

Monergism



A PEACEMAKER

WITHOUT PARTIALITY AND HYPOCRISY

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Or, The Gospel-way to make up the present breaches of Brotherhood, and heal the divisions, whereby some of the reforming Professors and Ministers of this Kingdom at this time, sadly dishonor their profession, mainly obstruct our Reformation, utterly destroy the safe constitution both of Church and State.

Wherein are handled,

1. How the means of Christian peace, as well Civil as Ecclesiastical, may be found and ought to be followed, both by Pastors and people.
2. What are the special lets of Ecclesiastical Reconciliation, and what the causes of divisions are, and how to be remedied.
3. What are the Grounds, Terms and Motives of Brotherly Unity and Forbearance, which the Ministers and Members of the Churches of England ought to profess and practice one towards another, for the Gospels sake.

All written upon several occasions and at several times by Mr. John Dury, one of the Assembly of Divines, &c. and now published by Samuel Hartlib, to whom they were sent.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell
together in unity.

Psal. 133.1.

For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart.

Judges 5.15.

A brother offended is harder to be won then a strong City, and their
contentions are like the bars of a Castle.

Prov. 18 19.

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Lions in Cornhill near the Royal Exchange, 1648.

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Editor's Note – During the TCP Transcription Process, all the archaic text was hand transcribed according to visual representation; and as such, sometimes the letters s, l, f & t are misconstrued with each other, these letters regularly being almost illegibly similar in the original facsimiles. Though it is rare for these errors to remain post-edit, unfortunately they may if uncaught. My apologies in advance where this error does occur. Also, the symbol <H&G> signifies omitted Hebrew & Greek. Because a majority of readers are not fluent in the original languages; it was thought best to omit instead of possibly misconstrue; since most original languages are written in archaic script in the original facsimiles.

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Preface I.

How the means of Christian Peace, as well Civil as Ecclesiastical, ought to be followed, and may be found amongst Professors.

Discovered in a Letter sent to Mr. Sam. Hartlib by John Dury, September. 12. 1647.

Sir, You have acquainted me with the resolutions of some of our leading men, eminent in the prevailing side, to moderate matters,

and compose our differences. Happy had this Church and State been if that aim had been carried all along from the beginning in the Counsels and endeavors of those, who have been entrusted with the management of affairs; and if it be not now too late to quench this flame, or if it can be hoped that in the midst of so great fears, so many jealousies, so different practices, and so loud clamors, and so sensible injuries, men's spirits can be brought to mutual confidence and made susceptible of temperate thoughts towards one another, I would advise all, but chiefly such as have power in the Houses, in the City, in the Assembly, in the Army, and most of all the General and the Lieutenant general, on whom the eyes of most men are fixed, to proceed after this manner, and lead as in this way.

First, let our aim be (as in the sight of God who trieth the Reines) to purge our heart from a design to serve the interests of one side, mainly to cross another. For he that looks upon his Brother with the eye of a party, hath put out the eye of a Christian. A Christian doth not take notice of men after the flesh, he looks upon the new creature in everyone, and he that doth not walk after this Rule, there can be nothing but misery and destruction in his ways, for the way of peace and truth he hath not known.

Secondly, then if we can clear our aims from partiality, our Counsels may be free from prejudice, and if this be, we will not shun the light but desire to show that our works are wrought in God; and will be ready to declare to all in public the true rules and maxims, by which our conscience is guided; by which we intend to walk, and by which we desire to be judged, by all, in our proceedings; but if we either have no such rules, or are not willing to declare them; we shun the light, we love darkness, and let us not deceive ourselves, there is no truth nor love to peace in us. And what although hitherto perhaps we have not minded conscionably the equitable and charitable affections

which the Spirit of Christ doth suggest; yet now being put in mind thereof, if henceforth the motions of his Spirit be not rejected but sincerely entertained, openly professed, and effectually followed, who doth not know but that yet a happy composure of our differences may be effected?

Thirdly, Declarations of the truth that is in us, are good; but however they are no more but words; except then real actions answer them, and speak the truth of justice and peaceableness in our proceedings, there can be nothing but bitterness in the end. For nothing can prevent the cross workings of men's spirits against us, but that which is able to beget and settle a confidence in their minds towards us; and to beget this confidence, and allay these jealousies which cause men's spirits boil up to a disturbance of those proceedings wherein we mean well: I would suggest to our leading men these impartial considerations.

1. That they ought to lay to heart the causes which hinder others to confide in us, to remove the same.
2. That they ought to seek and find out the persons which are most capable of receiving good impressions of us and from us, that the same may be given them, and by them propagated unto all.
3. That they should make use of the proper means by which confidence is bred in honest minds towards us, that the same may be set a working.
4. That they should observe the method and manner of proceeding requisite in doing this, that the attempt may be effectual, and not miscarry.

Of these four heads I shall suggest somewhat tending to the advancement of peace and truth as briefly as I can.

First, concerning the causes hindering others to confide in us, and begetting fears in them against us, let me say this:

He that doth not confide in his neighbors, doth hinder them to confide in him, and he that doth fear others, doth beget in them causes of fear against himself; if then we would have others to confide in us and not fear us, we must also confide in them and not fear them. For if I cannot bring my spirit to trust my neighbor, how can I expect that his spirit should be brought to trust me? And if I think that he doth not trust me, I will readily suspect him: if I suspect him, I will either arm myself to oppose him, or weaken him lest he oppose me; and if I give way to these thoughts, I am at war with him in my heart, and the affection of Christian love and ingenuity, which only can beget confidence, is lost between us; love being lost, the fruits of emulation, envy and passion will be found, and break forth in our nature.

I find the sequel of matters in our nature to lie thus:

Where I do not love, I cannot confide; where I confide not, I will find cause to mistrust; where I find cause to mistrust, I will fortify myself against the same; and if I fortify myself against my neighbor, I must expect that he will do the like against me (for what cause hath he to trust me more than I do him?) therefore as long as I manifest no love, nor trust, but force only, there can be no confidence expected from any towards me. The main hindrance then of confidence and cause of fear is the endeavor of force; and if I once begin to endeavor force, I seek not only security to myself, but the conquest of that which I think is mine opposite; because I cannot naturally rest secure as long as that which I count an enemy is not subdued; and

whatsoever I do not trust, I am apt to account an enemy; therefore whilst I make nothing my friend but mine own force, I am apt to trust to nothing else but it. From all which this doth follow, that as soon as I forsake the simplicity of my love, I beget naturally fears within myself; and when I take a course to secure myself from my fears by force, I multiply fears in others, and give them cause to mistrust me. Let me then cure mine own fears first which I have of others, and then I shall be able to cure the fears which others have of me: if I take the beam out of mine own eye, I shall see clear to take the moat out of my neighbors.

[Quest.] But the question will be, How shall I cure mine own fears?

[Answ.] Truly to answer this, I know none other way but to follow God's counsel by the Prophet Isaiah. Say ye not (saith the Lord) A confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear nor be afraid, sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. It is then nothing else but the base fear of men upon politick considerations, and the want of the true fear of God upon divine Principles, which troubles me, and drives me to courses which make others afraid of me; but if I did not at all look to men, but unto God alone, if I did not confide in mine own force, but in the Almighty, others would find cause to confide in me. As I behave myself towards God, so I must expect that others will behave themselves towards me; if I mean from my heart well towards others in God, God will move others to mean so also towards me. And who is he (saith the Apostle) that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? If I mind nothing but that which is good to everyone; what cause have I to think that any will mind harm or evil against me? But suppose I suffer wrong whiles I mind that which is good and righteous; the Apostle saith that I am happy; and if I am happy, I

need not be afraid of men nor troubled at my suffering. But what if I be afraid and troubled? Is it not because I am not willing to suffer in doing good? If then I to avoid suffering for righteousness will secure myself by force, and make others afraid of me; it is evident that I do not commit myself and my cause to God in well doing, but I take it in mine own hand, to manage it by mine own strength, and how this will prosper I need not to mention.

[Quest.] But now you will perhaps say, How should I become a constant follower of that which is good?

[Answ.] To answer this, the Doctrine and Rule of Christ is without all exception. Whatsoever you would have others to do to you, do you to them also; the meaning is, do you it first unto them, for we are commanded, to consider one another to provoke each other to love and to good works. If I must consider to provoke, then he that is to be provoked to love, hath not yet applied himself unto the duty, but I am obliged to go before him in the way thereof, and therefore I must express my love to him first, although he hath not done his duty to me. If then I would have another to trust me, it is clear by this rule, that I must first show that I do trust him, but if I show not this, then I provoke him to the contrary, namely, not to trust me. And if but the Law, which the Gentiles by common nature knew, were heeded in this case, it would take away the causes of our differences and jealousies, and teach us to follow that which is good. *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*, What thou wouldest not have done to thyself, do not thou to any. Is it that thou wouldest not have any fear thee, or suspect thee, or arm himself against thee? Then do not thou fear and suspect him, or arm thyself against him. Wouldst thou not have all thy faults ripped up, and all advantages taken against thee, to bring thee into discredit, then rip not up the faults of others, and take no advantages against them to discredit them? Wouldst thou

not be judged, condemned and disarmed? Do not judge, condemn and endeavor to disarm others; For with what judgment thou judgest, thou shalt be judged, and with what measure thou dost mete, it shall be measured unto thee again; and if thou wilt disarm others and keep them as captives under thy power, thou must expect to be disarmed and led captive under the power of others, for God doth render to everyone according to his works. Wilt thou then follow that which is good? Do not make thyself terrible unto any, because thou wouldest have none to be terrible unto thee; cure thine own distempers, mean well towards others, and as thou hast opportunity, make the power which thou hast in thine hand serviceable unto others for good; for he that hath power to do good to those that are under his power and doth it not, is foolish and weak; and by not using his power to the end for which it is given, doth overthrow himself by it. Summisque negatum stare diu, things at the height stand not long. Therefore if a man hath not learned of Christ to deny himself in the use of his power, he must fall under the weight of it; now the weight of it is nothing else but the jealousy of State which it begets in others that are equals or inferiors.

I have done with the causes hindering others to confide in us.

The second thing to be considered is, How we shall find out those that are fittest to entertain and receive the good which we do follow, and in case of aversion from us, how to make them susceptible of better impressions. For to conquer the world, it is not enough to mean well, and to do that which in itself is good, but the good which is done, must be well placed also. A good seed should be sown in fruitful ground, else how will it multiply?

Now to do this, let me offer these thoughts.

1. No man is able exactly to discern his own, far less other men's hearts; our prejudicated opinions deceive us nowhere more than in the thoughts of persons, the imaginations which we frame to ourselves of others and of their principles ensnare our affections, and shut us up from that freedom of spirit towards them which might be a means either to gain or to discover them to us; for they bias our proceedings and corrupt that ingenuity, without which we are darkened, and neither can discern others, nor be discerned by them in truth. For when we apply ourselves to one this way, and to another that way, and do not walk equally by the plain Rule of the new creature towards all, we must needs be entangled, and lose our strength; which is upheld by nothing so much, as by that plainness wherein it is always like itself. Our various presumptions of men, and of their different designs, cause us to be with child, and when they have put us in pain, they make us bring forth as it were wind; nor can we at all work any deliverance in the earth by them to ourselves or others, because we bring nothing but earthly wisdom with us, to subdue the spirits of men, before which the inhabitants of the world will never fall. Therefore if we would seek out and find those that are fit to receive the good which we would offer to them, let us never take upon us to judge determinately of any man this or that way according to appearances; but leaving him to God and himself, let us judge righteous judgment; as we desire others to judge and presume of us by the Rules of Charity, so let us apply our thoughts unto them, for this will keep us in a frame of freedom within ourselves and ingenuity towards them, without which no safe address can be made unto any.

2. To discover then such as are capable of the good which we do follow, we must address ourselves unto all alike by one and the same Rule of sincerity and truth; and where we find that the good which we have prosecuted is resented, there we should apply ourselves

more particularly to multiply the manifestation thereof unto them, and to fix more deeply the sense thereof into their apprehensions: For where we see that God doth cause the seed which is sown to take root, there we may hope that being watered it will fructify by his blessing.

3. And although our addresses should be thus towards all, yet this must not hinder a more special application of our self to some, who are likely to be more capable than others of good motions: such then as are of good report for piety and parts, such as are noted for temper and moderation from human passions, and such as are apparently zealous for the works of Reformation, ought to be looked upon with a special eye and sought out. They ought to be dealt withal more plainly and more fully, for the setting of their judgments aright and the clearing of doubts which they may have concerning our ways and principles: and then we ought also to put an edge upon their affections to concur with us towards a progress in public works; that the righteousness which doth reach alike unto the edification of all, may be advanced for the completing of the work of our reformation.

4 And as public and private reports are not altogether to be slighted for the finding out of men, so are they not either way easily and much to be credited: for they are carried for the most part by interests, and a man of judgment that doth set a rule unto himself in all his ways, will both on this side and on that side arm himself against the strong impressions of evil and good reports. Against the evil ones he will have in store charitable constructions of things that may be well taken, lest his spirit be rashly biased to a wrongful affection against him that deserveth it not; and against the largeness of the good ones he will balance himself with discretion and prudence, lest he be swayed through too much credulity to a groundless confidence in one that may deceive him; and thus keeping himself both ways free, in an

equal temper, neither too high nor too low in his apprehensions, to rise and fall with the blasts of reports, he will be able to steer an even course in his carriage towards all; measuring himself and all other men in his and their actions by one and the same rule, which is the life of Christ in the Spirit: for that is the only standard by which all are to be measured, that is the only touchstone by which all spirits are to be tried whether they be true gold or not.

In this search and discovery of persons, although none are to be excluded of what quality and condition soever, yet those that are called Divines are chiefly to be sought after, because they have a great influence upon the spirits both of the multitude, and also of the ordinary sort of stayed men to sway their affections. Except then we deal with these men according to these rules to gain them to our aim, we shall find the ways of peace and union mainly obstructed, and the gall of bitterness now stirred and overflowing in many, almost impossible to be allayed.

I have done with the discovery of persons fit to be dealt withal.

The third point is concerning the means by which confidence may be begotten in these towards us, and set a working towards all, for the composure of differences. This means I conceive is none other but a free and orderly Treaty to be set afoot between some of us and some of their side. And to the end that by this means mutual confidence may be begotten, equal power to propose matters to be taken into consideration, and equal freedom from awful prescriptions must be assured unto all, and an equal engagement must be conscionably laid upon all alike to meet; to meet I say constantly and never to leave off the Treaty, till the end for which it shall be undertaken be attained, or at least the course which therein should be followed shall be brought to a full period.

The disagreement was originally about the frame and constitution of Churches, but now it is about the power of settling the government of the Kingdom; the first controversy hath still an influence upon the latter, so that this will never be well agreed, without some determination of that.

The treaty concerning Civil government, can be nowhere set a foot but in the Parliament. The Parliament is there, where by the Kings authority according to the constitution of the Kingdom, the bodies of Peers and Commons are met, to order the affairs of the Kingdom entrusted to their care: Only now for matter of order, it is to be wished, that the things henceforth to be debated and voted should look rather forward then backward: that is, that the Houses should rather determine things tending to our settlement in time to come; then alter or unsettle things present, or call things past into question before our settlement be in view, or the foundation thereof established. If an Act of Oblivion were past on all sides, for things done in the heat of strife since the parties were formed, and positive Counsels entertained for preventing of breaches hereafter; we might hope to see better days shortly, then otherwise we are like to enjoy in this generation.

But I shall leave the civil Treaties to those to whom they are entrusted by the Kingdom, and beseeching the Lord to give them one mind in his fear, to make them all faithful to their public trust without self-seeking, and interests of parties, I shall speak of a Treaty which may relate unto the settlement of the Churches.

This Ecclesiastical Treaty is of absolute necessity, that ingenuous men may not mistake one another, as for the most part in these differences they do; for it is clear that matters are misunderstood on both sides; and being misrepresented heinously to the simple

multitude by many, and nobody laboring effectually to rectify mistakes, our divisions must needs be multiplied, and our breaches made greater. If then the freedom which hitherto hath been taken and abused on both sides, to traduce each other in the Press and Pulpit, can neither by authority nor by persuasion be restrained, we are never like to gain any advantage for the composure of men's affections by a Treaty, though never so fair, never so orderly, never so peaceable and effectual in itself; for it will never become so unto others; because as long as the winds blow fiercely, the Seas will be stormy; as long as railing accusations continue, passions will be raised; and whiles passions rule, conscience is asleep, judgment is darkened, and men are not capable of rational and good proposals. For this Reason also, the men to be chosen for the Treaty on both sides, must not only be conscionable, judicious and learned, but moreover free from all preingagement and passion. Then the Treaty itself although for the same cause it may not be public (for then it must have public authority, whereupon a thousand inconveniences will follow to make it fruitless) yet it must not be altogether private, but should have the foreknowledge and countenance of authority to beget it, lest it be wholly slighted and inconsiderable: So then let some of the peaceable and chief leading States-men of both sides (being thereto either deputed or allowed by the rest of each side) order and direct the Treaty in a course which shall be wholly free from partiality, and let a jealousy be raised against the intent and purpose of such a Treaty, let it be declared that it shall not be to conclude anything (for that cannot be done without the full knowledge and consent of parties) but only to try what hopes there may be of finding a sure way to procure an accommodation, either by the means of a reconciliation, or by the means of a mutual forbearance of in offensive differences. Such a Treaty of three or at the most of four chief Divines on each side, who should be wholly set apart from all other employments to apply themselves day and night

to this work, and who should have the freedom, at all times severally and jointly without the formality of an ordinary Committee to meet, may by God's blessing become a means to lay the ground of a confidence between the parties; if only the fit method and manner of proceeding first in the Treaty itself, and then in the communication of that which they shall agree upon can be observed.

The Reasons why I would have no more but three or at the most four on each side to treat are these.

1. Three or four truly moderate and quiet spirited men, will be sooner found, easier spared from other tasks, and be able to meet more frequently, and constantly than a greater number on each side.

2. This smaller number will be less subject to distraction and disagreement within it self than a greater number.

3. This number will be sufficient to make a trial, and to discover the way towards an Accommodation which without prejudice to either side may be tendered to all. But if a great number should be engaged on each side, they might beget a new division if the parties should not consent unto their results.

4. The way and method of Treating, which is only safe, and wherein lieth a secret enforcement towards an agreement in Christianity cannot be followed by many so well as by few. And to make this good,

Let us now speak of the last point which is the method and manner of proceeding both in the Treaty itself, and in the communication of the results thereof to gain the assent of parties.

In this method and manner of proceeding, something there must be preliminary to make the work more sad and serious to those that go

about it, and these that go about the work, more pious and conscientious in it. Something there must be also decretorily observed to make the work more orderly and effectual towards the end for which it is to be set afoot.

As for the preliminary or preparatory work, I would have the Divines that shall be chosen and those that do choose them to meet alone, to set a day privately apart amongst themselves, to seek God's face with Fasting and Prayer, that they may receive his direction in the work which they shall take in hand. At this time of their humiliation I would have them to be exercised not only in Prayers and mutual exhortations to provoke each other to the duties of servant love and of sincerity; but also in conferences whereby they should (as in the presence of God calling upon him at the proposal of every new matter) deliberate upon three points. First, of the distinct and particular end which they should set before their eyes in their future Treaty to determine it. Secondly, of the special and appropriate means to reach that end in righteousness according to the will of God. Thirdly, of the orderly course which should be followed in the prosecution of these means by their Treaty amongst themselves. Of which three heads a Note should be made in writing for a memorial and rule of proceeding to be faithfully observed. Herein all should declare their willingness to be engaged towards each other as in the fear and presence of God, and that the engagement may be more effectually binding, and not liable to doubts in time to come, at the end of the day and of their conference they should attest and solemnize their mutual engagement by the subscription of their hands unto an Act or instrument which afterward should be laid up in the Repository where all their other Acts are to be kept as the ground of their future proceeding. And I would advise that amongst other things to be mentioned in that Writing or Instrument, they would oblige themselves expressly unto these clauses. 1. That they

shall not only do all things conscionably and sincerely between God and themselves, but also that they shall deal openly and clearly one toward another, without all mental Reservations, in all points of their Treaty. 2. That they shall look to nothing in all their consultations but to the prosecution of clear and undeniable duties of Christianity, without any respect to outward interests to their relations unto parties, or to any human concernments whatsoever. 3. That none shall secretly divulge or openly publish anything which in their Treaty shall be agreed upon as an Act, neither by word of mouth or otherwise directly or indirectly to any; without foreknowledge, leave and full consent of all that are joined in the Treaty. 4. That nothing in the world shall retard or stop them from endeavoring to proceed constantly towards the Period of their Treaty which they shall have agreed upon to prosecute.

And for the better observation of these clauses I would advise the States-men themselves by whose authority they should be called and appointed to meet; not to desire to know any of the results of their Treaty, before it be brought to a full Person, and they of themselves think it fit to impart the same unto them. I have pregnant reasons for this, which I need not here to mention. It will be absolutely most expedient, that immediately after the first meeting (wherein the States-men should be with them to enter them upon their work) they should wholly leave them unto themselves; except only to call upon them now and then from time to time to encourage them to proceed constantly without interruption.

And thus much for the preparative engagements, now I come to the work of the meeting to give advice concerning the matter, the manner, and the circumstances thereof, to make it orderly within itself, and without all prejudice effectual towards others, which will

be if the right way of communicating their results be taken and followed.

In these things I shall be brief, because the particular determination of all things of this nature, doth belong properly to those that are appointed to meet; yet because generals may give without all prejudice some overtures to advance their negotiation; I shall offer these following thoughts to their consideration.

First, then I conceive that all their meetings to treat should begin and end with prayers, and that by turns one of each side should preside and lead their actions, so that every time by course a new man should have the chair.

Secondly, he that doth preside or lead the action shall gather the results and put them to paper; and after the Treaty they shall be registered in the book of their Acts, and at the end of every meeting subscribed by all.

Thirdly, there shall be two books kept, one containing the Diurnal or brief Narrative of the daily proceedings of each Meeting: another containing nothing else but the results of each treaty, or the advices which shall be agreed upon, to advance the accommodation of differences.

4. To keep these two books there shall be a peculiar Trunk or Chest or Box, with two several locks fixed to the meeting place, and everyone of the one side shall have a key for the one lock, and every one of the other side a key for the other lock, so that none of either side alone shall be able to open the Chest, but any two of both sides shall have power to do it; and to make use of their Registers as they shall think good.

5. The times of their meetings should be constantly appointed once for all, and inviolably observed, because they are wholly to be set apart to attend the work without interruption.

6. If at any time by reason of some invincible impediment, as of sickness or some other unavoidable accident, one of the number be absent, the meeting shall not be void; yet the Acts thereof shall not be Registered, till he that was absent hath seen them and approved of them.

7. Nothing shall be carried by the major part of voices, what is not consented unto by all shall not be any Act.

8. The matter of the Treaty shall not be concerning doctrinal truths, because it is supposed that there is no material difference therein between the parties: but concerning practical duties relating either to the constitution or to the government of the Churches, or to the exercise of Religious worship, in a private or public way.

9. The manner of their Treaty shall not proceed by way of debate and dispute to argue what is right or wrong, in respect of the particular practices of parties, but it shall proceed in the way of positive Declarations and Answers unto certain Questions, which shall be proposed as cases of conscience, to be resolved from the Word of God, and the undeniable principles of Christianity.

10. He then that sitteth in the chair shall ask of everyone what matter he would have taken into consideration; what shall be offered by everyone shall be noted in a memorial by itself; then the question shall be in what order the things offered shall be thought upon, and when that which is to be first in order shall be determined, a question shall be framed thereof, as a case of conscience to be resolved by the word; from which everyone shall gather his Answer,

and bring it in against the next meeting in writing, and when the writings are compared, that wherein they all do agree, shall only be taken as a result of their Treaty; and that wherein they differ shall be left untouched, except some proposal be made which doth take with all, for the reconcilment of the difference.

