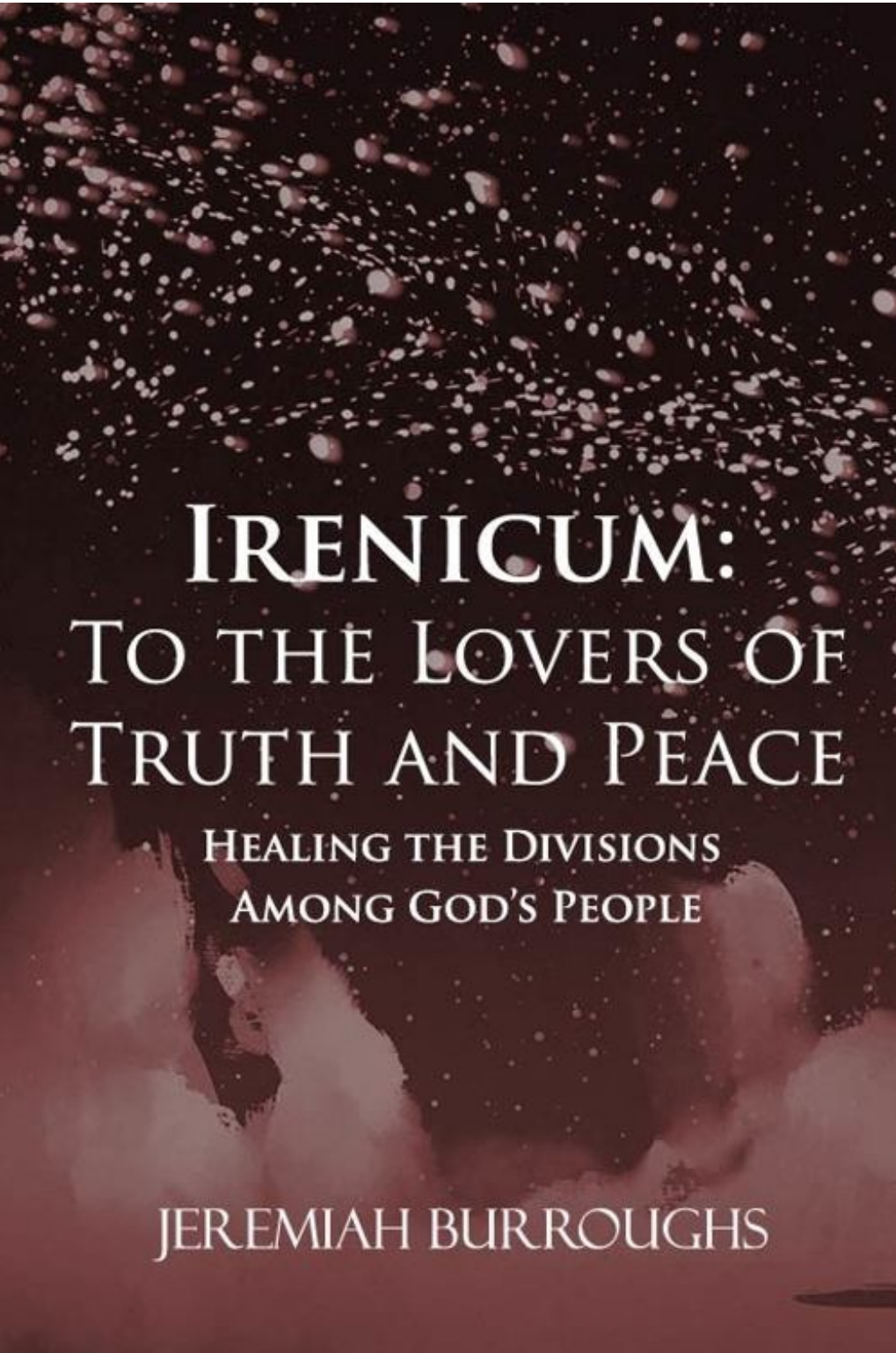


IRENICUM:  
TO THE LOVERS OF  
TRUTH AND PEACE

HEALING THE DIVISIONS  
AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE

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# **Irenicum:**

## **To the Lovers of Truth and Peace**

### **by Jeremiah Burroughs**

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## To the Reader

Whether the fiery trial of contention, or of persecution be greater, is hard to determine; God hath wrought for us to free us from the one, we have brought upon ourselves the other. Every man is angry that others are not of his mind; we have been so divided, that it is the infinite mercy of God that our enemies have not come in at our breaches, and divided all among themselves, before this time. Were our divisions only between the good and bad, they were not so grievous. Chrysostom says,\* It is better to be hated for Christ, then to be beloved for him. How much better then is it to be hated for Christ, then to be beloved for sin? The reason he gives of that strange assertion of his, is, If thou beest loved for God, it is an honour to thee, and thou art a debtor for that honour; If thou beest hated for him, God is a debtor to thee, he owes honour to thee, for so he is pleased to be to his poor servants. But our divisions have been and still are between good men, even God's Diamonds do cut one another; good men cause afflictions to good men; every man is plotting, working, winding for himself. Every man strives like Apelles and Protogenes who shall draw the subtilest line to attain his own ends, but few strive who shall draw the straightest, who shall in the most direct course work himself and all his ways to God and public good. Who can meddle with this fire that is kindled among us, and not burn his fingers? A mans good affections happily may be approved, but his prudence will be questioned. But what I find Luther writes in an Epistle to his friend Nicolas Gerbelius in the like case, shall satisfy me, *Cupio ego inveniri Christi & Ecclesiæ suæ fidelis, si prudens esse non potuerim minister*: I desire howsoever to be a faithful Minister of Christ and his Church, if I cannot be a prudent one. The standing in the gap is more dangerous and troublesome then the getting behind the hedge; there you may be more secure, and under the wind, but it is best to be there where God looks for a man.\* That which Pelopidas said to his wife taking her leave of him as he was going out of his house to the Wars, is a speech worthy of all men in public place: She comes weeping to him, and prays him to look will to himself; he answers her, My good wife, it is for private soldiers to be careful of themselves, not for those in public place, they must have an eye to save other mens lives. It may be when you are going about a work that hath hazard and trouble in it, your wives or some friends of yours will with great affection desire you,

beseech you, to have a care of yourselves, that you bring not yourselves into trouble or danger, oh take heed of that, rather never meddle, let others do that work if they will; you should answer, It is for private men to take care of themselves, but men in public places are called to look to the public, that it suffers not through their neglect.

Some come into the gap, not to make it up, but to keep it open, yea to make it wider; the Lord deliver me from such a spirit: God knows I had rather die, then be a cause of so great an evil. What this endeavour of mine may work in mens hearts, God knows. If it meet with a son of peace, I hope it will speak peace, it will establish peace in such a heart: if with a son of strife, it may work ad modum recipientis. That which is intended to be an Irenicum, may prove to be a Polemicum, a bone of contention.

Those things which God himself ordains for union (the Sacraments) are by mans corruption made the occasion of the greatest contention in the Christian world. No marvel then that what comes from mans sincerest intentions and best endeavors be turned quite cross.

Like enough these leaves may meet with some boisterous Reader, that may beat them one against another, that may pry and pick to find that in them which is not, looking thorough the contradictions of his own spirit he may think he sees the like here. Let the lines be never so straight, yet he will wrest and pull them what he can to make them lye cross. I am so far from being solicitous that they are so indeed, that the special thing I desire of thee is the laying one thing to another, the comparing one thing with another. Remember what the subject is, Divisions, Differences. I have in it to deal with various spirits, opinions, ways: remember the scope is to seek the composing of them what I can. If you see me now near to the one side, and by and by near to the other, which yet are very wide from one another, be not rash to judge, that I am off my center; read on, and see what the issue may come to.

This path of mine hath been upon sharp stones, cutting shells, and pricking thorns; yet thorough the help of the shoe of the preparation of the Gospel of peace, I do not find my feet cut.

Peace is precious to me, I feel the sweetness of it; I am willing to do what

I can to honour it. The public jars, contentions, disturbances abroad in Church and Commonwealth are very grievous. They say there are in the world such things in Families also. I have brought here some water: if my line had been longer, my bucket had been fuller. You have here what I delivered: some things are added, especially quotations of Authors and Histories. When they grow to be many I think them fitter for the Press than the Pulpit. I was the more willing these things should come forth to public view, because otherwise what other men apprehended to be my mind, would be put into their own words, and so rendered in an evil appearance. But will Printing help? The boldness of this age is such, as not only to make a mans words sound otherwise than when they came from him, and so traduce him; but confidently to aver that there are such things written in such Books, of such men, which never yet came into their thoughts, much less into their pen. With what boldness hath it been said and printed again and again, that I in that Book entitled, The glorious name of God, The Lord of Hosts, did call the Earle of Essex the Lord of Hosts. Surely the sight of these men is extramittendo, not intramittendo, they send forth species of their own dyed with the evil of their hearts, and then they say they find them in such a book. No man can find that name given by me to him. I indeed endeavoured to encourage him in his work, because the Lord had made him the Lord of our Hosts, which is no more than the Lord of our Armies. The utmost that ever was said or writ comes but to this, that God had put a name upon him that came near to his, but never mentioned without some difference from it. An abuse in this kind, though not altogether so high, I have had from the Anti-Apologist; he quotes many places in my Lectures upon Hosea, he sets down the pages, wherein he says, I have contrary to what is in the Apology preached for that way you call Independent. Would any man but think, when he sees the Book named in Print, the Lecture, the very page mentioned, but that the thing is true, it is to be found there? But to this day it hath never come to my ears that ever any man hath found such things there but himself. Are those the places? Let moderate and quiet spirited men look into them, and they shall find nothing there but what the generality of Presbyterian Brethren, yea I think I may say every one, who is not either Prelatical or very violent, will acknowledge to be truth, and if so, I am free. But we shall have another time for this. At this time I would gladly that this Treatise might meet with no spirit exasperated, but



in calmness and quietness let what is here be examined. That God that can create the fruit of the lips to be peace, can make the fruit of the pen to be so. My aims are peace, which I shall never cease endeavouring and praying for, who am

Thy friend, glad of any opportunity for thy good,

JEREMIAH BURROUGHS.

## **HEART-DIVISIONS**

### **The Evil of our Times.**

**Their Heart is divided, now shall they be found faulty. - HOSEA 10:2**

**CHAP. I: The Text opened, and suitableness of it to our Times, shewed.**

NO marvel though Israel be charged, ver. 1. to be an empty vine, seeing their heart is divided. Heart-division will cause emptiness of good, both in mens spirits, and in Church and State. The least dividing of the heart, in any one part from another, if it be but by the prick of a pin, is deadly; a great gash in the head is curable. There may be much difference in mens opinions without any great hurt, if this difference gets not to the heart; but if once it gets in there, the danger is great, Now shall they be found faulty, Now shall they be guilty, or as some, Nunc delinquent, Now they will offend, as if Heart-division contracted the greatest guilt, and by it

men were the greatest Delinquents of any. The word signifies also to perish, to be made desolate, so Arias Montanus, Desolabuntur.\* Heart-division is a desolating sin, by the judgement of God upon them for it, they shall be convinced in their own consciences, and in the fight of all men, that they were guilty; that by such a sin as this, they had bound themselves over to the justice of God, and those desolating evils that came upon them, were the righteous judgements of God upon them for those divisions that were amongst them. Men will not be convinced of their sin, till God's judgement is upon them for it; and then their consciences will, and others shall see that God is righteous, and they are vile and sinful before him, even in such things that before they pleaded for, or at least could not be brought to own their own guiltiness in. When thunder and rain came upon the men of Israel in their wheat harvest, and they were afraid they should dye, 1 Sam. 12:18, 19. then they could say, We have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a King.

The Lord convince us of, and humble us for the sinfulness of our divisions, by his Word, that desolating judgements be not upon us to convince and humble us.

Their heart is divided.

This Heart-division is either from God, or from one another.

Their heart is divided between God and their Idols; They would not cast off the worship of God wholly, that was too much; they loved their Idols, but they must not have all: to divide between God and them they thought was faire. Their hearts were also divided one from another; and just it is with God that those who divide from him, should divide one from another. 2 King. 15. you may see what woeful divisions there were amongst them, King against people, and people against King, Civil Wars. Their King comes upon one of their own Towns, and smites it, and rips up all the women that were with Child in it, and all because they opened not to him. O the rage and cruelty of men of proud spirits, when they get power into their hands! for then their pride swells, being blown up by the flatteries of such as are about them: As if they were such gods upon earth, as they might do whatsoever they pleased, and the lives, estates, liberties, comforts of all must lye under their feet, and must submit to their lusts

and humours. You shall find further, in the whole Chapter there was nothing but conspiring, mischieving, and murdering one another. In their Church State there was nothing but factions and rents one from another; some were for the true worship, some for the false. And amongst the false worshippers there were divisions too; Some were for the Calves that Jeroboam set up at Dan and Bethel; some were for Baal: great contention there was between these. You know the story of Jehu an Idolater, yet destroying the worshippers of Baal and his Idols.

The Jews of old understood this Text of these Heart-divisions amongst themselves, as well as of their divisions from God, which appears by a notable tradition of theirs, S. Jerome in his Comment upon these words, relates: whereas (says he) the Scripture, 2 King. 17. tells us, that Hoshea was the last King of Israel, and in his time Israel was carried captive; yet ver. 2. it is said, He did not evil in the sight of the Lord, as the Kings of Israel that were before him. Now the Jews put this Question, Why was not Israel carried captive with their King, when they had the worst King, but rather when things seemed to go something better then before? God yet chooses this time.

The Answer they give, is, Because in former times the people might pretend, they could not tell how to help what they did amiss in the matter of Worship; indeed they worshipped the Calves, but they were forced to it by the tyranny of their Kings; it should be the loss of all they had if they did not: but (say they) in the days of Hoshea there was more liberty given then before. Now those who would, might go up to Jerusalem to worship and that they say is the reason of that expression, that Hoshea did not evil as other Kings had done; but when they came to have more liberty, they fell to wrangling amongst themselves, (which is an usual concomitant of liberty) now their division rose high, some would go up to Jerusalem to worship, others would not; those that went up, cried out of those who went not; and those who went not, vilified those who went. Now their hearts are thus divided, now shall they be found guilty. The desolating judgement must now come. This is the time for their captivity. Now he gives them up to the enemy. God was exceedingly provoked with their contentions one against another at this time. What? (says God) when I was in some way of favour towards them, when I took off (in great part)

the yoke of bondage that was upon them, that fore oppression that was before, none of them (a while since) dared go to Jerusalem to worship, and now their Governors are more moderate, their oppressing Courts are down, there is more liberty in the Land for my true worship, and do they now fall out, condemn, divide, wrangle one with another? let them go into captivity, let the enemy come in upon them, my soul takes no delight in such a crooked perverse Generation as this is.

Our condition seems to parallel with theirs very much, we lately were under sore and cruel bondage, nothing was more dangerous then the worshipping God in his own way, wee were under hard task-masters, oppressing, undoing Courts; The Lord hath in a great measure delivered us, it is the unthankful ness, the sinful distemper of mens spirits that makes them say, What is done? it is as ill with us as ever it was; No, we have much ease, such liberties, as were our fore-fathers raised out of their graves to see, they would admire God's goodness, and bless him with meltings of heart; but we spend that strength in siding, wrangling, contending, quarrelling, vexing, opposing one another, that we should spend in magnifying, blessing and praising the Name of God for that mercy we enjoy. We are a divided people, whose hearts are divided and heads too, and hands too; peace and unity seems to be flown from us, and a spirit of contention and division is come upon us: King and subjects are divided, Parliament is divided, Assembly is divided, Armies are divided, Church is divided, and State is divided, City is divided, Country is divided, Towns are divided, Families divided, Godly people are divided, Ministers almost every where are divided; yea, and what heart almost is there at this time, but is divided in it self? the thoughts, the counsels, contrivances, endeavours, ways of men, almost of all men, how are they divided? O blessed Saviour! are these the times thou speakest of, wherein five should be in one house divided, three against two, and two against three; the father against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother? Oh woe to us! we find it so amongst us, and yet there is found no healing; we are broken, and there is no binding up: It is with us as it was with Ezekiel 2:6. Briars and thorns are with us, and we dwell amongst Scorpions. O Lord, what is this thy curse at this time upon England? Briars and thorns shall it bring forth: We are rending and tearing, and devouring one

another, while the adversary stands before us ready to devour us: Ephraim is against Manasseh, and Manasseh against Ephraim. A fire is come out from Abimelech, and devours the men of Sechem; and fire comes from the men of Sechem and devours Abimelech; yea, there is a fire kindled in our own bowels, it rises from ourselves. Ezek. 19:14. Fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, which hath devoured her fruit, so that she hath no strong rod to bee a Scepter to rule, this is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation. This is amongst us at this day, and how long it shall continue, God only knows.

What this people were in their divided condition, that wee are; and what does this threaten, but that we should be as they a while after this were? namely, a people given up to the rage and the fury of the enemy, which the Lord forbid.

There is a great outcry of our divisions, and while wee cry out against them, we still increase them; wee are angry with men rather because they are divided from ourselves, then because they are divided from the truth; we are angry because every man is not of our own mind, and does not as we do. There was a great deal of do in Luther's time about the seamless coat of Christ.\* Granvillan the Emperors Deputy in a Speech he made to the Citizens of Worms, beseeches them for the Death of CHRIST, and for all loves, that they would amend our Lords coat, which is rent and torn on every side. When Luther laboured to bring Reformation to the Rule, they bad him take heed that he did not rend the seamless coat of Christ, and because they talked so much of the tunica inconsutilis, they were called the Inconsutilistæ, the seamless men: And what a stir hath there been in outcries against men that would not yield to every thing that was enjoined? O they rent the seamless coat of Christ. I remember Musculus in a Tract he hath De Schismate, hath a witty and pious note upon this, The Soldiers (saith he) would not divide the seamless coat of Christ; but what made them to be so careful of it? was it out of respect to Christ, that they were so unwilling it should be divided? No, but out of respect to their own advantage, every one hoping it might fall to his share, therefore say they, Let us cast lots for it; so, saith he, men would not have Christ's coat divided, they would have no division in the Church; but what do they aim at? their own advantage, that they might enjoy quietly their own ease,

honour and means, that they might have none to contradict them, but that the stream may run smoothly and wholly with them, what a fine brave thing were this? And because they see they cannot do this while their ways are looked into and crossed, therefore they make such an outcry against the dividing the seamless coat of Christ.

But certainly, till our hearts be otherwise then yet they are, all our outcries will not serve our ends, the stilling our divisions. Did we less divide between God and our own ends, our own ways, wee should not divide so much one from another. Wherefore let us first turn our thoughts to consider a little of this division between God and other things, and the evil of it.

## **CHAP. II**

### **The evil of dividing between God and any thing else.**

This people would give God something, and their idols something, and so think to please both, 2 King. 17:33. They feared the Lord, and served their Idols. Thus Judah in the days of Josiah, Zeph. 1:5. swear by the Lord and by Malcham; Swearing is a part of God's worship, therefore no humane instituted religious ceremony ought to be joined with it, no more then with the Sacrament, or any other divine worship, no creature should share in it, but they joined Malcham, that is their King. The worship and service proper to God hath been too much divided between God and the Kings of the earth; but here its probable is meant their Idol, to which they gave a Kingly power over them, their Idol Moloch had his name from

hence.

I have read of Redwald King of the East Saxons, the first Prince of his Nation that was baptized, in the same place worshipped Christ, and set up an Altar to worship his Idols. Many mens spirits lye like that Haven, Acts 26:12. towards the Southwest and Northwest, two opposite points: Surely their spirits must needs be very winding and crooked which lye towards such opposites.

This dividing with God is very wicked; what communion hath God with Belial? How can you partake of the Table of the Lord, and the Table of Devils? 1 Cor. 10:21. And left they should think it a light thing thus to divide with God, he adds, vers. 22. Doe wee provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger then he? It is a great provoking of God, and a fighting against him, thus to divide in his worship. To think that God should accept of such a dividing, is to make him cruel, like that Harlot, 1 King. 3:26. who was content to have the child divided, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but let it be divided. God's worship is as dear to him as any child can bee to the most tender-hearted mother in the world. When Darius would have divided with Alexander, No, says Alexander, there can bee but one Sun in the Firmament. If we will be dividing with God, he will cast off all. 2 King. 17:33. it is said, they feared the Lord, and served their Idols; but ver. 34. it is said, they did not fear God, God accounted a divided fear no fear at all, vers. 16. it is said, They left all the Commandments of the Lord their God, and made them molten Images. If they give any part of God's honour to molten Images, he acknowledges no honour at all given to him, he accounts all his Commandments to be left: So Jer. 32:23. They have done nothing of all that thou commandest them to do: and vers. 30. The children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me.

God is infinite, and hath all excellency in him, therefore he must have the whole heart; Idols do not challenge so much, because they have not an universal excellency, a piece of worship is enough for them; our hearts, estates, liberties, all wee are or have, are more God's then our own. Cyrus took Babylon by dividing the River: The Devil soon surprises us, if he can but divide our hearts.

The reason why Heathen Rome rejected Christ from being of the number of their gods, when such a thing was tendered to their Senate, was, Because (say they) if we receive him to be a God, he will suffer none of our other gods; if we take in any other new god, we may yet retain still our old ones; but if we take this JESUS, all our old ones must be abandoned. Many at this day reject Christ upon this ground.

The Romanists since think they can take in Christ for a God, and yet divide between him and other gods; their Religion is made up of divisions between God and their graven Images; between Christ the Mediator, and Saints and Angels; between the Word, and their own Traditions; between Divine Institutions, and Humane Inventions.

1 King. 18:21. Why halt ye between two opinions? Wee must not be voluntary Cripples to halt between two. Why are you dismembered in your hearts and your opinions? so Josephus in his History mentioning that place. That is observable, when the Prophet put that Question to them, the Text saith, The people held their peace, their mouths were stopped, they had not a word to say for themselves. If any thing be pretended for this dividing, it is that trouble may be prevented: exactness in Religion, through Reformation, giving up ourselves wholly to God and his truth, hath a shew of bringing much trouble with it. Hence men wind and shift about, and do what they do by halves.

It was a notable speech of Calvin to those who were offended with troubles they met with in the work of Reformation,\* If wee could be content with half a Christ, (says he) our work would more easily go on, we could soon bring about what we would have, we should not meet with so much opposition, but nothing but a whole Christ will serve our turn.

Obj. 1. But it is necessary that all things be reformed at once?

Answ. No: Affirmative Precepts do not bind to all times, but Negative do ; therefore it is necessary at all times, that there be no mixture of evil with any good we do, that our mediocrity be not Medium participation is, but Medium abnegation is, between two extremes, which are evil, but not partaking of any evil; no good thing is moderated by mixture of evil, but by removing from it something that is evil, that hath already mingled it



self with it.

Obj. 2. But must God have all our hearts, so as we may not let them out at all to any thing else?

Answ. If we let out our hearts to any thing but in subordination to God, then we divide between God and that thing sinfully; but though we do let out our affections to other things, yet if it be in subordination to God, so far as God is in those things, and we may be led nearer to God by them; this is no dividing between God and other things, but an uniting all in God, and enjoying God in all. The Saints are instructed in this mystery of godliness, they know how to give God the whole heart, and yet to enjoy the comfort of wives and children, and estates, and callings, as much as any in the world, they have that heavenly skill to unite all in God, and enjoy God in all, God is all in all unto them in their enjoyments of all good whatsoever; but if our hearts be let out to any thing otherwise then thus, they go a whoring from God, and will certainly vanish in their own folly. This is contrary to that singleness, to that oneness of heart promised as a blessing of the Gospel. Many of you complain of barrenness, here is the reason your hearts are divided; were the stream of your hearts wholly after God, it would run strongly, and bear down opposition before it; you would be fruitful in all the ways of holiness.

How fruitful and gloriously useful would men in public place be, if their hearts were single and one for God; did they only care to honour God in their duty, and leave the care of protection of, and provision for themselves and state to God? Let not mens hearts be cut, be divided with their cares and fears about consequences and successes; Their wisdom should be how to work all about for God, not how handsomely to contrive that God may have part, and themselves part. The more fully we give up ourselves, our ends, designs to God, the more securely may we fit under God's protection, care and blessing. Many of the good Kings of Judah had their hearts for God, but yet they let the high places stand; their politick wisdom divided their hearts between God, and their fears of disturbance in the State; If they should raise their Reformation so high, by this their division, their hearts lay flat, the work was neglected. But 2 Chron. 17:6. Jehoshaphat's heart was lift up in the ways of the Lord, he took away the high places and groves, he sought to the Lord God of his father, and

walked in his commandments, not after the doings of Israel, vers. 4. But did he not bring disturbance to the Kingdom by this his zeal? No, Ver. 5. Therefore the Lord established the Kingdom in his hand, and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents, and he had riches and honour in abundance. And ver. 10. The fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat. Ver. 12. Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly.

Let our hearts be for God alone, for God alone is enough to satisfy our hearts, to supply all good unto us for ever.

There is infinite reason our whole hearts should be for him, he is willing his whole heart should be for us. Jer. 32:41. Yea I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.

## **CHAP. III**

### **Heart-divisions one from another.**

When they divided from God, then they divided from his people, they would not join with his people in the way of his worship, only such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel, went to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord God of their fathers, 2 Chron. 11:16. only those whose hearts the Lord touched, but others for their own carnal ends would not join with them, they saw trouble attended that way; and having divided themselves from God and his people, it was God's curse upon them, that they should be divided one from another; if you be divided from the truth, what can hold you together? Truth is a single,\* simple, plain thing,

but error is various and ensnares it self with infinite contradictions: If people go out of the plain path of truth, they wander up and down God knows whither, entangling themselves in briars and thorns, so as they cannot extricate themselves: As those ten Tribes which at first divided from Judah only in their subjection to the house of David, and in their worship at Jerusalem, but after they denied all Scripture but only the five Books of Moses: They were exceedingly given, and generally addicted unto Sorcery, Magic, and witchcraft, in which they grew more and more notorious till Christ's time. This is intimated in that blasphemy of the Jews against our Saviour, Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a Devil,\* taxing him with the practice of that people, who commonly being Witches had familiar spirits attending on them, for otherwise they knew he was no Samaritan, but a Galilean of Nazareth: They were also exceedingly divided amongst themselves. Epiphanius recites four several Sects of them, the Offens, Sebuœans, Gorthenians, and Positheans; Truth is the bond that keeps to unity, but error is wild, you know not where to find it, nor yourselves if you give way to it: Our present times will be a testimony of this to all future generations. The wild and unruly divisions of our times is to be the subject of the future discourse. I am not ignorant nor insensible of the difficulty, the trouble, the danger there is in meddling with such a subject at such a time as this. He that meddles with the divisions of the times may expect to bee divided himself, to have his name, his repute, to be cut asunder and thrown this way and that way: It is an unthankful work to meddle with a divided people;\* a man may with as much safety put his hand into a nest of Hornets. A Learned man being once asked why he did not write his judgement about the controversy of his time, answered, To what purpose? it would not help the cause, but much hazard him that should meddle. That which one once said to Luther, when he was about interesting himself in seeking Reformation, sounds in my ears when I first thought of having to do with this Argument,\* O Luther, rather get you into your Cell, and say, Lord have mercy upon us.

It is a great part of the skill of a Minister to divide the Word aright; but, this skill of his will be put to it, when he comes to divide the Word amongst a divided people, to give every part its portion. I should never have ventured to have chosen a Text on purpose for such an argument,

but seeing Providence hath brought it so fully into my way, I shall now venture upon it, with my heart cast and fixed upon that promise, Prov. 11:3. The uprightness of the upright shall guide him.

I shall cast what I intend into this mould:

1. The causes of our divisions.
2. The evil of them.
3. Cautions about them, that wee may not make an ill use of them.
4. Remedies or Cures of them.

The causes of our Divisions.

The principal cause from without, is the Devil, he seeks to keep his own kingdom free from divisions, but seeks nothing more then to cause divisions in the Kingdom of Christ. The Muhammadans who worship a cursed imposter: The Pagans, who worship the Sun, Moon, and Stars: The Egyptians, who worship Onions, Leeks, Cats and Dogs, never had such divisions amongst them as the worshippers of Jesus Christ have had, and have at this day amongst themselves; for all the former are the Devils kingdom, which he seeks to keep at peace; but he is that envious one who sows the seeds of division in the Kingdom of Christ; hence those who foment divisions amongst Christians are called Devils, 1 Tim. 3:11. The wives of Deacons must not be slanderers:\* The word may be translated Devils: Women are most liable to the Devils temptations this way, because they are weak, and are in danger to run away with sudden apprehensions without due examination; and what can cement division more then slandering, so far as any, especially in the Church, hath a hand in causing or cementing division, so far he or she is a Devil in Scripture-language, the part of the Devil is acted by them. I remember Cajetan hath a note upon that place in the Gospel, where the Devils being cast out of the man, who had a legion in him, prayed Christ that they might not go out of that Region; why would they not go out of that Region? says Cajetan; He gives this answer, The Devils have certain places to which they divide their work, such Devils to such a place for such a service, and

such to another for another service; now these Devils were loath to be displaced of their region, though they were cast out of the man, having further work to do in that place: If this be so, surely the Devils that are appointed to cause and foment divisions and dissensions above all Regions, love to be in the Region of Churches, for no where do divisions such hurt as there, and at this time especially, for now the Devils see they cannot prevail to get men to their old superstitious vanities, but some reformation there will be, they now seek to mingle a perverse spirit of division amongst men, hoping they shall prevail here, though they could not hold their own in the former. God put enmity between Satan and the Saints, but it is the Devil that puts enmity between Saints and Saints. When wee hear fearful thundering, and see terrible storms and tempests, many people say, that ill spirits are abroad; surely these blustering storms of contention are raised and continued from evil spirits: But the truth is, all the Devils in Hell could do us no great hurt in dividing us from God or from one another, were it not for the corruption of our own hearts: Wherefore as the Lord says to Israel, *Perditio tua ex te*, thy destruction is from thy self : So may we now say of England, *Divisio tua ex te*, thy division is from thy self .

The causes of our divisions from ourselves, may be referred to three Heads:

1. Dividing principles, sometimes our divisions come down from our heads to our hearts.
2. Dividing distempers, sometimes they go up from our hearts to our heads.
3. Dividing practises, and these come from head and heart, they foment and increase both.

We will begin with Dividing principles: Except some care be taken of the head, it will bee in vain to meddle with the heart, to cry out against our heart distempers; the chief cause of many of our divisions lies here: It is to little purpose, to purge or apply any Medicine to the lower parts, when the disease comes from distillations from the head.

## CHAP. IV

### Dividing Principles.

#### **The first, There can be no Agreement without Uniformity.**

This Principle hath a long time caused much division in the Church. The right understanding wherein the weakness and falseness of it lies, will help much to Peace, to join us sweetly together.

In the substantials of Worship, Unity is necessary; there all are bound to go by the same rule, and to do , to the uttermost they are able, the same thing.

But the circumstances of Worship have a two-fold consideration: They are either such, as though but circumstances to some other worship, yet have also in themselves some divine worship, some spiritual efficacy, something in them to commend our service unto God, or to cause some presence of God with us, or to work us nearer to God, by an efficacy beyond what they have in them of their own natures. As for instance, Time is a circumstance, but the Lords day hath a worship in it commending our service to God, and an efficacy to bring God to us, and raise us to God: this not from any natural efficacy of the time,\* but from God's institution. Now in such circumstances as these, there ought to be uniformity; for these have institutions for their rule, and are not at mans liberty to be altered as he thinks best in prudence; But there are other circumstances which are only natural or civil, subservient to worship in a

natural or civil way; They are conversant about worship, but have nothing of worship in them, but are merely natural or civil helps to it. When we worship God, we do something as men as well as worshippers; hence we have need of some natural or civil helps. As for instance, when we meet to worship God, we being men as well as Christians, must have a convenience of place, to keep us from the weather, to know whither to resort; and of time, to know when.

There must be order: Many cannot speak at once to edification; modest and grave carriage is required of us, as a society of men, meeting about matters of weight. In these circumstances, and other of the like nature, there is no worship at all, there is no spiritual efficacy, there are only natural or civil helps to us, while we are worshipping; therefore for these circumstances, humane prudence is sufficient to order them.

The right understanding of this takes away a great prejudice that many have against such as desire to keep to Divine Institutions, not only in Substantials, but in the Circumstantials of Worship; they think it an unreasonable thing, that Divine Institution should be required for every circumstance in Worship; this hath bred a great quarrel in the Church: and well may it be thought unreasonable, if we required Institutions for circumstances in Worship, which are but natural or civil helps, and have no worship at all in them, for that indeed were endless, and a mere vanity. Certainly Institutions are to be required only in things that are raised beyond what is in them naturally, in tendering my respects to God by them, or expecting to draw my heart nearer to God, or God nearer to me in the use of them. The contention on about Uniformity is much increased for want of a right understanding of this difference in the circumstantials of Worship; did we understand one another in this, we might soon have Peace as concerning this thing.

In these latter sorts of circumstances, we must also distinguish. There are some that must of necessity be determined, as time and place; it is therefore necessary, there should be an uniformity in these, in all the members of every society respectively, that they agree to meet in the same place, at the same time, natural necessity requires this: but natural necessity requires not the binding of several Churches to Uniformity in things of this kind. The urging Uniformity beyond the rule in such things,

hath in all Ages caused woeful divisions in the Church. Eusebius tells of Victor, Bishop of Rome, about two hundred years after Christ, broke off communion from all the Churches of Asia, for not keeping Easter the same time he did. The controversy was not about Easter, but only about uniformity in the time. Never hath there been greater breaches of unity in the Church, then by violent urging Uniformity.

But further, There are other natural civil circumstances, which need not at all be determined; though there be a liberty and variety in them, yet order and edification is not hereby hindered. As for instance, In hearing the Word, one stands, as Constantine was wont constantly to do , another sits; one is uncovered, another is covered; one hath one kind of garment, another, another; yet no rules of modesty or gravity are broken. Now if any Power should violently urge uniformity in such like circumstances, and not leave them as Christ hath done, here they make the necessity of uniformity a dividing principle, upon these four grounds:

1. This is a straitening mens natural liberties, without satisfying their reason.
2. This hath been the in-let to almost all superstitions in the Church; First the Plea hath been for decency and order, then there hath been stamped a humane institution to raise things higher.
3. The urging such things, when there is no reason seen in the nature of them, why this rather then that, makes men fear there is some religious respect put upon them already.
4. Here is a stretching the power of authority beyond the limits of it, which Man naturally is very impatient of, not knowing how far it may yet further be extended. As for the practice of Church-Governors, or civil going beyond their bounds, we shall speak to in the third Head.

I have read of Suleiman the great Turk,\* when he was advised by a Mufhty to compel those of divers Religions in his Dominions to Muhammadanism, looking out of his window into his Garden, where there was great variety of flowers and herbs, said, As the variety of flowers and herbs seem very delightful, so the diversity of Religions in my



Kingdom is rather useful then burdensome, so be it those who profess them live peaceably. I am not of his mind for the variety of several Religions, of which further by and by; yet certainly in the variety of the practices of Brethren in such things as we are speaking of, tuned with brotherly love one towards another, there will be a sweet harmony, when violent urging uniformity in such things will cause a harsh discord in the Churches.

When the fore-named Victor of Rome, with those who joined with him, caused woeful divisions in the Church by standing so much upon uniformity, urging there could be no Peace without it, by it they brake the Peace of the Church. Irenæus and others in the same time pleaded for the peace of the Church, to be procured by yielding to difference of practice in such things, in the name of all the Brethren in France under his charge, he writes to Victor, and those who joined with him, and tells them of the variety of practices of divers Brethren in times before them, which was very near the Apostles times, who yet were at unity one with another. They who were Bishops (says he) before Soter, of that Sea which now thou governest, as Anicetus, Pius, Higinus, Telesphorus, Xixtus, were at unity with them of other Churches, although their observations were various, and Polycarpus being at Rome in the time of Anicetus, varied in divers things from him. Although Polycarpus had (says he) what he did from John the Disciple of our Lord, with whom he conversed, yet would he not persuade Anicetus to the same things, but left him to the way of his own Church, and they communicated lovingly one with another, and parted in a brotherly way. Cannot men walk peaceably in a broad way, though they do not tread just in one another's steps? What though there be some distance in their walk, one towards one side, the other towards the other side of the way; must they needs fall out, because they are not in the same path, when the way is broad enough? Indeed if they went over a narrow bridge, they must not take that liberty to go abredth; if they keep not close to one another's steps, if they step at a distance, they may fall into the river. Thus in matters of divine worship, we must look to it, that we walk exactly in the same steps; if there we presume to take liberty, we may soon fall; but in circumstances of an inferior nature, there may be difference without division. Wee must not here take upon us to be wiser then Christ. Melancthon in an Epistle to some Brethren of differing

minds, (cited by Gersom Bucerus) persuades to unity thus:\* Seeing (saith he) we agree in the principal Articles of Faith, let us embrace one another with mutual love, the dissimilitude and variety of Rights and Ceremonies, (I will add, says Bucerus) and of Ecclesiastical Government, ought not to disjoin our minds.

## CHAP. V

### **The second dividing Principle: All Religions are to be tolerated.**

This is a divider indeed. There is a great outcry of this, but what is the scope of it? it is to exasperate mens spirits against the toleration of any thing. Some think there must needs be a necessary dependence between tolerating some things conceived errors, and tolerating all things; and if it were not for the fear of the one, there would not be such ado about the other. But I hope I shall clearly shew there is no such dependence; but as this is a dividing principle, that all things should be tolerated, so the other is as truly dividing and false, that nothing should be tolerated.

There is nothing makes more stir amongst us at this day, then this principle of absolute liberty in matters of Religion. Conscience presses me to speak what I shall find to be the mind of God in this thing: The wantonness of mens spirits, their extreme boldness about the matters of God, and Christ, is such, as should cause our hearts to tremble; such horrid blasphemous things are amongst us, owned and professed with so much impudence, and their practice strengthened by this Principle, That there is to be an absolute liberty in the things of Religion, that our duty to

God, our love to, and care of the preservation of Religion, calls us to set ourselves against such a false, sinful, dangerous disturbing Principle as this is.

This Principle is strengthened by two Positions; both which are dividing as well as the Principle it self .

First, That Magistrates have nothing to do with men in the matters of Religion.

Secondly, Conscience is a tender thing, and must have liberty; nothing must be done to men, who plead their consciences for what they do .

First, we shall shew the principle it self to be a dividing principle; Then the mistakes in those two Assertions, that uphold this principle: As they strengthen the principle, so they strengthen division.

The principle is dividing: For,

First, It is abhorring to nature. Is it not an abhorring thing to any mans heart in the world, that men should suffer that God to be blasphemed, whom they honour? and that nothing should be done for the restraining any, but to ask them why they do so, and to persuade them to do otherwise? There hath ever been as great a contestation amongst people about Religion, as about any thing. Exod. 8:25, 26. Pharaoh bade Moses sacrifice in the land: But Moses said, It is not meet so to do ; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians: Lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? Though they had leave of the King, yet the people would not endure it.

Secondly, It is against the light of Scripture. Deut. 13:6. If thy brother the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, nor thy fathers, Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken to him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare him, nor conceal him: But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to

death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

Let not any put off this Scripture, saying, This is in the Old Testament, but we find no such thing in the Gospel; for we find the same thing, almost the same words, used in a Prophecy of the times of the Gospel, Zech. 13:3. In the latter end of the 12. Chapter, it is prophesied that those who pierced Christ, should look upon him, and mourn, &c. having a spirit of grace and supplication powered upon them. Chap. 13:1. There shall now be opened a fountain for fin and for uncleanness. Ver. 3. It shall come to passe that he that takes upon him to prophecy that his father and his mother that begat him, shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live, for thou speakest lies in the name of the Lord: And his father and his mother that begat him, shall thrust him through when he prophesied.

You must understand this by that in Deut. The meaning is not that his father or mother should presently run a knife into him, but that though they begat him, yet they should be the means to bring him to condign punishment, even the taking away his life; those who were the instruments of his life, should now be the instruments of his death.

Thirdly, It is a dividing principle, because by it the reins are let loose to all kind of wantonness; and spirit of opposition, in the matters of Religion. Men naturally are wanton in nothing more then in the things of Religion; and corrupt spirits are bent upon, and pleased with opposition in these things, above any other: for being things supposed to have an excellency in them, and above reason, and so liable to contradiction from men of corrupt minds, if there be nothing to restrain men from opposing one another in them; the wantonness and pride of mens hearts will carry them forth to infinite jarrings, contentions and divisions.

If it be said, Christ hath left spiritual means to help this.

It is answered, Christ's spiritual means are to work in a spiritual way upon the heart to change it, and secondarily upon the outward man; while Christ's means are working thus, external means may keep evil from breaking forth in the outward man; Christ hath not left the outward man at absolute liberty to do what it will, till spiritual means be made effectual to the heart, especially considering if you grant this liberty, men

may choose whether any of those spiritual means of Christ should at all come at them.

The first position that upholds this dividing principle: Magistrates have nothing to do in the matters of Religion.

It must be granted, that a Magistrate is not an Officer of Jesus Christ the Mediator in his Mediatory Kingdom\*

There is a two-fold government that Christ hath:

1. One as he is God equal with the Father, together with the Father ruling heaven and earth.
2. Another, as he is God and man, Mediator, in a peculiar Kingdom of his that he hath by way of dispensation from the Father.

Now the Magistrate is an Officer of God, both the Father and the Son, in the general Government of the world. But he is not the Officer of Christ, in that Kingdom of his that he hath by way of dispensation from the Father, that *Regnum Mediatorium*, as Divines call it: No, though he be a Christian Magistrate, there are no Officers of that, but such as are by divine Institution set down in the Word; his Christianity doth only add unto him further ability to execute the work of his Office in a better manner, it adds no new authority to him: An Infidel Magistrate converted to Christian Religion, is thereby better enabled to perform the duty of his place then before, but he had the same authority before; it was his sin, he did not use his Authority as now he is able to do ; though he be a Christian who is a Magistrate, yet the power of his Magistracy belongs to another Kingdom, different from that the second person hath as he is Christ the Mediator.

Obj. 2. But doth not this then exclude him from the exercise of any power in the matters of Christian Religion?

Answ. No, for God in the exercise of his power governing the world, hath a special aims at the promoting the Kingdom of his Son CHRIST the Mediator: Therefore Magistrates exercising this power of God, ought to

aim at these ends, that God himself aims at in the exercise of his own power, that is, to be useful to Christ's Government in his Church, and for the good of his Church: God in all his ways, from the beginning of the world, hath aimed at the setting up his Son to be King upon his holy Hill, at the promoting of the glory of him who is God-man, and if his Ministers do not make use of their power to this end, when this Kingdom of his Son comes to be revealed to them, he will require it at their hands.

The power that God invested Magistrates withal in matters of Religion in the Old Testament, is so full and clear in that which God gave to the Kings of Judah and Israel, that to name particulars would almost make a volume; I find many who write about this subject, spend most of their strength here, but I wholly forbear mentioning instances in this, because it is granted by all that they had power; but the argument from thence to the power of Magistrates in the times of the Gospel, prevails little with those who hold this Dividing Principle we are now speaking of. For they tell us that their power was typical, they in the exercise of such a power were types of the Kingly power of Christ, for wee find glorious promises of dominion and stability made to Christ in the persons of many of those Kings.

2. They tell us, that as it is no argument, because Priests and Levities had in time of the Law power in temporal things, in ordering the affairs of the State; therefore Ministers should have civil authority now: So neither is it an argument, because Magistrates had power then in spiritual things, therefore our Magistrates should have the like now.

3. They tell us, that the Church and Common-wealth of the Jews were mixed in one; hence to be a stranger from the Church is expressed by being a stranger from the Common-wealth of Israel, Ephes. 2:12. and therefore their Magistrates were Church-officers as well as Civil

4. That the people of the Jews were brought up in a more servile way then Christ would have his Church, in the times of the Gospel, brought up in: Compulsion therefore in matters of Religion was more suitable to their condition then it is to our Jerusalem which is free.

5. The whole Church then was bound to be under the same State-

government; the Laws of their State were by divine appointment; their Kings were chosen by God; but now Christ chooses his Church out of all Nations of the earth, and leaves them to the several Governments, Laws, Officers of several Nations for their Civil State.

1. I confess were there nothing but merely examples or Laws from the Old Testament to confute this dividing Position, to an examining eye the argument would hardly be cogent or satisfactory, only so far as there is a common reason and equity in them, and so all the judicial bind now as well as they did then.

2. So far as the New Testament approves of for the times of it, what was formerly done in the Old.

The strength of the argument from the power of Magistrates in the Old Testament, lies in these two.

First, there is a common reason and equity, what ever the strength of such kind of arguing be from one Spiritual Ordinance to prove another, yet without all question, it is strong enough from one Civil Ordinance to prove another, though it be conversant about spiritual things.

It is the Dictate of Nature, that Magistrates should have some power in matters of Religion. The generality of all people have ever thought it equal It hath been ever challenged in all Nations and Common-wealths. The Heathens would never suffer their gods to be blasphemed, but punished such as were guilty thereof, by the power of the Magistrate. Socrates was put to death for blaspheming their multiplicity of gods.

Secondly, surely there is a common equity, for there is a necessity of it as truly now as there was then. I cannot argue the being of Spiritual Ordinances from our need of them, not thus there is such an institution, for the Church hath need of it; but rather thus, I find it in the Word to be an institution, and therefore the Church hath need of it. But in natural or civil things this way of arguing is strong enough; there is need of such a help, and therefore wee should seek to have it.

Now sure the need we have of such a power, is exceeding great, we were

in a most miserable condition if we had no external civil power to restrain from any kinds of blasphemies and seducements. The condition of the Jews, O how happy was it in comparison of ours, if this were denied us! for if any one of theirs did blaspheme God, or seek to seduce any from him, they knew what to do with him, besides persuading him to the contrary; but if any should seek to seduce the wives of our bosoms, children of our bodies, friends as dear to us as our own lives, into those ways that we think in our consciences will undo their souls to all eternity, yet we must only desire them they would not do so, we must only admonish, and seek to convince them, or reprove them, but restrain them we cannot: If the deliverance of us from the pedagogy of the Law hath brought us into this condition, our burden is greater in this thing than any that the Law laid upon our fore-Fathers. Hath Christ delivered us from one burden to lay a greater upon us? Must we now see those who are dearest to us drawn into the ways of eternal destruction, and stand and look on, but no way left to help them, or ourselves, unless we can persuade to the contrary? surely our condition is very sad: Have we not cause to say, Lord let any burden of the Ceremonial Law be laid upon our necks rather than this? If there were a company of mad men running up and down the streets with knives and swords in their hands, endeavouring to mischief and kill all they met with, and we must do nothing to restrain them; if wee could persuade them to do otherwise well and good: but that is all wee can do for help ; what a dangerous thing were this? The case is the same, when those who are mad with damnable Heresies, run from place to place, seeking to draw all they can from the truth; If we have no means of help but arguments, it is ill with us: Surely God hath not put his people into such a sad condition as this is, he hath provided better for his people than thus.

Thirdly, we find in the Records of Scripture mention of Heathen Magistrates, who had nothing but the light of nature to guide them, interesting themselves in matters of Religion, and this the Holy Ghost relates in way of commendation of them for this thing.

The argument from these examples cannot be avoided, as that which is taken from the practice of the Kings of Judah. Wee read Ezra 7:26. Artaxerxes interposes his power in matters of Religion, and Ezra blesses



God for it, Whosoever will not do the Law of thy God and the Law of the King, let judgement bee executed speedily upon him: And in the next words Ezra blesses God who put it in the heart of the King by these and other means, to beautify his house. The making such a Law was one notable means whereby the House of the Lord came to be beautified.

Thus also Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. 3:29. I make a Decree that every people, nation and language, who speak any thing against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dung-hill, &c. This the Scripture records as a work of the Kings repentance.

The King of Nineveh, Jonah 3. by the decree of his Princes and Nobles, proclaims a Fast, and commands every one to cry mightily to God, and to turn from his evil way.

Further, let us see how the holy Ghost justifies this power of the Magistrate in the times of the Gospel: First, in the Prophetesies of the times of the Gospel: Secondly, in divers places in the New Testament.

For Prophetesies, The fore-named place, Zech. 13:3. cannot be put off: Essay 49:23. Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and Queens thy nursing mothers. The protection of their civil peace is not sufficient to give them such a denomination of nursing fathers and mothers.

Essay 60:10. The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their Kings shall minister unto thee: They shall not only be favorer of them, but as Kings they shall minister to them, even by their power: So Revel. 21:24. The Kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour to the Church: there is such a time coming. This surely is more then merely to protect their outward peace.

In the New Testament, Rom. 13:4. He is thy minister for thy good. 1 Pet. 2:13, 14. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lords sake, whether it be to the King as to the supreme, or unto Governors, which are sent for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well. Now seeing the Scripture speaks thus generally, For thy good, and for the punishment of evil doers, and praise of them that do well, Non

distinguendum ubi Scriptura non distinguit, Except the nature of the thing require, why should we distinguish where the Scripture doth not?

You will say, The nature of the thing spoken of will require that it must be restrained to those things that belong to his cognisance.

Such a limitation must of necessity be granted; therefore it is true that the Magistrate cannot command every good thing, nor punish every evil; the abstruse controversies in Religion come not under the cognisance of a Magistrate, as a Magistrate; only such things as are against the rules of common justice and equity, and the common light of Christianity, where he is to govern Christians, for he is to enjoin and punish such things only as if he were not; the community of people which sets him up, ought to enjoin and punish, for he hath his power from them: But of this more in the next Principle.

If you shall say, But those Scriptures speaking of Civil Magistrates, we must understand them to be meant only in civil things.

The Magistrate hath his appellation civil, because the power that he exercises is civil, the things that he do are civil; he cannot do the works of a Church-officer, by all the power he hath, as administer Sacraments, and the like; but this hinders not the use of his civil power, and the doing of external acts upon the outward man, subservient to spiritual good; indeed what he doth, hath not any spiritual efficacy in it, for then it were worship. Though he cannot work in a spiritual way upon mans soul, by his power, it is not an Ordinance set apart by God to that end, yet he may by the exercise of his power upon the outward man, restrain it from the external act of evil, or bring it to an external good; his power still that he exercises is civil, yet ordered to the help of spiritual good, either removendo prohibentia, or applicando media externa, or cohibendo à malo externo; removing outward things that hindered, applying outward means, or keeping from outward evils. Whatsoever Commandment requires any duty, requires us to make use of all things that may help us to the performance of that duty; if there be any civil, natural, spiritual helps, we are bound to make use of all. Only here lies the great doubt, Whether hath God appointed the use of the Magistrates power to be a help to the things of Religion? Hath God made this to be an ordinance for

the spiritual good of people? That it is by God an ordinance for their civil good, is plain out of those Scriptures before mentioned; but how doth it appear that ever God intended it to be an ordinance for their spiritual good?

Answ. What naturalness there is in any thing, it hath it from God, for nature is God's work, if there be a naturalness in it to work upon the outward man, for the furtherance of spiritual good; this is from God: if I should use it to work upon the inward man expecting a spiritual efficacy, then I make it an ordinance to my self, and sin against God, presuming to put more in a creature of his, then it was appointed to. In this consisted the evil of Ceremonies, they were used in a spiritual way, to work upon the heart of man, by virtue of that institution that man put upon them, beyond what God in their natural power ever put into them.

But how can natural and external things be helps to things spiritual and divine?

Answ. Any mans reason, yea sense may tell him, that the taking away external hindrances, and the putting upon external use of divers things, may keep from much evil, and further much good that is spiritual and divine; though it cannot reach to the spiritualness and the divinenesse of that good, yet it reaches to the external action, without which that divine and spiritual good cannot be.

Wherefore seeing the New Testament sets out the power of Magistrates, and requires submission to them in such general terms; from this we may draw such a conclusion, Therefore the Lord intended to leave Christians for their subjection to Magistrates, to the light of nature, and to the equity of the general rules that were in Scripture before-time; if God should say, Ye are Christians, see you do not part with that liberty Christ hath purchased for you; we may give this account, Lord we found in thy word that once thou didst make use of the power of Magistrates in the matters of Religion; and in the New Testament, there was nothing revealed to forbid their power in them; nay Lord thou toldst us there, that thou hadst appointed them for our good, and to be a terror to evil works in the general; from thence we gathered that in our yielding to their power, it was thy will we should make use of those general rules in Scripture we

found before the times of the Gospel, and of the light of nature. Being also persuaded it was thy mind we should make use of all the natural helps we could for our spiritual advantage, & we found it recorded in thy Word that thou didst allow of the exercise of such power in the things of Religion, even to those who had only the light of nature to guide them, and being the use of it reached only to the outward man, we did not see a necessity of a special institution for this, knowing what naturalness it had in it, to be an external help was put into it by thy self, therefore we made use of it. God will accept of this account.

Add yet a Consideration or two.

1. When the Apostles were convened before Civil Authority about matters of Religion, we never find that they pleaded for themselves, You have no power to meddle with us in the things of Religion, they belong to Jesus Christ only who is our King, and to that government he hath set in his Church; No, their plea was only the justness of their cause, that what they professed and preached was the truth of God, they did it in obedience to God.

2. If all men be bound to improve all the abilities, gifts, talents they have, for the propagation of the Gospel, the Magistrates are bound to improve those which are peculiar to them; If a man hath more wisdom than others, or a greater estate, or more friends, he is to make use of all these for helps to the furtherance of Religion; if then a man hath more power than others, he is to improve that likewise, not only by countenancing what he conceiveth to be right, but by all other means according to the dictates of Reason, not forbid by Scripture.

But we have often heard that of Tertullian urged,\* If it be therefore said it is lawful because the Scripture doth not forbid, it is therefore unlawful because the Scripture doth not command.

Ans. In the matters of God's worship this rule is to be urged, but not in matters civil or natural, though in their way subservient to worship, there Reason may guide very far.

But you will say, What? will you then make the Magistrate a Judge in all

causes of Religion? he may be a wicked man, a Heathen, and yet a true Magistrate.

Ans. Whatsoever he be, yet he may be a Judge in matters of fact, and so far as Reason may go in matters of right; he may judge whether you do not go against your own principles, either in your profession, acts of worship, or in the wrong you do to your brother; yea, he may judge whether your very principles be not contrary to the common light of the knowledge of God, that God hath given to men, and to the rules of humane justice. A Magistrate who is not skillful in Physicke or Navigation, yet he may judge Physitians and Mariners, if they wrong others in their way.

## CHAP. VI

### **The second Position, Conscience is a tender thing, and must not be meddled with.**

Certainly Conscience is a very tender thing; and as men must take heed how they offer violence to their own consciences, so to the consciences of others; It is such a thing as is not in subjection to any creature in Heaven or earth, only to God himself. Gerard reports out of the Histories of France, of a King of Navarre, writing to his Nobles, used this expression,\* The rule over consciences and souls is left to God alone: And of a King of Polonia, who was wont frequently to say, That God had reserved three things to himself; 1. To make something of nothing: 2. To know things future: 3. To rule over conscience.\* Maximilian the second used to say, There was no tyranny more intolerable then to seek to rule over consciences. Henry the third, King of France, as the last pangs of death carried him into another world, had this speech, Learn of me that piety is

a duty of man unto God, over which worldly force hath no power;\* this was spoken in the same Chamber where the Counsel was held about that fatal Bartholmew day, in the year 1572.

But for all this, the Devil must not bee let alone, though he be got into mens consciences, God hath appointed no City of refuge for him; if he flies to mens consciences, as Joab did to the horns of the Altar, he must be fetched from thence, or fallen upon there. Something may be done to men to keep them from evil, and to reduce them, notwithstanding the plea of their consciences.

But what may be done to a man in such a case?\*

First, any man that pleads his conscience, may be required to give an account of his conscience; it is not enough for him to say, his conscience puts him upon such a thing, or keeps him from such a thing; he must give an account of the grounds upon which his conscience goes.

The Word requires us to give an account to every man of that hope that is in us, if he requires it in a due way; we are bound to give no offence neither to the Jew nor Gentile: It is against the light of nature, that men in a society should do things of which they need give no account to any whatsoever.

Secondly, due enquiry is to be made, whether the Devil be indeed in the conscience, it may be you shall find him in some other room of the soul, only he pretends to that as his sanctuary, hoping to escape better there then any where else; if he should be found in a mans will, he thinks he should bee soon hunted out with violence, he could not scape there; but he hopes men will deal more tenderly with conscience; therefore either thither he will get, or at least he will give it out he is got in there, hoping you will enquire after him no further, when it is given out he hath taken refuge there, as a Malefactor searched after; it may be he is lurking in some house not far from you; but that you may either not search, or cease searching; he causes it to be given out, that he is got into some strong Castle, or some other Country where there is little hope to come at him.

Quest. But how shall it be known, whether the Devil be in a mans

conscience or not? Conscience is an inward room, who can see into it, what, or who is there?

Answ. It is a very hard thing to give a judgment, but these notes may help us much in discerning.

First, if I see a mans own private interest is much engaged in what he pretends conscience for, this may be enough to raise suspicion, though it can be no determining rule; for a man may in some things have his conscience put him upon that where there is much of his own interest; but this brings him under much suspicion, if the thing be not exceeding clear to the view of every man.

Secondly, if in the course of a mans life, he appears not to be much under the command of his conscience, but can take liberty as he pleases; if indeed a man in the general course of his life appears to be very conscientious; wee had need take heed how we meddle with such a man in a way of opposition, except the evil wee see now in him be very clear and gross; but that man, who in the common course of his life, can trifle with his conscience, hath deprived himself of the benefit of this plea, as a man may forfeit the benefit of his freedom in the City, by misdemeanor; so the benefit that otherwise might be had of such a plea may be forfeited by such looseness of life.

Thirdly, when the account a man gives, cannot in any rational way be judged such, giving allowance to all his weaknesses, as should probably mislead him so grossly, as is apparent he is misled. Wee must grant, that those may be reasons to one which are not to another; but when they appear so gross, as after all allowance to weaknesses, they cannot in any common understanding reach to such a conclusion, wee may at least suspect very much, that the evil of this man lies not in his conscience, but some where else; yet wee should not do well to be too hasty and violent with such men; it may be a man for a while may be so overpowered, that he is not able to render a rational account of his ways, but wait a while, and deal with him tenderly in love; consider his personal disabilities, his temptations, give him all the allowance you can; if one means prevail not, to shew him his error, try another; if at one time you do no good upon him, see what may be done at another; consider, is it not possible, that

even such weak things may appear to the conscience of a man that has so many weaknesses, and lies under so many temptations, to be for the present such grounds as he cannot without sin deny; and if so, you had need deal tenderly with such a man, except the grossness of the evil requires severity.

Fourthly, if a man be proud and turbulent in his carriage, by that you may know the Devil is rather in the will than in the conscience; though an erroneous conscience may cause one to hold fast an error, yet it does not put upon proud, scornful turbulent behavior: When a man by reason of his conscience (it may be the weakness of it) differs from his brethren, he had need carry himself with all humility, and meekness, and self-denial in all other things; he should be willing to be a servant to every man, in what lawfully he may, that thereby he may shew to all, that it is not from any willfulness, but merely the tenderness of his conscience, that he cannot come off to that, which his brethren can do, whom yet he reverences, and in his carriage towards them, shows that he yet esteems them his betters; but if a man that is weak, very much beneath others in parts and graces, shall carry himself high, imperious, contemning and vilifying those who differ from him, and be contentious with them: There is great reason to think, that the corruption is in the will rather than any where else; if there should be some conscience yet in these men, their heart-distempers may justly forfeit their right of pleading their consciences. Those who oppose them, if they do it in a Christian way, may justify what they do before God; if God should call them to an account, and say, why did you deal so with such men who professed they were put upon what they held and did, by their consciences; if they can answer thus, Lord thou knowst we were willing to have dealt with them in all tenderness, if we could have seen conscientiousness in their carriage; but we saw nothing but scornfulness, pride, imperiousness, turbulence, conceitedness, we could see nothing of the Spirit of JESUS CHRIST acting them in their way; this their carriage persuaded us, that the sinfulness was got rather into their wills than their consciences.

Fifthly, when a man is not willing to make use of means to inform his conscience, not of those means that are not against his own principles, but goes on peremptorily and stoutly: Surely, when we see many of our



Brethren differing from us, our respect to them should gain so much at least from us, that if there be any means left unused, for the further trying our opinions or informing our judgements, we should make use of that means, a conscientious heart will do so.

The sixth note added, will seal up all; when a man by reason or Scripture is so put to it, as he must either renounce his error, or fly from some of his own principles, he will rather deny his principles than yield himself convinced of his error; yea, when those principles are of great moment. The man that doth thus, is the man spoken of Titus 3:11. that is αὐτοκατάκριτος, condemned of himself, An Heretic after the first and second admonition reject, because he is self -condemned; we must not reject every man that errs in every little thing, no not after two or three admonitions, that was a prelatial, tyrannical rule, but he must be an Heretic, and erring so grossly as he is self -condemned in his error, and such a man suffers not for his conscience, when he is rejected, but for sinning against his conscience.

Quest. But who can know when a man is condemned of himself? the judgement of a mans own conscience is a secret thing.

Aeons. This is the strength of this hold the Devil gets into, he thinks he gets so deep, that you cannot get to it to find him out, and as for God's displeasure who knows their consciences, these men will venture that. But by this Scripture Tit. 3. it is clear, that a mans conscience may be so far seen into, as there may be a judgement passed upon a man, that he is a self -condemned man: To what purpose otherwise serves this Scripture? it is not like this Heretic would acknowledge that he was self -condemned, but yet the Apostle makes this the ground why he should be rejected; As if he should say, You see he will go against his own principles, against what his conscience tells him is truth, merely to maintain a wicked Heresy that he is infected withal; let him therefore plead what he will, reject him, for his own conscience condemns him, and GOD is greater then his Conscience, and knows all things.

The third thing that is to be done to a man who pleads his conscience for evil, is, the great snare and danger he brings himself into, is to be declared to him, that by giving way to let evil into his conscience, he puts

himself into such a condition, as whatsoever he doth, he must needs sin against God, so long as he holds his error: Evil gets into the consciences of many very easily, because they think the dictates of their consciences will be sufficient to bear them out in what they do ;\* but they are deceived, for an erroneous conscience does not bind, you sin notwithstanding your conscience bids you do it; and if you go against this erroneous conscience, you sin too; what a miserable snare is this? you had need look to yourselves then, and take heed what you let into your consciences.

The fourth thing, is to charge him, and if it be in a matter of consequence, to adjure him in the Name of God, (who is the searcher of the hearts of men, and will judge them at the great day accordingly,) that he deals plainly and sincerely, not to dare to put a pretence upon that which he knows his conscience cannot justify him in; if there be indeed any conscientiousness in the man, this will startle him.

