and Diligently: as being of such unspeakable consequence to others and our selves. We are seeking to uphold the world, to save it from the curse of God, to perfect the Creation, to attain the ends of Christs Redemption, to save our selves and others from Damnation, to overcome the Devil, and demolish his Kingdom, and to set up the Kingdom of Christ, and attain and help others to the Kingdom of Glory. And are these works to be done with a careless mind, or a lazy hand? O see then that this work be done with all your might. Study hard, for the well is deep, and our brains are shallow; and (as *Cassiod.*) *Decorum hic est terminum non habere: hic honesta probatur ambitio; Omne fi quidem scientificum quanto profundius quaeritur, tanto gloriosius invenitur.* But especially be laborious in Practice and exercise of your knowledge. Let *Pauls* words ring in your ears continually, *Necessity is laid upon me, and woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel.* Still think with your selves, what lyeth upon your hands. *If I do not bestir me, Satan may prevail, and the people everlastingly perish, and their blood be required at my hand.* And
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by avoiding Labour and Suffering, I shall draw on me a thousand times more then I avoid: for as *Bernard* saith, *Qui in labore hominum non sunt, in labore profecto Daemonum erunt*, Whereas by present Diligence you prepare for future blessedness. For, as *Gregor. in Mor.* saith, *Quot labores veritati nunc exhibes, tot etiam remunerationis pignora intra spei tue cubiculum clausum tenes*. No man was ever a loser by God.

3. This work must be carried on Prudent'y, Orderly and by Degrees; Milk must go before strong meat: The foundation must be first laid before we build upon it. Children must not be dealt with as men at age. Men must be brought into a state of Grace, before we can expect from them the works of Grace. The work of Conversion and Repentance from dead works, and faith in Christ must be first, and frequently, and thoroughly taught. The Stewards of Gods household must give to each their portion in due season. We must not go beyond the capacities of our people ordinarily, nor teach them the perfection, that have not learned the principles. As *August.* saith, *li. 12. de Civit. Si pro viribus suis alatur infans, fiet ut crescendo plus capiat: si modum suae capacitatis excedat, desicit antequam crescat*. And as *Gregor. Nysen.* saith, *Orat, de Pauper. amand.* As we teach not insants the deep precepts of science, but first letters, and then syllables, &c. So also the Guides of the Church do first propound to their hearers certain documents, which are as the elements, and so by degrees do open to them the more perfect and mysterious matters. Therefore did the Church take so much pains with their *Catechumeni*, before they baptized them, and

would not lay unpolished stones into the building; as *Chrysost.* saith, *Hom.* 40. *Imperfect. operis* (or who ever else it be) *p. (mihi)* 318. *Aedificatores sunt Sacerdotes, qui—domum Dei componunt sicut enim adificatores, nodosos lapides & habentes torturas, ferro dolant, postea vero ponunt eos in aedificio, alioqui non dolati lapides lapidibus non cohaerent: Sic & Ecclesiae doctores vitia hominum quasi nodos acutis incisionibus primum circumcidere debent, & sic in Ecclesiae aedificatione collocare: alioquin vitiis manentibus Christiani Christianis concordare non possunt.*

4. Through the whole course of our Ministry, we must insist most upon the Greatest, most Certain and Necessary things, and be more seldom and sparing upon the rest. If we can but teach Christ to our people, we teach them all. Get them well to heaven, and they will have knowledge enough. The great and commonly acknowledged Truths are they that men must live upon, and which are the great instruments of raising the heart to God, and destroying mens sins. And therefore we must still have our peoples *necessities* in our eyes. It will take us off gawdes, and needless Ornaments, and unprofitable Controversies, to remember that *One thing is Necessary*. Other things are desirable to be known, but these *must* be known, or else our people are undone for ever. I confess I think Necessity should be a great disposer of a Ministers course of study and labours. If we were sufficient for every thing, we might fall upon every thing, and take in order the whole *Encyclopaedia*: But life is short: and we are dull: and eternal things are necessary: and the souls that depend on our teaching are precious: I
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confess Necessity hath been the Conductor of my studies and life: It chooseth what book I shall read, and tells when and how long? it chooseth my Text, and makes my Sermon for matter and manner, so far as I can keep out my own corruption. Though I know the constant expectation of death hath been a great cause of this, yet I know no reason why the most healthful man should not make sure of the *Necessaries* first, considering the uncertainty and shortness of all mens lives. *Xenophon* thought, *there was no better Teacher then Necessity, which teacheth all things most diligently.* *Curtius* saith, *Efficacior est omni arte Necessitas.* Who can in study, preaching, or life, *aliud agere* be doing other matters, if he do but know, that *This must be done?* Who can trifle or delay, that feeleth the spurs of hasty Necessity: As the souldier saith, *Non diu disputandum, sed celeriter & fortiter dimicandum ubi urget Necessitas.* So much more must we as our business is more important. And doubtless this is the best way to redeem time, and see that we lose not an hour, when we spend it only on Necessary things: And I think it is the way to be most profitable to others, though not alwaies to be most pleasing and applauded; because through mens frailty, its true that *Seneca* complains of, that *Nova potius miramur quam magna.*

Hence it is, that a Preacher must be oft upon the same things, because the matters of Necessity are few; We must not either feign Necessaries, or fall much upon unnecessaries, to satisfie them that look after Novelties: Though we must cloth the same necessities with a grateful variety in the manner of our delivery. The great volumns and tedious controver-

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sies that so much trouble us and waste our time, are usually made up more of Opinion then necessary verities. For, as *Marsil. Ficinus* saith, *Necessitas brevibus clauditur terminis; opinto nullis*. And as *Greg. Nazianz.* and *Seneca* often say, *Necessaries are common and obvious it is superfluities that we waste our time for, and labour for, and complain that we attain them not*. Ministers therefore must be observant of the case of their Flocks, that they may know what is most *necessary* for them, both for matter and for manner. And usually matter is first to be regarded, as being of more concernment then the manner. If you are to chose what Authors to read your selves, will you not rather take those that tell you what you know not, and speak the needful truth most evidently though it were with barbarous, or unhandsom language, then those that will most learnedly, and elegantly, and in grateful language tell you that which is false or vain, and *magno conatu nihil dicere*? I purpose to follow *Austins* counsel, (*li. de catech.*) *praeponendo verbis sententiam, ut animus præponitur corpori: ex quo fit ut ita mallet Veriores quam Discretiores invenire sermones, sicut mallet prudentiores quam formosiores habere amicos*. And surely as I do in my studies for my own edification, I should do in my teaching for other mens. It is commonly empty ignorant men that want the matter and substance of true learning, that are over curious and sollicitous about words and ornaments, when the antient, experienced, most learned men, abound in substantial verities, usually delivered in the plainest dress. As *Aristotle* makes it the reason why women are more addicted to pride in apparel then men, because being
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conscious of little inward worth and ornament, they seek to make it up with borrowed ornaments without; So is it with empty worthless Preachers, who affect to be esteemed that which they are not, and have no other way to procure that esteem.

5. All our teaching must be as Plain and Evident as we can make it. For this doth most suite to a Teachers ends. He that would be understood, must speak to the capacity of his hearers, and make it his business to make himself understood. Truth loves the Light, and is most beautiful when most naked. Its a sign of an envious enemy to hide the truth; and a sign of an Hypocrite to do this under pretence of revealing it: and therefore painted obscure Sermons (like the painted glass in the windows that keeps out the light) are too oft the markes of painted Hypocrites. If you would not Teach men, what do you in the Pulpit? If you would, why do you not speak so as to be understood? I know the height of the matter may make a man not understood when he hath studied to make it as plain as he can; but that a man should purposely cloud the matter in strange words, and hide his mind from the people, whom he pretendeth to instruct, is the way to make fools admire his profound learning, and wise men his folly, pride and hypocrisie. And usually its a suspicious sign of some deceitful project and false Doctrine that needeth such a cloak, and must walk thus masked in the open day light. Thus did the followers of *Basilides*, and *Valentinus*, and others among the old Hereticks; and thus do the *Behmenists* and other *Paracelsians* now; who when they have spoken that few may understand them, lest they
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expose their errors to the open view, they pretend a necessity of it, because of mens prejudice, and the unpreparedness of common understandings for the truth. But truth overcomes prejudice by meer light of Evidence, and there is no better way to make a good cause prevail, then to make it as plain, and commonly and throughly known as we can; and it is this Light that will dispose an unprepared mind. And, at best, its a sign that he hath not well digested the matter himself, that is not able to deliver it plainly to another. I mean, as plain as the nature of the matter will bear, in regard of capacities prepared for it by prerequisite truths. For I know that some men cannot at present under stand some truths, if you speak them as plainly as words can express them: as the easiest Rules in Grammar most plainly taught, will be no whit understood by a child that is but learning his Alphabet.

6. Our whole work must be carried on in a sense of our insufficiency, and in a Pious, Believing dependance upon Christ. We must go to him for Light, and Life, and strength, who sends us on the work; And when we feel our own faith weak, and our hearts grown dull, and unsuitable to so great a work as we have to do, we must have recourse to the Lord that sendeth us, and say, *Lord, wilt thou send me with such an unbelieving heart to perswade others to believe? must I daily and earnestly plead with sinners about everlasting life and death, and have no more belief and feeling of these weighty things my self? O send me not naked and unprovided to the work; but as thou commandest me to do it, furnish me with a spirit suitable thereto. As Austin saith, (de Doctr. Christ. l. 4.)*

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A Preacher must labour to be heard understandingly, willingly and obediently, & hoc se posse magis pre-tate or ationum, quam oratoris facultate non dubitet: ut or ando pro se ac pro aliis, quos est allocuturus, sit prius orator quam doctor; & in ipsa hora accedens, priusquam exeat, proferat linguam ad Deum, levet animam sitientem, &c. Prayer must carry on our work as well as preaching; He preacheth not heartily to his people, that will not pray for them; If we prevail not with God to give them faith and Repentance, we are unlike to prevail with them to Believe and Repent. *Paul* giveth us frequently his example, of praying night and day for his hearers; When our own hearts are so far out of order, and theirs so far out of order, if we prevail not with God to mend and help them, we are like to make but unsuccessful work.

7. Our work must be managed with great humility; we must carry our selves meekly and condescendingly to all; and so teach others, as to be as ready to learn of any that can teach us, and so both Teach and learn at once; Not proudly venting our own conceits, and disdaining all that any way contradict them, as if we had attained to the top of knowledge, and we were destinated for the chair, and other men to set at our feet: Not like them that *Gregory M.* mentioneth in *Moral. l. 24. par. 5. c. 12.* *In quorum verbis proditur, quod cum docent, quasi in quodam sibi videntur summitatis culmine residere, eosq; quos docent, ut longe infrase positos, velut in imo respiciunt, quibus non consulendo loqui, sed vix dominando dignantur.* Pride is a vice that ill beseems them that must lead men in such an humble way to heaven.

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And let them take heed, lest when they have brought others thither, the gate should prove too strait for themselves. For (as *Hugo* saith) *Superbia in coelo nata est, sed velut immemor qua via inde cecidit, istuc postea redire non potuit*. God that thrust out a proud Angel, will not entertain there a proud Preacher, while such. Me thinks we should remember at least the title of a *Minister*, which though the Popish Priests disdain, yet so do not we. It is indeed this Pride at the root that feedeth all the rest of our sins: Hence is the envy, the contention, and unpeaceableness of Ministers, and hence the stops in all reformation; all would lead, and few will follow or concur; yea hence are the Schisms and Apostasies, as hence have been former persecutions, and arrogant usurpations and impositions: As *Gregor. M.* saith, *in Mor. Latet plernmq; superbia, & castitas innotescit, atq; ideo tentata diu castitas, circa finem vitae perditur; quia cooperta superbia usq; ad finem, in correctaretinetur*. And the same may be said of other vices, which oft revive when they seemed dead, because Pride was unmortified, which virtually contains them all. Hence also is the non-proficiency of too many Ministers, because they are too proud to learn; unless it be as *Hieroms* adversaries, *publice detrahentes, legentes in angulis*; and scarcely will they stoop to that. But I may say of Ministers as *Augustine* to *Hierom*, even of the Aged of them, *Etsi senes magis decet docere quam discere; magis tamen decet discere quam ignorare*; Humility would teach them another lesson; *Ut Hugo, Ab omnibus libenter disce quod tu nescis: quia humilitas commune tibi facere potest, quod natura cuique proprium fecit, sapientior omni-*
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bus eris, si ab omnibus discere volueris: Qui ab omnibus accipiunt, omnibus ditiores sunt.

8. There must be a prudent mixture of severity and mildness both in our preaching and discipline; each must be predominant according to the quality of the person, or matter that we have in hand. If there be *no* severity, there will be contempt of our reproofs. If *all* severity, we shall be taken as usurpers of Dominion, rather then perswaders of the minds of men to the Truth. As *Gregor. M.* saith, *Moral. l. 20. Miscenda est lenitas cum severitate, & faciendum ex utra{que} quoddam temperamentum, ut nec multa asperitate exulcerentur subditi, nec nimia benignitate solvantur.*

9. We must be sincerely Affectionate, serious and zealous in all our publike and private Exhortations. The weight of our matter condemneth coldness, and sleepy dulness. We should see that we be well awakened our selves, and our spirits in such a plight as may make us fit to awaken others. As *Gregor.* saith, *Mor. l. 30. c. 5.* We should be like the Cock that *Cum edere cantus parat, prius alas solerter excutit, & se ipsum feriens vigilantiores reddit: Ita praedicatores cum verbum praedicationis movent, prius se in sanctis actionibus exercent, ne in se ipsis torpentes opere, alios excitent voce, sed ante se per sublimia facta excutiant, & tunc ad bene agendum alios sollicitos reddunt. Prius sua punire fletibus curant, & tunc quae aliorum sunt punienda, denuntiant.* If our words be not sharpened, and pierce not as nails, they will hardly be felt by stony hearts. To speak coldly and sleightly of heavenly things, is neer as bad as to say nothing of them.

10. All our work must be managed Reverently; as beseemeth them that believe the presence of God, and use not holy things as if they were common. The more of God appeareth in our duties, the more authority will they have with men: And Reverence is that affection of the soul, which proceedeth from deep apprehensions of God, and signifyeth a mind that is much conversant with him. To manifest unreverence in the things of God, is so far to manifest hypocrisie; and that the heart agreeth not with the tongue. I know not what it doth by others; but the most Reverent Preacher, that speaks as if he saw the face of God, doth more affect my heart, though with common words, then an unreverent man with the most exquisite preparations. Yea, if he bawl it out with never so much seeming earnestness if Reverence be not answerable to fervency, it worketh but little. Of all Preaching in the world (that speaks not stark lyes) I hate that Preaching which tendeth to make the hearers laugh, or to move their minds with tickling levity, and affect them as Stage-playes use to do, instead of affecting them with a holy Reverence of the name of God. Saith *Hierom.* (in *Epistol. ad Nepotian. pag. mihi 14.*) *Decente in Ecclesia te, non clamor populi, sed gemitus suscitatur; Lachrymae auditorum laudes tuae sunt.* We should as it were suppose we saw the Throne of God, and the millions of Glorious Angels attending him, that we might be awed with his Majesty, when we draw neer him in his holy things, lest we profane them, and take his name in vain.

To this I annex, that all our work must be done *spiritually*, as by men possessed by the Holy Ghost,

and acted by him, and men that savour the things of the Spirit. There is in some mens preaching a spiritual strain, which spiritual hearers can discern and relish. And in some mens this sacred tincture is so wanting, that even when they speak of spiritual things, the manner is such as if they were common matters. Our Evidence also and ornaments must be spiritual, rather from the holy Scripture, (with a tautelous subservient use of Fathers and other Writers) then from *Aristotle* or the authorities of men. The wisdom of the world must not be magnified against the wisdom of God; Philosophy must be taught to stoop and serve, while faith doth bear the chiefest sway; And great Schollars in *Aristotles* School, must take heed of too much glorying in their master, and despising those that are there below them; least themselves prove lower in the School of Christ, and *least* in the Kingdom of God, while they would be *great* in the eyes of men. As wise a man as any of them, would glory in nothing but the Cross of Christ, and desired to know nothing but him crucified. They that are so confident that *Aristotle* is in Hell, should not too much take him for their Guide in the way to heaven. Its an excellent *memorandum* that *Greg. M.* hath left in his *Moral. l. 33. Deus primo collegit indoctos; post modum Philosophos; & non per oratores docuit piscatores, sed per Piscatores subegit Oratores.* The Learnedst men should think of this.

Let all writers have their due esteem, but compare none of them with the word of God. We will not refuse their service, but we must abhor them as Competitors. Its a sign of a distempered heart that loos-

eth the relish of Scripture excellency. For there is a connaturality in a spiritual heart to the word of God: because this is the seed that did regenerate him; The word is that feal that made all the holly Impressions that be in the hearts of true believers, and stamp the Image of God upon them. And therefore they must needs be like that word, and highly esteem it as long as they live. *Austin* tells us (in his *lib. 10. de Civit. Deic. 29.*) *Quod initium sancti Evangelii cui nomen est secundum Joannem quidam Platonius (sicut à sancto sene impliciano qui postea. Mediolanensi Ecclesiae praesedit Episcopus, solebamus audire) aureis literis conscribendum, & per omnes Ecclesias in locis eminentissimis proponendum esse dicebat.* If he could so value that which suited with his Platonism, how should we value the whole which is suitable to the Christian nature, and interest? God is the best Teacher of his own nature and will.

II. The whole course of our Ministry must be carried on in a tender Love to our people: we must let them see that nothing pleaseth us but what profiteth them; and that which doth them good doth us good; and nothing troubleth us more then their hurt. We must remember as *Hierom* saith *ad Nepotian.* *That Bishops are not Lords but Fathers,* and therefore must be affected to their people as their children: Yea the tenderest love of a mother should nor surpass theirs. We must even *travel in birth of them till Christ be formed in them.* They should see that we care for no outward thing, not money, not liberty, not credit, not life, in comparison of their salvation; but could even be content
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with *Moses* to have our names wiped out of the *Book of life*, i. e. to be removed *è numero viventium*: rather than they should perish and not be found in the *Lambs book of life*, *in numero salvandorum*. Thus should we as *John* saith, be ready to lay down our lives for the brethren, and with *Paul* not to count our lives dear to us, so we may but finish our course with joy in doing the work of God for their salvation. When the people see that you unseignedly love them, they will hear any thing, and bear any thing, and follow you the more easily. As *Austin* saith, *Dilige, & dic quicquid voles*. We will take all things well our selves from one that we know doth entirely love us. We will put up a blow that is given us in Love, sooner then a foul word that is given us in anger or in malice. Most men use to judge of the counsel, as they judge of the affection of him that gives it: at least so far as to give it a fair hearing. O therefore see that you feel a tender love to your people in your breasts, and then let them feel it in your speeches, and see it in your dealings; Let them see that you spend and are spent for their sakes; and that all you do is for them, and not for any ends of your own. To this end the works of charity are necessary, as far as your estate will reach For bare words will hardly convince men that you have any great love to them. *Amicitia a dando & accipiendo nascitur, Chrysost.* But when you are not able to give, shew that you are willing to give if you had it, and do that sort of good that you can; *Si potes dare, da: si non potes, affabilem te fac. Coronat Deus intus bonitatem, ubi non invenit facultatem. Nemo dicat, non habeo. Charitas non de sacculo erogatur. August. in*

Psal. 103. But be sure to see that your love prove not carnal, flowing from pride, as one that is a suiter for himself, rather than for Christ, and therefore doth love because *he is* beloved, or that he *may be*, pretendeth it. And therefore take heed that you do not connive at their sins under pretence of love: for that were to cross the nature and ends of Love: *Amici vitia siferas, facistua.* *Senec.* Friendship must be cemented by piety. *Tu primum exhibe to bonum, & quaere alterum similem tibi.* *Sen.* A wicked man can be no true friend; and if you befriend their wickedness, you shew that you are such your selves. Pretend not to love them, if you favour their sins, and seek not their salvation. *Solis sancti, & Dei sunt, & inter se amici.* *Basil.* *Improbiorum & stultorum nemo amicus.* *Id.* By favouring their sin you will shew your enmity to God, & then how can you love your brother? *Amicus esse homini non potest, qui Deo fuerit inimicus.* *Ambros.* If you be their best friends, help them against their worst enemies. *Amicus animae custos.* And think not all sharpness inconsistent with Love; Parents will correct their children. And God himself will chasten every son that he loveth. *Melius est cum severitate diligere, quam cum lenitate decipere.* *Aug.*

Besides this, the nature of love is to excite men to do good, and to do it speedily, diligently, and as much as we can. *Alios curat aedificare, alios contremiscit offendere, ad alios se inclinatur, cum aliis blanda, aliis severa, nulli inimica, omnibus mater.* *August.* *de Catech.* *Ecce quem amas Domine infirmatur: Non dixerunt veni; Amanti enim tantum nunciandum fuit: sufficet ut noverit: Non enim amat,*

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& *deserit*. August. *in Joan*. So will it be with us.

12. Another necessary concomitant of our work is Patience. We must bear with many abuses and injuries from those that we are doing good for. When we have studied for them, and prayed for them, and beseeched and exhorted them with all condescension, and spent our selves for them, and given them what we are able, and tendered them as if they had been our children, we must look that many should requite us with scorn, and hatred, and contempt, and cast our kindness in our faces with disdain, and take us for their enemies because we tell them the truth; and that the more we love, the less we shall be beloved. And all this must be patiently undergone, and still we must unwearyedly hold on in doing good, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, &c. If they unthankfully scorn and reject our Teaching, and bid us look to our selves and care not *for them*, yet must we hold on: We have to deal with distracted men, that will flye in the face of their Physitian, but we must not therefore forsake the cure. He is unworthy to be a Physitian, that will be driven away from a phrenitick patient by foul words. καθὰπερ οἱ μαινομενοι καὶ τὸν ἱατρὸν, &c. *i. e. Sicut insani etiam medicum impetere conantur, ita & illi, saith Chrysost. of the Sodomites, Hom. 43. in Gen. Et alibi, Medici ferant aegrotum calcibus ferientem, incessentem contumeliiis, & convitiis, nec off enduntur; quia nihil aliud quam salutem agroti quaerentes, licet facientis indecora, non ideo acura desistunt; sic concionator licet malae patiatur ab auditoribus, &c.* If we tell them that natural

tural men favour not the things of the spirit, and are besides themselves in matters of salvation, we must measure our expectations accordingly, and not look that fools should make us as grateful a return as the wise. These are things that all of us can say, but when we come to the practice with sinners that reproach and slander us for our love, and are readyer to spit in our faces, then to give us thanks for our advice, what heart-risings will there be, and how will the remnants of old *Adam* (pride and passion) struggle against the meekness and patience of the new man? And how sadly do many Ministers come off in this part of their trial?

Having given you these 12. Concomitants of our Ministerial labour as singly to be performed by every Minister, let me conclude with one other that is necessary to us as we are conjoined, and fellow-labourers in the work: and that is this: We must be very studious of Union and Communion among our selves, and of the Unity and Peace of the Churches that we oversee. We must be sensible how needful this is to the Prosperity of the whole, the strengthening of our common cause, the good of the particular members of our flock, and the further enlargement of the Kingdom of Christ. And therefore Ministers must smart when the Church is wounded and be so far from being the Leaders in divisions, that they should take it as a principal part of their work to prevent and heal them. Day and night should they bend their studies to find out means to close such breaches. They must not only barken to motions for Unity, but propound them and prosecute them: Nor only entertain an offered Peace, but even follow

low it when it flyeth from them. They must therefore keep close to the antient simplicity of the Christian faith, and the foundation and Center of Catholike Unity. They must abhor the arrogance of them that frame new Engins to wrack and tear the Church of God, under pretence of obviating Errors, and maintaining the truth: The Scripture-sufficiency must be maintained, and nothing beyond it imposed on others; and if Papists or others call to us for the Standard and Rule of our Religion, it is the Bible that we must shew them, rather than any Confessions of Churches, or writings of men. We must learn to difference well between Certainties and Uncertainties, Necessaries and Unnecessaries, Catholike verities (*quae ab omnibus, ubiq; & semper sunt retentae*, as *Vincent. Lioen.* speaks) and private opinions; and to lay the stress of the Churches. Peace upon the former, and not upon the latter. We must therefore understand the Doctrine of Antiquity, that we may know what way men have gone to heaven by in former ages, and know the writings of later Divines, that we may partake of the benefit of their clearer Methods and Explications; but neither of them must be made the Rule of our faith or charity. We must avoid the common confusion of those that difference not between verbal and real Errors, and hate that *Rabies quorundam Theologorum*, that tear their Brethren as Hereticks, before they understand them. And we must learn to see the true state of Controversies, and reduce them to the very Point where the difference lyeth, and not to make them seem greater then they are. Instead of quarreling with our Brethren, we must combine against the common ad-

versaries: And all Ministers must associate, and hold Communion, and Correspondency, and Constant meetings to those ends; and smaller differences of Judgement are not to interrupt them. They must do as much of the work of God in Unity and Concord as they can. Which is the use of Synods; not to Rule over one another, and make Laws; but to avoid misunderstandings, and consult for mutual edification, and maintain Love and Communion, and go on unanimously in the work that God hath already Commanded us. Had the Ministers of the Gospel been men of Peace, and of Catholike rather then factious spirits, the Church of Christ had not been in the case as now it is; the Nations of *Lutherans* and *Calvinists* abroad, and the differing parties here at home, would not have been plotting the subversion of one another, nor remain at that distance, and in that uncharitable bitterness, nor strengthen the common enemy, and hinder the building and prosperity of the Church as they have done.

CHAP.



CHAP. IV.

SECT. I.

Use.



Everend and dear Brethren, our business here this day is to humble our souls before the Lord for our former negligence, especially of Catechizing and personal instructing those committed to our charge; and to desire Gods assistance of us in our undertaken employment for the time to come. Indeed we can scarce expect the later without the former. If God will help us in our future duty and amendment, he will sure humble us first for our former sin. He that hath not so much sense of his faults as unfeignedly to lament them, will hardly have so much more as may move him to reform them. The sorrow of Repentance

pentance may go without the change of heart and life; because a Passion may be easier wrought then a true conversion: but the change cannot go without some good measure of the sorrow. Indeed we may justly here begin our Confessions; It is too common with us to expect that from our people, which we do little or nothing in our selves. What pains take we to humble them, while our selves are unhumbled? How hard do we squeeze them by all our expostulations, convictions, and aggravations, to wring out of them a few penitent tears, (and all too little) when our own eyes are dry, and our hearts too strange to true remorse and we give them an example of hard-heartedness, while we are endeavouring by our words to mollifie and melt them. O if we did but study half as much to affect and amend our own hearts, as we do our hearers, it would not be with many of us as it is! Its a great deal too little that we do for their humiliation; but I fear its much less that some of us do for our own. Too many do somewhat for other mens souls, while they seem to forget that they have any of their own to regard. They so carry the matter, as if their part of the work lay in calling for Repentance, and the hearers in Repenting: theirs in speaking tears and sorrow, and other-mens-only in weeping and sorrowing; theirs in preaching duty, and the hearers in performing it; theirs in crying down sin, and the peoples in forsaking it.

But we find that the Guides of the Church in Scripture did confess their own sins as well as the sins of the people, and did begin to them in tears for their own and the peoples sins. *Ezra* confesseth the
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sins of the Priests as well as of the people, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, *Ezr.* 9. 6, 7, 10. and 10. 1. So did the *Levites*, *Neh.* 9. 32, 33, 34. *Daniel* confessed his own sin as well as the peoples, *Dan.* 9. 20. And God calleth such to it as well as others, *Joel* 2. 15, 16, 17. When the fast is summoned, the people gathered, the Congregation sanctified, the Elders assembled, the Priests the Ministers of the Lord are called to begin to them in weeping, and calling upon God for mercy. I think if we consider well of the Duties already opened, and withal how we have done them; of the Rule and of our unanswerableness thereto, we need not demurr upon the question, nor put it to a question, Whether we have cause of humiliation? I must needs say, though I judge my self in saying it, that he that readeth but this one Exhortation of *Paul* in *Acts* 20. and compareth his life with it, is too stupid and hard-hearted, if he do not melt in the sense of his neglects, and be not laid in the dust before God, and forced to bewail his great omissions, and to flye for refuge to the blood of Christ, and to his pardoning grace. I am confident, Brethren, that none of you do in judgement approve of the Libertine Doctrine, that cryeth down the necessity of Confession, Contrition and true humiliation, yea and in order to the pardon of sin! Is it not pittie then that our Hearts are not more Orthodox as well as our heads? But I see our lesson is but half learnt when we know it, and can say it: When the understanding hath learned it, there is more ado to teach it our Wills and Affections, our eyes, our tongues and hands. It is a sad thing that so many of us do use to preach
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our hearers asleep: but its sadder if we have studied and preacht our selves asleep, and have talkt so long against hardness of heart, till our own grow hardned, under the noise of our own reproofs. Though the head only have eyes, and ears, and smell, and taste, the heart should have life, and feeling and motion as well as the head.

And that you may see that it is not a causeless sorrow that God calleth us to. I shall take it to be my duty to call to remembrance our mainfold sins, or those that are most obvious, and set them this day in order before God and our own faces, that God may cast them behind his back: and to deal plainly and faithfully in a free confession; that he who is faithful and just may forgive them; and to judge our selves that we be not judged of the Lord. Wherein I suppose I have your free and hearty consent, and that you will be so far from being offended with the disgrace of your persons and of others in this office, that you will readily subscribe the charge, and be humble self-accusers; and so far am I from justifying my self by the accusation of others, that I do unfeignedly put my name with the first in the bill. For how can a wretched sinner of so great transgressions, presume to justifie himself with God? Or how can he plead Guiltless, whose conscience hath so much to say against him? If I cast shame upon the Ministry, it is not on the office, but on our persons, by opening that sin which is our shame: The glory of our high employment doth not communicate any glory to our sin; nor will afford it the smallest covering for its nakedness. For *sin is a reproach to any people*, or persons, *Prov. 14. 34.* And it is my self as well as others

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on whom I must lay the shame. And if this may not be done, What do we here to day? Our business is to take shame to our selves, and to give God the glory, and faithfully to open our sins that he may cover them, and to make our selves bare by confession, as we have done by transgression, that we may have the white rayment which cloatheth none but the penitent; For be they Pastors or people, it is only he *that confesseth and forsaketh his sins, that shall have mercy, when he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief, Pro. 28. 13.*

And I think it will not be amiss if in the beginning of our Confession we look behind us, and imitate *Daniel* and other servants of God who confessed the sins of their fore-fathers and predecessors. For indeed my own Judgement is so far from denying Original sin, even the imputed part, with the antient opposers of it, or those of the new Edition, that it doth not so much excuse me from the Guilt of my later progenitors offences, as most other mens do seem to excuse them. Let us fetch up then the core of our shame, and go to the bottom, and trace the behaviour of the Minsters of the Gospel from the daies of Christ till now, and see how far they have been from innocency.

When Christ had chosen him but twelve Apostles, who kept neer his person, that they might be acquainted with his Doctrine, Life and Miracles: yet how ignorant did they long remain, not knowing so much as that he must dye and be a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and be buried and rise again, and ascend into glory, nor what was the nature of his spiritual Kingdom? so that it puts us hard to it to imagine how
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men so ignorant could be in a state of grace; but that we know that those points were after of absolute necessity to salvation, that were not so then.

* *If any one about the times of Moses, offering sacrifice according to the Law, were not instructed in the Doctrine of the death of our Redeemer, but only believed that God through the means which he knoweth to be most agreeable and convenient, will forgive us our trespasses, it were rashness to go about to exclude such a man from salvation.* Per. Molinæus de Tradition. c. 19. p. 251, 252.

* How oft doth Christ teach them publikely and apart? *Mark* 4. 34. and rebuke them for their unbelief and hardness of heart: And yet after all this, so strange were these great mysteries of Redemption to them, and these (now) Articles of our Creed, that *Peter* himself dissuadeth Christ from suffering and goeth so far in contradicting his gracious thoughts for our Redemption, that he is called *Satan*, and *tantum non* excommunicate. And no wonder; for if his counsel had been taken, the world had been lost for ever. And as there was a

Judas among them, so the twelve are before Christs face contending for superiority; so early did that Pride begin to work in the best, which afterwards prevailed so far in others, as to bring the Church so low as we have seen. What should we say of their joynt forsaking Christ of their failings even after the powrings out of the Spirit! of the dissention and separation between *Paul* and *Barnabas*; how strange *Peter* made of the calling of the Gentiles; of his compliance with the Jews to the endangering the liberties of the Gentiles, *Gal.* 2. Of the dissimulation of *Barnabas*; and the common dissention of *Paul* in his suffering: When he had found one *Ti-mothy*,

he saith, he *had no man like-minded, that would naturally care for their estate; for all seek their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ, Phil. 2. 20, 21.* A sad charge of self-seeking in that glory of the Church for faith and purity. And what charges are against most of the Angels of the seven *Asian Churches* is expressed, *Rev. 2. and 3.* And its likely that *Archippus*: was not the only man that had need to be warned to look to his Ministry. *Col. 4. 17.* Nor *Demas* the only man that forsook a persecuted partner, and turned after the things of the world! Nor *Diotrephes* the only man that loved to have the prehemine noe, and made quarrels, and dealt unjustly and unmercifully in the Church upon that account.

And even while the Churches were frying in the flames, yet did the Pride and dissensions even of godly Pastors do more then the fire of persecution could do to turn al to ashes. How sad a story is it that *Policrates* with all the Eastern Churches should be arrogantly excommunicated by *Victor* with his *Romans*, upon no higher a crime then mis-choosing of *Easter-day* (which our Brittain also long after were guilty of) who would think that so great weakness, and presumptuous usurpation, and uncharitable cruelty, and Schismatical zeal, could have befallen the Pastors of the Church in the strongest temptations of prosperity? much less in the midst of Heathenish persecutions! What toys and trifles did the antient Reverend Fathers of the Church trouble their heads about, and pester the Church with, and what useless stuff are many of their Canons composed of? Yet these were the great matter and work of many of
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their famous consultations. How quickly did they seem to forget the perfection of holy Scripture, the non-necessity and burdensomness of ceremonious impositions; And by taking upon them an unnecessary and unjust kind of Jurisdiction, they made the Church so much more work then ever Christ made it, and so clogged Religion with humane devices, that the Christian world hath groaned under it ever since, and been almost brought to ruine by it; and the Reverence of their persons hath put so much Reputation on the crime, and custom hath so taught it to plead praescription, that when the lacerated languid Churches will be delivered from the sad effects of their presumption, God only knoweth. It would make an impartial Reader wonder that peruseth their Canons and the History of the Church, that ever men of piety, and charity, and sobriety, could be drawn to perplex and tear in pieces the Churches by such a multitude of vanities, and needless determinations (to say no worse.) And that the Preachers of the Gospel of peace, which so enjoyneth humility, unity and love, should ever be drawn to such a height of pride, as to think themselves meet to make so many Laws for the whole Church of Christ, and to bind all their Brethren through the world to the obedience of their dictates, and practice of their historical insnaring Ceremonies; and that upon the penalties of being accounted no less then damned Hereticks or Schismatics. Though *Paul* had told them betime that he was afraid of them, lest as the Serpent deceived *Eve*, so they should be deceived and drawn from the simplicity that was in Christ, 2 *Cor.* II. 3. Yet quickly was this Caution forgotten, and the thing

thing that *Paul* feared soon befell them, and instead of the simplicity of Doctrine, they vexed the Churches with curious controversies; and instead of the simplicity of Discipline and Government, they corrupted the Church with Pompe and Tyrannie, and varieties of new orders and rules of Religions; and instead of the simplicity of worship, they set up such a train of their own inventions, of which the Church had no necessity, that the Bishops were become the Masters of Ceremonies, who should have been the faithful and humble observers of the pure Laws and Ordinances of Christ. Though their Councils were usual for the Churches Communion had they been rightly ordered, yet so unhappily did they manage them for the most part, that *Greg. Nazianzene* purposed to come at them no more, as having never seen any that did not more harm then good; And so bold and busie were they in additions and innovations, even in making new Creeds, that *Hilary* sadly complains of it, not sparing the Council of *Nice* it self (though their Creed were allowable) because they taught others the way, and set the rest a work. And *Luther* sheweth us at large in his Book *de Conciliis*, what thoughts he had of those Assemblies. Three lamentable vices did the Prelates of the Church then commonly abound in, *Pride* the root; *Contention*, and *Vain impositions* and inventions, the fruits. No charity that is not blind can hide this guilt. We had never else had the Christian world so plagued with their quarrels about superiority, and vain Traditions, after such warnings, and lessons and examples as Christ had given his own Apostles. When once the favour of a Christian Prince did

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shine upon the Churches, what self-exaltation and contention of the Prelates did ensue? So that if they had not been restrained and kept in quiet by the Emperor, how soon would they have made a sadder havock then they did? perhaps in their first General Council it self. And though that Council had a good occasion, even to suppress the *Arrian* heresie, yet had not *Constantine* committed their mutual accusations to the flames, and shamed them from their contendings, it had not had so good an end. And yet as good as it was, *Luther* saith, p. 226. *de Concil. Ariana haeresis locus fuit ante Nicenum Concilium, præilla confusione quam ipsi post Concilium excitaverunt.* *Augustines* sad complaint of the loading of the Church with ceremonies, and comparing them to Judaism, is commonly known. Of which see *Luthers Comment. ib. p. 55, 56.* And so strange did it seem to *Luther* that the learned Prelates of those bitter times should so scold *circa naenia & nugas*, about preheminance and ceremonies, and things of nought, that he is again and again taken up in admiring it. Read that Treatise throughout.

Is it not sad to think of the heat of an *Epiphanius* and *Theophilus Alexand.* against *Chrysostom*, and of *Chrysostome* against them! Of *Hierom* against *Ruffinus*, *Chrysostom*, and many others; and if *Austin* had not been more peaceable then he, one of them must have been an Heretick, or Schismatick at least. How many more such sad examples have we!

And for their damnatory Sentences, they were more presumptuous then their Laws; Few men could stand in anothers way, or fall out, but one of them

them must be an Heretick before they had made an end. Small differences were named damnable Heresies. Though they had enough among them that were such indeed, (whereof some of the Clergy were almost alwaies the causes and fomenters) yet did they so multiply them by their imputation, that their Catalogues swelled beyond the credit of charity. And he that had the highest reputation, was usually safest from the blot, and had power to make others hereticks almost at his pleasure; and if a man had once got the vote and fame, it was dangerous gain-saying him. Had *Vigilantius* or *Jovinian* had *Hieroms* name, some of their heresies might possibly have been articles of faith.

And as they were dangerously forward on one side to make every small mistake a Heresie, and cause divisions in the Church by their unjust condemnations; so many on the other hand were as forward to provoke them, by novelties or false conceits, especially about the Trinity, and the person and natures of Christ; So that unquiet spirits knew not when or where to rest: And multitudes of them did turn cheaters and deluders of the vulgar, by pretending to Miracles, and Revelations, and Visions, and drawing the people deeper into superstition by such means, (as *Bonafacius Moguntinus* wrote to Pope *Zachary* about the hypocritical Saint *Aldebert*.) And in that age especially when few learned men (as *Erasmus* complaineth) did escape the suspicion of heresie, and he that was a Mathematician was counted a Magitian, it had been more wit to have silenced some unnecessary verities, then to have angered impatient ignorance. *Virgilius* might have talkt more

of the world above us, and let the world below us alone, rather than to force the learned Pope *Zachary* to say to his brother *Boniface* of *Mentz*: *De perversa & iniqua doctrina, quam contra Deum & animam suam locutus est*; (a high crime) *si clarificatum fuerit ita eum confiteri, quod alius mundus & alii homines sub terras sint, hunc accito Concilio, ab ecclesia pelle sacerdotii honore privatum. vid. Usher. syllog. Hibernic. Epistel. pag. 49, 50.* But to mention the twentieth part of the Proud usurpations, innovations, impositions and sentences of those following times, especially among the Romanists, is fitter for large volumes than a cursary Lamentation of the Churches sins. I will not meddle with the Errors, and cruel blood shed of the Popish Clergy of late, against the *Waldenses*, and Protestants; nor yet with the sad condition of the rest of the Clergy through the Christian world, in *Aethiopia*, *Muscovia*, *Grece*, &c. For you will think that this is less to us that do disclaim them: But let us come neerer our selves, and we shall find yet matter of further lamentation. And I will purposely say nothing of any of the sins of our forrain Reformers, nor meddle with any of those sad contentions, which have brought the Reformed Churches into two such exasperated partys, *Lutherans* and *Calvinists*, (as they are commonly called) and hindred their reconciliation and frustrated all means that have been used to that end till this day, to the exceeding shame of the Pastors of these Churches, and the publishing of our darkness, Pride, and selfishness to all the world. But my present business lyeth only at home, and that only with the Reformed Pastors of our Churches. For though through the
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great mercy of God, they are far from the Papal cruelty which made bone-fires of their Brethren better then themselves throughout the Land, and as far from the worst of their Errors and false worship; yet have we been so far from innocency, that all posterity is bound to lament the miscarriages of *their* predecessors.

Is it not a very sad History of the troubles at *Frankford*, to read that so many godly learned men that had forsaken all for the Reformed profession, and were Exiles in a forraign Land, even in a City where they had but borrowed the liberty of one Church should even then fall in pieces among themselves, and that about a Liturgy and Ceremonies, so far as to make a division; and after many plottings and counter-plottings, and underminings of one another, one part of them must leave the City, and go seek another for their liberty! What had not those few Exiles that left their native Country, lands and friends, and all for the Gospel, that fled so far for the liberty of Gods worship, and had as great advantage as most men in the world to be sensible of the excellency of Reformation and liberty, had these I say no more Christian love and tenderness, no more esteem of what they suffered for, then to fall out with one another, and almost fall upon one another, for such things as these! Would not suffering abate their pride and passions, and close their hearts, nor yet make them so far patient as to tolerate each other in so small a difference: Even when their dearest friends and fellow-servants were frying in the flames at home, and the prisons filled with them, and they had daily news of one after another that was

made a sacrifice to the fury of the Papists, could they yet proceed in their own dissensions, and that to such a height! O what is man! and the best of men! Yea before this, in King *Edwards* daies, what rigor was used against Bishop *Hooper* about such Ceremonies! But the prison abated Bishop *Ridleys* uncharitableness, and they then learned more charity when they were going to the flames.

From *Frankford* the sad division at the death of Queen *Mary* was transported into *England*; and the seeds that were sown or began to spring up in the Exiled Congregation, did too plentifully fructifie in the Land of their prosperity. No sooner doth the Sun shine upon them, but contentious spirits begin to swarm; and the prison doors are no sooner open, and their bolts knockt off, but they continue the suppressing of their Brethren, as if they had been turned loose as fighting Cocks to fall upon one another, and to work for Satan when they had suffered for Christ. The party that was for Prelacy and Ceremonies, prevailed for the countenance of the state, and quickly got the staff into their hands, and many of their Brethren under their feet: and so contrived the business that there was no quiet station to be had in the Ministry, for those that would not be of their mind and way. And many of them endeavoured to have a brand of ignominy set upon their names, who desired the Discipline and order of other reformed Churches; That all might be accounted Schismatics that would not be ruled by them even in Ceremonies. The contrary-minded also were some of them too intemperate, and impatient, and unpeaceable; and some few of them turned to flat separation,

and flew in the faces of the Prelates with reviling: For their sakes many wise and peaceable men were the worse used; and they that were got into the Chair, began to play the scorers and the persecutors: and thought meet to impose upon them all the nick-name of Puritans, as knowing how much names of reproach and scorn could do with the vulgar for the furthering of their cause; some of these Puritans (as now they had named them) were imprisoned, and some put to death, and some dyed in and by imprisonment: They are all made incapable of being Preachers of the Gospel in *England*, till they would change their minds, and subscribe to the lawfulness of Prelacy, and the Liturgy and Ceremonies, and use these accordingly when they use their Ministry. O how much did many good men rejoyce that the Lord had visited their native Countrey with deliverance, and the light of the glorious Gospel of his Son? How much did they long to lay out themselves for the saving of their dear Countrey-men, and to improve the present freedom for the most effectual propagation of the Truth? When alas their own friends, some of their fellow-sufferers animated and assisted by many temporizers, did suddenly disappoint their hopes and shut them out of the Vineyard of the Lord, and would suffer none to labour in it, but themselves and theirs. Alas that persecution should be so soon forgotten! and that they should have no more sense of the cruelty of the Papists, to have moved them to some more tenderness of the consciences and liberties of their Brethren. That they had no more compassion on the Church of Christ, then to deprive it of the labours

of so many choice and worthy men; and that at such a time of necessity. When Popish Priests were newly cast out, and multitudes of Congregations had no Preachers at all, but some silly Readers, yet might not these men be allowed to Preach. If the Judgements of these Prelates were never so absolute for the Divine right of their own government, yet could it not be so for the absolute Necessity of the Cross, Surplice, and every part of the forms in their Liturgy! Had they but countenanced most their own party, and silenced all that did speak against their Government and Ceremonies, and only allowed them to preach the Gospel without subscription to the lawfulness of these things, and with a silent forbearance of the use of the Ceremonies, they might have better secured their own power and way, and have exercised some sense of brotherly love, and compassion on the necessitous state of the Church, and in all likelihood might have stood safe themselves to this day. A wonderful thing it seems to me, that wise and good men (for such I doubt not but many of them were) should think it better that many hundred Congregations in *England* (to say nothing of *Ireland* or *Scotland*) should be without any preaching at all to the apparent hazard of the damnation of means souls (who were so deep in Popish ignorance before) then that a man should preach to them that durst not use the Cross or Surplice? were these of more worth then so many souls? It was lawful in the Apostles daies to baptize without the Cross, and to pray, and praise God without the Surplice? and why might not the Prelates of *England* have tolerated that in the Churches necessities, at
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least as a weakness in well-meaning Brethren which the Apostolical Churches used not at all? What if they were lawful? They that thought so might have them. Were they now become more necessary than the Preaching of the Gospel, when in the Apostles times they were of no necessity or use at all? If it were obedience to the Prelates that was necessary, they might have required obedience to undoubted and necessary things, and they should soon have found it. Had they contented themselves to be as Officers under Christ, to see to the execution of his Laws, and to meddle at least with no needless new Legislation, I think few would have questioned obedience to them but the ungodly. But it was sadly contrived to have such Impositions on mens consciences in needless or indifferent things, as the most tender conscienc't men were likest to disobey, and as might be snares to those that desired to please God, (when) the business of Church Governors should be to promote the obedience of Christs-Laws, and to encourage those that are most fearful to disobey them) and to do as the Law makers, *Dan. 6. 5. We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the Law of his God.*

But thus it came to pass that the enemy of the Church did too much attain his ends: such excellent men as *Hildersham, Brightman, P. Bayn, Parker, Ames, Bradshaw, Dod, Nicolls*, with multitudes more were laid aside and silenced; and multitudes of them that petitioned for liberty in *Lincolnshire, Devonshire*, and other parts, suppressed; and the Nation in the mean time abounding with gross ignorance

ignorance, was brought by observing the countenance of the times, to like their own Readers better than painful Preachers, and to hate and scorn the zealous obedience to the Laws of Christ, and all diligence for salvation, because they observed, that those men that were such, were so many of them hated and persecuted by the Rulers, though on the occasions before mentioned. And here was the foundation of our greatest misery laid: While some of the Rulers themselves began to turn their hatred against practical godliness (which corrupted nature hates in all) and the common people took the hint, and no longer confined the word Puritan to the Non-conformists, but applied it commonly through all parts of the Land, to those that would but speak seriously of heaven, and tell men of Death and Judgement, and spend the Lords day in preparation thereto, and desire others to do the like; that did but pray in their families, and keep their children and servants on the Lords day to learn the way to salvation, in stead of letting them spend it in gaming or revelling; they that did but reprove a swearer or a drunkard; these were become the Puritans and the Precisians, and the hated ones of the time; so that they became a by-word in all the Towns and Villages in *England* that ever I knew, or heard of (as to these things.) And thus when the Prelates had engaged the vulgar in their cause, and partly by themselves, and partly by them, had so far changed their cause, as that all serious Christians that feared sin, and were most diligent for salvation, were presently engaged among their adversaries, and they were involved with the rest, though they did nothing against the Govern-
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ment or Ceremonies, and the most ignorant and impious became the friends and agents of the times, and everywhere made the most pious and sedulous Christians a common scorn, to the dishonour of God, and the hardening of the wicked, and discouraging of the weak, and filling men with prejudice against a godly life, and hindring many thousands from the way of salvation: then did God himself appear more evidently as interested in the quarrel, and rose against them, and shamed them that had let in scorn and shame upon his waies; And this, even this was the very thing that brought them down.

Besides this, there was scarce such a thing as Church-Government or Discipline known in the Land; but only this harassing of those that dissented from them. In all my life I never lived in the Parish where one person was publicly admonished or brought to publike penitence or excommunicated, though there were never so many obstinate drunkards, whoremongers or vilest offenders. Only I have known now and then one for getting a bastard, that went to the Bishops Court and paid their sees; and I heard of two or three in all the Countrey (in all my life) that stood in a white sheet an hour in the Church: But the antient Discipline of the Church was unknown. And indeed it was made by them impossible, when one man that lived at a distance from them, and knew not one of many hundreds of the Flock, did take upon him the sole Jurisdiction (and executed it not by himself, but by a lay-Chancellor) excluding the Pastors of the several Congregations, who were but to joyn with the Church-wardens and the Apparitors in presenting men, and bringing them
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into their Courts: And an impossible task must needs be unperformed: And so the controversie as to the letter and outside was, *Who should be the Governors of all the particular Churches?* but as to the sense and inside of it, it was, *Whether there should be any effectual Church-Government, or not?* Where-upon those that pleaded for Discipline, were called by the New name of Disciplinarians; as if it had been a kind of Heresie to desire Discipline in the Church.

At last the heat began to grow greater, and new impositions raised new adversaries. When conformable Puritans began to bear the great reproach (there being few of the Non-conformists left) Then must they also be gotten into the Net; Altars must be bowed to or towards: All must publish a Book for dancing and sports on the Lords day, disabling the Masters of Families, & parents (though they had small time on the week-daies, by reason of their poverty or labour) to keep in their own children or families from dancing on that day, that they might instruct them in the matters of God. If a man as he read a Chapter to his family, had perswaded them to observe and practice it, and with any reasons urged them thereto, this was called *expounding*, and was enquired of in their Articles, to be presented together with Adultery and such like sins: so also was he used that had no preaching at home, and would go hear a conformable Preacher abroad: So that multitudes have I known exceedingly troubled or undone for such matters as these, when not one was much troubled for scandalous crimes. Then Lectures were put down, and afternoon Sermons, and expounding

pounding the Catechism, or Scripture in the afternoons. And the violence grew so great, that many thousand families left the Land, and many godly, able Ministers, Conformists as well as others, were fain to flie and become Exiles, some in one Countrey and some in another, and most in the remote *American* parts of the world: Thither went *Cotten, Hooker, Davenport, Shephard, Allen, Cobbet, Noyes, Parker*, with many another that deserved a dwelling place in *England*.

Yet I must profess I should scarce have mentioned any of this, nor taken it for so hainous a crime, had it been only cruelty to the persons of these men, though they had dealt much hardlyer with them then they did, and if it had not been greater cruelty to the Church, and if they had but had competent men for their places when they were cast out. But alas the Churches were pestered with such wretches as are our shame and trouble to this day. Abundance of meer Readers, and drunken profane deboist men, were the Ministers of the Churches; so that we have been this many years endeavouring to cleanse the Church of them, and have not fully effected it to this day. And many that had more plausible tongues, did make it their chief business, to bring those that they called Puritans into disgrace, and to keep the people from being such. So that I must needs say, that I knew no place in these times, where a man might not more safely have been drunken every week, (as to their punishment) then to have gone to hear a Sermon if he had none at home. For the common people readily took the hint, and increased their reproach, as the Rulers did their persecvtion;

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so that a man could not in any place of *England* that I came in, have said to a swearer or a drunkard, *O do not sin against God, and wound or hazard your own soul*, but he should have been presently hooted at as a Puritan: He could not have said to an ignorant or careless neighbour, *Remember your everlasting state: prepare for death and Judgement*: or have talked of any Scripture matters to them, but he was presently jeered as a Puritan or Precisian: and Scripture it self was become a reproach to him that talked of it, and they would cry out, *What! we must have talk of Scripture now! you will preach to us! we shall have these Preachers ordered ere long*. So that it was become commonly in *England* a greater reproach to be a man truly living in the fear of God, then to live in open prophaness, and to rail at godliness, and daily scorn it, which was so far from being a matter of danger, that many took it up in expectation of preferment; and the Preachers of the times were well ware that the rising way was to preach against the precise Puritans, and not to live precisely themselves. And thus both Ministry and people grew to that sad pass, that it was no wonder if God would bear no longer with the Land.

Even as it was in the Western Churches before the inundation of the *Goths* and *Vandals*, as *Salvian* among others tells us; Indeed I know not a Writer that more fitly painteth out the state of our times; I shall therefore borrow some of his words to express our case, which it seems had been then the Churches case.

Ipsa Dei Ecclesia quae in omnibus esse debet placatrix Dei, quid est aliud quam exacerbatrice Dei? aut præter

ter paucissimos quosdam qui mala fugiunt, quid est aliud pene omnis coetus Christianorum quam sentina vitiorum? Quotum enim quemq; invenies in Ecclesia non aut Ebriosum aut helluonem, aut adulterum, &c.— immo facilius invenias qui totum sit quam qui nihil: Et quod diximus nihil nimis forsitan gravis videatur esse censura; plus multo dicam, facilius invenias reum malorum omnium quam non omnium; facilius majorum criminum quam minorum: id est, facilius qui & majora crimina cum minoribus, quam qui minor a tantum sine majoribus perpetrarint. In hanc enim morum probrositatem prope omnis Ecclesiastica plebs redacta est, ut in cuncto populo Christiano genus quodammodo sanctitatis sit, minus esse vitiosum. Itaq; Ecclesias vel potius templa atq; altaria Dei minoris reverentiae quidem habent quam cujuscunque minimi ac municipalis judicis domum. Siquidem intra januas non modo illustrium potestatum, sed etiam praesidum & praepositorum, non omnes passim intrare praesumunt, nisi quos aut judex vocaverit, aut negotium traxerit, aut ipsa honoris proprii dignitas introire permiserit: ita ut si quispiam fuerit insolenter ingressus, aut cædatur, aut propellatur aut aliqua verecundiæ atq; existimationis suæ labe mulctetur. In templa autem vel potius in altaria atque sacraria Dei passim omnes sordidi ac flagitiosi sine ulla penitus reverentia sacri honoris irrumpunt, non quia non omnes ad exorandum Deum currere debent; sed quia qui ingreditur ad placandum, non debet egredi ad exacerbandum. Neq; enim ejusdem officii est indulgentiam poscere & iracundiam provocare: Novum siquidem monstrigenus est; eadem paene omnes jugiter faciunt, quæ fecisse se plangunt: Et qui intrant in Ecclesiasticam domum, ut mala antiqua defleant, exeunt; & quid dico
exeunt

exeunt? in ipsis pene hoc orationibus suis moliuntur. Salv. de Gubern. l. 3. p. 86, 87.