11. In bringing in their answers they shall avoid large discourses, and set down that which they shall deliver, upon the point to be resolved, in short Aphorisms and Propositions per thesim & Antithesim: and to facilitate the matter, each side should contract their several answers into one sum, containing that in which they all do agree; that so at their meeting together, the comparison may be made only between two writings, out of which the agreement is to be extracted, as a common result upon the Question which was proposed.

12. When the resolutions of all profitable questions tending to an accommodation of our differences, shall be thus gathered without contradictory debates into clear and distinct propositions, which shall be taken from God's Word, to be offered as an advice unto the dissenting parties towards an agreement; then they shall be put into some order and ranked under their proper heads of matters, to be communicated unto the rest of each side.

13. The way of communicating matters I conceive may be this:

First, let the preliminary determinations of the Treaty be published by setting forth the Art and Instrument of the mutual engagement of those that are called to the Treaty, and let this be done immediately after the Treaty is begun, to the end that the rest of both sides may know the end of the Treaty, and be desired to recommend the effect thereof to God in their public and private Prayers.

Secondly, when the Treaty is at an end, let there be a brief narrative published of the order and method of proceeding used in the Treaty, to let all see how equally and amiably matters have been carried.

Thirdly, when this is done towards all indifferently, then let the results of all the deliberations upon all the questions be printed, but not made common to all; only first to the States-men who set the Treaty afoot a certain number of copies are to be imparted, that they may distribute and send the same to the most peaceable and moderate spirits of each side, to engage them to declare how far they give their assent thereunto, and when the chief shall have declared their sense thereof, and it doth appear that the advice is not rejected; the Houses of Parliament may be moved to move the Assembly of Divines to declare their sense and approbation of the same; which being done, the Houses should concur with their authority not only to permit, but to recommend the practice thereof unto all.

Thus I have done for the present with these suggestions rather to satisfy your desire, and discharge mine own conscience, then that I have any great hope they will be laid to heart; yet who knoweth where this seed may fall, and what God may do with it? I know assuredly that he will do good to Israel to these that are of a clean heart: I know that the peace-makers are pronounced blessed and called the Sons of God, and that the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. Now the God of Peace and Truth be with you always. Amen.

From Zion House September. 12. 1647.

Preface II.

To the ensuing discourse: showing what are the special lets of Ecclesiastical Reconciliation, and what the causes of Divisions are amongst Ministers, and how to be remedied.

Sir, You know what hopes you gave me when I was at Zion House, that some effectual course would be followed to reconcile our differences about matters of Religion. I did thereupon impart unto you very freely my thoughts concerning the whole business, how it might be advanced as I conceived.

Since that time being here at London, the hopes which you gave me were confirmed by the zeal and forwardness of those, who in the City gave occasion to the best affected to meet at several conferences, whereof the aim was very laudable and necessary, viz. to prevent both in Church and State the imminent dangers of Tyranny on the one hand, and of Anarchy on the other: and to find out and set on foot the means of brotherly unity and amiable concurrence in carrying on the work of our present Reformation.

What the particular causes are wherefore the motions then made were not effectual, and the conferences of this kind have since been left off: I shall not at all mention, for you know them well enough; and we all have just cause to mourn for this, that in our outward profession of the Gospel, there is so little true spiritual zeal for necessary duties of Communion, and so much for private concernments; and that our disease if we continue long in these distempers, is like to prove remediless.

As for me, although I cannot but lay this sadly to heart, yet I do not suffer the discouragements which cause most men despair to work

upon my spirit any fainting impressions: but have rather given way to a charitable inclination, which I love to entertain within myself, which is, to hope for a possibility of our reconcilment, notwithstanding all the backwardness which is apparent in the leading men of both side. I have (I say) kept up my spirits, in a resolution to proceed in these motions partly upon this hope, partly upon other principles, then I perceive most men do walk by: for most men move only as they find cause by outward appearances to expect the success of their enterprises, and some are so very tender of their repute of being engaged, that except they be sure of gaining what they pretend to seek, they will not hazard their labor, nor seem forward in anything, although in itself never so answerable unto the way of God in the Gospel. But I have been otherwise taught to look upon myself: I shall never value my credit amongst men, or my pains above my duty; I shall never be afraid to be counted a fool to the prudent of this age, and to lose my labor for the Gospels sake. He that cannot freely venture the reputation of his prudence upon the ground of a duty, without consulting the appearances of flesh and blood, is not yet instructed to walk by Faith and above sense, and he that is not willing to serve Christ without success, is not worthy to be employed by him. Therefore I conceive that in this business of seeking peace and ensuing it, which God doth command me to do, Psal. 34.14. and of maintaining peace, if it be possible, and as much as in me lieth, which in like manner is commanded, Rom. 12.18. (I say in this business thus enjoined and bound upon my conscience) I conceive that I owe to God an implicit obedience; that is to say, an obediencial resolution, and an attempt to do what I can towards the effect, although I see no appearance of success: for he that commands me to hunt peace, doth presuppose that it will flee from me, and when it is fled, he that doth bid me overtake it, and if I overtake it, to hold it fast if it be possible, and as much as in me lieth, doth not therefore give me any assurance that I shall overtake it, and

be able to hold it; but this only he requireth, that I should do my utmost endeavors. Now if I demure upon the matter, and will not do this except I can perceive that I shall be able to do it, as I pretend for my credit: in this case I serve not the will of him that commands me, but mine own: for I walk not in the obedience of Faith, but in the dictates of my fancy: for now I lean to mine own understanding, and suffer the pride of my heart to be my counselor, which being unwilling to be foiled in any undertaking, doth make me quit the work, because I think I shall not have the credit of it. But if for some other reasons, I demure upon the duty and suspend mine action, as perhaps, because I see not I can gain this or that benefit by it; or because I think it not seasonable to appear till matters of State be so and so contrived; that such and such a business may come in at such a time for such a design, &c. (although in matters merely human, arbitrary and external, I do not blame this prudential contrivance; yet I say) if any such consideration should bias my resolution towards the performance of that which in itself is a duty, and of a spiritual nature, (as I fear it doth with many) then I walk no more by the grace of God in simplicity, but by the wisdom of men in the world; then my aim is not to serve Christ, but rather to make use of Christ and his kingdom, and of my interest in the work of the Gospel to serve either mine own turn or the turns of other earthly men out of it; and if I do so, it is clear that I do the work of the Lord deceitfully, and the reward of an hypocrite will be given to me.

Upon these grounds I have laid aside all such hidden things of darkness, which I have seen sway with some in the works of this nature; and therefore I am persuaded I have herein a good conscience towards God, which doth give me confidence to cast myself upon him, hoping for a blessing upon these endeavors, because I look to nothing but the doing of his will therein.

Although then I may ingenuously confess that I cannot rationally foresee, as the times now are, and as most men stand affected to each other, that these motions will be entertained (for they will suit no ends of parties) but am rather apt to conceive that some who think themselves wise, will laugh at me, and at this discourse; that most will not relish the motions, as being somewhat out of the common way; that many will mistake my meaning, misconstrue my aim, and fall foul upon me perhaps for what they have misconstrued and mistaken. And finally that few or none that seem to be Pillars, will heartily join and help to advance either these or other impartial ways of peace. (I say) although this may be confessed; yet I cannot forbear to offer these thoughts unto you, both that I may discharge my conscience towards God in the vow which I have made to prosecute Peace and Truth, by walking in the light (whatsoever some may or do think of me) and also that they may stand not only for me as a witness, that I have sought without partiality the ways as well of Truth as of Peace amongst Brethren: but also rise up in judgment (if you think good to publish them) against those, who for worldly ends and self-will (lest they should seem to lose ground) keep us at a distance, and making our divisions irreconcilable weaken our hands in the Gospel. Here I desire not to be mistaken, for I say not that any do purposely intend (except they be the Emissaries of Jesuits, of which too many are crept in amongst us, in this dissolution of all order) to make our divisions irreconcilable; and to weaken our hands in the Gospel: God forbid that any professing the Gospel should be thought so maliciously partial. But this I mean to say freely; that all such as by the management or composure of these differences seek any way rather to please themselves, then in the spirit of meekness to please others to their edification; I say of these, that they keep us at a distance, that they widen our breaches, that they make our divisions by little and little irreconcilable, and so they weaken both their own, and their Brethren's hands in the Gospel, and herein they not taking

heed to themselves, principally serve no bodies turn but Satan's; and become his instruments most effectually to hinder the power and prevalency of the Truth. For it is Satan's main interest, above all others to set and keep the Ministers of the Gospel at variance amongst themselves, and disagreeing in the way of their testimony. For as long as they are kept so, he is sure that the world, the wickedness and greatness thereof, and the height of men will not fall before the throne of Jesus Christ by their means. For if we will look upon Satan's kingdom, and consider the ways by which he doth set up, and settle the Mystery of iniquity in opposition to the kingdom of God among men; we shall perceive that one of them is this. That he being the Prince of this world, doth establish the government thereof by mere power and deceiving Policy. This government he endeavoreth always to put in the hands of such men, who intend to make use thereof only for their own ends, which commonly are none other but greatness and glory: for this cannot be denied, that as the way of self-denial and humility is proper to Christ and his Kingdom: So the practices of men in seeking themselves by power and policy are the works of Satan's spirit, and of their own corruption in order to his designs. And as the end of natural men in the world, is only to maintain and enlarge themselves, according to their own will by their own ways; so the end of Satan in teaching them to manage their affairs, rather by power and policy, with an absolute command, than by loving persuasions and convictions of the mind, with the evidence and demonstration of the Truth, is only to oppose in the souls of men the kingdom of Christ which is the light of Truth and the life of righteousness and holiness. For by these Christ is the King and Conqueror of souls; for by the light of Truth he ruleth in the understanding, and by the power of righteousness and holiness he ruleth in the will and affections of his subjects: if then Satan can gain the opportunity to set his ministers awork, who by the outward means of power and policy for their own temporal ends, draw away

men's minds from the attention unto, and the apprehension of Truth; and put out of their affections, the frame of meekness, love and humility, wherein the life of righteousness and holiness doth stand; if (I say) he can get such instruments, which he can act either directly or indirectly to draw men's minds from the way of Christ by this way of his own creating; then he hath clearly gained his end; because he will be able to keep men's understandings in darkness; that is, in ignorance or doubt of the truth; and their will and affections in confusion and disorder, that is, in a frame opposite to the Law of God and his righteousness.

Now Satan will be able to do this directly by his instruments, when he can cause the profession of ignorance to be advanced, set up and commended by authority, or commanded by a Law, or when he can cause the knowledge and practice of anything; besides that which is settled by mere human authority for certain ends of State to be made a crime punishable by death; by infamy or by any other penalty, and when he can cause the whole frame and profession of Religion to be fitted only to establish that greatness, wherein the glory of the outward state and the authority of his instruments doth consist. All which Satan doth with a high hand grossly in the Muhammadan, but with more subtlety, and most completely in the Papal state; and this he is able to do everywhere else in some competent measure wheresoever the maxims of absolute dominion are maintained, and where the great Idol of Politicians, which is called the reason or interest of State is only worshipped; and the true reason and interest of Conscience and Religion is laid aside and comparatively not at all regarded: I say wheresoever this course is followed, there Satan is able to oppose the kingdom of Christ directly.

But where he cannot attain to this he taketh the nearest way he can to gain the same purpose indirectly, which is done by making all

doctrines of Truth doubtful, and all Gospel Ordinances full of confusion.

Now to make all Truths doubtful, he raiseth disputes, and doth find out ways to make them undecidable: and this he doth chiefly by the means of those that should be the unanimous witnesses of that Truth, which is called into question, when they are disunited amongst themselves. And to confound the Ordinances, he setteth everyone promiscuously upon the administration thereof in his own way; not only by giving a freedom unto all both to do without control what they please in such matters, and to condemn and oppose everyone that is not of their way; but also by disannulling the authority by which all order should be settled in Church and Commonwealth. And to bring all this to pass, his main endeavor is to cause the Ministers of the Gospel, either to be subordinate unto his ministers in all things at their will; or by variance of judgment amongst themselves, and difference of practices from each other to lose their way; to neglect the rules of unity and forbearance which the Word prescribeth to uphold the communion of Saints, which is their strength; to break the bonds of love and peace; and having engaged them into quarrels, to bring them within the compass of his reach, that is, to move them to act their controversies, by the ways of the power and policy of his kingdom for self aims: For if he once can corrupt the simplicity of their minds so, that they mind not truly the duty of being conformable to the Word in everything, and to the spiritual aim of Christ's walking in the world; and if he can engage them into worldly designs to advance the same in a worldly way, he hath gotten them clearly within his reach; where he will endeavor to the utmost, first to cause them utterly forget and lay aside the aim of their spiritual calling. Secondly, to allure them unto, and affect them with the appearance and glory of his dominion. Thirdly, to act them by the principles of outward fears and hopes to that which he would

have them do; and when he hath once gotten them thus far under the power of this snare, he will be able without resistance to carry them headlong amongst themselves to more and more uncharitableness and unconscionableness of conversation, whereby breaches will be multiplied and made irreconcilable. For although a difference arise but from a very small and circumstantial matter amongst them (as it doth naturally fall out amongst other men;) yet Satan aiming at them above all others, to get advantages against them, if he doth find them in such a case; either without brotherly and charitable affections, or inclined to please themselves; he will be able to work upon them first jealousies, and by jealousies mistakes, and by mistakes a distance and strangeness, by reason of worldly aims differently carried on; and when plots and passions are come to some maturity, cross courses and mutual provocations will be set on foot, real injuries will be offered; complaints and clamors will break forth, which in continuance make the divisions of hearts past all remedy, and irreconcilable: because it is not possible that men who aim at worldly matters, should deny themselves either the use of their wit and passions in the prosecution of their design, or neglect the strength which they have in hand, when they think it can serve their turn. For if they should do so, they should seem to quit their designs, and so lose at once both the credit and profit thereof, which to men that make use of their reason only to compass their own will; and to that effect can employ both power and policy, is a thing altogether insufferable, as being no less contemptible than folly, and as hateful as death.

This I conceive to be one of the mysteries of iniquity, by which Satan doth prevail against the Ministers of the Gospel even against many men that are otherwise godly and able, but are not sufficiently aware of his wiles, by which they are drawn from their own and ensnared in his way, by which means their hands being weakened in their work,

he gaineth his end at least indirectly by their infirmities and miscarriages.

Therefore all such as are conscionably sensible of their own frailties and of those dangers, should be wakened from security to become watchful over their own souls in these times of temptation: for amongst the Protestant Churches, where, with the increase of knowledge, a true sense of Christian liberty is begotten in the minds of professors; Satan hath none other way to fit to erect his kingdom as this is, of dividing the Ministers: for which cause as we see their divisions daily increased, so the remedies should be the more earnestly thought upon, and offered with freedom and tenderness unto all indifferently, but chiefly to those who are nearest in principles, and have least cause to walk asunder and be at a distance.

These remedies can be none other, but the helps to holy communion amongst Ministers in the prosecution of spiritual aims, tending to the advancement of Truth and Peace. For the unity of their spirits in the simplicity of Truth is their strength: and the evidence of grace without worldly wisdom in their walking, will make them not only invincible, but even irresistible: because the power of the Word of life, which is a two-edged Sword; and the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left (when they are handled in sincerity without all mixture of human policy) will be prevalent to make them triumph in Christ, and to cause the inhabitants of the world to fall in due time before them; that in the day of Christ's power (which we hope is approaching) all the strong holds of Satan may be surrendered unto him.

This ensuing discourse then concerning unity and forbearance, to show the ground, terms, and motives thereof, was by me conceived, as a proposal of matters belonging properly to the consideration of

the Orthodox Ministers of this kingdom, who dissent only from each other in the way of government; that if our private or public conferences had continued as they were begun in simplicity, the heads thereof might have been a subject of further deliberation amongst us; For to that effect they were put to paper at the desire of some, but seeing the motions tending to a reconcilment of our Religious differences seem to be obstructed so, that there is little or no hope to gain any further meetings and conferences in this kind, and for this aim; therefore I have enlarged them a little and altered the frame thereof somewhat, and now shall leave them to you to be disposed of as God shall direct you for the public good to make use of them. For whether the obstruction of these thoughts of reconcilment, arise from the unwillingness of some, who perhaps think it not wisdom to venture their pains in such a way, or from the State contrivements, or preingagements, and combinations of others, who by any of these means, think themselves strong enough to gain their own desires another way. Whether (I say) from any, or from all of those causes, the obstruction doth arise, it is to me a matter of no discouragement, but rather an occasion to be willing to appear so as I am, in the presence of God free from interests, and before men, without all pretense to wisdom, strength and authority: That so far as those motions shall be found agreeable to the will of God, and suitable to the conscience of those, whose wisdom, strength and authority is the obedience of Faith in performing their duty, they may be entertained with singleness of heart, and if so many of us as have freed our spirits from the bondage of fears and hopes in respect of outward matters, and have given ourselves up to walk openly, by known and undeniable rules, and by the Law of unprejudicate love to be without offense towards all, should but resolve upon this provocation, to lay the matter of duty represented therein, more seriously to heart then hitherto we have done, and to ripen further thoughts concerning the same; who knoweth what God may work

thereby? It is not impossible for him to blow upon the dead bones of our scattered affections, from the ways of peace and communion, to bring them to a concurrence in the acknowledgement of some rules which shall relate to nothing but his own will; and if any such spirit of life be breathed but in a few of us, we may hope that it will not be without effect towards others; but that some resolutions may ensue, which God will bless with successfulness in the prosecution. However I am resolved without all appearance of success to cast this bread upon the waters, and commending myself unto his providence leave these papers to you to be disposed of, as you shall think fit in your discretion, which with yourself is recommended to the grace of God by,

Your faithful friend, and servant in Christ, JOHN DURIE.

Written this 8th. of May, 1648.

**A DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE GROUND, TERMS, AND
MOTIVES OF BROTHERLY UNITY AND FORBEARANCE:
WHICH THE MINISTERS OF THE CHURCHES OF
ENGLAND OUGHT TO PROFESS AND PRACTICE ONE
TOWARDS ANOTHER FOR THE GOSPELS SAKE.**

CHAPTER I.

The Introduction, showing the Scope and Matter of the Discourse

Although the case is doleful, and highly to be lamented, that there is nowhere in the world so much strife and division apparent, as

amongst those that are named Christians, nor that amongst any Christians greater animosities do break forth, then sometimes amongst those that are the Ministers of the Gospel: yet this is a most certain and undeniable Truth, and worthy of all acceptation, That the doctrine of Christianity in itself, is nothing else but the glad tidings of everlasting peace; that therein Christ is revealed to be the Prince of love and peace; that none but his followers are capable of peace and unity with God; and that amongst men the true directions to live in love and peace one with another, are nowhere to be found, but in his kingdom. Which being so, it will follow (notwithstanding all these divisions) that none should more willingly undertake, nor can more profitably entertain the thoughts of peace and unity, for the composure of differences and ending of strife amongst men, then they whom God hath called to be Preachers of his Gospel, and whom he hath appointed to be witnesses of the Covenant of his grace and peace.

And seeing all they to whom this Covenant is tendered, and by whom it is received through Faith; are bound to live in the unity of Faith and Love, as being all one in Christ, and confederates one to another by virtue of that Covenant: Therefore I shall offer myself in the way of the heavenly calling (as one to whom the Gospel is revealed, and to whom the testimony of Jesus in the Covenant of peace is committed) unto those that are my Brethren in the same Ministry, humbly entreating them all, but chiefly such as are most conscionably wise in looking rather to the will of God in the duties of their Ministerial function, then to the interests of a party amongst men, to observe and consider with me, concerning the ways of Unity and Forbearance which they ought to mind amongst themselves, and acquaint their hearers withal, these three assertions.

First, that the ground wherefore they ought to profess and practice Unity and Forbearance one towards another, is the undeniable Law of Christian Brotherhood.

Secondly, that the Terms of Unity whereunto they have already attained, are full and satisfactory, and that the terms of the Forbearance which they should intend to practice are plain and easy to be acknowledged and settled amongst them.

Thirdly, that the Motives which should induce them to the acknowledgement, profession, practice, and settlement thereof; are as strong as unavoidable necessity, and the highest relation unto duty can make them.

And to make good these three Assertions, I shall with as much brevity as I can declare my sense thereof distinctly and plainly, without any great enlargements, as intending chiefly to speak to men of understanding.

CHAPTER II.

Of the first Assertion. Concerning the Law of Christian Brotherhood, what it is, and whereunto it binds us.

The undeniable Law of Christian Brotherhood is this, That all such who are begotten of the same heavenly Father, by the same Word of Truth, in the same womb of the free woman, the Jerusalem which is above, are children of God, and truly brethren one to another in Christ, and having the same sense of their relation one to another in Christ, and in all the chief Acts of their Religious profession, the

same rules to walk by, in the household of faith, they are bound to acknowledge each other to be Brethren, and as Brethren to walk together in holy Communion for the administration and observation of Christ's Ordinances in that whereunto they have attained, and to bear with one another in that whereunto they have not yet attained.

Now so it is, that such as are acknowledged to be Orthodox and godly Ministers in this Kingdom of England, are begotten of the same heavenly Father, by the same Word of Truth, (which is the doctrine of Faith revealed in the Scriptures) in the same womb of the true Church, and have the same sense of their relation unto Christ, and in all the chief Acts of their Religious profession have the same Rules to walk by.

Therefore it followeth undeniably, that they are truly Brethren one to another in Christ, and that they are bound in conscience to acknowledge each other to be Brethren, and as Brethren to walk together in Holy Communion, for the administration and observation of Christ's Ordinances in that whereunto they have attained, and to bear with one another in that whereunto they have not yet attained.

And lest any should make a doubt of this Truth; the first proposition expressing the Law of Brotherhood, shall be showed from clear places of Scripture, and the second containing an application thereof unto the Ministry of this kingdom, shall be verified of them by a more special deduction of the particulars expressed therein.

The places of Scripture wherein the Law of Brotherhood is clearly manifested, are amongst many others these.

Christ saith to his Disciples.

Matth. 23.8. All ye (namely, my Disciples) are Brethren.

Rom. 8.29. Whom he (viz. the Father) did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son, that he might be the first borne amongst many Brethren. Ergo, they are made all brethren unto Christ, and so Brethren to each other.

Jam. 1.18. Of his own will, he (viz. the Father) begot us (viz. believers) by the Word of Truth. Ergo they all being children of the same Father and begotten of the same seed, are Brethren to each other.

Job. 1.12. As many as received him (viz. Christ) to them he gave power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his name. Ergo, those that receive Christ the same way, are alike Sons of God, and a like his Brethren.

Heb. 2.12. I will declare (saith Christ) thy name unto my Brethren. Ergo, if Christ doth own believers before God as his Brethren, shall they not own one another as such?

1 Cor. 12.13. By one spirit we are all Baptized into one Body. Ergo, those that have received the same Spirit are bound to become one body, and consequently to be united together as members one of another.

Ephes. 4.4, 5, 6. There is one body and one Spirit, one hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all. If all these are one and the same in and to all believers, then all believers are united unto each other by them, and woe be to such that by their divisions give the world cause to believe, that there is not one body, but many, nor one spirit, but many, nor one hope, nor

one Lord, nor one Faith, nor one Baptism, but many, nor one God, but many.

Gal. 4.26. Jerusalem which is above, is free, the mother of us all. If we are of one Father and Mother, then undeniably Brethren to each other.

Phil. 2.1, 2. If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Ergo, such as are in Christ and made partakers of the same spirit, are bound to have fellowship one with another, and in their fellowship to impart to each other matters of full joy, by mutual consolation and comfort, by mutual bowels and mercies; and to be able to do all this, they must study unity amongst themselves, in the same mind and in the same love.

Phil. 3.16. Whereunto we have attained already, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Ergo, Brethren, though not agreed in all things, yet are bound to profess so far as they are agreed.

Ephes. 4.1, 2, 3. Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Ergo, it is a part of our calling wherewith we are called, to practice mutual Forbearance; to the end, that Unity and peace may be preserved, and such as mind not the duty of Forbearance, have therein renounced their calling.