But it may be this will not prevail, wherefore in the fifth place, whatsoever a man holds, though his conscience be never so much taken with it, yet if it cannot stand with the power of godliness, but destroys it, if this man be in a Christian society after all means used to reduce him, if he still perseveres in it, he is, notwithstanding his conscience, to be cast out of the society of the Saints; this is not a little matter, if a man hat any conscience in him, it cannot but be a dreadful thing to him: If poison be got into a glass, and you cannot wash it out, the poison and glass too is to be thrown into the sink: Such a man as this is, with the conscience that he hat, is to be thrown upon the dunghill. If a man by his wickedness cuts himself off from the mystical body of Christ, the Church may cut him off from his visible; he hat forfeited his Choirmasters.

Sixty, If the error with the profession of it be destructive to the State, and he cannot be reclaimed; he may likewise bee cut off from it, or at least deprived of the privileges of it, and benefits by it, notwithstanding his plea of conscience. This justifies the cutting off Jesuits and Priests, who teach people that the Crown is at the dispose of any foreign power, by which also subjects may be freed from their Allegiance. A Reverend Divine of ours,\* in a Treatise upon the pouring out of the seven vials, interprets the turning of the Rivers into blood; the execution of justice

even to blood upon the Rimose Emissaries, the Jesuits and Priests, who come from the See of Rome, to take people off from their Allegiance.

Sevenths, what ever pretence of conscience a man hat, yet this cannot excuse him in any matter of apparent injustice done to his brother in his estate or goods: As suppose a man pleads conscience in the point of community of goods, yet if he take away his neighbors goods by violence, his conscience cannot deliver him from the stroke of justice. The Papists pretend conscience for their furthers, for the Catholic cause, but this delivers them not out of the hands of justice; if a man pleads conscience that he is bound to marry more wives then one, and the like.

Ethyl, a man may bring himself under both Civil and Ecclesiastical sword, not only for sins destructive and injurious to our brother, but for sins against God, if they be also against the light of nature, as blasphemy and gross idolatry: Though the Sun be down, if you allow your servant a candle to work ordinary work by, and he put it out, he cannot plead he could not work, because it was dark: Man at first had Sun-light to work by, but our Sun is down, yet we have the candle of the light of nature; if wee sin against that, our darkness can be no plea for us; and if he be a professed Christian, and sins against the common light of Christianity, which he cannot but see, except he will shut his eyes, he is to be dealt with as a man that sins against the light of Nature.

Though such as are not Christians cannot by violence be compelled to profess Christian Religion, yet notwithstanding any plea of their conscience, they may be restrained, and that by violence, if other means will not do it, from an open blaspheming Christ, and the Scriptures, or doing any acts of any open dishonor to them: acts of open dishonor to God done by any whomsoever, as they are abominable, so such as have loved God and Christ, have accounted them insufferable.

I suppose you have heard or read that notable story we have in the Book of Martyrs, of one Gar diner, though we undertake not to justify his practice as allowable in an ordinary way, he being but a private man, yet there were little question to be made of it had he been a Magistrate: He being a Merchant in Portugal seeing the Cardinal offering the Host, though it were in the presence of the King and his Nobles, yet he runs to

him and snatches it out of his hand, and throws it under his feet; if the King himself had done this, who would have condemned it?

10. Notwithstanding any mans conscience he may be kept from endangering the salvation of others, no mans conscience can set him at liberty to hurt others.

those who strengthen others in dangerous soul damning principles may be taken from them, the light of Nature teaches it.

In some cases, a private man may himself use violence to restrain men from evil; if a man should come to seduce my wife, or child, in a matter I know will endanger their souls, if I could have no help by the Magistrate, I might if I had power keep him off; And what I might do by mine own strength, in case there were no Magistrate, I may call in the help of a Magistrate to do for me, when there is a Magistrate.

Object. But you will say, you speak all this while of the restraint of men from dangerous gross evils; but what if the evils be of less moment, can there be nothing done to men for the restraining them from such?

Aeons. Yes, a man may be put to some trouble in those ways of evil, that his conscience puts him upon, so far as to take off the wantonness of his spirit and the neglect of means: In times of liberty there is very great wantonness in mens spirits; they stand as in an equal balance to receive truth or error; every little thing casts the balance in many mens spirits, as interest in a friend, esteem from such men of repute in some, in others the credit they conceive there is in being able to speak further to a business than other men, to have a further insight into it than others, and a thousand the like; now to help against such temptations, if there be some trouble laid in the way, of that which is apparently evil, so as men shall see there is something to be suffered in that way; if there be no more grains of trouble than may help against this wantonness and neglect of means, I see no reason why any should be offended at this; indeed if there be a mistake, and the trouble be put into the wrong scale, if it be laid in the way of truth, let the sin be upon those who dare venture upon their mistakes; or if so much be put into the scale as will not balance only against wantonness and neglect of means, but will be a sore temptation to

decline the truth, and rather embrace that which is evil, then to endure so much trouble; this is very displeasing to God: If a man be asleep at a Sermon, his friend may pull his hand, yea he will not be offended though he give him a nip perhaps, but if he should strike him with his staff on the head, so as to make the blood come, or cut his flesh with his knife, this would not be borne.

One step I think may be gone farther. Suppose a man be not wanton, but serious, and neglects no means to inform his conscience, and yet he cannot yield, what shall be done to such a man?

Aeons. Though such a man should be dealt with in much tenderness and love, yet in such things as by his weakness he makes himself less serviceable to the Common-wealth or Church, then other men, who have more strength; he may be denied some privileges and benefits that are granted to others. I instance in that opinion of some Anabaptists, who deny the lawfulness of War; suppose their consciences after much seriousness in the use of means, cannot be satisfied; yet seeing by this error of theirs they are made less useful in the State then others, they should not think it much though they be denied many privileges and accommodations that are granted to others, who venture their lives for the preservation of the State. If a mans body be weak, he cannot help it, yet by it he is not so useful as others, why should he think much that he hat not whatsoever others by strength are able to attain to? Suppose a man should have such a principle in his conscience, that the King hat an absolute arbitrary power; though it be his conscience, yet by it he is disabled from employment and preferment in places of trust. So for the Church, suppose the government of it by Prelates had been lawful, (which now we know was not) there had been no evil in denying to those who in conscience could not submit to it, their preferments of Deanries and Prebends, and the like.

But lest what I say in this should be abused, you must understand this denial of places of profit or honour to men, because of that which their consciences will not suffer them to yield to, only such places, as the tenderness of their consciences in such a point makes them unfit to manage, if because their consciences differ from you in one thing, you will take advantage against them in other things that have no dependance

upon that wherein they differ from you, and make them suffer in those things too, you now (to say no worse) begin to grow near to a way of persecution and tyranny over your brethren, which Christ is displeas'd with. We accounted it in the Bishops not near, but come up to tyranny and persecution, when they would not suffer such as could not conform to their Church discipline and ceremonies, not so much as to teach children the Grammar, or to practice Physique, or to preach Christ in places where there was no preaching, but people lived in darkness, perishing for want of knowledge. What dependance had these things upon their discipline and Ceremonies, supposing they had been right? Yes, they would foment their errors by this means.

Aeons. But seeing there was no dependance between their errors, (if you will call them so) and these things, to deny the Church and Commonwealth the benefit of the gifts and graces of men, upon such a pretence that they will abuse their liberty, we thought it was hard dealing, yea no less then persecution.

Suppose a man differs from his brethren in point of Church-Discipline, must not this man have a place in an Army therefore? Though he sees not the reason of such a Discipline in the Church, yet God hat endued him with a spirit of valor, and he understands what Military Discipline means; must he not have a place in a College to teach youth Logic and Philosophy? may he not preach Jesus Christ to poor ignorant creatures? if you fear he will divulge his opinions, surely some other course may be taken whereby he may suffer as much as such a fault comes to; but therefore to deprive Church and State of what abilities God has given him, which might be very useful to them, and that before any such fault is committed, for fear it may be committed, the softest word I have to express my self against this, is, It is very hard dealing with your Brethren.

I have now gone to the uttermost line I can in shewing what is to be done to a man that pleads his conscience in things which we conceive are not right: I would now speak a word or two, to men who have to deal with their brethren consciences, and then to those who plead their consciences for their freedom.

To the first. Let those who have to deal with mens consciences,\* first take

heed they do not vilify and sleight mens consciences, do not scorn at the plea of their consciences, What, this is your conscience, your conscience forsooth will not suffer you. Woe to them who offend one of these little ones; it were better that a mil-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the bottom of the sea, Mat. 18:6. it is his conscience, and perhaps better informed then thine, and more tender; thou hats it may be a corrupt conscience, thy conscience is broke by thy sinning against it, or otherwise it is loose or benumbed, no quickness in it, thou cast swallow down greater matters, therefore thou wonder est at those who are so nice conscience, who stand upon small matters; what if at the great day Christ shall own these to be truly conscientious, and honour them for obeying the voice of their consciences in small things, for not daring to offend them in any thing, where wilt thou appear? what is like to become of thee then? Or if their consciences be weak, not rightly informed, yet Christ expects thou shoddiest seek to heal, to strengthen them, not to jeer and scorn them; that fearfulness of theirs to offend Christ, though in the particular they may be mistaken, shall be accepted, when thy boldness and venturousness in taking thy liberty shall appear to be thy folly.

2. Take heed in your dealings with such, you make them not suffer more then Christ would have them suffer; do not abuse your power over them, so as to cause them to complain justly to God of conscience-oppression; Conscience-oppression is the most fearful oppression; of all the cries in the world, the cries caused by it come up most swiftly to God. When an oppressed soul shall get alone, and make his moan to God,\* Oh Lord, thou who knows the secrets of all hearts, thou knows the desires of my soul in uprightness to know thy will; I can freely and comfortably appeal to thee. Thou knows what a sad affliction it is to me that my judgement should be different from my brethren, whose parts and graces I prize far beyond mine own. Thou knows also there is no means for further Reformation, but I have been willing to make use of it as I was able, and what ever other help thou shalt make known to me, I am ready to make use of it, that I may not be led aside into error: and if thou wilt be pleased to reveal thy mind further to me, I am ready to submit to it. I should account it a greater happiness then all the comforts in the world can afford, to know what thy mind is, in such and such things; but Lord, as yet I cannot do this thing, except I should sin against thee; thou knows it:

yet thou knows also that I desire to walk humbly and peaceably with my brethren, and in all meekness, submissiveness, and quietness of spirit, together with all diligence, I will wait till thou shalt further reveal thy mind to me. But Lord, in the mean time I find rigid dealing from my brethren; their spirits are embittered, their speeches are hard, their ways towards me are harsh, yea Lord there is violence in them; Lord thou knows my spirit is not such as to need any such carriage of my brethren towards me; I am not conscious to my self (no not when I set my self most solemnly in thy presence) of stiffness, wilfulness in my way; the least beam of light from thee, would presently turn my spirit what way thou woodiest have it go : Such a moan to God would prove a sadder business against such as shall occasion it, then if such men had strength and spirits to answer bitterness, harshness, and violence, with bitterness, harshness, and violence.

Let me also on the other side speak to them who plead their consciences.\*

First, take heed you rest not in this as an empty plea, setting it as a Bulwark against any thing that shall be to said you: Why, it is my conscience, and who hat to do with my conscience? and so think you need look no farther, nor give any other account to your Brethren then this: This is to abuse your conscience, and the indulgence of God, and the respect he would have men shew to the consciences of his people; this is a hardening conscience against the truth, no true tenderness of it.

Secondly, If Conscience be such a thing as none must have the power over it but God, such a thing wherein thou hats to deal so much with God, thou headset need keep it very clean; it is above all creatures, next to God, take heed of defiling it, oh keep it pure: Unclean consciences are good enough to prostrate to men, but consciences reserved for God need be kept unspotted and very clean. Doves love white houses, the holy Ghost loves a pure conscience.

Thirdly, Thou wilt have none to command thy conscience, let conscience then command thee; if thou wilt rebel against thy conscience, it is just with God to suffer men to tyrannize over thy conscience. When you complain of men seeking to have power over your consciences, lay your hand upon your heart, and say, Have not I rebelled against my



conscience? I have resisted the power of it over me, just therefore it is that others should seek to bring it under their power.

## **CHAP. VII**

## **They who are for a Congregational way, do not hold absolute liberty for all Religions**

But for all that hath been said, Are there not yet a sort of men, who though they would color over things, and put faire glosses upon their opinions and ways, saying they would not have such an absolute liberty as to have all Religions suffered, yet do they not come near this in their tenets and practise?\* Doe not men in a Congregational way take away all Ecclesiastical means that should hinder such an absolute liberty as this? for they hold, every congregation hath sole Church power within it self, and they are not tied to give any account to others, but merely in an arbitrary way, will not this ons, bring in a toleration of all Religions, and a very Anarchy?

Answ. First, I know none holds this, and how far men in a congregational way are from it, shall appear presently.

In the clearing of this thing, I shall not argue for one side or other, I shall only shew you that there is in effect as much means to prevent or subdue error, heresy, schism in the congregational way, (which you call by another name) as there is in what way, other Brethren endeavour to hold forth. I am not here to plead what is right, what is wrong, but only to shew you the difference is not great, so far as concerns this thing; what one holds, the same the other holds in effect; if this be done with clearness, then the great out-cry against that way as fomenting divisions by opening a gap to all kind of liberty, will I hope be stilled, and your hearts in some measure satisfied. I confess were it as many of you are made to believe, that, that way gives liberty, or at least hath no help against all errors and heresies, it must be acknowledged it were a means of most fearful divisions, and in no case to be tolerated. But certainly you will find it far otherwise. This Argument I am now about, (namely, how far Brethren agree in a matter of so great moment, and in that which they are by some thought most to disagree in, and their disagreement most feared, as a matter of dangerous consequence) I know cannot be an unpleasing argument to you, although we cannot be ignorant that there is

a generation of men that are vexed when they hear how near their brethren come to them in way of agreement, it serves more for their turns to have the distance wide, they would keep open the wounds, yea widen them, but God forbid there should be such a spirit in you.

Wherefore for your help in this thing, these two things are to be premised.

First, that the only way the Church hath to keep down errors or heresies is spiritual; as for other means they are extrinsically to the Church; this all acknowledge: as for subjection to the Magistrate, if he pleases to interpose, to that both they and we must yield.

Secondly, the virtue of spiritual power works not upon the outward man, but by its prevailing upon conscience; therefore so far as men are conscientious, so far it works, and no farther.

Now then see what difference there is in the Congregational way from the Presbyterian, for the prevailing with mens consciences, to reduce to the truth those who go astray from it.

First, Those in the Congregational may acknowledge that they are bound in conscience to give account of their ways to the Churches about them, or to any other who shall require it; this not in an arbitrary way, but as a duty that they owe to God and man.

Secondly, they acknowledge that Synods of other Ministers and Elders about them are an ordinance of Jesus Christ for the helping the Church against errors, schisms, and scandals.

Thirdly, that these Synods may by the power they have from Christ admonish men or Churches in his name, when they see evils continuing in, or growing upon the Church; and their admonitions carry with them the authority of Jesus Christ.

Fourthly, as there shall be cause, they may declare men or Churches to be subverters of the faith; or otherwise according to the nature of the offence, to shame them before all the Churches about them.

Fifthly, they may by a solemn act in the name of Jesus Christ refuse any further communion with them, till they repent.

Sixthly, they may declare, and that also in the name of Christ, that these erring people or Churches, are not to be received into fellowship with any the Churches of Christ, nor to have communion one with another in the ordinances of Christ. Now all this being done in Christ's name, is this nothing to prevail with conscience?

You will say, What if they care not for all this?

Answ. That is as if you should say, What if they be not conscientious? What if nothing can prevail with conscience?

I demand, what can any Church power do more to work upon mens consciences for the reducing them from evil?

You will say, They may do all this with more authority then the Congregational way will allow.

Answ. We need not contend about the word Authority: But, how much higher is any act of authority in the Church, then for the Officers of Christ to act in the name of Christ?

If you say, Private Brethren may admonish, and declare in the Name of Christ.

This is more then if any private Brethren should do the same thing; for a Synod is a solemn Ordinance of Christ, and the Elders are to be looked on as the Officers of JESUS CHRIST.

But our Brethren say, There is one means more in their way then the Congregational way hath, that is, if the six former will not work, then Synods may deliver to Satan.

In this very thing lies the very knot of the controversy, between those who are for the Presbyterial, and those who are for the congregational way, in reference to the matter in hand, namely, the means to, reducing from, or keeping out errors and heresies from the Church, in this lies the dividing

business; But I beseech you consider at what a punctum wee divide here, and judge whether the cause of division in this thing be so great as there can be no help, and whether if an evil spirit prevail not amongst us, we may not join; For,

First, consider, what is there in this delivering to Satan? which is a seventh thing that our Brethren think may hopefully prevail with mens consciences, when the six former cannot.

Yes, say they, for by this they are put out of the Kingdom of CHRIST into the Kingdom of Satan, and this will terrify.

This putting out of Christ's Kingdom must be understood, *clave non errante*, if the Synod judges right, not otherwise; Yes, this is granted by all.

Then consider, whether this be not done before, and that with an authority of Christ by those former six things; for Heretical Congregations, or persons are judged and declared in a solemn ordinance, by the Officers of Christ gathered together in his Name, to be such as have no right to any Church-ordinance, to have no communion with any of the Churches of Christ: Now if this judgement bee right, are not such persons or Congregations put out of the Kingdom of CHRIST, and put under the power of Sathan consequently?

Object. But they are not formally and juridically delivered to Satan.

Answ. What? shall we still divide, as to devour one another, for formality and juridically, when those terms are not at all in Scripture, seeing we agree in the substance of the thing, which may as really and fully prevail with conscientious men, as if formality were observed? especially, if wee consider,

Secondly, that it is a great question amongst our Brethren, whether this *traditio Satanæ* were not Apostolic, peculiar to the power of Apostles, so as ordinary Elders had it not, and if it prove so, then non-communication will prove the utmost censure the Church now hath.

But thirdly, if some brethren rise to a seventh degree, and others stay at six, which yet have such a power over conscience, that if they prevail not, the seventh is no way likely to prevail: Why should not the Apostles rule quiet us all, Phil. 3:15, 16. whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, if in any thing you be otherwise minded, God will reveal even this unto you; if wee have attained but to six, and our brethren have attained to seven, let us walk together lovingly to the six; if God shall after reveal the seventh (we will promise to pray and study in the mean time) we shall walk with them in that also: why must it needs be now urged with violence, so as to divide else? and although we hold not the seventh, yet there is an ingredient in the sixth, that hath in it the strength of the seventh? For wherein lies the strength of the seventh above the rest? is it not in this? that it is the last means Christ hath appointed in his Church to work upon the heart, this consideration hath much terror in it; Now those in the Congregational way, say, that this is fully in the sixth, wherefore that is as terrible to their consciences as the seventh can be, to the consciences of our brethren, and that upon the same ground.

And consider now, my Brethren, whether the Congregational way be such, as if it be suffered, there will be no help to reduce an erring or heretical Church, but all Religions, Arrianisme, Muhammadism, any thing must be suffered. Surely men do not deal fairly, in raising such mighty accusations upon such poor and weak grounds; this great aspersion and huge out-cry, that these men would have all religions suffered, and in their way, there is no help against any Heretical Congregations, moulders and vanishes away before you.

Let no man yet say, All this that hath been said is nothing.

If you be conscientious who hear them say so, your own breasts must needs suggest an Answer; surely these things would bee very much to me, to prevail with my conscience.

But what if Congregations refuse to give account of their ways? what if they will not shew so much conscientiousness, as to regard admonitions, declaring against them, withdrawing communion from them?

Answ. So we may say, what if they will not regard your delivering them up

to Satan, but will go on still?

You will say then, you will complain to the Magistrate, his power must come in to assist, to make them regard what the Church doth.

Answ. But now you have no further help from any intrinsical power the Church hath; and as for subjection to the Magistrate, there we are upon equal ground, if he will interpose, he may assist and second the sentence of judging men subverters of faith, of withdrawing communion from them in the one, as well as the sentence of giving men up to Satan in the other; and wee must still bee subject here to suffer what is inflicted, if wee cannot do what is required; only we do not go so far as some do, in this one thing, whereas they lay a Law upon the consciences of Magistrates, that they are bound to assist with their power the Decrees of the Church, taking cognisance only of the fact of the Church, that they have thus decreed, not enquiring into the nature of the things, wee dare not lay any such bond upon the Magistrates conscience.

But say, that he is to assist the Church both upon the knowledge of what the Church hath done, and the knowledge of the nature of the thing, seeing every private man hath this power, to be judge of his own act, it were a great misery upon those who have power over men, to be denied this power.

If it shall be said, But surely they do not agree so far, they do not come up to these six things mentioned. To that I answer, I do not in these deliver only mine own judgment, but by what I know of the judgments of all those Brethren with whom I have occasion to converse by conference both before and since; I stand charged to make it good to be their judgements also; yea, it hath been both theirs and mine for divers years, even then when we never thought to have enjoyed our own Land again; and if it be so, then let the Lord bee judge between us and our Brethren, for those loud and grievous outcries there hath been against us in this thing.

But if the difference be so little, why do they not come in?

We come as far as we have light to guide us, we dare not step one step in

the dark; if we do , we shall certainly fall into sin; whatsoever else wee fall into, what ever the thing be to others, it would be our sin, if there were no other reason, but because we venture in the dark. We sail up to our Brethren as far as we can see the Line of Truth, and beyond it we dare not venture in the least.

The controversy is not about little or great trouble, or inconvenience; if it were, such a charge might well make us blush, the inconvenience or trouble is little, yet a few men will not yield to their Brethren, who are many, for peace sake; but the controversy is about sin; now whether that be little or great, the difference cannot but remain, if one part shall urge upon another that which to them is sin, as to acknowledge any one thing to be a power of Christ, which he cannot see Christ hath owned in his word, must needs be; therefore the way to peace, is not the necessity of coming up one to another, because the thing is little, but the loving, and peaceable, and brotherly carriage of one towards another, because the difference is but small.

## CHAP. VIII

**The third dividing Principle is, That nothing which is conceived to be evil, is to be suffered.**

This is the other extreme; some think all things should be suffered, and they are loose and cause divisions on the one hand; others think nothing is to be suffered, and these are rigid, and cause divisions on the other hand; If any thing be conceived evil, either in opinion or practise, if



instructions and persuasions cannot reform, there must be means used to compel; This is a harsh and a sour Principle, a disturbing Principle to Churches and States, to mankind. This Principle seldom prevails with any but those who have got power into their hands, or hope to get it. This must needs be a dividing Principle,

First, because of the infinite variety of mens apprehensions about what is good or evil, scarce three men agree any long time in their apprehensions of some things to be evil; if then nothing that is conceived to be evil must be suffered, there must needs be continual opposition between man and man.

This subjects the generality of men to suffer for many things which they can see no evil in, but are persuaded is good; this raises an animosity against those by whom they suffer; though a man can subject his body and estate to another, he cannot subject his reason to another: In the common ways of justice men are punished for those things, which if they be guilty of, they cannot but acknowledge themselves to be worthy of punishment, as in Theft, Murder, Drunkenness, &c. And for the fact they are tried in such a way, as they cannot but acknowledge is fit in reason to be subjected to; and therefore, though they suffer much, yet they will yield to it without disturbance.

But if this principle prevails, every man almost is made liable to punishment for thousands of things that he can see no reason why he should be punished: It is very hard to bring mens spirits to yield in such things.

But you will say, May not men be punished for things that they see no reason why they should be punished? for many Malefactors may easily escape thus; guilt will quickly blind men, they will see no reason why they should be punished.

Answ. It is not what men say they see no reason for, or what it may be they indeed see no reason for; but what men cannot see reason for, though they should bend their understandings and strength to the uttermost; yea, what the generality of mankind, and of that community of which a man is, cannot possibly see reason for, it is impossible for the

generality of mankind, and the community of any Church or State, though they should be never so diligent to find out what is good, and what is evil; yet to be able to understand every thing that is evil, to be so.

If you will have laws made against all things, that such as are in authority conceive to be evil, then you must give them power to judge, not only by the rules of common justice and equity, and punish for the breach of them, but by the apprehensions that their own raised parts shall suggest unto them, and to punish men for not being raised to that height of understanding themselves have; but this power is more then is fit to be given to any men upon earth. This would bring tyranny both into State and Church.

For first, from whence is the rise of all Civil Power that any man,\* or society of men, are invested with? is it not from the generality of the men, over whom they have power? Is it not the power which they themselves had, and which they might have kept amongst themselves? For who can say, that a Democracy is a sinful Government in it self? True; God establishes it upon particular men by his Ordinance, after it is given to them by the people; but the first rise is from them; and if so, then they should make no Law to bring those men under punishment, who gave them their power, but such a Law as these men may possibly come to understand, to be equal and just, for they act their power; and it must be supposed, that they never intended to give a power beyond this. Those who give power, may limit power; they may give part to one, part to another; they may limit the matter about which the power shall be exercised, it shall go so far, and no further; the utmost limits cannot go beyond these rules of justice which they are capable to understand. Hence it is, that all men in our Law, are tried *Per pares*, by their Peers, because it is to be supposed, that they are to be accounted offenders, and to be punished; only so as those who are equal with themselves shall judge them worthy; and this likewise is the reason that Courts are in public, no man is to be shut out, because all men that will may behold the trial, and justify the proceedings of Justice against offenders: It must needs be supposed then, that the rules by which the Judges go, must be the rules of common equity and justice, that all men may understand; beyond what these rules will reach to, the Civil State is not to punish, not every thing

that men of deep judgements, and strong parts, may apprehend to be evil.

The power of the Church likewise extends not to the punishment of every thing, that either may by the Governors of it, be conceived to be evil, or that is indeed evil. As the rise of the Civil power shows, that only such things are to be punished by it, as are against the common rules of Justice and Equity; so the rise of Church power will shew, that only such things as are against common rules, such things as some way or other appear to be against conviction, and are obstinately persisted in, are by Church censure to be punished.

The rise of Church power is indeed different from the rise of the Civil, yet agrees in this, that it limits the Church, as the rise of the Civil doth the Civil power. The power of Governors in the State arises from the people, and they act their power that the Common-wealth gives to them: But the Governors of the Church, have not their power from the Members of the Church, but from Christ; neither do they act in the name of the Church, but in the Name of Christ. It is true, the Members of the Church do design such men to such an Office, but being designed, now they are invested with the Power of Jesus Christ, they exercise his power, and do act in his Name, not in the name of the Church.

You will say, seeing the Church chooses their Officers as well as the Common-wealth theirs: How doth it appear, that the Officers of the Church, do not exercise the power of the Church, as well as the Officers of the Common-wealth, the power of the Common-wealth?

Answ. These two things shew the difference clearly.

First, The Officers of the Common-wealth can do nothing by their power, but that which the Common-wealth may do without them, if they were not; they might have kept their Government in a Democracy, and if they had pleased, done any act of power by a major vote: But it is not so in the Church; if the Church be without Officers, they cannot do that which belongs to Officers to do, they can have no Sacraments amongst them, neither can they have any Spiritual jurisdiction exercised amongst them; only brotherly admonition, and with-drawing from such as walk

disorderly, for their own preservation.

Secondly, the Members of the Church cannot limit the power of their Officers, so as the Commonwealth may the power of theirs; but if once a man be chosen to be an Officer in the Church, all that power that ever any in that office had since Christ's time, in any Church in all the Christian world, or ever can have to the coming of Christ again, falls upon him: If a man be chosen a Pastor, he hath as full power as ever any Pastor had upon the face of the earth, or can have by any Pastoral power: The Church cannot limit him, and say, You shall be a Pastor for such ends and purposes, but no further: The same may be said of the ruling, none upon earth ever had, or can have more power of ruling, then this man who is chosen into that office. It is not thus in the State, all Kings have not the like power, in some countries Kingly power reacheth so far, in others further, according to the variety of the Laws of the countries, the agreements between them and the people: all Dukes, all States, all Parliaments have not the same power.

Now then, the rise of the power of Church-governors rising from Jesus Christ, and they doing what they do in the Name of Christ, therefore they cannot punish any evil beyond what Christ would have punished.

You will say, What evils would Christ have punished, and what not?

Answ. Christ would have no evil punished that is repented of; if it be a known evil, then it must be repented of particularly; if it be a sin of ignorance, Christ forgives it upon a general repentance, although a man should never be convinced of it all his days; Yet, says Christ, I discharge him of all these, supposing the rise of his ignorance be not some willful neglect: But if it be a sin committed through wilfulness, or continued in obstinately; then, says Christ, I will have this man smart for such an offence; now comes in the power of the Church-officers, to do in the Name of Christ what he would have done: But if they go further, then they exercise a tyrannical power, if they will punish every thing which they conceive to be evil, whether committed through ignorance and weakness, or wilfulness and obstinacy, in this they take upon them a higher power of punishing then Christ (according to the tenor of the Gospel) exercises. For my part, says Christ, I go but thus far with my

power; If I see any of my Church sin through weakness and ignorance, labouring to understand and do my will, and mourning that they know no more, they do no better, I will passe by all; but if any shall appear willful and obstinate, I will deal severely with such a one.

If you say, If men have means of knowledge and strength, and yet continue ignorant and weak, should not such be dealt with as willful and obstinate?

Answ. No, says Christ, I do not go by any such rule, for I have revealed my will in my Word, I labour by my Spirit and Ministers to convince men, yet I see after all means I use, there are many, who merely through their weakness are not convinced, I pity them, I deal gently with them, I pardon them. Those then who will go further, they will punish for every evil; and if they use means to convince them, and they bee not convinced, they will judge them obstinate, and proceed against them accordingly; these challenge and exercise not the power of Christ, but Antichrist. If Christ should deal so with them, as they deal with their Brethren, it would go ill with them: if Christ should say, whatsoever I see evil in you, I will not suffer it in you; if you are ignorant notwithstanding means of light, I will deal with you as willful and obstinate, and never leave inflicting punishment upon you, till you be convinced, and do reform; could any of you stand before Christ dealing thus with you? Take heed of exercising that power over your Brethren, (and that in Christ's name) that you would not have Christ exercise over you.

Both the Civil State and Church must take us as we are fallen from that integrity of our first creation, not as we came first out of God's hands: God the Creator may (indeed) punish us for not knowing or doing what is our duty to know or do , because he once made us perfect; but Man must not do so, Man must deal with his fellow-creatures as men imperfect; one man cannot require of another that perfection not only of heart, but of external conversation, that God may, yea God-man our Mediator looks upon us in a state of imperfection, and deals with us accordingly, and thus he would have all do who have to deal with his people in his name.

But you said before, All things must not be suffered; now you say, Some things must be suffered: Tell us then, what must not, and what must.

I am persuaded most of you yield to the falseness of both these dividing principles; you verily believe all things must not be suffered, and yet you think it were too harsh to affirm that nothing is to be suffered; only here lies the difficulty, what must, and what must not be suffered. This hath been the unhappiness of pleading for toleration of any thing, yea of the very mention of it, that men presently cry out, and say we would have every thing tolerated.

I confess it is very hard to cut here right in the joint; were I sure that none would blame or oppose what I shall deliver in this; but those who are willing to interesse themselves in such a knotty business as this is, and to be helpful to us in the understanding how to untie such a knot, what ever such opposers should prove otherwise, I should not fear them for being too numerous.

What I have, I shall present unto you.

## **CHAP. IX**

### **Rules to know in what things we are to bear with our Brethren.**

First, though men be known to err in judgement in things not fundamental nor destructive, yet if after such knowledge of them, they would keep their judgements to themselves, so as not to hurt others, or disturb the peace; most men of moderate spirits, if not all, hold that such men are not to be punished either by Church or State: But though this be yielded to, yet the practices of many are against it, they have ways to draw

forth mens judgements, though they would conceal them, and when they have drawn them forth they make them suffer for their judgements these 3. ways.

First,\* by requiring men to subscribe to things which they suspect are against their judgements; they invent Articles, which if put to them they know will pinch them, and draw forth their judgements, which when they come to know, they make them as Articles of Accusation against them. Surely such dealings as these are very harsh.

But you will say, Blessed be God we hope we have done with forcing men to subscribe.

Answ. God grant that we never meddle with any thing answerable to that tyranny; heretofore we groaned under the drawing out mens judgements, and then the punishing them for them.

Secondly, if such things be put into oaths, which though a man should not hold in every clause, yet he may be godly, and a good subject, and urge such oaths with violence under penalty, what is this but to punish a man for his judgement, though he would keep it to himself?

Thirdly, by propounding Questions to men, when they come to the choice of, or admission to any place of preferment, to draw forth their judgements, such questions as concern not at all the qualification of men to such places, and then deny them those places, either because they are unwilling to answer, or if you will needs have them answer, they discover their judgements different from yours, is not this to make men suffer for their judgements, though they would live peaceably, keeping them to themselves? Here is not that suffering of Brethren that CHRIST would have.

Secondly, In things controversial and doubtful amongst godly and peaceable men, though there should be a declaration of difference of judgement, and some different practice, yet there is to be a forbearance of compulsory violence; we must not be to one another in such things as these are, as that Giant we read of, who laid upon a bed all he took, and those who were too long, he cut them even with his bed, and such as were

too short, he stretched them out to the length of it. Verily this is cruelty, God hath not made men all of a length nor height; mens parts, gifts, graces differ; mens tempers, apprehensions, educations are various, and if there be no suffering one another in things not clear, all the world must needs be quarrelling, there will be strengthening interests, sidings and opposing one another continually, except not only mens bodies and estates, but their very souls also be brought under sordid slavery.

Our Brethren of Scotland writing against the tyranny of Prelates, when they were under it, in that Book, entitled, English and Popish Ceremonies, have this passage: If the error of Conscience be about things unnecessary, then it is tuition pars, the surest and safest way, not to urge men to do that which in their consciences they condemn. And the Ministers of the Protestant Churches in France, giving their judgements, De pace inter Euangelieos procuranda, How Peace amongst the Protestants in Germany may be had, set forth by Duræns, say thus: () Let all matters controversial be brought into such a certain model, as may give satisfaction to both parties; and that if it be possible, framed out of the very words of Scripture: and let no man require any thing else of his brother, Zanch. in præcep. 4. hath this notable speech: () That which I say, (says he) is diligently to be observed, that those who would stir up Princes to have all people, Kingdoms, Common-wealths, which (not overthrowing the Fundamentals of Religion, differ from them in any thing) condemned of heresy, excluded from friendship, driven out of their territories, these are no friends, says he, either to their Princes, or to the Church of Christ.

Many think they do great service to Christ, the Church and State, if they can stir up Magistrates to suppress whatsoever they conceive are errors; it may be their hearts are upright in the main, they aim at peace, but certainly they cause much disturbance in Church and State.

Bishop Davenant in a little Book, entitled, His Exhortation to brotherly love amongst Churches, the ninth Chapter, hath this title,\* that Brotherly communion between Churches Evangelical is not to be cut asunder because of divers opinions about Questions controversial. And in the beginning of the 10. Chapter, This is to be premised, The bonds of the brotherly communion of Christian Churches ought not to be dissolved



upon every difference of opinions, but only for the denying or opposing Fundamentals. Here see the moderation of a Prelate.

Thus Cyprian of old delivered his opinion,\* and practiced accordingly, differing from many of his brethren, but withal professeth, That he meant not to prescribe or give Laws to any; that he would not contend with any of his Colleagues, so as to break divine concord, and the peace of our Lord; that he was far from judging or censuring any of his Brethren, or cutting off from his communion any that were of a different mind; and that in such case none ought to constrain his Colleague by tyrannical violence, (therein glancing at the violent proceeding of Stephen to whom he wrote) to a necessity of believing or following what he thinks meet. This modesty and charity of Cyprian is very often and very deservedly commended by S. Augustine,\* says D. Potter, an Episcopal man.

That this may go down the better, or at least that mens spirits may be in some measure moderated, take these following Considerations.

First, this contending about every difference of opinion, and urging our Brethren with what we conceive right, in matters of controversy, crosseth the end of Christ in his Administration of differing gifts to his Church, and humane Society, and his revealing truths in a different way, some more darkly, some more clearly; Christ could easily have given such gifts to all, or revealed all truths so clearly, that every man should have been able to have seen every truth. Surely Christ did not disperse gifts, and reveal truths so differently, to that end, that there might bee continual matter of strife and contention in his Church, and in humane societies; not that there should be provocation to the exercise of cruelty one upon another, but rather that there might be the exercise of love, charity, forbearance, meekness, long-suffering of one towards another; Christ bids us, charges us to be at peace amongst ourselves. If we should say, O Lord Jesus, wouldst thou have us bee at peace one with another? there are many things in thy Word, that we and our Brethren have different apprehensions of; for though (blessed be thy Name) the great necessary things of salvation be clearly revealed, yet many other things are so dark to us, that through our weakness we cannot all of us see the same thing. Now is it thy mind , O blessed Saviour, that one man, who conceives himself to understand the truth (and that it may be rightly) compel

another to his judgement? And dost thou also require, that we must not bring our judgements to our Brethrens till thy light brings them? How then is it possible we should be at peace one with another?

Doe not all Divines say, There are some things in Scripture wherein the Elephant may swim, some things where the Lamb may wade? matters of Discipline are acknowledged by all, not to bee revealed with such clearness, but that truly conscientious, upright, diligent men may not be able in many things to see the mind of CHRIST in them. And to what end hath Christ done this think you?

Secondly, Compulsion in such things as we are speaking of, is to strain Justice so high, as to make it summa justitia, which is the degeneration of it: As Physicians say of the uttermost of degree of health, it is a beginning of sickness: If Justice bee wound up a peg too high, it breaks: Though Justice were to be managed by the most holy, wise, self-denying, and meek men upon the earth, yet there would be much danger in winding it up to the highest; for it is administered by men full of infirmities, to men full of infirmities; therefore God will not have it strained too high, he will rather have charity to be above justice, then justice to be above charity. This I have out of Luther, though he was a man of a fiery spirit, he could tell how to contend where there was cause; yet in an Epistle that he writes to the Divines of Nuremberg,\* upon occasion of dissensions risen amongst them, he hath this passage, Judgement must serve, not rule over charity; otherwise it is one of those four things that Solomon says troubles the earth; namely, a servant ruling, or the Maid heir to her Mistress; if therefore you would have peace, says he, charity must rule over justice, you must not suffer justice to rule over charity.

Thirdly, if men go upon this principle, they will be in danger of opposing truth as well as falsehood, and compelling to falsehood as well as to truth; for in matters doubtful and controversial amongst good and peaceable men, it is not easy to have any such grounded confidence, as to bee out of all danger of mistake; there is more confidence needful in a thing that we impose upon others, then in what we practise ourselves; if a thing be to us rather true then otherwise, we may lawfully do it; but this is not enough to be a ground for the imposing it upon others, who cannot see it to be a truth; in such a case we had need be very sure. The weak drizzling of our

probabilities, guesses, and opinions, are not enough to cause the stream of another mans conscience to stop, yea to turn its course another way; especially considering that in such things we have oftentimes misgiving thoughts ourselves; yea, and not long since we were confident, that what we now condemn was true; and what we now are ready to enjoin others, we then did as confidently condemn. There must be great care taken, that when we seek to pluck up tares, we pluck not up the wheat also; this may be understood of things, of truths and falsehoods, as well as of persons; we may be mistaken in the one, as well as in the other. Pluck not up the tares. Christ does not forbid casting out any wicked men from the Church; but as Hierome hath it, in those countries tares were very like the wheat; therefore take heed, says Christ, what you do in plucking up; when you have to deal with men whose condition is any way doubtful, be sure they be Hypocrites, or else meddle not with them, do not pluck them up upon every surmise, because you think they are not right, for then you may pluck up a wheat as well as a tare, he may prove to bee a godly man; therefore you had better let tares grow; if you do but think that such men are not right, you were better let them continue in the Church, then by venturing upon them, to be in danger to pluck up the wheat.

Thus in respect of things good or evil, there are some things apparently evil, they are rather thistles and briars, then tares; we may freely pluck up them; but other things, though perhaps they may prove evil, yet they have some likeness to good, so as you can hardly discern whether they be good or evil; Now, faith Christ, take heed what you do then, do not out of eagerness to oppose all evil, to get out every tare, pluck out some wheat too; what if that you oppose with violence as evil, prove to be good? you had better let forty tares stand, then pluck up one wheat.

Fourthly, If men take this power upon them, to compel men to do whatsoever they conceive good, and to deny or forbear whatsoever they conceive evil, they take more power upon them then ever the Apostles took. The Government of the Saints under the Apostles, was a great deal more mild, sweet, gentle then this. The rule the Apostles went by, Phil. 3:15. was, Let therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you; nevertheless whereunto wee have already attained, let us walk. If any

should be otherwise minded then I or the other Apostles, God will reveal it in due time, we will not force him, only let us walk up to what we have attained.\* This rule, Zanchy, faith Augustine, would repeat a thousand times; and Chrysostom hath a good note upon this place, he does not say, God will bring them to it, if they be otherwise minded, but God will reveal it, noting the love and goodness of God to those who are otherwise minded, excusing them that it was not through wickedness, but for want of knowledge that they did otherwise, Acts 15. where the Apostles and Elders were met together, the furthest they would take upon themselves, was to lay no other burden but those necessary things. The false teachers put a yoke upon them, which was such a burden, that neither they nor their fore-fathers could bear, ver. 10. yet it was no juridical authority that these had over them; surely the yoke they put upon them, in the judgements of all was but doctrinal: But for us, say the Apostles, we finding what the mind of the Holy Ghost is, dare not yoke you as they did; all that we burden you with, is these necessary things, no Church-officers, no Synod can go further then this, but certainly every matter in controversy amongst godly and peaceable men cannot be conceived to be necessary.

Rom. 14. is a very useful place for this, Him that is weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtful disputations; Receive him, though he understands not all you do ; do not trouble him, neither with nor for doubtful things; One believes he may eat all things, another who is weak eateth herbs; let not him that eateth; despise him that eateth not; neither let him that eateth not, judge him that eateth, ver. 5. One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike; let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind . Upon this he gives general rules, to do all to the glory of God; all these people were not in the right, for a man not to eat flesh out of conscience, when the thing was not forbidden, certainly was a sin; or to make conscience of a holy day, which God required not, was a sin: Now the Apostle did not come with his authority, and say, I will make you leave off keeping such days, or you shall eat, or to abstain thus as you do , is evil, and it must not be suffered in you. No, the Apostle lays no Apostolic authority upon them, but tells them, That every man must be fully persuaded in his own mind, in what he does; and who art thou that judgest another mans servant? the Lord hath received

him. And yet the Governors of the Churches in the Primitive times might upon much stronger grounds have stood upon such a principle, then any Governors of the Church now can; there was less reason why they should suffer any difference in opinion or practice amongst them, then why we should suffer differences amongst us; for they had men amongst them immediately inspired, who could dictate the mind of Christ infallibly; they could tell them the certain meaning of any Scripture. The burden of being under the determinations of such men in points of differences, had not been so great as subjection to any Governors now in such cases would be; Our differences are usually about the meaning of such or such Scriptures, in which both sides think they have the right; and profess one to another, as in the presence of God, the searcher of all hearts, that if they could but see the meaning of such a Scripture to be so as their brethren believe it is, they would soon agree: and yet though there were in these Primitive times such means of reconciling differences more then we have, yet there was much mutual toleration amongst them; they used no compulsive violence to force those who through weakness differed from them, to come up to their judgements or practice. Yea, It is also more tolerable in Papists not to tolerate any difference in opinion or practice, because First they believe they have an infallible Judge to decide all Controversies. Secondly, they hold Implicit faith in the judgement of their Clergy, to be sufficient warrant to justify the belief or practice of the people, or of any particular man, and yet they suffer differences in opinions and practices amongst them; They have their several Orders of their Monks, Priests, Friars, Jesuits; they differ very much one from the other, and yet agreeing in the root, they are suffered, supposing those two helps to union; they have an infallible Judge, and implicit faith; We have cause either to admire at their moderation in their mutual bearing one with another, or at the disquieting, the rigidness of spirits amongst us, who cannot bear with far lesser things in their Brethren differing from them; for we profess we know no such external infallible Judge, upon whom we may depend; neither dare we warrant an implicit faith. We teach men, that every man must be persuaded in his own heart; must see the rule of his own actions; must give an account of his own way to God: now what can men that have the most gracious and peaceable spirits you can imagine, do in such a case? Before they believe or do what their Brethren believe or do, they must see the authority of the Word to ground

their faith or actions; and for the present, though sincerely willing to know God's mind, and diligently laborious to search it out, yet they cannot see it: and yet according to this sow, rigid principle, they must be forced to it by violence, what is it but to command the full tale of brick to be brought in, where no straw can be had, if this be not? Straw might be had in Egypt by seeking for it; but here, after the most careful and painful seeking for it, yet it cannot be had.

Fifthly, By this principle, the finding out of much truth will be hindered; it will stifle mens gifts and abilities in arguing and discoursing about truths. We know fire is beaten out by striking the flint. Although differences be very sad, yet the truth that comes to light by them, may recompense the sadness. You cannot beat out a place for a window to let in light, but you must endure some trouble; Children will think the house is pulling down, when the window is beating out; but the Father knows the benefit will come by it: he complains not that the dust and rubbish lies up and down in the house for a while; the light let in by it will recompense all. The trouble in the discussions of things by Brethren of different judgements may seem to be great, but either you or your posterity hereafter may see cause to bless God for that light hath been or may be let in to the Churches by this means; men of moderate spirits do bless God already. But if according to this principle, the Governors of the Churches must suppress whatsoever they conceive not to be right, to what purpose should there be arguing and discussing of several judgements and several ways?

You will say, Those who are the Governors, they, or those whom they call to consult with, may argue and discuss, but not others.

Answ. Is not this to deny the Church the benefit of the gifts and graces of thousands of others? The Church may soon receive as much prejudice by this, as the trouble caused by some differences comes to.

Sixthly, This lays a great temptation to idleness and pride before the guides of the Church: Men are naturally subject to sloth, and may not this principle suggest such a temptation as this, What need we take care or pains to search into truths, to be able to convince gain-sayers, to carry things with strength of Scripture and Reason, seeing we have power to

compel men to yield to us? And men who can do least by Reason and Scripture, are many times strongest in their violence this way; this strength must come in to make up their other weakness. But it may be Conscience will not let them compel men presently; it will tell them they must seek first to convince men: but because the seeking to satisfy other mens consciences in things differing from us, is a troublesome work, the temptation that this principle presents may at least prevail thus far, that seeing besides means of conviction by arguing they have another help at hand to keep down error, namely, compulsory violence, making men who differ from them, to suffer for those things, therefore not to trouble themselves very much in the way of seeking to convince, but for their own ease to rid their hands of such a burdensome work, to cast the trouble, and lay heavy burdens upon their brethren, this is easy for them to do , though hard for their brethren to suffer; But the Tables may turn one day, wherein the sufferers shall have the greatest ease, and the inflictors the sorest burden. But God forbid that their brethren should lay it upon them, though it were put into their power to do it.

The temptation to pride is not less, neither are mens hearts less prone to this. If it prevails, what domineering is there like to be of one over another, yea of some few over many? If they judge in things never so doubtful, all must yield, at least for their profession and practice. This is a great power to be given to men over men in matters of faith and godliness. This is Lording it over God's inheritance. It is observable, when the Church was in the lowest condition, this power was highest; the power of making Canons in doubtful things to bind under penalties: And when this power was lowest, as in the Primitive times, then the Church was highest

Seventhly, This will be a means to bring gross ignorance upon the face of the Churches and of the world: For, first, if men shall not be suffered to profess or practice otherwise then Governors in Church or State shall determine, they will not take pains to find out the truth themselves, but rather take things implicitly, which is the easiest way; they will think it to little purpose to take pains in examining things, when after all is done they must be bound up at least in their profession and practice, to what either is or shall be determined by those who have power of rule in their

hands.

Our late Prelates design was to bring in ignorance, that they might with the more freedom rule over us as they pleased; and in nothing did they drive on this design more, then in the practice of this power, which they took to themselves to command things doubtful and controversial, and by violence to urge their commands upon people: by which, had their power continued, gross ignorance would soon have been spread over the face of the Land. From whence hath come the gross ignorance of Popery, but from the prevailing of this principle? By which the people have been brought in such subjection under their guides, that they have loft their understandings in the matters of Religion.

If it be said, But we will take care that those men who shall be consulted withal, and those who shall have power in their hands to determine, shall be wise, understanding, godly men, and then the danger will not be so great.

Answ. Suppose those men who for the present have such power, have attained to the highest measure of knowledge and godliness that can be imagined to be in any men upon the earth, yet the people are under this temptation, to neglect the getting of knowledge themselves; and it may be the rather, because those who are appointed to determine things, are so understanding and so conscientious; now these people growing ignorant, when these knowing and godly men who are now in place, shall be gone, who shall choose other in their places? I suppose it to be the opinion of most of you, and of the godly in the Kingdom, and in all Reformed Churches, that either the body of the Church, the people must choose their Officers; or at least, that none must be put upon them without their consent. Well then, if the people through the prevailing of the former temptations grow ignorant; Is it not like they will choose such guiders and leaders as themselves are? or if they shall not choose, yet their negative voice will have such an influence into the choice, as it is very probable, that in a generation or two, blind guides will be brought in, and so the blind leading the blind. And when by this, ignorance hath prevailed and gotten head in the Church, there is almost an impossibility ever to get it out again; this brings men into the dark, and locks and bolts the doors upon them.



Hence men by pleading for this principle, may bring themselves and their posterity into greater bondage then they are aware; for although now while they have the power in their own hands, it may be well with them; yet hereafter others may have the power, and then it may prove ill enough; they may then complain of what now they plead for; though now the guides of the Church may be good and holy, yet they may live to see such a change, or at least their posterity, that such a principle acted by such men as they may be under, may wring them; yea, it is the more strange, that men should plead so much for this now, when as the soars of their necks, caused by the bondage under it a while since, are scarce yet healed.

Eighthly, there is yet a further danger in this, not only that men will neglect truth, but there will be a strong temptation to resist and reject truth; if God begins to dart in any light into a mans spirit, that appears to cross what hath been determined of for opinion or practise under a penalty; the corruption of a mans heart will entice him to turn his mind from that light, not to let it into conscience or heart, lest it prevailing, should put him upon such ways, wherein he is like to suffer. This hath been common in former times; many have hid their eyes from those truths that would have kept them from conformity, because they fore-saw what sad consequences would follow, if their consciences should not suffer them to conform.

But you will, This supposes that some things will be urged that is contrary to truth, which is uncharitable to suppose.

Answ. Although in matters fundamental, there is no fear that godly able men will err, yet let charity be stretched to the full latitude of it, and reverence of men in place raised to the uttermost height; yet if they will meddle with such things as are doubtful and controversial amongst godly and peaceable men, and force them upon others; that confidence of theirs that shall put them out of fear of erring, shall be to me a ground of great fear, that they will err.

But some will acknowledge, that some liberty should bee granted in things thus doubtful and controversial, to men who are indeed

conscientious, godly and peaceable men; but if this be yielded to, then men who are not conscientious, but of turbulent and corrupt spirits, will abuse it.

Answ. We have given rules to find out those who only pretend conscience, and if by those, or the like, it does not appear, but that men are indeed conscientious in their way, we should judge charitably of them; you think much if those be not admitted to communion with Christ and his Saints, when they profess godliness in word and life, and nothing appears to the contrary; why then should you think much to tolerate those as conscientious, who profess it in words and life, and nothing appears to the contrary?

Bishop Davenant in that exhortation to peace before quoted,\* as one means for peace, gives his opinion thus, Because it belongs only to God to teach the hearts of men, it is our duty always to make the best interpretation of things, and to presume of every one where the contrary appears not by manifest signs, that he is kept from assenting by his conscience rather than by obstinacy.

As for the peaceableness of mens dispositions, let it be judged from their carriages in other things of as great moment, wherein the temptation for the attaining their own ends is as great, yea far greater then here: Doe they not carry themselves in as peaceable, gentle, self-denying way as any? Mr. Parker upon the Crosse, cap. 5. sect. 14. pleads for himself and others who could not yield in some things enjoined them, when they were accused of pride, contempt, unpeaceableness, What signs, says he, do men see in us of pride, contempt, unpeaceableness? What be our cætera opera, that betray such a humour? Let it be named wherein we go not two mile, where we are commanded to go but one; yea, whether we go not as many miles as any shoe of the preparation of the Gospel of peace will carry us: What payment, what pain, what labour, what taxation made us ever to murmur? Survey our charges where wee have laboured, if they be not found to be of the faithful subjects that be in the land. Wee deserve no favour; nay, there is wherein we stretch our consciences to the uttermost to conform and obey in divers matters: Are wee refractory in other things? As Balaam's Ass said to his Master, Have I used to serve thee so at other times?

And whereas it is said, that some will abuse such liberty as this: It is answered, Surely those who are peaceable and conscientious, must not be deprived of what sufferance CHRIST allows them, because others who are in the same way, are, or may prove turbulent, and do or may not appear truly conscientious. This is as far beneath the rule of Justice, as no sufferance in any thing conceived erroneous, is above it.

Thirdly, whatsoever errors or miscarriages in Religion the Church should bear withal in men, continuing them still in communion with them as Brethren, these the Magistrate should bear with in men, continuing them in the Kingdom or Common-wealth, in the enjoyment of the liberty of Subjects: Grant what possible can be granted to the Magistrate in the extent of his power about Religion, to be Custos utriusq; tabulæ; yet certainly no man can imagine, that this his charge reaches further then the charge of the Church: That he is to be more exact in his over-sight of these things, then the Church is to be; for what ever the power of the Magistrate be in these things, yet to the Church especially are the Oracles, the Ordinances, the Truths of God committed. The charge of the spiritual estate of men especially belongs to the Church: Now the Church is to bear with men in their infirmities, though they be ignorant of many things, yea after means used for information. No Church must cast off any from communion with it, but for such things that all the Churches of Christ ought to cast them off for.\* This is generally held by our Brethren, if a man be rightly cast out of communion with one Church, he is thereby cast out of all; if this be so, then surely many things must be suffered before we proceed to cast out a member, it must not be for every error or miscarriage. Thus Bishop Davenant in his rules for peace, Those may not be cut off from communion with particular Churches who remain joined to the Catholic Church.

Yea,\* none is to be cast out of communion, but for that which if whole Churches were guilty of, we must refuse communion with; yea, with all the Churches in the world, if they could be supposed to be so far left of Christ, as to be guilty of the same thing; If this be so, when a Church is about casting any out of communion, it need be wary, and not presently fall upon him, because there is something evil in him; and if the Church should be so, the civil Magistrate much more, whose care of a mans

spiritual estate is not so immediate and full as the Churches is.

From what hath been said these two consequences are clear: First, Articles or rules for doctrine or practise in matters of Religion to be imposed upon men, should be as few as may be; there is very great danger in the unnecessary multiplying them: This in all ages hath caused divisions, and exceeding disturbances in the Churches of Christ.

I find an excellent passage in an Epistle of Isaac Causabon to Cardinal Perron, which he wrote in the name of King James by his command, (c) The King (saith he) thinks that the things that are absolutely necessary to salvation are not many, therefore His Majesty is of that mind that there is no shorter way for peace, c then first by severing necessary things from things that are not necessary, and then to labour a full agreement in those; but as for things not necessary, let them (says he) be left to Christian liberty. And again, These necessary things are few, and the King thinks this distinction to be of so great moment to lessen the controversies which this day do so exceedingly trouble the Church, that all who study peace, should most diligently explicate, teach, and urge this.

God hath so graciously ordered things for the body,\* that things necessary for life are not many, nor costly; the greatest stir in the world is about things not necessary. So for the soul.

A second consequence from what hath been said, is, wee see hence who is most for Peace; one professeth what he is convinced of to be a truth and a duty, if it be not necessary he is not to force it upon his brethren, though he had never so much power in the Church or State to back him. The other holds this principle, That whatsoever he thinks to be a duty, he must force it upon his brethren, not only by the power of the Church, but he must call in the power of the Magistrate to back him in it.

Object. But do not men in a Congregational way urge upon others their own conceptions and practices, according to the power they have, as much as any? for if men will not enter into covenant, if they hold another kind of government in the Church differing from them, they will not receive them, nor communicate with them.

Answ. I would all our controversy lay here, surely we should soon agree. Whosoever doth as you say, cannot be justified in so doing; some men it may be through an earnest desire of promoting what they conceived to be the mind of Christ, have been too rigid in their dealings with their Brethren. What hath been said, will shew the evil of their practice as well as of others.

As for entering into Covenant, It is true, there is such a practice in the Congregational Churches; and a Covenant either explicit or implicit, I think all acknowledge: that is, there must be some agreement to join those together in a body, who formerly were not joined, to make them to be of such a society, to have power in it with others for the choice of Officers in this congregation, and to be under the care and charge of those Officers more then members of another congregation: what shall join them, if not at least some mutual agreement to join in one body for such spiritual ends as Christ hath appointed this body for, the very nature of a society that is embodied, carries this with it; and any farther then this I know none requires as necessary.

Indeed the more explicit this agreement is, the more is the edification. Surely there is no Christian but will acknowledge that the more one Christian opens his heart to another, and binds himself to walk in the ways of Christ with another, the more comfortable it is, and helps to edification; and upon this ground do the Congregational Churches practice this.

Suppose any godly man shall come and desire to join with any of them, but withal tell them, that for his part he yet cannot be convinced by any thing he can find in Scripture that this way of covenanting is required; if the Church cannot satisfy such a man (being godly) in their practice, yet desire to know of him whether he be willing to join with them in all the ordinances of Christ, so far as he knows, a mere affirmative to this is a covenant sufficient to join him with them. The more fully he expresseth this to them, it would be the more acceptable. Now then why is it that there is such a noise every where in exclamations against Church Covenant, when it is nothing but this, which how any gracious heart upon due consideration can be against, I cannot see. And this is not only our present opinion, but that which ever since we knew any thing in that way,

upon all occasions, we have held forth.

But what do you say to the other, If a man who you believe is godly, yet not being convinced of your way of Government, but rather thinks the Presbyterian Government to be the way of CHRIST; would you receive such a man into communion with you?

Answ. If any godly man whose conscience is not satisfied in that way of Government, yet is so cast by Providence as he cannot join with those Churches where there is that Government he thinks to be Christ's; and because he is desirous to enjoy what ordinances of Christ he can, therefore tenders himself to one of these Congregational Churches: Such a man should be received to these Ordinances he sees to be Christ's, if there be nothing else against him, but merely because after all due means used, yet through weaknesses he cannot see Christ's mind in some other ordinance. Christ doth not lay so much upon the ordinance of Government, as to exclude his Saints all their days from all other Church ordinances, if through weakness they cannot be convinced of that.

Now let one who is in a Congregational way, and cannot see Christ's mind in the Presbyterian Government, yet come to one of those Churches, and say, he would gladly in all his ways see the mind of Christ, and enjoy all his ordinances, but he cannot see that a Minister who takes only the charge to feed by Word and Sacraments one congregation, yet should with others have the charge of ruling an hundred or more, and till he be convinced otherwise, he cannot in his practice acknowledge that Government to be Christ's, would you yet receive such a one to communion with you in all other Church ordinances? If you would, I make no question then but if we well understood one another, and were of quiet spirits, we might live together in peace.

Let not miscarriages in particular men or Churches in things of this nature, hinder our peace; what we say ought to be suffered in us, we profess to be our duty to suffer that or any thing of the like nature in others, and where there hath not been that brotherly and Christian forbearance as ought to be, there hath been sin committed against Christ: but let not this hinder brotherly and Christian agreement amongst ourselves, or any other Churches of Christ.

Fourthly, Evils that are small or uncertain, or come by accident, must rather be suffered, then any good that is great, certain, and per se, should be hindered. We must take heed that in our zeal to oppose evil, we hinder not a greater good: If opposition of evil lies so far out of your reach as you cannot come at it but by hindering much good, you must be content then to let it alone.

Lastly,\* if the evils be such as only can be removed by supernatural means, we must not use violence for the removing of them, though God hath such authority over us, as he may justly punish us for not doing that which we are unable to do , by the strength of nature: yet one man hath no such authority over another.

The power that God hath given a Magistrate, is but for a natural help at the most, and therefore it can go no farther then to help us in a natural way, to do what we are able to do by a natural power; when it hath gone so far, there it must rest. I shall refer the Learned to Zanchius upon the fourth Comment, where they may see more about this.

## CHAP. X

### **The fourth dividing Principle. Division is the best way to maintain Dominion.**

This is Machiavelli's principle, Divide & regna. When Division is got into such a Principle as hath it not only in the bowels of it, that is something to foment it by what may be drawn from it, but when the principle carries division in the very face of it, not collaterally, or by consequent avowing

it, but directly and immediately justifying it, then it grows strong indeed, who can stand before it? When this is brought down to the people, it is expressed by that Proverbial speech, It is good fishing in troubled waters. The divisions of the times are our advantages. Some mens ends are best served, when Church and State are most divided. They never had such comings in as now they have. It is true, it may be desired that men in evil things should not agree, that they may be like the Witnesses that came against Christ, who could not agree in their testimony. Paul cast a bone of dissention between the Pharisees and Sadducees.

But when men love division, and desire the continuance of it, First, to maintain that which is evil; Secondly, to aim at their own ends, not regarding what public mischiefs come, so their own private advantages may be served; not caring what house be on fire, so their eggs may be roosted, if they may have some poor, peddling, private benefit by them: Thirdly, not caring what the divisions are, whether against good, or against evil, so be it their turn may be served: This is abominable: and cursed is that man that wishes for, or rejoices in, or seeks the continuance of divisions, for these base ends. Yea that man is not worthy to breathe in so good a Land as England is, who would not willingly lay down his life to cure the present divisions and distractions that are amongst us; who would not desire with Nazianzen, as formerly Jonah, to be cast into the sea himself, so be it all might be calm in the Public? Oh cruel, hard-hearted man, who for his own private advantage, is not sensible of the woeful miseries of Church and State, yea of that dreadful dishonor to the name of God, caused this day by our sad divisions, miserable distractions! just it were that such a man should be separated to evil, and that his name should be blotted out from under heaven.

But if things were settled in Church and State, some men should not have such liberties as now they have, therefore they are willing enough to have our differences continued, their plot is to lengthen them out.

Answ. First, That which thou callest seeking to lengthen out divisions, it may be God now accounts, and will another day call seeking after the nearest union with himself, and the firmest union of his Saints.

Secondly, the liberties these men seek for, are either evil or good; If evil,



oh how dearly do they buy that which is evil, with bringing the guilt of all that evil that comes from our divisions upon themselves! you need not wish any enemy more evil upon his head then this; certainly such a man hath load enough upon him.

But if those liberties they seek be good, or but supposed by them to be so, why then should they fear a right settling of things? what ever is good, can be no enemy unto good. That Scripture, Rom. 13:3. is enough to keep their hearts from fearing the right ordered power of authority, especially from fearing it so far, as by the fear of it, to be driven into such a desperate guilt of wickedness as this is, to desire or endeavour the continuance of such public mischief for their own ends. Rulers, saith the Text, are not a terror to good works, but to evil; wilt thou then not be afraid of their power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. Surely then the power was as formidable to any thing, a Christian heart could suppose good, as now any power is like to be that we have to deal with.