Et pag. 180. O miseriam lacrymabilem. O miseriam luctuosam! quam dissimilis nunc a seipso est populus Christianus, id est, ab eo qui fuit quondam!—Ecce in quid reducti sumus, ut beatam fore Ecclesiam judicemus, si vel tantum in se boni habeat quantum mali. Nam quomodo non beatam arbitremur, si mediam plebis partem haberet innoxiam, quam pene totam nunc esse plangimus criminosa—superfluè unius scelera deflevimus; aut omnes enim, aut pene omnes flendi atq; lugendi sunt.

Et pag. 195, 196. Omnia amamus; omnia colimus; solus nobis in comparatione omnium Deus vilis est? siquando enim veniret, (quod saepe evenit) ut eodem die & festivitas Ecclesiastica & ludi publici agantur, quæso ab omnium Conscientia, quis locus majores Christianorum virorum copias haberet? Caveane ludi publici, atriū Dei? Et templum omnes magis sectentur, an theatrum? dicta Evangeliorum magis diligant an thymelicorum? verba vitae, an mortis? verba Christi, an mimi? Non est dubium quin illud magis amemus quod anteponimus.

Too like to these here described were our times grown, through the fault of those that professed themselves to have the oversight of their souls. A most sad thing it was to see those men that undertook to guide men in the waies of life, to be the chief means of discouraging them; and to hear them make a mock at holiness, that should have devoted their Doctrine and life thereto. The accusation may seem harsh to those of after-times that knew not this! or that by the Patrons of iniquity are perswaded of the
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contrary. But I say as *Salvian*, l. 6. p. 197. *Sed gravis est forsitan haec atq; iniqua congestio. Gravis profecto, si falsa.*

Yet through the mercy of God, it was not all the Prelates of the Church that thus miscarried: we have yet surviving our *Usher*, our *Hall*, our *Morton*, learned, godly and peaceable men; whose names are as dear to us as any mens alive. And O that it had been the will of God that all had been such! Then had we not been like to have seen those daies of blood that we have seen: nor those great mutations in Church and state! But so far were these good men from being able to do the good that they would, that they were maligned for their piety, and soundness in the faith, and many a time have I heard them despised as well as others, and scorned as Puritans for all they were Prelates.

And yet it were well if all the guilt had lain upon that party! But alas it was not so! Those pious and painful Divines that were oppressed, and much more that part of the people that joyned with them, were too impatient under their suffering! and bent themselves (some of them) more then was meet against the persons of those that they suffered by; and too much endeavoured to make the Prelates odious with the people; as persecutors of the Church of God: and were ready to go too far from them on the other hand; and to think the worse of some things because they commanded them. Doubtless had we all suffered with more patience, and carried our selves with meekness and gent eness to those that we differed from, and given them so much commendation as was their due, and put the best constructions on

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their actions that we could, and covered their infirmities with the most charitable interpretations, we might have done more to mollifie their minds; or at least, to have maintained our own innocence. But as there was no room on their part to a motion for peace, or a petition for liberty, in the time of their prosperity; so when advantages did seem to appear to us of vindicating our liberties, we looked upon them as unreconcilable, and too inconsiderately rusht on, and were wanting in those peaceable endeavours that were our duty. We did not in our Assembly invite them to a free consultation, that their cause might have the fullest and fairest hearing, before it had been condemned. Proposals that had any tendency to healing and accommodation, had never that entertainment from us that they did deserve. What moderate Proposals were made to one party by Bishop *Usher*, which both parties did dislike! How many pacificatory motions and excellent Treatises came from that Heavenly peaceable Bishop *Hall*, especially his *Peace-maker*, his *Pax terris*, and his *Modest Offer*! But how little did they effect! Certainly some of the men were so venerable for their admirable learning and piety, that they deserved to have been heard, and consulted with too, as wise and most Judicious men. And Prelacy was not so young a plant in the Church, nor had it in former and latter ages, had so few or mean persons to adorn and credit it, but that it well deserved the fairest hearing and debate.

But thus have we all shewed our frailty, and this is the *heed* that we have *taken to our selves and to all the Flock*. The Lord open our eyes at last, that we
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may all fullyer see our own miscarriages; for surely they lie as Mountains before us, and all the world about us may see them, and yet we will hardly see them our selves.

A man would think now that if the heart of man be cureable, we should by this time be all brought to the sense of our miscarriages, and be prepared to a closure on any reasonable terms? Who would think but after all the smart of our divisions, we should long ere this have got together, and prayed, and consulted our selves into peace! But alas there is no such matter done; and few do I find that mind the doing of it. We continue our quarrels as hot as ever: As *Salvian* saith in another case, *Miseri jam sumus: & nec dum nugaces (discordes) esse cessamus.* l. 6. p. 20 2. Et pag. 200. *Mala incessabiliter malis addimus, & peccata peccatis cumulamur: & cum maxima nostri pars iam perierit, id agimus ut pereamus omnes.—Nos non vicinos nostros tantum ardere vidimus, sed ipsi iam ex maxima nostrorum corporum parte arsimus. Et quid hoc, proh nefas, mali est? arsimus, arsimus, & tamen flammæ quibus iam arsimus non timemus. Nam quod non ubiq; agantur quæ prius acta sunt, miseriae est beneficium, non disciplinæ. Facile hoc probo. Da enim prioris temporis statum, & statim ubi{que} sunt quæ fuerunt.*

The minds of many are as much exasperated or estranged as ever. Three sorts I meet with, that all are too backward to any accommodation.

1. The violent men of the Prelates side, especially those of the new way, who are so far from Reconciliation and healing of our breaches, that they labour to perswade the world that the contrary-minded are

Schismatics, and that all the Ministers that have not Episcopal ordination are no Ministers, nor any of the Churches that have not Prelates are true Churches, (at least, except it can be proved to be through unavoidable necessity.) And they say, To agree with such were to strike a Covenant with Schism it self.

2. Some on the other side say, *Do you not see that except an inconsiderable number, the Prelatical party are all, empty, careless, if not scandalous ungodly men! Where are almost any of them whose Communion is desirable! That set themselves to the winning and saving of souls, and are serious men in the matters of salvation, in whom you can perceive a heavenly conversation? Hath God brought down these enemies of godliness, and persecutors and depopulators of his Church, and would you make a league with them again? Do you not see that they are as bitter and implacable as ever! and have not some of them the faces to justifie all the former impositions and persecutions, and draw or continue the guilt of it upon their heads? and would make the world believe that they are wrongfully eicted, when so many accusatians in Parliament before the division, so many Centuries of horribly scandalous ones published by Mr. White, and so many more Centuries that lie on Record under depositions in the several Countyes of the Nation where the Committees eicted them, will be perpetual witnesses of the quality of these men.*

3. Others there be that are peaceable men on both sides, that will not justifie the former miscarriages, nor own the present evils of any; but think though there be too much truth in these later accusations, yet the nature of the Difference and the Quality

lity of some of the persons is such, as deserveth our desires and endeavours of Reconciltation. But they think the work to be hopeless and impossible, and therefore not to be attempted.

And thus our breach is made; but how or when it will be well healed, the Lord knoweth. But this is not all; it behoveth us yet to come neerer home, and enquire into the waies of the present approved Godly Ministers, of what party soever; and doubtless if we are willing to know our selves we may soon find that which will lay us very low before the Lord, I shall in all have an eye at my own corrupt heart which I am so far from Justifying in this common lamentation, that I take it as my necessary duty to cast the first stone at my self.

The great sins that we are guilty of, I shall not undertake to enumerate; and therefore my passing over any particular is not to be taken as a denyal of it for our Justification. But I shall take it to be my duty to give instance of some few, that cry loud for humiliation and speedy Reformation.

Only I must needs first premise this profession; That for all the faults that are now among us, I do not believe that ever *England* had so able and faithful a Ministry since it was a Nation as it hath at this day: and I fear that few Nations on earth, if any, have the like. Sure I am the change is so great within this 12. years, that it is one of the greatest joyes that ever I had in the world to behold it. O how many Congregations are now plainly and frequently taught, that lived then in great obscurity? How many able faithful men are there now in a County in comparison of what were then? How graciously

hath God prospered the studies of many young men, that were little children in the beginning of the late troubles? so that now they cloud the most of their seniors: How many miles would I have gone twenty years ago, and less, to have heard one of those ancient Reverend Divines, whose Congregations are now grown thin, and their parts esteemed mean by reason of the notable improvement of their Juniors? And in particular, how mercifully hath the Lord dealt with this poor Countrey of *Worcestershire*, in raising up so many of these, that credit their sacred office, and self-denyingly, and freely, zealously and unwearyedly do lay out themselves for the good of souls! I bless the Lord that hath placed me in such a neighbourhood, where I may have the brotherly fellowship of so many able, humble, unanimous, peaceable and faithful men. O that the Lord would long continue this admirable mercy to this unworthy Countrey: And I hope I shall rejoyce in God while I have a being for the common change in other parts, that I have lived to see: That so many hundred faithful men are so hard at work for the saving of souls, *fremetibus licet & frendentibus inimicis*; and that more are springing up apace. I know there are some men whose parts I reverence, who being in point of Government of another mind from them, will be offended at my very mention of this happy alteration: but I must profess if I were absolutely Prelatical, if I knew my heart, I could not chose for all that but rejoyce: What not rejoyce at the prosperity of the Church, because the men do differ in one opinion, about its order! should I shut my eyes against the mercies of the Lord! The souls
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of men are not so contemptible to me, that I should envy them the bread of life, because it is broken to them by a hand that had not the Prelatical approbation; O that every congregation were thus supplied; but all cannot be done at once. They had a long time to settle a corrupted Ministry; and when the ignorant and scandalous are cast out, we cannot create abilities in others for the supply; we must stay the time of their preparation and growth; and then if *England* drive not away the Gospel by their abuse, even by their willful unreformedness, and hatred of the light, they are like to be the happiest Nation under heaven. For, as for all the Sects and Heresies that are creeping in and daily troubling us, I doubt not but the free Gospel managed by an able self denying Ministry, will effectually disperse and shame them all.

But you may say, This is not confessing sin, but applauding those whose sins you pretend to confess?

Ans. It is the due acknowledgement of Gods graces and thanksgiving for his admirable mercies, that I may not seem unthankful in Confession, much less to cloud or vilifie Gods graces, while I open the frailties that in many do accompany them.

SECT. II.

AMong the many things that are yet sadly out of order in the *best*, I shall touch upon these few particulars following.

I. One of our most hainous & palpable sins is *Pride*: A sin that hath too much interest in the best; but is more hateful & unexcusable in us then in any men. Yet is it so prevalent in some of us, that it inditeth our discourses for us, it chooseth us our company, it formeth our countenances, it putteth the accents and emphasis upon our words; when we reason, it is the determiner and exciter of our Cogitations? It fills some mens minds with aspiring desires and designs: It possesseth them with envious and bitter thoughts against those that stand in their light, or by any means do ecclipse their glory, or hinder the progress of their idolized Reputation. O what a constant companion, what a tyrannous commander, what a fly and subtile insinuating enemy is this sin of Pride! It goes with men to the Draper, the Mercer, the Taylor; it choseth them their cloth, their trimming and their fashion. It dresseth them in the morning, at least the out side. Fewer Ministers would rustle it out in the fashion in hair and habit, if it were not for the command of this tyrannous vice. And I would that were all, or the worst: But alas how frequently doth it go with us to our studies, and there set with us and do our work? How oft doth it chose our subject? and more often chose our words and ornaments. God biddeth us be as plain as we can,
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for the informing of the ignorant, and as convincing and serious as we are able, for the meiting and changing of unchanged hearts; And Pride stands by and contradicteth all; and sometime it puts in toyes and trifles, and polluteth rather then polisheth, and under pretence of laudable ornaments, it dishonoureth our Sermons with childish gawdes: as if a Prince were to be decked in the habit of a Stage-player or a painted fool. It perswadeth us to paint the window that it may dim the light; and to speak to our people that which they cannot understand, to acquaint them that we are able to speak unprofitably: It taketh off the edge, and dulls the life of all our teachings, under pretence of filing off the roughness, unevenness and superfluity; If we have a plain and cutting passage, it throws it away as too rustical or ungrateful. When God chargeth us to deal with men as for their lives, and beseech them with all the earnestness that we are able; this cursed sin controlleth all, and condemneth the most holy commands of God, and calleth our most necessary duty a madness; and saith to us, *What will you make people think you are mad? will you make them say you rage or rave? cannot you speak soberly and moderately?* And thus doth Pride make many a mans Sermons, and what Pride makes the Devil makes; and what Sermons the Devil will make, and to what end, we may easily conjecture. Though the matter be of God, yet if the dress, and manner, and end be from Satan, we have no great reason to expect success.

And when Pride hath made the Sermon, it goes with them into the Pulpit, it formeth their tone, it animateth them in the delivery, it takes them off
from

from that which may be displeasing, how necessary soever, and setteth them in a pursuite of vain applause. And the sum of all this is, that, It maketh men both in studying and preaching to seek themselves, and deny God, when they should seek Gods glory and deny themselves. When they should ask, *What should I say, and how should I say it, to please God best, and do most good?* It makes them ask, *What shall I say, and how shall I deliver it, to be thought a learned able Preacher, and to be applauded by all that hear me?* When the Sermon is done, Pride goeth home with them, and maketh them more eager to know whether they were applauded, then whether they did prevail for the saving change of souls. They could find in their hearts, but for shame, to ask folks, how they liked them, and to draw out their commendation. If they do perceive that they are highly thought of, they rejoyce as having attained their end; but if they perceive that they are esteemed but weak or common men, they are displeased as having mist the prize of the day.

But yet this is not all nor the worst, if worse may be. O that ever it should be spoken of godly Ministers, that they are so set upon popular air, and of sitting highest in mens estimation, that they envy the parts and names of their Brethren that are preferred before them, as if all were taken from their praises that is given to anothers, and as if God had given them his gifts to be the meer ornaments and trappings of their persons, that they may walk as men of reputation in the world, and all his gifts in others were to be trodden down and vilified, if they seem to stand in the way of their honour! What, a Saint, a
Preacher

Preacher for Christ, and yet envy that which hath the Image of Christ, and malign his gifts for which he should have the glory, and all because they seem to hinder our glory! Is not every true Christian a member of the body, and therefore partaketh of the blessings of the whole, and of each particular member thereof? and doth not every man owe thanks to God for his Brethrens gifts, not only as having himself a part in them, as the foot hath the benefit of the Guidance of the eye; but also because his own ends may be attained by his brethrens gifts as well as by his own? For if the glory of God and the Churches felicity be not his end, he is not a Christian. Will any work-man malign another because he helpeth him to do his masters work? yet alas how common is this hainous crime among men of parts and eminency in the Church! They can secretly blot the Reputation of those that stand cross to their own; and what they cannot for shame do in plain and open terms, lest they be proved palpable lyers and slanderers, they will do it in generals and malicious intimations, raising suspicions where they cannot fasten accusations. And so far are some gone in this Satanical vice, that it is their ordinary practice, and a considerable part of their business to keep down the estimation of any that they dislike, and to defame others in the slyest and most plausible way. And some goe so far, that they are unwilling that any one that is abler then themselves should come into their Pulpits, least they should be applauded above themselves. A fearful thing, That any man that hath the least of the fear of God, should so envy at Gods gifts, and had rather that his carnal hearers were unconverted, and the

the drowsie not awakened, then that it should be done by another who may be preferred before them. Yea so far doth this cursed vice prevail, that in great Congregations that have need of the help of many Teachers, we can scarce in many places get two in equality to live together in love and quietness, and unanimously to carry on the work of God! But unless one of them be quite below the other in parts, and content to be so esteemed, or unless one be a Curate to the other or ruled by him, they are contending for precedency, and envying each others interest and walking with strangness and jealousie towards one another, to the shame of their profession, and the great wrong of the Congregation. I am ashamed to think of it, that when I have been endeavouring with persons of publike interest and capacity to further a good work, to convince them of the great necessity of more Ministers then one in great Congregations, they tell me, they will never agree together! I hope the objection is ungrounded as to the most: but it is a sad case that it should be so with any. Nay some men are so far gone in Pride, that when they might have an equal assistant to further the work of God, they had rather take all the burden upon themselves, though more then they can bear, then that any should share with them in the honour; and for fear least they should diminish their interest in the people.

Hence also it comes to pass that men do so magnifie their own opinions, and are as censorious of any that differ from them in lesser things, as if it were all one to differ from them and from God; and do expect that all should be conformed to their judgments,

as if they were the rule of the Churches faith! and while we cry down Papal Infallibility, and determination of Controversies, we would too many of us be Popes our selves, and have all stand to our determination, as if we were infallible. Its true, we have more modesty then expresly to say so: we pretend that it is only the evidence of truth that appeareth in our Reasons that we expect men should yield to, and our zeal is for the truth and not for our selves: But as that must needs be taken for Truth which is ours, so our Reasons must needs be taken for valid; and if they be but freely examined, and found to be infirm and fallacious, and so discovered, as we are exceeding backward to see it our selves, because they are ours, so how angry are we that it should be disclosed to others? and we so espouse the cause of our errors, as if all that were spoken against them were spoken against our persons, and we were hainously injured to have our arguments throughly confuted, by which we injured the truth and the minds of men! so that the matter is come to that pass through our Pride, that if an errour or fallacious argument do fall under the Patronage of a Reverend Name (which is no whit rare) we must either give it the victory, and give away the truth, or else become injurious to that name that doth patronize it. For though you meddle not with their persons, yet do they put themselves under all the strokes which you give their arguments; and feel it as sensibly as if you had spoken it of themselves, because they think it will follow in the eyes of man, that weak arguing is a sign of a weak man. If therefore you take it for your duty to shame their errors and false reasonings, by discovering their nakedness,

they take it as if you shamed their persons; and so their names must be a Garrison or fortress to their mistakes, and their Reverence must defend all their sayings from the light.

And so high are our spirits, that when it becomes a duty to any man to reprove or contradict us, we are commonly impatient both of the matter and of the manner. We love the man that will say as we say, and be of our opinion, and promote our reputation, though he be less worthy of our love in other respects: But he is ungrateful to us that contradicteth us, and differeth from us, and that dealeth plainly with us in our miscarriages, & telleth us of our faults! Especially in the management of our publike arguings: where the eye of the world is upon us, we can scarce endure any contradiction or plain dealing. I know that Railing language is to be abhorred, and that we should be as tender of each others reputation, as our fidelity to the truth will permit: But our Pride makes too many of us to think all men condemn us that do not admire us, yea and admire all that we say, and submit their judgements to our most palpable mistakes! We are so tender that no man can touch us scarce but we are hurt; and so stout and high-minded that a man can scarce speak to us: Like froward children, or sick folk that cannot endure to be talkt to; the fault is not that you speak amiss to them, but that you speak to them. So our indignation is not at men for writing or speaking injuriously or unjustly against our words, but for confuting them. And a man that is not verft in complementing: and skilled in flatterie above the vulgar rate, can scarce tell how to handle them so observantly, and fit
their

their expectations at every turn, but there will be some word, or some neglect which their high spirits will fasten, and take as injurious to their honour; So that a plain Countrey-man that speaks as he thinks, must have nothing to do with them, unless he will be esteemed guilty of dishonouring them.

I confess I have often wondered at it, that this most hainous sin should be made so slight of, and thought so consistent with a holy frame of heart and life when far lesser sins are by our selves proclaimed to be so damnable in our people! And more have I wondered to see the difference between ungodly sinners, and godly Preachers in this respect. When we speak to drunkards, worldlings, or any ignorant unconverted men, we disgrace them as in that condition to the utmost, and lay it on as plainly as we can speak, and tell them of their sin, and shame, and misery: and we expect, not only that they should bear all patiently, but take al thankfully; and we have good reason for all this: And most that I deal with do take it patiently, and many gross sinners will commend the closest Preachers most, and will say that they care not for hearing a man that will not tell them plainly of their sins. But if we speak to a godly Minister, against his errours or any sin, (for too many of them) if we honour them and reverence them, and speak as smoothly as we are able to speak, yea if we mixt commendations with our contradictions or reproofs, if the applause be not apparently predominant, so as to drown all the force of the reproof or confutation, and if it be not more an applause then a reprehension, they take it as an injury almost insufferable. That is *railing* against them, that would be no better
better

better then *flatterie* in them to the common people; though the cause may be as great.

Brethren, I know this is a sad and harsh confession! but that all this should be so among us, should be more grievous to us then to be told of it. Could this nakedness be hid, I should not have disclosed it, at least so openly in the view of all. But alas it is long ago open in the eyes of the world: We have dishonoured our selves by idolizing our honour; We print our shame, and preach our shame, and tell it unto all. Some will think that I speak over charitably to call such persons Godly men, in whom so great a sin doth so much preval. I know where it is indeed predominant, not hated, and bewailed, and mortified in the main, there can be no true godliness; and I leave every man to a cautelous jealousie and search of his own heart; But if all be Graceless that are guilty of any, or most of the forementioned discoveries of Pride, the Lord be merciful to the Ministers of this Land, and give us quickly another spirit; for grace is then a rarer thing then most of us have supposed it to be.

Yet I must needs say that it is not *all* that I intend; To the praise of Grace be it spoken, we have some among us here, (and I doubt not but it is so in other parts) that are eminent in humility and lowliness and condescension, and exemplary herein to their flocks and to their Brethren: and it is their glory and shall be their glory; and maketh them truly honourable and amiable in the eyes of God and all good men; yea and in the eyes of the ungodly themselves: And O that the rest of us were but such! But alas this is not the case of all.

O that the Lord would lay us at his feet, in the tears of unfeigned sorrow for this sin! Brethren, may I take leave a little to expostulate this case with my own heart and you, that we may see the shame of our sin and be reformed? Is not Pride the sin of Devils? the first-born of Hell? is it not that wherein Satans Image doth much consist? and is it tolerable evil in a man that is so engaged against him and his Kingdom as we are? The very design of the Gospel doth tend to self abasing; and the work of grace is begun and carried on in Humiliation. Humility is not a meer ornament of a Christian, but an essential part of the new creature. It is a contradiction to be a sanctified man, or a true Christian, and not humble. All that will be Christians must be Christs Disciples, and *come to him to learn*; and their lesson is, to *be meek and lowly*, Mat. II. 28. O how many precepts and admirable examples hath our Lord and master given us to this end? Can we once conceive of him as purposely washing and wiping his servants feet, and yet be stout and Lordly still? shall he converse with the meanest, and we avoid them as contemptible people, and think none but persons of riches and honour to be fit for our society? How many of us are oftner found in the houses of Gentlemen, then in the poor cottages of those that have most need of our help? There are many of us that would think it a baseness, to be daily with the most needy and beggarly people, to instruct them in the matters of life, and supply their wants? As if we had taken charge only of the souls of the rich! Alas what is it that we have to be proud of? Of our body? why, are they not made of the like

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materials

materials as the brutes? and must they not shortly be as loathsom and abominable as the dung? is it of our Graces? Why the more we are proud of them, the less we have to be proud of. And when so much of the nature of Grace is in Humility its a great absurdity to be proud of it. Is it of our Learning, Knowledge, abilities and gifts? Why sure if we have any knowledge at all, we must needs know much reason to be humble; and if we know more then others, we must know more reason then others do to be humble. How little is it that the most Learned know, in comparison of that which yet they are ignorant of? And to know that things are past your reach, and to know how ignorant you are, one would think should be no great cause of Pride! However, do not the Devils know more then you? And will you be Proud of that which the Devils do excell you in? Yea to some I may say as *Salvian, li. 4. de Gubern. p. 98. Quid tibi blandiris O homo quisquis es, Credulitate, quae sine timore atque obsequio Dei nulla est? aliquid plus Daemones habent. Tu emin unam rem habes tantummodo; illi duat. Tu Credulitatem habes; non habes timorem: illi & Credulitatem habent pariter & timorem.* Our very business is to teach the great lesson of self-denyal and humility to our people; and how unfit is it then that we should be proud our selves? We must study Humility, and Preach Humility; and must we not possess and practice it? A proud Preacher of Humility, is at least a self-condemning man.

What a sad case is it that so vile a sin is no more easily discerned by us? but many that are most Proud, can blame it in others, and take no notice of it in themselves.

selves. The world takes notice of some among us, that they have aspiring minds, and seek for the highest room, and must be the Rulers, and bear the sway where-ever they come, or else there is no standing before them. No man must contradict them that will not partake of the fruits of their indignation: In any consultations, they come not to search after truth, but to dictate to others that perhaps are fit to teach them. In a word, they have such arrogant domineering spirits, that the world rings of it; and yet they will not see it in themselves.

Brethren I desire to deal closely with my own heart and yours. I beseech you consider. Whether it will save us to speak well of the grace that we are without? or to speak against the sin that we live in? Have not many of us cause to enquire once & again, Whether sincerity will consist with such a measure of Pride? When we are telling the drunkard that he cannot be saved unless he become temperate, and the fornicator, that he cannot be saved unless he become chaste (an undoubted truth); have we not as great reason if we are proud, to say of our selves, that we cannot be saved unless we become humble? Certainly, Pride is a greater sin then whoredom or drunkenness: and Humility is as necessary as Chastity and Sobriety. Truly Brethren, a man may as certainly, and more sily and dangerously, make haste to hell in a way of Profession and earnest preaching of the Gospel, and seeming zeal for a Holy life, as in a way of drunkenness and filthyness. For what is true Holiness but a devotedness to God and a living to him? and what is a wicked and damnable state, but a devotedness to our carnal selves, and a living to our

selves? And doth any man live more to himself then the proud? or less to God? And may not Pride make a Preacher study for himself, and pray, and preach, and live to himself, even when he seemeth to out-go others in the work, if he therefore out-go them that he may have the glory of it from men? It is not the work without the principle and end that will prove us upright. The work may be Gods, and yet we do it, not for God but for our selves. I confess I feel such continual danger in this point, that if I do not watch against it, least I should study for my self, and preach for my self, and write for my self, rather then for Christ, I should soon miscarry; and after all, I justifie not my self, when I must condemn the sin. Consider I beseech you Brethren, what baits there are in the work of the Ministry, to entice a man to be selfish, that is, to be carnal and impious, even in the highest works of piety! The fame of a godly man is as great a snare as the fame of a learned man: And woe to him that takes up with the fame of godliness instead of godliness. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. When the times were all for learning and empty formalities, then the Temptation of the proud did lie that way; But now through the unspeakable mercy of God, the most lively practical preaching is in credit, and godliness it self is in credit: and now the Temptation to Proud men is here, even to pretend to be zealous Preachers and godly men. O what a fine thing doth it seem to have the people crowd to hear us, and to be affected with what we say, and then we can command their Judgements and Affections! What a taking thing is it to be cryed up as the ablest and godlyest man in the
Country!

Countrey! and to be famed through the Land for the highest spiritual excellencies. Alas Brethren a little grace will serve turn to make you to joyn your selves with the forwardest of those men, that have these inducements or encouragements. To have the people plead for you as their felicity, and call you the Pillars of the Church of God, and their Fathers, the Chariots and horse-men of *Israel*, and no lower language then excellent men, and able Divines and to have them depend upon you and be ruled by you; though this may be no more then their duty, yet I must again tell you, that a little grace may serve to make you seem zealous men for this. Nay Pride may do it without any special Grace. O therefore be jealous of your selves, and in all your studies, be sure to study Humility. *He that exalieth himself shall be brought low, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* I observe commonly that almost all men good and bad do loath the Proud, and love the Humble: so far doth Pride contradict it self, unless it be where it purposely hideth it self, and as conscious of its own deformity doth borrow the homely dress of humility. And we have cause to be the more jealous, because it is the most radicated vice, and as hardly as any extirpated from the soul. *Nam saepe sibi de se mens ipsa mentitur, & fingit se de bono opere amare quod non amat; de mundi autem gloria, non amare quod amat; inquit Gregor. M. de cura Pastor. P. 1. c. 9.* When it was a disgrace to a man to be a godly zealous Preacher, then Pride had not such a baite as now: As the same *Gregor.* saith, *ibid. p. 21. c. 8. Eo tempore quo quisquis plebibus præerat, primus ad Martyris tormenta ducebatur; Tunc lau-*

dabile fuit Episcopatum quaerere, quando per hunc quemque dubium non erat ad supplicia major a pervenire.

But it is not so now, as he saith in another place, *Cap. 1. initio, Sed quia authore Deo ad Religionis reverentiam omne jam praesentis seculi culmen inclinatur, sunt nonnulli qui intra sanctam Ecclesiam per speciem regiminis gloriam affectant honoris; Videri Doctores appetunt, transcendere caeteros concupiscunt, atque attestante veritate, primas salutationes in foro, primos recubitus in coenis, primas cathedras in conventibus quaerunt, qui susceptum curae pastoralis officium ministrare digne tanto magis nequeunt, quanto ad hujus humilitatis magisterium ex sola elatione pervenernat; ipsa quippe in Magisterio lingua confunditur, quando aliud discitur, & aliud docetur. Hactenus Gregorius, & ipse nimis magnus.*

But I have stood longer upon this sin then is proportionable to the rest of my work; I shall be the shorter in the confession of some of the rest.

SECT.

SECT. III.

2. **A**Nother sin the Ministers of *England*, and much more of many other Churches, are sadly guilty of, is, *An undervaluing the Unity and Peace of the whole Church*. Though I scarce ever met with any that will not speak for Unity and Peace, or at least, that will expresly speak against it: yet is it not common to meet with those that are addicted to promote it; but too commonly do we find men averse to it, and jealous of it, if not themselves the instruments of division. The Papists have so long abused the name of the Catholike Church, that in opposition to them many do either put it out of their Creeds, or only fill up a room with the name, while they understand not or consider not the nature of the thing; or think it enough to *believe* that there is such a Body, though they behave not themselves as sensible members of it. If the Papists will Idolize the Church, shall we therefore deny it, disregard it, or divide it? It is a great and common sin through the Christian world, to take up Religion in a way of faction; and instead of a love and tender care of the Universal Church, to confine that love and respect to a party. Not but that we must prefer in our estimation and Communion the purer parts before the impure, and refuse to participate with any in their sins; but the most infirm and diseased part should be compassionated and assisted to our utmost power; and communion must be held as far as is lawful, and no-

avoided but upon the urgency of necessity: As we must love those of our neighbourhood that have the plague or leprosie, and afford them all the relief we can, and acknowledge all our just relations to them, and communicate to them, though we may not have local Communion with them: and in other diseases which are not so infectious, we may be the more with them for their help, by how much the more they need it. Of the multitude that say they are of the Catholike Church, it is too rare to meet with men of a Catholike Spirit: Men have not an Universal consideration of and respect to the whole Church; but look upon their own party as if it were the whole. If there be some called *Lutherans*, some *Calvinists*, some (among these) of subordinate divisions, and so of other parties among us, most of them will pray hard for the prosperity of their party, and rejoyce and give thanks accordingly, when it goes well with them: but if any other party suffer, they little regard it, as if it were no loss at all to the Church. If it be the smallest parcel that possesseth not many Nations, no nor Cities on earth, they are ready to carry it as if they were the whole Church, and as if it went well with the Church when it goes well with them. We cry down the Pope as Anti-christ for including the Church in the Romish pale, and no doubt but it is an abominable schism: But alas how many do imitate them too far, while we reprove them! And as they foist the word *Roman* into their Creed, and turn the *Catholike Church* into the *Roman Catholike Church*: as if there were no other Catholikes, and the Church were of no larger extent; so is it with many others as to their several parties.

parties. Some will have it to be the *Lutheran* Catholike Church, and some the Reformed Catholike Church (as if it were all reformed) some the Anabaptist Catholike Church, and so of some others. And if they differ not among themselves, they are little troubled at differing from others, though it be from almost all the Christian world. The Peace of their party, they take for the Peace of the Church: No wonder therefore if they carry it no further.

How rare is it to meet with a man that smarteth or bleedeth with the Churches wounds, or sensibly taketh them to heart as his own? or that ever had solicitous thoughts of a cure? No but almost every Party thinks that the happiness of the rest consisteth only in turning to them; and because they be not of their mind, they cry, *Down with them*, and are glad to hear of their fall, as thinking that is the way to the Churches rising; that is, their own. How few be there that understand the true state of Controversies between the several parties? or that ever well discerned how many of them are but Verbal, and how many are Real? And if those that understand it do in order to right information and accommodation, disclose it to others, its taken as an extenuation of their error, and a carnal compliance with them in their sin. Few men grow zealous of Peace, till they grow old, or have much experience of mens spirits and principles, and see better the true state of the Church, and the several differences, then they did before. And then they begin to write their *Irenicon's*; and many such are extant at this day. *Pareus*, *Iunius*, and many more have done their parts; as our
Davenant,

Davenant, Morton, Hall, (whose excellent Treatise called the *Peace-maker*, and his *Pax terris*, deserve to be transcribed upon all our hearts) *Hattonus, Amyraldus* also have done: But *recipiuntur ad modum recipientis*; As a young man in his heat of lust and passion was judged to be no fit auditor of Moral Philosophy; so we find that those same young men who may be zealous for Peace and Unity, when they are grown more experienced, are zealous for their factions against these in their youthful heat. And therefore such as these before mentioned, and *Duræus* who hath made it the business of his life, do seldom do much greater good then to quiet their own consciences in the discharge of so great a duty, and to moderate some few and save them from further guilt, and to leave behind them when they are dead, a witness against a wilful, self-conceited and unpeaceable world.

Nay commonly it bringeth a man under suspicion either of favouring some heresie, or abating his zeal, if he do but attempt a pacificatory work. As if there were no zeal necessary for the great fundamental verities for the Churches Unity and Peace, but only for parties and some particular truths.

And a great advantage the Devil hath got this way, by employing his own Agents, the unhappy Socinians in writing so many Treatises for Catholike and Arch-catholike Unity and Peace, which they did for their own ends, and would have done it on insufficient terms: By which means the enemy of Peace hath brought it to pass that whoever maketh motion for Peace, is presently under suspicion of being one that hath need of it for an indulgence to his
own

own Errors. A fearful case! that heresie should be so credited, as if none were such friends to Unity and Peace as they! And that so great and necessary a duty, upon which the Churches wellfare doth so depend, should be brought into such suspition or disgrace.

Brethren, I speak not all this without apparent reason. We have as sad divisions among us in *England*, considering the piety of the persons, and the smallness of the matter of our discord, as most Nations under heaven have known. The most that keeps us at odds is but about the right form and order of Church-Government. Is the distance so great that Presbyterian, Episcopal and Independent *might* not be well agreed? Were they but heartily willing and forward for peace, they *might*, I know they *might*. I have spoken with some moderate men of all the parties, and I perceive by their concessions it were an easie work. Were mens hearts but sensible of the Churches case, and unfeignedly touched with Love to one another, and did they but heartily set themselves to seek it, the settling of a safe and happy Peace were an easie work. If we could not in every point agree, we might easily find out, and narrow our differences, and hold Communion upon our agreement in the main; determining of the safest way for the managing of our few and small disagreements, without the danger or trouble of the Church. But is this much done? It is not done. To the shame of all our faces be it spoken, it is not done. Let each party flatter themselves now as they please, it will be recorded to the shame of the Ministry of *England*, while the Gospel shall abide in the Christian world.

What

What will be recorded? What? Why this; That learned and godly Ministers in *England*, did first disagree among themselves, and head and lead on their people in those disagreements! That they proceeded in them for the space of 14. years (already; how much more will be, God knows) and in all that time had as great advantages and opportunities for Agreement, as any people in the world. They had the sad experience of the conflagration of the Commonwealth, and were scourged to it by a calamitous war. They saw the fearful confusions in the Church; and the perverting of multitudes of seduced souls, some to be Seekers, some Socinians, some Ranters, Quakers or Infidels; They saw the continual exasperation of minds, and the jealousies and bitterness that their distance bred, and how it was the fuel of a daily course of sin. And yet for all these, they were not moved to effectual endeavours for a cure. They could let a course of sin run on: they could let divisions and heresies increase, they see the Church of Christ so low, and yet forbear the cheapest cure, that ever a people could be called to use. They could see, and hear, and know that we were all made a very derision to our enemies, and the publike scorn or pity of the world; and yet set still, as if all this were little to them. They had Magistrates that did not hinder them from the work: but gave them full liberty to have consulted and endeavoured a full agreement. They lived neer together, and might have easily met together for the work: and if one or two or an hundred meetings could not have accom-
plisht it, they might have held on till it was done. And yet for all this there is no such thing done, not
any

any considerable attempt yet made. And O what hainous aggravations do accompany this sin? Never men since the Apostles daies I think, did make greater profession of godliness: The most of them are bound by solemn Oathes and Covenants, for unity and reformation: They all confess the worth of peace: and most of them will preach for it, and talk for it, while they set still and neglect it, as if it were not worth the looking after: They will read and preach on those Texts that command men to *follow peace with all men, and as much as in us lyeth if it be possible, to live peaceably with them*: and yet we are so far from following it, and doing all that possibly we can for it, that too many will snarl at it, and malign and censure any that endeavour it, as if all zeal for Peace did proceed from an abatement of our zeal for holiness; and as if holiness and peace were so fallen out that there were no reconciling them; when yet they have found by long experience, that concord is a sure friend to Piety, and Piety alwaies moves to Concord. We have seen how Errors and Heresies breed by Discord as Discord is bred and fed by them. We have seen to our sorrow, that where the servants of God should live together as one, of one heart and one soul, and one lip, and should promote each others faith and holiness, and admonish and assist each other against sin, and rejoyce together in the hope of their future glory, we have contrarily lived in mutual jealousies, and drowned holy love in bitter contentings, and have studied to disgrace and undermine one another, and to increase our own parties by right or wrong; and we, that were wont to glory of our Love to the Brethren as the certain mark of
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our sincerity in the faith, have now turned it into a Love of a Party only; and those that are against that Party have more of our spleen, and envy, and malice then our love. I know this is not so with all (nor prevalently with any true Believer) but yet it is so common that it may cause us to question the sincerity of many that are thought by themselves and others to be most sincere. And it is not our selves only that are scorched in this flame, but we have drawn our people into it, and cherished them in it, so that most of the godly in the Nation are fallen into several parties, and have turned much of their antient Piety into vain Opinions, and vain Disputes, and envyings, and animosities; Yea whereas it was wont to be made the certain mark of a graceless wretch to deride the godly, how few be there now that stick at secret deriding and slandering those that are not of their opinion? A pious Prelatical man can reverently scorn and slander a Presbyterian; and some of them an Independent, and an Independent both. And, which is the worst of all: the common ignorant people take notice of all this, and do not only deride us, but are hardened by us against Religion; and when we go about to perswade them to be Religious, they see so many Parties, that they know not which to joyn with, and think that it is as good be of none at all as of any, when they are uncertain which is the right; And thus thousands are grown into a contempt of all Religions by our divisions; and poor carnal wretches begin to think themselves in the better case of the two, because they hold to their old formalities, when we hold to nothing Yea, and these Pious contenders do more effectually
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plead the Devils cause against one another, then any of the ignorant people can do; They can prove one another Deceivers and Blasphemers, and what not? and this by secret slanders among all that they can handsomly vent them to; and perhaps also by public-like disputations and Printed slanderous books. So that when the obstinate drunkards are at a loss, and have nothing to say of their own against a man that would drive them from their sin they are prompted by the raling books or reports of factious zealous malice; Then they can say, *I regard him not nor his Doctrine; such a man hath proved him a Deceiver and a Blasphemer; Let him answer him if he can.* And thus the lyes and slanders of some (for that is no news) and the bitter opprobriou, speeches of others, have more effectually done the Devils service, under the name of Orthodoxness and Zeal for Truth, then the malignant scorers of Godliness could have done it. So that the matter is come to that pass, that there are few men of note of any party, but the reproaches of the other parties are so publicly upon them, that the ignorant and wicked rabble that should be converted by them, have learnt to be Orthodox and to vilifie and scorn them. Mistake me not! I do not slight Orthodoxness nor jeer at the name; but disclose the pretences of Devilish Zeal, in Pious or seemingly Pious men. If you are offended with me for my harsh language, because I can tell you that I learnt it of God I dare be bold therefore to tell you further, that you have far more cause to be offended at your Satanical Practices. The thing it self is sure odious, if the name be so odious as to turn your stomachs How should the presence and guilt of it terrifie you,

you, if the name make you start? I know that many of these Reverend Calumniators do think that they shew that soundness in the fairh, and love to truth which others want. But I will resolve the case in the words of the Holy-Ghost, *Iam. 3. Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom; But, if you have bitter envying (or zealousness) and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lye not against the Truth; This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying (or zeal) and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work: But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easie to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisie: And the fruit of Righteousness is sown in peace of them that make Peace.* I pray you read these words again and again, and study them.

O doleful case to think of; that a while ago we were afraid of nothing, but least Papists and Deboist persons should have swallowed up the Gospel and our liberty, and destroyed us together; And now when the work hath been put into the hands of those men, that were joyned in these fears, and are joyned in the strictest profession of Piety, and are of one judgement in all the Articles of the faith; they cannot or will not unanimously joyn in carrying on the work; but they either fall upon one another, or live at a distance, and cast their work upon a hundred disadvantages by the bitter disagreements that are among themselves. O what a Nation might *England* have been ere now, if it had not been for the proud and obstinate contentions of godly Ministers?

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What abundance of good might we have done! Nay, what might we not have done, if our perversness had not marr'd our work? Did we but agree among our selves, our words would have some Authority with the people; But when they see us some of one mind, and some of another, and snarling and reviling at each other, they think they may well enough do so too: Why may not we call them Sectaries or Deceivers, say they, when they call one another so? Nay, if we were not all of a mind in some smaller matters, yet if we did but hold Communion and Correspondency, and joyn together in the main, and do as much of Gods work as we can in concurrent unanimity, the people would far more regard us, and we might be in a greater capacity to do them good: But when we are single, they sleight us; and when we disagree and divide, they despise us: and who can marvel at it, when we despise one another? What, say they, (when a Minister doth his duty alone) *Must we be ruled by every singular man? Are you wiser then all the Ministers in the Countrey? Are not such and such as learned as you?* But when we go hand in hand, it stops their mouths. They think either themselves may be wiser then one or two Ministers, or at least, other Ministers may be wiser then they; but common modesty will not suffer them to think that they are wiser then all the Ministers in the Country, or in the world. I know that matters of faith are not to be received upon our credit alone: but yet our credit may do much to remove prejudice, and to unblock the entrance into mens minds, and procure the truth a more equal hearing, and therefore is necessary to our peoples good.

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Nay, more then all this; I know it; I see and hear it; that there are some Ministers that are glad when they perceive the people despise their Brethren that differ from them in some lesser things; They would have it so, and they foment it as they can for shame; and they secretly rejoyce when they hear the news of it. This is next to Prelatical silencing them, and casting them out of the Church. And I confess I cannot but suspect that such men would go neer to silence them, if they had their will and way. For he that would have a Minister under disgrace, would have him useless; which is next to silencing him, and tendeth to the same end. You will say, we do not desire that he should be disabled to do good, but to do hurt. I answer; but the question is, Whether his error be so great, that the holding or propagating it doth more hurt, then all his Preaching, and the labours of that whole party which you would disgrace, is like to do good? If so, then I think it is a desirable work to disgrace him, and silence him in a just measure, and by just means, and I would concurr therein; but if it be otherwise, we are bound to keep up that reputation of others, which is necessary ordinarily to the success of their labours.

I may not here without wrong to my conscience, pass over the late practises of some of our Brethren of the *New Prelatical way*; (For those of the antient Prelacy are more moderate.) I know it will be displeasing to them: and I have no mind to displease them: but yet I will more avoid the treacherous or unfaithful silence which may wrong them, then the words of faithful friendship, which may displease them

them. And I will say no more to them, then (if I know my self) I should say if I were resolved for Prelacy. It is the judgement of these men that I now speak of, that a Prelate is essential to a Church, and there is no Church without them; and that their Ordination is of necessity to the essence of a Presbyter: and that those that are ordained without them (though some will except a case of necessity) are not Ministers of Christ. Hereupon they conclude that our Congregations in *England* are no true Churches (except where the Presbyter dependeth on some Prelate) and the Ministers ordained by Presbyters only are no true Ministers; and they will not allow men to hear them or communicate with them, but withdraw from our Congregations like Separatists or Recusants. And the same note many of them brand upon all the Reformed Churches abroad, that have no Prelates, as they do on us: So that the Church of *Rome* is admirably gratified by it; and instead of demanding where our Church vvas before *Luther*, they begin to demand of us, Where it is now? And indeed had it been no more visible in the ages before *Luther* then a Reformed Prelatical Church is now, they would have a fairer pretence then now they have, to call upon us for the proof of its visibility. Suppose that the Presbyters who rejected Prelacy were guilty of all that schism and other sins, as they are ordinarily accused of. (For I will now go on such suppositions.) Must the people therefore turn their back on the Assemblies and Ordinances of God? Is it better for them to have no preaching, and no Sacraments, and no publike Communion in Gods worship, then to have it in an Assembly that

hath not a Prelate over it; or from a Minister ordained without his consent? I confess I would not for all the world stand guilty before God of the injury that this Doctrine hath already done to mens souls, much less of what it evidently tendeth to. There are through the great mercy of God, abundance of painful and able young Ministers, that were in the Universities in the time of the wars, and had no hand in it, and were ordained since Bishops became to them either invisible, or inaccessible; and its like they judge not *their* Ordination to be of necessity. They lay out themselves faithfully for the healing of that ignorance and common prophaneness which got so much head under their careless or drunken predecessors. They desire nothing more then the saving of souls; They preach sound Doctrine: They live in Peace. And it is the greatest of their grief that many of their hearers remain so ignorant and obstinate still. And see what a help these poor impenitent sinners have for their cure? They are taught to turn their backs upon their Teachers; and whereas before they heard them but with disregard, they are now taught not to hear them at all. And if we privately speak to them, they can tell us that its the Judgement of such and such learned men, that we are not to be heard, nor our Churches to be communicated with, nor we to be at all regarded as Christs Ministers. And thus Drunkards, and Swearers, and worldlings, and all sorts of sensualists are got out of gun-shot, and beyond the reach of our teaching or reproof: And those that do not (for shame of the world) obey their Doctrine to stay from the Assembly, yet do they there hear us with prejudice and contempt, and from the
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the Communion of the Church in the Lords Supper they commonly abstain. Were it only the case of those few Civil persons, that conscientiously go this way, and address themselves to these kind of men for Government and Sacraments, I would never have mentioned the thing; For it is not them that I intend. For what care I what Minister they hear or obey, so it be one that leadeth them in the waies of truth and holiness? Let them follow Christ and forsake their sins, and go to heaven, and I will never much contend with them for the forsaking of my Conduct. But it is the common sort of prophane and sensual men, that are everywhere hardened against the Ministry, and they have nothing but the reputation of the Prelatical Divines to countenance it with. If their Teachers do but differ in a gesture from these men, they vilifie them, and reject their guidance, having nothing but the authority of such men to support them. Fain would we reach their consciences to awaken them from their security; for it pittiyeth us to see them so neer unto perdition. But we can do no good upon them; for our Ministry is in contempt because of the contrary judgement of these men. Not that the poor people care any more for a Prelate, as such, then for an ordinary Minister: For if Prelates would have troubled them as much with their preaching, and reproofs, and discipline, they would have hated them as much as they do the Ministers: But because they found by experience, that under their Government they might sin quietly, and make a scorn of godliness without any danger or trouble, and that to this day, the men of that way are so much against those precise Ministers, that will not let them

go quietly to hell, therefore are they all for Prelacy, and make this the great shelter for their disobedience and unreformed lives. So that I confess I think that the hurt that Separatists and Anabaptists do in *England* at this day, is little to the hurt that is done by these men. For I count that the greatest hurt, which hardeneth the greatest number in the state and way of greatest danger. An Anabaptist may yet be a penitent and godly person, and be saved; But the sensual and impenitent worldlings can never be saved in that condition. I see by experience, that if separation infect two or three, or half a score in a Parish; or if Anabaptistry infect as many (and perhaps neither of them mortally) this obstinate contempt of Ministerial exhortation, encouraged by the countenance of the contrary minded, doth infect them by the scores or hundreds. If we come to them in a case where they have no countenance from the Ministry, how mute, or tractable comparatively do we find them! But if it be a case where they can but say, that the Prelatical Divines are of another judgement, how unmoveable are they, though they have nothing else to say? Try when we come to set afoot this work that we are now upon, of Catechizing and private instruction, whether this will not be one of our greatest impediments; though in a work of unquestioned lawfulness and necessity: Even because they are taught that we are none of their Pastors, and have no authority over them. I know that some of these men are Learned and Reverend, and intend not such mischievous ends as these. The hardening of men in ignorance is not their design. But this is the thing effected. To intend well in doing ill, is no rarity

rarity. Who can in reverence to any men on earth, sit still and hold his tongue, while he seeth people thus run to their own destruction, and the souls of men be undone by the contendings of Divines for their several parties and interests? The Lord that knows my heart, knows that (if I know it my self) as I am not of any one of these parties, so I speak not a word of this in a sactious partiality, for one party, or against another, as such; much less in spleen against any person; but if I durst in conscience, I would have silenced all this, for fear of giving them offence whom I much honour: But what am I but a servant of Christ? and what is my life worth, but to do him service? and whose favour can recompence for the ruines of the Church? and who can be silent while souls are undone? Not I for my part, while God is my Master, and his word my Rule; his work my business: and the success of it, for the saving of men, my end. Who can be reconciled to that which so lamentably crosseth his Masters interest, and his main end? Nor yet would I have spoken any of this, if it had been only in respect to my own charge; yet I bless God, the sore is but small, in comparison of what it is in many other places. But the observation of some neighbour Congregations and others more remote, me thinks, should make the very contrary minded Divines relent, if they were present with them.

Would it be a pleasant hearing to them, to hear a croud of scandalous men to reproach their Ministers that would draw them to repentance, and to tell them they have no authority over them, and all this under the pretence and shelter of their judgements?

Had they rather men went to Hell, then be taught the way to Heaven by Presbyters that had not their Imposition of hands? Is that point of order more necessary then the substance of the work, or the end it self? Nay, I must needs in faithfulness say yet more; That it is no credit to the cause of these Reverend men, nor ever was, that the generality of the most wicked men, and haters and contemners of all Devotion, are the great friends and maintainers of it. And the befriending of such a party did more to gain their love, then to save their souls. And the engaging such a Party for them, hath not been the least cause of their fall. This is true, however it be taken.

And what a case would the Churches of *England* be in, if we should yield to the motions of these Reverend men! supposing that mens judgements are not at their own wills, and therefore many cannot see the reasons for Prelacy; must we all give up our charges as no true Ministers, and desert the Congregations as no true Churches? Why, whom will they then set over them in our stead? First, it is known that they cannot, if they had fit men, procure them what liberty their way requires, because of the discountenance of authority; and it is known that they have not fit men for one Congregation of very many. And had they rather that the doors were shut up, and God had no publike worship, nor the people any publike teaching or Sacraments, then any but they should have a hand in the performance of it? Or if the Ministers keep their places, can they wish all the Congregations to stay at home, and live like Heathens? Nay, are they not angry with us for
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casting out a grosly ignorant, insufficient, scandalous sort of Ministers, who were the great means of the perdition of the people, whose souls they had taken charge of? As for the casting out of any able godly men upon meer differences about the late troubles and State affairs; I speak not of it, I approve not of it; If any such thing were done, let them maintain it if they can that did it; for I neither can nor will. But its a very sad case, that any men of judgement & piety should not only be indifferent in matters of such moment, but should think it a persecution and an injury to their party and cause, to have hundreds of unworthy wretches to be ejected, when it was a work of so great necessity to the Church.

And indeed by all this they plainly shew what a condition they would reduce this Nation into again, if it were in their power. Sure they that would have the people disown and withdraw from them as being no Ministers, and turn their backs on the word and Sacraments, would silence them if they could: I think there is no doubt of that. And surely they that are so offended that the insufficient and scandalous ones are cast out, would have them in again if they could. And if this be the change that they desire, let them not blame men that believe the Scripture, and value mens salvation, if they have no mind of their change. If it were a matter of meer opinion, we should be more indifferent with them: Or if the question were only whether men should be conducted in waies of holiness by a Prelate, or by meer Presbyters only, we should think it of less moment, then the matter that is before us: But when it comes to this pass, that the Prince of darkness must be so gratified,

gratified. and so much of the Church of Christ delivered overmuch into his power, and the people led by multitudes to perdition, and all for the upholding of our own parties, or interests, or conceits; we cannot make light of such matters as these: These are not meer speculations, but matters that are so obvious to sense and Christian experience, that they must not think much that serious experienced Christians are against them.

But that I be not mistaken, it is far from my thoughts to speak what I have done of any peaceable man of the Prelatical way, or to meddle in the Controversie of the best way of Government; nor do I speak to any of the New Prelatical way, but only those who are guilty of the miscarriages which I have spoken of; and for them, I had rather bear their indignation, then the Church should bear the fruits of their destructive intemperate conceits.

The most common cause of our Divisions and unpeaceableness, is, mens high estimation of their own Opinions. And it ordinarily worketh these two waies; sometimes by setting men upon Novelties; and sometimes by a censorious condemning of all that differ from the party that they are of.

Some are as busie in their enquiries after new Doctrines, as if the Scripture were not perfect, or Christ had not told us all that is necessary; or the way to heaven were not in all ages one and the same, from Christ to the end of the world; or the Church were not still the same thing. And they look not only after new discoveries in lesser things, but they are making us new Articles of faith, & framing out new waies to heaven. The body of Popery came in at this door;
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Their new fundamentals were received on these terms; Their new Catholike Church, which their fore-fathers knew not, was thus set up. Before, it consisted of all Christians through the world; and now it must consist of none but the Popes subjects. So is it with the Anabaptists; They must now in the end of the world have a new Church for Christ, even in the natural capacity of the matter! Never since the creation can it be proved that God had any where a Church on earth where Infants were excluded from being members (if there were any among them.) They were members before the Law, under the Promise, under the Law, and under the Gospel, through the Christian world to this day; and yet they would needs make Christ a Church now without them. As if Christ had mist it in the forming of his Church till now! Or as if he begun to be awearry of infants in his Church now at last! Or as if the Providence of God did now begin to be awakened to have a right formed Church in the conclusion of the world, and to eject those infants as incapable, who till now have been in the bosom of his family.

Yea this disturbing vice doth also work by setting a higher rate of necessity upon some truths, then the Church of Christ had ever done; When we will needs make that to be of absolute Certainly, which hath been either not before received, or but as a dark & doubtful thing; and we will make that to be of necessity to salvation, which the former ages did hold but as a point of a far lower nature, which some were for, and some against, without any great disagreement or mutual censure. I confess I do hold
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some points of Doctrine my self to be true, which I cannot find that the Church or any in it did hold of many ages after the Apostles; but then I cannot lay such a stress on them, as to think them of flat necessity to the welfare of the Church, and the saving of souls; As the Doctrine of the certain perseverance of all the Justified, and some few more: If I may think that *Austin*, *Prosper*, and all the Church in those Ages did err therein (as I think they did): Yet to think that they erred fundamentally, were to think that Christ had no Church: I will not take the Judgement or Practice of the Church in any age since the Apostles as my Rule of faith and life: but I will suppose that they had all things in the most defiled age, that were of absolute necessity to salvation. I know that we must be Justified in the same way as they were, and upon the same terms. Faith is the same thing now as it was then; and hath the same object to apprehend for our Justification, and the same office in order to our Justification. Many new notions are brought in by Disputers, which must not be made matters of necessity to the soundness or integrity of the Churches faith. We may talk of Peace as long as we live; but we shall never obtain it but by returning to the Apostolical simplicity. The Papists faith is too big for all men to agree upon: or all their own, if they enforced it not with arguments drawn from the fire, the halter, and the strappado. And many Anti-Papists do too much imitate them in the tedious length of their subscribed Confessions, and novelty of impositions, when they go furthest from them in the quality of the things imposed. I shall speak my mind to these in the words of *Vincentim Lirinensis*,

Lirinensis, cap. 26. Mirari satis nequeo tantam quorundam hominum vaesaniam, tantam excoecatae mentis impietatem; tantam postremo errandi libidinem, ut contenti non sint traditâ semel & acceptâ antiquitus credendi reguld, sed nova ac nova in diem quaerant, semperque aliquid gestiant religioni addere, mutare, detrabere: Quasi non coeleste dogma sit quod semel revelatum esse sufficiat, sed terrena institutio, quae aliter perfici nisi assidua emendations, immo potius reprehensione non possit. When we once return to the antient simplicity of faith, then, and not till then, we shall return to the antient love and peace.