1. Pet. 1.22. Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the Truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the Brethren; see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. Ergo, one of the ends

for which the Spirit is given to make us obedient to the Truth for the sanctification of our souls, is this; that we should affectionately express our love unto the Brethren. In these places we see what the ground of the Law of Brotherhood is amongst true Christians, and what the duties thereof are.

But if neither this Law, nor the duties thereof be at all regarded by those that pretend to be the chief of Christians, is it not either a testimony against them, that they indeed are not what they pretend to be true, and faithful Ministers of the Gospel of peace? Or if they needs will be counted such; is it not then before the world a testimony against the Gospel itself and Christianity, that it is not amongst us what it is said to be, viz. the way of true love and peace? Therefore the great Character of true Christians is to be laid to heart seriously in these times of universal strife, wherein all pretend more than others unto Christ, namely this which Christ hath given us himself, Joh. 13.35. Hereby shall all men know that ye are my Disciples if ye have love one to another. From whence must needs follow, that if ye have no love one to another, by this all men shall know, that ye are not his Disciples. Therefore let us not deceive ourselves, it is not the bare dogmatical knowing of the truth that will approve us to be Christ's Disciples, there must be a real practice of it, and this practice is nothing else but to walk in love, as Christ hath loved us: For herein we shall approve ourselves to be dear children and followers of God, because the new commandments which Christ hath given us, John 13.34. is this, That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. And John his beloved Disciple tells us, that we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the Brethren, 1 John 3.14. from whence he doth in the same place infer this consequence: he that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Let therefore no man flatter himself with a vain show of the Truth of Christianity; this is an infallible Rule; None

is a Christian indeed and truth but he that loveth the Brethren. If then we can make it appear that the Ministers of this kingdom are to esteem one another truly Brethren because fully united unto Christ, and that by the Law of Christian Brotherhood they are bound to make profession of that unity, and to behave themselves one towards another, as it becometh the Brethren of Jesus Christ, and the brethren of each other in Christ; if (I say) we can make these things appear to be an undoubted duty, then we may hope, that on the one hand such as pretend to be Christians, and yet mind not at all this distinguishing duty, but continuing to walk offensively in strife with everyone, dishonor their profession, will be discovered to be void of truth; and on the other hand such as are sincere will be stirred up to show themselves zealous in the way of Truth, for the effectual performance of the duties of Brotherly Unity and Forbearance towards all those whom they are bound to acknowledge to belong to Jesus Christ no less themselves.

CHAPTER III.

Of the second Assertion. Concerning the Terms of Unity and Forbearance in general.

By Unity we mean the concurrence of men's judgments, affections and actions about the same thing in one and the same way, and for the same end.

By Forbearance we mean the refraining from uncharitable and unkindly affections and behaviors towards another in some things, although there be some difference between us and him in judgment and in the way of acting about these things.

By the terms of Unity and Forbearance we understand all those things, which determine the judgment and conscience of a Christian to the profession and practice of these duties, as he oweth them unto Christ and his members.

As then the profession and practice of Unity is grounded upon the Law of Brotherhood according to that of Abraham unto Lot: Let there be no strife between me and thee, I pray thee, for we be Brethren: So the profession and practice of Forbearance must be grounded upon the Terms of some Unity: for where there is no Unity at all, if ever the disunited parties come within the reach of one another, there no Forbearance can be expected; but where there is some Unity, because there also will be some concurrence, therefore there will needs follow thereupon some restraint of strife, which is a Forbearance: for the affections of men are to be answerable to the natures of things; as then things wholly opposite, cannot possibly agree to bear one with another, in that wherein their opposition doth lie, when they are to act upon the same subject; no more then things agreeing can intend to oppose and destroy each other in that wherein their agreement doth lie: So it is with the Motions of men's spirits, both in the way of opposition and agreement, when either of these is fundamental. For as in case of opposition the Apostle doth argue thus, 2 Cor. 6.14. What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Balial? So in case of agreement he argueth in like manner thus, 1 Cor. 12.21.26. The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.

So then all Forbearance from strife and opposition, must proceed from the presupposal of some Unity; and where no Unity is presupposed, there can be no such Forbearance: Therefore before we can speak of the terms of Forbearance, we must consider first the terms of our agreement, to see how full and satisfactory these will be found.

CHAPTER IV.

Concerning the terms of Unity by themselves what they are, why not regarded, and wherefore they ought to be regarded.

The thing whereof we are to make enquiry at this time is this, Whether yea or no the terms of Unity whereunto the Ministers of this Kingdom which are counted Orthodox and godly have already attained, are not full and satisfactory to make them acknowledge one another to be Brethren? If it can be made out that the terms of their Unity are such, then it may be inferred that they ought to behave themselves each to other as it becometh brethren, which to the grief of many is very slightly, or not at all performed. Now to resolve the question, let us consider that which maketh men fully and satisfactorily brethren in Christ; whether it be not truly found in them, although by many of them not at all regarded.

We shall say then, that which formerly hath been asserted; If such as are acknowledged to be godly and Orthodox Ministers in this kingdom are begotten of the same heavenly Father, by the same Word of Truth, in the same true Church; and have the same sense of their relation unto Christ, and in all the chief Acts of their Religious profession have the same rules to walk by; then they have attained

already unto that unity, which is full and satisfactory to make them acknowledge one another to be Brethren. But so it is, that they are thus begotten, that they have this sense of their Relation to Christ, and these Rules to walk by in their Religious profession. Therefore the Unity whereunto they have already attained is full and satisfactory, to make them acknowledge one another to be Brethren. To these three heads then the particular terms of their Unity are to be referred, viz. 1. To the doctrine of Truth, which is the seed of the heavenly Father begetting them to himself. 2. To the sense of their Relation unto Christ in the Church. 3. And to the Rules of their religious walking; that if in every one of these the Unity whereunto they have already attained be found fully satisfactory to oblige them to a mutual acknowledgment of Brotherhood; then the public profession thereof, may not any longer be held in unrighteousness, as it is done by many to the great dishonor of their Ministry, and of Christianity itself. For it is a very sad thing and extremely destructive to the honor of true Christianity, to see those men, that in all main things are fully agreed, and cannot be otherwise esteemed as to men, then truly sincere and godly in their walking, not only to drive opposite designs and courses one to another in Religious matters, without just cause, but even hatefully, to seem willing to destroy one another only through want of charity in themselves, and for mere infirmities and incivilities in others, which the fundamental Laws and aims of Christianity oblige them to bear withal. And the more holy and heavenly these men seem to be in the ways wherein they agree with their Brethren; the more destructive and pernicious is the consequence of their failing, in this kind, unto the Brotherhood of Christianity; because it causeth every small matter of difference to be heightened so in the minds of their followers, that all the grounds of Unity, of Love, of Forbearance and of mutual edification, are not only weakened, but directly cast off and disregarded.

This doth put me in mind of the failing of John and James which is mentioned, Luke 9. ver. 53. till 57. Christ was going with them towards Jerusalem, in his way he passeth by a Village of the Samaritans, and they perceiving that his face was towards Jerusalem would not receive him, and give him civil entertainment: whereat James and John were so highly offended, that they would have revenged this injury, with their utter destruction by fire from heaven: but Christ did rebuke them, and told them two things; first, ye know not (saith he) what manner of spirits ye are of. Secondly, The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. As if he had said, Your spirit is distempered, and you discern not that Satan hath caught you in his snare, and you remember not, that my aim is to save men's lives; and not with vengeance to right myself against them to their utter destruction. From this History we may observe these Truths.

1. That it is incident even to godly men to be transported with zealous distempers wherein Satan doth take hold of them. For it cannot be denied but that James and John were truly godly and faithful Disciples of Christ; and that here they are transported with a zeal, which is not godly, but devilish, is altogether also undeniable.

2. That the devilish zeal of godly men, may arise in them from their love to the Truth, and from a sense of the indignities done unto it, which they cannot brook at the hands of unworthy men: for it is clear that nothing could occasion this excess in James and John so much as their great love and high esteem of Christ's worth, and the injury which they thought was done to him and themselves by such men as they thought Samaritans to be; viz. men of corrupt Principles in Religion, Schismatics and unworthy of their society: For the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans.

3. That this love to the Truth and sense of the indignities done to it by unworthy men, may be mixed with the spirit of self-love, which is indiscernible unto them that are led thereby. For it may be conjectured, that although the Disciples loved their Master sincerely, and thought him highly affronted by the Samaritans, that would not give him lodging-room; yet that they should not have been sensible at all of their own inconveniency of not being refreshed with meat when they were hungry, and of the affront done to themselves, not to be civilly entertained when they were weary, is not at all likely, but it may be probably gathered from circumstances, that the disappointment of their expectation (messengers being sent before to make ready for them) when they were weary & hungry, did heighten both their discontent, and the sense of the injury done unto their Master.

4. That even godly men, when they are ensnared into passions occasioned by injuries, will for small matters of private concernment, be sometimes set upon thoughts of revenge, take up destructive resolutions, and thereby forget the main end of their profession; for we see all this in the Apostles, and by Christ's reproof of them, and his reason taken from the end of his Ministry, whereunto all his and their actions were to be subordinate, it appears that they are put in mind of what they had forgotten.

Now as it was with James and John in this case, so it is with many godly men in like cases. For in these times of controversy, wherein divisions are heightened to the utmost, it doth often fall out, that men being of different parties, for far lesser causes than Jews and Samaritans were divided; yet look upon one another with no less animosity than did the Jews upon the Samaritans, and the Samaritans upon the Jews; that is, with so much prejudice, that if they find a man but looking towards that party to which they have set

themselves in opposition, as the Samaritans found Christ's face set towards Jerusalem, they will be ready to deal with him as the Samaritans dealt with Christ, and his Disciples, refuse him civility, use him inhumanely, and perhaps offer injuries both in deeds and words. These injuries will sometimes be taken as reflecting upon the Truth of the profession; sometimes upon the justice of the cause and the innocence of the party which we favor; and if withal (as ofttimes it falleth out) some private concernment of our own is mixed with the public interest; that will mainly heighten the sense of those injuries, and transport us unto some excess of zeal: For when any degree of passion for self-concernment doth meet in our affection with any object of true zeal, and a ground of public interest, to mix withal and raise itself upon; then it becometh a mighty one, and a giant-like passion; as when in the first world, the Sons of God came in into the fairest of the daughters of men, and those bore children unto them, they were mighty ones and men of renown: so it falleth out here, that in the Spirits of men, mighty resolutions and purposes of high revenge are begotten upon such occasions: and when Satan doth find us in any such distemper, he hath a fit opportunity to in fuse his poison into cur aims to cause us forget the end of our spiritual calling which is not to destroy but to save the lives of men, by rectifying them and building them up in the Spirit of meekness and of love, with all longsuffering and Forbearance. Thus we may see by daily experience, that when human parties are formed, (for in Christianity there is none) and when inhumane injuries are mutually offered about religious concernments, it is one of the hardest things in the world, to prevent or to rectify the distempers which arise from thence; but yet we must say in this case what Christ faith in another; With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. Therefore I believe that God is able both to prevent and rectify such excesses of passion, two ways.

First, by wakening our consciences effectually towards himself in minding us of the end and way of our ministerial function, as it is in Christ: that is to say, to teach us to aim at nothing but to be conformable unto Christ, by minding the same thing which he did mind towards God, and by walking in the same way, wherein he is gone before us, to glorify his Father in his Ministry.

Secondly, by setting a spiritual edge upon our affections towards men; not to consider them after the flesh, but after the spirit, as they are, or may be in Christ Jesus our Brethren. That is to say, to walk in all things towards them, by the Law of Christian Brotherhood, and make the positive rules thereof bear the only sway in all our resolutions. For by these principles, and by these alone, we shall be enabled both to free ourselves from the trouble which otherwise will fall upon us for small and inconsiderable matters of difference in judgment and practice, and also to cause all outward concernments fall flat before the Majesty of God's will in the duties of peace and Brotherhood, but without these we shall be found void of all strength to do any such thing, and every little trifle will make us fall from our own steadfastness. Whence it is, that because these principles and duties have been and are disrespected in our work of reformation amongst those that undeniably are Brethren; therefore the scandals which are given to the weak, and observed by the wicked, to discredit our proceedings, are multiplied, to the saddening of the hearts of all that are godly; nor is there any other way imaginable as I conceive, relating to conscience, fit to remove them, and to heal the breaches which follow thereupon, but this, to manifest unto those that are faithful to their principles and conscionable in the Ministry, that the relation wherein God hath set them one towards another, is a brotherly Unity, which in itself is so full and satisfactory, and by his commandment is so strict and obligatory, that whosoever doth not take up the profession thereof, and endeavor to observe the duties

belonging thereunto, shall not only be found a transgressor, but even inexcusable and unworthy of the name of a Christian. For this cause I have laid to heart this subject of Brotherly Unity and Forbearance, that if God permit, it may clearly, though briefly be laid open to some of the Ministry, that seem wholly to neglect the consideration thereof. For my scope is only to name the chief heads of their agreement, to show how full & satisfactory it is in my opinion to settle the profession and practice of a Christian Brotherhood between them: (offering this, that if any shall make a scruple of the Truth of that, which shall be asserted concerning this matter in brief; that a large deduction and demonstration in due time shall be made thereof) to the end that such who heighten matters of strife amongst Brethren, that multiply controversies unadvisedly, for small matters; and that walk by dividing Principles rather than by the spirit of Unity in the Gospel of Peace, may have cause to reflect upon themselves; to consider seriously of the error of their way, and shape their course otherwise then hitherto they have done, lest happily they be found guilty of that conscientiousness and disobedience unto the Truth, whereunto the Apostle hath sadly threatened a heavy judgment of wrath and indignation, of Anguish and Tribulation, in the Epistle to the Rom. Cap. 2. v. 8, 9. from which I beseech the Lord to grant unto us all, the seal of our deliverance, and the effect all evidences thereof in a conversation which is holy and blameless in love.

CHAPTER V.

Concerning the particular terms of Unity, whereunto the Ministers of this kingdom have attained, in the doctrine of Faith, and in their relation to Christ and his Church.

Forasmuch as I am very confident, that the Ministers of both sides are fully convicted of each others Orthodoxy in all those Truths which contain not only the substance and Fundamentals of Christianity, but also all profitable matters unto edification; therefore I shall assert the fullness and satisfactoriness of this Unity briefly in a few propositions, which I am sure do contain much more as to the agreement in doctrinals; and no less as to the agreement in their relation unto Christ and his Church, then is requisite to make up a Brotherly Unity.

First then, it is undeniably evident, that they all acknowledge and receive the same holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, to be the only Word of God, outwardly given both to the Church in general, and to all men in particular, as the only rule of Faith and Obedience, which in itself and to all believers is clear and sufficient for the attainment of salvation, and for their direction in all good works.

Secondly, they all agree that in doubtful places of Scripture, the Interpretation thereof is to be taken from the undoubted analogy (that is, the proportion) of Faith, which is in other clear places of Scripture, and from the right Analysis, (that is, the resolution or division) of the context of the same place.

Thirdly, it is evident, that they all believe unanimously, that in these holy Scriptures is revealed unto us, that there are three bearing witness in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one, and the only true and living God, of whom the true knowledge is life eternal.

Fourthly, they all agree to profess and teach that we have hope to be justified and saved by Faith only in God through Jesus Christ alone; who according to the Scriptures is the Messiah promised to the

Fathers, and sent into the world; and who being the only begotten Son of the Father from eternity, was in time made flesh, a true man, like unto us (sin excepted) in all things; and becoming a Mediator between God and us, suffered our punishment, and paid the ransom for our sins to satisfy God's justice, and doth still make intercession for us in heaven.

Fifthly, they all agree fully in this, That there hath been always, that now there is, and ever shall be unto the end of the world amongst men a true Church, wherein God is worshipped according to his will in spirit and truth, by the Ordinances of his own appointment. That unto this Church the promises of perpetual assistance by the spirit and word of protection against the gates of hell and of remission of sins, are made in and through the Covenant of grace: and that such as live in this Covenant the life of repentance and faith here, shall in the resurrection of the just hereafter partake of the life of eternal glory with Christ, when all the wicked shall be punished with the everlasting judgment of being cast out of his presence into utter darkness and endless torment.

Sixthly, besides these necessary truths (which I confess to be sufficient to oblige me to acknowledge everyone a true Brother in the Faith of Christ, as to the Doctrinal part, who doth believe the same.) I say, besides these Fundamentals they all agree with the reformed Churches in the other Doctrines of Faith, contained in their Confessions and public writings, such namely as concern, 1. The Creation of the world and of man. 2. The decrees of God and his providence. 3. The fall of man, his sin original and actual, and the freedom of his will. 4. The restitution of man's fall by Christ. 5. Christ's person, offices, natures and works of redemption, and the application thereof. 6. The Law and the Gospel. 7. The use of good works and their rewards. 8. The nature of Faith and Repentance. 9.

The state of regeneration, justification, sanctification and perseverance in conversion. 10. The universal Church and marks of a true particular Church. 11. The worship of God. 12. The Ministers of the Church and their calling. 13. The true and false Ordinances. 14. The Sacraments of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, and such like; wherein over and above necessary truths, most things that are profitable and expedient for edification are fully expressed, and by all assented unto, so that the unity of Faith in this kind is without all doubt very abundantly full and satisfactory.

Seventhly, seeing the bare theory of truths dogmatically assent unto, is not all that is requisite to make up a Brotherly unity between Christ and our own souls; but there is also a subsistence and evidence of our interest in, and relation unto him necessary to complete this union. Therefore in like manner to complete a full and satisfactory unity in our Christian brotherhood one towards another, there ought to be some evidence of this subsistence of our relation unto him manifested unto each other. And hereunto all the godly and orthodox Ministers of this kingdom will heartily agree; That none are to be counted true members of Jesus Christ and belonging unto his mystical body, but such as by faith embracing fiducially with their heart the fundamental and saving truths of Christianity, make confession thereof with their mouth, and endeavor in their life and conversation to walk in holiness answerable thereunto; that is, not after the flesh, but after the spirit, in love towards one another, as God loved us.

CHAPTER VI.

Concerning the terms of unity in the chief Acts of our Religious profession.

Our Religious profession is here taken notice of, as it is public, and doth oblige us to stand in some relation towards others through the communion of Saints.

The chief Acts thereof are four:

The first is, of professors as they stand single by themselves in reference to the worship of God in public.

The second is, of professors as they stand united unto a congregation, in reference to the visible constitution and government thereof.

The third is, of several Congregations in reference to their mutual association

The fourth is, of the Officers and Rulers of these several Congregations, in reference to their interest in each other, and the joint administration of their public charges.

If then in all these acts, the fundamental rules whereby they are to be directed and managed, are fully and satisfactorily the same, and not unknown but rather acknowledged by the professors of both sides; it will follow, that both sides ought to look upon each other therein as upon Brethren, and practice the duties of Brotherhood one to another which are answerable unto this acknowledgment. But if notwithstanding this unity and agreement in these rules, and in the acknowledgment thereof, the duties are neglected, then the sentence of the Apostle James 4.16. is to be laid to heart; To him that knoweth to do good and doth it not, to him it is sin. And that of our Savior

which is more full and plain, Luke 12.47. The servant which knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. Now that in these Acts of the profession, the fundamental rules obliging us unto holy Communion are acknowledged on both sides to be the same, will appear in these following particulars.

Sect. I. Of single Professors.

When we look upon Professors (such namely as we have already described to be believers of the doctrine forenamed; and to have that relation unto Christ and his body which hath been formerly mentioned;) when I say we look upon these Professors as single, that is, as standing by themselves, and not embodied into any particular society; yet we intend not to exempt them by this notion from either a visibility of their profession, or a compliance in that wherein they ought to concur with other Christians. For they are to be counted single; not as if they might take up a single and singular way of processing Christ by themselves alone, which is neither common nor perceptible unto other Christians, but they are to be counted single only as they are men, not engaged as yet, unto any particular Congregation to be members thereof professedly. Suppose then a man to be a true Christian and a mere stranger to all the men and Churches of a Nation, where he findeth the name of Christ known and publicly professed by some, and not at all known and professed by others, the question may be concerning him, threefold. 1. Whether he should make himself known to be a professor yea or no? 2. How he should manifest his Profession? viz. Whether yea or no he should not join with others in the Acts of public worship? And 3. What the Acts of public service and worship are, whereunto he should join, if he should apply himself to other Professors?

Now in the answer to these three questions I suppose that both sides will fully agree upon these rules as a directory for him to walk by, in such a case, and to the first the answer is this.

1. Although a man stand single, and is not embodied into any particular society; yet he ought to make it appear unto the world and to other Professors, that he is a Christian, that is, he ought to appear in public as a Professor of Christianity.

The grounds of this Rule are these commandments. Matth. 5.16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Phil. 2.15, 16. Shine ye as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.

Ephes. 5.7. Walk as children of light.

Vers. 10. Prove what is acceptable unto the Lord.

Vers. 11. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Phil. 1.27. Let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ.

Mark. 8.38. Whosoever shall be ashamed of Mee and my Word in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy Angels.

2. To the second question, whether yea or no, he should not joy ne with others in the Acts of public worship? The answer will be affirmative thus.

He that should appear in public as a Professor of Christianity, ought to assemble himself together to call upon the name of God in Christ, with such as meet to that effect.

The grounds of this rule are these places of Scripture.

Heb. 10.24, 25. Consider one another to provoke to love and to good works. Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is.

Act. 3.1. Peter and John went up together into the Temple at the hour of Prayer, the ninth hour.

Act. 16.13. And on the Sabbath we went out of the City by a river side where Prayer was wont to be made, and we sat down, and spake unto the woman which resorted thither.

Act. 17.1, 2. Where was a Synagogue of the Jews, and Paul as his manner was went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scripture.

3. To the third question, What the Acts of the Profession are in the public service and worship whereunto he should join, if he should apply himself unto other Professors. The answer will be twofold.

The first is concerning the Acts of service, belonging unto the communion of Saints, wherein all Christians are bound to join together as Christians without respect of persons, or societies grounded upon particular interests; and it is that which the Apostle doth command, Timoth. 2. Ephes. 2.22. To follow righteousness, faith, charity and peace, with all such as call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.

The second concerning the public Acts of divine worship in the assemblies, whereunto Professors should resort; of which these positions will be acknowledged by all.

1. That the main and principal Acts of public worship are the preaching and publishing of the Word of God, and the offering up of Prayers and thanksgivings unto God: which will be found a truth in these places of Scripture; Act. 6.4. Rom. 10.13, 14, 15, 16, 17. and 1 Cor. 14. per totum, and 1 Tim. 2.1, 2, 3, 4. and Chap. 4.11.16. Col. 3.16. Heb. 13.15.

2. That these Acts should not be ordinarily performed by everyone that will put himself forward to speak, but by some that are known to have the gift of prophesying, and are approved; set apart, and called to that duty. Which will be evidenced in these places of Scripture; Rom. 10.15. and Chap. 12.6, 7, 8. and 1 Cor. 12.18.27, 28, 29. and Chap. 14.29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34.40. Ephes. 4.8.11, 12. and 1 Tim. 3.1, 2.10 and Chap. 5.22. Tit. 1.5, 6.10, 11. Hel. 5.1, 2, 3, 4. and 1 Pet. 4.10.17.

3. That those Acts should be both for the matter and manner answerable to the Oracles of God, and the rules of the word, and done by those that perform them, not formally and by rote, but understandingly in spirit and truth: as is clear by these places; Rom 12.6. and 1 Pet. 4.11. 1 Tim. 1.13. and 2.15. and 1 Cor. 14.19, 20. John 4.23.24.