Thirdly, it is a sign of a very poor, low, unworthy spirit, to think that any in whom thou hast any persuasion there is any fear of God or interest in Christ, should have no higher thoughts for their support and encouragement in what they conceive good according to the mind of Christ, but such as the hopes or desires of continuance of such woeful evils in the divisions of Church and State raiseth in them, if they did believe that Christ took no more care of them then so, but left them to such miserable supports as these are, their condition were sad indeed.

Fourthly, if such baseness of spirit as this is, were ruling in them, which hath in it the malignity of all the dregs of an evil spirit, surely you would find it working in them in some other thing, save only in that wherein they differ from you. For certainly it is impossible but that man that is so left of God to such dregs of evil, must needs break out to some other vile evils in a little time. It were strange if such horrid wickedness of a mans heart should break out in nothing else. The Lord therefore be Judge between his servants and those men, yea those men professing godliness, who have such hard thoughts of them; and the Lord convince them of all their hard speeches, and hard writings in this thing.

## CHAP. XI

### **The fifth dividing Principle. That every man is bound to profess and practice always what he apprehends to be truth.**

This hath the greater strength, because it comes under a shew of exact godliness: I do not mean an hypocritical shew, but an appearance to mens consciences.

It is very dividing: For, first, if while many things lye in mens own thoughts, they cause much strife within themselves; their reasonings are very divers: Though they have all the same tincture from the same affections, and are swayed by the same ends then when these things come abroad, before others, who have not the same reasonings, nor the same affections, to give them such a tincture, but reasonings and affections running quite another way, nor the same ends to sway them, but quite different to poyse them a cross way, there must needs be much strife, such divisions as will be hard to reconcile. If men sometimes can hardly prevail with their own thoughts to agree, notwithstanding the sway of their own affections and ends; how are they like to agree with others, whose affections and ends are so various from theirs?

Secondly, if men do presently profess and practice what they conceive to be right, they must necessarily profess and recant, recant and profess; for in many things, what they apprehend true at one time, they suspect, yea see cause to deny at another; and what confusion and disorder would there be in matters of Religion, if continually by some or other there

should be profession of things as true and good, and calling the same things presently into question, yea within a while denying and renouncing them? And if not so, then

Thirdly, if a man hath once made profession of what he conceives to be a truth, differing from others, if it proves to be a misapprehension, there lies a great temptation upon him to stand out in it, to strive to make it out to the utmost; for nothing is more contrary to a mans nature, then to acknowledge himself to be mistaken in his understanding, and to lye down in the shame of rashness and inconsiderateness in his actions; therefore whatsoever mens own thoughts be within, in their own spirits, they had need take heed what they do , when they come to make open profession, and practice what they apprehend, and engage themselves thereby to maintain; there are not many who attain to Augustine's self-denial, to publish retractions to all the world. Now if a man through the strength of this temptation, shall still retain what he hath made profession of, and others shall see his weakness, joined with willfulness; they must oppose him in it, and so contention and division is like to arise higher & higher. In regard therefore of the great usefulness of this point, and the difficulty of the right understanding it, I shall endeavour to speak to it under these three Heads:

First, to shew wherein Profession is necessary.

Secondly, wherein men may keep in, what they think they understand to be truth, so as not to profess or practice it.

Thirdly, I shall propound some rules of Direction, to shew in what manner a man should make profession of what he conceives to be truth, though it be different from his Brethren.

For the first. Certainly profession in some things is very necessary.

Rom. 10:10. With the heart man beleeveth unto riotousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Confession is here joined to Believing, as necessary to salvation. This I conceive to be the meaning of those places which hold forth the necessity of Baptism, He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved.\* Augustine in one of his Sermons De

Tempore, says, We cannot be saved, except we profess our faith outwardly for the salvation of others. And Christ, Mar. 8:38. says, Whosoever shall be ashamed of him and of his words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy Angels. And it is observable,\* that they follow upon those words, What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? As if Christ should say, If you would not lose your souls eternally, look to this, make profession of the Truth,\* as you are called to it; though you live in a wicked and an adulterous generation, yet be not ashamed of me before them; for if you be, your souls may go for it eternally.

Zwingli in his third Epistle, says, We may as well with a Diocletian worship before the Altar of Jupiter and Venus, as conceal our faith under the power of Antichrist.\*

Now though profession be necessary, yet in what cases we are bound to profess, and in what not, is no easy matter to determine.

Zuarez, a man of great judgement, yet falling upon this Question, When a man is bound to make profession of the Truth, says, We cannot give rules in particular, when there is a necessity of profession, in regard of the good of our neighbor, but it must be determined by the judgement of Prudence.

But though the determination be very difficult, yet we may assert these five cases to bind us to profession.\*

First, when the truths are necessary to salvation,\* and my forbearance in them may endanger the salvation of any, the salvation of the soul of the poorest beggar, is to be preferred before the glory, pomp, outward peace and comforts of all the Kingdoms on the earth; therefore much before my private contentments: In extreme danger of life there is no time to reason what in prudence is fit to be done, but save the mans life if you can, and reason the case afterward.

Secondly, when not profession shall be interpreted to be a denial, though

in case of a lesser truth; I must not deny the truth, the least truth interpretative, I must rather be willing to suffer, then the truth should suffer by me so far: This was Daniels case, when he would not cease his praying three times a day, neither would he shut his windows, though it endangered his life. A carnal heart would say, why might not Daniel have been wiser? he might have forborne a while, at least he might have shut his windows. No, Daniel was willing to venture his life in the cause, rather then he would so much as by way of interpretation, deny that honour that he knew was due to God.

Thirdly, when others shall be scandalized, so as to be weakened in their faith by my denial; yea, so scandalized as to be in danger to sin, because they see me not to profess; in this case wee must venture very far, wee should take heed of offending any of the Saints, so as to grieve them, but when the offence comes to weaken their faith to occasion their sin, there we should venture very far to our own outward prejudice, rather then so to offend them.

Fourthly, when an account of my faith is demanded, if it be not either in scorn to deride, or in malice to ensnare, but seriously, so as the giving it may be to edification, especially in a way of giving a public testimony to the truth, 1 Pet. 3:15. Be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you: If to every one, much more to Magistrates.

Fifthly, so far as those whom God hath committed to my charge for instruction are capable, at some time or other I must manifest that truth of God to them that may be for their good according as I am able.

Yet this duty of profession being a duty required by an affirmative precept, though we are bound always, yet not to all times, semper, but not ad semper, we must always keep such a disposition of heart, as to be in a readiness, rather to give testimony to any truth of God, if called to it by God, then to provide for our ease or any outward comfort in this world, so as we may be able to appeal to God in the sincerity of our hearts to judge of that high esteem we have of his truth. Lord if thou shalt make known to me now or any other time, that thy Name may have any glory by my profession, of any truth of thine, whatsoever becomes of my outward

peace, ease, or content, I am ready to do it for thy names sake. There is a time, says Hugo, when nothing is to be spoken, a time when something, but there is no time when all things are to be spoken.\*

There are six other cases wherein you are not bound to profess.

First, when you shall bee required in way of scorn, or to ensnare you; this were to cast pearls before swine.

Secondly, you are not bound to make profession of a truth to those who are not able to receive it, whose weakness is such as they cannot understand it till they be principled with some other truths. I have many things to say, says Christ, but ye are not able to bear them. So St. Paul, Hast thou faith? have it to thy self ; he speaks in the case of doubtful things, which will trouble weak ones.

Thirdly, when mens hearts appear so corrupt, that there is apparent danger of abuse of truths, to the strengthening them in their lusts, there are precious truths that many Ministers cannot speak of before some people without trembling hearts; and were it not that they believed they were the portion of some souls in the Congregation, they dared not mention them.

Fourthly, when your profession of some truths will take off mens hearts from other that are more weighty and necessary. The rule of the Apostle, Rom. 14:1. holds forth this; receive not those who are weak in faith to doubtful disputations; this may hinder them in the great things of the Kingdom of God, Righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost, ver. 17. as if the Apostle should say, Let them be well established in them; but these doubtful disputations will hinder them in such things as those are.

Fifty, when my profession at this time in this thing is like to hinder a more useful profession at another time in another thing. Prov. 29:11. A fool uttereth all his mind , he that is wise keeps it in till afterward. It was the wisdom of Paul when he was at Athens, not presently to break out against their Idols, he staid his due time, and yet all the time he kept in his uprightness in the hatred of Idolatry as much as ever.

Sixthly, when our profession will cause public disturbance, and that to the godly, the disturbance of mens corruptions who will oppose out of malice, is not much to be regarded. When it was told Christ the Pharisees were offended, he cared not for it, but he made a great matter of the offence of any of his little ones. When men who love the truth as well as we, shall not only be against what we conceive truth, but shall be offended, and that generally at it; if we have discharged our own consciences by declaring as we are called to it what we conceive the mind of God, we should sit down quietly, and not continue in a way of public offence and disturbance to the Saints. The rule of the Apostle will come in here, Let the spirit of the Prophets be subject to the Prophets: we should wait till God will some other way, or at some other time have that prevail in the hearts and consciences of his people which we conceive to be truth, and they now are so much offended at. There could never be peace continued in the Church, if every man must continually, upon all occasions, have liberty openly to make profession of what he apprehends to be a truth; never have done with it, though the Church, which is faithful, and desires unfeignedly to honour Christ and his truth, be never so much against it.

In divers of these cases the consideration of that Text, Eccles. 7:16. is very suitable, Be not righteous over much, neither make thy self over wise, why shouldest thou destroy thy self ? Amongst other things this is included in the scope of the Holy Ghost; when you apprehend a thing to be a truth, do not think that you are bound at all times, upon all occasions, to the utmost profess, practise, promote that truth, without any consideration of others, being carried on with this apprehension, it is a truth, come of it what will; whatsoever becomes of me, whatsoever trouble shall follow upon it, I must and will profess it, and publish it again and again, to the death: In this you had need look to your spirit, in this you may be over-just, and make your self overwise; though there may be some uprightness in your heart, some love to Christ and his truth, yet there may be mixture of your own spirit also; you may stretch beyond the rule; this is to be over-righteous, to think out of a zeal to God and his truth, to go beyond what God requires.

It is true, at no time, upon no occasion, though thy life, and all the lives in

the world lay upon it, thou must not deny any, the least truth, but there may be a time when God doth not require of thee to make profession of every thing thou beleevest to be a truth.

You will say, This tends to looseness, to lukewarmness, to time-serving; men pretending and pleading discretion, grow loose and remise, and so by degrees fall off from the truth.

Ver. 17. Let men take heed of that too; Be not over-much wicked, neither be thou foolish. As you must be careful not to go beyond the rule, so take heed you fall not off from it; so you may grow wicked and foolish, yea very wicked, over-wicked, God will meet with you there too: Wherefore Verse 18. It is good thou shouldst take hold of this, yea also from this withdraw not thine hand: Take both, be careful of thy self in both, but especially mark the last clause of the 18. ver. He that feareth God, shall come forth of them all. The fear of God possessing thy heart, will help thee in these straits; thou shalt by it, be delivered from being ensnared by thy indiscreet, sinful zeal, and it shall likewise keep thee from bringing misery upon thy self, by falling as far on the other hand, to looseness and time-serving. The fear of God will ballast thy soul even, it will carry thee on in a way that shall be good in the eyes of the Lord, and of his Saints.

There is a natural boldness, and a mixed zeal in many who are godly, that carries them on in those ways that causes great disturbance to others, and brings themselves into great straits and snares; and these men are very ready to censure others of remissness and looseness, who do not as themselves do; but this Scripture reproveth them, shewing that it is not through fleshly wisdom, and providing for ease that is the cause others do not as they do, but the fear of God in a right way ballasting their spirits; God will own his fear to be in their hearts ordering them aright, when thy disorderly, mixed zeal shall receive rebuke from Christ.

Object. But doth not Christ say, He came into the world to witness to the truth, and is not every truth more worth then our lives?

Answ. That man who in the former five cases wherein profession is shewed to be our duty, shall witness to the truth, he shows that truth is indeed precious to him, and gives that testimony to the truth, that he was



born for, although in the six latter he shall forbear.

Obj. But when these latter cases shall fall out, how shall the truth be maintained? will it not suffer much prejudice?

Answ. 1. Christ will not be beholding to mens weaknesses for the maintenance of his truth.

2. If every man according to his place to deliver his own soul, shall declare (observing the rules we shall speak to presently) what he conceives to be the mind of God, though he shall not either in words or practice continually hold forth the same, yet thereby the truth is maintained.

3. The truth is maintained, by forbearing that practice which those opinions of men that are contrary to the truth, puts them upon, not doing as they do is a continual witness against them, and so a witness for the truth, and this is a Christians duty at all times, although I must never upon any ground do that which my conscience says is in it self sin, in the least thing; yet I am not ever bound to do that which my conscience says is in it self good (as it may fall out) in some great things. A thing in it self evil can never be made my duty to do , what ever circumstances it may be clothed with, what ever good I may conceive may be done by it; but a thing in it self good, may by circumstances attending of it, be such, as at this time it is my duty to forbear it, so that in not doing it I cannot be charged of a sin of omission, of not living according to what my judgement and conscience is convinced of to be truth, and good.

That we may understand yet further our duty of profession,\* so as we may cause no divisions by it, let these five rules be considered for the ordering of it.

First, we must be well grounded in Fundamentals, before we make profession of other truths; seldom or never have you known men who in the beginning of their profession of Religion have laid out the first of their strength in Controversies, but that they have vanished and come to nothing in their profession. Be first well rooted in the faith, in the great things of godliness, the absolute necessary things of eternal life, and then

thy searching into other truths of God which are for thy farther edification, will be seasonable.

Secondly, take heed that what thou dost, be not out of affectation of novelties, which men naturally have itching desires after. It is very pleasing to the flesh, to convey such things to others, to be the first that shall bring to others, things which before they understood not, whatsoever the things be. As there is much wickedness in raising up old errors, as if they were new truths; so there is much vanity in bringing forth old truths in novel and affected phrases, as if men desired to be thought to find out some new thing that yet hath not been, or is very little known in the world, when indeed upon examination, when it is unclothed of its new expressions, it proves to be the same old truth, that ordinarily hath been known and taught, and so the man appears to be no knowing man, more then ordinary. Take heed of this vanity of spirit in the holding forth of truth, especially when in public you speak of God's truths, speak of them with reverence of the name of the great God, as the Oracles of God, clearly, plainly, not in obscure, uncouth, unknown expressions, as the Oracles of the Idols were wont to be delivered in.

Thirdly, whatsoever is differing from others who are godly, is not to be held forth and professed without serious examination: We may venture more suddenly upon those things which are generally received of the Saints; but if they be differing, then we had need examine them over and over again, with a jealous eye over our own hearts, and to take heed to our spirits, and how we behave ourselves in such things, wherein we are like to go a way so much differing from so many of our godly, able brethren. We must take heed of publishing any such things rawly, undigested, lest we wrong the truth of God, and make the profession of it become ridiculous. If the thing be true to day, it will be true to morrow.

Fourthly, We must not think it enough, boldly to affect things, but according to the rule of the Apostle, 1 Pet. 3:15. we must give an account, 1. with meekness; we must not do it in a passionate, froward way, not with our affections hurrying and tumultuous; not after a contentious manner, as if we desired victory rather then truth; but with quietness and composedness of spirit. We must not think it much to bear contradiction from others, yea though it should arise to contemptuous carriage against

us, and with fear , that is, either in respect of ourselves who make the profession, or in respect of those before whom we make it. For ourselves, we must not do it in a conceited way, not in a high, arrogant way, with foolish confidence in ourselves, in our own apprehensions and abilities, but with fear , manifesting our sensibleness of our own weakness, vanity, and nothingness: 2. in respect of those before whom the profession is made. We must manifest our due, reverent esteem of them; no unbeseeming behavior, no scornfulness, lightness, contempt, if it be before Magistrates, especially then whatsoever they are in regard of their persons, yet reverential respects ought to be given to them in respect of their places; and if they be men of worth, learning, grace, public use in the Church or State, that respect that is due to their worth, is to be manifested also in our carriage towards them. Grace teacheth no man to be unmannerly, rude, scornful, furious or foolish.

Fifthly, if you would make profession of, or practice any thing differing from others who are godly and judicious, you should first acquaint those who are most able, with what you intend, and not go to youths, and women, and weak ones first, seeking to promote what you apprehend, by possessing their hearts first with it, and to get them to be a party for you; this is not the way of God. If God hath revealed some new thing to you, you have some new light that is not yet made known to your Brethren, which not only by profane men, but I fear by some who are godly, is in a profane manner scorned at; and it were well if none of those who pretend it, did not give some occasion: were not the temptation to the despising of that expression, yet you should first go to those who are most able to judge, acquaint them with what apprehensions you have, and see whether they cannot make it appear to you that you are mistaken; if not, they may confirm you in the truth, that you may go on in it with the more confidence.

If Churches were settled as they ought, I should think it very ill for any Minister to preach any thing not ordinarily received by the Saints, before they have acquainted other Elders, yea some of other Churches with it, if out of an eager desire to be foremost in venting some new thing, they shall do it merely from themselves, they may be means to raise and engage themselves in woeful disturbances before they are aware. That

common union and fellowship that there is between Elders and Churches, requires mutual advise and consultation in matters of difficulty, though to lay a law upon them to advise in every thing, be it never so clear, would be hard.

## CHAP. XII

### **The sixth dividing Principle. What is in it self best must be chosen and done, not weighing circumstances or references.**

This brings much trouble to the Churches; yea it causeth much trouble in the spirits and lives of many truly godly. It causeth men to break the bonds of their Callings, of their Relations, of their Public Interests, therefore certainly it must needs be a dividing principle.

Some men whose calling is only to a private employment, yet having some gifts, and having used sometimes in their Families to take a Scripture, and speak something out of it; upon this they think it is a better thing to be exercised in preaching God's Word, then to sit in a shop all day, at some mean work, or selling out wares, therefore they think they are bound to give over their callings, which they look at as too low, mean things, and be Preachers of the Word, not regarding those due ways that Christ would have men come into such an employment by. Although I do not think, but that Tradesmen, who have good knowledge in the Scripture, and are gifted by God to speak the Word to people for their edification, when there is a want of able men, who have been all their lives preparing for such a work, and are set apart for it, rather then people should continue in ignorance, and so perish, (if those who are able and fit to judge, shall judge them meet for such a work ) they may be

employed to make Christ known to them; yet for every man that takes himself to be a gifted man, and it may be so judged, by some who are willing to flatter him, to take upon him of himself, or by the advise of two or three of his friends, to leave his other employment for the work of the Ministry, because that is a more noble and excellent work; this is not a way of God, but a way of confusion and disorder.

Again, it is in it self a better thing to enjoy a Ministry of the most eminent gifts and graces, then one of lower; but if this should be made a rule, that a man who is under a Pastor who is faithful and in some good measure gifted, upon another mans coming into the Country that is more eminent, he should forsake his Pastor, and join to the other; and if after this still a more eminent man comes, he should leave the former and join to him; and by the same Law, a Pastor who hath a good people, yet if others be more likely to receive more good, he may leave his own people and go to them, what confusion and disorder would there be continually in the Church? Men must consider, not only what the thing is in its own nature, but what it is to them, how it stands in reference to their relations. If you be joined to a Pastor, so as you believe he is set over you by Christ, to be a Pastor to you, (not because the Bishop hath sent one, or an old Usurer dyes, and leaves the Patronage of a living to some Ostler or Tap-wench in an Alehouse, and he or she shall send one by virtue of their right to the patronage, this cannot tie a mans conscience to depend upon him for the ordinances of Christ all his days, in case he cannot remove his dwelling, but if you cannot but look upon the man as the Pastor that Christ hath set over you.) Though this man hath meaner gifts then others; and it would be more comfortable for you to have another Pastor; yet this is not enough to cause you to desert him whom Christ hath set over you; and if people may not leave their Pastors, because others have more eminent gifts, then surely Pastors must not leave their people, because others have more eminent Livings.

To instance yet further, that you may see how this Principle disturbs mens spirits: Many being in the works of their calling, have some thoughts come into their mind , that prayer is a better work , more noble and spiritual then to be employed as they are; therefore they must needs presently leave their work, and go to prayer: How many have been

perplexed with temptations this way, by which their lives have been made very uncomfortable? Prayer in it self is better, but is it better at this time for me, all things considered? am not I about that which God hath called me to? By this Principle many deceive and trouble themselves, in respect of their souls; as some by a conceit of the like nature, deceive and bring great trouble to themselves in respect of their bodies; some who have sickly bodies, their flesh is decayed, they think such and such things have most nourishment in them, such things are hot, and full of spirits, and juice, therefore they will eat and drink altogether such things, leaving their ordinary diet; by this means they many times overthrow their bodies: for though a man wants flesh, yet the way for him to have it, it may be is not to take nourishing things, but purging; and though he be troubled with faintness, it may be the way to get good spirits, is by eating ordinary diet, and cooling his body, that so some distemper may be cured, and he may get his veins filled with good blood, and spirits got from it, rather than by drinking hot waters that are full of spirits, which perhaps burns his heart, and dries his body, that there is no good blood generated from his diet.

It is not enough therefore to say the thing is in it self better, but is it better in all the references I have, and it hath? is it better in regard of others, in regard of the public, for the helping me in all my relations? May it not helps one way, and hinder many ways? If a Physician should come to a man, and see his disease is hot, and should therefore presently cool him by giving him water, the man may like it for the present; why is it not better to be cool, then so burning hot? but thus the Physician discovers his folly, and the Patient loses his life. A Physician in prescribing some physic had need have forty considerations in his head at once, how one part stands affected to the other, of what years the man is, of what completion, how long the disease hath been upon him, what was last done to him, &c. So it should be in the duties of Religion, a Christian who desires to walk orderly, to beautify and honor his profession to enjoy communion with God, and peace in his own soul, and bee useful to the public, had need have his wits about him, not presently to fall upon a work , because it is now presented as good to him in a single consideration; he must compare one thing with another, and see what it is in all its references; or otherwise, he will but interfere, he will but hack

and hew, and bungle, and disturb himself and others in the ways of Religion, he will make Religion tiresome to himself and others, he will be in danger in time to cast off strictness, and to grow so much the more loose then others, by how much more straightened he hath been in a disorderly way then others. I believe some of you have known those who in their young time have been very strict and tender; whatsoever they have conceived to be better then other, they have presently followed it with all eagerness, never considering circumstances, references, or consequences, but the thing is good, it must be done; yet being wearied with this, they have after grown loose, in as great an access, the other way; yea, it may bee have vanished and come to nothing.

## CHAP. XIII

### **The seventh Dividing Principle; It is obstinacy for a man not to be convinced by the judgement of many, more learned and godly then himself.**

The making this to be the rule to judge obstinacy by, hath in all ages caused great divisions by exasperating the spirits of men one against another. In times of Popery what rage did it raise against men who were most conscientious? the generality of men thought they did God good service, in persecuting those who would not yield to the judgement of others, who had the repute of learning and piety; and those who were conscientious, could not yield to their determinations, not seeing the truth of God in them, and this made the stir. While men appear obstinate,

by the rule of Christ we are not to bear with them; and this Principle sets thousands of godly peaceable men in the seat of the obstinate, these cannot in conscience yield, and others cannot but in conscience oppose them; what reconciliation then can there be hoped? either men must captivate their consciences, cause them in a fordid way to bow down to slavery, or else there must needs be continual division and opposition where this prevails.

I confess such a Principle as this is would make for union amongst those who either think they need not, or through carelessness regard not, to search out truth, but with an implicit faith take in all that shall be imposed upon them, who think ignorance of God's mind and conscience slavery, to be no great evil; this is never urged with violence, but either by those who have given up their consciences to be serviceable to the ease and content of the flesh, or those who have, or hope to have power in their hands, to bring others in subjection to them.

Because the right informing our judgments in this, may much conduce to peace, I shall endeavour, 1. To shew you what due respect is to be given to mens judgement who are learned and godly. 2. Yet not so much as to make their judgements the rule to judge men obstinate, if they differ from them. 3. What then should be the rule? by what should we judge a man to be obstinate?

For the first, Certainly much respect is to be given to the learning and godliness of men.\* There is a great delusion in many mens hearts, that makes them think it to be half Popery, to give any respect to Learning; although the abuse of Learning hath done much evil, against that much hath been and may be said; but I dare avow this, that never since the beginning of the world could a man be found to speak against Learning but an ignorant man; neither is it like, nay I may aver, it is impossible that any but such will be found to the end of the world, Learning hath so much of God in it, that it never had nor will have any enemy but ignorance.

1 Tim. 4:13. Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Ver. 15. Give thy self wholly to them, ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι, Be in them. And when we see grace added to Learning, it should add much to our esteem of such a



man; it is the orient pearl in the gold ring, it is a great testimony to a way, that it is the way of good men. Prov. 2:20. That thou maist walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous. The judgement and counsel of such is to be received with very great respect, especially if the eminency of their grace appears in the tenderness of their spirits, that we may see much of the fear of God in them. Ezra 10:3. Now let us make a covenant, according to the counsel of my Lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God. And when not only some few godly men are of this mind, but when it is that which God hath sealed in the hearts of the Saints generally, very high respect is to be given unto it.

Wherefore he that differs in his judgement from wise, learned, godly men, had need

First, spend much time in Prayer and Humiliation before the Lord. There is a notable expression of Basil, cited in an Appendix of an Epistle of Luther to the Ministers of Nuremberg,\* who were at variance one from another: He who will separate himself from his brethren, had need consider many things even to anxiety; he had need break his sleep many nights, and seek of God with many tears, the demonstration of the truth.

Secondly, you must even then when you cannot subject to their judgements, preserve due reverence in your heart, and shew due respects to men of learning and grace according to their worth. We have a notable relation of that holy man, Mr. Greenham, in a Letter of his to the Bishop of Ely, in whose Diocese he lived; the Bishop seeking to bring him to conformity, objected thus unto him, Why will not you yield? Luther approved of these things, are you wiser then he? His sober and gracious answer was, I reverence more the revealed will of God in teaching that worthy instrument of God Mr. Luther so many necessary things to salvation, then I search into his secret will, why he kept back from his knowledge other things of less importance.

Thirdly, if those things wherein we differ from the judgments of learned and godly men, be not matters of duty, they only may bring us to some suffering, we should silently yield for peace sake, and out of respect to them, not oppose.

Fourthly, in all things wherein you may have any help from them, you should repair to them, and desire to partake of the benefit of those gifts and graces God hath bestowed upon them.

Fifthly, in all things wherein you can agree, you should be the more careful to manifest all possible observance and respect to them, in blessing God for any help he grants to you by them, either in making known his truth to you, or at least in further confirming you in it by them.

Sixthly, and in what still your consciences will not suffer you to agree with them, you are to take it as your affliction, and to account that way you are in to want a great lustre, and most desirable encouragement, in that so many learned and godly mens judgements and practices are against it.

We are to raise our respects to men of learning and godliness thus high; but if we should go so high, as to give up our judgments and consciences to them, we should in honouring them, dishonor Christ; yea they would account themselves to be dishonored. Such as are truly godly and wise, do rather account it their honour to carry a loving respect to those who differ from them,\* then desire that men should, blindfold, before they see their grounds, follow them. Prelatical spirits indeed account it their honour to force men to be of their mind; it is their glory that they can say to the consciences of men, Bow down before us. A gracious spirit abhors the thought of such a tyranny. This to high raising respects due to learned, holy men, hath been very hurtful in the Church, prejudicial to the souls of men, but especially to the honour of Christ. I will give you an instance. Erasmus was no novice, yet how dangerously he was taken with this, will appear by a strange expression of his, in an Epistle he wrote to one Bilibaldus: How far the authority of the Church prevails with others, I knew not; but with me it hath that power, that I could be of the opinion with Arians and Pelagians, if the Church did but allow that which they taught. This you will say is a strange expression, coming from a learned man, and one too, not addicted to the Church that then was in that excess as others were; how then did this conceit prevail with men more weak, who gave up their consciences to others through their blind superstition?

Wherefore secondly, though great respect is to be given to men holy and

learned, yet not such, that a man must be judged obstinate, if he submit not to their judgements and determinations. For,

First, if a man should believe or do any thing before he sees some other grounds besides their judgements or examples, though the thing were in it self never so good, yet it would be sin to him. If indeed this were enough to answer Christ, Lord I am a poor weak man, I cannot find out thy truths my self, therefore I seeing learned godly men to be of such a judgement, and doing such things, I thought it too much presumption for me to differ from them, therefore I also believed it to be true, and practised accordingly: This were an easy way for people to agree, and it might well be judged obstinacy to gain-say. But this account Christ will not take, for he tells us, Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin; and the judgements and practices of godly learned men, he never made to be the rule of faith.

Secondly, if God in revealing his mind to men, always did it according to the proportion of their gifts and graces, then it were too much boldness for any to differ from those who are most eminent; but experience tells us it is otherwise, as God causes his rain to fall upon one field, and not upon another; and as the wind blows where it lists, so are the workings of the Spirit of God upon men. Although he reveals to all his Saints whatsoever is absolutely necessary to salvation, yet for other truths, a man of eminent parts shall know one, another of weaker shall know another. David was a man as eminent for parts, and was filled with the Spirit of God as much as Nathan, both in regard of Prophecy and godliness; yet sometimes that was revealed to Nathan, which was kept hid from David. When the Book of the Law was found, and read before Josiah, they send to Huldah the Prophetess, yet there were Prophets in the Land at that time.

But you will say, Is it not more likely that men of learning and piety, should know what is right, and what is not, better then others?

Answ. True, it is more likely they should; but God many times doth things which we think are not likely; that which is the most unlikely to us, God many times chooseth as best to serve his ends.

Thirdly, if there were no other reason why a man of weaker parts should

differ from others, then because he is conceited of his parts, thinks himself more able to understand, than those who are far his betters, then there would be more liberty to deal severely with him: But being there may be this reason, why men who are weak, yet differ from those who are eminent, Christ hath laid this charge upon them, that they must not believe or practice any thing in the matters of Religion, but what they shall first see ground for out of his Word. If a man shall be jealous of himself, fearing lest his own understanding should mislead him, and in the use of all means he can, seeks to God, and yet cannot see from Scripture the ground of those things learned and godly men have determined, and having received such a charge from Christ, not to alter his judgement or practice, till in the use of these means he should receive farther light from him; what would you have this man do? If he yields to you, he sins against the charge of Christ and his own conscience; if he doth not, either now or after such a time you prefix him, alter his judgment and practice, you judge him obstinate, and in the name of Christ deal with him as such; do not you by this make that bond that Christ hath laid upon him, (to do all he doth from a principle of faith) heavier than Christ would have it?

Fourthly, the more learning, the more godliness men have, the more pains they take in finding out the truth; there is the less ground to judge those obstinate, who differ from them, because they differ.

You will say, How can that be? For if men be very learned and godly, and take much pains to find out the truth, there is the more reason we should believe their judgements, more than our own.

Answ. We must indeed honour them, then, the more; but yet the exquisiteness of their learning, the eminency of their godliness, the industry of their labours, for the finding out of truth, may excuse those from obstinacy who cannot see into the ground from the Word, of all that they are able to see; for is it not more than probable, that men who are weak and exceedingly beneath them, should through mere weakness be unable to see the rule of Scripture in those things which they have got the sight of, by the help of their great learning, godliness, and indefatigable labours? Can it be, that men who have not attained to that eminency, who are not able to take so much pains in searching, that they (though they

have their help added) should be able to attain to what these men so eminent and industrious have attained to? Can they in a few months come to see that which they have been studying, and debating one with another divers years before they could see it, can they be satisfied in their consciences of the mind of Christ, when these eminent men, for a long time could hardly satisfy one another? yea, it may be after all the help of their learning, godliness, and painful labours, they look upon many things but as probable, as more likely to be so then otherwise, they have not a Plerophory in their own hearts; and shall those who do not see ground enough for the foot of Faith to settle upon, bee judged, and dealt with as obstinate? Because they yet are not of their mind, (God forbid.)

Fifthly, there is much danger in making this to be the rule, for if to go against the judgement of godly and learned men be obstinacy now, ere long it may come to this, that to go against those in place, who have power in their hand, shall be obstinacy, whatsoever they bee; for who dare question their learning and piety? Whatsoever miscarriages these shall be in after ages in bringing men unlearned and ungodly into place; yet those must be judged as guilty of obstinacy who are not of the same judgement they shall be of; and into what a case then have we brought ourselves?

If you shall say, True, our case would be sad, but wee must venture it, there is no help, better an inconvenience then a mischief.

Answ. But here will be not an inconvenience only but a mischief: In civil things this indeed must be ventured, for there wee are not bound to understand the reason and ground of all things; but if nothing appear to bee contrary to the rules of justice and piety, we are to submit; but in the matters of Religion it is otherwise, wee must understand the ground of all from the word; therefore those who shall lay down such a position, that we may deal with these men as obstinate, by the Ordinance of Christ, who after two or three admonitions shall not be of the same judgement, and do the same things that learned and godly men determine, do bring the Church into greater bondage then they are aware of.

Sixthly, Learned and godly men yet have flesh as well as spirit, and private engagements do often sway much even with them: Here with us

wee know how the greater number of learned and godly men go , but in New-England the greater number of learned and godly men go another way. Lately the greater number of learned and godly men in Old England did judge submission to Prelatical power in the Church, and practice of Ceremonies, and use of Common Prayer to be lawful, I hope it is not so now.

Seventhly, If it be always obstinacy not to believe or practise what they judge should be believed and practised, then sometimes it will be obstinacy not to believe and practise a contradiction; for we know some learned and godly men determine one thing, some determine the contrary; yea, oftentimes they are contrary to themselves.

Eighthly, It is against the rule of the Apostle, Try all things keep that which is good, abstain from all appearance of evil; If after the trial of prophecy, there be but an appearance of evil, we are bound to abstain.

Ninthly, we know by our own experience, we have differed from many more learned and godly then ourselves, and yet our consciences did excuse us before God, that we did it not out of obstinacy, that if our lives had lain upon it we could not for the present have helped it.

But if we shall not judge men that go against the determination of those who are most able to judge, then every man may do what seems good in his own eyes, and so there will be nothing but confusion.

Answ. Not so neither, though this be not the rule to judge men to be obstinate by; yet men may by some other rules be judged to be so, and dealt with accordingly; as those by which we judged whether the evil be in a mans conscience or in his will, especially these four:

First, If the thing wherein men differ, be against the common principles of Christianity; then such as will take upon them the profession of Christianity, do involve themselves in the guilt of obstinacy, if they go against those things.

Secondly, In other things, if their carriages be turbulent, and altogether unbeseeming a Christian differing from his Brethren.

Thirdly, Where there is neglect of those means of reformation, which he hath nothing to say against.

Fourthly, If he so crosses his own principles, that he appears to be self-condemned.

## CHAP. XIV

### **The eighth Dividing Principle. If others be against what we conceive to be truth, we may judge them going against their own light.**

This is a worse, a more dividing Principle then the former; it is worse to make our judgements the rule of other mens actions, then other mens judgements the rule of our actions: This makes men who differ, to have exceeding hard thoughts one of another; it causeth a mighty spirit to rise in them one against another. A man cannot judge worse of another, then this, that he goes against his own light. Of all things conscientious men know not how to bear this; yet how ordinarily will men who are weak, judge those that are strong, because they cannot see into the reasons of their actions? therefore those that do them, must needs do them against their own light: If they see another mans garb, and manner of converse, and way, to be differing from their own, they presently judge him sinning against his own conscience, to bee acted by by-ends to do what he does merely out of cunning and craftiness; This is from the pride and soreness of mens spirits. This is far enough for you to go in judging your brother, were I in his condition, should I do as he doth, I should go against my light, I should act by by-ends; but therefore to conclude that he goes

against his light, and acts by by-ends, is very sinful. Many carnal men think, if they should make such a shew of Religion; if they should do such things, as such and such men do, it would be hypocrisy in them, and they judge truly, because their principle would not bear out their practise; but therefore to judge all that do such things to be hypocrites, we account to be a very wicked thing. If thou hadst any spirit of humility or wisdom in thee, thou wouldest rather think, it may be he sees what I do not, I am to look to mine own heart and ways, by what principles I go my self: Men who are weak and can see but a little way into things, must take heed they censure not others, who know how to manage businesses better than themselves; some may do that acceptable to God, that thou couldest not do without an evil conscience: The same honesty and sincerity may continue in a man, though in true wisdom and discretion he applies himself diversely, according as occasions are divers; as the hand remains the same, whether closed into a fist, or extended abroad, or bent this way or that way as occasion serves. Wherefore for your direction in this, take these five rules.

First, We are bound to give the best interpretation upon our brethren's actions we can, if they be not apparently ill; we should not do as the Logicians, *Sequi partem deteriolem*, but incline to that which may any way be conceived or hoped to have any goodness in it; we must rather wrong ourselves by thinking too well of them, than wrong them by thinking too ill of them. This would help exceeding much to peace.

Secondly, we should rather be jealous of ourselves than others, knowing more of the evils of our own hearts than we can do of any others.

Thirdly, if we know certainly we are right, and others not, our hearts should rather be taken up with admiring and blessing GODS goodness to us for what he shows us, than in censuring our Brethren for what he hath denied them.

Fourthly, we must remember, that not long since we were ourselves of another mind, and yet we sinned not against our light.

Fifthly, we must consider also that in other things our Brethren see what we do not, and we would be loath to have such measure from them, that



they should judge us,\* going against our light, and to be acted by by-ends in that we differ from them. We must grant, that liberty to our Brethren we would have ourselves; that is not to be involved in the judgements of others, but try all things, and keep what God makes known to us to be good; This liberty, says Luther, Paul hath given me, and I will stand to it, I will not suffer it to be captivated.

The ninth Dividing Principle. Rules of prudence are sufficient to guide us in natural things and civil affairs, and may as well suffice us in spiritual and Church-Affairs.

A Great part of our divisions about Church-affairs comes from this Principle: If God would help us with right apprehensions about this, our divisions would in a great measure vanish. Those whose consciences are taken with a contrary principle, namely, that there must be institutions for all things that are properly Ecclesiastical and spiritual, they cannot yield to any such thing, till they see the stamp on, an institution upon it: Others who think because prudence is enough to order civil affairs, there needs no institution for these things, they think such as stand for them to be too rigid and stiff in their way.

It divides also upon this ground: In the corrupt estate of the Church (such as ours yet is) if we bind to institutions, we shall be sorely pinched with many things that will be very troublesome to us; but if we go according to the rules of common prudence, we may decline, or alter what would pinch, and take up what may be commodious for us: Hence the principle is very desirable, if it can be maintained, men will strive hard before they will lose it; and on the other side, God is looked at as a jealous God, who not will suffer a mans wisdom to share with him in the things of his worship, which are spiritual and holy, to appoint and leave out as may bee most commodious for the freedom of them from trouble, therefore they dare not yield to any Ordinance that is beyond civil, but upon some institution of CHRIST in his Word, and this divides.

Now for your help in this: As God hath given two lights to the world, the Sun, the greater to rule the day; and the Moon, the lesser, to rule the night: So he hath given two Lights to man, to guide his course; the Scriptures the greater, to guide man, especially in his spiritual condition,

in those more immediate references he hath to God, for his worship and enjoyment of communion with him; The other the less, the light of Reason, to be his guide in natural and civil things, in the ordering his life for his natural and civil good; and though it is true, Religion makes use of Reason, and we have help from the Scriptures in our natural and civil affairs, yet these two lights have their distinct special use, according to those distinct conditions of man.

When, I say,\* we must have Scripture, and in it institutions for those things which are spiritual, and properly Church-affairs, I mean whatsoever is made use of for the drawing my soul nearer to God, or God nearer to me; or for the tendering up my Homage to God, beyond what it hath in the nature of the thing, put into it by God; for that I must have an institution, I must not frame any such thing to my self ; if I make use of any thing of mine own, for such an end that I may worship God by, or that God might convey some spiritual efficacy to me in the use of it, because it is a thing that I think as fit for such an end, as other Ordinances I find in the Word, and yet have not an institution for it; in this I sin against Christ the Lord, who alone hath power to set apart the use of what he pleaseth, for the tendering up Homage to God, or the conveying of any spiritual efficacy from God into the hearts of his servants.

Mans natural and civil good, is not so high, but reason and prudence will reach them; but for such things as these are, all the reason and prudence in the world lies too low, they cannot without sinful presumption attempt the putting any thing of their own in the place of these: Therefore there can be no other Officers in the Church, to act by any spiritual power, then what wee find in the Word; no new Ordinances, no new Courts erected, no kind of authority, no extent of authority any further then we find in Scripture: The proof is evident, all Church Ordinances are for spiritual ends, to work by a spiritual efficacy, beyond what is natural or civil; and the efficacy of the power of government consists much in those who govern; if they have not their Charter to authorize their power and the extent of it, it loses its efficacy, though it bee otherwise managed with never so much wisdom and justice; the same act that is an act of justice in one, is murder in another; yea, the same mans act done within such limits

is an act of Justice, and if done beyond those limits, it is murder.

But you will say, Surely there is use of reason and prudence in matters spiritual; how far may their use extend?

To the doing of these two things.

Answ. First, by reason I may compare institutions, and argue from one institution to another, and so find out institutions that lye more in the dark, by others which are more apparent. Though the thing that I gather be not terminus in Scripture, yet if I gather by necessary consequence from an institution, one or more, it hath the force of an institution in it: If I make Reason to be the Basis, the ground of my consequence, it will never rise up to that height as to raise to an institution; but if I make some other institution the Basis of my consequence, then it may.

Secondly, when I have found out an institution, then reason and prudence comes in to help to manage this in a fit and comely way, applying it to fit persons and times, making use of fit seasons, due order, and whatsoever natural or civil conveniences may further the due administration of it. The Prelates abused that Scripture, Let all things be done decently and in order; for they joined institutions of their own to God's, to make them decent and orderly: But that Scripture only shows you when you have an institution of Christ, you are to apply by the use of reason and prudence, what natural or civil helps you can, for the better managing this institution of his.

From hence we have an Answer to that objection is made against many things done by those who are in a Congregational way; what institution have they for many things they do ? what for their Covenant? &c.

Answ. Though there be no Text of Scripture holds forth this in terminus, yet it is grounded upon other institutions, plainly held forth in Scripture.

First, it is clear in Scripture, that besides the Catholic Church there are particular Churches, Saints embodied, under such Officers, who are so Officers to them as they are not to others: These people can look upon this man as their Pastor, and this Pastor upon this people in a peculiar

relation; they may do some acts of power over one another in their Congregation, which they cannot do over others in another Congregation: Now then it follows, they being a body, must needs have something to join them together; and the least thing that can be to join them, is the manifestation of their assent to join for those ends for which Christ hath appointed such a body; and what is their Covenant, but this? Only some manifest this their assent more largely, some more briefly; I know nothing more is required, but to manifest their assent to join with that body, to set up all the Ordinances of Christ so far as they know.

If there be any other thing done in their Churches wherein they make further use of reason and prudence, then in the two fore-named things, they cannot justify it, but must acknowledge it evil.

The Tenth Dividing Principle; or rather vain conceit. Every difference in Religion is a differing Religion.

What do you hear more ordinary then this, How many Religions have we now? Shall so many Religions be suffered amongst us? we cannot tell now what Religion men are of; upon this apprehension they oppose such as differ from them in some few things, with all the violence they can, as men bringing up new Religions, and would take away their Religion from them; how can they possibly accord with men that are of a different Religion from them?

Answ. Surely we are more afraid then hurt; Though our differences be sad enough, yet they come not up to this, to make us men of different Religions. We agree in the same end, though not in the same means; they are but different ways of opposing the common adversary. The agreeing in the same means in the same way of opposing the common enemy would be very comfortable, it would be our strength, but that cannot be expected in this world.

Livie in his story of a great battle between Hannibal and Scipio,\* says, That at the joining of the Armies, the shouting of Scipio's men was far more terrible then the shouting of Hannibal's, because Scipio's men were all Romans, their shouting had all the same tone: but Hannibal's Army was made up of men of several Countries, so that in their shouting there

was variety of the tones of their voice, which was not accounted so formidable a shout as the other. It is true, our adversaries do not look upon our opposition to them having so much diversity in it, so formidable as they would if we were all but one in our way of opposing them; But still we are all shouting against the common enemy; although therefore the terror upon our adversary would be greater, if our shout were more uniform; yet we hope the victory may be as sure.

Soldiers who march against a common enemy, all under the same Captain, who follow the same Colors in their Ensign, and wear them upon their hats or arms, may get the day, though they be not all clothed alike, though they differ in things of less concernment.

Revel. 15:2. we read of the Saints standing upon a sea of glass, which had fire mingled with it. Master Brightman interprets this sea of glass, the doctrine of the Gospel, more clear, more transparent then the doctrine of the Law, which, he says, was resembled by the sea of brass that Solomon made: But there is fire mingled in this sea of glass, that is, saith he, There are contentions & divisions in the Church, where this doctrine of the Gospel is taught: But yet mark what follows, They got the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, and had the harps of God in their hands, and sang the song of Moses, &c.

Men who are in a crowd, tread one upon another, yet they all make to the same door, they would all go the same way: Godly people are divided in their opinions and ways, but they are united in Christ; though they may be divided from such a particular society, yet they are not divided from the Church; it is with the Saints here, as with the boughs of trees in time of a storm; you shall see the boughs one beat upon another, as if they would beat one another to pieces, as if Armies were fighting, but this is but while the wind, while the tempest lasts; stay a while and you shall see every bough standing in its own order and comeliness, why? because they are all united in one root; if any bough be rotten, the storm breaks it off, but the found boughs come into their former place. These times of division may break off men whose spirits were before unfound; they will never come in to join with the Saints again so as they seemed to do in former times: but within a while when this gust is over, others may come

in and shew themselves to be all united in, and receive sap from the same root.

## CHAP. XV

### **Dividing Distempers, the lusts of mens hearts.**

These divide us not only from God, but from one another.\* This I learn, says Luther, from mine own experience, that I have more cause to fear what is within me, then what is without. What ever others do to divide us would prevail little, were it not for the lusts of our hearts within. Vapors that are got within the earth, are the cause of all earth-quakes; they rend and tear: the winds, storms, and tempests without, never move it. Ill humours within the body, disturb more then the air without. James 4:1. Whence are wars and fightings amongst you? are they not hence, even from your lusts? Whence come they? The Answer is soon made, Doe you not see plainly that they come from your lusts? Yet were this Question put to some of us, Whence are all our divisions? Some would answer, Such kind of men are the cause of them, and others would answer, Nay but such men cause them. We all put off the cause of our divisions from ourselves; few would give Saint James his answer, They are from hence, even from our lusts. There would not be such evil distillations from the head, if it were not for the malignant vapors that arise from the stomach. The curing the heart will sooner cure the head, then the curing the head will cure the heart.

Whence are wars? even from your lusts. The Apostle doth not here

condemn Wars simply, this was the error of the old Manichees, raised up again by some amongst us, especially as the wars are looked upon under that notion, raised for Religion. They seek to weaken our hands in these wars, by telling young people, who have newly given their names to Christ, and therefore desire to be guided by the Word in all they do, whom God hath used under himself to be the strength of these wars, that they have no warrant to fight for Religion. To whom our Answer is, that we have a Civil right to the outward peaceable profession and practice of our Religion; we have the Laws of the Land for it, and for the maintenance of this right we fight. There can be no reason given why our Civil right we have to our Religion, may not as well be maintained by the sword, as our civil right to our houses and lands. This answers all objections against the maintenance of Religion by the sword, from the practice of the Christians in the Primitive times, who never sought to maintain Religion thus. Wee say their case was not the same with ours; they never had any civil right to the profession and practice of their Religion, in the Countries where they lived, as we have.

The wars meant in this Text are contentions, jars, divisions amongst Christians; though they did not take up the sword one against another, yet there were many quarrels, jars, and divisions amongst them, these came from their lusts. The lusts of mens hearts are very quarrelsome. Storms and tempests are here below in this impure muddy part of the world, in the higher part all is serene, calm, and clear, 1 Cor. 3:3. For ye are yet carnal, how does he prove that? whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? Strifes and divisions do manifest mens hearts to be very carnal.

Augustine upon that place, Gen. 15:10. where God required Abraham to take beasts and birds for sacrifice, the beasts were divided,\* cut asunder, but not the birds: Thus (says he, by way of allusion) carnal brutish men are divided one from another, but not the birds; not those who are more spiritual, more celestial.

Ye walk as men, says the Apostle, ye should not walk as men, ye should walk as it becomes those whose condition is raised above the condition of men, as it becomes Christians, the redeemed ones of the Lord; you say, Can flesh and blood endure this? Can any man living bear this? What if

flesh and blood, what if a man cannot? A Christian may, a member of Jesus Christ who is God-man, may. Chrysostom in one of his Sermons to the people of Antioch, brings in God's gracious dealing with Cain, as an example for them to imitate, in their carriage towards those who carry themselves ill towards them; He brings them in also replying, God indeed was gentle and patient toward Cain, for he is God, he is above all passion, but we are but men; he answers them, Therefore did the Son of God come down, that he might make you as near as may be to be God.

The Scripture says, The Saints are made partakers of the divine nature; therefore do not say, We are but men. You must not walk as men, but as those who are endued with the Divine nature. It is a great charge that the Holy Ghost lays upon the Corinthians, that they walked but as men; yet many come short of the lives of men: they rather walk as dogs, as tigers, as wolves. Gal. 5:20. The fruits of the flesh are hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings. All these are the causes or workings of divisions: Surely our divisions are the fruits of the flesh. Wee see it in nature, the more spiritual any thing is, the more it unites; and the more gross the substance of any thing is, the less it unites; the beams of the Sun are of a kind of spiritual nature, therefore thousands of them will unite in puncto, but its not so in other things; spiritual hearts in this are like the Sun beams, though thousands of them live together, they will unite in one so long as they continue spiritual. The three thousand Converts, Act. 2. joined with one accord, with one single heart: We find it now by experience, so long as there be but a few in a Church, they agree well, but usually when they come to be numerous, dissensions rise amongst them; this is an argument that the hearts of men are not spiritual, still much flesh remains. Brackish water ascending to the Heavens, is sweetened, it comes down sweet from thence; thus those things which have trouble, which have an aptness to breed divisions, yet spiritual heavenly hearts having to do with them, they turn the nature of them, they work spiritual advantage out of them.

The higher fire ascends, the more it unites; the flame that is broad at the bottom, as it grows high, unites to be as the point of a needle. When the hearts of Christians keep below, and have a great deal of smoke amongst them, they do not so unite; but when they can get up high, O what close,



single-hearted union is there! a crooked and a right line cannot join, but two right lines will join in every point.

The lusts of mens hearts cause divisions many ways:\*

First, they are mens own, therefore they will contend for them; nothing is a mans own so much as his lusts; man aims wholly at himself in satisfying his lust: A Dog will bark, and bite, and fly in a mans face to preserve his own whelps.

Secondly, Mens lusts blind their judgements; Perit iudicium cum res transit in affectum; when the heart is tainted, the judgement is soon blinded; if the beam of the scale you weigh by, be not straight, the scale that hath the lighter weight may weigh down the heavier; if our hearts be crooked, warping to any sinful lust, what weight soever there be in any arguments to convince, the scale will go according to the warping of the heart, the conclusion will follow the worse part.

Thirdly, mens lusts weaken their spirits, so as they are not able to bear any thing that comes cross to them; women, children, sick people,\* who are weakest, fall out most with one another; things that are rotten cannot hold together, every little touch breaks them asunder; that which is found hath strength to hold one part to another.

Fourthly, in mens lusts there is confusion, they cannot bee kept in order, therefore they must needs cause disturbance, not only in mens own spirits, but to all that have to deal with men acted by them; where there is confusion, there cannot be union; when there is right order in an Army, though the men be never so numerous, never so differing in other respects, yet if they keep their ranks they are all but one; but if put to a rotund confusion, then the bond of unity is broken, and every man divides from another to shift for himself.

In mens lusts there are contradictions; no virtue is contrary to another, but vices have nothing but contrarieties and contradictions in them: Mens lusts oppose and fight against one another in mens hearts; no marvel then when there are such stirs within, though they break forth into quarrels and contentions without: If a man bee quarrelsome in his

family, no wonder if when he comes abroad, he quarrels and contends with his neighbors also.

Sixthly, in mens lusts there is violence, violence and peace cannot stand together. Isa. 60:18. God promises peace, and there promises, that violence should be no more heard in their Land. Mens lusts are boisterous and unruly, especially when they have been acting a while; at the first venting they seem to be faire, but after a while they grow outrageous: violent and boisterous dispositions are unfit for society.

You shall find in experience men who seem to be of weak spirits, of softly tempers, very remiss in what they do ordinarily, yet let the lusts of these men be engaged in any cause, to any side, O how violent and impetuous will they be! they care not what they say or do, they will divide from God, from the public, from their dearest friends, from their nearest relations, from what themselves have made profession of heretofore, from their credit, profit, from their own peace, from any thing, and all to serve a lust engaged in such a business; it is a dangerous thing to have a mans lust engaged, nothing can stand against an engaged lust, a man runs on headlong, he will break his conscience, he will desperately endanger his eternal breaking, to maintain the engagement of his lust.

Seventhly, in the lusts of mens hearts there is an antipathy against God, against his ways, purity of his Ordinances, his Saints. Gen. 3:15. I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed.

In Antipathy the opposition is,

1. In the nature of the things, therefore its deeply rooted, it comes not in accidentally; you may find two Sheep fighting upon some accident, but the natures are not opposite, like the Wolfe and the Sheep.

2. The cause of this opposition is secret; wicked men have their spirits rise against the godly, but they are not able to say why: The husband loved his wife while she was carnal, now God hath turned her heart, she is more obedient then ever, she seeks to give him content in all things more then before, she is more useful to him in all occasions, more faithful, every way more lovely then before, only she is godly now, and was not so

before; but his heart is now quite off from her, he dares not say that it is for her godliness, if he hath any conviction himself, but so it is that now he looks upon her with an evil eye, and an estranged heart: So a wicked Father or Mother, who loved their child exceedingly, before God was pleased to work upon him, yet now the child is more dutiful then he was, but the heart of the father or mother is taken off from him, can hardly endure him, ready to take any exception against him, their countenances are lowering and sad towards him, they can give no reason for this their change, but as they were wont to say of Christians, Such a man is a good man, but he is a Christian. Bonus vir Caius Seius sed Christianus, non amo te, I love you not, but I can give no reason; Hoc tantum possum dicere, Non amo te, all that I can say is this, that I do not love you.

3. It is a settled, constant opposition: This hath been in all generations the great cause of division between the men of the world, and the Saints, and still it continues the same; you may see the same spirit of the old opposers of godliness and godly men, working in our days; the names of things may be changed, but the same kind of men for the same things are opposed and hated now in the same manner as in former generations.

4. It is very strong; ungodly men are exceedingly embittered against the Saints. Ezek. 26:6. Because thou hast clapped thine hands, and stamped with the feet, and rejoiced in heart, with all thy despite against the Land of Israel: This spirit of bitterness and indignation that was in them against the people of God, is seminally at least in all wicked men.

5. The enmity of Antipathy is incurable, it can never be taken away, except one ceases to be in its nature what it was; there can be no compounding things that are so contrary, one of them must cease to be, or turned into another nature, or else the opposition will be everlasting.

The great divisions amongst us are those that are between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the Serpent; some divisions there are between those who are the seed of Christ, but the great stirs in the Kingdom come from the evil spirit there is in the seed of the Serpent against the godly in the Land. In the beginning of the Parliament when mens liberties and estates being involved in one, there was good agreement, all men rejoiced, generally the countenances of those who were not popish and

prelatical, were serene, they had comfortable aspects one upon another; but when those whose spirits were opposite to the power of godliness, saw how the godly amongst them rejoiced, how their heads were lifted up, how their hearts were filled with hopes of good days, wherein Religion should be countenanced and honoured; that Antipathy that was in their hearts against the ways of God, boy-led in them; though they were glad that they should be freed from some burdens, yet to see those whom they hated in their hearts, to rejoice so much, they could not bear, but their spirit rose against them, and in opposition to them they have raised these stirs, they have made these woeful distractions that are amongst us.

Lastly, the lusts of mens hearts are the cause of our divisions,\* because God requires every man according to his place to make opposition against them; the cause of the strife lies not in those who oppose them, they do but their duty; but in those who nourish such lusts within them; yet we find it ordinarily, that those who are most corrupt will cry out against those who oppose them in their wicked ways, as the cause of strife and divisions, as if they were the troublers of Israel, whereas indeed themselves, the wicked lusts of their own hearts are the troublers of Israel, those who oppose their lusts desire all good to their persons. I remember Augustine in his Book about the unity of the Church hath this passage, The Son doth more grievously persecute his father by living naughtily, then the father him by chastising him duely. Sarahs Maid did more trouble her by her wicked pride, then she her Maid by her deserved correction. Those men who are most faulty, are the men who are to be charged to bee the greatest troublers in Church and State.

Thus in the general, mens lusts are the cause of divisions; but let us enquire into the particular lusts of men, which wee may also charge: We shall find these dividing distempers to bee as many as the dividing Principles: As the Philosopher speaks of four Cardinal virtues, so the first four that I shall name I may call the four Cardinal vices, these are Pride, Self-love, Envy, Passion or Frowardness; All the other distempers that cause divisions, have the poison of these four at the root of them. These are the Chariot wheels of the Furies, or the four horses that draws them up and down hurrying from place to place.

## CHAP. XVI

### **The Pride of mens hearts the great dividing distemper.\***

Pride is the greatest Master of mis-rule in the world, it is the great incendiary in the soul of man, in families, in Towns, Cities, in all societies, in Church and State: This wind causeth tempests to arise. Prov. 13:10. Only by pride comes contention. The Holy Ghost singles out pride, as the only cause of all contentions, because it is the chief; though there be many in a riot, the whole usually is laid upon the ring-leaders. Pride is the ring-leader to all riots, divisions, disturbances amongst us. Prov. 21:24. Proud and haughty scorner is his name who dealeth in proud wrath. Pride may bee well indicted for the great common Barrettor in all Towns, and Cities, and Kingdoms, it makes woeful troubles wheresoever it comes. Mathematicians make this a rule to know when a thing is exactly round, and when it is exactly plain; Round things will not touch but in puncto, if you lay plain things together, they will touch in every part of them.

Proud hearts will join only in some things that concern themselves, but plain hearts will join in every thing wherein God may have glory, and their Brethren good.

Gouty swollen legs keep at distance one from another; Bladders that are blown up with wind, spurt one from another, they will not close, but if you prick them, and so let out the wind, you may pack a thousand in a little room. We find this by experience, when God gives us most success in our Armies, then are we most divided, then every man begins to look high, and to be sharking for himself; and when the Lord discountenances our Armies, and brings us low, then we think and speak of ways of Accommodation, then we bewail our divisions with some brokenness of spirit: As it is with Soldiers when they are fighting against the common

adversary, then they can agree well enough, but when they come to divide the spoil, or be put into their Garrisons, then they fall out: When we lye under the danger of the same common calamity, then we can agree, but when we come to share for ourselves, then our spirits swell one against another.

We read in Scripture of the Manna that God gave his people, such was the nature of it, that the heat of the Sun melted it. You will say, How could it then endure the heat of the oven? for they baked it in the oven; yet so it was, of a strange kind of nature, that it could bear the heat of the oven, and not the heat of the sun. Even of such a temper are our hearts; The heat of the sun of prosperity dissolves us, causes us to run one from another, but the heat of the fire of affliction bakes us, brings us and settles us together; it makes us to be one, it takes away our rawness, it consumes many of our ill humours, and so composes our spirits into one.

The stupidity of our hearts is such, as we do not make our brethren's case, who suffer the rage of these wars, our own; But we for the present having some more liberty then formerly, we are lifted up, and in the pride of our hearts push at our brethren, and smite our fellow servants: If the dogs be at a little distance from us, though we even hear the cries of our brethren who are worried by them, yet we foolishly bless ourselves in our present ease, enjoyments, and hopes, as if our flesh must be spared, our estates, our liberties and enjoyments must be continued, yea raised, whatsoever becomes of others. Oh sinful vain spirits, befooled and hardened with their pride!

But what are the several workings of pride that make such a stir in the world?\*

Answ. First, A proud man thinks himself too great to be crossed, Shall I bear this? I will make you know what it is to do such things against me; he thinks it a great dishonor to him to bear any thing, therefore he must needs quarrel and contend, if it be but to shew what a man of spirit he is, or to shew that he is a man of such worth, as whatsoever others bear, yet it is not fit for him to bear it; it is but reason that such a man as he should make men who will presume to cross him, to yield to him, to stoop under him. Now when one proud man thinks it a dishonor for him to put up

wrongs from another who it may be is as proud as himself, and he thinks it a dishonor for him to put up wrongs; what peace can there be? some wrongs must be put up, but proud men will never agree who shall begin.

Secondly, because his spirit swells so big, he thinks every thing that crosseth him to be very great; his sufferings are great to him according to what great thoughts he hath of himself, according to the excellency or meanness of any person; So are his sufferings to be reckoned, sufferings of a man in eminence are judged according to his eminence and place; if a mean man suffer the same things, they are not accounted so great; now whether a man be great really, or in his own apprehension, its all one in regard of his esteem of his sufferings, he thinks them therefore intolerable because they are against himself.

Dan. 3:14. Is it true O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? Doe not ye serve my gods? that which you have in your books, Is it true? Arias Montanus translates, Nunquid desolatio: what, is there desolation made? what, you to oppose the command of a King? if this be suffered, what desolation must needs follow? And indeed the root from whence the Word comes, signifies desolari, to make desolate; why?\* was it a desolation that these three poor innocent men made, because they would not, nay they could not do as this proud King would have them? what made him thus to aggravate the offence, but merely the pride of his heart? he thought that any thing cross to his command was a most heinous offence, a thing most horrid in the very mention of it, no less then the utter undoing of all things. Pride ever aggravates any thing done against its own mind . This in Dan. that Montanus turns, Nunquid desolatio, Buxtorfius translates num de industria; what on purpose? you do it on purpose to provoke me; thus proud men and women in their families, whatsoever children or servants do amiss; what? you do it on purpose to anger me, do you? When the wind comes cross the stream, the waters rage: So does the will and affections of a proud heart when any thing crosseth it.

Thirdly, Pride makes men swell beyond their bounds; the way to keep all things in union is for every man to keep within his bounds, the swelling beyond tends to the breaking all in pieces. Hab. 2:5. He is a proud man, neither kept at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and cannot be

satisfied. If any humour of the body goes beyond its bounds, it brings much trouble to it, the health and peace of the body consists in the keeping of every humour within its vessel and due proportion.

Fourthly, Pride hardens mens hearts. Dan. 5:20. His mind is hardened in his pride. If you would make things cleave, you must have them soft, two flints will not join; the Spaniard hath a Proverb, Lime and stone will make a wall, if one be hard; yet if the other be yielding, there may be a joining, and good may be done, not else.