But the Pride of mens hearts doth make them so overvalve their own conceptions, that they expect all men else should be of their mind, and bow down to those reasons which others can see through, while they are as confident as if there were no room for doubting. Every Sect is usually confident in their own way, and as they value themselves, so they do their reasons. And hereupon arise such breaches in affections and communion as there are, while most men cry down the divisions of others, but maintain the like. Some will have no Communion with our Churches, because we have some Members that they take to be ungodly, and do not pull up the Tares in doubtful unproved cases, where we cannot do it without pulling up the Wheat. Others are so confident that Infants should be unbaptized, and out of the Church, that they will be of no Church that hath infant members, till these scandalous infants be (I say not excommunicated, for that supposeth a former right, but) taken as such that have no part or fellowship in the business, they will not joyn with such a society;

society; Christ telleth us, that except we become as little children, we shall not enter into his Kingdom; and they say, except little children be kept out of the Church, they will not enter or abide in it. Is not this extream height of spirit, to be so confident, as to avoid Communion upon it, in a case where the Church hath been in all ages (or almost all by their own confession) so much against them? Would they not have separated from the whole Church on the same ground, if they had lived in these times? Others (as is before said) are so confident that we are no Ministers or Churches for want of Prelatical Ordination and Government, that they separate also, or deny Communion with us. And thus every party in the height of their self-conceitedness is ready to divide, & condemn all others that be not of their mind.

And it usually falls out that this confidence doth but bewray mens ignorance, and that too many make up that in passion and wilfulness, which they want in reason. How many have I heard zealously condemning what they little understand? Its a far easier matter to say that another man is erroneous, or heretical, or rail at him as a deceiver or blasphemer, then to give a sound account of our belief. And as I remember twenty years ago, I have observed it the common trick of a company of ignorant formal Preachers, to get the repute of that learning which they wanted, by railing at the Puritans, as being all unlearned: so is it now the trick of some that can scarce give a sound reason for any controverted part of their belief, (nor it may be of the fundamentals) to use this as the chief remedy, to get the name of sound Divines, by reproaching some that differ! from
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them, as unsound; and to be esteemed Orthodox, by calling others Erroneous or Heterodox.

The truth is, most Ministers in the world do take up their opinions in compliance with their several parties; and they look more who believeth it, then what is believed, and on what ground, or they have nothing but what is spoken by the men that they must concurr with: And thus too many take up their Religion in a faction; even the truth it self. And therefore they must speak against those that they hear that party speak against. As *Proster* said of the detractors of *Austin*, *Praef. ad capit. Gall. Injustis opprobriis Catholici praedicatoris memoria carpitur: in quod peccatum cadunt, qui aliena instigatione commoti, scriptorem celeberrimi nominis promptius habent culpare, quam nesse.* And as *Salvian* saith in his Preface *ad Salonium: ad Cathol. Eccles. Tam imbecilla sunt iudicia huius temporis, ac pene tam nulla, ut qui legunt, non tam considerant quid legant, quam cuius legant; nec tam dictionis vim at{que} virtutem quam dictatoris cogitant dignitatem.* How many a hot dispute have I heard of several subjects, which the disputants have been forced to manifest that they understood not? And yet they will drive all to damnatory conclusions, when the parties understand not one anothers meaning, and take not the subject of the dispute in the same sense, or at least not the several predications. One disputeth for Free-will, another against it; and call them to give you their definition of Free-will, and you shall see to what purpose it was. And so in many other cases.

And thus do we proceed in a contentious zeal to divide the Church, and censure our brethren, and
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make our differences seem greater then they are, while we know not well what they are our selves, who so eagerly manage them.

SECT. IV.

3. **T**HE next sin which I shall mention, that we are lamentably guilty of, is this; We do not so seriously, unreservedly and industriously, lay out our selves in the work of the Lord, as beseemeth men of our profession and engagements. I bless the Lord that there are so many that do his work with all their might! But alas, for the most part, even of those that we take for Godly Ministers, how reservedly and how negligently do we go through our work? How few of us do so behave our selves in our office, as men that are wholly devoted thereto, and have devoted all that they have to the same ends? And because you shall see my grounds for this Confession, I shall mention to you some of the sinful discoveries of it, which do too much abound.

1. It is too common with us to be negligent in our studies; and few men will be at that pains that is necessary, for the right informing of their understandings, and fitting them for their further work. Some men have no delight in their studies, but take only now and then an hour, as an unwelcome task which they are forced to undergo, and are glad when they are from under the yoke. Will neither the natural desire of knowing, nor the spiritual desire of knowing God and things divine, nor the con-

consciousness of our great ignorance and weakness, nor the sense of the weight of our Ministerial work, will none of all these keep us closer to our studies, and make us more painful in seeking after the truth? This diligence is now the more necessary for Ministers, because the Necessitie of the Church doth draw so many from the Universities so young, so that they are fain to Teach and Learn together: And for my part, I would not discourage such young ones, so be it they be but competently qualified, and quickened with earnest desires of mens salvation, and are drawn out by the present Necessities, sooner then they would go, if the Church could longer wait for their preparation; and will but study hard in the Country. For I know that as Theologie is a practical Science, so the knowledge of it shineth best in a practical course: And laying out here is a means of gathering in; and a hearty endeavour to communicate and do good, is not the smallest help to our own proficiency. Many men have not been ashamed to confess how young and raw they were at their entrance, who yet have grown to eminent parts. *Vigilius* the Martyr was made Bishop of *Trent* at twenty years old. *Ambrose de Offic.* li. c. i. saith thus, *Homines discunt priusquam decent, & ab illo accipiunt quod aliis tradant: Quod ne ipsum quidem mihi accidit: Ego enim de tribunalibus at{que} administrati-
onis infulis ad sacer dotium captus, docere vos coepi quod ipse non didici. Itaq; factum est ut prius docere inciperem quam discere. Discendum igitur mihi simul & docendum est, quoniam non vacavit ante discere. Et quantumlibet quisq; profecerit, nemo est qui doceri non egeat dum vivit.*

O what abundance of things are there that a Minister should understand? and what a great defect is it to be ignorant of them? and how much shall we miss such knowledge in our work! Many Ministers study only to compose their Sermons, and very little more, when there are so many books to be read, and so many matters that we should not be unacquainted with. Nay in the study of our Sermons we are too negligent, gathering only a few naked heads, and not considering of the most forcible expressions by which we should set them home to mens hearts. We must study how to convince and get within men, and how to bring each truth to the quick, and not leave all this to our extemporarie promptitude, unless it be in cases of necessity. Certainly Brethren, experience will teach you, that men are not made learned or wise without hard study, and unwearied labours and experience.

SECT. V.

2. **I**F Ministers were set upon the work of the Lord, it would be done more vigorously then by the most of us it is. How few Ministers do Preach with all their might? or speak about everlasting Joy or Torment in such a manner as may make men believe that they are in good sadness. It would make a mans heart ake to see a company of dead and drowsy sinners sit under a Minister, and not have a word that is like to quicken or awake them. To think with our selves, *O if these sinners were but convinced*
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and awakened, they might yet be converted and live. And alas we speak so drowsily or gently, that sleepy sinners cannot hear: The blow falls so light, that hard-hearted persons cannot feel it. Most Ministers will not so much as put out their voice, and stir up themselves to an earnest utterance: But if they do speak loud and earnestly, how few do answer it with earnestness of matter! and the voice doth little good; the people will take it but as meer bauling, when the matter doth not correspond. It would grieve one to hear what excellent Doctrines some Ministers have in hand, and let it die in their hands for want of close and lively application. What fit matter they have for convincing sinners: and how little they make of it; and what a deal of good it might do if it were set home; and yet they cannot or will not do it. O sirs, how plain, how close and earnestly should we deliver a message of such a nature as ours is? when the everlasting life or death of men is concerned in it: Me thinks we are nowhere so wanting as in this seriousness? There is nothing more unsuitable to such a business, then to be slight and dull. What! speak coldly for God! and for mens salvation! Can we believe that our people must be converted, or condemned and yet can we speak in a drowsie tone! In the name of God, Brethren, labour to awaken your hearts, before you come, and when you are in the work, that you may be fit to waken the hearts of sinners. Remember that they must be wakened or damned; and a sleepy Preacher will hardly wake them. If you give the holy things of God the highest praises in words, and yet do it coldly, you will seem in the manner to un-

say what you said in the matter. It is a kind of contempt of great things, especially so great to speak of them without great affection and fervency: The manner as well as the words must set them forth. If we are commanded what ever our hand findeth to do, to do it with all our might; then certainly such a work as preaching for mens salvation should be done with all our might: But alas how few, how thin are such men! here one and there one, even among good Ministers, that have an earnest perswading working way, or that the people can feel him preach when they hear him.

SECT. VI.

3. **I**F we are all heartily Devoted to the work of God, why do we not compassionate the poor unprovided Congregations about us, and take care to help them to able Ministers? and in the mean time, step out now and then to their assistance, when the business of our own particular charge will give us any leave. A Lecture in the more ignorant places purposely for the work of conversion, performed by the most lively working-preachers, might be a great help where constant means is wanting.

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SECT. VII.

4. **T**HE negligent execution of acknowledged duties, doth shew that we be not so wholly Devoted to the work as we should be. If there be any work of Reformation to be set a foot, how many are there that will go no further then they are drawn? And it were well if all would do but that much.

If any business for the Church be on foot, how many neglect it for their own private business? when we should meet and consult together for the unanimous and successful performance of our work, one hath this business of his own, and another that business, which must be preferred before Gods business.

And when a work is like to prove difficult and costly, how backward are we to it, and make excuses and will not come on? For instance; What hath been for more talked of, and prayed for, and contended about in *England* for many years past, then the business of Discipline? And there are but few men (the *Erastians*) but they seem zealous in disputing for one side or other: some for the Prelatical way, and some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Congregational. And yet when we come to the practice of it, for ought I see we are most of us for no way. It hath made me admire sometimes; to look on the face of *England*, and see how few Congregations in the Land have any considerable execution of Discipline, and to think withall what volumns they have written for it; and how almost all the Mini-

stery of the Nation is engaged for it? how zealously they have contended for it, and made many a (just) exclamation against the opposers of it; and yet for all this will do little or nothing in the exercise of it. I have marvelled what should make them so zealous in siding for that which their practice shews that their hearts are against. But I see a disputing zeal is more natural then a holy obedient practicing zeal. How many Ministers in *England* be there that know not their own charge, that plead for the truth of their particular Churches, and know not which they be, or who be members of them? and that never cast out one obstinate sinner; no nor brought one to publike Confession, and expression of Repentance and promise of reformation; No nor admonished one publicly to call him to such Repentance. But they think they do their duties if they give them not the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, (when it is perhaps avoided voluntarily by themselves, and thousands will keep away themselves without our prohibiting them) and in the mean time we leave them stated members of our Churches, and grant them all other Communion with the Church, and call them not to personal Repentance for their sin. Read *Albaspinaens*, a sober Papist in his *Observat.* 1. and 2. and 3. after his *Annot* on *O tatus*, and see whether Church-Communion in former times was taken to consist only in co-partaking of the Lords Supper. Either these hundreds that we communicate not with in the Supper are members of our Churches, or not; If not; then we are Separatists while we so much disclaim it; for we have not cast them out nor have we called them to any profession, whether they own
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or disown their membership, but only whether they will be examined in order to a Sacrament nor do we use to let them know that we take their refusal of Examination for a refusal of Church membership, and exclusion of themselves. It follows therefore that we have gathered Churches out of Churches before they were unchurched, or before we took Gods way to cast any of them (much less all of them) out. But if they are taken for members, how can we satisfy our consciences to forbear all execution of Discipline upon them? It is not Gods Ordinance that they should be personally rebuked and admonished, and then publikely called to Repentance and be cast out if they remain impenitent? If these be no duties, why have we made such a noise and stir about them in the world as we have done? If they be duties, why do we not practise them? If none of all these persons be scandalous, why do we not admit them to the Lords Supper? If they keep away themselves, is not that a sin which a brother should not be permitted to remain in? Is it not a scandal for them to avoid the Ordinances of God and the Communion of the Church for so many years together as they do? Yea and many a one of them avoideth also the very hearing of the word: The antient Discipline was stricter, when the sixth general Council at *Trull*, in *Constantinop.* ordained *Can. 80.* that *whosoever was three daies together from Church, without urgent necessity, was to be excommunicated.*

Brethren, for my part, I desire not to offend any party, nor to bring the least dishonour to them; but I must needs say that these sins are not to be cloaked over with excuses, extenuations or denyals. We have

long cried up Discipline, and every party their several waies. Would you have people value your way of Government or not? No doubt but you would; Why if you would have them value it, it must be for som excellency: shew them then that excellency. What is it? and wherein doth it consist? And if you would have them believe you, shew it them not only in paper, but in practice, not only in words, but in deeds. How can the people know the worth of bare notions and names of Discipline, without the thing? Is it a name and a shadow that you have made all this noise about? How can they think that that is good which doth no good? Truly I fear we take not the right way to maintain our cause, but even betray it, while we are hot disputers for it. Speak truly; is it not these two things that keep up the Reputation of the long-contended for Discipline among men; *viz.* with the godly, the *meer reputation of their Ministers that stand for it*; and with many of the ungodly, *the non-execution of it*, because they find it to be tooth-less, and not much troublesom to them? Verily Brethren, if we get the late Prelates carnal wisdom and go their way to work, by ingratiating our way of Government with the ungodly multitude, by the meer neglect of practice, and the befriending of their sins, we may well look for the same blessing and issue as the Prelates had. If once our Government come to be upholden by the votes of those who should be corrected or ejected by it, and the worst men be friends to it, because it is a friend to them in their ungodliness, we then engage it against the Lord, and he will appear as engaged against us. Set all the execution of Discipline together that hath been practised
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in a whole County ever since it was so contended for, and I doubt it will not appear so observable as to draw godly people into a liking of it for the effects. How can you wonder if many that desire deeds and not words, Reformation and not the meer name of Reformation, do turn over to the separated Congregations, when you shew them nothing but the bare name of Discipline in yours? All Christians value Gods Ordinances, and think them not vain things; and therefore are unwilling to live without them. Discipline is not a needless thing to the Church: If you will not difference between the precious and the vile by Discipline, people will do it by separation. If you will keep many score or hundreds in your Churches that are notoriously scandalous, and contemners of Church-Communion, and never openly (nor perhaps privately) reprove them nor call to Repentance, nor cast them out, you cannot marvel if some timorous souls do run out of your Churches as from a ruinous aedifice, that they fear is ready to fall upon their heads. I pray you consider, if you should do in the same manner with them in the Sacrament, as you do in Discipline, and should only shew the bread and wine, and never let them taste of it, could you expect that the name of a Sacrament should satisfie them, or that they should like your Communion? Why should you think then that they will be satisfied with the empty sound of the word, *Church-Government*? And consider but what a disadvantage you cast your cause upon in all your disputations with men of another way. If your principles be righter then theirs, and their practice be righter then yours, the people will suppose that the Question is,
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Whether the name or the thing, the shadow or the substance, be more desirable? and they will take your way to be a meer delusory formality, because they see you but formal in the use of it, yea that you use it not at all. I speak not against your Government, but for it, all this while; and tell you, that its you that are against it, that seem so earnest for it; while you more disgrace it for want of exercise, then you credit it by your bare arguments: And you will find before you have done, that faithful execution will be your strongest argument. Till then, the people will understand you as if you openly proclaimed, *We would have no Publike Admonitions, Confessions or Excommunications; our way is to do no good, but to set up the naked name of a Government.* Doubtless it was a sault more past all disputation, for the Prelates to destroy Discipline and do little or nothing in it, then for them to be Prelates; and if they had but done the good that Discipline is ordained for, Prelacy might have stood to this day for ought I know; I am sure it would have had no opposition from many a hundred godly people that have opposed it. And again I say, if you will run into their error, you may expect their fate.

And what are the hindrances now that keep the Ministers of *England* from the Execution of that Discipline which they have so much contended for? I hear not all speak: but I hear some, and see more. The great Reason as far as I can learn, is, *The difficulty of the Work, and the trouble or suffering that we are like to incurr by it: We cannot publicly reprehend one sinner, but he will storm at it, and bear us a deadly malice. We can prevail with very few to make a publike*
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profession of true Repentance. If we proceed to excommunicate them, they will be raging mad against us: They will be ready to vow revenge against us, and to do us a mischief: If we should deal as God requireth with all the obstinate sinners in the Parish, there were no living among them; they would conspire in hatred against us to the hazard of our lives. We should be so hated of all, that as our lives would be uncomfortable, so our labours would become unprofitable; for men would not hear us when they are possessed with a hatred of us; therefore duty ceaseth to be duty to us, because the hurt that would follow would be greater then the good; and affirmatives bind not ad semper.

These are the great Reasons for the non execution of Discipline, together with the great labour that private admonition of each offender would cost us. And to these I answer.

I. Are not these reasons as valid against Christianity it self in some times and places, as now against Discipline? Christ came not to send us peace; we shall have his Peace, but not the worlds; for he hath foretold us that they will hate us. Might not Mr. *Bradford*, or *Hooper*, or any that were burnt in *Queen Maries* daies have alledged more then this against duty? They might have said, It will make us hated, if we own the Reformation, and it will expose our lives to the flames. How is he concluded by Christ to be no Christian, who hateth not all that he hath and his own life for him! and yet we can take the hazard of our life as a reason against his work; What is it but hypocrisie to shrink from sufferings, and take up none but safe and easie works, and make our selves believe that the rest are no duties? Indeed
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this is the common way of escaping suffering, to neglect the duty that would expose us thereunto. If we did our duty faithfully, Ministers should find the same lot among professed Christians, as their predecessors have done among the Infidels. But if you could not suffer for Christ, why did you put your hand to his plough? and did not first set down and count your costs? This makes the Ministerial work so unfaithfully done, because it is so carnally undertaken; and men enter upon it as a life of ease, and honour, and respect from men and therefore resolve to attain their ends, and have what they expected by right or wrong. They looked not for hatred and suffering, and they will avoid it, though by the avoiding of their work.

2. And as for the making your selves incapable to do them good: I answer, That reason is as valid against plain preaching, reproof, or any other duty which wicked men will hate us for. God will bless his own Ordinances to do good, or else he would not have appointed them. If you admonish, and publike-ly rebuke the scandalous, and call men to repentance, and cast out the obstinate, you may do good to many that you reprove; and possibly to the excommunicate: I am sure it is Gods means; And it is his last means, when Reproofs will do no good: It is therefore perverse to neglect the last means lest we frustrate the foregoing means, when as the last is not to be used but upon supposition that the former were all frustrate before. However, those within and those without may receive good by it, if the offender do receive none; and God will have the honour, when his Church is manifestly differenced from the world,

world, and the heirs of heaven and hell are not totally confounded, nor the world made to think that Christ and Satan do but contend for superiority, and that they have the like inclination to holiness or to sin.

3. And I would know whether on the grounds of this objection before mentioned all Discipline should not be cast out of the Church, atleast ordinarily; And so is not this against the Thing it self, rather then against the present season of it? For this reason is not drawn from any thing proper to our times, but common to all times and places. Wicked men will alwaies storm against the means of their publike shame; and the use of Church censures is purposely to shame them, that sin may be shamed, and disowned by the Church. What age can you name since the daies of the Apostles wherein you would have executed the Discipline that you now refuse, if you go on these grounds, supposing that it had not been by Magisterial compulsion? If therefore it be Discipline it self that hath such intolerable inconveniences, why have you so prayed for it, and perhaps fought for it, and disputed for it as you have done? What must all dissenters bear your frowns and censures, and all for a work which your selves judge intolerable, and dare not touch with one of your fingers? When do you look to see all these difficulties over, that you may set upon that which you now avoid? Will it be in your daies? Or will you wait till you are dead, and leave it as a part of your Epitaph to posterity, that you so deeply engaged and contended for that which you so abhord to the death, that you would never be brought to the practice of it! And doth
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not this Objection of yours plainly give up your cause to the Separatists? and even tell them that your contending is not for your way of Discipline; but that there may be none, because it will do more harm then good. Certainly if this be true, it would have been better to speak it out at first, before all our wars, and tears, and prayers, and contentions, then now in the conclusion to tell the world, that we did all this but for a name or word, and that the thing is so far from being worth our cost, that it is not tolerable, much less desirable.

4. But yet let me tell you, that there is not such a Lyon in the way as you do imagine; nor is Discipline such a useless thing. I bless God upon the small and too late tryal that I have made my self of it, I can speak by experience, it is not vain; nor are the hazards of it such as may excuse our neglect.

But I know that pinching reason is behind; They say that, *When we pleaded for Discipline, we meant a Discipline that should be established and imposed by the secular power: and without them what good can we do? when every man hath leave to despise our censures, and set us at nought: and therefore we will not meddle with it (say they) without authority.* To which I answer,

1. I thought it once a scornful indignity that some fellows attempted to put upon the Ministry, that denied them to be the Ministers of Christ, and would have had them called the Ministers of the State, and dealt with accordingly. But it seems they did not much cross the judgements of some of the Ministry themselves, who are ready to put the same scorn upon their own calling. We are sent as Christs Embassadors to speak in his name, and not in the Princes; and

and by his Authority we do our work as from him we have our Commission. And shall any of his Messengers question the Authority of his commands? The same Power that you have to preach without or against the Magistrates command, the same have you to exercise Pastoral Guidance and Discipline without it. And should all Ministers refuse preaching if the Magistrate bid them not? yea or if he forbid them?

2. What mean you when you say, *you will not do it without Authority*? Do you mean the *Leave*, or the *Countenance* and approbation, or the *Command* upon your selves, or do you mean a *Force* or *Penalty* on the People to obey you? The Magistrates *Leave* we have; who hindereth or forbiddeth you to set up Discipline, and exercise it faithfully? Doth the secular Power forbid you to do it, or threaten or trouble you for not doing it? No, they do not. To the shame of the far greatest part of the Ministers of *England* it must be spoken (for we have so opened our own shame that it cannot be hid) we have had free Liberty to have done the work of Christ, which we have desired and pleaded for, and yet we would not do it. What might not the Ministers of *England* have done for the Lord, if they had been but willing? They had no prohibition, nor any man to rise up against them, of all the enemies whose hearts are against their work: and yet they would not do it. Nay more, for ought you know, you have the Approbation of Authority. You have the commands of former powers not yet repealed. You have the Protection of the Laws and present Governors: If any one seek revenge against you for the sake of Discipline, you have not only Laws, but as many willing Magistrates

strates to restrain and punish them as ever you knew I think in *England*. And what would you have more? Would you have a Law made to Punish you if you will not do your duty? What! dare you tell God that you will not do his work unless the Magistrate drive you to it with scourges? I confess if I had my will it should be so; and that man should be ejected as a *negligent* Pastor, that will not rule his People by Discipline (though yet I might allow him to be a Preacher to the unchurched) as well as he is ejected as a negligent Preacher that will not preach. For Ruling is as Essential a part of a Pastors office as preaching I am sure. And therefore seeing these men would fain have the Magistrate interpose, if he did eject them for unfaithful negligent Pastors (were it not for the necessity of the Church that hath not enow better) I know not well how they could blame him for it. Its a sad discovery of our carnal hearts, when man can do so much more with us then God, that we would obey the commands of men, and will not obey the commands of Christ. Is he fit to be Christs Officer, that will not take his Command as obligatory?

But I know the thing expected is, that all the people should be forced under a penalty to submit to our Discipline. I confess, I think that the Magistrate should be the hedge of the Church and defend the Ministry, and improve his power to the utmost to procure an universal obedience to Christs Laws, and restrain men from the apparent breach of them, especially from being false Teachers and Seducers of others. How far I am against the two extrems of Universal Licence, and Persecuting tyrannie, I have frequently

frequently manifested on other occasions. But I shall now say but this. 1. Doth not this further discover the carnal frame of our hearts, when we will not do our duty unless the Magistrate will do his to the full, and all that we conceive may be his duty? What! will his neglect excuse yours? Hath Christ bid you use the Keyes of the Kingdom, and avoid a scandalous sinner upon condition that the Magistrate will punish him with the sword? Is not this your meaning if you would speak it out, that you find a great deal of difficulty in your work, and you would have the Magistrate by terrifying offenders make it easie to you? for if it be not safe and cheap and easie, you are resolved you will not do it; And such servants Christ may have enough. Nay is not your meaning, that you would have the Magistrate to do your work for you? Just as your pious people have long cryed and prayed for Discipline, and called upon Ministers to do it, but we cannot get them to reprove offenders and deal with them seriously and lovingly for their good and inform the Church-Officers of them that are obstinate. So do we toward the Magistrates: The work of God is so much beholden to us, that we would all have it done, but few will do it. We can easilyer censure and talk against others for not doing it, then do it our selves. O the guile and hypocrisie of our hearts!

2. But further, What is it that you would have the Magistrate to do? I pray you consider it how you will answer it before God, that you should willfully neglect your own duty, and then make it your Religion to quarrel with others. Is it not a fearful deceit of heart for a man to think himself a godly

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Minister for finding fault with them that are less faulty then himself? I say, less faulty. For tell me truly. Whether the Magistrate do more of his part in Government, or you in yours. I am no more a flatterer of the Magistrate then of you; nor was ever taken for such, that I could understand: but we must deal justly by all men. Would you have the Magistrate to punish men *eo nomine*, because excommunicated, without any particular cognisance of the fact and case? 1. That were unjust; Then he must do wrong when ever we mistake and do wrong; If an honest man were an hangman, he would be willing to know that he hanged not a man that was unjustly condemned: However the Magistrate is not the meer executioner of the Ministers, but a Judge: and therefore must be allowed the use of his Reason, to know the cause, and follow his own judgement, and not punish men against it. 2. And excommunication is so great a punishment of it self, that I hope you do not think it nothing, unless the Magistrate add more: If so, then the temporal punishment might serve turn, and what need of yours? But I suppose that this is not your sense, but you are so just, that you would have the Magistrate to punish a man as an offender, and not as excommunicate. And if so, I think it is not nothing that he doth. Are all the penalties against Swearers, Cursers, Drunkards, Peace-breakers, Sabboth-breakers, &c. nothing? Certainly the Laws of the Land do punish much sin against God. Well! What do you as Church-Governors against these same sins? The Magistrate fineth and imprisoneth them: that is his part: It is your part to bring them to open Repentance, or to
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cast them out: Have you done this as oft as he hath done his part? Doth not the Magistracy of *England* punish ten, twenty, what if I say an hundred Swearers, Drunkards or Sabbath-breakers by the sword, for one that the Elders of the Church do punish by censures or bring to publike Repentance for the satisfaction of the Church? Brethren, these things seem strange to me; that the case should stand thus as it doth, and yet that the deceit of our hearts should be so great, that we should go on to account our selves such blameless godly men, whom Magistrates and people are all bound to reverence, and to speak against the Magistrate so much as we do. I believe they are all slack and faulty; but are not we much more faulty? What if they should pay us in our own coyn? What language might they give the Ministers, that after so many years talk of Discipline will do nothing in it! I say nothing in most places: To meet together for consulation, is no exercise of Discipline, nor reformation of the Church, which our meetings should conduce to.

3. And I give you this further answer: What had the Church of Christ done till the daies of *Constantine* the great, if it had no better Pastors then you that will not Govern it without the joynt compulsion of the Magistrate? Discipline, and severe Discipline was exercised for three hundred years together, where the Prince did not give them so much as a Protection, nor Toleration, but perfecuted them to the death. Then was the Church at the best, and Discipline most pure and powerful; say not then any more for shame, that it is to no purpose without a Magistrate, when it hath done so much against

their wills? O what an aggravation is it of our sin! That you cannot be content to be negligent and unfaithful servants, but you must also flie in the face of your Lord and Master, and obliquely lay the blame on him! What do you else, when you blame Church-censures as uneffectual, when you should blame your lazy self seeking hearts, that shift off the use of them? Hath Christ put a leaden sword into your hands, when he bids you smite the obstinate sinner? Or are you cowardly and careless, and then blame your sword instead of using it, as thinking that the easier task? Are the Keyes of Christs Kingdom so unmeet and useless, that they will not open and shut without the help of the sword? or are you unskillful and lazy in the use of them! If they have contracted any rust, by which they are made less fit for service, next to the Prelates we may thank our selves, that let them lie so long unused.

4. And I must tell you, that too much interposition of the sword with our Discipline, would do more harm then good. It would but corrupt it by the mixture, and make it become a humane thing. Your Government is all to work upon the conscience; and the sword cannot reach that. It is not a desirable thing to have Repentance so obscured by meer forced Confessions, that you cannot know when men do mean as they speak; and so it will be the sword that doth all, by forcing men to dissemble, and you will not discern the power of the Word and Ordinance of Christ. I confess since I fell upon the exercise of some Discipline I find by experience that if the sword did interpose and force all those Publike Confessions of sin, and Profession of Repentance, which I have
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perswaded men to by the light of the word of God; it would have left me much unsatisfied concerning the validity of such Confessions and Promises, whether they might indeed be satisfactory to the Church: And I find that the godly people do no further regard it then they perceive it hearty and free; and if it were forced by Magistrates, they would take him for no Penitent person, nor be any whit satisfied, but say, *He doth it because he dare do no otherwise.*

And I must add this word of plainer dealing yet. You blame the Magistrate for giving so much liberty; and is it not long of your selves that he doth so? You will scarce believe that such enemies to Liberty of Conscience, are the causes of it: I think that you are; and that the keenest enemies have been the greatest causes. For you would run too far to the other extream, and are so confident in every controversie that you are in the right, and lay such a stress upon many Opinions of your own as if life or death did lie upon them, (when perhaps the difference may prove more verbal then real, if it were searcht to the quick) that this occasioneth Magistrates to run too far the other way; and if they look on such as—and dare not trust the sword in such hands, you may thank your selves. Truly Brethren, I see by experience, that there is among many of the most injudicious of us, such a blind confused zeal against all that is called error by their party, that without being able to try and make a difference, they let flie pell mell at all alike, and make a great outcry against errors, when either we know not what they are, nor how to confute them, nor which he

tolerable in the Church, and which intolerable, nor how far we may hold or break Communion with the owners of them, and perhaps are the erroneous persons our selves. The observation of this hath made the Magistrates so over-jealous of us, that they think if they set in with a party in each contention, we shall never be without blood and misery. And I confess I see in some Ministers so little of the fire of Divine Love, and Christian Charity, and compassion, nor heavenly mindedness, nor humble sense of their own infirmities, and so much of the zeal that *James* describeth (*Jam.* 3. 14, 15.) which is kindled from another fire, that makes them full of suspicions and jealousies, and keen and eager against their Brethren, censuring, defaming and unconscionably back-biting them, and straining an ill sense out of their well meant words and actions, and living towards them in plain envy and malice instead of Christian love and peace; I say I see so much of this in many that affect the Reputation of Orthodox, while they are indeed factious, that I am the less sorry that the Magistrate doth so little interpose. For were the sword in such envious angry hands, there would be little quiet to the Church: For there is no two men on earth but differ in something, if they know or believe any thing. And these men must square the world to their own judgements, which are not alway the wisest in the world: They that dare so rail at others as Blasphemers, when they know not what they say themselves, durst sure smite them as Blasphemers, if they had power. This may possibly make the Magistrate think meet, (seeing we are so quarrelsom and impatient) to let us fight it out by the bare fists, and not to put
swords

swords into our hands till we are more sober and know better how to use them: For if every passionate man, when he hath not wit enough to make good his cause, should presently borrow the Magistrates sword to make it good, truth would be upon great disadvantage in the world! Magistrates are commonly the most tempted and abused men, and therefore I know not why we should call so lowd to have them become the Arbitrators in all our quarrels, lest error have two victories where truth gets one. I could wish the Magistrate did more; but if he do but give us Protection and Liberty (specially if he will but restrain Deceivers from preaching against the great unquestionable truths of the Gospel, and give publike Countenance and Encouragement to those master-truths) I shall not fear by the Grace of God, but a prudent, sober unanimous Ministry will ere long shame the swarm of vanities that we think so threatening.

But I have been too long on this. I shall only conclude it with this earnest request to my Brethren of the Ministry, that they would speedily and faithfully put in execution, at least all the unquestionable part of the Discipline, that they have so much contended for. When we were so offended with the Parliament for their enumeration of scandals, as too defective, and a Protestation was published that we acted only on supposition that it was defective, sure we little thought then that we that were so earnest to have had more power, would use none and we that must needs have authority to reject more then the Parliament did enumerate, would censure so few even

of them as we have done, since we have had more liberty to do it.

But one objection is common, which I forgot: They say, We are but single Pastors, and therefore cannot excommunicate men alone, unless we should make every Pastor a Pope in his Parish, or a Bishop at least.

Ans. For my part I have no mind to obtrude my own opinion on such (for the power of a single person to excommunicate) I have sufficiently already proved my self a Novelist and singular with some, by asserting antient and most common Truths. But yet 1. I could wish these men so much moderation, as to be sure that they are in this as much wiser then the contrary-minded, as their confidence doth import, before they proceed in calling them Popes: Least as the cunning of the times is by making many Antichrists, to make none; so these men should contrary to their intention, credit the Pope, by making so many Popes, and the Prelates too by making such kind of Prelates.

2. A Pope is the pretended head of the Catholike Church, and an universal Bishop to govern it; Are single ruling Pastors such? A Diocesan Bishop is the Ruler of all the Pastors and Churches in a Diocess: Is such a Pastor one of these?

3. Why do you in your disputes against the Prelates maintain that every Minister is a Bishop of his own Church; and do you now abhor it?

4. What if you might not excommunicate, may you not therefore do the rest? may you not personally and publickly reprove them, pray for them, &c.

5. Must

5. Must not the people avoid a Notorious drunkard. &c. whether you bid them or not? If not; why hath God commanded it? If yea; why may you not bid them do that which is their duty?

6. Have you none in your Parish, not one or two to make Ruling Elders of, that by their conjunction you may be authorised to do more then now you do? I mean, according to your own principles; for I confess its not according to mine.

7. And what hindereth but you may joyn together if you will? If it must needs be many Pastors conjunct, that must exercise any act of Discipline, why is it not so done? Doth any forbid them, or threaten them if they do it? If you say, *I am alone, because no neighbour Minister will joyn with me.* You speak hardly of all the Ministers about you? What! are they all so negligent? Blame us not then to reprove them. But its an incredible thing that they should be all so bad that are of your judgement, that no one or two will be perswaded to assist you. And I think you will confess that two or three may do it authoritatively, though no one else in the County do it. I could wish that the Prelates had not such an argument given them as this: *No one Presbyter hath the Power of the Keyes, by their own Confession: therefore two or three have not;* least they go further in proving the consequence then you expect. But if it must be so, I could yet wish that no single Pastor for the excusing of himself, would lay such a reproachful charge upon all the Ministers in the Country that be of his own Judgement, as to say that Discipline is cast aside, because they can get none to joyn with them in the execution! at least till they have

have thoroughly tryed whether it be so indeed, or not.

SECT. VIII.

5. **A**Nother sad discovery, that we have not so devoted our selves and all we have to the service of God, as we ought, is, *The Prevalency of worldly fleshly interests too much against the Interest and work of Christ*. And this I shall further manifest in these three instances following. 1. Our temporizing. 2. Our too much minding worldly things, and shrinking from duties that will hinder our commodity. 3. Our barrenness in works of Charity, and in the improving of all that we have to our Masters use.

1. I would not have any to be thwart and contentious with those that govern them, nor to be disobedient to any of their lawful commands. But it is not the least reproach upon the Ministry, that the most of them for worldly advantage do still suit themselves with the party that is most likely to suit to their ends. If they look for secular advantages, they suit themselves to the secular Power: if for the air of Ecclesiastick applause, then do they suit themselves to the party of Ecclesiasticks that is most in credit. This is not a private, but an Epidemical malady. In *Constantines* daies, how prevalent were the Orthodox? In *Constantius* daies, they almost all turned *Arrians*, so that there were very few Bishops at all that did not apostatize or betray the truth; even of the same
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men that had been in the Council of *Nice*; And when not only *Liberius*, but great *Osius* himself fell, who had been the President or chief in so many Orthodox Councils, what better could be expected from weaker men! Were it not for secular advantage, or Ecclesiastick faction and applause, how could it come to pass that Ministers in all the Countries in the world, are either all, or almost all, of that Religion and way that is most in credit, and most consistent with their worldly interest! Among the Greeks, they are all of the Greek profession: and among the *Abassines*, the *Nestorians*, the *Maronites*, the *Iacobites*, the Ministers generally go one way. And among the Papists they are almost all Papists. And in *Saxony*, *Sweden*, *Denmark*, &c. almost all *Lutherans*: In *Holland*, *France*, *Scotland*, almost all *Calvinists*. Its strange that they should be all in the right in one Countrey, and all in the wrong in another, if carnal advantages and reputation did not sway much. When men fall upon a conscientious search, the variety of Intellectual capacities causeth unavoidably a great variety of conceits about some hard & lower things. But let the Prince and the stream of men in credit go one way, and you shall have the generality of Ministers agree to a hair, and that without any extraordinary search. How generally did the common sort of Ministers too often change their Religion with the Prince at several times in this land? Not all (as our Martyrologie can witness) but the most. I will purposely forbear the mention of any later change. If the Rulers of an University should but be corrupt, who have the disposal of preferments, how much might they do with the most of the students, where
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meer Arguments would not take? And the same tractable distemper doth so often follow them into the Ministry, that it occasioneth the enemies to say, that Reputation and preferment is our Religion, and our Reward.

2. And for the second, How common is it with Ministers to drown themselves in worldly business? Too many are such as the Sectaries would have them be, who tell us that we should go to plough and cart, and labour for our living, and preach without so much study: And this is a lesson easily learnt. Men take no care to cast off and prevent care, that their souls and the Church may have their care.

And especially how commonly are those duties neglected, that are like if performed to diminish our estates? For example: Is there not many that dare not, that will not set up the exercise of any Discipline in their Churches (not only on the fore-mentioned accounts but especially) because it may hinder the people from paying them their dues? They will not offend sinners with Discipline, least they offend them in their estates, (yea though the Law secure their maintenance.) I find money is too strong an Argument for some men to answer, that can proclaim the love of it to be the root of all evil, and can make large orations of the danger of covetousness. I will say no more now to these but this; If it was so deadly a sin in *Simon Magus* to offer to buy the Gift of God with money; what is it to sell his gifts, his cause, and the souls of men for money? and what reason have such to fear least their money perish with them?

3. But the most that I have to say is to the third discovery.

discovery. If worldly and fleshly interest did not much prevail against the interest of Christ and the Church, surely most Ministers would be more fruitful in good works, and would more lay out that they have to their masters use. Experience hath fully proved it, that works of Charity do most potently remove prejudice, and open the ears to words of piety. If men see that you are addicted to do good, they will the easilier belive that you are good, and the easilier then believe that it is good which you perswade them too. When they see that you Love them, and seek their good, they will the easilier trust you: And when they see that you seek not the things of the world, they will the less suspect your intentions, and the easilier be drawn by you to seek that which you seek. O how much good might Ministers do, if they did set themselves wholly to do good, and would dedicate all their faculties and substance to that end! Say not that it is a small matter to do good to mens bodies, and that this will but win them to us, and not to God, nor convert the soul; For it is prejudice that is a great hindrance of mens conversion, and this will remove it: We might do men more good, if they were but willing to learn of us; and this will make them willing, and then our further diligence may profit them. Brethren, I pray you do not think that it is ordinary charity that is expected from you, any more then ordinary piety. You must in proportion to your talents go much beyond others: It is not to give now and them two pence to a poor man; others do that as well as you. But what singular thing do you with your estates for your Masters use? I know you cannot give away
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that which you have not: But me thinks all that you have should be for God. I know the great objection is, We have wife and children to provide for: a little will not serve them at present, and we are not bound to leave them beggars. To which I answer,

1. There are few texts of Scripture more abused then that of the Apostle, He that provideth not for his own, and specially those of his family, hath denyed the faith, and is worse then an Infidel. This is made a pretence for gathering up portions, and providing a full estate for posterity, when the Apostle speaketh only against them that did cast their poor kindred and family on the Church to be maintained out of the common stock, when they were able to do it themselves. As if one that hath a widdow in his house that is his mother or daughter, and would have her to be kept on the Parish when he hath enough himself. His following words shew that it is present provision, and not future portions that the Apostle speaketh of, when he bids them that have widdows, administer to them, or give them what is sufficient.
2. You may so educate your children as other mean persons do, that they may be able to get their own livings, in some honest trade or imployment, without other great provisions. I know that your charity and care must begin at home, but it must not end there: You are bound to do the best you can to educate your children, so as they may be capable of being most serviceable to God, but not to leave them rich or a full estate; Nor to forbear other necessary works of Charity. meerly for a larger provision for them. There must be some proportion kept between our provision for our families, and for the Church
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and poor. A truly charitable self-denying heart, that hath devoted it self and all that he hath to God, would be the best judge of the due proportions, and would see which way of expence is likely to do God the greatest service, and that way he would take.

3. I confess I would not have men lie too long under endangering strong temptations to incontinency; lest they wound themselves and their profession by their falls: But yet methinks its hard that men can do no more to mortifie the concupiscence of the flesh, that they may live in a single freer condition, and have none of these temptations from wife and children, to hinder them from furthering their Ministerial ends by charitable works. If he that marryeth not, doth better then he that doth, sure Ministers should labour to do that which is best. And if he that can *receive this saying*, must receive it, we should endeavour after it. This is one of the highest points of the *Romish* policy, which they pretend to be a duty of common necessity, that all their Bishops, Priests and other Religious orders must not marry, by which means they have no posterity to drain the Churches revenues, nor to take up their care: but they make their publike cause to be their interest, and they lay out themselves for it while they live, and leave all that they have to it when they die; So that their Churches wealth doth daily increase, as every Bishop, Abbot, Jesuite or other person doth gather more in their life time, and usually add it to their common stock. Its pitty that for a better cause we can no more imitate them in wisdom and self-denyal, where it might be done. 4. But they that must marry, should take such as can maintain themselves and their children,

dren, or maintain them at the rate as their temporal means will afford, and devote as much of the Church means to the Churches service as they can.

I would put no man upon extreame; But in this case flesh and blood doth make even good men so partial, that they take their duties, and duties of very great worth and weight to be extreame. If worldly vanities did not blind us, we might see when a publike or other greater good did call us to deny our selves and our families. Why should we not live neerlyer and poorer in the world, rather then leave those works undone, which may be of greater use then our plentiful provision? But we consult in matter of duty with flesh and blood; and what counsel it will give us, we may easily know. It will tell us we must have a competency; and many pious mens competency, is but little below the Rich mans rates, *Luke* 16. If they be not cloathed with the best, and fare not deliciously every day, they have not a competency. A man that preacheth an Immortal Crown of glory, must not seek much after transitory vanity: And he that preacheth the contempt of Riches, must himself contemn them, and shew it by his life; And he that preacheth self-denyal and mortification, must practise these in the eyes of them that he preacheth to, if ever he would have his Doctrine prosper. All Christians are sanctified, and therefore themselves and all that they have are consecrated and dedicated to their masters use; But Ministers are doubly sanctified; They are devoted to God both as Christians and as Ministers; and therefore they are doubly obliged to honour him with what they have.

O Brethren, what abundance of good works are before us, and how few of them do we put our hands to? I know the world expecteth more from us than we have: but if we cannot answer the expectations of the unreasonable, let us do what we can to answer the expectations of God, and conscience, and all just men. *It is the will of God that with well doing we should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.* Especially those Ministers that have larger maintenance must be larger in doing good.

I will give but one instance at this time, which I mentioned before. There are some Ministers that have 150. or 200. or 300. *per an.* of Church means, and have so great Parishes that they are not able to do a quarter of the Ministerial work, nor once in a year to deal personally with half their people for their instruction, and yet they will content themselves with publike preaching, as if that were all that were necessary, and leave almost all the rest undone, to the everlasting danger or damnation of multitudes, rather than they will maintain one or two diligent men to assist them. Or if they have an assistant, it is but some young man to ease them about baptizings or burials, or such work, and not one that will faithfully and diligently watch over the Flock, and afford them that personal instruction which is so necessary. If this be not a serving our selves of God, and not a serving God, and a selling mens souls for our fuller maintenance in the world; what is? Me thinks such men should fear least while they are accounted excellent Preachers and godly Ministers by men, they should be accounted cruel soul murderers by Christ? and least the cryes of those souls whom they have

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betrayed to damnation should ring in their ears for ever. Will preaching a good Sermon serve the turn; while you never look more after them, but deny them that closer help that you find to be necessary, and alienate that maintenance to your own flesh, which should provide relief for so many souls? How can you open your mouthes against oppressors, when your selves are so great oppressors, not only of mens bodies but their souls? How can you Preach against unmercifulness, while you are so unmerciful? And how can you talk against unfaithful Ministers, while you are so unfaithful your selves? The sin is not therefore small because it is unobserved, and not become odious in the eyes of men; nor because the charity which you withhold is such as the people blame you not for withholding. Satan himself their greatest enemy hath their consent all along in the work of their perdition. It is no extenuation therefore of your sin that you have their consents: For that you may sooner have for their hurt then for their good.

I Shall proceed no further in these confessions and discoveries; but beseech you to take what is said into Cōsideration; and see whether this be not the great and lamentable sin of the Ministers of the Gospel, that *they be not fully devoted to God*, and give not up themselves and all that they have to the carrying on of the blessed work which they have undertaken? and whether flesh-pleasing and self-seeking, and an interest distinct from that of Christ, do not make us neglect much of our duty, and walk too unfaithfully in so great a trust, and reservedly serve God in the cheapest and most applauded part of his work, and withdraw from that which would put us upon cost and sufferings? And whether this do not shew, that too many are earthly that seem to be heavenly, and mind the things below while they preach for the things above, and Idolize the world while they call men to condemn it? And as *Salvian* saith, *li. 4. ad Eccles. Cath. pag. 454. Nullus salutem plus neglig it quam qui Deo aliquid anteponit.* Despisers of God will prove despisers of their own salvation.

SECT. IX.

AND now Brethren what remaineth, but that we all cry guilty, of too much of these fore-mentioned sins! and humble our souls in the lamentation of our miscarriages before the Lord! Is this *Taking heed to our selves and to all the Flock*? Is this like the pattern that is given us here in the Text? If we should prove now stout-hearted and unhumbled men, and snuff at these Confessions as tending to our disgrace, how sad a symptom would it be to our selves and to the Church? The Ministry hath been oft threatned here, and is still maligned by many sorts of adversaries; Though all this may shew their impious malice, yet may it also intimate to us Gods just indignation. Believe it Brethren, the Ministry of *England* is not the least or last in the sin of the Land; It is they that have encouraged the common prophaness; It is they that have led the people into divisions, and are now so backward to bring them out. And as sin hath been found in them, so Judgements have been found and laid upon them. Its time therefore for us to take our part of that Humiliation which we have been calling our people to so long. If we have our wits about us, we may perceive that God hath been offended with us and that the voice that called this Nation to Repentance, did speak to us as well as others. He therefore that hath ears let him hear the voice of railing enemies of all sorts, the voice of them that cry, down
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with us, even to the ground, all calling us to try our waies and to reform. He that hath eyes let him see the precepts of Repentance written in so many admirable deliverances and preservations, and written in so many lines of blood. By fire and sword hath God been calling even us to Humiliation; And as Judgement hath begun at the house of God, so if Humiliation begin not there too, it will be a sad prognostick to us and to the Land. What! shall we deny, or excuse, or extenuate our sins, while we call our people to such free Confessions? Is it not better to give glory to God by a full and humble Confession, then in tenderness of our own glory to seek for fig-leaves to cover our nakedness; and to put God to it, to build his glory which we denyed him, upon the ruines of our own which we preferred before him? and to distraint for that by a yet sorer Judgement, which we denyed voluntarily to surrender to him? Alas if you put God to get his honour as he can, he can get it to your greater sorrow and dishonour. If any of our hearers in a day of Humiliation when sin is fully confessed and lamented, should be offended at the Confession, and stand up against it, and say, *You wrong me; I am not so bad! You should have told me of this in private, and not have disgraced me before the Congregation.* What could we think of such a man but that he was a hardened impenitent wretch; and as he would have no part in the Confession, so he should have none in the Remission. And shall we do that which we scarce ever see the most hardened sinner do? Shall we say, This should not have been spoken of us in the ears of the people, but we should have been honoured before them? Certainly sins

openly committed are more dishonourable to us when we hide them, then when we confess them. It is the sin and not the Confession that is our dishonour: And we have committed them before the Sun, so that they cannot be hid. Attempts to cloak them, do increase the guilt and shame: There is no way to repair the breaches in our honour, which our sin hath made, but by free Confession and Humiliation. I durst not but make Confession of my own: and if any be offended that I have confessed theirs, let them know, that I do but what I have done by my self. And if they dare disown the confession of their sin, let them do it at their peril. But as for all the truly humble Ministers of the Gospel, I doubt not but they will rather be provoked more solemnly in the face of their several Congregations, to lament their sins, and promise Reformation.

CHAP.



CHAP. V.

SECT. I.

The Use of Exhortation.



Having disclosed and lamented our miscarriages and neglects, our duty for the future lies plain before us. God forbid that we should now go on in the sin that we have confessed, as carelessly as we did before. Then would that exclamation of *Salvian* fall upon us, *de Gubern. l. 3. p. 87. Novum siquidem monstri genus est; cadem pene omnes jugiter faciunt, quae fecisse plangunt. Et qui intrant Ecclesasticam domum, ut mala antiqua defleant, exeunt; & quid dico exeunt? in ipsis pene hoc orationibus suis ac supplicationibus moliuntur; Aliud quippe or a hominum, aliud corda agunt: Et dum verbis praeterita mala plangunt, sensu sutura meditantur: ac fi oratio eorum rixa est magis criminum quam exoratrix; ut vere illa in eis Scripturae maledictio compleatur, ut de oratione*

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ipsa exeunt condemnati, & oratio eorum fiat in peccalum.

Be awakened therefore I beseech you brethren, by the lowd and manifold voice of God, to set more seriously to the work of God, and to do it for the future with all your might, and to *take heed to your selves and to all the Flock*. The Reasons why you should take heed to your selves, I gave you in the beginning. The Reasons why you should take heed to all the Flock, I shall give you now, as Motives to enforce this Exhortation; and the Lord grant that they may work with us according to their truth and weight.

1. **T**HE first quickning Consideration which the text here affordeth us, is taken from our Relation to all the Flock. We are *Overseers* of it. In this I shall further shew you these subordinate particulars, which will manifest the force of this consideration.

1. The nature of the office requireth us to *Take heed*. What else are we Overseers for? *Episcopus est nomen quod plus oneris quam honoris significat*, saith *Polid. Virgil. p. 240.* and a Father before him To be a Bishop or Pastor is not to be set up as Idols for the people to bow to, or as idle slow-bellies to live to our fleshly delight and ease; but it is to be the guide of sinners to salvation The particulars of our duty we have somewhat touched before, and more shall do anon. It is a sad case, that men should be of a calling that they know not the nature of, and undertake they know not what. Do these men know
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and consider what they have undertaken, that live at ease and pleasure, and have time to take their superfluous recreations, and to spend an hour and more at once in loitering and vain discourses, when so much work doth lie upon their hands! Why Brethren, do you consider where you stand, and what you have taken upon you? Why you have undertaken the Conduct under Christ of a band of his souldiers against Principalities and Powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. You must lead them on the sharpest conflicts. You must acquaint them with the enemies stratagems and assault. You must watch your selves and keep them watching. If you miscarry they and you many perish. You have a subtle enemy, and therefore must be wise; You have a vigilant enemy, and therefore must be vigilant. A malicious, and violent, and unwearied enemy; and therefore you must be resolute, couragious & unwearied. You are in a crowd of enemies, compassed with them on every side; and if you heed one and not all, you will quickly fall. And O what a world of work have you to do? Had you but one ignorant old man or woman to teach, though willing to learn, what a tedious task is it? But if they be as unwilling as ignorant, how much more difficult is it? But to have such a multitude of these, as most of us have, what work will it find us? Who hath ever tried it, that knoweth it not by experience? What a pitiful life is it, to reason with men that have almost lost the use of reason, and to talk with obstinate willful people, that know what they will and resolve, but not why they do it? and to argue the case with them that neither understand themselves nor you; and yet
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think that no man hath understanding that contradicteth them, and that are confident they are in the right, when they can shew nothing but that confidence to make them confident? their will is the reason of their judgements and lives: it satisfies them, and it must satisfie you. O Brethren, what a world of wickedness have we to contend against, in some one soul! and what a number of those worlds? what rooting have their sins? what disadvantage must truth come upon? How strange are they to the Heavenly message that we bring them: and know not what you say when you speak in that only language that they understand? And when you think you have done something, you leave your seed among the sowls of the air; wicked men are at their elbows to rise up and contradict all that you have said. They will cavil, and carp, and slander you, that they may disgrace your message, and deride and scorn them away from Christ, and quickly extinguish the good beginnings that you hoped you had seen. They use indeed weaker reasons then yours, but such as come with more advantage being neer them, and familiarly and importunately urged, and such as are fetcht from things that they see and feel, and which are befriended by their own flesh. You speak but once to a sinner, for ten times or twenty times that the Messengers of Satan speak to them; moreover, how easily do the cares and businesses of the world devour and choak the seed which you have sown? And if it had no enemy but what is in themselves, how easily will a frozen carnal heart, extinguish those sparks which you have been long in kindling? and for want of fewel and further help, they will go out
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of themselves. What abundance of distemperers, and lusts, and passions, do you cast your gracious words amongst? and what entertainment such companions will afford them, you may easily conjecture. And when you think your work doth happily succeed, and have seen men under troubles and complaints, confessing their sins, and promising reformation, and living as new creatures and zealous converts, alas after all this, they may prove unsound and false at the heart, and such as were but superficially changed, and took up new Opinions, and new company, without a new heart: How many are after a notable change, deceived by the profits and honours of the world, and fallen away while they think they stand? How many are entangled again in their former sensuality? and how many do but change a disgraceful way of flesh-pleasing for a way that is less dishonourable, and maketh not so great a noise in their consciences? How many grow proud before they reach to a settled knowledge, & greedily snatch at every error that is presented to them, under the name of Truth; and in confidence of the strength of their unfurnished intellects, despise them that they were wont to learn of, and become the greatest grief to their Teachers, that before rejoyced in their hopeful beginnings? And like Chickens that straggle from the hen, they are carried away by that infernal Kite, while they proudly despise the Guidance and advice of those that Christ hath set over them for their safety. O Brethren, what a field of work is there before us? not a person that you can see but may find you work. In the Saints themselves, how soon do their graces languish if you neglect them?
and

and how easily are they drawn into scandalous waies, to the dishonour of the Gospel, and their own loss and sorrow! If this be the work of a Minister, you may see what a life he hath to lead. Up then, and let us be doing with all our might: Difficulties must quicken and not discourage in a Possible and Necessary work. If we cannot do all, let us do what we can: For if we neglect it, woe to us and them. Should we pass over all these needful things, and by a plausible Sermon only, think to prove our selves faithful Ministers, and to put off God and man with such a shell and formal vizer, our Reward would prove as superficial as our work.