4. That although it is not in the power of any men to prescribe unto, or impose upon, the Churches and Ministry of Jesus Christ, any set forms of public worship, otherwise then Christ hath ordained: yet that the Ministers of the Gospel may and ought without prejudice to their liberty in Christ, agree amongst themselves, to observe some rules of uniformity in their public ways, to the end that the occasions

of dissonancy and confusion may be avoided, and the fruit of public edification by all spiritual means and helps to decency and orderliness in the Acts of solemn worship, may be advanced, will be gathered from these Scriptures: Gal. 1.1.8, 9, 10, 11, 12. and 1 Cor. 11.1.23. and Chap. 7.23. and Chap. 14.37. Matth. 15.9. Col. 2.6, 7, 8. and 1 Cor. 14.40. and 1 Cor. 11.16. Col. 2.5.

Sect. II. Of Professors united to a Congregation.

Although it is acknowledged by all, that Professors whiles they stand single, if they walk orderly, and behave themselves as it becometh the Gospel, do partake of the spiritual communion of all Saints, and have an interest in the public Ordinances, with all the Churches, wheresoever they conveniently meet with them, whiles they are unsettled. And although this their interest is never lost, after their settlement in a particular Congregation, so long as they remain faithful and obedient to Christ, no more than they who are made free and partake of the privileges of a particular company in London, do thereby abridge themselves of their common rights and privileges belonging to them as they are naturally freeborn, or naturalized in the nation, so long as they fall not from their allegiance. Although I say, this is agreed by all to be so; yet it is also acknowledged on both sides; that Professors ought not to stand single, but should be united in and to a body rightly constituted and governed according to the will of Christ, which being clear from these Scriptures, Rom. 12.4, 5. and 16.17, 18. and 1 Cor. 1.10, 11, 12. Ephes. 2.19, 20, 21, 22. and 4.16. Phil. 1.27. Col. 2.5.19. Gal. 6.10. doth give a ground to these following Rules, concerning the constitution and government of particular Congregations, wherein both sides, if they will understand one another rightly, I am confident are fully agreed.

1. That such persons as have by their professed subjection unto the Gospel of Jesus Christ, made it apparent that they are united unto him as the head by Faith, and to all his members by love, may and ought to be united together in one Church-fellowship, which is called a particular Congregation; according to the sense of these Scriptures, 2 Cor. 8.1, 2, 3, 4, 5. and chap. 9.13. Ephes. 4.13, 14, 15, 16. and chap. 2. verse. 19, 20, 21, 22. and 1 Cor. 12.27. Phil. 1.27. and chap. 2.1, 2. and 1 Thes. 4.9, 10. Act. 2.41, 42.

2. That the particular Congregations thus constituted ought to be governed by Elders and Deacons, whereof the first are overseers of the ways and state of the flock: the second servants of their necessities, both are Officers thereof, walking as Brethren, as servants and as members of each other in their administrations by a Brotherly equality; whereby all usurpation of Lordly power in any of these over the inheritance of Christ is made void, and all affectations of human titles tending thereunto, is acknowledged to be utterly unlawful in the household of Faith, according to the truth revealed in these Scriptures, 1 Tim. 3. per totum, Acts 6. Vers. 1, 2, 3, 4.5, 6. 1 Tit. 1. per totum, Heb. 13.17. 1 Tim. 5. per totum, 1 Pet. 5.1, 2, 3, 4, 5. and 1 Cor. 12. per totum; Matth. 20.25, 26, 27, 28, 29. and chap. 23.8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Ephes. 4.11.16.

3. That the particular Congregations thus governed have power within themselves, to exercise all Christ's Ordinances necessary and useful for their own edification and preservation from sin and disorder, which power doth originally proceed from their obligation to be obedient unto his will, according to these Scriptures, 1 Pet. 4.10, 11. and 1 Cor. 3.21, 22, 23. and chap. 4.8. and chap. 5. per totum, and chap. 6. per totum, Heb. 3.6, 7, 8 compared with Heb. 2.1, 2.5. Matth. 17.5. and 1 Cor. 7.19.

4. That the Officers of every Congregation may be chosen and called by the Congregations themselves; of such persons as being competently gifted and tried for the exercise of their charges shall be ordained thereunto, according to the rule of God's Word, by the imposition of the hands of a Presbytery; according to these Scriptures, Act. 6.2, 3, 4, 5, 6. and 1 Tim. 3.10. and chap. 4.14. and 5.21, 22. Act. 14.23.

Sect. III. Of several Congregations, as they are or ought to be associated.

That there ought to be an association of those Churches which profess to walk by the same rules, is granted on all sides; only in the way to settle and maintain this association, and to determine emergent differences thereby, the difficulty doth lie; but if that wherein there is a full agreement were made use of, for the increasing of love, I am persuaded that the offenses which occasion all our breaches might be taken out of the way. Therefore those terms of unity, which in this kind are undeniably consonant to the principles of Brotherly Communion, and some others, which upon some friendly conferences have been assented unto by some leading men of both sides, shall here be offered towards the manifestation of the grounds of this association, in these Propositions following.

1. The association of Churches should arise and be entertained freely upon the ground and motive of Brotherly care only, and not by any ties of mere human Authority: This doth follow from the property of co-membership, and the ends thereof mentioned, 1 Cor. 12.25.

2. That brotherly equality wherein Christ hath set every Congregation in respect of another, is to be upheld by the association, and not at all to be diminished, according to these

Scriptures, 1 Cor. 12. verse. 13. till 25. and 1 Pet. 5.5. Rom. 15. verse. 1. till 8.

3. So far as the several Churches do find themselves obliged, and for mutual edification think it most expedient to entertain their association either consultatively or judicially, they ought to enter into it, without prejudice, and make use of the nearness whereunto God hath brought them, to his glory and their mutual comfort.

4. Although every several Congregation hath power within itself to administer all Christ's Ordinances; yet no Congregation may lawfully intend by the use of those Ordinances to stand and walk by itself, as divided and separate from other Congregations professing the same Faith and obedience towards Christ. The reason of this is clear:

First, from the commandments which enjoin the study of unity amongst all Christians, such as these, Ephes. 4.3, 4, 5, 6. and 1 Cor. 12.12, 13, 14, 15.21. and 1 Cor. 1.10, 11, 12, 13.

Secondly, from the nature of divisions, or intentions to division, amongst Brethren, which the Apostle doth condemn as the fruit of a carnal mind. 1 Cor. 3.3. Rom. 16.17, 18.

Thirdly, because this intention is contrary to the request of Christ in his prayer unto the Father, where he desires that all believers may be made perfect in one, John 17.23. and if all believers, then all Congregations of believers.

5. If several Congregations may not intend to stand, as by themselves, and walk as separate from one another, in the administration of Christ's Ordinances, which they have received by a common rule, and are to profess before the world in public as one body in Christ, then it will follow clearly, that it is far less lawful unto

them in the prosecution of matters tending to mutual edification, in ordinary or in extraordinary and weighty matters, of common and necessary concernment; to stand and walk by themselves alone without a due respect unto their Brethren, and some tie of association towards their neighbor Congregations. So that I take this to be an undeniable principle and maxim of Brotherly association in Churches. That nothing which with conveniency, and to the benefit of the Gospel itself, or to the edification of others therein, can be done unitedly and jointly, ought to be done dividedly and separately. For when Christ doth pray for a perfect union of all believers which may work upon the world a belief that the Father hath sent him; I cannot conceive that he doth mean anything less, then such an association which may reach unto all the Acts of his worship, and the visible administration of all duties and ordinances belonging to his Kingdom. For nothing, but such a union professedly maintained in his name, is able to convince the world finally, that he is come from the Father. Thus far then, or rather thus near, the Congregations ought to be associated if it be possible; and that it is possible and will be effected in due time, is certain, because Christ hath prayed that it should be, for the manifestation of his name unto the world; and the Father cannot deny him this request. Hitherto I have insisted upon that which I conceive is, or will be assented unto by all, upon the undeniable grounds of brotherly communion. Now I shall offer the other Propositions which for a more particular accommodation of differences have been assented unto, and are agreed upon by some leading men of both sides as followeth.

6. All professors, whether single or in a body, are bound in conscience to give an account of their ways to their Brethren, or to any that shall require it of them, and that not arbitrarily but as a duty appointed by God to be: observed. Mr. Burroughs Irenicum, pag. 43.

7. Concerning the admission of members, which come from one Congregation into another, to be thereunto distinctly associated, because this doth reflect commonly upon some particular interests of men, wherein the rules of holy communion are not taken notice of, therefore offenses are frequently given and taken up in this matter, which to prevent these agreements have been offered as a remedy thereunto.

1. That no Congregation should be gathered and made up of the Members of other settled Congregations, except they be in an orderly way dismissed by these with whom they were associated.

2. That no member coming from another Church with which we are in brotherly Communion, shall be admitted to become a distinct member of our society, till the Church from which he cometh be made acquainted with his purpose to associate with us.

3. That none who is said to belong to that neighborhood or association, which is called a Parish, (though he doth not profess himself a member in that way) shall be received as a member of any distinct Congregation, until the Officers thereof have inquired concerning his life and conversation of those that are Rulers of the said neighborhood, and of the Congregations nearest unto his habitation, to whom it is likely, he may have had some relation, or which may have taken notice of his ways and profession.

One of the chief mysteries and original causes of our manifold divisions doth lie in this outward circumstantial manner of the association of members into a Congregation, and the reason hereof as I take it, is, partly because men naturally seek rather to please themselves in the satisfaction of some humors of their own, then to edify others, partly because the true use of Christian liberty, and the relation wherein all true professors stand one to another in Christ, is

either not understood, or not minded; in comparison of some circumstantials of our own coining to ourselves, upon any one of which we use to lay more weight than upon all the fundamentals of Christ's appointment.

And till his grace and good spirit discover and work out this self-pleasing humor, we cannot hope for peace and unity almost in anything, although our agreement be never so fundamental in all things.

Sect. IV. Of the Officers and Rulers of several Congregations, and their association.

The Officers of every Congregation are under a twofold relation of unity to each other: First, as they are Professors: Secondly, as they are Officers, that is, specially entrusted with a charge in the profession: As they are Professors, they are nearer in Brotherhood than as they are Officers. For their profession doth give them an immediate interest into Christ, and to one another in him: but their Office doth give them no interest either in him or in each other, further then they are true to the profession: whence it followeth that except they be associated in the mystical body of Christ, they cannot be associated in the ministry thereof. It followeth also further, that the relation wherein they stand to each other as Christians, being the only foundation of their Brotherhood; all the other relations, which are ministerial, must yield and be subordinate thereunto So that all the bonds, which may settle their association in the ministry, must be intended no further then they serve to advance and confirm the brotherhood and association, which is settled upon the truth of Christianity. For if any combination of Ministers be framed otherwise, or to any other end, then to strengthen the fundamentals of Faith, and to increase the fruits of true Christianity in holiness and

love: it will beget nothing else but a Papacy, because the root of the Papal Hierarchy, and the foundation whereupon that mystery of iniquity was raised in the Church, was nothing else but the aim of an association of Church Officers subordinating the profession to their places, and making use of the fundamentals of truth, to set up themselves above others: for it may be evidenced, that all the superstitious devices and politick practices of Popery to blind men, and by an implicit faith to keep them in subjection, resolve themselves at last into this principle and aim, of setting up themselves above Christianity in the hearts of men, which is properly the Temple of God. Therefore it cannot be denied, that they spring originally from hence, seeing everything is ultimately resolved into that, whereof it was first begotten. From all which I draw this conclusion in brief, that all associations of Church-Officers or of any other public Officers of what kind soever, who subordinate not themselves, and the interest which they have in each other by their Offices and by their associations, unto the ends of Christianity, to exalt the unity thereof, that Christ may be seen above all therein; but seek to make the way of Christianity, or the association of Christians subordinate to the advantage of their places above others, are Papal and Antichristian.

Let then all parties look to their aims in their associations, whether they be called Independent or Presbyterial Associations, and whether they be settled upon Episcopal or Erastian principles; and let all Magistrates look to their interests and ways of prosecuting the same by their associations; whether they be Democratical, Aristocratical, Parliamentary or Monarchical, whatsoever their character, frame, or model is, as to the matter of circumstantials, which is all that ordinarily men as men look after: Let (I say) all these Officers of each kind, or such as out of the mixed multitude, upon the ruins of others, do thrust themselves into places of trust and profit, and seek to

strengthen themselves by combinations of their own framing; (I say again) let all these look well to it, everyone in his particular association, if their whole aim and the frame of their society be not, to subordinate themselves and their combinations and confederacies to the setting up of that union, which is essential unto the profession of Christianity, and which alone shall last eternally; they shall be utterly broken to pieces without all remedy. For the Word of God by the Prophet Isaiah cannot fail, Isa. 8, 9, 10. which saith, Associate yourselves ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces, gird yourselves and ye shall be broken in pieces, gird yourselves and ye shall be broken in pieces: take counsel together and it shall come to naught, speak the word and it shall not stand. For God is with us.

Here the Prophet speaking in the name of the Church doth provoke the whole world, and bids the people thereof a defiance, that though they join all in one, and gird themselves with all their strength and all their counsels and resolutions be brought to full maturity, yet that they shall be without effect, that they shall be broken to pieces in their associations, and disappointed in their counsels, and resolutions, because God is with his Church, as the head of their association. Thus we see that the Spirit of God doth blow upon all the designs of men so far as they are not subordinate unto God: for wherein men are not subordinate, they are opposite unto him, and he will certainly be stronger than his opposites.

And if the Question be made concerning the Church, and those that belong thereunto, what their duty is in times of trouble and fear when all the world is providing for their safety, with confederacies, strength and counsel? (I say) if such a question be made, the answer will be found in the following words of the Prophet from verse. 11. till the end of the Chapter, whereof this is the sum.

First, that they should take heed lest they be drawn and engaged into worldly confederacies, for human fears; but that they should sanctify God alone in their hearts, and make him their fear, verse. 11, 12, 13. because the Lord will be to all those that do so, a sanctuary, but to others a rock of offense, verse. 14, 15.

Secondly, that they should bind up the testimony and seal the Law amongst the Disciples of the Lord; that is to say, that they who are taught of God (for these are his Disciples) should make the testimony of Jesus the only bond of their unity, and that the seal of this bond should be their obediencial submission unto the Law of God, verse. 16.

Thirdly, that they should arm themselves with patience to wait for the Lord's coming, who is hid from the eyes of the world, and with resolution to appear before him, although the world doth wonder at them, verse. 17.18.

Fourthly and lastly, when in cases of difficulty men shall be destitute of counsel, and not know what to do; then to consult only with the Law and the Testimony, and not to betake themselves to any other Oracle, verse. 19, 20. and whosoever doth not follow this advice shall be driven into utter despair, verse. 21, 22.

Thus we see what the counsel of God is concerning human associations; what the issues thereof will be, and what the way is to preserve our souls from that despair which doth attend those that forsake God, and subordinate not their counsels and associations to his will.

This then will be our wisdom to take this warning, whether we be Professors or Officers: but chiefly this must be the ground of the ministerial association, in reference to their charges; to make use

thereof only for the furtherance of holy Communion in the profession of Christianity. And although I cannot say that it is so amongst the Combinations which now are on foot, yet I am sure that these grounds will be assented unto by all that are taught of God; and that their practice may be answerable thereunto, I shall offer that whereunto both sides do agree, and which without contradiction will be sufficient to enter them upon a Ministerial correspondence both for the advancement of true Brotherhood in Christianity amongst themselves, as also for the preservation of themselves and of their flocks, from partaking of other men's sins.

For to these two heads, the matters of agreement in the point of association may be referred.

Of the first I shall offer these Propositions.

1. The Officers of Sister Churches, making profession of their brotherhood in Christ, should desire to advance each other to perfection; and to that effect should have frequent meetings for brotherly conferences, 2 Cor. 13.9. Malachi. 3.16.

2. The chief ends of their meetings and conferences should be, to maintain the unity of the Spirit whereunto they have attained; to make it more complete in love, and to gain others to concur with them by the truth therein.

3. They should for these ends set themselves in a way to make their conferences effectually conscionable, constant, without interruption and disorderliness; which way may be settled upon these grounds.

First, upon a voluntary engagement, freely entered into, which should contain these heads: that seeing they acknowledge one another fellow-members of the body of Christ, and fellow-servants of

the same Master, in the same household of Faith, for the accomplishment of his will; that therefore they are resolved to give to each other the right hand of fellowship in doing the work of their Ministry, that they will entertain brotherly meetings and conferences to that end: and that they will never suffer any circumstantial differences of opinions or practices, to break their association or hinder their ordinarily appointed meetings and conferences.

Secondly, upon some rules and orders which in like manner everyone should assent unto freely, and expressly, so far as he doth find himself convicted of the justice and equity thereof, the substance of which orders may be this. That in their conference's confusion shall be avoided, that an equal and orderly freedom of speech shall be yielded unto all, and that a liberty of dissenting impartially upon reasons alleged shall be given unto everyone.

Thirdly, upon the means of some correspondency between several associations: for seeing all that are willing to associate, cannot possibly meet at the same conference's, by reason of the distances of places and men's different occasions, therefore several knots and companies of associates will arise, and lest they being unacquainted with one another's ways, take disagreeing resolutions and mistake one another's meanings therein; for this cause, some means of correspondency between distant associations, is to be agreed upon for the communication of matters belonging to the advancement of truth in love between them.

Hitherto we have looked upon the first head wherein there is an agreement in the Rules by which the association is to be framed for mutual edification; now follow the matters of agreement belonging to the second head, which is the use of their association for the preservation of themselves and of their flocks from partaking in

other men's sins. Of which I shall set down almost word by word that which I find granted by Mr. Burroughs in his *Ironicum* or *Heart Divisions*, pag. 43. which I conceive the Brethren of the other side will fully assent unto, and ought to lay as a sufficient ground of associating in a brotherly way: His words are these.

1. They (viz. the dissenting Brethren) acknowledge that Synods of other Ministers and Elders about them, are an Ordinance of Jesus Christ, for the helping of the Church against Errors, Schisms and Scandals.

2. 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.

3. As there shall because they may declare men or Churches to be subverters of the Faith; or otherwise according to the nature of the offense; to shame them before all the Churches about them.

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

5. 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.

To these Propositions, if a full assent be given, as by many no doubt there is; I cannot imagine what should hinder, or may obstruct the profession of their unity and a concurrence to settle their associations for a joint and mutual assistance in the work of

brotherly preservation of each other, from the guilt of other men's sins.

Thus then we see that the terms of our brotherly unity are full and satisfactory in all these respects, and if notwithstanding all this we are divided in our ways, and in our affections unwilling to practice anything jointly, which is suitable to these acknowledged principles; are we not guilty before God and men of the neglect of a fundamental duty in Christianity, and that inexcusably? Surely we will be found so, if we set not ourselves in another way then hitherto we have walked in one towards another.

CHAPTER VII.

Concerning the terms of forbearance, that therein is, and may be found an agreement.

Having showed how full and satisfactory the unity is, whereunto we have attained, and which ought to be professedly acknowledged and put in practice; it remaineth now that we speak also of mutual forbearance, in that whereunto we have not yet attained. For if it be made apparent, that we are not only thus far agreed, but that we have also the same sense of the terms, that is, of the Principles and Rules whereby a forbearance may be settled in that wherein we are not yet agreed; then I cannot see what in conscience or reason should keep us still at this distance: But I am confident it may be made undeniably apparent that we have the same sense of the terms, that is, of the principles, rules and conditions, whereby a forbearance may

be settled amongst us; therefore there is nothing in conscience or reason, that can keep us at this distance. Now if the Question be, what then the causes are that keep us from joining in a forbearance? And what the difficulties are to practice that wherein we are of one mind? My answer is, that I am very willing to confess my ignorance of these causes and difficulties, rather than to reflect upon the jealousies, upon the designs, upon the passions and distempers of either side, and to lay open the uncharitable failings, and the unfriendly proceedings of both sides against each other. I shall only say that the chief difficulty concerning the terms of settling a Christian forbearance amongst us in my opinion hath been this; that this matter hath never been prosecuted in that way of simplicity, which becometh the Gospel, nor upon the terms, wherein either there is undeniably, or there may be found infallibly, a full and satisfactory agreement; and whether yea or no any course will be taken to prosecute it otherwise hereafter, I know not, but I shall in the meantime endeavor to acquit my conscience, by showing my sense of the principles and rules thereof, whereunto I am persuaded none will be dissenters, who do lay to heart without prejudice their duty, in the profession of Christianity.

CHAPTER VIII.

Concerning the principles of mutual toleration wherein there is a full agreement.

There be two main principles of a Toleration whereof both sides have the same sense to the full. The first is concerning the necessity; the second concerning the limits and bounds of a Toleration amongst Christians.

Concerning the necessity of some forbearance amongst Brethren in Christianity, all will undeniably acknowledge these two Propositions.

First, that God hath commanded his children and servants both to bear one another's burdens, and to bear with one another's infirmities, and to forbear one another in love, as appeareth in these places of Scripture, Gal. 6.1, 2. Ephes. 4.2. Colos. 3.12, 13. and 1 Thess. 5.14. Rom. 14.1.

Secondly, that this duty is not only necessary (necessitate praecepti) because God hath commanded it, but it is also necessary (necessitate medii) as a means of mutual edification; which cannot possibly be advanced without the observation thereof. And the reason hereof is evident, because in many cases of human failings, and in some of different opinions and practices, if there should be no forbearance at all, debates would be sharp and endless, about every small matter, and for every trifle; the affections of love would be lost, the peace of the Churches disturbed, Schisms made unavoidable, and the healing or preventing of breaches become altogether impossible, Rom. 14.13. and 15.1, 2, 3. Phil. 2.1, 2, 3, 4.

And concerning the bounds and limits of this forbearance, all will undeniably acknowledge, that it ought not to be extended indifferently unto all persons, opinions and practices, but that these four propositions are agreeable to the truth of Christianity.

First, that it is not the mind of Jesus Christ that his servants should agree to bear one with another in that which they know to be evil and contrary to his will, but that their duty is in such cases to endeavor the removing of evil, by zeal and brotherly admonitions, as will appear in these places of Scripture, Rev. 2.2. and 1 Thes. 5.14, 15. and 2 Thes. 3.12, 13, 14, 15. and 1 Cor. 5.2.7.11.13.

Secondly, that it is not the mind of Christ that any of his servants should profess themselves willing, or obliged, to bear with any person which doth endeavor, and with any doctrine or practice which doth tend to overthrow the faith in his name, which is delivered to the Saints, or to destroy the life and power of godliness either in the private or public profession of Religion, or to dissolve the bonds of holy communion amongst Christian brethren, or to abolish the orderly relations and obligations natural and moral, without which human societies cannot stand, or to put down the authority which God hath set up in and over human societies for the Administration of justice therein.

Thirdly, it is the mind of Jesus Christ that his servants in all matters merely circumstantial by him not determined should be left free to follow their own light, as it may be offered, or arise unto them, from the general rules of edification and not constrained by an implicit faith to follow the dictates of other men; and although it may sometime fall out, that in things of this nature their ways may be different from the ways of their brethren; yet that ought not to make any breach of love amongst them, but they should esteem all cross and partial practices about them, utterly unlawful; because they beget disputes and jealousies, and tending to divisions, bring forth hatred and mutual persecutions. Rom. 14. per totum, Gal. 5.13, 14, 26. Phil. 2.3, 4.14, 15.

Fourthly, that in matters of greater weight, which are not merely circumstantial, but are conceived to be determined by the word, yet so, as that it is differently understood: in this case the mind of Christ is, that the rules of Christian charity and mutual edification, be inviolably observed with all long suffering and forbearance. And this course ought to be continued so long, either as there is hope to gain the advantage of loving conferences, whereby differences may be

reconciled, and mistakes and scandals prevented and taken out of the way; or so long as there is cause to think that God may reveal his profitable truths to such as err not willfully, but through weakness of judgment and harmlessly, Phil. 3.15, 16. and 2 Tim. 2.22, 23, 24, 25, 26.

CHAPTER IX.

Concerning the way how to settle and prosecute a mutual Toleration,
by rules wherein there is an agreement.