Fifthly, Pride causes men to despise the persons actions and sufferings of others, nothing is more insufferable to a mans spirit then to be vilified. A proud man despises what others do , and others what he does, every man next to his person, desires the honour of his actions. If these two be contemned, his sufferings will likewise be contemned by the proud: This also goes very near to a man; one man thinks what another man suffers is nothing, no matter what becomes of him; another thinks his sufferings nothing, and no matter what becomes of him; O at what a distance now are mens hearts one from another!

Sixthly, Pride causes every man to desire to be taken notice of to have an eminency in something or other; if he cannot be eminent on one side, he will get to the other; he must be taken notice of one way or other: when he is in a good and peaceable way, God makes some use of him, yet because he is not observed and looked upon as eminent, he will rather turn to some other way, to contend, strive, to oppose, or any thing, that he may be taken notice of to be some body, that he may not go out of the world without some noise: What, shall such a man as I? of such parts, such approved abilities, so endued by God to do some eminent service, be laid aside, and no body regard me? I must set upon some notable work , something that may draw the eye of observance upon me. I have read of a young man, who set Diana's Temple on fire,\* and being asked the reason, he said, That he might have a name, that the people might talk of him. Because he could not be famous by doing good, he would by doing evil. Proud spirits will venture the setting the Temple of God, yea Church and State on fire, that they may have a name, whatsoever they do or suffer;\* to get a name they will rather venture, then dye in obscurity, that of all things they cannot bear.



7. A proud man would have others under him; and others being proud too, would have him under them; he would have others yield to him, and others would have him yield to them; where will the agreement then begin? What is that which hath rent and torn the world in all ages, that hath brought woeful distractions, perplexities, confusions, miseries in all Countries by Wars, but the pride of a few great ones, seeking to bring one under another? Those wasting Wars of the Romans between Sylla and Marius, Cæsar and Pompey, were they not from hence? It is hard for men in great places, and of great spirits, to accord long. Melancthon in his Comment upon Prov. 13:10. says concerning such men, there was wont to be this Proverb, Duo montes non miscentur, Two mountains will not mix together.

Eighthly, a proud man makes his will to be the rule of his actions, and would have it to be the rule of other mens too, and other men being proud too, would have their wills the rule of their actions, and of his too. Thus the blustering wind of Pride in mens hearts causes them to jostle one against another, and so to split themselves one upon another; as where many ships lye together, a violent wind breaking their Anchor cables, causes them to dash one upon another, and so to make Shipwreck even in the Haven.

9. A proud man opposes others, because they have begun such a work; and others, who are also proud, oppose him, because he hath begun it. The Senators of Rome could have been content to have admitted Christ to have been amongst the number of their gods, but only upon this, they refused because the motion began not with them. Many amongst us have no other reason why they oppose good motions, but because they were not first in them; They are loth to break the ice, to begin a good work, if they see any difficulty in it, and yet the Cause of God must not go on, Christ must not be admitted, if they have not been at the beginning: Like two men carrying along piece of timber in at a narrow passage, one man will go before, and the other man will go before, they can never carry it in, because they cannot agree who shall go foremost.

10. One proud man is conceited of what he doth, because it is his own way; and another proud man is conceited of what he doth, because it is

his own way, and so men draw divers ways, and the public Cause of God and his people must give way to their conceitedness. Pride makes a man drunk with his own conceits. Hab. 2:5. The proud man is as he that transgresseth by wine; and Drunkards you know are quarrelsome. Wonder not at any absurd thing in a proud man, for pride makes him drunk. Prov. 13:10. Proud men who cause contention, are opposed to the well advised, But with the well advised (cum consultis) is wisdom.\* The Septuagint reads it, The wise are such as know themselves, but the proud do not.

11. Proud men will venture upon things unseemly, thinking their esteem and greatness will bear them out; and others who are proud will venture upon the like, upon the same ground, for every man is ready to have high thoughts of himself. Psal. 19:14. Deliver me from presumptuous sins, à superbis, so some, Ab insolentibus, so others, from proud, from insolent sins. Pride makes insolent. A proud man,\* says the Philosopher, is a feigner of boldness and valor, and therefore will foolishly venture upon any thing.

12. If there is any thing to be done that is conceived to be mean and low, a proud man will seek to put it upon others, and others who are proud will seek to put it upon him; and if it be a work of credit, then he seeks it to himself, and others seek it to themselves, and hence are jarrings and divisions.

13. If there be any good success in any thing, then pride makes one man attribute it to himself, and another man attribute it to himself; and if the success be ill, then one puts it off from himself, and another from himself, and thus quarrels and contentions are raised and fomented.

14. One proud man thinks himself the only worthy man to have his counsel followed, and his desires satisfied, and the other he thinks himself the man that should have his counsel followed, and his desires satisfied, and thus men struggle and oppose one another.

Lastly, one proud man is very discerning in the discovery of pride in another; and though he entertains it in his own bosom, yet he hates it in others wheresoever he sees it: This is a peculiar curse upon this sin; one

drunkard loves another, one whoremaster another, but one proud man hates another. This is exemplified notably in Boniface the second, Bishop of Rome, he says of Aurelius Bishop of Carthage, and of the rest of those who were present at the sixth Council of Carthage, that through the instigation of the Devil, they swelled with pride against the Roman Church, he means against the Supremacy of it, for it was spoken upon the submission of Eulalius Bishop of Carthage, to the Chair of Rome. Behold the proud Bishop of Rome, who would have all the preeminence himself, swells with pride against the pride of others.

Here we see what a make-bate Pride is; That which Tertullus said to Felix, Act. 24:2. is true of Humility, By thee we enjoy great quietness; but the contrary is as true of Pride, By thee are made woeful divisions, by thee we suffer miserable disturbances. Though there be no occasion of quarrel, yet pride will make some; only by pride comes contention, as before, Pro. 13:10. though there be nothing else but pride, and in the Hebrew it is יתן מצה Dabit jurgium, give contention, if there be no cause given, it will make it.

Now let every man look into his own heart, and see what Pride hath been, and still is there, and be humbled before the Lord for this. All you contentious, froward, quarrelsome people, you are charged this day from God to be men and women of proud spirits, and what evil there is in our sad divisions, that pride in your bosom is a great cause of. S. Paul did beat down his body, left after he had preached to others, he should become a Reprobate. Let us all, and especially Ministers, labour to beat down our spirits, left after all our profession and glorious shows, we at last become Reprobates, at least such as God may cast out for the present in this world, taking no delight in making use of; what in such times as these are to have hearts swollen and lift up in pride? God is now about the staining the pride of the earth. How unseasonable and dangerous is it for a Mariner to have his topsails up, and all spread in a violent storm? it is time then to pull down all, left he be sunk irrecoverably. The point of a needle will let the wind out of a bladder, and shall not the swords of God, the swords of War and Plague, that have got so deep into our bowels, let out the windy pride of our hearts? The haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone will be exalted. The Lord humble us, that he

may reconcile us, not only to himself, but to one another.

## CHAP. XVII

### **Self-love, the second dividing distemper.**

This is near akin to the former: Philip. 2:3. Let nothing be done through strife: Ver. 4. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others: This is the cause of strife, because men look so much on their own things. Many will have no peace, except their own party be followed; Iehu-like, What hast thou to do with peace? follow me. It is not Peace, but Party that they mind . Maxima pars studiorum est studium partium: The greatest part of their studies, is to study sides and parts. Luther upon the 127. Psal. hath a notable speech, I am of that opinion, says he,\* that Monarchies would continue longer then they do , were it not for that same little Pronoun [EGO] that same [I] (my self .) Yea certainly could this same Self be but laid aside, all governments and societies would not only continue longer, but flourish better.

Self-love is the cause of our divisions.

First, where this prevails, men love to take in all to themselves, but let out nothing from themselves; this must needs divide societies in Church and State, for they are Bodies; if one member in the body takes in all to it self , and lets out nothing from it self to other members; as suppose the arm or leg takes in all the blood and spirits that comes in to strengthen it self , and when it hath got them in, there keeps them, and lets out none to any other member, how soon would the members drop one from another? The whole world is maintained by mutual communication of one creature to another; take away that, and the world dissolves presently.

Secondly, those who are acted by self-love, have no common ends to join them, therefore they cannot close; if they be employed in public service, they quickly warp to their private ends. Take two boards never so straight, yet if one be seasoned and the other green, they will lye close a while, but ere long you will find that the unseasoned will divide from the other by warping, especially when heat comes to it. Thus many at the

first, Oh who but they for the public, for the common good; but there being a principle of Self within, like the sap in the board, when they began to feel heat, some difficulties rising, they warped to their own ends, and divided from those they were employed with. Mens private ends are narrow, they cannot drive on them but they will meet with one another, & jostle one another, quarrel, contend, and fight for the way, as Car-men do when they meet in narrow streets, and Boat-men in narrow passages. If we had public ends, our way would be broad enough,\* we might go on peaceably and comfortably, without prejudice to one another. If a man lived alone, then he might go on quietly in his way, only God would meet him in it; but seeing men live in the world amongst others, they must consider, that if they will drive on their own designs, and work their own ends, other men have designs and ends to drive on and work as well as they: it is therefore impossible but you will cross and be crossed, you will vex and fret at others, and others will vex and fret at you. Whatsoever is such, says, Tullie, wherein many cannot excel, in that there is for the most part such contention, as society can hardly be kept entire.

Thirdly, Self makes every man judge of things according to what is in himself. I have read of Blackmores, when they paint an Angel, they paint him black like themselves; and when they paint the Devil, they paint him white, as much different from themselves as they can: Thus men acted by Self, the soulest, blackest opinion, yet if suitable to their judgements, they will set out like Angels, with the fairest glosses that may be; and that which is truth, if disagreeing from them, they will paint it out in the soulest manner that can be; they labour so to besmear it, that if it be possible it shall look like a Devil. If a selfish man be conscious of not having that which is commendable, he will not believe that others hath it: As Nero, being abominably filthy, would not believe there was any chaste man in the world: Whatsoever evil he doth, he thinks all men if they had the like opportunity, would do the same; if they have plots to fetch about their own ends, they think every man is plotting too.

Fourthly, Self makes much stir and trouble, for it is a very odious thing; *Omne affectatum odiosum*: as Vermine are odious, because they only take in to themselves, consume things, and are no way useful to any thing else. When any thing doth but smell of Self, it begins to be loathed; let a

man have never such excellent parts, do never such excellent things, yet if Self appears, the loveliness and glory of all is gone; therefore those men that act self, they had need be very cunning, to keep in and hide it; herein appears what a vile thing Self is, that though in truth it acts all, and receives the incomes of all, yet it dares not appear, but lies skulking under all the covers it can; how vile is this self, for which all must be done, which thou makest thy God, yet cannot in the least appear, but is odious and abominable to every one? yea it is conscious to it self that it is so, and therefore dares not appear; yet the acting of it is very mischievous to all humane Societies.

Fifthly, There is this wickedness in self-love, that even those things that men acknowledge to be right and good in the general, yet if in the particular they shall not suite with something they would have, it will put men upon the opposing it; and what peace and union can there be amongst men, if what they will grant and commend to be good, yet when it falls cross to them, they will oppose and contend against? Thus Act. 26:7. Unto which promise our twelve tribes instantly serving God night and day hope to come, for which hopes sake I am accused of the Jews The twelve Tribes, the whole body of the Jews constantly grant the promise of the Resurrection, and yet in malice to me they accuse me of this; or if not so, yet they are willing that I should sink in this cause: Just as many Ministers were wont in their Pulpits to commend highly the ways of Religion, to exhort men to grow up in godliness, to be careful of all their ways; but when some of their parishioners did but practice in the particular, what themselves had commended to them in the general, they would hate them, and persecute them for it. God deliver us from such a spirit.

Sixthly, Self, causes men who are in public employment, to keep up their private jars and grudges, to interrupt the public, they will cross one another in their work for the public; let that suffer, so they may let one another feel of their private grudges: In this Christians are beneath Heathens. I have read of Aristides and Themistocles, who had many jarrings between themselves, but being both employed in the work of the Common-wealth, in an Embassy, as they went over the Mountains, one says thus to the other, Let us lay down all our private grudges upon these

mountains, at least till our business be over, and if there shall be just cause when we have done our work for the Common-wealth, we may then examine them: It were happy with us, if all men in public employment in this Land would from their hearts speak thus to one another; but men are selfish and cannot do it: Hence comes so many of our breaches and divisions.

Seventhly, Self causes men not to see their own evils, or if they do, to indulge themselves in them, but to be quick-sighted and severe in the discovering and opposing those evils there are in others, and this causes many breaches and fallings out. We may apply that of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 13. Love covereth a multitude of faults to self-love. Selfish men see little evil in themselves, all is ever well with them whatsoever others do, and the more they cocker themselves, the more severe they are to others; but Christ would have the quite contrary, severity to ourselves, but indulgence to others; those that are so, are the most peaceable men. Mat. 18:8. If thy hand or foot offend thee cut them off, and cast them from thee; or if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out. We must deal severely with ourselves in those things that are as near and dear to us as our hands and eyes; but ver. 15. When Christ gives order how we are to deal with our Brethren, he then requires more moderation; if thy Brother offends thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, and see what thou canst do with him that way; yea, and after that tell the Church, not presently cut him off, or cast him away, as you must do when your hand or eye offends you; If men have any indulgence, let it be exercised towards their Brethren; if they have any severity, let them exercise that against themselves. I remember I have read of Pliny, that he says of himself, That he so passed by other mens offences, as if himself were the greatest offender, and he was so severe against himself, as if he meant to pardon none. If it were so with us, we should live at more peace one with another then we do .

8. Selfishness causes reservedness; great self-lovers never care for communion but with such as are either far above them, that so they may get from them, and have credit by conversing with them, or with those that are under them, for they will admire them, they may rule amongst



them: In the company of either of these, they will let out themselves fully; but if there be an equality, then you shall have little from them, there is nothing to draw forth Self, there soon grows a strangeness between them and such, union will not hold where communion is not free; if there be but an interruption of the freedom of communion, the union will soon break.

You will say, These were wont to be very entire friends, how came they to break? what hath either of them done? what unkindness hath besalned them?

None at all, only that principle of Self was not so fully fed as it would be; upon that they began to be reserved, and so strange, and at last quite fell off from one another, from former love and friendship, and then every little thing caused grudgings between them.

Ninthly, Self sets mens wits on work in all cunning craftiness, to fetch others about to their own ends, and this goes as much against a mans spirit as any thing: When he comes to discern it, no man can abide to be circumvented, to be as it were rid upon, to be made serviceable only to another mans ends: the more cunning there is in it, the more odious and abominable it is to a mans spirit, when it comes once to be perceived, a man cannot bear it. Crooked windings are the goings of the Serpent: But if a man shall not only seek to make use of another to serve his own turn by him, but after he hath done that, then to cast him off to shift for himself; this is so provoking a thing, as it makes breaches irreconcilable.

10. When one is for Self in his ways, he teaches another to be so in his; As a man by conversing with the froward, learns to be froward: So many who have heretofore had plain hearts, full of love and sweetness, yet by being acquainted much with selfish politique men, learn to be so too; I see how he hooks in himself in every thing, fetches about this way and that way, but still gets it to come to self ; I perceived it not at my first acquaintance with him, and then my heart was let out to him fully, but now I see every man is for himself, and why should not I be so too? and what then is like to become of the Public?

Surely this selfishness is very vile in the eyes of God; God hath made us

members of a community, the Universe is maintained by union, therefore the creatures will venture the destroying themselves in going contrary to their natures, rather than there should not be union in the world; that which they do in a natural way, we should do by the strength of reason, much more by grace. Philosophers say there cannot be a vacuity in the world; The world could not stand, but would be dissolved, if every part were not filled, because Nature subsists by being one; if there were the least vacuity, then all things should not be joined in one, there would not be a contiguity of one part with another. This is the reason that water will ascend when the air is drawn out of a pipe, to fill it; this is to prevent division in nature; O that we had but so much naturalness in us, that when we see there is like to be any breach of union, we would be willing to lay down our self-ends, to venture ourselves, to be any thing in the world that is not sin, that we may help to a joining: O foolish heart, that in such a time as this art selfish, when the danger is public! As in a storm, when the Ship is in danger, if every Mariner should be busy about his own Cabin, dressing and painting that; what infinite sottish folly were it? and is it not our case? It were just with God to leave thee to thy self hereafter; if thou wilt look so much to thy self now. Ezek. 22:16. And thou shalt take thine inheritance in thy self in the sight of the Heathen, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: This is in a way of threat, as appears if you compare it with ver. 14, 15. Woe to us if God leaves us to ourselves. I have heard of a story of a fool being left in a chamber, and the door locked when he was asleep, after he awakes and finds door locked, and all the people gone, he cries out at the window, Oh my self , my self , O my self , nothing else came from him but O my self . Such fools have we amongst us now, nothing but Self is in their thoughts, their hearts and endeavours. The Apostles complaint, Phil. 2:21. may justly be ours, All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's: Their own things, that is, says Chrysostom,\* their pleasure and their security, their temporal commodities, their profits, their honours: So others, why are not the comforts, the safeties, the honours of the Saints the things of Christ, doth not Christ own them? Are they not under his protection and care?

Answ. Yes, And he would own them more, if we owned them less; the more we deny them, the more hath he a care of them: We may by our

giving them up to the honour of Christ, make them to be amongst the number of his things, and then they would be precious indeed: but by desiring them, using them, rejoicing in them, in reference to ourselves, Christ accounts them not amongst his things, things of a higher nature are his things, the glory of his Father, the propagation of the Gospel, the spiritual good of his people, and the things of eternal life, they are his things; let us make his things ours, and he will make our things his.

## **CHAP. XVIII**

### **The third Dividing Distemper, Envy.**

Envy is a squint-eyed fool, Job 5:2. Envy slayeth the silly one. James 3:14. If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts. Envy is a bitter thing, and causes strife, and makes that bitter too: So ver. 16. Where envying and strife is. Gal. 5:20. Hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings. 1 Cor. 3:3. There is among you envying, strife, divisions. Envy made divisions between Angels and men; it was the first sin, not the first borne of the Devil, but that which turned Angels into Devils. The first heart-division amongst men was between Cain and Abel, and what caused it but envy? Who can stand before Envy? she is subtile, undermining, dares not appear at the first; but if she cannot be satisfied with her underworks, then she flings, rends, frets, and fights, uses violence, seeks to raise a contrary faction, falls on any thing in the world so be it mischief may be done, let become of God's glory, of service to the public, of saving souls, rather than that esteem, respect and honour that otherwise might be had, should not be obtained; all must come under, all must be serviceable to this base lust; rather than the glory of an envious

man must be eclipsed, God himself and his blessed Truth must be darkened; O hideous wickedness and high impudence against the God of Heaven! Envy divides in Counsels, in instruments, actions, in all proceedings: She will make use of good to oppose that which is good; if she cannot raise evil men to oppose good, she will seek to get good men to oppose; she would make God contrary to himself, she would strike at God with his own sword. Phil. 1:15. Some preach Christ out of envy. As Envy makes use of good for evil, so God makes use of this evil for good: Many seek to excel in preaching, or otherwise, by this means; and says Saint Paul, Howsoever I do rejoyce, and will rejoyce. If Envy cannot reach others by imitation, she will reach them by calumniation. Zoilus the common slanderer, being asked why he spake evil of such and such men? Because, says he, I can do no evil to them. If there be any good done, that she seeks to blast, together with the instruments of it; if any evil, that she rakes into, and feeds upon, like that Bird Ibis in Africa, that eats Serpents. Luther says, envious men feed upon the dung of other men; they are like flies, that love to be upon sores. Erasmus tells of one, who collected all the lame defective verses in Homer, and passed over all that were so excellent. When you see a man seeking to rake and gather together all he can of any distempers, disorders, mistakes, miscarriages by hearsay, Letters, or any way, so be it he may fill up his dung-cart; and for the good, the graces or gifts of God in men, those are laid aside, or slightly passed over, if at all mentioned, it is with some dirt mingled: Surely this is an envious man fitted for strife and debate, whom God permits to be an affliction to his people, in raising up a spirit of strife and contention, and causing divisions amongst them, like the Kite, who passes over faire Meadows, and pleasant fields, not regarding them, till she meets with a carrion, there she falls and fastens, now she is upon her prey where she would be: How pleasant is it to some men to hear of, or find out evil in others whom they do not love? To say no worse. You know how it hath been an old practise, to seek to get any thing by reports, or any other ways that might blast the Professors of Religion; and how glad were they? how did it please them at the heart if they could meet with any thing that might serve their turn?

This is a very shameful distemper, some men will upon occasion confess they fear other men, and others that they love not other men, or that they

condemn others, but no man will acknowledge that he envies others, there is too much shame in this, to be owned by any. The impiety and wickedness is not less, it is a monstrous wickedness for a man to complain of God, that he made the world no better; and yet such wickedness there is in some mens hearts; but what is it then to complain of, and quarrel with God, that he hath made the World, or any part of it so well? This the envious man doth.

An envious man cannot endure to see others better then himself, or to have more respect then himself. It is reported of Licinius an intimate familiar with Constantine the Great, who also married his sister, but fell off to be a desperate enemy against Christians, alleging this to be the reason, because in their Assemblies they prayed for Constantine, and not for him. Envious men, whether they deserve respect or no, yet if others have it, and not themselves, they rage, and are mad.

There is no vice but hath some kind of opposition to some other, as covetousness to prodigality, &c. but Envy only opposeth that which is good, and all good, therefore there is nothing in it but evil, and an universal evil. Gulielmus Parisiensis brings in Gregory, saying, That all the poison in the old Serpent is in this sin, as if it had emptied it self of its poison, and vomited it in this sin, so much venom there is in it.

Is it not a very evil thing, that in mens opposition against what they see others desire, they should give this reason why it should not be suffered,\* because if it be, the greater part of the most godly people in all places will join with it? This brings to mind what I have read in Ecclesiastical History: In the Second Century, The Emperor Adrian would have built a Church for the honour of Christ void of Images, because such was the custom of the Christians; but his friends dissuaded him, saying, If he did so, all men would forsake the Temples of the gods, and become Christians. I find in that learned piece of Voetius, *Desperata causa papatus*, a notable story of Raynerius a Popish Inquisitor, he exclaims against the Waldenses, those poor men of Lions, (as he calls them,) He says there was never any more pernicious Sect then that;\* and I pray why? He gives 3. reasons; First, That it is very ancient; Some say (says he) it hath continued from the time of Sylvester; others, from the times of the Apostles. Secondly, It is so general, there is scarce any country but this

hath got into it. Thirdly, whereas others are guilty of blasphemy against God, upon which they are abhorred, these appear to be holy men, they live justly, their belief of God is right, they believe all the Articles in the Creed; We can find no fault with them either for their lives or for their Doctrine, only they are against the Church of Rome, in which the people are ready to join with them. These are strange accusations, for do not they themselves make all these the signs of the true Church? and yet are these poor men so vile, because such things are found amongst them. Surely, it is Envy that embitters the spirits of men against others, because they see in them those things which they cannot but acknowledge to be good, and herein the great evil of Envy, that malignity of it, by which it causeth so great contentions does appear, they are angry they can find no evil in them, whereby they may get advantage against them.

The holy Ghost says, that envy is rottenness to the bones; the same learned man Guliel. Paris. applies this to such as are chief in Church and Common-wealth, who are as it were the bones, the strength, the support of the societies whereof they are; Envy, says he, is often found amongst them, and it is rottenness to them. This vile sin hath caused a rot in many men of eminent abilities and places, who might otherwise have done much service for God and his people in Church and Commonwealth: oh it is a mischievous sin. Take away envy, says Augustine, and what is mine, you have; take away envy, and what is yours, I have. We read Acts 11. of Barnabas that he was a good man, and full of the holy Ghost, and he was a man of a cleaving disposition, of an uniting temper, ver. 23. He exhorted them that with full purpose of heart they would cleave to the Lord: This man was free from envy, for the Text says, when he had seen the grace of God, he was glad: He rejoiced in, and blessed God for the graces he saw in his Saints. Doe you envy for my sake? says Moses; I would to God all the people of the Lord did prophesy. Moses was a fit man for public service, who was so void of envy; No men are so fit for public employment as such who can bless God that he is pleased to make use of others as well as, yea beyond themselves. It was a good speech of that gracious, holy, old Disciple Mr. Dod lately deceased, I would to God, says he, I were the worst Minister in England; not wishing himself worse then he was, but all Ministers better.

## The Fourth Dividing Distemper, Passion.

Prov. 29:23. An angry man stirreth up strife. Passion is so opposite to Union, that Prov. 22:24. the holy Ghost would have us make no friendship with an angry man.

First, this fire of anger burns asunder the bands of union, the bands of relation, as Nebuchadnezzars fire did the bands of the three Children. A froward heart cares not for any relations. What makes divisions between husband and wife, brother and brother, servants and masters, and mistresses, neighbor and neighbor, but passionate frowardness?

Secondly, this fire burns asunder the bands by which mens lusts were tied up and kept in; it sets mens lusts at liberty, The lusts of mens hearts are like a bed of snakes in the cold, but the heat of passion warming them, causes them to crawl and hiss. What a stir would the Lions in the Tower make, and the Bears in Paris-garden, if they were let loose? Passion lets mens Lyon-like lusts loose. Philosophers say of the inferior Orbs, that were they not kept in, restrained in their motion by the Premium mobile, they would set all the world on fire: If our lower affections, especially this of Anger, be not kept in and ordered by Reason and Religion, they will set all on fire. Passion makes men and women to be lawless, boundless, careless.

Men know not what they do in their anger; this raises such a smoke, that they cannot see their way; the more corrupt the heart is, the greater and the more noisome is the smoke raised by this fire in the heart. Put fire to wet straw and filthy stuff, oh what a filthy smoke arises!

Levit. 13:25. we read of a leprosy breaking out of a burning; seldom do mens passions burn, but there is a leprosy breaking out of that burning, and what union can there be with such? If froward people were dealt withal like the Lepers, shut up from others, we should have more peace. Some men when once their anger is got up, they will never have done, we can have no quiet with them; this fire in them, is like that of hell, unquenchable. The dog-days continue with them all the year long. Seven devils can better agree in one Mary Magdalen, then seven froward people in one family. If one should set the Beacons on fire upon the landing of

every Cock-boat, what continual combustions and tumults would there be in the Land? Those men who upon every trifle are all on a fire by their passions, and what in them lies sets others on fire, do exceedingly disturb the peace of those places where they live, those societies of which they are. Their hot passions cause the Climate where they live to be like the torrid zone, too hot for any to live near them. Christ is the Prince of peace, and the Devil is the Prince of divisions. Hence that expression of the holy Ghost, Eph. 4:27. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil: you are loth to give place to your brother. You will say, What, shall I yield to him? You will not yield to him, but you will yield to him that is worse, to the Devil. So you do when you yield to wrath.

There are divers other dividing distempers that we shall speak to;\* but for the present let us make use of the great mercy of God towards us, that yesterday we solemnized in a public Thanksgiving; Let us see how we may improve this glorious work of God for the closing of our spirits, the healing our divisions. It calls to us aloud to join, oh let your hearts join. There are twelve Arguments in this great work of God, to persuade us to union.

First, there hath appeared much of God's presence in this his great work. I will praise thee, oh Lord, for thou hast done it, Psal. 52:9. The Lord hath appeared wonderfully, his naked arm hath been revealed, his right hand hath become glorious in power. Those who were present saw much of God in this work. They send to us to give God the glory, and all the Country about send still to us to tell us how much of God they have seen in this.

But how is this an argument for us to unite?

Answ. Suppose children or servants were wrangling one with another, were not this an argument to make them be quiet, Your Father is here, Your Master is come? will not all be whist presently? God is come amongst us, we may see the face of God in what he hath done for us, and shall we be quarrelling before his face?

But three days before this great goodness of God, by special Order from



the House of Commons, there was a day set apart to humble our souls before the Lord, and to seek him for this mercy that now we rejoice in, and in our Humiliation was not this one great sin we did confess our divisions? did we not then acknowledge that it were righteous with God because of our divisions, to give us up as a prey to our adversaries? Now then, have not our divisions overcome God's goodness, lest God's goodness overcome our divisions? Suppose there had been a day of Humiliation set apart to mourn under the heavy hand of God against us in delivering us up into the hands of our enemies, as (through his mercy we have had a day of Thanksgiving, to bless him for our deliverance from them) would not this sin have been the matter of a great part of the confession of all your Ministers? Oh the divisions that are amongst us! Thou hast dealt righteously with us. Our wraths were up one against another, and just it is with thee O Lord to let out the rage of the Adversary upon us; and shall we yet continue in that after a mercy, which we have confessed might justly have prevented the mercy? shall we still be guilty of that, which our consciences tell us, would have been the burden of them, as the just cause of our misery, if the Lord had come against us in his sore displeasure? God forbid. Let not that evil now be found in us, that would have galled our consciences, if mercy had been denied us.

3. We are delivered from being devoured by our enemies; shall we now devour one another? oh unworthy we of such a deliverance as this. It went ill with us in the beginning of the fight, but God looked mercifully upon us, his bowels wrought, if I come not in for their help. These ungodly men will devour my servants, howsoever they have been fair to some, because yet they have not attained their own ends; but if they prevail here, they will account all their own, and then they will begin to exercise that cruelty that yet hath not been heard of, but it shall not be, my heart cannot bear the cries of my servants under such cruelties as I fore-see. Do you think this was God's end in delivering us from being devoured of our enemies, that we may be devoured one of another? We read Ezek. 5:3, 4. the Prophet was bid to bind up a few hairs in his skirt, which was to signify a few of the people which were preserved from that common calamity, but after these were cast into the fire, and fire came forth from these to all the house of Israel. Polanus upon the place hath this note, that grievous evils may come upon those who have been

preserved from former common miseries, and those who for a while have been preserved, by their contentions and divisions, may be the cause of woeful evil to others. God forbid that this Text should be fulfilled in us. Let not a fire come from us, who yet are so graciously preserved, to devour the house of Israel.

Fourthly, God in this work of his hath joined several sorts of instruments, men of several opinions; he hath made them one to do us good, why should not we be one in the enjoyment of that good? Let the one part, and let the other part have their due honour under God, in the mercy God hath made use of both, and why may not both enjoy the fruit of this mercy together in the Land?

Fifthly, we were not without some fears, lest God should leave us in the work of Reformation begun; but now God speaks aloud to encourage us, he tells us he owns the work. Now what doth this require of us? A little Logic will draw the consequence, Hath God declared himself that he intends to go on in this work he hath begun? Then let us all join together, to further it, to the uttermost we can; let us not exasperate the spirits of one another in ways of strife and opposition, but let every one set his hand and heart to this work, that he may be able to say, Oh Lord God, thou that knowst the secrets of all hearts, knowst that upon this great mercy of thine, my heart was so moved, that whatsoever I could possibly see to be thy will for the furtherance of this great work of Reformation, and that I was able to do, I did set my self to do it, and am resolved to spend my strength and life in it. If every one did thus, oh what glory might God have from this mercy of his!

Sixthly, when the Lord comes to us with mercies, and such great mercies, he expects we should rejoice in them, and sing praise; but how can we sing without Harmony? Prayer requires an agreement. Mat. 18:19. If two of you shall agree on earth touching any thing they shall ask, it shall be done for them. Surely Praise requires agreement much more. Psalms out of tune are harsh to the ear; disagreement of heart is much more to the Spirit of God.

7. Surely when God hath done so much for us, it must be acknowledged to be our duty, to study what sacrifice would be best pleasing to him; some

sacrifice we must offer: If there be any more acceptable to him than other, surely he deserves it now. If a friend had done some real kindness for you, you would be glad to know what might be most grateful to him, wherein you might testify your thankfulness: Is this in your hearts? Do you now say, Oh that we did but know what is the thing that would be most pleasing to God; what sacrifice would smell sweetest in his nostrils! The Lord knows we would fain offer it, whatsoever it be. I will tell you, That we would lay aside our divisions, our forwardness, that we would abandon our contentions and strife, that we would put on the bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, forgiving one another; if any man hath a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye, Col. 3:12. And 1 Pet. 3:4. A meek and a quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price, it is much set by, πολυτελής. Psal. 51:17. The sacrifice of God, that which is instead of all sacrifices, is a broken spirit. Our hearts have been broken one from another in our unhappy divisions; oh that now they could break one towards another in love and tenderness! Here would be a sacrifice more esteemed of God, than thousands of Rams, and ten thousand Rivers of Oil: Loving mercy, and walking humbly is preferred above such sacrifices, Micah 6:8.

Eighthly, God might have soddered us together by the fire of his wrath, he might have made our blood to have been our cement to have joined our flinty hearts together; but it is otherwise, God seeks to draw us to himself, and one to another by the cords of love, the allurings of his mercy.

Ninthly, what can have that power to take off the soreness of mens spirits like mercy; the mercy of a God? surely if any thing possibly can sweeten them, that must needs do it. We read 1 Sam. 11:11, 12, 13. a notable experiment of the efficacy of mercy to sweeten mens hearts. After Saul had slain the Ammonites, some of the boisterous spirits would have had him to have slain those who formerly had rejected him; but mark Saul's answer, ver. 13. There shall not a man be put to death this day: Why? For this day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel. Though Saul at another time was a man of a harsh and cruel spirit, yet now mercy sweetens him; that which he was one day by the sense of mercy, that should we be not only in the day of our Thanksgiving, but in the course

of our lives. When salvation came to the house of Zachaeus, O what a sweet temper was he in! Behold, half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wronged any one, I restore fourfold. Salvation is this day come to the Kingdom, O that all we, had hearts to say, If we have wronged any, we will restore; if we have wronged any in their names, by word, or writing, any way, we will restore: Mercy and love calls for mercy and love; if we were in a right tune, there would be a sympathy between the bowels of God and ours; as in two Lutes, if the string in one be wound up to be answerable to the other, if you then strike one string, the other will move though lying at a distance: Now God's love, God's bowels move, let our love, our bowels move answerably.

10. God shows that he can own us notwithstanding all our infirmities: Was ever Kingdom in a more distempered condition then ours hath been of late? and yet the Lord hath owned us: Why should not we own our Brethren, notwithstanding their infirmities? Why should our divisions cause us to cast off one another, seeing our divisions from God hath not provoked him to cast us off?

11. Is it not in our desires, that this great Victory might be pursued, that it might not be lost, as others (in great part) have been? Surely it cannot be pursued better, then to take this advantage of it, to unite ourselves more together then ever we have done. This would strike as great a terror into the hearts of our adversaries as the victory hath done.

Lastly, we had need take heed of breaches, lest God should be provoked to change his administrations towards us; if there be so much choler in the stomach, that sweet meats are turned into choler, it were just with God to come with bitter and sore pills to purge out our choler. We read Jude, ver. 5. The Lord saved the people out of the Land of Egypt, yet afterward he destroyed them that believed not; the Lord hath granted us a great salvation from our enemies, who would have brought us into Egyptian bondage. We have been singing the song of Moses, we have been praising God according to that, Apoc. 15:3. but let us take heed that yet God be not provoked against us, for we are not out of all danger; as they by not believing, so we by not agreeing, but contending and quarrelling may at last be destroyed. You know how the Lord of that servant to whom ten thousand talents were given, took it, that he should

presently go to his fellow servant who ought him but a hundred pence, and lay hands on him and take him by the throat, and say, Pay that thou owest, and cast him into prison, Mat. 18:28. If men be not mollified by this mercy, they will be hardened, they will use their brethren worse then they did before, the rather, because they would declare to all the world, that they make no such interpretation of this mercy, as that God would have them have further tender regard towards, to seek union and peace with, to bear with or yield unto their Brethren more then before; it is not unlikely but temptation may be suggested to do some act the more against them, either now or within a while, to wipe away any conceit of any such an interpretation of this gracious work of God for us. But those who are of gracious and peaceable spirits, should take the hint of this, and go to all they know, who have been at distance one from another, of whom they may have hope to do good, and seek to mollify their spirits, to know what it is they have one against another, what prejudices, what hard thoughts have been entertained by them, and by all means they are able to remove them, that so we loving and delighting in one another, the Lord may love us, and delight in us, and shew mercy to us yet more and more.

## CHAP. XIX

### **The fifth Dividing Distemper, (Rigidness;) the sixth Rashness; the seventh, Wilfulness; the eighth, Inconstancy.**

Rigid, harsh, sore, crabbed, rough-hewn spirits are unfit for union; there is no sweetness, no amiableness, no pleasingness in them, they please themselves in a rugged austereness, but are pleasing to none else in all their ways; they will abate nothing of their own, nor yield any thing to others: This is against the rule of the Apostle, Rom. 15:1, 2, 3. We must

not please ourselves, but let every one please his Neighbor for his good to edification; and this, according to the example of Christ, who pleased not himself. This is the duty not of weak men only, who had need please others, because they have need of others, but ver. 1. those that are strong ought not to please themselves, but seek to please others: Men who are of austere spirits affecting a gravity which turns to a dull, sullen sternness, they think it to be the commendation of the strength of their spirits, that they can carry themselves as they do towards others, seeking altogether content to themselves without any yeilding to others; no, that is but lightness and weakness in men, they are of a more staid and strong temper then to do so: These men by their wisdom do very much sin against the wisdom of the Holy Ghost in this Scripture; yea, and against the example of Jesus Christ, who as in his whole course manifested tenderness, gentleness, amiableness, amiableness towards weak ones, who were infinitely beneath him, and here is set forth unto us to be one who pleased not himself, far from this rigid harsh temper: Those swords are not of the best tempered metal who will not bend but stand stiff, but such as yield and bend with most ease, and stand strait again; neither are those dispositions the best, who are the stiffest; but such as are most yeilding, and yet stand straight too. This harsh and rigid spirit makes mens gifts and graces to be very unuseful When Plato saw Xenocrates of an austere rigid temper, he advised him to sacrifice to the Graces, that he might have more mildness, fearing that otherwise his parts and learning would be unprofitable. The Jews observe upon Exod. 25:3. That no Iron was in the stuff of the Tabernacle; rigid iron spirits are very unfit for Church work . Levit. 17:7. They shall no more sacrifice to Devils:\* The word translated Devils, signifies rough ones; Devils had their names from thence; this is the name of a Satyr, Isa. 34:14. The rough one. The Spirit of God is a Dove-like sweet Spirit, but the Spirit of the Devil, is a rough harsh spirit, the spirit of a Satyr. Prov. 11:17. He that is cruel, troubleth his own flesh. That word here translated cruel, the Septuagint elsewhere translates it by a word that signifies rigid, stiff, *σπερδς*, Jerem. 30:14. Men of such tempers are very troublesome to themselves, to their families, to all with whom they converse: If a Smith would join two pieces of iron, he must first file them, or beat them smooth: If the Joyner would join two pieces of wood, he must plain them: Except our spirits be filed, beaten smooth, or plained, they are unfit for joining.

## The sixth Dividing Distemper, Rashness.

Acts 19:36. Ye ought to be quiet, and do nothing rashly. Doing things rashly, and quietness, are opposed.

1. Rashness makes men engage themselves suddenly in business, before they have examined it well: This causes much trouble, for if a man be engaged he lies under a temptation to go on in it: As 2 Chron. 25:9. When the man of God came to Amaziah, to take him off from a business he was engaged in; O but, says he, what shall I do for the hundred talents I have given out already? thus many answer to the truth of God that would take them off from what they are engaged in, but what shall I do for my credit that lies engaged?

Secondly, Rashness causes men suddenly to provoke others; whereas did they consider what ill consequences might come of it, they would forbear. Rash men quickly take hold of the sword of justice to hack and hew; they think that what they do is according to reason: but they do not wisely weigh things in the balance of Justice. Remember, Justice hath a Balance as well as a Sword. Prov. 29:11. A fool uttereth all his mind,\* the Septuagint translate it, θυμῶν, utters all his anger. Rash fools by uttering their anger, suddenly cause great stir and trouble where ever they come. The Hebrew word that signifies a fool, and that which signifies suddenly, rashly, is from the same root.

Thirdly, when peace sometimes is even concluded, and there is great joy in hope of a comfortable agreement, rashness will suddenly break it without any due consideration.

O that, that promise Isa. 52:4. were fulfilled amongst us, The heart of the rash shall understand knowledge. Rash men think they presently understand all that is knowable in such a business, and thence presume to make sudden determinations; but as over-hasty digestion causes wind, and brings much trouble to the body; so over-hasty resolutions to mens spirits and to societies.

## The seventh Dividing Distemper, Wilfulness.

I Think I may say in most men, Will is the axletree, lust and passions are the wheels, whereupon almost all their actions are carried: Where there is much will, though the thing be little about which men contend, yet the opposition may be great; as a little stone thrown with a strong arm, may take deep impression. It is a dangerous thing to have mens wills engaged in matters of difference, it is easier to deal with twenty mens reasons, then with one mans will: A man of a wilful stout spirit, stands as a stake in the midst of a stream, lets all passe by him, but he stands where he was; What hope can there be of union, where there will be no yielding? one mans will raiseth anothers, set will to will they may dash one against another, but not like to close, to get into one another. A wilful man thinks it is beneath a wise man to alter his way; yea, it may be he thinks it a dishonor to the truth, that both he, his profession, and the honour of God shall suffer by it; when a stubborn self-will is taken for a right constancy and settledness, it is very strong in men; but let us take heed of this, it is no matter though we go back from our former assertions, so long as we go forward to the truth. Luther was called an Apostate; I am so, says he, but it is from error to the truth. Many times stoutness of spirit comes from weakness rather then strength; there is not always the greatest strength of judgment where there is the greatest strength of will: As a mans judgement that is without prejudice is very strong; so a mans prejudice that is without judgement is as strong: The dullest horses are not always the most easily reigned. I know and am persuaded, says the Apostle, Rom. 14:14. many men are persuaded before they know, those who are persuaded before they know, will not be persuaded to know. Mens wills will not suffer their understandings to consider; if they do consider, they will not suffer them to be convinced; if they be convinced, they will not suffer them to acknowledge that they are convinced.

It is dishonest for a man not to give in his bond when the debt is paid; so for a man not to acknowledge himself convinced, but stand out against the truth, though his conscience tells him it is made clear to him. Let men lay down their wills, and there will be no hell, says Bernard: So say I,\* take away mens wills, and contentions will cease. Scaliger tells us, the nature of some kind of Amber is such, that it will draw to it self all kind of stalks of any herb, except Basilisk, an Herb called Capitals, because it makes men heady, filling their brains with black exhalations.\* Thus those



who by the fumes of their corrupt wills, are grown headstrong, will not be drawn by that which draws others.

But this charging men of wilfulness is presently caught hold of, in an abusive way; if men will not yield to what some conceive to be right, presently they are charged with wilfulness and stubbornness, they do not see because they will not see; they are not convinced, because they will not. We who differ so much from others in things that others think to be clear, should take heed how we charge others of wilfulness who differ from us: As it is dishonest not to give in the bond when the debt is paid, so it is a cheat to require the bond before the debt be satisfied: Men may think, and give out, they have done enough to convince men, when indeed, upon examination, it will be found to be nothing, or far short of satisfying the reasons that are against it if they were their own. But when a man may have peace in his conscience, that what he holds or does, is not through wilfulness, but constancy of his love to the truth, I shall speak to presently.

The eighth Dividing Distemper, Inconstancy.

IF a man had an art to change his face every day, to seem sometimes white, sometimes black, sometimes ruddy, sometimes pale, sometimes hairy, sometimes smooth, sometimes old, sometimes young, how unfit were such a man for society? this which men cannot do in their faces, they do in the inconstancy of their spirits: As our affections and determinations must not be like the Persian Decrees, to admit of no alteration, so neither must they be such as the Polonian Laws are, which (they say) last but three days: When a thing is so brittle, that it breaks as soon as you meddle with it, how can you make it join? there must be some consistency in that which you would fasten to another thing; when mens spirits are so fickle, that a man cannot tell where to find them, how can there be a close? O how much are men now differing from themselves, in what their thoughts of men and carriage towards them have been, though the men concerning whom they thus differ remain the same they were, yea the same they appeared to be long since! there was sweet agreement in affection, loving embracements, rejoicing in the preference of one another, and yet nothing is known in those from whom their hearts, countenances and ways are alienated, &c. more then

formerly was: not difference in judgement, that was known before: Such a change of spirits and carriages in godly men one towards another hath appeared, as never appeared in any age since the world began. A great deal of stir there hath bin more then formerly,\* and yet what are these men otherwise then they have been many years since? Were I to speak to wicked men, to charge them of the inconstancy of their spirits, I would make use of that similitude I have out of Epiphanius,\* who speaking of the Jews desiring the coming of the Messiah, but when he was come, they hated him, They were (says he) in this like mad dogs, who first glaver upon men, and then bite and devour them. But because I speak to many of the Saints, I had rather use a softer expression, more suitable to the honour that is due to godly men; I compare them in their inconstancy towards their brethren, which hath caused so great division, to the sweetness of the air in a faire sun-shine morning, oh how does it delight the traveller when he goeth forth! and truly such were the serene countenances of our brethren towards us, but within a while the clouds over-cast, the sky looks lowering, gusts of wind arise, yea thunderbolts of terrible words fly about our ears, and the flashes of their anger strike upon our faces.

Tantæ ne animis cœlestibus iræ.

Inconstancy is evil, and a cause of division; Stoutness is evil, and a cause of division: A man must not be one thing one day, and another another day; not like a Weather-cock, carried up and down with every wind; neither must he be willful and stout, not like a rusty lock that will not be stirred by any key. Now then, how shall we know when a man is neither fickle nor stout? For except some rules of discerning be given, this temptation may be before me, I must not be fickle, unsettled, and inconstant, I will therefore stiffly stand to maintain what I have professed.

Answ. You may know whether your sickliness be avoided by true settled constancy of spirit, or by stoutness, by these five notes:

First,\* true constancy and settledness of spirit is got by much prayer and humiliation before the Lord; Establish me Lord with thy free spirit; unite my heart to fear thy Name. When after thy heart-breakings and meltings,

and heart-cryings and pourings forth, Lord shew me what thy will is in this thing, keep me from miscarrying, let me not settle upon any error instead of the truth, but what is thy truth fasten my soul in it, that what ever temptations come, I may never be taken off from it. Tell God in Prayer what the thing is, and what hath persuaded thy heart to embrace it, open thy heart fully to God in all thy aims; and if by this means the heart be fixed, now it is delivered from sickliness, and not fall into stoutness.

Secondly, where true constancy is attained by the Spirit of God, and not by the stoutness of thine own, there is exercise of much grace, and growing up in grace, as faith, humility, love, meekness, patience, &c. 1 Pet. 3:17, 18. Take heed ye fall not from your steadfastness, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Hearts stout and willful are dry and sapless.

Thirdly, if the more a man hath to do with God, the more settled he is in his way; when he hath the most full converse and sweetness of communion with God, he is then the most fully settled, satisfied, established in such a truth, which he before conceived to be of God.

Many men are very stiff and willful, unmovable when they have to deal with men, they seem then to be the most confident men in the world; but God knows, and their consciences know, when they solemnly set themselves in the presence of God, and have the most real sight of God, and have to deal most immediately with him, then they have misgiving thoughts, they have fears that things may not prove so sure as they bore others in hand they apprehended them to be: But if God's presence and thy dealings with him confirms thee in this, thy conscience may give thee an assurance, that as thou art not fickle and wavering, so not stout and willful.

Fourthly, when there is a proportion in mens constancy, if a man be resolute and constant in one thing, but very fickle and easily turned aside in others, there is cause to suspect his constancy is rather from stiffness then from grace; for grace works proportionably through the whole soul, and in the whole course of a mans life.

Fifthly, if the more real the presence of death and judgement appear to a man, the more settled he is in that way; this likewise may be a good evidence to him, that his settledness in such a way, is right.

## **CHAP. XX**

**The ninth dividing distemper, A spirit of jealousy. The tenth, A spirit of contention. The eleventh, Covetousness. The twelfth, Falseness.**

Envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, 1 Tim. 6:4. Strife and evil surmisings are near akin. If contentious men can get nothing against their brethren, they will surmise there is something; if they can find nothing in their actions to judge, they will judge their hearts; if there be nothing above-board, they will think there may be something underboard;\* and from thinking there may be something, they will think it is very likely there is something; and from likely there is, they will conclude there is, Surely there is some plot working. But this is against the law of Love, for it thinks no evil; all the good that they see in their brethren is blasted by their suspicion of evil. Love would teach us rather by what appears to judge the best of what appears not,\* then by what appears not to judge the worst of what appears. Suspicion is like some jelly stuff that is got between the joints; if the bone be out of joint, and any jelly be got in, though it be but a little soft stuff, it will hinder the setting of the bone. I confess in these times, because we have been so extremely deceived in those who have been used in public place, in whom

we so much confided, there is a great deal of reason that we should be very wary of men, and believe (till we have very good grounds of confidence) with trembling. I remember Melchior Adam in the life of Bucholcerus tells of a witty counsel of his to his friend Hubnerus, who being to go to the Court to teach the Prince Electors children, at their parting, I will give you, says he, one profitable rule for your whole life, he lessening what it should be: I commend (saith he) to you the faith of the Devils: At which Hubnerus wondering, Take heed (says he) how you trust any at the Court, believe their promises but warily, but with fear ; you may fear they will never come to any thing. But in the mean time while we are thus fearful of one another, while we cannot trust one another, we cannot join one with another. I have read of Cambyses, he did but dream his brother should be King of Persia, and he put him to death. Many amongst us do but dream of men, with whom our hearts are not, that they have some plots working, and how do our spirits work against them?\* Groundless jealousies arise from much baseness in our own hearts. Those who have no principle of faithfulness in themselves, are suspicious of every one; But as for those who suffer causelessly, in this thing let them be of good comfort, God will reward them good for what evil they suffer. We read Numb. 5:28. that if a man were jealous of his wife, so that he brought her to the trial by drinking the water of jealousy, if she were clear, she should not only be freed from hurt by that water, but she should conceive seed, if she went barren before, the Lord would recompense her sorrow & trouble she suffered by her husbands suspicion of her. And Paulus Fagius upon the place, says, The Jews had a tradition, not only that she should conceive, but it should be a man-child; if she had any disease, she should be freed; and if she brought forth before with difficulty, she should bring forth now with ease. Let not men therefore who are of public use, having their consciences clear, yet because they are under suspicion, throw off all in an anger: Such a temptation many lye under; but let them know, this temptation cannot prevail but upon the distemper of their hearts, the exceeding sinful frowardness of their spirits; they should trust God with their names, their esteem, their honour, and go on in their work. The only way to deliver themselves from suspicion, is their constant industry and faithfulness in all opportunities of service God puts into their hands; and with the more quietness of spirit, with the less noise they go on, the sooner will the suspicions they

were under, wash off and vanish to nothing; God will make their names break forth as the light; those weeds having no ground to take root, will wither and dye away.

The tenth dividing distemper, A spirit of contention.

AS in some there is a strong inclination, a vehement impetus to whoredom, which the Prophet calls a spirit of whoredom; so there is in others a vehement strong disposition of heart to contention; these have a spirit of contention; these are like Salamanders, who love, and live in the fire. They thirst after the waters of Massah and Meribah, their temper is such, as if they drank no other drink then what was brewed of those waters; Contentions and strifes, that are as tedious to other men as death, are their delight; they are most in their element when they are over head and ears in them. A contentious spirit will always find matter for contention. Prov. 26:21. As coals to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife: they are ready to put their hands to any strife they meet with: yet Prov. 26:17. He that meddles with strife belonging not to him, is like one that holdeth a dog by the ears. Many men have no metal in any thing but contentions; like many jades who are dull in travel, they have metal only to kick and to play jadish tricks.

If thou hast any spirit, any zeal and courage, it is pity it should be laid out in quarrels; reserve it for the Cause of God, to strengthen thee in contending for the Truth and the Public.

The eleventh distemper, Covetousness.

This is the root of all evil, then of this; there is no greater plague to friendship,\* then desire of money, says Lælius apud Cicer. A covetous man is witty to fore-see ways of gain, and he is stiff in holding fast what may be for his advantage. Ye know what a stir Demetrius and his fellows made in Ephesus when their profit was endangered, they had rather set all in a tumult, then let their gain go . 1 Tim. 4:5. Envy, strife, railings, &c. perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness. How will some object against men, and withdraw from them, deprive themselves of the benefits of the gifts of God in them, of much good they have heretofore acknowledged they have

got by them, and all merely to save their purses, and that in a poor peddling way? What a stir hath this Meum and Tuum made in the world? The sweetness of gain amongst men is like honey cast amongst Bears, they will fight, rend and tear out one anothers throat for it. They that will be rich, fall into temptations and a snare, and into many and hurtful lusts,\* 1 Tim. 6:9, 10. They pierce themselves and others too with many sorrows.

When divisions arose in Germany, upon Luthers doctrine, men of base covetous spirits, judging Luther by themselves, thought that Luther made all this stir to get gain; Why therefore, says one, do you not stop the mans mouth with gold or silver? Another answers, Oh, this German beast cares not for money.

The twelfth dividing distemper, Falseness.

Nothing more firmly unites and holds together the Common-wealth, then Fidelity, says Cicero.\* Truth is a girdle. Stand therefore, having your loins girt with truth, Eph. 6:14. Truth binds, and Falseness loosens. The Apostle Eph. 4:25. exhorts to put away lying, and every man to speak truth to his neighbor, upon this ground, because we are members one of another. The Romans esteemed so much of Truth for uniting men into societies, that they built a Temple to it, as to a Goddess; in which Temple all Leagues, Covenants, Truces, and important bargains were made, which were so religiously observed, that whosoever broke them, was held for a cursed, damned creature, unfit for humane society. Rom. 1:29. Full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity. A man were better be true to false principles, then be false to true ones. Those who are false, are also mischievous: they care not what mischief they do to any, so they may but uphold themselves, and repair that credit which formerly they had, but now through their base falseness is cracked; and if they have wronged any by their falseness, they seek to keep such down, if not to ruin them, fearing lest their falseness should hereafter be revenged: and if they cannot get them down by force, they will seek to do it by adding yet more falseness, by flattering them whom their hearts hate, and would gladly ruin. That Scripture, Prov. 26:28. is very remarkable for this, A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin. Psal. 72:14. He shall deliver their soul from deceit and

violence. If men who are false cannot compass their ends by deceit, they will seek to do it by violence: God hath his time to deliver his Saints from both. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.

## CHAP. XXI

### **Dividing Practices. The first, The Practice of the Tongue. The second, Needlesse Disputes.**

PRovoking bitter language, is a great divider: An evil tongue in Scripture is compared to swords, Arrowes, Razors, to poyson of Aspes, fire, yea to the fire of hell, which sets all the world on fire, to wild beasts; it is an unruly member that cannot be tamed. When a Philosopher saw two women of ill fame talking together, he said,\* By this speech the Aspe takes in poyson from the Viper, which it seems was a proverbiall speech in Tertullians time, he inveighing against Marcion the Heretique, Let the Heretique, says he, cease borrowing poyson from the Jew,\* according to the Proverbe, the Aspe from the Viper.

Many men of moderate spirits, if let alone, yet meeting with men who tell them stories, and speak ill of those men that heretofore they had a good opinion of, yet now before they have examined what the truth is, there is a venome got into their spirits before they are aware, their hearts begin to be hot, and to rise against those men they heare such things of, their thoughts are altered concerning them, their spirits alienated, breaches are made, and men who are innocent wonder from whence all comes. O take heed of these men of evil tongues, especially at your tables, for while you are warme with mirth and good cheare, you are in greater danger to take down the discourse of such as are at table with you, some poyson may get into your spirits, and you not think of it. Saint Augustine could not endure such guests at his table; he caused therefore these two verses to be writ over his Table, it were well they were over some of yours.



Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam,

Hanc mensam vetitam noverit ipse sibi.

To speak ill of the absent forbear,

Or else sit not at Table here.

But if men of evil tongues do so much hurt to men of moderate spirits, what hurt do they do one to another? when two or three, or more of them meet together, having all of them bitter spirits and evil tongues, what hot burning venome do they infuse one into another, inflaming one another with malice? That proverbiall speech, ὄφις ἢ μὴ φαγη, ὄφιν δράκων οὐ γξνήσεται, is true of these men; if one Serpent did not eat another, there would bee no Dragon; by taking in one anothers poyson, they grow to bee fiery Dragons, flying up and down from place to place with their fiery stings.

Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues, for I have seen violence and strife in the City, Psal. 45:9. The same letters in the Hebrew word that is to signifie verbum, a word,\* is also for pestis, the plague; an evil tongue hath the pestilence in it.

The whisperings of an evil tongue causes divisions, Rom. 1:29. Full of envy, debate, malignity, whisperers. 2 Cor. 12:20. Debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, whisperings. Many of sidling, paltry dispositions, go up and down whispering, they speake very secretly to you, you must tell no body by any means, and yet themselves tell it to a second, a third, a tenth, and any one they meet with, with whom they desire to ingratiate themselves, and to every body they speak, yet still they must tell no body; they do not love to be brought forth as the authors, they tell you as a friend, what they heare; and thus carrying tales up and down in a secret way, they do what in them lyes to blast the names of their Brethren; jealousies, suspitions, envyings, displeasure, anger is raised, and the parties against whom all this is, wonder what is the matter, they being no ways conscions to themselves of any miscarriage towards such from whom they find such strange carriage; at last some nibling whispering Mouse is found to bee the cause of all.

These whispering Tale-bearers have such an art, as to cause what they thus speak in secret to sinke very deeply into mens hearts: They professe themselves very sorry for what they tell you, but it is too true, and with a deep sigh they mischiefe their Neighbour; Et sic cum vultu mæsto procedit maledictio, Bern. But let men take heed of them, for they strike, they wound them as much, if not more, then they do those against whom they speak, for they know nothing of it; and though they suffer, yet they do not sin; but you may not only be troubled, and that causelesly (it may be) and for nothing lose the sweetnesse of your love to your friend, and the enjoyment of his to you; but withall, you may entertain sin into your heart, and so be wounded. Prov. 18:8. The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly, beware therefore of such. Prov. 20:19. He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets, therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lippes. Hee may come glaving, and fawning, and smiling to you, as if he accounted you a speciall friend, and therefore would not tell every body; but meddle not with him; if you shall hug and imbrace him, you have received a wound even in the innermost parts of the belly. Prov. 26:20. Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out; so where there is no tale-bearer the strife ceaseth.

Prov. 16:28. A whisperer separateth chiefe friends. Those who have lived in entire friendship many years, sometime by some whispering woman, have their hearts very much estranged, the beauty of their friendship darkened, and the sweetnesse of it almost lost.

Whispering tale-bearing tongues is the cause of strife, take heed of it: And so is a censuring tongue: I can compare this to nothing better then to a candle, whose tallow is mixed with brine, as soon as you light it, it spits up and down the roome: Thus many have salt brine in their spirits, which when they get a little knowledge, they spit here and there in hard and bitter censures, which are exceedingly provoking to the spirits of men; though the censures should prove true, yet the mixture of so much salt brine in them, cannot but exasperate and cause mens hearts to fret; but much more if they prove to be meere slanderers. Jer. 9:4. Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother, for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with

slanders; and c. 6:28. They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders; they are brass and iron, they are all corrupters. And yet more, if this be a raging tongue, Hos. 7:16. Their Princes shall fall by the sword, for the rage of their tongue. Discontents rise high, first by too much liberty of the tongue, then higher, by the bitterness of it; but when it comes to the rage of it, by this many times they rise so high, that great men, yea Princes come to fall by the sword. There is a Storie in the Tripartite Historie of a Christian who professed he had been seven and thirty years learning that lesson, Psal. 39:1. I said I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not in my tongue, and yet had not learned it. I fear there are many amongst us who have been Professors these seven and thirty years, and yet have not learned this lesson; notwithstanding the Scripture saith, If a man bridleth not his tongue, he deceiveth his own heart, this mans religion is in vaine, James 1:26.

The second dividing practice, Needlesse Disputes.

WHen men have got a little knowledge, they think it a fine thing to be arguing and disputing in matters of Religion: unnecessary disputes are their necessary practice, for otherwise they shall be accounted as no body, if they have not something to object against almost every thing, but in this way of theirs, they shall be accounted knowing men, men who have an insight into things, who understand more then ordinary men do : hence they turne all their Religion into disputes, and by them they grow giddie. Wine is good when it goes to the heart to cheere it, but when it fumes all up into the head, it makes it giddie. Knowledge is good when the strength of it gets to the heart to comfort it, there to breed good spirits, for the strengthning it in the waies of holinesse; but when it flies up all into the head, it fills it with thousands of phansies; it causes pride and giddinesse. Disputes draw the best spirits from the heart, by which it weakens it. It is a very ill signe in a man to have a contradicting spirit, to get into a veine of disputing against any thing, though it be good. I have read of Gregory Nazianzen, that he told his friends that Julian would prove to be a notorious wicked man, he gave this reason, Because he took such delight in disputing against that which was good. Disputes are seldome without much heart-distemper; if they continue long, they cause snarling one at another; and no marvaile though those who snarle so

often, do bite at last. A man shews most parts in the matter of truth, but most grace in the manner of handling it with reverence, holinesse and modesty. Rom. 14:1. Receive not the weak in faith to doubtfull disputations. Here is a direct injunction against those disputes I am speaking of. Let no man say every truth is precious, the least truth is more worth then our lives, we must contend for every truth.

Answ. The least truth is so precious, that we must rather lose our lives, then deny it; you must do and suffer much to maintaine truth, but this in an orderly way.

First, you must be grounded in the maine Fundamentals of Religion; you must be strong in the faith, and after that labour to edifie yourselves in all the truths of God, so as one may be helpfull to another. It is not for every one who hath but little time, little knowledge, little means, little strength, to tyre out himself and others in doubtfull disputes. The Scripture is so much against this, as nothing can be more. 1 Tim. 1:4. Which minister questions rather then edifying. To aske and discourse of questions about the great things that concerne thy soule, thy eternall estate, how thou mayst live further to the honour of God, is good, when you meet together; to confer one with another what God hath done for your soules, to tell each other the experiences of your own hearts, and God's dealings with you, what temptations ye meet with, and how God helps you against them; such things as these would edifie. But when your questions are about things that you are never like to understand, and if you did understand, they little concern you, they would not be helpfull to you one whit in the ways of godlinesse, these the holy Ghost would not have you spend your time in. Eccles. 7:29. Man was made upright, and he hath found out to himself many inventions, Miscuerit se infinitis quæstionibus, so the old Latine reads it, he hath mingled himself in infinite questions. If we had but that great question more amongst us, What shall we do to be saved? it would cause many unprofitable questions to vanish. Never such ignorance came upon the Christian world, as in that age when the Schoolmen were in the highest esteeme; all Religion then was turned into Questions, both the mysterie and the power of godlinesse was lost. The things of Religion are rather to be beleevd then disputed. We beleevve Fishermen, not Logitians,\* says

Ambrose. The Devil at this day seeks to darken the glory of Religion this way; he sees that in regard so much light hath broke forth, he cannot get men presently off it by profanenesse, therefore he labours to eate out the strength of it by busying them, and getting them to delight in multitudes of questions, and that about things of lesser concernment.