2. Consider also that it is by your own voluntary undertaking and engagement, that all this work is laid upon you. No man forced you to be Overseers of the Church. And doth not common honesty bind you to be true to your trust?

3. Consider also that you have the *Honour* to encourage you to the *Labour*. And a great honour indeed it is to be the Embassadors of God, and the instruments of mens conversion and salvation, *to save mens souls from death, and cover a multitude of sins, Jam. 5 ult.* Indeed the honour is but the attendant of the work. To do therefore as the Prelates of the Church in all ages have done, to strive for precedency, and fill the world with vile contentions about the dignity and superiority of their seats, doth shew that they much forget the nature and work of that office which they strive about. I seldom see men strive so seriously who shall go first to a poor mans cottage to teach him and his family the way to heaven; or who shall first endeavour the conversion of a sinner; or
first

first become the servant of all; strange! that for all the plain expressions of Christ, men will not understand the nature of their office! If they did, would they strive who should be the Pastor of a whole County and more, when there are ten thousand poor sinners in it that cry for help; and they are not so eager to engage for their relief? Nay when they can patiently live in the houses with riotous profane persons, and not follow them seriously and incessantly for their change? And that they would have the Name and Honour of the work of a County, who are unable to do all the work of a Parish, when the Honour is but the appendix of the work? Is it *Names* and *Honour*, or the *Work* and *End* that these desire? O if they would faithfully, humbly, and self-denyingly lay out themselves for Christ and his Church, and never think of Titles and Reputation, they should then have Honour whether they would or not: but by gaping after it, they lose it: For this is the case of vertues shadow, *Quod sequitu, fugio, quod fugit ipse sequor.*

4. Consider also, you have the many other excellent Priviledges of the Ministerial office to encourage you to the work. If you will not therefore do the work, you have nothing to do with the Priviledges. Its something that you are maintained by other mens labours, and live on the common-wealths allowance. This is for your work, that you may not be taken off it, but as *Paul* requireth, may *Wholly give your selves to these things*, and not be forced to neglect mens souls whilst you are providing for your own bodies. Either do the work then or take not the maintenance.

But

But you have far greater Priviledges yet then this. Is it nothing to be bred up to Learning, when others are bred at the plough and cart? and to be furnished with so much delightful knowledge, when the world lieth in ignorance. Is it nothing to converse with Learned men, and talk of high and glorious things, when others must converse with almost none but silly ignorants?

But especially, What an excellent life is it to live in the studies and preaching of Christ? to be still searching into his mysteries, or feeding on them! to be daily in the consideration of the blessed Nature, or Works, or Waies of God! Others are glad of the leisure of the Lords Day, and now and then an hour besides when they can lay hold of it: But we may keep a continual Sabbath: We may do nothing else almost but study and talk of God and Glory, and call upon him, and drink in his sacred, saving truths. Our employment is all high and spiritual! Whether we be alone, or with others, our business is for another world. O were but our hearts more suitable to this work, what a blessed joyful life should we live! How sweet would our study be to us? How pleasant would the pulpit be? and what a delight would our conference of these things afford? To live among such excellent helps as our libraries afford, and have so many silent wise companions whenever we please and of such variety. All these and more such Priviledges of the Ministry, bespeak our unwearied diligence in the work.

5. You are related to Christ as well as to the Flock. He therefore being also related to you, you are not only advanced but secured by the relation, if
you

you be but faithful in the work that it requireth. You are the Stewards of his mysteries, and Rulers of his household: And he that entrusted you will maintain you in his work: But then, *it is required of a Steward that a man be found faithful*, 1 Cor. 4. 2. Be true to him, and never doubt but he will be true to you. Do you feed his Flock; and he will sooner feed you as he did *Elias*, then forsake you. If you be in prison, he will open the doors; but then you must relieve imprisoned souls. He will give you a tongue and wisdom that no enemy shall resist: but then you must use it faithfully for him. If you will put forth your hand to relieve the distressed, and willingly put it to his plough, he will wither the hand that is stretched out against you. The Ministers of *England*, I am sure, may know this by large experience. Many a time hath God rescued them from the jaws of the devourer. O the admirable preservations, and deliverances that they have had, from cruel Papists! from tyrannical persecutors! from malicious Sectaries, & misguided passionate men! Brethren, in the fear of God consider, Why is it that God hath done all this? Is it for your persons, or for his Church? What are you to him more then other men, but for his work and peoples sakes? Are you Angels, or men? Is your flesh of any better mettle then your neighbours? Are you not of the same Generation of sinners, that need his grace as much as they? Up then and work as the Redeemed of the Lord; as those that are purposely rescued from ruine for his service. O do not prepare a remediless overthrow for the English Ministry by your ingratitude after all these deliverances. If you believe that God hath rescued you for himself,

himself, live to him then, as being unreservedly his that hath delivered you.

SECT. II.

II. **T**HE first Motive mentioned in the text, we have spoken of, which is from the Consideration of our office it self. The second is from the *efficient cause*. It is *God by his spirit* that makes us Overseers of his Church, therefore it concerneth us to Take heed to our selves and it. I did before shew you how the Holy-Ghost is said to make Bishops or Pastors of the Church in three several respects. By Qualifying them for the office: By directing the Ordainers to discern their Qualifications, and know the fittest men: and by directing them, the people and themselves for the affixing them to a particular charge. All these were done then in an extraordinary sort, by inspiration, at least very oft. The same are all done now by the ordinary way of the spirits assistance. But it is the same spirit still: and men are made Over-seers of the Church (when they are rightly called) by the Holy-Ghost now as well as then. Its a strange conceit therefore of the Papists to think that Ordination by the hands of man, is of more absolute necessity to the Ministerial Office, then the calling of the Holy-Ghost. God hath determined in his word, *that there shall be such an office, and what the Work and Power shall be, and what sort of men, as to their qualifications, shall receive it:* None of these can be undone by man, or

made

made unnecessary. God also *giveth men the Qualifications* which he requireth. So that all that the Church hath to do, whether Pastors or People, Ordainers or Electors, is but to *discern*, and *determine*, which are the men that God hath thus Qualified, and to *Accept of them that are so provided*, and *upon consent to install them solemnly in this office*. But I purposely cut short the controvertible part.

What an Obligation then is laid upon us by our call? If our Commission be sent from Heaven, its not to be disobeyed. When *Paul* was called by the voice of Christ, he *was not disobedient to the heavenly Vision!* When the Apostles were called by Christ from their secular employments they presently leave friends, and house, and trade and all, and follow him. Though our call be not so immediate or extraordinary, yet is it from the same spirit. Its no safe course to imitate *Jonah*, in turning our back upon the commands of God. If we neglect our work, he hath a spur to quicken us: and if we over-run it he hath Messengers enough to over-take us, and fetch us back, and make us do it; and it is better to do it at first then at last. This is the second Motive.

SECT. III.

III. **T**HE third Motive in the Text, is, from the dignity of the Object. It is the Church of God which we must Oversee, and Feed. It is that Church which the world is much upheld for; which is sanctified by the Holy-Ghost; which is united to Christ, and is his mystical body: that Church which Angels are present with, and attend upon as Ministering Spirits; whose very little ones have their Angels beholding the face of God in heaven: O what a charge is it that we have-undertaken! And shall we be unfaithful to such a charge! Have we the Stewardship of Gods own family, and shall we neglect it! Have we the conduct of those Saints that must live for ever with God in glory, and shall we neglect them! God forbid! I beseech you Brethren, let this thought awaken the negligent! You that draw back from painful, displeasing, suffering duties, and will put off mens souls with uneffectual formalities; do you think this is an honourable usage of Christs Spouse? Are the souls of men thought meet by God to see his face, and live for ever in his glory, and are they not worthy of your utmost cost and labour? Do you think so basely of the Church of God, as if it deserved not the best of your care and help? Were you the Keepers of sheep or swine, you might better let them go, and say, they be not worthy the looking after; and yet you would scarce do so if they were your own. But dare
you

you say so by the souls of men even by the Church of God? Christ walketh among them: Remember his presence, and keep all as clean as you can. The praises of the most high God are in the midst of them. They are a sanctified peculiar people, a Kingly Priesthood, an holy Nation, a choice generation, to shew forth the praises of him that hath called them, *1 Pet. 2. 9.* and yet dare you neglect them? What a high honour is it to be but one of them, yea but a door keeper in the house of God! but to be the Priest of these Priests, and the Ruler of these Kings, this is such an honour as multiplyeth your obligations to diligence and fidelity in so noble an employment.

SECT. IV.

IV. **T**HE last Motive that is mentioned in my Text, is, from the Price that was paid for the Church which we Oversee. God the Son did purchase it with his own blood. O what an Argument is here to quicken the negligent? and what an Argument to condemn those that will not be quickened up to their duty by it? O saith one of the antient Doctors, if Christ had but committed to my keeping one spoonful of his blood in a fragile glass, how curiously should I preserve it, and how tender should I be of that glass? If then he have committed to me the purchase of his blood, should I not as carefully look to my charge? What Sirs shall we

despise the blood of Christ? Shall we think it was shed for them that are not worthy of our utmost care? You may see here it is not a little fault that negligent Pastors are guilty of? as much as in them lyeth, the blood of Christ should be shed in vain: They would lose him those souls that he hath so dearly bought.

O then let us hear those Arguments of Christ, when ever we feel our selves grow dull and careless; *Did I dye for them, and wilt not thou look after them? Were they worth my blood, and are they not worth thy labour? Did I come down from Heaven to Earth, to seek and to save that which was lost: and wilt not thou go to the next door, or street, or Village to seek them? How small is thy labour or condescension as to mine? I debased my self to this, but it is thy honour to be so imployed. Have I done and suffered so much for their salvation? and was I willing to make thee a co-worker with me, and wilt thou refuse that little that lyeth upon thy hands?* Every time we look upon our Congregations, let us believingly remember, that they are the purchase of Christs blood, and therefore should be regarded accordingly by us.

And think what a confusion it will be at the last day to a negligent Minister, to have this Blood of the Son of God to be pleaded against him! and for Christ to say, *It was the purchase of my blood that thou didst so make light of, and dost thou think to be saved by it thy self?* O Brethren, seeing Christ will bring his Blood to plead with us, let it plead us to our duty, lest it plead us to damnation.

SECT.

SECT. V.

I Have done with the Motives which I find in the Text it self: There are many more that might be gathered from the rest of this Exhortation of the Apostle; but we must not stay to take in all. If the Lord will set home but these few upon your hearts, I dare say we shall see reason to mend our pace: and the change will be such on our hearts, and in our Ministry, that our selves and our Congregations will have cause to bless God for it. I know my self unworthy to be your Monitor; but a Monitor you must have; and its better for us to hear of our sin, and duty, from any body, then from no body. Receive the admonition, and you will see no cause in the Monitors unworthyness, to repent of it: but if you reject it, the unworthiest Messenger may bear that witness against you that will confound you. But before I leave this Exhortation, as I have applied it to our general work, so I shall carry it a little further to some of the special parts and modes of our Duty which were before expressed.

1. And first and above all, *See that the work of saving grace be thoroughly wrought on your own souls.* It is a fearful case to be an unsanctified Professor; but much more to be an unsanctified Preacher. Doth it not make you tremble when you open the Bible, lest you should read there the Sentence of your own Condemnation? when you pen your Sermons, little do you think that you are drawing up inditements against

your own souls! When you are arguing against sin, you are aggravating your own: When you proclaim to your hearers the riches of Christ and grace, you publish your own iniquity in rejecting them, and your unhappiness in being without them. What can you do in perswading men to Christ in drawing them from the world in urging them to a life of faith and holiness; but conscience if it were but awake might tell you, that you speak all this to your own confusion? If you mention Hell, you mention your own Inheritance: If you describe the Joyes of heaven, you describe your misery that have no right to it. What can you devise to say for the most part, but it will be against your own souls? O miserable life! that a man should study and preach against himself, and spend all his daies in a course of self-condemning! A graceless unexperienced Preacher, is one of the most unhappy creatures upon earth. And yet is he ordinarily most insensible of his unhappiness. For he hath so many counters that seem like the gold of saving grace, and so many splendid stones that seem like the Christians Jewel, that he is seldom troubled with the thoughts of his poverty, but thinks he is Rich and wanteth nothing when he is poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked: He is acquainted with the holy Scripture, he is exercised in holy duties, he liveth not in open disgraceful sin, he serveth at Gods Altar, he reproveth other mens faults, and preacheth up holiness both of heart and life; and how can this man chose but be Holy? O what an aggravated misery is this, to perish in the midst of plenty! and to famish with the bread of life in our hands, while we offer it to others, and urge it on them!

them! That those Ordinances of God should be the Occasions of our delusion, which are instituted to be the means of our conviction and salvation? and that while we hold the Looking glass of the Gospel to others, to shew them the true face of the state of their souls, we should either look on the back side of it our selves, where we can see nothing, or turn it aside, that it may mis-represent us to our selves. If such a wretched man would take my counsel, he should make a stand, and call his heart and life to an account, and fall a preaching a while to himself, before he preach any more to others: He should consider whether food in the mouth will nourish that goeth not into the stomack? whether it be a Christ in the mouth or in the heart that will save men? *Whether he that nameth him should not depart from iniquity?* and whether *God will hear their prayers, if they regard iniquity in their hearts?* and whether it will serve the turn at the day of reckoning to say, *Lord we have prophesied in thy name;* when they shall hear, *Depart from me, I know you not?* and what comfort it will be to *Iudas* when he is gone to his own place, to remember that he preached with the rest of the Apostles, or that he sate with Christ, and was called by him, *Friend?* and whether a wicked Preacher *shall stand in the Iudgement, or sinners in the Assembly of the just?* When such thoughts as these have entred into their souls, and kindly workt a while upon their consciences, I would advise them next to go to the Congregation, and there preach over *Origens* Sermon, on *Psal.* 50. 16, 17. *But to the wicked, saith God, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my Covenant into*

thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and hast cast my words behind thee? And when they have read this text, to sit down, and expound, and apply it by their tears. And then to make a free Confession of their sin, and lament their case before the assembly, and desire their earnest prayers to God for pardoning and renewing grace; and so to close with Christ in heart, who before admitted him no further then into the brain; that hereafter they may preach a Christ whom they know, and may feel what they speak, and may commend the riches of the Gospel by experience.

Verily, it is the common danger and calamity of the Church, to have unregenerate and unexperienced Pastors: and to have so many men become Preachers, before they are Christians; to be sanctified by dedication to the Altar as Gods Priests, before they are sanctified by hearty dedication to Christ as his Disciples: & so to worship an unknown God, and to preach an unknown Christ, an unknown spirit, an unknown state of holiness and Communion with God and a glory that is unknown, and like to be unknown to them for ever. He is like to be but a heartless Preacher, that hath not the Christ and grace that he preacheth in his heart. O that all our Students in the University would well consider this! What a poor business is it to themselves, to spend their time in knowing some little of the works of God, and some of those names that the divided tongues of the Nations have imposed on them, and not to know the Lord himself, nor exalt him in their hearts, nor to be acquainted with that one renewing work that should make them happy. They do but
work

walk in a vain shew, and spend their lives like dreaming men, while they busie their wits and tongues about abundance of names and notions, and are strangers to God and the life of Saints. If ever God waken them by saving grace, they will have cogitations and imployments so much more serious, then their unsanctified studies and disputations were, that they will confess they did but dream before. A world of business they make themselves about *Nothing*, while they are wilful strangers to the Primitive, independent necessary Being, who is all in all. Nothing can be rightly known, if God be not known: nor is any study well managed, nor to any great purpose, where God is not studyed. We know little of the creature till we know it as it standeth in its Order and respects to God: single letters and syllables uncomposed are non sence. He that over-looketh the *Alpha* and *Omega* and seeth not the beginning and end, and him in all, who is the *all* of *all*, doth see nothing at all. All creatures are as such broken syllables; they signifie nothing as separated from God. Were they separated *actually*, they would cease to be, and the separation would be an annihilation: And when we separate them *in our fancies*, we make *Nothing* of them to our selves. Its one thing to know the creatures as *Aristotle*, and another thing to know them as a Christian. None but a Christian can read one line of his Physicks so as to understand it rightly. It is a high and excellent study, and of greater use then many do well understand; but its the smallest part of it that *Aristotle* can teach us. When man was made perfect, and placed in a perfect world, where all things were in perfect order,

order, and very good, the whole Creation was then mans book in which he was to read the nature and will of his great Creator; Every creature had the Name of God so legibly engraven on it, that man might run and read it. He could not open his eyes, but he might see some image of God: but no where so fully and lively as in himself. And therefore it was his work to study the whole volume of Nature; but first and most to study himself. And if man had held on in this prescribed work he would have continued and increased in the knowledge of God and himself; but when he would needs know and love the creature and himself, in a way of separation from God, he lost the knowledge of all, both of the creature himself and God, so far as it could beatifie, and was worth the name of knowledge, and instead of it he hath got the unhappy knowledge which he affected, even the empty notions, and phantastick knowledge of the creature and himself as thus separated: And thus he that lived to the Creator and upon him, doth now live to, and as upon the (other) creatures and himself; and thus, *Every man at his best estate (the Learned as well as the illiterate) is altogether vanity: Surely every man walketh in a Vain Shew: surely they are disquieted in vain, Psal. 39. 5, 6.* And it must be well observed, that as God laid not by the Relation of a Creator by becoming our Redeemer, nor the Right of his Propriety and Government of us in that Relation, but the, work of Redemption standeth in some subordination to that of Creation, and the Law of the Redeemer to the Law of the Creator: so also the duties that we owed God as Creator are not ceased; but the duties that
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we own to the Redeemer, as such, are subordinate thereto. It is the work of Christ to bring us back to God, whom we fell from, and to restore us to our perfection of Holiness and Obedience; and as he is the way to the Father, so faith in him, is the way to our former employment and enjoyment of God. I hope you perceive what all this driveth at, *viz.* That to see God in his creatures, and to love him and converse with him, was the employment of man in his upright state; That this is so far from ceasing to be our duty, that it is the work of Christ by faith to bring us back to it: and therefore the most holy men are the most excellent students of Gods works: and none but the holy can rightly study them, or know them. His works are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein, *Psal.* III. 2. But not for themselves but for him that made them. Your study of Physicks and other Sciences, is not worth a rush, if it be not God by them that you seek after. To see and admire to reverence and adore, to love and delight in God appearing to us in his works, and purposely to peruse them for the knowledge of God, this is the true and only Philosophy, and the contrary is meer foolery, and so called and called again by God himself. This is the sanctification of your studies, when they are devoted to God, and when he is the life of them all, and they all intend him as the end, and the principal Object.

And therefore I shall presume to tell you by the way, that it is a grand error, and of dangerous Consequence in the Christian Academies, (pardon the Censure from one so unfit for it, seeing the necessity

cessity of the Case commandeth it) that they study the Creature before the Redeemer, and set themselves to Physicks, and Metaphysicks, and Mathematicks, before they set themselves to Theology: when as no man that hath not the vitals of Theology is capable of going beyond a fool in Philosophy; and all that such do is but *doting about questions, and opposition of sciences falsly so called.* 1 *Tim.* 6. 20. 21. And as by affecting a separated Creature-knowledge *Adam* fell from God, so those that mind these βεβήλους κενοφωνίας, καὶ ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως they miss the end of all right studies; περὶ τὴν πίστιν ἡσόχησαν: while they will needs preferr these, they miss that faith which they pretend to aim at. Their pretence is, that Theology being the end, and the most perfect, must be the last, and all the subservient sciences must go first: But,

1. There is somewhat of Natural knowledge indeed prerequisite, and somewhat of art, before a man can receive Theology; but that is no more then their mothers can teach them before they go to school.
2. And its true that all right natural knowledge doth tend to the increase of Theological knowledge: but that which is a means to its perfection, may be the effect or Consequent of its beginning: And
3. The end must be first known, because it must be intended before the choice or use of means: And
- 4 The Scripture revealeth to us the things of God himself in the most easie way, and therefore he must be first learned there: And
5. The book of the Creatures is not to shew us more of God then the Scripture doth; but by representing him to us in more sensible appearances,

ces, to make our knowledge of him the more intense and operative, and being continually before our eyes, God also would be continually before them, if we could aright discern him in them. Its evident therefore that Theology must lay the ground, and lead the way of all our studies, when we are once acquainted with so much of words and things as is needful to our understanding the sense of its Principles. If God must be searched after in our search of the Creature, and we must affect no separated knowledge of them, then Tutors must read God to their Pupils in all; and Divinity must be the beginning, the middle, the end, the life, the all of their studies: And our Physicks and Metaphysicks must be reduced to Theologie; and nature must be read as one of Gods books, which is purposely written for the revelation of himself. The holy Scripture is the easier book: when you have first learnt God and his will there, in the necessary things, address your selves cheerfully to the study of his works, that you may there see the Creature it self as your Alphabet, and their Order as the Composure of syllables, words and sentences, and God as the subject matter of all, and the respect to him as the sense or signification; and then carry on both together, and never more play the meer Scriveners, stick no more in your letters and words, but read every Creature as a Christian or a Divine. If you see not your selves and all things as *living, and moving and having being in God*, you see nothing, what ever you think you see. If you perceive not in your perusals of the Creatures, that God is all, and in all,
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and see not ἐξ αὐτοῦ, καὶ δὲ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτόν τὰ πάντα, (*Rom* II. 36.) you may think perhaps that you *know something, but you know Nothing as you ought to know* (*1 Cor.* 8. 2.) But he that seeth and loveth God in the Creature, the same is known and loved of him. (*Vers.* 3.) Think not so basely of the works of God, and your physicks, as that they are only preparatory studies for boyes; It is a most high and noble part of holiness to search after, behold, admire, and love the great Creator in all his works: How much have the Saints of God been imployed in it! The beginning of *Genesis*, the books of *Job* and the *Psalms* may acquaint us that our Physicks are not so little kin to Theology as some suppose. I do therefore in zeal to the good of the Church, and their own success in their most necessary labours, propound it to the consideration of all pious Tutors, whether they should not as timely, and as diligently read to their Pupils (or cause them to read) the chiefest parts of Practical Divinity (and there is no other) as any of the Sciences? and whether they should not go together from the very first? It is well that they hear Sermons; but that is not enough: If they have need of private help in Philosophy besides publike Lectures, much more in Theology? If Tutors would make it their principal business to acquaint their Pupils with the doctrine of Life, and Labour to set it home upon their hearts that all might be received according to its weight, and read to their hearts as well as to their heads, and so carry on the rest of their instructions, that it may appear they make them
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but subservient unto this, and that their Pupils may feel what they drive at in all, and so that they would teach all their Philosophy *in habitu Theologico*, this might be a happy means to make happy souls, and a happy Church and Commonwealth. (The same I mean also along of the Course of Schoolmasters to their scholars.) But when Languages and Philosophy have almost all their time and diligence, and instead of reading Philosophy like Divines, they read Divinity like Philosophers, as if it were a thing of no more moment then, a lesson of Musick, or Arithmetick, and not the doctrine of Everlasting life; this is it that blasteth so many in the bud, and pestereth the Church with unsanctified Teachers! Hence it is that we have so many worldlings to preach of the invisible felicity, and so many carnal men to declare the mysteries of the Spirit; and I would I might, not say, so many Infidels to preach Christ, or so many Atheists to preach the living God: And when they are taught Philosophy before or without Religion, what wonder if their Philosophy be all or most of their Religion; and if they grow up into admirations of their unprofitable fancies, and deifie their own deluded brains, when they know no other God; and if they reduce all their Theologie to their Philosophy, like *Campanella*, *White*, and other self-admirers; or if they take Christianity for a meer delusion, and fall with *Hobbs* to write *Leviathans*, or with the L. *Herbert* to write such Treatises *de veritate*, as shall shew the world how little they esteem of verity; or at best, if they turn *Paracelsian Behmenists*, and spin them a Religion from their own inventions! Again therefore

fore I address my self to all them that have the education of youth, especially in order to preparation for the Ministry; You that are Schoolmasters and Tutors begin and end with the things of God. Speak daily to the hearts of your Schollars those things that must be wrought into their hearts, or else they are undone. Let some piercing words fall frequently from your mouthes, of God, and the state of their souls, and the life to come; Do not say, They are too young to understand and entertain them. You little know what impressions they may make which you discern not; Not only the soul of that boy, but a Congregation, or many souls therein may have cause to bless God for your zeal and diligence, yea for one such seasonable word. You have a great advantage above others to do them good; You have them before they are grown to the worst, and they will hear you when they will not hear another. If they are destined to the Ministry, you are preparing them for the special service of God; and must they not first have the knowledge of him whom they must serve! O think with your selves, what a sad thing it will be to their own souls, and what a wrong to the Church of God, if they come out from you with common and carnal hearts, to so holy, and spiritual and great a work! Of an hundred Students that be in one of your Colledges, how many may there be that are serious experienced godly men! some talk of too small a number. If you should send one half of them on a work that they are unfit for, what bloody work will they make in the Church or Countries. Whereas if you be the means of their through-sanctification, how many
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souls may bless you, and what greater good can you do the Church? When once their hearts are savingly affected with the Doctrine which they study and preach, they will study it more heartily, and preach it heartily: their own experience will direct them to the fittest subjects, and will furnish them with matter, and quicken them to set it home; and I observe that the best of our hearers can feel and favour such experimental preachers, and usually do less regard others, what ever may be their accomplishments. See therefore that you make not work for Sequestrators nor for the groans and lamentation of the Church, nor for the great Tormenter of the murderers of souls.

SECT. VI.

2. **M**Y second particular Exhortation is this: Content not your selves to have the main work of grace, but be also *very careful that your graces be kept in life and action, and that you preach to your selves the Sermons that you study, before you preach them to others.* If you did this for your own sakes, it would be no lost labour; but I am speaking to you upon the publike account, and that you would do it for the sake of the Church. When your minds are in a heavenly holy frame, your people are like to partake of the fruits of it. Your prayers, and praises, and doctrine will be heavenly and sweet to them! They will likely feel when you have been much with God: That which is on your hearts most, is like to

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be most in their ears: I confess I must speak it by lamentable experience, that I publish to my Flock the distempers of my soul: when I let my heart grow cold, my preaching is cold; and when it is confused, my preaching will be so; and so I can observe too, oft in the best of my hearers, that when I have a while grown cold in preaching, they have cooled accordingly; and the next Prayers that I have heard from them hath been too like my preaching. We are the Nurses of Christs little ones. If we forbear our food, we shall famish them; they will quickly find it in the want of Milk; and we may quickly see it again on them, in the lean and dull discharge of their several duties: If we let our Love go down; we are not so like to raise up theirs: If we abate our holy care and fear, it will appear in our Doctrine: If the matter shew it not, the manner will. If we feed on unwholsom food, either errors, or fruitless controversies, our hearers are like to fare the worse for it. Whereas if we could abound in Faith, and Love, and Zeal, how would it over-flow to the refreshing of our Congregations, and how would it appear in the increase of the same graces in others! O Brethren, watch therefore over your own hearts: keep out lusts and passions, and worldly inclinations; Keep up the life of Faith and Love; Be much at home: and be much with God. If it be not your daily serious business to study your own hearts, and subdue corruptions, and live as upon God, if you make it not your very work which you constantly attend, all will go amiss, and you will starve your auditors; or if you have but an affected servency, you cannot expect such a blessing to attend it; Be much,
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above all, in secret prayer and meditation. There you must fetch the heavenly fire that must kindle your sacrifices; Remember you cannot decline and neglect your duty, to your own hurt alone; but many will be losers by it as well as you. For your peoples sakes therefore look to your hearts. If a pang of spiritual Pride should overtake you, and you should grow into any dangerous or schismatical conceits, and vent your own over-valued inventions, to draw away Disciples after you, what a wound might this prove to the Church that you are set over! and you might become a plague to them instead of a blessing, and they might wish they had never seen your faces. O therefore take heed of your own Judgements and Affections. Error and vanity will slyly insinuate, and seldom come without fair pretences; Great distempers and apostacies, have usually small beginnings. The Prince of darkness doth frequently personate the Angels of light, to draw children of light again into his darkness. How easily also will distempers creep in upon our affections, and our first love, and fear, and care abate! Watch therefore for the sake of your selves and others.

And more particularly, me thinks a Minister should take some special pains with his heart, before he is to go to the Congregation: if it be then cold, how is he like to warm the hearts of the hearers! Go therefore then specially to God for life: and read some rowising waking book, or meditate on the weight of the subject that you are to speak of, and on the great necessity of your peoples souls, that you may go in the zeal of the Lord into his house.

SECT. VII.

3. **M**Y next particular Exhortation is this, *Star up your selves to the great work of God, when you are upon it, and see that you do it with all your might.* Though I move you not to a constant lowdness (for that will make your fervency contemptible) yet see that you have a constant seriousness; and when the matter requireth it (as it should do it, the application at least of every Doctrine) then lift up your voice, and spare not your spirits, and speak to them as to men that must be awakened, either here or in Hell. Look upon your Congregations believingly and with compassion, and think in what a state of Joy or Torment they must all be for ever; and then me thinks it should make you earnest, and melt your heart in the sense of their condition. O speak not one cold or careless word about so great a business as heaven or hell! What ever you do, let the people see that you are in good sadness. Truly Brethren, they are great works that are to be done, and you must not think that trifling will dispatch them. You cannot break mens hearts by jesting with them, or telling them a smooth tale, or patching up a gawdy oration. Men will not cast away their dearest pleasures upon a drowsie request of one that seemeth not to mean as he speaks, or to care much whether his request be granted. If you say, That the work is Gods, and he may do it by the weakest means; I answer, Its true, he may do so;
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But yet his ordinary way is to work by means; and to make not only the matter that is preacht, but also the manner of preaching to be instrumental to the work: Or else it were a small matter whom he should imploy that would but speak the truth. If grace made as little use of the Ministerial perswasions as some conceive, we need not so much mind a Reformation, nor cast out the Insufficient.

A great matter also with the most of our hearers, doth lie in the very pronounciation and tone of speech; The best matter will scarce move them, if it be not movingly delivered. Especially, see that there be no affectation, but that we speak as familiarly to our people as we would do if we were talking to any of them personally. The want of a familiar tone and expression, is as great a defect in most of our deliveries, as any thing whatsoever, and that which we should be very careful to amend. When a man hath a Reading or Declaming tone, like a School-boy saying his lesson or an Oration, few are moved with any thing that he saith. Let us therefore rowse up our selves to the work of the Lord, and speak to our people as for their lives, and save them as by violence, pulling them out of the fire: Satan will not be charmed out of his possession: we must lay siege to the souls of sinners which are his garri- sons, and find out where his chief strength lyeth, and lay the battery of Gods Ordinance against it, and ply it close till a breach be made; and then suffer them not by their shifts to make it up again; but find out their common objections, and give them a full and satisfactory answer. We have reasonable creatures to deal with; and as they abuse their rea-

son against the truth, so they will expect better reason for it before they will obey. We must therefore see that our Sermons be all *convincing*, and that we make the *light of Scripture and Reason* shine so bright in the faces of the ungodly, that it may even force them to see unless they willfully shut their eyes. A Sermon full of meer words, how neatly soever it be composed, while there is wanting the light of Evidence and the life of Zeal, is but an image or a well-drest carkass; In preaching there is intended a communion of souls, and a communication of somewhat from ours unto theirs. As we and they have understandings, and wills, and affections, so must the bent of our endeavours be to communicate the fullest Light of Evidence from our understandings unto theirs, and to warm their hearts by kindling in them holy affections, as by a communication from ours. The great things which we have to commend to our hearers, have reason enough on their side, and lie plain before them in the word of God; we should therefore be so furnished with all store of Evidence, as to come as with a torrent upon their understandings, and bear down all before us, and with our dilemma's and expostulations to bring them to a non-plus, and pour out shame upon all their vain objections, that they may be forced to yield to the power of truth, and see that it is great and will prevail.

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SECT. VIII.

4. **M**Oreover, if you would prosper in your work; Be sure to keep up earnest desires and expectations of success. If your hearts be not set on the end of your labours; and you long not to see the conversion and edification of your hearers, and do not study and preach in hope, you are not likely to see much fruit of it. Its an ill sign of a false self-seeking heart, that can be content to be still doing, and see no fruits of their labour; so I have observed that God seldom blesseth any mans work so much as his whose heart is set upon the success; Let it be the property of a *Judas* to have more regard to the bag then to his business, and not to care much for what they pretend to care; and to think if they have their Tythes, and the love and commendations of the people, that they have enough to satisfie them: but let all that preach for Christ and mens salvation, be unsatisfied till they have the thing they preach for: He had never the right end of a Preacher, that is indifferent whether he do obtain them, and is not grieved when he misseth them, and rejoyced when he can see the desired issue. When a man doth only study what to say, and how with commendation to spend the hour, and looks no more after it, unless it be to know what people think of his own abilities, and thus holds on from year to year, I must needs think that this man doth preach for himself, and drive on a private trade of his own, and doth not

preach for Christ even when he preacheth Christ, how excellently soever he may seem to do it. No wise or charitable Physitian is content to be still giving Physick, and see no amendment among his Patients, but have them all to die upon his hands: nor will any wise and honest Schoolmaster be content to be still teaching though his Scholars profit not; but either of them would rather be weary of the employment. I know that a faithful Minister may have comfort when he wants success and though Israel be not gathered, our reward is with the Lord: and our acceptance is not according to the fruit, but according to our labour; and as *Greg. M. saith, Et Aethiops etsi balneum niger intrat, & niger egreditur, tamen balneat or nummos accipit.* If God set us to wash Blackamores, and cure those that will not be cured; we shall not lose our labour, though we perform not the cure. But then 1. He that longeth not for the success of his labours, can have none of this comfort, because he was not a faithful labourer: This is only for them that I speak of, that are set upon the end, and grieved if they miss it 2. And this is not the full comfort that we must desire, but only such a part as may quiet us though we miss the rest. What if God will accept a Physitian though the Patient dye? He must work in compassion, and long for a better issue, and be sorry if he miss of it, for all that: For it is not only our own Reward that we labour for, but other mens salvation. I confess for my part, I marvel at some antient Reverend men, that have lived 20. or 40. or 50 years with an unprofitable people, where they have seen so little fruit of their labours, that it was scarce discernable, how they can
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with so much patience there go on? Were it my case, though I durst not leave the Vineyard, nor quit my calling, yet I should suspect that it was Gods will, I should go some whether else, and another come thither that might be fitter for them; and I should not be easily satisfied to spend my daies in such a sort.

SECT. IX.

5. *Do well* as well as *say well*: be zealous of good works. Spare not for any cost, if it may promote your masters work.

1. Maintain your innocency, and walk without offence. Let your lives condemn sin, and perswade men to duty. Would you have your people be more careful of their souls, then you will be of yours? If you would have them redeem their time, do not you misspend yours. If you would not have them vain in their conference, see that you speak your selves the things which may edifie, and tend to minister grace to the hearers. Order your own families well if you would have them do so by theirs. Be not Proud and Lordly if you would have them to be lowly. There is no vertue wherein your example will do more, at least to abate mens prejudice, then humility, and meekness, and self-denyal. Forgive injuries, and be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good: Do as our Lord, who when he was reviled, reviled not again; If sinners be stubborn, and stout, and contemptous, flesh and blood will perswade

swade you to take up their weapons, and to master them by their carnal means; but thats not the way, (further then necessary self-preservation or publike good requireth it) but overcome them with kindness, and patience, and gentleness. The former may shew that you have more worldly power then they (wherein yet they are ordinarily too hard for the faithful); but its the later only that will tell them that you overtop them in spiritual excellency, and in the true qualifications of a Saint. If you believe that Christ was more imitable then *Caesar* or *Alexander*, and that its more glory to be a Christian then to be a Conqueror, yea to be a man then a beast, (who oft exceed us in strength) contend then with charity, and not with violence; and set Meekness, and Love, and Patience against force, and not force against force: Remember you are obliged to be the servants of all. Condescend to men of low estate; be not strange to the poor ones of your Flock. They are apt to take your strangeness for contempt: Familiarity improved to holy ends, is exceeding necessary, and may do abundance of good. Speak not stoutly or disrespectively to any one: but be courteous to the meanest as your equal in Christ. A kind and winning carriage is a cheap way of advantage to do men good.

2. Remember what I said before of works of Bounty and Charity: Go to the poor, and see what they want, and shew at once your compassion to soul and body. Buy them a Catechism and some small Books that are likest to do them good, and bestow them on your neighbours, and make them promise you to read them,

them, and specially to spend that part of the Lords day therein, which they can spare from greater duties. Stretch your purse to the utmost, and do all the good you can. Think not of being rich, seek not great things for your selves or posterity. What if you do impoverish your selves to do a greater good; will it be loss or gain! If you believe that God is your safest purse-bearer, and that to expend in his service is the greatest usury, and the most thriving trade, shew them that you do believe it. I know that flesh and blood will cavil before it will loose its prey, and will never want somewhat to say against that duty that is against its interest; But mark what I say, and the Lord set it home upon your hearts; *That man that hath any thing in the world so dear to him that he cannot spare it for Christ if he call for it, is no true Christian*, And because a carnal heart will not believe that Christ calls for it when he cannot spare it, and therefore makes that his self deceiving shift, I say furthermore; that *That man that will not be perswaded that duty is duty, because he cannot spare that for Christ which is therein to be expended, is no true Christian*: For a false heart corrupteth the understanding, and that again increaseth the delusions of the heart. Do not take it therefore as an undoing to make you friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, and to lay up a treasure in heaven, though you leave your selves but little on earth. *Nemo tam pauper potest esse quam natus est; Aves sine patrimonio vivunt, & in diem pecua pascuntur; & haec nobis tamen nata sunt; quae omnia si non concupiscimus posidemus, inquit Minutius Felix. p. (mihi) 397.* You lose no great advantage for heaven by becoming

ing poor; *Qui viam terit, eo faelicioꝛ quo levioꝛ incedit. Id.*

I know where the heart is carnal and covetous, words will not wring their money out of their hands; They can say all this, and more to others; but saying is one thing, and believing is another. But with those that are true believers, me thinks such considerations should prevail. O what abundance of good might Ministers do if they would but live in a contempt of the world, and the riches and glory of it, and expend all they have for the best of their Masters use, and pinch their flesh that they might have wherewith to do good. This would unlock more hearts to the reception of their Doctrine, then all their oratory will do; and without this, singularity in religiousness will seem but hypocrisie, and its likely that it is so. *Qui innocentiam colit, Domino supplicat.—qui hominem periculo surripit, opimam victimam caedit; Haec nostra sacrificia; haec Dei sacra sunt; sic apud nos Religiosioꝛ est ille qui justioꝛ, inquit idem Minutio Felix. ib.* Though we need not do as the Papists, that will be-take them to Monasteries, and cast away Propriety, yet we must have nothing but what we have for God.

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SECT. X.

6. **T**HE next branch of my Exhortation is, that you would *maintain your Christian and brotherly Unity and Communion*, and do as much of Gods work as you can in unanimity and holy concord. Blessed be the Lord that it is so well with us in this County in this regard as it is. We lose our Authority with our people when we divide. They will yield to us when we go together, who would resist and condemn the best of us alone.

Two things in order to this I beseech you to observe. The first is, that you still maintain your meetings for communion: Incorporate, and hold all Christian correspondency; Grow not strange to one another; Do not say, that you have business of your own to do, when you should be at any such meeting or other work for God. It is not only the mutual edification that we may receive by Lectures, disputations or conferences (though thats not nothing) but it is specially for consultations for the common good, and the maintaining of our Communion, that we must thus assemble. Though your own person might be without the benefit of such meetings, yet the Church and our common work requireth them. Do not then shew your selves contemners or neglecters of such a necessary work. Distance breedeth strangeness, and somenteth dividing flames and jealousies, which Communion wil prevent or cure. It wil be our enemies chiefest plot to divide us that they may
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weaken us: conspire not with the enemies, and take not their course. And indeed Ministers have need of one another, and must improve the gifts of God in one another: and the self-sufficient are the most deficient, and commonly proud and empty men. Some there be that come not among their brethren to do or receive good, nor afford them any of their assistance in consultations for the common good, and their excuse is only *we love to live privately*. To whom I say, why do you not on the same grounds forbear going to Christ, and say You love to live privately? Is not Ministerial Communion a duty, as well as common-Christian Communion? and hath not the Church always thought so, and practised accordingly? If you mean that you love your own ease or commodity better then Gods service, say so and speak your minds. But I suppose there are few of them so silly as to think that is any just excuse, though they will give us no better. Somewhat else sure lieth at the bottom. Indeed some of them are empty men, and afraid their weakness should be known, when as they cannot conceal it by their foliolariness, and might do much to heal it by Communion: some of them are careless or scandalous men: & for them we have no desire of their Communion, nor shall admit it, but upon publike Repentance and Reformation. Some of them are so in love with their parties and opinions, that they will not hold communion with us because we are not of their parties and opinions: whereas by Communication they might give or receive better information, or at least carry on so much of Gods work in unity as we are agreed in. But the mischief of schism is to make
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men censorious and proud, and take others to be unmeet for their communion, and themselves to be the only Church, (or pure Church) of Christ.

The Papists will have no Catholick Church but the *Romans*, and unchurch all beside themselves. The Separatists and many Anabaptists say the like of their parties: The new prelatical party will have no Catholick Church but Prelatical, and unchurch all except their party, and so avoid Communion with others; and thus turning Separatists and Schismatics, they imitate the Papists, and make an opposition to schism their pretence. First, All must be accounted schismatics that he not of their opinion and party (when yet we find not that opinion in the Creed), and they must be avoided because they are Schismatics. But were solve by the grace of God to adhere to more Catholick principles and practices, and to have Communion with all Godly Christians that will have Communion with us, so far as they force us not to actual sin. And for the separating Brethren, as by distance they are like to cherish misinformations of us, so if by their wilful estrangedness, and distance, any among us do entertain injurious reports of them, and think worse of them, and deal worse by some of them, then there is cause, they may partly thank themselves.

Sure I am by such means as these we are many of us grown so hardened in sin, that men make no great matter what they say one against another, but stand out of hearing and sight, and vent their spleen against each other behind their backs. How many jeers and scorns have they among their Companions for those that are against their party! and they

they easily venture be'the matter never so false. A bad report of such is easily taken to be true; and that which is true is easily made worse: when as *Seneca* saith, [*Multos absolvemus, si coeperimus ante judicare quam irasci: nunc autem primum impetum sequimur*] It is passion that tels the tale, and that receiveth it.

The second thing therefore that I intreat of you is, that you would be very tender of the Unity and Peace of the Catholick Church; not only of your own parties, but of the whole. And to this end these things will prove necessary. 1. Do not too easily introduce any Novelties into the Church either in faith or practice: I mean not, that which seems a novelty to men that look no further then yesterday; for so the restoring of Ancient things will seem novelty to those that know not what was Anciently; and the expulsion of prevailing novelties will seem a novelty to them that known not what is such indeed. So the Papists censure us as Novelists for casting out many of their Innovations; and our common people tell us we bring up new Customs if we do not kneel at the receiving of the Lords Supper: (A notorious Novelty: Even in the sixth General Council at *Trull. in Constantinop.* this was the ninth Canon: *Ne Dominicis diebus genua flectamus; à Divinis Patribus nostris Canonice accepimus: Quare post vespertinum ingressum Sacerdotum in Sabbato ad Altare ut more observatum est, nemo genua flectii usque ad sequentem vesperem post dominicam.*) It is that which is indeed Novelty that I dissuade you from, and not the demolishing of Novelties. Some have already introduced such New Phrases,

Phrases, at least, even about the great points of faith, lustification and the like, that there may be reason to reduce them to the Primitive Patterns.

A great stir is made in the world about the test of a Christian and true Church, with whom we may have Communion, and about that true Center and Cement of the Unity of the Church, in and by which our Common calamitous breaches must be healed. And indeed the true Cause of our Contrived divisions and misery is for want of discerning the center of our unity, and the terms on which it must be done: which is great pity, when it was once so easie a matter, till the ancient test was thought insufficient! If any of the Ancient Creeds might serve, we might be soon agreed. If *Vincentius Lirineus*. test might serve, we might yet make some good shift, *viz.* To believe (explicitly) all that *quod ubique quod semper quod ab omnibus creditum est* For as he addeth [*hoc est etenim verè proprièq, Catholicum*] But then we must come 1. That the first age may not be excluded which gave the rule to the rest. 2. And that this extend not to every Ceremony which never was taken for unalterable, but to matters of faith; and that the acts and Canons of Councils, which were not about such matters of faith, but meer variable order, and which newly constituted those things, which the Apostolike Age knew not, and therefore were not properly *Credita*, much less, *semper*, & *ab omnibus*, may have no hand in this work. I say if either the ancient Western, or Eastern Creed, or this Catholick faith of *Vincentius* might be taken as the test for explicit saith, or else rather all those Scripture texts, that

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express the *Credenda* with a note of necessity, and the the whole Scripture moreover be confessed to be Gods word, and so believed (in other points) at least implicitly; this Course might produce a more general Communion and agreement; and more lines would meet in this Center then otherwise are like to meet. And indeed till men can be again content to make the Scripture the sufficient Rule, in Necessaries to be explicitly believed, and in all the rest implicitly, we are never like to see a Catholike Christian durable Peace. If we must needs make the Council of *Trent*, or the Papal Judgement our test; or if we must make a blind bargain, with the Papists to come as near them as ever we dare, and so to compass another *Interim*, and make that a test (when God never made it so, and all Christians never be of a mind in it, but some dare go nearer *Rome*, then others dare, and that in several degrees) or if we must thrust in all the Canons of the former Councils about matters of order, discipline and ceremonies into our test, or gather up all the opinions of the Fathers for the three or four first ages, and make them our test; None of all these will ever seem to do the business! and a Catholike Union will never be founded in them. It is an easie matter infallibly to foretel this. Much less can the writings of any single man, as *Austin*, *Aquinas*, *Luther*, *Calvin*, *Beza*, &c. or yet the late Confessors of any Churches that add to the ancient test, be ever capable of this use and honour.

I know it is said that a man may subscribe the Scripture, and the ancient Creeds, and yet maintain Socinianism or other heresies: To which I
answer

answer, 1. So he may another test which your own brains shall contrive; and while you make a snare to catch hereticks, instead of a test for the Churches Communion, you will miss your end, and the heretick by the slipperyness of his conscience will break through, and the tender Christian may possibly be ensnared. And by your new Creed the Church is like to have new divisions, if you keep not close to the words of Scripture. 2. In such cases when hereticks contradict the Scripture, which they have subscribed, this calls not for a new or more sufficient test, but the Church must take notice of it, and call him to account, and if he be impenitent exclude him their Communion. What I must we have new Laws made every time the old ones are broken? as if the Law were not sufficient because men break it? Or rather must not the penalty of the violated Law be executed? It is a most sad case that such reasons as these should prevail with so many learned godly men, to deny the sufficiency of Scripture as a test for Church-Communion, and to be still framing new ones that depart (at least) from Scripture-phrase, as if this were necessary to obviate heresies? Two things are necessary to obviate heresies, the Law and good execution; God hath made the former, and his Rule and Law is both for sense and phrase (translated) sufficient: and all their additional inventions as to the foresaid use are as spiders webs. Let us but do our part in the Due execution of the Laws of Christ, by questioning offenders in orderly Synods, for the breaking of these Laws, and let us avoid Communion with the impenitent; and what can the Church do more? The rest belongs to the Magistrate (to restrain him

from seducing his subjects) and not to us.

Well! this is the thing that I would recommend therefore to all my Brethren as the most necessary thing to the Churches peace, that you *Unite in necessary truths, and tolerate tolerable failings; and bear with one another in things that may be born with; and do not make a larger Creed, and more necessities than God hath done.* And to that end, let no mans writings, nor the judgement of any party though right, be taken as a test, or made that rule. And I, Lay not too great a stress upon controverted opinions, which *have godly men, and specially whole Churches* on both sides. 2. Lay not too great a stress on those Controversies that are ultimately resolved into Philosophical uncertainties (as some unprofitable controversies are about Free-will, and the manner of the spirits operation of Grace, and the Divine Decrees and Pre-determination.) 3. Lay not too great a stress on those controversies that are meerly verbal, and if they were anatomized would appear to be no more. Of which sort are far more, (I speak it confidently upon certain knowledge) that now make a great noise in the world, and tear the Church, then almost any of the eager contenders that ever I spoke with do seem to discern, or are like to believe. 4. Lay not too much on any point of faith which was disowned of, or unknown to the whole Church of Christ in any age since the Scriptures were delivered us. 5. Much less should you lay too much on those which any of the more pure or judicious ages were wholly ignorant of. 6. And least of all, should you lay too much on any point which no one age since the Apostles did ever receive, but all commonly hold
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the contrary. For to make such an error which all the Church held, to be such as is damning were to unchurch all the Church of Christ: and to make it such, as must exclude them from our Communion.

1. Doth make the whole Church excommunicable, which is absurd. 2. And doth shew that if we had lived in that age, you would it seems have separated from the whole Church. To give an instance of the difference among errors. That any elect person shall fall away totally and finally, is a palpable condemned error; of dangerous consequence. But that there are some justified ones not elect that shall fall away and perish, is an error of a lower nature, which may not break the Communion of Christians: For otherwise we must renounce Communion with the Catholic Church in *Augustines* daies, and much more before (as is said before.) What then? Shall I take this therefore for a truth which the Church then held? some will think me immodest to say, No; as if I were wiser then all the Church, and that in so learned an age if not for so many: But yet I must be so immodest, as long as Scripture seemeth to me to warrant it! Why might not *Augustine*, *Prosper*, and all the rest mistake in such a thing, as that? But then I am not so immodest nor unchristian as to unchurch all the Church on that account: Nor would I have separated from *Austin*, and all the Church, if I had then lived; Nor will do now from any man on that account. Both sides will be displeased with this resolution, one, that I suppose all the Church to err, and our selves to be in the right; and the other, that I take it for no greater an error: but what remedy! it will, it must be so; Read *Prospers Resp-*

ad Capit. Gall. and you may quickly know both *Austins* mind and his.

He that shall live to that happy time, when God will heal his broken Churches, shall see all this that I am now pleading for, reduced to practice, and this moderation take place of the new dividing zeal, and Scripture-sufficiency take place, and all mens Confessions and Comments to be valued only as subservient helps, and not to be the test of Church-Communion, any further then they are exactly the same with Scripture. And till the healing Age come, we cannot expect that healing truths be entertained, because there are not healing spirits in the Leaders of the Church. But when the work is to be done, the workmen will be fitted for it; and blessed will be the agents of so glorious a work.

But because the Love of Unity and Verity, Peace and Purity must be conjunctly manifested, we must avoid the extreams both in Doctrine and Communion. The extreams in Doctrine are on one side, by Innovating Additions: on the other side by envying or hindring the progress of the light. The former is the most dangerous, of which men are guilty these waies.

1. By making new points of faith, or duty.
2. By making those points to be fundamental or necessary to salvation, that are not so.
3. By pretending of Prophetical and other obscurer passages of the Scriptures that they have a greater objective Evidence, and we a greater certainty of their meaning, then indeed is so.

As I have met with some so confident of their right understanding of the *Revelation* (which *Calvin*

vin durst not expound, and profest he understood it not) that they have framed part of their Confessions or Articles of faith out of it; and grounded the weightyest actions of their lives upon their exposition; and could confidently tell in our late changes and differences, which side was in the right and which in the wrong, and all from the *Revelation*; and thence would fetch such arguments as would carry all, if you would but grant the soundness of their expositions; but if you put them to prove that, you marr'd all.

And these corruptions of sacred Doctrine by their Additions are of two sorts: some that are the first Inventers: and others that are the propagators and maintainers: and these when Additions grow old, do commonly maintain them under the notion of antient verities, and oppose the antient verities under the notion of Novelty, as is before said.

The other extream about Doctrine is by hindring the progress of knowledge: and this is commonly on pretence of avoiding the Innovating extream. It must be considered therefore, how far we may grow, and not be culpable Innovaters. And 1. Our Knowledge must increase *extensively ad plura*; we must know more verities, then we knew before, though we may not feign more. There is much of Scripture that will remain unknown to us when we have done our best. Though we shall find out no more Articles of faith which must be explicitly believed by all that will be saved, yet we may find out the sense of more particular Texts, and several Doctrinal Truths, not contrary to the former, but such

as befriend them, and are connexed with them. And we may find out more the Order of Truths and how they are placed in respect to one another, and so see more of the true method of Theologie then we did, which will give us a very great light into the matter it self, and its consecutaries.

2. Our knowledge also must grow subjectively, intensively and in the manner, as well as in the matter of it. And this is our principal growth to be sought after. To know the same great and necessary truths with a sounder and clearer knowledge then we did: which is done,

1. By getting strong Evidence and Reasons in stead of the weak ones which we trusted to before; (for many young ones receive Truths on some unsound grounds.)

2. By multiplying our Evidence and Reasons for the same truth.

3. By a clearer and deeper apprehension of the same Evidence and Reasons which before we had but superficially received: For one that is strong in knowledge seeth the same truth, as in the clear light, which the weak do see, but as in the twi light. To all this must be added also the fuller Improvement of the Truth received to its ends.

I shall give you the summe of my meaning in the words of that great enemy of Innovation, *Vincent. Lirinens. c. 28. Sed for sitan dicit aliquis: Nullusne ergo in Ecclesiâ Christi profectus habebitur? Religionis Habeatur plane, & maximus: Nam quis ille est tam invidus hominibus, tam exosus Deo, qui isiud probibere conetur? sed ita tamen ut verè profectus sit ille fidei, non permutatio. Siquidem ad perfectum pertinet, ut*
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in semet ipsâ unaquaeque res amplificetur: ad permutationem vero ut aliquid ex alio in aliud transvertatur. Crescat igitur oportet, & multum, vehementerque proficiat, tam singulorum quam omnium; tam unius hominis quam totius Ecclesiae aetatum ac seculorum gradibus intelligentia, scientia; sapientiae; sed in quoduntoxat genere, in eodem scilicet dogmate, eodem sensu, eademq; sententia.

And more plainly, and yet more briefly, *Cap. 30. Jus est etenim, ut prisca illa caelestis Philosophiae dogmata processu temporis excurentur, limentur, poliantur; sed nefas est, ut commutentur. Accipiant licet Evidentiam, Lucem, Distinctionem; sed retineant necesse est plenitudinem, integritatem, proprietatem.* Let this mean then be observed if we would perform both Truth and Peace.