Hitherto in this matter of forbearance we have looked upon the principles of our duty, which we conceive both sides will fully assent unto, if now we can also from thence gather, and from other undeniable and known truths, find out some rules which may direct us in a way, how to settle and prosecute to a full period of practice the duties of this forbearance; and if these rules being found out can be applied to the case in hand between the parties, by some transaction so fully and orderly, that none who doth assent unto the principles and the rules, can except against the proceedings therein; if (I say) these rules can be thus found out and applied, then we shall be able convincingly to conclude that all such as follow not the practice thereof, walk neither answerable to the light which they have received, nor to the vocation wherewith they are called in the profession of Christianity, and consequently, that as they are not upright in their way, so they shall be frustrate of the felicity promised thereunto, and receive the reward of hypocrites: for in this case that which Christ said unto his Disciples, is to be said unto the ministry, and to the professors of this kingdom, John 13.17. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

But if you know them not, you cannot be happy in doing them; and if knowing them, you do them not, your profession shall be found vain, and your end eternal misery; for not everyone that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he only who doth the will of God, who is in heaven. From all which we must gather this conclusion, that if we know that there is a forbearance, which is necessary, it will not be enough for us to know what the principles thereof are, but the way how to practice the duties must also be sought after, and regularly followed. Let us then do this, and endeavor to find the rules of such a transaction as will beget between the parties a settlement of that toleration, whereof we have seen and allowed the principles.

And to this effect if any Treaty or conference be intended (for without some such thing nothing can be settled) there must be, before all other things, an agreement found in the aim of the transaction, and in the means to bring it to pass.

For if these two be not determined by common consent, and a resolution fixed to proceed according to that determination, nothing will take effect or be successful in the transaction.

The aim then of the transaction should not be to settle a forbearance which should leave the parties or confirm them in the distance, whereinto they are unhappily fallen: But both sides should expressly declare that the Treaty is to be set afoot, and professedly intended for these two ends. First, that a door may be kept open and enlarged, to further a more perfect unity then as yet the parties have attained unto. Secondly, that a path and course to maintain the further unity, which will be attained by God's blessing, may be prepared and made more plain and easy then hitherto it hath been.

If this aim be sincerely taken up, the means to bring it to pass will neither be difficult to be found, nor without success, when they are set a work amongst true Christians. I shall offer therefore at them.

First then, the means to open a door to advance the parties to a more perfect unity, then as yet they have attained unto, is to find out, and settle rules of mutual condescension.

Secondly, the means to make the path plain and easy to maintain and walk in the unity which shall be settled, is, to remove move by common consent and upon conscionable motives all the causes of disaffection and of breaches. For if both sides cannot only yield and stoop to embrace each other in love, but also remove all that which may occasion the dissolving of that embracement, we may be sure that peace and unity will be settled without interruption. Therefore in hope that either now or hereafter this may be laid to heart, and followed to produce a necessary toleration, I shall offer my thoughts of these two means.

CHAPTER X.

Of the rules of condescension, how they may be found out.

We have formerly seen that some toleration amongst Christians is necessary; if so, then undoubtedly some condescension also towards one another, because without some yielding it is not imaginable that any mutual forbearance can be settled or transacted amongst parties, that are at variance; and although this might suffice to satisfy the scruples of some, who perhaps will boil at the matter of condescension, as prejudicial to the truth of the holy profession, yet I

shall add a word to show the lawfulness of such a course, as being a duty recommended unto us by God, and necessary for edification.

The Apostle Rom. 15.1, 2. saith that we ought not to please ourselves, but that everyone of us should please his neighbor for his good to edification. Now in this case everyone is supposed to be strong, and the neighbor, whom he ought to please, is by the Apostle supposed to be weak. Therefore we are all bound to yield unto each other, as supposing others to be weak that we may be able to edify each other. And to press this home as a duty to the conscience of all, he doth give us Christ example, as a pattern thereof in this particular, that he did not seek to please himself, but condescended even to bear reproaches, that we might be edified by that which is written of him, verse. 3. and 4. And then to make an application of this unto the end for which he doth prescribe it as a duty; he first prayeth to God for us, and secondly exhorts us to the imitation of Christ's example. His prayer is, that God would grant us to be like minded one towards another according to Christ Jesus, that we may glorify God with one mind and mouth: where he intimates two things, which are in this matter very considerable. First, that except we have this grace to be so minded unto each others as Christ was to us, we cannot be at unity amongst ourselves. Secondly, that except we be united with one mind and one mouth in our profession of Christ, God cannot be glorified by us, verse. 5 & 6.

Then his exhortation is a consequence inserted upon these premises thus, ver. 7. Wherefore receive ye one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Now Christ received us to the glory of God (that is, to the participation of God's love and goodness) by a great condescension unto our weakness, studying not to please himself but us to our good; therefore we are all bound to yield unto each other in like manner: so then some condescension is both lawful and

requisite. Compare with this, that which is further to this purpose delivered concerning Christ, Phil. 2.4, 5, 6, 7. and 1 Pet. 2.21, 22, 23.

But to press further the point which in this duty is to be heeded, let us consider the precept given by the Apostle, Rom. 12. 16. and his own practice, which he sets before us elsewhere to be followed as an example of that rule.

The precept is this, Be of the same mind one towards another, mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate (or to mean things) be not wise in your own conceits. As if he had said, it is your duty to be like minded towards each other in love, and that you may not be taken off from performing this, take heed to your thoughts, that you neither affect high matters, wherein naturally men use to please themselves, nor that you be in love with your own wisdom, but study rather to make your minds pliable, and bring yourselves to condescend to men and matters, that are mean and low, for except you all resolve upon this, you can never be of the same mind one towards another: So then we see that some condescension is not only lawful, but wholly requisite to maintain love and unity and resist pride and self-love, whence strife and confusion doth proceed.

Answerable unto this rule was the Apostles own practice, mentioned 1 Cor. 9. for our imitation, for there from the first verse till the 19 th. he showeth that although he had a full right to take maintenance from the Church of Corinth, for his service done to them, yet he would not do it, but condescended rather for their weakness sake, to make the Gospel of Christ without charge unto them, lest he might be thought to abuse his power in the Gospel. So then to prevent an inconveniency he did condescend to quit his right to a benefit and a conveniency, which he might otherwise have lawfully enjoyed. But then from verse. 19. till the end of the Chapter, he speaks of another

kind of condescension wherein he did exercise himself, and which he relates that he might therein be imitated by others: which was this, that although he was free from all men, yet he made himself a servant to all, that he might gain the more. Vers. 19. To the Jews he became as a Jew, to them that are under the Law as under the Law. Vers. 20. To them that are without Law, as without Law (though he was not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ). Vers. 21. To the weak he became as weak, and he made himself (by way of condescension) all things unto all men that he might by all means save some, Vers. 22. And the reason why he exercised himself in this duty, was not only for the good of others, but for his own good also in three things. First, that he might partake of the Gospel with everyone in every condition, Vers. 23. Secondly, that he might keep himself in a fit temper of spirit, so to run in his calling, as to receive the prize, and so to fight as not to beat the air, Vers. 24, 25, 26. And thirdly, that he might be master of his own body, lest if he neglected the duty of bringing it into subjection, he might be found himself a reprobate after all his pains in preaching the Gospel unto others, Vers. 27. Thus we see that the Apostle doth make this not only a duty which as lawful, but in some sort necessary to the faithful discharge of the ministerial function, even so far that without the performance of it, a man can neither gain all sorts of people to the Gospel, nor partake fully of the Gospel himself, nor be in a temper so to run and strive as to gain his incorruptible crown before others, nor at last escape the danger of being a castaway, although he hath painfully preached the Gospel unto others. From all which we must conclude, that the study of condescension, chiefly in a Minister, with whom I am now dealing, is not a matter of indifferency, but a duty of very great importance. And if so, then we are obliged in conscience, not only to resolve upon the practice, but to seek out the rules by which our conversation in this matter may be ordered aright: for seeing in every duty, there are some rules, and in this of condescension (because none do set

themselves to the practice thereof) the rules are not looked into. Seeing also none ought in anything to presume to prescribe rules unto others, but all should rather in all humility search after the discovery thereof in the holy Scriptures, and then hold forth in simplicity that which God doth teach them, and they find profitable for the edification of others, therefore we shall apply ourselves unto this search, and offer that which we suppose neither side will except against; and yet may prove a sufficient directory for the practice of condescension, and the transaction of a forbearance in the cases of our divisions.

We shall say then, that to find out without difficulty the rules of condescension towards a forbearance, three things should be reflected upon.

1. That wherein there can be no yielding.
2. That wherein there may be and ought to be a voluntary yielding.
3. That which may draw forth, and oblige the spirits of men, to discover the things whereunto they shall be willing of themselves to yield.

Concerning the first, there can be no condescension proposed which should oblige any to make profession of anything otherwise then it is in his heart. For no man can with a good conscience yield to profess any untruth, or transact to relinquish his sense and opinion of anything which he doth esteem a point of truth or of right, I say no man can condescend to relinquish his opinion, or his challenge of a right to a privilege: because the matters of truth and right can edify no man, but disedify both ourselves and others, if they be denied and professedly given up. A man may dispense with a truth so far as not to speak of it, to all sorts of persons, or at all times, because they

cannot bear it, nor is it seasonable for edification to speak all truths at all times: as we may see by Christ's example, John 16.12. and the Apostles practice, 1 Cor. 3.1, 2. and the rules, Matth. 7.6. and Rom. 14.1. And concerning a point of right a man may dispense with the use of it, as we see the Apostle doth, 1 Cor. 9. But no man ought to yield himself obliged to deny any truth, or not to bear witness to it when it is opposed, or not to challenge his right to a privilege, when it is called in question, for to do so were to betray truth and righteousness, which cannot stand with a good conscience: therefore no condescension may be intended to suppress the profession of these things, but rather a transaction is to be intended to this purpose, that both sides shall bear with one another in such a profession without offense, and grant a freedom to each other to declare the truth, as it is in their hearts, for this is the duty and one of the commendable characters of those, that shall abide in the tabernacle of God and dwell in his holy hill, Psal. 15.1, 2.

Concerning the second, namely that wherein there may and ought to be a voluntary yielding on all sides; I shall not take upon me to specify any rules (for that is to be referred to the transaction of the forbearance itself) but I shall only mention the heads of matters, whereof rules may be determined and gathered from the Word.

As first, there may and ought to be a mutual condescension towards the settling of ways and expedients of different sorts, of orderly proceedings at several places and times in public meetings, for the confirmation of the unity of the spirits of brethren, in the common profession, and for the avoiding of confusion. As for example, at the public meetings in some places they have no Assessors adjoined to him that is the Prolocutor, in other places they have; in some places the Prolocutor or Mediator of the meeting is perpetually the same, in other places he is continually changed; and that either by a new

election through the plurality of votes, or without any election by a vicissitudinary succession of one after another, into the office of presiding over the meeting: in some places nothing is determined without the consent of all, in other places it is otherwise: and where the consent of all is required, in some places the Presides of the action is obliged to ask every man's vote distinctly and in order; in other places that custom is not precisely observed, but it is free for anyone to speak when he can get a turn, and if matters go against his sense, to enter his dissent; and elsewhere, who doth not give his consent, is not obliged to the determination. In all such ways of orderly proceedings, if those that entertain the meetings for their mutual edification do alter their constitutions according to circumstances of times, places, persons, and affairs, upon grounds which they think valid for the end for which they meet, (I say) in all such ways a condescension may and ought to be mutually intended; and there ought not to be any breach of unity and affection for the difference of opinions amongst Brethren in matters of this nature. Only a care is to be had, that the general rules of order and decency be observed according to the Apostles commandment, 1 Cor. 14.40.

Secondly, there may and ought to be a voluntary condescension to all the means which are thought by those, who are of repute, fit and expedient to give just satisfaction to any that are possessed with prejudices against us, or to clear mistakes, or to prevent the evil effects of sinister reports, or to take away all inconveniencies and scandals of that nature: (I say) there ought to be a yielding to all motions in that kind which do not prejudicate the truth: because all things that are commendable and of good report are to be followed; and all the occasions of murmurings, of jealousies and of discontents are to be avoided. In such a case as this, Peter condescended to make an Apology for himself to those of the circumcision who contended with him for his going unto Cornelius, Act. 11.2, 3, 4. till 19. and Paul

at the advice of James and the Elders of Jerusalem went into the Temple and condescended to observe the customs of the ceremonial Law to take away the prejudice which many had against him, Acts 21. verse. 18. till 28. Another time Paul of his own accord did circumcise Timothy by way of condescension to the Jews, who were weak and would have been offended if that had not been done, Act. 18.1, 2, 3. but when the cause was altered, and by condescending to circumcise Titus the liberty of the Gospel would have been prejudged towards the Gentiles, he would not at all yield unto it, Gal. 2.3.4, 5.

Thirdly, there ought to be a condescension in matters of indifferency, such as the Apostle doth mention, Rom. 14. throughout, to bear with the weak: item, in matters of offense, which may be foreseen, we are bound to prevent the same by yielding unto the weak and ignorant, lest either our good be evil spoken of, or our Brother be grieved at what we do, or his conscience be emboldened by our example (whiles it wanteth light, to discern its own liberty) to sin, Rom. 14.15, 16. and 1 Cor. 8.9, 10, 11, 12, 13. and chap. 10. verse. 23. till the end.

Fourthly and lastly, there ought to be a condescension to bear with all men in that whereunto they have not yet attained; that by the things whereunto they have attained, and our friendly converse with them, according to the rules of edification, they may be gained. Concerning this way of condescension towards others, these places are considerable, Matth. 12.18, 19, 20. and 1 Cor. 9.19. till the end, Gal. 4.12. and 6.1. 2 Tim. 2.24, 25, 26, and 1 Thes. 5.14, 15.20, 21. Phil. 3.15, 16. And all things which flow from the principles of Charity, Gentleness, meekness, and humility, with prudence and discretion, for the good of those that err, and are ignorant, may be called a condescension, and ought to be practiced in imitation of Christ and his Apostles, from whom the rules of forbearance are to be learned, Col. 3.13.

Concerning the third which is the way to draw forth the spirits of men, to discover the things whereunto they shall be willing of themselves to condescend unto others; I shall offer an expedient which I suppose none who desireth to walk in the light will think unreasonable or unconscionable, and that is this. That all such as would be borne withal in anything by others, should offer first unto those from whom they expect a brotherly forbearance, all that condescension which they intend to use, and the rules of forbearance by which they purpose to walk towards them: for this is according to Christ's fundamental rule of justice, Matth. 7.12. Whatsoever things you would have men do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. If this one rule were rightly applied and followed, there would be no great difficulty in transacting this matter; chiefly if we take up the practice of it, not upon the grounds of human policy, but of Christian obedience to the duty which is commanded, Heb. 3.12. Exhort one another daily whiles it is called today, and Heb. 10.24. Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, and Phil. 2.15, 16. Be ye blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, shine as lights in the world, bold forth the word of life. From all which this expedient will follow towards the finding out of the rules of condescension; that everyone who doth delight to go before others in good works, and walk in the light, ought (in obedience to the will of God revealed in these commandments) of his own accord to offer unto his neighbor, with whom he doth desire to walk in peace and unity, a full discovery of those principles and rules, by which he doth find himself obliged in conscience, according to God's will, to walk towards everyone in the ways of condescension.

If everyone would do this freely and fully, it would be easy, without any danger of disagreement or of debates about particular interests (which continually trouble the ways of our profession) to set down

the rules of condescension and forbearance, for that might be taken as a rule to bind everyone, which he should offer freely, and acknowledge to be an obligation upon his conscience; or which being offered unto him by others, should by the Law of love bind him to practice the like unto them. For I conceive this to be equal, that what another doth yield unto me (supposing the matter in itself to be lawful) I should yield unto him in like manner, even as I would have him yield unto me that which I offer unto him; as then I would not have any to press upon me anything of a Religions concernment, further then my light from the Word doth lead me to embrace it: so I ought not to intend to press upon others anything of that nature further then their light doth lead them, but as I would be born withal, so I should bear with another, till God give in more light to either of us, by private meditations or regular conferences. In the meantime let that which is yielded on all sides be settled as a rule of agreement to walk by, and improved to the best advantage of peace and unity. Thus we see, that if everyone would but hold forth his principles of light and life unto others, and would bind himself as in the presence of God, to walk answerable thereunto; we might easily come to the settlement and observation of the rules of condescension.

CHAPTER XI.

Concerning the causes of disaffection and of breaches, how they should be removed by common consent.

The first and original causes of disaffection and of breaches are for the most part not taken notice of, and hardly discerned by many, even then when they are discovered, because they lie very close to our nature, for they are commonly nothing else, but the neglect of

charitable inclinations and duties; and the unadvised admitting of prejudices, and entertaining of evil surmises, which not being observed and cured, fester in the mind, and first breed a shyness or wariness of him, against whom they are conceived, then a distance from him, afterwards a strangeness to his ways; and lastly a breach of unity with opposition. The causes of prejudice are very many in all sorts of men; those which the ungodly and natural man doth entertain, against a conscionable and religious walking with God, I need not here to meddle withal (another hath handled that subject profitably at large, and showed the cure thereof) but those which godly and religious men, through human frailty entertain one against another, are the matter which here is to be considered, to make the way of unity and forbearance plain and easy, and I shall now only name them, and point at the cure thereof in a word or two; because I do intend to speak to men of understanding only, to whom God hath committed the charge of souls, and my aim towards them is, not to dictate anything, but only to discover the possibility of a cure of this disease; first in themselves, and then in their hearers, by the removal of the chief causes of all our prejudices; which I shall reduce to two heads, whereof the one is openly, the other is secretly offensive.

That which doth openly offend, and causeth prejudices to rise in the minds of men, who are otherwise godly, and against men who are truly godly and their Brethren, is the irregularity of disputes and debates about matters of Religion, which is mainly twofold, some irregularity there is, in respect of the matter, some there is, in respect of the manner of disputing.

In respect of the matter prejudices are raised, when men strive about needless matters, and contend for words, and this the Apostle doth often warn Timothy to avoid, as a thing whereunto the Ministers

were and would be much subject, 1 Tim. 1.4, 5, 6. and chap. 4.7. and chap. 6.4, 5.20. and 2 Tim. 2.14, 15, 16, 17, 23.

In respect of the manner of debating matters which are necessary and profitable; prejudices are raised divers ways, but that which is the most common and hurtful, is that, of passionate and provoking expressions against a man's person and his opinions to make him odious, and his errors thought to be extreme dangerous in that wherein he dissents from us; these railing accusations, and all other injurious and insolent proceedings, breed averse affections, and stirring up men's spirits to strife and contradictions, augment prejudices extremely, and fill the Churches with disturbance and confusion.

That which doth offend more secretly and doth beget much prejudice, is the perverse and uncharitable observation of men's failings, when they are construed suspiciously to the worse sense, and then whispered in the ears of others, that are leading men, under the pretense of a caution, or warning given unto them, to take heed of this or of that, for the strengthening of their hands in partial designs, and the promoting of particular interests. This dark malicious devil, who covers himself oftentimes with a cloak of light and a zeal for holiness and truth, is exceeding busy in our days, and hurtful to our affairs, and doth work his mischief, not only against him, who is blasted in his reputation, to make all the good which his talents may produce unprofitable unto others; but also against the Authors of such whisperings themselves, to make them the ring-leaders of division and of evil intelligence amongst brethren.

These are in brief the chief causes of our prejudices, these must needs be removed; else the way of a lawful condescension and forbearance will never be plain and easy in the settlement, nor

lasting in the continuance; it will then be of absolute necessity that some course be taken to remedy the same. Therefore I shall for the present only advise, that when a brotherly transaction of matters, towards a mutual forbearance shall be intended, then some rules should be thought upon, debated, and by common consent settled, concerning three things.

First, how needless disputes and multiplicity of new controversies, breaking forth in the Press and Pulpit may be prevented.

Secondly, how the injuriousness of censures and of proceeding, which men of partial dispositions and of high thoughts run into, may be rectified; when disputes are necessary: And

Thirdly, how the secret mischief of suspicious whisperings and talebearing amongst Brethren may be prevented, and being discovered satisfactorily corrected.

And that some rules of righteousness may be found in the Word to remedy these evils, and may be raised from the nature of Christian charity, equity, ingenuity, piety, discretion, and prudence: I suppose none will deny, who doth believe that the holy Scriptures with and by the spirit of God, which is promised to the children of God are able to make the man of God perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work.

Thus I have made out (as briefly and as distinctly as this occasion seemeth to require) the truth of the first and second assertion of this discourse, namely that the Ministry of this kingdom is undeniably obliged in conscience to the mutual profession of Brotherhood; and that the terms of their unity and forbearance, are both in themselves full and satisfactory, and may be settled reciprocally amongst them, in a plain and easy way, if the men that lead others, were but willing

to look to God more than to men, and to conscience more than to outward interests.

CHAPTER XII.

The third Assertion. Concerning the motions which should induce us to make profession of this unity and forbearance: Why these are requisite, and what they are.

But now although these things are evidently thus demonstrable, and by all that which hitherto hath been alleged; it may be manifestly apparent, that these who are the leaders of the flocks, should not only stand united, and walk by one rule in that whereunto they have attained; but also, that their differences may and ought to be composed in love by amiable meetings, by orderly conferences, and by the settlement of a necessary and lawful forbearance of each other: although (I say) all this is so, yet we see to the great dishonor of God, the lamentable disadvantage of the truth, and the extreme grief of many godly souls, that this hath not hitherto, either been done or effectually prosecuted and intended by those that are in the work of the Ministry, or if it hath been intended by some, yet not so as it ought to have been, that is, upon the grounds which are proper unto their vocation.

What the causes of this neglect may be, we shall not now particularly search into; only in general, we may take notice that all such failings in duty may proceed from two main causes; either that men (otherwise knowing and godly, yet) consider not the necessity of this duty in respect of the evils that follow upon the neglect thereof, or that the excellency, commendableness and worth thereof is either

not known, or if not unknown, yet not laid to heart. Now then in this our present sad condition if anything can be suggested which may be a help to remove these causes of our failing in this kind, it may be hoped, that godly and conscionable men will be more careful of the performance, and more fearful of the neglect thereof, then hitherto they have been. Therefore it will not be amiss but may be of very great use, to offer some motives and inducements to incline them without partiality to these resolutions, and this we shall intend to do if God permit.

CHAPTER XIII.

Concerning the necessity of Brotherly unity in the Ministry.

If then we should take into consideration the absolute necessity of this duty, it will appear that the present evils whereinto these Churches, and the state of this kingdom are fallen, and which threaten all with unavoidable ruin, are mainly brought upon us through the neglect of that ministerial unity and correspondency, which is suitable unto Christianity.