1 Tim. 6:4. He is proud, and knoweth nothing, but doting about questions, and strife of words, whereof commeth envie, strife, railings, evil surmises, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth. These men conceit they have more knowledge then other men, but the holy Ghost says they know nothing; they cry out much for the truth, and they contend for the truth, but the holy Ghost says they are destitute of the truth. 2 Tim. 2:22, 23. Follow charitie, peace, but foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes, but the servant of the Lord must not strive. And Titus 3:8, 9. This is a faithfull saying, these things I will that thou affirme constantly, that they which have beleevd in God, might be carefull to maintaine good works; these things are good and profitable unto men, but avoid foolish questions, and Genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the Law, for they are unprofitable and vaine.

The question about the Law, whether a man be justified by it, or by free grace in Christ, this is not one of those foolish questions and needlesse strivings, this is a great question, this we are to contend for, our life is in it, but there are other questions about the Law, which cause striving rather then edifying, as whether the Law be a rule for our lives, as it was given by Moses; That we are bound to do what is required in the Law, this is generally acknowledged, as to love God, not worship Images, &c. but whether we be bound to do it as it was the Law delivered by Moses upon Mount Sina, this question troubles many mens heads; that we are bound to do the same things as they are delivered by Christ in the hand of that Mediator, is acknowledged by any that understand themselves in any measure. Now then let these two things be granted about the Law; First, that we are not justified by it, but by the free grace of God in Christ: Secondly, that what duties of holines are set down in the Law, we are bound to them by the most strong obligations: what need we contend further about the Law? Let us be established in these two, and it will be

sufficient for our edifying; It is like when Paul wrote this Epistle to Titus, the heads of people were troubled about some such kind of questions about the Law, as are amongst us; therefore says he, Avoid foolish questions, and strivings about the Law. But now the questions about the Law are driven on to such a dangerous issue, that we have cause not only to be carefull to avoid them, but even to tremble at the thought of them. It is now accounted a legall thing against the grace of the Gospel to confesse sin, to be humbled for sin, to make conscience of duty, or to be troubled in conscience for neglect of it; No, they thank God they are delivered from such things, in respect of God, whether they sin or not it is all one: yea these things prevail with those who have been forward in profession of Religion, who seemed to walk strictly, now are grown loose. That faith is easily wrought, which teacheth men to beleieve well of themselves, though their lives be ill. There is a mighty change in mens spirits now from that which was heretofore; Times have been when any opinion that tended to loosenesse, was presently distasted as unsavoury, and rejected by such, who made profession of Religion.

Sleidan in the tenth book of his Commentaries, says, The Devil that sought to do mischief at Munster was not a skilfull Devil, but rude and simple, because he sought to prevaile by tempting men to loosenesse; whereas, says he, if he had been a cunning Devil, he would rather have deceived by abstaining from flesh, by abhorring Matrimony, by shewes of wonderfull lowlinesse of mind , &c. he might sooner have taken men this way; but truly now the most cunning Devils sees it to be the best way to attaine his ends, to raise up and foment opinions that tend to the liberty of the flesh, so be it he can carry them on under the colour of magnifying free grace; he findes that these things are exceeding sutable to mens spirits in these times, that they are taken in by such who formerly appeared so conscientious, that hee feared hee should never have been able to have prevailed with them; he never found a way like to this to prevaile with such men; yea, never a way like to this to choake the Word, when it first begins to work upon the heart; he hath blasted more young seeming converts this way, then ever he did by any way since he was a Devil: Heretofore the way was to stirre up others to deride them for following the Word, and for praying; now he hath a way worth two of that, to make them to deride others for their conscientiousnesse in

following the Word and praying, and this strengthened with a high perswasion, that hereby they are the great magnifiers the free grace of God in the Gospel, the only men who understand the Gospel way. This Devil now lookes upon himself and his fellowes as simple and foolish in all their former devices, here is an experiment beyond them all, seeing this Christ must needs be magnified, hee will magnifie him too; seeing the Gospel must go on, he will put it on too, he will find out a device here, to strike at the practise, power, life of godlinesse, in a more secret and prevailing way then ever formerly was done; it is like in this generation the former principles of godlinesse will not be got out; but if this way prevails still in proportion to what it hath done, in a generation or two it is like to bring generall profanenesse and licentiousnesse upon the face of the Christian world more then any way of Satan ever did since the world began, for here is a way to be loose and profane, and to satisfiy conscience too.

## CHAP. XXII

### **The third Dividing Practice, Men not keeping within the bounds that God hath set them.**

First, when men will be meddling with that which concerns them not, that is out of their sphere. 1 Thes. 4:11. Study to be quiet, and do your own business. Prv. 20:3. It is an honour for a man to cease from strife, but every fool will be meddling. Choler in the gall is useful to the body, but if it overflow, the body grows into distemper presently; we may be all useful in our places, if we keep to them, contenting ourselves with the improvement of our talents in them; thus both ourselves and others may have quiet. When Manna was gathered and kept in that proportion God would have it, it was very good; but when men must have more, and keep

it longer then God would have them, then it breeds worms. Thus it will be in all that we have, or do ; let us keep our proportion God sets us, and all will be well; but if we think to provide better for ourselves by going beyond our measure, worms are presently bred in all.

But especially where men will not keep within their bounds in their power over others; for what is all our contestation at this time? it is not about mens stretching their power beyond their line both in State and Church? From whence are our State-divisions, our Wars, but because Princes have been persuaded their power was boundless? at least not to be kept within those bounds the State says it ought to be. They think there is such a distance between them and others, that the estates, liberties, lives of all men within their country lie at their mercy; not considering how they come to be raised so high: that what they have above others, is given to them by those above whom they are. No man inheriteth more then was given to his fore-fathers, and so to him, whereby they might see that they are not limited only by the laws of God, but by the laws of men also, namely, The agreement between them and the people when they are raised to such dignities. There is nothing weakens their right more then the pleading it by conquest; Princes have little cause to thank those who plead their right that way. The surest foundation for Princes to set their feet on, is the agreement between the people and them, or their progenitors; but if they will go beyond this agreement, what stirs, what woeful disturbances do they make!

Secondly, if either they, or any Governors of the State, shall instead of being helpful to the government of the Church, take it all from it into their own hands, in this they go beyond those bounds Christ would have them; it is by the Civil power that the Governors of the Church have the peaceable exercise of what power Christ hath given them, but they have not their power from them. Civil Authority cannot put any spiritual power into a man, or company of men, which they had not before; it can only protect, encourage, and further the exercise of that power that CHRIST hath given. They are inconsiderate men,\* says Calvin, who make Magistrates to spiritual; This evil, says he, prevails in Germany, and in the Countries about us; we find what fruit grows from this root, namely, that those who are in power, think themselves so spiritual, that there is



no other ecclesiastical government; this sacrilege comes in violently amongst us, because they cannot measure their office within its due bounds.

And for Church-Governours, if they would keep within their limits, we might enjoy much peace, if first they would assume to themselves no more power then Christ hath given them; Secondly, if they would not extend it over more congregations then Christ hath committed to them; Thirdly, if they would not exercise it in more things then Christ would have them. Let us look a little into these three, for the want of a right understanding in them hath caused, and may yet further cause much disturbance.

For the first. That Christ hath appointed some to rule in his Church, and that all the members of the Church are not in the office of ruling, is apparent in Scripture, 1 Cor. 12:28. Rom. 12:8. but that these Officers, preaching Elders, or others, should so have the sole power of ruling as to do all in their own Consistory Classis, or (whatsoever you may call their convening) that the Church should have nothing to do with their acts of rule but to obey, this is assuming to themselves power beyond what is given them; This hath brought tyranny into the Church,\* it hath made the Church-officers to look upon the rest of the Church in a contemptible way, as the common vulgar sort, men ignorant and weak, not at all fit to meddle with matters of government, not so much as to take cognisance,\* or give any consent to what the Church-officers do; But whether they understand or know whether they consent or dissent, it makes no matter, the determinations of those in place must stand, their censures must be submitted to.

Peter Martyr in an Epistle to the Ministers, and such as professed the Faith in Polonia, exhorts them to endeavour the establishing of Discipline in the Church as soon as they could, while peoples hearts were heat with love to, and desires after the Gospel, he tells them it will be harder to bring it in afterward, when their hearts begin to grow more cold; and that they might not think Discipline a small thing, he says, that those Churches cannot be said to profess the Gospel truly nor solidly, which want it; he would have them acknowledge it not to be the least part of Christian Religion, but must know that the Gospel is neglected by such as

shall put off from themselves such a singular excellent portion of it. But says he, this will be the Objection, Under the color of Discipline, the Ministers of the Church will tyrannize, they will carry things according to their own minds.

To this he answers, Tyranny in the Ministers needs not be feared, where the rule of the Gospel for censures is observed; for in casting out any who will not be reclaimed, the consent of the Church must be had; and if it be done by this authority, none can complain of the tyranny of a few.

Cyprian in his sixth Epistle professeth his resolution to do nothing without the counsel of the Elders,\* and consent of the people. Our Brethren of Scotland in their opposition to the Prelates, give very much to the people in the matter of Excommunication: It pertaineth, say they, to the whole Church collectively taken to deny her Christian communion to such wicked persons as add contumacy to their disobedience,\* therefore it pertaineth to the whole Church to excommunicate them. Again, It pertaineth to the whole Church to admit one into her communion, therefore to the whole Church to cast one out of her communion. And a page or two after, The Apostle writing to the whole Church of Corinth, will have them being gathered together, to deliver that incestuous person to Satan, therefore every particular Church or Congregation hath power to excommunicate. There they give many arguments to prove, that the Apostle would not excommunicate by his own authority alone, but by the authority of the Church, and that collectively taken, (so they say) not the Ministers or Elders of the Church only.

Let no man say, this was the judgement but of one Minister, for at the beginning of this Parliament, my self , together with a reverend Brother, asked Master Henderson, two or three of the Ministers of Scotland being with him, Whether we might not take that Book as the judgement of the most godly and able of the Ministers of Scotland, for the matters of Church-discipline? They answered, we might.

The second way of going beyond their limits, is their extending their power to more congregations then Christ hath given them charge of. The chief Church-Controversy at this day is about this extent; I shall only shew you where the difference lies between one and the other in it. The

Question is this, Whether one that is set by Christ to take charge of a particular congregation, as a Pastor to feed them, by Word, Sacraments, and Rule, may keep the Pastoral charge he hath for Word and Sacraments to one congregation, but his charge for Rule shall extend together with others to an hundred congregations or more.

Some say that no Minister can have the charge of ruling over people in a larger extent then his charge over them for Word and Sacrament reaches; they think that those people that can say to a Minister, That charge that Christ hath given you for Word and Sacraments, extends not to take care of our souls to feed them, therefore you have no charge of our souls for ruling; if you think you may, preach or administer Sacraments in an accidental, arbitrary way only, not as challenging power over us for this, or looking upon us as those committed to you, for whom you are to answer; then at the farthest you may exercise rule over us but in this way.

But others hold this, That a Minister may answer to this people thus, I confess I have indeed only such a particular congregation to be my flock, and although I being desired to help sometimes in another to preach or administer Sacraments, yet I do it not as having the charge of their souls as being Pastor to them: But as for that ruling power that Christ hath given me, I conceive by joining of it with others, it extends to hundreds of Congregations, or more, according as our association shall be, so as we have not only liberty to be helpful to those who have the special charge of the Congregations, but we have the supreme ruling power in our hands, to challenge in the Name of Christ, to exercise over these Congregations, as we shall see cause. I say, the supreme power above what your Ministers or Elders in your particular congregations have; for though these Ministers and Elders of yours be admitted to be members of our Court, yet if they all should be of a contrary mind from us, in some matter that concerns your congregation, we yet will judge and determine, we will censure and exercise all kind of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction in that congregation, as we see cause, though it may be not one of us ever saw any of the faces of any of the men of your congregation before. Here, I say, lies the great dividing controversy, which is right, which is wrong is not my work to shew; all I am to do, is but to shew you what the controversy is, about which there is so much dispute.

And though I determine not the case either way, yet I shall leave two considerations to help you in your thoughts about it.

First, the extent of power of Jurisdiction must be by institution as well as the power it self ; all juridical power whatsoever, either in state or Church receives limits or extent from the same authority it first had its rise, this is impossible to be denied: If a man by a Charter be made a Mayor of a Town, he cannot therefore challenge the power of a Mayor wheresoever he comes, except the authority that first gave him his power shall also extend it. Now the Charter by which any Church-Officer is invested with power, is the Word, therefore we cannot straighten or enlarge the power of a Minister otherwise then we find it in the Word; for Civil power it may be straightened or enlarged, as the Governors of State shall see cause, because their Charter is from man, it is ἀνθρωπίνη κτίσις.

Secondly, man naturally is of nothing more impatient then to have Jurisdiction challenged over him, except he sees the claim to be right; and in the point of spiritual jurisdiction, man is the most tender of all, because in that men come in the Name of Christ to him, challenging authority to exercise the power of Christ over him, not over the outward man so much as over his soul, to deliver it up to Satan. Surely there had need be shown a clear and full Charter, that any men have, that gives them such a power as this, that men in conscience shall be bound to submit to. Now then here lies the division, one says his Charter does extend so far; the other says, he does not find it so in the reading of it.

There is yet a further consideration of the stretching either Civil or Ecclesiastical authority beyond their bounds, which hath been, and may be the cause of much division; that is, their challenging and exercising power in things indifferent, beyond what God hath given them; for the opening of which wee must know:

First, no man either in State or Church, hath any authority given him by God, to command any thing merely because he will; especially, when the things concern the worship of God. Our Brethren of Scotland in their dispute against English Popish ceremonies, part. 3. chap. 8. pag. 127. have this passage, Princes have enjoined things pertaining to the worship of God, but those things were the very same which God's written Word

had expressly commanded; when Princes went beyond these limits and bounds, they took upon them to judge and command more then God hath put within the compass of their power: And pag. 136. of the same Book they say, The Apostle, 1 Cor. 7:23. forbiddeth us to be the servants of men, that is, to do things for which we have no other warrant beside the pleasure and will of men. This was the Doctrine in Tertullians time,\* You exercise, says he, an unjust dominion over others, if you deny a thing may bee done, because you will, not because it ought not to bee done.

It is only the Prerogative of God, of Jesus Christ, to command a thing because they will.

God hath appointed Civil Governors to be his Ministers for our good. Rom. 13. Those things only which they can do in God's Name as his Ministers, and are for the good of a State, are the object about which their power is to be exercised; they are not to require a thing because there is nothing against it, but because this thing is for God: And Church-governours are to require only such things as Christ requires, all the exercise of their power ought to be in the Name of Christ, hence not because they will, or because nothing can be said to the contrary.

In all they require of us, they must be able to say as Paul, 1 Cor. 14:38. giving rules about order and decency, If any man think himself to be a Prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the Commandments of the Lord.

You will say, But are Governors always bound to shew a reason of their will, to those who are under them; or may not they obey except they know some good in the thing, besides their doing the will of those who do command them?

Answ. Though no Governors may command but upon reason, yet the Governors of State need not always discover the reasons of their commands.

We may give up our Civil liberties so far as to be bound to yield to our Governors commands, if we see nothing against what they command, but have cause to suppose that they see some reason that we do not, which is

not fit to make known to us. This is grounded upon this reason, that there are Arcana imperii, mysteries of State that are not fit for every man to know, the secrecy of them conduces most to the good of the State: But it is otherwise in the matters of the Church, which are spiritual, there are no such mysteries in the Church, wherein any members of it can be required to be active, but it concerns them to understand as well as to do . All the actions of the Church as such must be done for spiritual edification; now a man cannot do a thing for the edifying his soul, or the soul of another, but he must understand his action and the rule of it; he must see it required by the Word, or otherwise he cannot expect any spiritual efficacy in what he does; I may do a thing for a civil good, wherein I may trust another mans reason, and this may be sufficient to attain my end, the procuring of some good merely civil, but this will never be able to reach to a spiritual good, I must see the reason, the ground, the rule of the action my self ; I must judge by the Word, that this action at this time clothed with all its circumstances is by Christ fitted for such a spiritual good that I aim at.

Besides, if things merely indifferent be enjoined, then is Christian liberty violated. No, say some, Christian liberty is in the conscience, so long as a man keeps his conscience free, the thing may be still indifferent to him in regard of his conscience, though his practise be determined, and so Christian liberty is preserved. This is the put off that the Prelatical party made use of against our Brethren of Scotland many years since, when they pleaded that by their usurpation Christian liberty was taken from them.

To that answer of the Prelates, they thus reply: When the authority of the Churches constitution is obtruded to bind and restrain the practice of Christians in things indifferent,\* they are bereaved of their liberty, as well as if an opinion of necessity were borne in upon their consciences. They urge that place, Col. 2:21. where the Apostle gives instances, say they, of such humane ordinances as take away Christian liberty; he saith not, you must think that you may not touch, but touch not; you must not practise, not be subject to such ordinances; telling us, That when the practice is restrained from touching, tasting, handling, by the ordinance of men, then is Christian liberty spoiled, though conscience be left free; if the

outward man be brought in bondage, this makes up spiritual thralldom (say they) though there be no more.

And further, the Apostle gives these two Arguments against these things:

First, says he, they perish in the use; that is, there is no good comes of them.

It may be you will say, What hurt is there in them? That is not enough, says the Apostle, to justify them, though there should be no hurt in them, yet seeing they perish in the use, seeing there comes no good by them, you must not do them: But what if they shall be commanded by authority? may wee not do them then? No, says the Apostle, that is another argument against them; they are after the commandments and doctrine of men; if it be a mere ordinance of man, and there be no other reason in the thing, but because man enjoins it in the Church, you are not to do it. Yea, in some respect we have not so much liberty in things indifferent, if they be enjoined by men, as we had before. This is thought to be a very strange assertion by some; but consider this one thing, and it will not appear so: Though I might do such a thing before, yet if man shall take upon him this authority to command, merely because of his will and pleasure, if I now obey I am in danger to edify him, to strengthen him in this his sin; he challenges this authority, and I seem to yield it to him, certainly he is strengthened in it by my subjection, except I do this, at least profess against any such authority of man granted by Jesus Christ.

But say some, If you take from Governors power to command things indifferent, you take away all their power; for things necessary are required without them, and things sinful they may not command.

Answ. Surely this conceit comes rather from tradition then from due consideration; for is it not power enough to see to the keeping of the commands of God, that the Ordinances be kept pure, that there be justice between man and man, to reward those which do well, and to punish the evil doers.

Yet thus fare must be granted to the Officers of the Church, they have authority from Christ to declare dogmatically, when a thing in it self

indifferent, yet by reason of some circumstances, comes to be a duty, and this is to be regarded more then the declaration of any private brother or brethren, for they do it by way of office in the name of Christ. This we find Acts 15. the Apostles and Elders sent their Decrees, δόγματα κεκριμένα, their dogmatical determinations about some things in themselves indifferent, but as clothed with those circumstances they call them things necessary; they determine them to be done from the reason of the things, not from their authority; those things were duties before they decreed them, and had been, had they never decreed them. Even forbearing the eating of blood was a duty in case of offence, though their decree had never been, and otherwise it was no duty, notwithstanding their Decree, for afterward Paul says, that whatsoever is sold in the shambles, they might eat of it, asking no question for conscience sake, and every creature of God is good, if it be received with thanksgiving. Thus we have seen what the bounds are which God hath set to men in authority, or at least the controversy about them: Let them be careful to keep within their bounds, as they are set to keep others within theirs: by this, Church and State, may enjoy much peace.

## CHAP. XXIII

### **The fourth dividing practise, Gathering of Churches disorderly.**

This is cried out of as the greatest dividing practice of all; You may speak of this or that to be dividing amongst us, say some, but above all things, this Gathering of Churches is the great divider amongst us.

To this I shall speak in these six things.



First, it is not absolutely unlawful for a Church to be gathered out of a Church.\* Voetius that learned Professor of Vtrecht, answering Jansenius, pleading against us for separating from the Romish Church, which was the most ancient and famous Church: No, says he, it is not absolutely evil to separate from such a Church, for then the Christians gathering themselves out of the Jewish Church were Schismatics, which is false.

Doctor Jackson, a Prelatical man, in the 14. Chapter of his Treatise of the Church, gives two reasons, which he says are just and necessary, for which men (whether few or many) may and ought to separate themselves from any visible Church. First, because they are urged or constrained to profess or believe, some points of doctrine,\* or to adventure upon some practices which are contrary to the rule of Faith or love of God. Second, In case they are utterly deprived of freedom of Conscience in professing what they inwardly believe, or be bereft of some other means, either altogether necessary, or most expedient to salvation. For which latter he quotes 1 Cor. 7:23. Ye are bought with a price, be not ye servants of men. Although (says he) we were persuaded that we could communicate with such a Church, without evident danger of damnation, yet inasmuch as we cannot communicate with it upon any better terms, then legal servants or bondslaves do with their masters, wee are bound in conscience and religious discretion, when lawful occasions and opportunities are offered, to use our liberty, and to seek our freedom, rather then to live in bondage.

This doctrine was allowed of in the Bishops times. Now suppose upon these two grounds there be a withdrawing from a Church, Christ does nowhere require his people to live without Ordinances all their days, rather then they should join themselves together into another body.

Secondly, yet where these causes are not, but men may communicate without sin, professing the truth, and enjoy all ordinances, as the freemen of Christ. Men must not separate from a Church, though there be corruption in it, to gather into a new Church which may be more pure, and in some respects more comfortable. First, because we never find the Saints in Scripture separating or raising Churches in such a case: and secondly, There would be no continuance in Church fellowship, if this were admitted: for what Church is so pure, and hath all things so

comfortable, but within a while another Church will be more pure, and some things will be more comfortable there? The general peace of the Church should be more regarded by us, than some comfortable accommodations to ourselves.

Thirdly, Although you cannot for the present communicate with the Church, in which you are, without sin, or bondage, yet you are not presently to withdraw, to gather into another, or to join with another, you are bound to give so much respect to the Church, as to continue with much long-suffering, to seek the good of that Church, to remove the sin that is upon it, with all good means you can. You must bear much with a brother, much more with a Church.

Fourthly, If things were in that ordered and settled way, as they ought, there ought to be no gathering of any new Churches without consulting and advising with neighbor Churches. Christ would have all Churches unite themselves, and have conjunction one with another, being all of the same body of Christ: If then there be to be raised a new Sister Church, that expects and is to desire the benefit of communion with the rest, there is all the reason in the world that the help, advice, and assistance of the other Churches should be made use of in the raising and ordering this Church that they are thus to own in the way of communion with them to whom they are to give the right hand of fellowship.

Fifthly, All believers who live in a place together, ought so far as they can, join into one Church, though they be of different judgements and tempers, what ever things they differ in, yet if they may stand with grace they can have no encouragement from the examples of any of the Churches, we read of in Scripture, for them to divide themselves into little pieces. The way of Christ all along in Scripture is, that all the Saints in such a place who are not more than can join in one, should join together and make but one Church; certainly this is more for the honour of Christs Body then the division of Saints in the same place into several little societies, Christ stands much upon the union of his Saints in one, in all ways, by all means that may be.

Sixthly, as things are yet with us, there is no such great reason of that outcry there is amongst us against gathering of Churches as so great a

dividing practice as many seem to make it.

How can this practice be so very offensive, when almost all of you think it lawful for a man for any commodiousness to remove from that Church of which now he is, to join with another, so be it he will remove his dwelling?

But these do not set up new Churches.

Answ. If a company of men who have estates, should not be satisfied with that Ministry that belongs to that company that now they are joined with, and should buy a piece of ground close to the place where they were, and build upon it, and have leave of the State to make a new Parish of those dwellings they build; who would blame them for gathering a Church thus? Hence it is apparent, that withdrawing from our Churches, and gathering others, is not according to the judgements of our Brethren against any Church Principle; the offence that is, is only against some Civil constitution.

Secondly, this thing in effect hath been ordinarily practiced heretofore without any offence to the godly; yea, and is still practiced without any complaint: Hath it not been, and is it not still ordinary for many not to communicate in the Parishes where they live? nor commonly to hear there, but from all parts of the City to come to some Parishes where they conceive the best Ministers to be, and there to hear and communicate, and this in a constant way, and that with allowance to the maintenance of such Ministers? yea, and thus the Husband goes one way, and the wife another, and yet none offended; it may be the Gentleman can content himself with his Parish-Church, but his wife or Lady is not satisfied, but must go elsewhere.

If it be said, But this was in a time when things were in great confusion, not so reformed as now they are, and we hope may further be.

Answ. 1. Then it is not howsoever simply unlawful.

2. It continues so still in many places of this City.

3. When you have reformed further, it may be mens consciences will bee further satisfied; you may reform so far as you may prevent much of what you now complain so much of.

But though they came for their present relief, yet they did not bind themselves one to another by Covenant, so as men now do .

Answ. If those who came constantly to your Ministry and Sacraments had professed their willingness to join with you in all the Ordinances of Christ so far as they knew, and to walk accordingly, you might the more comfortably have administered ordinances to them, but offensive to you it could not have been.

Object. But their Covenant binds them so, that they cannot return back again, whatsoever reformation there be.

Answ. Doe you pray for and endeavour the putting on Reformation to the uttermost, and then see what they will do ; they have not yet declared themselves, that they hold themselves so joined by any Covenant, that they may not join with you; that what relief they have had for the present time, or what agreement there hath been amongst themselves, should hinder them from falling into that way all along held forth in Scripture; namely, for all the Saints that live together, to join in one, so far as possible they can.

But these who gather Churches thus, look upon all others who are not in that way as Heathens; and what division must this needs make?

Answ. If this were so, it were a sad dividing practice indeed; wicked men cannot endure to be thus judged of, to be cast out as unworthy of Church-fellowship, much less can the Saints bee able to bear it, it must needs go nearer to their hearts. Aben Ezra says, the Ammonites and Moabites burnt the Books of the Law, because of that place, Deut. 23:3. An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the Congregation of the Lord, even to their tenth Generation. If an Ammonite or Moabite cannot bear the being shut out of the Congregation of the Lord,\* how can the Saints bear it? But God knows, and our Brethren may know, I hope they shall know, that the thing is not so: O no, they look upon you as the precious

Saints of God, their dear Brethren in Jesus Christ, they bless God for the graces they see in you, and rejoice in the hope of living eternally in Heaven with you.

But why then will they not admit them to their communion?

Answ. In all worship that belongs to Saints, as Saints they joyfully join with them; but they think there is some that belongs to Saints as gathered in a Society under officers, which cannot be performed orderly but in that way; and they think it unreasonable, that any should have the benefit of the privileges of the Church, and be under no power, no discipline of any Church; that they should pick and choose Ordinances, and yet live at liberty; so that if they walk disorderly, no Church hath any power to call them to an account. Suppose this to be a reason why they admit not of some, this is another thing then the judging of them to be Heathens.

Let me say further, I know none of these congregated Churches, either here or in other parts, that ever refused any who appeared to be godly, from communicating with them, if they did but acknowledge themselves to be members of any Church elsewhere, though that Church were in a differing way from it in respect of government.

You will say, What need that?

Answ. If it be to prevent looseness in men who will be under no government, if it be because they judge Sacramental communion to be a Church-Ordinance; or if it should be through a mistake, yet howsoever this must not be judged to be the cause that they judge all, that do not join with them to be as Heathens; this is the most uncharitable interpretation that can be.

## CHAP. XXIV

## **The fifth dividing practice, The aspersing and seeking to blast the credits of those men whom the Lord uses to be instruments of good.**

This may be done you know otherwise then by the tongue: This hath been an old dividing way, if wee can blast the chief of a party, we shall do well enough with the rest, wherefore let us make as ill interpretations of what they do as possibly we can; let us fasten as ill things upon them as we can have any color or pretence for; let reports be raised, fomented and spread, whether they be true or no, it makes no matter, something will stick. Jer, 20:10. Report, say they,\* and we will report it; do but raise a report, let us but be able to say we heard it, or there was a Letter writ about such a thing, and we will boldly assert it and divulge it; the very apprehension of it will prevail with many howsoever, these men shall not have that esteem in the hearts of men so generally as heretofore they have had, and if we once get down their esteem, we shall do well enough with their cause; if we can meet with any bold spirit that will venture to encounter with them in this, that will dare to take upon him to gather up, or make, or aggravate, or wrest reports, or do any thing that may render them otherwise in the thoughts and hearts of men then hitherto they have been, we shall break them, it is but one or two venturing the hard thoughts of men to make an experiment, some may bee found fit for such a business, we will find out ways to encourage them; if their hearts begin to fail, we will apply warm clothes to them, we will one way or other support them; this must be done, or else whatsoever we do will be to no purpose; something or other must be found to serve our ends in this. Doth Moses prevail too much in the hearts of the people? something must be found against him; if we can find nothing against himself, yet we will find something against his wife, She is an Ethiopian woman, Numb. 12:1. and yet who was she but the daughter of Iethro, to whom he had been married many years before? for an Ethiopian and a Midianitish woman are all one; but now we are resolved to pick out whatever we can get information of, though it be in things done many years since, when they were in the university, when they lived in such or such places in times of

old, it will serve our turn, we may fasten it upon them, Prov. 16:27. An ungodly man diggeth up evil, and in his lips there is a burning fire: If he hath nothing above ground, he will dig something up, though it be what both by God and man hath been buried long since.

David was a public instrument of God for much good, yet Psal. 31:1. He was a reproach amongst his enemies, but especially amongst his neighbors. Nehemiah raised up by God for great service, what dirt was cast upon him? he was accused of sedition and Rebellion.\* Paul a pestilent fellow, he and his company with him turned the world upside down; what evil can be devised, but was fastened upon the Christians in the Primitive times? They charge them for being the cause of all their misery; if they have ill weather, if the Rivers overflow, if Nilus does not flow, if there be any earthquake, plague, famine, hale the Christians to the Lions: At their meetings they said they made Thyestes suppers, who invited his brother to a supper, and presented him a dish of his own flesh, a limb of his son: Many such abominable things were fastened upon them, as are not fit to be named. Tertullian tells the Christians, that they were Funambulones, like men upon a rope, if they went one step awry, they were in danger to be undone by it, so narrowly did their enemies watch them, and so maliciously did they aggravate all their miscarriages. Thus the most eminent after his time, as Athanasius, he was as miserably aspersed as ever poor man in this world, by the Arian party, they rendered him most odious to his friends, and strangers.

In the beginning of Reformation, the Waldenses were so aspersed, that the story says of them, there was not one Arrow in the quiver of malice, but it was drawn forth and shot at them. Luther,\* Calvin, Beza, Oecolampadius, Bullinger, and the rest are by some in writing rendered the most black and vile pieces that the earth bore, both in their lives and deaths. I find it recorded of Zwingli, that he was a man so eminent, as his friends made him almost a God; and so traduced by his enemies, that one would wonder the earth did not open and swallow up such a man. The like dealings did that worthy instrument of God Mr. Knox find, who in Queen Mary's time fled with divers others to Frankford; when men of vile contentious spirits could not prevail against him any other way, they sought to asperse him, and that so maliciously, as his life was in danger,

accusing him to the Governors of Frankford, for a Sermon preached in England; in which the Emperor was concerned: The words were these, O England, England, if thou wilt obstinately return into Egypt, that is, if thou contracting marriage, confederacy or league with such Princes as do maintain and advance Idolatry, such as the Emperor, who is no less enemy to Christ then Nero; if for the pleasure of such Princes, thou return to thine old abominations, then assuredly, O England, thou shalt be plagued, and be brought to desolation, by the means of those whose favour thou seekest.

The same measure did those worthy men of God meet with, who sought after Reformation in Queen Elizabeths days, they called Mr. Cartwright an Anabaptist, and whatsoever evil there was in any opinion in those times, they fastened it upon him. Mr. Vdall was accused for his life, and condemned to be hanged for writing, That if the Parliament did not bring in the Government of Christ, Christ himself would bring it in by some means that would make their hearts to ache; or to that effect; meaning, as he expounded the words, Christ would in some way of judgment make way to set up his own government in the Land, but they wrested the words to a seditious sense, as if he had meant to conspire to raise a force, and by violence of Arms to make the Parliament to yield to that way of government that he conceived to be Christs, justly like those accusations that are amongst us at this day, that if such kind of men cannot have the liberty of their way granted to them, seeing they have, or hope to have the Sword in their hand, they will take it to themselves, and defend themselves also in it.

Only in this they go beyond the bitterness of the Prelatical party, they wrested what was said or written, these feign what was never said or written; who are the fire-brands amongst us, if not such men as these? as fire-brands plucked out of the fire, and now they seek to fire those who plucked them out; but if this be too hot, what will you call them? what will you say of them? O is this the fruit of all prayers for them, relief of them, respect to them!

Tanta ne vos generis tenuit fiducia vestri?

Sed mot as præstat componere lites.



Whosoever shall read that Book of Bancroft, entitled, Dangerous Positions, published and practised by those who pretend Reformation for the Presbyterian Government, shall find the whole subject of the book to be the blasting the names of the most eminent godly Ministers that lived in those times, rendering them to the State, as men not fit to be suffered in any Christian Common-wealth. The State at that time being wholly for Prelacy, and discountenancing that way of government these men sought for, their adversaries thought they might be bold to take what liberty they pleased, to calumniate, traduce, and to render them as vile as possible they might, there was no such way to keep them down as this; in this, they being like those in the Primitive times, who put the Christians into Bears and Tigers skins, and then cast them to the Dogs to be devoured.

Let the servants of God but appear as they are, they will gain reverential respect even from the multitude; but when these ugly things are put upon them, they are prepared to be the objects of their fury.

I have read in Suetonius of the cruelty of Tiberias,\* who because it was unlawful that Virgins should not be put to death, caused the Hang-man to ravish them, and then to execute them: This is the cruelty of some amongst us, they can do some men no hurt, but by offering violence first to their names, and if they be defiled, then they think they may do any thing with them. Of such as these are who make divisions amongst us in so ungodly a way as this, all that I shall further say, is,

The Lord rebuke them.

As for the Servants of God, they commit their names and ways to God, knowing that the Lord takes care of their names as well as their souls. If dirt be cast upon a mud wall it sticks, but if upon Marble, it soon washes or moulders away. God will in time justify his servants even in your consciences, by the constancy of their peaceable carriage towards men, and their gracious holy walking with their God; only take you heed that you involve not yourselves in the guilt of that wrong that is done unto them by the readiness of your spirits to close with, and take content in what evil you hear of those whom God accounts faithful.

## CHAP. XXV

### **The sixth Dividing Practice, the giving Characterizing names to men, names of Division.**

This is an old continued practice of the Devil, he hath gained much by it, and therefore is loath to leave it: the Orthodox of old were called Cornelians, Cyrillians, by the followers of Novatus and Nestorius, in time of Reformation Lutherans, Zwinglians, Hussites, Calvinists, Hugonots.\* Tertullian says in his Apology for the Christians of his time, their crime that they are persecuted for, hath no name, that for which they are hated and persecuted is the crime of their name; such men are cried out of under such a name, but when things come to be examined, their name is all their crime.

And among other that of Schismatic is not only a characterizing, but a stigmatizing name, whereby of old and lately many have had a brand of reproach upon them, which upon examination will be found to be as it is applied by many, nothing but a scaring word, taken up by such who understand little what Schism is; I shall therefore endeavour to open this briefly. The word Schism comes of the Greek σχίζω, to rend, from thence σχίσμα Scisura, a rent; It is amongst Divines a Technological term. Schism in the Church, is much like to what Sedition is in the State: When the Church grew up to the state and outward glory of an earthly Kingdom, much use was made of this term, as a brand upon those who would not subject to the yolks of them who loved preeminence in the Church.

But the true nature of Schism is this, An uncharitable, unjust, rash, violent breaking from union with the Church, or the Members of it.

The Church is that from which the rent is: Heresy divides from the head, Schism from the body, Apostasy from both. This rent is either from the

whole Church, or some part: if from the whole, it is Donatism: Donatus denied any to be of the body of Christ, to be believers, to be such as could be saved, except that company that joined with him, and with those in his way. This is clear from the whole discourse of Augustine against him, in that Tract De unitate Ecclesiæ. Wherefore those who censure such as deny communion with some particular congregations, as Donatists, discover either ignorance or malice, if not both. Yet Schism may be, though the rent be but from some part of the Church, but this must needs suppose union with that part: now there may be a twofold union with the several parts of the Church, either that which all who are to be accounted Christians have with them as they are of the same body Catholic; or that which is by agreement to grow up together into a special fellowship. The rending from either of these unions in such a way as before was mentioned, is Schism. If we separate from, or refuse that communion with such as are to be accounted Christians, that is due to all Christians, this is the more gross Schism. Or if we thus break off that communion which is by special agreement, which may be either when Christians join together in a private way for mutual edification and comfort: or when they so join together as to make up a distinct spiritual corporation, to set up the public ordinances of Christ, which the Scripture calls a Church: Now though there may be Schism in the breaking the former, yet the censure of Schism is especially applied to the undue breaking off communion in the latter.

Now this implies an union by a Church agreement; where there never was such an agreement, there cannot be the guilt of this Schism. Although they who dwell within such a perambulation, such a compass of ground, should not join in some ordinances with some within that compass, whatsoever offence there may be against some civil constitution, yet the guilt of Schism they do not contract upon themselves, for that union they never had cannot be broke.

But you will say, Yes, they are Schismatics, though they were never so united, because they were bound to unite thus, and they have not.

Answ. It must be granted that CHRIST by what he ordered the Apostles to do, would have all Christians dwelling together, so far as they can, to unite into a body, but there is no such order of Christ, that all that dwell

on the one side of the street should be of one body, and all on the other of another body: if they be more then can join into one spiritual corporation, they are bound to join into several, so as they may best, to their own and other Churches edification, and if they should fail in this, not joining in the best way that possibly might be, their sin is against that edification that Christ requires, but not therefore the sin of Schism. Who ever they were that bounded Parishes, surely they did not so bound them to the greatest edification of the Church that possibly might be, and yet who will say they were therefore Schismatics? But suppose you have joined with any company of Saints in a spiritual corporation, if you now shall uncharitably, unjustly, rashly, and violently break from communion with them, then you contract the guilt of Schism upon you.

First, the separation must be from want of charity. By faith especially we are united to Christ our head, and by charity to one another. If a man appears departing from any fundamental Article of our Faith which joined him to his Head, he is to be judged an Heretic. So by his appearing to depart from that love by which he was joined in communion with the members,\* he is to be judged a Schismatic. If his departure proceeds from his love of God, his love to his Saints, and his own soul, yea his love to that very Church from whence he departs, as sometimes it may, witnessing in a gracious way against evil in it, he is far from the guilt of Schism.

If you say,\* love is a secret thing, we cannot judge of what is in the heart.

We cannot judge of it while it is in the heart, but when it appears we may. You may know whether this or other principles act men or no by their behavior in their breaking off communion. Where this is not, bitterness, pride, self -ends, will soon appear, and carry them beyond those principles themselves profess they go upon.

Answ. Secondly, If the cause of leaving communion be just, then those who give this cause are the schismatics, not those who withdraw upon it. Thus the Governors of the Church may be the Schismatics, and a private member withdrawing may be free. Suarez a great Jesuit, in his disputation De Schismate, says in some cases the Pope may be a Schismatic.

If Governors shall enjoin any thing upon the Church, or any member, that is sin; or if they shall mingle evil in the public worship, so that there can be no joining with their worship, but there must be likewise a joining with sin, in this case if any withdraw from them, they are the Schismatics, not those who withdraw,\* they are fugati, not fugitivi. The blame of Schism, says learned Voetius, must not be upon those who forsake such as have forsaken Christ and the ancient faith; but upon those who have thus forsaken Christ and his truth.

When the second Counsel of Nice set up Image-worship, many thousands could not yield to it, but were forced to withdraw, who was the Schismatic all party there, but the Synod and those who joined with it?

Yea further, if they impose that which is not necessary, (though in it self not sinful) and will not bear with the weaknesses of such as think it to be evil; if upon that they be forced to withdraw; in this the Governors are the Schismatics also; the cause of the rent is in them, they ought in such things to bear the weaknesses of their Brethren, and not imperiously to require of them those things that there is no necessity of. If such things be sin to their Brethrens consciences, if they will stand upon it to enjoin them, they lay a necessity upon them to withdraw from them. God will not lay the Indictment of Schism thus, Such a one departed from the communion of such a Church, because he would not do what was lawful to be done; but thus, You imposed that upon your Brother which there was no necessity of, and would not forbear him in what I would have you forbear him, but caused him by your imperiousness and stiffness, to depart from communion with you. It is true, says God, the thing might have been done, but it was not necessary, it was out of conscience to me that they forbore, the weakness is theirs, but the Schism is yours.

Answ. This hath been generally received (though it be very false) that if a man departs from a Church because he refuseth to join with it in that which is not in it self evil, that this mans departure is Schismatic: Certainly no; Grant there is a weakness in his conscience, and so a sin, he should inform his conscience better, but cannot; and this inability is not without sin, yet this arises not to that height of sin, as to make that (which (supposing him to be in this condition) is better for him to do then not to do) to become Schism; especially if he be willing to hold

communion with that Church still in all acts of worship, wherein he can join without sinning against his conscience, and continues brotherly love to them as Saints in all the expressions thereof, as he is able.

The first great Schism in the Church, that was caused by the Governors of it, was that which Victor Bishop of Rome, and those who joined with him caused, by that imperious way of enjoining Easter to be kept at such a time which you have mentioned, pag. 15, 16, 17. The story of which you have in Eusebius, lib. 5. cap. 23. Those who denied not the lawfulness of keeping Easter, yet have generally accused Victor, and such who so violently urged this upon the Churches as the cause of the Schism, not such who did not conform to what was enjoined them, because the thing was not necessary, and there should have been a forbearance in it: No Governor ought to urge such unnecessary things which are but under suspicion by tender consciences, if they do, the Schism is justly charged upon them.

Thirdly, where a man cannot have his soul edified in some Ordinances and truths of great moment, which that Church whereof he now is shall deny, and is in great danger of being seduced to evil, he may depart from that Church to another, if he does it orderly, and not be guilty at all of Schism, love to God and his own soul is the cause of this, not want of love to his Brethren.

It is a good speech I find Chillingworth hath, what the goodness of the man was I know not, but in that Treatise of his, *The Religion of Protestants a safe way*, Cap. 5. Part. 1. Sect. 61. answering that plea of his adversary against Protestants, that communion with a Church not erring in fundamentals, upon pretence of erring in other matters, must not be forsaken, he hath this excellent saying: If I did not find in my self a love and desire of all profitable truth; if I did not put away idleness, and prejudice, and worldly affections, and so examine to the bottom all my opinions of divine matters, being prepared in mind to follow God, and God only which way soever he shall lead me; if I did not hope that I either do or endeavor to do these things, certainly I should have little hope of obtaining salvation.

When I consider of these causes of departing from a particular Church,

that speech of Tertullian concerning a Martyr comes into my mind , Non poena sed causa facit Martyrem, Not the punishment but the cause makes a Martyr. So, Non decessio sed causa facit Schismaticum, Not the departing, but the cause makes a Schismatic. Aquinas shewing that wherein the vitiousnesse of Schisme lyes,\* says; As in natural things that which is by accident does not constitute the species, so in moral, not that which is beside the intention, for that is accidental: therefore, says he, the sin of Schisme is in that it intends to separate from that unity which charity makes, and therefore Schismatics are properly those who of their own accord and intention do separate themselves from the unity of the Church.

The next thing considerable in the description of Schisme, is the rashness or the separation: though the cause of separating be just, yet the manner of it may be schismatic, if done rashly or violently. Those who are joined in communion with others, when they differ from those with whom they have communion, they are bound to examine, try, to make use of all means they can to satisfy their consciences in things they scruple: and if they cannot, yet before they break off communion they are bound to seek by all means they can for a redress of those things which after most serious examination appear evil to them, they are bound to wait with much forbearance, and long-suffering. And at last if there be a necessity of departing, they must not rend away with violence, but shew themselves willing and ready in the spirit of love and meekness to open their cause, to shew their reasons to the Church why they cannot continue in that communion with them they formerly had, and desire that they may peaceably and lovingly depart, seeing they cannot with peace of their conscience and love to their souls continue with them, and that they may join with some other Church, where they may enjoy peace and further edification.

Surely here is no Schisme, this is no rending away, here is no violence used, here is only a loving and peaceable secession; notwithstanding this, were it not for the pride, envy and frowardness of mens spirits, much love and peace might continue amongst Christians and Churches: True indeed, if men can bear no contradiction, no kind of blame of their ways, there must needs be trouble; but then those who do contradict or blame,

though they be in the wrong, yet if it be through weakness, and carried with meekness, they are not so much the cause of the trouble, as those who cannot bear this weakness of their Brethren without forwardness and contention.

There are other names of division; the name of Puritan, what a divider hath it been? but that seeing it self ready to dye, divided it self into two, Round-head and Independent; these are now the opprobrious, discriminating, scornful names of division amongst us: For the first, there is so much folly and absurdity in it, that surely it will soon vanish of it self if you condemn it; it is too low and contemptible for a Pulpit, or a Pen to meddle with: But the other carries in the face of it an open defiance to all kind of government, a monstrous kind of liberty for men to live as they list, and to be accountable to none, whatsoever they hold or do : Certainly such kind of people as these, are not to be suffered; shall I say in any Christian society? no not in any humane society; if there be any such people as these, they are one of the most monstrous kind of people that ever lived upon the face of the earth: How many run away with the word, and cry out of men and their ways under this name which they know not? How far those who are for the Congregational way are from such an uncontrollable liberty, hath been shown, Chap. 7. Pag. 41. I shall add this one thing, of all kind of governments in the Church, that which hath this name fastened upon it is most opposite to the name of any in that sense it is ordinarily taken, for there is no Church-government that holds forth more means to reduce from error, or any miscarriage, then this doth; examine it with the Prelatical or Presbyterian Government, and you shall find it; for first, in the Prelatical Government, if once the Prelates determine any case, you must there rest, there is no Church help for you, except you will say it is in a Convocation, where we know they ruled both in the choice of members, and ordering all things as they list. In the Presbyterian way, if so many associated Elders determine any case, it must in them receive the final determination, you must rest in it, although the greater part of the Churches, and the greater number of Elders in a Kingdom should be of another mind ; for if you rise to a National Assembly, there are not the twentieth part of Elders of the Kingdom in it: But those who men call Independents say, that if any thing be done by them that is offensive, not only those associated Elders, but all



or any Elders or Churches whatsoever may require account, may in the name of Christ do all in effect, for the reducing of them, that those associated Elders can do , still remembering that Church-power in one or the other, goes no further then mens consciences; if men will not conscientiously regard what is done to reduce them from evil, there is no help within the Church, but to appeal to CHRIST; as for external help by the Magistrate, that concerns not the controversy about Church-government, and yet for subjection to that Ordinance of God, the principles and profession of those you call Independents leave as much to the Magistrate, as the principle or profession of those who are Presbyterian do , if not more. Tolle jam nominis crimen & nihil restat nisi criminis nomen; Now take away the crime of the name, and there remains nothing but the name of a crime.

## **CHAP. XXVI**

## **The seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth dividing Practices.**

The seventh, Whatsoever personal evil there is in any one who is in a differing way from others, is cast upon all that are in that way.

This you know was the practice of former times, whatsoever evil any forward Professor was guilty of, that was cast upon all, they are all thus; Doe you not see what Hypocrites they are? whatsoever their shows be, yet if they have opportunity they will be as vile as any men; enough may be found against the best of them all, if they were narrowly watched; this is their way, they are a company of dissemblers: Such kind of imputations are cast upon the miscarriage of any one, upon all, on purpose to enrage the people against them: We accounted this hard dealing heretofore, let us not now be guilty of such things ourselves.

Some such practice it is like there was amongst the Corinthians, when that foul fact of the incestuous person brake forth, some of them were puffed up, so the Apostle chargeth them; it is a very strange charge, that any should be puffed up upon such a thing as that; what was there in it to occasion puffing up? The Answer is this, It is clear there were great divisions in Corinth, some sided one way, some another; now one of them who was of such a side, fell into this foul and scandalous sin, upon that the other side thought they had an advantage against the whole party, and this puffed them up; nay, do you not see what one of them hath done? you may by him see what kind of men they are; this made the whole party low in their eyes; they cast the contempt of this one upon all that were associated with him in such a way differing from others: This could not but widen the divisions amongst them.

It is an evil advantage that many take, if they see some very erroneous many ways, and obnoxious in their lives, yet if these agree but in some one thing with those whom themselves differ from, all the odium of these errors and loose lives must be cast upon such as they thus agree with, in that one thing, though their consciences cannot but tell them, that those

Brethren who are in a differing way from them, do abominate such errors and looseness of life, as much as themselves.

After God used Luther to bring light into Germany, there arose many Sects;\* Papists say, there were grown in the Church after Luthers time, in one hundred years, two hundred and seventy Sects, whereas from Christs time to his, there cannot be reckoned above a hundred eighty one. Now this was the practice of the Papists, that they might cast an odium upon the Lutheran party, which they looked upon as standing most in their light; whatsoever errors were held, or miscarriages of life appeared in any of these Sects, all was cast upon the Lutheran party, upon this ground, because the Lutherans and these sects agreed in this, that they were all against the Papacy.

There are many amongst us, who contend for several ways, Anabaptists, Antinomians, Socinians, Separatists, those that are for the Congregational way, Seekers, with many others, they all agree in this, that they are against the Prelacy; Doe you now think it were a just thing for the Prelates to gather together all the errors, opinions, and miscarriages in life, in all these sorts of men; and cast the ignominy and odium of all upon our Brethren, who contend for the Presbytery? if they should say, Look what vile opinions are held by those who are against Episcopacy, how scandalously many of them live, but they all concenter in this, they would have the Prelacy down, they are enemies to Bishops: You would presently answer, What though they agree in this one thing? yet such as are for the Presbytery, they are as much against the errors and disorders of those who join with them in this one thing, as yourselves are.

We read Jer. 29:26. Shemajah sent Letters to Zephaniah against Jeremiah; mark the Argument he useth why Jeremiah should be dealt severely withal. The Lord, says he to Zephaniah, hath made thee Priest instead of Jehoadah. Why, what then? where lies the force of his Argument, that Jeremiah must therefore be punished? It lay here, Jehoadah had punished one Matthan an Idolatrous Priest; therefore, says Shemajah, you must do as Jehoadah did; as if he should say, they are both in one way.\* This Jeremiah was a Priest, and so was Matthan; such kind of men must be looked to, they are all alike. Matthan was odious to the people, they all said he was not to be suffered, and they

being in some things alike, therefore all the evil which was found in Matthan, all the odium that was upon him, must be cast upon Jeremiah. Certainly this is a very sinful, unjust, uncharitable practice of men, (especially such as profess godliness) against their brethren: it widens, heightens, and lengthens our divisions very much.

The eighth dividing practice is an inordinate cleaving to some, so as denying due respect to others.

This was the practice amongst the Corinthians, which caused great divisions amongst them; some were of Paul, some of Apollos, some of Cephas. No question a man may in his heart more reverence, and prize, and outwardly shew more respect to those whom God makes the greatest instruments of good (*cæteris paribus*) then to others. David shewed more respect to Nathan than to Gad; Nathan was by far more intimate with him: The intimacy was such between them, that Nathan thought it a very strange thing that David should do any thing about the disposing of his Crown, and not make him acquainted with it. So Valentinian the Emperor upon this ground honoured Ambrose above any of the Bishops in his time.\* Such men as God is not pleased to make so instrumental for good as others, should not envy this; let them be willing that those should be honoured whom God honours: but yet people should take heed that they give not so much honour to one, that they deny due respect to others; and Ministers and others in public place should not entertain, much less seek for, or rejoice in any honour or respect given to them, which they see detracts from that esteem and countenance that is due to others.

Peter Martyr upon that place, 1 Cor. 3:4, 5. observes, that Heathen Philosophers were ambitious that their Disciples should receive denomination from them: hence some were called Platonic, others Pythagorici, others Epicurei,\* but this should be abominated amongst Christians. Lactantius hath a notable speech against this, Those (says he) cease to be Christians, who take upon them the names of men, and are not called by the name of Christ.

Peter Martyr upon the fore-named place,\* says of Socrates, that he was more modest then the rest, he refused to be accounted the author of that learning he taught others, but said of himself, that he was but as a Mid-

wife to be helpful to the bringing forth of that, which was in the minds of men before.

The weakness and folly of people in their inordinate giving or denying respects, is often caused, but more ordinarily fomented and increased by the pride and vanity of teachers, in seeking for, or at least in a pleasing embracing such inordinate respects given to them, whereby others suffer much; siding of parties is made, and more hurt comes to the public, then their honours are worth a thousand times over. This evil many times comes of it, that reason and truth from one man is little regarded, and error and weakness from another man is greedily embraced, and stiffly maintained; whereas it should be with Reason and Truth, as it is with money, one mans money in a market is as good as anothers, so should one mans reason and truth spoken by him be as good as anothers.

The ninth dividing practice. Because men cannot join in all things with others, they will join in nothing.

Some men are of such dividing dispositions, that if they be offended with a man in any one thing, in hearing, or otherwise, they will go away in a tetchy mood, resolving never to hear him more. You think you have liberty in any froward mood to cast off that means of good which God offers to you, to refuse to partake of such mens gifts and graces as you please; It may be your stomach is so high and great on a sudden, or your spirit is fallen into such a sullen humour, as you will not so much as go or send to him, to see if upon a serious and quiet examination of things, you may not have satisfaction in what for the present offends you. No, mens spirits are carried on with present rash heady resolutions. I believe there was never such a kind of spirit prevailing amongst such as profess godliness, since Christian Religion was in the world; never did so many withdraw from hearing even those by whom they acknowledge God hath spoken to their hearts, and that before they have gone to them, to impart what it is that scruples them, to try whether they may not get some satisfaction. Certainly if you have no need of the Word, the Word hath no need of you. You may easily express your discontents one to another; you may easily say you are resolved you will never hear such an one any more, but you cannot so easily answer this to Jesus Christ. When your weaknesses, the prevailing of your distempers shall grate upon your

consciences, this will be a great aggravation of the evil of them, You neglected in a humorous way, and self-willed resolution, those means that might have done your soul good, even such as many hundred, if not thousands of souls bless God for all the days of their lives, yea are now blessing God in heaven for. Heretofore you would have been glad of that, which now you sleight and reject; this is not from more light or strength that you have now which you had not then, but from more vanity, pride, and wantonness.

Others deny hearing, not from such a distempered spirit, but out of tenderness, because they think the Minister is no true Minister of Christ, because he had no true call, because he was ordained by the Prelates, &c. I confess though for mine own part I never yet doubted of the lawfulness of the call of many of the Ministers of the parishional congregations in England, though they had something superadded which was sinful, yet it did not nullify what call they had by the Church, that communion of Saints, amongst whom they exercised their Ministry, yet I do not think it the shortest way to convince those which refuse to hear, to stand to prove to them the lawfulness of the call of those Ministers whom they refuse to hear, but rather to make it out to them, that though their call be not right to the Ministry, yet they have not sufficient ground of withdrawing from hearing them. For they hold it is lawful for a man to preach the Word as a gifted man, and that these men from whom they withdraw are gifted and faithful, and preach excellent truths they deny not.

But they will say, If they did this as gifted men, it were another matter, but they preach by virtue of their call.

The answer to that is, if they be acted by that principle, and therein mistake, this is their personal sin, not the sin of those who join with them in a good thing, which they do upon an ill ground. When I join with a man in an action, I am to look to the action, and to the principle that I go upon, but let him with whom I join look to the principle that he goes upon.

Your hearing a man doth no way justify his call to the office of the Ministry.

If a man doth a thing that he may do by virtue of two relations or either of them, it may be he thinks he stands in one of those relations which indeed he doth not, yet he doth the action by virtue of it in his own thoughts, in this he sins; but there is another relation wherein he stands, that is enough to warrant the action that he doth to be lawful. Now though he doth not intend the acting by this relation, the action may be sin to him, but not at all sin to those who join with him in it. If he will go upon a false ground, when he may go upon a true, let him look to it. I will join with him in that action as warranted for him to do by virtue of his second relation, which it may be he will not own himself.

Take an instance in some other thing, and the case perhaps will be more clear.

Giving alms is a work that a man may do either by virtue of Church-office, as a Deacon, or as a Christian whom God hath blessed in his estate, or entrusted with the distribution of what others entrust him with. Now suppose a man is in the place of a Deacon, he thinks himself to be in that office by a right call into it, and he gives out the alms of his Church by virtue of his call; but I am persuaded his call to that office is not right, he is not a true Deacon; yet if I be in want, I knowing that both he & those who have given him money to dispose, may and ought to distribute to those that are in need, by virtue of another relation, as men, as Christians, enabled by God, surely then I may receive alms from him lawfully, though his principle by which he gives them me is sin to him. I may communicate with him in this thing, though he acts by virtue of that office that he had no true call unto; why may I not as well communicate with a man in his gifts, though he acts thus sinfully himself?

This consideration will answer all those objections against hearing men, that they say are not baptized; grant they are not, and so you think they cannot be Ministers; yet they are men gifted by God, and thereby enabled to dispense many truths of God to your soul.

The tenth dividing Practice, Fastening upon those who are in any error, all those false things and dangerous consequences, that by strength of reason and subtilely may be drawn from that error.

This embitters the spirits of men one against another; it is true, grant one false thing, and a thousand may follow, but I must not judge of a man that holds that one false opinion, as if he had the malignity of those thousand evil things in his spirit. I find our Divines who have been of peaceable spirits, have condemned very much this fastening of dangerous consequences of mens opinions, upon those who hold the opinions, and yet whose hearts are as much against such consequences, as possibly may be deduced from them, as any: In their giving rules for peace, they advise to take heed of this, as a thing which makes Brethren, who are different in their opinions, unlikely ever to become one. Davenant says,\* It is abhorrent to charity and right reason, that any because of consequences from what he holds, neither understood nor granted by him, should be thought to deny or reject a fundamental Article, which he firmly believes, expressly asserts, and if he were called to it, would seal the truth of it with his blood: Truer, and more gentle, says he, is the judgement of that great and peace-making Divine, Bucer, who says, It is our part not to look at what may follow from an opinion, but at what follows in the consciences of those who hold it.

The eleventh dividing Practice, To commend and countenance what we care not for, in opposition to what we dislike.

When such as profess godliness, shall make much of wicked men, shall commend them, join with them, embrace them; yea, be well pleased with the bitterness, boisterousness, boldness of their daring spirits, because there may be use made of them against those men and ways they differ from, this is an evil which brings guilt upon themselves, and makes the division between them and their Brethren very great: If your hearts be right, and your cause be good, you need not make use of any thing that is evil, to comfort your hearts, or to maintain your cause: The Lord will not be beholding to the evil, the bitterness of mens spirits, for the furtherance of his cause; and why should you? God will not take the wicked by the hand, neither shouldst thou: Are not your spirits strengthened against your adversaries, when you see them calling in Papists, and all manner of the refuse of men wicked and treacherous: Can you think that these are the most likely to maintain the Protestant Religion, and the liberty of the Subject? Why do you seek to strengthen yourselves by stirring up vile



men to join with you, such as heretofore your hearts were opposite to? How comes it to passe you can close so lovingly now? You can smile one upon another, and shake hands together: How comes it to passe, you do rejoice the hearts of evil men; they encourage you, and you encourage them? Those unsavory bitter expressions that come from them, you can smile at, and be well pleased with, because they are against such as differ from you; blow up that sparkle of ingenuity that heretofore hath been in you; lay your hands upon your hearts, bethink yourselves, is it the Spirit of Jesus Christ, that acts us in such a way wherein we are? Surely, this is not the way of peace, but of division and confusion.

The last dividing Practise, The Practise of Revenge.

When any provoke you, you say you will be even with him; there is a way whereby you may be, not even with him, but above him; that is, forgive him.

Practising revenge is the way to continue divisions to the end of the world; such offend me, therefore I will offend them; and therefore they offend me again, me again, and I them, and so it may run in infinitum; they deny me a kindness, therefore I will deny them, and therefore they will deny me; so these unkindness run on endlessly; divisions will have a line of succession, where will it, where can it stop, if this be the way of men?

Paulus Fagius in his Notes upon Leviticus, cap. 19. v. 18. says, If Reuben should say to Simeon, Lend me thy Axe,\* and he should answer, I will not; the next day Simeon hath need of an Axe, and he comes to Reuben, and says, I pray lend me your Axe, and Reuben answers, No, you would not lend me yours yesterday; the Jews accounted this to be Revenge: There is much more malignity in our revengeful practices one upon another then this.

Basil inveighing against requiting evil for evil,\* in his tenth Sermon, speaks thus to a revengeful heart; Doe not make your Adversary your Master, do not imitate him whom you hate; be not you his looking glass, to present his forme and fashion in your self .

Revenge God challengeth to himself as his, presume not to encroach upon God's propriety, to get up into God's seat, and do his work, thou hast enough to do of thine own. And it is very observable, how God stands upon his challenge of revenge as his own; as that which he by no means will suffer others to meddle with: in those Scriptures where this is mentioned, the challenge is doubled, yea, sometimes trebled, as Psal. 94:1. O Lord God to whom vengeance belongeth, O God to whom vengeance belongeth: So Nahum. 1:2. The Lord revengeth, the Lord revengeth, the Lord will take vengeance on his Adversaries, Heb. 10:30. Vengeance belongeth to me, I will recompense saith the Lord; and again, the Lord will judge his people: You must not think revenge to be so light a matter.

How unbeseeming are revengeful practices to Christian profession!\* Many of the Heathens were above such things. Plutarch reports of Phocion, That when he had done notable service for the Athenians, yet was put to death by them; but being asked a little before his death whether he had any thing to say to his son; Yes, says he, that I have, I require of thee my son, that thou never wishest ill to the Athenians for this they do to me.

How far are most of us from this? we can hardly passe by an ill look without revenge; but if we conceive ourselves to be wronged in words or actions, then revenge rises high, such things must not be borne.

A Gentleman of very good credit, who lived at Court many years, told me that himself once heard a great man in this Kingdom say, He never forgave man in his life: and I am moved the rather to believe it to be so, because I have been told by some other Gentlemen, that the same man would when he was walking alone, speak to himself, and clap his hand upon his breast, and swear by the Name of God, that he would be revenged, he would be revenged; and that she who lay in his bosom, was wont to sit alone, and sing to her self, Revenge, Revenge, O how sweet is Revenge! If they get power into their own hands, and are so uxorious, as they must needs give way to have things managed according to the will of their revengeful wives; what peace, what security is there like to be?\* Sir Walter Rawleigh in his History of the World, tells of the sad case of the Lacedaemonian, when Nabis having power in his hands, having a wife,

Apega, a woman full of cruelty and revenge, her husband delighting in her, caused her Image to be made, lively representing her, and apparelled with costly garments; but indeed, it was an Engine to torment men withal; he made use of it thus, when he could not have his will upon men by his own persuasions, he took them by the hand, telling them, that perhaps his wife Apega, who sate by in a chair, could persuade more effectually, so he led them to the Image, that rose up and opened the arms, as it were for embracement, those arms were full of sharp iron nails, the like whereof were also sticking in the breasts, though hidden with her clothes, and herewith she griped these men to death: At which Nabis standing by, laughed to see the cruel death of these miserable men. The Lord deliver us from revengeful spirits.