2. About Church Communion the common extremes are; on one side, the neglect or relaxation of Discipline, to the corrupting of the Church, the encouragement of wickedness, and confounding the Kingdom of Christ and Satan: And on the other side, the unnecessary separation of Proud men, either because the Churches own not their own opinions, or because they are not so reformed and strict in Discipline as they would have them or as they should be. I have ever observed the humblest men very tender of making separations: and the proudest most prone to it. Many corruptions may be in a Church, and yet it may be a great sin to separate from it, so that we be not put upon an owning of their corruptions, nor upon any actual sin. There is a strange inclination in proud men to make the Church of Christ much narrower then it is, and to reduce it to
almost

almost nothing, and to be themselves the members of some singular society, as if they were loth to have too much company in heaven. And by a strange delusion through the workings of a proud fancy, they are fuller of joy in their separted societies, then they were, while they kept in the union of the Church. At least such power of Ordinances, and presence of the spirit, purity and peace, is promised to the weak by the Leaders that would seduce them, as if the Holy-Ghost were more eminently among them then any where else in the world. This hath ever been the boasting of Hereticks. As the foresaid *Vincentius* saith, *cap. 37. Jam vero illis quae sequuntur permissionibus miro modo incautos homines haeretici decipere consueverunt. Audent etenim polliceri & docere, quod in Ecclesia sua, id est, in Communionis suae Conventiculo, magna & specialis ac plane personalis quaedam sit Dei gratia, adeo ut sine ullo labore, sine ullo studio, sine ulla industria, etiamsi nec quaerant, nec petant, nec pulsent, quicunq; illi ad numerum suum pertinent, tamen ita divinitus dispensentur, &c.* But their consolations and high enjoyments being the effect of self-conceitedness and fancies are usually so mutable and of short continuance, that either the heat of oppositions, or mutation to other sects must maintain their life, or else they will grow stale and soon decay.

Having said thus much of the means, I return to the end of this Exhortation beseeching all the Ministers of Christ to compassionate the poor divided Church, and to entertain such *Catholike principles*, and *charitable dispositions*, as tend to their own and the common peace. Hath any thing in the world
done

done more to lose our authority, and disable us for Gods service then our differences and divisions? If Ministers could but be all of a mind, or at least concur in the substance of the work, so that the people that hear one, might as it were hear all, and not have any of us to head a party for the discontented to fall into or to object against the rest, we might then do wonders for the Church of Christ. But if our tongues and hearts be divided, what wonder if our work be spoiled, and prove liker a *Babel* then a Temple of God. Get together then speedily, and consult for peace, and cherish not heart-burnings, and continue not uncharitable distances and strangeness. If dividing hath weakened you, closing must recover your authority and strength. If you have any dislike of your Brethren or their waies, manifest it by a free debate to their faces, but do not unnecessarily withdraw from them. If you will but keep together, you may come to better understanding of each other, or at least may chide your selves. Friends, specially quarrel not upon points of precedency or reputation, or any interest of your own. No man will have settled peace in his mind, nor be peaceable in his place, that proudly envyeth the precedency, of others, and secretly grudgeth at them that seem to cloud their parts and name. One or other will ever be an eye-sore to such men. There is too much of the Devils image on this sin, for an humble servant of Christ to entertain. Moreover, be not too sensible of injuries: and make not a great matter of every offensive word or deed. At least do not let it interrupt your Communion and Concord in Gods work: For that were to wrong Christ and his Church,
because

because another hath wronged you. And if you be of this impatient humor, you will never be quiet: For we are all faulty, and cannot live together without wronging one another. *Ubiq; causae supersunt nisi deprecator animus accessit*, saith *Seneca*. And these proud over-tender men are often hurt by their own conceits: Like a man that hath a sore that he thinks doth smart more when he conceits that some one hits it. They will think a man jeareth them, or contemneth them, or meaneth them ill, when it never came into his thoughts! Till this *self* be taken down, we shall every man have a private interest and of his own, which will lead us all into several waies, and spoil the peace and welfare of the Church: while every man is for himself and his own Reputation, and all mind their own things, no wonder if they mind not the things of Christ.

And as for those opinions which hinder our union (alas the great dividers of this age) me thinks if I cannot change their minds, I might yet rationally expect of every Party among us that professe themselves Christians, that they should value the *whole* before a *part*; and therefore not so perversely seek to promote their party, as may hinder the common good of the Church, or so to propagate their supposed Truths, as to hinder the work of the main body of divine Truths. And me thinks a little humility should make men ashamed of that common conceit of unquiet spirits; *viz.* That the welfare of the Church doth so lye upon their opinions, that they must needs vent and propagate them whatever come of it. If they are indeed a living part of the body, the hurt of the whole will be so much their own,

That

that they cannot desire it for the sake of any party, or opinion. Were men but impartial to consider in every such case of difference, how far their promoting their own judgement may help or hurt the whole, they might escape many dangerous waies that are now trod. If you can see no where else, look in the face of the Churches enemies, how they rejoyce and deride us. And as *Seneca* saith to *demulce* the angry, *Vide ne inimicis iracundia tua voluptati sit*. When we have all done, I know not what party of us will prove a gayner: so true are the old proverbs, *Dissensio ducum hostium succum*. And *Gaudent praedones, dum discordant regiones*. And is it not a wonder that godly Ministers that know all this how the common adversary derideth us all and what a scandal our divisions are through the world, and how much the Church doth lose by it, should yet go on, and after all the loudest calls and invitations to peace, go on still, and few, if any sound a retreat? and seriously call to their Brethren for a retreat: Can an honest heart be insensibile of the sad distractions and sadder Apostacies that our divisions have occasioned? *Sæp rixam conclamatum in vicino incendium solvit*, saith *Seneca*. What scolds so furious that will not give over, when the house is on fire over their heads? Well; if the Lord hath given that evil spirit whose name is Legion, such power over the hearts of any, that yet they will sit still, yea and quarrel at the pacificatory endeavours of others who hunger after the healing of the Church, and rather carp, and reproach, and hinder such works then to help them on, I shall say but this to them: How diligently soever such men may preach, and how pious soever they may

may seem to be, if this way tend to their everlasting peace, and if they be not preparing sorrow for themselves, then I am a stranger to the way of peace.

SECT. XI.

7. **T**HE next branch of my Exhortation is, that *You would no longer neglect the execution of so much Discipline in your Congregations, as is of confessed necessity and right.* I desire not to spur on any one to an unseasonable performance of the greatest duty. But will it never be a fit season? Would you forbear Sermons and Sacraments so many years on pretence of unseasonableness? Will you have better season for it, when you are dead? How many are dead already before they ever did any thing in this work that were long preparing for it? It is now near three years since many of us here did engage our selves to this duty: And have we been faithful in performance of that engagement? I know some have more discouragements and hindrances then others: But what discouragements can excuse us from such a duty? Besides the Reasons that we then considered of, let these few be further laid to heart.

1. How sad a sign do we make it to be in our preaching to our people, to live in the willful continued omission of any known duty? And shall we do so even year after year and all our daies. If excuses will take off the danger of this sign, what man will not find them as well as you? Read *Amesius medul. cap. 37. de Disciplin. Eccles. & Gelespi's, Aarons rod,*
with

with *Rutherford* and many more that are written to prove the Need and Dueness of Discipline, saith *Ames. ib. sect. 5. Immo peccat in Christum authorem ac institutorem quisquis non facit quod in se est, ad hanc Disciplinam in Ecclesiis Dei constituendam & promovendam.* And do you think it safe to live and dye in such a known sin?

2. You gratifie the present designs of dividers, whose business is to unchurch us and unchristen us: to prove our Parishes no true Churches (and our selves no baptized Christians.) For if you take them for people uncapable of Discipline, they must be uncapable of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper and other Church-Communion; and then they are no Church. And so you will plainly seem to preach meerly as they do, to gather Churches where there were none before. And indeed if that be your case that your people are not Christians, and you have no particular Churches, and so are no Pastors, tell us so and manifest it, and we shall not blame you.

3. We do manifest plain laziness and sloath, if not unfaithfulness in the work of Christ. I speak from experience; It was laziness that kept me off so long, and pleaded hard against this duty. It is indeed a troublesom and painful work, and such as calls for some self-denyal, because it will cast us upon the displeasure of the wicked. But dare we preferr our carnal ease, and quietness, and the love or peace of wicked men, before our service to Christ our Master? Can sloathful servants look for a good reward? Remember Brethren, that we of this County have thus Promised before God in the second Article of our Agreement, *We agree and resolve by Gods help,*
that

that so far as God doth make known our duty to us, we will faithfully endeavour to discharge it, and will not, desist through any fears or losses in our estates, or the frowns and displeasure of men, or any the like carnal inducements whatsoever. I pray you study this promise, and compare your performance with it. And do not think that you were ensnared by thus engaging; for Gods Law hath laid an obligation on you to all the same duty, before your engagement did it. Here is nothing but what others are bound to, as well as you.

4. The Ministry that are for the Presbyterian Government have already by their common neglect of the execution, made those of the separating way believe, that they do it in a meer carnal compliance with the unruly part of the people, that while we exasperate them not with our Discipline, we might have them on our side. And we should do nothing needless, that hath so great an appearance of evil and is so scandalous to others. It was the sin and ruine of many of the Clergy of the last times, to please and comply with them that they should have reprov'd and corrected; by unfaithfulness in preaching, and neglect of Discipline.

5. The neglect of Discipline hath a strong tendency to the deluding of souls; by making them think they are Christians that are not: while they are permitted to live in the reputation of such, and be not separated from the rest by Gods Ordinance: and it may make the scandalous to think their sin a tolerable thing which is so tolerated by the Pastors of the Church.

6. We do corrupt Christianity if self in the eyes
of

of the world; and do our part to make them believe, that to be a Christian is but to be of such an Opinion, and to have that faith which *James* saith the Devils had, and to be solifidians; and that Christ is no more for Holiness, then Satan, or that the Christian Religion exacteth Holiness no more, then the false Religions of the world: For if the Holy and unholy are all permitted to be sherp of the same fold, without the use of Christs means to difference them, we do our part to defame Christ by it, as if he were guilty of it, and as if this were the strain of his pre-scripts

7. We do keep up separation, by permitting the worst to be uncensured in our Churches, so that many honest Christians think they are necessitated to withdraw. I must profess that I have spoke with some members of the separated (or gathered) Churches, that were moderate men, and have argued with them against their way; and they have assured me, *That they were of the Presbyterian judgement, or bad nothing to say against it, but they joyned themselves with other Churches upon meer necessity, thinking that Discipline being an Ordinance of Christ, must be used by all that can, and therefore they durst no longer live without it when they may have it; and they could find no Presbyterian Churches that executed Discipline, as they wrote for it; and they told me, that they did thus separate only protempore, till the Presbyterians will use Discipline, and then they would willingly return to them again.* I confess I was sorry that such persons had any such occasion to withdraw, and the least ground for such a reason of their doings. It is not keeping them from the Sacrament that will excuse us from

the further exercise of Discipline, while they are Members of our Churches.

8. We do too much to bring the wrath of God upon our selves and our Congregations, and so to blast the fruit of our labours. If the Angel of the Church of *Thyatira* was reprov'd for suffering Seducers in the Church, we may be reprov'd on the same ground for suffering open, scandalous, impenitent ones. *Rev.* 2 20.

9. We seem to justify the Prelates who took the same course in neglecting Discipline, (though in other things we differ.)

10. We have abundance of aggravations and witnesses to rise up against us, which though I will purposely now over-pass, lest I seem to press too hard in this point, I shall desire you to apply them hither, when you meet with them anon under the next branch of the Exhortation.

I know that Discipline is not essential to a Church; but what of that? Is it not therefore a duty; and necessary to its well-being; Yea more, The power of Discipline is essential to a particular Political Church: And what is the Power for, but for the work and use? As there is no Common-wealth that hath not *partem imperantem*, as well as *partem subditam*, so no such Church that hath not *partem regentem*, in one Pastor or more.


SECT. XII.

8. **T**HE last particular branch of my Exhortation is, that *You will now faithfully discharge the great duty which you have undertaken, and which is the occasion of our meeting here to day, in personal Catechizing and Instructing every one in your Parishes that will submit thereto.* What our undertaking is you know, you have considered it, and it is now published to the world. But what the performance will be I know not: but I have many reasons to hope well of the most, though some will alwaies be readyer to say, then to do. And because this is the chief business of the day, I must take leave to insist somewhat the longer on it. And 1. I shall give you some further Motives to perswade you to faithfulness in the undertaken work; Presupposing the former general Motives, which should move us to this as well as to any other part of our duty. 2. I shall give to the younger of my Brethren, a few words of Advice for the manner of the performance.



CHAP. VI.

SECT. I.

I.  HE first reasons by which I shall perswade you to this duty are taken from the benefits of it. The second sort are taken from the difficulty. And the third from the Necessity, and the many obligations that are upon us for the performance of it. And to these three heads I shall reduce them all.

1. And for the first of these; when I look before me, and consider what through the blessing of God, this work well managed is like to produce, it makes my heart to leap for joy. Truly Brethren, you have begun a most blessed work: and such as your own consciences may rejoyce in, and your Parishes rejoyce in, and the Nation rejoyce in, and the childe that is yet unborn; yea thousands and millions for ought we know may have cause to bless God for,
when

when we have finished our course. And though it be our business here to humble our selves for the neglect of it so long, as we have very great cause to do, yet the hopes of a blessed success are so great in me, that they are ready to turn it into a day of Rejoycing I bless the Lord that I have lived to see such a day as this, and to be present at so solemn an engagement of so many servants of Christ to such a work. I bless the Lord, that hath honoured you of this County to be the beginners and awakeners of the Nation hereunto. Is it not a controverted business, where the exasperated minds of divided men might pick quarrels with us, or malice it self be able to invent a rational reproach: Nor is it a new invention, where envy might charge, you as innovators, or proud boasters of any new discoveries of your own; or scorn to follow in it, because you have led the way. No; it is a well known duty: It is but the more diligent and effectual management of the Ministerial work, and the teaching of our Principles, and the feeding of babes with milk. You lead indeed, but not in invention of novelty, but the restauration of the antient Ministerial work, and the self-denying attempt of a duty that few, or none can contradict. Unless men do envy you, your labours and sufferings, or unless they envy the saving of mens souls, I know not what they can envy you for, in this. The age is so quarrelsome, that where there is any matter to fasten on, we can scarce explain a truth or perform a duty, but one or other, if not many, will have a stone to cast at us, and will speak evil of the things which they do not understand, or which their hearts and interests are against.

But here I think we have silenced malice it self: and I hope we may do this part of Gods work quietly, (as to them); If they cannot endure to be told what they know not, or contradicted in what they think, or disgraced by discoveries of what they have said amiss, I hope they will give us leave to do that which no man can contradict, and to practice that which all are agreed in; I hope we may have their good leave, or silent patience at least, to deny the ease and pleasure of our flesh, and to set our selves in good earnest to help men to heaven, and to propagate the knowledge of Christ with our people. And I take it for a sign of a great and necessary work, which hath such universal approbation; the commonly acknowledged truths and duties being, for the most part, of greatest necessity and moment. A more noble work it is to practise faithfully the truths and duties that all men will confess, then to make new ones, or discover somewhat more then others have discovered. I know not why we should be ambitious of finding out new waies to heaven: To make plain, and to walk in the old way, is our work, and our greatest honour.

And because the work in hand is so pregnant of great advantages to the Church, I will come down to the particular benefits which we may hope for, that when you see the excellency of it, you may be the more set upon it, and the lother by any negligence or failing to destroy or frustrate it. For certainly he that hath the true intentions of a Minister, will rejoyce in the appearances of any further Hopes of the attaining of his ends, and nothing can be more welcome to him, then that which will further the very business
to

of his life; And that our present work is such, I shall shew you more particularly.

I. **A**ND first; It will be the most hopeful advantage for the conversion of many souls, that we can expect. For it hath a concurrence of those great things which must further such a work.

1. For the matter of it, it is about the most needful things: the Principles or Essentials of the Christian faith.

2. For the manner of exercise, It will be by private conference, where we may have opportunity to set all home to the heart.

3. The common concord of Ministers will do much to bow their hearts to a consent. Were it but a meeting to resolv som controverted questions it would not have so direct a tendency to conversion Were it but occasional, we could not handsomly fall on them so closely: but when we make it the appointed business, it will be expected, and not so strangely taken. And if most Ministers had singly set upon this work, perhaps but few of the people would have submitted, and then you might have lost your chiefest opportunities, and those that had most needed your help, would have had least of it. Whereas now we may hope that when it is a general thing, few will refuse it; and when they see that other neighbours do it, they will be ashamed to be so singular or openly ungodly as to deny.

The work of conversion consisteth of two parts.

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1. The

1. The well informing of the judgement in the necessary points. 2. The change of the will, by the efficacy of this truth. Now in this work; we have the most excellent advantage for both. For the informing of their understandings, it must needs be an excellent help to have the summe of all Christianity still in memory. And though bare words not understood, will make no change, yet when the words are plain English, he that hath the words is far liker to know the meaning and matter, then another; For what have we to make known things by, that themselves are invisible, but words and other subservient signs? Those therefore that will deride all Catechisms and Professions, as unprofitable forms, may better deride themselves for talking and using the form of their own words to make known their minds to others: And they may deride all Gods word on the same account, which is a standing Form for the guiding of preachers, and teaching all others the doctrine of eternal life. Why may not written words that are still before their eyes and in their memories; instruct them, as well as the transient words of a Preacher? These Forms therefore of wholsom words are so far from being unprofitable (as some phantastical persons do imagine) that they are of admirable use to all.

And then, we shal have the opportunity by personal conference to try them how far they understand it, and how far not? and so to explain it to them as we go: and to chose out and insist on those particulars which the persons that we spèak to have most need to hear. So that these two conjunct: A form of words, with a plain Explication, may do more,
then

then either of them could do alone.

Moreover, we have the best opportunity to imprint the same Truths upon their hearts; When we can speak to each ones particular necessity, and say to the sinner, Thou art the man; and plainly mention his particular case, and set home the truth with familiar importunity; if any thing in the world is likely to do them good, it is this. They will understand a familiar speech, that hear a Sermon, as if it were non-sence: And they have far greater help for the Application of it to themselves. And withal you shall hear their Objections, and know where it is, that Satan hath most advantage on them, and what it is that stands up against the truth, and so may be able to shew them their errors, and confute their objections, and more effectually to convince them: we can better drive them to a stand, and urge them to discover their resolutions for the future, and to promise the use of means and reformation, then otherwise we could do. What need we more for this, then our experience? I seldom deal with men purposely on this great business, in private serious conference, but they go away with some seeming convictions, and promises of new obedience, if not some deeper remorse, and sense of their condition. And I hope your own experiences are the same.

O Brethren, what a blow may we give the Kingdom of darkness by the faithful and skilful managing of this work! If then the saving of *souls*, of your *neighbours souls*, of *many souls*, from everlasting misery, be worth your labour, Up and be doing! If the increase of the true Church of Christ be desirable, this work is Excellent, which is so likely to promote it.

If

If you would be the Fathers of many that shall be new born to God, and would see the travail of your souls with comfort, and would be able to say at last, Here am I, and the children that thou hast given me; Up then and ply this blessed work. If it will do you good to see your holy converts among the Saints in glory, and praising the Lamb before his Throne; if you will be glad to present them blameless and spotless to Christ; be glad then of this singular opportunity that is offered you. If you are Ministers of Christ indeed, you will long for the perfecting of his body, and the gathering in of his Elect, and your hearts will be set upon it, and you will travail as in birth of them till Christ be formed in them. And then you will take such opportunities as your harvest-time, and as the un-shine daies in a rainy harvest, in which it is unreasonable & unexcusable to be idle. If you have any spark of Christian compassion in you, it wil sure seem worth your utmost labour to save so many souls from death, and to recover so great a multitude of sins. If you are indeed co-workers with Christ, set then to his work, and neglect not the souls, for whom he dyed. O remember when you are talking with the unconverted, that now there is an opportunity in your hands to save a soul, and to rejoyce the Angels of heaven, and to rejoyce Christ himself, and that your work is to cast Satan out of a sinner, and to increase the family of God. And what is your own Hope, or Joy, or Crown of rejoycing? Is it not your saved people in the presence of Christ Jesus at his coming? Yea doubtless, they are your glory and your joy, 1 *Thes.* 2. 19, 20.

2. THE

2. **T**HE second happy Benefit of our work if well managed, will be, *The most orderly building up of those that are converted, and the stablishing them in the faith.*

It hazardeth the whole work, or at least much hindereth it, when we do it not in the order that it must be done. How can you build if you first lay not a good foundation? or how can you set on the top-stone while the middle parts are neglected? *Gratia non facit saltum*, any more than nature. The second order of Christian Truths have such dependance upon the first, that they can never be well learned, till the first are learned. This makes so many deluded novices, that are pust up with the vain conceits of knowledge while they are grosly ignorant, and itch to be preaching before they well know what it is to be Christians; because they took not the work before them, but learnt some lesser matters which they heard most talk of, before they learnt the vital Principles. And this makes many labour so much in vain, and are still learning, but never come to the knowledge of the Truth, because they would learn to read before they learn to spell, or to know their letters; And this makes so many fall away, and shaken with every wind of temptation, because they were not well settled in the fundamentals. It is these Fundamentals that must lead men to further truths: It is these they must bottom and build all upon. It is these that they must live upon, and that must actuate all their graces, and animate all their duties; It is
these

these that must fortifie them against particular temptations; and he that knows these well, doth know so much as will make him happy; and he that knows not these, knows nothing; and he that knows these best, is the best and most understanding Christian. The most godly people therefore in your Congregations will find it worth their labour to learn the very words of a Catechism. And if you would safely edifie them and firmly stablsh them, be diligent in this work.

3. **A** Third Benefit that may be expected by the well-managing of this work, is this, *It will make our publike preaching to be better understood and regarded.* When you have acquainted them with the Principles, they will the better understand all that you say. They will perceive what you drive at, when they are once acquainted with the main. This prepareth their minds, and openeth you a way to their hearts: when without this you may lose the most of your labour: and the more pains you take, in accurate preparations, the less good you do. As you would not therefore lose your publike labour, see that you be faithful in this private work.

4. AND

4. **A**ND this is not a contemptible Benefit, that by this course *you will come to be familiar with your people*, when you have had the opportunity of familiar conference. And the want of this with us, that have very numerous Parishes, is a great impediment to the success of our labours. By distance and unacquaintedness, slanderers and deceivers have opportunity to possess them with false conceits of you, which prejudice their minds against your doctrine: and by this distance and strangeness abundance of mistakes between Ministers and people are fomented. Besides that, familiarity it self doth tend to beget those affections, which may open their ears to further teaching. And when we are familiar with them, they will be more encouraged to open their doubts and seek resolution, and deal freely with us. But when a minister knoweth not his people, or is as strange to them as if he did not know them, it must be a great hindrance to his doing them any good.

5. **B**ESIDES, by the means of these private Instructions, *we shall come to be the better acquainted with each persons spiritual state, and so the better know how to watch over them*, and carry our selves towards them ever after. We may know the better how to preach to them when we know their temper, and their chief objections, and so what they have
most

most need to hear. We shall the better know wherein to be jealous of them with a pious jealousy, and what temptations to help them most against. We shall the better know how to lament for them and to rejoyce with them, and to pray for them to God. For as he that will pray rightly for himself, will know his own sores and wants, and the diseases of his own heart; so he that will pray rightly for others, should know theirs as far as he may, and as is meet. If a man have the charge but of sheep or cattle, he cannot so well discharge his trust if he know them not, and their state and qualities. So is it with the Master that will well teach his Schollars, and Parents that will rightly educate their children: And so with us.

6. **A**ND then this tryal of, and acquaintance with our peoples state, will better *satisfie us in the administration of the Sacraments*. We may the better understand how far they are fit or unfit. Though this give them not the state or relation of a Member of that Church whereof we are Over-seers; yet because the Members of the Church Universal, though they are of no particular Church, may in some cases have a right to the Ordinances of Christ in those particular Churches where they come, and in some cases they have no right, we may by this means be the better informed how to deal with them, though they be no members of that particular Church. And whereas many will question a Minister that examineth his people in order to the Lords Supper, by
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what authority he doth it, the same work will be done this way, in a course beyond exception. Though I doubt not but a Minister may require his Flock to come to him at any convenient season, to give an account of their faith and proficiency, and to receive instruction, and therefore he may do it in preparation to the Sacrament; yet because Ministers have laid the stress of that examination upon the meer necessity of fitness for that Ordinance, and not upon their common duty to see the state and proficiency of each member of their Flock at all fit seasons, and upon the peoples duty to submit to the guidance and instruction of the Pastors at all times, they have therefore occasioned people ignorantly to quarrel against their examinations, and call for the proof. Whereas it is an easie thing to prove that any Scholar in Christs School is bound at any time to be accountable to his Teachers, and to obey them in all lawful things in order to their own edification and salvation; though it may be more difficult to prove a necessity that a Minister must so examine them in order to the Lords Supper, any more then in order to a day of Thanksgiving or a Lords day, or the Baptizing of their children.

Now by this course, we shall discern their fitness in an unquestionable way.

7. Another

7. **A**Nother Benefit will be this, *We shall by this means be the better enabled to help our people against their particular temptations, and we shall much better prevent their entertainment of any particular errors or heresies; or their falling into Schism to the hazard of themselves and the Church.* For men will freelyer open their thoughts and scruples to us, and if they are infected already or inclined to any errour or schism, they will be ready to discover it, and so may receive satisfaction before they are past cure. And familiarity with their Teachers, will the more encourage them to open their doubts to them at any other time. The common cause of our peoples infections and heresies is the familiarity of Seducers with them, and the strangeness of their own Pastors. When they hear us only in publike, and hear Seducers frequently in private unsaying all that we say, and we never know it, or help them against it, this fettleth them in heresies before we are aware of it. Alas our people are most of them so weak, that whoever hath 1. Most interest in their estimations and affections: and 2. Most opportunity in private frequent conferences to instill his opinions into them, of that mans religion will they ordinarily be. It is pity then that we should let deceivers take such opportunities to undo them, and we should not be as industrious, and use our advantages to their good. We have much advantage against Seducers in many respects, if our negligence and their diligence did not frustrate them.

8. Another

8. **A**Nother, and one of the greatest Benefits of our work will be this, It will better inform men of the true nature of the Ministerial office, or awaken them to better consideration of it, then is now usual. It is now too common for men to think that the work of the Ministry is nothing but to preach well, and to Baptize and administer the Lords Supper, and visit the sick: and by this means the people will submit to no more, and too many Ministers are negligently or wilfully such strangers to their own calling, that they will do no more. It hath oft grieved my heart to observe some eminent able Preachers, how little they do for the saving of souls, save only in the Pulpit; and to how little purpose much of their labour is, by this neglect. They have hundreds of people that they never spoke a word to personally for their salvation, and if we may judge by their practice, they take it not for their duty: and the principal thing that hardeneth men in this oversight, is the common neglect of the private part of the work by others. There are so few that do much in it; and the omission is grown so common among pious able men, that they have abated the disgrace of it by their parts, and a man may now be guilty of it, without any common observance or dishonour. Never doth sin so reign in a Church or State, as when it hath gained reputation, or at least is no disgrace to the sinner, nor a matter of any offence to beholders. But I make no doubt through the mercy of God, but the restored practice of personal oversight

will convince many Ministers, that this is as truly their work as that which they now do: and may awaken them to see that the Ministry is another kind of business, then too many excellent Preachers do take it to be. Brethren, do but set yourselves closely to this work, and follow on diligently, and though you do it silently, without any words to them that are negligent, *I am in hope that most of you here may live to see the day, that the neglect of private personal Oversight of all the Flock shall be taken for a scandalous and adious omission, and shall be as disgraceful to them that are guilty of it, as preaching but once a day was heretofore.* A School master must not only read a common Lecture, but take a personal account of his Scholars, or else he is like to do little good. If Physicians should only read a publike Lecture of Physick, their patients would not be much the better for them: Nor would a Lawyer secure your estate by reading a Lecture of Law. The charge of a Pastor requireth personal dealing as well as any of these. Let us shew the world this by our practise; for most men are grown regardless of bare words.

The truth is, we have been occasioned exceedingly to wrong the Church in this, by the contrary extream of the Papists, who bring all their people to Auricular confession: For in the overthrowing of this error of theirs, we have run into the contrary extream, and led our people much further into it then we are gone our selves. It troubled me to read in an Orthodox Historian, that licentiousness, and a desire to be from under the strict enquiries of the Priests in Confession, did much further the entertain-
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ment of the Reformed Religion in *Germany*. And yet its like enough to be true, that they that were against Reformation in other respects, yet partly for the change, and partly on that licentious account, might joyn with better men in crying down the Romish Clergy. But by this means, lest we should seem to favour the said Auricular Confession, we have too commonly neglected all personal instruction; except when we occasionally fall into mens company, few make it a stated part of their work: I am past doubt that the Popish Auricular Confession, is a sinful novelty, which the antient Church was unacquainted with. But perhaps some will think strange that I should say, that our common neglect of personal Instruction is much worse, if we consider their Confessions in themselves, and not as they respect their connexed Doctrines of satisfaction and purgatory. Many of the Southern and Eastern Churches do use a Confession of sin to the Priest. And how far Mr. *Tho. Hocker* in his *Souls Preparat* and other Divines do ordinarily require it, as necessary or useful, is well known. If any among us should be guilty of this gross mistake as to think when he hath preached, he hath done all his work, let us shew him to his face by our practice of the rest, that there is much more to be done, and that taking heed to all the Flock is another business then careless lazy Ministers do consider of. If a man have the least apprehension that duty, and the chieftest duty, is no duty; he is like to neglect it, and be impenitent in the neglect.

9. **A**Nother singular Benefit which we may hope for from the faithful performance of this work, is, that It will help our people better to understand the nature of their duty towards their Overseers, and consequently to discharge it better. Which were no matter if it were only for our sakes; but their own salvation is very much concerned in it. I am confident by sad experience, that it is none of the least impediments to their happiness, and to a true Reformation of the Church: that the people understand not what the work and power of a Minister is, and what their own duty towards them is. They commonly think that a Minister hath no more to do with them but to preach to them, and visit them in sickness, and administer Sacraments, and that if they hear him, and receive the Sacrament from him, they owe no further obedience, nor can he require any more at their hands. Little do they know that the Minister is in the Church as the School-master in his School, to teach and take an account of every one in particular, and that all Christians ordinarily must be Disciples or Scholars in some such School They think not that a Minister is in the Church as a Physician in a Town, for all people to resort to, for personal advice for the curing of all those diseases that are fit to be brought to a Physician: and that the Priests lips must preserve knowledge, and the people must ask the Law at their mouths, because he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. And that every soul in the Congregation is bound

bound for their own safety, to have personal recourse to him, for the resolving of their doubts, and for help against their sins, and for direction in duty, and for increase of knowledge and all saving grace! and that Ministers are purposely settled in Congregations to this end, to be still ready to advise and help the Flock. If our people did but know their duty, they would readily come to us when they are desired to be instructed, and to give an account of their knowledge, faith and lives; and they would come themselves without sending for, and knock oftner at our doors, and call for advice and help for their souls; and ask, What shall we do to be saved? Whereas now the matter is come to that sad pass, that they think a Minister hath nothing to do with them, and if he admonish them, they will bid him look to himself, he shall not answer for them: and if he call them to be Catechized or instructed, or to be prepared for the Lords Supper, or other holy Ordinance, or would take an account of their faith and profiting, they will ask him, By what authority he doth these things? and think that he is a busie pragmatistical fellow, that loves to be meddling where he hath nothing to do; or a proud fellow that would bear rule over their consciences. When they may as well ask him, By what authority he preacheth, or prayeth for them, or giveth them the Sacrament; or they may as well ask a School-master, By what authority he calls his Scholars to learn or say their **lesson**; Or a Physitian, By what authority he enjoyneth them to take his Medicine? people consider not, that all our authority is but for our work: even a Power to do our duty and our work is for them;

so that it is but an authority to do them good: And the silly wretches do talk no wiselyer, then if they should thus quarrel with a man that would help to quench the fire in their thatch, and ask him, By what authority he doth it? Or that would give his money to relieve the poor, and they should ask him, *By what authority do you require us to take this money?* Or as if I offered my hand to one that is fallen, to help him up, or to one that is in the water, to save him from drowning, and he should ask me, *By what authority I do it?* Truly we have no wiser nor thankfuller dealing from these men: Nay, it is worse, in that we are doubly obliged, both by Christian Charity, and the Ministerial office to do them good. I know not of any Simile that doth more aptly express the Ministerial power and duty, and the peoples duty, then these two conjunct; *viz.* even such as a Physician is in an Hospital, that hath taken the charge of it, and such as a School-master is in his School, especially such as the Philosophers, or teachers of any science or art, whose Schools have the aged and voluntary members, as well as children (Christs hath all ages) even such is a Minister in the Church, and such is their work and their authority to do it, and the duty of the people to submit thereto, allowing such differences as the subject requireth.

And what is it that hath brought people to this ignorance of their duty, but custom? Its long of us, Brethren to speak truly and plainly, its long of us; that have not used them nor our selves to any more then the common publike work. We see how much custom doth with the people. Where it is the custom, they stick not among the Papists at the confessing
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of all their sins to the Priest: And because it is not the custom among us, they disdain to be questioned, catechized or instructed. They wonder at it as a strange thing, and say, such things were never done before. And if we can but prevail to make this duty become as usual as other duties, they will much more easily submit to it then now. What a happy thing would it be, if you might live to see the day, that it should be as ordinary for people of all ages to come in course to their Teachers for personal advice, and help for their salvation, as it is now usual for them to come to Church, or as it is for them to send their children thither to be Catechized. Our diligence in this work, is the way to do this.

10. **M**OREOVER, our practice will give the Governors of the Nation some better information about the nature and burden of the Ministry, and so may procure their further assistance. It is a lamentable impediment to the Reformation of the Church and the saving of souls, that in most populous Congregations, there is but one or two men to over-see many thousand souls, and so there are not labourers in any measure answerable to the work, but it becomes an impossible thing to them to do any considerable measure of that personal duty which should be done by faithful Pastors to all the Flocks. I have often said it, and still must say it, that this is a great part of Englands misery, and a great degree of spiritual famine which reigns in most Cities and great

Towns through the Land, even where they are insensible of it, and think themselves well provided; Alas we see multitudes of carnal, ignorant, sensual sinners round about us, *here* is a family, and *there* a family, and there almost a whole street or village of them; and our hearts pity them, and we see that their necessities cry loud for our speedy and diligent relief, so that he that hath ears to hear must needs hear it. And if we would never so fain, we cannot help them: Not only through their obstinacy, but also through our want of opportunity. We have experience, that if we could but have leisure to speak to them, and to open plainly to them their sin and danger, there were great hopes of doing good to many of them, that receive little by our publike teaching. But we cannot come at them: more necessary work prohibits us: we cannot do both at once: and the publike must be preferred, because there we deal with many at once. And it is as much as we are able to do, to perform the publike work, or some little more; And if we do take the time when we should eat or sleep, (besides the ruining of weakened bodies by it) we shall not be able after all, to speak to one of very many of them. So that we must stand by and see poor people perish, and can but be sorry for them, and cannot so much as speak to them to endeavour their recovery. Is not this a sad case in a Nation that glorieth of the fulness of the Gospel? An Infidel will say, No: but me thinks no man that believes an everlasting Joy or Torment should say so. I will give you the instance of my own case. We are together two Ministers, and a third at a Chappel, willing to bestow every
hour

hour of our time in Christs work. Before we undertook this work that we are now upon, our hands were full, and now we are engaged to set apart two daies every week from morning to night for private catechizing and instruction; so that any man may see that we must leave undone all that other work that we were wont to do at that time: and we are necessitated to run upon the publike work of preaching with small preparation, and so must deliver the Message of God, so rawly and confusedly, and unanswerably to its dignity, and the needs of mens souls that it is a great trouble to our minds to consider it, and a greater trouble to us when we are doing it. And yet *it must* be so: there is no remedy, unless we will omit this personal instruction, we must needs run thus unpreparedly into the Pulpit! And to omit this we dare not, it is so great and necessary a work. And when we have incurred all the forementioned inconveniences, and have set two whole daies a week apart for the work that we have now undertaken, it wil be as much as we shal be able to do, to go over the Parish but once in a year (being about 800. families) And which is worse then that, we shall be forc't to cut it short, and do it less effectually to those that we do it, having above 15. Families a week to deal with. And alas, how small a matter is it to speak to a man once only in a year, and that so cursorily as we must be forced to do, in comparison of what their necessities do require? yet are we in hope of some fruit of this much, but how much more might it be, if we could but speak to them once a quarter, and do the vwork more fully and deliberately (as you that are in smaller Parishes may do.)

And

And many Ministers in *England* have ten times, (if not more) the number of Parishoners as I have: so that if they should undertake the work that we have done, they can go over the Parish but once in ten years. So that while we are hoping for opportunities to speak to them, we hear of one dying after another, and to the grief of our souls are forced to go with them to their graves before we could ever speak a word to them personally to prepare them for their change. And what is the cause of all this misery? Why our Rulers have not seen a necessity of any more Ministers then one or two in such Parishes; and so they have not allowed any maintenance to that end: Some have alienated much from the Church (the Lord humble all them that consented to it effectually, lest it prove the consumption of the Nation at last) while they have left this famine in the chief parts of the Land. Its easie to separate from the multitude, and gather distinct Churches, and let the rest sink or swim, and if they will not be saved by publike preaching, let them be damned: but whether this be the most charitable and Christian course, one would think should be no hard question. But whats the matter that wise and godly Rulers should be thus guilty of our misery, and that none of our cries will awake them to compassion? What, are they so ignorant as not to know these things? Or are they grown cruel to the souls of men? Or are they false-hearted to the interest of Christ, and have a design to undermine his Kingdom? No, I hope it is none of these; but for ought I can find, it is even long of us, even of us the Ministers of the Gospel, whom they should thus maintain.

For those Ministers that have small Parishes, and might do all this private part of the work, yet do it not (but very few of them) nor will not do it. And those in great Towns and Cities, that might do somewhat, though they cannot do all, will do just nothing, but what accidentally falls in their way, or next to nothing; so that the Magistrate is not wakened to an observance or consideration of the weight of our work: If it be not in their eyes, as well as in their ears, they will not regard it. Or if they do apprehend the usefulness of it, yet if they see that Ministers are so careless and lazy that they will not do it, they think it in vain to provide them a maintenance for it: it would be but to cherish idle droans: and so they think, that if they maintain Ministers enough to preach in the Pulpit, they have done their parts. And thus are they involved in hainous sin, and we are the occasions of it. Whereas if we do but heartily all set our selves to this work, and shew the Magistrate to his face, that it is a most weighty and necessary part of our business, and that we would do it thoroughly if we could, and that if there were hands enough at it, the work might go on, and withal when he shall see the happy success of our labours, then no doubt, if the fear of God be in them, and they have any love to his truth and mens souls, they will set to their helping hand, and not let men perish, because there is no man to speak to them to prevent it. They will one way or other raise maintenance in such populous places for labourers proportioned to the number of souls, and greatness of the work. Let them but see us fall to the work, and see it prosper in our hands; (as if it be well managed through

through Gods blessing, there is no doubt but it will do) and then it will draw out their hearts to the promoting of it: and instead of *laying Parishes together to diminish the number of teachers*, they will either divide them, or allow more teachers to a Parish. But when they see that many carnal Ministers do make a greater stir to have more maintenance to themselves, then to have more help in the work of God, they are tempted by such worldlings to wrong the Church, that particular Ministers may have ease and fulness.

II. **A**Nother benefit that is like to follow our work, is this; *It may exceedingly facilitate the Ministerial service to the next generation that shall succeed us*; and prevent the Rebellion of people against their Teachers. As I said, custom is the thing that swaies much with the multitude; and they that first break a destructive custom, must bear the brunt of their indignation; some body must do this. If we do it not, it will lie upon our successors; And how can we look that they should be more hardy and resolute, and faithful then we? Its we that have seen the heavy Judgements of the Lord, and heard him pleading by fire and sword with the Land. Its we that have been our selves in the furnace, and should be the most refined (*Mal. 3. 23.*) Its we that are most deeply obliged by oaths and covenants, by wonderful deliverances, experiences and mercies of all sorts. And if we yet flinch and turn our backs, and prove false-hearted, why should we expect better
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from them, that have not been driven by such scourges as we, nor drawn by such cords. But if they do prove better then we, and will do it, the same *odium* and opposition must befall them, which we avoid, and that with some increase, because of our neglect; For the people will tell them, that we their predecessors did no such things. But if we would now break through that are set in the front, and break the ice for them that follow us, their souls will bless us, and our names shall be dear to them, and they will feel the happy fruits of our labour every week and day of their Ministry. When the people shall willingly submit to their private instructions and examinations, yea and to discipline too because we have acquainted them with it, and removed the prejudice, and broke the evil custom that our fore-goers had been the cause of. And so we may do much to the saving of many thousand souls in all ages to come, as well as in the present age that we are working in.

12. **A**Nother Benefit will be this; We shall keep our peoples minds and times from much of that vanity that now possesseth them. When men are at work in their Shops almost all their talk is vanity: the children also learn foolish and ribbald songs and tales; and with such filth and rubbish are their memories furnished. Many an hour is lost, and many a thousand idle thoughts and words are they guilty of. Whereas when they once know that Catechisms must be learnt, and that they must
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all give account, it will turn much of their thoughts and time that way.

13. **M**Oreover, It will do much to the better Ordering of families, and better spending of the Lords day. When we have once got the Master of the family to undertake it, that he will once every Lords day examine his family, and hear them what they can say of the Catechism, it will find them the most profitable employment: whereas otherwise, many of them would be idle, or ill employed: And many Masters that know little themselves, may yet be brought to do this for others.

14. **M**Oreover, It will do some good to many Ministers that are apt to be too idle, and mispend their time in unnecessary discourses, businesses, or journeys, or recreations; and it will let them see that they have no time to spare for such things. And so when they are engaged in so much pressing employment of so high a nature, it will be the best cure for all that idleness or loss of time: And withall, it will cut off that scandal which usually followeth thereupon: For people use to say, such a Minister can sit in an Ale-house or Tavern, or spend his time at bowls, or other sports, or vain discourse; and why may not we do so as well as he? Let us all set close to this part of our work, and then see what time we can find to spare? and live idly, or
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in a way of voluptuousness, yea or worldliness, if we can.

15. **A**ND many personal Benefits to our selves, are consequential to these. It will do much, 1. To exercise and increase our own graces. And 2. to subdue our own corruptions. And 3. besides our safety, it will breed much peace to our own consciences, and comfort us when our time and actions must be reviewed.

1. To be much in provoking others to Repentance, and heavenly-mindedness, may do much to excite them in our selves.

2. To cry down the sin of others, and engage them against it, and direct them to overcome it, will do much to shame us out of our own: and conscience will scarce suffer us to live in that which we make so much ado to draw others from. And that very constant employment for God, and busying our minds and tongues against sin, and for Christ and holiness, will do much to habituate us, and to overcome our fleshly inclinations, both by direct mortification, and by diversion, leaving our fancies no room nor time for their old employment, I dare say, that all the Austerities of Monks and Hermits (that addict themselves to unprofitable solitude, and are the true imitators of the unprofitable servant, *Mat.* 25. that hid his Talent because his Master was an austere man, and that think to save themselves by neglecting to shew compassion on others) will not do near so much in the true work of Mortification, as this fruitful diligence for Christ will do.

16. And

16. **A**ND it will be some Benefit, that by this means we shall take off our selves and our people from vain controversies, and from letting out our care and zeal, and talk upon the lesser things in Religion, which least tend to their spiritual edification. For while we are taken up in teaching, and they in learning the Fundamentals, we shall divert our minds and tongues, and have less room for lower things. And so it will cure much wranglings and contentions between Ministers and people: For we do that which we need not and should not, because we will not fall closely to do that, which we need and should.

And if we could handsomly contrive the more understanding sort of our people to assist us in private helping others (though prejudice of others, and their own unripeness, and unfitness much hinder) it would be the most effectual way to prevent their running into preaching distempers, or into schisms; For this employment would take them up, and content the teaching humor that they are inclined to. And it might make their parts more useful in a safe and lawful way.

17. Moreover,

17. **M**oreover, The very diligent practice of this work that we are upon, would do much to set men right about many controversies that now trouble the Church, and so to put an end to our differences. Especially most of those about the Ministry, Churches and Discipline, would receive more convincing light by practice, then all our idle talking, or writing will afford us. We have fallen of late into parties, and troubled the Church about many controversies concerning excommunication. in such and such cases, which perhaps never will fall out; or if they do, they cannot be so well decided by any man that is not engaged in the practice. It is like the profession of a Physitian, a souldier, a Pilot, &c. who can never be worth a straw at his work, by all the precepts in the world, without practise and experience. This will be the only course to make, 1. Sound Divines in the main, which bare studying will not do 2. And recover us again to the Primitive simplicity, to live upon the substantial necessary things. 3. And to direct and resolve us in many of our quarrels that will no other way be well resolved. For example; If this work had been set on foot, and it had been but visible what it is to have the oversight of souls durst any Prelates have contended for the sole Oversight of 200. or 400. or 1000 Churches? and that the Presbyters might be but their curates and informers? Durst they have striven with might and main to have drawn upon themselves such impossibilities, and have carried such

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mountains

mountains on their backs, and to answer God as Over-seers and Pastors of so many thousand people, whose faces they were never like to see, much less were they ever like to speak one word to them for their everlasting life? Would they not have said, *If I must be a Bishop, let me be a Parochial Bishop, or have no more to oversee then I am capable of overseeing, and let me be such as the Primitive Bishops were, that had but one Church, and not hundreds to take care of; and let me not be engaged to natural impossibilities, and that on pain of damnation, and to the certain destruction of the business that I undertake; sure these would rather have been their strivings.* I speak not this against any Bishops that acknowledge the Presbyters to be true Pastors to rule and teach the Flock, and take themselves only to be the chief or Presidents among the Presbyters, yea or the Rulers of Presbyters, that are the Rulers of the Flock; but of them that null the Presbyters office, and the Churches Government and Discipline, by undertaking it alone as their sole prerogative.

Many other Disciplinary controversies I might instance in, that will be better resolved by this course of practice, by the abundant experience which it will afford, then by all the disputations or writings that have attempted it.

18. And

18. **A**ND then for the extent of the foresaid Benefits, (which in the two next places shall now be considered) The design of this work is, the *Reforming and saving of all the people in our several Parishes*; For we shall not leave out any man that will submit to be instructed. And though we can scarce hope that every particular person will be reformed and saved by it, yet have we reason to hope, that as the attempt is universal, so the success will be more general or extensive then hitherto we have seen of our other labours. Sure I am it is most like to the spirit, and precept and offers of the Gospel, which requireth us to preach the Gospel to every creature, and promiseth life to every man if he will accept it by believing! If God would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth (that is, as Rector and Benefactor) of the world, he hath manifested himself willing to save All men if they will themselves, though his Elect he will also make willing) then sure it beseems us to offer salvation unto all men, and to endeavour to bring them to the knowledge of the truth. And if Christ tasted death for every man, its meet we should preach his death for every man. This work hath a more excellent design, then our accidental conferences with now and then a particular person. And I observe that in such occasional discourses men satisfie themselves to have spoken some good words, but seldom set plainly and closely to the matter, to convince men of sin, and misery, and

mercy; as in this purposely appointed work we are now more like to do.

19. **A**ND further, It is like to be a work that shall reach over the whole Land, and not stop with us that have now engaged in it. For though it be at the present neglected, I suppose the cause is the same with our Brethren as it hath all this while been with us; who by vain expectations of the Magistrates interposition, or by that inconsiderateness, and lazyness which we are bewailing here this day, have so much omitted it till now as we have done; but specially a despair of a common submission of the people hath been the hindrance. But when they shall be remembered of so clear and great a duty, and excited to the consideration of it, and see with us the feisableness of it, in a good measure, when it is done by common consent, no doubt they will universally take it up, and gladly concurr with us in so blessed a work. For they are the servants of the same God, as regardful of their Flocks, and as consciencious as we, and as sensible of the Interest of Christ, and as compassionate to mens souls, and as self-denying, and ready to do or suffer for such excellent ends: seeing therefore they have the same Spirit, Rule and Lord, I will not be so uncharitable as to doubt, whether all that are godly, (or the generality of them) will gladly joyn with us through all the Land And O what a happy thing it will be to see such a general combination for Christ? and to see all *England* so seriously called upon, and impo-
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for Christ, and set in so fair a way to heaven! Me thinks, the consideration of it should make our hearts rejoyce within us, to see so many faithful servants of Christ all over the Land, to fall in with every particular sinner with such industrious sollicitations for the saving of their souls, as men that will hardly take a denyal. Me thinks, I even see all the godly Ministers of *England*, even setting upon the work already, and resolving to take the opportunity, the unanimity may facilitate it. Which if they do, no doubt but God will succeed them. Is it not then a most happy undertaking that you are all setting your hands to, and desiring the assistance of Christ in, this day?

20. **L**Astly, of so great weight and excellency is the duty that we are upon, that *The chiefest part of Church-Reformation that is behind*, (as to means) *consisteth in it*; and it must be the chiefest means to answer the Judgements, the Mercies, the Prayers, the Promises, the cost, and the endeavours, and blood of the Nation; and without this it will not be done; the ends of all these will never be well attained; a Reformation to purpose will never be wrought; the Church will be still low, the interest of Christ will be much neglected; and God will still have a controversie with the Land, and above all, with the Ministry that have been deepest in the guilt.

How long have we talkt of Reformation, how much have we said and done for it in general, and

how deeply and devoutly have we vowed it for our own parts (of which more anon.) And after all this, how shamefully have we neglected it, and neglect it to this day! We carry our selves as if we had not known or considered what that Reformation was that we vowed. As carnal men will take on them to be Christians, and profess with confidence that they believe in Christ, and accept of his salvation and may contend for Christ, and fight for him, and yet for all this, would have none of him, but perish for refusing him, who little dreamt that ever they had been refusers of him; and all because they understood not what his salvation is, and how it is carried on, but dream of a salvation without flesh-displeasing, and without self-denying, and renouncing the world, and parting with their sins, and without any holiness or any great pains and labour of their own in subserviency to Christ and the spirit: Even so did too many Ministers and private men talk and write, and pray, and fight, and long for Reformation, and would little have believed that man, that should have presumed to tell them, that for all this, their very hearts were against Reformation, and that they that were praying for it and fasting for it, and wading through blood for it, would never accept it, but would themselves be the rejecters and destroyers of it? And yet so it is, and so it hath too plainly proved: and whence is all this strange deceit of heart? That good men should no better know themselves? Why, the case is plain: They thought of a Reformation to be given by God, but not of a Reformation to be wrought on and by themselves. They considered the blessing, but never thought of the means
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of accomplishing it. But as if they had expected that all things besides themselves should be mended without them; or that the Holy Ghost should again descend miraculously, or every Sermon should convert its thousands, or that some Angel from heaven, or some *Eliis* should be sent to restore all things; or that the Law of a Parliament, and the sword of a Magistrate would have converted or constrained all, and have done the deed; and little did they think of a Reformation that must be wrought by their own diligence and unwearied labours, by earnest preaching, and catechizing, and personal instructions, and taking heed to all the Flock, whatever pains or reproaches it should cost them They thought not that a through Reformation must multiply their own work, but we had all of us too carnal thouhgts, that when we had ungodly men at our mercy all would be done, and conquering them was converting them, or such a means as would have frightened them to, heaven. But the business is far otherwise, and had we then known how a Reformation must be atrained, perhaps some would have been colder in the persecution of it. And yet I know that even foreseen labours seem small matters at a distance, while we do, but hear and talk of them: but when we come nearer them, and must lay our hands to the work and put on our armour, and charge through the thickest of opposing difficulties then is the sincerity and the strength of mens hearts brought to tryal, and it will appear how they purposed and promised before. Reformation is to many of us, as the Messiah was to the Jews. Before he came, they looked and longed for him, and boasted of him and rejoyced in

hope of him, but when he came they could not abide him, but hated him, and would not believe that he was indeed the person, and therefore persecuted and put him to death to the curse and confusion of the main body of their Nation, *Mal. 3. 1, 2, 3. The Lord whom we seek shall suddenly come to his Temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye del gbt in: But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiners fire, and like Fullers sope: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purifie the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.* And the reason was, because it was another manner of Christ that the Jews expected, then Jesus was that did appear to them; it was one to bring them riches, and liberty, and to this day they profess that they will never believe in any but such. So it is with too many about Reformation. They hoped for a Reformation, that should bring them more wealth and honour with the people, and power to force men to do what they would have them: and now they see a Reformation that must put them to more condescension and pains then ever they were before, this will not down with them. They thought of having the opposers of godliness under their feet; but now they see they must go to them with humble intreaties and put their hands under their feet, if it would do them good, and meekly beseech even those that sometime sought their lives, and make it now their daily business to overcome them by kindness, and win them with love. O how many carnal expectations are here crost.

Hence

Hence also it is, that most men do lay so great a part of Reformation in their private opinions, or singular waies. The Prelatical party think that the true Reformation is to restore them to power. The Presbyterians have thought that if Prelacy and Independancy were well down, and Classes up, the work were much done: And the Independents have thought that if they had gathered a separated body of godly people under Covenant, much of the Reformation were wrought: And the Anabaptists have thought, that if they could but get people to be Baptized again, they had done a great matter for Reformation. I am not now reprovng any of these in the matter, (though the last especially well deserve it) but that they lay so much upon their several orders and formalities as many of them do: When indeed if we had our will in all such matters of order, and had the rightest form of Government in the world, it is the painful execution, and the diligent and prudent use of means for mens conversion and edification, by able faithful men, that must accomplish the Reformation. Brethren, I dare confidently tell you, that if you will but faithfully perform what you have Agreed upon both in this business of Catechizing and personal instruction, and in the matter of Discipline formerly (where we have well waved all the controverted part, which hath so much ascribed to it) you will do more for the true Reformation, that is so desirable, and hath been so long prayed and hoped for, then all the changes of forms and orders so eagerly contended for, are ever like to effect. If Bishops would do this work, I would take them for Reformers: And if Presbyters will do it, I will take them

them for Reformers: and it was those that neglected and hindred it, that I ever took for Deformers. Let us see the work well done, that God hath made so necessary for mens conversion, preservation, restauration and salvation, and the doers of it, whether Prelates or Presbyters, shall never have any fierce opposition of mine. But it is not bare Canons and Orders, and Names and Shews, that any wise man will take for the substance of Reformation! It is not Circumcision or uncircumcision, to be a Jew or a Gentile, bond or free, that availeth any thing, but a new creature, and faith that worketh by love. That is the Reformation which best healeth the Ignorance, and Infidelity, and Pride, and Hypocrisie, and Worldliness, and other killing sins of the Land, and that most effectually bringeth men to faith and holiness. Not that I would have the least truth or duty undervalued, or any part of Gods will to be rejected: But the Kingdom of God consisteth not in every truth or duty; not in ceremonies, or circumstances, not in meats or drinks; but in Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy-Ghost.