For whosoever in the fear of God shall lay to heart the woeful condition of the Churches of Christ in this land, will perceive that amongst the manifold causes of our miserable breaches and sinful distractions, the original and consequently the greatest of all the rest is this; That such as are called to be the Ministers of the Gospel, who by their own confession are Brethren and fellow-laborers in the same employment, do not maintain those duties of Brotherly love, fellowship and communion, which by the nature of their work, and by the appointment of their Lord and Master are made necessary for

the manifestation of his glory, and for their own mutual edification. For seeing by that which hath been hitherto showed, it must needs be acknowledged, that they ought to stand together and look upon each other as Brethren begotten of the same Father, as fellow-soldiers in the same fight and warfare, and as fellow-members in the same body of Christ: Seeing (I say) this is confessed and cannot be denied to be so, it will follow also undeniably, that they ought in conscience to discharge the duties belonging to these relations, which are not only to profess a Brotherhood, but to be knit together in fervent love, to have the same care one for another, and jointly to communicate in things belonging to the kingdom of Christ. But that these duties, notwithstanding all these relations, are neither really thought upon, nor at all prosecuted to any purpose almost by any, is no less undeniable, and must needs (although to our great shame) be plainly and ingenuously confessed. Seeing then the guilt of this their fault is so great and so apparent, that no color of excuse can be pretended to extenuate it, therefore the judgment is ripe for them, and the punishment hath now in the sight of all the world most justly overtaken them: For whereas they were lately in a capacity to be as happy within themselves, and as profitable to the Kingdom of Christ abroad, as any of all the Ministers on earth if they had continued in their unity, now they are like to be more unsettled and more miserable within themselves, and less respected by others, and less useful both at home and abroad towards the cause of Christ, then any that are elsewhere in all the Churches, & this only, because they have suffered themselves in their profession to be divided, and have not regarded nor do they yet regard the duties of their Christian Brotherhood so much as outward concernments. For by this means they have corrupted the Covenant, and are become partial in the Law, and caused many to stumble at the Law, and therefore the Lord hath made them contemptible, and caused all their adversaries to prevail against them, so that they have just cause to give glory unto

him, to lay their hands upon their mouths, to be sensible of their guiltiness, and to accept of the punishment of their transgressions. For if the very vocation wherewith all the professors of the Gospel are called unto God, doth oblige them to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace one with another; far more doth it oblige the Ministers, to intend before others this great and fundamental duty in the vocation wherewith they are called. And if all the members of the mystical body of Christ are by God's appointment fitly joined together, and ought to be compacted in their stations to make the increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love, by that which every joint supplieth, then it must needs also be granted, that the chief joints of these members are more especially appointed by God, and obliged in conscience to be united in their relations, and compacted in the duties of their ministerial employments. But how far they are not only distant from this conjunction, but have even an aversion unto it, I need not at all to mention (the thing is clear as the Sun at noon day) nor shall I search at whose door the fault doth principally lie, whether here or there (for I know that everyone will justify his own proceedings). But this I shall freely say, and I say it with grief of heart; and therefore I hope without offense to either side; that this is the great sin of the Ministry, and the misery of this Nation, that at this time, when a concurrence of affections and of endeavors, is so absolutely necessary for the preservation of the truth in the very fundamentals thereof, and when we all are called forth to fight in the same cause as it were for our life, that (I say) at this time there is so much of animosity prevailing, and so small a sense of Christianity in common duties and of imminent dangers found in men's hearts, that it is almost impossible to move any to compassionate one another's calamities; far less to draw any to rise up and stand united, for each other's conservation, that (I say again) it is so with us at such a time, this is the great sin of the Ministry and the misery of this Nation. For where is the man to be found that doth

truly mourn, and not rejoice rather at his opposites parties failings and miscarriages; and yet we know that charity doth not rejoice at iniquity? Where is he that doth seek to heal breaches upon common principles and without a particular interest? And yet we all know that charity doth not seek itself; and who is he that doth blow a trumpet from the battle and seek for a cessation from needless and injurious controversies? Who is he that doth endeavor a through and unprejudicate reconciliation? And who dare own a Treaty for mutual condescension, without a fear of being cast off, or fallen upon by his Brethren? And yet we all know; that we are seriously exhorted, even because the Lord is at hand, to let our moderation be known to all men; and that we are expressly commanded to seek peace and follow after it; and that it is our duty to become all things unto everyone for their edifications sake; and, if it be possible and so far as in us lieth, to have peace with all men.

What shall we say then to these things? Shall we still justify ourselves notwithstanding the manifest transgression of all these rules? No surely, for to cover or to excuse this fault would aggravate the guilt thereof; and to discover or condemn it, is the way to gain pardon for it; but to reform and remove the causes thereof, is that only which in this case will make us happy: for it will avail nothing to confess our sin, except it be forsaken. Let us then look upon it so, as to resolve effectually upon a course of reformation. Our sin, in a word, is this breach of Christian unity. The chief causes thereof are carnal self-seeking, disorderly controversies, and the want of true brotherly inclinations, notwithstanding the manifold bonds, and the name of brotherhood taken up amongst us. The remedies of these causes are, that we should learn self-denial from Christ, that we should not strive nor cry, nor let our voice be heard in the streets, nor quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed, but that we should in truth and sincerity, as in the presence of God, consider one another,

to exhort and provoke each other unto love and to good works. Now to move us effectually hereunto (next unto the express and known will of God, which is before all others the greatest of inducements) I know nothing that should be more powerful with us, then the discovery of the doleful and pernicious effects of our divisions and distempers. For whilst we are thus at a distance for points of outward order, the inward substance of the profession is not regarded. Whilst we contend for circumstantials, concerning the ways of going about our work, the main of the work is left undone; and whilst for temporal jealousies about small matters, Brethren uphold no spiritual correspondency, Satan in matters of the greatest concernments hath gotten this advantage against us, that the whole doctrine of truth is become doubtful unto very many; and the Gospel itself, and in it the ways of peace (the chief object of comfort) are made a matter of strife and contradiction unto all. And if we will observe particulars, we shall perceive that amongst other things by this way of strife and contradiction, he hath prevailed chiefly in this, that the very being of an orderly Ministry is called in question, and opposed most universally: For to abolish the work, and the office of the ordinary ministry, is that about which under several pretenses all his agents on all hands, are most earnestly employed, and by their means all the fundamentals of order and ordinances in the Church are already unsettled, and all the grounds of authority in the State are almost quite overthrown: For by and upon some principles of that, which is called a new light, it is free for everyone to do what seemeth good in his own eyes without control, or giving account thereof unto any. This licentious freedom doth lead them that follow it to the fulfilling of all their fleshly desires, and doth confirm them in all manner of confusion, wherein the spirit of railing, of bitterness, of envy, of contradiction and of uncharitableness in opposing and censuring others, doth increase strife and hatred, and multiplieth scandals infinitely, all which bring forth the woes that lie upon us.

For to rail and caluminate without shame is become the very trade of many; nor is there any way left almost either in Church or Commonwealth to redress the injuries of this kind, though never so gross and palpable. All this breaketh the hearts of the godly, staggereth the weak, gladdeth the adversaries, openeth a door to all profaneness, and causeth the Name of God to be blasphemed, and the way of truth to be evil spoken of in the world, at which Atheists and Papists triumph and exult with joy, expecting in the end, that the effect of all this will be the utter ruin and desolation of all Protestants.

He that cannot see these evils to rise originally from the misbehaviors of Brethren in the Ministry of the Gospel about their differences, is wholly blind; he that doth not feel the inconveniences thereof is senseless, and he that cannot grieve for the same, is hardened in sinfulness.

Now because all these inconveniencies reach unto all the Professors in some sort alike, therefore everyone (though chiefly the Ministers, as chief of the Professors) should be moved thereby to contribute their whole strength towards the speedy removal thereof.

But besides these common evils, there is in this neglect (whereof the Ministry is most of all guilty) something which doth more especially reflect, (and that justly) upon themselves, more than others, and from them upon their Ministerial function, as tending to make void the authority, and wholly frustrate the end of their ordinary vocation. For although personal faults ought not to prejudice the vocation & the credit of the function; yet because it is very natural to all men to make a consequence from the one to the other, therefore the Apostle will have even the meanest of the profession to behave themselves so, as it may not suffer any disesteem for their sakes. For speaking of

servants professing Christianity to Titus and to Timothy, he will have them to show all good fidelity unto their masters, that they may adorn the doctrine of Christ our Savior in all things, and to honor their masters, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed, through their misbehavior. If then Christianity itself will suffer in the opinions of men, and be discredited by the faults of the meanest that take the name thereof upon them, how shall it not be discredited by the miscarriages of those that are the chiefest of the profession? And how shall the credit of the ministry be upheld in men's opinions and affections, if those to whom the charge thereof is committed, dishonor their administration? And how can they be thought to honor their administration, if they walk not answerable unto the end thereof? Now there is nothing more opposite unto the true end of the Ministerial calling, then this very neglect of duty, whereof they are at this time found guilty: For the end, use and effect of the Ministerial work is, to reform the world; To perfect the Saints, and to edify the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man; but this effect must needs be made void, and this end frustrate, as long as the Ministers maintain no Brotherly communion one with another, but stand at their distances, and are single by themselves; so as to have no familiarity of concurrence about their Masters work, even although he hath therein strictly commanded them to be united. For how can they reform others, that are not reformed themselves? How can they be thought fit to perfect the Saints so long as they seek not one another's perfection? How can they be said to advance the unity of Faith who do all things belonging to the profession of faith within themselves dividedly? How can they in the work of the Ministry be able jointly to build up the same body of Christ, who in that work maintain no communion one with another in reference unto his body; but rather set themselves to make up everyone a separate body for himself? And how can they be able to bring all unto the unity of

the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man through love, whose imperfection in love is such; that they do value no common relations unto Christ and his service further then these set up some private interests; nor do mind the unity of the spirit through the love of Christ which is common unto all, so much as to entertain either comembership, or ministerial fellowship, or true Gospel-work-acquaintance with any, that are not either settled in the circumstantial courses of their way, or willing to come up unto them therein? We see then upon these grounds, that except this neglect of duty be reformed, and the true end of the Ministerial work without human aims, be heartily entertained by those to whom it is entrusted, the effects thereof will never prosper in their hands; but Satan (as hitherto he hath done since they were divided) will continually prevail against them all, till he hath brought them unto final destruction and irrecoverable desolation.

This then is the danger whereinto we are fallen, and to lay this to heart is that matter of absolute necessity, which by all should be apprehended, but chiefly by those that are called to the Ministry, that they in doing their principal duty, which is to study unity in the truth in Christianity, may uphold the holy profession, and thereby intend their mutual preservation. For without all doubt their very being in this kingdom, if they take not this course, will be very shortly in a most desperate condition; because as it is undeniably apparent, that hitherto nothing but their own disunion about matters extra-fundamental, hath made Satan and their enemies to prevail against them. So it is clearly manifest that henceforth nothing but their mutual union will be effectual to maintain what they yet hold, or restore what they have lost in the minds of men, and of their standing in the profession; he then that doth decline to concur in the ways of spiritual unity with those that offer and sue for the same unto him, and being convicted of this danger doth not endeavor to

prevent it, shall be found guilty of all the evils that follow upon our breaches, of all the ruin that befalleth unto these Churches, of all the confusions that from thence arise unto the Commonwealth, of all the dishonor done to the name of Christ for want of order in his house, and of all the shame and reproach which this Nation is either now aspersed withal abroad amongst their Neighbors, or will in after ages cleave unto it. If then there is any love to the Fundamental truths of the Gospel, if there is any zeal for righteousness and against damnable heresies, if there is any just hatred due to Blasphemies, and to the ways of profaneness and licentiousness, whereby the kingdom of Satan is erected, and settled upon the ruins of Christ's kingdom amongst us; and if there is any faithfulness and constancy to be expected from those that professing Christianity, have entered into solemn protestations, vows and covenants to stand united according to the will of God, for the advancement of a common reformation, and the settlement of our union therein: if I say there be any such thing as love to truth, zeal for righteousness and faithfulness of Christian Covenants; I may adjure such as pretend thereunto, to show themselves at this time therein, for their own and their Brethren's preservation, that by the duties of Brotherly unity in the holy profession, they may be found to keep faith and a good conscience without blame.

For as it is not possible, that the Faith once given to the Saints can be maintained by any, without a good conscience, so the integrity of a good conscience cannot be kept without observing the end of the holy Commandment, which is the practice of love out of a pure heart. Now this practice amongst Ministers in their Ministerial charges, can be none other but a conscionable concurrence of their spirits in that aim, wherein the all relate unto Christ, to strengthen one another's hands in the works of his service. For their unity and love to each other can have no truth, but as it relates unto him, nor can it relate

otherwise unto him, then by fulfilling his will, in doing the works of his service; and if this aim be lost in any, let them pretend what they will, their conscience is not sound, their performance is not acceptable, nor will their endeavors be forever established; hence it is, that because many have left off to aim sincerely at this (who either delight to stand wholly by themselves, and give way to dividing principles and practices; or think it more expedient to stand wholly associated, but give way to the means of human power to trust more thereunto than to the duties of Christian love and serviceableness) therefore it is just with God to withdraw from such of both sides that walk in these ways, and from their undertakings, the blessing of his presence. So that by reason of the want of his strength to go along, and conduct, to guide them, all their hands are weakened, nothing which is undertaken doth prosper, the service of Christ's house is not advanced, the stewards thereof are either divided by themselves, or scattered by others, and generally they are as men without a heart, afraid one of another: and through these their breaches, a whole deluge of damnable errors, and a full current of all unrighteous, wicked and scandalous practices, hath overwhelmed and almost drowned the Churches; so that the very floodgates of hell seem to be opened upon us, and have covered us with the proud waves of all licentiousness.

And although it cannot be denied, but that it is just with God, to suffer Satan thus far to prevail against all for the sins of all, and to make this breach upon the Leaders for their failing in the Ministry; yet it is far from me to think, (as some do) that the promise of God is failed in this our age; at if there were neither true Church nor Ministry anymore amongst us, or anywhere in this world, but that the gates of hell, having prevailed against the Church, which Christ did once institute by his Apostles; a new mission must be expected, and a new foundation laid for the erecting of his kingdom. I say God

forbid that I should think so. Yea, let God be true but every man a liar: for I believe that heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word that is gone out of Christ's mouth shall not pass away. Now Christ upon a special occasion said distinctly unto his Disciples three things, which are these.

1. That his Church should be built upon the rock of that truth, whereof the Apostles made confession, which was, that Jesus was the Christ, the son of the living God.

2. That the gates of hell should not prevail against that Church.

3. And lastly, That the keys of the kingdom of heaven with authority to bind and loose on earth, whatever should be bound and loosened in heaven, shall be given to this Church. These promises I believe to be so sure that they shall never fail: Therefore I must conclude, that neither the foundation of the Church, nor the Church which is built thereupon, nor the Ministerial authority of the keys given to that Church, shall fail so long as this world doth last. For what although some do not believe, and are disobedient to the will of God; shall their unbelief and disobedience make the faith and truth of God without effect? God forbid, yea all men are to be found liars, that God may be found true; for he hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all: therefore in his sayings he shall be justified, and when he is judged overcome. We must therefore acknowledge that by our unrighteousness the righteousness of God is to be commended; and that although we of this Nation should utterly fail him, and be no more worthy to be counted his Church, yet that he will never fail to do what he hath said unto the seed of Christ amongst men, and never recall the word which he hath spoken concerning his Church. But this we are bound to believe, that wheresoever there is a society of men believing with their heart, and

with their mouth making openly profession of this truth, that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God, there is a Church existent; and wheresoever a Church is existent, there the authority of the keys is not wanting; because Christ hath said that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I shall then confidently conclude from these premises two things, first, seeing there are societies of believers which are here existent and known to be built upon that truth, which is the foundation, that therefore notwithstanding all these failings in particular duties, whereof they are guilty, that yet God's promise for the main will never be wanting to them, as to his Church. Secondly, I may infer this also, that notwithstanding all the advantages which Satan seemeth to have gotten, both against the Ministry of this Church, and against their administrations therein (whereby he doth blast them, and the fruit of their labors) yet we may be sure, that he shall never prevail so far as to make void the privilege of the Church, which is to have a right to the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and thereby to the administration of all Christ's Ordinances.

Now then although indeed it is very sad and lamentable, that the Builders themselves should be so far wanting to their duty, as by their divisions to give such an advantage unto Satan, that he should be able, visibly to pull down more than they are able to build up: yet we know that all things, even these same and such like failings, will work together for the best towards those that love God, and that all the advantages which Satan hath gotten against the kingdom of Christ, will tend together to God's greater glory and Satan's own overthrow at last. For as the wrath of man shall surely praise the Lord, so the plots of Satan and all his prevailing upon the infirmities of his Saints, when he shall have mercy upon Zion, will redound exceedingly to the increase of his glory, by the manifestation of the riches of his grace, and of the stability of his purposes, in setting up the kingdom of Jesus Christ through a final and total destruction of

all the enemies thereof. Seeing then I have cause to hope for such an issue of this warfare, I shall not fear that the discovery of this failing in the Ministry will be taken as a reproach to discredit them towards others in their function (which I acknowledge in its own way and degree to be of God & not of man) but rather as an admonition of love to show to those that are conscionable the necessity of laying their own condition to heart, and of seeking the remedy thereof, in that way wherein it may be found. And that I may not be wanting unto this design, I shall add one thing more, for the demonstration of the necessity of this duty of brotherly unity, which is so much neglected amongst us, that afterwards I may come to speak more fully of the usefulness and excellency thereof.

In the profession of Christianity the Apostle saith, that neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk by this rule, Peace (saith he will) be upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. Here then we see that the fruits of Peace and of mercy are God's blessings upon the life of the new Creature; and where these fruits are not at all apparent, but on the contrary a spirit of strife, of bitterness, of hatred and of merciless affection doth prevail, there we needs must say, that the old creature is still alive, because the wisdom which is earthly, sensual and devilish, which is the old man's rule, brings forth such effects. Now it is the proper work of the true Ministers of the Gospel, to persuade all men to live the life of the new Creature, and to mortify the members of the old man, which are upon the earth, whereof these are a part. But if through the spirit of division and variance, the Ministers themselves are entangled in these passions, and that even one against another; so that they do not show forth all meekness with all longsuffering and forbearance, wherein they ought to receive each other to the glory of God, as Christ received us, how can they perform this work? How can they persuade others to walk

by a rule which they mind not, and wherein they themselves are not exercised? It is clear then, that to do the proper work of their Ministry, it is necessary for them to intend the duty of brotherly love and unity.

Moreover it is said here, that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision doth avail anything in Christ Jesus, and if this is so, then the division and distraction, which is amongst us for things of such a kind is sinful and necessary to be left off; for I am sure that circumcision to the Jews, and uncircumcision to the Gentile was a matter of greater concernment, then anything about which we at this time are divided. And if that ought not to have made a breach between them, far less these things amongst us. Now that which by the new Creature is available in Christ Jesus, is faith only which worketh by love. If then the Ministers of the Gospel are appointed by God to beget faith and love in their hearers (that is, to persuade the unbelievers thereunto, and to build up and confirm and increase the believers therein) by the testimony of Jesus, and by their unity and love amongst themselves, how shall they be able to do this, except they be first agreed to hold forth the same testimony, and except there be some amiable concurrence amongst them in the works of their Ministry? Therefore as faith and love are inseparably necessary to make a true Christian: so the testimony of Jesus, and the spirit of unity are inseparably requisite for the work of the Ministry. For as there is an absolute necessity lying upon the Ministry to bear witness unto the truth, towards the manifestation thereof, for the saving of their own souls: So they are also no less necessitated to maintain the profession of their unity, for the edification of their hearers. For without this profession, that manifestation will never in reason be found a truth fit to convict the world, which otherwise it may be; because as it is just, that when witnesses do not agree, their testimony should not be received, so it is equitable that when they do

agree, their testimony should not be rejected. And if by this only default, they make their testimony without effect, it is evident, that to establish the truth and not to discredit it, to uphold the Ministry and not to make it contemptible, to build up the Churches and not to ruin them, and to confirm the faith of the Professors and not to stagger them, the profession and practice of Brotherly unity amongst the Ministers of the Gospel, is absolutely necessary. For all may see, that are not blind and senseless; that originally nothing but the neglect of this duty, hath deprived us of all our hopes and blessings, and brought us under the yoke of all these miseries. Upon all which this consequence doth manifestly follow; that the only way to preserve the remnant which is left entire, to restore that which is not utterly decayed in the Church, and to help this distracted State unto some settlement (if there be any possibility of attaining it) is this. That the Ministers of the Gospel should set themselves to concur and correspond together, that they may hold forth unto the world in the testimony of Jesus Christ, the loveliness, the peaceableness, the meekness and the unity of his spirit, to the end that both they and their hearers may follow therein his footsteps, as he is gone before us to leave us an example. For this is a path of the new and the living way, which he hath consecrated for us; and out of this way no man can come unto the Father, it is therefore absolutely necessary, that such as will enter into the holiest, become followers of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and made himself as one of us, even our Brother, to gain us unto God.

CHAPTER XIV.

Concerning the usefulness and commendableness of brotherly unity
in the work of the Ministry.

Sect. I. What the communion and correspondency is, wherein our unity is to be settled.

Hitherto we have reflected upon that which doth make the study of brotherly love and unity amongst us absolutely necessary to avoid the danger of ruin and destruction, and the guilt of hindering the progress of the Gospel in the world; now we shall reflect also upon the usefulness and commendableness of the duty in reference unto the work of the Ministry. It is no generous disposition to be drawn by mere necessity and fear unto a duty, but to be moved thereunto by the loveliness of grace, and by that which is excellent therein, is praiseworthy and argueth a noble and virtuous inclination. Therefore we shall set ourselves to work upon this inclination, and endeavor to waken it in everyone that hath ingenuity. And my aim shall be rather to deal with the understandings of all (able to consider of their ways) to demonstrate that which I conceive to be a duty; then with the affections of any, to persuade them unto a performance, before they are convicted of that, which is the will of God therein. For I shall speak to Ministers, and such as I must suppose to be conscionable; and to those I knew nothing so effectual to persuade, as to evidence unto them, that a matter is conformable unto the will of God, for nothing but this doth interest conscience into action.

Now lest I should be mistaken in that which I shall desire to offer as a duty of the Ministry, I shall contract all, which for the present I have to say, to one assertion; which having opened, I shall endeavor to make good.

The assertion is this.

That although there were no danger of any enemies, or of inward breaches and divisions in the Church (for the preventing of which, to study the unity of the spirit it wholly necessary) yet that for the true (1) Ministers of the Gospel, in the duties (2) of their ministerial charge, nothing is more conscionable, (3) nothing more profitable, (4) nothing more commendable, (5) and nothing more suitable to the glory of God, (6) and the perfecting (7) of the Saints, then to (8) maintain a Brotherly communion (9) and correspondency one with another, and that such as lay not this duty to heart, but love rather to stand and walk by (10) themselves, and to maintain the principles (11) of a singular distance from their brethren in the Ministry, will not be able in the end to approve their consciences unto God, that they walk worthy of the calling wherewith they are called. This assertion is somewhat large, therefore to open the parts thereof, that my meaning may be the better understood, I shall say of the several heads thereof thus.

1. That by the true Ministers of the Gospel are meant none but such persons as are authorized by an ordinary and regular way of calling to administer the public ordinances of Christ in his Church.

2. That by the duties of their Ministerial charge are meant the works which in and towards the Church are to be performed as an office, and such are, To labor in the word and prayer, to have the care of gathering and constituting the Church, to rule and govern the Saints committed to their charge as one body in Christ, to dispense the seals of the Covenant to those that belong unto it, and to exercise Church discipline over those that are liable to it. all which they are bound to attend as occasion is offered, and the edification of the Church doth require.

3. That when I say a thing is conscionable, I mean that it is prescribed by God in his word as a duty which cannot be neglected without contracting of guilt unto the conscience.

4. When I say, that a thing is profitable, I mean that it doth yield in its own kind some benefit to him that useth it.

5. When I say, that a thing is commendable, I mean that it hath qualities for which it is to be esteemed and embraced by all.

6. By brotherly communion and correspondency I mean not a bare name and profession of brotherhood, but a real conjunction of the thoughts, of the desires and affections, and of the endeavors of men, proceeding from this principle, that they acknowledge one another to be the children of the same Father, or at least the servants of the same master: for as a master is a father to servants, so fellow-servants are brethren in service.

7. By the meaning of the communion and correspondency, I mean a constant following of the duties thereof, through the acknowledgment of some professed engagement obliging thereunto.

8. By the glory of God in this duty to be aimed at, I mean besides the general praise due to him for all his goodness, a more special manifestation of the unity of his Name in all his Saints.

9. By the perfection of the Saints in this duty to be advanced, I mean three things.

1. The building of them up into one body, by the oneness of the Name of God, as Christ and the Father are one, that they may be perfect in one.

2. The strengthening of them with might by the Spirit in the inner man, that being knit together in love, they may be comforted unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the Ministry of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.

3. The powerful propagating of the Gospel of truth in the world, to be a testimony thereunto to convict it that Christ is sent of the Father, and a means to call in all the elect of God, to the communion of Saints out of it.