## **CHAP. XXVII**

### **The Evil of Divisions, They hinder much good.**

Eusebius reports of Constantine,\* That he was more troubled with the dissensions of the Church, then with all the wars in his Dominions, that he took them so to heart, that he could not sleep quietly for them; yea, although he had a spirit full of heroic valor, yet the dissensions of the Church were such evils to him, as to cause him to cry and sob: Thus he writes in an Epistle to Alexander and Arius,\* Let me enjoy the days in peace, and the nights without molestation, that the pleasure which riseth out of the pure light of concord and quiet life, may henceforth inviolably be conserved; if it otherwise happen, it behoveth us to sob and sigh, and to shed many a salt tear.

What heart that hath any tenderness in it, bleeds not in the sense of those sore and dreadful heart-divisions there are amongst us! The evil there is in them, is beyond what tongue or pen can express: Take a view of it under these three Heads:

1. The good they hinder.
2. The sin they cause.
3. The misery they bring.

First, the quiet, comfort, sweetness of our spirits is hindered by divisions: They put the spirit out of tune; men who heretofore have had sweet spirits full of ingenuity, since they have interested themselves in these Divisions, have lost their sweetness, their ingenuity is gone: When the Bee stings, she leaves her sting behind her, and never gathers Honey more; men by stinging one another, do not lose their stings, but they lose their honey, they are never like to have that sweetness in their hearts, that heretofore they had. Shall I lose my sweetness, says the Fig-tree, and go to be promoted over the trees? Why doest thou not reason thus with thy spirit? Shall I lose my sweetness in contending, to get my will to be above others? God forbid. There was a time that both my self and others found much sweetness in the temper of my spirit; there was nothing but peaceableness, quiet, calmness, contentedness in it, and how comfortable was such a temper of spirit! me thought when my spirit was in that sweet frame, all things were sweet to me; but since I have been interested in quarrels and contentions, it hath been far otherwise with me. Prov. 15:4. Perverseness in the tongue causes a breach in the spirit. Contentions cause much perverseness in mens tongues, and this causes a breach in their spirits. Your contending costs you dear: though it were in nothing else, yet the loss of this sweetness of spirit makes it very costly to you. All the wrong that you should have put up if you had not contended, had not been so great an evil to you, as this one thing is. There is nothing more contrary to ingenuity then quarrelsomeness. It is reported of Melancthon, that when he was to dye he had this speech, and Strigelius at his death had the same:\* I desire to depart this life for two causes: First, that I may enjoy the desired sight of the Son of God, and the Church in heaven. Secondly, that I may be delivered from the fierce and implacable hatred

of Divines. There was much disputing, contending, quarrelling in those times, which was so tedious to the spirits of these good men, as it made them the more willing to die, that they might be where their souls should be at rest. That Saint of God old Mr. Dod, never loved to meddle with controversies; he gave that reason, He found his heart the worse when he did. Men seldom come away from hot disputes, or any other contentions, but their spirits are altered for the worse. They find it so, and others find it in them. If a man has been abroad, and met with company with whom he hath been contending, his wife, children, servants, find that he comes not home with the same spirit that he went out with.

Secondly, they hinder the freedom of a mans spirit, which a wise man sets a high price upon; the strength of many mens spirits is spent in contentions, they have no command of them to any thing else. When a man is once engaged in a contest, he knows not how to get off; Contention is a great snare to a man, he wishes he had never meddled with it, he is weary of it, but knows not how to come off fairly. I have read of Francis the first, King of France, consulting with his Captains how to lead his Army over the Alps into Italy, whether this way or that way; Amarill his Fool sprung out of a corner where he sate unseen, and bade them rather take care which way they should bring their Army out of Italy back again. It is easy for one to interest himself in quarrels, but the difficulty is to be disengaged from them when you are in.

Thirdly, they hinder the good of the body; many men contending with their Brethren are so full of stomach, that they have no stomach, they hinder their sleep; men lye tossing up & down a great part of the night, sometimes whole nights, musing, plodding and contriving, how they may make their party good, what advantages they may get of those they contend with. Have the thoughts about the breach sin hath made between God and thy soul, broke thy sleep so much as the thoughts of breaches between thee and thy neighbors and brethren? We read of Moses, Deut. 34:7. that he was an hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. Some give this to be one reason of such a wonderful preservation of his health and strength, the meekness of his spirit: God witnesses of him, Numb. 12:3. That he was the meekest man upon the face of the earth. That good old man Mr. Dod came very

near to Moses in the one and in the other.

Fourthly, they hinder mens judgements: if the water be muddy, we cannot see what lies at the bottom.\* These dissensions disturb the medium of our sight: you cannot weigh gold in the midst of blustering winds: you cannot consider and give a judgement upon truth, except the heart be calm. Gregory Nazianzen hath this similitude: As the earth, says he, is fixed to men whose brains and eyes are sound, but to those who have a vertigo in their heads it seems to turn round: so we are deceived in our apprehensions of things, we have not the same judgement of things when we love, and when we do not love.

Fifthly, they hinder the sweetness of Christian converse and communion: you know your communion with the Saints was wont to be far more sweet then now it is: ye were wont to have your hearts spring at the sight of one another: *Ipse aspectus boni viri delectat*, says Seneca, The very sight of a good man delights, the sight of a godly man was wont to delight us otherwise then now it does: you look one upon another now sourly, with lowering countenance, and withdraw from one another: your comforts were wont to be double, treble, seven fold, an hundred fold, according to that society of Saints you conversed withal: one godly man accounted it the joy of his heart, that he had any thing that he could communicate to another godly man, and the other had the like joy that he had any thing to communicate to him; thus comforts were multiplied; but now your comforts are single. Oh the sweetness, the suitableness there was wont to be in the spirits of Christians! Shall I say suitableness? it was a blessed oneness of heart: they did as it were exchange souls one with another every day; their souls did close clasp one with, and cleave one to another. Oh how did they love to open their hearts one to another! what delight was there in pouring forth their spirits one into another! What cheerfulness was there wont to be in their meeting! they ate their bread together with singleness of heart and joy, praising the Lord. There were no such merry meetings in the world, as the meetings of the Saints were wont to be: They parted one from another with their souls bound up one in another; their hearts warmed, enlarged, resolved, strengthened in God's ways. But now they cannot meet together but they fall a jarring, contending one with another, and part with spirits estranged from,

soured, and embittered one against another: their hearts weakened, and more unsettled in the things of God then before. Heretofore when they were absent one from another, yet the remembrance one of another was joyful; but these days seem to be gone. Where is there that opening of secrets one to another as formerly? every one is afraid of another. What sweet visits were there wont to be? what bearing one anothers burdens? what heart-encouraging Letters? It was with the Saints as in Tertullians time,\* Christians called Brethren, and were ready to dye for one another: but now they are burdens to one anothers spirits, they bring evils one upon another. Those who heretofore were forward Professors, whose society was only amongst the Saints, now they can suit well enough with those who are carnal, they close with them, their converse is most amongst them.

Oh Lord, what fire is it that is kindled amongst us! The nature of fire is, Congregare homogenea, & segregare heterogenea, to gather things of a like nature together, and separate things of a different: but our fire does quite contrary, it separates things that are Homogeneall, and joins things Heterogeneall. Surely this is no other then the fire of hell.

Sixthly, they hinder our time. Abundance of time is spent about our divisions, which we are not able to give account to God for. When men are engaged in contentions, they will follow them night and day, whatsoever business be neglected, to be sure that must not: yea the choice of our time that was wont to be spent in meditation, reading, prayer, is now spent in contending and wrangling. Those retired times that we were wont to converse with God in, are now spent in the workings of our thoughts about our divisions; and when we come abroad then a great part of our time is taken up in going first to this body, and then to the other, to help forward and foment matter of division. Of all the time of a mans life, that time that is spent in lawyering and quarrelling is the worst, and happy it were for many that it might not be reckoned amongst the days, weeks, or months of their lives.

Seventhly, they hinder our prayers. If two or three agree together touching any thing they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father, says Christ, Mat. 18:18. 1 Tim. 2:8. I will that men pray, lifting up their hands without wrath. When Daniel was in a strait, he goes to his

companions, and desires them to lift up prayers to God for him, Dan. 2:17. There was a sweet agreement between them. Hence their stock and trade in prayer went in common, but divisions do exceedingly hinder prayer, either one with another, or one for another. 1 Pet. 3:7. the Apostle giving rules for a peaceable loving life between man and wife, the woman must be meek, and the man live with his wife as a man of knowledge; and they must walk together as the heirs of life. Why so? That your prayers may not be hindered Private contentions in families are great hindrances of family prayers: So our public divisions and contentions are the great hindrances of the prayers of Christians in a more public way. How were they wont to pour forth their hearts in prayer together? then their hearts closed, but now it is otherwise. Men do not walk now together as the heirs of life, therefore their prayers are hindered. God accepts not of our gift, if we offer it when our hearts are at a distance from our brethren. When breaches continue, and we are not reconciled, you know Christ requires us to leave our gift at the Altar till reconciliation be made. It is the Spirit of God in the Saints that is the spirit of prayer: now God's Spirit is a Dove-like, a meek, quiet, and peaceable spirit.

Eighthly, they hinder the use of our gifts: When vessels are soured with vinegar, they spoil liquor that is poured into them, they make it good for nothing: Many men have excellent gifts, but they are in such sour vinegar spirits, that they are of little or no use in Church and Common-wealth.

1. In these times of division, many men exercise their gifts and parts in little or nothing else but in matters of division; do you think that God hath given you such parts for no other end but this?

2. They have no hearts to impart to their Brethren their gifts in counselling, admonishing, strengthening, comforting: No, their hearts are estranged from them, they care not to have any thing to do with them: but do you think, that you are so far your own men, that you may keep in, or employ your talents as you please? Are you not the Stewards of Christ, are they not given to you for the edification of your Brethren, as well as for good to yourselves? Can this satisfy your consciences? such a one differs from you, he hath angered you, therefore though you have opportunity of being useful to him, yet you refuse it, as if it were at your liberty to lay out your abilities for good, or not, Certainly, this is not



according to the mind of Christ. 1 Cor. 12:7. The manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

3. If you do make use of your gifts for the good of others, yet dissensions between you will hinder the profit of them, you are not like to do any good by them, except they be carried on by the oil of love, they will not soak into mens hearts. When did you ever know a wrangling contentious Minister (though his gifts were never so excellent) do good amongst his people? And what comfort can a man have of his life, if he be laid aside by God as a useless man?

4. These divisions cause men to make the gifts of others useless to themselves, whereas God puts opportunity into mens hands, to get much good by those excellent gifts their Brethren have, yet if there be any difference between them, either they will not acknowledge the gifts of GOD in them, or otherwise they have no mind to receive from them that good they might have, because their hearts are not with them.

Ninthly, they hinder our graces; how little of God and Christ, little spiritualness appears in Professors of Religion since these rents and divisions have been amongst us, in comparison of what in former times hath appeared. As the members of the body (says Augustine) are not quickened, except they be joined, so even the members of Christ do not receive of the quickening virtue of Christ, except they be joined: Here is the reason of the deadness, coldness, emptiness, barrenness, vanity of your spirits, you are not joined: O where are the heavenly Christians that were wont to be, those humble, those holy gracious souls, who lived by faith, who were able to deny themselves, their whole lives were nothing else but a continual exercise of self-denial, who were not only patient, but joyful under afflictions? Where are those watchful Christians who walked close with God, who enjoyed such spiritual communion with him, as made their faces shine in their holy heavenly conversations? Where are those tender, broken-hearted Christians that were wont to be, who lived upon the Word, to whom the Word was more sweet then honey and the honeycomb? Now there is another kind of face of Professors of Religion, as if there were godliness in these days, not of the same kind with that which was formerly. If our fore-fathers, who were the most holy and gracious, should rise again, they would not own those for Professors of

Religion who now make a great noise, keep a great stir about Religion, as if they had got up higher then their fore-fathers had, and yet are loose, vain, frothy, false in their way. Certainly, those holy, gracious Saints, whom these new Professors sleight, were they alive, they would abominate them, as the great disgrace of, and dishonor to Jesus Christ and his Saints.

Take but away their disputes, and for any else, how empty and dry are they? If they ever had any grace, it is under a deal of rubbish, we cannot see it; and can these men be any other but an empty vine, seeing their hearts are so divided? The graces that they seemed to have had, are quite blasted; and if there were any in truth, they are exceedingly weakened; Vinegar will dissolve Pearls. Pliny tels of Cleopatra Queen of Egypt,\* that in her wanton bravery, at a Supper she made for Marcus Antonius, she dissolved a Pearl in Vinegar, and drank it off, and prepared another, both which were valued worth near five thousand pounds: Oh the many precious pearls worth thousands, of gold and silver, that are dissolved by the Vinegar sourness of mens spirits in these sharp dissensions that are amongst us!

Our Divisions hinder the breaking forth of the lustre, the shine of Religion in the beauty and glory of it.

The fire of our contentions raises such a smoke, that it all smothers us, it takes away our comeliness, it makes us look black, no amiableness appears in the ways of Religion to convince men of the excellency of them. Scratched faces, rent and torn garments we account a shame to us; distracted, divided spirits, rending and tearing one another, and from one another in our divided ways, O how uncomely does it render us, and that profession of Religion that we take upon us!\* The Turks were wont to wonder much at our English men for pinking and cutting their clothes, counting them little better then mad men, for making holes in whole cloth, which time of it self would tear too soon: The cuts, rents, slashes that are in our spirits, in our divisions at this day, are much more uncomely, and may justly render us foolish and mad in the eyes of all that do behold us.

Our Divisions hinder our strength; If you untwist a Cable, how weak is it

in the several parts of it? a three-fold cord is not easily broken, but a single one is: Divide a strong current into several rivulets, and how shallow and weak will the course of the water be? That act that Plutarch reports of the King of Scythia, Scilurus, toward his sons hath been very famous, to set out how divisions weaken wheresoever they are; he says he had eighty sons, and when he was near death, he caused a bundle of Arrows to be brought and given to them one by one, bidding each of them to break it; they all answered, it was impossible for any man to do it;\* then he causes the Arrows to be taken out one by one, and bade one of his sons break them, this any of them could easily do ; upon this he speaks to his sons thus, If ye agree together, ye shall abide strong and unconquerable; but if ye divide yourselves, contending one with another, ye will be weak and easily overcome.

They hinder our doing good in public; that which concerns many, must be done by many: But how can two, much less many, walk together, if they be not agreed? that which one does, the other seeks to undo : Now although God can turn whatsoever is contrary to his work , to the furtherance of it, yet man cannot do so. When God would hinder the work of building Babel, he comes down and confounds their tongues, so as they could not join together in it: Thus when the Devil would hinder the work of Jerusalem, he knows no way more likely then by dividing the hearts of those who are employed, if he can possibly, that thereby he might bring confusion.

They hinder our own ends; none are more crossed in their ends and designs, then contentious people; we have not the mutual benefit of one anothers estates, houses, the many ways of accommodation and help from one another, as heretofore we were wont to have; now every man shifts for himself; scarce any man who knew what the heartiness of friendship meant, enjoys those outward accommodations as he was wont.

They hinder the blessing of God, Psal. 133. The Psalmist commending the love of Brethren concludes, There the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. There! that is, where the love of Brethren is, there is a blessing, a blessing commanded by God; it comes with power, and this no less then life, and this life for evermore. God dwells in Salem, says Luther, not in Babylon; where there is peace, not where there is

confusion.

Lastly, yea they hinder all good. They are like the Torrid Zone, nothing can prosper under it. When the Dog-star rises no plants thrive as at other times. When a fire is kindled in a town, the bells ring backward. When fires of contentions are kindled in places, all things go awake. There is little joy in any thing.

Thus you see how great evil there is in our divisions in respect of what good we lose by them: now then consider whether it be possible that any gain we can get by them can recompense this loss; can any thing got by them quit the cost? But if it could be supposed our loss may be recompensed, yet I am sure nothing can countervail the evil there is in them, in respect of the sinfulness of them. That is the next head.

## **CHAP. XXVIII**

### **The Sinfulness of our Divisions.**

Though there be sin in many things mentioned, yet we considered them in reference to our good that was hindered: but now let us consider what venom of sin there is in them.

The number 2 hath been accounted accursed, because it was the first that departed from unity. The departure from that unity God would have, is a very cursed thing, for it hath much sin in it.\* That which S. Augustine says of original sin, we may well apply to our divisions, They are sin, the punishment of sin, the cause of sin, nothing but a heap of sin.

First, they are against the solemn charge and command of God, and of Jesus Christ. 1 John 3:23. This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave us commandment. It is not an arbitrary thing that we should love one another, but it is the command of God, and a great command joined to that of believing in his Son Jesus Christ. The one is as truly necessary to salvation as the other. Let men talk of faith, of believing on the Son of God, of trusting to free grace in Christ, yet if they have dividing, contending spirits, no love, no sweetness, no grace of union with the Saints, their faith is a dead faith. And because God stands much upon this to have his people live together in love, at the beginning of the verse he says, it is his commandment; at the end of the verse he says, he gave us commandment; And it is also observable, that he says of the commandment of love, that he gave us that commandment. It is a gift, for it is a sweet commandment. We should not only submit to it, as being bound by the authority of it: but we should open our hearts to it, and embrace it joyfully as a gift from God. The commandment of love God gives us as a gift from his love. The excellency of these commandments are further amplified, vers. 24. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. I do not think that you can find in all the Scripture any command of God in one verse, and a piece of another so inculcated and commended. Again, chap. 4:21. This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also. If you think you have any command to love God, or to believe in Jesus Christ, know the same authority lays a command upon you, to love your brother also. Joh. 15:12. This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you. And ver. 17. These things I command you, that ye love one another. Christ you see likewise makes a great matter of the Saints loving one another. Surely the sin then must needs be great that breaks such a great commandment as this, upon which God the Father and Jesus Christ his Son lays so much weight.

Secondly, these unkind and unloving divisions are against the prayer of Jesus Christ, yea against that prayer he made for us a little before he died, Joh. 17:21. he prays to his Father, that all who did believe, and should after believe on him, might be one, as his Father is in him, and he is in his Father; and that they may be one in the Father and him: as if he should

say, Oh Father, I am now going out of the world, and I foresee, when I am gone, even those whom thou hast given me, who are one in me, and in thee, will meet with strong temptations to divide them one from another: but oh Father I beseech thee, let thy fatherly care be over them, to keep their hearts together, that they may be united in the strongest union that is possible for creatures to be united in. Oh Father, let them bee one, as thou and I am one. Would wee not bee loath to lose the benefit of that heavenly prayer of Christ for us in that 17. of Joh. read it over, see what soul-ravishing excellency there is in it, seeing he hath expressly said he intended us who live now, in it, as well as those Disciples who then lived with him; Let us prize this prayer, as being more to us then ten thousand worlds. Luther writes a chiding Letter to Melancthon; By those sinful distrustful fears, and carking thoughts of yours, says he, you do irritas facere præces nostras, you make void our prayers. How great then is the evil of our divisions? by them we do what in us lies to make void as concerning us the prayer, that blessed prayer of Jesus Christ. Sathan, says Christ to Peter, hath desired to winnow you like Wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith fail not. He shall not prevail, says Christ: Why? Because I have prayed for you. Oh blessed Saviour, is not thy prayer against our divisions, as strong? Canst not thou prevail with thy Father as well in this as in that? Wee know thy Father did and does ever hear thee: some way or other this prayer of CHRIST is, and shall bee heard; yet our sin is not the less, for it tends to the frustrating of Christ's prayer. Sathan desires to winnow us in our divisions, but he desires not to have the Chaff divided from the Wheat, he rather would have the Chaff mixed with the Wheat. The mixing the Chaff with the Wheat makes a great stir amongst us: But Christ's prayer which helped Peter in his winnowing, we hope will help us in ours: only let not us do any thing that makes against it.

Thirdly, our divisions are against our own prayers. How often have many who now are estranged from one another, heretofore so prayed together, as their hearts have seemed to melt one into another, so as one would think it impossible that ever in this world there should have been that distance between them that now there is. How often have we prayed, Oh that once we might be blessed with such a mercy, as to worship God according to his own mind ! that we might be delivered from conscience oppression, from spiritual bondage! Oh that we might be delivered from

the inventions of men in the service of God: that the Saints might join and serve the Lord with one shoulder. There were never such hopes that the Saints should enjoy their prayers so as of late there hath been, and yet never were they so divided as now they are: they now seek to bring one another in bondage. If five or six years since when many of us were praying together, making our moans to God for that oppression we were under, God should have then presented as in a Map, such times as these are to our view; could we have believed that it were possible that there should be such a distance in our spirits as now these is?

Fourthly, our Divisions are very dishonorable to Jesus Christ; were it, that they darkened our names only, it were not so much; but that which darkens the glory of Jesus Christ, should go very near unto us. I have read of Alexander Severus, seeing two Christians contending one with another, commanded them that they should not presume to take the name of Christians upon themselves any longer; For (says he) you dishonor your Master Christ, whose Disciples you profess to be. It is a dishonor to a General to have his Army routed, and run into confusion. The Devil seems to prevail against us in these our divisions, so as to rout us. Joh. 17:21, 23. is a notable Scripture, to shew the sinfulness of our divisions, in the dishonor they put upon Christ, and it may be as strong an argument against them as any I know in the Book of God; Christ praying to the Father for the union of his Saints, uses this argument, O Father let this be granted, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me: And again, ver. 23. Let them be perfect in one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me. If they be not united one to another in love and peace, but have a spirit of division ruling amongst them, what will the world think? surely, that thou didst not send me; that I who am their head, their teacher and Lord, never came from thee, for thou art wisdom, holiness & love, and if I had come from thee, then those who own me to be theirs, and whom I own to be mine, would hold forth in their conversations something of that spirit of holiness, wisdom and love there is in thee; but when the world does not see this in them, but the clean contrary, they will never believe, that I came from thee; those truths that I came into the world to make known as from thee, O Father will not be believed, but rather persecuted, if those who profess them by their divisions one from another, and oppositions one against another, shew forth a spirit of pride,

folly, envy, frowardness; therefore, O Father, let them be one, as thou and I am one; if this Petition be not granted, how shall I look the world in the face? I shall be contemned in the world: what am I come down from thee, for such glorious ends as indeed those were, for which I came into the world, and when I should come to attain those ends, for which I came, shall there be such a carriage in those who do profess my Name, that by it the world shall persuade themselves, that thou diddest never send me? O what a sore evil would this be! surely any Christian heart must needs tremble at the least thought of having a hand in so great an evil as this is.

Fifthly, Divisions are sinful because they grieve the holy Spirit of God, Ephes. 4:30, 31. Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption. Surely, there is no godly heart, but will say, O God forbid, that I should do any thing to grieve the good Spirit of God, it is the Spirit that hath enlightened me, that hath revealed the great mysteries of God, of Christ, of eternal life unto me; it is that Spirit that hath drawn my soul to Jesus Christ, that hath comforted it, with those consolations that are more to me than ten thousand worlds; the Spirit that hath strengthened me, that helps me against temptations, that carries me through difficulties, that enables me to rejoice in tribulations; the Spirit that is an earnest, to assure me of God's electing love; the Spirit that hath sealed me up to the day of Redemption; and now shall I be guilty of so great a sin as to grieve this blessed Spirit of the Lord? If I did but know wherein I have grieved it, it could not but make my soul to bleed within me, that I should have such a wretched heart, to grieve this holy Spirit, by whom my soul hath enjoyed so much good; I hope I should for ever hereafter take heed of that thing, I would rather suffer any grief in the world, to mine own spirit, than be any occasion of grief to that blessed Spirit of God. But would you know what it is that hath grieved it, and what it is that is like to grieve it further? mark what follows, ver. 31. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice: And would you do that which may rejoice it? Oh! God knows it would be the greatest joy in the world for me to do it, then ver. 32. Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christs' sake hath forgiven you.

Sixtly, these divisions do grieve and offend our Brethren, this should not



be a light matter to us, Christ accounts it a great evil to offend one of his little ones: We may think it a little matter to give offence to some of God's people who are poor and mean in the world, so long as we have the bravery of it, and the countenance of great men, no matter for them. But (friend) whatsoever sleight thoughts thou hast of it, Christ thinks it a great matter; you may look upon them as under you, the times favour you more than them; but if you shall give them cause to go to God, to make their moans to him, of any ill usage they have had from you; Lord thou knowst I was for peace to the uttermost that I could, so far as I was able to see thy Word for my guide; but these who heretofore were as Brethren to me, now their spirits are estranged, their hearts are embittered, their words, their carriage are very grievous, and all because I cannot come up to what their opinions, their ways are; certainly this would prove very ill to you, regard it as lightly as you will; it may be when others carry themselves towards you otherwise than you expected, you vent yourselves against them in quarrelling, in giving ill language, in vilifying and scorning, your strength runs out this way; but there are a generation of men, who being wronged, improve their strength in patient bearing, yet in making their moan to God in the exercise of faith, in the committing their cause to him.

Matth. 18. from 24. to 31. you have the story of the servant who had ten thousand talents forgiven him, who yet took his fellow servant by the throat who ought him a hundred pence, and put him into prison; the Text says, When his fellow servants saw what was done, they were sorry, and came and told their Lord what was done. You do not hear them cry out of their fellow-servant, O what a vile base wretch was he, who would deal thus with his fellow! No, but they went & told their Lord. It is not the way of Christians when they apprehend wrong done, to give ill language, to seek to right themselves or others by bitter provoking expressions; but their hearts being filled with grief, if they must needs vent it, if quiet debates with their Brethren will not ease them, let them vent themselves in the pouring forth their complaints to the Lord.

Seventhly, there is much sin in our divisions, for they stir up much corruption on all sides, both in ourselves and others; As if you shake a glass of water that has dirt in the bottom, the dirt spreads it self all over:

so doth the dirty stuff in our hearts, these divisions causing a commotion in them; that corruption is now discovered, that neither ourselves nor others had thought had been in us: Do not you say in your hearts, and it may be one to another, Who would have thought it possible, that so much filthy stuff should lye so long in such mens hearts undiscovered, which now appears since these unhappy divisions have been amongst us? James 3:16. Where there is envying and strife, there is confusion and every evil work . When Snakes are cold, they lye still; but if the heat of fire come to them, then they hiss and put forth their stings: Thus mens corruptions heat by the fire of contention that is kindled amongst us, begin to stir, to act, yea, to rise very high. The reason that some give of that prohibition of the Apostle, Ephes. 4. Let not the Sun go down upon your wrath, which also I find Chrysostom upon the place gives, is, because when mens wrath is stirred by contending, if it continues in the heat of it till night, as they lye upon their beds their corruptions will be boiling, they will lye musing and plotting against those that contend with them; their thoughts in the night season will work up their corruptions to a great height; have you not found it so, when the Sun was gone down upon your wrath, you could hardly sleep that night? William the Conqueror in his first year commanded, that every night at eight a clock a bell should be rung, and that all people should then put out their fire, which was called the Curfew Bell: it were well that some were admonished every night, to cover the fire of their passions.

We stir up likewise the corruptions of others, in these our divisions; do you not see those distempers formerly mentioned, working and breaking forth in your Brethren when you provoke them in your contending with them? O pity, pity thy Brother, if thou canst not pity thy self ; does it not grieve thee, that thy Brother should bring sin upon himself? Were it not better for thee to suffer, then for thy brother to sin? It is an evil thing to be an occasion of grief to our Brethren, The Lord does not willingly grieve the children of men, but to be occasion of sin to them is much worse: When did you ever meet with your Brethren, and had your spirits put into any heat, but after your parting, when you began to be cool, you then saw cause to grieve for unbeseeing words, carriages, breakings forth of passion, that there was either in you or them: Sometimes in a froward debate there is more sin committed in one hour, then there is otherwise

in a whole twelvemonth, between those who live lovingly and sweetly together: yea, sometimes such corruptions are stirred by differences and divisions, that one would think were not compatible to a Saint; namely, the rejoicing in the evil of other men, yea of godly men. David said his zeal had even consumed him, because his enemies had forgotten God's Word; but some mens zeal do even consume them, because their friends do remember God's Word; the more inoffensive they walk, the more are they troubled; it were endless to mention the uncharitableness, wrong, malice, injustice, oppression, cruelty, with the abundance of other sins that are caused by our divisions.

Eightly, Yet further, as they stir up sin, so they harden in sin. Fire hardens the clay into a brick: Thus are mens hearts hardened in evil by our divisions, men who heretofore had tender spirits, their hearts were ready to relent upon any brotherly admonition, now they are stiff, they stand out sturdily, yea behave themselves scornfully: O this fire of contention hath baked their lusts, hath hardened their hearts. Ezek. 11. God promises to give his people one heart, and this heart should be a heart of flesh: While the hearts of the Saints are united, they are tender; but when they divide, they grow hard.

Hence is the reason why Brethren being fallen out, it is so hard to convince either of them of any ill carriage, they are angry, and they think they do well to be angry, and all because their hearts are hardened. Jonah was in a pettish mood, his heart was hardened with it, let God himself come now to convince him, he stands it out, he will by no means acknowledge himself faulty; no, what he does he will justify, he does well to be angry.

Ninthly, there is much sin in them, for they are a means to keep off others from God's ways; if this be their religion for men to quarrel one with another, I will have none of it: Carnal hearted men use to charge Religion with all the miscarriages of the Professors of it. You know what Saint Paul says, 1 Cor. 14. If men speak with strange tongues, and there comes in one unlearned, will they not be to him as Barbarians, will they not say they are mad? Thus when the men of the world look upon those who profess Religion, and see their carriages, their ways strange, divided amongst themselves, will they not think them even mad people? I charge you, says

the Church, Cant. 3:5. by the Roes, and by the Hindes, that you stir not up my Beloved till he please. This by some is interpreted thus, The Roes and Hindes are shy and fearful creatures, by them are signified such as are observers of the ways of the Church, and ready to take offence at any thing they see amiss in them, therefore I charge you, say those who are faithful, that you do nothing that may make any disturbance in the Church, whereby such as are observers of your ways shall be offended: If they see miscarriages in you, they will fly off, and of all miscarriages there are none more offensive to the lookers on, then wranglings and contendings; when they see this, they will conclude, Surely this is not the way of Christ.

10. They are a very ill improvement of our zeal and courage; Zeal and courage have such an excellency in them, as its a thousand pities they should have no other improvement then to raise and maintain quarrels and divisions. The Lord hath use of every mans zeal and courage, reserve them for him, for some notable work that God hath to do for thee, and do not spend them about that from whence comes no good. If Soldiers lying near their enemies, having no store of powder, should spend what they have in making squibs and fire-works, would they not be condemned of folly, if not of treachery, by all? Those who have the most zeal and courage, have little enough to serve their turn, for the services that God requires of them, and must this be spent in unworthy brabbling, wranglings and quarrelling? That mans body is in an ill condition that hath a fore to which the humours have recourse to feed it, leaving off the supplying to the parts of the body that are to be nourished and maintained by them; the sore is fed, but the other parts grow lank and feeble. Thus it is with many mens spirits, they are distempered, and then what abilities they have, are drawn forth to feed those distempers; what account can be given to God of such a use of them as this?

11. They make very much against the Cause of Christ now in hand, the great work of Reformation. Had we joined hand in hand together, and set ourselves to serve the Lord with one shoulder, what abundance of service might have been done? how might the honour of Christ have been advanced high amongst us before this day? But while one draws one way, another another, one seeks to set up, and another labours to pull down,

how can the work go on?

You will say, That is true indeed, things would go on apace, if those who differ from others, would give up their judgements and practices to them, to believe what they believe, and to do what they do . But how can this be? you would not have them give up their judgements or practices to them till they know they are right, and how can that be, till they by discussing, praying, reading, meditating, find that out? If some men had certainly found out the right, and other men knew certainly that they had done so, then the work were at an end.

But when we complain of our divisions for making much against the Cause of Christ, or work of Reformation, we do not complain against men, because they cannot all understand things alike. But this we complain of,

1. That all men who profess godliness, have not joined in opposing that which they believe cannot stand with godliness, by all the ways that God hath put into their hands.

2. That they have not joined to promote those ways of godliness, which they are convinced to be so.

3. That they have not joined to study what ways and means may be found out to ease the hearts and consciences one of another, to bear with one another, so far as Christ would have them be helpful to, and bear with one another. It is this that hath made such a stop in the work of Reformation. A peaceable, humble, and quiet discussing of things, furthers that Reformation that Christ would have. Doe you think that Christ would be pleased with such a Reformation wherein the lesser part should give up their consciences and practices to the judgments of the greater? such a kind of slobbering over matters might soon be, but Christ must have all the matters of his worship and doctrine consented to, and practiced from a principle of faith. Let us join with all our might in all we know, and with peaceable, quiet, humble spirits seek to know more, and in the mean time carry ourselves humbly and peaceably towards those we differ from, and Christ will not charge us at the Great Day for tattering his Cause, the great work of Reformation in hand.

12. These our dissensions are against a great part of the Covenant of Grace which God hath made with his people in Christ, and those many promises of so much peace that there is to be in the times of the Gospel. We by these do that which tends to make void the Covenant, we do as it were say that Christ is not come in the flesh. 1 Joh. 4:3. Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God, and this is that spirit of Antichrist. Many men talk much of Antichrist, but such as profess the Gospel, and yet are of unpeaceable, snarling, contending spirits, they have the spirit of Antichrist, and they do not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. It is the argument the Jews have against Christ, say they, If he were come, then that Prophecy Esay 11:6. would be fulfilled, The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lye down with the kid, and the cow and the bear shall feed together, &c. But this is not so, they bring many other places where Peace is prophesied of, as Esay 9:7. Of the increase of his government and peace shall be no end. Those who seek for his Government, should seek for his Peace also.

Galatinus de Arcanis Catholicæ veritatis, spends divers Chapters in answering the Jews Objections against Christ from these places with others, as Lib. 5. the 6, 7, 8. Chapters. A special part of the Covenant of Grace is in that promise, Ezek. 11:19. I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, v. 20. And Jer. 32:38, 39. They shall be my people, and I will be their God, and I will give them one heart and one way. Many men speak much of the Covenant of Grace, who manifest little of this part of it in them. If that which is against any command of God be sinful, much more is that which is so directly against God's Covenant with his people, that which tends to make even the Covenant of Grace to be of none effect; if it be of no effect in one part of it, it will be of none in the other.

13. By our divisions we cross that end that God aimed at in the variety of his administrations in the gifts and graces of men; That this was not Christ's end in dispensing gifts and graces in a different way, that there might be fuel administered to contentions and quarrels, but rather to exercise love, we spoke to before, now only take notice of it as a consideration that sets out the exceeding sinfulness of our divisions.

## The Aggravations of the sinfulness of our Divisions.

First, That we that are Christians should be thus divided, it were not so much if we were Heathens; our divisions are against the very character of Christianity: Hereby shall ye know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another, says Christ. Love and Unity are Christ's badge, the Arms of a Christian, whereby he shows of what House he is: But by these divisions of ours, what do we but rend the very Arms that Christ hath honoured us with, and cast them under our feet?

Secondly, that we who were so lately in bondage, should upon the beginning of our deliverance thus fall out one amongst another, one from another, one upon another; for us who are newly come out of prison, who have upon us still the very smell of our prison garments, the sores of our necks by reason of those yokes that were lately upon them are not yet healed, and yet we thus presently fight one with another, this is uncomely and very sinful.

Thirdly, The union of our enemies is an aggravation of the sinfulness of our divisions; how great a shame is it that they should join better then we! have they stronger bonds of union then we? Psal. 83:5, 6. we read of ten or eleven sorts of men who could all agree in that which was evil; the Text says, They consulted together with one consent,\* it is in the Hebrew, with one heart; there was Edom, the Ishmaelites, the Moabites, the Hagarens, Gebus, Ammon, Amaleck, the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assur is joined with the children of Lot: these were of several opinions and ways in matters of Religion, and yet could join. I remember Gregory Nazianzen in one of his Orations, makes a bitter complaint of this,\* Who is there, says he, that is of a right mind, that doth not deplore the present state of things? Who can find out expressions to set out this calamity of ours, that thieves and robbers,\* tyrants and whoremasters should be at peace amongst themselves, yet we cannot be at peace? Revel. 17:13. we read of ten Kings of the earth, that they are of one mind to give their power to the Beast, and to make war with the Lamb; shall not we be of one mind to fight against the Beast for the Lamb?

Fourthly, that such as God hath joined in so many bands of union, should so divide as we do , as the bands of old acquaintance, of dear friendship in

former times, that fellow-sufferers, that such as are related nearly, brethren, sisters, kinsmen, kinswomen, such as live in the same family, as are of the same society, the same calling, such as have received much good one from another, yet that now they should be thus divided, and thereby the occasions of so much evil one to another, this is a sore, and a grievous evil.\* Luther in an Epistle of his to his friend Spalatinus, tells him, that if he must perish, he would not that the Emperor Charles should have a hand in it, out of respect to him, but let me rather, says he, perish by those of Rome, for I know, says he, what misery followed Sigismund the Emperour after the death of John Husse. Although we should desire that we might be no occasion of evil to any, yet if it must needs be, better a thousand times that the evil fall upon wicked men, and those who are at the greatest distance from us, then upon those who are godly, and so near unto us.

Fiftly, that such as agree in so many things, yea in all things necessary to salvation, yea almost, if not in all the Doctrinal part of Religion, yet because of some few things of lesser moment, there should be such a fearful breach as now there is, this makes the account we are able to give of our breach the worse, and our sin the more. And this is the evil spirit of some, they could with our divisions were in greater things, that they might justify their opposition so much the more.

Sixtly, the sin is great, because it is Heart-division; if it were Head-division, difference of judgement, it were ill, but not so ill. Jer. 4:18. Their wickedness is bitter, for it reaches to the heart. This makes the wickedness of our divisions bitter; the heart commands the head, but the head cannot command the heart.

7. They are the worse, because they break out so much as they do ; wounds that take air, grow much worse then those who are kept closed; It is an ignorant, foolish speech that some please themselves with, when they are provoked, and vent abundance of choler in bitter, wicked language: When I am angry, say they, I must vent what I have within; it is better to let it out, then to keep it in. Indeed if the breaking of it out did make it to be less within then it was before, as the corruption of a sore is when it breaks out, then there were some reason in what you say; but it is otherwise. As the more you act grace the more it increaseth, so the more



you act sin, the more it increaseth. And besides, Heart-corruptions when they break forth, they dishonour God in a public way; whereas when they are kept in, the dishonour to God is but between God and yourselves.

8. That our divisions are in the presence of wicked men, that we should discover our shame before them. Gen. 13:7. the Text says, There was a strife between the herdsmen of Abraham and the herdsmen of Lot, and the Canaanite and the Perizite dwelt in the land.\* Their strife was the more vile, because it was before them. Let us remember when we are striving, that the Canaanite and Perizite dwell in the land. It is not safe, says Nazianzen, to betruse him that hates a Christian,\* with the hearing any thing against a Christian.

9. Our divisions are long continued divisions, nothing can quiet us, as if they were irreconcilable.\* There is, says Nazianzen, a satiety in all things amongst men but in contentions; in meat, in drink, in singing, in all things otherwise most delightful, but men have never done in mischieving one another. We are like cocks, who are easily set a fighting, and when they are in, they will never leave till they kill one another.\*

10. The late Covenant that should be a means to unite us, is made a means of widening our divisions, by making false interpretations of it, by drawing the sense of it to what may serve mens turns, by charging men of perjury, because they come not up fully to what they would have them, by which abuse some seek to make it to be a very snare to their brethren.

11. We are thus divided at such a time as this, the most unseasonable for divisions that ever was in the world: For,

First, it is a time of affliction. It was sad with the Children of Israel when they were in the wilderness to meet with fiery Serpents to sting them; while we are in the wilderness in an afflicted condition, we are fiery serpents one to another.\* The Hebrew word that signifies afflicted, signifies meek, to note, that afflicted ones should be meek ones. When the storm is coming, the Bees flock together to the hive. Jer. 50:4. In those days, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, and the children of Judah together, going and weeping they shall go and seek the Lord their God. Judah and Israel could not agree at other times, but when they are

in a weeping condition, then they shall come together.

Secondly, it is a time of Fasting and Prayer; England never knew what such Fasting and Prayer meant, as it hath known of late: No nation in the world that we know of ever knew the like; and shall we in such times as these, when we are casting down ourselves before Almighty God, when we are judging ourselves before him, in the pride and frowardness of our hearts contend against one another? Esay 58:4. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to fight with the fist of wickedness. It is a fist of wickedness indeed, that fights in times of Fasts. Is it such a Fast that I have chosen? How do we in the days of our Fasts, acknowledge our vileness, our unworthiness of the least mercy, our pride, our self-love, our envy, our passions, all those distempers that are dividing distempers, yet still we continue in them, and they break forth into dividing practices? Surely our Fasts will rise up in judgement against us, to make the sin of our divisions out of measure sinful.

Thirdly, it is a time also of great mercies; We are afflicted, but not forsaken; and mercies should sweeten our spirits. This Summer hath been a continued miracle of mercies; if our agreeing together, our love to one another were now beyond the expectation of all men, as God's mercies to us have been beyond, and above all expectation, even such a fruit of mercies would be the greatest mercy of all. But if instead of being sweetened by mercies, we are the more embittered one against another, how great is this sin? If we shall take occasion from our victories at Nazeby, Taunton, Bridgewater, Sherburne, Bristol, to seek to drive out of the Kingdom thousands of godly men whom God used as instruments of so great mercy to us; will not this be sin unto us? God brought us indeed into a wilderness, but he hath there spoke comfortably to us; our wilderness is our way to Canaan. It was the charge of Joseph to his brethren, Gen. 45:24. when they were going from Egypt to Canaan, See that ye fall not out by the way: We hope God is leading us to Canaan, oh that we could see Christ looking upon us, and charging us, saying, See that you fall not out by the way, do not grudge one against another, let not one say, You are the cause of our trouble, and another say, Nay, but you are the cause of our trouble; let every one charge his own heart, let every man fall out with his own sin as much as he will, but let not

brethren fall out by the way.

Fourthly, it is a time of Service; God never put such opportunities of service into our hands, as now he hath. How many holy men who were furnished with large abilities and enlarged hearts to have done service for God and his people in former times, lived privately, only enjoyed sweet communion between God and their own souls, but oh how did they prize opportunities of service! how did they thirst after, and greedily embrace advantages for public work! they were willing to submit to any thing to the uttermost their consciences would suffer them, that they might be employed in work for God and his Saints: Though their encouragement from men was small, yet their work was wages to them; but in those times, almost all places of public employment were in the hands or at the dispose of evil men; could they have foreseen that within a few years, there should be a door open for all godly men, to full opportunities for the employment of their gifts and graces to the uttermost. How would they have rejoiced and longed to have seen those times, and blessed those who should live in them! I am confident it cannot be shewn that ever there was a time since the world began, that so many godly people in a Kingdom have had such a large opportunity of public service, as for these last five years hath been in England; and shall this opportunity be lost with our wrangling and contending? Oh how unworthy are we to live in such times as these are! When a Master sets his servants to work, and that in such a piece of work as is of great concernment, the opportunity of which if lost will be a great loss to him: if these servants shall trifle away this opportunity with wrangling one with another about their work, one opposing another in it, will this be a good account to their Master? So much time was spent in work, but so much in quarrelling, whereby there is little of the work done. We read of Nehemiah, cap. 6:3. when Sanballat and Tobiah, those quarrelsome companions sent to him to meet them, intending to quarrel with him, he answered them, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come, why should the work cease? If we see men set upon strife and contention, we should not meddle with them, to spend our time in answering what comes from them; our case were miserable, if we were at the mercy of every quarreller, bound to answer whatsoever he pleases to put forth. But let us tend our work; these opportunities of service that now we have are too precious to give way to them, to be

spent, to be lost upon the How just were it with God to take these opportunities from us, to bring us again into such a condition as we should be glad of a days employment in public service, and then oh how would our consciences wring us, and grate upon us for such ill improvement of them, for such unworthy loss of them when we had them!

5. This time is the time of the trial of our spirits. We never had such a time to try what spirit of love, what principles of union are in us as now we have; and shall we now miscarry? May it not be justly thought that all our seeming love one to, and closing one with another formerly, was only for our own ends? Before we were all under oppression, or at least the fears of it, when we looked upon ourselves as in the same condition, then the trial was not so much: but now there is some difference made in the condition of godly men. Some have the times smiling upon them more than others; now is the time of trial. The time of the trial of the spirit of Pharaohs Butler towards Joseph, was when he was out of prison, enjoying his preferment at the Court, & Joseph remained still in prison. Perhaps while they were fellow-prisoners he might tell Joseph that his heart did close much with him, and if he had any opportunity to be useful to him, oh what a happiness should he think it to himself! Surely it should be improved for the good of Joseph to the uttermost. But when he was preferred, when he had respect amongst great ones, and Joseph still was kept low, then he is not the same man that he was when he was Josephs' fellow sufferer. Now he hath other things in his head: Joseph is forgotten by him. Where this evil is, be sure God will find it out: for it is an evil very grievous to his Spirit. Put these together, and it will appear that it is no time now to contend, whatsoever we do at other times. I remember I have read of Sir Francis Drake, having a dear friend of his slain by a bullet as he sate with him at supper, Ah says he, I could grieve for thee, but now is no time for me to let down my spirits: So when any shall do such things as might cause contention, do you speak to your own heart, Ah I find my anger stirred; I could contend, but now is no time for me to let my spirits rise in a contending way; these times call for peace and union, not for strife and debate. This is the 11. aggravation we are divided in such a time as this.

The twelfth is, we are divided, notwithstanding we are all convinced of the evil of divisions. We cry out exceedingly against them: we tell one another, that of all the tokens of God's displeasure amongst us, these are the greatest. Yet scarce a man does any thing, or leaves any thing undone towards any help against divisions, or furtherance of our union. Every man cries out of the Thief, but who stops him? We all say we would have peace, oh peace is an excellent thing! But where is the man who is willing to be at any cost for it, either in putting up any wrong which he conceives is done to himself, or bearing with his brother in any thing differing from himself? The Lord may justly judge us out of our own mouths.

13. We have complained of others who were in place of power, to be of harsh, cruel dispositions. We have said if they had been of gentle, loving, peaceable dispositions, tendering the glory of God dearly, and the good of their brethren as their own, what abundance of good might they have done! We have thought in those times, Oh if such men were in place, who were then our dear brethren, whom we conceived to be of holy, humble, sweet, peaceable spirits, very tender-hearted towards any they saw godliness in; had they power in their hands, what safety, peace, rest, would the Saints have! How comfortably should they go on in their work! How would they be edified, praising the Lord! What a heaven upon earth should we have! And yet we find it otherwise. We may say, we looked for light, and behold, (I will not say darkness) but behold dimness even from them: for brightness, but behold obscurity. Oh how do the carriages of these men in some degree justify the harshness, sourness, domineering and cruelty of some of the Prelates! We hope nothing shall ever befall us as to be such a temptation to us, as to justify their places. But some of their persons are so far justified, as there is occasion given to think they were not such vile men as heretofore we thought they were. For now we see what a temptation there is in having the times shine upon men, in having power put into mens hands. We see now that men who have other manner of principles then ever they had, yet how sadly they miscarry when they come under the like temptations. How can we answer Christ Jesus for these things?

14. We are still divided, though we have seen the woeful evils that divisions have brought upon others, yet we cannot be warned by other

mens harms. Those who are acquainted with Ecclesiastical Histories, may furnish themselves with Volumes in this kind. Who can read that short but sour History of the troubles at Frankford, but his heart must needs bleed within him? And of late what evils have almost all the Protestant party in Germany, and through the Christian world, suffered by divisions! And yet we engage ourselves in them, and are every day engaging ourselves more and more. How deep we shall sink the Lord knows.

15. In our very labouring for union we are divided, in our endeavours for peace we are at variance. Nazianzen in his 12. Oration rebuking this strange miscarriage of men, hath this notable expression,\* While we would have charity, we study hatred, while we seek to set up the corner stone which unites the sides together, we are loosened ourselves, we are for peace, and yet we fight one with another. Our ways of late have been little else but doing and undoing; yea we cross ourselves in what we would do, by doing what we do . We are full of contradictions in our own spirits and actions,\* and we cry out of others, that they are not consistent to their own principles.

Lastly, the sin of our divisions is the greater, because we make Religion to patronize them. We divide from one another, and all under a pretence of Religion. Surely this Virgin is forced, for there is nothing more contrary to the name or nature of Religion, then to cause or further divisions. The name carries union, strong union with it: Religio à Religando, from binding us again to God, and to one another, after we were divided by our sin. To father our wicked divisions upon Religion, is no other then to bring down the Holy Ghost from the likeness of a Dove to be like a Vulture or a Raven. What spirit is it that we profess ourselves to be acted by when we are working for Religion? is it not the Spirit of God? and is not that a Dove-like spirit? although we dishonor ourselves by discovering the baseness of our own spirits by our divisions, yet let us not put dishonor upon the blessed Spirit of God; this makes the sin to be abominable. Nazianzen in his fore-named Oration,\* inveighs against this in those in his time, In our pleadings for the truth, we (says he) belly one another; as if this were the way to maintain truth.

## CHAP. XXIX

### **The wofull miseries that our divisions bring upon us.**

They are themselves fruits of the curse, therefore there can come no other but cursed fruits from them, except God, contrary to their nature, be pleased to over-rule them, which he only is able to do . It was the curse of God upon the ground, Briars and thorns shall it bring forth; It is no less curse of God upon mens hearts, that they bring forth such briars and thorns, by which they tear one another.

First, our divisions provoke the wrath of God against us; though the wrath of man accomplishes not the riotousness of God, yet it may accomplish the wrath of God. Esay 9:21. Manasseh against Ephraim, and Ephraim against Manasseh, and they together against Judah; for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. When we are thus one against another, the anger of God is not turned away from us, we may fear his hand will yet be further stretched out against us; so long as our wraths one against another continue so hot, certainly God's wrath is not appeased.

We read of Abraham, when he was about sacrificing Isaac, he found a Ram entangled in the briars, which God had prepared for him to be a sacrifice: We are this day entangled in the briars, and we know not how to get out, it is a sign that we are prepared to be a sacrifice, even to the wrath of God.

Secondly, by them we serve the designs of our enemies; what would they have given, when they first divided from us, to have procured so great divisions amongst ourselves, as have been, and yet are? If a Million would have purchased them, rather then they should not have been, they would (no question) have given it; I am sure they further their designs more then many Millions would have done:

Hoc Ithacus velit, & magno mercentur Atridæ.

We have often said that some who have kept at the Parliament have served the designs of the King and those about him better then they who were with him. Certainly those who foment divisions amongst us, do serve our enemies turn more then many that are with them. When in our contentions our spirits rise one against another, and we reproach one another, we do not consider,\* says Nazianzen, how unsafe it is to put weapons into our enemies hands. Yea he thought in his time, though near thirteen hundred years since, the divisions of the Churches to be a great means to further and hasten the coming of Antichrist: for so he says in the same Oration before quoted, I verily fear lest Antichrist should come suddenly upon these our divisions,\* and lest he should take the advantage of these our offences and distempers to raise his power over us. Let those therefore who cry down Antichrist so much, cry down divisions also, lest they prove to serve the designs of Antichrist in a very great measure, though they think not so.

Thirdly, by these we make ourselves a scorn to our enemies. Hosea 7. ult. The rage of their tongue shall be their division in the land of Egypt. When Malignants hear our rage one against another, we are a derision amongst them; these Egyptians jeer us, they condemn us, and all the power we can make against them. I find in one of Melancthons Epistles, a story of one Bessarion, exhorting the Princes to concord, that they might join against the Turks, he brings in this Apologue: There was a war between the wolves and the dogs;\* news came to the wolves that there was a huge army of dogs coming against them, intending to tear them in pieces; the wolves sent an old wolf out to be a scout, he comes and tells them there were indeed a great company of dogs more then themselves were, but they need not fear, for he perceived they were of different colors: Upon this the wolves made nothing of them, accounting it an easy matter to deal with them who were so differing amongst themselves. In the same manner, says Melancthon, do Staphilus, and Canisius, and others of the popish faction, triumph in respect of us; upon which he falls to prayer, That the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, would govern them, and make all in their Churches to be one in him.

Fourthly, yea by these we are like to be made a prey to our enemies. Here



many sad stories might be told you of the prevailing of enemies against divided people. The divisions of Israel at this time made them a prey to their adversaries, which you may see clearly if you read 2 King. 17. afterwards the divisions of the other Tribes made them a prey to the Romans. When the Turks have prevailed over Christians, do not all stories tell us it hath been through the divisions of Christians? When Normans, Danes prevailed in England, it was by the advantage they had of our divisions; if we will still divide and contend, our condition may prove to be like two birds pecking at one another, in the mean time the Kite comes and catches them both away.

Fifthly, if God should free us from our enemies, yet we are like to devour one another, and this is a greater misery then to be devoured by the common adversary. Gal. 5:15. If ye bite and devour one another, take heed ye be not consumed one of another. What biting and devouring was this? It was not in an open hostile way, they did not take up Arms one against another, but by their different opinions and contentious carriages in matters of Religion. Their differences in the matters of Religion were very great, Non de finibus, sed de hæreditate, not about the bounds, but the inheritance it self ; yet unpeaceableness and violence in their carriages one towards another, though the matter of their difference was so great, is condemned and threatened by the Apostle. Doe not our Adversaries say, Let them alone and they will devour one another? God gives us good hope that he will deliver us from our enemies; but the hearts of many godly and wife men tremble within them, fearing lest that wolfish distemper of ours should feed upon our own flesh, when the matter that it had to feed upon from without is taken away.

Sixthly, if we should not devour one another, yet being thus divided we are like to perish of ourselves, as those Infecta, which after they are cut asunder, yet the several parts live; they wriggle up and down a little while, but they cannot hold long. So it is like to be with us; except we join, we cannot live.

Seventhly, these divisions are like to make many miserable indeed; for if God be not merciful to them, and that soon, they are like to be such a rock of offence, as to split them, upon which they are running; they are in very great danger to make shipwreck of their consciences; yea I fear some have

done it already; if it be not so, the Lord be merciful to them, and prevent it. The spoiled houses, the torn estates, the maimed bodies of men caused by our divisions, are sad objects to look upon; but the broken, maimed, spoiled consciences that these have caused, and are like further to cause, were and yet are like to be objects before us to be lamented with tears of blood. This shipwreck of conscience it may be is not felt now, but it will prove horror of conscience hereafter.

Eighthly, they are like to lay a foundation of much evil to posterity; this consideration is almost as sad as any. We think it a great evil that Kings children should be brought up in the sight of blood, that they should be in danger to have principles of cruelty or tyranny infused into them in their tender age; we are afraid lest the muddy water they drink now should breed diseases in them that may break out afterward. Surely it is a great evil also for the children of the Church to be brought up in the sight and exercise of divisions in matters of Religion; that that knowledge of Religion which they now take in, should be as troubled waters full of soil. In the beginning of this Parliament there was as hopeful a generation of young ones coming up, as ever the Sun saw, but many of them have lost their lives in this public Cause; God will certainly take a valuable consideration at the hands of the adversaries for their blood especially; we have cause to bless God for them: God made use of them to stop the rage, the overflowing of the proud adversaries upon us; they have served their generation, and have been more useful in it than others who have lived 70 or 80 years formerly: but for those who are preserved, these divisions in the things of Religion have spoiled many of them, they are carried away with such a strange kind of spirit of error, of conceitedness, folly, willfulness, bitterness, licentiousness, and boldness, that their hopeful beginnings are lost, so that the next generation is like to reap very sour, bitter, and unwholesome fruits of these our quarrels and contentions. By what hath been said you may see why the Spirit of God, Prov. 6:19. puts the sowers of discord amongst those whom God hates: What the harvest of such seed is like to be, we shall see in the next Head.

Aggravations of the misery that comes by our divisions.

First, our misery is the greater, because it is still increasing; Divisions make way for divisions; we beat our brethren till they cry, and then we

beat them because they cry, is not this hard dealing? We read in our Chronicles that those who were born in England the year after the great mortality 1349.\* wanted some of their cheek teeth; if we should judge of mens teeth by their biting, one would think that now men had more teeth, or at least far sharper then they were wont to have; there was never such biting as now there is. Yet thanks be to God this increase is not in all places, not in our Armies; time was when we were much afraid of divisions there, but now we hear they are comfortably united, Dividing terms are not heard amongst them as formerly; though there be differing judgements, their hearts and arms are open one to another, they love one another, they are willing to live and dye one with another. The blessing of the Almighty be upon you; go on and prosper, the Lord is with you; he hath done great things by you, and delights to use you in great services, for the honour of his Name, and good of his people. You have had, and have the prayers of the Saints, they bless you, and bless God for you. Soldiers united in love, and hating that which is vile, are exceedingly strengthened in valor.

Plutarch reports of a Theban band that were but three hundred, yet were the most terrible to the enemies, of any, and did the greatest services: They were called the Holy Band, because they hated dishonest things, and were willing to venture their lives for honest causes, fearing dishonorable reproach more then honourable danger. But though this was one cause why it had that name,\* yet Plutarch thinks that the first cause why it was called the Holy Band, was from their entire love one to another. By the self same reason (says he) that Plato called a lover a divine friend by God's appointment. These Thebans, together with other of their Countrymen, had a great power of the Lacedæmonians to resist such a power as the Athenians, for fear of it, left off to protect them, renouncing that league that they had before with them. Every man, said the Thebans, were undone. But these despised Thebans meeting with the Lacedæmonians about the City of Tegyra, where according to the compute of some they were six to one, and a warlike valiant people, one came running to Pelopidas the Captain of the Thebans, saying, Sir, we are fallen into the hands of the Lacedæmonians. Nay, are not they fallen into ours? says Pelopidas. And so it fell out, for they utterly routed them. In all the wars that the Lacedæmonians ever had, as well with the Grecians as

with the barbarous people, no Chronicle ever mentioned that they were overcome by any number equal in battle. Whereupon these Thebans grew so terrible to their enemies, that none durst for a long time encounter with them. After this battle Pelopidas would never separate them one from another, but keeping them together he would always begin with them, to give a charge in his most dangerous battles. Yet notwithstanding all this service they had ill requital from the people, for when their Captain Pelopidas came home, they stirred up a party against him that sought to break him, though they could not prevail. It is farther reported of this Band, that it was never broken nor overthrown till the battle of Chœronea, where it seems they had some added to them. And see what love and valor will do in an Army unto death. Philip taking a view of the slain bodies there, he saw four hundred dead on the ground, one hard by another, all of them thrust through with Pikes on their breasts, and being told that it was the Lovers Band, he fell a weeping for pity, saying, Woe be to them that think these men did or suffered any evil or dishonest thing.

Ever since our Armies have been united, God hath wonderfully blessed them. Shall men of war be at peace? and is this comely? and shall men of peace be at war? how uncomely will this be? Yet so it is. The seeds of dissensions never sprung up more against us then of late they have done. The spirits of men seem to be heat and ready to boil one against another in this City more then heretofore they have done. The Lord hath made London a blessing to the whole Kingdom, and the neighbor Kingdoms too. The children not yet borne will have cause to bless God for London, for their union, their faithfulness, their courage, their bounty: and shall now, when God is about bringing in rest to us from the rage of our enemies, a fire of dissention be kindled amongst us? Shall the comfort of all our former mercies and future hopes be lost, by raising up of new quarrels? and must this come from the City? The Lord forbid. The Lord make you like Jerusalem, a City compact, at unity within it self . Your very name carries unity in the face of it. *Civis à coeundo*, says Cicer: *quod vinculo quodam societatis in unũ coeunt quasi Coivis*. I remember I have read in Livy a notable speech of Scipio to the Citizens at Carthage. By what name, says he, shall I call you? I know not: Shall I call you *Cives*,\* *qui à patria vestra descivistis*? Things are not come to this passe in this City. The Lord forbid that there should ever be that degenerating from

that unity and love heretofore hath been, that there should be cause to say, Shall you still be called Cives? qui à pristina unitate, à pristino amore mutuo descivistis, who have departed from your former unity and mutual love. Oh no, Let brotherly love continue, Heb. 13:1. Let none take your crown, but abide glorious in the eyes of the whole Nation about you, and all strangers that come into you. We pray for the peace of London, Let them prosper that love it, Peace be within her walls, and prosperity within her Palaces. If any shall say, the City is not guilty herein, it is but some few private men: I gladly answer as Scipio in his forenamed speech did to the Carthaginians, making such an objection, Libenter credam negantibus, I am very willing to believe it. Only do you make it appear to be so, by knitting yourselves so much the more strongly together, by how much any amongst you seeks to disunite you.

A second aggravation of the misery of our divisions, is, Surely none will pity us in all that evil that comes upon us by them. If God should have suffered our enemies to have prevailed against us, all the Protestant party in the world would have pitied us. If those who had escaped had fled for their lives to them, they would have entertained them with much compassion. But if we mischief ourselves by our divisions, we shall be looked upon as contemptible in the eyes of all. If we should fly to them, we may expect to be entertained with rebukes; You are an unworthy generation: God put a price into your hands, to have done yourselves and all the Protestant party good; you might have freed yourselves from thralldom, and many ways have been helpful to us, but you had such proud, envious, quarrelsome spirits, that you brake asunder one from another, you mischieved one another, and so have undone yourselves and your posterity; ye are not worthy to live amongst men. Can we be able to bear such rebukes as these? Every man that is in misery desires to be pitied, but this misery is like to be such, as no pity can be expected in it.

Thirdly, our consciences will fly in our faces, telling us that we may thank ourselves for all this. It is a great part of the torment of the damned, that their consciences shall be always upbraiding them for bringing so much evil upon themselves. This shall be the gnawing of that worm of conscience for ever.

Fourthly, our misery is and will be aggravated by the executioners of it:

our familiars, our brethren, those who not long since were dear to us, will be made use of to make us miserable. How great a misery will that be? When the men of Judah came up to Samson, to deliver him to the Philistines, Judg. 15:11, 12. says Samson to them, But swear to me that ye will not fall upon me yourselves., He thought it a very grievous thing for the men of Judah to fall upon him. He did not so much regard what the Philistines could do against him. Certainly there is nothing in the world more sad then for one brother to make another miserable. The History of that War between Sylla and Marius tells of one having slain a man not knowing him, but after he looked and found it was his brother, in the anguish of his heart, because he had slain his brother, he took his sword and ran it into his own bowels. It is a great evil to be an instrument of evil to our brethren, and to suffer evil from our brethren.

This consideration might be enough to stop us in our divisions, and cause us to think of ways of joining. Plutarch in the forecited place, the life of Pelopidas, says, that the Poets write that the misfortune of Laius who was slain by his brother Oedipus, was the first original cause that the Thebans began to be in such love one with another, to join in that Holy Band before mentioned. If this were cause enough to take us off from our contentions, we have enough of this amongst us. The Lord be merciful to us.