Dear Brethren, it is you and such as you, that under Christ must yet give this Nation the fruit of all their prayers and pains, their cost and blood, and heavy sufferings. All that they have been doing, for the good of the Church, and for true Reformation for so may years, was but to prepare the way for you, to come in and do the work which they desired. Alas what would they do by fire and sword, by drums and trumpets, for the converting of souls! The actions of Armies and famous Commanders, which seem so glorious, and make so great a noise that the world
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rings of them, what have they done, or what can they do that is worth the talking on without you? In themselves considered, all their victories and great achievements, are so far from being truly glorious, that they are very lamentable: and a Butcher may as well glory that he hath killed so many beasts, or a hangman that he hath executed so many men, as they can glory in the thing considered in it self. For war is the most heavy temporal judgement. And far less cause would they have to glory, if their cause and ends were wrong. And if their hearts, and ends, and cause be right, and they mean as honestly as any men in the world, yet are these great Commanders but your pioneers, to cut up the thorns that stand in your way, and to cast out the rubbish, and prepare you the way to build the house. Alas they cannot with all their victories, exalt the Lord Jesus in the soul of any sinner; and therefore they cannot set up his spiritual Kingdom; for the hearts of men are his house and throne: If the work should stop with the end of theirs, and go no further then they can carry it, we should be in the end but where we were in the beginning, and one generation of Christs enemies would succeed another, and they that take down the wicked, would inherit their vices, as they possess their rooms, and the last would be far the worst, as being deeper in the guilt, and more engaged in evil-doing. All this trouble then, and stir of the Nation, hath been to bring the work to your hands: and shall it dye there? God forbid! They have opened you the door, and at exceeding cost and sufferings have removed many of your impediments, and put the building instruments into your hands: and will you now stand still, or loyter?

loyter? God forbid! up then Brethren, and give the Nation the fruit of their cost and pains; frustrate not all the preparers work: fail not the long expectations of so many thousands, that have prayed in hope of a true Reformation, and paid in hope, and ventured in hope, and suffered in hope, and waited till now in hope. In the name of God take heed that now you fail not all these Hopes. Have they spent so long time in fencing the Vineyard, and weeding and pruning it, and making it ready for your hands: and will you now fail them that are sent to gather in the vintage, and lose all their labours? When they have plowed the field, will you sow it by the halves? If they had known beforehand that Ministers would have proved idle and unfaithful, how many hundreds would have spared their blood, and how many thousands would have sate still, and have let the old Readers and formalists alone, and have said, If we must have dullards and unprofitable men, it is as good have one as another: It is not worth so much cost and pains to change one careless Minister for another.] The end is the mover and life of the agent in all the means. How many thousands have prayed, and paid, and suffered, and more, upon the expectations of a great advantage to the Church, and more common illumination and reformation of the Nation, by your means. And will you now deceive them all! Again I say, God forbid. Now it is at your hands that they are expecting the happy issue of all. The eyes of the Nation are or should be, all (under God) upon you, for the bringing in the harvest of their cost and labours. I profess, it maketh me admire at the fearful deceitfulness of the heart of man, to see how every
man

man can call on others for duty, or censure them for the omitting it, and what excellent Judges we are in other mens cases, and how partial in our own? The very judicious Teachers of the Nation can cry out (and too justly) against one sect and another sect, and against unfaithful underminers of those that they thought would have done the work, and against the disturbers of the Reformation that was going on, and say, [These have betrayed the Church, and frustrated the Nations cost and hopes, and undone all that hath been so long a doing.] And yet they see not, or seem not to see, that it is we that are guilty of this, as much as they. It was not the Magistrates driving, but the Ministers drawing, that was the principal saving means that we have waited for. Brethren, it were a strange mistake sure, if any of us should think, that the price of the Nations wealth and blood was purposed to settle us in good Benefices, and to pull down the Bishops, and give us the quiet possession of our livings which they would have deprived us of. Was this the Reformation, that we might live in greater ease and fulness, and succeed the ejected Ministers in their less disgraced sins! Why sirs? what are we more then other men, that the people should do all this for us? that they should impoverish the whole Nation almost to provide us a livelyhood! What can they see in our Persons or Countenances for which they should so doate upon us? Are we not men, frail and corruptible flesh, unworthy sinners like themselves? Surely it was for our work, and the ends of our work, and not for our Persons (but in order to our work) that they have done all this- What say

say you now Brethren? Will you deal faithfully with your Creditors, and pay the Nation the debt which you owe them? Shall all the blood and cost of this People be frustrated, or not? You are now called upon to give your answer, and it is you that must give it. The work is now before you: And in these personal Instructions of all the Flock, as well as in publike preaching doth it consist. Others have done their part, and born their burden, and now comes in yours. You may easily see how great a matter lies upon your hands, and how many will be wronged by your failings, and how much by the sparing of your labour will be lost. If your labour be more worth than all our treasures, hazards and lives, and then the souls of men, and the blood of Christ, then sit still, and look not after the ignorant or the ungodly; follow your pleasure or worldly business, or take your ease, displease not sinners, nor your own flesh, but let your neighbours sink or swim; and if publike preaching will not save them, let them perish. But if the case be far otherwise, you were best look about you. (But I shall say more of this anon.)

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SECT. II.

II. **H**AVING given you the first sort of moving Reasons, which were drawn from the Benefits of the present undertaken work. I come to the second sort, which are taken from the difficulties; which if they were taken alone, or in a needless business, I confess might be rather discouragements than motives: But taking these, with those that go before and follow, and the case is otherwise. For difficulties must excite to greater diligence in a necessary work.

And difficulties we shall find many, both in our selves and in our people; which because they are things so obvious that your experience will leave no room for doubting, I shall take leave to pass them over in a few words.

1. In ourselves there is much dulness and laziness, so that there will be much ado to get us to be faithful in so hard a work. Like a sluggard in bed, that knows he should rise, and yet delayeth and would stay as long as he can; so do we by duties that our corrupt natures are against, and put us to the use of all our powers. More sloath will tye the hands of many.

2. We have also a base man-pleasing disposition, which will make us let men perish lest we lose their love, and let them go quietly to hell, lest we should make them angry with us for seeking their salvation: and we are ready to venture on the displeasure of
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God, and venture our people into everlasting misery, rather than get ill-will to ourselves. This distemper must be diligently resisted,

3. We have some of us also a foolish bashfulness, which makes us very backward to begin with them, and to speak plainly to them: we are so modest forsooth, that we blush to speak for Christ, or to contradict the Devil, or to save a soul: when shameful works we are less ashamed of.

4. We are so carnal, that we are prone by our fleshly interests, to be drawn to unfaithfulness in the work of Christ. Lest we lose our Tythes, or bring trouble upon ourselves, or set people against us, and many such like. All these require diligence for their resistance.

5. The greatest impediment of all is, that we are too weak in the faith: So that when we should set upon a man for his conversion with all our might, if there be not the stirrings of unbelief within us, to raise up actual questionings of Heaven and Hell, whether the things that we should earnestly press be true, yet at least the belief of them is so weak, that it will hardly excite in us so kindly, resolute, and constant zeal: So that our whole motion will be but weak, because the spring of faith is so weak. O what need therefore have all Ministers for themselves and their work, to look well to their faith, especially that their Assent to the truth of Scripture, about the Joy and Torments of the life to come, be sound and lively.

6. And lastly, we have commonly a great deal of unskilfulness and unfitness for this work. Alas how few know how to deal with an ignorant worldly man
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for his salvation! To get within him, and win upon him, and suit all speeches to mens several conditions and tempers, to choose the meetest subjects, and follow them with the holy mixture of seriousness, and terroure, and love, and meekness, and evangelical allurements! O who is fit for such a thing! I profess seriously, it seems to me (by experience) as hard a matter to confer aright with such a carnal person in order to his change, as to preach such Sermons as ordinarily we do, if not much more. All these Difficulties in our selves should waken us to resolutions, preparation and diligence, that we be not overcome by them, and hindred from, or in the work.

2. **A**ND for our people, we have as many Difficulties to encounter with in them.

1. Too many of them will be obstinately unwilling to be taught; and scorn to come at us, as being too good to be catechized, or too old to learn: unless we deal wisely with them in publike and private, by the force of Reasons, the power of Love to conquer their perversness; which we must carefully endeavour.

2. And so great is the dulness of many that are willing, that they can scarce learn a leaf of a Catechism in a long time, and therefore will keep away, as ashamed of their ignorance, unless we are wise and diligent to encourage them.

3. And when they do come, so great is their ignorance and unapprehensiveness, that you will find it a wonderful hard matter to get them to understand

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you, so that if you have not the skill of making things plain, you will leave them as strange to it, as before.

4. And yet harder will you find it to work things upon their hearts, and set them so close to the quick, as to make that saving change which is our end, and without which our labour is almost lost. Oh what a block, what a rock is a hardened carnal heart! How stiffly will it resist the most powerful perswasions! and hear of everlasting life or death as a thing of nothing! If you have not therefore great seriousness, and fervency, and working matter, and fitness of expression, what good can you expect? And when all is done, the spirit of Grace must do the work: But as God and men do use to choose instruments most suitable to the nature of the agent, work or end, so here the spirit of wisdom, life, and holiness, doth not use to work by foolish, dead or carnal instruments, but by such perswasions of Light, and Life, and Purity, as are likeliest to it self, and to the work that is to be wrought thereby.

5. And when you have made some desirable Impressions on their hearts, if you look not after them, and have not a special care of them when they are gone, their hearts will soon return to their former hardness, and their old companions, and temptations will work off all again. I do but briefly hint these things which you so well know. All the difficulties of the work of conversion, which you use to acquaint the people with, are here before us in our present work; which I will forbear to enumerate, as supposing it unnecessary.

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SECT. III.

III. **T**HE third sort of moving Reasons are drawn from the Necessity of the undertaken work: For if it were not Necessary, the lazy might be discouraged rather than excited, by the forementioned difficulties, as is aforesaid. And if we should here expatiate, we might find matter for a volumn by it self. But because I have already been longer then I did intend, I shall only give you a brief hint of some of the general grounds of this Necessity.

And 1. it is Necessary by Obligation, *Ut Officium, Necessitate præceoti*: and 2. It is necessary *ad finem*; and that, 1. For God. 2. For our neighbours. 3. And for our selves.

1. For the first of these. 1. We have on us the Obligation of Scripture-precepts. 1. General. 2. Special. And 2. the subservient obligation (or the first bound faster on us) by Promises and Threatnings. 3. And these also seconded by executions, even 1. by actual Judgements: 2. and mercies. And lastly, we have the Obligation of our own undertaking upon us. These all deserve your Consideration, but may not be insisted on by me, lest I be over tedious.

1. Every Christian is Obliged to do all that he can for the salvation of others, but every Minister is doubly obliged, because he is separated to the Gospel of Christ, and is to give up himself wholly to that

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work.

work. *Rom.* 1. 1. 1 *Tim.* 4. 15. It is needless to make any further question of our Obligation, when we know that this work is needful to our peoples conversion and salvation, and that we are in general commanded to do all that is needful to those ends, as far as we are able. That they are necessary to those ends hath been shewed before; and shall be more anon. Even the antient professors, have need to be taught the Principles of Gods Oracles, if they have neglected it, or forgot it, saith the Apostle, *πάλιν χρείαν ἔχετε τοῦ διδάσκειν ὑμᾶς τίνα τὰ σοιζεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων τοῦ Θεοῦ.* *Heb.* 5. 12. Whether the unconverted have need of conversion and the means of it, I hope is no doubt among us: And whether this be a means, and a needful means, experience may put us far out of doubt, if we had no more. Let them that have taken most pains in publike, examine their people, and try whether many of them be not yet as ignorant and careless almost, as if they had never heard the Gospel. For my part, I study to speak as plainly and movingly as I can, (and next my study to speak truly, these are my chief studies) and yet I frequently meet with those that have been my hearers this 8. or 10. years, who know not whether Christ be God or man, and wonder when I tell them the history of his birth, and life, and death, and sending abroad the Gospel, as if they had never heard it before, and that know not that Infants have any original sin: And of those that know the History of the Gospel, how few are they that know the nature of that faith, repentance, and holiness, that it requireth; Or at least, that know their own hearts? But most of them have an ungrounded affiance in
Christ,

Christ, trusting that he will pardon, justifie and save them, while the world hath their hearts, and they live to the flesh: And this assiance they take for a justifying-faith. I have found by experience, that an ignorant sot that hath been an unprofitable hearer so long, hath got more knowledge and remorse of conscience in half an hours close discourse, then they did from ten years publike preaching. I know that preaching of the Gospel publikely is the most excellent means, because we speak to many at once: But otherwise, it is usually far more effectual to preach it privately to a particular sinner, as to himself. For the plainest man that is, can scarce speak plain enough in publike for them to understand; but in private we may much more. In publike, we may not use such homely expressions, or repetitions, as their dulness doth require, but in private we may: In publike our speeches are long, and we quite over-run their understandings and memories, and they are confounded and at a loss, and not able to follow us, and one thing drives out another and so they know not what we said: But in private we can take our work *gradatim*, and take our hearers with us as we go; and by questions and their answers, we can see how far they go with us, and what we have next to do. In publike, by length and speaking alone, we lose their attentions: But when they are Interlocutors, we can easily cause them to attend. Besides that, we can (as was abovesaid) better answer their Objections, and engage them by Promises before we leave them, which in publike we cannot do. I conclude therefore that publike preaching will not be sufficient: For though it may be an effectual means to convert many, yet
not

not so many; as experience, and Gods appointment of further means, may assure us. Long may you study and preach to little purpose, if you neglect this duty.

2. And for instances of particular special Obligations, we might easily shew you many, both from Christs own example, who used this interlocutory preaching, both to his Disciples and to the Jews, and from the Apostles examples, who did the like: But that indeed it would be needless tediousness to recite the passages to those that so well know them, it being the most ordinary way of the Apostles preaching, to do it thus interlocutorily and by discourse: And when they did make a speech any thing long to the people, yet the people and they discourse it out in the conclusion. Thus *Peter* preached to the Jews, *Acts* 2 and to *Cornelius* and his friends, *Acts* 10. and thus *Philip* preached to the Eunuch, *Acts* 9. and thus *Paul* preached to the Jaylor, *Acts* 16. and to many others. Its plain that it was the commonest preaching of those times, which occasioneth the Quakers to challenge us to shew where any ever took a text, and preacht as we do: (though they might have found that Christ did so, *Luk.* 4. 18.) *Paul preached privately to them of reputation, lest he should have run, and laboured in vain, Gal.* 2. 2. And that earnest charge no doubt includeth it, *2 Tim.* 4. 1, 2. *I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall Judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom; Preach the word, be instant in season, and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and Doctrine.* Both publike preaching, and all sorts of Reproofs and Exhortations are here required.

3. And

3. And how these preceptss are seconded with promises and threatnings, is so well known, that I shall pass it over with the rest.

2. **T**Here is a Necessity also of this Duty *ad finem*; and first, To the Creater Glory of God, by the fuller success of the Gospel: Not *simply to his Glory*, as if he could not have his Glory without it: for so our salvation is not Necessary to his Glory: but to his Greater Glory: because he is most honoured and pleased when most are saved: For he hath sworn that he hath no pleasure in the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he return and live. And doubtless as every Christian liveth to the Glory of God, as his End so will he gladly take that course that may most effectually promote it: For what man would not attain his Ends? O Brethren if we could generally set this work a foot in all the Parishes of *England*, and get our people to submit to it, and then prosecute it skilfully and zealously our selves, what a Glory would it put upon the face of the Nation, and what Glory would redound to God thereby? If our common Ignorance were thus banished, and our vanity and idleness turned into the study of the way of life, and every Shop, and every house were busied in learning of Catechisms, and speaking of the word and works of God, what Pleasure would God take in our Cities and Countries? He would even dwell in our habitations and make them his delight. It is the Glory of Christ that shineth in his Saints; and all their Glory is his

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Glory;

Glory; that therefore which honoureth them, in Number, or excellency, that honoureth him; Will not the Glory of Christ be most wonderful and conspicuous in the new *Jerusalem*, when the Church shall have that shining lustre that is described in *Rev.* 21.? It is he that is the sun and the shield of his Church, and his light is it in which they shall have light; and the business of every Saint is to glorifie him: If therefore we can increase the Number or strength of the Saints, we thereby increase the honour of the King of Saints; For he will have service and praise where before he had disobedience and dishonour. Christ also will be honoured in the fruits of his bloodshed, and the spirit of Grace in the fruit of his operations; And do not all these Ends require that we use the means with diligence?

2. This Duty also is necessary to the welfare of our people: How much doth it conduce to their salvation is manifest. Brethren can you look believably on your miserable neighbours, and not perceive them calling for your help? There is not a sinner whose case you should not so far compassionate, as to be willing to relieve them at dearer rates then this comes to. Can you see them as the wounded man by the way, and unmercifully pass by? Can you hear them cry to you, as the man of *Macedonia* to *Paul* in his vision, come and help us? and yet will you refuse your help? Are you entrusted with an hospital, where one languisheth in one corner, and another groaneth in another, and cryeth out, O help me, pity me for the Lords sake, and a third is raging mad, and would destroy himself and you, and yet will you sit idle, or refuse your help?

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If it may be said of him that relieveth not mens bodies, how much more of them that relieve not mens souls, that *if you see your brother have need, and shut up the bowels of your Compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in you?* You are not such Monsters, such hard-hearted men, but you will pity a Leper, you will pity the naked, imprisoned or desolate, you will pity him that is tormented with grievous pain or sickness; And will you not pity an ignorant hard-hearted sinner? will you not pity one that must be shut out from the presence of the Lord, and lie under his remediless wrath, if through Repentance speedily prevent it not? O what a heart is it that will not pity such a one? what shall I call the heart of such a man? a heart of stone, or a very rock, or adamant, or the heart of a Tyger? or rather the heart of an Infidel? for sure if he believed the misery of the impenitent, it is not possible but he should have pity on him! Can you tell men in the Pulpit, that they shall certainly be damned except they repent, and yet have no pity on them when you have proclaimed such a danger? And if you pity them, will you not do this much for their salvation? what abundance round about you are blindly hastening to perdition? and your voice is appointed to be the means of reclaiming them. The Physician hath no excuse who is doubly bound to relieve the sick, when every neighbour is to help them. Brethren, what if you heard sinners cry after you in the streets, *O Sir; have pity on me, and afford me your advice! I am afraid of the everlasting wrath of God! I know I must shortly leave this world, and I am afraid lest I shall be miserable in the next!*

Could

Could you deny your help to such a sinner? What if they came to your Study-door, and cryed for help, and would not away, till you had told them how to escape the wrath of God? could you find in your hearts to drive them away without advice? I am confident you could not. Why, alas such persons are less miserable then they that cannot cry for help. It is the hardened sinner that cares not for your help that most needeth it: and he that hath not so much life as to feel that he is dead, nor so much light as to see his danger, nor so much sense left as to pity himself, this is the man that is most to be pityed. Look upon your neighbours round about you, and think what abundance need your help in no less a case then the apparent danger of damnation. And every impenitent person that you see and know about you, suppose that you hear them cry to you for help *as ever you pitied poor wretches pity us, lest we should be tormented in the flames of hell: if you have the hearts of men, pity us:* And do that for them that you would do if they followed you with such complaints. O how can you walk and talk, and be merry with such people, when you know their case? Me thinks when you look them in the face, and think how they must lie in perpetual misery, you should break forth into tears (as the Prophet did when he looked upon *Hazael*,) and then fall on with the most importunate Exhortations! when you must visit them in their sickness, will it not wound your hearts, to see them ready to depart into misery, before you have ever dealt seriously with them for their recovery? O then for the Lords sake, and for the sake of poor souls,

souls, have pity on them, and bestir your selves, and spare no pains that may conduce to their salvation.

3. **A**Nd I must further tell you, that this Ministerial fidelity is Necessary to your own welfare, as well as to your peoples. For this is your work, according to which (among others) you shall be judged. You can no more be saved without *Ministerial* diligence and fidelity, then they or you can be saved without *Christian* diligence and fidelity, If you care not for others, at least care for your selves. O what is it to answer for the neglect of such a charge? and what sins more hainous then the betraying of souls? Doth not that threatning make us tremble? [*If thou warn not the wicked—their blood will I require at thy hands.*] I am afraid, nay I am past doubt, that the day is near when unfaithful Ministers will wish that they had never known that charge. But that they had rather been Colliars or Tinkers, or sweepers of Channels, then Pastors of Christs flock! when besides all the rest of their sins, they shall have the blood of so many souls to answer for. O Brethren, our death as well as our peoples is at hand! and it is as terrible to an unfaithful Pastor as to any. When we see that dye we must, and there is no remedy, no wit or learning, no credit or popular applause can put by the stroke, or delay the time; but willing or unwilling, our souls must be gone, and that into a world that we never saw, where our persons and
worldly

worldly interest will not be respected, O then for a clear Conscience, that can say [*I lived not to my self but to Christ, I spared not my pains, I hid not my talent; I concealed not mens misery, nor the way of their recovery.*] O Sirs, let us therefore take time while we may have it, and work while it is day, for the night cometh when none can work. This is our day too: and by doing good to others, we must do good to our selves. If you would prepare for a comfortable death, and a sure and great Reward, the harvest is before you: gird up the loins of your minds, and quit your selves like men; that you may end your days with that confident triumph [*I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith, I have finished my course; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of Righteousness, which God the righteous Judge shall give me*] And if you would be blessed with those that dye in the Lord; Labour now, that you may rest from your labours then, and do such works as you would wish should follow you, and not such as will prove your terror in the review.

SECT. IV.

HAVING found so great Reason to move us to this work, I shall, before I come to the Directions. 1. Apply them further for our Humiliation and Excitation. And 2. answer some Objections that may be raised.

And 1. what cause have we to bleed before the Lord this day, that have neglected so great and good a work so long? That we have been Ministers of the Gospel so many years, and done so little by personal instructions and conference for the saving of mens souls! If we had but set a work this business sooner, that we have now agreed upon, who knows how many more might have been brought over unto Christ? and how much happier we might have made our Parishes, ere now? And why might we not have done it sooner as well as now? I confess many impediments were in our way, and so there are still, and will be while there is a Devil to tempt, and a corrupt heart in man to resist the light: But if the greatest impediment had not been in our selves, even in our own darkness, and dulness, and undisposedness to duty, and our dividedness and unaptness to close for the work of God, I see not but much might have been done before this. We had the same God to command us, and the same miserable objects of compassion, and the same liberty from Governors of the Commonwealth. But we stood looking for changes, and we would have had the Magistrate not only to have
given

given us leave to work, but have done our work for us, or at least to have brought the game to our hands, and while we lookt for better daies, we made them worse, by the lamentable neglect of a chief part of our work. And had we as much petitioned Parliaments for the interposition of their Authority to compell men to be catechized and instructed by the Minister, as we did for maintenance and other matters; its like we might have obtained it long ago, when they were forward to gratifie us in such undisputable things. But we have sinned, and have no just excuse for our sin; somewhat that may perhaps excuse *à tanto*, but nothing *à toto*; and the sin is so great, because the duty is so great, that we should be afraid of pleading excuse too much. The Lord of Mercy forgive us, and all the Ministry of *England*, and lay not this or any of our Ministerial negligences to our charge. O that he would cover all our unfaithfulness, and by the blood of the everlasting Covenant, would wash away our guilt of the blood of souls, that when the chief Shepherd shall appear, we may stand before him in peace, and may not be condemned for the scattering of his Flock. And O that he would put up his controversie which he hath against the Pastors of his Church, and not deal the hardlyer with them for our sakes; nor suffer underminers or persecutors to scatter them, as they have suffered his Sheep to be scattered! and that he will not care as little for them, as they have done for the souls of men; nor think his salvation too good for them, as they have thought their labour and sufferings too much for mens salvation: and as we have had many daies of Humiliation in *England*, for the
sins

sins of the Land, and the Judgements that have lain upon us, I hope we shall hear that God will more thoroughly humble the Ministry, and cause them to bewail their own neglects, and to set apart some daies through the Land to that end; that they may not think it enough to lament the sins of others, while they over-look their own; and that God may not abhor our solemn National humiliations, because they are managed by unhumbled Guides; and that we may first prevail with him for a pardon for our selves, that we may be the fitter to beg for the pardon of others.

And O that we might cast out the dung of our Pride, Contention, Self-seeking and Idleness, lest God should cast our sacrifices as dung in our faces, and should cast us out as the dung of the earth, as of late he hath done many others for our warning! and that we might presently Resolve in concord to mend our pace, before we feel a sharper spur then hitherto we have felt.

SECT. V.

2. **A**ND now Brethren, what have we to do for the time to come, but to deny our lazy contradicting flesh, and rouze up our selves to the business that we are engaged in. The harvest is great, the labourers are too few; the loyterers and contentious hinderers are many; the souls of men are precious; the misery of sinners is great; and the everlasting misery that they are near to is greater; the
beauty

beauty and glory of the Church is desirable; the joy that we are helping them to, is unconceivable; the comfort that followeth a faithful steward-ship is not small; the comfort of a full success also will be greater; to be co-workers with God and his Spirit, is not a little honour; to subserve the blood-shed of Christ for mens salvation is not a light thing: to lead on the Armies of Christ through the thickest of the enemies, and guide them safely through a dangerous wilderness, and steer the vessel through such storms, and rocks, and sands, and shelves, and bring it safe to the harbour of Rest, requireth no small skill and diligence: the fields now seem even white unto harvest, the preparations that have been made for us are very great; the season of working is more warm and calm, then most ages before us have ever seen: we have carelessly loytered too long already; the present time is posting away; while we are trifling, men are dying, & how fast are men passing into another world? And is there nothing in all this to awaken us to our duty, and to resolve us to speedy and unwearied diligence? Can we think that a man can be too careful and painful under all these motives and engagements? Or could that man be a fit instrument for other mens illumination, that were himself so blind? or for the quickning of others, that were himself so senseless? What Sirs, are you that are men of wisdom as dull as the common people? and do we need to heap up a multitude of words to perswade you to a known and weighty duty? One would think it should be enough to set you on work, to shew a line in the Book of God, to prove it to be his will? or to prove to you that the work hath a tendency to mens salvation?

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One would think that the very sight of your miserable neighbours should be motive sufficient to draw out your most compassionate endeavours for their relief? If a cripple do but unlap his sores, and shew you his disabled limbs, it will move you without words? and will not the case of souls that are near to damnation move you? O happy Church, if the Physicians were but healed themselves! and if we had not too much of that Infidelity and stupidity which we daily preach against, in others! and were soundly perswaded of that which we perswade men of, and deeply affected with the wonderful things, wherewith we would affect them! Were there but such clear and deep impressions upon our souls, of those glorious things that we daily preach, O what a change would it make in our Sermons, and in our private course! O what a miserable thing it is to the Church and to themselves, that men must preach of Heaven and Hell, before they soundly believe that there are such things! Or have felt the weight of the Doctrines which they preach! It would amaze a sensible man to think what matters we preach and talk of! What it is for the soul to pass out of this flesh, and go before a righteous God, and enter upon unchangeable Joy or Torment! O with what amazing thoughts do dying men apprehend those things! How should such matters be preacht and discoursed of? O the gravity, the seriousness, the uncessant diligence, that these things require! I know not what others think of them, but for my part, I am ashamed of my stupidity, and wonder at my self that I deal not with my own and others souls, as one that looks for the great day of the Lord; and that I can

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have

have room for almost any other thoughts or words, and that such astonishing matters do not wholly take me up: I marvel how I can preach of them slightly and coldly! and how I can let men alone in their sins! and that I do not go to them and beseech them for the Lords sake to Repent, how ever they take it, and whatever pains or trouble it should cost me! I seldom come out of the Pulpit, but my Conscience smiteth me that I have been no more serious and servent in such a Case.

It accuseth me not so much for want of humane ornaments or elegancy, nor for letting fall an unhansom word But it asketh me *How couldst thou speak of Life and Death with such a Heart? How couldst thou Preach of Heaven and Hell, in such a careless sleepy manner? Dost thou believe what thou saist? Art thou in earnest or in jest? How canst thou tell people that sin is such a thing, and that so much misery is upon them and before them, and be no more affected with it? shouldst thou not weep over such a people, and should not thy tears interrupt thy words? shouldst thou not cry aloud, and shew them their transgressions? and intreat and beseech as for life and death.* Truly this is the peal that Conscience doth ring in my ears, and yet my drouzie soul will not be awakened! O what a thing is a senseless hardened heart! O Lord save us from the plague of Infidelity and Hard-heartedness our selves, or else how shall we be fit Instruments of saving others from it! O do that on our own souls, which thou wouldst use us to do on the souls of others! I am even confounded to think what difference there is between my sickness apprehensions, and my Pulpit and discour-
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sing apprehensions of the life to come? That ever that can seem so light a matter to me now, which seemeth so great and astonishing a matter then; and I know will do so again when death looks me in the face, when yet I daily know and think of that approaching hour! and yet those fore thoughts will not recover such working apprehensions? O Brethren sure if you had all conversed with neighbour-death as oft as I have done, and as often received the sentence in your selves, you would have an unquiet Conscience, if not a reformed life in your Ministerial diligence and fidelity; and you would have something within you that would frequently ask you such questions as these: *Is this all thy Compassion on lost sinners? wilt thou do no more to seek and to save them? Is there not such and such, and such a one, O how many round about thee, that are yet the visible sons of death? What hast thou said to them or done for their recovery? shall they dye, and be in Hell before thou wilt speak to them one serious word to prevent it? shall they there curse thee for ever that didst no more in time to save them?* such cries of Conscience are daily in mine ears, though the Lord knows I have too little obeyed them. The God of Mercy pardon me, and awake me, with the rest of his servants that have been thus sinfully negligent, I confess to my shame, that I seldom hear the Bell toll for one that is dead, but Conscience asketh me *What hast thou done for the saving of that soul before it left the body? There is one more gone to Judgement: what didst thou to prepare them for Judgement?* and yet I have been slothful and backward to help the rest that do survive. How can you

chuse, when you are laying a Corps in the grave, but think with your selves, *Here lieth the body, but where is the soul? and what have I done for it, before it departed? It was part of my charge, what account can I give of it,* O Sirs, is it a small matter to you to answer such questions, as these? It may seem so now, but the hour is coming when it will not seem so. If our hearts condem us. God is greater then our hearts, and will condemn us much more even with another kind of Condemnation then Conscience doth. The voice of conscience now is a stil voice, and the sentence of Conscience is a gentle sentence, in comparison of the voice, and the sentence of God. Alas! Conscience seeth but a very little of our sin and misery, in comparison of what God seeth. What mountains would these things appear to your souls, which now seem mole hils? What beams would these be in your eyes that now seem motes, if you did but see them with a clearer light? (I dare not say, As God seeth them) we can easily make shift to plead the Cause with Conscience, and either bribe it, or bear its sentence: but God is not so easily dealt with, nor his sentence so easily born. *Wherefore we receiving (and preaching) a Kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence, and Godly fear: for our God is a Consuming fire,* Heb. 12. ult. But because you shall not say, that I affright my self or you with bug bears, and tell you of dangers and terrors when there are none, I will here add the certainty and sureness of that Condemnation, that is like to befall the negligent Pastors, and particularly that will befall us that are here this day, if we shall

shall hereafter be wilful neglecters of this great work; How many will be ready to rise up against us to our Condemnation?

1. Our Parents that destinated us to the Ministry may condemn us, and say, *Lord we devoted them to thy service, and they made light of it, and serv'd themselves.*

2. Our Masters that taught us, our Tutors that instructed us; The Schools and Universities that we lived in, and all the years that we spent in study, may rise up in judgement against us, and Condemn us: For why was all this, but for the work of God?

3. Our Learning and Knowledge and Ministerial gifts will condemn us; For to what are we made partakers of these, but for the work of God?

4 Our voluntary undertaking the Charge of souls will condemn us; For all men should be true to the trust, that they have undertaken?

5. All the Care of God for his Church, and all, that Christ hath done and suffered for them, will rise up in judgement against us, if we be negligent and unfaithful, and condemn us: For that we did by our neglect destroy them for whom Christ dyed.

6. All the severe Precepts and Charges of holy Scripture, with the Promises of Assistance and reward and the threatnings of punishment, will rise up against the unfaithful and condemn them; For God did not speak all this in vain.

7. All the Examples of the Prophets and Apostles and other Preachers recorded in Scripture, will rise up against such and condemn them: even

this pattern that is set them by *Paul, Acts 20*. And all the examples of the diligent servants of Christ in these latter times, and in the places about them. For these were for their imitation, and to provoke them to a holy emulation in fidelity and Ministerial diligence.

8. The Holy Bible that is open before us, and all the Books in our studies that tell us of our duty, directly or indirectly, may condemn the lazy and unprofitable servant: For we have not all these helps and furniture in vain.

9. All the Sermons that we preach to perswade our people to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, to lay violent hands upon the Crown, and take the Kingdom as by force, to strive to enter in at the strait gate, and so to run as they that may obtain, &c. will rise up against the unfaithful and condemn them. For if it so nearly concern them to labour for their salvation, doth it not concern us who have the charge of them to be also violent, laborious, and unwearied in striving to help on their salvation? Is it worth their labour, and patience, and is it not also worth ours?

10. All the Sermons that we preach to them to set out the danger of a natural state, the evil of sin, the need of Christ, and Grace, the Joyes of heaven, and the torments of hell, yea and the truth of Christian Religion, will rise up in Judgement against such and condemn them. And a sad review it will be to themselves, when they shall be forc't to think Did I tell them of such great dangers and hopes in publike, and would I do no more to help them in private? What tell them daily of threatned damnation, and yet let them

them run into it so easily? Tell them of such a Glory, and scarce speak a word to them personallly to help them to it? Were these such great matters with me at Church, and so small when I came home?]
All this is dreadful self-condemnation.

11. All the Sermons that we have preached to perswade other men to such duties, as neighbours to exhort one another daily, and plainly to rebuke them, and parents and masters to do it to their children and servants, will rise up in Judgement against such, and condemn them. For will you perswade others to that which you will not do (as far as you can) your selves? When you threaten them for neglecting it, you threaten your own souls.

12. All our hard censures of the Magistrate for doing no more, and all our reproofs of him for permitting Seducers, and denying his further assistance to the Ministers, doth condemn our selves if we refuse our own duty. What must all the Rulers of the world be servants to our sloathfulness, or light us the candle to do nothing, or only hold the stirrup to our Pride, or make our beds for us, that we may sleep by day-light? Should they do their part in a subordinate office to protect and further us, and should not we do ours who stand nearest to the end?

13. All the maintenance that we take for our service if we be unfaithful will condemn us: For who is it that will pay a servant to take his pleasure, or sit still or work for himself? If we have the Fleece, it is sure that we may look to the block. And by taking the wages, we oblige our selves to the work.

14. All the honour that we expect or receive from the people, and all the Ministerial Priviledges before

mentioned will condemn the unfaithful: For the honour is but the encouragement to the work, and obligeth to it.

15. All the witness that we have born against the scandalous negligent Ministers of this age, and the words we have spoken against them, and all the endeavours that we have used for their removal, will condemn the unfaithful. For God is no respecter of persons: If we succed them in their sins, we spoke all that against ourselves. And as we condemned them, God and others will condemn us, if we imitate them. And though we be not so bad as they, it will prove sad to be too like them.

16. All the Judgements that God hath executed on them in this age before our eyes, will condemn us if we be unfaithful: Hath he made the idle Shepherds and sensual drones, to stink in the nostrils of the people? and will he honour us, if we be idle and sensual? Hath he sequestred them, and cast them out of their habitations, and out of the Pulpits, and laid them by, as dead, while they are alive, and made them a hissing and a by-word in the Land? and yet dare we imitate them? Are not their sufferings our warnings? and did not all this befall them for our examples? If any thing in the world should waken Ministers to self-denial and diligence, one would think we had seen enough to do it! If the Judgements of God on one man should do so much, what should so many years judgement on so many hundreds of them do? Would you have imitated the old world, if you had seen the flood that drowned them! Would you have taken up the sins of *Sodom*, Pride, Fulness of bread, Idleness, if you had stood by and seen the flames of *Sodom*!

This was Gods argument to deter the Israelites from the Nations sins, because, *for all these things they had seen them cast one before them*. Who would have been a *Judas* that had seen him hanged and burst? and who would have been a lying sacrilegious hypocrite, that had seen *Ananias* and *Saphira* dye? And who would not have been afraid to contradict the Gospel, that had seen *Elymas* smitten blind? And shall we prove self-seeking, idle Ministers, when we have seen God scourging such out of his Temple, and sweeping them away as dirt into the Channels? God forbid! For then how great, and how manifold will our condemnation be?

17. All the Disputations and eager contests that we have had against unfaithful men, and for a faithful Ministry, will condemn us, if we be unfaithful? And so will the Books that we have written to those ends. How many score, if not hundreds of Catechisms are written in *England*? and yet shall we forbear to use them? How many Books have been written for Discipline, by English and Scottish Divines? and how fully hath it been defended? and what reproach hath been cast upon the adversaries of it through the Land? And yet shall we lay it by, as useless, when we have free leave to use! O fearful hypocrisy! What can we call it less? Did we think when we were writing against this sect, and the sect that opposed Discipline, that we were writing all that against our selves? O what Evidence do the Book-sellers shops, and their own Libraries contain against the greatest part, even of the godly Ministers of the Land! The Lord cause them seasonably to lay it to heart.

18. All the daies of fasting and prayer that have been of late years kept in *England* so a Reformation, will rise up in Judgement against the unreformed, that will not be perswaded to the painful part of the work. And I confess it is so heavy an aggravation of our sin, that it makes me ready to tremble to think of it. Was there ever a Nation on the race of the earth that hath so solemnly and so long, followed God with fasting and prayer as we have done? Before the Parliament began, how frequent and servent were we in secret: After that for many years time together, we had a monethly Fast commanded by the Parliament: besides frequent private and publike Fasts on the by. And what was all this for? What ever was sometime the means that we lookt at, yet still the end of all our Prayers was Church-Reformation, and therein especially these two things; *A faithful Ministry; and Exercise of Discipline in the Church:* And did it once enter then into the hearts of the people, yea or into our own hearts to imagine, that when we had all that we would have, and the matter was put into our own hands, to be as painful as we could, and to exercise what Discipline we would, that then we would do nothing (but publicly preach) that we would not be at the pains of Catechizing and Instructing our people personally? nor exercise any considerable part of Discipline at all? It astonisheth me to think of it! What a depth of deceit is it, the heart of man! What, are good mens hearts so deceitful? Are all mens hearts so deceitful? I confess I told many souldiers and other sensual men then, that when they had fought for a Reformation, I was confident they would abhorr it and be enemies to it,
when

when they saw and felt it: thinking that the yolk of Discipline would have pincht their necks: and that when they had been catechized and personally dealt with, and reprov'd for their sin, in private and publike, and brought to publike confeston and repentance, or avoided as impenitent, they would have scorned and spurned against all this, and have taken the yolk of Christ for tyrannie: But little did I think that the Ministers would have let all fall, and put almost none of this upon them, but have let them alone for fear of displeasing them, and have let all run on as it did before.

O the earnest prayers that I have heard in secret daies heretofore for *a Painful Ministry, and for Discipline!* As if they had even wrestled for salvation it self? Yea they commonly called Discipline, *The Kingdom of Christ; or the Exercise of his Kingly office in his Church;* and so preached and prayed for it, as if the setting up of Discipline, had been the setting up of the Kingdom of Christ. And did I then think that they would refuse to set it up when they might! What is the Kingdom of Christ now reckoned among the things indifferent!

If the God of heaven that knew our hearts, had in the midst of our Prayers and Cries on one of our Publike monethly Fasts, returned us this answer with his dreadful voice, in the audience of the Assembly, *You deceitful hearted sinners; what Hypocrisie is this, to weary me with your cries for that which you will not have if I would give it you! and thus to lift up your voices for that which your souls abhor! what is Reformation, but the instructing and importunate persuading of sinners to entertain my Christ and Grace as*
offered

offered them, and the Governing my Church according to my word? and these which are your work, you will not be perswaded to when you come to find it troublesom and ungreatful! when I have delivered you, it is not me but your selves that you will serve; and I must be as earnest to perswade you to reform the Church in doing your own duty, as you are earnest with me to grant you liberty for reformation? and when all is done, you will leave it undone, and will be long before you will be perswaded to my work. I say, if the Lord or any Messenger of his, had given us in such an answer, would it not have amazed us, and have seemed incredible to us, that our hearts should have been such as now they prove! and would we not have said as Hazael, Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing? Or as Peter, Though all men forsake or deny thee, I will not! Well Brethren! too sad experience hath shewed us our frailty: We have denyed the troublesom and costly part of the Reformation, that we prayed for! But Christ yet turneth back, and looketh with a merciful eye upon us. O that we had yet the hearts, immediately to go out & weep bitterly, and to do so, as we have done, no more, lest a worse thing come unto us, and now to follow Christ through labour and suffering, though it were to the death, whom we have so far forsaken.

19. All the Judgements upon the Nation, the cost, the labour, the blood, and the deliverances, and all the endeavours of the Governors for Reformation, will rise up against us if we now refuse to be faithful for a Reformation, when it is before us, and at our will.

I have said somewhat of this before. Hath God
been

been hewing us out a way with his sword, and leveling opposers by his terrible Judgements, and yet will we sit still or play the sluggards? Have *England, Scotland and Ireland* paid so dear for a Reformation, and now shall some men treacherously strangle it in the birth, and others expose it to contempt, and overrun it? and others sit still and look on it as a thing not worth the trouble: How many thousand persons may come to the condemnation of such men? The whole Countries may say, *Lord we have been plundered, and ruined or much impoverished, we have paid taxes these many years, and it was a Reformation that was pretended, and that we were promised, in all; and now the Ministers that should be the instruments of it do neglect it:* Many thousands may say, *Lord we ventured our lives in obedience to a Parliament, that promised Reformation, and now we cannot have it.* The souls of many, that have dyed in these wars may cry out against us, *Lord it was the hopes of a Reformation that we fought and suffered for, in obedience to those Governors that professed to intend it; and now the Pastors reject it by their idleness.* The Parliament may say, *How long did we sit and consult about Reformation; and now the Ministers will not execute the power that is granted them?* The Nation may say, *How oft did we beg it of God, and Petition the Parliament for it, and now the Ministers deny us the enjoyment of it?* Yea God himself may say, *How many prayers have I heard! and what dangers have I delivered you from! how many! and how great! and in what a wonderful manner! And what do you think it was, that I delivered you for? Was it not that you should do my work! And will you betray it, or neglect it after all this?* Truly Sirs, I know

know not what others think, but when I consider the Judgements that we have felt, and the wonders of Mercy that my eyes have seen, to the frequent astonishment of my soul, as I know it is great matters that these things oblige us to, so I am afraid lest they should be charged on me as the aggravations of my neglect. I hear every exasperated party still flying in the faces of the rest, and one saith *It was you that killed the King*, and the other saith *It was you that fought against a Parliament, and put them to defend themselves, and drencht the land in blood*. But the Lord grant that it be not *we*, if we prove negligent in our Ministry, and betray the Reformation that God hath called us to, that shall have all this blood and misery charged on us, yea though we had never any other hand therein: And that the Lord say not of us, as of *John*, even when he had destroyed the house of *Ahab* by his command, because he accomplished not the Reformation which that execution tended to, *Yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Iezrael on the house of Jehu*, Hos. 1. 4. O Sirs, can we find in our hearts to lose all the cost and trouble of the three Nations, and all to save us a little trouble in the Issue, and so to bring the guilt of all upon our selves. Far be it from us if we have the hearts of Christians.

20. Lastly, if we should yet refuse a Reformation, in our Instructing of the Ignorant or our exercise of Christs Discipline, how many Vows and Promises of our own may rise up in Judgement against us and condemn us! 1. In the National Covenant those that entered into it did vow and Promise most solemnly before the Lord and his people, that
Having

Having before our eyes the Glory of God, and the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ——— we would sincerely, really and constantly endeavour in our several places and callings the Reformation of Religion in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government — and we did profess our true and unfeigned purpose, desire and endeavour for our selves and all others under our power and charge, both in publike and private, in all duties we ow to God and man, to amend our lives, and each one to go before another in the Example of a Real Reformation. And this Covenant we made as in the presence of God the searcher of all hearts with a true intention to perform the same as we shall answer at the great day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. O dreadful case then that we have put our selves into, if infinite mercy help us not out! May we not say after the reading of this as Josiah after the reading of the Law, a Kings 22. 13. 2 Chron. 34. 21. Great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because we have not done according to this Covenant. Could a people have devised a readier way to thrust themselves under the curse of God by such a solemn dreadful Covenant, and when they have done so long, so wilfully, so openly to violate it? Doth not this plainly bind us to the private as well as the publike part of our duty? and to a Real Reformation of Discipline in our practice? Again therefore I must needs say, what a bottomless depth of deceit is the heart of man! O what heavy charges have we brought against many others of these times for breaking this solemn Vow and Covenant (from which I am far from undertaking to acquit them)
when

when yet we that led the way, and drew on others, and daily preach't up Reformation and Discipline, have so horribly violated this Covenant our selves, that in a whole Countrey it is rare to find a Minister, that hath set up Discipline or private Instruction. And he that can see much done towards it in *England*, hath more acquaintance, or better eyes then I have.

2. Also in our frequent solemn Humiliation days in the time of our deep distress and fear, how publickly and earnestly did we beg deliverances, *not as for our sakes, but for the Church and Gospel sake*, as if we had not cared what had become of us, so that the Reformation of the Church might go on, and we promised if God would hear and deliver us, what we would do towards it. But O how unfaithful have we been to those Promises! as if we were not the same men that ever spoke such words to God! I confess it filleth my own soul with shame, to consider the unanswerableness of my affections and Endeavours to the many fervent prayers, rare deliverances, and confident Promises of those years of advesity! And such experiences of the almost incredible unfaithfulness of our hearts, is almost enough to make a man never trust his heart again; and Consequently to shake his Certainty of sincerity: Have we now, or are we like to have any higher Resolutions, then those were which we have broken! And it tends also to make us question in the next extremity, even at the hour of death, whether God will hear and help us any more, who have forfeited our Credit with him by proving so unfaithful. If so many years publike humiliations spurred on by such

such calamities as neither we nor our fathers for many Generations had ever seen, had no more in them then now appears, and if this be the issue of all, how can we tell how to believe our selves hereafter? It may makes us fear lest our case be like the *Israelites*, *Psal 78. 34, 35, 36, 37, 43, 42, 57.* Who *when he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned, and enquired early after God: and they remembred that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer, Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth: and they lyed unto him with their tongues; For their heart was not right with God, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant. They remembred not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the Enemy.—But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.*

3. Moreover, if we will not be faithful in duties that we are engaged to, our own Agreements and Engagements which remain subscribed by our hands, and are published to the view of the world, will rise up in judgement against us and condemn us. We have engaged our selves under our hands near three years ago, that we will set up the exercise of Discipline, and yet how many have neglected it to this day without giving any just and reasonable excuse? We have now subscribed another Agreement and Engagement, for Catechizing and Instructing all that will submit. We have done well so far; But if now we should flag and prove remiss and superficial in the performance, Our subscriptions will condemn us; this days humiliation will condemn us. Be not deceived: God is not mocked: it is not

your Names only, but your hearts and hands also that he requireth: There is no dallying with God by feigned Promises; He will expect that you be as good as your words. He will not hold him guiltless, that by false Oaths, or Vows, or Covenants with him doth take his holy Name in vain? *When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools; pay that which thou hast vowed. Better it is that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay; suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin: neither say thou before the Angel, that it was an Error; wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thy hands,* Eccless. 5 4 5, 6.

And thus I have shewed you what will come on it, if you shall not set your selves faithfully to this work, to which you have so many obligations and engagements? and what an unexcusable thing our neglect would be, and how great and manifold a condemnation it would expose us to. Truly Brethren, if I did not apprehend the work to be of exceeding great moment, to your selves, to the people, and to the honour of God. I would not have troubled you with so many words about it, nor have presumed to have spoken so sharply as I have done. But when it is for life and death men are apt to forget their reverence, and courtesie and complements, commonly called Good manners! For my part I apprehend this as one of the best and greatest works that ever I put mine hand to in my life. And I verily think that your thoughts of it are as mine: and then you will not think my words too many or too keen. I can well remember the
time

time when I was earnest for the Reformation of matters of Ceremony: and if I should be cold in such a substantial matter as this, how disorderly, and disproportionable would my Zeal appear! Alas, can we think that the Reformation is wrought, when we cast out a few Ceremonies, and changed some vestures, and gestures, and forms! O no Sirs! it is the converting and saving of souls that is our business: Thats the chiefest part of the Reformation that doth most good, and tendeth most to the salvation of the people. Let others take it how they will, I will so far speak my conscience for your just encouragement, as to say again, that I am verily perswaded that as you are happily agreed and combined for this work, so if you will but faithfully execute this Agreement, together with your former Agreement for Discipline, you will do much more for a true Reformation, and that peaceably without meddling with controverted points then I have heard of any part of *England* to have done before you, and yet no more than is unquestionably, your Duty.

SECT. VI.

I Am next to answer some of those Objections, which backward minds may cast in our way. And 1. some may object, that *this course will take up so much time that a man shall have no time to follow his studies: Most of us are young and raw, and have need of much time to improve our own abilities, which this course will prohibit us.* To which I answer: 1. We suppose them whom we perswade to this work, to understand the substance of the Christian Religion, and to be able to teach it others: And the addition of lower and less necessary things, is not to be preferr'd before this needful communication of the fundamentals. I highly value common knowledge, and would not encourage any to set light by it: But I value the saving of souls before it. That work which is next the end must be done, whatever be undone: Its a very desirable thing for a Physician to be thoroughly studied in his art; and to be able to see the reason of his experiments, and to resolve such difficult controversies as are before him: But if he had the charge of an Hospital, or lived in a City that had the raging Pestilence, if he would be studying *de fermentatione, de circulatione sanguinis, de vesiculo chyli, de instrumentis sanguificationis*, and such like excellent useful points, when he should be looking to his patients, and saving mens lives, and should turn them away and let them perish, and tell them that he cannot have while to give them advice, because he
must

must follow his own studies, I should take that man for a preposterous student, that preferr'd the remote means before the end it self of his studies: and indeed I should think him but a civil kind of Murderer. Mens souls may be saved without knowing, whether God did predetermine the creature in all its acts? whether the understanding necessarily determines the wil? whether God works Grace in a Physical or Moral way of causation? What free-will is? Whether God have *scientiam mediam*? Or positive decrees *de malo culpae*; with a hundred such like, which are the things that you would be studying when you should be saving souls. Get well to heaven, and help your people thither, and you shall know all these things in a moment, and a thousand more which now by all your studies you can never know: and is not this the most expeditious & certain way to knowledg.

2. If you grow not extensively in knowlege, you will by this way of diligent practice obtain the intensive more excellent growth: If you know not so many things as others, you will know the great things better then they: For this serious dealing with sinners for their salvation, will help you to far deeper apprehensions of their saving principles, then will be got by any other means. And a little more of the knowledge of these is worth all the other knowledge in the world. O when I am looking heavenward, and gazing towards the inaccessible light, and aspiring after the knowledge of God, and find my soul so dark and distant, that I am ready to say, [I know not God; he is above me: quite out of my reach] this is the most killing and grievous Ignorance! One thinks I could willingly exchange
all

all other knowledge that I have for one glimpse more of the knowledge of God and the life to come. O that I had never known a word in Logick, Metaphysics, &c. Nor known what ever School-men said, so I had but one spark more of that light that would shew me the things that I must shortly see. For my part, I conceive that by serious talking of everlasting things, and teaching the Creed and shortest Catechism, you may grow more in knowledge (though not in the knowledge of more things) and prove much wiser men, then if you spent that time in common or curious less necessary things.

3. Yet let me add, that though I count this the chief, I would have you to have more; because those subservient sciences are very useful: and therefore I say, that you may have competent time for both: Lose none upon vain recreations and employments: Trifle not away a minute: Consume it not in needless sleep: Do that you do with all your might: and then see whether you have not a competent time. If you set apart but two daies in a week in this great work that we are Agreed on, you may find some for common studies out of all the other five.

4. Duties are to be taken together: the greatest to be preferr'd; but none to be neglected that can be performed; not one to be pleaded against another, but each to know its profession: but if there were such a case of Necessity, that we could not read for our selves in the course of our further studies, and Instruct the Ignorant both, I would throw by all the Libraries in the world, rather then be guilty of the perdition of one soul; or at least, I know that this is my duty.

Obj. 2. *But this course will destroy the health of our bodies, by continual spending the spirits, & allowing us no time for necessary recreations; and it will woolly lock us up from any civil friendly visitations, so that we must never stir from home, nor take our delight at home one day with our friends, for the relaxation of our minds; but as we shall seem discourteous and morose to others, so we shall tire our selves, and the bow that is still bent will be in danger of breaking at last.*

Ans 1. This is the meer plea of the flesh for its own interest: The sluggard saith, there is a Lyon in the way. He will not plough because of the cold. There is no duty of moment and self-denyal, but if you consult with flesh and blood, it will give you as wise reasons as these against it. Who would ever have been burnt at a stake for Christ, if this reasoning had been good? Yea or who would ever have been a Christian?

2. We may take time for necessary Recreation for all this? An hour or half, an hours walk before meat, is as much Recreation as is of necessity for the health of most of the weaker sort of students. I have reason to know somewhat of this by long experience. Though I have a body that hath languished under great weaknesses many years, and my diseases have been such as require as much exercise as almost any in the world, and I have found exercise the principal means of my preservation till now, and therefore have

have as great reason to plead for it as any man that I know alive, yet I have found that the foresaid proportion hath been blessed to my preservation (though I know that much more had been like to have tended to my greater health.) And I do not know one Minister of an hundred, that needeth so much as my self. Yea I know abundance of Ministers that scarce ever use any exercise at all (though I commend it not in them) I doubt not but it is our duty to use so much exercise as is of necessity for the preservation of our health, so far as our work requireth: else we should for one daies work lose the opportunity of many: But this may be done, and yet the works that we are engaged in, be done too. On those two daies a week that you set apart for this work, what hinders but you may take an hour or two to walk for the exercise of your bodies? Much more on other daies.

But as for those men that limit not their Recreations to their stated hours, but must have them for the pleasing of their voluptuous humor, and not only to fit them for their work, such sensualists have need to study better the nature of Christianity, and learn the danger of living after the flesh, and get more mortification and self-denyal before they preach these things to others. If you must needs have your pleasures, you should not have put your selves into that calling that requireth you to make God and his service your pleasure, and restraineth you so much from fleshly pleasures. Is it your baptismal engagement to fight against the flesh? and do you know that much of the Christian warfare consisteth in the combate between the flesh and the spirit? and that is the very
Difference

difference between a true Christian and a wicked wretch, that one liveth after the spirit, and mortifyeth the deeds and desires of the body, and the other liveth after the flesh? and do you know that the overcoming the flesh is the principal part of our victory, on which the Crown of life depends; and do you make it your calling to preach all this to others; and yet for all this must you needs have your pleasures? If you must, then for shame give over the preaching of the Gospel, and the profession of Christian self-denyal, and profess your selves to be as you are, and as you sow to the flesh, so of the flesh shall you receive the wages of corruption. Doth such a one as *Paul* say? *I therefore so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, least that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away,* 1 Cor. 4. 26, 27. And have not such sinners as *we*, need to do so? Shall we pamper our bodies, and give them their desires in unnecessary pleasures, when *Paul* must keep under his body, and bring it into subjection? Must *Paul* do this, *least after all his preaching he should be a cast-away?* and have not we cause to fear it of our selves much more? I know that some pleasure it self is lawful: that is, when it is of use to the fitting us for our work. But for a man to be so far in love with his pleasures, as that he must unnecessarily wast his precious time in them, and neglect the great work of God for mens salvation, yea and plead for this as if it must or might be done, and so to justifie himself in such a course, is a wickedness inconsistent with the common fidelity of a Christian, much more with the fidelity

fidelity of a Teacher of the Church: And such wretches as are *lovers of pleasures, more than lovers of God*, must look to beloved of him accordingly, and are fitter to be cast out of Christian Communion, then to be the chief in the Church for we are commanded, *from such to turn away*, 2 Tim. 3. 5. Recreations for a student, must be specially for the exercise of his body, he having before him such variety of delights to his mind. And they must be as whetting is with the Mower, that is only to be used so far is necessary to his work. And we must be careful that it rob us not of our precious time, but be kept within the narrowest bounds that may be. I pray peruse well Mr. *Wheatley's* Sermon of Redemption of time. 2. And then the labour that we are now engaged to perform, is not likely much to impair our health. Its true, it must be serious; but that will but excite and revive our spirits, and not so much spend them. Men can talk all the day long of other matters without any abatement of their health: and why may not we talk with men about their salvation without such great abatement of ours?