10. By the standing and walking by ones self.

I mean not the distinction of charges (as if none might stand or walk in a distinct office, wherein another hath no right to intermeddle) or the maintaining of the particular rights, belonging to particular Congregations, (for I hold that every Church hath within itself a right to all Christ's ordinances, in respect that it is built upon the foundation) but I mean the disjointing of men's practices, and the dividing of their affections and purposes in the exercise of their distinct charges, whereby as parties in opposition to one another, they set up marks of distinction and separation between themselves and others, whom they cannot deny to belong to Jesus Christ and to be built upon the same foundation with themselves.

11. By the maintaining of principles of a singular distance, I mean such a plea for the rights and privileges of particular associations of professors, as doth make void the fit jointing and compacting of themselves together with others that stand upon the same foundation, that according to the purpose of God the whole building may be fitly framed together and grow unto a holy temple in the Lord. For all are called unto the unity of the same body by God; and the ministerial work is appointed to bring all to the unity of the same faith and knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the

measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. If therefore any plea be taken up for a singular distance which is grounded upon disjointing principles; this will not suit with the purpose of God, which is to make up the whole body of Christ into one, that by the compacting of the members thereof, there may be an effectual working in the measure of every part, to make the increase of the body, for the building of itself up in love. What principle then soever doth overthrow this compacting of the whole, for this end to be fulfilled in and by every part; is destructive to the glory of Christ, and the happiness of his members. If then the principle of Christian liberty and the plea for it, and for the particular rights of distinct Congregations, is made, by the subtlety of Satan, the chief instrument of our divisions and distractions at this time, and in this kind, it must be qualified by the principle of holy communion, and the plea for the unity of the members of Christ, and for the common rights of the profession of Christianity. For the Apostolical rule is clear, that we are indeed called unto liberty, only we must neither use liberty, nor plead for it, that it may give an occasion to the flesh, but we are commanded by love to serve one another, because the whole Law is fulfilled in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. And if this Law be not observed, it is clear that we walk not worthy of the calling wherewith we are called, whatever the truth of our principle, or the justice of our plea may be in itself. For it is not the Theoretical upholding of a truth that will save us, but the doing of the will of God: woe be then unto us, if by our disputes for that which we think to be truth and righteousness, Satan doth ensnare us; and by the practice of a singular distance, doth so far lead us out of the way, as to make us his instruments to divide and disjoint the spirits and the practices of professors; that the essential unity of the whole, and the visible conjunction of the members, being put out of the thoughts and aims of common professors, all societies may be broken to pieces, and all relations to common duties made void, according to

the will and fancy of everyone, that will pretend to be a Saint in such or such a degree above his neighbor; that so by our singular distances through strife (for self-interests) scandals may be multiplied, and the honor of God's Name in the holy profession blasphemed in the world. Therefore to avoid all this, nothing is so fit or more necessary and useful, then to maintain this communion and correspondency, which we plead for, which is nothing else but a free and voluntary concurrence of spiritual counsels and endeavors, which God as the Father of Spirits and King of Saints doth require in his children and Office-bearers, for the advancement of the kingdom of his Son, that it may appear unto the world, that the Church is his house, that he is the ruler of it by his Word and Spirit, and that the Ministers thereof depend unanimously upon him, as his children and servants; and that in their mutual relations they stand united to each other, not by a rule of their own choosing and transacting; from which they may exclude one way or other whomsoever they please, but by the common rule which is his love, whereby they are bound to each other as Brethren, and as his servants, that is, fellow-members of the same body of Christ; for all the members of everybody, are but servants to the head in the whole & to each other for the heads sake, and for the good of the whole. Although then every member hath a faculty of life, and a right through that faculty to act in and by itself, the work of its own office; and hath immediately from the head its direction what to do; and is not under the command of any particular fellow-member yet in the use of this faculty, and in the exercise of this right, every member is directed by the head to subordinate itself to the service of the whole, and to depend upon the unity thereof, and not to stand or act by itself: for the Apostle saith, that the eye cannot say to the hand I have no need of thee; nor the head (though head, and over all the rest) to the feet (though but feet, and under all the rest) I have no need of you, but even the weakest and the most unseemly members are the most necessary, and every one of them in

the performance of their duties towards the whole (for none of them are allowed to do anything for themselves alone) are made to depend upon each other. If this doctrine were laid to heart, and applied practically (without disputing) to particular matters now in dispute, and if our brains were less, and our consciences more exercised in looking herein to that which is (without all dispute) the known will of God, we should not need to be troubled with the niceties (though we might confer about them) of the proper seat of right to power and government, and with the national debates of the priority of the universal, and of the rights and privileges of the particular Churches, upon which rocks our affections being now split, all the duties of necessary communion, correspondency, and concurrence are neglected amongst us, notwithstanding all the known excellency, commendableness and usefulness thereof. Therefore my purpose is to set before the consciences of those that seek life, the loveliness of this duty whereunto we have already attained; if so be we will but put forth our hand unto it, as to the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God, and not feed upon the Theory of disputable opinions concerning particular rights and privileges; which are to us a tree of the knowledge of good and evil, whereof the fruit doth work nothing but death and enmity between God and us: and between man and man nothing but strife and distances, by reason of our pride wherewith our knowledge doth puff us up, to appear somewhat more than others in all our undertakings.

Sect. II. Of the excellency of unity and of the fountain thereof, Charity.

The holy Ghost hath set himself of purpose to commend Unity and Charity unto us, (which now I am to speak of) in two several places of Scripture, which I shall make the matter of this Section, to represent only the heads thereof in brief unto such as are conscionable, that by

themselves they may lay the thing to heart and weigh it considerately, that God may persuade their affections to the practice thereof.

The excellencies of brotherly unity are set forth in the 133. Psal. where first by way of preface and proposition the holy Ghost doth call upon us, and invites us to contemplate and observe the same with admiration in the twofold property thereof, viz. the goodness and the pleasantness which is in it. Behold how good and how pleasant it is, for Brethren to dwell together in unity, Vers. 1.

Then secondly, by way of proof and demonstration he doth show wherein that goodness and pleasantness doth consist, and whence it doth proceed. The goodness and pleasantness of brotherly unity doth consist in this, that it doth bring with it to those that maintain it, all manner of blessings in great plenty. The blessings are both spiritual and bodily, the first in the Church, the second in the Commonwealth.

The spiritual blessings bestowed in the Church, are the graces of the holy anointing, it is like the ointment, whose excellencies are 1. in their worth, the precious ointment; 2. in their use and application, which is to consecrate and make men Priests unto God, by the virtues conferred upon their principal faculties; upon the head, the beard, Aaron's beard; 3. in their abundance and fruitful proceeding from the head to all the inferior parts, it ran down upon the beard, went down upon the skirts of his garment, Vers. 2.

The bodily blessings bestowed in the Commonwealth are the fruits of the earth in the highest parts thereof both far from the Church, and near unto the same. As the dew of Hermon (a hill and land far from Jerusalem near Jordan) and the dew that descendeth upon the mountains of Zion, Vers. 3.

All this goodness and pleasantness doth accompany brotherly unity, because the Lord hath commanded the blessing to be there (viz. where unity is) and the blessing which he hath commanded is, even life for evermore, Vers. 3. and consequently all the means of life, and if of life eternal, then of temporal also, for we have the promise, that if we seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness all other things shall be added unto us, Matth. 6.33. Now from all this which is the clear doctrine of the holy Ghost, I shall make this inference only, that if these promises are made to brotherly unity, by reason of the blessing of God upon those that maintain it in Church and Commonwealth, then we may denounce the contrary threatening's unto those that maintain it not, for the wrath of God is upon those that are contentious and obey not the truth. Hitherto of unity. The ground of it is love, as may be gathered from 1 Cor. 12.25. where the same care of members one for another (which is the effect of their love) is the cause why there is no rent in the body, and consequently why unity is preserved: For where that loving care is not, unity is not, but a rent will be, as we may daily perceive in our doleful estate. Therefore all the excellencies that belong to brotherly unity are first and originally to be attributed unto charity. But then there are yet other excellencies, which are more immediately attributed unto it by the holy Ghost, in 1 Cor. 13. where the Apostle having in the foregoing Chapter, from the beginning, reckoned up the spiritual gifts, which are given to the Saints in the Church to profit withal in the unity of the body, (as is clear from Vers. 7. compared with Vers. 12, 13. of Chap. 12.) he cometh in the conclusion of that Chapter to exhort the Saints to covet earnestly the best gifts; and to encourage them unto this duty, he promiseth to show them the way which is (H&G) most excellent. Which is that which immediately in the following 13 th. Chapter he begins to describe. From whence this inference doth offer it self, that as the chief and most excellent means to attain to all

spiritual gifts, is the practice and exercise of love, so the neglect of that duty is the chief cause of the decay and loss of all spiritual gifts.

Now the Apostle in the description of this way doth show a Threefold excellency, and usefulness of love. The first is, that without it no spiritual talents or good works are profitable to the Church, or to our own salvation, Vers. 1, 2, 3. The second is, that in it and by it all virtues tending to make a man perfect, are wrought in us, Vers. 4, 5, 6. 7. The third is, that above all other graces, it is the only durable and lasting unto eternity, Vers. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Which doctrine being referred to the foregoing proposition in the last verse of Chap. 12. will produce this argument, or demonstration concerning the excellency of love.

That virtue without which no gifts nor good works are useful unto any, and by which all virtues are wrought in us, and which alone lasteth unto eternity, is the most excellent way to spiritual gifts. But so it is, that charity is that virtue; Ergo, it is of all others the most excellent way to spiritual gifts.

The Minor or the Assumption of this argument is made good concerning charity, in the three several parts thereof forementioned.

First then, that without it no spiritual talents and outward good works are useful; the Apostle doth make out in many particulars. For he first mentioned the gift of utterance, suppose a man could speak with the tongues of men and Angels, yet if he want charity, he is to his auditory but as sounding brass, or a tinkling Cymbal, Vers. 1. Afterwards the gifts of prophesy, of understanding all mysteries, of all knowledge, of all faith to do miracles, yet if there be no charity, he declareth that all this is of no use and virtue neither to the Church nor to him that hath it, Ver. 2.

Then concerning good works, he supposeth the largest and most compassionate relief of the poor; and the greatest constancy in martyrdom for the truth, even that a man should give his body to be burnt; yet if there be no charity, all these works will avail him nothing, Vers. 3. Charity then is more excellent than these gifts, and is to be counted the life, and as it were the soul of them all.

Secondly, that by charity all virtues are wrought in us, the Apostle doth in like manner declare in many particulars. For the virtues which make us perfect, for our behavior towards persons in actions and about things, they all proceed from charity.

For our behavior towards persons: if others be cross and froward, it teacheth longsuffering. If they be good and virtuous, it teacheth kindness; if they are in glory and prosperity, it doth not envy their condition; if we in respect of ourselves find some excellencies or eminencies in our own condition which others have not, it doth not suffer us to vaunt thereof towards others, nor to be puffed up thereby within ourselves, Vers. 4.

For our behavior in actions whether they be our own or other men's, whether evil or good, charity doth teach the virtues which are to be exercised in them.

In our own actions in respect of the form, charity doth not behave itself unseemly; in respect of the end, it seeketh not her own. In the actions of others, if they be evil, it is not provoked easily to wrath, or sharpness by them, if they be good, it doth not think evil of them, Vers. 5. its own proper action is joy; whereof the object is not iniquity but truth, whether in ourselves or others, Vers. 6. For our behavior about things, if the things are indifferent and present as done by others, it beareth with them; if the things are good, and said or promised by others, it believeth them; or absent and expected from

others, it hopeth for them; if the things are evil, it endureth them, Vers. 7. Thus in all respects it doth make a man complete in all virtues: So that it is not without cause, that the Apostle doth call it, the bond of perfectness, and in that respect doth exhort us above all other endeavors to exercise ourselves therein, Coloss. 3.14. Above all these things put on charity which is the bond of perfectness.

Thirdly, that of all other graces necessary to make us perfect unto salvation, charity is alone the permanent virtue, the Apostle doth show. First, by declaring that it never faileth. Secondly, by comparing it with Prophecies, with Tongues and with knowledge, which all shall fail and vanish away, Vers. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. And thirdly, by exalting it above Faith and Hope, as the greatest of these graces, Vers. 13.

And if to all this we should add the commendations which the Apostle John in his first Epistle doth give unto this virtue, as the chief means of our communion with God, of comfort within ourselves, and of our inoffensiveness towards our neighbor, we might be very large upon this subject; but to such as in their Ministry have any conscionable respect unto the express will of God, and who can discern the things that are excellent; this will suffice at this time, to commend unity and charity considered in themselves as they are good, pleasant, lovely and desirable.

Sect. III. Of the common rules of Christianity, as they are more especially obligatory unto Ministers in the duties of their calling.

Besides the loveliness and excellency of these virtues which doth commend to all the practice thereof in a common way, there are three special considerations, which ought to induce Ministers of the Gospel to entertain in the works of their Ministry one with another, the duties of brotherly communion and correspondency following thereupon. The first is taken from the rules, which are common to all

professors, without which none can be answerable unto the calling, wherewith he is called unto Christianity itself.

The second is taken from the laudable practice of those who are set before them, as infallible examples in the Ministry.

And the third is taken from the consideration of those things, which God doth peculiarly require of them as they are Ministers. So that none who neglecteth these duties will be able to approve himself in the beauty of holiness, either a true Christian by the common profession; or an upright follower of Christ and his Apostles in the Ministry; or a faithful servant to the trust committed unto him in his charge; but in the day of accounts must expect to receive, not the praise due to the good and faithful, but the reproof to be given to the wicked and slothful servant, together with his reward.

As for the duties of the common profession, wherein professors are obliged to relate to one another, and which to that effect are mainly pressed upon the consciences of all again and again & commended unto us in the Scriptures as matters, which to uphold the integrity of the profession before the world, are most of all necessary, they are nothing else, but the effects of unity and love in truth and holiness. For truth and holiness are the fundamentals of a single profession; but without the effects of love and unity in these, there can be no common profession, or public manifestation of the life of Christ unto the world by a body of Professors. And for this cause Christ hath made the fundamental law of the profession in common, and the badge of his disciples unto the world to be this, that they should love one another as he hath loved them John 13.34, 35. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another: by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. Now if this

Law is common to all as they are Christians, so that the transgressors thereof do forfeit their right in Christianity and are not to be acknowledged Christ's Disciples if they persevere in this fault, then it is evident that such of the Ministry as observe it not in their Ministerial relation one towards another, are far more guilty then others, because their charge in the common profession doth oblige them more to this duty then others, in as much as they are more bound thereby to uphold the truth of the profession then others are; for they are the joints of the body, and the instruments of the communion between the members; which if they through want of love to each other, do either break or not advance, they are not only guilty of their own disunion from their fellow laborers in the Ministry, but also of the disjointing of all other professors and members of Christ, one from another in the way of the common calling. And this is so much the more to be heeded, by how much the Scripture is more frequent and earnest in pressing this duty and the effects thereof; then any other thing requisite in the obedience of Faith. To reckon up all the particular commandments and strong motives which are in the New Testament, to enforce the practice of this duty, is not my purpose at this time; but I would only remonstrate unto those that intend to be faithful unto God and conscionable in their ministry, that as the fundamental Laws of the common profession, which are the practice of love and unity, belong more unto them in respect of each other, then unto single members, in respect of one another, (because mutual love and unity in the Ministers entertained or not entertained doth beget or destroy the same in common professors) so the effects, means and consequents of those duties are more eminently the concernment of their calling then of any others. Therefore I shall briefly point at some places of Scripture wherein the chief effects and means of those fundamentals are earnestly recommended unto all, that the Ministry of this age may see therein the rule of their comportment, and how far we are

strayed from it. We are then all commanded, and that as a duty wherein we are to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, to study the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, because all our fundamental relations to all the means, and to Christ and God the Authors of our salvation, are one and the same, Ephes. 4.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. and 1 Cor. 1.10, 11, 12, 13. and 2 Cor. 13.11. Col. 3.13, 14, 15. Therefore we are commanded again and again to be of the same mind each towards another, Rom. 12.16. Phil. 2.2. to have the same love, and to be of one accord, Phil. 2.2. and 1 Pet. 3.8. and 1 John 4.7, 8.11, 12. & 5.1. and 2 John 5, 6. and 1 Pet. 1.22. and the measure and height of this love is, that we are bound in imitation of Christ to lay down our lives for our brethren, 1 John 3.16. and Joh. 15.12, 13. far more then ought we to deny ourselves in lesser things.

The effects of these graces and the means to honor the holy profession by the practice thereof, are of two sorts; the one positive, the other negative.

The positive effects of the spirit of love and unity, are the expressions of all good will towards others in the common profession, and the use of all the means whereby the integrity thereof may be upheld in everyone. These are chiefly,

1. Mutual care to build up each other, to pray for each other, to keep each other in the love of God, Jud. 20.21. and to this effect.
2. To look to each other's things, and not to our own things alone, Phil. 2.4. and 1 Cor. 10.24.
3. To serve each other in love, Gal. 5.13.
4. To please our neighbor for good to his edification, Rom. 15.2.

5. To provoke one another to love and good works, Heb. 10.24. and to follow the good whereunto we are provoked, Hebr. 12.14.

6. To exhort and admonish one another, Heb. 3.13. Rom. 15.14.

7. To prefer others to ourselves in love and by humility, Rom. 12.10. Phil. 2.3.

8. To have compassion on each other in cases of infirmity, considering our own condition, lest we also be tempted, Jud. 22. Gal. 6.1.

9. To bear one another's burdens, and in the spirit of meekness supporting the weak, to restore one another, Gal. 6.1, 2. and 1 Thes. 5.14. Rom. 15.1.

10. To make a difference of faults, and to save some as pulling them out of the fire, Jud. 22, 23.

The negative effects of this spirit are the inclinations and endeavors whereby all evils which may occasion the breach of unity or love are avoided.

And to this effect we are commanded,

1. Not to seek or to please ourselves, Rom. 15.1.3. Phil. 2.4.6, 7, 8.

2. Not to have any evil will or hatred against any, 1 Pet. 2.1. and 1 John 2.9, 10, 11.

3. Not to be vain-glorious, to provoke any, or to envy one another, Gal. 5.26.

4. Not to revenge or recompense evil with evil, Rom. 12.17.19.21. and 1 Thes. 5.15. but to forbear and to forgive one another in cases of offense, Ephes. 4.2. Col. 3.13.

5. Not to murmur nor dispute, nor to give offense unto any, Phil. 2.14, 15, 16. and 1 Cor. 10.32.

6. Not to strive, nor to fight, nor to beat our fellow servants, Matth. 24.49. and to avoid this it is especially required in the Ministers of the Gospel, 2 Tim. 2.24, 25.

Of all which and such like duties, whereof the Scriptures are full, and which tend to perfect the Saints in their holy communion, and to direct brethren in the common profession of Christianity to advance truth and holiness in themselves, and others, we must say this, that they oblige Ministers in a threefold respect above others. For they are not only bound to observe these rules in all their ways as they are Christians, but they are moreover bound to observe them, First, towards all more eminently than other common professors, because they are appointed to be the Salt of the earth, and the light of the world, and as a City built upon a hill that cannot be hid, Matth. 5.13, 14. Secondly, towards their fellow Ministers more especially and distinctly then towards others, because they are bound to them by a double tie of fellowship, viz. by that of Christianity, and that of the Ministry. And thirdly, they are bound to observe these rules towards the works and in the performances of their Ministerial administrations more exactly then in and towards other common duties; because those works and performances are of a more important nature, then other works, as being more universal and more leading in their kind, and such as more nearly concern the glory of God, and reflect upon the souls of men in order to him, so that a small failing in any of these is more hurtful to the profession

then a greater fault in any other kind. So that we must forcibly conclude, that because all the common rules of Christianity, are more obligatory unto Ministers towards one another in the duties of their calling then unto common professors; that therefore the chief and most fundamental rules of the holy profession which concern love and unity, communion and correspondency, are more binding towards them, chiefly in the works of their Ministerial administration, then towards any others: and consequently that the neglect of the least of these duties, in any of them, is a greater guilt and less excusable, then in any others, the commission of a gross misdemeanor. A little moat in the eye will trouble the whole body more, then a great handful of dirt and dust cast upon any other part of the face, and the least prick that may be in the heart or in the pia mater of the brain (as Physicians say) will kill a man infallibly; but a great wound in the flesh, nay a stab through the whole body may be cured. A thorn in a small joint will endanger a gangrene to the whole body, whereas a great impostume in a part of the flesh will be without danger &, may be a means (though with some trouble) to purge the whole of many evil humors. Thus a little spark of disaffection in one Minister against another, or breach of unity in the least duty of their charge, may prove infinitely more hurtful to the whole Church of God, then great and gross hostilities in common professors for matters of outward concernment.

Now amongst all the faults and defaults of Ministers in their charge, that of the want of mutual love, and of care to maintain the unity of the spirit in the profession of Christianity; together with a delight to stand at a distance by themselves, is to me one of the greatest, because it doth directly cross the chief end of their Ministerial function, which is to gather the believers into one visible body, and to bring that body to the perfection of spiritual unity (which may be clearly gathered from John 17.21, 22, 23. compared with Ephes. 4.12,

13, 14, 15, 16.) And if this be the chief end of their Ministry, then the main neglect of the means by which this end may be obtained, and without which it cannot be prosecuted, must needs be their greatest guilt; whence it will clearly follow, that to maintain no communion in spiritual things one with another is one of their greatest faults, because most directly cross to the end of their administration. So then, if to maintain spiritual communion is a duty in this respect fundamental and necessary, then it followeth that the engagements unto a concurrence, and the lawful ways of spiritual correspondency are also fundamental and necessary to the work of the Ministry, and must be entertained, because without these the duty of holy Communion cannot be maintained, nor the unities of the Church brought to any visible perfection, but rather visibly dissolved.

Thus then upon this consideration it is an undeniable Scriptural truth, That for the Ministers of the Gospel, in the duties of their Ministerial charge, nothing is more conscionable, nothing more commendable, nothing more profitable, and nothing more suitable to the glory of God, and the perfecting of the Saints, then that they should maintain a brotherly communion and correspondency one with another, and such as neglect it, walk not worthy of the calling wherewith they are called in the common profession of Christianity.

Sect: IV. Of the practice of those that are set before us as infallible examples in the Ministry.

Although the mediatory actions of Jesus Christ in the flesh, as he is our Savior, are not imitable, nor were they performed to be imitated by any, for he alone is the only Mediator between God and man; yet his relations unto us, as our brother, sanctifying us in our flesh; and the ways of his converse amongst men were such, that in all cases of duty, wherein we are to come to God, or to behave ourselves dutifully

one towards another in respect of God, he hath left us either an example which we are bound to imitate, or a precept which we ought to observe, and which he himself did practice. For in this, he is the Captain of our salvation, because he went before us in all things, and we are bound to follow not only, him before all others, but also none further then they are found to be his followers, 1 Cor. 11.1. and for this cause we see that the Apostles as in all other things, so chiefly in these duties of love, unity, forbearance, and condescension towards the weak, do allege his practice as the strongest argument that can be used to oblige us thereunto. Thus, 1 John 3.16. He laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the Brethren.

Ephes. 5.1, 2. Be ye followers of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us.

Coloss. 3.13. Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Gal. 6.2. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ.

1 Pet. 4.1. Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind. And the Apostle,

Phil. 2. Having used many strong inducements to persuade us to love and unity, Vers. 1, 2. and to dissuade us from strife and division, verse. 3. then verse. 4. he exhorts us to mutual care of one another; whereunto as an argument is brought in Christ's example, as the chiefest of all other motives, Vers. 5, 6, 7, 8. Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus, &c. and Christ saith to his Father, John 17.22. The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one. By glory I understand here grace, as 1 Pet. 5.1. partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.