Fifthly the misery of our contentions in the Civil State is such, as if we be overcome, we are undone, for our outward condition, we and our posterity are made slaves; if we do prevail, yet there is sadness in our conquest. That is a miserable war, which is thus. The Civil Wars of the Romans were such, *Nullo habitura triumphos*, there was no triumph, but sadness even in the victory.

Sixthly, what help can there be? for we wilfully make ourselves miserable; if men will undo themselves, who can help it? Except God comes in from heaven with a mighty hand to help, our wound is incurable.

Thus you have seen what evil and bitter things our divisions are; their root is evil and bitter, and they are the root of much evil and bitter fruit. We read Genes. 38:29. that Pharez was the son of Tamar; Pharez signifies division, fraction, from whence he had his name; Tamar signifies a Palm

tree,\* Ab amaritudine, says Pagnine, according to some, from bitterness; Division comes from bitterness, and begets, like it self , nothing but bitterness.

## CHAP. XXX

### **Cautions about our Divisions, that we may not make an ill use of them, but try if it be possible to get good out of them.**

Our Divisions are very evil, yet let us not make-them worse then they are, and let us take heed that we be not made worse by them. Wherefore we shall

First, shew what are those ill uses which many make of them.

Secondly, that it is no such strange thing as some would make it, that there should be divisions in times of Reformation.

Thirdly, how it comes to passe that godly men are divided, who above all men, one would think, should agree.

Fourthly, why these differences are so strong, and sometimes so sharp amongst those men who seem to come very near together in the main, the matter of whose difference lies in smaller things.

Fifthly, how far God himself, and Christ, and the Gospel, may be said to have a hand in our Divisions.

Sixthly, What good uses we should make of our Divisions.

For the first. The ill uses that many make of our Divisions, are,

First, Some upon the evils they see and feel in them, think it was better with us heretofore, and wish we had those times again; Just like the murmuring Israelites, as soon as they were put to any straits, they wished they were in Egypt again; it was better with us then, say they. Yea Num. 16:13. out of discontent with their present condition, they commend the Land of Egypt, wherein they were Bond-slaves, to be a Land that flowed with milk and honey, murmuring at Moses that brought them out of such a Land. The Land of Canaan that God promised to carry them to, was a Land that flowed with milk and honey, but out of the perverseness of their spirits they despised that Land, and Egypt now in this froward humour of theirs, must be the Land that flowed with milk and honey. Oh the perverseness of mens hearts! if they be but a little crossed, how hard is it for God or man to please them! how unworthy are such froward spirits as these, to live in such a time as this, to see the great works of God that he hath done for his people. It is true, heretofore men seemed to be more united then now, there appears more differences in mens opinions and ways then formerly; but whence was it that men formerly were not at such a distance? was it not because they were chained together? two prisoners chained to a block keep together all day long; men that are at liberty walk in the streets at a distance; if the prisoners should commend their life as more comfortable then yours, because they keep closer together all the day then you do, would you envy their happiness? time hath been that a tyrannical chain hath been upon us, we dared not then discuss any matters of difference with freedom; if a Convocation determined it, there was a chain upon us to fasten us to it; now God hath given us more liberty to debate things freely, that we may find out the truth more clearly; and though men while they are in their debates be at some distance one from another, do not say it was better with us heretofore then it is now, thou dost not speak wisely concerning this thing.

Surely these men who are so desirous of former times, are ad servitudinem nati, born to be slaves; it is pity but they should have their ears bored for slaves.



Secondly, the ill use that others make of these divisions is to cry out of Religion and preaching; since there hath been so much profession and preaching, we never had good world, there was more love and unity before, all things were more quiet, neighbors were more at peace one with another: This is no other then if men when Christ lived amongst them, should have objected against him, Since this Christ hath come amongst us, we have had more trouble then we or our fore-fathers heretofore have known; we were not wont to hear of men possessed with the devil, so as now we do ; now what a noise is there in all the country of men possessed with evil spirits? we do not read of such things before Christ's time; yet do you think this was a good argument why men should wish that Christ had never come? If the Devil be put into a rage now more then before, it is a sign he is more opposed then he was before; he possessed all in quiet before, but now his Kingdom begins to shake.

Thirdly, because of these divisions, many resolve they will stand Neuters, they see it is doubtful which way things may go ; seeing there are such differences, we will stand by and look on till we see how they will agree; by this means they do not only desert the public Cause that is now on foot, but they are in danger to be for any thing at the last, or to turn Atheists. Chrysostom in his Sermons upon the Acts,\* Chap. 15. inveighs against such men as these; he there makes an Apology for the dissensions of the Christians, the Heathens objected, We would come to you, but we know not to whom we should come; one is of one mind, another is of another, we cannot tell what you hold, you are so different from yourselves.\* Chrysostomes Answer is, This is but a cavil; for first, this hinders you not in other matters, where there is difference amongst men, yet you will take pains and enquire which is the right; Yea secondly, if you did know what you should hold, yet you would not embrace it, for you do know what you should do, and yet you do not do it; do what you know, and then ask of God, and he will reveal more to you.

Fourthly, others cry out against those men who have been most active in this common Cause, putting forth themselves, venturing their estates and lives, and putting on others; at the first these men were honoured, but men did not then see what would follow, they did not think that such troubles would have attended such undertakings as now they have found;

upon this their hearts rise against those who were the most public spirited; Had it not been, say they, for a few hot fiery spirited men who know not what they would have, things had never come to this passe, we might have been quiet; These men are by some, yea many, looked upon as no other then disturbers, men of turbulent unquiet spirits, and yet they have been the means of preserving you and your posterity from slavery, and of continuing the Gospel amongst you. This is an ill requital of all that willingness of theirs to hazard their estates and lives for your good; You have cause to bless God, seeing you were of such low, narrow, timorous spirits yourselves, unfit for such a work as God had to do in the beginning of the change of these times, that he raised up others, and gave them enlarged, resolved spirits, fit for such a public work, accompanied with so many difficulties as attended upon this, did they break the ice for you, and do you thus requite them? This is like a froward, perverse patient, who flies in the face of his Physician,\* because his Physic makes him sick.

Fifthly, others seeing much evil come of the divisions amongst us, they think there is no way to help them but by violence, forcing men to yield to what they think is right.\* They think they do God good service in compelling men to the same judgement and way that themselves are of. This is a very ill use of them. It is a new and unheard of way of preaching, says Gregory, to require men to believe by blows. To go from the divine Word to an iron Sword, from the Pen to the Halbert, to persuade men to believe, is a way that Gerard. confess. Cathol. l. 1. pag. 809. exclaims against.\*

Socrates in his Ecclesiastical History, lib. 3. cap. 21. reports of the Macedonians petitioning Jovianus the Emperour for the banishing of those who were not of their judgement in matters of religion of great moment. The Emperour receiving their supplication gave them no other answer but this, I tell you truly I cannot away with contention, but such as embrace unity and concord I do honour and reverence them. Tertullian in his book ad Scapulam, cap. 2. says, It is not the way of Religion to compel Religion, which ought to be taken up willingly, not by force. If you should compel us, says he, to sacrifice, what did you in this for your gods? none desire sacrifice from those who are unwilling, but

such as are contentious: but God is not contentious. I find in Thuanus his History, lib. 16. a notable passage in a writing that the Senate of Paris sent to their King in the year 1555. after he had sent forth an Edict,\* requiring great severity against those who differed in matters of Religion: They professed to him they did not think his Edict equal, and that they could not subscribe to it: for, say they, we see that such severe punishments, for matters of Religion, render men detestable to the people, but their errors abide the same still, they are not at all altered in their opinions by severity: but for their parts they give their judgements, that it were better to go in the old way of the Church, which did not propagate Religion by sword and fire, but by pure doctrine, and the good examples of the lives of their Bishops. Let them live piously, and teach the word of God sincerely, this is the way to root out errors that increase so fast: but if this be not done, no Laws, no Edicts of men will do any good.\* Sleidan in his Commentaries hath set down a Decree of the Emperor, King Ferdinando, and the rest of the Princes and States, that the controversy of Religion should be appeased by none other but by godly, friendly, and quiet means. But a few pages after he relates the effect of a petition of those in Austria, for their freedom in Religion, to King Ferdinando, with an answer of the King to them: in which there was this passage, That such as shall not like that Religion which the Prince hath chosen, may have free liberty to sell that they have, and go dwell in another place, without any blemish to their estimation. To which the Ambassadors of Austria reply: What discommoditie were herein, how heavy and sorrowful news this would be to the people, who seeth not? When they shall hear that they which have been ever most ready to spend their blood and life for the preservation and dignity of the House of Austria, must now forsake their most sweet native country, so many years inhabited and enriched by their forefathers? Therefore we admit not that Answer in this behalf: but as we have done oft heretofore, for the honour of God we beseech you, that you would suffer us to have no let in this matter, &c.

But you will say, What does all this tend to, but to plead for an absolute Toleration, which you seemed before to be against?

I answer, In quoting these Authors I own not such a judgment that

possibly you may think to be in some of them for an absolute Toleration. How a Toleration should be limited and granted, I have spoke to before: but I produce the Authors to this end, that the rigidness of the judgements of some amongst us that think all differences in religion that cannot be quelled by argument, must be quelled by violence, may be mollified. I am sure if any of these men go too far one way, those which I am now reproving go as wide another. Fierce violence in matters of Religion is dangerous; as the Chirurgeons rigorous handling his patients arm, breaks that bone quite, which before was but out of joint.

6. Some take advantage by them to give themselves to looseness in their lives: it is a time of liberty, and they will take their time. If times were quiet and settled, they would be observed more narrowly, there would be means of restraint; but in these times every man takes his own way, and so will they. But know that God takes this very ill at thy hands. The more loose others are, the more conscionable shouldest thou be: the worse the days are, the more circumspectly shouldest thou walk. Ezek. 44:10. The Levites that are gone from me, which went astray when Israel forsook me, they shall also bear their iniquity. The commonness of a sin is an aggravation of it.

7. Some make no other use of them, then to observe which way there may be advantage got by them: how they may suite themselves to this side or the other, for their gain, or to drive on some private design: so long as they can make use of the times that run such a way, they are for them: if the stream turn they can turn too: they can tack about to every wind: their study is not to help to heal them, but to contrive ways how they may get by them. Hence they wrench and sprain their consciences with their quick turnings this way and that way: they will be on the sunny side wheresoever it be. Cunning heads and corrupt hearts will serve their own turns by all varieties of times. If they were in Dioclesians time, they could be Pagans; if in Constantines, Christians; if in Constantius, Arians; if in Julians, Apostates; if in Jovians, Christians again: and all this within less then the age of a man.

8. Some have their spirits in a base manner subjugated by these divisions and troubles that come upon them: they care not what they do or submit to: so be it they may have peace, they will bow down their backs and

consciences, they will put themselves and posterity under the yoke of perpetual slavery: so be it they may be at quiet, and enjoy their estates for the present, no matter what becomes of the public, no matter what becomes of the truth. They are content to let all go, to betray all, for their own private advantage. This is beneath the spirit of a man.

9. Others are discouraged, upon the sight of the great evils that daily flow from our divisions, and are like still to flow, their hearts sink in despair. They call into question whether it be the cause of God that we now undertake. When the Temple was building, there was no noise of hammer, axe, or any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building. But oh Lord is our work Temple-work! We hear the noise not of hammer and axe, but of swords and spears, of drums and cannons, of railings and reviling; these are dreadful in our ears: but let us not be discouraged, for though there was no noise heard in the House, yet in preparation for the House there was. It may be all we are yet about is only preparatory work for the House of our God. If God will use us in this only, yet blessed be his name Wherefore though our divisions be many and very evil, yet they are not so evil nor many, but that there may be hope in Israel concerning this thing. For consider,

It is no new thing for divisions to be in the Church.

The Apostle would not have us think it strange concerning the fiery trial, he means there of persecution. The fiery contentions amongst us, are another fiery trial. We should not think strange of this neither; as if such a thing had befallen us that never yet befell any. I think for all circumstances it is very hard to parallel, but the Church in all ages hath been sorely afflicted with divisions. Act. 15:39. Paul and Barnabas, two great Apostles, were so divided, that they could not keep company together, but went one from another in anger. The Text says, The contentions were so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from another.\* The word signifies such a sharpness as there is in vinegar. It is used by Physicians to signify the sharpness of the feverish humour when it is acting in a fit. Their dissention put them as it were into the fit of a Fever. You will say, Surely it was some very great matter that should cause such eminent and holy men to be in such a passion one against another, to be so hot as not to company together. Truly no: the matter

was not great, it was whether Mark should go with them or no; the one would have him, the other would not have him, and about this the contention arose to this height. Read the Epistle to the Romans, to the Corinthians, to the Galatians, you shall find very great dissensions in these Churches: And in after times especially, when God delivered them from those ten bloody Persecutions, the contentions of the Church were very great. When Constantine came to the Nicene Council,\* divers of the Members of that Council accused one another to the Emperor, and put up Libels one against another, which Libels Constantine caused to be burned. After all the debates of the Council, with the presence of the Emperor, who laboured all he could for peace and union amongst them, making large speeches to that purpose, to them, yet there were five of them dissented from the rest in matters of greater consequence than any amongst us dissent from our Brethren, namely, in that point of Christ's being of the same substance with the Father.\* I find in Eusebius this grievous complaint: After our affairs, thorough too much liberty, ease and security, degenerated from the rule of piety, one pursued another with open contumely and hatred; we impugned ourselves by no other than ourselves, with the armor of spite and sharp spears, of opprobrious words, so that Bishops against Bishops, and people against people raised sedition; and they which seemed our Shepherds, laying aside the rule of pity, practised contention and schism among themselves; and whilst they aggravated contention, threatening, mutual hatred, and enmity, and every one proceeded in ambition, much like tyranny it self, then the Lord according to the saying of Jeremy, made the daughter of Sion obscure, and overthrew from above the glory of Israel. The contentions of the Church caused by those four grand Heresies of Arius, Macedonius, Nestorius, Eutyches, one after another, exercised the Church a long time. There was much siding, some cleaving to one part, some to another in all these four. The first denied Christ's divinity, upon which the first Nicene Council was called. The second, the personality of the Spirit, upon which the second General Council was called at Constantinople. The third, the distinction of persons in Christ, upon which the third General Council was called at Ephesus. The fourth confounded Christ's natures, upon which the fourth was called at Chalcedon. About this time Pelagius and Donatus caused much disturbance in Europe and Africa. Epiphanius who lived in the third Century, reckons threescore several Heresies that had

got head, many followers of them all, which caused great breaches in the Church from the time of the Apostles to the time wherein he lived. After the division of the Empire into the Eastern and Western parts, then rose mighty contention for the Primacy between the Bishops of Rome and Constantinople, that put the Church into woeful contentions for many years, one part excommunicating the other, writing and opposing one another to the uttermost. When this heat was at the hottest then on the one side, upon the Western parts God let out the Gothes, Hunnes, Vandals, those barbarous people, and Mohammed upon the Eastern, so that all learning was almost extinct in the Christian world, and gross darkness came upon the face of all Churches. The Church having lost her lights, men of learning and worth, then the great contention about Images arose that εἰκονομαχία, the Eastern Churches demolishing Images in Temples, the Western maintaining them with extreme contention against the Eastern. There were not only excommunications thundered one against another, but much blood was shed in that quarrel. In this condition have the Churches been from time to time divided, yea fighting one with another about opinions. And for the divisions and contentions between particular men, the most eminent Lights in the Church, in those times, after they came to have rest from persecutions. We find most lamentable complaints in the writings of the Ancients, of the extreme offence these dissensions were to the Heathen.\* Nazianzen in his first Apologetic Oration: We are made a spectacle (says he) to Angels and Men, not as that valiant champion Paul, who fought against Principalities and Powers, but we are made a scorn to wicked men, in their Markets, their Feasts, their Plays, in all their meetings. The most vile people jeer us, and all this for contending and warring one with another. Basil makes this complaint: I have lived now (says he) the age of a man, and see more union in Arts and Sciences than in Divinity: for in the Church I see such dissensions as do divide it asunder, and dissipates it.

Chrysostom and Epiphanius fell out so bitterly, that the one wished the other might never dye a Bishop,\* and the other wished that he might never go home alive. And it fell out to either of them as each one had wished to the other, for Epiphanius came not to Cyprus, he died on the seas by the way; neither did Chrysostom dye a Bishop, for he was deposed

and banished the Church. The contentions between Jerome and Ruffinus were very bitter, who had been formerly great friends. Augustine in his 15. Epistle says, Their friendship had been famous in all the Churches.\* If such things may fall out between Jerome and Ruffinus, (says he) who that is now a friend may not fear to be an enemy? Yet Ruffinus writes two Books against Jerome, which are intituled Ruffini Invectiva in Hieronymum.\* He begins his first invective, applying that of the Psalmist to Jerome, Psal. 57. 4. I lye among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears, arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. In the beginning of his second, he accuses him of lying, and that he does himself what he reproves in others; With abundance of such kind of bitter stuff. And Jerome pays him again in the same kind. In his 16. epist. ad Principiam Virginem, he calls him a Scorpion, in regard of the poison that came from him. And in his Apology against him, lib. 3. in the beginning of it he applies that Scripture to Ruffinus, Prov. 14:3. In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride. And that of Isay, Is. 32:6. The vile person will speak villainy, and his heart will work iniquity, to utter error against the Lord. And I find in an Epistle of Augustine to Jerome, a great complaint he makes to him of those differences there were between Ruffinus and him: with very patheticall expressions to move Jerome to peace.\* When I read your Epistles, I pined away with grief, my heart was cold within me with fear . Oh miserable, oh lamentable condition that we are in! You who were wont to be most familiar, joined in the strongest bands; you who were wont to lick up the honey of the holy Scriptures, now there is bitterness amongst you. Woe is me that I cannot meet you together, that I might fall down at your feet, and weep my fill! that I might beg of you as strongly as I love you, sometime either of you for your own sake, sometime both of you for either's sake, and especially for the sake of those that are weak, for whom Christ died, who look upon you with a great deal of danger; that you would not in your writings spread such things one against another, which though you should agree you could not wipe off from one another; or such things as if ye were agreed ye would be afraid to read.

Yea many times there was very hot contest between Jerome and Augustine himself. Sometimes I find some of their writings one against another to be very sharp.



If we can debate things without bitterness of discord, well and good;\* but if I cannot tell you what should be mended in your writings, and you tell me what should be mended in mine without suspicion of envy, and breach of friendship, let us meddle no more, but favour our health and lives.

In after times when God stirred up a spirit in Luther, and others, to set themselves against the tyranny of Antichrist, to throw off that heavy yoke of bondage, the dissensions between the chief public instruments of God to the Church was very great,\* as Luther, and Zwingli, and Oecolampadius, and Corolostadius.

Luther in one of his Epistles says, that there was no wickedness, no cruelty, that Zwingli did not charge him with. And in another Epistle he complains that Corolostadius was more malicious against him then ever any of his enemies yet had been.\* And as for Oecolompadius, Luther was so provoked against him, as he called him the black Devil. We may see what strange corruptions are working sometimes in the hearts of godly men.

As for the many sects and rents in and presently after Luther's time, they would fill up a large volume to name them, with their several opinions and ways. There is one Schlüsselburgius a Protestant Divine, that hath gathered the chief of them together in twelve or thirteen several Books that he wrote about them. There is not any one strange opinion amongst us now, but you shall find it amongst them in terminus, and that so prevailing as to get a strong party to join with it. Only I remember not that one that hath taken some, who though they acknowledge the Scripture, yet think there is no visible Church upon the earth. In after times whosoever shall read Junius his Comment upon Psal. 122. will find the state of the Church in his time miserably distracted and distressed with contentions. I cannot (says he) but be exceedingly moved,\* when I think of these evils. What shall I do ? Shall I hold my peace when the Devil has stirred up so great a perturbation, has kindled so great a fire? Certainly there is such a fire kindled in the Christian world, that unless God looks from heaven upon us, it will consume all: the minds of men are as hearths for this fire, upon which sin burns; the tongues of men, some are the bellows that blow this fire, others as fuel by which this fire burns

more and more. That the tongue cannot do to blow up and down this fire, that virulent papers do, dung carts of virulent papers, that is his expression. Yea a great part of the Christian world at this time, seems to be rather like the place of the burning of dead bodies, then the house of Christ's flock: are these Shepherds? are these the Sheep of Christ, whom I see to consume away in their miserable burning? Surely they are Shepherds still, they are the Sheep of Christ, and anointed ones still: but many of them in this horrible and deadly burning, remember not that they are Sheep or Shepherds. And thus he proceeds further in pouring forth his soul in most grievous complaints.

This fiery trial of dissensions in the Church then is no new thing: we are to be sensible of it, to account it a great affliction; but not to look upon it as if some strange thing had befallen us, that never befell the Churches before.

But you will say, How can we do less but account it a very strange thing, that those who fear God should be thus divided? that dogs should snarl one at another, is no marvel: but that sheep, that those who are godly should do thus, this we cannot but wonder at: for what reason can there be given for it, yea what shew of reason can there be imagined?

Answ. If we consider of things wisely,\* we have no such cause to wonder that godly men in this their estate of imperfection should differ so much one from another as they do ; For

First, every godly man prizes and seeks after knowledge; others mind little but their profit and pleasure; they trouble not themselves about the knowing the things of God, except ambition puts them upon it; they care not which way truths go : But the godly man prizes every truth at a high rate, worth the contending for, to the uttermost, rather then to deny it or lose it. In the dark, all colors be alike, but in the light they appear diverse. While the Egyptians were in the dark, they all sate still, but they moved with various motions when the light brake out upon them: when men discuss things, and desire to see farther into them, it is impossible, considering the weaknesses of the best, and the variety of mens apprehensions, but there must needs be much difference in mens judgements, and then considering that every thing they apprehend to be a

truth, their consciences are engaged in it, at least thus far, that they must not deny it for a world; this puts mens spirits at distance, although both be godly, both love the truth equally.

Secondly, Godly men are Free-men, Christ hath made them so, and requires them not to suffer themselves to be brought under bondage, they must not, cannot submit their consciences to the opinions, determinations, decrees of any men living; they cannot submit to any as Lords over their faith; this others can do: as for points of Religion, say some, let learned men judge of them, we will not be wiser then they, we will submit, and others must submit to what they shall determine: this makes quick work indeed of divisions, but this, those who fear God, cannot do ; they must see every thing they own as truth, with their own light, yet received from Jesus Christ; though they reverence men of greater parts, deeper learning, yet they have the charge of Christ upon them, not to acknowledge it as truth, til they understand it to be so; this causes much contention amongst good men, through their weakness and the corruption of their hearts.

The less distance men apprehend between themselves and others in regard of power, the more differences there are amongst them, as they say the greatest and sorest storms are about the Equinoctiall: Men are kept more at peace in the Commonwealth then in the Church, because there is a greater subjection of one to another there, then may be admitted in the Church.

Thirdly, godly men give up themselves to the strictest rules of holiness, they walk in the narrow way of Christ, it is broad enough to the spiritual part, but in regard of our corruptions, it is a narrow pent way; they dare not give way to themselves to decline a hairs breadth from the rule, to gratify others; they dare not bend to them, that they might suit more with them, but must keep themselves to the straight rule; they must keep just in their path; they cannot go aside to give way to others; hence there is clashing, every one not having the same thoughts of the rule and way that others have; those who walk by loose rules, in ways that are broad, even to their flesh, they can suit themselves one to another easily, they can gratify their friends, yea the corruptions of their friends more then others can do ; godly men cannot yield for peace sake to such terms as other

men can.

Fourthly, the things that the Saints are conversant about, are great things, things of a high nature, about their last end, their eternal estates; hence every one is very careful, and strongly set to maintain what he apprehends; those who understand not the infinite consequence of those things, who have not had the fear of them fall upon their hearts, they wonder at the stiffness of mens spirits that they can be brought to yield no more in such things that they conceive they might yield in, and where there are different apprehensions of those things that concern mens eternal estates, even amongst godly men, they must needs stand out one against another, till God causes one of them to see things otherwise then now he doth.

Fifthly, the things of Religion are hidden mysteries, they are the secrets of God, they are hard to be understood, God reveals them in a differing way, they are not ordinarily so clearly revealed, but that the apprehensions of them are like to be different.

Sixthly, the Saints are bound to watch over one another, each is his brothers keeper, they ought to advise, admonish, reprove one another, not to suffer sin to be upon their brethren; now this (through our corruption) is very displeasing, we do not love to be meddled with, to be crossed in what we have a mind to; but other men can better preserve their own quiet, by letting their brethren alone; I will not trouble them, lest I be troubled my self . Hence it is that they many times live more quietly one with another, then godly men do ; yet this is a great evil, a shame to those who are godly, that it should be so upon any terms.

Seventhly, ungodly men are dead in sins, the Devil hath them sure enough, he doth not seek to stir their corruptions so much as he doth the corruptions of the godly; he shall not get so much advantage by the one as by the other; therefore he labours to keep the corruptions of the godly acting as much as he can, that he may disquiet their own spirits, and the spirits of those with whom they converse.

Thus you see it is no such wonder why there are dissensions amongst men that truly fear God; Suppose they should live all together, yet so long

as they live here in this muddy world, it cannot be but there will be sometimes foul weather amongst them; but if you look into the Church, and consider of the dissensions there, there is a farther reason for them, for usually there are many hypocrites mingled with the godly there, they taking up a profession of Religion, and so creep into the Church, they find spiritual things unsuitable to them, hence they fly off, their spirits not being brought under the yoke of Christ, they fling against those things that pinch them. We read Numb. 11:4. that the great trouble the Children of Israel had among them, after they were got out of Egypt,\* was from the mixed multitude that was among them; these are as ill humours in the body, that do much disturb the quiet of it. None have more turbulent, cruel, impatient spirits, then hypocrites; none are so desirous of revenge as they, says Luther.

Yet further, the fourth thing propounded, is to shew, that those that come nearst together,\* yet differing in some things, are many times at greater variance one with another, then those who differ in more things from them. The Jews and Samaritans were at greater variance then Jews and Heathens.

Epiphanius tells of a sect of the Jews, the Nazarites, who continued the Customs and Ceremonies of the Jews, but acknowledged Christ also; and the Jews in hatred to them cursed them solemnly three times a day, morning, noon, and evening, when they went into their Synagogue to pray.

The Turks have a honourable esteem of Christ,\* which the Tartars have not; yet they say, that the Tartars turn Christians sooner then the Turks: The Turks and Persians are both Mohammedans, they are both circumcised, but the Turks follow the way of Ebubezer, and the Persians are of the School of Haly, they detest one another more then they do the Christians; they will both tolerate Christians to live amongst them, but they will not tolerate Mohammedans, who are in a different order from themselves.\*

Luther complains much of those who acknowledged the same doctrine, professed the same faith with himself, came to the same Sacraments, yet were worse enemies then the Papists, so that the Papists laughed at them,

and said, They bite one another, and are consumed one of another.

I have read of a profane speech of one Cosmus Duke of Florence, against some perfidious friends, You shall read (says he) that we are commanded to forgive our enemies, but you never read that we are commanded to forgive our friends. Breaches of friends, of such as are otherwise nearst, are the greatest. Prov. 18:19. A brother offended is harder to be won then a strong city, and their contentions are like the bars of a Castle.

1. We see it in nature, the nearer the union is, the more grievous is the separation; it is not so great an evil to a man for his arm to be separated from his body, as for his soul; for the union of the one is integral, of the other it is essential. The bone is more firmly united in all the parts of it then the flesh, and the least breach in that is far more hurtful then a greater in the flesh.

2. Those who agree in many things, have hope it may be to get one another to them; upon this they struggle with one another the more: as for those who are at a great distance, they have no hope to prevail with them, therefore they make no onset, but seeing themselves frustrated of their hopes, here this troubles them, yea it oft stirs up a spirit of anger against them whom they cannot get up to themselves.

3. Those who agree in many and great things, and yet stand out in few and of less consequence, are thought to be the more unreasonable; if you yield thus far, why not a little farther? the one thinks so of the other, and the other thinks so of him, and hence their spirits are stirred one against another.

4. Those who come up near to others, and yet dissent, seem to stand more in the light of those they come up so near unto, then those do who are at a greater distance: it makes men think such a one is not in the right, if he were, those who come so near to him would see it, they who think themselves got beyond others, cannot enjoy that comfort and content in what they are beyond others in, as otherwise they might, because such as are so near them are against it, if they did not agree in most things, and those of greatest moment, their opposition would not be much regarded: but because they are such men who for their judgements and lives are so

unblamable, their differing in such a thing is more then if a hundred times as many, who were at a greater distance in their principles and lives, should differ from us.

5. They who are so near one to another, have occasion to converse more together then others have, and to argue things oftener one with another, then with such as they differ more from. Now it is seldom that men of different judgements and ways meet and argue, but there is some heat between them before they have done: and so their spirits grow more estranged one from another then before. And if your spirits be estranged, then those that you have reference to, and such as are in your way, will have their spirits estranged too, your relation of things to them according to what apprehensions you have of them, will be enough to estrange their hearts, and so by degrees a bitterness grows up between you.

The fifth thing, That God hath a hand in our Divisions, and how far.

God had a great stroke in the division of these ten Tribes from the two, 1 King. 12:23, 24. The word of the Lord came to Shemajah the man of God, saying, Return every man to his house, for this thing is from the Lord. In the sense of the Prophet there, we may say that our Divisions are from the Lord. We are wrangling, devising, plotting, working one against another, minding nothing, but to get the day one of another: but God is working out ends above our reach, for his glory, and the good of his Saints.\* There must be Heresies, says the Apostle, 1 Cor. 11:19. So there must be divisions.

That word Heresies is used to signify several opinions,\* several ways, Heresies Platonicae, Heresies Peripateticae. Chrysostom interprets that place of the Apostle, There must be Heresies, of such Divisions as we are treating of.\*

But why must there be Divisions, what does God aim at in them?

Ans. First, the discovery of mens spirits, that they which are approved may be manifest, says the Apostle. By those divisions in Corinth, wherein the rich divided from the poor,\* whereby the poor were condemned, the graces of the poor in bearing this were manifested.\* Thus Chrysostom

upon the place: The Apostle says this, That he might comfort the poor which were able with a generous mind to bear that contempt. The melting of the metal discovers the dross, for they divide the one from the other. These are melting times; and thereby discovering times. If Reformation had gone on without opposition, we had not seen what drossy spirits we had amongst us. Those who have kept upright without warping in these times are honourable before God, and his holy Angels and Saints.\*

2. By these Divisions God exercises the graces of his servants. A little skill in a Mariner is enough to guide his Ship in faire weather: but when storms arise, when the Seas swell and grow troublesome, then his skill is put to it. In these stormy troublesome times there had need be much wisdom, faith, love, humility, patience, self-denial, meekness, all graces are put to it now, they had need put forth all their strength, act with all their vigor; our graces had need be stirring, full of life and quickness now. God prizeth the exercise of the graces of his Saints at a very high rate. He thinks it worth their suffering much trouble. It is a good evidence of grace, yea of much grace, to account the trouble of many afflictions to be recompensed by the exercise of graces. In times of division men had need stir up all their graces, and be very watchful over their ways, and walk exactly, be circumspect, accurate in their lives. Those who have not their hearts with them, have their eyes upon them, prying into them, watching for their halting. When there is siding there is much observing. Lord (says David, Psal. 27:11.) teach me thy way, and lead me in a plain path because of mine enemies, so it is in your books; but you may read it, because of mine observers: enemies are observers.\* Hence it was the policy of the Lacedæmonians always to send two Ambassadors together which disagreed among themselves, that so they might mutually have an eye upon the actions of each other.

3. God will have these to be in just judgement to the wicked, that they may be a stumbling block to them who will not receive the truth in love. There are so many opinions, such divisions, so many Religions, say some, that we know not what to do . If your hearts be carnal, not loving the ways of God, not prizing spiritual things, not favouring the things of another world, these opinions, divisions, may be laid by God in judgement as a stumbling block in thy way,\* that thou mayest stumble upon them and



break thy self for ever. God hath no need of thee. If thou wilt be froward and perverse against his truths, if thou hast a mind to take offence, you shall have matter enough before you to take offence at. Stumble and break your necks, as a just reward of the perverseness of your hearts. These divisions which you rejoice in, which you can speak of as glad that you have such an objection against my people and ways that your hearts are opposite to, shall cost you dear, even the perdition of your souls everlastingly.

It was a speech of Tertullian, I account it no danger to affirm, that God hath so ordered the revelation of truth in Scriptures, that he might administer matter for Heretics.

4. God hath a hand in these Divisions, to bring forth further light. Sparks are beaten out by the Flints striking together. Many sparks of light, many truths are beaten out by the beatings of mens spirits one against another. If light be let into a house, there must be some trouble to beat down a window. A child thinks the house is beating down, but the father knows the light will be worth the cost and trouble. If you will have the cloth woven, the Woof and the warp must be cast cross one to another. If you will have truths argued out, you must be content to bear with some opposition for the time. Those who are not willing to bear some trouble, to be at some cost to find out truth, are unworthy of it. Those who love truth will seek for it, for truths sake; those who love victory, yet because the truth is the strongest, will seek after truth that they may get victory, Dan. 12:4. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. To some these divisions darken truths, to others they enlighten them. We may well behold mens weakness in these divisions, but better admire God's strength and wisdom in ordering them to his glory, and his children's good.

Be not discouraged ye Saints of the Lord, at these divisions, your Father hath a hand in them, he will bring good out of them. Yea Christ, who is the Prince of peace, hath a hand in them. Matth. 10:34, 35. he says, Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth, I came to bring a sword. I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother. One would think it to be the strangest speech that could be, to come from the mouth of him who is the great peace-maker.

Oh blessed Saviour, must we not think that thou art come to send peace? Thou art our peace. Is not thine Embassy from thy Father, an Embassy of peace? True: peace with my Father, but not peace on the earth; not an earthly peace; do not think that I came from heaven to work this for men, that they should live at ease in plenty and pleasure, that they should have no disturbance, no trouble to the flesh: no, the event of my coming you will find to be a sword, divisions, and that between those of the nearest relations. A child who is wicked will despise and break with his godly father, and the daughter with her godly mother. And Luke 12:53. the carnal father and mother will have their hearts rise against their godly son and daughter. I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled? Let it kindle as soon as it will, I am contented, I know much good will come of it. These Scriptures are enough to take away for ever the offence of divisions.

First, Christ himself is the greatest offence to wicked men that ever was in the world: he is the stumbling stone and rock of offence, thousand thousands being offended at him miscarry everlastingly. Christ foreseeing how many would be offended at him, Mat. 11:6. blesseth the man who shall not be offended. Some are offended at what they see in Christ; others apprehend whatsoever is in him to be most excellent and lovely, that which they cannot but defend and stand for to the death. He is disallowed of men, rejected by the builders, a stone of stumbling to them: but to the Saints the chief corner stone, elect, precious, 1 Pet. 2:4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Such different apprehensions of Christ must needs divide men.

2. Christ comes to make the greatest alteration that ever was or can be in the world, and do we not find that troubles accompany alterations, and above all alterations, alterations in government, and especially such a government as gives no composition, yields no compliance with any thing else? When Christ comes he brings his fan in his hand, he must have his floor thoroughly purged; he gathers his wheat into his garner, and severs the chaff to be burnt in unquenchable fire. If he comes thus, who shall abide his coming? Mal. 3:2. Who shall stand when he appears? for he is like a refiners fire, and fullers soap, he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, he shall purify the sons of Levi. Certainly there will be much ado when they come to be purified. No men in the world are like to make so

much stir when they come to be purified as the Clergy will. Christ comes to cast out Devils, they will foam, fret, vex, rend and tear when they are casting out. The Gospel likewise divides. The word of the Gospel is a dividing word. Heb. 4:11. It is quick, powerful, sharper then a two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow. It divides in a mans own heart, and divides between man and man. The light of it divides. The first division we ever read of was of God's making, Gen. 1:3, 4. When he said, Let there be light, and God divided the light from the darkness. The doctrine of the Gospel shows the spiritualness of God's commands, the sinfulness of thoughts, of the first stirring of sin, Mat. 5. this touches to the quick.

The heat of the Gospel divides: it is like fire when it comes. Is not my word like fire? The preaching of the Gospel with power heaps coals of fire upon mens heads, which will either melt them, or burn them. In it there is a separation of the precious from the vile.

The Ordinances of the Gospel divides, they difference men. Some they will receive, others they will not. They must bring men to a higher, to a stricter way then the sluggish, dead, vain, slight, drossy hearts of men are willing to come up unto.

The godliness that is in Christ Jesus divides, therefore whosoever will live godly so, must expect to suffer persecution, 2 Tim. 3:12.

1. Those who hold forth the life and power of godliness, seem to challenge a more special peculiar interest in God then others which cannot be endured, 1 Joh. 5:19. We are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness.

2. Their lives condemn others, which they cannot abide, as Noah is said to condemn the world, Heb. 11:7.

3. In godliness there is an excellency. They whose hearts are naught cannot look upon that that hath any appearance of excellency, without a spirit of envy. If they judge men only to be conceited with it as an excellency, but for their parts they think it not to be so, then, they look upon the with a spirit of indignation.

4. Godliness makes men zealous in such things as others can see no reason why they should. They think they do *incalescere in re frigida*, and that the ground of their zeal is vanity, and turbulency of spirit.

5. It makes men constant: nothing can turn them out of their way. The son yields not to his father, the servant not to his master; this is judged to be stoutness and wilfulness, though God knows it is faire otherwise, it must need therefore enrage others at them.

The good uses that we are to make of our Divisions.

Why may not meat come out of the eater, and sweet out of these bitter things? The heavens can draw up salt vapors from the sea, and send them down again in sweet refreshing showers. Why may not heavenly hearts change the very nature of these sour brinish things, and make them sweet to themselves and others? This is the excellency of grace; it does not only preserve the soul from the evil of temptations, but it gets advantage by them, it turns the evil into good. Luther upon the Galat. c. 5. v. 17. hath a notable expression to set forth the power of grace: By this a Christian (says he) comes to be a mighty workman, and a wonderful creator, who of heaviness can make joy, of terrors comfort, of sin righteousness, of death life. And why may not I add, of division and contention, peace and union. Wherefore

First, by these Divisions men may come to see the vileness and the vanity of their own hearts: what were the thoughts of men heretofore? Oh, had we but liberty and opportunity to be instrumental for God, we hope we should improve all to the uttermost for him, now God hath granted these to us, we abuse them, we grow wanton, we jar one against another: we are like some Mariners, who are calm in a storm, but storm in a calm. Surely every man is vanity. The untowardness of the spirits of those who heretofore longed after ordinances, freed from those defilements they mourned under, when they have their desires in great measure satisfied, discovers so much evil in the hearts of men, that it justifies those whom themselves have had hard thoughts of, men who seemed carnal and naught, that you looked upon as very evil, men of bitter spirits against good men, you thought such things apparently argued them void of grace, and yet when you are got into Church-fellowship, that way of freedom,

that your souls mourned after a long time, now though you be joined in covenant one to another, yet if your brethren differ any thing from you, though they be otherwise godly, what a bitterness of spirit is there in some of you against them! what pride! what frowardness do you manifest against them! Oh what a poor creature is man! if once he gets power and liberty, what a deal of filth appears in him! we may learn by this to have charitable thoughts of some, of whom we have had hard thoughts before; we see if these men have any grace, grace may be in a mans heart lying under much corruption.

Secondly, learned to be humbled for that dishonor which comes to God by these divisions; thou spendest thy time in vexing and fretting at, in crying out against these breaches, but when was thy heart broken with the dishonor that God hath by them?

Thirdly, let these divisions confirm us in the main, and settle us there more then ever; for do we not see that those many sorts of men who are divided,\* who oppose one another much, yet they all join in the things of the greatest consequence, they all witness against the common enemy? This, says Nazianzen, is the greatest argument of the truth, that it is not overcome by time, neither can enmity one against another put out that little spark of the love of it that is in us, &c. If a mans house stands after many shakings of strong winds,\* he concludes the foundation is good, this satisfies him, though some tiles be shaken off.

Fourthly, let us bless God who hath carried on the work of Reformation thus far, notwithstanding our divisions; wee were afraid that these differences, not so much between the good and bad, but between the good and good, would have undone all, and yet behold the Lord beyond our thoughts, how infinitely beyond our deserts, hath carried on the work hitherto, so as it gets ground, though it be not so speedily brought to an issue as we would have it.

Fifthly, let us hence raise our hopes in this, that Satan's time is not long; his raging and foaming so violently, doth evidence it to us. Surely Christ our Prince of Peace is at hand, he will tread down Satan under our feet shortly.

Sixthly, let us from these stirs without, be put upon the labouring to make and to confirm peace within. Oh consider, is the breach between man and man so grievous? how grievous is that which is between God and the soul! I find it hard, and doubt whether it be possible to be at peace with men in this world; I find them of such froward, peevish, selfish, willful spirits, even many who seem to be good men otherwise, but God gives many encouragements to poor souls to come unto him; he is a God of love and mercy, he delights not to grieve the children of men, to crush under his feet the prisoners of the earth: he is willing to be reconciled to sinners: there is nothing that his heart is more set upon, then reconciliation with wretched sinful souls. Oh that in these sad days of miserable dissensions, I might be blessed with the comforts of the reconciliation of my soul with God! if this were, I hope I should be able contentedly to bear, and with strength to passe through all those heart-sadning evils caused by these breaches and dissensions there are amongst us. This were a good use indeed, made of such evil things, if mens contending with you shall thus further your peace with God; what he once said of Adams sin, it was Felix peccatum, a happy sin, because it occasioned so much good in Mans Redemption: So I may say of that strife and contention there is among us, it is fælix contentio, a happy contention, that God hath turned to so much good unto you.

I have read of Robert Holgate, who was Arch-Bishop of York, because he could not peaceably enjoy his small living in Lincolne-shire, in regard of the litigiousness of a neighboring Knight, coming to London to right himself, he came into the favour of King Henry the 8. and so got by degrees the Archbishopric of York, he thought he got well by the litigiousness of this Knight; but if the strifes of men shall put thee upon those providences and duties which shall be so blessed unto thee, as to further thy getting into the favour of the high God, and the enjoyment of the soul-satisfying sweetness there is in peace with him; what cause shalt thou have of admiring free grace, which hath brought to thee so great a good from so great an evil? and if these strifes have been a means to move thy heart Godward for thy making thy peace with him, let them also put thee on still to further, to confirm, to settle, to maintain thy peace with him. When the wind and storm rises, the Traveller plucks his cloak the closer about him; these dividing times are stormy times, labour to get

your souls to the harbour under shelter, labour to make sure of that one thing necessary; the more strangely men look upon you, let your hearts be stirred up to seek with the more strength the face of God, that you may never look upon it but with joy. You hear harsh notes abroad, such things as grieve you at the heart, labour so much the more to keep the bird always singing in your bosom.

7. If your peace be made with God, bless God for it. It is a great mercy for a man in these times of trouble, to have rest in his own spirit; while others are tossed up and down in the waves of contention, you may fit quietly in the Ark of a good conscience, blessing the Lord that ever you knew him and his ways.

8. Labour to make up your want of that good and comfort you heretofore had in Christian communion, with a more close and constant communion with the Lord, who hath been pleased to speak peace unto you. Although I have not that comfort in communion with the streams, yet I may find it fully made up in the fountain.

9. By way of Antiperistas, let us labour to be so much the more united with the Saints, by how much we see others to be divided: Men make void thy Law, says David, therefore do I love it above gold. We use to put a price upon things that are rare: what makes Jewels to be of that worth, but for the rarity of them? Unity, hearty love, sweetness of communion among brethren, is now a very rare thing, a scarce commodity, let us prize it the more, and you who do enjoy it, bless God for it.

10. The more confused, broken, and troublesome wee see things to be, the more let our hearts be stirred up in prayer to God, putting him in mind of all those gracious promises that he hath made to his Church for peace and union: Lord is it not part of thy Covenant with thy people, that thou wilt give them one heart? hast thou not said that they shall serve thee with one shoulder? hast thou not told us that thou wilt make Jerusalem a quiet habitation, that thou wilt take away violence, that there should be no pricking briar nor grieving thorn?

11. Those whose consciences can witness to them, that it hath been their great care not to enwrap themselves in the guilt of these divisions, but

they can appeal to God that they have endeavoured after peace so far as they could with a good conscience, let them bless God for this mercy, it is a great deliverance to be delivered from the guilt of these divisions. Deut. 33:8. Of Levi he said, Let thy Urim and Thummim be with thy holy One, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah. Massah signifies tentation, and Meribah, contention. Places and times of contention are places and times of tentation. Now if God shall prove us at those places in those times, and we be found upright, this will bring a blessing upon us. At those waters where the people murmured, contending even with God himself, Aaron (though there was some weakness in him) yet kept himself from being involved in the guilt of that sin of contending with God. And Sol-farchi, with other of the Hebrews, say, that the Levities were not in that sin neither; which they think that place Malac. 2:5. refers unto, My covenant was with him of life and peace, for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The fear of God was upon Levi, at that time he dared not contend as then others did, and therefore my covenant of life and peace was and is with him. We have been these three or four years at these waters of Massah and Meribah, God hath tried us. How happy are those who have held out, who have kept their consciences free, upon whom the fear of God hath been, and through that fear of his, have walked before him in the ways of truth and equity? The Blessing of the Covenant of Life and Peace be upon them for ever.

## **CHAP. XXXI**



## The Cure of our Divisions.

What gracious heart is not cut asunder with grief for those sore and fearful evils that there are in, and come from our divisions, and is not even the second time cut asunder with careful thoughts in it self , what may be done to heal them? Mat. 6:25. Christ forbids that carking care that cuts our hearts, when it is in matters concerning ourselves, yea for our lives, μή μεριμνᾶτε, take no thought for your life, so it is in your books: but the word signifies, Doe not take such thought as should cut your heart asunder: so ver. 28. τί μεριμνᾶτε; why do you divide your hearts? and ver. 31. μή μεριμήσητε, and ver. 34. μή μεριμνήσητε again. But though this charge of Christ be doubled and doubled again, against our careful dividing, cutting thoughts about ourselves, yet for the uniting the hearts of the Saints together for the good of the Church, this heart-cutting care is not only allowed, but required, 1 Cor. 12:25.\* That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another. The words are, That the members may care, the same thing one for another, and that with dividing, cutting care, that there might be no schism in the body. The word that is here for care, is the same that in the former places in the 6. of Mat. is forbidden. The expressions of my thoughtful cares about this work, is the subject at this time: When I set myself about it, my heart doth even ache within me at the apprehension of the difficulty of it. There are some diseases that are called opprobria medicorum, the disgraces of Physicians, because they know not what to say or do to them; or if they do any thing it is to little purpose. If there be any soul-disease that is opprobrium Theologorum, the disgrace of Divines, it is this of contention and division. How little has all that they have studied and endeavored to do , prevailed with the hearts of men? What shall we do ? Shall we but join in this one thing, to sit down together, and mourn one over another, one for another, till we have dissolved our hearts into tears, and see if we can thus get them to run one into another. Oh that it might be; what sorrow soever it costs us!

We read Judg. 2:12, 3, 4, 5. the Lord sent an Angel from Gilgal to the men of Israel, who told them how graciously he had dealt with them, yet they

had contrary to the command of God made a league with the inhabitants of the Land, for which the Lord threatened that they should be as thorns in their sides. When the Angel spake these words unto the children of Israel, the people lift up their voice and wept. And they called the name of that place Bochim, a place of tears. Their sin was too much joining, joining in league where God would not have them: those whom they joined with, God told them should be thorns in their sides. Upon this they wept, and that so sore, that the place received its name from their weeping. But oh that the Lord would send his Angel, yea his Spirit to us, to convince us of our evil, that we to this day have not joined in sure league one with another, but are thorns in the sides of one another: and that after so many mercies, such great deliverances from our bondage, from the rage of ungodly men, yea that we are so false one to another, though the Lord hath never broke covenant with us, which was the heart-breaking argument the Angel used, ver. 1. Yea the Lord hath done abundantly for us, beyond our hopes, desires, thoughts, and that after all this there should be nothing but breaches and divisions amongst us, that we should be not only thorns, but spears and swords in one anothers sides, piercing to one anothers hearts. Are we the children of Israel? Let our hearts then break for the breaches of our hearts. Let them break, and melt, and mourn, and bleed, and resolve that nothing shall comfort them, but peace with our God, and peace one with another.

That one Text, 1 Thess. 4:9. were enough alone to pierce our hearts thorough and thorough. As touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you, saith the Apostle, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. Oh Lord, what are we in these days such kinde of Christians as these were? Oh that it were so with us, that we had no need to be wrote to, to be preached to, concerning this. Does it appear by our carriages one towards another, that we are taught of God to love one another? But that God may teach us this day, attend to what shall be said to you in his name, which I shall cast into these five heads:

1. Joining Principles.
2. Joining Considerations.
3. Joining Graces.

4. Joining Practices.

5. Conclude with Exhortation.

Wherein we shall endeavour to set before you the beauty and excellency there is in the heart, union, and mutual love of Christians.

I shall not need to be long in these: For take away Dividing Principles, Dividing Distempers, Dividing Practices, and be thoroughly convinced of the evil of divisions, and one would think our hearts should of themselves run into one another. But that I may not seem to leave our wounds open, so that air should get into them, but endeavor the closing of them, and so the healing, I shall speak something to these five Heads.

The first joining Principle.

In the midst of all differences of judgement, and weakness of the Saints, it is not impossible but that they may live in peace and love together.

IF notwithstanding differences from God's mind , and many weaknesses, there may be peace and love between God and his Saints: then surely notwithstanding these things, the Saints may be at love and peace among themselves. Let this be laid for a ground, and let our hearts be much possessed with it, we shall find it very helpful to our closing. Away with that vain conceit which hath been the great disturber of Churches in all ages, if men differ in their judgement and practice in matters of religion, though it be in things that are but the weakness of godly men, yet there must needs be heart-burning and division. Let all peaceable men deny this consequence, Let us not say it will be so, and that our words may be made good afterwards indeed make it so: certainly the connection of them, if there be any, is rather from the corruption of our hearts, then from the nature of the things.

I have read of two Rivers in the East, Sava and Danuby, that run along in one channel threescore miles together, without any noyse, and yet they keep themselves distinct, the color of the waters remain distinct, all along: why should we not think it possible for us to go along close together in love and peace, though in some things our judgements and

practices be apparently different one from another? I will give you who are Scholars a sentence to write upon your Study doors, as needful an one in these times as any; it is this:

Opinionum varietas, & opinantium unitas non sunt Absoluta.

Variety of opinions, and unity of those that hold them, may stand together.

There hath been much ado to get us to agree: we laboured to get our opinions into one, but they will not come together. It may be in our endeavors for agreement we have begun at the wrong end. Let us try what we can do at the other end: it may be we shall have better success there. Let us labour to join our hearts to engage our affections one to another: if we cannot be of one mind that we may agree, let us agree that we may be of one mind .

Eusebius records a Letter that Constantine sent to Alexander and Arius,\* before he apprehended the grossness of Arius his heresy, conceiving them to differ but in smaller things, he endeavors to reconcile them: For that (says he) the things wherein you differ, concerneth not any weighty substance of our Religion, there is no reason why it should breed at all any division in mind , or discord in doctrine; and this I say not to compel you in this light question, of what sort soever it be, altogether to condescend unto the same sentence: and though you dissent amongst yourselves about a matter of small importance, (for neither truly are we all in all things like minded, neither have we all the same nature and gift engrafted in us) nevertheless for all that the sacred unity may be soundly and inviolably retained among you,\* and one consent and fellowship conserved between all.

I have read of the like peaceable disposition in divers German Divines, meeting to confer about matters of Religion in difference, in Marpurg. The conclusion of their Conference was this: Although we see we cannot hitherto fully agree about the corporeal presence of the body and blood of Christ in the bread and wine, yet both parts ought to declare Christian love one to another, as farre as every one can with a good conscience. Oh that this were the conclusion of all our debates and conference, wherein

we cannot come up fully to one anothers judgements. If we stay for peace and love till we come to the unity of the faith in all things, we must stay for it, for ought I know, till we come to another world. Ephes. 4:11, 12. He gave some Apostles, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers, for the work of the Ministry, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man. The unity of the faith, and the perfect man, will be both together; and when they are there will be no more need of any ministry, there shall be no more preaching after we are all come to this unity: when that is done our work is done for this world.

The second joining Principle.

That shall never be got by strife, that may be had by love and peace.

WE would all fain have our will: now that which lies uppermost upon many mens hearts, that which is the first thing they do, if their wills be crossed, is presently to strive and contend: but this should be the last thing, after all other means are tried: this should never be made use of but in case of pure necessity. We should first think, Is there any way in the world whereby it is possible we may have our desires satisfied with peace, let us try this, and another way, a third, a fourth, yea a hundred ways, if they lye between us and the way of strife, before we come to meddle with that. This rule you will find of very great use to order all our businesses in Churches and Commonwealths, of Towns, Families, yea whatsoever concerns any of your persons in reference to any other. The Apostle, 1 Cor. 12. rebuking the divisions of that Church, of which they were guilty more then any, for they had many among them of raised parts, of eminent gifts, and therefore puffed up more then others. Except God joins eminency of grace, men of eminent gifts join less then others, whose gifts are meaner. Among those means he directs for union, when he speaks of love: I will shew you, says he, a more excellent way, ver. last; καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν, a way of the highest excellency, beyond any expression. The way of love, of the engaging hearts one to another, is the only way to bring men to unity of judgement: yea the only way when all is done, for men to have their wills. I may give you this or the other rule to bring you to think and do the same thing, but that which hath an excellency in it with an Hyperbole, is the way of love. If you could get

your minds by other ways, certainly you cannot enjoy it with that sweatiness and comfort as you may if you have got it this way.

Marcus Cato repented that ever he went by sea when he might have gone by land (it seems the skill of those times for Navigation was not great) but certainly there is no man living but hath cause to repent him that ever he got that by strife and contention that he might have got by love & peace.\* What hinders why soft and gentle words may not prevail, as well as hard and bitter language? Why may not a loving winning carriage do as much as severe rigid violence? If it may, thou providest ill for thine own peace and comfort, to leave this way, and betake thy self to the other. Tell me, were it a sign of valor in a man to draw his sword at every Whippet that comes near him? yea at every Fly that lights upon him? Were it not folly and madness? Why? he may by putting forth his finger put them off from him. Thy froward choleric spirit is ready to draw at every thing that thou likest not. This is thy folly: thou mayest with less ado have what thou hast a mind to. If I would put a Feather from me, I need not strike violently at it, a soft gentle breath will do it better. Why should a man labour and toil till he sweats again, to take up a pin? Have none of you sometimes made a great stir in your families about that which when the stir is a little over you plainly see you might have had as well with a word speaking: and hath not your heart secretly upbraided you then? Try the next time what you can do by faire and gentle means. Why should we let the strength of our spirits run waste? Let this be a constant rule, never make use of severity till you have tried what clemency will do: there is more power in that to conquer the hearts of men you would fain have yield to you, then you are aware of.

Plutarch reports of Philip of Macedon, that when one Arcadion railed on him, the Courtiers would have had him dealt severely with; but Philip took another course, he sends for him, and spake gently to him, and shewed great love and respect to him: upon this Arcadions heart was turned, so as there was no man in the world that Arcadion spoke more honourably of then of Philip, wheresoever he came. After a while Philip met with those who would have had him to have revenged himself upon Arcadion, What say you now of Arcadion? says he: How doth he now behave himself? There is no man living, say they, speaks better of you

now then he. Well then, says Philip, I am a better Physician then you; my physic hath done that which yours never would have done.

The like he reports of Fabius,\* who was called the Romans Target: When he heard of a soldier who was valiant, yet practised with some others to go to serve the enemy, he calls him to him, and instead of dealing with him in rigour, tells him he had not had recompense according to his desert, and gives him honourable gifts, and so gains him to be faithful for ever. And says he, As Hunters, Riders of Horses, and such as tame wild beasts shall sooner make them leave their savage and churlish nature by gentle usage and manning of them, then by beating and shackling them; so a governor of men should rather correct by patience, gentleness, and clemency, then by rigour, violence, and severity. None but a cruel, harsh, sordid spirited man, will say, I had rather men should fear me then love me God prizes most what he hath from us by love.

The third joining Principle,

It is better to do good, then to receive good.

Active good is better then passive; only God himself, his Angels and Saints do good; all creatures can receive good. This principle would quickly join us; for if this were in mens hearts, they would study to do all the good they could to one another, and so gain upon one anothers hearts: and the more good we do to any, the more will our hearts be inclinable to love them. The very communication of goodness, if it be out of a good spirit carries the heart along with it to the subject this good is communicated to: the more good God doth to any, the more he loves them. God hates nothing that he hath made, but loves what there is any thing of his work: but when he communicates his grace, his Spirit, when he gives his Christ in these gifts, he gives his heart: they do not only come from love, but they make the subject further lovely in his eyes. So it is with us in our proportion: if you take a poor child from the dunghill, or out of the alms-house, and make him your heir, you do not only do this good to him because you love him, but you also love him more, because you look upon him as an object of your goodness, as one raised by you.\* Titus accounted that day lost, a day wherein he had not reigned, if he had done no good. This principle would make men great as well as good. It is

the glory of God that he does so much good. And if men could account this greatness, satisfying greatness, the most and greatest contentions that are in the world would be laid down: for what do men contend so much for as for greatness?

The fourth joining Principle.

The good of other men is my good as well as theirs.

WE are all of one body: whatsoever good others have, it is the good of the body; it makes them some way able to do that good that we would have done, or at least that we should desire to have done. Plutarch says that Solon made a law whereby every man was enabled to sue whosoever wronged his neighbor, as if he had wronged himself; he gave this reason for it, There is no good that one man has in a Commonwealth, but it is another mans as well as his.

Community in the Church is more. 1 Cor. 3:22. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. If you be godly you have an interest in all the eminent godly men in the world, in all their gifts, their graces, in all they have or do ; all that is in the world that hath any good in it, is yours, yea what is evil shall be serviceable to you for good. This is brought by the Apostle to quiet the jarrings and contentions that were amongst the Corinthians. One would be for Paul, another for Apollos, says the Apostle, What need this contention, who you are for, and who another is for? they are all yours, all the excellency there is in them is the good of every one of you. A special reason why men contend so much, is, they think the good that other men have is their evil, therefore they must either get it to themselves, or darken it in those that have it. But such men acted by such a principle are poor, low-spirited men. A man of a raised, enlarged spirit, opens his heart that it may be filled with that infinite good in which there is all good. Now if it be that good my soul closeth with, and is satisfied in, then whatsoever hath any goodness in it, be it where it will, it flows from this Infinite Ocean of good that my soul is launched into, and some way or other flows into this again; though thorough mens corruptions, there may be many windings and turnings in the course of it, yet hither it comes at last, and therefore it



is mine as really and truly as any I have in mine own hand: my soul then shall rejoice in all the good I see my brethren have, in all they do , I will bless God for it, and seek the furtherance of it what I can. Surely this man must needs be a man of peace and love.

The fifth joining Principle.

My good is more in the public then in my self .

The strength, safety, excellency of a Cabin in a Ship consists not so much in the boards of the Cabin, or the fine painting of it, as in the strength and excellency of the ship.

It is because we have such private spirits that there are such contentions among us: were we more public spirited, our contentions would vanish. When I read of what public spirits many of the Heathen were, I am ashamed to look upon many Christians. Paulus Aemilius hearing of the death of his children, spake with an undaunted courage thus, That the gods had heard his prayer, which was, that calamities should rather befall his family, then the Commonwealth. The publicness of his spirit made it very sweet and lovely: the story says of him, he entreated them gently and graciously whom he had subdued, setting forward their causes, even as they had been his confederates, very friends and near kinsmen. Public spirited men are men of sweet and peaceable spirits.

The sixth joining Principle.

What I would have others do to me, that I will endeavor to do to them.

Would not I have others bear with me? I then will bear with them. I would have others do offices of kindnesses to me, I will then do offices of kindnesses to them. I would have the carriages of others lovely, amiable to me, mine shall be so to them. I would have others live peaceably with me, I will do so with them. This rule of doing to others as I would be done to, is a law of justice; such justice as keeps the peace. Alexander Severus the Roman Emperor,\* was much taken with this: he says he learned it from the Christians, if he had to deal with his common Soldiers that did wrong, he punished them: but when he had to deal with men of worth

and dignity, he thought it sufficient to reprove them with this sentence, Do as you would be done by.

Chrysostom in his 13. Sermon to the people of Antioch, makes use of this principle, thus, After Christ had spoken of many blessedness,\* (says he) he then says, Those things you would have others do to you, do you to them: as if he should say, There needs not many words, let thine own will be thy law: would you receive benefits? bestow benefits then: would you have mercy? be merciful then: would you be commended? commend others: would you be loved? then love. Be you the Judge your self, be you the Law-giver of your own life. That which you hate, do not to another. Cannot you endure reproach? do not you reproach others. Cannot you endure to have others envy you? do not you envy others. Cannot you endure to be deceived? do not you deceive others.

The seventh joining Principle.

It is as great an honour to have my will by yielding, as by overcoming.

Many men in their anger will say, I will be even with him. I will tell you a way how you may be above him: forgive him. By yielding, pardoning, putting up the wrong, you shew you have power over your self, and this is a greater thing then to have power over another. Numb. 14:17, 18. Now I beseech thee let the power of my Lord be great, pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, ver. 19. and by this thou mayest honourably prevail with thy brother: hereby shalt thou heap coals of fire upon his head.

I have read of two famous Philosophers falling at variance, Aristippus and Aeschines,\* Aristippus comes to Aeschines, Shall we not be friends? says he. Yes with all my heart, saith Aeschines. Remember, faith Aristippus, that though I am your elder, yet I sought for peace. True, faith Aeschines, and for this I will always acknowledge you the more worthy man; for I began the strife, and you the peace.

The eighth joining Principle.

I will never meddle with any strife but that which shall have peace to be

the end of it.

NO war is good upon any terms, taken up upon the most just ground, except it aims at peace. *Bellum minime bellum*: that Soldier is a murderer that sheds blood not in reference to peace. The Swords and Ensigns of Soldiers should have this Motto upon them, *Sic quærimus pacem*, Thus we seek Peace. Hercules his Club was made of the Olive, the emblem of Peace.

The ninth joining Principle:

No man shall ever be mine enemy, that is not more his own than mine, yea more the enemy of God than mine.

IF a man offends me merely through weakness, this is his affliction, in this he is neither an enemy to himself nor me; he mourns for it, and I will pity him in his mourning; he is more troubled for what he hath done, then I have cause to be for what I have suffered. If he offends willingly and purposely, he is his own enemy more than mine. When Latimer was cozened in buying a commodity, his friends telling him how he was cheated of his money, he fell a mourning for him that had cheated him, He hath the worst of it, says he. If my heart rises against a man in this, and I seek to oppose him in his way, it may very well be interpreted to be out of love to him, for my heart rises against his enemy, I oppose his enemy, even himself, but an enemy to himself, more than to me; he hath hurt me a little, but himself more. I am troubled a little for the wrong I suffer, but more for the evil he hath done. If his ways be enmity to God, I will oppose him, because I love God,\* and no farther than wherein I may manifest my love to God rather than hatred of him. When Servetus condemned Zwingli for his harshness, he answers, In other things I will be mild, but not so in Blasphemies against God. Let us keep our enmity within these bounds, and the peace of God will not be broke.