3. It is to be understood that the direction that we give, and the work which we undertake is not for dying men, that be not able to preach or speak, but for men of some competent measure of strength, and whose weaknesses are tollerable, and may admit of such labours.

4. What have we our time and strength for, but to lay it out for God? What is a Candle made for, but to be burnt? Burnt and wasted we must be, and is it not fitter it should be in lighting men to heaven, and in working for God, then in living to the flesh?

How

How little difference is there between the pleasure of a long life and of a short, when they are both at an end? What comfort will it be at death, that you lengthened your life by shortening your work? He that works much; liveth much: Our life is to be esteemed according to the ends and works of it, and not according to the meer duration. As *Seneca* can say of a drone, *ibi jacet, non ibi vivit; & diu fuit, non diu vixit*: Will it not comfort us more at death to review a short time faithfully spent, then a long time unfaithfully?

4. And for the matter of Visitations and Civilities, if they be for greater ends, or use, then our Ministerial employments are, you may break a Sabbath for them; you may forbear preaching for them, and so may forbear this private work; But if it be otherwise, how dare you make them a pretence to neglect so great a duty? Must God wait on your friends? What if they be Lords, or Knights, or Gentlemen? Must they be served before God? Or is their displeasure or censure a greater hurt to you, then Gods displeasure? Or dare you think, when God shall question you for your neglects, to put him off with this excuse, *Lord I would have spent more of my time in seeking mens salvation, but that such a Gentleman and such a friend would have taken it ill if I had not waited on them*. If you yet seek to please men, you are no longer the servants of Christ. He that dares spend his life in flesh-pleasing and man-pleasing, is bolder then I am. And he that dares wast his time in complements, doth little consider what he hath to do with it. O that I could but improve my time according to my convictions of the necessity of improving it! He that hath

hath lookt death in the face as oft as I have done, I will not thank him to value his time. I profess I admire at those Ministers that have time to spare, that that can hunt, or shoot, or bowl, or use the like recreations two or three hours, yea whole daies almost together, That can sit an hour together in vain discourses; and spend whole daies in complemental visitations, and journeys to such ends. Good Lord, what do these men think on! when so many souls about them cry for their help, and death gives no respite; and they know not how short a time their people and they may be together? When the smallest Parish hath so much work that may imploy all their diligence night and day! Brethren, I hope you are content to be plainly dealt with. If you have no sense of the worth of souls, and of the preciousness of that blood that was shed for them, and of the glory that they are going to, and of the misery that they are in danger of; then are you no Christians, and therefore very unfit to be Ministers: And if you have, how can you find time for needless recreations, visitations or discourses? Dare you like idle Gossips, chat and trifle away your time, when you have such works as these to do, and so many of them? O precious time! How swiftly doth it pass away! How soon will it be gone! What are the 40 years of my life that are past! Were every day as long as a moneth, me thinks it were too short for the work of a day! Have we not lost enough already in the daies of our vanity? Never do I come to a dying man that is not utterly stupid, but he better sees the worth of time! O then if they could call time back again, how loud would they call? If they could but buy it,

it, what would they give for it? And yet can we afford to trifle it away! Yea and to allow our selves in this, and willfully cast off the greatest works of God! O what a befooling thing is sin, that can thus distract men that seem so wise! Is it possible that a man of any true compassion and honesty, or any care of his Ministerial duty, or any sense of the strictness of his account, should have time to spare for idleness and vanity?

And I must tell you further Brethren, that if another might take some time for meer delight which were not necessary, yet so cannot you; for your undertaking binds you to stricter attendance then other men are bound to. May a Physitian in the plague-time, take any more relaxation or recreation then is necessary for his life, when so many are expecting his help in a case of life and death! As his pleasure is not worth mens lives, so neither is yours worth mens souls. Suppose your Cities were besieged, and the enemy on one side watching all advantages to surprize it, and on the other seeking to fire it with grenades which are cast in continually. I pray you tell me now, if certain men undertake it as their office to watch the ports, and others to quench the fire that shall be kindled in the houses, what time will, you allow these men for their recreation or relaxation? When the City is in danger, or the fire will burn on and prevail if they intermit their diligence! Or would you excuse one of these men if he come off his work, and say, I am but flesh and blood, I must have some pleasure or relaxation? At the utmost sure you would allow him none but of necessity?

Do not grudge at this now and say, This is a hard saying,

saying, who can bear it? For it is your mercy; and you are well, if you know when you are well, as I shall shew you in answering this next Objection.

Object. 3. *I do not think that it is required of Ministers that they make drudges of themselves. If they preach diligently, and visit the sick, and do other Ministerial duties, and occasionally do good to those they converse with, I do not think that God doth moreover require that we should thus tie our selves to Instruct every person distinctly, and to make our lives a burden and a slavery?*

Ans. 1. Of what use and weight the duty is, I have shewed before and how plainly it is commanded. And do you think God doth not require you to do all the good you can? Will you stand by and see sinners gasping under the pangs of death, and say, God doth not require me to make my self a drudge to save them? Is this the voice of Ministerial or Christian Compassion? or rather of sensual *Lazarus*, and diabolical cruelty! Doth God set you work to do, and will you not believe that he would have you do it? Is that the voice of obedience, or of rebellion? It is all one whether your flesh do prevail with you to deny obedience to acknowledge duty, and say plainly I wil obey no further then it pleaseth me. Or whether it may make you wilfully reject the evidence that should convince you that it is a duty, and say I will not believe it to be my duty unless it please me. Its the true Character
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of an hypocrite, to make a Religion to himself of the cheapest part of Gods service, which will stand with his fleshly ends and felicity; and to reject the rest, which is inconsistent therewith. And to the words of Hypocrisie, this objection superaddeth the words of gross impiety. For what a wretched Calumny is this against the most high God, to call his service a slavery and drudgery! what thoughts have these men of their Master, their work and their wages? the thoughts of a believer or of an Infidel; Are these men like to honour God, and promote his service that have such base thoughts of it themselves? Do these men delight in Holiness, that account it a slavish work? Do the believe indeed the Misery of sinners, that account it such a slavery to be diligent for to save them. Christ saith that he that denieth not himself and forsaketh not all and taketh not up his cross and followeth him, cannot be his Disciple. And these men count it a slavery to labour hard in his vineyard, and deny their ease, in a time when they have all accomodations and Encouragements? How far is this from forsaking all? and how can these men be fit for the Ministry that are such enemies to self-denyal, and so to true Christianity? Still therefore I am forced to say, that all these Objections are so prevalent, and all these carnal reasonings hinder the Reformation, and in a word, hence is the chief misery of the Church, *that so many are made Ministers before they are Christians*. If these men had seen the diligence of Christ in doing good, when he neglected his meat to talk with one woman, *Joh. 4.* and when they had no time to eat bread, *Mark 3. 22.*
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would not they have been of the mind of his carnal friends that went to lay hold on him, and said, He is besides himself, *vers.* 21. They would have told Christ he made a drudge or a slave of himself, and God did not require all this ado. If they had seen him all night in prayer, and all day in preaching and healing, it seems he should have had this censure from them for his labour! I cannot but advise these men to search their own hearts, whether they unfeignedly believe that word, that they preach? Do you believe indeed that such Glory attends those that dye in the Lord, and such Torment attendeth those that dye unconverted? If you do, how can you think any labour too much, for such weighty ends? If you do not, say so, and get you out of the vineyard, and go with the Prodigal to keep swine, and undertake not the feeding of the Flock of Christ.

Do you not know that it is your own benefit which you grudge at? The more you do, the more you receive: the more you lay out, the more you have coming in: If you are strangers to these Christian Paradoxes, you should not have taken on you to peach them to others. At the present, our incomes of spiritual life and peace are commonly in way of duty; so that he that is most in duty hath most of God: Exercise of Grace increaseth it: And is it a slavery to be more with God, and to receive more him, then other men? It is the chief solace of a gracious soul to be doing Good, and receiving by doing: and to be much exercised about those Divine things which have his heart. A good stomach will not say at a feast, what a slavery is it to bestow my
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time and pains so much to feed my self? Besides, that we prepare for fuller receivings hereafter: we set our Talents to usury, and by improving them we shall make five become ten, and so be made Rulers of ten Cities. We shall be judged according to our works. Is it a drudgery to send to the utmost parts of the world, to exchange our trifles for Gold and Jewels? Do not these men seek to Justifie the prophane, that make all diligent godliness a drudgery, and reproach it as a precise and tedious life, I say, they will never believe but a man may be saved without all this ado? Even so say these in respect to the works of the Ministry, They take this diligence for ungrateful tediousness, and they will not believe but a man may be a faithful Minister without all this ado! It is a hainous sin to be Negligent in so great a business: but to approve of that negligence, and so to be impenitent, and to plead against duty as if it were none, and when they should lay out themselves for the saving of souls, to say *I do not believe that God requireth it*; this is so great an aggravation of the sin that (where the Churches Necessity doth not force us to make use of such, for want of better) I cannot but think them worthy to be cast out as the rubbish, and *as sale that hath lost its savour, that is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghil, but men cast it out: he that hath ears to hear* (saith Christ in these words) *let him hear, Luke 14.*

34. 35. And if such Ministers become a by-word and reproach, let them thank themselves: for it is their own sin that maketh them vile, 1 *Sam.* 3. 13. And while they thus debase the service of the Lord, they do but debase themselves, and

prepare for a greater abasement at the last.

Object. 4. **B***Ut if you make such severe Laws for Ministers, the Church will be left without. For what man will put himself upon such a toilsom life; or what Parents will choose such a burden for their children? Men will avoid it both for the bodily toil, and the danger to their Consciences, if they should not well discharge it.*

Ans. 1. It is not we, but Christ that hath made and imposed these Laws which you call severe. And if I should silence them or mis-interpret them, or tell you that there is no such things, that would not relax them nor disoblige or excuse you. He that made them, knew why he did it, and will expect the performance of them. Is infinite Goodness it self to be questioned or suspected by us, as making bad or unmerciful Laws? Nay it is meer mercy in him that imposeth this great duty upon us? If Physitians be required to be as diligent in Hospitals or Pest-houses or with other patients, to save their lives, were there not more mercy, then rigor in this Law? what, must God let the souls of your Neighbours perish, to save you a little Labour and suffering: and this in mercy to you? O what a miserable world should we have, if blind self-conceited man had the ruling of it?

2. And for a supply of Pastors, Christ will take care. He that imposeth duty, hath the fulness of the Spirit, and can give men hearts to obey his Laws. Do you think Christ will suffer all men to
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be as cruel, unmerciful, fleshly and self-seeking as you? He that hath undertaken himself the work of our Redemption, and born our transgressions, and been faithful as the chief Shepherd and Teacher of the Church, will not lose all his Labour and suffering for want of Instruments to carry on his work, nor will he come down again to do all himself because no other will do it: but he will provide men to be his Servants and Ushers in his School that shall willingly take the labour on them, and rejoyce to be so imployed, and account that the happiest life in the world which you account so great a toil, and would not change it for all your ease and carnal pleasure, but for the saving of souls, and the propagating of the Gospel of Christ, will be content to *bear the burden and heat of the day, and to fill up the measure of the sufferings of Christ in their bodies, and to do what they do with all their might, and to work while it is day, and to be the servants of all, and not to please themselves but others for their Edification, and to become all things to all men that they may save some, and to endure all things for the elects sake, and to spend and be spent for men, though the more they love, the less they should be beloved, and should be accounted their enemies for telling them the truth; such Pastors will Christ provide his people after his own heart, that will feed them with knowledge: as men that seek not theirs, but them.* What, do you think Christ can have no servants, if such as you shall with *Demas turn to the present world and forsake him?* If you dislike his service, you may seek you a better where you can find it, and boast of your gain in the Conclusion: but do not threaten him with the loss of

your service. He hath made such Laws as you will call severe, for all that will be saved as well as for his Ministers (though he impose not on them the same employment): for all must *deny themselves and mortifie the flesh, and be crucified to the world, and take up their Cross and follow Christ, that will be his Disciples*: And yet Christ will not be without Disciples, nor will he hide his seeming hard terms from men to tice them to his service, but will tell them of the worst, and then let them come or chuse: He will call to them before hand to count what it will cost them, and tell them *that the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head*; he comes *not to give them worldly Peāce and Prosperity*, but to call them to *suffer with him that they may raign with him, and in patience to possess their souls*, and conquer, that they may be crowned with him and sit down on his throne. And all this he will cause his chosen to perform. If you be at that pass with Christ as the *Israelite*: were once with *David*, and say *will the son of Jesse give you fields and vineyard? Every man to your tents* O *Israel*: and if you say, *Now look to thy own house* O *David* you shall see that Christ will look to his own house, and do you look to yours as well as you can, and tell me at the hour of death or Judgement which is the better bargain, and whether Christ had more need of you, or you of him.

And for scrupling it in Conscience for fear of failing, 1. It is not involuntary imperfections that Christ will take so hainously; but it is unfaithfulness and wilful negligence: 2. And it shall not serve
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your turns to run out of the Vineyard or harvest, on pretence of scruples, that you cannot do the work as you ought. He can follow you and overtake you as he did *Jonas* with such a storm, as shall lay you in the belly of Hell: Totally to cast off a duty, because you cannot endure to be faithful in the performance of it, will prove but a poor excuse at last. If men had but reckoned well at first, of the difference between things temporal and eternal, and of what they shall lose or get by Christ, and had that faith which is the evidence of things not seen, and lived by faith and not by sense, all these objections would be easily resolved; and all the plea's of flesh and blood for its interest, would appear to have no more reason, then a sick mans plea for cold water in a Pestilential feaver.

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Obj. 5.

Obj. 5. **B**ut to what purpose is all this, when most of the people will not submit? They will but make a scorn at your motion, and tell us, they will not come to us to be Catechized, and that they are too old now to go to School; And therefore it is as good let them alone, as trouble our selves to no purpose.

Ans. I. Its not to be denied, but too many people are obstinate in their wickedness, and too many simple ones love simplicity, and too many scorers delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge, *Prov.* 1.22. But the worse they are, the sadder is their case, and the more to be pityed, and the more diligent should we be for their recovery. 2. I would it were not too much long of Ministers, that a great part of the people are so obstinate and contemptuous? If we did shine and burn before them as we should, had we convincing Sermons and convincing lives, did we set our selves to do all the good we could what ever it cost us: Were we more humble and meek, more loving and charitable, and let them see that we set light by all worldly things in comparison of their salvation; much more might be done then is, and the mouthes of many would be slopt, and though still the wicked will do wickedly, yet more would be tractable, and the wicked would be fewer and calmer then they are. If you say, that the ablest and godliest Ministers in the world have had as untractable and scornful Parishoners as any others, I answer, that even
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able godly men have some of them been too Lordly and strange, and some of them too uncharitable and worldly, and backward to costly, though necessary works, and some of them have done but little in private, when they have done excellently in publike; and so have hindred the fruit of their labours. But where these impediments are absent, experience telleth us that the success is much greater, at least, as to the bowing of people to more calmness and teachableness: but we cannot expect that all should be brought to so much reason.

3. Their wilfulness will not excuse us from our duty: If we offer them not our help, how know we who will refuse it: Offering it is our part, and accepting is theirs: If we offer it not, we leave them excusable (for then they refuse it not) but its we that are lest without excuse. But if they refuse our help when its offered, we have done our part, and delivered our own souls.

4. If some refuse our help, others will accept it: and the success with them may be so much, as may answer all our labour were it more. It is not all that are wrought on by our publike preaching, and yet we must not therefore give it over as unprofitable.

Obj. 6. *BUT what likelyhood is there that men will be informed or converted by this means, that will not by the preaching of the word? when that is Gods chief Ordinance appointed to that end: Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word preached.*

Answ. 1. The advantages I have shewed you before, and therefore will not stand to repeate them; only, lest any think that this will wrong them by hindring them from preaching, I add to the 20. Benefits before mentioned, that it will be an excellent means to help you in preaching: For as the Physitians work is half done when he fully knows the disease, so when you are acquainted well with your peoples case, you will know what to preach on; and it will furnish you with matter to talk an hour with an ignorant or obstinate sinner, as much as an hours study will do: for you will know what you have need to insist on, and what objections of theirs to re-fell.

2. I hope there is none so silly as to think this conference is not preaching. What doth the number we speak to make it preaching? Or doth interlocution make it none? Sure a man may as truly preach to one as to 1000. And (as is aforesaid) if you search, you'll find, that most of the Gospel preaching in those daies, was by conference, or serious speeches to people occasionally, and frequently interlocutory: and that with one or two, fewer or more, as opportunity

tunity served. Thus Christ himself did most commonly preach. Besides, we must take account of our peoples learning, if we mind the success of our work.

There is nothing therefore from God, from the spirit, from right reason, to cause us to make any question of our work, or to be unwilling to it. But from the world, from the flesh and the Devil, we shall have much, and more perhaps then we yet expect. But against temptations, if we have recourse to God, and look on his great Obligations on one side, and the hopeful Effects and Reward on the other, we shall see that we have little cause to draw back or to faint.

Let us set before us this pattern in the text, and learn our duty thence, and imitate it. From *Vers.* 19. To serve the Lord (and not men or our selves) with all humility of mind (and not proudly) and with many tears, &c. *Vers.* 20. To keep back nothing that is profitable to the people, and to Teach them publikely and from house to house: *Vers.* 21. That the matter of our preaching be Repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. *Vers.* 22, 23, 24. That though we go bound in the spirit, not knowing particularly what shall befall us, but knew that every where bonds and afflictions do abide us, yet none of these things should move us, neither should we count our Life dear to our selves, so that we might finish our course with joy, and the Ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus to testifie the Gospel of the grace of God. From *Vers.* 28 To take heed to our selves and all the flock, particularly against domestick Seducers and Schisms.

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From *Verse* 31. Without ceasing to warn every one day and night with tears. *Vers.* 3. 3. To covet no mans silver, or gold, or apparel, as counting it more honourable to give then to receive. O what a lesson is here before us! But how ill is it learned by those that still question whether these be their duty. I confess some of these words of *Paul* have so often been presented before mine eyes, and stuck upon my conscience, that I have been much convinced by them of my duty and neglect: And I think this one speech, better deserveth a twelve-moneths study, then most things that young students do lay out their time in. O Brethren write it on your study doors, or set it as your Copy in Capital letters still before your eyes: Could we but well learn two or three lines of it, What preachers should we be? 1. For our general business, [SERVING THE LORD WITH ALL HUMILITY OF MIND.] 2. Our special work, [TAKE HEED TO YOUR SELVES, AND TO ALL THE FLOCK.] 3. Our Doctrine, [REPENTANCE TOWARDS GOD, AND FAITH TOWARD OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.] 4. The place and manner of Teaching, [I HAVE TAUGHT YOU PUBLIKELY, AND FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE.] 5. The Object, and internal manner, [I CEASED NOT TO WARN EVERY ONE NIGHT AND DAY WITH TEARS] This is it that must win souls and preserve them. 6. His innocency and self-denial for the advantage of the Gospel, [I HAVE COVETED NO MANS SILVER OR GOLD.]

GOLD.] 7. His patience, [NONE OF THESE THINGS MOVE ME, NEITHER COUNT I MY LIFE DEAR.] 8. And among all our motives, these have need to be in Capital letters before our eyes. 1. We oversee and feed THE CHURCH OF GOD, WHICH HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD. 2. [GRIEVOUS WOLVES SHALL ENTER IN AMONG YOU, NOT SPARING THE FLOCK] and [OF YOUR OWN SELVES SHALL MEN ARISE SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS, TO DRAW AWAY DISCIPLES AFTER THEM.] Write all this upon your hearts, and it will do your selves and the Church more good, then twenty years study of those lower things, which though they get you greater applause in the world, yet separated from these, will make you but sounding brass, and tinkling Cymbals.

The great advantage of a sincere heart is, that God and Glory, and the saving of souls are their very *end*: and where that *end* is truly intended, no labour or suffering will stop them, or turn them back. For a man must have his *end*, whatever it cost him: He still retains this lesson, whatever he forget, [ONE THING IS NECESSARY] and *Seek first the Kingdom of God*, and therefore saies, *Necessity is laid upon me, and wo unto me if I preach not the Gospel*. And this is it that will most effectually make easie all our labours, and make light all burdens, and make our sufferings seem tollerable, and cause us to venture on any hazards in the way.

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That which I once made the Motto of my colours in another warfare, I desire may be still before my eyes in this, (which yet according to my intentions, is not altogether another.) On one side, *He that saveth his life shall lose it.* On the other, *Nic propter vitam vivendi perdere causas;* Which Doctor *Jo. Reynolds* thought had reason enough in it, to hold him to his labours though it cost him his life. He that knoweth that he serveth a God that will never suffer any man to be a loser by him, need not fear what hazards he runs in his cause: And he that knows that he seeks a prize, which if obtained will infinitely over-match his cost, may boldly engage his whole estate on it, and sell all to purchase so rich a Pearl. Well Brethren, I will spend no more words in exhorting wise Merchants to such a bargain, nor telling Teachers themselves of such common Truths; and If I have said more then needs already, I am glad. I hope now I may take it for granted, that you are Resolved of the utmost diligence and fidelity in the work. On which supposition I shall now proceed.

CHAP.



CHAP. VII.

SECT. I.

*Directions for the right managing
this Work.*



IT is so happy a work which we have before us, that it is a thousand pities it should be destroyed in the birth, and perish in our hands. And though I know that we have a knotty generation to deal with, and that its past the power of any of us all to change a carnal heart without the effectual grace of the Holy-Ghost; yet it is so usual with God to work by means, and to bless the right endeavors of his servants, that I cannot fear,
but

but great things will be done, and a wonderful blow will be given to the Kingdom of Darkness by our undertaken work, if it do not miscarry through the fault of the Ministers themselves. And the main danger is in these two defects. 1. Of diligence. 2. Of skill. Against the former I have spoken much already. As for the later, I am so conscious of my own unskilfulness, that I am far from imagining that I am fit to give directions to any but the younger, and unexperienced of the Ministry; and therefore must expect so much Justice in your interpretation, as that you will suppose me now to speak to none but such. But yet something I shall say, and not pass over this part in silence, because the number of such is so great, and I am so apprehensive that the welfare of the Church and Nation, doth much depend on the management of this work.

The points wherein you have need to be solicitous are these two.

1. To bring your people to submit to this course of private Catechizing or Instruction. For if they will not come at you, what good can they receive.

2. To do the work so as may most tend to the success of it, when they do come to you.

And for the first, the best directions that I can give are these following.

1. The chief means of all is, for a Minister so to behave himself in the main course of his Ministry and life, as may tend to convince his people of his ability, sincerity and unfeigned Love to them. For if they take him to be ignorant, they will despise his Teaching, and think themselves as wise as he. And if they think

think him self-seeking, or hypocritical, and one that doth not mean as he saith, they will suspect all that he saith and doth for them, and will not be regardful of him. And if they think he intendeth but to domineer over their consciences, and to trouble and disgrace them, or meerly to exercise their wits and memories, they will flie away from him as an adversary, and from his endeavours as noxious and ungrateful to them. Whereas when they are convinced that he understandeth what he doth, and have high thoughts of his abilities, they will Reverence him, and the easilyer stoop to his advice. And when they are perswaded of his uprightness, they will the less suspect his motions: And when they perceive that he intendeth no private ends of his own, but meerly their good, they will the sooner be perswaded by him. And because those that I write to are supposed to be none of the most able Ministers, and therefore may despair of being revered for their parts; I say to such;

1. You have the more need to study and labour for their increase.

2. You must necessarily have that which *Amesius* makes the lowest degree tollerable, *viz.* to be *supra vulgus fidelium*: and it will produce some reverence when they know you are wiser then themselves.

3. And that which you want in ability, must be made up in the other qualifications; and then your advice may be as successful as others.

If Ministers were content to purchase an interest in their people at the dearest rates to their own flesh, and would condescend to them, and be familiar, and
loving,

loving, and prudent in their carriage, and abound according to their ability in good works, they might do much more with their people then ordinarily they can do. Not that we should much regard an interest in them for our own sakes, but that we may be more capable of promoting the interest of Christ, and of furthering their own salvation: Were it not for their own sakes, it were no great matter whether they love or hate us: but what Commander can do any great service by an Army that hate him? and how can we think that they will much regard our counsel, while they abhor or dis-regard the persons that give it them? Labour therefore for some competent interest in your peoples estimation and affection, and then you may the better prevail with them.

Obj. But what should a Minister do that findeth he hath quite lost his interest in them?

An. If they be so vile a people that they hate him not for any weakness, nor through mis-reports about particular things, but meerly for endeavouring their good, though in prudence as well as zeal, and would hate any other that should do his duty; then must he in patience and meekness continue to instruct these that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth. But if it be upon any weaknesses of his, or difference in lesser opinions, or prejudice meerly against his own person, let him try first to remove the prejudice by all lawful means; and if he cannot, let him tell them, It is not for my self, but for you that I labour: and therefore seeing that you will not obey the word from me, I desire that you will agree to accept of some other that may do you that good,
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which I cannot:] and so leave them, and try whether another man may not be fitter for them, and he fitter for another people: For an ingenious man can hardly stay with a people against their wills; and a sincere man can more hardly for any Commodity of his own, remain in a place where he is like to be unprofitable, to hinder the good which they might receive from another man, who hath the advantage of a greater interest in their estimation and affection.

2. **S**upposing then this general preparation, the next thing to be done is, To use the most effectual means to convince them of the Benefit and Necessity of this course, to their own souls. The way to win the consent of any man to any thing that you offer, is to prove it to be good for him, and to do this in Evidence that hath some fitness and proportion with his own understanding: For if you cannot make him believe that it is Good or Necessary for him, he will never let it down, but spit it out with loathing or contempt. You must therefore preach to them some effectual convincing Sermons to this purpose beforehand; which shall fully shew them the Benefit and Necessity of Knowledge of Divine truths in General, and of Knowing the Principles in special, and that the Aged have the same duty and need as others, and in some respects much more: *E. G.* from *Heb.* 5. 12. which affordeth us many observations suitable to our present business.

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As 1. That Gods Oracles must be a mans Lessons.

2. Minsters must teach these, and people must learn them of them.

3. The Oracles of God have some Principle; or fundamentals that all must know, that will be saved.

4. These Principles must be first learned: thats the right order.

5. It may be well expected that people thrive in knowledge according to the means or teaching which they profess: and if they do not, it is their great sin.

6. If any lived long in the Church under the means of knowledge, and yet be ignorant of these Principles, he hath need to be taught them yet, (how old soever he be). All this is plain from the Text: Whence we have fair opportunity by twenty clear convincing Reasons to shew them; 1. The Necessity of knowing Gods Oracles. 2. And more especially of the Principles. And 3. especially for the aged, that have sinfully lost so much time already; that have so long promised to repent when they were old; that should be teachers to the younger, whose ignorance is a double sin and shame; who have so little time to learn in, and are so near their Judgement; and who have souls to save or lose as well as others, &c. Convince them how impossible it is to go the way to heaven without knowing it, when there are so many difficulties and enemies in our way? and when men cannot do their worldly business without knowledge, nor learn a trade without an apprenticeship? Who can love, or seek, or desire that which he knoweth not?

Convince

salvation; What a profitable improvement it will be of their time? And how much vanity and evil it will prevent? And when they once find that it is for their own good, they will the easilier yield to it.

3. **W**Hen this is done, it will be very necessary that according to our Agreement, we give one of the Catechisms to every family in the Parish, poor and rich, that so they might be so far without excuse: For if you leave it to themselves, perhaps half of them will not so much as get them: Whereas, when they have them put into their hands, the receiving is a kind of engagement to learn them: and if they do but read the exhortation (as its likely they will do) it will perhaps convince them, and incite them to submit. And for the delivery of them, the best way is, for the Minister first to give notice in the Congregation, that they shall be brought to their houses, and then to go himself from house to house and deliver them, and take the opportunity of perswading them to the work; and as they go, to take a Catalogue of all the persons at years of discretion in the several families, that they may know whom they have to take care of, and instruct, and whom to expect when it cometh to their turns. I have formerly in the distributing of some other Books among them, desired every family to fetch them; but I found more confusion and uncertainty in that way, and now took this as the better. But in small Parishes, either way may serve.

And

And for the charge of the Books, if the Minister be able, it will be well for him to bear it: If not, the best affected of his people of the richer sort should bear it among them. Or at a day of Humiliation in preparation to the work, let the Collection that is wont to be for the poor, be employed to buy the Catechisms, and the people be desired to be the more liberal, and what is wanting, the well-affected to the work may make it up.

And for the order of proceeding in small Parishes, the matter is not great, but in greater it will be needful that we take them in order family by family, beginning the execution a moneth or six weeks after the delivery of the Books, that they may have time to learn. And thus taking them together in common, they will the more willingly come, and the backward will be the more ashamed to keep off.

4. **B**Esure that you deal gently with them; and take off all discouragements as effectually as you can. 1. Tell them publicly, that if they have learnt any other Catechism already, you will not urge them to learn this, unless they desire it themselves. For the substance of all Catechisms (that are Orthodox) is the same: Only our reasons for offering them this, was the brevity and fulness; that we might give them as much as we could in a few words, and so make their work more easie. Or if any of them had yet rather learn any other (Orthodox) Catechism, let them have their choice.

2. As for the old people that are of weak memories, and not like to live in the world, and complain that they cannot remember the words, tell them that you expect not that they should overmuch perplex their minds about it, but hear it oft read over, and see that they understand it, and get the matter into their minds and hearts, and then they may be born with, though they remember not the words.

3. And let your dealing with those that you begin with be so gentle, convincing and winning, that the report of it may be an encouragement to others to come.

6. **I**F all this will not serve to bring any particular persons to submit, do not so cast them off, but go to them and expostulate the case with them, and know what their reasons are, and convince them of the sinfulness and danger of their contempt of the help that is offered them. A soul is so precious that we should not lose one for want of labour, but follow them while there is any hope, and not give them up as desperate, till there be no remedy. Before we give them over as dogs or swine let us try the utmost, that we may have the experience of their obstinate contempt, or renting us, to warrant our forsaking them: Charity beareth and waiteth long.

SECT.

SECT. II.

2. **H**AVING used these means to procure them to come in and submit to your teaching, the next thing to be considered is, how you should deal most effectually with them in the work; And again I must say, that I think it an easier matter by far, to compose and preach a good Sermon, then to deal rightly with an Ignorant man for his instruction in the Necessary Principles of Religion. As much as this work is contemned by some, I doubt not but it will try the parts and spirits of Ministers, and shew you the difference between one man and another, more fully then Pulpit-preaching will do. And here I shall as fitting to my purpose; transcribe the words of a most Learned, Orthodox and godly man, Bishop *Usher*, in his Sermon before King *Iames* at *Wansted*, on *Eph.* 4. 13. pag. 44, 45. (but Impres. 3. pag. 34, 35.) “Your Majesties care can never be sufficiently commended, in taking order that the chief heads of “the Catechism should in the ordinary Ministry be diligently propounded and explained unto the people throughout the Land. Which I wish “were as duely executed every where, as it was piously by you intended. Great Scholars possibly “may think, that it standeth not so well with their “credit, to stoop thus low, and to spend so much of “their time, in teaching these rudiments and first “principles of the Doctrine of Christ. But they “should consider that the laying of the foundation

“skillfully, as it is the matter of greatest importance in the whole building; so is it the very Master-piece of the wisest builder; 1 Cor. 3. 10. *According to the grace of God which is given to me, as a wise Master-builder I have laid the foundation*, saith the great Apostle. And let the learnedst of us all try it when ever we please, we shall find that to lay this ground-work rightly (that is, to apply our selves to the capacity of the common Auditory, and to make an Ignorant man to understand these mysteries in some good measure) will put us to the tryal of our skill, and trouble us a great deal more, then if we were to discuss a Controversie, or handle a subtile point of learning in the Schools. Yet Christ did give as well his Apostles, and Prophets, and Evangelists, as his ordinary Pastors and Teachers to bring us all both learned and unlearned, unto the Unity of this faith and knowledge: and the neglecting of this, is the frustrating of the whole work of the Ministry. For let us preach never so many Sermons to the people, our labour is but lost as long as the foundation is unlaid; and the first principles untaught, upon which all other Doctrine must be builded.

So far the Reverend Bishop.

The Directions which I think necessary to be observed in the managing of the work, for matter and manner are these following.

Direction

Direct. 1. When your Neighbours come to you, one family or more, begin with a brief Preface, to demulce their minds, and take off all offence, unwillingness or discouragement, to prepare them to entertain your following Instructions. “*E. g.* “Neighbours, it may perhaps seem to some of you, “as an unusual, so a troublesom business, that I put “you upon: but I hope you will not think it needless: “For if I had thought so, I should have spared you “and my self this labour: But my Consci- “ence hath told me, yea God hath told me in “his word, so roundly¹, what it is to have the “Charge of mens souls, and how the blood of them “that perish in their sins, will be required at the “hands of a Minister that neglecteth them, that I “dare not be so guilty of it as I have been. Alas, all “our business in this world is to get well to Hea- “ven; and God hath appointed us to be Guides to “his people, to help them safe thither; If this be “well done, all is done; and if this be not done we “are for ever undone! The Lord knows how little a “while you and I may be together; and therefore it “concerns us to do what we can for our own and “your salvation, before we leave you or you leave “the world. All other business in the world are but “toyes and dreams in comparison of this! The la- “bours of your calling are but to prop up the cot- “tages of your flesh, while you are making ready “for death and Judgement; which God knows is “near at hand. And I hope you will be glad of “help in so needful a work, and not think it much “that I put you to this trouble; when the trifles of “the

1 deformed letter in original.

“the world will not be got without greater trouble] This, some of this, or somewhat to this purpose may tend to make them more willing to hear you, and receive instruction, or give you an account of their knowledge or practice, which must be the work of the day.

Direct. 2. When you have (to spare time) spoken thus to them, all, take then the persons one by one, and deal with them as far as you can in private, out of the hearing of the rest; For some cannot speak freely before others, and some will not endure to be questioned before others, because they think that it tendeth to their shame, to have others hear their answers; and some persons that can make better answers themselves will be ready when they are gone to twattle of what they heard, and to disgrace those that speak not so well as they; and so people will be discouraged, and backward persons will have pretences to forbear and forsake the work, and say, they wil not come to be made a scorn or a laughing stock. You must therefore be very prudent to prevent all these inconveniences. But the main reason is, as I find by experience, people will better take plain close dealing about their sin and misery and duty when you have them alone then they will before others; And if you have not opportunity to set it home and deal freely with them, you will frustrate all. If therefore you have convenient place, let the rest stay in one room, while you confer with each person by themselves in another room, Only for the necessary avoiding of scandal, we must speak to the women, only in the presence of some others; and if we do lose some
advantage

advantage by it of the success of our instructions, there is no remedy: Its better do so, then by giving matter of reproach to the malicious, to destroy all the work. Yet we may so contrive it, that though some other be in the room, yet what passages are less fit for others observance, may be spoken *submissâ voce* that others may be no hearers of it; and therefore they may be placed at the remotest part of the room. Or at least let none be present but the members of the same family, that be more familiar, and not so likely to reproach one another. And then, in your most rouzing examinations and reproofs, deal most with the most ignorant, and secure and vicious, that you may have the clearer ground for your closest dealing, and the hearing of it may awaken the standers by, to whom you seem not so directly to apply it. These small things deserve observance, because they be in order to a work that is not small: and small errors may hinder a great deal of good.

Direct. 3. Let the beginning of your work be, by taking an account of what they have learned of the words of the Catechism; receiving their answer to each question. And if they are able to recite but a little or none of it, try whether they can rehearse the Creed, and the Decalogue.

Direct. 4. Then choose out some of the weightiest points, and try by further Questions how they understand them. And therein be careful of these things following. 1. That you do not begin with less necessary points, but these which themselves may perceive are of nearest concernment to them. As, E. G. “[What do you think becomes of men
“when

“when they are dead? [What shall become of us
 “after the end of this world? Do you believe that
 “you have any sin? Or that you were born with
 “sin? And what doth every sin deserve? What re-
 “medy hath God provided for the saving of sinful
 “miserable souls? Hath any one suffered for our
 “sins in our stead, or must we suffer for them our
 “selves? Who be they that God will pardon? and
 “who shall be saved by the blood of Christ? What
 “change must be made on all that shall be
 “saved? and how is it made? Where is our
 “chief Happiness? and what is it that our hearts
 “must be most set upon?] with such like as
 these

2. Take heed of asking them nice or needless or doubtful and very difficult questions, though about those matters that are of greatest weight in themselves. Specially be very cautelous how you put them upon definitions or descriptions. Some self conceited men will be as busie with such questions which they cannot answer themselves, and as censorious of the poor people that cannot answer them, as if life and death did certainly depend on them. You will ask them perhaps *What is God?* and how defective an answer must you make your selves? specially if it be the *Quid*, and not the *Qualis* that you mean. You may tell what he is not, sooner then what he is. If you ask *What is faith?* Or *what is Repentance?* how sorrily would many very learned Divines answer you? Or else they would not be at so great difference among themselves about them; not only *disagreeing* about the Definitions of them, but so *widely disagreeing*. If you ask them *what is*

For-

Forgiveness of sin? how many Ministers may you ask before you have a right answer? Or else they would not be so disagreed in the point? Much more may I say so about Justification (though perhaps the same thing with Remission) so if you ask them *what Regeneration is? What Sanctification is?* Why Divines be not agreed, what they are themselves? But you will say perhaps, *If men know not what God is; what Faith, Repentance, Conversion, Sanctification, and Pardon of sin, or Justification be, how can they be true Christians and be saved?* I answer. It's one thing to know exactly what they be, and another thing to know them in the nature of them in the main, though with a more general, indistinct and undigested knowledge: and its one thing to *know* and another thing to *tell* what this or that is. The very Name as Commonly used doth signifie to them and express from them the thing without a Definition: and they partly understand what that Name signifieth, when they cannot tell it you in other words. As they know what it is to *Believe*, to *Repent*, to be *forgiven*; by custom of speech they know what these mean, and yet cannot define them, but perhaps put you off with the Countrey answer. To Repent is, to Repent; and to be forgiven is, to be forgiven, or if they can say, It is to be pardoned, it is fair. Yet do I not absolutely dissuade you from the use of such questions; but do it cautiously, in case you suspect some gross Ignorance in the point: specially about God himself. And (which is the next part of this Direction.)

3. In such a Case, so contrive the predicate into
Your

your Question that they may perceive what you mean, and that it is not a nice Definition, but a necessary solution that you expect, and look not after words but things, and there leave them to a bare *Yea* or *Nay*, or the meer elocution of one of the two descriptions which your self shall propound. As *E. G.* [*“What is God? is he made of flesh and blood as we are? or is he an invisible spirit? Is he a man or is he not? Had he any beginning? Can he dye? what is faith? Is it a Believing all the word of God? what is it to Believe in Christ? Is it all one as to become a true Christian? Or to believe that Christ is the Saviour of the world, and to Accept him for your Saviour to pardon, teach, govern and glorifie you? What is Repentance? Is it only to be sorry for sin, or is it, The change of the mind from sin to God, or both?”*

4. And as you must do thus when you come to hard points as Definitions or the like, so in all points where you perceive that they understand not the meaning and stress of your question? there you must first draw out their answer by an Equipollent or expository question, or if that will not do, thus frame the answer into your question, and demand but his *Yea* or *Nay*: yea if it be never so easie a point that you are upon, you must do thus at last in case by the first question you have an unsatisfactory answer. *E. G.* I have oft asked some very ignorant people, *How do you think of your sins, so many and great sins shall be pardoned?* And they tell me *by their Repenting and mending their lives*; and never mention Jesus Christ. I ask them further, *But do you think that your amendment can make God*
any

any amends or satisfaction for the sin that is past? They will answer *we hope so, or else we know not what will?* A man would think now that these men had no knowledge of Christ at all, in that they make no mention of him; And some I find have indeed none and when I tell them over the history of the Gospel, and what Christ is, did and suffered and why, they stand wondering at it as a strange thing that they had never heard before; and some say; They never heard this much before, nor knew it, though they came to Church every Lords day. But some I perceive do give such answers, because they understand not the scope of my question; but think that I take Christs death as granted, and only ask them what shall make God satisfaction as their part under Christ (Though thus also they discover sad ignorance.) And when I ask them whether their deeds can Merit any thing of God? they say No; but they hope God will accept them. And if I ask further *Can you be saved without the death of that?* they say, No; And if I ask *what hath he done or suffered for you?* They will say He dyed for us; or shed his blood for us: and will profess that they place their confidence in that for salvation. Many men have that in their minds, which is not ripe for utterance; and through ill education and disuse, they are strangers to the expressions of those things which they have some Conceptions of. And, by the way you may here see the cause to deal very tenderly with the common people for matter of knowledge and defect of expression; if they are teachable, and tractable, and willing to use means, and to live obediently: For many even
ancient

ancient godly persons cannot speak their minds in any tolerable expressions: no nor cannot learn when expressions are put into their mouths. Some of the most pious experienced, approved Christians that I know (aged people) complain exceedingly to me with tears that they cannot learn the words of the Catechism, and when I consider their advantages that they have lived under the most excellent helps, in constant duty, and in the best company for forty or fifty or sixty years together, it teacheth me what to expect from poor ignorant people that never had such company and converse for one year or week: and not to reject them so hastily as some hot and too high professors would have us do. But this is on the by.

5. This also must be observed, that if you find them at a loss, and unable to answer your questions, drive them not on too hard or too long with question after question, lest they conceive you intend but to puzzle them and disgrace them: but presently, when you perceive them troubled that they cannot answer, then step in your self and take the burden off them, & make answer to the question your selves; and then do it thoroughly and plainly, and make a full explication of the whole business to them, that by your Teaching they may be brought to understand it before you leave them. And herein it is comonly necessary that you fetch up the matter *ab origine*, & take it on in order till you come to the point in question.

6. And usually with the grosly ignorant, it is flatly necessary that you do run over all the sum of our Religion to them in the most familiar way that you can possibly devise: But this must be the next Direction. *Direct.*

Direct. 5. When you have done what you see Cause in the trial of their knowledge, proceed next to instruct them your selves: And this must be according to their several Capacities. If it be a Professor that understandeth the Fundamentals, fall upon somewhat which you perceive that he most needeth, either explaining further some of the mysteries of the Gospel, or laying the Grounds of some duty which he may doubt of, or shewing the necessity of what he neglecteth, or meeting with his sins or mistakes, as may be most convincing and edifying to him. If it be one that is grosly ignorant, give him a plain familiar recital of the sum of the Christian Religion in a few words: for though it be in the Catechism already yet a more familiar way may better help them to understand it. As thus “[You must know, that from Everlasting there was one “only God that had no beginning, and can have no “end, who is not a Body as we are, but a most pure, “spiritual Being that knoweth all things, and can “do all things, and hath all Goodness and Blessed- “ness in himself. This God is but one, but yet three “Persons, the Father, the Son and holy Ghost in an “incomprehensible manner, above our reach; yet “we have somewhat in our selves and other crea- “tures that may give us some resemblance of it. As “in a man, his Power and his understanding and “will, be but One soul, and yet they are not one “faculty, but differ one from another: Or as in the “Sun, the Being or Power, and the Heat and the “Light, are not all one; and yet there is but one “Sun; so in a more incomprehensible manner it is in “God. And you must know that this One God did

F f

“make

“make all the world by his word; the heavens he
“made to be the place of his Glory, and made a
“world of holy Angels to serve him, in his
“Glory: but some of these did by Pride or other
“sin fall from God and are become Devils that
“shall be miserable in torments for ever, when he
“had made the rest of this lower world, he made
“man, as his noblest creature here, even one man
“and one woman *Adam* and *Eve*, and he made them
“perfect without any sin or fault, and put them in-
“to the garden of *Eden*, and forbad them to eat but
“of one tree in the garden, and told them that if they
“did, they should dye. But the Devil that had first
“fallen himself did tempt them to sin, and they yield-
“ed to his temptation, and by wilful sinning they
“fell under the curse of Gods Law, and fell short
“of the Glory of God. But God of his infinite Wis-
“dom and Mercy did send his own son Jesus Christ
“to be their Redeemer, who as he was promised in
“the beginning, so in the fulness of time 1655. years
“ago was made man, and was born of a Virgin by
“the power of the Holy Ghost, and lived on earth
“among the Jews about 33 years, and he preached
“the Gospel himself and wrought many miracles to
“prove his doctrine, and bring men to believe in
“him, healing the lame, the blind, the sick, and rai-
“sing the dead by the word of his mouth by his Di-
“vine power; & at the end by the malice of the Jews,
“& his own Consent he was offered upon the Cross,
“as a sacrifice for our sins, to bear that Curse that we
“should have born; and when he was buried, he
“rose again the third day, and lived on earth forty
“dayes after: And before his departure he sent his
“Apostles

“Apostles and other Ministers to preach the Go-
 “spel of salvation to the world, and to call home
 “lost sinners by Repentance, and to assure them
 “in his Name, that if they will but believe in him
 “and take him for their Saviour, and unfeignedly
 “lament their former sins, and turn from them to
 “God, and will take Everlasting Glory for their
 “portion, and be content to resign their carnal In-
 “terests and desires, he will pardon freely all that is
 “past, and be merciful to them for the time to
 “come, and will lead them up into spiritual Commu-
 “nion with God, and bring them to his Glory when
 “this life is Ended, but for them that make light of
 “their sins and of his Mercy, and will not forsake
 “the pleasures of this world for the hopes of ano-
 “ther, they shall be condemned to everlasting pu-
 “nishment. This Gospel Christ hath appointed his
 “Ministers to preach to all the world; and when he
 “had given this in charge to his Apostles, he ascend-
 “ed up into heaven before their faces, where he is
 “now in Glory with God the Father in our Na-
 “ture, ruling all: And at the end of this world, he will
 “come again in that nature, and will call the dead
 “to life again, and set them all before him to be judg-
 “ed: and all that truly Repented and believed in him
 “and were renewed by his spirit, and renounced this
 “world for the hopes of a better shall be judged to
 “live with God in Glory, and shall be like to his
 “Angels, and praise him for ever; and the rest
 “that repented not, and believed not in him, but
 “lived to the flesh and the world, shall be con-
 “demned to everlasting misery. So that you may
 “see by this, that mans Happiness is not in this
 F f 2 “world

“world but in the next, and that all men have lost
 “their hopes of that Happiness by sin, and that Je-
 “sus Christ the only Son of God and the Redeemer
 “of the world hath recovered it for us by the price
 “of his blood shed and hath made a New Covenant
 “with us, assuring us of Life and Salvation, if we
 “Repent and believe in him for that life, and mor-
 “tifie our fleshly desires: To which end he send-
 “eth forth his holy Spirit to convert all that shall
 “be saved, and to turn their hearts from this world
 “to God. If ever you mean to be saved, there-
 “fore it must be thus with you: Your former-
 “sins must be the grief of your soul, and you must
 “fly to a crucified Christ as your only Refuge from
 “the deserved Curse, and the Spirit of Christ must
 “Convert you, and dwell in you and make you
 “wholly a new Creature: or there is no salvation.]
 Some such short plain rehearsal of the Principles of
 Religion in the most familiar manner that you can
 devise, with a brief touch of application in the end,
 will be necessary when you deal with the grosly ig-
 norant: And if you perceive they understand you
 not, go over it again, and ask them whether they un-
 derstand it, and seek to leave it fixed in their me-
 mories.

Direct. 6. Whether they begrosly Ignorant or
 not, if you suspect them to be ungodly, fall next up-
 on a prudent enquiry into their states, And the
 best and least offensive way will be this: to take
 your occasion from some Article of the Catechism,
 as the fifth or seventh; and then to make way by
 a word that may demulce their minds, by convincing
 them of the necessity of it; as *E. g.* thus, or to this
 purpose

purpose, “You see in the 7. Article proved by Scripture, that the Holy-Ghost doth by the word enlighten mens minds, and soften and open their hearts, and turn them from the power of Satan to God by faith in Christ, and so makes them a Sanctified peculiar people to God; and that none but these are made partakers of Christ and life: Now though I have no desire needlesly to pry into any mans secrets, yet because that it is the office of Ministers to give advice to a people in the matters of salvation, and because it is so dangerous a matter to be mistaken, where life or death everlasting doth lie upon it, I would intreate you to deal truly and tell me, Whether ever you found this great change upon your own heart, or not? Did you ever find the spirit of God by the word, come in upon your understanding, with a new heavenly life, which hath made you a new creature? The Lord that seeth your heart doth know whether it be so or not? Therefore I pray you, see that you speak the truth.

If he tell you, that he hopes he is converted; all are sinners; but he is sorry for his sins, or the like; then tell him more particularly in a few words of the plainest notes, or by a short description, what true conversion is, and so renew and enforce the enquiry: as thus: “Because your salvation or damnation lyeth upon it, I would fain help you a little in this, that you may not be mistaken in a business of such consequence, but may find out the truth before it be too late: for as God will judge us impartially, so we have his word before us, by which we may know, now, how God will judge us, then: for this

“word tells us most certainly who they be that shall
“go to heaven, and who to hell. Now the Scripture
“tells us that the state of an unconverted man is this;
“He seeth no great matter of felicity in the Love
“and Communion of God in the life to come, which
“may draw his heart thither from this present
“world, but he liveth to his carnal self, or to the
“flesh, and the main bent of his life is, that it may go
“well with his body here, and that religion that he
“hath is but a little on the by, lest he should be dam-
“ned when he can keep the world no longer; so that
“the world and flesh are highest in his esteem, and
“nearest to his heart, and God and Glory stand be-
“low them and further off, and all their service of
“God is but a giving them that which the world
“and flesh can spare. This is the true case of every
“unconverted man; and all that are in this case, are
“in a state of misery. But he that is truly converted,
“hath had a light shining into his soul from God,
“which hath shewed him the greatness of his sin
“and misery, and made it a heavy load upon his soul,
“and shewed him what Christ is and hath done for
“sinners, and made him admire at the riches of Gods
“grace in him! O what glad news is it to him, that
“yet there is hope for such lost sinners as he; That so
“many and so great sins may be pardoned! and that
“this is offered to all that will accept it! How glad-
“ly doth he entertain this Message and offer? And
“for the time to come, he resigneth himself and
“all that he hath to Christ to be wholly his, and dis-
“posed of by him, in order to the everlasting glory
“which he hath promised: He hath now such a
“sight of the blessed state of the Saints in glory, that
“he

“he despiseth all this world as dross and dung in
 “comparison of it, and there he layeth up his happi-
 “ness and his hopes, and takes all the matters of this
 “life but as so many helps or hindrances in the way
 “to that: so that the very bent and main care and
 “business of his life is to be happy in the life to come.
 “This is the case of all that are truly converted, and
 “shall be saved. Is this your case, or not? Have you
 “found such a change or work as this upon your
 “soul? If he say, he hopes, he hath, descend to
 some particulars distinctly. *E. G.* “I pray you then
 “answer me to these two or three questions. 1. Can
 “you truly say, that all the known sins of your life
 “past are the grief of your heart, and that you have
 “felt that everlasting misery is due to you for them,
 “and that in the sense of this heavy burden, you
 “have felt your self a lost man, and have gladly en-
 “tertained the news of a Saviour, and cast your soul
 “upon Christ alone for pardon by his blood. 2. Can
 “you truly say, that your heart is so far turned from
 “your former sins, that you hate the sins that for-
 “merly you loved, and love that holy life that you
 “had no mind to before, and that you do not now
 “live in the willful practise of any known sin: Is
 “there no sin which you be not heartily willing to
 “leave whatever it cost you? And no duty which
 “you be not willing to perform? 3. Can you truly
 “say, that you have so far taken the everlasting en-
 “joyments of God for your happiness, that it hath
 “the most of your heart, of your love, desire, and
 “care: and that you are resolved by the strength of
 “grace to let go all that you have in the world rather
 “then hazard it; and that it is your daily principal
 “business

“business to seek it? Can you truly say, that though
 “you have your failings and sins, yet your main care
 “and the bent of your whole life is to please God
 “and enjoy him for ever, and that you give the
 “world Gods leavings, as it were, and not God the
 “worlds leavings, and that your worldly business is
 “but as a travellers seeking for provision in his jor-
 “ney, and heaven is the place that you take for your
 “home.

If he say, yea, to the first and third, tell him how great a thing it is for a mans heart to abhor his sin, and to lay up his happiness unfeignedly in another world, and to live in this world, for another that is out of sight! And therefore desire him to see that it be so indeed. If he say, yea, to the second question, then turn to the ninth, tenth, eleventh or twelfth Articles of the Catechism, and read over some of those Duties which you most suspect him to omit; and ask him, Whether he do perform such or such a duty: Especially Prayer (in a family or private) and the holy spending of all the Lords day: because these are of so great moment (of which anon.)

Direction 7. When you have either by former discovery of gross ignorance, or by these later enquiries into his spiritual state, discerned an apparent probability that the person is yet in an unconverted state; your next business is, to fall on with all your skill and power, to bring his heart to the sense of his condition: *E. G.* “Truly neighbours, I have no
 “mind, the Lord knows, to make your condition
 “worse then it is, nor to put any causless fear or
 “trouble into your mind: but I suppose you would
 “take me but for a flattering enemy, and not a faith
 “ful-

“ful friend, if I should daub with you, and not tell
“you the truth: If you sought to a Physitian in
“your sickness, you would have him tell you the
“truth, though it were the worst: Much more here;
“For, there the knowledge of your disease may by
“fears increase it, but here you must know it, or else
“you can never be recovered from it. I much fear
“that you are yet a stranger to the new life of all
“them that Christ will save: For if you were a
“Christian indeed and truly converted, your very
“heart would have been set on God and the life to
“come, and you would have admired the riches of
“grace in Christ, and you would have made it your
“business to prepare for Everlasting; and you durst
“not, you would not, live in any wilful sin, nor in
“the neglect of such duties! Alas! what have
“you done? how have you spent your time till
“now? Did you not know, that you had a soul to
“save or lose? and that you must live in heaven or
“hell for ever! and that you had your life and time
“in this world for that purpose, to prepare for ano-
“ther! Alas! what have you been doing all this
“while that you are so ignorant, or so unprepared
“for death if it should now find you? If you had
“but had as much mind of heaven as of earth, you
“would have known more of it, and done more of
“it, and enquired more diligently after it, then you
“have done! You can learn how to do your busi-
“ness in the world, and why could you not have
“learned more of the will of God, if you had but
“minded it. You have neighbours that could learn
“more, that have had as much to do in the world as
“you, and as little time? Do you think that heaven

“is

“is not worth your labour? or that its like it can be
 “had without any care or pains? when you cannot
 “have the trifles of this world without? and when
 “God hath bid you, first seek his Kingdom and the
 “righteousness thereof? Alas Neighbour, what if
 “you had dyed before this hour in an unconverted
 “state what had become of you? and where had you
 “now been? why you did not know all this while
 “that you should live a day to an end! O that ever
 “you would be so cruel to your selves as to venture
 “your Everlasting state so desperately as you have
 “done! what did you think of? Did you not all this
 “while know that you must shortly dye, and be
 “judged as you were then found? Had you any
 “greater work to do? or any greater business to
 “mind then your salvation? Do you think that all
 “that you can get in this world will comfort you at
 “a dying hour, or purchase your salvation, or ease
 “the pains of Hell-fire?