As concerning Christ's practice in his Ministry to avoid breaches and contentions between him and others, it is set forth by the holy Ghost in Isa. 42.2, 3. and Matth. 12.19, 20. thus: He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man bear his voice in the streets, a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

And concerning his way to bring us to unity with himself and with God; the Apostle doth set it forth as an example to be imitated, Rom. 15. Vers. 2, 3. Let everyone of us please his neighbor for his good to edification, for even Christ pleased not himself, &c. which is further applied to our practice, verse. 5, 6, 7. The God of patience and consolation grant you that ye be like minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, wherefore receive ye one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God. And then explained in showing what the work of Christ's Ministry was, Vers. 8, 9. Now I say that Jesus Christ was a Minister of the Circumcision for the Truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the Fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy, &c. Where we may clearly understand that by Christ's Ministerial behavior, which was without strife, free from all clamors and disputes, and which did tend to the uniting of all, both Jews and Gentiles, both circumcised and uncircumcised unto God, we are taught to be without partiality, to endeavor the communication of God's glory unto all, and obliged in our Ministry not to stand and walk by ourselves to satisfy our own desires and enjoy our rights and privileges which we pretend unto for private content, but rather to please others to their edification, although we should suffer reproaches for their sake. For thus Christ was reproached by the Pharisees (who were much in love with their own holiness) for conversing and eating with Publicans and sinners,

Matth. 9. Vers. 10, 11, 12. & Chap. 11.19. and upon this ground of pleasing others and receiving all that came in his way to the glory of God, Christ conversed, did eat and drink with the Samaritans with whom other Jews had no dealings, John 4.9. till verse. 43. Nor was it without a mystery, that at his death he was crucified between two Malefactors, that the Scripture might be fulfilled which saith, and he was numbered with the transgressors, Mark 15.27, 28. For by God, and by himself justly in respect of the imputation of our sins to him, and by sinners unjustly he was numbered in his life, and in his death one of them, for their good to save them. This example of Christ in his Ministry made the Apostle Paul become all things unto all men that he might gain some and partake of the Gospel with everyone, as he himself doth set forth his own practice, to exhort us to follow it, 1 Cor. 9. verse. 19. till 24. Now if Christ and the Apostles did thus behave themselves with indifferency, and apply themselves without respect of persons by their Ministry unto all, that were any way capable of the outward means of edification (though great sinners otherwise) how can the practice of a Separation, or of a Semi-separation be warranted, and that even from those, who in respect of their profession cannot be denied to be our brethren? Should we dare to put upon matters that are merely circumstantial, and upon things nowhere expressly enjoined, but rather taken up by ourselves, more weight than upon all these fundamental duties of Christianity, and upon the undeniable practice of Christ and his Apostles in the work of their Ministry? If we do make ourselves, and our own ways the measure of all perfection, surely we become perfect Idols to, and Idolaters of ourselves in God's worship. For if in the outward means of worshipping and drawing near to God in public, though his own ordinances be observed as he hath appointed them, as to the outward man, (for to the inward fellowship he himself alone doth admit whomsoever he pleaseth) yet if then we love to set ourselves at a distance from others, or reject others from being partakers with us of

the ordinances, either because we count them in holiness inferior to us, or because we are not satisfied concerning their sincerity, or because they come not up to join in opinion with us, concerning all the circumstantials of our way. If I say for these, or such like causes, we stand aloof in the common profession; and think that God is nowhere to be found but in our way and society; do we not Idolize ourselves? Do we not make ourselves the only rule of all perfection, and say in our hearts, Stand thou by thyself, come not near, for I am holier than thou. And what can be imagined more opposite to the love, humility and condescension of Christ and his Apostles in the way of their Ministry? Let us therefore take heed to this snare, let us count nothing perfect, but that which upon the grounds of the common profession is conformable to the example of Christ and his Apostles, who came into the world to save and draw sinners unto God, not by a distance, but by a condescension unto them in their weakness.

As for the communion and correspondency which the primitive Ministers maintained one with another in the Ministerial works; we shall find that it did tend to these four ends.

First, to advance the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith and profession of Christianity.

Secondly, to build up and confirm those that had received the truth of the Gospel, that they might be settled therein.

Thirdly, to preserve those that were settled from the danger of seducers.

Fourthly and lastly, to strengthen themselves in the works of their employment towards the Churches. All which aims are still necessary to be followed, and therefore the means which are serviceable

thereunto, and which they then used must not now be neglected, if they can be set afoot.

First, we find then that for the propagation of the Gospel amongst the Gentiles some went forth to preach unto them the name of Christ, and took nothing of them. To receive such and bring them forward on their journey after a Godly sort, was a work of holy Communion commended in Gajus by the Apostle John, as being a duty, which all ought to intend, and the ground why all ought to intend it is, that all may be fellow-helpers to the truth. This practice then is still to be followed by all that are called to the Ministry, so long as the propagation of the truth shall be necessary.

Secondly, for the confirmation and edification of converts in the faith by the care of neighbor Ministers corresponding with those that did convert them, we have an example in Acts 8.14. where the Ministers of the Church at Jerusalem sent to Samaria two of their number to confirm the believers and build them up in the faith; in like manner when they heard that some were turned unto the Lord in Antioch, they sent Barnabas, and he went to the same end and purpose, Acts 11.20, 21, 22, 23.

Thirdly, for the preservation of the truth from the danger of Seducers, and the decision of doubts in doctrine and practice cast in amongst the professors to trouble them, we have an example of Brotherly Communion and Correspondency in Acts 15. verse. 1. till 30. where one Church doth crave and another doth contribute assistance, counsel and authority in a Synodical way towards the decision and settlement of the difference which broke forth amongst them.

Fourthly, the example wherein Ministers amongst themselves did strengthen one another in the work of their employment towards the

Churches, is that of the Apostles of the Jews and Gentiles, who having communicated together concerning the doctrine which they preached, Gal. 2. verse. 2. and made known to one another their practice, Verse 3, 4, 5, 6. to gain mutual approbation and confirmation therein, Verse 6, 7, 8. they did enter into a contract of fellowship, Vers. 9. and an obligation of Communion and communication of good things between their Churches, Vers. 9, 10. Nor was it found lawful or answerable to the truth of the Gospel, that upon human considerations or partial respects that Communion should be broken, Vers. 11. till the end.

From all which again doth follow that which formerly hath been concluded; that nothing is more conscionable, nothing more commendable, nothing more profitable, and nothing more suitable to the glory of God and the perfecting of the Saints in the work of the Ministry, then that the Ministers of the Gospel should maintain a Brotherly Communion and correspondency one with another, and that such as neglect this duty walk not worthy of the calling wherewith they are called in imitation of Christ and his Apostles.

Sect. V. Concerning that which concerns the Office of the Ministry in itself.

If we reflect upon the Ministerial office in itself, and consider that whereunto it hath a special reference, we shall find, that all Ministers that are faithful to their charge are bound at all times to have respect unto four things.

The first is their relation unto Christ as they are under him who is the head of the Church.

The second is their relation to the Church, as therein they are Officers.

The third is their relation to the works of their charge in the Office.

The fourth is their relation to their fellow laborers in these works.

None of these respects must be wanting, because without their subordination unto Christ, they are no Ministers, nor are they otherwise in Christ, but as they are members of his Church, nor can they be counted members without a work to perform, because the use of every member is to be an Organ of the soul in the body: now the soul of this body is the spirit of Christ, and every true believer is a member Organical in his own place, that is, appointed to some useful work. Nor is any member alone, but it is put together with the rest, to make up the whole by mutual conjunction and cooperation, therefore none doth work as it is alone, but as it standeth united with its fellow-laborers in every work. And as none of these respects can be wanting in the office of the Ministry; so none besides these are needful; for if a member doth duly depend upon his head, and standeth in its right place in the body; and hath a lively faculty to do its own work, and is no ways disjointed but fitly compacted and linked to the other members in doing its work, nothing can be further desired or wished for in it. These are then the essential and proper relations, under which a Minister as an Officer of the Church is to be considered. Now if it be found that in the profession of truth and holiness, nothing doth make him so fit for his office in all these relations, as to maintain the duties of brotherly love, unity, communion and correspondency, and that without the study of these, he cannot stand aright in any of those relations; then I suppose that these duties will without contradiction be acknowledged to be the most commendable and useful that he can apply himself unto, and that without the observance of the same, he cannot be said to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called.

Let us therefore take these relations into a more distinct consideration, and see how therein by these duties a Minister is fitted for his office.

First, then a Minister by his Office is subordinate unto Christ, as a Servant, as a Disciple, and as a friend of his; and to make these relations evident to the world and sure to himself, is to make his calling and election sure; which is effected when both others are made to see, and he himself doth assuredly of himself know, that what he doth in his charge, is done to serve Christ as it becometh his Disciple and friend. But except his behavior in all the works of his charge be suitable to that love whereby Christ his master did love us, and thereby did unite himself unto us, these relations will not be evidenced.

For to be a faithful servant of Christ he must make two things appear. First, that he serves none but him alone, as the Apostle doth, Gal. 1.10. and as Christ requires of all to be done, when he tells us that none can serve two masters, Matth. 6.24. And secondly, that he applies himself to the same work which Christ did. For he commands all his servants to follow him, John 12.26. namely, in that service which he performed, which was to do the will and manifest the love of his Father unto us; therefore the Apostle, 2 Cor. 4.5. in order to this, doth profess not to preach himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and himself a servant to the Corinthians for Jesus sake. This was to be a servant of the love of Jesus to us, to invite all to be reconciled to God for his sake, 2 Cor. 5.18, 19.21. and 6.1. As the employment is nothing else but a service of love, Gal. 5.13. that is, to express the love and fulfill the Law of Christ, Gal. 6.2. so the infallible character of a disciple by which he is to be distinguished in the world from all others, is mutual love and unity, as is clear by John 13.35. and herein as well as in holding forth the word, they are to approve themselves

to be the light of the world, Matth. 5.14. which will appear by comparing these two places, Phil. 2.14, 15, 16. with 1 John 2.9, 10, 11. The whole relation then of being a true servant and Disciple, is evidenced by nothing more then by this work of love and mutual unity. Lastly also it is evident, that none can claim the title of being Christ's friend, but by the performance of this duty: For Christ hath entailed the right to this dignity wholly upon this condition; which is clearly expressed John 15.12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you; greater love hath no man then this, that a man lay down his life for his friends: Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you, &c. And when in verse. 15. and 16. he hath showed, how much by his friendship to them he hath obliged them already; and what further obligations they should receive from his Father, he concludes, verse. 17. thus. These things I command you, that you love one another. So that he puts all the relations which we have to him of servants, of disciples and of friends, upon the expression of our love to each other; from whence we must forcibly conclude, that if there be no such expression of love, but rather of disaffection, and of hatred to one another in our Ministry, that we make it apparent unto the world; and to our own consciences, when they awake, it will be evident, that we are none of his servants, nor his disciples, nor his friends; but rather the servant, disciples, and friends of his enemy, the Prince of wickedness in heavenly matters. Therefore let no man be deceived with fair pretenses of holiness, and with large pleas and discourses about special rights; the Apostle tells us, that if we have bitter envy and strife in our hearts one against another, and if we glory therein, we lie against the truth: For the wisdom by which men are led in such cases, descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish.

Secondly, in relation to the Church, as it is a house of God, the Ministers therein are builders, 1 Cor. 3.10, 11, 12. as it is the household of faith, they are stewards of the Mysteries of God, 1 Cor. 14.1, 2. and as it is a flock they are shepherds thereof, 1 Pet. 5.2. Now if in building the same house there be no concurrence and correspondency between the builders thereof, how will it be fitly framed together as it ought to be? Ephes. 20.21. Can builders that have no spiritual communion, but are rather disunited in their ways, frame fitly one and the same house for God's spirit to dwell in? And if in a great household, where one steward cannot oversee all, several stewards being appointed to do all by one and the same rule of administration; yet they agree not amongst themselves, but walk different ways and cross each other: will not this distraction disorder the affairs of the household? Will not this reflect upon their Lord and Master, as if he could not govern his family in peace? And if several shepherds belonging to a great flock to feed it jointly, do everyone take a part thereof for himself, and feed it separately each from other, without any care to maintain good neighborhood and acquaintance, but rather to cross one another in their walks, and draw sheep one from another, how will they be able to answer it to him that hath entrusted them with the joint care of his flock? I find that when the soul which is in love with Christ doth seek to find him out, it is afraid to turn aside unto the flocks of his companions; and when it is directed how to come to him, it is bid go forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed besides the shepherds tents: whence we may observe, that the multitude of flocks under many pretending to be Christ's companions, do perplex the soul, and turn it aside from him, but the unity of the flock under shepherds that are united, is the way wherein Christ is to be found.

Thirdly, their relation to the works of their employment doth wholly necessitate them to maintain mutual love and unity; because not

only these duties in themselves are a principal part of their work; but whatever else doth belong to their charge, whether it concern the Church or the Gospel; it can neither be acceptable unto God, nor profitable unto men, except it be done in the spirit of love and unity.

First then, that these duties are recommended unto them, as a main part of the very work, which is chiefly to be aimed at in their profession, I suppose hath been abundantly made out by that which formerly hath been alleged.

Secondly, that nothing can be acceptable unto God without this frame of spirit, is evident, because God is love, and he that loveth not, knoweth not God, 1 John 4.8. and on the contrary he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him, *ibid.* Vers. 16. Moreover he that doth not all his works in love, as he is commanded, 1 Cor. 16.14. transgresseth the whole Law, by the unlovely frame of his spirit, because as love is the fulfilling of the whole Law, Rom. 13.8, 9, 10. So the want of it, must needs be the transgression of the whole Law; and he that is not subject to the Law of God cannot please him, saith the Apostle, Rom. 8.7, 8.

And as nothing can be acceptable unto God, which is not done in love, so it cannot be profitable unto men; For if God bless it not, how can it prosper towards them, and how can he bless that which is displeasing to him? And then the Apostle tells us, that knowledge is apt to puff men up, but it is Charity which edifieth, 1 Cor. 8.1. And what I say of love may be verified of unity; as it is the fruit of love inseparable from it in Christ's aim: John 17.23. and equally recommended to us by the Apostle, 1 Cor. 1.10. and 2 Cor. 13.11. Ephes. 4.1. Ephes. 4.1. till 7. Phil. 2.2. whence we see, that all things which are to be done by any must thus be qualified to find acceptance; but if we look more distinctly upon the proper works of

their employment towards the Church and for the Gospel; we shall perceive more clearly the intrinsical coherence which is found between these duties and the Ministerial administrations.

For the works of their administration towards the Church are all the Ordinances of God belonging to the public worship in the word and prayer, whereunto the Sacraments, the Government and the Discipline are subordinate, that therein by the Word and Prayer the Saints may have communion with God through the Spirit. The whole substance and sum of all that they have to do, is expressed by the Apostle, Ephes. 4. from Vers. 11. till 17. where I observe that all the gifts and Offices which Christ hath given to his Church, both the extraordinary, of Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, and the ordinary of Pastors and teachers, their work is the same towards the Church unto the worlds end; namely this. 1. To be serviceable in perfecting the Saints, and in building up the body of Christ, in Faith and knowledge, till they all come to the unity thereof, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Where we see that the end of their work is nothing else but the perfection of unity, and consequently if any should not aim at this, it is evident that they come short of the true end of their administration of the ordinances, and shoot not at the mark which God hath set before them.

Secondly, their service is to preserve by this means the Professors of Christianity from that unsettlement which is brought upon those that are children in understanding by the different doctrines of men and their sleights and cunning craftiness whereby they lay in wait to deceive the simple and draw disciples after them: whence we may gather that if the true Ministers had done their work as they should have done in love and unity from the beginning of the Reformation, the deceivers of these times would never have prevailed so as they

have done hitherto. But because this hath not been intended, therefore they have gotten all the advantages that they can desire and wish for, both against us and all other Protestants.

Thirdly, their work is not only to unite them in faith and knowledge, and to preserve them from seducers, but to endeavor their growth in all things into him, who is their head Christ, by the sincerity and truth of love.

Fourthly, and to this effect their work is to compact them and join them together as one body to build up themselves in love by that which every joint is able to supply unto another.

Whence we may most evidently perceive that the whole substance of their work towards the Church and Saints to perfect them and build them up, is in effect nothing but this, to unite them in the faith and knowledge of Christ, to preserve them from unsettlement, and to cause them grow up within themselves by the loving communication of their graces to each other. As concerning the work which they are to intend for the Gospel to maintain the profession of it in the world; it is in a word to uphold the truth which is after godliness; that it may be acknowledged to be the grace of God which bringeth salvation: and that it may appear unto all men; to teach them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and the Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. Now to hold forth this word of life, the Apostle requireth in all Professors, and therefore most of all in the Ministers of the profession, that they should do all things without murmurings and disputing's, and that they should be (in their conversation) blameless and harmless, as the

Sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, and that they should stand fast in in one Spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel. Where we may observe that in that work which is proper to the advancement of the Gospel of truth in the world, the holiness of life, the peaceableness and the unity of the professors, are the necessary requisites without which nothing in this kind can be effected: For this work hath two parts. The one is towards the children of truth, the other is against the adversaries of truth. Towards the children of truth, the work is in respect of the common profession, to concur in the ways of righteousness, of faith, of charity and of peace with all those that call upon God out of a pure heart, 2 Tim. 2.22. and in respect of the aim of mutual edification for practice, it is to exhort one another daily whiles it is called today, Hebr. 3.13. and to provoke one another to love and to good works, Heb. 10.24. and for knowledge, it is to endeavor that their hearts may be comforted, being knit together in love, and to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God and of the Father, and of Christ in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col. 2.2, 3. Where we ought to observe that the study of love and unity have not only an influence upon the common profession, and that part of the peculiar work of edification, which is practical to maintain it, but also that it is a means to confirm and comfort the hearts of the believers in all the riches of the full assurance of the knowledge of the highest and most secret Mysteries. And consequently that where this study is not entertained, there both the profession and all the comforts which arise unto the souls of believers practically and intellectually from their peculiar interests in each others edification, do wholly decay, and the great mysteries of our salvation concerning God and the Father and Christ are darkened, made doubtful, and by some utterly contradicted, all

which is brought to pass nowadays as much, if not more then in any age heretofore by our dissensions.

As for the adversaries and gainsayers who are to be opposed, if we take them to be the principalities and powers of darkness and spiritualities of malice in high places, a chief part of the armor by which we are to fight against them and preserve ourselves from their assaults is, to have our Loins, (that is, our affections) girt about with truth (that is, with sincere love, which is the bond of perfectness) Ephes. 6.14. and to have our feet shod (that is, our ways of conversion fitted) with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, (that is, with means of peace, to prepare men to entertain without offense and peaceably the Gospel of the peace of God, which is revealed in his word to us, Ephes. 6.15. But if we take the opposers to be men, although sometimes their mouths must be stopped, and they sharply rebuked, namely, when it is evident that they are vain talkers, unruly deceivers and liars: yet always matters of strife and jangling both with them and all others, are to be avoided (which we now have not heeded) and the behavior of the servant of God even in his greatest zeal, and in the worst of times must never be precipitate and hasty, that is, without longsuffering, 2 Tim. 4.2, 3. But chiefly towards such of whom there may be hope of recovery, all gentleness, patience, forbearance and meekness of instruction is with great care to be used, as the Apostle doth teach Timothy, 2 Epist. 2.24, 25. which is a lesson almost utterly forgotten in these our days amongst some that esteem themselves the chief of Professors. Thus then we see that there is no particular part of all the Ministerial work wherein the spirit of love and unity must not appear, as the principal agent to make it successful.

Fourthly and lastly, their relation to each other as fellow-laborers in these works, is properly that of joints, which are between the

Members of the body to unite them to each other, and to make them dependent upon the head. For in Ephes. 4. verse. 16. the Apostle doth clearly speak of the visible body of the Church, as it hath a spiritual communion with Christ, and within itself by the means of that which every joint supplieth; if then every part by his joint (that is, by his Minister, to whom is joined a society of Saints as a part of the whole) is bound to supply to another part, that which is his effectual working towards the building up of the body in Love, then it is absolutely necessary for him to correspond and concur with his neighbor and fellow-joints: for how can any part supply anything to another part of the body without the joint thereof? So then we must observe that the Associations of the Saints (which are undeniable true parts of the whole) should edify one another, by that which every joint supplieth. For to that effect joints are in the body, and the Apostle saith in the whole body: to let us understand that all the particular Associations of Believers in respect of the common profession are to be counted as one Association, and that by the joints which God hath set in the whole, the parts therefore are fitly to be joined together; whence we must gather, that Ministers are not only joints to unite individual Professors into a society, but to unite one Congregation unto another; for he saith, that the whole is compacted by joints, it followeth then that the Congregations, though distinct by themselves, and one within themselves, as to their several joints, yet ought to be further jointed with other Congregations, and not to be at a distance and stand by themselves as parts of the whole disjointed from each other a which is the posture whereat many desire to stand, and is the practice of too many upon several pretenses, to the great dishonor of the Gospel in the common profession of Christianity.

But how contrary this is unto the true end of the public worship of God, to the calling of the Ministry, to the aim of Christ in giving gifts

unto men, to the perfecting of the Saints, and to the edifying of the body of Christ, I hope such as are conscionable will be able to see by that which hath been hitherto said. And although I think it needless, to speak much more of this relation which Ministers ought to maintain one to another, seeing it hath already been proved, that all the Commandments of brotherly love, of unity, of mutual care, of communion and correspondency which are given to all Christians in the common profession, are more particularly binding unto Ministers towards each other, in respect of their Ministerial charges: Yet I shall briefly mention three or four special duties which seem to be enjoined more distinctly unto them, rather as they are Ministers, then as they are Christians, because they have a respect rather unto their public charge and employment, wherein they relate one another, then unto the common profession by itself.

First, they are not only bound to serve all men Ministerially as Christ served us, but they are by his example and precept more distinctly commanded to serve one another, Matth. Chap. 20. Vers. 27, 28. Whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant, even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many.

Secondly, they are bound to look first unto themselves, and then to the flock, Acts 20. Vers. 28. Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, &c. For Vers. 29. & 30. they are foretold that amongst them grievous Wolves will enter in, and of their own selves (that is, some of their own vocation) men shall arise speaking perverse things, to draw away Disciples after them. If then all must look diligently lest a root of bitterness spring up in the Church and many be defiled thereby, Hebr. 12.15. far more is it the duty of Ministers, to look to each other herein.

Thirdly, they are bound to look upon themselves and their gifts, as not for themselves but for all, and chiefly for each other to profit withal, according to that of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 12. Vers. 7. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone to profit withal; to the Ministers ordinarily the greatest and most useful manifestations are given; and they can profit most thereby one towards another, because in being profitable thereby unto each other; they are enabled so much the more to be profitable unto all.

Fourthly and lastly, in the use of their spiritual gifts wherein they intend to be profitable unto all, they are to subject themselves one to another; as it is written, 1 Cor. 14. Vers. 29.32. Let the Prophets speak and let the others judge. And the Spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets.

From all which as the duties of mutual love and unity are necessarily to be inferred, so the means to maintain and exercise the same, which are the ways of spiritual communion and correspondency, must needs also be acknowledged to be their duty; for where the end is commanded, there the means also, without which that end cannot be attained; is also commanded: so that we must clearly conclude that this is an undeniable Scriptural Truth.

That the Ministers of the Gospel are bound to maintain brotherly unity, communion and correspondency one with another; because in the duties of their Ministerial charge, nothing is found more conscionable, nothing more commendable, nothing more profitable, and nothing more suitable to the glory of God, and the calling by which they are called to the perfecting of the Saints, and to the edifying of the body of Christ, then this duty is; and therefore whosoever doth not walk by this rule, doth not walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called in the Gospel; and whosoever doth

walk thereby, peace and mercy be upon him, and upon all the Israel of God. Amen.

FINIS.

Brotherly Unity amongst all Christians, especially amongst the Ministers of Christ, being in itself so excellent and comely at all times; and (considering the danger and sad consequences of our present divisions) so desirable and necessary at this time: I conceive all overtures and counsels having a true tendency thereunto worthy the public light. And do therefore approve the publication of this ensuing discourse, entitled, A Peace-maker without partiality and hypocrisy, &c.

June 6. 1648.

Joseph Caryl.

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