The tenth joining principle:

I had rather suffer the greatest evil, then do the least.

IF when others wrong you, you care not what you do to right your self :

This is your folly and madness, Such a one hurt me, and I will therefore mischief my self ; he hath pricked me with a pin, and I will therefore in an anger run my knife into my side. If in all we suffer we be sure to keep from righting ourselves by any ways of sin, there will not be much peace broke. Such an one is thine enemy, and wilt thou of one enemy make two? wilt thou also be an enemy to thy self , yea a greater enemy then he or any man living can be to thee? for all the men in the world cannot make thee sin, except thou wilt thy self .

The eleventh joining principle:

I will labour to do good to all, but provoke none.

A Father hath not so much power over his child, as to provoke him. Col. 3:21. Fathers provoke not your children to wrath. Surely if a man hath not this power over his child, he hath it not over his friend, his neighbor, much less his superior: yet how many take delight in this, Such a thing I know will anger him, and he shall be sure to have it! Oh wicked heart! dost thou see that this will be a temptation to thy brother, and wilt thou lay it before him? dost not thou pray for thy self and for him, Lord lead us not into temptation? wee should account it the greatest evil to us of all the evil of afflictions,\* to be any occasion of sin to our brother; but what an evil should this be to us, to provoke our brother to sin? if we will needs be provoking, then let the Apostles exhortation prevail with us, Heb. 10:24. Let us consider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works: Let us not consider one another in a way of curiosity and emulation, to envy, or find fault with one another, from whence frowardness, pride, hatred, dissensions, factions may arise, faith Hyperius upon the place, but consider one another, so as we may further the good of one another, so as to make one another quick & active in that which is good.

The twelfth joining Principle:

Peace with all men it is good, but with God and mine own conscience it is necessary.

But how will this join us one to another?

Answ. Very much, both as it holds forth the goodness of peace with all men, and as it carries the heart strongly to the making and keeping peace with God and a mans own conscience. This peace with God and a mans own conscience will so sweeten the heart, that it cannot but be sweet towards every one; a man who hath satisfaction enough within, can easily bear afflictions and troubles that come without. When Saul had made great breaches between God and his soul, and in his own conscience, then he grew to be of a very froward spirit towards every man, before his Apostasy he was of a very meek and quiet spirit, but this soured his spirit, and made it grow harsh, rugged, and cruel; This is the cause of the frowardness of many men and women in their families, and with their neighbors, there are secret breaches between God and their own consciences.

The thirteenth joining Principle:

If I must needs err, considering what our condition is here in this world, I will rather err by too much gentleness and mildness, then by too much rigour and severity.

Man's nature is more propense to rigour, then to lenity;\* but the account of overmuch lenity is easier then of too much rigour. Men who are of harsh, sour spirits themselves, are ready to think that God is so too. As the Lacedæmonians because they were of a warlike disposition, they represented their gods all armed. But God is love: there is anger and hatred in God as well as love: but God is never said to be anger or hatred, no not justice it self ; but he loves that expression of himself to the children of men, God is love. If God intended that all things amongst men, either in Church or Common-wealth, should be carried with strictness of justice, he would rather have governed his Church and the world by Angels, who have right apprehensions of justice, who are themselves perfect, altogether free from those evils that are to be punished, then by men, whose apprehensions of justice are exceeding weak, inconstant, partial, as often false as true, and have much of that evil in themselves that they judge in others.

The last joining Principle.

Peace is never bought too dear, but by sin and baseness.

WE use to say, We may buy Gold too dear, and so wee may peace: but whatsoever we pay for it beside sin and baseness, we have a good bargain. Suidas tells of the Emperor Trajan, that he would cut his own clothes to bind up the wounds of his Soldiers. We should be very pitiful to soldiers, who are wounded to keep us whole. We should bind up their wounds, though it cost us dear: but especially our care should be to bind up those wounds that by divisions are made in Church and Commonwealth: and well may we be willing to cut our clothes to bind them up, when the evil of them is such as either does or should cut our hearts. But though peace be a rich merchandize, yet we must not sail too far for it, not so far as to sin. We read 2 King. 23:13. Mount Olivet is called the Mount of corruption, because of the idolatry committed upon it. Though we are to prize Mount Olivet at a very high rate, with the Olives growing upon it, yet we must take heed that we make it not a Mount of corruption. We may give peace to buy truth, but we may not give truth to buy peace. We may be bold with that which is our own to purchase peace, but not with that which is God's: yet we must not be base in our yielding in things natural or civil for peace sake, that is,

First, we must not for our own private peace yield to that which is like to prove public disadvantage and disturbance. There is a notable story of a Turkish Emperor, perceiving his Nobles and people to be offended that he was so strongly in love to his Concubine Irene, his heart was so taken with her that he grew remiss in his regard to the Stern of the State. Nothing must be done but as Irene would have it: whatsoever resolutions there were of any good to the State, yet Irene must be consulted withal before they were put in execution, and if they pleased not her all was dashed, so much did he dote upon Irene. This the Nobles and State could not bear: he therefore at last so far considered the public, as he overcame his doting affections. He brought Irene before them, and says, That ye may see how much I prize the content of my people, I sacrifice her to them, and so drew his sword, and slew her with his own hands before their eyes. If according to her demerits for drawing his heart away from the good of the Commonwealth, she had been given up to the sword of justice, it might have satisfied as well. But left I be thought to be too

literal, give me leave to allegorize upon this Irene. Her name is a Greek name, Ἐιρήνη, it signifies peace: we must not so dote upon our Irene, our private peace, that the public should suffer for the sake of it. This is baseness: let her be sacrificed for public good; this is true generousness.

Secondly, that is baseness, when our yielding is thorough ignorance, cowardice, base fear, not from a principle of wisdom and understanding: not so much out of true love to peace, as a foolish, ignorant, sottish, sordid spirit of our own: whereas had we had a spirit of wisdom and courage, we might have peace upon more honourable terms. Indeed many think every kind of yielding baseness, but they are for the most part such as are not put to any great trial themselves. but when our consciences tell us, that what we do is what the rule allows us; it is not because we would avoid trouble, but we find thorough God's grace, our hearts in some measure prepared for suffering, if God were pleased to call us to it, in any thing wherein he may have glory, and the public may be benefited. But because all things duly considered, we see that God in such a way shall have more glory, and our brethren generally more good: therefore whatsoever becomes of our particular in regard of esteem, or other ways, we are willing to yield, and in this we find our hearts as much closing with God, enjoying communion with him in all holiness and godly fear, and in other things that go as near to us, we are able to deny ourselves as much as ever: in this we may have comfort, that it is not baseness that makes us yield, but rather the grace of God enabling us to rule over our own spirits. The peace that we thus purchase with the suffering much in our names, and the loss of many comforts does not cost us too dear.

## **CHAP. XXXII**

### **Joining Considerations.**

The first. The consideration of the many things wherein God hath joined us.

God hath joined us together as we are men: we are not dogs, not wolves, let us not be so one to another. Act. 7:26. Moses speaks thus to those who strove one with another: Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one another? The words in the Greek are, ἀνδρὲς ἀδελφοὶ ἐστε, men yet are brethren. There is a consideration in this, that ye are men: if there were no more, yet ye should not strive one with another, but much more considering ye are brethren. If we be men, let us be humane. What is the meaning of humanity, but courteousness, gentleness, pleasantness in our carriages one towards another? But still the consideration grows higher, as we are the same Countryman, of old acquaintance, in the same employment, of the same family and kindred, but above all, joined in such a blessed root, the fountain of all love and peace. Ephes. 4:4. presents this consideration most fully to us. The reason the Apostle gives why we must keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, is because there is one body, and one spirit, ye are called in one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. Here you have seven Ones together in two or three lines. It is very much that the Spirit of God should join so close together seven Ones; surely it is to be a strong argument for us to unity.

First, one Body. The meanest member yet it is in the body. Is it comely for the body of Christ to be rent and torn? any reference to Christ might persuade unity, but union with Christ as the members with the body, what heart can stand against the strength of this? What can cause one member to tear and rend another, but madness?

2. One Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:11. that one and the self same spirit: he does not only say, The same spirit; but, The self same spirit: and as if that not enough, he adds One to the self same; and that yet not enough, he says, That one, all this is in the Greek, τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα. The repeating the Article hath a great elegancy in it. And is not this one Spirit the Spirit of love and meekness? What does a froward contentious spirit do in thee, who professest thy self to be a Christian? What, says Cyprian, does the fierceness of Wolves, the madness, of Dogs,\* the deadly poison of Serpents, the bloody rage of Beasts, in a Christians breast?



3. Called in one hope. Are not you heirs, joint heirs of the same Kingdom, and do you contend as if one belonged to the kingdom of light, and the other to the kingdom of darkness?

4. One Lord. You serve the same Lord and Master. Is it for the credit of a Master, that his servants are always wrangling and fighting one with another? Is it not a tedious thing in a family that the servants can never agree? Mark how ill the Lord takes this, Mat. 24:49, 50, 51. that evil servant who begins to smite his fellow-servants, provokes his Lord against him so as to come upon him with such severity as to cut him asunder, and to appoint his portion with the hypocrites; διχοτομήσει, he will dichotomize him, divide him in two; he by his smiting his fellow-servants makes divisions, but his Lord will divide him. It may be he pretends that his fellow-servants do not do their duty as they ought; as if he were more careful of the honour of his Lord than others who are of a different way from him. But in the mean while he inveighs against others, smiting them with the tongue, and otherwise as he is able. He fits at full Tables, eats and drinks of the best, with such as are carnal and sensual, but they are great men, to have their countenance is brave; this is extreme suitable to a carnal heart, who yet keeps up a profession of Religion, hath some form of godliness, he is afraid to lose his fleshly contentment, therefore he smites those who stand in his way: Thus divisions and troubles are made in God's family: The Lord the Master of it will reward accordingly; he will divide such by cutting them asunder, and appointing them their portion with the hypocrites.

5. One Faith. What though we agree not together in some things of lesser moment, yet we agree in one faith. Why should we not then keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace? The agreement in the faith one would think should swallow up all other disagreements. We should rather bless God for keeping men sound in the faith, then contend with them for lesser mistakes. When the Pharisees, Acts 23:9, understood that Paul agreed with them in that great doctrine of the Resurrection, they presently overlooked his other differences, saying, We find no evil in this man. Our Brethren agree with us in more Fundamentals then this, and yet we can find evil in them, and aggravate their evil beyond what it is, and improve it all we can against them. This is worse then Pharisaical.

Master Calvin in his Epistle to our Countrymen at Frankford,\* fled for their lives in witness to the truth, yet miserably jarring and contending one against another there, to the scandal of all the Churches of God in those parts, begins his Epistle thus: This doth grievously torment me; it is extremely absurd that dissensions should arise among brethren, exiles, fled from their country for the same faith, and for that cause which alone in this your scattering, ought to be to you as a holy band, to keep you fast bound together. Their contentions were about Church-worship.

6. One Baptism. We are baptized into Christ's death, and is not that to shew that we should be dead to all those things in the world that cause strife and contention among men? Our Baptism is our badge, our livery, it furthers somewhat the unity of servants that they wear all one livery.

7. One God. Though there be three Persons in the Divine Nature, and every Person is God, yet there is but one God; here is an union infinitely beyond all unions that any creature can be capable of; the mystery of this union is revealed to us, to make us in love with union. Our interest in this one God is such a conjunction, as nothing can be more.

Joseph's brethren, Gen. 50:17. looked upon this, as having very great power in it to make up all breaches, to heal all old grudges. After their Father was dead, their consciences misgave them for what they had done to Joseph, they were afraid old matters would break forth, and that Joseph would turn their enemy; now how do they seek to unite Joseph's heart to them? We pray thee, say they, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy Father, and the Text says, Joseph wept when they spake unto him. Oh this was a heart-breaking speech to Joseph, The servants of the God of my Father; Shall my heart ever be estranged from the servants of the God of my Father? The Lord forbid. Their offence indeed was great, but their God is my God, and he was my Fathers God; this argument had more in it to draw Joseph's heart to them, then if they had said, We are your brethren, we came from the same loins you did: True, that is something, but the servants of the God of thy father is much more. Let us look upon all the godly, though they have many weaknesses, though they have not carried themselves towards us as they ought, yet they are the servants, yea the children of our God, and of our fathers God; let this

draw our hearts to them. If they be one with us, in their interest in one God, let them be one with us in the affections of our heart, to love them, delight in them, and rejoice in communion with them.

One God and Father. Mal. 2:10. Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother? Job 31:15. Did not he that made me in the womb, make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb? Is it seemly that one mans children should be always contending, quarrelling, and mischieving one another? do you think this is pleasing to your Father? It follows in that 4. of Ephes. who is above all, and through all, and in you all. You have enough in your Father to satisfy your souls for ever, whatsoever you want other ways; he is above all; he that is so glorious and blessed, infinitely above all things, hath put honour enough upon you, that he is your Father; why will you contend and quarrel about trifles? He hath absolute authority to dispose of all things as he pleaseth; let not the different administrations of his, to some in one kind, to some in another, be matter for you to contend about. And he worketh in all.

Those gifts and graces especially that are in his children, are his workings; that some have more then others, it is from his working. You may see the workings of your Father in the hearts of your Brethren. He is in all. Men may have children in whom little or nothing of their Father appears, but God is in all his children, notwithstanding all their weaknesses, therefore our hearts should be in them and with them. This Scripture is one of the most famous Scriptures for the union of the Saints in one, that we have in all the Book of God.

You will say, If indeed wee could see God in such, if we could see grace and holiness in them, our hearts would close with them, but we see not this.

Answ. 1. Take heed thou dost not reject any from being thy brother, whom Jesus Christ at the great day will own for his, and God the Father will call Child.

2. Suppose thou canst not be satisfied in their godliness, yet the gifts of the Spirit of God that are in them, should cause some kind of closing;

common gifts are of a middle nature, between nature and grace, as the spirits of a man are neither of the same nature with the soul, nor of the body, but between both, and serve to unite the soul and body together, which otherwise are of natures very different. The common gifts that men who are not yet sanctified have, may and should cause some union between the godly and them while they live in this world, so far as to be useful one to another in what God hath given them.

The second joining Consideration:

Let us consider how far we can agree.

WE differ thus and thus, but what do we agree in? do we not agree in things enough, wherein we may all the days of our lives spend all the strength we have in glorifying God together? Many men are of such spirits, as they love to be altogether busied about their brethren's differences; their discourse, their pens, and all their ways are about these, and that not to heal them, but rather to widen them. You shall not hear them speak of, or meddle with their agreements; their strength is not bent to heighten and strengthen them: if at any time they do take notice of their agreements, it is to make advantage of them, to render their disagreements the more odious, or to strengthen themselves in what they differ from them; they desire to get in men, and to get from them, only to serve their own turns upon them, this is an evil spirit. No marvel therefore though some bee so loath to discover to them how near they can come to them.

Pliny tells us of Apelles,\* that drawing the face of Antiochus the King who had but one eye, that he might hide this deformity, he devised to paint him turning his visage a little away, so he shewed but the one side of his face: and from him, says Pliny, came the invention first of concealing the defects and blemishes of the visage. But the Painters of our time are quite in another way, if there be any deformity or defect on any side, they will be sure to paint that side in all the lineaments of it, that must be set forth fully to the view of all men; yea if it may be made to look more ugly and monstrous than it is, all the skill they have shall be improved to do it. But my brethren, this ought not to be; God doth not so with us: he takes notice of the good of his children, but conceals their evil. There was but

one good word in Sarah's speech to Abraham, Gen. 18:12. she called him Lord, the speech otherwise was a speech of unbelief, yet the holy Ghost speaking afterwards of her, in reference to that speech, 1 Pet. 3:6. conceals all the evil in it, and mentions only that reverend title she gave to her husband, commending her for it. Thus should we do ; had we peaceable hearts, thus wee would do : all the good of our brethren we would improve to the uttermost, and what is evil, so far as with a good conscience we might, we would conceal. When I shall see this temper in mens spirits, I shall hope there will be peace.

The third joining Consideration:

Let us consider of mens tempers, spirits, temptations, education, years, gifts.

There must be a due consideration of all these, and we must indulge something to them all. This would allay much strife: as we read Numb. 31:23. Every thing that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go thorough the fire, and all that abideth not the fire ye shall make go thorough the water. We must deal with every man according to his temper. Some men are by their complexions of a more harsh and rugged temper than others. Consider what is the best way of dealing with such: in the main they are faithful and useful; they will join with you there, and spend their lives for you: if the harshness of their natures cause some excrescencies, unpleasing carriages, consider their tempers, though no evil in them is to be justified, yet deal tenderly with them, indulge them what lawfully you may. Some mens spirits, though upright to God and you, yet they have a fervor in them that is not qualified with that wisdom, meekness, humility, as they ought, do not presently take these advantages against them, that they in their heat may perhaps give you; do not fly upon them as if those unjustifiable expressions that come from them, came from a spirit of malignity: You know the man and the manner of his communication; passe by weaknesses, accept of uprightness. Some mens temptations are very strong; it may be their hearts are pressed with disappointments, it may be they are pricked with the want of many comforts you have; they have family-temptations, and personal temptations that you are freed from: you do not know what you might do if you were under the like temptations. Bless God that you are delivered from them; but do not add

to your brethren's affliction, by taking advantages against them, but according to the rule of the Apostle, Gal. 6:1. If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thy self, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Consider their education. Some men have been brought up altogether amongst Prelates, perhaps among Papists; some all their days have lived in wicked families, they never were acquainted with the society of the Saints, with that way of godliness that hath the most strictness and power in it. You must not deal with them for all things you see amiss in them, in the same way you would deal with such who have had godly education, who have had acquaintance with the most strict and powerful waves of godliness, but now manifest a spirit against them.

Consider mens years: old age looks for respect, and justly; especially such as have gone thorough the brunt, and suffered much for your good: though some infirmities should break forth that are incident to old age, we must cover and passe by what we can, not forgetting that reverent respect that is due to the hoary head found in the way of godliness. Consider mens gifts: it may be they are not able to rise to your height, to understand what you do; thank God for your strength, but be not angry with your brother because he is weaker. This was one of the arguments for peace that Constantine in that fore mentioned Letter of his to Alexander and Arius, used; we are not in all things like minded, neither have we all the same nature and gift engrafted in us.

The fourth joining Consideration.

What we get by contention will never quit cost.

A Merchant thinks it an ill venture, if when he casts up his accounts he finds the charge of his voyage rises to more then his incomes. If thou hast so much command of thy spirit, if thou canst so far overcome thy passions as to get a time in cool blood to cast up thy accounts truly, what good thou hast done, or what thou hast got by such and such contentions; and on the other side cast up what the hurt thou hast done, what sin hath been committed, what evil hath got into thy spirit, I fear you will have little cause to boast of, or rejoyce in your gains.\* To be freed from that

expense that comes in by strife, is not a little gain, says Ambrose. In strife you will find there is a very great expense of time, of gifts, and parts. Many men in regard of the good gifts God hath given them, might have proved shining Lights in the Church, but by reason of their contentious spirits, they prove no other then smoking firebrands. It may be by all the stir you keep you shall never get your mind ; if you do, it will not quit cost; the charge you have been at for it, comes to much more then it is worth. God deliver me from having my mind at such a dear rate.

The fifth joining Consideration.

The strongest hath need of the weakest.

Let not the hand say, it hath no need of the foot; nor the eye, it hath no need of the hand; God hath so tempered the body, that every member hath need of every member.

It was a sweet spirit in Peter, that great Apostle, writing to the scattered Christians, he begins his Epistle thus: Simon Peter a servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us. Little nails may be useful, where great wedges can do no good. Little chips may help to set great logs on fire.

The sixth.

Consider when any thing falls out that occasions strife, it may be this is but for trial, this is a temptation.

When men provoke us we are ready to fly upon them, looking no further then the men with whom we are displeased. But if you look a little further, perhaps you may see the Devil is on the other side of the hedge, and hath been the chief agent in this business. Augustine presseth this by a most excellent similitude. When a Fowler, saith he, hath set his net to catch Birds, he sets it at a distance from the hedge, and when he has done he takes stones and throws at the hedge, upon this the Birds fly out, and flutter about. The Fowler does not intend any hurt to the hedge, neither does he think to hit any Birds with his stones, but that which is in his eye is the net on the other side of the hedge, he hopes to drive the Birds in

there. So says he, the Devil prepares his net to catch men in, he raises up contentions, and causes much trouble to be in Churches, and among brethren, you think all the evil is in the trouble of your present contentions. Oh no: the Devil is behind, he intends to bring some of you into some great sin by these; he hath set his net for you, when you are troubled and vexed by such contentions, the Devil sees you fit for a temptation: now I hope I shall get him to do such and such things, which otherwise I could never have got him to. Oh that we had hearts when we find contentions stirring to consider, But is there not a temptation in them?

The seventh.

Consider how the heart of God is set upon making peace with us, and what it cost him.

God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself: this work hath taken up the thoughts, counsels, heart of God from all eternity above any thing that ever he did: this is the chief master-piece of all the works of God. There is more of the glory of God in this, then in all that God hath done. This is and shall be the object of the admiration of Angels and Saints, the matter of their praises to all eternity. The heart of God was so in this, that he was resolved to have it whatsoever it cost him; it cost the dearest that ever any thing in this world did; yea the price of it was more then ten thousand worlds are worth: it was no less then the blood of the Son of God, of him who is the second person in Trinity, God blessed for evermore. Col. 1:14. In whom we have redemption through his blood who is the image of the invisible God, the first borne of every creature: by him were all things created, he is before all things: by him all things consist, in him all fullness dwells: and having made peace through the blood of his Crosse, ver. 20. What God hath done for peace with us, calls aloud to us to prize peace one with another. It is the Apostles argument, 1 John 3:16. He laid down his life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. It cost his life to make our peace with God. We should be willing to do any thing we are able, even to the hazard of our lives, to make peace among the Saints. Christ laid down his life even for this peace also. Ephes. 2:14. For he is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broke down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in



his flesh the enmity, to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace, and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the Crosse. Christ reconciles both unto God: but how? it is in one body. Lay this Consideration warm at your hearts, and it will comfort your hearts, and so preserve and increase peaceable dispositions in you towards one another.

The eighth.

Consider how unworthy we were when Jesus Christ received us into union with himself.

What uncomely, what loathsome creatures we were! yet Christ took us into his bosom, into his heart, and resolved that never any thing should separate us from him again. But that those embracements of his should be everlasting, and yet shall every trifle take us off from one another's hearts? shall every jealous suspicious conceit, every little difference, be enough to separate us and that almost irreconcilably? Have we the spirit of Christ in us? is the same mind in us that was in Christ Jesus?

The ninth.

Consider that we are called to peace.

God hath called us to peace, 1 Cor. 7:15. That case upon which the Apostle mentions our calling to peace is as difficult a case to preserve peace in, as any can fall out in ones life. It was the case of man and wife unequally yoked, one is a believer, the other an Infidel, yet being man and wife the Apostle determines that the believer must be content to live with the unbeliever, as it becomes a wife or a husband; except he or she of themselves will depart, but they should give them no occasion of departing, but rather by their holy humble conversation seek to convert them: this no question was accounted a hard task, but it must be, says the Apostle, and upon this he grounds it, for God hath called us to peace. There is another case almost as difficult as this, where the patience and quietness of spirit is very much tried, and that is when a servant meets with a harsh, rugged, cruel master, that abuses him very injuriously; if any thing would put ones spirit into a rage, one would think this would do

it. No, says the Apostle, such must be the command you must have over your spirits, as you must patiently bear this: and he grounds it upon this, For hereunto were ye called, 1 Pet. 2:21, 22. But though husbands and wives should live at peace, though they suffer one from another: though servants should put up wrongs from their masters, yet it follows not that the like patience should be required in us, when we are wronged by our equals, by those to whom we have no such band of relation to tie us. Yes, this argument of calling is strong in this case also: 1 Pet. 3:8, 9. Love as brethren, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railings, but contrariwise, blessing, knowing that ye are thereunto called.

The tenth.

Consider the presence of God and of Christ.

Our God, our Father, our Master, our Saviour, stands by looking on us. It is a most excellent passage that I find in an Epistle of Luther to the Ministers of Norimberg. There were great divisions amongst them: he writes to them that he might pacify their spirits one towards another. Suppose (says he) you saw Jesus Christ standing before you,\* and by his very eyes speaking thus unto your hearts, What do you, O my dear children, whom I have redeemed with my blood, whom I have begotten again by my Word, to that end that you might love one another? Know that this is the note of my Disciples. Leave this business, ye wholly cast it upon me, He look to it, there is no danger that the Church should suffer by this, though it should be stilled, yea though it should dye, but there is a great deal of danger if you dissent amongst yourselves, if you bite one another: Doe not thus sadden my spirit, do not thus spoil the holy Angels of their joy in heaven; am not I more to you then all matters that are between you? then all your affections? then all your offences? What? can any words of a brother, can any unjust trouble penetrate your hearts, stick so fast in you, as my wounds, as my blood, as all that I am to you, your Saviour Jesus Christ? Oh that we had such real apprehensions of Christ looking upon us, speaking to us!

The eleventh,

Consider what account we can give to Jesus Christ of all our Divisions.

When Christ shall come, will you stand before him with scratched faces, with black and blew eyes? 1 Thes. 3:12, 13. The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men: To what end? To the end, faith the Apostle, he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his Saints. It will be a sad thing to be found in our divisions, at the coming of Jesus Christ, Mat. 24:50. the coming of Christ is mentioned as a terror to those who shall but begin to smite their fellow-servants. We may wrangle and stand out one against another in our contentions now; but it will not be so easy to answer Jesus Christ, as it is to answer one another. In the Name of Jesus Christ I now speak unto you, yea as from him charge you, let no reason move you to contend with, diffent or separate from your brethren, but that which you are persuaded in your conscience, and that after due and serious examination will hold out before, will be approved of, Jesus Christ at his coming

The twelfth,

Let every man consider his own weaknesses.

You are ready to take offence from others, within a while you are as like to be offensive to others. There will be as much need they should bear with you, as now there is you should bear with them. The Common Law of those who intend to live at peace one with another, is, Veniam petimus, damusque, We desire pardon, and we do pardon.

The thirteenth,

Let us consider our mortality.

IT is but a little time we have to live; shall the greater part of it, nay why should any part of it be raveled out with contentions and quarrels? I have read of Pompey, that upon a time passing over divers hills, where there lived many people in caves, but their order was that the man lived in one cave and the wife in another; he asking the reason, they said, In those parts they live not long, therefore they desired that the little time they did live, they might have peace and quiet, which they had found by experience they could not have, if man and wife lived constantly

together.\* Though the means they used for their quiet was sordid, yet the good use they made of the shortness of their lives was commendable. Vilgil says, if swarms of Bees meet in the air, they will sometimes fight as it were in a set battle with great violence; but if you cast but a little dust upon them, they will all be presently quiet. Sprinkle upon your hearts the meditations of death, that within a while this flesh of yours will be turned to dust, this will quiet you.

The fourteenth,

Consider the life of heaven.

There is and will be perfect agreement there. We are here as Bees, flying up and down from flower to flower all day, but at night they come all into the same Hive; That is a place where Luther and Zwingli will well agree. Shall not we whom God from all eternity hath ordained to live co-heirs in heaven, to join together in praises there, agree together here on earth?

## **CHAP. XXXIII**

### **Joining graces.**

#### **1. Wisdom.**

The deepest seas are the most calm, so men of the deepest judgements are most quiet. A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit, Prov. 17:27. or thus, is of a cool spirit, for so the word signifies; his spirit is not heat with passion, there is a cool dew of examination and deliberation upon his spirit, he weighs the circumstances, consequences, and issues of

things; he orders and disposes of things so, as jars,\* contradictions and oppositions are prevented. The wisdom that is from above is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, James 3:17. Reason and Wisdom have a majesty in them, and will force reverence. Let Passion reverence the presence of Reason, says Basil, as children doing things unseemly are afraid of the presence of men of worth.

## 2. Faith.

1. This unites us to Christ and God, and in them to one another.

2. Faith commits all causes, all fears, injuries to God.

3. Faith lays hold upon, and improves those gracious promises that God hath made to his Churches for union. Faith sues out the Bond.

4. Faith is able to descry the issue of troubles and afflictions; Though Sense says, It will not be, Reason, It cannot be, yet Faith gets above, and says, It shall be, I descry land: and thus quiets all in the soul; all being quiet there, the turbulent motions that are in our spirits one towards another are soon quieted.

## 3. Humility.

Coloss. 3:12. Put on as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind. Ephes. 4:2. With all lowliness and meekness, and long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Philip. 2:3. Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. We may say of Humility, as Tertullus, Acts 24. said of Felix, By thee we enjoy great quietness. An humble heart looks upon every truth of God as infinitely above it self, therefore it is willing to receive it from any; a child may lead it, Esay 11:6. One Baldassar, a German Divine, writing to Oecolampadius, hath this notable expression:\* Let the Word of the Lord come, let it come, and we will put under six hundred necks if we had them. Such a disposition as this would make much for peace. Esay 32:18, 19. we have a promise, that the people of God should dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in quiet resting places, and

the City shall be low, in a low place. When the heart lies lowest, it is quietest.

#### 4. Self-denial.

The joints in the body cannot join, but one part must be hollow, and give way to the other. Condescension of one to another is a principal thing in friendship.\* Philip. 2. the example of Christ emptying himself, and making himself to be of no reputation, is set before us as an argument for our union, that therefore we should do nothing through strife, be like minded, having the same love, and be of one accord, and one mind. It is indifferent to a heart emptied of Self, whether it conquers, or be conquered, so Truth may triumph. In other conflicts the Conqueror hath the honour, and the conquered is disgraced; but in the conflict for truth, both conquered and conqueror are honourable; the mercy is the greater to him that is conquered; but he must have a self-denying heart to make him think so.

#### 5. Patience.

The Olive, the Emblem of Peace, will continue green, though overflown by the waters for a long time together. After Noah had been so long in the Ark, the Dove brought an Olive leaf in her mouth to him. It may be an emblem of Patience as well as Peace. Patience and Peaceableness are near akin. Ephes. 4:2, 3. Long-suffering is amongst the graces, where the unity of the spirit is to be kept in the bond of peace.

There is a notable story I find in the lives of the German Divines: One Vitus Theodorus a Divine,\* sends to advise with Melancthon what he should do when Osiander preached against him; Melancthon writes to him, and beseeches him for the love of God, yea charges him, that he should not answer Osiander again, but that he should hold his peace, and behave himself as if he heard nothing. Vitus Theodorus writes back again, This was very hard, yet he would obey.\* Let not men be too hasty to oppose oppositions, but let them go on patiently in a constant way, resolving to bear what they meet with, and God at length will make their righteousness break forth as the light. Confute evil reports by thy life. He that knows not to bear calumnies, reproaches, injuries, he knows not how

to live, says Chytræus, another German Divine.

## 6. Joy in the holy Ghost.

Rom. 14:17. The Kingdom of heaven is righteousness, peace, joy in the holy Ghost. This grace in the heart puts a grace upon all a mans conversation; it makes it lovely and amiable. The beams of the Sun shining upon the fire will put it out; The beams of this spiritual joy will put out the fire of our passions.

## 7. Meekness, Gentleness.

Milk quenches wild-fire,\* Oil (saves Luther) quenches Lime, which water sets on fire. Opposition will heat, will fire men, when meekness and gentleness will still and quench all. Cicero says, Sweetness in speech and carriage is that which seasons friendship; severity in every thing and sadness must not be among friends in their converse; such a kind of carriage may have a seeming gravity, but friendship must have a remissness, it must be more free and sweet, disposed to all mildness and easiness. Ephes. 4:2, 3. Meekness comes in as a special grace for peace and unity, so Col. 3:12.

## 8. Love.

That is the special uniting grace; Faith indeed hath the preeminence in our union with Christ our head, but Love is the grace that unites the members. 1 Cor. 13. the Apostle shews many of the fruits of this grace, all tending to union and peace; It suffers long, it envies not; it is not puffed up, it behaves not it self unseemly, it seeketh not her own, it is not easily provoked, thinks no evil, beareth all things, beleeveth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Bearing all things and enduring all things seem to be the same. Therefore some would have it,\* it covereth all things, for so the word also signifies; but there is a greater elegancy in it, in the Translation, beareth all things, it is like the cross main beam in a house, supporting the whole building: and were it not for some who have the love of God and his truth, and the good of the public, enabling them to undergo what they do , more then any encouragement from men, all things in Church and State would be ready to fall into confusion, to be

nothing but a heap of rubbish; but this love enables to bear all things. But if they have no encouragement, but see that though they hazard themselves never so much, be of never so great use, do the greatest services that can be expected from men, yet when mens turns are served, they are little regarded, but envied and narrowly watched, to spy out any thing that may have some shew of excepting against them, and left to shift for themselves as well as they can, when they might justly expect a great reward of their services, yet are disappointed, their hearts are grieved. But yet because they are acted by a principle of love to God, his cause, the public, they therefore still hold out, go on in their way, labour to be as instrumental as they can for good, commit themselves and all their endeavours to God, expecting encouragement from him, and so they endure all things: such men are worth their weight in gold: here is a heart that hath much of the spirit of God in it. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. No marvel though these men act so swiftly in their way; no marvel though their motion in public service be so speedy, for their Chariot is like that Chariot of Solomon, Cant. 3:10. The middle thereof is paved with love, and this is for the daughters of Jerusalem. Now the love of God be for ever with these his servants, the blessing of the Almighty, and all his Saints, be with them, upon them, in them and theirs for ever.

Where men are acted by love they may do any thing without offence.\* If you be silent, and be silent out of love; if you cry out, and you do it out of love; if you spare, and it be out of love; if you correct, and you correct from love; let all be for amendment for good, all from the root of love; love, and do what you will. Thus Augustine in his 7. Tractate upon John.

These with other uniting graces that might be mentioned, are the graces that God expects should be in a special manner acted in these times; and this is in a holy manner *καίρω δουλεύειν*, to serve the time, as some Copies have it, Rom. 12:11. This is the most suitable work for the times wherein we live. What is more seasonable for divided times then uniting graces? And that union that comes from the acting of these graces, is a spiritual, holy, truly Christian union, a raised union to a far higher pitch then any natural excellencies can raise unto.\* It is an excellent saying of Clemens Alexandrinus, If the spiritual man be in us, our humanity is



fraternity. What then is our fraternity? it is raised to that which hath no name to express it: the union of the Saints in heaven is beyond the union of fraternity; this which is of grace is of the same nature.

## CHAP. XXXIV

### Joining Practices.

The first the practice of the tongue.

Gentle Language.

A Soft answer turneth away wrath, Prov. 15:1. In your disputes let your arguments be as hard as you will, but let your words be soft. Soft words and hard arguments make a good dispute. Gentle language gains much upon the hearts of men, 1 Chron. 28:2. Hear me my brethren, and my people, says David. This was better, and tended more to union between King and people, then the rugged churlish answer of Rehoboam, My Father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke. But what came on it? Ten Tribes were rent from him. As good a man as he could say, Hear me my brethren and my people. Good words are as cheap as bad. Gentle courteous language is as easy as rough and bitter. Gen. 49:21. Naphtali is said to give goodly words, sayings of godliness or fairness; so the Hebrew hath it, that is, faire, pleasing words: this Tribe were faire spoken men. Now compare this with Deut. 33:23. there Naphtali is said to be satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord. Faire, courteous language hath an acceptation among men, and the blessing of God is with it.

The second joining Practice.

Let us humble ourselves for our divisions.

That is a rule, Whatsoever sin you have been guilty of, though you have for the time left it, yet if you have not been humbled for it, a hundred to one but you fall into it again. Yes, say some, it is fit we should humble ourselves for our divisions, we will have days of fasts, that we may do it. But take this note with you, In your days of fast, or at other times when you would thus humble yourselves, let it be principally for your own guiltiness herein. Many in their humiliations make great complaints of others, as the cause of divisions, whom it may be God will own, and acquit; take heed of being too forward in meddling with others in your fasts, lest your fasts prove like those, Isay 58:4. Ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist.

The third joining Practice.

An Amnesia.

Where we see there hath been mistakes and differences thorough humane frailty, and a willingness to be otherwise, so far as God gives light, let all former unkindness be forgotten, so as never to rip up old things to charge them one upon another: let there be a line of forgetfulness drawn over them; let them be buried in oblivion. This was the Athenians Amnesia; a Law that was made by Thrasybulus, with the consent of the people, that former injuries should be forgotten. It was made upon this occasion: After Lysander had conquered the Athenians, he set thirty Governors over them which tyrannized exceedingly. Thrasybulus, with many others, were banished; but after a while, Thrasybulus gathering together his banished Countrymen, he got up an Army, and by it delivered the Athenians from the yoke of these thirty Tyrants: now because when the banished men came home to their former possessions, Thrasybulus feared there would be exceeding heart-burning amongst the Athenians, that those who had been banished would be revenged upon those whom they judged the causes of it, and the other would be enraged against them: therefore Thrasybulus got the people to join with him in this Law, which they called Amnesia, that all former

wrongs should be forgotten, and that they should live lovingly and peaceably henceforth one with another, as if such breaches had never been among them. Whensoever God shall deliver these Kingdoms from bondage & settle things amongst us, the addition of such a Law which we may call our English Amnesia will be very necessary. Otherwise oh the abundance of the fire of malice that will remain raked up under the ashes, ready upon any occasion to burst out! one will look upon another with eyes full of revenge, with scorn, hatred, and disdain; one will charge the other as the cause of all our miseries, and curse him; the other will charge him, and curse him as deeply. Every time men think what they have suffered, their hearts will be enraged. Such now is that extreme bitter exasperation, and deadly rage of mens hearts one against another, that whensoever peace shall be concluded, if it be not made exceeding sure, our pacification is like to be the foundation of far greater evils to us then yet have befallen us. If this Amnesia be not strengthened with what is in the wisdom, power of man to do , and the blessing of the Almighty also with it, we are an undone people.

The fourth joining Practice.

Never contend but be sure you understand one another what it is you contend for.

I Have read of a quarrel there was between the Eastern and Western Churches; the Eastern Churches said there were three subsistences in the Trinity, but not three persons; the Western said there were three Persons, but not three subsistences. Athanasius comes and reconciles them both. It is true, the contentions among us are more then verbal, yet for any thing a great part of the Kingdom knows (even of those whose spirits are bitter enough) they may be no other then merely verbal. How many ignorant people, women, young ones, understand not where the difference lies between Presbyterians and those whom they call Independents; and yet they can with much bitterness cry out against the one or the other. Perhaps you have some Ministers, or others, come to your Table, they tell you a tale of such and such, your heart is hot presently, but do you understand the matter? You begin to make a stir, but can you give account of it? Be silent, forbear, take heed what you do; meddle not in way of strife, till you understand where the controversy

lies, and that from both parties.

The fifth joining Practice.

Be ingenuous; 1. do not lye at the catch to take advantages; 2. make the best interpretation of things you can.

IF God should catch advantages against us, what would become of us? This is most unseemly, when men are seeking to find out truth, if then they shall piddle about words, catch at phrases, get hold of expressions, and seek to make their advantages out of them; and in this shall be the greatest strength of their answer, though this may have a specious shew before men, who are willing to receive any thing which makes against what they would have crushed, yet this will not abide before the throne of Christ. We read Matth. 4. Christ had a great dispute with the Devil, in which he had him at great advantage in his quotation of a Scripture, ver. 6. He shall give his Angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, left at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. This was quoted out of the 91. Psal. ver. 11. there it is, He shall give his Angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. Yet Christ did not catch this advantage, he did not so much as upbraid him for leaving out that passage, which he might justly have done, but he answers to the thing. Yea Christ might have taken a further advantage against the Devil, for the words following in the Psalm are a prophesy of Christ destroying the power of the Devil, Thou shalt tread upon the Lyon and Adder, the young Lyon and the Dragon shalt thou trample under thy feet. Christ did not take the advantage of this neither, and upbraid him with it, he had enough against him in the thing it self he brought. It is a sign that men have less advantage in the matter, when they seek so much to catch at all the advantages they can in the manner of the expressions of those whom they oppose.

2. Make the best interpretation of things you can. 1 Cor. 13:5. Love thinks no evil. It may be if you meet with a man in the streets, if he stays not to talk with you, if he takes not special notice of you, you presently think it is his pride, his slighting, disregarding you, this is the worst interpretation that can be. Why? is it not possible that it may be thorough multitude of business in his head that you know not of? May it not be that his eyes and

thoughts were another way? he did not take notice of your passing by him; is it not thus often with your self in respect of others? Again, perhaps such a man you find not in his behavior towards you when you are with him, looking so smilingly upon you, carrying himself in that familiar affable way as you expected;\* you presently think and say, Surely it is his pride and furlinesse, whereas it may be it is because his head is fuller then yours, which may afterwards be for your good, if you would be but patient a while; it may be it is from some trouble of his spirit at that time; it may be it is from the temper of his body, his constitution, or some weakness in it at that time; if such a faire interpretation may be made, why should not an ingenuous candid spirit make it? This very exception I find was taken against Basilius Magnus, and Nazianzen in one of his Orations, in which he highly commends Basil, answers it, and justifies him; It is hard to keep unity, love, and peace with men who have exceptionally carping dispositions; if God were strict to mark what we do amiss, what would become of us? God is strict to mark what good there is in his Saints; if there be any little good in the midst of much imperfection, God's way is to passe by the imperfection, and take notice of the good; but our way is often, if there be a little bad, though but through a very pardonable mistake, in the midst of much good, to passe by all the good, and to seize upon the mistake, to make it the seed of contention, to brood over it, and so beget the brats of contention from it. Certainly this ought not thus to be.

The sixth joining Practice:

So Far as Reason and Conscience will give way, yield to those whom you contend withal.

That standing at a distance with those that dissent from us, even to the utmost, is the way of many; but certainly it is a false way, God is not in it. It may be some, yea many will judge this yielding to be a faire, handsome turning about to the other side; take heed of such bold censures: Is every difference from that rigid, stout spirit of thine, a warping from the truth, a sinful, temporizing for private ends? The Lord judge between you and his servants. Some men who have been of yielding spirits in things that God would have them, have stood out undauntedly when God hath called them to witness to his truth, when those who have been stout and harsh

in their own ways have basely betrayed it, when they have been tried with greater sufferings. Ambrose was a man of a sweet and moderate spirit, witness amongst other things that notable saying of his,\* If that end of virtues be the greatest that looks at public good, Moderation is of all the most beautiful. Ay, but I warrant you, Ambrose was a man who saw which way the times went, he was loth to hazard himself in standing out against men who had power in their hands, this temper of his made him thus plead for moderation. No, Ambrose was a man of an invincible spirit in the ways of God; In all Ecclesiastical Story we read not of a braver spirit then his contesting with men of power in the cause of Christ. For when Theodosius the Emperor had been the cause of a great slaughter in Thessalonica, though provoked to it by a sedition there, the Emperor a while after coming to Milan, where Ambrose's charge was, after the usual manner he came to the Church, Ambrose meets him, and forbids him entrance, reprovng him before all the people,\* Doe you not know, oh Emperor, (says he) the barbarousness of that vile fact of yours? or do you not remember we have another Emperor above you? what bold impiety is this? do you not fear to bring those feet of yours, polluted with the blood of innocents, into this holy place? or to stretch forth those hands of yours, wet, yea dropping with blood, to take the most holy body of the Lord? or to put that mouth of yours, which (forgetting not only the clemency which belongs to an Emperor, but the justice) gave out the sentence for the killing so many innocent men,) to the precious blood of the Lord? Away therefore, will you add impiety to your sin? do not think much to come under that discipline which the Lord commands. Upon this the Emperor goes back to his Palace with sighing and tears, and spent eight months in mourning and lamentation, and yet after this he was not received by Ambrose, till again being sharply reprehended, he cast himself down in the porch, upon the pavement, bewailing his sin, and rising up he was about to sit in the Chancel where the Emperors seat was, he was required to go forth into the place of penitents. With the like, yea more boldness he dealt with Ruffinus, a great Courtier, the Master of the Emperors Horse. Here behold a man of a moderate, quiet spirit, yeilding in what he could, yet when he conceived himself interested in the Cause of Christ, his courage raises him above the fears or favours of men.

The seventh joining practice:

If you will needs be striving, strive who shall do one another most good, who shall engage one another in the most and greatest offices of love.

This is a good combat; such striving as this is, God and his blessed Angels look upon, and take much delight in.

I find a notable story in the life of Alexander the Great, which may put on and encourage Christians in such a combat as this: There was a great King in India, his name was Taxiles, who on a time came to salute Alexander, and said unto him,\* What should we need to fight and make Wars one with another, if thou commest not to take away our water and our necessary commodity to live by, for which things men of judgement must needs fight? as for other goods, if I be richer then thee, I am ready to give thee of mine; and if I have less, I will not think scorn to thank thee, if thou wilt give me some of thine. Alexander being pleased to hear him speak thus wisely, embraced him, and said unto him, Thinkest thou that this meeting of ours can be without fight, for all these goodly faire words? No, no, thou hast won nothing by them, for I will fight and contend with thee in honesty and courtesy, because thou shalt not exceed me in bounty and liberality. So Alexander took divers gifts of him, but gave more to him.

Oh that our contentions were turned into such contentions as these are! Let us rejoice in any opportunity of doing any office of love to those we differ from, yea to those who have wronged us. It was wont to be said of Arch-Bishop Cranmer, If you would be sure to have Cranmer do you a good turn, you must do him some ill one; for though he loved to do good to all, yet especially he would watch for opportunities to do good to such as had wronged him. Had we but a few leading men of such spirits among us, how great a blessing of Peace might we enjoy!

The eighth joining Practice.

Let every man be diligent in that work that God calls him to.

Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, 1 Thess. 4:11. It is not an arbitrary thing, the command of God lies upon it.

I am verily persuaded that many of our divisions in opinion and otherwise, our hard thoughts one of another, are raised and fomented by such as want employment. Hence they go about from place to place, arguing, disputing, jangling about things they understand not; and yet think themselves to have a deeper insight than ordinary. I would be loath to add to the affliction of those, who by the rage of the enemy have been put out of their employments, and are come for shelter amongst us; God forbid that I should willingly grieve them, their case is to be pitied, we are to succor, comfort, and help them what we can; but yet I desire them withal to take heed of a temptation they may be under, and think not of it, in this their want of employment; now they are here they meet with variety of company, with all sorts of people, and having too much time to spare, the Devil may soon and unawares to them prevail to cause an itching desire in them; after this opinion and the other, this and the other way, which having taken their hearts, they carry up and down what they hear, and what apprehensions they have of things, and persons, pleading and arguing for that they have but sleight and sudden apprehensions of, and by arguing the thing gets down into their spirits, before it be thoroughly examined and understood, and being got down there, then it must needs be maintained, and so a spirit of contention rises in them, and seeds of contention are sown among others.\* It may be some of your callings are low and mean, and that may possibly be your discouragement: but let it not be so, for there may be as much obedience to God in thy faithfulness in that mean calling of thine as in the highest and most honourable employment upon earth, yea thy reward may be as great, for God looks at faithfulness in the work, not the greatness of the work. Let every man know, says Luther, that his work in any godly kind of life is a divine work, because it is the work of a divine call, having God's command for it.

The ninth.

In all striving with men have a care that due respect to their persons be kept as much as may be.

IT is very observable, when God in the manifestation of his displeasure against the Devil, in the Serpent, cursed him, Then he says cursed be thou; but when he would manifest it against Simeon and Levi, it is not,



Cursed be ye, or, Cursed be they; but Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their rage, for it was cruel. You may be bitter against mens sin, so be it you shew due respect to their persons; by denying that respect you might and ought to give to mens persons, you deprive your self of that liberty which otherwise you might take in opposing their sin, which is the thing you say you aim only at.

The tenth.

Labour to get good by the wrongs that are done us.

IF we found God blessing them to us for good, our hearts will be very moderate towards those that have done them. The over-ruling providence of God turning the wrong that Joseph's brethren had done him to so much good, took off Joseph's spirit from practising any evil against them; but when this good shall come to us by the exercise of our own graces, it will be more prevalent to quiet and moderate our spirits. Philip of Macedon thanked some great men of Athens who had brought up ill reports of him, because both in speech and life he was the better, labouring by words and deeds to prove them liars: the best answer to ill reports, is to live contrary to them.

The eleventh.

Turn your zeal from working one against another to zeal for God.

You will say, Are works of zeal any helps to peace and union? who are they that make the greatest disturbances in the world, but your fiery zealots? if men were of a cooler temper, we should have more peace.

Ans. Distempered zeal may cause disturbance; but true zeal, the clear flame of the Spirit of God, making men in their ways zealous not for themselves, but for God, this has the blessing of God's peace with it. Numb. 25:12, 13. Phinehas there has the promise of the Covenant of peace, because he was zealous for his God.

The twelfth.

In seeking to reduce others to good, let it appear that you seek rather to

be helpful to them, then to get victory over them.

IT is grievous to a mans nature to be conquered, but not to be helped.\* Ambrose writing to his friend Marcellus about composing some breaches between him and his brother and sister, hath amongst other this excellent expression, I thought that to be the best way, I would have none to be conquered, and all to overcome. The like practice is reported of Scipio, when at the taking of New Carthage two Soldiers contended about the Murall Crown,\* due to him who first climbed the walls, so that the whole Army was thereupon in danger of division, when it came to Scipio, he decides the matter thus: He told them they both got up the wall together, and so gave the scaling Crown to both.

The thirteenth.

Make up breaches as soon as may be.

Take them, if it may be, at the beginning. When good men fall out, only one of them is usually faulty at the first, but if such strifes continue any time, both of them become guilty. If you defer the setting of a bone broken, it cannot be done without much difficulty, and great pain. Prov. 17:14. The beginning of strife is as when one lets out water, therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with, antequam immisceat se, so you may read it, before it be got into thee, and mingle it self in thy heart, or between you and your brother. If your house be on fire, you do not stay quenching it till it breaks out of the roof; divisions that are but sparks, very little at the first, if let alone, grow very high and great in a little time. I have read a story of two sons of the Duke of Florence, who having been hunting, the one said, My dog killed the Hare, and the other said, Nay but my dog killed it: words multiplied, they grew into a heat, the one draws upon the other and kills him; the servant seeing his master killed, draws upon him who had slain him, and kills him. Neglect not beginnings of quarrels, you know not to what they may grow.

The fourteenth.

Let us account those brethren, in whom we see godliness, and carry ourselves towards them accordingly, though they will not account us.

Let us not be too ready to take the forfeiture of our brethren.\* The learned and godly men who lived in that Age wherein the Donatists renounced all Christian communion with other Churches, yea disclaimed any brotherhood with other Christians, yet seeing godliness in many of them, they did account them part of the Church and their brethren; thus they sought to pluck those to them, who thrust themselves from them.

Lastly, pray much.

Pliny says of the pearls they call Unions,\* though they be engendered in the sea, yet they participate more of the heavens than of the sea. Certainly this precious union, though it be amongst men, yet it hath its lustre and beauty, yea its very being from the heavens. You must look up to heaven therefore for peace, for the preservation, increase, lustre, beauty of it, if you would have it.

Job 25:2. God maketh peace in his high places, the Lord can make peace between high and low. Let us carry mens rugged, crooked, perverse hearts to God in Prayer, who is the great joiner of hearts; it is he that makes men to be of one mind in a house, he maketh the wars to cease. Psal. 122:6. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. In your prayers for the Church this must be mentioned as a special blessing. If praying prevail not, fighting will not. Those are the most peaceable men in Church and Commonwealth, that pray most for the peace of them; God hath more prayers for the peace of this Church and State upon the file, of theirs whom some of you account hinderers of it, than of yours. You complain much for want of peace, you inveigh much against those whom you are pleased to mark out as hinderers of the peace, but do you pray as much? You have these means presented unto you for the furtherance of peace; what other you may meet with any way, make use of. 2 Thes. 3:16. The Lord of peace give you peace always by all means.

And that all may be the better improved, let the exhortation of the Apostle,\* 1 Thes. 4:11. sink into you, Study to be quiet, the words are, Love the honour of being quiet: There is great excellency in it.

That is the last thing.

## CHAP. XXXV

### **Exhortation to peaceable and brotherly union, shewing the excellency of it.**

And now, my brethren, as the Eunuch said to Philip concerning his Baptism, Here is water, what lets but I may be baptized? I shall say concerning our uniting in peace and love one with another. Here are Joining Principles, Joining Considerations, Joining Graces, Joining Practices; what now lets, but that we may join in love and peace one with another? Surely nothing can let but extreme corrupt, perverse hearts of our own.

The Apostle Paul is mighty earnest in his desires, in his exhortations for this: 1 Cor. 1:10. Now I beseech you brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same mind, and in the same judgement. The word translated perfectly joined, signifies such a joining,\* as when a bone is out of joint, is perfectly set right again.

So Philip. 2:1. If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, let nothing be done through strife, &c. The Apostle pours forth his soul in this exhortation, it is a heart-breaking exhortation.

Luther, though a man of a stirring, hot spirit,\* yet writing to the Pastors of the Church of Strassburg, hath these words: I pray you be persuaded, that I shall always be as desirous to embrace concord, as I am desirous to have the Lord Jesus to be propitious to me.

I find also in a Letter that Martin Bucer writes to a godly Minister, a very high expression, of that high esteem he had of, and earnest desires after the curing of divisions:\* Who would not (says he) purchase with his life the removing that infinite scandal that comes by dissention? Oh that there were such hearts in us! Christ expects it from us all, but especially from his Ministers, for they are his Ambassadors for peace,\* to beseech men in his stead to be reconciled to God: reconciliation with God will reconcile us one to another. If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another, 1 John. 4:11. The faces of the Cherubims in the Temple looked one towards another, which some think signified the agreement that should be amongst Ministers of the Gospel. So the six branches in the Candlestick joined all in one; those who hold the light of truth before others, should be united in peace in one, amongst themselves. The first thing Christ's Ministers were to do when they came to any place was to say Peace be to that place; if any sons of peace were there,\* they were to abide, otherwise not: Surely then it is expected that themselves should be sons of peace. The contentions of private Christians are offensive, but the contentions of Ministers is a scandal with a witness. Yet in all Ages of the Church, the corrupt Clergy have been the greatest causes of divisions; they have been of the most cruel spirits against any that differed from them. But let not such a spirit be in us; we have enough to do to contend with the wicked of the world, with the malice of Satan, let us not contend one with another.

Luther writing to the Ministers of Nuremberg, brings in Christ saying to them, Satis est vobis ob nomen meum malorum, You are like to suffer evil enough for my name, you need not be afflictions one to another. It was barbarousness in the Priests of Baal to cut and slash themselves, but it is worse for the Ministers of Jesus Christ to cut and slash one another. 1 Kings 6:23. The Cherubim were made of the Olive tree; If you be typified by them, as we hinted before, let it appear that you are olives, not brambles: yea and ver. 31. For the entering of the Oracle the doors were

of Olive-tree: who will believe that you bring the Oracles of God with you, when they see by your froward, contentious carriage, that you never entered in at these doors? People cannot but think it a miserable thing to have a scratching, tearing bramble to be over them. Oh that God would set the beauty, glory of peace, friendship, love, before us! That this precious pearl, Union, might be highly valued by us! All men are taken in some degree or other with the excellency and sweetness of love and friendship.\* Some men, says Cicero, despise riches, others honours; those things that by some are delighted in, by others are vilified; but all men of all sorts have a high esteem of friendship; they think there can be no life without it.

Gen. 34:21. The great commendation that Hammer and Shechem give of Jacob and his sons as an argument to persuade the men of Shechem to join with them in the giving their daughters to them for wives, and in taking theirs, is, These men are peaceable with us. A peaceable disposition is very convincing.

Cant. 6:6. My dove, my undefiled is but one, she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. What then follows? The daughters saw her and blessed her, yea the Queens, and the Concubines, and they praised her, Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, faire as the moon, clear as the Sun, terrible as an army of Banners? Let the Saints be but one, and then they will appear beautiful and glorious indeed, yea they will be terrible as an army of Banners.

Euagrius in his Ecclesiastical History records an Epistle of Cyril of Alexandria,\* written to John of Antioch, upon the occasion of a Pacificatory Epistle of John unto him, his spirit was so taken with it that it breaks forth thus: Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, the mid wall of rancor is battered down, the boiling choler which bereaved the minds of quietness, is purged from among us, and all the occasion of discord and dissention is banished away, for our Saviour Jesus Christ hath granted peace unto the Churches under heaven.

The Thebans made Harmonia a goddess,\* they accounted her the defender and patroness of their City. Harmonious, peaceable, uniting dispositions, have much of God in them; if not from sanctifying grace, yet

it is from a common work of the Spirit of God: there is a nobleness in such a heart. By the Laws of England Noblemen have this privilege, that none of them can be bound to the peace, because it is supposed that a Noble disposition will never be engaged in brawls and contentions, it is supposed that the peace is always bound to him, that of his own accord he will be careful to preserve it. It is the base Bramble that rends and tears. Nazianzen reports of Alexander, who having taken a City, and consulting what to do, one Parmenius answered, If he were King he would raze the City to the ground. Alexander answers, So would I too,\* if I were what you are; rigour may become you, but gentleness becomes me. Gentleness, mercy, goodness, love, tenderness of others sufferings, are the greatest ornaments to a noble spirit. If this be sanctified, the glory of God shines bright indeed in such a heart. For God glories in this, to be the God of peace and love. 1 Thess. 5:23. The very God of peace. 2 Thess. 3:16. The Lord of peace himself. Jesus Christ in being the Prince of peace; the holy Ghost in being like a Dove that hath no gall: the Gospel is the Gospel of peace; the Kingdom of God is peace as well as riotousness; the legacy that Christ left is a legacy of peace; the Apostolic benediction is grace, mercy, and peace: the glory of the Church is in this, that it is a City compact at unity within it self. Yea this will be the glory of that glorious Church, that God is raising a new Jerusalem, there shall be no more crying there, Apoc. 21:4; Ezech. 14:9. The Lord shall be King over all the earth, in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name shall be one. There is but one Lord now, but he is called by different names, but in that day his name shall be but one. Zeph. 3:9. Then will I turn to a people of pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord, and serve him with one consent. The Hebrew word is with one shoulder, now we shoulder one another, but then all shall serve the Lord with one shoulder. This love and peace is compared to the most delightful, and the most profitable things; Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell at unity; it is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garment, as the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Sion. Psal. 123.

There are many promises made to this. Mat. 5. Blessed are the peacemakers. 2 Cor. 13:11. Be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of peace shall be with you. John 15:12. Christ says, This is his commandment, that

we love one another. ver. 14. he says, Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. By loving others we do not only get them to be our friends, but Christ too. Me thinks I see Christ here pleading for love, as one who had to deal with two men who were at some variance, persuading them to peace and love; Come, you shall passe by all former things, you shall be made friends, by this you shall gain me also to be a friend to you as long as I live.

Genes. 13. ver. 8. to the end, is a remarkable Scripture to shew how God is with a loving, gentle, peaceable disposition. Ver. 8, 9. we have Abraham's kind gentle yielding to Lot his inferior for peace sake; but mark what follows, and you shall find he lost nothing by this his yielding: for as soon as Lot was gone from him, the Lord came to him, ver. 14. and said to him, Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art Northward, Southward, Eastward and Westward, for all the Land that thou seest to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever: arise, walk thorough the Land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee. The difference of what Jacob says of Reuben when he was to dye, Gen. 49:4. from that of Moses, Deut. 33:6. is observable: Jacob says, He is the first borne, the beginning of his strength; but he shall not excel, because he went to his fathers bed. But Moses, Let Reuben live and not dye, and let not his men be few. The reason of this difference is given by some, because it was fit that Jacob, to deter his other children, should exercise the authority of a father; but Moses frees him from the curse, because he was always loving to his brother Joseph. Brotherly love hath a blessing going along with it: God loves it exceedingly, for it makes much for the glory of God. And to what purpose do we live, if God have not glory by us? Rom. 15:5, 6, 7. the Apostle first prays that the God of patience and consolation would grant them to be like minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus, that they may with one mind and one mouth glorify God. Then he exhorts: Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Much of God's glory depends upon our union. Yea God stands so much upon this, that he is willing to stay for his service till we be at peace one with another. Mat. 5:23, 24. Leave thy gift before the Altar, and first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. My worship shall stay till you be reconciled. I love my worship, and desire it much, but I must have peace and love amongst



yourselves first, I will stay for that. But I beseech you let us not make God stay too long. Remember while you are wrangling and quarrelling, God stays on you all this while. If children should be quarrelling, and one comes to them, and says, Your father stays for you, it is time for them to break off. Be not unmannerly with God, in making him stay so long upon you: some of you have made him wait upon you for an acceptable duty of worship divers weeks, yea it may be many months, and yet your spirits are not in temper to offer any sacrifice to God. What a fearful evil is it then to stand out in a stubborn, sullen, dogged manner refusing to be reconciled. Learned Drusius cites Hebrew Writers, saying, That he that offends his brother ought to seek to pacify him; if he refuse to be pacified, then he must bring three of his friends with him to intercede twice or thrice, and if he shall after this refuse, then he is to leave him, and such a man *quia implacabilis est,\** vocatur peccator, is called a signer, with a special note upon him.

Lastly, the Saints enjoyment of the sweetness of love, peace and unity among themselves, what is it but heaven upon earth? Heaven is above all storms, tempests, troubles, the happiness of it is perfect rest. We pray that the will of God might be done on earth as it is done in heaven; why may not we have a heaven upon earth? this would sweeten all our comforts, yea all our afflictions. But the Devil envies us this happiness. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.

If you would have the excellency of love set before you more fully, read over and over again the Epistles of John. Ecclesiastical story reports of this blessed Apostle, whose heart was so full of love, that when he grew very old, not able to preach, yet he would be brought into the congregation in a chair, and there say only these words, Little children flee idolatry, love one another. But the more excellent union and peace is, the more is the pity that it should be abused to be serviceable to mens lusts; the more would our misery be if we should be abused in our treaties about it; if we should have a mock-peace; if we should be gulled in either offers of or conclusions about peace; if peace should be made our ruin, but a preparation of us for slaughter. It hath been by many observed,\* that what the English gained of the French in battle by valor, the French regained of the English by cunning in Treaties. The Lord deliver us from

such French tricks. Let us all be for peace, yet so as not to be befooled into bondage by the name of peace. Now God hath by his mighty arm helped us, let us not be put off with a babble, and made to believe it is this Pearl. We know with whom we have to deal.

And now as the Apostle, 2 Thess. 3:5. The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God: Let me add, And into the love of one another. Let us all study peace, seek peace, follow peace, pursue peace, and the God of peace be with us.

FINIS.

## MONERGISM BOOKS

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