Set these things home with a more earnest voice
 then the former part of your conference was managed with. For if you get it not to heart, you do little or nothing and that which affecteth not is soon forgotten.

Direct. 8. Next this, conclude the whole, with a Practical Exhortation, which must contain two parts, First, the duty of the heart in order to a closure with Christ, and that which is contained in that closure: and Secondly, The use of external means for the time to come, and the avoiding of former sins. *E. g.* [“Neighbour, I am heartily sorry to
 “find you in so sad a case; but I should be more sorry to leave you in it; and therefore let me intreat
 “you

“you for the Lords sake and for your own sake to
“to regard what I shall say to you, as to the time
“to come. It is the Lords great mercy that he did
“not cut you off in your unconverted natural state,
“and that you have yet life and time, and that
“there is a sufficient Remedy provided for your soul
“in the blood of Christ, and he is yet offered with
“Pardon and life to you as well as any others;
“God hath not left sinful man to utter desperation
“for want of a Ransom by a Redeemer as he hath
“done the Devils; nor hath he made any exception
“in the offer or promise of pardon and life against
“you any more then against any other. If you had
“yet but a bleeding heart for sin, and could come
“to Christ believably for recovery, and resign
“your selves to him as your Saviour and Lord, and
“would be a new man for the time to come, the
“Lord will have mercy on you in the pardon of
“your sins, and the saving of your soul; And I must
“tell you, that as it must be the great work of Gods
“grace to give you such a heart, so if ever he mean
“to pardon and save you, he will make this change
“upon you that I have before mentioned; he will
“make you feel your sin as the heaviest burden in
“the world, as that which is most odious in it self
“and hath laid you open to the Curse of God; he
“will make you see that you are a lost man, and
“that there is no way but one with you, even ever-
“lasting damnation, unless you are pardoned by the
“blood of Christ, and sanctified by his spirit: he
“will you make you see the need you have of Christ,
“and how much you are beholden to him for his
“bloodshed, and how all your hope and life is in
“him

“him he will make you see the vanity of this world
“and all that it can afford you, and that all your
“happiness is with God, in that everlasting life,
“where with Saints and Angels you may behold his
“Glory and live in his loves and praises, when those
“that reject him shall be tormented with the devils:
“And because it is only Christ the Redeemer that
“can bring you to that glory, and deliver you from
“that torment, he will make you look to him as
“your hope and life, and cast your burdened soul
“upon him, and give up your selves to be saved and
“taught and ruled by him; and he will possess you
“with the spirit of holyness, that your heart shall
“set upon God and heaven as your treasure, and
“the care of your mind and the business of your life
“shall be to obtain it, and you shall despise this
“world and deny your fleshly interests and desires,
“and cast away the sin with abhorrence which you
“delighted in, and count no pains too great, nor no
“suffering too dear for the obtaining of that ever-
“lasting life with God. Let me tell you, that till
“this work be done upon you, you are a mise-
“rable man, and if you dye before its done, you
“are lost for ever: Now, you have hope and help
“before you, but then there will be none. Let me
“therefore intreat these two or three things of you,
“and do not deny them me as you love your soul.
“First, That you will not rest in this Condition that
“you are in. Be not quiet in your mind, till you
“find a true conversion to be wrought. Think
“when you rise in the morning, O what if this day
“should be my last, and death should find me in an
“unrenewed state? Think when you are about your
“labour

“labour, O how much greater a work have I yet
“to do, to get my soul reconciled to God and
“possessed of his Spirit! Think when you are eat-
“ing or drinking or looking on any thing that you
“possess in the world, what good will all this do me,
“if I live and die an enemy to God, and a stranger to
“Christ and his Spirit, and we must perish for ever.
“Let these thoughts be day & night upon your mind
“till your soul be changed. The second thing that I
“would intreat of you is, that you would bethink you
“seriously what a vain thing this world is, and how
“shortly it will leave you to a cold grave, and to
“everlasting misery, if you have not a better trea-
“sure then this: and bethink you what it is to live in
“the sight of the face of God, and to reign with
“Christ, and be like the Angels? and that this is
“the life that Christ hath procured you, and is pre-
“paring for you and offereth you if you will accept
“it in and with himself upon his easie reasonable
“terms; bethink your self whether it be not mad-
“ness to slight such an endless glory, and to prefer
“these fleshly dreams, and earthly shadows before
“it. Use your self to such considerations as these,
“when you are alone, and let them dwell upon your
“mind. The third thing that I would intreat of
“you is, that you will presently without any more
“delay, Accept of this felicity and this Saviour:
“close with the Lord Jesus that offereth you this
“eternal life: Joyfully and thankfully accept his of-
“fer, as the only way to make you happy: and then
“you may believe that all your sins shall be done
“away by him. My fourth request to you is, that
“you will resolve presently against your former sins:
“find

“find out what hath defiled your heart and life, and
“cast it up now by the vomit of Repentance, as you
“would do Poyson out of your stomach, and abhor
“the thought of taking it in again. My fifth and
“last request to you is that you will set your selves
“close to the use of Gods means till this change
“be wrought, and then continue his means till you
“are confirmed, and (at last) perfected. 1. Be-
“cause you cannot of your selves make this change
“upon your heart and life betake your self daily to
“God for it by prayer, and beg earnestly as for your
“life that he will pardon all your former sins, and
“change your heart, and shew you the riches of his
“Grace in Christ, and the Glory of his Kingdom,
“and draw up your heart to himself. Follow God
“day and night with these requests. 2. That you
“will fly from temptations and occasions of sin, and
“forsake your former evil company, and betake
“your selves into the company of those that fear
“God, and will help you in the way to heaven.
“3. That you will specially spend the Lords day
“in holy exercises both publike and private, and lose
“not one quarter of an hour of any of your time,
“but specially of that most precious time, which
“God hath given you purposely that you may set
“your mind upon him, and be instructed by him
“and to prepare your self for your latter end. What
“say you will you do this presently? at least so
“much of it as you can do if you will. Will you
“promise me to think of these things that I before
“mentioned, and to pray daily for a changed heart
“till you have obtained it, and to change your
“Company and Courses, and fall upon the use of
God’s

Gods means in reading or hearing the Scriptures, meditating on them, specially on the Lords day?

And here be sure if we can, to get their promise, and engage them to amendment, especially to use means, and change their company, and forsake actual sinning, because these are more in their reach, and in this way they may wait for the accomplishing of that change that is not yet wrought. And do this solemnly, remembring them of the presence of God that heareth their promises, and will expect the performance. (And when you have afterward opportunity, you may remember them of that promise.)

Direction 9. At the dismissing of them do these two things. 1. Again lenifie their minds by a deprecation of offence in a word; *E. G.* ["I pray you "take it not ill that I have put you to this trouble, "or dealt thus freely with you: Its as little pleasure "to me as to you, if I did not know these things to "be true and necessary, I would have spared this labour to my self and you: But I know that we "shall be here together but a little while: we are almost at the world to come already; and therefore "its time for us all to look about us, and see that we "be ready when God shall call us.]

2. Because it is but seldom that we our selves shall have opportunity to speak with the same persons, set them in a way for the perfecting of what is begun. 1. Engage the Governor of each family to call all his family to account every Lords day before they go to bed, what they can rehearse of the Catechism: and so to continue till they have all learned it perfectly: and

when they have done so, yet still to continue to hear them recite it, at least once in two or three Lords daies, that they may not forget it. For, even to the most judicious it will be an excellent help to have still in memory, a sum of the Christian Doctrine, for matter, method and words. 2. As for the Rulers of families themselves or those that are under such rulers as will not help them, if they have learnt some small part of the Catechism only, engage them either to come again to you (though before their course) when they have learnt the rest, or else to go to some able experienced neighbour, and recite it to them, and take their assistance when you cannot have time your self.

Direction 10. Have all the names of your Parishioners by you in a book: and when they come and recite the Catechism, note in your Book who come and who do not; and who are so grosly ignorant as to be utterly incapable of the Lords Supper and other holy Communion, and who not: and as you perceive the necessities of each, so deal with them for the future. But for those, that are utterly obstinate, and will not come to you nor be instructed by you, remember the last Article of our Agreement, *to deal with them as the obstinate despisers of Instruction should be dealt with, in regard of Communion, and the application of sealing and confirming Ordinances:* which is to avoid them, and not hold holy or familiar Communion with them, in the Lords Supper or other Ordinances: and though some Reverend Brethren are for admitting their children to Baptism (and offended with me for contradicting it) yet so cannot I be, nor shall I dare to do it upon any pretences of
their

their Ancestors faith, or of a Dogmatical faith of these Rebellious Parents, supposing them both to be such as in that Article we have mentioned. To these particulars, I add this General.

Direction 11. Through the whole course of your conference with them, see that the manner as well as the matter be suited to the end. And concerning the manner observe these particulars.

1. That you make a difference according to the difference of the persons that you have to deal with. To the dull and obstinate you must be more earnest and sharp: To the tender and timorous that are already humbled, you must rather insist on direction and confirmation. To the youthful you must lay greater shame on sensual voluptuousness, and shew them the nature and necessity of mortification: To the Aged you must do more to disgrace this present world, and make them apprehensive of the nearness of their change, and the aggravations of their sin, if they shall live and dye in ignorance, or impenitency. To Inferiors and the Younger, you must be more free, to Superiors and Elders more reverend: To the rich this world must be more disgraced, and the nature and necessity of self-denial opened, and the damnable-ness of preferring the present prosperity to the future, with the necessity of improving their talents in well-doing. To the poor we must shew the great Riches of Glory which is propounded to them in the Gospel, and how well the present things may be spared, where the everlasting may be got. Also those sins must be most insisted on, which each ones age, or sex, or temperature of body, or calling and employment in the world, doth most encline them to.

As in females, loquacity, evil speeches, passion, malice, pride, &c. In males, drunkenness, ambition, &c. Of all which and abundance more differences, calling to us for different carriage; See *Gregor. Mag. de Officio Pastor.*

2. Be as condescending, familiar and plain as is possible, with those that are of the weaker capacity.

3. Give them the Scripture proof, the light of full evidence and reason of all as you go, that they may see that it is not you only, but God by you that speaketh to them.

4. Be as serious in all, but specially in the Applicatory part as you can. I scarce fear any thing more, then least some careless Ministers will slubber over the work, and do all superficially and without life, and destroy this as they do all other duties, by turning it into a meer formality: putting a few cold questions to them, and giving them two or three cold words of advice, without any life and feeling in themselves, nor likely to produce any feeling in the hearers: But sure he that valueth souls, and knoweth what an opportunity is before him, will do it accordingly.

5. To this end, I should think it very necessary that we do both before and in the work, take special pains with our own hearts; especially to excite and strengthen our Belief of the Truth of the Gospel, and the Invisible Glory and Misery that is to come. I am confident this work will exceedingly try the strength of our belief: For he that is but superficially a Christian, and not sound in the faith, will likely feel his Zeal quite fail him (specially when the duty is
grown

grown common) for want of a Belief of the things which he is to treat of to keep it alive. An affected fervency and hypocritical stage-action, will not hold up in such kind of duties long: A Pulpit shall have more of them, then a conference with poor ignorant souls: For the Pulpit is the hypocritical Ministers stage: There, and in the Press, and in Publike acts, where there is room for oftentation, you shall have his best, and almost all. It is other kind of men that must effectually do the work now in hand.

6. It is therefore very meet that we prepare our selves to it by private prayer; and if time would permit, and there be many together; if we did begin and end with a short prayer with our people, it were best.

7. Carry on all (even the most earnest passages) in clear demonstrations of love to their souls, and make them feel through the whole, that you aim at nothing but their own salvation; and avoid all harsh discouraging passages, throughout.

8. If you have not time to deal so fully with each one particularly as is here directed, then 1. Omit not the most necessary parts. 2. Take several of them together that are friends, and will not seek to divulge each others weaknesses, and speak to them in common as much as concerneth all; and only the Examinations of their Knowledge and state, and convictions of misery and special directions, must be used to the individuals alone: But take heed of slubbering it over (upon an unfaithful laziness, or being too brief) without a real Necessity.

Direction 12. Lastly, if God enable you, extend your charity to those of the poorest sort, before they part from you: Give them somewhat towards their relief, and for the time that is thus taken from their labours: Especially for encouragement of them that do best; and to the rest, promise them so much when they have learned the Catechism. I know you cannot give what you have not, but I speak to them that can. And so much shall serve for Directions to the younger Ministers, in their dealing with the more ignorant or carnal sort of persons,

AS for them, that are under fears and troubles of mind, who yet give us hopes of the work of saving grace on their souls, though it deserve a full discourse to direct us in dealing with them, yet I shall not meddle with it now. 1. Because I intended this discourse for another end. 2. Because Divines being at some variance about the methods of comforting and confirming troubled minds, are many of them so impatient of reading any thing which is not cut out according to their present opinions; that I perceive it my duty as far as I can, to avoid points controverted. 3. Because I have done so much as I think necessary already in my *Directions for peace of Conscience*.

CHAP.



CHAP. VIII.

SECT. I.



Nother sort there are, that we may have occasion of conference with, though they will scarce stoop to be Catechized; and that is, Opinionative Questionists, that being tainted with Pride and self-conceitedness, are readier to teach, then to be taught, and to vent their own conceits, and quarrel with you, as being ignorant or erroneous your selves, then to receive instruction: and if they are tainted with any notable error or schismatical disposition, they will seek to waste the time in vain janglings, and to dispute, rather then to learn. I am not now directing you what to do with those men at other times (of that I shall give a touch anon;) but only if they come to you at this time, which is

G g 3

appointed

appointed for Catechizing and edifying Instruction: Nor is it my thought to presume to direct any but the weaker sort of Ministers in this, any more then in the former:

Its like you will have some come to you amongst the rest, that when they should give an account of their faith, will fall into a Teaching and Contentious discourse, and one will tell you, that *you have no true Church, because you have such bad members*: another will ask you, *by what authority you baptize Infants?* another will ask you, *how you can be a true Minister, if you had your Ordination from Prelates?* and another will tell you, that *you are no true Minister because you had not your Ordination from Prelates*: another will ask you, *What Scripture you have for Praying or singing Psalms in a mixt Assembly?* and another will quarrel with you, *because you administer not the Lords Supper to them, in the gesture and manner as they desire, and were wont to receive it; or because you exercise any Discipline among them.* If any such person should come to you, and thus seek to divert your better discourse, I should think it best to take this course with them.

I. Let them know that this meeting is appointed for another use; that is, for the Instructing of the people in the Principles of Religion; and you think it very unmeet to pervert it from that use; it being a sin to do Gods work disorderly, or to be doing a lesser work, when you should be doing a greater: And therefore as you durst not turn Gods publike worship on the Lords day into vain or contentious disputings, which discompose mens minds, and spoil a greater work; so neither do you think it lawful to abuse
these

these times to lower uses, which are appointed for higher.

2. Yet let him know, that you do not this to avoid any tryal of the truth: and that he may know so much, you will at any other fit season, when he will come on purpose to that end, endeavour to give him full satisfaction; or you will as willingly receive instruction from him, if he be able and have the truth, as you desire he should receive instruction from you: and if it must be so, you will yield to his desire before you part, if there be but time when you have dispatcht the greater work: but upon condition only, that he will submit to the greater first.

3. Then desire him first to give you some account of the Principles in the Catechism: And if he deny it, conuince him before all, of the iniquity of his course.

1. In that it is the Principles that salvation most dependeth on, and therefore being of greatest Excellency and Necessity, are first to be taken into consideration.

2. In that it is the appointed business of this day.

3. It is orderly to begin with the fundamentals, because they bear up the rest, which suppose them, flow from them, and cannot be understood without them.

4. It is the note of a Proud vain-glorious hypocrite, to make a flourish about lesser things, and yet either to be ignorant of the greater, or to scorn to give that account of his knowledge, which the people whom he despiseth, refuse not to give.

If he yield to you, ask him only such questions as

seem to be of great weight, and yet strain him up a peg higher, then you do the common people; and especially keep out the predicate usually from your Question, and put him most upon defining or distinguishing, or expounding some terms or sentences of Scripture, &c. As such questions as these may be put to him, which call for definitions, wherein its ten to one, but you will find him ignorant. *E. G* ["What is God? What is Jesus Christ? What is the Holy-Ghost? What is Person in the Trinity? How many natures hath Christ? Was Christ a creature before his Incarnation, or the Creation? Is he called the first-born of all creatures as God, or as man? Is he called, the Image of the Invisible God, and the express Image of the Fathers person or subsistence as a creature, or as God? Was *Adam* bound to believe in Christ? Was one, or two Covenants made with *Adam* before his fall? Did the first Covenant of Nature make any promise of everlasting celestial glory? Did it threaten hell fire, or only temporal death? Did it threaten eternal torment to the soul only, or to the body also? Should there have been any Resurrection of the body, if Christ had not come to procure it? Should Christ have come, or been our Head, or have brought us to glory, if man had not fallen? What is the first Covenant? what, its conditions? What the second Covenant, and its Conditions? What was the difference between the Covenant with *Adam*, and that by *Moses*? Was it a Covenant of Works, or of Grace that was made by *Moses*? What were the conditions of salvation before Christs Incarnation? What is forgiveness of sin? What is Justification? How

“How are we said to be Justified by faith? how
 “by works? What is faith? What repentance? What
 “Sanctification, Vocation, Regeneration? Is the
 “Covenant of Works Abrogated, or not? Is the Co-
 “venant of Grace made with the Elect only? or
 “with all? or with whom? What is Freewill? Is
 “there any conversion without the word? What is
 “the true nature of special grace? and what is the
 “proper difference of a Regenerate man from all
 “others? What is the Catholike Church? How
 “will you know the true Church? How know you
 “the Scripture to be the word of God? What is
 “Christ’s Priestly, Prophetical, Kingly office? Be they
 “three offices, or but one: and be they all?] with abundance
 the like.

And if it be Sacrament Controversies which
 he raiseth, tell him it is necessary, that you be first
 agreed, what Baptism is? (what the Lords Supper is?)
 before you dispute who should be Baptized, &c.
 And its twenty to one, he is not able truly to tell you
 what the Sacrament it self is.

A true Definition of Baptism or the Lords Supper
 is not so commonly given as pretended to be given.

4. If he discover his Ignorance in the cases pro-
 pounded, endeavour to humble him in the sense of his
 pride and presumption; And let him know what it is,
 and what it signifieth, to go about with a Teaching,
 Contentious, proud behaviour, while he is indeed so
 ignorant in things of greater moment.

5. But see that you are able to give him better in-
 formation your selves in the points wherein you find
 him ignorant.

6. But specially take care that you discern the spi-
 rit

of the man: And if he be a settled perverse Schismatick, or Heretick, so that you see him peremptory and resolved, and quite transported with pride, and have no great hopes of his recovery, then do all this that I have before said openly before all that are present; that he may be humbled or shamed before all, and the rest may be confirmed. But if you find him godly and temperate, and that there is any hope of his reduction, then see that you do all this privately between him and you only: and let not fall any bitter words, nor that tend to his disparagement. And thus I advise, both because we must be as tender of the reputation of all good men, as fidelity to them and to the truth will permit: we must bear one anothers burdens, and not encrease them, and we must restore those with a spirit of meekness, that fall through infirmity; remembring that we our selves also may be tempted: and also because there is small hope that you should ever do them good, if once you exasperate them, and dis-affect them towards you.

And therefore 7. See that to such erring persons as you have any hopes of, you carry your selves with as much tenderness and love as will consist with your duty to the Church of God. For most of them when they are once tainted this way, are so selfish and high-minded, that they are much more impatient of reproof then many of the prophaner sort of people.

This way did *Musculus* take with the Anabaptists, visiting them in Prison, and relieving them even while they railed at him as Antichristian, and so continued without disputing with them, till they were convinced that he loved them, and then they sought to him for advice themselves, & many of them were reclaimed by him.

8. Either

8. Either in the Conclusion of your meeting, or at another appointed time, when you come to debate their Controversie with them, tell them, *That seeing they think you unable to teach them, and think themselves able to teach you, it is your desire to learn; You suppose disputing (as tending usually to exasperate mens minds, rather then to satisfie them) is to be used as the last remedy; Therefore you are here ready, if they are able to Teach you, to learn of them and desire them to speak their minds: Which if they refuse, tell them, you think it the humblest and most Christian edifying way for him that hath most knowledge to Teach, and the other to Learn; and therefore your purpose is to be either a Learner or a Teacher, and not be Disputant, till they make it to be Necessary. When they have declared their minds to you in a teaching way, if it be nothing but the common pleas of the seduced (as its like it will not till then) that this is no new thing to you; it is not the first time that you have heard it, or Considered of it, and if you had found a Divine Evidence in it you had received it long ago: You are truly willing to receive all truth; but you have received that which is contrarie to this doctrine, with far better Evidence then they bring for it, &c.* If they desire to hear what your Evidence is, tell them if they will hear as learners you shall communicate your Evidence in the meetest way you can, which if they promise to do, let them know that this promise obligeth them to impartialitie and an humble free entertainment of the truth, and that they do not turn back in cash carping and contention but take what shall be delivered into sober Consideration: which if they promise,

mise, 1. If you are so far vers't in the point in hand as to mannage it well *ex tempore*, or the person be temperate and fit for such debates, then come in with your evidence in a discursive way, first shewing your reasons against the grossest imperfections of his own discourse, and then giving him your grounds from Scripture; not many but rather a few of the clearest best improved. And 2. When you have done (or without verbal teaching if you find him unfit to learn that way) give him some book that most effectually defendeth the questioned truth, and tell him, *that it is a vain thing to say that over so oft, which is so fully said already, and a man may better consider of what he hath before his eyes, then of that which slideth through his ears, and is mistaken or forgotten: and therefore you desire him as an humble learner to peruse that Book with leisurely consideration; because there are the same things, that you would say to him; and desire him to bring you in a sober and solid answer to the chief strength of it, if after perusal he judge it to be unsound.* But, if it may be, fasten some one of the most sticking Evidences on him before you leave him. If he refuse to read the book, endeavour to convince him of his unfaithfulness to the Truth and his own soul? Doth he think that Gods truth is not worth his study? or will he venture his soul (as the ungodly do) and the Churches peace with it, and all to save himself so small a labour? Is it not just with God to give him over to delusion, that will not be at a little pains to be informed, nor afford the truth an equal hearing?

9. But above all, before you part, yea or before you
debate

debate the Controversie, see that you do sum up the precedent Truths wherein you are both agreed.

1. *Know whether he agree to all that is in the Catechism, which you teach the people?* 2. *Whether he suppose that you may attain salvation, if you be true to so much as you are agreed in?* 3. *Whether they that are so far agreed as you are, should not live in Love and Peace, as children of the same God, and members of the same Christ, and heirs of the same Kingdom?* 4. *Whether you are not bound, notwithstanding your smaller difference, to be helpers in the main work of the Gospel for the conversion and saving of souls?* 5. *Whether then they are not bound to manage the private difference so as they may not hinder the main work, and therefore to let the lesser stoop to the greater?* 6. *Whether they ought not to hold communion in publike worship, and Church-relation, with those that are so far agreed, and walk in the fear of God?* 7. *And whether it be not schism to separate from them, for the sake of that small disagreement, themselves being not necessitated by Communion to any actual sin?*

I speak all this only of the tolerable differences that are among men, fearing God. And in that case, if the person be sober and understanding, he must needs yield to the affirmative of these Questions: Which if he do (or to any of them) let him subscribe it, or openly averr it: And then let all the standers by be made apprehensive, that none of the great matters that you deal with them about, are questioned, but all yielded unquestionable; (And the affixed Scripture leaves them so:) therefore there is no cause for them to receive the least discouragement in their way.

I conceive its past doubt, that differing brethren may well joyn in recommending the truths that they are agreed in to the ignorant people! Bishop *Usher* told King *James* in his Sermon at *Wansted* on the *Churches Unity*, that he made this motion even to the Papists Priests themselves that they might joyn in teaching the people of that barbarous Nation the Common Principles that both were agreed in: A motion too Christian for sullen factious Zeal to entertain. I will repeat his own words, pag. 33. “[The danger then of this ignorance being by the “Confession of the most judicious Divines of both “sides acknowledged to be so great; the woful “estate of the poor Countrey wherein I live is “much to be lamented, where the people generally “are suffered to perish for want of knowledge (*he “meant the Papists*) the vulgar superstitions of “Poperie not doing them half that hurt, that the “ignorance of those Common principles of the faith “doth, which all true Christians are bound to learn. “The consideration whereof hath sometime drawn “me to treat with those of the opposite party to “move them, that however in other things we did “differ one from another, yet we should joyn together in teaching those main points the knowledge “whereof was so necessary to salvation, and of the “truth whereof there was no Controversie betwixt “us. But what, for the Jealousies which these “distractions in matters of Religion have bred “among us, and what, for other respects, the motion “took small effect: and so betwixt us both, the poor “people are kept still in miserable ignorance, neither “knowing the grounds of the one Religion nor
“of

“of the other.] So far this learned Christian Bishop.

And what wonder if Popish Priests refuse this motion, when now among us it is so rare a matter to find any in *England*, though he differ only in the point of Infant-Baptism, that will calmly and without fraudulent designs of secret promoting his own opinions by it, entertain and prosecute such a motion for the common good! As if they had rather, that Christianitie were thrust out of the world, or kept under, then Infants should be admitted into the Church! well, let any party or person pretend what they will of Zeal or Holiness, I will ever take the *Dividatur* for an ill sign: The true Mother abhors the Division of the Child; and the true Christian doth prefer the Common interest of Christianity, before the Interest of a faction, or an opinion, and would not have the whole building endangered, rather than one peg, should not be driven in as he would have it, he had rather a particular Truth (if we suppose it a truth) should suffer, then the whole or the main.

And having given you this advice what to do with this kind of men in your Conference on the occasion now in question, so I shall add a word or two of advice how to carry your self towards them at other times; For the preservation of the Unity and Peace of your Congregations doth much depend on your right dealing with such as these. For (alas for grief and shame) it is most commonly men that profess more then ordinary Religiousness they are the dividers of these.

1. I must premise, that the chief part of your work to preserve the Church from such, doth consist in the prevention of their fall, seeing when they are once thoroughly infected; be the error what it will, they are but seldom recovered; but if they be beaten out of the error, which they first fell into; they go to another, and perhaps thence to another; but, through a just excecation, they seldom return to the truth.

2. To which end, it is most desirable that the Minister should be of Parts above the people so far, as to be able to teach them, and awe them, and manifest their weaknesses to themselves, or to all. The truth is (for it cannot be hid) it is much long of the Ministers, that our poor people are run into so many factions! and particularly, the weakness of too many is not the least cause, when a proud Seducer shall have a nimble tongue, and a Minister be dull or ignorant, so that such a one can baffle him, or play upon him in the ears of others, it brings him into contempt, and overthrows the weak: For they commonly judge him to have the best cause, that hath the most confident, plausible, triumphant tongue. But when a Minister is able to open their shame to all, it mightily preserveth the Church from their infection.

3. It is necessary also to this end, that you frequently and thoroughly possess your people, with the nature, necessity, and daily use of the great unquestionable Principles of Religion, and of the great sin and danger of a perverse zeal about the lower points before the greater are well laid, and let them be made sensible how it is the Principles, and not their
smaller

smaller Controversies that life or death doth depend upon.

4. Make them sensible of the mischiefs of Schism, and the great and certain obligations that lie upon us, all to maintain the Churches Unity and Peace.

5. When a fire is kindled, resist it in the beginning, and make not light of the smallest spark: and therefore go presently to the infected person, and follow him by the means hereafter mentioned, till he be recovered.

6. Specially use a fit diversion: when a small Controversie begins to endanger the Church, raise a greater your self, which you have better advantage to mannage, and which is not like to make a division. That is; let them know that there are far greater difficulties then theirs to be first resolved (such as some of the Questions before mentioned) and so give them a Catalogue of them, and set them a work upon them, that they may be matter of avocation from that fore, where the humors begin their conflux, and also that they may be humbled in the sense of their ignorance, and their proud self-conceits may be somewhat abated.

7. See that you preach to such auditors as these, some higher points, that stall their understandings, and feed them not all with milk, but sometime with stronger meat: For it exceedingly puffs them up with Pride, when they hear nothing from Ministers but what they know already, or can say themselves: This makes them think themselves as wise as you, and as fit to be Teachers; For they think you know no more then you preach: And this hath set so many of them on preaching, because they hear nothing from others

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but what they can say themselves; and Ministers do not set them such patterns as may humble them, and deter them from that work. Not that I would have you neglect the great fundamental verities, or wrong the weak and ignorant people, while you are dealing with such as these; but only when the main part of your Sermon is as plain as you can speak, let some one small part, be such as shall puzzle these self-conceited men: Or else have one Sermon in four or five of purpose for them: Not by heaping up citations of Fathers, nor repeating words of Latine or Greek (unless when you are convincing them of the difficulty of a Text of Scripture) For they will but deride all this: But take up some profound questions (such as the Schools voluminously agitate) and let them see that it is edifying that you intend, and therefore desire to make it as plain as you can; that they may see that it is not your obscure manner of handling, but the matter it self that is too hard for them, and so may see that they are yet but children that have need of milk, and that you would be more upon such higher points, if it were not that their incapacity doth take you off.

8. See that you preach as little as may be against them in the Pulpit, in any direct manner, opposing their sect by name, or by any reproachful titles: For they are exceeding tender, proud, passionate and rash, ordinarily, that are intangled in a Schism: & they will but hate you, and fly from you as an enemy, and say you rail. The way therefore is, without naming them, to lay the grounds clearly and soundly, which must subvert their errours; and then the error will fall of it self. And when you are necessitated to deal
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with them directly; do it not by short unsatisfactory applications, and loathed snatches, or angring reproaches; but without naming them, take up the Controversie, and handle it thoroughly, peaceably, and convincingly, and so let them alone in publike: yet be not too long upon it neither: but give them your fullest evidence in a few Sermons; not saying all that may be said, but choosing out that which they can have least pretence to quarrel with, and passing over that which they may say more against, or will require more ado to clear and defend.

9. Be sure to keep up some private meetings, and draw them in among you, and mannage them prudently. By this means you may keep them from Dividing meetings among themselves, where they may say what they wil behind your back without controle, For most Professors are addicted to private meetings, (and well ordered, they are of great use to their edification) and if they have not the opportunity of such as they should have, they will gather to such as they should not have. In the mannaging of them (as to the present purpose) observe these things.

1. Be sure to be still with them your selves.

2. Let not the main exercises of the meeting be such as tend to contention, or to private mens proud ostentation of their parts, but such as tend to the edification of the people: Not for private men to preach or expound Scripture, nor (as some do) to let every one of them speak to questions of their own propounding; but to repeat the Sermons that you have preacht, & to call upon God, and sing his Praise.

3. Yet let there be some opportunity for them to speak, and appear in a learning way. To which purpose,

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pose, when you have done repeating, let all that are present know, that if they doubt of any thing that was delivered, or would have any thing made plainer to them, or would be resolved in any thing else that concerneth the subject in hand (or any other in case of need) you desire them to propound their doubts. And so let them have the liberty of questioning as learners, while you remain the Teacher, and resolve all the doubts your selves, and do not set them on disputing, by leaving it to them to make the answer. And if you have not competent abilities *ex tempore*, to resolve their doubts, you were much better let pass this too: but if you have, it will be of very great use, both for their edification, and the maintaining of order, and their necessary dependance on you.

4. But if you perceive them so set upon the exercise of their own parts for ostentation, that they are like to divide, if they have not opportunity to do it; be not too stiff against them; but mildly let them know, that it is for their good that you dislike it, both because it is an ill sign of a proud heart, that had rather teach, then learn, especially where a Teacher by office is in place, and where there is no necessity; and also because you fear it will not tend to the best edification of the Flock, but to vain janglings, or to excite others that are unable to an imitation. Desire also to know of them, whether they have any truth of God to reveal to them, that you do not reveal? If they have not, why should they desire needlessly to tell them what they are daily told by you? If they have, it is necessary that you know it and consider of it, before you consent that it should be taught to your Flock. But if this mild resistance satisfie not, let them

them take their course a while, rather then sepearate from you (unless they be already perverse and subtile Hereticks:) and when they have done their exercises, tell them that as you give libertie to all, to propound their doubts about what you have delivered, so you must take the like libertie that you give: And so propound, first, whether the understandings of people are like to be more edified, by such obtusions of variety, or by fastening well up-on their memories the things that they have lately heard? and so whether such exercises or repetitions be more necessary? And then open the weaknesses of the discourse; the mis-expounding of Scriptures, the errors in matter, in Method, and in words and that not in a contemptuous or disgraceful way, but as the points wherein you remain unsatisfied. And by such means as these you will quickly shame them out of their way of ostentation, and make them give it over.

10. Make use of your Peoples parts to the utmost as your Helpers in their places, in an orderly way, under your Guidance; or else they will make use of them in a disorderly dividing way in opposition to you. It hath been a great cause of Schism, when Ministers would contemptuously cry down private mens preaching, and withall desire not to make any use of the Gifts that God hath given them for their assistance; but thrust them too far from holy things, as if they were a prophane generation. The work is like to go poorly on, if there be no hands imployed in it, but the Ministers. God giveth not any of his gifts to be buried, but for common use. By a prudent improvement of the gifts of the more able

Christians, we may receive much help by them, and prevent their abuse; even as lawful marriage preventeth fornication And the uses you must specially put them to are these. 1 Urge them to be diligent in Teaching and praying with their own families; specially Catechizing them, and teaching them the meaning of what they learn, and whetting it on their affections: And there if they have a mind to preach to their children and servants, (so they undertake not more, then they are able to do) I know no reason, but they may. 2. Urge them to step out now and then to their poor Ignorant Neighbours, and catechize and instruct them in meekness and patience from day to day, and that will bring them more peace of Conscience, then contemning them. 3. Urge them to go oft to the Impenitent and scandalous sinners about them, and deal with them with all possible skill and earnestness, yet also with love and patience, for the Converting reforming and saving of their souls. 4. Acquaint them with their duty of watching over each other in brotherly love; and admonishing and exhorting one another daily and if any walk scandalously, to tell them their fault before two or three, after the contempt of private reproof; and if that prevail not, to tell the officers of the Church, that they may be further proceeded with, as Christ hath appointed. 5. At your private meetings and in days of humiliation or thanksgiving in private, employ them in prayer, and in such learning Questions as is aforesaid. 6. If there be any very ignorant or scandalous sinner that you know of and you cannot possibly have time your selves to speak to them at
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that season, send some of those that are able and sober to do it in your stead, to instruct the ignorant, and admonish the offenders, as far as a private man, on a message from a Minister, and in discharge of his own duty may go. 7. Let some of them be chosen to Represent the Church: or to see that they have no wrong, and to be their Agents to prepare all Cases of Discipline for publike audience, and to be present with the Church officers at appointed meetings to hear the Evidences that are brought in against any scandalous impenitent sinners, and to discern how far they are valid and how far the persons are obliged to make satisfaction, and give publike testimony of Repentance or to be further proceeded against. 8 Let such as are fit, be made subservient officers, I mean Deacons: and then they may afford you help in a regular way, and will by their relation discern themselves obliged to maintain the unity of the Church and authoritie of the Ministrie, as they have some participation of the Employment and honour, and so by a complication of Interests you will make them firmer to the Church: But then see that they be men Competently fit for the place.

I am perswaded, if Ministers had thus made use of the parts of their ablest members, they might have prevented much of the Divisions and distractions and apostacie that hath befalln us: For they would have then found work enough upon their hands for higher parts then theirs, without invading the Ministrie, and would rather have seen cause to bewail the impfection of their abilities to that work which doth belong to them. Experience would have convinced

and humbled them more, then our words will do. A man may think he can stir such ablock, or pluck up a tree by the roots, that never tryed; but when he sets his hands to it, he will come off ashamed. And see that you drive them to diligence in their own works, and let them know what a sin it is to neglect their families, and their ignorant miserable neighbours &c and then they will be kept humble, and have no such mind to be running upon more work, when they feel you, spurring them on to their own, and rebuking them for the neglect; nor will they have any leisure for schismatical Enterprises, because of the constancy and greatness of their employment.

11. Still keep up Christian love and familiarity with them, even when they begin to warp and make defection; and lose not your interest in them, while you have any thoughts of attempting their recovery.

12. If they do withdraw into separated meetings, follow them, and be among them, if it may be, continually, enter a mild dissent as to the lawfulness of it; but yet tell them, that you are willing to hear what it is that they have to say, and to be among them for their good, if they will give you leave, for fear lest they run to further evil. And be not easily removed; but hold on, unless they resolvedly exclude you. For 1. You may thereby have the opportunity of a moderate gentle opposing their errors, and so in time may manifest the vanity of their course: 2. And you will prevent much of that impudent reviling, and grosser venting of further Error, which they will do more freely where there is no
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Contradicter. They may say any thing when there is none to gainsay them, and make it seem good in the eyes of the weak. 3. And by this means, if any seducers from abroad come in to confirm them, you will be readie to oppose them: And so at the least you will do much to prevent the increase of their party. It hath been a very great cause of the schisms in *England*, that Ministers have only (too many) condemned them, & when they have withdrawn into private separated meetings, have talk't against them to others, or reprov'd them in the Pulpit & in the mean time fled away from the faces of them, or been strangers to them, while they have given Seducers opportunity to come among them & be familiar with them without contradiction, and to have the advantages of deceiving them, and even doing what their list. O that the Ministrie had been more guiltless of those Errors and Schisms that they talk against! But its easier to chide a sectary in the Pulpit, and to subscribe a Testimony against them, then to play the skilful Physician for their Cure, and do the tenth part of the duty that lieth upon us, to prevent and heal such calamitous distempers. I am not finding fault with Prudent Reprehensions of them in Publike, or Testimonies against them: but I think too many of us have cause to fear, lest we do but publicly proclaim our own shame in the guilt of our negligence or imprudent weaknesses; and lest in Condemning them and Testifying against them, we Testifie against and Condemn our selves.

13. If you be not well able to deal with them, do as I before advised: Give them the best book on that subject to peruse.

14. If

14. If all this will not do, get the fittest neighbour Minister that you know to come over and help you: Not in Publike, nor as a set Disputation, (without necessity;) but let him come as occasionally, and *ex improviso*, come upon them in one of their private meetings, as desirous to see and hear them, and so take the opportunity to deal with them. And if after that there be any Disputations appointed, be sure to observe the old rule, fight with them on their own ground, and keep up the war in their quarters, and let it come as little as you can into your own: and therefore go to their Assemblies, but let them not come into yours. For with them, you can lose little, and may gain much: but at home, you can gain little, but its two to one, will lose some, let the error be never so gross. The Sectaries commonly observe this course themselves, and therefore you will have much ado to get their consent to bring your disputations into their own Assemblies.

15. Let not the authors of the Schism out-do you, or go beyond you in any thing that is good: For, as truth should be more effectual for sanctification, then error; so if you give them this advantage, you give them the day; and all your disputation will do but little good: For the weaker people judge all by the outward appearance, and by the effects, and be not so able to judge of the Doctrine in it self: They think that he hath the best cause, whom they take to be the best man.

I extend this rule both to Doctrine and Life
E. G. If a Libertine preach for Free-grace, do you preach it up more effectually, then he: be much upon it, and make it more glorious on right grounds, then
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he can do on his wrong. If on the like pretences, he magnifie the Grace of Love, and (in order to cry down fear, and humiliation) be all for living in pure Love to God: do not contradict him in the assertive, but only in the negative and destructive part; but out-go him, and preach up the Love of God, with its motives and effects, more fully and effectually then he can do, on the corrupt grounds on which he doth proceed: Or else you will make all the silly people believe that this is the difference between you, that he is for Free-Grace and the Love of God, and you are against it: For if you dwell not upon it in your preaching as well as he, they will not take notice of a short concession of profession. So if an Enthusiast do talk all of the Holy-Ghost, and the light, and witness, and Law within us: Fall you upon that subject too, & do that well which they did ill; and preach up the office of the Holy-Ghost, his indwelling and operations, and the light, and testimony, and Law within us, better then they. This is the most effectual way of settling your people against their seductions. So if you be assaulted by Pelagians; if they make a long story to prove that God is not the Author of sin; do you fall upon the proof of it too: If they plead for Free-will, do you plead for that Free-will which we have (the natural liberty, which none deny, consisting in a self-determining power, and supposing actual indetermination) and deny only that Liberty which the will hath not: (that is, 1. Either a freedom from Gods Government. 2. Or from the necessary guidance of the Intellect, and Moral force of the object. 3. Or that true Spiritual, Ethical freedom from vicious inclinations, which consisteth in the Right Disposition

Disposition of the will: though the sanctified indeed have this in part; and that predominantly.) So if any Pelagian or Semi-Pelagian, will go about industriously to prove mans power (or rather impotency) to will or do evil; do it as effectually as he: For this is indeed but to prove a man a sinner, under pretence of proving him free, or at least to prove him defective (if it be not the ill inclination, but the possibility of sinning that they defend: in which case, we can say more, then they. So if they go about laboriously to prove, that Christ dyed for all: I would endeavour to do it as effectually, as they; that it might appear to the people, that the difference between us is not in this, that they would magnifie the riches of grace above me, or that I would leave sinners hopeless and remediless, and without an object for faith, any more then they: nor that I abuse or reject express Scriptures, when they own them in their proper sense: But I would let them know, that the Controversie lyeth elsewhere; *viz.* Whether Christ in offering himself a sacrifice for sin, had not a special Intention or Resolution (in compliance with his Fathers predestinating will) infallibly and effectually to save his chosen, even such and such by name, in making his blood applyed, effectual to the pardon of all their sins, and to give them his spirit to seal them unto glory: having no such Will, Intention, Resolution, in dying (no more then his Father had in predestinating) as to the rest of the world. So if one that is for private mens preaching come and inveigh against Ministers for inhibiting them to use the gifts of God for the edification of the Church, I would not presently set to thwart him: but I would rather fall a perswading

private men to use their gifts, in all the waies that I even now mentioned; and sharply chide them for using them no more; and then among my Cautions, or reprehensions, meet with his desired abuse in the end. And what I have said by way of instance in these few points, I mean in all others: Preaching truth is the most successful way of confuting error: and I would have no Seducer to have the glory of out-going us in any good, and so not in befriending or defending any truth. Once more *E. G.* If a Soci-nian should fall a pleading for the Churches Peace, and for Unity upon the antient simplicity of faith, I would labour to out-go him in it: and then would shew that the antient simple faith condemned him. If he would plead Reason for Scripture or the Christian Religion, I would endeavour to out-go him in it, and he should not have opportunity to glory that he only had Reason for what he held, and I had none. But I would shew that as I have Reason to believe the Scripture, so that Scripture condemneth his errors. If a Separatist will plead for the Necessity of Church-order and Discipline, so would I as well as he: and shew him that it is only Disorder, and Confusion inconsistent with right order and discipline that I dislike in him or those of his way. And so would I do by others in this case.

And you should be as loath that they should out-go you in the Practise of a Holy and Righteous life, any more, then in sounder diligent teaching. Do any of them express a hatred of sin, and desire of Church Reformation? So must we do more. Do any of them use to spend their time when they meet together in holy discourse, and not in vain janglings? Let us do

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so much more: Are they unwearied in propagating their opinions? Let us be more so in propagating the Truth: Will they condescend to the meanest, and creep into houses to lead captive the silliest of the Flock? Let us stoop as low, and be as diligent to do them good. Are any of them loving to their party, and contemners of the world? Let us be lovers of all, and specially of all Saints; and do good to all, as we have power; and specially to all the household of faith; and love an enemy, as well as they can do a friend. Let us be more just than they; and more merciful than they; and more humble, and meek, and patient than they: For this is the will of God, that by well-doing we may put to silence the Ignorance of foolish men. Let us excell them in a holy, harmless, righteous, merciful, fruitful, heavenly life, as we do in soundness of Doctrine: that by our fruits we may be known, and the weaker sort of our people may see the truth in this reflexion, that cannot see it in itself, and that our Light may so shine before men, that they may see our conversation, and glorifie our Father which is in heaven, and even they that obey not the word, may without the word be won by the conversation of their Teachers, 1 *Pet.* 3. 1, 2. O how happy had *England* been; how happy had all the Church been, if the Ministers of the Gospel had taken these courses! It would have done more against Errors and Schism, than all our chiding at them hath done, or then all the force can do which we desire from the Magistrate.

Three

THree sorts of persons that we may meet with in our conference, are now over, *viz.* 1. The grosly ignorant and unconverted. 2. The doubting troubled believer. 3. The Cavilling Questionist, or seduced Schismatick. The fourth that I should speak of in this Direction, is, Those that by a professed willingness to learn and obey, and by other signs, do give us some probability, that they may have true Repentance and faith, and yet by their ignorance, or lukewarmness (being not noted for any special profession of Godliness), or by some uneven walking, do make our fears to be as great or greater then our hopes: so that we are between hope and fear of them, doubting the worst of their present safety, though we have not ground to charge them to be unconverted, impenitent, unsanctified persons. I think half that come to me are of this sort: and ten of this sort (if not 40) for one that I dare flatly say are unregenerate. Now it may be a great difficulty with some younger Ministers what they should do with this sort of people where they have no sufficient ground to determine of them as Godly or Ungodly, what ever their fears or hopes may be.

Of these I shall only briefly say this. 1. The first Directions may suffice in the main, for dealing with these: and are as much fitted to these as to the worst. As we may tell a Notorions, ungodly man, *Your case is miserable, you are a child of death:* so may we tell these, *I much fear your Case is sad; these are ill signs: I wonder how you dare so hazard your salvation;* And so abating of the confidence of our Censures according

according to the several degrees of the hopeful good, that appear-eth in them, we may see in the first case, how to deal in this.

2. And I would advise you to be very cautelous how you pass too hasty or absolute Censures on any that you have to do with; because it is not so easie a matter to discern a man to be certainly graceless that professeth himself a Christian, as many do imagine it to be; And you may do the work in hand as well without such an absolute conclusion as with it, as the former examples (which will serve all with a little alteration do) shew.

3. The general descriptions of the Ministerial work, may supply the rest. I shall only add in a word. 1. Keep them close to the use of private and publike means. 2. Be oft with the luke-warm to awaken them rouzingly; and with the careless to admonish them. 3. Take the opportunity of sickness which will bow their hearts and open their ears. 4. See that they spend the Lords day, and order their families, aright. 5. Draw them from temptations and occasions of sin. 6. Charge them to come and seek help in all great streights and open their temptations and dangers before they are swallowed up 7. Strike at the great Radical sins. Self-seeking, fleshly mindedness, sensuality, Pride, wordliness, Infidelitie, &c. 1. Keep them to the Reading of Scripture and good books, and direct them to those that are likest to awake them. 8. Engage their godly neighbours to have an eye upon them. 9. Keep up Discipline to awe them: 10. Maintain the life of Grace in your selves that it may appear in all your Sermons to them; that every one that comes cold to the Assembly may have warming helps before he depart.

I have done my Advice, and leave you to the Practice. Though the proud may receive it with scorn and the selfish and slothful with some distast and indignation; I doubt not, but God will use it, in despite of the oppositions of sin and Satan, to the awakening of many of his servants to their duty, and the promoting of the work of a Right Reformation: and that his much greater blessing shall accompany the present undertaking, for the saving of many a soul, the Peace of you that undertake and perform it, the exciting of his servants through the nation to second you, and to increase Purity and the unity of his Churches, *Amen*.

FINIS. *Decemb. 25. 1655.*



*To the Reverend and faithful
Ministers of Christ in the
several Counties of this Land,
and the Gentlemen and other
Natives of each County, now
inhabiting the City of Lon-
don.*

Reverend and Beloved Brethren,



THE whole design and bu-
siness of this Discourse,
being the Propagati-
on of the Gospel and
the saving of mens souls, I

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have

have thought it not unmeet to acquaint you with another work to that end, which we have set afoot in this County, and to propound it to your Consideration, and humbly invite you to an universal imitation. You know, I doubt not, the great inequality in Ministerial abilities, and that many places have Ministers that are not qualified with convincing lenity, awakening gifts: Some must be tolerated in the necessity of the Church, that are not likely to do any great matters towards the conversion of ignorant, sensual, worldly men: And some that are learned, able men, and fitted for controversies, may yet be unfit to deal with those of the lower sort. I suppose if you peruse the
whole

whole Ministry of a County, you will not find so many, such lively convincing Preachers as we could wish. And I take it for granted that you are sensible of the weight of eternal things, and of the worth of souls; and that you will judge it a very desirable thing that every man should be employed according to his Gifts, and the Gospel in its Light and Power should be made as common as possibly we can: Upon these and many the like Considerations, the Ministers in this County resolved to choose out four of the most lively, yet sober, peaceable, Orthodox men, and to desire them once a moneth to leave their own Congregations to the assistance of some other, and to bestow their

labour in the places where they thought there was most need; And as we were resolving upon this work, the Natives of this County inhabiting the City of *London*, having a custom of feasting together once a year, and having at their feast collected some moneys by contribution, for the maintaining of a weekly Lecture in this County, (besides other good works) did (by their Stewards) desire us to set up the said Lecture, and to dispose of the said moneys in order thereto; And their judgements upon consulation did correspond with our design. So that the said money being sufficient to satisfie another that shall in their absence, preach in their own places, we imploy it accordingly,

cordingly, and have prevailed with some Brethren to undertake this work.

I propound to your consideration, Reverend Brethren, and to you, the Natives of each County in *London*, Whether the same work may not tend much to the edification of the Church, and the welfare of souls, if you will be pleased speedily and effectually to set it afoot through the Land? Whether it may not, by Gods blessing be a likely means, to illuminate the ignorant and awaken the secure, and countermines Seducers, and hinder the ill success of Satans Itinerants, and win over many souls to Christ, and stablish many weak ones in the faith? And not doubting, but
I i 3 your

your judgements will approve of the design, I humbly move, that you will please to contribute your faculties to the vwork; *viz* That the *Londoners* of each County will be pleased to manifest their benevolence to this end, and commit the moneys to the hands of the most faithful, Orthodox Ministers, and that they will readily and self-denyingly undertake the work.

I hope the Gentlemen, Natives of this County will be pleased to pardon my publishing their example, seeing my end is only the promoting of mens salvation, and the common good.

And that you may fullyer understand the scope of our design; I shall annex the Letters directed
to

to the several Ministers of the County, which the Lecturers send to the Ministers of the place, and receive his answer, before they presume to Preach in any Congregations.



*To all the rest of the Ministers
of the Gospel in this County,
our Reverend and beloved
Brethren, Grace and Peace in
our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Reverend Brethren,



HE Communication of the
heavenly Evangelical Light, for
the Glory of our Redeemer in
the Conversion, Edification and
Salvation of mens souls, is that
which we are bound to by many Obligations,
as Christians, and as Ministers of Christ for
his

his Church, and therefore must needs be solicitous thereof: and it is that which the spirit of Grace where it abideth, doth proportionably dispose the heart to desire: By convictions of the excellency and necessity of this work, and of our own duty in order thereto, and by the excitation of undeserved Grace, our hearts are carried out, to long after a more general and effectual illumination and saving Conversion of the inhabitants of this County in which we live: Which while we were but entring upon a consultation to promote, it pleased God (without our knowledge of it) to put the same thoughts into the hearts of others. The Natives of this Country of *Worcester* who dwell in *London*, meeting at a feast, (as is their yearly use) collected a sum of money for the setting of 8. poor boies to trades and towards the maintaining of a weekly Lecture, and have committed the execution of this last to our care: And upon consultation with their Stewards, and among ourselves, both they and we are satisfied, that a moveable Lecture on the Lords Day, is the likeliest way for the improvement of their Charity to the attainment of their ends. For 1. Many people through poverty cannot, and many through negligence will not come to a week day's Lecture: Experience telleth us, that

that such are usually attended but little by those that have the greatest need. 2. And thus the benefit may extend to more, than if it were fixed in one Place.

We have therefore desired our Reverend and Dear Brethren, Mr. *Andrew Tristram* Minister at *Clent*, Mr. *Henry Oasland* Minister at *Bewdley*, and Mr. *Thomas Baldwin* Minister at *Wolverley*, and Mr. *Joseph Treble* Minister at *Church-Lench*, to undertake this work, and that each of them will be pleased every fourth Lords day to Preach twice in those places, where they shall judge their labours to be most necessary: and as we doubt not but their own Congregations will so far consent for the good of others: So do we hereby request of you our Brethren, that when any of them shall offer their labours for your Congregations, in preaching the said Lecture, you will receive them, and to your power further them in the work. For as we have no thoughts of obtruding their help upon you, without your consent; so we cannot but undoubtedly expect that men fearing God, and desiring their peoples everlasting good, will cheerfully and gratefully entertain such assistance. And we hope that none will think it needless, or take it as an accusing the Ministry of insufficiency: For the Lord doth variously

riously bestow his gifts: all that are upright are not equally fitted for the work: and many that are learned, judicious, and more able to teach the riper sort, are yet less able to condescend to the ignorant, and so convincingly and fervently to rowze up the secure, as some that are below them in other qualifications: and many that are able in both respects, have a barren people; and the ablest have found by experience that God hath sometime blest the labours of a stranger to do that which their own hath not done. We beseech you therefore interpret not this as an accusation of any, which proceedeth from the Charity of our worthy Countrey-men in *London*, and from the earnest desires of them and us to further the salvation of as many as we can. And that you may have no jealousies of the persons deputed to this work; we assure you that they are approved men, Orthodox, sober, peaceable, and of upright lives, happily qualified for their Ministerial work, and zealous and industrious therein; and so far from being likely to sow any errors or cause divisions, or to draw the hearts of people from their own faithful Pastors, that they will be forward to assist you against any such distempers in your Flocks. Not doubting therefore, but as you serve the same Master,

ster, and are under the same oblations as we, so as many as are heartily addicted to his service will readily promote so hopeful a work, we commend you and your labours to the blessing of the Lord.

Your Brethren and fellow-Labourers in the work of the Gospel,

Kedminster.

In the name and at the de-	}	
sire of the Ministers of	}	<i>Richard Baxter.</i>
this Association.	}	

John Boraston. Jarvis Bryan.

Evesham.

In the name of the Mi-	}	<i>Giles Collier.</i>
nisters of this Associa-	}	<i>George Hopkins.</i>
tion.	}	<i>Iohn Dolphin.</i>

